



Michael Atkinson

Atkinson Farms - Spring, TX

* * *

Accession Number: UHM-004

Date: April 02, 2025

Location: Atkinson Farms – Houston, TX

Interviewer: Evan Stern

Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs

Length: Thirty six minutes

Project: Urban Harvest Market

0:00:00

Evan Stern: Today is April 2nd, and I'm speaking with Mike Atkinson at Atkinson Farms in Spring, Texas. For the record, could you please tell us your name and occupation?

Michael Atkinson: Michael Atkinson, and I'm a farmer, vegetable farmer.

Evan Stern: No matter whom I'm speaking with, I always like to start off by asking if you could describe for us your childhood home, and tell us about where you grew up.

Michael Atkinson: I grew up in Houston, Texas. My grandfather bought the farm we were at in 1961. I've been a vegetable farmer all my life, and I'm 72 years old. I've been doing it for 50-something years.

Evan Stern: I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about your grandparents, who they were, and how and when they came to purchase this land. How did they get into farming?

Michael Atkinson: They had always been farmers way back when in the early 1900s.

0:00:59

They used to-- my great-grandfather used to work in the strawberry fields in New Orleans in the wintertime. In the summertime, they would go to San Antonio. It just happened that, I guess it was 1917-18, somewhere in there, they were on a wagon, coming back, and the wagon broke. They didn't have any money or anything. They landed in San Antonio, and went to work for a produce company in San Antonio, and it just bloomed up from there.

Evan Stern: If you were to have a conversation with your grandparents today, what would you like to talk about?

Michael Atkinson: Just how much change the farming industry has done from a team of mules, and how much more scientific it's got, how much more we rely on all the data, and the different types of fertilizer, and different types of chemicals, and different types of plants and seeds and everything, the way that we do it this day and time compared to what they done 100 years ago.

0:01:59

Evan Stern: You said that they worked with horses and mules. Did you ever get the chance to do that yourself?

Michael Atkinson: When I was a little kid, we got it. I've still got all the stuff in the barn to hook up a team of mules to-- I was about 10 or 12 the last time that I've hooked up to a team of mules, and that's probably been 50, 60 years ago. I don't ever care to do it again, but that's how it's done.

Evan Stern: How old were you when they put you to work?

Michael Atkinson: About 5.

Evan Stern: What was your first chore?

Michael Atkinson: You know, whatever we done on the farm. I can remember them transplanting with a tractor. My dad and grandpa was transplanting, and I would drive the tractor, but I was too small to mash the clutch. So, I had to put both feet on the clutch, and grab the steering wheel to push it down so my dad could get off and knock it out of gear, and turn it around, and go to the next row, 'cause I couldn't turn it around. I was probably 5 or so. I wasn't big enough to be in kindergarten.

Evan Stern: What's the most important lesson you learned, starting to work at a young age?

0:03:02

Michael Atkinson: We've always worked hard all our life. We've always worked 60, 70, 80 hours a week, no matter what we've done. It's always been a long, drawn out process, and we never finish. We never go home thinking, well, we got everything done. We got everything done. We're through. There's always something to do on the farm, always something to do.

Evan Stern: What did your-- do you know anything about how your parents found or selected this plot of land where we are right now?

Michael Atkinson: We grew up on the north side of Houston, around Little York and 45, and things started to boom and grow up there. Most of all the farmland there had turned into houses and stuff. My grandfather was looking for another place, and he found this place and bought it, I guess, in 1961.

Evan Stern: What did they farm when they first started working this land?

0:03:57

Michael Atkinson: We've always farmed tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, squash, all kinds of greens, mustard greens, collard greens, spinach, radishes.

Evan Stern: Can you paint a picture for us of what Spring in this area looked like back in 1961?

Michael Atkinson: Well, like I tell everybody today, we're a mile and a half off of 45. When we come to Spring, we were the third house on the left, and now we're the third-millionth house on the left.

Evan Stern: What has it been like for you to watch all of the development spring up around here?

Michael Atkinson: It's just one after another, and I guess it doesn't really affect us in any way, where it's all developed and all grown up to houses, and where it used to be nothing but trees and cows and farmland.

Evan Stern: But is it hard for you at all to see that the farmland has been overtaken by development?

Michael Atkinson: Yeah, some of the best farmland in the state of Texas is right here through Spring and Klein, over toward Tomball community.

0:05:01

There used to be probably 150 to 200 small vegetable farmers in this part of the area, and I think there's about 3 or 4 left.

Evan Stern: So, has it been hard for you to lose some of those neighbors?

Michael Atkinson: The neighbors moved on. Just this place right beside me, they put 409 apartment units. It's 28 acres there. I used to farm that for a long time. It was an original Klein place, and the man passed away and the wife passed away, and the two daughters had it. As soon as they got it, they sold it. It's naturally how everything else went in this part of the world.

Evan Stern: But you've held on and, I mean, I imagine that you've probably received a lot of attractive offers from developers, and your property taxes are probably a lot higher than they were in 1961. Yet you have held on. Why is that important to you?

Michael Atkinson: Well, it's been a family, it's been a business. My son works in the business with me. My daughter's also in the business and keeps the books.

0:06:00

We all live right here on the farm. It's home. To pick up and move everything that we've accumulated and everything that we've done for 60-plus years, to pick up and move would, you know, it'd displace everybody. We're all able to work. We're all healthy. I could sell everything I got, and probably never have to worry about working again, but what is that? Is that the right thing to do? I doubt it. As long as I'm healthy, and I wanna work, I'm gonna continue to work.

Evan Stern: As I understand, for the better part of 20 years, your grandparents primarily sold wholesale, mainly to Weingarten's Grocery. But that closed in the early '80s, and so what did that cause for the business?

Michael Atkinson: Well, my grandfather was getting up in age.

0:06:58

He was in his late 70s, early 80s. My dad, he didn't really care to go on much more when Weingarten's shut down. We spent about five or six years just peddling different places and doing different things. My grandfather got sick in '87, and passed away in '88. My dad hung on a year or two more, and he said that he's done. He had enough money. He wasn't gonna work no more. So, in 1990, he decided he's gonna retire and not work no more. We also had some farmland still left down in Houston, and he dabbled in that a little bit. But I come here and start over in 1990, all by myself, and it's bloomed up from there.

Evan Stern: What would you say was the greatest challenge that you faced in picking up the reins from your father and grandparents when you officially became the owner?

0:07:59

Michael Atkinson: They taught me a lot, you know, my grandfather taught me a lot how to farm. My dad taught me a lot how to keep a set of books and do the best we can with that, keep records and all. But it's so much change every day, so much change in this business every day, every day, every day. Things that we done in 1990, we could never do 'em again. We could never do 'em again. We're just too far advanced down the road with technology and stuff.

Evan Stern: What are some of those things that you did in 1990 that you can't or wouldn't do now?

Michael Atkinson: We were limited with the size of tractors we had, the type of equipment that we had, all the modern, new modern equipment. We lay a lot of this black plastic mulch down, drip tape, different techniques of watering and all that we never done. We used to just furrow water everything.

0:08:59

We can overhead sprinkler now, we can drip irrigate, we put this plastic mulch down to protect everything, and just we go right on down the road.

Evan Stern: I know, as well, you do take over in 1990, and I believe you said that the wholesale business started to become a lot tougher in the '90s. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Michael Atkinson: The wholesale business did become a lot tougher. So much of the big, big farms producing things that we have are coming in and just bulk food. We kind of want to see so

much coming in from all over the world. This day, with transportation, the way transportation is, it can come in from Mexico, it can come in from Canada, different seasons and things all over the world.

Evan Stern: With that going on, you end up pivoting and adapting your business model because of that.

0:10:00

Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Michael Atkinson: I guess it was maybe 2000. We'd done wholesale stuff, mostly greens, through the '90s, you know, all the wet leafy vegetables, the mustard, the collards, the turnips, the beets, the kale, the spinach, squash, and zucchini, and we did dabble through that. I guess, in 2004, we decided here at the farm to open up a little farm stand at the farm. We didn't know how it was gonna do. We're way back off the road. We was kind of still in the country a little bit, but we opened it up, and it bloomed up for us real well.

Evan Stern: I guess, reflecting now on the 25 years you've had this stand, are there any memories that stick out that remain with you as particularly impactful or touching?

Michael Atkinson: What? I don't understand.

Evan Stern: Well, like, any interactions you've had with customers or any stories that you can share about the people who you've gotten to know by having this stand here that you might not know otherwise.

0:11:02

Michael Atkinson: So many different business people that we've done business with and so many just great customers that we have that come into our market, we now have the ability to do farm tours and stuff, to educational kids, with the kids. We do farm tours a couple times a week. It's really good to see little 5-, 6-year-old kids that's never been on a farm and never been off the concrete, to come in and have an educational tour with them.

Evan Stern: I know you also now invite people to come here and pick their own berries. How did that get started?

Michael Atkinson: We started dabbling in trying to raise strawberries about 15 years ago. That's always a big trick to raise 'em and plant 'em and cover 'em. They can be profitable, but you can lose your rear end real quick. We start planting the plants in late September, 1st of October, and plant about seven acres of 'em now.

0:11:59

We cover 'em up with blankets, to keep the frost and freeze off of 'em the best we can. Then, when it starts to warm up, they'll come out and do well.

Evan Stern: I know you said that it's amazing to see the reactions that kids have when they get out here and they take the farm tour. They probably come here with their families to pick some berries. Are there any kids that stick out in your memory or any stories you can share about any of those families or people?

Michael Atkinson: I guess it's been three or four years ago we had a tour of kids. A little kid really stuck out with us. He was about-- he was down from the inner city of an HISD school that come out with a tour, and brought like 75 kids, and they spread out everything on there, and we

had a-- they bring their own lunch. They went and picked berries, and run around here. Part of the tour, price of the tour, they all got a little pint of strawberries to bring back home with them.

0:12:56

I guess the demographics was, the ethnic group was it was about half Hispanic and about half Black, and had a little bitty kid, little bitty Black kid. He wouldn't eat his strawberries. He just wouldn't eat them. I went up to him, and I said, "You like strawberries?" He says, "Yes sir, yes sir." These are probably first- or second-grade kids. "Yes, sir." I said, "Well, eat your strawberries now. Why don't you wanna eat your strawberries?" He says, "I'm gonna take 'em home to my mama." Although he was on a tour, he was thinking about taking 'em to his mama. So, I went and got my wife, and said, "That little boy there won't eat his strawberries 'cause he's gonna take 'em home to his mama." My wife told him, she said, "You eat all you want. You're gonna have plenty to take home to your mama." [Laughter] But just some kids, some of the kids, they'll say anything, but some of the kids are really, really, on tours, are really into wanting to learn and all, they are.

Evan Stern: But I know we are so divorced from the land in today's society.

0:13:59

In a city like Houston, and even now Spring, why is it important for people to know where their strawberries come from?

Michael Atkinson: It's important that they all know where everything has come from, and the traceability to this day and time on produce is really, really out there, real good. Just about all produce comes with a birth certificate of where it comes from. They can trace it real quick.

Evan Stern: At what point do you get involved with the Urban Harvest market?

Michael Atkinson: I guess it was 2006 we were-- 2006, we had opened a little market here. The lady that still brings us honey was selling us honey at the time, and I seen 'em at the market when we were selling things wholesale. We were selling everything bulk and wholesale. She says, "Hey, there's a little market that I go to on Saturdays," and says, "it'd be real good. You ought to go." I was really griping about the prices that we got and everything.

0:15:00

I says, "No." I said, "Well, we'll just try it." So, the lady from the Urban Harvest come out and inspected everything, and she said, "This is good. This is what we need." So, we decided to go. I said, "I got too much to go. I'm not going." I sent my son and his wife and my wife. So, they went, and they done real well. I mean, he called me about 10 o'clock in the morning and said, "Dad, this place is crazy. We done sold everything we got." So, we had to bring him some more tomatoes and some more peppers and stuff that we had at that time, and it done real well. Since 2006, going to the Saturday market at Urban Harvest, I don't think we've missed a Saturday that they've been open, I don't think. We manage to go there every weekend. It's been profitable for us. Some days are better than others.

0:16:00

Evan Stern: What was the market like when you first got there?

Michael Atkinson: Now they've probably got 75 to 80 vendors. When I first got there, they had maybe 12, and it was the only roadside market in town. Now there's little roadside farmers markets all over town. They must have-- but they have 30 of 'em on a weekend, all around

Houston. I've never been to none of 'em but Urban Harvest. I go there. That's kinda my baby. We go to three more other than Urban Harvest on Saturdays.

Evan Stern: In what ways has Urban Harvest helped you grow your presence at the market?

Michael Atkinson: I met a couple chefs at Local Foods and at Dish Society both there, and we currently sell them-- we sell them quite a bit of stuff every week.

0:16:56

Evan Stern: Can you tell us a little bit more about the relationships that you foster with chefs, and where you can find your produce on menus around town?

Michael Atkinson: I guess that it got started in maybe 2000, before we started even going to Urban Harvest. The chef Chris Shepherd, I'm sure everybody knows Chris Shepherd. Chris come to-- he come out here, he was at Catalan, and he come out here and took a tour of the farm. He said, "This is what I want at my restaurant. This is what I want." We started selling to Catalan, and I guess we sold to Catalan there for maybe a year or so. Chris knows quite a few people in the industry and in the restaurant industry. We met Dylan Murray at Local Foods there at the market, I guess, in 2000-- maybe '05, maybe '06, maybe about 19 or 20 years that we've been selling to Local Foods.

0:17:59

They had one restaurant at the time. I think they have five now. I guess it was about 10, yeah, maybe 10 or 12 years ago that Aaron Lyons at Dish Society come along. He was at the market, and he wanted things. We grow different things. We grow things now for them restaurants,

especially for them, that we won't be able to sell very much of it wholesale, but we grow it especially for them restaurants.

Evan Stern: That sounds delicious, I gotta say. But I know just about every time I've gone to the market, you and your wife have been there. Why is it important for you to be there yourself?

Michael Atkinson: You know, always, it's just like when I go to sell to the restaurants, I think it's important of the restaurants that we sell, either myself or my son, most of the time we try to make it. That way, if there's a problem, we wanna fix it.

0:18:59

We're just not-- we make all the deliveries ourselves. I got one guy that works for me that makes a few deliveries, but 90% of the produce that we've always sold all our life, either myself or my son has made the deliveries. We wanna be proud of what we take. If there's a problem-- and it can be a problem sometimes. If it's a problem, we wanna fix it. If we've got a problem, we can handle it.

Evan Stern: That's a crazy amount of work. What does a typical market day look like for you, from start to finish? What time do you get up in the morning, and what does your entire day look like?

Michael Atkinson: There's a lot of paperwork and a lot of things that goes on during the day. I start typically about 5:30 in the morning, and everybody else gets here at 7:00 so I got about an hour and a half to do things that I need to do in the morning. We work to 12:00. We take an hour break for lunch, and then we work to 6:00.

0:19:58

We religiously work from 7:00 to 6:00 and 60 hours a week. Sometimes on Sundays, we alternate on who's gonna work on Sundays, but we do work on Sundays.

Evan Stern: What does the Saturday market day look like for you?

Michael Atkinson: A Saturday market day is the only day of the week that's a little bit different. I get up in the morning at about 4 o'clock. We get loaded and get outta here about 4:30, 4:00 to 5:00. We get downtown at about 5:20, 5:25 in the morning. We get everything set up. That market runs from 8:00 to 12:00. When we get done at 12:00, I come home, and as soon as I can get my big truck home, I jump outta one truck, and go to another truck, because we sell a lot of greens and stuff still to Food Town, the warehouse at Food Town.

0:20:57

Food Town is a chain grocery store in the Houston area that has 29 or 32 stores; I don't know exactly which one. But we have to make it to their warehouse, and their warehouse closes at 2:30. I'm cutting it close. I get there about 2:20, 2:15. Come back home, truck's loaded, jump in one truck and go to another. I get there anywhere from 2:00 to 2:15. Then I'll usually get back here around 3 o'clock on Saturday. We get outta the truck, and we go. We go hard till 6 o'clock on Saturday.

Evan Stern: Speaking of work, I've heard, people have said that Houston has kind of a year-round growing season. So, right now, it's April. What are you growing? What are you harvesting? What all are you working on as I'm meeting with you right now today?

Michael Atkinson: Like, today, we're planting some collards and kale today.

0:21:57

But, right now, we're harvesting mustard, collards, turnips, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, a few green beans, a few snow peas, onions, radishes. All this is out there. We probably, maybe Friday, might start picking zucchini squash and yellow squash on Friday. Then we'll start with cucumbers and pickling cucumbers in a couple weeks. It'll go from watermelons into cantaloupes and tomatoes and grape tomatoes and all this other stuff, and all the peppers and stuff. They're all planted. They're all growing now. We'll do a You-Pick Blackberry. Blackberries will start first part of May. It's always to go. It'll slow down a little bit, but we can grow things year-round here. We're real fortunate to do that. It'll slow down first part of August for about a month.

0:23:01

But it'll give us time to clean up and gear up. We're already cleaned up and geared into the fall, and we'll go right-- we go from spring to fall. Hopefully, we can skip summer. We don't know how hot it's gonna be. We don't know how dry it's gonna be. We're just dealing with the weather that we have to deal with. Weather's always an issue, but we deal with it.

Evan Stern: From your perspective, what are the greatest challenges that Houston area farmers persistently face?

Michael Atkinson: The challenges are weather and the labor. The labor may be a bigger challenge than the weather. We can deal with the weather. It is what it is. There's nothing nobody can do about it. You just have to deal with what we have. I don't know. A couple years ago, I don't know when Hurricane Harvey come through and dump 53 inches of rain on everybody in the south. In Houston, it comes through on a Friday, Saturday.

0:24:00

We took off Sunday. Monday morning, we picked up all the debris, and tried the best we can to dry up the fields. Then Wednesday, we was back planting. We don't, we won't mess around. I mean, if we catch a storm or a disaster, we won't mess around. We'll go right-- everything on the farm all drains real well. We had 53 inches of rain for Harvey, and the day after it was gone. Just got a big drainage ditch runs through the place, and we're high enough, and we don't flood.

Evan Stern: Well, that's certainly a blessing. But reflecting on your time here, if you can name it, what is the hardest year that you remember?

Michael Atkinson: The hardest year was 2011. It didn't rain. It didn't rain. It was hot and dry.

0:24:57

Now, hot and dry, we're real fortunate, we have five wells around here. When it's hot and dry, I've always said you'll have a tired ass and a pocket full of money when it's over with, because nothing-- it doesn't get bad, like the rain, like droughts. We can put water on. It's just hard to take it off. We can survive a drought; we drown in a flood.

Evan Stern: For those who've never been here before, how would you describe the climate of Houston, and what are its advantages and disadvantages?

Michael Atkinson: I've always lived in Harris County, and whatever the-- I don't know-- the advantages or disadvantages. There's other people all over the world. Whatever their climate is, they deal with it. The same with us, we deal with it.

0:25:57

Evan Stern: But I know farming is expensive. You have utilities, you have tractors, you have land, and everything. I mean, I don't want to be too invasive here, but are there any expenses that you would like people to be aware of that you have to deal with?

Michael Atkinson: People see everything. We don't have any so-called cash money set aside or any retirement or anything like this. Everything we make farming, we just throw it right back into the business. Now, we've accumulated a lot. We have a lot of tractors. We have a lot of equipment. I don't withhold any kind of money any way when it comes to equipment or technology or anything. I want the best. I want it to be made as easy as it can.

0:26:55

Evan Stern: Say someone comes here to the market, and they buy some beets or potatoes, or they pick some berries from your patch, I mean, what would you like them to know about all of the work that's behind just a simple berry or potato or beet?

Michael Atkinson: Most of the people that come to a little place like this, they kinda understand it. A lot of people, when they were younger, grew up on a farm-- not a lot-- but some of 'em do and some of 'em don't know, you know, they don't know the work that goes in. But, for the most part, we don't have any problem with the customers, you know, we don't have any problem with the customers.

Evan Stern: Obviously, as you've told me, there is so much work. What is it about this work that fuels you and gives you joy?

Michael Atkinson: I like to go out and look at a patch of stuff that really looks good. I mean, if it's tomatoes, and that tomato bush is loaded up, and I feel we've done the right thing, it makes me feel good.

0:28:00

If we go out to pick a patch of squash, and the bushes are loaded up, and everything looks real good, it just makes you feel good. It makes you feel like you've been successful in what you did.

[Unrelated conversation]

0:29:00

Evan Stern: May I ask what's going on here that you're having to deal with?

Michael Atkinson: Oh, I brought the truck back to come over here to talk with you, and there's about eight of 'em over there that's planting about four acres of cabbage and collards and kale. There's three tractors over there, but the rest of 'em don't have a ride back. They're stuck over there.

Evan Stern: Oops [laughter].

0:30:00

Michael Atkinson: So, they're stuck over there. They've gotta get a ride back.

Evan Stern: Oh my goodness. How many acres do you now have here?

Michael Atkinson: There's 65 here, but we farm about 125. We're scattered around between here in New Waverly and Tomball and in Westfield, and we're scattered around farming.

Evan Stern: For those who are unfamiliar with the Houston area, what do you think grows and does particularly well here in this environment?

Michael Atkinson: It's all timing. The greens in the wintertime will do real well. All the wet vegetables will be real good in the wintertime. The springtime, the tomatoes and peppers and

stuff. We try to raise tomatoes and peppers and eggplant in the fall, but we're going against the clock. Here, in the springtime, all the people didn't realize all the days are getting longer and longer and longer.

0:30:58

In the fall, we're going against the clock because the days are getting shorter and shorter and shorter, and we survive on sunlight.

Evan Stern: I know that your son is next in line to pick up your reins. I've heard that he's all into to keep this going. What's the most important lesson that you would like to pass on to him?

Michael Atkinson: He better learn to work like me.

Evan Stern: [Laughter] I read there are now five million fewer family-owned small farms in this country than there were in the '30s. What do people get from small farms that they won't find elsewhere?

Michael Atkinson: What do they get from small farms? You know, I guess just the fam...to being able to have a family business instead of a big business or corporation business, your own family business.

Evan Stern: Why is having your own family business important?

Michael Atkinson: I'm such a jackass, I get to be my own boss.

0:32:00

Evan Stern: [Laughter] What are your hopes for the future?

Michael Atkinson: I hope I live a long time. I hope to farm a lot. I hope all my family's healthy and all. We really like to-- every year, we bring in five, six, eight high school kids, 16 years old. It's usually their first job. They'll stay here two or three years. They get on, they go on to college, and then they'll come back around. There's been some of 'em that's been-- some of 'em, you know, it's still home to 'em. It was their first job, and they still call and talk to me all the time. They move on with their life, get a better job with a future. But every one of 'em that's done that, they come up with good work habits. They come up with good, good work habits. They know how to work, they know how to manage, and they're not really bad.

0:33:00

They're good people.

Evan Stern: I suppose, reflecting on your life and time here, if you can name it, what is your proudest accomplishment?

Michael Atkinson: I don't know. Been married 52 years, and been happily married for 52 years, and done a lot of things and, you know, not winning or not done anything, but accomplished a lot, and it's rewarding to do that.

Evan Stern: What can you tell us about your wife, and what she does, and her contributions to all of this?

Michael Atkinson: There is nothing on this place she can't do, absolutely. She'll be out in the middle of the field when it's 110 degrees, picking squash. It doesn't matter. It can be freezing cold, and she'll be out there. I've seen it out there in the cold, and it's so cold that she's taking the muffler on a tractor, and trying to warm up, and all the suck from a diesel tractor makes her look like she's got a black mustache, and probably breathing all that carbon monoxide and all. But

she'll be right out there in the middle of everybody, and there's nothing on this place that she can't do.

0:34:01

There's not a tractor she can't drive, there ain't a truck she can't, there is nothing here she can't do. She's gonna be 72 years old, and she goes all day long, still.

Evan Stern: But did she grow up on a farm as well, or did--?

Michael Atkinson: No.

Evan Stern: No? So, did she know what she was signing up for when she married a farmer?

Michael Atkinson: I don't know if she knew what she was signing up for, but she figured it out pretty quick.

Evan Stern: [Laughter] How did you meet?

Michael Atkinson: Oh, actually, her brother and I were friends in the seventh grade.

Evan Stern: Fantastic. I'm just gonna just take a quick scan through my notes here. I think that we covered just about everything. I just wanna make certain I'm not leaving anything-- I wanna make certain we're covering all our bases. Do you have any final thoughts that you'd care to share?

0:35:00

Michael Atkinson: No. I think you've kind of covered quite a bit of it, of what we've done, from start to finish. It's rewarding and it's nice to have your family close to your family, and

everybody's right here amongst us, with 'em every day. It's good to have family like that. The kids, I like messing with 'em high school kids that come around here. It's a circus every day.

Evan Stern: Well, Mr. Atkinson, thank you so much. I know that you're exceptionally busy. We really appreciate your time. Thank you.

Michael Atkinson: Okay. Enjoyed it. Thanks for having me.

[End]