

- 1 BJ: To try, to try again to contact him. Yeah. So um, what uh, how closely would you say you follow the local news? These are sort of some [lifestyle questions] I want to ask you right now.
- 2 AB: [Pretty,] relatively closely.
- 3 BJ: [You read-]
- 4 AB: [As closely as I can.]
- 5 BJ: How do you- Do you read the- a local paper, or?
- 6 AB: I read the, the Tribune Review...skim through the Post Gazette. And, some of these local, I don't know, there's a bulletin that's sort of a local thing, I do, that comes to the house, I do, do look at that. And...things of that sort.
- 7 BJ: Mm hmm. Yeah so you read (2 sec pause) uh...you also watch tv? Get local news on tv, or?
- 8 AB: No, I don't watch as much- I don't like the local news. (laughs)
- 9 BJ: Mm hmm.
- 10 AB: So I don't- I probably get more local news from the newspaper than I do on tv. I- I don't find the tv to be a...very good source of a...
- 11 BJ: [No, I don't-]
- 12 AB: [It's, it's on for] an hour and a half, an- an- it's an hour and a half of the same stuff over and over and over again, and a lot of it's, a lot of it I think it's [nonsense.]
- 13 BJ: [Mm hmm.]
- 14 AB: Uh, so I don't really... No. I- I don't, I don't watch local news.
- 15 BJ: [Yeah, yeah.]
- 16 AB: [I used to,] but not anymore.
- 17 BJ: What I'm, rediscover every time there's g- (going) about to be an election is that, I don't know how to get really good information about the...candidates...for local...for things like, you know, the city council, and so on. (The) Post Gazette doesn't really... have much, they have
- 18 AB: [No.]
- 19 BJ: [you know,] a few little articles.
- 20 AB: No [they...]
- 21 BJ: [Nothing] on tv, [wi-]
- 22 AB: [No.]
- 23 BJ: You know? [Who do you-]
- 24 AB: [And]
- 25 BJ: How can you [be an informed voter around here?]
- 26 AB: [Be-...well being...] being, being the cynical, the cynical person I am, I- I believe that that's the way it's meant to be in this city, of Pittsburgh, because I think that's, that's how we have the same people running the city for year after year after year, because I think the newspapers are part of this whole-
- 27 BJ: [Yeah]
- 28 AB: [There all,] all...I- I view them as all being together, I- I

don't...especially the Post Gazette, which is a paper, I skim through the Post Gazette I- I usually don't read it because I don't, I don't believe a word they say...becau- (because) for a lot of reasons, but... Uh, the political coverage I don't like... and they were also one of the papers that was big on the stadium, and the Pirates, and at that time they- they were an investor in the Pirates, too, they had some money invested in the Pirates, and I thought, well...you know how objective, oh...li- (like), as if, as if they're really going to be objective about, uh...spending money on the stadiums...

- 29 BJ: Mm hmm
30 AB: for the Pirates, uh...
31 BJ: So what do you think of the stadiums now?
32 AB: I- I have not been to them and I will [not go to them.]
33 BJ: [Yeah...really?]
34 AB: No. I have not watched a...football, baseball...I don't watch any sports, but I used to watch football once in awhile, (and) baseball...I don't watch any- anything after that because I don't agree with the way they financed it. [An- so I-]
35 BJ: [Mm hmm.]
36 AB: I watch no sports... no local sports. I have no idea with the Pirates...or... I had no idea who was in the World Series, I wasn't even... I think I did hear about it here and there, but I- I, no, [I was] very upset.
37 BJ: [Yeah.] So you're not really interested in sports, or is it just...
38 AB: I wa-...[I was a little bit...]
39 BJ: [partly dispolitical...?]
40 AB: and then I don't like the way... I don't like the way sports operates in this country, not just in Pittsburgh, where I'm paying taxes to support multi-millionaire owners and multi-millionaire [players is ridiculous...]
41 BJ: [Mm hmm.]
42 AB: how- how- how the state and the local, the city gets away with doing that...
43 BJ: Mm hmm.
44 AB: is beyond, is beyond to me. Especially a democratic mayor and city council, cause that was the thing that I used to hear...years ag- (ago), I was a Republican...and that was the thing...used to, all the Republicans...they're, they're big business...they-, they're against the [little people...]
45 BJ: [Mm hmm.]
46 AB: And it's like you tell, well, who's Mayor Murphy? Who's he...taking care of? He's not [taking care of the little people.]
47 BJ: [Yeah.] Yeah. So it's kind of unusual...to be (2 sec pause) I mean, I bet that, were your family Republicans [before you, or?]
48 AB: [My dad was a
Republican.]
49 BJ: He was? [Mm hmm.]

50 AB: [I'm- I'm] I'm still Republicans because I've been too lazy to get out and change my registration to Independent because I don't- I don't vote for either party.

51 BJ: Right

52 AB: And- And I did run as a political candidate...in '78, and '70-, in '78 I ran for state legislature [and then] '79 I ran for city council

53 BJ: [Oh really?]

54 AB: And...had no money...but I ran...and it was an uphill battle, and...uh...I just knocked on a lot of doors [and uh,]

55 BJ: [Mm hmm.]

56 AB: I did carry one area, Ross Township was in- was in the legislature very, I did carry Ross Township. That was the only area that...went for me, [but...]

57 BJ: [Mm hmm.]

58 AB: And city council...I ran for that only because (the) Republican Party needed a candidate...I said I would spend no money on it...I would run...I wou- I wou- I would do it...And I did that the following year just they had asked me if I would be [interested] in a doing so...

59 BJ: [Mm hmm.]

60 AB: and they gave me a hundred dollars...that's how much money the Republican, (Elsy Hillman)...gave all of us a hundred dollars...to run our campaigns...an- and that's all I spent...(be)cause I told myself, I was not spending, I had spent some of my own money the previous year. I think personally that that's what soured me on politics was...to actually run because I was always interested in politics from time I was a kid and had been active as a committee man...uh...when I was in college, and then I ran and then I-, then I- my eyes were open both, my brother was my campaign manager, our both our eyes were opened...to the realities of politicians and politics...and totally soured me.

61 BJ: Mm hmm. Well it's an old democratic machine, [I mean this is very...]

62 AB: Well, wasn't the-, no the Republicans weren't any, uh, [any better.]

63 BJ: [They weren't any better?]

64 AB: Uh, I think the thing that shocked both of us, I had done all my research, I had my views, my positions, an-...we both went to a meeting that the Republican party was holding a meeting downtown...were the candidates, they wanted the candidates to come, they were going to have...people that were already in office talking to us, [you know,]

65 BJ: [Mm hmm.]

66 AB: we could ask questions. And my brother and I we sat there, and most of the questions from these people, that were running for office, was...well what position do I take on taxes, what position do I take on this? And my brother and I just looked at each other and we thought...God this is a joke. And then, they were being told, well...you should take this position...and this is the position, the- the party's position on this, (and

that). And I just- uh...I just, I thought why are these people running?
67 BJ: It is... huh. [They don't want to have their own...]
68 AB: And...I kn- I'm I'm totally [against...I'm against political parties] cause
I- I'm tired, I'm really personally am tired of these people that oh, their
first loyalty to the political party and then the people come- uh come
[second.]
69 BJ: [Mm hmm.] Mm hmm.
70 AB: So I'm, I'm very cynical about, uh, pol-...I, that...people always say
"Get involved in politics." You know? (Sure) "You get learn things."
And I learned [all the negative things.]
71 BJ: [Mm hmm.]
72 AB: And...
73 BJ: Well you did get involved.
74 AB: I did get involved. And plus, being with the board of trade I've been
involved with some local politicians and I've also seen some shady deals
that have gone on in- in Lawrenceville with some of the politicians over
the [years, too.]
75 BJ: [Mm hmm.]
76 AB: And how...things happen. Too much politics. I- I really...
77 BJ: Yeah.
78 AB: It's the reality, I understand that, but it's uh...
79 BJ: Mm hmm. So what, uh what radio stations do you listen to?
80 AB: I really...mm, do not listen to the radio at all.
81 BJ: Well if you walk to work I guess you don't listen to it in the car, so!
(laughs)
82 AB: (laughs) Not even- even when I'm driving, I don't- I don't really like li-
(listening)... I've never been a big radio [uh, listener.]
83 BJ: [Mm hmm.] Mm hmm. Do you,
do you ever go out to eat?
84 AB: Very seldom.
85 BJ: Mm hmm.
86 AB: Not- not usually.
87 BJ: Mm hmm.
88 AB: [You know, I usually make something.]
89 BJ: [Would you, would you] go to a place in Lawrenceville if you were
going out, or would you go...somewhere else?
90 AB: I've been to some places in Lawrenceville. Mm...I don't know that
they're that many places (laughs) right here, right- right around 9-, 9-4 to
go to anymore...uh, I think that there's some newer places that have
come, but I'm not real big on...
91 BJ: Mm hmm.
92 AB: going out uh, to eat, I'd just as soon make something at home.
93 BJ: So you know some of the newer, some of the newer...people who live in
Lawrenceville, though, even if you don't go to the newer...restaurants.
94 AB: Do I know some of the newer...?
95 BJ: Yeah, the newer...

96 AB: I know some of them through involvement in some of the community organizations and groups, yes.

97 BJ: Mm hmm.

98 AB: That's how I- that's how I got- know- know some of them through that.

99 BJ: Mm hmm. Like business, business people you mean?

100 AB: Not business, also new- newer residents that have- that have come in and gotten active in different ways in the neighborhood.

101 BJ: Mm hmm.

102 AB: And so we've...

103 BJ: Yeah, I'm just curious about how, uh...you know, there just seem to be different...different groups of people there and in some cases they don't overlap very much. That is, the new people don't really know anybody on their street, and they don't...

104 AB: Well I-...

105 BJ: they go to the new restaurants, and the new cafes, and they don't go to the old places, and..

106 AB: [I think there's been some...]

107 BJ: [It's almost like they...]

108 AB: Well, I think there's been some tension.

109 BJ: Mm hmm.

110 AB: Uh, oh let's see...how many years are we going back? Ten, fifteen years...I'm not sure what year this one group called the Lawrenceville Urban Pioneers got started, which I understand is still in existence...and there was some fri- some friction there because...there were...some people, an- and not all of them were bad, but there were some that I personally did not get along with who came in with this attitude: "We're here to save the neighborhood." And some of them are not even are in the neighborhood anymore...and...I think there was some friction there were the rest of us was like we're dumb, illiterate people...uh and now oh- oh- oh we're these great, we're these yuppy types, or whatever, professionals we're gonna (going to) save your neighborhood. And suddenly we had a...a proliferation of organizations, that I never heard of, (that) just popped up around the neighborhood. I know there's still a lot of them around...and I think there was some ill-feeling. I had ill-feeling towards some of- some of these people at the time, telling me about how (2 sec pause) "Save the neighborhood"...wh- the- what they're going to do, what has to be done, and so on. And I never did like the t-, the uh, term Lawrenceville Urban Pioneer...because...

111 BJ: Pioneers...[like nobody ever lived there before...I mean]

112 AB: [Well, they're not...Yes and] also the Pioneers, I think they were calling themselves Pioneers (be)cause some of them were coming in and buil- and fixing up their homes...but I always used to say to the one fellow that was involved with it...I said, my grandparents were pioneers, not really knowing the language, that was pioneering. Not, not someone who's working as an architect, or lawyer. You're coming in and you're fixing up the house a little bit. And yeah, I don't consider

that a pioneer. But that's...So, there...there has been some friction over the years, and I don't know...uh...

113 BJ: [There's this group...]

114 AB: there has been some friction over the years.

115 BJ: Yeah, well...I mean, when I first heard that...heard of the...Lawrenceville Urban Pioneers, I was struck by how...pretentious that name was.

116 AB: Oh. (laughs) Well they also were very, a very uh, exclusive group, because my understanding, now I don't know if they still do this, uh, a when they first started they would have what they would call, now I never heard of this, progressive [dinners...]

117 BJ: [Progressive dinners.] [They still do, yeah.]

118 AB: [Yes.] Ok, and I never, I didn't know what that was, and then somebody explained that to me, and...that didn't appeal to me but, th-...but they were very, a to me they were very exclusive- exclusive little group, too. And I don't think they were really going out to...a...a...a...to really make good contact with th- the rest of the neigh- the neighborhood. But I know there has been some friction over the years between...some of us that have been there for awhile [and...]

119 BJ: [And] then there's a group called the Stakeholders.

120 AB: Yes, that's a new group, [again, too.]

121 BJ: [Is that a new...] [is that new...]

122 AB: [Yes, that's a new group.]

123 BJ: [business people?]

124 AB: [Yes.] well no they're not business people. They're...just...presidents. I thin- I believe they're trying to save...different properties and that. Cause I- I do understand that there's some property below Butler street, it's a house, it's in bad shape, the people that live around it would like it torn down, and they're trying to save it, and...There- there are a lot of groups. I- I can't keep track, because they a, there's a friend of mine, that's a lawyer, that's originally from Mar-, that I went to grade school, who was originally from Marxville, and he's involved with politics. And he's always calling me up and saying, "Hey [Dennis], wha- what is this group? Have you heard of this group?" And sometimes I haven't and I'll ask about it. (Be)cause there was- there was a special group that came up in the last election that was created...we have a lot of groups in the neighborhood.

125 BJ: You do.

126 AB: Which I don't necessarily think is a good idea (be)cause I- I think, that when there-, when this started some years ago with all these different groups...I don't think it was good because you no longer have a central...The board of trade at one time was the central spokesman for the neighborhood, and then...we sort of got pushed aside...well, actually before I got involved in it.

127 BJ: Mm. No, I've noticed that. There seems to be a group for every
[ten people in Lawrenceville,]
128 AB: [Yes, yes,]
129 BJ: and I can't figure it out, [but, you know...]
130 AB: [I- and I don't] understand it myself either. I- I-
that I don't...understand. The annoying thing is that some of them are
able to get money fr- through the, now maybe that will change now
because of the financial thing, they're able to get money through-
through city council, grants of money, and...and I don't know what some
of them do...to be honest with you. I don't know what they all do
131 BJ: Well I'm glad that's not what my project is...
132 AB: (laughs)
133 BJ: I'm glad my project is not to understand all of Lawrenceville politics
134 AB: [You'd have a hard time understanding with all of these groups!]
135 BJ: [because it would take me a long time!]