Stephen Kupperman Transcript

Rosalind Hinton: This is Rosalind Hinton interviewing Stephen Kupperman at his law office -- let me see if I say this right -- Barasun -- Barrasso, Usdin, Kupperman, Freeman, and Sarver.

Steve Kupperman: Got it.

RH: In New Orleans, Louisiana. Today is Friday, September 8th, 2006. I'm conducting the interview for the Katrina Jewish Voices Project of the Jewish Women's Archives and the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. Stephen, do you agree to be interviewed and understand that the interview will be video recorded?

SK: I do.

RH: Let's just begin with a little of your background with your family and when your family came here. I got very curious about where your father's business was and where you grew up. Your neighborhood where you grew up before we get to your neighborhood where you live now.

SK: Right. OK. Well, let me tell you when you said how I got here or when I got here. My dad's side of the family, Dad's first generation, came from Russia and Poland. My mom is, I don't know what generation, they came before the Civil War. I had a great, I guess a great-great-great-grandfather who fought in the Civil War for the Confederacy. And settled here in Homer, not Houma, but Homer, Louisiana, which is in north Louisiana and after the war, moved down here. The family has been in this general area ever since. My Dad was -- he's -- he went to law school, practiced law for a very brief period of time and then got into the furniture business with his uncle and his mother. Their first store was down Dryades Street and right close to where the interstate is now. It's a New

Orleans mission, it was Levitan's Furniture Store and he had a bunch other furniture stores in town at different times. Sold out around 1984, practiced law for a while and is now 87 and, I'd say, happily retired, but I don't think he views it as being real retired because he is always doing something. I grew up here, went to Newman High School and then Duke undergrad, Tulane law and stayed here. I am trying to think. I lived in the Broadmoor -- grew up in the Broadmoor section of town.

RH: Tell me a little about that because a lot of people grew up in the Broadmoor. They're not there anymore, so what was it like growing up there?

SK: Well, it was nice. Now, as a kid you would never -- I mean, I don't know if my recollection is 100% accurate, but it was real nice. There were a lot of young kids there, a lot of my friends from school lived in that general vicinity. I think people had moved out of the lake, that had kind of started when I was little or around that time. But so I had some friends out kind of toward the lakefront, but most of my friends were still uptown, right in that area.

RH: Can you kind of describe the Broadmoor? What you mean by the area?

SK: Well, it's kind of the bottom of the bowl in New Orleans, which we are all familiar with now after Katrina. But what I term Broadmoor is really kind of the area between Clayburn and Fountainbleau, around Napoleon to Broadway in that range. Other people may define it a little differently, but I suspect that that is going to be within everybody's general definition of the area. We lived on Galvez between -- which is about two blocks on the Fountainbleau side of Clayburn between Octavia and Joseph Street, right off of Nashville. And it was a real nice place to ride your bike and, you know, kids all around the block and always can get up a football game in the street or go down to the churchyard on a -- on a Jefferson and Clayburn and play baseball.

RH: OK.

SK: Things like that.

RH: And what is SoFTY?

SK: Southern Federation of Temple Youth.

RH: OK.

SK: I guess it's a part of NFTY now, which is National Federation of Temple Youth, but when I was in high school, I got involved in what was called SoFTY then, which covered Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Western Tennessee. Memphis was included in that. And it was a group that -- they still have it, I think it goes by a different name, but it's generally that group. They'll have conclaves and you get to meet a lot of Jewish kids from other areas and get involved in Jewish activities.

RH: Where was the center of your Jewish life when you were growing up?

SK: We belonged to Temple Sinai growing up and I can't tell you that we were particularly religious. I think there's much more of a -- I am trying to figure the right way of putting it -- more of a historical or cultural identity than there is a real religious identity for us. And Sinai, I think you could probably say is the most reform of the three reform synagogues in town at the time. So, I guess it was Sinai and the house and then of course, I went to Newman, so there were a lot of Jewish kids at Newman. I'd say probably about half the class was Jewish at the time. But I wasn't that active in things until I got involved in SFTY and had a lot of friends in other areas of states, the South, that I got to know real well, that I've stayed in touch with over the years. Well, some of them moved here, so I know a lot of them from high school years even though they might have been, say, from Meridian Mississippi and I was here. We get together periodically and that was always very nice and I got to be, I guess it was first Vice President my Senior year in high school so that brought me into contact with a lot more kids than I otherwise would have.

RH: So, what kind of things did you do as first Vice President?

SK: It was not that much, there really wasn't that much to do, but you know, you would go to conclaves, which were a few times a year in a different location. You were always communicating with people. If there was any kind of event or anything of that nature you would participate. I can remember that there were people in – I think it was in Jackson, Tennessee. They were trying to start a small youth group so I was asked to go up there and visit and talk to the people and, you know, see about helping to start that -- that kind of thing. You know, you're in high school, you can't travel a lot. You don't have a lot of time, but it was nice and it was a way to get people involved.

RH: So, tell me about your relationship to the larger New Or -- where do you live now? Why don't we do that.

SK: OK.

RH: Tell me how many kids you have and...

SK: OK. I live on Coliseum Street right off of State, so uptown, not far from Audubon Park. That's between Prytania and Magazine Street. Been married for about 25 -- 26 years and have three boys, Zack, Shane, and Jake. Zack is 23 and in law school right now at Tulane. Shane is 21 and in his last year at Indiana University and Jake is 17 in his last year at Newman. We don't know where he's going to school yet. So, in terms of the Jewish community I guess when I first got out of law school and started practicing law -- well, my dad, in particular, was always very involved in the Jewish community. He had been on a lot of boards growing up, had been President of the JCC right around the time that they were making plans to tear down the old building and build the building that's there now. So, he was always going to meetings and getting involved and I guess like a lot of people, would always teach you get involved in the community and give something back to the community. So, when I got out of law school I remember I was asked to join

the Board of Jewish Family Service. Jule Ann (sp?) -- now Jule Ann (sp?) Isaacson -- was the Executive Director at the time and then Jule Ann Haskell (sp?). And I did join that board and I enjoyed it and got actively involved in that and became president of that several years later and just went from one thing to another. You know, there is not that big of a group of Jews in town, so once you get involved it seems like you see the same general groups in different organization. I sat on a Woldenberg board for a little while, I sat on the ADL board for a long time, was chairman of that for 4 years, have been on other boards. I was on the Executive Committee of the Federation board for a while. Things like that.

RH: Do you have kind of a most vivid memory connected to the Jewish community pre-Katrina? I know you have some very vivid ones now. (Laughter)

SK: Well, and even those are fading. No, not really. I mean, you remember little snippets of things that happen. I mean, there is nothing in particular that stands out. I can remember I had my grandparents who lived in Shreveport; I can remember going to like Passover Seder at the synagogue up in Shreveport. I can remember in SFTY going to synagogues and places like Natchez, which is almost a gone synagogue now. I know they don't have a Rabbi, somebody travels, I guess, an itinerant Rabbi for lack of a better term, and very few members of that congregation left. But I can remember going to places like that. I remember when Henry S. Jacobs Camp first opened. I think when Jacobs opened I think it was after my senior year in high school and I went a week early to Jacobs and helped kind of put the finishing touches on the camp.

RH: Right.

SK: In fact, I can remember one of my big projects was digging a large drainage ditch from the swimming pool to the lake for overflow and concreting that in. It was a hot summer; it wasn't a lot of fun. But, you know, things of that nature that you kind of remember.

RH: Tell me about New Orleans. How do you get involved in New Orleans? What about New Orleans kind of is part of your routine in life here?

SK: I don't -- I don't know. I mean I never thought about that. It's hard to define. Coming from a, you know, there's a Jewish standpoint and the non-Jewish standpoint and I'm not sure the answer is the same, but I am not sure the answer is any different, either. New Orleans -- most people I know either love it or hate it. I -- I love it. Now, it drives you nuts sometimes because some of the very things that make it so nice like the preservation of its history and its traditions are also what drives you crazy about the place because it retards progress in a lot of ways. But somehow New Orleans just kind of gets into your blood. I just like it here; it's very -- very at ease, not a lot of airs put on, kind of a -- I'll use an old term because I don't really know what other term to use -- kind of a funky atmosphere. You know, sitting on your stoop and having a drink, and talking to the neighbors, which I confess I don't do much of, but it's still just somehow very nice.

RH: You know it's there if you want it to be.

SK: Right, right. But there is just something about New Orleans that seems different. Now, the Jewish community, I mean the city is very insular, too, but the Jewish community, I don't think, is quite as insular, but it's small and there are people who are generally active in it and people who are not. Some of that is probably due to assimilation and some of it just -- like everything else -- some people are active and some aren't. So, but I think it's a fairly close-knit community. As least those who are active generally know each other. I mean you run into each other constantly, and I think the Jewish community in New Orleans is more active than its proportion of the population would tend to make you believe.

RH: More active in the larger community or just more active...

SK: No, both. I think both. Certainly, the Jewish community I wouldn't expect 100% there, but it's more active in the larger community, too. And so I mean I think that's a good thing and it's nice. That doesn't mean that you get invited to go to the Mardi Gras Balls, but on the other hand, I don't care about getting invited to go to the Mardi Gras Balls!

RH: Right. So let's get into your Katrina story a little bit here. Tell me when the storm kind of first came on your radar screen and when you decided you had to do something.

SK: OK. Well, let me back up even before then. I had been on the board of Touro Infirmary for a few years. I became Chairman of the Board in February of 2005. About the day or a couple of days before I became Chairman of the Board, Gary Stein, who had been the CEO for 14 years submitted his resignation effective the middle of July. He gave us about a six-month notice which was what he was supposed to do and was very nice so, when I became chairman, my first five months were spent with a national search firm and other members of the board trying to find a new CEO. We found that CEO, a man named Les Hirsch, who was originally from New Jersey, at that time with a hospital in Denver. And we hired him and he was scheduled to start work on August 22, 2006. So that brings you up to Katrina.

RH: Right.

SK: OK. Katrina, you know, like any storm, you are always looking at the tropics, you are always pay attention to the weather, but storms are off in the Atlantic someplace and you don't have to worry with them until they get real close and there is nothing you can do about them anyway, so there is no sense worrying about them. So, Katrina, as I remember, was supposed to be going around Apalachicola and on Friday the 26th I guess it was, of August, I was leaving work early and my wife, Mara, my son Jake and my nephew Blair Rothstein who was living here at the time, all got in the car and we were driving to Atlanta because of a cousin's bar mitzvah that was supposed to be the next

morning. So we drove out of town a little early and when we got to Slidell, we turned on the radio and I heard that they had just changed the projected path of the storm from around Apalachicola area all the way west toward someplace between Gulfport and Mobile. Well, that's a little too close for comfort because you can tell, I mean, projections are always wrong, you never really know where they are going, but when you look at a map even though Gulfport's, you know, 30 or 45 minutes away by car, it's you know, only that far away on a map. The distance is not east to west, it's also some north and south to get there. So, I told Mara I wasn't going any further and we turned the car around and we came home.

RH: Slidell is about 30 minutes out of town?

SK: Yeah.

RH: Is that about how far you got?

SK: Right, right, and we came back. I wanted to board up the house and I wanted to, you know, with plywood and I wanted to make sure that the plants, and the garbage cans, and the hoses, and all those things can fly around were brought inside and made safe. So, we came back and on Saturday, Mara and Blair left and went back to Atlanta and Jake and I stayed. My other two, Zack and Shane are out of town. So, Jake and I stayed and we spent all day Saturday pulling in the plants and, you know, buttoning down everything, making sure it wouldn't (inaudible). I have pre-cut plywood in my shed and we put the plywood up to cover the windows and doors, things of that nature. And we finished that and the storm was now still coming in the New Orleans, Gulfport area, but you really didn't know where it was going. So, Saturday night I remember Jake went out with his friends. I told him not to be gone real long and I went over to a friend's house and there were several couples over there and we had dinner, and drinks, and had a nice time. Nobody was really planning on leaving. I don't know who else has told you this but, you know, evacuation is kind of new. When we were here when I was a kid, nobody

evacuated. I don't think people gave a thought to evacuation and it's really only been in the last 10 or 15 years that people have talked about evacuating. And the government's really kind of been telling people to evacuate but even then, I think it was Hurricane Ivan that was probably a couple of years before Katrina that everybody seemed to take it seriously. We didn't try to get out of town, but I could see from my window right here that everybody else apparently was and nobody was moving more than about an inch an hour on the highway. It was a disaster with Ivan. They fixed that, I think a lot, with the contraflow idea with Katrina. You know, where they turn all the roads out instead of in, but it just never dawned on me really, to leave. I've always felt safe here. My house is more than 100 years old. I figure it's withstood storms and I didn't see any reason to go. So Saturday we went out and we stayed out, Jake stayed out probably by 12:30 or 1, I got home probably about the same time. I went to sleep, you know, when the storm is coming you are nervous. I got up around 5 o'clock on Sunday morning and I turned on the TV and this thing was heading straight for us and it was, you looked at the map, and it was taking up almost the entire Gulf of Mexico and they were saying the winds were about 165 miles an hour and I -- I got real nervous. So, because -- I guess I forgot to tell you, my Mom and Dad, who are in their 80s -- it's hard to move them. They didn't want to evacuate. They've never done it before. They were going to come over for the storm and I had cousins, Larry Feldman and his wife Susie Morgan who had just moved here from Shreveport, about a month earlier and they didn't know what to do, so I told them to come over, we would ride the storm out together. And then there is another couple in their 20s, Hilary and Steve Olivera, who are from Santa Barbara. My brother lives in Santa Barbara and Hilary was his daughter's age who grew up next door and she had gotten married, she was about 23, 24 -- she had gotten married to Steve, also from Santa Barbara and he is in the Coast Guard and he had been stationed in New Orleans, so they had moved here about a week, 10 days, before the storm. Steve was actually off in Virginia on assignment, but Hilary was left in town, so I told her to come over to the house. So, we were all going to get to the house and when I woke up then on Sunday

morning and I saw the storm, I tried to figure out what I wanted to do, to stay, to evacuate, or what. And I realized at that point, the best thing, probably, was to get out of the house, go to someplace that was a little safer and I felt safe in the house, but this was a storm that looked like no other storm. And I figured I could evacuate or I could go to Touro. So, I decided to go to Touro and the reason I decided was because poor Les, who had just started work, I had been talking to him five or six times a day, at least, in his first four days, five days on the job, had talked to him a bunch Friday, Saturday, Sunday. The board was usually invited to the hospital to ride out storms. I don't think anybody ever did it before and I didn't really have much of an intention of doing it until the storm looked real bad, but at that point I kind of felt like I -- I didn't know that it would be any help. I just didn't want to get in the way, but I also felt like I should go to the hospital rather than evacuate because that was just the thing to do and I had been with Les before at the hospital and the hospital is an older physical facility and things, you know, sections, departments, have kind of grown up willy-nilly in the place. Not planned out necessarily to be right were they maybe should be if you had a new structure. So, I had been with Les and he would walk down the hall and get lost. So, I -- I figure I've got a CEO who gets lost in his own hospital, not that I'm much better at it, but let me go see what I can do to help him. Les had been to New Orleans, I think, twice before on interviews with us. Had never been through a hurricane or anything of the sort, so I figured I'd do better off there. So, I called him on Sunday morning and I said, I'm coming to the hospital and I'm bringing all these people. The hospital had, at the time, about 250 plus patients in the hospital, we probably had about five or 600 staff members in the hospital and the hospital had always invited staff members, you know, essential personnel to bring their family members with them, so they didn't have to worry about it or deal with it. So, we probably had about 1,200 or more family members in the hospital, so we had a little over 2,000 people in the hospital at the time that the storm hit and of course, that includes pets and everything else. In fact, we brought our dog. We have a little -- he was about a year old at the time and he's a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, you

know, one of these little lapdogs. The thing that he was bred for --

RH: -- What's his name?

SK: Duke.

RH: Duke. OK. (Laughter)

SK: And so, we brought Duke in a cage. I didn't name him, the kids did. It's after the basketball team.

RH: Right.

SK: But so, I went with Duke, and Jake, and my parents, and Larry, and Susie, and Hilary and we all went over to the hospital. We got -- Les opened up a meeting room, there are several meeting rooms and a bunch of very large kind of conference rooms, but we took one of the small meeting rooms in the hospital and they brought in mattresses, you know, these little plastic mattresses about this thick to throw on the floor and that was our room. Most other people, all the other guests in the hospital, if you will, the family members were in other meeting rooms and conference rooms. Some of them were large rooms, so there were hundreds of people in these things. I'd say probably sometime Sunday afternoon somebody else stuck their head in, another family whose name I didn't catch and we have since -- my Mom knew it and got to be very friendly and has since forgotten the name. I'm sorry I don't know who they were, but it was a woman, and her two children, and her husband I think was a nurse at the hospital and they came in and shared the room with us. And so, we that was kind of our home, you know, for the storm and on -- I am trying to think now of where to start because that kind of takes us up to the storm --

RH: -- Right.

SK: I can tell you that throughout the storm I guess I was more active and busy with the staff and the hospital and trying to do whatever we could for the hospital whereas the other party, the other people in my party remained pretty much in the conference room, the meeting room, or within the hospital, walking the halls, doing things like that during the time. So, I really wasn't with them as much. The -- Sunday, I guess, when we got there Les called a meeting for the vice presidents and directors, these -- the -- the higher up staff, which I went to and I was in a conference room in the administration offices that kind of became the makeshift control room for the rest of the storm. Since then we have done a lot better, we actually have an emergency room, now with all sorts of communication devices, but at the time, it was just makeshift conference room with some phones and computers brought in. Sunday -- well, I will give you a feeling -- with all the people in the place, you couldn't set up for eating purposes. We had to feed everybody and there is a cafeteria there, just to give you a sense, the cafeteria -- you didn't get a choice of anything, you either ate, or you didn't eat and you ate what they gave you and, you know, it was one thing. Maybe it was red beans and rice, you know, and a biscuit and you got a soft drink or something, or coffee, and so that's what everybody would have and they just went through the cafeteria lines like that. They did a real good job, you know, they had a dietician or somebody who was trying to make meals healthy and give you what you had within the parameters of what we had in the kitchen, too. And of course, they had to prepare the meals for the patients, too. So, Sunday night, I guess -- and it was interesting because -- I am sorry about going back and forth --

RH: No, that is quite all right.

SK: -- things are just kind of pop into my mind. You know, we wanted to make sure the generators had all the gas that they needed. It runs on diesel fuel and everything else, so they had the maintenance crew, they did a marvelous job this whole time and the maintenance crew was making sure -- I can remember going out and trying to -- they were loading gas into the tanks for the generators, they had brought in a new generator

that they set up outside the hospital just to give us extra power if we needed it. And, you know, Sunday night, that was it. We kind of all sat around this room with the emergency lights on and played cards and went to bed early. I don't know if you've ever been through a storm, but you know, you kind of get these as the bands come in and it's hours and hours before the eye where the storm gets bad. You would just be able to see the wind or the rain come across in these bands of clouds as the storm sweeps in, so it was raining on again, off again, and getting windy, and not, and you know, we would walk up to the -- one of the parking garages on the deck and look outside and you could see how it was picking up or the wind was blowing and, after a while it got dangerous to go up there because a lot of the dogs also went up there, so you had to watch where you were stepping.

RH: Oh, that kind of danger.

SK: Yes, yes. Not from the wind, from the dogs. It's funny, people take their dogs to the hospital to keep them safe and then they don't take them out for a walk, or they leave them in cages, or take them out for a walk and not clean up after them. It wasn't real great. In any event, I guess things started to go wrong sometime Monday morning. The generators started going out about 3 o'clock in the morning. We were running on emergency lighting and we later -- only months later -- found that what had happened was we had a bad load of fuel and there was a lot of sediment in -- sediment in the fuel and it had clogged up the generators and gotten into some of the generator parts and basically ruined the generators. Since all the generators were tied together to each other, ultimately it spread throughout the hospital and ruined all the generators, we've since, of course, have bought new generators and changed the entire system. But the -- the generators would go out and, you know, there are different generators covering different parts of the hospital at the time and as one of the generators would go out, maintenance would go to work on it. They might get it started again, but when they would get that started, you know, an hour later another generator would go out and they

would have to work that. And then the first one might go out again, so there was constant repair, always a problem, and then we kept running low on fuel because generators aren't made to operate for that long and we just didn't have the fuel capacity, so we needed to get more diesel. In any event, on -- they started to fail, I guess, Monday morning real early and I can remember that the -- the generators in intensive care went out and we had a bunch of people up there who were on ventilators and they needed the electricity, so a call went out for help and a lot of people ran, me included, I took Jake and Larry, we ran up to ICU and people were hand bagging the patients and we were taking them on the gurneys and running them down the hallway to try to get them to another area like the Emergency Department, which is downstairs on a different floor where there was still power to try to hook them up. And, of course, then the elevators were also out because of the generators. We could use one or two elevators, but not others, so some people were going by elevator, some people were hand carrying the patients and the gurneys down these steps to get them to where they could survive to hook them up with power. Now, of course, at different times, the Emergency Department later, of course, lost power, so everybody was rushing them back up to another section and that was a constant refrain at the hospital. It was nice because it wasn't just staff though, it were guests everybody would pitch in. I mean, if you happened to be in the spot and see people running down the hall with a gurney, people would just stop and want to help. I can remember that with all the elevators out we had nine floors of patients that had to get fed, you know, you are not there on a party or a picnic. There is no way to get them fed with the elevators out with just using the staff, so they put out a call and asked for people and a lot of the guests came and people would just form a chain of people up each one of the stairwells and they would bring the food and the trays and hand them to people and they would go up from hand to hand up the stairwell and then down the corridors into one of the rooms, then they moved to the next room, you know, and that's how they were delivering the food to patients. And -- which was really, you know, it was a nice feeling of camaraderie, of being able to help somebody. So, that was

kind of Sunday night, Monday morning, and Monday some during the day. I can remember that by Monday afternoon we realized that the storm had kind of missed New Orleans. It had gone slightly to the east, so we had not born the brunt of it and I can remember being, you know, very excited thinking, I mean we could look out the windows and see a lot of the trees down and all the power lines were down, but still, you were kind of happy you hadn't born the worst of it. We didn't know anything about the levees at the time. Most of the power was off. You could get -- you could get some power, you know the radios with the batteries you could hear some news and none of the land lines worked, all of the phones were dead, none of the cell phones worked. Every now and then you could actually get across on a Cingular cell. Why Cingular, I don't have any idea, but it was, you know, one out of every 20 calls you might get a call in or be able to place a call out.

RH: [phone rings] We can stop – do you need to stop?

SK: Why don't we stop this for a minute and... OK, so landlines were out, none of the phones were working, none of the cell phones worked except every now and then a Cingular phone. In fact, we put out a call for Cingular phones, if anybody had any, in the hope that we could use one of those to get through to somebody. Text messaging worked some. I was able to get text messages. I guess they work on a different system than the cell phones. Later on, we found out all the cell towers were down, but the text messages would work on occasion. I could get messages from my son in Indiana, who liked to text message and so I was communicating with him. But nothing else. There was no communication. On Sunday night or Monday, there were about 30 or 40 maybe -- maybe more police at Touro because everybody in the district, all these police had driven -- not everybody, but a lot of police -- had driven in to Touro to park their cars and to take protection from the storm. So when the storm was over, they all left. But I can remember Monday I would run into them in the neighborhood. There was one that was patrolling around Prytania right by the hospital and I stopped him to ask what was going

on in the rest of the city and his answer was he had no idea because none of their communications worked either. He just figured he was supposed to stay on the beat, so he was in the neighborhood. So, Monday, you know, after -- by the afternoon the weather kind of cleared and I can remember telling -- I took my Mom, and Larry, and Susie, and Hilary, and Jake, and we got in a car and I wanted to see how the houses had done. We didn't make it to Hilary's, which is in the Garden District in a -- in a carriage house, instead we went further uptown to my parents' house, and Larry and Susie's house, and my house. Mom and Dad's house didn't -- they live around the corner from me on State between Camp and Chestnut in the old German Protestant Orphanage grounds. Their house didn't look like it had any damage. Larry and Susie's, which is on Hurst and Arabella didn't look like it had any damage and mine didn't have major damage, but it had enough that, you know, you could see gutters hanging from the house and several windows had broken. In fact my neighbor's -- my neighbor who faces State Street had a slate roof and lost the slate roof, much of which had ended up in part of my house. I'm still finding slate. It's been a year, I'm finding slate underneath my house now whenever I clean up anything. It had come in through all the windows on that side of the house and then pockmarked the sod over there. Interestingly, poor Hilary had a new car, an Audi and she lived on 3rd close to Magazine and we weren't really sure how that would take the storm and so I, I suggested that she bring her car up and park it in my driveway, which is protected on one side by the house, on one side by the fence, you know, a wooden fence, which she had done. Her husband, being out of town, his truck had remained in front of their house. His truck was untouched, absolutely fine and Hilary's poor car was pockmarked with -- with slate all over it. Not to mention the fact that the fence hadn't withstood anything and that came down on her car and one of mine and did some damage that way. So, no good deed goes unpunished. (laughter) So on -- let's see where am I as I ramble --

RH: So, you're --

SK: -- Monday afternoon.

RH: Yeah, you were checking your house out.

SK: And I -- we actually thought -- we actually thought of -- well, half of the town was just littered. It was strewn with trees, wires, everything. And I remember going over to a friend's house. Cathy and Charlie Glazer live on Chestnut -- I'm sorry Camp and Jefferson. Their house was missing some roof tiles and had a little bit of damage, but the house behind it was gone. It was like a shotgun double and it had been in the process of being renovated and it was now flat like a pancake. The roof was actually sitting on top of the house and the whole thing was probably about two feet high now, off the ground. It was -- it was pretty impressive. Fortunately, there was nobody in it. We were going to stay -- we thought about staying in the house overnight, figuring the storm is done, everything is OK. A lot of the people, the guests at the hospital left, a lot of them went back home because the storm was over. I figured at that stage that the hospital had generators up and operating on again, off again, and it was a lot better than being at home, which had absolutely no power, because all the lines were down, so we figured we would spend the night in the hospital, eat there, because there was nothing else, nowhere else to eat, and then we could go back the next morning. So, we went back to the hospital and the generators were primarily out and the odd thing was the building was starting to sweat. There is no other way of putting it, the condensation from the heat inside the building was getting to the building and the walls and the floor were slippery. You could -- kind of, you know, slip and slide on the floor; you had to be very careful walking. There had been a lot of roof damage to the building, too. I mean a lot of the elevators in part went out because water had come in from the roof down the elevator shafts and ruined the equipment. We are still trying to get it fixed. My cell phone.

RH: OK. It's all right.

SK: It'll go away in a minute. We hope. There we go.

RH: OK.

SK: We had some roof damage, so some of the ceiling tiles had collapsed and there were pools of water that everybody was trying to clean up in the hospital, too, from the rain and the storm. But eventually, I can tell you that it was largely due to the condensation. The building itself got so hot from not having the air and everything condensing that we have those suspended roof tiles, you know, the little white kind of like these things that are in hospital, like you see in most modern buildings and they all collapsed. They just -- they got wet from the condensation and fell apart and it cost the hospital, at the end of the day, about $4 million to replace all of those, which was all just from the storm. Some of it was leakage, but most of it was condensation from the heat. In fact, t was getting very hot in the building on Tuesday, we actually broke windows in the building. The storm had broken windows, in fact, one of the -- we have two ICU units and one of them had lost power, the other one we had to evacuate because the storm had blown in several of the windows there, you know, which jeopardized the patients, but we had -- we went and broke windows in some patient rooms just to get air in. It's kind of odd. I have never had anything like this and I have mentioned it to several other people and they have told me the same thing. Usually, when a storm comes through -- New Orleans is always hot and humid, but when a storm generally comes through, it sweeps out with it, as it goes on the humidity and a lot of the heat. It may come back a day or two later, but at least it kind of takes it with it and it didn't happen this time. It was just still hot. I am sure the temperatures were way up in the 90s and the humidity just seemed to be no less than it normally is and so the building, however hot it was outside, inside was getting worse because it was unbearable. It was like being in an oven. So, Tuesday morning, we found out that the levees had broken. I can remember we actually heard it -- we had a guy from Homeland Security whose wife worked at the hospital and he had taken shelter there, so he was our only link to the outside world and he was giving us reports he was getting that the levees had broken. But the reports were all inconsistent from him, from listening to the radio, you really couldn't tell what was going on. There

was water coming in to the city, but you didn't really know how bad it was, but listening to the radio it would be, you know or him, in fact, he would say, "Oh, we hear there is going to be 20 feet of water in town," and, you know, all of this stuff. So you never know and then you hear about the looting on the radio. We didn't have any kind of communications with anybody. We could finally jerry rig an Internet connection and through that the IT people at the hospital hooked up telephone lines through the Internet. So, we were able to get communications to the outside world. We had one telephone line. We called, I think it was Les who called the Mayor to give a report. We never did speak to the Mayor, but he got through to somebody at the local or state government. They assumed that we were fine and didn't need help because they hadn't heard from us. That was what they told us, of course, they hadn't heard from us because there was not communication. There was not way for them to hear from us. But we could watch some of the news reports now, you know, the national news had come down, I guess, and we were getting national news through the Internet, you know, streaming video showing some of the levee breaks, so we knew that water was pouring in. We knew there was supposed to be looting, and in fact, all the reports about what was happening at the Super Dome, only we didn't get it then, but you heard all sorts of horrible stories, most of which turned out not to be true, but there clearly was looting. We put people, we posted people up on the roof of the hospital just to try to observe the neighborhood and what was going on. You could actually stand out on the roof and see people looting the Rite-Aid down the street, which is about a block and a half away. A couple of people who had been looting the Rite-Aid ran in to the hospital, apparently, the police were there and started to chase them. They ran into the hospital. Our security people caught them and turned them over and at that point, Les and I decided we were going to close the doors to the hospital. I mean, somebody inside could always get out by opening the door, but you couldn't get in from the outside except by going up to the third floor, the parking garage where a walkway is. That would be easier to control the ingress into the hospital. We were hoping that nobody would run in, or looters just wouldn't run right into the hospital and overwhelm

anybody that way. We were kind of worried that somebody would get the bright idea about the pharmacy and drugs so we locked all the doors, we had armed guards, we made sure that they were armed because we wanted to assure the safety of the patients, so I can tell you, as an aside and this is when I'm off with Les, trying to get things done with the hospital, my Mom is with Jake, my 16 year old at the time and they are walking around out on Prytania Street and this woman comes by with a bag of groceries and my Mom says, "Oh, where did you get that?" Because, you know, the food you are getting at the hospital is not the world's greatest and you only get what you're served. So, she says, "Oh, they opened up the A&P down on Magazine Street, they are letting you take whatever you need." So, Mom, of course, says to Jake, "Well, let's go check it out." So, Jake and my Mom and my Dad, my Dad being 86 at the time, my Mom being 81, in fact it was her birthday that Sunday before the storm, and the woman and her two kids who were sharing a room with us all get in my Dad's car, Jake drives them all down to Magazine to the A&P where, apparently, the A&P is not exactly open and the police aren't – that's what she said, that the police are letting you take the food out, it's not like it's open with the police letting you take food out, it's open because all the windows have been shattered and people are just running it and running out, stealing things and throwing stuff up in the air. And they're stopped in the street and people are coming by and looking in the windows, I guess they were lucky they weren't car jacked and then Jake says he sees -- there is an art gallery about a block away up Magazine Street -- Jake says he and Dad are sitting in the front seat and they are looking down the street and they see a pick-up truck back in through the plate glass windows of this art gallery and the guy jump out and start taking art off of the walls, putting it into the back of the pickup truck at which time, my Dad turns to Jake and says, "Jake, I think we should go back to the hospital." (laughter) So, they turned around and went back. So Tuesday, we are in the hospital trying to get things up and operating while they are out having their adventure and Larry -- when I got back probably about 2 o'clock or so in the afternoon and Larry didn't know anything about the levees -- my cousin and Hilary -- knew nothing

about the levees breaking or anything else. When I told them and it was unbearably hot now because we were running it on emergency lighting only, so it's only just an occasional light in a room or on the floor to make sure you could see to save the power. He decided to leave so he and Susie, and they took Hilary and they left town. They drove up to Alexandria. Then the only way -- that -- at that time what we had heard the only way to get out of town was go to Tchoupitoulas Street, which isn't too far from the hospital and then go out the Crescent City connection, the bridges over to the West Bank. So, they did that, apparently had no trouble although Larry told me later on, as did we when we left, he saw people looting the Wal-Mart on Tchoupitoulas Street. Tuesday, we -- I am trying to get all this -- I can remember I got to use one of the phones, you know the headpieces hookups to the Internet and I called Mara to tell her we were fine and she was not happy. She was in Atlanta and she started letting me know that I needed to get out of the hospital and out of New Orleans. And I told her I really didn't want to go, that I, you know, had a responsibility to stay and we were fine, we were safe in the hospital and she didn't exactly agree with me. (laughter) She was yelling at me, she was crying, she was very upset and she says, "You don't know what's going on. People are getting shot, they're shooting, they're looting, the city is flooding, you have to get out." I kept telling her we were fine. One thing she didn't realize is there are a bunch of other people behind me waiting to use the phone, of course, and I think everybody could hear her over my -- over my earpiece, yelling at me to get out. "I don't care." You know, she wanted to at least get my son out, you know, but Jake was fine, he was a real trooper. So Tuesday, we -- with the power going and the water supply, the city water stopped and we had no water in the hospital. We ended up with drinking water, the bottled water that we had, but the city water supply shut down. I guess the flooding did it and there were cracks in the pipes, but whatever did it, there was nothing coming out the taps, you know, you're a hospital. You are not thinking just drinking water, you have to clean the place, you have got to wash your hands, you have got to sterilize equipment if you need it and we couldn't do any of that, so we knew we had to evacuate. Les kept

saying we're losing the building, but we had to evacuate and we realized it. By the way, we have since now drilled a well at about a $450,000 cost and the minute the city water supply shuts down, the well goes on to continue to supply us with water for all those things, so we are prepared for the next one. So, we were in poor shape. I know there was some concern depending on how many people were still at the hospital who would have to convert to two meals a day instead of three so the patients could get the food because it's hard to feed 2,000 people. We didn't have the hospital stocked for a week of food for 2,000 people. You have it for a few days. I do remember that even on the emergency lighting we were running out of fuel and we were desperate for fuel and we kept trying to get fuel and, of course, nobody would respond to us. The government was no help, we got Homeland Security, the city and state just wouldn't even answer. We got Homeland Security they would say they were busy, they'd see what they could do and eventually --

RH: Hospitals weren't a priority?

SK: I guess not. We did get through -- we were communicating with Children's Hospital, which was uptown. They were worried about looting and they asked us to send over some of our security guards. But, we needed the security guards because we only had a few on hand and besides, nobody was sure they could get there. So we ultimately just decided they would stay at Touro, but Children's did get a load of fuel, diesel fuel for their generators at one point in time and they couldn't take all of it, there was some left and he sent, Children's sent the truck over to us, which was nice, which gave us enough generator fuel to at least run the emergency lighting for a while.

RH: Where did they get theirs? Do you have any --

SK: -- I think, I don't know. I don't know whether it came through the Army or, I think where it came from was a Louisiana Hospital Association who was primarily up in Baton Rouge. That's where they are headquartered and they, even without communication with

people, were trying to figure out what they needed. We ultimately did get through to the Louisiana Hospital Association on Tuesday up in Baton Rouge. A guy named John Matasino (sp?) was the head of it. He did a marvelous job and told him we needed to evacuate and we needed help. I think -- I'm not sure about this, but what happened to a lot of the other hospitals, I think is that they relied on the government to get them out and we had called the government and we were looking for help and, you know, we're told that they were too busy, so we figured we had to go it alone and if we would evacuate -- while we'd like them to come help us, it had to be with us, we had to do it. So, we didn't hesitate to try to figure out some way out of the mess and I think what happened to some of the other hospitals that had it a lot worse, one, their locations may have been worse, but it wasn't just the location, I think they -- I don't know this for a fact -- but my guess is, they relied on the government to help them more than we did and the government didn't show. I will say I have -- that neither the city nor the state was particularly responsive, but they were just overwhelmed and I had nothing but contempt for the federal government at the time and still, still don't have much. It's shaken my faith in the federal government and the United States.

RH: So, that means... OK.

END OF PART 1

RH: Two. I'm speaking with Stephen Kupperman for Katrina Jewish Voices. So, Stephen, what -- what are the expectations that bring you to this moment of contempt? (laughter) I mean, what do you think should have happened?

SK: Yeah, well, you know, I probably would have been a lot more vehement about it six months ago, than I am now, just because you get used to it with time, but I think probably the best way of putting it is, I guess, two -- two -- two thoughts. One is that the whole

purpose of FEMA is to be there in the event of an emergency, and they were not. They were woefully absent, they were very slow to respond, they did not respond when they should have and, in fact, for us, at least from what we understand, we have not gotten confirmation of this, they were hurting us and I'll tell you as I go on with the story because you'll understand.

RH: OK.

SK: The other reason is that not only do they not do their job that they were supposed to and, granted, Katrina was such a big disaster that maybe nobody could have been fully prepared, but they sure could have been better prepared than they were, particularly because this was not 100% unexpected. All of these projections showed what could happen. I don't know that anybody really expects it to happen, but that's what the government should be expecting, a worse case scenario, and they weren't expecting, I think, a bad case scenario. And then when you see what happened, which we didn't know at the time, what happens at the Super Dome or, worse, at the Convention Center, there is just no excuse for that. The other thing is I think the government has this agency that costs us millions and millions of dollars that is supposed to be prepared and they are not and they, in fact, don't do anything and, sometimes, hurt a situation. The second part of it is that, at least in my view, the government is there to protect and support the people and they just didn't do that job. It's as if -- it's as if maybe because we are New Orleans and we are not Washington, D.C. or New York, nobody gave a damn. Maybe it's because George Bush figured that we voted Republican for him once before and we were always going to do it again, he didn't care. He had us anyway, but whatever the -- or maybe he just didn't care period for no reason, but whatever it is, to me the obligation of the government to make sure that it's own citizens get protected and it failed in this instance and I think it's failed subsequent to that with regard to rebuilding New Orleans. You know they call the government -- I know I'm rambling, I'm sorry --

RH: No, you are not rambling.

SK: But I know like a lot of the government issues about, "Oh, look how much we've poured into New Orleans. We have put in $110 billion or whatever the number is that you see quoted periodically, that number changes, so I'm never sure, but it's $110 billion, well, I understand about $40 billion of that is to the Army Corps of Engineers to fix the levees that the Army Corps screwed up the first time, so I don't really view that as something they are giving us. It's something that should have been done and it was promised a long time ago and over the course of the last 40 years, we have been paying for anyway. But some of it, like 17 billion of it, that they count as being a donation to the city, part of the 110 that the federal government has given us, I think 17 billion, what I saw at the last count, is from national flood insurance. Now, people -- granted, it's subsidized, but that's not the 17 billion, those are the payments out. People paid for that. They paid premiums for it. They are not getting anything that people didn't tell them they deserved to get, they were paying whatever the appropriate rate was for the insurance. So, you know, I don't have any trust for George Bush. My view is that if anybody around here votes Republican, they are fools, but anyway, so I digress.

RH: You didn't digress. I asked so --

SK: Yeah, you just like to hear that. You could get me for hours on this subject though. OK, so we are going back to Tuesday?

RH: Tuesday, let's go back to Tuesday and tell me what you did. You have your family still with you, your wife wants you out.

SK: Right.

RH: You are losing the building.

SK: Yes, and we got in touch with the Louisiana Hospital Association and through them we were able to reach Acadian Ambulance Service, which is actually headquartered in Lafayette, so they were OK. And we tried to get them to come evacuate. Nobody could come with ambulances or anything by car, but Acadian owned some helicopters, so Acadian promised to send us helicopters and we were told to bring all of our patients up to the roof. We have a helipad on the roof, we have two garages, both have walkways into the building and one of them has a helipad on top on the roof and we were told bring the patients up to the roof and they are going to bring in the helicopters and they would begin flying. We should do that Tuesday afternoon, Tuesday evening really and they will begin flying and picking them up, most critically ill first on Tuesday. We made those arrangements and then I went down to see my parents and my Dad was not doing well. It looked like he had gotten out of the shower, he was just drenched in sweat. It was miserable. The guy is 86, I was worrying about him and I realized he needed to get out of the hospital, so I got him, I decided that he needed to leave, which I don't -- he didn't want to leave without me, but I think he ultimately decided he agreed he had to go. So, I decided to send him and my Mom and my Dad, 86, can barely see above the steering wheel, so I couldn't get him out of the hospital by himself and just put him in the car and tell him goodbye. So, I was going to send my 16 year old with them, who is very sharp and very good and then I thought, I'm an idiot or words to that effect. I mean, I can't send a 16 year old off with my 80-something year old parents and nobody knew what was going on in the city. All you kept hearing about was looting and we could see them from the roof and, you know, what would happened if he ran into looters or they hijacked them or whatever, car jacked them, or they had trouble anywhere, or they ran into water before they got out of the city because nobody knew where the water was. We actually were sending out one of the vice presidents of the hospital about every half hour to drive down Napoleon to find out where the water was and at first it was on the other side of Clayburn, he had come back, a half hour later, it's on this side of Clayburn, and he would go back and forth, you know, that it was, you know, is it -- kept mounting up so it was

getting increasingly closer and you didn't know where it was in other parts of the city so I decided at that point I had to leave with Jake and my parents and the dog, of course. So, I can remember I really felt horrible. I felt real guilty about leaving. I remember telling the lady, actually that afternoon, when Larry left and I told the lady and her kids who were sharing the room with us, they -- they left and a lot of people were leaving. They had gotten word of the levee breaks and people were getting out, people with cars, whoever could who weren't the essential personnel at the hospital. I felt real bad about going and I didn't want to go. But I figured I had to take care of Mom and Dad. So, it must have been about seven or 8 o'clock that night, the four of us with the dog got in my Dad's car, which was the only one that was accessible in the parking lot and drove down Tchoupitoulas Street. We passed -- we passed some people looting the Wal-Mart there. They were still going at it I guess hours after Larry had left. It seemed like days afterwards, it was only hours. I can remember laughing as we drove by. Jake asked me why I was laughing. It's because this guy was carrying out a big TV out of the Wal-Mart and all I could think of was there's no power, I don't know what he's watching, but he was carrying the TV out and we drove down Tchoupitoulas Street. Nobody bothered us, it was dry along Tchoupitoulas and we hit the bridge, there's an entrance to the bridge on Tchoupitoulas so we went right up and over and I can remember as we are driving across the bridge, Jake says -- he was sitting in front with me -- and he says, "Dad, it's really weird." And I said, "What's weird?" And he says, "We're the only car here." And I realize, you look around, there wasn't a car on either one of the two bridges except us and it was kind of eerie, you know, going across these big bridges that are normally jammed with traffic and we're the only people there. We hit the Westbank Expressway and went out. I can remember seeing some Entergy crews working on the west bank and as we drove -- there are two things that struck me as we drove out of town -- one was that I saw hundreds of busses along the side of the road and in parking lots doing nothing, just sitting there. And I didn't understand what they were doing there. I found out later but they were just sitting on the side of the road in these parking lots, apparently

waiting for instructions on what to do from FEMA, which they didn't get, apparently, for a while. But I mean there were hundreds of them in parking lots.

RH: This is on the west bank of --

SK: Well, this is back. We drove across the west bank -- no, we drove across the west bank and then back over the 310 bridge from the west bank to connect it with I-10 and go up to Baton Rouge. We actually went and spent the night in Lafayette. But this was now on the east bank again after we crossed over the 310 --

RH: OK.

SK: -- bridge and were on I-10. You know, there's, for example, in, I guess it's Gonzalez or Prairieville, someplace there is a big truck stop, lot of parking area and the place was jammed with busses in there. The other thing I remember was that there were, on the other side of the interstate, there were hundreds of people with boats that they were towing. I can remember seeing airboats and just mast boats and fishing boats, people obviously just regular citizens just coming into the city, trying to rescue people. They must have seen all these pictures of flooding that I couldn't really see too well, but I can remember just driving and seeing all these people flooding into the city to try to save people. It was really something.

RH: Also, you're going over the bridge has become a point of controversy because other people who walked over the bridge weren't allowed, so did you see any police?

SK: No, I didn't see anybody. We were -- we just went right over. We didn't see any Army, or National Guard, or anybody else coming into the city. I did see some the next day when we were on the road but we didn't see any heading in that day. That was Tuesday and we ended up spending the night in Lafayette. I think I was exhausted, but I must have stayed up most of the night trying to look at pictures on TV to see what was really going on because we didn't have a good feel for it while we were there. And I

remember my parents, who hadn't seen any of it, because I had gotten it through the computers that were helping to run the hospital and they didn't have access to it. They were just flabbergasted. In fact, I almost forgot to say this, as we were leaving, someplace -- we hadn't seen everything, but you began to understand the scope of it because we were listening to the radio going out. I had seen some pictures and we had seen these buses and there are helicopters you can here and you just see hundreds of people lined up, driving into the city. You get a sense of how massive the problem is and I can remember Mom and Dad were sitting in the back seat and, you know, they are these little people now in their 80s next to each other, kind of in the middle of the seat, holding hands and I can remember looking in the rearview mirror and they are both sitting there crying and my Mom pats my Dad's hand and I hear her say, "All we have to do now is live long enough to make sure they are OK." And I'm sure she is talking about me and the family. But it's a very eye-opening experience when that happened. It makes it very personal.

RH: Yeah.

SK: OK. I was --

RH: Were you in a -- did you get a hotel room in Lafayette?

SK: No, I have a -- what I call a sister-cousin, who lives there. She is actually a cousin, but her parents had died when she was in high school and she and her younger sister had moved in with us for six years. So, from the time I was six until the time I was about 12 or 13 I had a sister, two of them who lived in the house with us. So, when I'm angry with them, they are cousins, and when I like them they are sisters so --

RH: They were sisters this day.

SK: Right, right, so and they had about -- they had another two families staying with them and when we showed up we just kind of moved in. I think Mom and Dad got their

bedroom and I slept on a sofa out in the living room.

RH: You must have been in shock.

SK: It was a little strange.

RH: Looking back on, you know --

SK: Well, it was when I got there because the cell phones didn't work. As long as you are in a 504 exchange, nothing worked and the 225 exchanges, which were Baton Rouge, also didn't work very well. Sometimes they worked sometimes they didn't because I think they were overloaded and the 337, which is Lafayette area worked decently, but not always. But I can remember, when I got to their house -- Maureen and Steve Goldware -- when I got to their house, I called Mara and -- who was thankful we were out. She knew because I had text messaged Shane who had called her and the only thing -- I don't know why -- I got to Lafayette figuring that's fine, we'll sit for a few days in Lafayette. By the time I got there I had this urge to get out and get my family together. I just had to get everybody together. Zachary lived in Austin, Texas, so I made up my mind that the next morning I was leaving for Austin, so I told Mara to catch a plane to Houston and meet me at the airport and I'd come get her, you know, make it for late in the day and I'd be there. And we called Zack and told him, we're coming, find us a place to stay. So, in the meantime I was in constant touch with the hospital. I mean, I must have talked to them at least every hour. They would call me or, what also happened was late Tuesday after I left, or else it was early Wednesday, I am not sure exactly when, it could have been Wednesday, they managed to -- some of the maintenance guys managed to find a downed telephone line which somehow they hooked up so there was now one land line in and out of the hospital. They actually hooked it up to a red telephone, so it was like the phone. Everybody would know, that's the one that works. So, I could call in because over the Internet I couldn't get in, we could only get out, but I could call in and it was really just used for emergencies by them and for me to get in to

Les and people like that I need to talk to them. The helicopters were supposed to come Tuesday night, they did not. They never showed up. We never got a call from anybody. We didn't know anything as to what. We didn't know that they weren't coming, they just didn't come. About a month later, we were told that FEMA had decided that they needed the helicopters so they had instructed the helicopters not to come to us, but to do something else. We heard that from one of the pilots of the helicopters on Wednesday. Don't know if it's true. I actually met later with Michael Chertoff and -- who is the head of Homeland Security -- and David Paulison who, at the time was not the head of FEMA but is now. He replaced Michael Brown and Gil Jameson who was the head of FEMA in the Gulf Coast region and told them this story. They said they would look into it, but I have never heard back from them. But the story we got from the helicopter pilots was that FEMA had redirected their flights to another task that FEMA thought was more important than helping to evacuate the hospital. We lost 10 patients on the roof that night.

RH: Oh my God.

SK: Now, I suspect most of them wouldn't have lived anyway. They were all critically ill, intensive care patients, but we moved them up to the roof and, you know, you have to hand ventilate people and try to take care of them and it would have been helpful to know that, you know, maybe we could have hooked them up to some generator or done something because we were told to bring them up because helicopters were on their way. I think the people who were up there trying to help and keep them alive did yeoman's job and maybe they would have died anyway, I mean, in the hospital itself, it was hot. I suspect that in the long run most of the people who went up to the roof were better off for it. We ended up having the whole hospital up there, I mean all of the patients because it wasn't as hot. There was at least some circulation of the air on the roof so people could get some sleep and not suffocate like they would have in the building. Anyway, the helicopters showed up on Wednesday.

RH: Where were these from?

SK: Acadian Ambulance. They came in on Wednesday. They took the NICU babies, the neo-natal intensive care babies out first and then started flying the most critically ill and anybody we could get out of the hospital and most of the time the NICU babies actually flew, I think, to Houston and maybe to Birmingham. I am not sure where, but most of the patients after that went to Louie Armstrong Airport. I don't know if it was FEMA or the National Guard, I think it was FEMA had set up a triage unit there so the helicopters could come bring people in to the airport and then they would take those people and send them out to other hospitals. Once they left Touro, we didn't know where they went, we just knew they were going to the airport. We didn't know where they were going to be sent and my understanding, at least, is that nobody at the government thought to make a list of where they were sending different people. It was, I'd guess, a good month after the storm everyday, I would get phone calls from family members of people who had been in the hospital, trying to find their families. I talked to one family about four different people from the family, I must have talked to them 10 times. They were looking for their mother. They couldn't find her. They finally found her. She was outside of Atlanta. But we were trying to track people down. We didn't know where they were, you just, you would look at the Red Cross list, you try to get the government to help, but nobody knew where they were, nobody had made a list. You just had to phone hospitals or rely on Red Cross. Things went pretty decently Wednesday, but it's a slow process. It's about a 20, 30 minute, you know, turnaround time.

RH: How many can fit on a helicopter?

SK: A few.

RH: Not too many.

SK: No, but you can make a lot of trips. And Wednesday night we had to stop that evacuation. The story from the pilots again was that, of course, the airport didn't have power and the FEMA had neglected to bring landing lights. That's what they said. They had forgotten about landing lights. I don't know how true any of this stuff is. I can only tell you what we were told. FEMA had forgotten to bring landing lights, so it was -- they considered it dangerous to land at the airport, so they would not allow anybody to land at the airport in the dark. So, the helicopter pilots continued to fly, but they now had to take our patients, instead of to the airport and back for a half hour or 40 minute roundtrip, they now had to fly them to Houston or Alexandria, someplace like that which is now a three to five-hour trip and I think Wednesday night we only got about six patients out of the hospital because of the long turnaround time. In the meantime, I had, you know, we were trying to plan for the evacuation, how to get people out and on Wednesday night now I was in Austin where my son and a cousin, the daughter of one of the girls who lives in Austin has borrowed an apartment from a friend of hers. This guy, actually she works with him, he was out of town, so she just took his key and we lived there for a few days. And I was constantly on the phone with the hospital at the time and I realized we were trying to figure out how do we get people out and what do we do and how do we save people. We needed helicopters, we needed evacuation. One of my partners here, Charles Rice, had just left as Chief Administrative Officer of the city, kind of the mayor's right hand man about -- less than a month before the storm and I was able to track Charles down at his mother-in-law's house in Baton Rouge and he gave me the mayor's blackberry number and text message number, which he had in an effort to try --

RH: In Baton Rouge or?

SK: No, the mayor Nagin here in New Orleans because he knew all of Nagin’s numbers and blackberry's -- blackberry's -- I didn’t know it until he told me but they take text messages, of course, nothing was working because all the servers were down and they also, and they can use it as a phone, but of course, none of that was working because all

the towers were down, but apparently, on a different system there is an SMS number, which I didn't know about and it's like text messaging and you can reach people that way, so I was able to get through Charles, the mayor's text message. Charles sent messages to him and I did, asking for help basically, to evacuate the hospital, we needed buses to try to get patients out. Figuring they had RTA buses or school buses or something. Now, it turns out most of those were underwater, we didn't know, but we never would have found out because nobody ever returned any of the messages. I also -- Susie and Larry, particularly Susie Morgan, who had been in the hospital with me, I knew where they went. They went up to Alexandria to stay with a mutual friend and I knew that Susie was close to Mary Landrieu. So, I called Susie and got Mary Landrieu's personal cell number. Promising, of course, not to tell Mary where I got it from so don't repeat this. It's just between us.

RH: OK.

SK: So, I called Mary's cell and text message and never got through. I mean I left messages, but never heard back from that either. Trying to get her, maybe figuring a U.S. Senator might be able to get the National Guard to go someplace. On Wednesday, by Wednesday evening I was getting kind of desperate and I was trying anything. I thought well maybe I'll call some news media. Maybe, you know, if everybody is down there, maybe if I can get someone to focus on Touro, it'll help get helicopters there. Of course, I don't know anybody in the news media that would help in particular, so I started calling around. I got Jace, Jace Schinderman up in New York who called somebody she knew at the New York Times. I actually did get a phone call from a New York Times reporter, talked to them for a while, tried to get some publicity. I got my name in the New York Times, but it didn't help. I was trying to get somebody to make an issue about the hospital to try to get help and that failed. One thing I did do was on my way to Austin, in early Wednesday morning, I called my son, Zack who is living there and I said, "Look, I need your help. I don't care how you do it. Find some buses and send them over to the

hospital." So, we were text messaging back and forth as I was driving and as it turns out, he couldn't find buses. He had called bus companies in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, Beaumont, Austin, couldn't find them anywhere because FEMA had basically sucked up all of the buses to send to New Orleans and that's why I made the comment I saw them sitting on the side of the road, that had to be the same buses and they were doing nothing. So, he was looking for buses to try to get to come to Touro. He ultimately, through one of his roommates found, I think on the Internet, found a small bus company that owned two busses. It was outside of San Antonio. These people didn't speak any English. He doesn't speak much Spanish, but he was able to call them and get through to them and he got his roommate who spoke a little Spanish they found a neighbor who spoke a little English and they got him hooked up and he hired the two buses using my VISA card I might add and they agreed to send the two buses immediately to New Orleans and he -- he was very good he told them, you know, because there are all sorts of rules as to how long drivers can drive, and he says, "Look, I don't care if you need one driver, two drivers, five, don't stop, put them all on the bus, just get them there. And I had given him directions to get into the city, which he conveyed to them and César, a driver over there at one of the buses spoke a little English and he had a cell and he got my number in Austin, so we were able to communicate. That was on Wednesday. On Thursday, I went back to the hospital. Nothing was working, the situation was really desperate. I was talking to Les, you know, it would be funny, I would call and somebody would answer the phone to beg Les and they would just beg, "Please, get us help." They were crying, they didn't know what was going to happen. They were worried about the patients. You know, hearing all the reports of gunfire and looting, they didn't know what was going to happen. While I was on the phone get Les, the Fire Marshall, who Les said was a Fir Marshall, somebody with the fire department, came by the hospital and told them that the police and the firemen -- they were letting everybody out of the dome, the police and firemen had decided they could no longer hold the city. They were leaving and we were on our own, as if we hadn't been already. But that, you know, we were at

our own risk and we should leave. Now, we still had patients up on the roof because he hadn't been able to get them out. We still had a lot of staff. Most of the family members had left in their cars by then. Teddy Tedesco, who was the head of the medical staff, he left New Orleans that day when we finally evacuated and never returned, he's now moved out of town, but Teddy is a heart surgeon and was the head of the med staff at the time, Med -- Med Exec Committee. He was there on site and Teddy ended up calling, I think, his dad who lives down in Terrebonne Parrish who, in turn contacted the Sheriff of Terrebonne Parrish and the Sheriff told him the situation and the Sheriff said he will do whatever he can to help. This is one of these things that reads now, if you are kind of picturing this as a movie, it's like the cavalry makes it there. A little while after the Fire Marshall leaves, the Terrebonne Parrish Sheriff's office shows up at the hospital with a fully dressed out swat team, you know, flack jackets, automatic weapons and a bunch of those little mini-buses that will fit 10 or 15 people in them.

RH: Right.

SK: And they come up so that's how they are planning on taking out most of the patients, so they start loading the patients. Now, most of them, the more critically ill patients are gone, so they are now loading these little mini-busses with --

RH: Sick people.

SK: Yeah, with sick people. I don't really know how the Sheriff got the busses, I'm not sure they were all his or whether he borrowed them, but he came with a whole swat team and around the same time, I get a phone call, while I'm on the phone with Les and he's telling me the swat team is there and I get a phone call from César the bus driver who has crossed the bridge, is in the city was coming down Tchoupitoulas when somebody started shooting at him and he got off of Tchoupitoulas to avoid the gunfire and was lost and didn't know where he was and really wanted instructions to get back to the bridge because he didn't want to stay, which I must confess, I don't quite blame him, if

somebody is shooting at you. Now, whether they were really shooting at him or he heard gunfire and thought they were, I don't have any idea, I told him just to sit tight and not move and I would call back to the hospital and I got Les again and told him what the situation was and he sent the head of security at Touro, Johnny Pommereau out to find the buses to bring them back. Johnny grabbed some of the swat team members and as they were going out to look for the buses, apparently they found a couple of National Guard armored vehicles and they all kind of convoyed out and looked. The found the buses and they escorted the buses back to Touro. So, you got the swat team, you got the people loading onto the buses, onto the mini-buses the patients, you got these two now, big greyhound-type buses and all of a sudden the National Guard and the Army actually, I think, shows up with helicopters. The big -- I don't know what they are -- Blackhawks or whatever and they start landing on the roof and they take off the last 25 or 30 patients in these big helicopters. And whoever is, you know, on the ground now, with all the buses and the swat team, people go get their cars and they all line up and they convoy out of the city. They went down Tchoupitoulas and across the bridge and out. I remember because Les was telling me that the helicopters, the last time I spoke to him, the helicopters had appeared and they thought they were going to be able to get everybody out. I remember Les telling me later, this is really when the Fire Marshall came, he thought everything was OK, he was just a desperate situation that everybody would be OK, when the Fire Marshall came, after he left he figured he was really in danger. So, everybody left the hospital and convoyed out, but I can remember when I was talking to Les and he was telling me the buses were now there, the swat team they were loading and the helicopters had just appeared and he had to leave to go up to the roof and I called back about 15 minutes later, maybe, and nobody answered the phone, so they had all evacuated in that time. This was sometime Thursday afternoon now when all this happened after the storm, which had hit Sunday night, Monday morning. And they all made it to Baton Rouge. As an aside, I though it was kind of funny, when I'd left -- when I last talked to Les he wasn't sure, of course, how many people he would be

able to get out in what manner and he had the buses and he said to me, we may need to use some of the buses for patients. I had originally gotten it thinking we needed to evacuate the staff because there were a lot of people there who didn't have cars. We weren't going to leave them behind, we needed to get them out and each bus, I remember, had 54 seats and we could just, you know, what were they going to do, say no, you couldn't cram more people on?

RH: Right.

SK: But we didn't know how we would get the patients out exactly or how everybody would depart so I remember Les telling me that he wanted to use it for staff, but if he had to, he would use it for patients, the two big buses that we had gotten. Thursday, late in the day, I got a phone call and it's César again and he put somebody else on the phone and the man whose name I didn't catch tells me he's in these buses and the buses have gotten separated from the convoy and he doesn't know what to do or where to go, they have pulled over to the side of the road, they are apparently outside of Baton Rouge, so I said to him, do you have patients there and he says, yes, the buses are full of patients. Well, in hindsight, I think he is probably saying they are full of people, but he said they are full of patients so I'm thinking I have got to send the patients someplace, I don't know where to send them, I'm in Austin. I can't reach Les because no cell phones are working and Cesar's was working because he was out of San Antonio. I decided to call -- there is a hospital in Alexandria and I knew we had sent some patients there early in the evacuation process so, I called the hospital asked to speak to the CEO and they put the guy on and I introduced myself, I said, "You don't know me but I'm the Chairman of Touro and didn't he take some of our patients?" He said, "Yes," and I thanked him profusely and said, look I have this other problem. I've got two busloads of patients and they are sitting on the side of the road on Baton Rouge and I don't know where to send them, so he asked me what kind of patients and I said, "Look, I don't have any idea." He said, "Well, if the P-MAC in Baton Rouge on the LSU campus -- They are the Pete Maravich

Assembly Center -- they are triaging people. You should send them there and then he stopped for a minute he says, "You know what, just send them here, I'll take care of your patients for you." He says, "I can't house them here, I got a full hospital, but I will find other hospitals to take them and I will make sure that they get taken care of," which was wonderful. So I call back, I get Cesar's phone number and the buses went on. I can only imaging the guy's shock when they arrive in Alexandria and there is not a single patient on those buses, they were entirely staff people as it turns out. So, they all unload at this hospital, they don't know where to go. But anyway, that's -- I -- I don't know what happened -- they all got left there, I think. So that's kind of the end of that story except to say, as I've told Les, Touro has been around since 1852 and I think it closed for a little while during the Civil War and other than that, I'm the only chairman who has had the great displeasure of -- of closing the hospital.

RH: Closing the hospital.

SK: I was only there for six months or seven months as the chairman and I closed the hospital, but I told Les he has me beat, he was there a week, he had to close the hospital. I will say, afterwards, we moved pretty fast. This is kind of where my story diverges. Now I am dealing with family, and my business, and Touro at that stage.

RH: Didn't you tell me one thing? You go to Houston, Mara is coming to Houston and...?

SK: I picked her up on the way to Austin.

RH: Oh, I had a friend describe going into all the shelters trying to find her partner and saying it had to be like a war scene where you can't find people, and you are looking for people, and you miss people, and you have been worried about people, and then when you finally see them it's an amazing moment.

SK: Well, you know, well, it was real nice when I got to see Mara and when I saw Zack and you just want to -- I probably did more crying in those days than I could ever

imagine. Just to see your family is wonderful and it's funny because for months afterwards, we lived in Baton Rouge and you would see people in Baton Rouge that were sometimes just acquaintances as opposed to real good friends and they would run up to you in the middle of the grocery store and hug you and cry. It was because of the shared experience everybody had been through even if the experience wasn't exactly the same. It was just good to see a face, but the funny thing was, it wasn't unusual. Because if it didn't happen to you, it was always happening to somebody else, you know, whether it was a restaurant or a grocery store or on the street, you would just see people doing it. It was an odd time.

RH: Yeah. So, your story switches over to you've got your family and your business?

SK: Right.

SK: Let me give you a postscript on Touro real quickly if I can.

RH: OK. Please, yes.

SK: I spend a tremendous amount of time over the next well, year, trying to help Touro get back up and operating. We were the first hospital. We actually, went and bought four houses in Baton Rouge to house some of the key staff because we wanted to keep everybody together. We rented some office space there to try to run the hospital operations to get up and operating quickly. As it turns out, we were very fortunate and Les did and everybody did a phenomenal job. We opened the emergency room on September 12th.

RH: Oh my God.

SK: Oh no, September 23, I think and we got the hospital open for inpatient care October 12th. We were the first hospital up and operating. Another one, Tulane, was the next one; they didn't open until the end of February. And even then they are operating

with, I think, about 60 beds, even today, a year later and we're -- we don't have as many beds as we had. We are only operating about 275 beds now we are licensed for about 560, we've always operated about 350. We have about 275. We just can't get the staff. There's no nursing help and monetarily, we are suffering incredibly because of the indigent population, so we are treating all sorts of people that can't pay.

RH: You've become the charity hospital since they've closed Charity.

SK: Well, we're basically the only hospital in the city limits, other than Tulane, which is a much smaller operation, but yeah, people come to us all sorts of charity. We deal with knife wounds and gunshot wounds and we never had to really deal with before. We became the primary trauma center in town until Charity reopened months later out in Jefferson Parrish in Elmwood. But, it's costing us because of the indigent patient base that we are now taking care of and because the nursing staff now, we have had to bring nurses in, there aren't enough in town, we have had to bring them in from other areas of the country and contract work, so that costs a lot more than the local nurses. In fact, we -- and we haven't been able to get enough -- we actually house some of the nurses in the vacant rooms in the hospital so we can get enough nurses to open up the rest of the hospital. But we have -- we have had a census -- an overnight census in the hospital as high as 300 on a bunch of occasions. You can tell there's a disconnect because we have about 275 beds. The other 25 spend the night in the emergency room, or in the hallways. There is nothing we can do, we just put them in the hallways so that the nurses on those floors can at least take care of them, but that's how great the need is. In 2006 the state passed a law that is supposed to help provide some money for indigent care. We haven't gotten any of it yet. I'm not quite sure how that will impact us. We estimate we may be able to recover 30-50% of our cost for taking care of indigent population. It may not be that much, but without that, we are on track to lose about $30 million in indigent care this year.

RH: In one year?

SK: Uh-huh.

RH: My God.

SK: So --

RH: So what does Touro do? What does the President of the Board of Touro do when he looks at a $30 million deficit?

SK: You thank your lucky stars that you have another couple of years in your foundation to sift through that and you hope that things get righted in time and you lobby trying to get things fixed and you figure that you don't want to go bankrupt, but the reason for the hospital is to take care of people, so you are going to do whatever it is you have to do to try to take care of people. St. Charles General Hospital, which is two blocks away, had been sold a few years ago and turned into a long-term acute care facility. Privately owned. They wanted out after the storm. We bought them. And that would give us an expansion of our facilities in an effort to provide more service. That building took a lot of damage in the storm, it hadn't been repaired yet, we are trying to get it repaired so, it hasn't -- it's been an outflow of money rather than any money coming in but we're trying to move things along since the storm and we've undertaken a big strategic planning initiative which is the main thing I wanted to do when I got to be chairman, it just got delayed for a year and now we are off on a new strategic plan and we just hope there will be enough money there and things will get straight. But the hospital is in no danger, as is stands now, of running into monetary, you know, fiscal problems and in the long run, and it seems to be doing real well and seems to be serving the community, which is what we want.

RH: It does and when you are reading about LSU and right up until maybe, I don't know, February, March, so they are losing physicians who are just going other places and they

can't seem -- they have to think about things for a while before they do anything. And Tulane, as you're saying 60 beds and I have some friends whose husbands are physicians there and they don't have enough to do. So there's a kind of a way --

SK: -- They have lost a lot of their patient base, I think, which is strange, but that also impacts Tulane Med School and LSU Med School and how they survive and we've talked to LSU docs and LSU to try to connect up to help them, we are trying to do the same thing with Tulane. I don't know where it will take us.

RH: I was just thinking maybe you should run the medical care for the whole city. Maybe you don't want to.

SK: That would be a big step. And Ochsner is -- has stepped up personally and maybe this is another one we should say is between us again. Ochsner, I think, has been very predatory in this, in terms of the doctors and how they have been handling things. And they have bought the Tenet facilities because Tenet was the big operation in town and they decided to get out, pretty much. Including Memorial, which is the Old Baptist Hospital, was a Tenet facility and Ochsner's has bought them and they are down the street from us. See how Ochsner develops things --

RH: Well, when you say "predatory" what do you mean?

SK: Right after the storm, I think they were trying to make some inroads in terms of market share with some of the other hospitals in town and were trying to pick off particular doctors that used to work at other hospitals or were working in other hospitals and trying to get them to come over to Ochsner, which is a closed system at Ochsner. You're part of the clinic and only the people at the clinic get to practice at the hospital so you are not really in private practice anymore, you are in this clinic setting. A lot of doctors don't like that. We take on all docs. I mean, you know, depending on the quality of care, but they don't work for us, basically and, for example, when -- when Baptist

Memorial flooded and closed we took on 90 to 100 doctors from Memorial who came to us just looking for privileges and I think, you know, we were very open about it and have always had an open policy. We took them in. I don't think, I mean, Ochsner wouldn't do that, I understand at least, this is all second-hand or third-hand, but they wouldn't do it without having these people effectively give up their own practice and move into the clinic there.

RH: OK.

SK: Now, with their purchase of the Tenet facilities, I think they are going to operate those facilities a little differently. But that hospital is no longer operational. Baptist, I think that building is going to have to come down.

RH: Well, it's just interesting the different types of ways you can function as a hospital in the city and that Touro seems to be up and running and doesn't seem to have a lot of bureaucracy standing in the way of also giving care.

SK: Well, there is always bureaucracy, but you try to cut that to a minimum because that is not why you are here. You are not here for a bureaucracy, you are here to give the care and that's what you want and then it's not just the care, you always want to improve the quality of your care.

RH: So, shall we move to your business?

SK: OK.

RH: The other 100 hours of your week.

SK: Right. It'll probably be a little bit shorter story, but my business while I was in Austin, of course, you got to get out of the, I mean I'm in the Touro mode and the law mode. I had left my firm Stone Pigman and started this one with a few other people. It was about

two years before the storm. We have been very fortunate, we have done real well, but when the storm comes, nobody knows what's going to happen. You don't know if your clients are even there anymore or if they have now all of a sudden disappeared. You don't know anything about it. We didn't even know where everybody was. It's not like we had a real disaster plan, so we do now, but I'm not so sure that it would survive much, but, you know, even though we all had everybody else's cell numbers, the cells didn't work, so it didn't matter, you couldn't reach people. While I was in Austin I kept trying to get through to people. I did take a good guess where at least two of my partners were and I was right. One was in Baton Rouge, one was in Marksville, Louisiana and the only reason I know -- I guessed there is because that's where they were born and raised and I knew that one of them had parents there and one of them had in-laws there. So, I got through to them and I also knew an associate that I worked with had been on vacation during the storm. He had gone to visit his parents in New York, so I got their number and got through to him and I asked him, I figure we need to find everybody and the best way of doing that was on the Internet because phones you didn't have any control over. So, I asked him to try to get our Internet up and working because our -- all the servers was down, all the power was gone, nobody could use -- there was no website, no way to reach each other over the Internet. He went to a law firm in Chicago that he had worked for and asked for their help and they put him in touch with their outside computer vendors and through those guys he was able to get the Internet up and working. That took about a week, two weeks to do it and he also then dealing with my partner at Marksville, was able to figure out what we needed in the way of computers and other things and he was able to buy all of those from Chicago and make arrangements to get the people to come down to set it up. When I talked to my partner in Baton Rouge, he was in touch with another partner who was in Baton Rouge and we kind of decided that obviously, we -- we couldn't go back to New Orleans. They were projecting six to eight months before the water got out. And so we had to set up shop someplace. I was perfectly content to stay in Austin, it's a pretty nice place, but we're Louisiana lawyers and kind of being Louisiana

lawyers in Texas didn't make much sense. Baton Rouge was kind of the logical place to be so we decided to set up shop in Baton Rouge. One of my partners, his in-laws are from there and his father-in-law has a building in not a great neighborhood, but he was using the first floor and the second floor was vacant. It wasn't very nice although he did a wonderful job in tearing out carpeting and painting walls, and try to get things done -- at least be livable for us. So we rented his place. We ended up with, you know, we were working there, pulling carpeting out and doing stuff like that and, you know, you get three or four people to a room, you had to go through one office to get to another office in some cases. It wasn't the -- wasn't what we were used to, wasn't the nicest accommodations, but we had a place and he was nice so, he didn't let us, I mean, a lot of law firms went up there and ended up in two or three office buildings, or had to take three- or five-year leases for places. I mean, for us it was just through December and then I knew if we wanted to stay longer, we could. We also had to find housing for everybody. I stayed in Austin for about two days and then I went to Baton Rouge to help. We all drove over. My parents, by the way, the day after we got to Austin, we put them on a plane for California. They went and lived with my brother until November, out in Santa Barbara, which was good for them and good for me.

RH: I still have them in Lafayette somehow, but no they were with you.

SK: They drove with us to Austin. They stayed with us.

RH: OK.

SK: Yes, I'm sorry, we all, we travel as a herd, so we all moved to Austin.

RH: Where one goes, the other (inaudible) for a while.

SK: That's right, that's right. So, we all went back to Baton Rouge and I actually stayed on -- Mara and I stayed on air mattresses and Jake did, too at a friend's aunt's house in Placquemine, Louisiana, which is across the river from Baton Rouge and I would drive

over to Baton Rouge every morning and meet with my partners and we started searching for housing for everybody. Ultimately, the guy I was staying with whose aunt was in Placquemine, ended up buying a house. A lot of people just jumped and bought houses. In fact, I had some friends who bought houses sight unseen in Baton Rouge, paying more than the asking price just to get a place. My friend, that first week, bought a house. It was big enough for all of us, so we ended up living together, the two families, throughout the time we were in Baton Rouge. When we left, his wife's parents, who had lost everything in Lakeview moved in and they still live there.

RH: Now who is this friend?

SK: Ted Moses, LeAnn Opotowski (sp?) Moses. It was her parents, Sidney and Lillian Opotowski, who lost everything and it was her aunt who lived in Placquemine.

RH: OK.

SK: And we lived off of -- in a place called Woodstone in -- off Highland Road and Lee Road in Baton Rouge.

RH: Right.

SK: Horrible traffic, but nice little area. Because all traffic in Baton Rouge was horrible then and probably has been, but it was worse because all the New Orleanians there. We -- my partners and I first searched -- we tried to find everybody and we were trying to find housing. Those were our two big tasks because we now had an office, we had an associate and one of our other partners fool with the equipment and I remember we would get in touch with one person who might know where one other person in the office was and they would try to contact them and that person might know where one other one was and that's how we were able to connect everybody. That and we put notices on message boards on the Internet. For example, I think Nola.com, which is a newspaper was running a message board, anybody could post anything, so, you put like the firm

name in big letters hoping you'd get somebody's attention, and every now and then somebody would see it, and then, you know, you would ask does anybody know where so-and-so is? There were a lot of those things on message boards. People looking for each other.

RH: OK.

END OF PART 2

SK: OK.

RH: Let me say this is Rosalind Hinton speaking with Steve Kupperman and this is tape 3 for Katrina's Jewish Voices. So, tell me again about your law firm and you are setting up and you are finding -- you're gathering in your herd.

SK: Right.

RH: How many do you have in your law firm?

SK: I am trying to think how many we had at the time. There were probably about 16 or so lawyers and probably 10 other people, so it wasn't a massive operation, but you were still looking for people who were scattered all over the country. Ultimately, I know one of them had left and gone to Hawaii where he left his family, others were in New York or Philadelphia, Chicago, Phoenix, different places, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, you know, Georgia; people were scattered. But we tried to get housing for everybody and that was real difficult in Baton Rouge because there was no housing anywhere in Baton Rouge. We found -- some of our partners had friends who lived there like George Freeman, my partner who was there had a, I think it was his sister and brother-in-law had a house in St. Francisville -- outside of St. Francisville on a lake that was kind of their

weekend home and they gave that up to somebody from the firm, Steve Houston, his wife lived out there with their dog. You know, got a 45 and an hour drive into Baton Rouge every morning, but that was OK, it was a place to live, it was nice. We shared the house in Baton Rouge with my friend, Ted and LeAnne and their kids. And we found apartments -- there were apartments that weren't finished being built yet in Gonzalez and we got those and they had hardly finished them for a lot of the people. We found some apartments on Acadian throughway that were not particularly nice, let's just say they were the kind of place that, even in college, you wouldn't want to live there.

RH: Oh my.

SK: And -- but people when we, you know, when we got them we were able to find housing for everybody in the firm. From, you know, the partners to the associates to secretaries, the file clerk and I will say the thing I am probably most proud of is the fact that we found housing for everybody, we didn't fire anybody, there were a lot of firms who fired people, who told lawyers that they were no longer needed at the firm, everybody was worried about the business and didn't know what happened. Some people who had been hired to start work were told by the firms not to show up. And one of the things that I thought was the nicest thing -- the nicest thing about it was not that we didn't fire anybody and everybody had their jobs and we found housing for everybody, but it was that there wasn't anybody around here who thought differently, which tells me I was at the right place. I had gone with the right group of people to start my own firm. It was just kind of an assumed thing. But we found people, you know, I mean, some of the secretaries came with the mother, and their sisters, and brothers and, you know, people were crammed into these small places, but they were places to live. We -- I got in touch with Allan Bissinger, I don't know if you are taking to Allan...?

RH: We've -- we've already talked.

SK: Because Allan spent time on his roof, I know and I saw him, I tried to track him down. I heard he was in Baton Rouge and I found him, he put in our telephone system for us in a hurry and, you know, all the things you don't think about, you know, you got people they are going to need a refrigerator, a microwave for a little kitchen that you are kind of setting up in a makeshift way, so we did that. And, you know, got all of that. And got everybody settled and the firm started to operate I'd say operate, that's using the term loosely, about two weeks after the storm we were able to move in. Nothing worked right for a long time, some people were real busy, other people had nothing to do because your clients were gone, all the courts were closed, nobody knew where anybody was. It's not like you could, you know, we tried to find clients. We were able to track some of them down. And ultimately, it worked out fine. But we were up there -- some group came back in late October when our building here in New Orleans opened up. I came in early November when Newman opened up for Jake and -- on kind of a piecemeal basis, a real small -- and the last people left there in, well, the office closed in December when Christmas break came for people in school. There was one or two -- there were one or two secretaries who remained up there until February or March and they would commute down here everyday to work because they had their houses, they had the places we had found them. They had nowhere to live down here, so they stayed up there.

RH: Tell me about getting your family settled.

SK: Well, that was not much of a story. It was much more emotional than anything else because it was Mara, and Jake, and me. We left the dog in Austin with Zack because I had no idea what the circumstances would be in Baton Rouge. He showed up again to live with us. Zack came over to visit in late October, the dog came back at that time, but the first thing, Jake had started school the week before the storm. I think August 22 was his first day of school and so all the schools had started in this area, so when the storm hit and we realized that nobody was coming back home soon, we had to figure out what to do with him and school. The only school -- the private school -- there is only one in

Baton Rouge that belongs to the same association as Newman here, where he was in school. And so we tried to get him into that. It's Episcopal school. We have no connections in Baton Rouge, we are not Episcopalian. I understand that they had a hierarchy as to who they selected. Some of it was first-come-first-served, some of it was whether you were Episcopalian, some of it was your connection to Baton Rouge, whether somebody in your family had attended. Ultimately, we didn't qualify for any of those Episcopal decided to have a night school. I think most of the kids from St. Martin's were going to go to school there so they hired somebody, I think a man from Philadelphia if I am not mistaken, I have forgotten his name, a very nice man, and then they picked up teachers from around the area to come teach in a night school there. So Jake was accepted into the night school. I didn't like it at all, but Jake was absolutely fine with it. I guess it fits a 16 year olds, you know, schedule. He could sleep till noon, he would go to lunch with Mara, he would go to school, he would come home at 9:30, 10 o'clock at night. I waited up for him, he would have dinner, I would go to bed and I don't know what he did after that. I'm sure he was up playing video games and talking to his friends on the Internet. And then it would start all over again, but I couldn't bug him about his homework or anything else, so he was perfectly happy. And he grew up a lot. But originally, we, you know, I meant the thought was we will all be in -- we will all be together and that -- when we got to Baton Rouge and things weren't working out very well with the schools we tried other schools and couldn't get in because they were already jammed. I mean, it was night school. I tried to get him into day school and they wouldn't take him. They already were overcrowded. As it turns out, the day school, and I don't know why Episcopal did this, but greed is my view, but the people who got into the day school, they made them pay for a year. They made them commit for a year of tuition even though most of them knew they were only going to be there for a semester. The night school, it was only for the night tuition for that one semester. And the night school tuition was a lot cheaper. Later on, only in February or so, I think, Episcopal ended up relenting on the day school and made people only pay for the one semester instead of the whole year,

which was good. And Newman, of course, kept everybody's tuition even though nobody went to school there. But they give you credit for whatever you spent elsewhere against future tuition. So, we thought we weren't happy with Episcopal, we weren't happy wit the night school, we didn't think he would get as good an education there. We looked around, there were some terrific schools in Austin, my brother had him set-up to go to school in Santa Barbara, they -- he had already talked to the principal out there. They were willing to take him. People all over were terrific. Teddy and LeAnn had a daughter who is just a couple months younger than Jake, but a year behind him in school and they were so unhappy with the situation in Baton Rouge, they sent her off to boarding school up in New Jersey. A lot of people did that. Some of my partners split up their families and our choice -- we were really unhappy with the educational issue, but our choice -- we -- we thought we could send Jack away like out to California or maybe to Austin to live with his brother and Mara didn't want to do that, so there was still up to whether Mara would go to California or to Austin and live there with Jake and that would mean that they were separated from me. And, you know, you just, you sift through that and you make a decision and then you revisit it about 20 times because you are not sure whether you are being selfish. We made the decision to keep the family together. We wanted to stay together but, you know, you don't know whether you are being selfish in wanting to be with your son and keep the family together or whether he would be better off someplace else. I guess we'll never know, but we made the decision to stay together. And that was -- that was a hard decision just because you want to do what is right for your kid, but you are not sure what that is.

RH: Right.

SK: So, that's kind of the personal side of that. That and I guess things that probably, you've heard from everybody else which are things, you know, the intangibles, everyday you would go to work and you would come home and all of a sudden it would dawn on you that the day you came home seemed an awful lot different than the day you left.

Something had happened during the course of the day or during the course of a week. You couldn't describe it, you couldn't put your finger on it, but there was something different, your emotions were totally different or you had run the gamut without even realizing it. You know, everyday seemed like an eternity just because things changed and you kept waiting to have the city and your life go back to normal and I realized pretty early, it is normal, it's just a different normal than the normal I was used to and it's remained kind of like that since the storm. Everything is different, but I don't know exactly how, but your view of things is different and somehow, things changed and you really weren't even conscious of it so much as to how they were changing at the time.

RH: So, you were -- you were up there and did you have a sense that you were -- when you would get back? I mean, you were really living in this indefinite period of your life.

SK: That's true and no, I didn't know when we would get back. I told everybody from the very beginning, we will all be back by Christmas. I don't know why I said that, but I just figured it's never going to be as --

RH: To make everybody feel better?

SK: Well no, it's never going to be as bad as you think, at least, that was my view and everybody was back around Christmas, of course, it's been horrible for a lot of people. We were lucky the house didn't flood and we could move back in.

RH: When did you first come back into the city?

SK: I first came back, I don't know, maybe 10 days after the storm.

RH: Really?

SK: Ten days after I left, probably. And I can remember we left a car in the parking lot at Touro and we went back to get it and it had no gas, in fact, none of the cars that were left

in the parking garage at Touro had gas. We found out the police had, you know, they didn't have gas to run their patrol cars, so they had siphoned off all the gas from any cars they could find to try to get their cars to run. But I guess it was about 10 days later we came back and boarded up the broken windows in the house, you know, that had been broken that we hadn't had boards on before and tried to clean up some.

RH: So, did you just...

SK: I came back and forth a bunch.

RH: Did you just try to go into your neighborhood, did you try to look around and...?

SK: No well, the first couple of trips were just to come back and -- I went to Touro a couple of times, but the first few times we would just come back to the house, clean up, try to get things done at my house, my parent's house, things like that.

RH: And Mara had left also, just thinking she would be gone for a few days so I suppose you were picking up?

SK: Well, we would pick up some things when we came to town. Clothes primarily we didn't want to move a lot -- a lot of stuff. In fact, I can remember Teddy and LeAnn got their bed out of their house and carted it up to Baton Rouge. We slept on an air mattress for three months. Actually, a succession of air mattresses. Between the dog and Teddy's kids, they seemed to break after a while, but you know, I didn't want to carry a lot because it would mean carrying a lot of stuff back.

RH: Were -- were there other people that you were interested in finding? Your friends? You know that you were...?

SK: Absolutely. In --

RH: People in Lakeview? I don't know if you had friends there?

SK: Well yeah, I did and for some reason, and I don't even remember how I was able to connect up, and most of them I knew where they were. I think they were looking for us, we were looking for them. Once you found one or two people, you found the rest. So, I'm not -- I pretty much knew where -- where people were. In fact, Harold and Carol Asher are good friends and, I'm not even sure how we connected up with them, but somehow, actually I do know because their son went to Texas -- University of Texas, which is in Austin, so he was in touch with Zack, so we knew where they were. They were in Austin and they -- Harold actually had rented an apartment and then decided they were going to stay in Austin for a while, so that was one of the houses that we were able to use to put staff in. He gave that to us and they ended up, they lost their house out at the lakefront and they ended up coming back in and living in our house for about a month.

RH: Oh, really?

SK: In New Orleans before we moved back. I think they lived in a whole bunch of different houses in a while, in a few months. But everybody was finding each other, you just didn't see each other all the time, but you'd find them.

RH: Was there anything you kind of intentionally did to kind of make life normal? Or was it just normal, just -- this is a dumb -- this is a dumb question.

SK: No, no, it's not a dumb question. I hadn't thought about it before, but no, I don't think so. You know everything was strange, even things that are normal were strange. Like, I was living in a nice neighborhood, a very residential place. I would take the dogs out on a walk at night and take them out in the morning and it was very civilized residing there but somehow it wasn't my place. I'm living with another family and it was just different. There really wasn't a normal and I can't really think of anything that -- that was normal about it.

RH: And even going into work, how did that feel? You had most of your staff with you, you didn't lose a lot of people?

SK: No, in fact we lost one person who went to Houston and didn't want to come back. And that was the file clerk and that's the only person. Everybody else got there.

RH: So, did you connect at all to the Jewish community up in Baton Rouge, which was...?

SK: Not really. We went -- the Jewish community in Baton Rouge -- we would hear things, we went over to go to temple once at the synagogue over there, we actually had the wrong time so we missed the services. And, you know, there were constant e-mails or phone calls, kind of word-of-mouth stuff that you would hear and it was really more the New Orleans Jewish community was doing something using the Baton Rouge community as a base or in conjunction with it. But we really didn't -- we were non-participatory. We had a lot of our friends who we knew from Baton Rouge or were in Baton Rouge who were participating, we would hear what was going on, but we didn't really participate, I'm sad to say. It's too much. We just had too many things going on --

RH: Right, you had a few things going on.

SK: -- that was not something that was high up on the list.

RH: I guess I want to ask you a little bit though about just -- were you proud of -- of the Jewish community through this crisis? Have you thought about that at all?

SK: Not in particular.

RH: OK.

SK: Not particularly have I thought about it as opposed to. I can remember, as I said, we were kind of non-participatory in a lot of it. Some of it I found disorganized, but that's to

be expected. Number one, I'm not so sure it's ever highly organized even in the best of times and this was not the best of times. But I didn't view this as Jewish event. I don't know of Jews who stood up or stood out, I mean, I think there were a lot of people helping other people but I don't think that that was something unusual or particular to the Jewish community or any other community. To some extent, I speak from ignorance in that regard though, but I didn't get the feeling that it was -- you know, Mara went to a meeting I couldn't go to at the time, but she went to a meeting that was for the Jewish community and it was really kind of a New Orleans/Baton Rouge meeting and I remember her coming back very disappointed. She wanted very much to get involved in doing something with the Jewish community and that's how this was kind of billed and when she came back she said it was basically everybody saying what they had done and kind of patting themselves on the back for how well they had done and there really wasn't anything there that they were saying we need help doing this, doing that that she could kind of participate in, which is why she had gone.

RH: Well, I mean I think of Touro as a Jewish institution that performed how through this crisis? Do you think of it as that way?

SK: As a Jewish institution?

RH: Yeah.

SK: Yeah.

RH: OK.

SK: Yeah, we are a not-for-profit faith-based hospital. How's that? The only one in the city as a matter of fact. The only one in the area. But no, it's a Jewish hospital. I've always viewed it that way and I'm proud of the way it worked. I don't think that Les and the staff get enough credit for what they did.

RH: Right. Do you -- you yourself has -- indulge me with these questions for a minute here -- has being Jewish -- has it -- have you looked to that at all over the past year or thought about that in anyway about how you have gotten through this?

SK: Yeah, but I'm not sure I have an answer for you, but I have thought about it. I mean, I have always considered myself Jewish. I'm not particularly religious, but I've always considered myself Jewish. And the Jewish part, if I wasn't Jewish, I guess I wouldn't have been on the Touro Board to begin with and that's played such a big role in my life the last year, year and a half. But I'm not -- I'm not sure the answer -- that I have an answer to your question except to say, yes, I've thought about it, but I'm not sure that I have a real answer as to what exactly what I've thought about it. I've just really haven't reached any conclusions.

RH: Is there anything now that you're back here in the city -- are there things that -- that you miss from your life before?

SK: I don't know there are a lot of things that are different.

RH: Yeah.

SK: I don't know if I miss any. I miss, I guess I miss a sense of normalcy. I miss just a sense that everything is OK, or is going to be OK, that kind of security. There isn't that sense, anymore, I kind of miss the sense of feeling confident in -- in my government because I don't. You know, I mean, I know your question is probably intended to be more cultural New Orleans or institutional New Orleans and I'm not sure that I can answer it in that way, but I think I miss some of these kind of emotional intangible things, you know, more than -- than some of the other more tangible matters.

RH: So, in the same vein are there things you took for granted before that you will never take for granted again?

SK: Well, never is an awful long time.

RH: Right, OK.

SK: Yeah, I don't know. I guess --

RH: You are not taking for granted now.

SK: Right. Sure, I mean, you know, you know, your family, your friends just your life style, what you are used to. You know, that kind of thing and as I said, I think the biggest thing is just assuming or expecting it to go on instead of realizing that, you know, in a moment it can change. The vagaries of life kind of answer that you get, you know?

RH: Right. Are you -- are there anything over the past year you look back and these -- these are kind of personal questions here all of these, these are kind of reflecting back on a year and, you know, things that you're grateful for.

SK: Sure there are always things you are grateful for but, you know, I guess the easiest thing to do to talk about whether you are grateful or not grateful is to compare yourself with other people who are in the same situation. I'm real grateful. You know, my business is strong, I'm making a good living, my family is together, nobody got hurt, nobody died, the house is still OK. My life was basically -- before the storm was basically, in what everybody calls the slit above the river or the isle of denial, however you want to, I mean, you know, from uptown along the river to downtown and the Quarter, in the Faubourg that was kind of where my life was 90% of the time and that's all still here, so I'm kind of thankful for that. You know, I'm not so sure that I could tell you, "Ooh, I'm thankful, you know Galatoire's is still around." I am, personally, but I can't say that that's what jumps out at, you know, or that I won't take for granted anymore. It's really the personal relationships and I will say that some of the people -- I think everybody -- everybody that I know of rose to the occasion and it's -- it's -- it's very heartwarming.

RH: In your own personal story, do you have some heroes?

SK: Well sure, a lot, I mean, you know I guess it depends on the gradations of heroes. I think Les and most of the staff over at Touro, I mean, these were extremely difficult conditions. If you put yourself back in time, these were people who heard that the city was flooding, they didn't know what happened to their family, they are hearing about shootings and lootings, but most of them stay at the hospital, they don't leave their post and they are there to take care of these people who are very ill and they stay on and they do stuff under the most trying of circumstances and probably the worst circumstance is lack of knowledge, you know, hearing all the rumors that are going around because that, you know, nighttime for some reason always make things more troublesome. Well, the rumors make it more troublesome, it's the lack of knowledge. You don't really know what's going on. That's tough and all of those people reacted really well and then you hear about what other people went through. Their stories are different, but everybody had to do something and it's -- it's pretty amazing what a lot of people did in their personal lives to survive and keep their families together. We have a secretary who has worked with us since she was about -- she worked with us in high school when she was 16, she is now 32 and single and she -- she basically took care of her family. Her mother, her sister, her niece and nephew. There were about 12 or 13 people she was taking care of and dragged them around the country. Went up to Arkansas for a while, they were in Mississippi, they came back to Baton Rouge and, you know, I mean I don't know all the details of her story, but that's somebody that'd be a hero in my book.

RH: Also, I guess, I want to know if after all you've been through -- one thing I really want to know is are you -- do you have any post-traumatic stress?

SK: I don't know. Is one of the signs -- I don't think so. But you know, I guess you never know. But no, I don't think so.

RH: Do you dream about it or get the --

SK: Oh, I used to think about it all the --

RH: -- break into sweat?

SK: I used to think about it all the time but no, I don't think about it or dream about it anymore. You know, you just go on with life. Now, I'm thinking other things that have to get done.

RH: Is there anything that you want to do differently now, since the storm or any things you do differently just concretely? I assume you have an evacuation plan.

SK: I hate to say this, but no.

RH: No, OK. (laughter)

SK: I tell my wife the next time a storm comes, like for this year, I'm going back to the hospital because I want to be there for it and she, of course, told me no, I'm not going to the hospital. We're leaving town. But our former evacuation spots all occupied now with other people. You know, I don't know. It's hard to say. I think, you know, there is probably more, you know, more of a feel for taking time to be with your family or to appreciate friends and probably I'm less risk-averse. I mean, you know, there were trying times and things worked out OK. So, I kind of feel like well, they will work out again, you know, whatever happens we can handle it and we can handle it as a family or as Touro as an institution, you know, and it will be OK.

RH: Let me ask a couple questions about the city. How do you think things are going? What do you need to happen here in New Orleans?

SK: You need a leader, which we don't have. I think the most interesting phenomenon is that New Orleans has been a pretty laid-back city without much citizen involvement and I think there is a lot of citizen involvement out there. I think a lot of it is going wasted right

now. I think a lot of people would like to get involved and like to do something and like to be active in helping bring the city back but they are not sure what to do and if there was a leader on the horizon that could get people enthused and it wouldn't take much, I think people would react very well to that. We don't have that leader so I think a lot of that is going wasted. But at the same time while I am very disappointed in that and would say things are going very poorly as a result, I also think that things are going -- I think things like that -- the fact that people are enthusiastic, the fact that people are enthusiastic, and the fact that people want to get involved, whereas before nobody seemed to care, are very good signs for the future. I think people seem to be more open to things, you know, some of the problems got washed away with the flood. Now, will they come back? Maybe so. I think the school system is much better. It's not really a school system anymore, but I think the charter schools have worked very well, certainly nothing could have worked worse.

RH: How do you feel about the changing demographics in the city? I mean, do you think it's going to stick, do you think there's a plan to really make sure that it's a smaller, whiter community? How do you feel about that?

SK: I don't know. I don't know. Maybe I'm not cynical enough, I just don't think it's that nefarious. You know, there are a lot of people in Lakeview who are white that were damaged and lost their homes and I don't want to say they are in the same boat as, you know, blacks in the lower Ninth, but they confront the same types of problems. I don't think they are having an easy time of it. Now, they have more money, they can come back, but it's still the same problems that people, I think, confront. Do I think that there is a plan to keep out blacks and not whites? No, I don't think so. I do think that I'm not so sure that the, you know, you talk about a change in demographics and whether it will stick, I'm not so sure there is much of a change in demographics. I mean I just -- I don't think anybody really knows where the city stands today. I mean everybody assumes it's primarily white, but I'm not so sure that's the case and certainly, I think the election didn't'

show that. The election for mayor didn't show it, so I'm not really sure where we stand or how it's changing. You know, you would like to keep the culture because that's what makes New Orleans New Orleans, but at the same time it's that culture of -- of -- kind of somewhat laziness or entitlement that is hurting the city and holds it back. So, you would like to keep one and not the other part of it. So, now that I've rambled on for a while, the answer is I don't know what the answer is. You know, I don't want to lose the things that make New Orleans special. Not that I can identify them, but you know if -- if there were more jobs and less poverty I'd be all in favor of it.

RH: Children.

SK: Right.

RH: If you want another generation, you have to have children.

SK: Right. However, there seems to be a lack of kids and a lack of elderly. I suspect the elderly were the most hurt by the storm. In fact, there was a legal matter there has been a lot of spikes in succession work since the storm.

RH: Really?

SK: Yeah.

RH: Do you think the racial tensions here are worse than they were before?

SK: Yeah. I think the major has been divisive. And, you know, New Orleans has always struck me as an odd place. It's a very integrated city. It's not like some cities where there is an area that's black and an area that's white and, you know, never the two shall meet. A lot of New Orleans is very integrated. I mean uptown and the main part of the city, I think, is very integrated. Now, there are some areas that have devolved like New Orleans East has become primarily black, the lower Ninth is primarily black, Lakeview

primarily white, but -- but there are sections that are very intermingled. The older parts of the city, you know, you can have -- very salt and pepper. At the same time, it's a city that's, you know, I mean, you had integration problems 50 years ago and things of that nature and historically, it was integrated but I think it was a little different. I'm not quite sure how the culture made it a little different then other places and I think that's what's happened with the storm is it's really caused the bad parts of that to come out and not any of the good parts. And I think that the mayor and the storm have been racially divisive when we really should have everybody pulling together for a common goal whether you are white or black, it's to get the city back up and operating and get people back in their houses and get jobs, you know, back so people can bring their families home and live and make some money and go on about their lives. People seem to play on the racial aspect and that doesn't help anybody.

RH: You think it's a more dangerous city? Do you feel that in any way?

SK: No, I don't feel anymore dangerous than it was.

RH: Tell me this, now that you've -- we're getting close to the end you'll be happy --

SK: I've kept you here a long time.

RH: A sense of home. What does that mean to you? You have been through a year where everything has been turned upside down, what does it -- if you can reflect on that with me or for me --

SK: A sense of home, huh?

RH: Yeah.

SK: I don't know.

RH: What that might that mean to you.

SK: I don't know. It's hard to say, you know. I could come up with a cliché, "Home is where the heart is," you know, but I can tell you that -- do you know what it means to miss New Orleans has -- has taken a precedent and even with Mara who never was the, I mean, she liked New Orleans, but you know, for years wouldn't have minded moving back to New York. I don't think she ever wants to go anywhere, she likes it right here and is content to stay right here forever. I think when we moved up to Baton Rouge, we kind of realized what we missed, not that we could verbalize it, but we did miss New Orleans. It was special to us. But, you know, that's -- what does home mean? I don't know, it's friends and family I guess. I'm not sure how to answer your question.

RH: Are you frustrated with people who leave the city?

SK: No, I can understand it. I wish they wouldn't.

RH: Have you lost some good friends who've left?

SK: I know people who have left. I don't think any of my real close friends have left, but I know people who have gone. I mean, some people I can understand for their livelihood or their place in life, it's time for them to go. Other people just, I think, don't want to put up with the hassle and for that group I kind of -- I'm not angry with them, but I don't have an awful lot of sympathy. I understand it, but I kind of look at it, "Well, if you really like the place," and maybe they didn't, but if this is really home than you try to stay as long as you can and help it recover, get back on its feet and make of it something that you would like to see it become instead of just leaving.

RH: So, there's a kind of an opportunity here wouldn't you think?

SK: Yeah, well that's one reason I think my son Zack is here in law school now. He is -- he's a big opportunity now I hope he's not wrong.

RH: Did he -- did he transfer from?

SK: No, he had gone to UT undergrad and lived there and then had taken a year off and worked over in Austin, that's where he was during the storm and then he came to law school the year afterwards.

RH: So, he doesn't want to be a dispatcher for a bus company?

SK: No, I don't think so.

RH: Is there anything you would like to add to this interview? Anything that I haven't asked?

SK: I can't think of anything. If I do, I'll call you 3 o'clock this morning when I came up with it and let you know.

RH: OK. You can, you got my number.

Sk: No, I can’t think of anything.

RH: I want to thank you.

SK: Thank you.

RH: This has really been -- you have given a lot of yourself here and I think it's a real important story you've told.

SK: Well thank you and thank Jason who's been sitting here quietly and uncomfortably in the corner behind the camera. No, but thanks. I think it's great that you're doing this. I don't know what use people will make of it in the future, but at least it will be there for somebody to maybe learn something from it.

RH: Yeah, and it will be something totally different than what we wanted to teach. I promise you.

SK: Right.

RH: Thanks.

[END OF INTERVIEW]