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[Music]

Buck Hutcherson: There you go. Well, all right, you gotta stop me.

Pauletta Hughes: On behalf of Crossroads to Freedom, Rhodes College and the Mike Curb Institute, I want to thank you for taking your time to share your story with you today. I'm Pauletta Hughes, a senior at Rhodes College, along with Dr. John Bass, head of the Mike Curb

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Institute and I'm honored to meet you and learn from your inspirational story. Today's interview will be archived online at the Crossroads to Freedom website. First of all let's start off with some basic biographical information to get us started. For the record, please state your name.

Buck Hutcherson: Buck Hutcherson.

Pauletta Hughes: If you don't mind telling us what year were you born?

Buck Hutcherson: 1823. *[Laughter]* No. I was born in 1943, darling.

Pauletta Hughes: So where were you born and raised?

Buck Hutcherson: I was born in Slatton, Mississippi.

Pauletta Hughes: Okay.

Dr. John Bass: That's where my wife was from, you know?

Buck Hutcherson: Really?

Dr. John Bass: Yeah, it is.

Buck Hutcherson: Well, she knows where Birmingham Ridge is.

Dr. John Bass: I'd say she does, yes.

Buck Hutcherson: Well, that's where I was born. I was born in a log cabin on a kitchen table. I really was. I'm not lying to you. I was born on Birmingham Ridge, John Robertson's place, an old man, and that was the man's name,

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and we lived there for a while and then moved over to Woods Jones' place here. We're sharecroppers, you know? I mean, we're sharecroppers all of our lives and, of course, we stayed there, you know? We lived there in Saltillo for a while and then moved to Tupelo and so that's when I started joining bands and setting on the front porch, playing my guitar, trying to learn how to do this and to do that, you know, and so, yeah, but Saltillo was where I was born at but Tupelo was actually where I grew up and then I moved to Memphis very early, so.

Pauletta Hughes: So after you moved to Memphis what was it like, what was your neighborhood like?

Buck Hutchenson: Oh, in Memphis?

Pauletta Hughes: Mmm-hmm.

Buck Hutchenson: Well,

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we came – I came to Memphis I believe it was about 1957 and I was just a mere lad. I was about 13, 12 or 13 years old and I lived – I came up here with a guy named Gene Simmons. He was the guy that had the big hit on “Haunted House,” [sings] “Just movin’,” he was the guy. Of course when we came up here in '57 that was way before he had the hit but he had this. Anyway, I was still going to school and wasn't doing any good at all and all that, you know, and so they were coming up here, and I told Gene, I said, “Man, I don't wanna go to **with you**.” He said, “Well,” he said, “I don't know how you're gonna do it” because he already had had bass, drums and guitar, you know? So anyway my brother was

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playing bass so what they did they switched it around and my brother started playing drums and that left a space for a bass player so I started playing bass with 'em and I came up here, like I said, that is 1957, I think I was about 13 years old, you know, and then we played. I'll never forget it. We used to live – there used to be a place on McLemore called May's Grill. It was right down – back then it was the Aurora Theater, now it's Stax Records, and we lived up over May's Grill there and it was just a great little place. She served lunches in the afternoon and there was rooms that you

rented up over there so, anyway, we started working with Eddie Bond and actually we didn't work with him

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and we actually didn't work with him. He started booking places for Gene and the way it all came about was back then Eddie was just a – he was the big DJ back then down in Memphis. See he had been at KWAM there in West Memphis from a long, long time, and I mean, he was really, almost a god in Memphis when it came to music, he really was. I won't never forget the guy that I met. At that we played Danny's Club, let's see, it was Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday night and we played Mill's Hideaway in Millington Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and the guy that Tucker replaced on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night was Willie Mitchell, one of the greatest guys you'll ever meet in

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your life, and back then he had four black guys singing with him and their name was The Four Dukes. Do you remember? Good, son, I'll tell you what, he had the deal going on, he really did, and so we did that for, I don't know, I think it was about a year or two and we went to Canada and stayed up there, I don't know, for a while, not very long, and then I came back to Tupelo, and I stayed in Tupelo for, I don't know, about a little less than a year, and that's when I came to Memphis and then I started working here and so but I was so young in Danny's Club and that other one, too, they wouldn't let me stay in clubs on break. I couldn't even stay on the bandstand, I had to go out and set in the car. [Laughter]

[0:07:00] *Begin Segment 2*

That's how it was so, anyway, that's where all that went and then, of course, like I said, you know, I was playing Lil' Abner's. Gene and all them after all that happened out there, yeah, that's where we went to Canada and everything. Then they went on and did something else, I don't know, went on playing but I hung around Tupelo there for a while and that's when I said, "Well, I'm going back to Memphis and then I came out here and started working at Lil' Abner's. You where that used to be right there on 51?"

Dr. John Bass: Mmm-hmm.

Buck Hutchenson: I would go up there and so part of Jerry's band – well, Jerry back then he was just using the bass and drums and, of course, he was begging us to come out and playing, like, from 12:00 a.m. to about 6:00 a.m., and, back then, Buster ____ was with him and I reckon

him and maybe one other place, there wasn't very many after-hours places in Memphis then at all and so he was one of 'em.

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He run – he had the Rubber Room that he run a band. Did you ever – I always wondered if this lady is still – have you ever heard of a lady named **Little Barbara Perry**?

Dr. John Bass: I don't know, no.

Buck Hutcherson: Man!

Dr. John Bass: It sounds sort of familiar but I don't know.

Buck Hutcherson: Boy that little woman could sing, a little black girl. God, man! She could really sing and they were working the Rebel Room, like, from 9:00 a.m. 'til 1:00 a.m., and then Buster would close the Rebel Room and he had – that's when he opened up the downstairs and first it was the old Killer Club then he turned it into Peppermint Lounge but, anyway, I mean, when the band quit upstairs, every one of 'em just come downstairs. *[Laughter]* In other words, boy, he had a thing going on but anyway, Jerry's band, you know? They would come in

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late hours. That's what pickers do, you know, and so I got to talking to them and then I said, "Well, I gotta _____, right there," so that was all that, so – did I cover about everything? *[Laughter]*

Dr. John Bass: Just going back, so you're learned to play in Tupelo when you were in Tupelo. When did you get your first guitar?

Buck Hutcherson: Hell, I was about eight years old.

Dr. John Bass: Uh-huh.

Buck Hutcherson: I was still in Saltillo.

Dr. John Bass: Okay, Saltillo.

Buck Hutcherson: You know, Saltillo and Tupelo, they's not but, what, about, what, ten miles between 'em there, right there on 45, and I'll never forget it. My dad was already – you know, he lived to be 105.

Dr. John Bass: Wow.

Buck Hutchenson: And he was already old, you know, back when I was, like, eight years old, you know, and there was a – back then, there was no such a time hardly as actually a music store, you

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know, where you go in and buy guitars and basses and things. See, back then, they didn't have nothing. Down and around where I was I at down there they didn't and so you would go to the feed store. That's where you bought your guitar and we had a **Phillips** Feed Store right across from the courthouse in Tupelo and daddy went and bought me a Stella guitar and my dad was real funny, of course, you know, he was real country and I'm just so proud of it, you know, [laughter] and he come in and, of course, arthritis had done drawn his hands, it was just, Good lord, you now? He would come in and brought that guitar and he done like this and he said – he did [plays guitar chords], and he'd make three chords, you know, the passing chords and he said, "Now, by George, if

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you can't go from there you won't never learn how to play, that's all you'll never need, [laughter] and I did it. I took them three chords and just went on from there, you know, picking that up from different people, kinda like you do now, you know, and the one good thing was back in those days, you know, wasn't long after we moved to Tupelo that Elvis came along, and the fairgrounds in Tupelo, that was their main hangout. I mean just about every month at the Fairgrounds, Mississippi-Alabama, Fair and Dairy Show, about every month; they all come to Tupelo at the fairgrounds. It cost like \$1.25 or \$1.00 or whatever it cost to get in, you know, and you could go, you know, and stand there, you know, by the bandstand and, back then, you know, that was great pick

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ers back for that time and they were – had a stage, like out in the grandstands, you know, and you could go down and stand right there in saddle like Carl Perkins or Scotty Moore or whatever, whoever was on stage, and you could stand there and if you knew anything about guitar you could watch their fingers and you could just about tell what they were doing, you know, and where they went. Well, you'd run back to the house and grab your guitar,

[laughter] you know, but I guess that's what people do now, you know, but that's the way I learned a lot and then I learned a lot from other people, just – you know, and I picked up a lot and learned a lot off the radio and all of that, so.

Dr. John Bass: So your first lessons were with Scotty Moore and Carl Perkins.

Buck Hutchenson: *[Laughter]*

Dr. John Bass: That's pretty cool.

Buck Hutchenson: I was at – I've got to tell you this here. Now this was really strange but I'm glad I did it and I wouldn't take nothing for it

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so they're having a big homecoming for Elvis in Tupelo. Well, I didn't have no money – I mean none – and I don't know how or where I was then, I just, Good lord, I was real young and I was about 12, 11 or 12. This is before that weekend. I can't remember it and I was trying to figure out any way in the world to buy a ticket. I knew I was going. I knew it. I said, "Look, I don't care what I have to do, I am going to this. I've got to see Elvis Presley," and I wound up around the grandstands there where they played, where he played, where they all did. They had a cyclone fence around 'em, all of 'em. Well, I knew there had to be a way to either get under that fence or over it. *[Laughter]*

0:14:00] CUT – begin Segment 3

I didn't know. I walked around that thing, man, about three, four, five or six times, and I found my place, and somebody had took a shovel or something and dug a little drainage ditch, and under the – I crawled under that fence. I really, really did and I was standing there within – I went but about three feet from the stands and I saw that whole show, his homecoming, boy. Man, I stood there and watched Scotty Moore, Good lord, and that lick that he did on "My Baby Left Me," *[sings] dang-da-la-da-da-da-da-dang-da-doo*, with all that reverb and that cool echo, it was really something. Well, I mean, you know, I'm not no young fellar now. I'll never forget that if I was to live to be 500 years old I'd never forget that but, you know,

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it was really neat. I bought a picture. My mom passed away two, three years ago, I can't remember when it was. She had a picture hanging in her hallway that I bought from Elvis the first time that he ever came back to Tupelo. "That's All Right, Mama" had been out for about three months, four months, whatever it was. He came back to Tupelo. Well, in my mind and a lot of us kids, you know, he was just a huge star because he was just different than anything and so I said, "Well, I gotta buy a picture" and he was standing backstage and I went back and told him, expressed that I wanted to buy one of the pictures. He said, "Yeah," and then he just looks at me and he signed it. Now they always give you. You didn't have to ask 'em, they just --

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that was the thing, you know, but I noticed that he was shaking like a leaf and me being young like that, you know, I couldn't understand it. I wondered what was wrong and before I walked off I asked him. I said, "Why are you shaking?" He said, "I've _____" and I walked off, and I didn't know what he was talking about but would later on. He had stage fright. You couldn't tell it when he got on stage but he did, back stage, big time, so, anyway, I went on, and I didn't even know what he was talking about as far as being scared but then I learned, you know, that he had stage fright because he was just broken into all this now and this stuff happened so fast with him that you could just imagine it would scare anybody to death so, anyway,

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my mama kept that picture in the hall for years and years and years. She really did.

Dr. John Bass: So Elvis was in for the Tupelo kids. He was a big deal, right? As a kid in Tupelo [crosstalk] --

Buck Hutcherson: Oh, yes.

Dr. John Bass: you saw him as [crosstalk] --

Buck Hutcherson: Oh, yes.

Dr. John Bass: Yeah.

Buck Hutcherson: Yeah, you know, he was born not too far from where I lived.

Dr. John Bass: Mmm-hmm.

Buck Hutcherson: Over the side of _____ .

Dr. John Bass: So it was known to you, all that. He was a Tupelo kid who went to Memphis and made it?

Buck Hutcherson: Oh, yeah.

Dr. John Bass: Yeah.

Buck Hutcherson: Oh, yeah, yeah. My two brothers – I'm on my family _____, on my mom's side and my dad's side. I have two brothers that played on the WELO radio station for a long time and Elvis used to come down there and wanna sing and, of course, he just could not sing.

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I mean, it was one of those things, you know? He was young. He had had no experience, just – you know, and I think he kept on wanting to sing and I think they let him sing one time and they never did let him sing on there. They told him, they said it was just terrible but you can kinda understand. He was just – Good lord, he was really, really young but I – you know, and it just goes to show, son, he showed them, didn't he?

Dr. John Bass: Yes.

Buck Hutcherson: [Laughter]

Dr. John Bass: He showed everybody.

Buck Hutcherson: He showed everybody. He sure did.

Dr. John Bass: So you move to Memphis from Tupelo and the – was it just that Memphis was the city that was closest that things were happening, that [crosstalk] --?

Buck Hutcherson: Well, down around Tupelo, you had two choices. Tupelo's set almost right in the middle of Columbus, Mississippi and Memphis, Tennessee but back in those days Columbus, Mississippi was rocking -

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pretty well, man. They had, my lord, Straight 8 Junior, Golden Bell, they had about, what six or seven big clubs down there. Of course that's a college town. Man, back during the day, man, they were rocking because we were. We played a lot in Columbus, you know? We'd drive from Tupelo down there and drive back so I would just sit down one day and I said, "Look, I'm fixing to do something, I'm fixing to. I'm going to Columbus or Memphis," you know, so anyway I came to Memphis and I just never did look back and I've been living up here. I married a lady up here when I was barely – well, when I went to work with Jerry I was just gonna turn 18 and I've been up here ever since and wouldn't – I mean I've been all over the world and I

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might go here and I might go there but when I get ready to go home I come to Memphis. *[Laughter]* That's just it, right there!

Dr. John Bass: Well, talk a little bit about Memphis in the late '50s. You're a musician, you know what I mean? What was it like on the *[crosstalk]* --?

Buck Hutchenson: Oh, man, I mean it was great.

Dr. John Bass: Yeah?

Buck Hutchenson: It was just – yeah, it really was, yeah. I don't know whether you would say Memphis was still young. I guess it was pretty early but it was just – but everything is so much different now than what it was back then. It was just – you know, Memphis was just what Southaven used to be or what it still is just about. That's what Memphis was and there was just a lot to do. I mean, a lot of places to play, musicians every

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where and, I mean, you know, I mean, you could just – it really gets me, like, when I go down home, you know, to Tupelo and I come back up to Lamar Avenue, I see so many of those buildings that are still there. There were like piano bars and a lot of nightclubs and, like, you know, I mean, there was just so many places to play. If you didn't want to play a big nightclub back then, you know, you could get in with a piano player, you know, and play bass with her or play guitar with her or something or with him, you know, either, whichever one it was and it was just – it

was really a great place, you know, so – and I just thank God, you know, that I got in at the time that I did, and stuff, you know?

CUT at 0:21:53 -- Begin Segment 4

Dr. John Bass: How aware were you guys as musicians of, like, things that were going

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on, you know, because we look back and we see everything that happened at Sun and the early years of Stax and stuff like that, was – were you guys aware of that as musicians or were guys playing all the time?

Buck Hutcherson: Oh yeah, yeah. The one thing, oh yeah, we were working with Jerry everything; we went to Sun Records a lot.

Dr. John Bass: Mmm-hmm.

Buck Hutcherson: Oh yeah, yeah I did a lot of sessions with Jerry but the one thing – well, not the one thing and not the most thing but there was one thing – that stood out and I don't know whether you remember this or not but it really gained a lot of attention. I believe it was the American Legion. I believe it was the building out on 51 Highway before you get to Millington, is it – it's still there.

Dr. John Bass: I think so, mmm-hmm.

Buck Hutcherson: Well, Billy Riley and The Little Green Men, they did a thing out there. They

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played for a week without stopping. Did you ever hear anything about that?

Dr. John Bass: Nuh-huh.

Buck Hutcherson: It gained a lot of attention. Of course Billy Riley, he – that's when he had, [*sings*] "My gal is red hot," and it was a hot record and of course J.M. Van Eaton playing drums with him, Willy Willis playing sax, and, you know, I think Jimmy Wilson playing piano there but, anyway, it was really neat. They are – they played for a week out there, man, you know, without stopping, and I don't know how they did it but they done it but that was something that I would never forget, man, it was, but, yeah, I worked with Jerry

was out there quite a bit and he sang and then you've got Bill Justis and his friend _____.

Dr. John Bass: Well, talk a little bit about working with Jerry.

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Just starting with him.

Buck Hutcheson: He's a great guy.

Dr. John Bass: Mmm-hmm.

Buck Hutcheson: He really is. He's a great guy, you know? He's got some ways about him some people don't like. I've got ways about me some people don't like, you know, but now Jerry Lee Lewis, there's one thing I don't care what you say about him, he's one of the greatest talents that ever been or ever will be, there's no doubt, and he's got a wall full of hit records, gold records, to prove it, and so Jerry's sharp. He's still sharp. He really is. He's 77 years old and Jerry's still sharp as a tack, man, when it comes to music. He really, really is, and, you know, people will say, "Well, if he'd done this and done that and done that over _____," he did all he wanted to do, and as far as I

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can I remember I don't reckon Jerry Lee Lewis ever had management. He managed his own self and what he got into he got out of and life went on but Jerry, you know, he don't answer to nobody. Well, he'll answer to Lord Jesus Christ, we'll all do that, but I'm talking about as far as a manager or this or that or whatever it might be, he's not gonna do it, and I don't blame him. I really don't, you know? Why with somebody as talented as Jerry Lee Lewis answer to somebody? I mean I look up to him for a lotta things. I mean, when went to work with him I just had started shaving. I mean, he practically raised me. He really has and I would take nothing in the world for it, I really wouldn't. I thank God every day that he let me go to work with Jerry Lee Lewis that young, I really do, sure do.

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Dr. John Bass: So what's it like being on the bandstand with Jerry Lee Lewis?

Buck Hutcheson: Well, like I said, you know, now it's not quite what it was then.

Dr. John Bass: Sure.

Buck Hutcherson: But from 1961 on up to 1965 I say this in my life I still say I don't know why they had it surface, they, somebody got video of our shows. They've got to have. Man, I tell you what, this guy, you ain't never in your life – this guy could put on a show. I mean he really did. He put everything he had into it and of course we had a band then, you know, The Memphis Beats, and the band we had, it was a Rock 'n

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Roll band, and I mean when he hit the stage, we were ready to go. That was it and we hooked him up, [laughter] you know, we did, and now he – it's still great, man, you know? He don't do all that now. Of course everybody understands that but, man, listen, as far as just Jerry walking out on stage and sitting down at the piano and putting – and sitting there singing and playing, you can still hear it.

Dr. Bill Bass: Mmm-hmm.

Buck Hutcherson: You sure can. You sure can and he had some of the greatest Country songs they ever did. There'll never be any more Country songs like that, so, you know, I think the world of him, I really do, so that's just about all of it right there.

Dr. Bill Bass: That's cool. Well, talk a little bit about – because what you just mentioned about these Country songs and granted that, you

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know, maybe this is not right to consider yourself a little bit more of a Country player than a Rock 'N Roll player or maybe you mix the two. What – is there a difference for you or, like, where – what is that [crosstalk] --?

Buck Hutcherson: Well, you can take Blues and Rock 'N Roll and Country and Gospel, you know? They're all four, man, the taste is so close to each other, you know, and you can kinda mix a little bit of Blues, a little bit of Rock 'N Roll, a little bit of Country and a little bit of Gospel and you can have something like [plays a guitar riff], you know, you got something like that, you know, you got something like that. I mean, that's what I always try to do. I try to play a little bit this and a little bit of that and a little bit of that over there

and just kinda mix it up, you know? I've come up pretty good, [laughter] you know, so far.

[0:29:00] CUT – Begin Segment 5

Dr. Bill Bass: Mmm-hmm, absolutely.

Buck Hutcherson: So that's – you know, I mean, but I don't like to get all – I like all of that, you know, so.

Dr. Bill Bass: Well, tell us a little bit about some of the other people who you've played with and – just over the years.

Buck Hutcherson: Well, as far as, you know, I haven't played with 'em but I worked on the stage. I mean they were on the show.

Dr. Bill Bass: With Chuck Berry and Little Richard?

Buck Hutcherson: All of 'em, every one of 'em, you know, but I've worked Memphis, you know, for a while. I get tired of playing with Jerry, you know, and I come off the road for two or three years or something and I work for some good bands in Memphis. I owned a nightclub for about five years. It was out the other side of Hernando's Hideaway, Buck & Tiny's Country ____ truck. I was married to a singer -- she was really good and

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we – we're a good band. Gary Adair was playing drums with us. We had a real good band. We really did and so I played with some good bands in Memphis, I really have. I mean some real good bands so I played with Hernando's Hideaway but I stayed with Jerry there for quite a while and I come up over here about 1965 or '66 or something like that and I worked the Hideaway, Billy Adams and all them. Done that and of course, like I said, you know, Jerry's about the only big name that I worked with but, yeah, that's just about as big as you can get right there but I know Chuck Berry and I know Little Richard. I mean, I know 'em and I can walk right up and talk to 'em and all this you know? Of course I knew Carl Perkins and all that. I knew a lot of them, you know?

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I met 'em. I was really – Carl Perkins was just a – man, he was a great, great guy, man, to talk to and just to go out and – shame he

had to have that wreck, you know? Carl Perkins I believe would've been a huge, huge star.

Dr. John Bass: Mmm-hmm, yeah, he was a great player.

Buck Hutcherson: Yes, he was. Yes, he was. He was a great player and, boy, I loved his singing. I loved his voice. He just – he would just take a song and go about it like nobody else would, you know, anytime I _____, sure do. Really did, he – there was a lot of good people back then. There really was. Sure was.

Dr. John Bass: Tell us a little bit about your own musical journey, you know? Play some things for us if you want

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to but what interests you because I see you have some albums out and things? What?

Buck Hutcherson: How about this one? Now [*plays guitar*] – and Jerry does this one here and I do it every once in a while. [*Sings "See See Rider" and plays guitar*]

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There's that and I like Country, too, man. Here's a guy that I really – of course, Jerry has some great

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songs. This guy right here was great, though. Well, as – I like all the old ones, man, you know? The new music is fine, you know, but I can't – I just can't get into it. I can't get into it like you should get into it, you know?

0:34:14 -- CUT – Begin Segment 6

[*Plays and sings "Today I Started Loving You Again"*]

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Dr. John Bass: That's nice.

Buck Hutcherson: Thank you.

Dr. John Bass: That's nice.

Buck Hutcherson: That's about it, you know? It's cool.

Dr. John Bass: Just a few things I'm curious about. So you've been a musician in Memphis, you know, for most of your life.

Buck Hutcherson: Yeah.

Dr. John Bass: Part of the narrative that people talk about a lot with Memphis is – the story that – the most famous story is, you know, Stax is an integrated recording label and things like that and then after the death of King here things changed and I'm just curious if you have any thoughts or experiences with that or just what – if it changed much from your perspective or --?

Buck Hutcherson: Well,

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it's changed quite a bit. I don't know whether Dr. King being killed here had anything to do with it or not. Some say it did, some say it didn't. I don't know but Memphis has changed considerably. I mean, they've done a 90-degree angle here, you know, and I don't know. I don't know but if you just ___ thing, if you turn your television on every morning, like I do, and 9 trillion people do, it ain't only Memphis and I know Dr. King didn't get – he didn't lose his life in every other place in the world, you know? I mean, he lost it here so I don't know whether

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that's got anything to do with it or not but Memphis has, it's really changed considerably.

Dr. John Bass: Was the story that you hear, Stax, what it was like back then, you know, African Americans and white musicians were playing together or --?

Buck Hutcherson: Oh, yeah. I mean, yeah, that's all – that was just like when I – growing up in Tupelo, man, there was a black guy, man, that I used to listen to all the time. Down not too far from where I lived in Tupelo there was a bait shop. There was a bait shop down there

and of course, you know, the old guy that owned the place, he would come up to the dairy barn, you know? My uncle owned – out here was a big dairy farm and that's where we lived. Anyway this guy would come and dig worms, you know, to sell at his bait

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shop. Well, I was just a kid, you know? I would go and of course I was trying to learn how to play guitar and he told me, he said, "Man," he said, "You ought to come down to the bait shop." He said, "There's a black guy down there who can really play the guitar." I said, "Really?!" [Laughter] So we went – I did, I went down and, man, he couldn't keep me away from that, this guy could really play, and he would play like that. He would play like – but he never would move that thumb. He would rest his thumb right there. Man, you're talking about playing, God, he could play! I don't think there was ever – well, maybe way back _____ but as far as black and white people playing music together, I think they did that a long, long time ago, you know? I mean – and then of course when Stax came along then – well, it was just like,

[0:41:00] CUT – Begin Segment 7

you know, BB King recorded at Sun Records, man, almost before anybody did, and I was – we were overseas somewhere, Thailand, and met a guy over there, Ike Turner. There is a big picture of when he and I met together and the strangest thing, man, I never knew this. We were sitting there just talking, you know, in the café. I got to know him pretty well and so I was sitting there one day and he said, "Where are you from, buddy?" I said, "I'm from Tupelo, Mississippi." He said, "I bet you'll never guess where I'm from." I said, "I sure don't." I probably

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said, "Probably New York, or somewhere," you know? He said, "Son, I was born and raised in Clarksdale, Mississippi," and I like to fell out. I said, "Man, there ain't no place from Tupelo." He said, "No, I know exactly where you're at," and he owned – and his brother or cousin or somebody, we like about – they used to haul corn whisky out of Alabama, up Number 6 Highway, you know, 78 and then it turns into Number 6 at Clarksdale. Yeah, he sure was. He was born and raised right there in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Good lord, he sure was. He was a great guy.

Dr. John Bass: Mmm-hmm.

Buck Hutchenson: He really was, man. I've got the live CD that he made, the CD, the last one he made; I've got it at home, sure do.

Dr. John Bass: Did you wanna ask anything about sort of this current sentiment in music, things like that?

Pauletta Hughes: You mentioned -

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earlier about the new music. What do you think is the disconnect between the new music and the music that you enjoy so much?

Buck Hutchenson: Well, the songs. The songs don't tell me as much as what the other songs did. Now having said that, the songs might tell you something or you something because we've got an age difference here, you know what I'm talking about? That's just like when Elvis came out. Oh, man! Of course I was a kid. He was talking to me. Now my mama and daddy, he didn't talk to them very much.

Pauletta Hughes: [Laughter]

Buck Hutchenson: [Laughter] They thought if it wasn't **Big O Mongrow** or somebody, you know, that it was just

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terrible and I'm not saying that the music now is terrible. I'm not saying that at all. It's good. It's just that I'm so used to George Jones and Merle Haggard and Jerry Lee Lewis and I can take their songs and it means a whole lot. I mean, I think the way they wrote songs back then, man, I think probably it would say something to you or you, you know? A lotta the songs now is what I'm trying to say – and maybe I'm speaking out of turn. I hope not. A lotta the songs that they're writing now it saying a whole lot, you know, it really ain't, I don't think. Now you take a – I'm sitting here with \$0.15 in my pocket and they've got \$55 million, you know? So there's something there to look at, [laughter]

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you know? But anyway I mean that's just one – you asked me and that's one guy's opinion, so.

Dr. John Bass: Do you have any advice for – you know, because you’ve done this for a long time – a current Memphis musician? What does it mean to you to be a Memphis musician and what should an up-and-coming Memphis musician take from this place?

Buck Hutcherson: Boy, it’s really hard. It was really. It really wasn’t that hard when I was – especially after I came to Memphis because there was just so much going on, man. This place was busted wide open. I mean it was just nothing. Of course you know you could buy a gallon of gas back then for \$0.25, a pack of cigarettes for \$0.10, you know? I mean, and it was just nothing, man, too. You could just go into about any bar or nightclub or whatever it might be and probably you started to work that night or at least the next night,

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and maybe you would make – wouldn’t make but, say, what, \$35.00, \$30.00, \$35.00, \$40.00, but, my lord, it didn’t cost anything to live then. The biggest part of the rent was what, \$40.00-a-month? So I don’t know, killer, it is really hard. My son, **Shane**, Shane Hutcherson, he’s a drummer, you know, and he’s pretty good but it’s just hard. It was hard for him to do anything and now he’s got a job and I’m glad of that but, you know, they just – there ain’t that much stuff going on in Memphis now. There ain’t that much working going, not as far as musicians. I mean, we’re all starving to death. I guess that’s what I’m trying to [laughter] say. There just ain’t anything going on. I mean, you go out and play now and

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if you find someone over here, you can make, what \$50.00, \$60.00 and you go pay \$5.00-a-gallon for gasoline and \$4.00 for a loaf of bread, it ain’t long, buddy, before that’s gone. [Laughter] So anyway I don’t know, you know, but if it’s born in you, you’re gonna do it. If God puts that in you, if you were born to be a picker, you’re gonna just about be one and I mean that’s just the way it is. I mean, I really – I’ve had my ups and downs in music, you know, but I’m not – you’re gonna have your ups and downs in everything so anybody out there that sees this, if they’re a picker, if they were born to be a picker, they’ll be one and ain’t nothing gonna stop ‘em, sure ain’t, because if there had been I wouldn’t be sitting here talking to you. [Laughter]

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Dr. John Bass: That's right. That's exactly right.

Pauletta Hughes: Is there anything else that you'd like to tell us that we haven't covered already?

Buck Hutcherson: I don't know, darling, I guess that about – oh, I've got a birthday.

Dr. John Bass: When is that?

Buck Hutcherson: April the 15th. I'll be 725 years old. *[Laughter]* Life's been good to me, ain't it? *[Laughter]* Nah, nah, I've got a birthday coming up the 15th of April.

Pauletta Hughes: What are you gonna do for your birthday?

Buck Hutcherson: Probably work in the garden.

Pauletta Hughes: Actually would you like to talk with us a little bit about your current music projects?

Buck Hutcherson: Well, I do a little CD every now and then, you know, and it's on CD Baby, you know, and all that on the Net and you can, like, go in through it to buckhutcherson.com and

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I do that and I play some of the retirement homes and nursing homes around Memphis and I'm still working with Jerry. I think we're doing Memphis in May and so I think that's gonna be – he's been pretty well down. He broke his leg and he broke a rib and he did this and he did that, you know, but he's coming back pretty good and so probably after Memphis in May we got some things that's coming up and we start back to working, too, and all this. That's about it, you know?

Dr. John Bass: Cool.

Pauletta Hughes: Well, thank you.

Buck Hutcherson: You're quite welcome, darling.

Dr. John Bass: Yes, thank you.

Buck Hutcherson: I enjoyed it tremendously. I always do, always do.

Dr. John Bass: It's been great talking to you and hearing you play. That's the truth.

Buck Hutcherson: Huh?

Dr. John Bass: It's been great talking to you and hearing you play.

Buck Hutcherson: Well, thank you.

Dr. John Bass: That was a treat, yeah.

Buck Hutcherson: I appreciate it. I got some more work on my guitar. I hope it sounded okay.

Dr. John Bass: That was a treat, yeah.

Buck Hutcherson: *[Plays guitar]*

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