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Emma Fiandt: On behalf of the Crossroads of Freedom Project, we want to thank you for sitting down with us and telling us your story today. If you can just start off by stating your name.

Buck Hutcherson: Buck Hutcherson.

Emma Fiandt: And when were you born?

Buck Hutcherson: 1943.

Emma Fiandt: Where were you born and raised?

Buck Hutcherson: I was born in Saltillo, Mississippi. And Saltillo is on 45 highway. Well, now it's actually a suburb of Tupelo because they've more or less kind of grew and met. But back then it was just Saltillo's back, what, eight miles from Tupelo or something like that. And I was born on Birmingham Ridge, which is a community west of Saltillo. But I say Saltillo because it's –

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Emma Fiandt: So tell me a little bit what it was like to grow up here in the south near Tupelo.

| Buck Hutcherson: Oh, I would have taken _____ [inaudible]. Somebody like me, I just couldn't picture being brought up in New York or Washington or - now some people that's okay, but me, just I couldn't even picture that. I'm so glad that I was brought up in the south and I thank God every day that I was born when I was. And the reason I say that is because, like I said, I was born in '43 and by the time I got 12, 13, 14-years-old, see, the rock and roll thing was hitting.

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And '50s was the greatest ten years in the world. We were at peace with everybody, everybody was fine. Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Roy – you don't get no better than that. And that's not me talking, they've proven themselves. So anyway, I was right in there just about the time they was really getting going good. I was old enough to start to join a band, and it was – well, just the greatest time; greatest time in the world as far as – not in the world, but the greatest time for the U.S.

Emma Fiandt: When did you first start playing music?

Buck Hutcheson: Well, daddy got me my first guitar when I was about eight-years-old.

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And we moved from **Saltillo** to Tupelo. And I think I joined my first band when I was about ten-years-old after we moved from Saltillo to Tupelo. And the first job that I can remember now, I hope I'm right, the first job that I can remember getting paid for – I consider that's when I actually started – I started making money, that's when you actually start playing and everything. But I went to work at Fullerton **BFW** Club on Saturday night, Fullerton, Mississippi. And I started making money, but I think –

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I was about ten-years-old, something like that, ten, eleven. I don't know, somewhere around in there.

Emma Fiandt: So you must have picked up guitar really quickly.

Buck Hutcheson: Yeah, I started actually – and daddy had an old mandolin around the house and I started playing that 'cause back then, this was before Elvis and everything, and, of course, everybody – it was Bill Monroe, and you know who that was. He was the bluegrass guy. And of course everybody, because of him, played the banjo and mandolin. So daddy had an old mandolin lay around the house, and I picked it up and I could play that a little bit. And I was going to do that. That was my route, but then I turned the radio on and I heard a guy on the radio.

[*Begins Singing*] Well, that's all right, mama.

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That's all right with you. [*Ends Singing*]

I was all over him. I throw the mandolin away. And of course then – well, Elvis came out, that's what I'm trying to say. He came out and after he came out, then you hardly ever heard of any of the rest of them, you know what I mean? The big guys in country music then, that was really burning them up where they just fell by the wayside even **they** didn't take them long to do it. So that's the way all that went.

But then daddy bought me a guitar. He bought me a rhythm guitar and then he brought me a lead guitar. And my big deal was then Chuck Berry came out. And I heard *Johnny B. Goode*. And that really kept it right there, I said, "Boy, this is the way I'm going to learn it," so that's how that went.

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Emma Fiandt: So you started playing when you were real young, how did it progress from there? What'd you do next? Did you start playing in a band or –

Buck Hutcherson: Well, yeah. Well, then I came to Memphis, I was - I don't know. I came to Memphis first when I was about 13-years-old and started playing **Danny's Club** in West Memphis. And then played in **Neil's Hideaway**. 'Course all that's gone now. But back then Danny's Club was really a big club in West Memphis. It was your number one club around here. And I always like to say this when I'm talking about it, "That's where I met Willie Mitchell." We played Monday, Tuesday –

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and Wednesday. Now ~~————~~ [inaudible] And Willie Mitchell played Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night.

And back then he had four guys working, I won't never forget it. And it was the four Dukes, and probably a lot of folks has done forgot about that, but it was Willie Mitchell and the four Dukes. They were the front singers. Man, and I tell you what, they was fantastic. And I did that, and then I decided to go back to Tupelo, and I think I stayed up here, what, until I was 15 or 16 or something, 15-years-old.

I think it was about two years I stayed, and then I decided to go back home, go back to Tupelo. And I went back down there and I stayed. I lived down there for about a year, a year and a half. Phew, I said, "Man, I can't handle this no more."

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So I came back up here to Memphis and went to work at Little Abner's. And I was working – back then the majority of the folks didn't have no after hours glasses, but Buster Arnold owned Little Abner's then on 51, it's Elvis Presley now so –

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I started working there and I started playing – he had a band. Buster had a band in the Rebel Room, a black band, and little **Barbara Perry**, I guess she's still around. That was their female singer. Boy, she – but anyway, they had a great band. And Buster wanted to go after hours, so he opened up the downstairs. And I was playing in the band downstairs, like from 12:00 till 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning.

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And Tarp and Hawk, the two guys that Jerry was using then, drums and bass, well, they got to coming in real late at night. And one time they asked me if I would like to play with Jerry, and I said, "Sure, I would."

So anyway, I went to work with Jerry, it's about 1961 and I worked with him for awhile and all that. So that's how that went, so –

Emma Fiandt: So do you remember the time that you spent in Memphis here? Do you remember anything specific about this place when you were here?

Buck Hutcherson: Well, I've always liked Memphis. I've been all over the world three or four different times, but Memphis –

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is the type of place that – it is for me now – I go everywhere, but when I get ready to come home, I come to Memphis. And so what I'm trying to say is Memphis is definitely home.

Emma Fiandt: Can you tell me a little bit about your family as you got older? Married or -

Buck Hutcherson: Yeah, I married a lady from here, I've got three kids. I've got two boys and a girl. And they're all doing fine. I've got grandkids. They raised all their kids in church, and they're all doing great, thank God. And so everything's fine. Me and their mom got divorced quite awhile back, a long time ago.

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But that didn't hinder them any. They are all doing great and they all got good educations and good jobs and all that so –

Emma Fiandt: So did music continue to play a role in your family life and things?

Buck Hutcherson: Now my youngest son, he plays drums. But my other two, my other boy and girl, they didn't go that route. They went other routes, but what they do, they make good money, make a good living. So that's what matters. My son, my youngest son, he plays drums around a little bit, and ~~there's~~ this, and ~~there's~~ that. But now he's musically inclined so –

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Emma Fiandt: Oh, okay. Let's see. Do you have any specific stories you remember about –

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traveling or playing or anything like that? Anything funny happen?

Buck Hutcherson: I have a bunch of them, but I don't know what would [Laughs] – just, like I said, I traveled with Jerry for years and I'm still playing with him. I'm still working with him now. And so – it's just a – back during the day, back during the '60s and early '70s, Memphis' biggest band was myself, Larry Nichols, keyboard player, Morris Tarrant, and Hawk Hawkins. Oh, we ~~was-were~~ just all young and it was just great. We just had a great time on the road. We really did. We got in –

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and out of everything, it just looked up. It was just a fun time, it really was.

Emma Fiandt: So I know you've made a couple solo projects, did you play with any other musicians or work on your own or –

Buck Hutcherson: The only thing I did was the couple of CDs. That's the only thing I've done. Back then it's just – I'm just playing in a band and trying to make a living and trying to do this, and trying to do that. Now I didn't try to do anything back then other than just play.

Emma Fiandt: Let's see. Well, if you had any advice to give to people who were interested in getting into music –

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Buck Hutcherson: ~~-----~~ I don't know. It's a lot different now than what it was, the way it used to be. Our technology, it's really good in one way

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and in another way it's not that good so anyway. I think that all depends on the Lord, Jesus Christ. If music is born in **me**, you're gonna just about do it in one fashion or the other. It might be gospel, it might be rock and roll or country or blues or whatever, but if the Lord, Jesus – if he puts it in you, you're gonna do it. And so that's just – I just wouldn't take nothing from mine. ~~I really wouldn't.~~

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~~I really wouldn't.~~ I fully believe that he put me here to play and sing and that's what I've been doing and I've always done fairly good. I ain't made no million dollars out of it, and I ain't got a wall of gold records, and I don't want them. But I've always done pretty good playing and singing. And as long as you can do that, thank God for that.

Emma Fiandt: So religion is a big part of your life?

Buck Hutcherson: Yes, it is. Definitely.

Emma Fiandt: Trying to phrase my question correctly. Is that one of your inspirations for making music?

Buck Hutcherson: Yeah. Or yes, ma'am, it is. In Saltillo I was brought up in

~~in a little holiness church.~~

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in a little holiness church. And that's Mayfield Holiness Church. I can remember I was just a kid, I was like five or six-years-old in this little church, and believe it or not, it's still there, the building. And they still have church, but it's named something else now.

But anyway, the church would hold about 30 people, but I'm telling you I can remember standing on the back pew, I would stand up and I was about that high, and I would sing just as loud as I could sing. And now when I sign gospel music, I sing the old church music like in

~~I Won't Have to Cross Jordan Alone~~

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I Won't Have to Cross Jordan Alone and The Old Country Church and stuff. And that's, to me now, that's still the songs that really has got a message in it. That you can really get something. Lot of them now, and I ain't throwing up on nobody, a lot of songs now that comes out, you can't get anything out of them. There's no message in it. They're not saying nothing. They're not – to me,

not to everybody, but that's the way I feel about that. And yes, ma'am, the Lord, Jesus Christ is definitely a big, a – well, he is my life. And he always will be. I'd like to throw that in.

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Emma Fiandt: What would you say is your proudest moment as a musician _

~~or any moment?~~

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Emma Fiandt: or any moment?

Buck Hutcheson: As far as music, I guess – and course I've had a lot of proud moment, but I guess I'd have to say this: probably as far as my proudest moment, I played on *The Greatest Live Show on Earth* album that we did in Birmingham, Alabama with Jerry. And it was really an honor to do that, and like I was 18-years-old then, 18 or 19-years-old, whatever it was. And we did it in 1964 –

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so you do the math, I ain't – but we did it in Birmingham, Alabama. I guess as far as my musical deal and course working with Jerry. I like to work with him. Course he's old, he's getting old. Course we all are, but Jerry's still got the charisma, man. He can walk out on stage and I'm telling you right now, he's still got the deal that God gave him. He's still got it. Oh yeah, and course working with him, I've enjoyed it for years and years. And I still do.

Emma Fiandt: I'm jumping around a little bit now, but what was it like to be so young and to be thrust into the middle of things that were so important to music at the moment? You were 15, 18.

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Buck Hutcheson: See, that was right down my _____. That was just a great – it was really great, man. Here I was, just 17-years-old and working with Jerry Lee Lewis, and I was straight out of Tupelo, Mississippi. And I never dreamed that I would ever even meet him, let alone work with him. My Lord. But when I came up here, when I talked to them and finally got an audition with Jerry, it was really not a whole lot of a problem for this reason: because the band that I worked with in Tupelo was – he was a nearby bass player for awhile and he throw that away and he started – what I'm trying to say is we did about everything that Jerry did.

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So when Jerry sat down at the piano and started running through his songs, well, I just fell right in behind him because I was so used to him. That's what we did in Tupelo. And I'll never forget what he said. He did about four or five songs there and he got up from the piano, he said, "Killer, I don't think you gonna have any problem at all." I said, "All right." And so anyway, things went on from there so –

Emma Fiandt: Well, let's see. Is there anything you want to add that we haven't talked about?

Buck Hutcherson: No, I'm just glad to do the interview with ya'll and everything. Like I said, I still love music and I don't know what in the world I would have been other than a guitar player. I just don't know what I'll been. Could you picture –

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me in a cockpit of an airplane? Or a brain surgeon? I'm kidding. Now I sort of believe that God meant for me to do what I'm doing, and I'll do it until he says, "Son, it's over with." "Thank you very much, I'll be at the house."

Emma Fiandt: LeKevia, you have anything else?

LaKevia Perry: Well, I do. Earlier I know we were talking and you told me that you played country, jazz, blues.

Buck Hutcherson: I play a little bit of everything.

LaKevia Perry: Of everything.

Buck Hutcherson: Yes, ma'am.

LaKevia Perry: Do you have a favorite genre that you like to play or –

Buck Hutcherson: A favorite what?

LaKevia Perry: Genre, like a favorite type of music that you like to play?

Buck Hutcherson: Darling, I really don't. I really don't. I love it all. I love gospel music. I really do, but then on the other hand, I love blues.

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B.B. King is my favorite right guitar player, and he always has been ever since I was that high, the first time I ever heard him play. And one of the reasons that I'm saying this, and I don't know how he does it and believe it or not, I never met B.B. King, never have, and Mr. King, if you're out there, I'd give anything in the world to meet you. I never did meet – he can get more feeling out of one string on a guitar, one string, he can get more feeling out of one string than the majority guitar players can get out of six.

And he don't **stand accept** you going all up and down, nope. I mean all up and down the neck of the guitar, he just gets there. He's in the pocket. Buddy, and listen, if you want somebody that can really –

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lay it down, he can do it, and he can still do it. But I like that and course I like country and rock and roll. I like all of it. I really do. I like every bit of it. If it's music, I like it. Was that okay?

LaKevia Perry: Yes. No, that was – okay.

Buck Hutcherson: Anything else?

LaKevia Perry: I think that's all we've got for right now.

Buck Hutcherson: Oh, okay.

LaKevia Perry: Thank you so much for sitting down with us.

Buck Hutcherson: You're quite welcome, darling. I enjoyed it to the fullest.

LaKevia Perry: Yeah.

Buck Hutcherson: Sure did.

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