



Voices

OF OUR REGION

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Bonnie

Well let's start at the beginning, so we can get this on recorder. Okay? Tell us your name, where you live and a little bit about your family, if you live alone, if you live with somebody....

I live with my cat. He's really good.

Okay, my name is Bonnie Irwin and I live in Bethel Park. ~~It's a~~ Really nice place. We have a really nice Giant Eagle – it's a Market District. Lots of chefs. So it's really nice. But, uh, so I used to be walking, and what happened was I fell off my horse and it caused my MS to come out. I didn't know I had MS until I fell off my horse...but, uh, I went to different people and this guy, he just learned all these things, and he could tell you from your picture where your allergies are. My allergies are soy, corn, potatoes, milk and sugar. Wheat, soy, corn, potato, milk, and sugar. So when I went off those foods I had no more MS symptoms, and you know, a doctor, they don't know that kind of stuff. So, uh,

Who is this guy?

Oh, he's a friend of mine, who used to give me colonics, which are really good to have. You know – you know what colonics are?

Mm hm.

How do you know that? His name is Alan Clemens, in Baldwin.

So were you here in Pittsburgh when this happened, or – where were you?

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Yes, I lived- I had kept my horse in South Park, and I fell off her. I rode my horse bareback, and then she taught me how to ride. My horse taught me how to ride. And then a girl killed her because she was jealous of me.

She killed your horse?

My seven-year-old horse. I rode her for three hours a day. So whatever, you know, I've had a lot of things stolen from me and everything but it doesn't matter. It only matters about my kitty. He's been with me the whole time. I was married, had to leave my husband. ~~B-~~but he yelled at me every day and for two years- I said, "If you keep yelling at me, I'm going to leave." ~~s~~So I did. I do what I say, I'm not a BS-er or anything.

And he went to Bill Gates, to work for Bill Gates. He was an unbelievable software engineer and he died. They - the autopsy didn't show anything. I think it was a broken heart, cause I left him. But I can't- We had a \$300,000 house, very beautiful, it's wheelchair accessible and everything, and - but when I met him I wasn't in a wheelchair. From him yelling at me got me into a wheelchair.

This was after the fall from the horse?

Yeah, that was a long time ago. So when I fell off my horse I didn't really have any problems, and then from things like my husband yelling at me, that made – that made me in a wheelchair. But when I was - When I got married I was walking. Well, no, by the time I got married I was in a wheelchair because he was yelling at me. Why did I marry him? I don't know, he is-~~s~~ like the most wonderful man you ever met.

Was he much older than you?

Younger. I go out with younger men, except now I have older men. My boyfriend is 62, 65.

Well how old are you, Bonnie?

Fifty, no. Forty-seven-~~;~~ I'm almost fifty.

Not quite. So your MS just exacerbated and exacerbated?

Yeah, I kept on aggravating it.

You didn't stay on the diet, like away from those foods did you?

Oh, that was way after. Now, if I - I don't eat that food, but I could eat some chips or something, I'm allergic to that, but it doesn't really bother me. Small amounts don't bother me.

Were you working?

Um, I used to work as a secretary for psychiatrists. And then I was a massage therapist. I loved that. I worked at Gold's Gym. Worked on the strongest man in the world. Yeah, they're easy to hurt, cause these guys tear their muscles, so it's easy to hurt torn muscles. I mean I know how to get in.

So who's the strongest man in the world? Who was he at that time?

I don't know I was at a um, -~~from~~ Gold's Gym I went to the Nationals or something, and I massaged for free. And I massaged a midget. The strongest man in the world is not – nothing. I mean –

They're-~~;~~ weight-lifters.

Yeah, they're just, yo know, competing power lifting.

So when you left your husband, did - you left that house?

I ended up signing over, not making any money on anything. But I'm really close to Jesus, everything will be okay. Probably. You know, if I don't write a book, which I think I should, because I've been – my Mom is an angel from heaven. I told her she dropped down from heaven to take care of me. And then she died and the funeral home said they never had so many flowers. She was really great, and, uh, so when I, you know – I learn about Jesus, I went to church, but when I was in a wheelchair, that's when I started becoming close to God, and now – and you know then I got **b**Baptized. I met this girl at church and she said, "You have to get **B**baptized, it'll change your life."

And then I said, "Oh, okay." So I go and do it. -It does! Cause then the Holy Spirit talks to you. It's just amazing. You know, I was a vegan, which is someone that doesn't eat anything with a mother. **-a** And the Holy Spirit said, "Rely on me, not your diet."

Like, oh, don't do that anymore. You know, so I'm not as picky about my food, cause God doesn't want me to worry about that.

So when did you first need somebody to help you -- a personal assistant?

Uh, my gosh, it was a long time ago. Since I'm disabled, I'm not able to, you know I need people...see, when I was married, I was okay when I was married, twenty years ago. Time goes so fast. Okay, so twenty years ago, so right after that, [Track 2] that's when I needed help.

How long were you married?

Two years.

And you needed help when you left your husband? No. Yes? Okay, okay. So twenty years ago, let me think. I don't think we – we barely had **a program, an attendant care program. Who helped? Were you getting it through the Center for Independent Living?**

Well, first I was getting assistance through, uh, UCP, and **then** now I have it through the Center for Independent Living, and I'm on a waiver program. I can't stand it. But this really good agency, they could pick me up. They have all Africans.

How do you go about doing that? How do you change your agency?

Well, I think I have to – well, the woman called me, but I think I have to call the person at the **S**state and have them do it, which I'll do because my brother has to pay this girl \$100 a month to buy her bus ticket, cause she don't have that much money to pay for a bus ticket and everything else.

Why does your brother have to pay her?

Well, I think we're nice people. It's just money. You know, **-**I don't know.

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

I have three brothers and one wonderful sister. She's a tennis pro.

Oh, nice. Does she travel around?

No, she's had a program for twenty years in Upper St. Clair. So she had her 14-year-old girl, she is best in the country. She's been playing tennis since she was four. Her name is Allie Reskin, you'll probably hear about her. Yeah, she was in a tournament in California and Billie Jean King said, "Who's your lucky pro?" -and she said, "Janis Irwin!" My sister is like really great at teaching tennis.

And what about your brothers? Are they all around here?

Um, one brother is lives in Alabama. He's like the perfect brother. He's my mother. I never knew he was exactly like my mother. Like, well, his wife was here and Robbie put me on the toilet, and Pam gasped. And Robbie comes in, "What's wrong?"

And Pam goes, "He's like this all the time." He's wonderful all the time, very handsome and wonderful, just like my mother.

The other brothers, the one brother, that's really talented, he's an alcoholic. So he doesn't come around. He lives in Brookline. Then my other brother is in Upper St. Clair. So he lives like fifteen minutes away. And he comes around, and, um, my sister lives right in Bethel Park-, one mile away.

So you live alone here with your cat?

Yes. I'm not alone. You know, the Holy Spirit talks to me now, which I want to start reading my Bible more. It really makes a difference. I'm ~~Really-...~~ You know, because I'm in a wheelchair, the guy that works at Giant Eagle that does sampling, he said, "You know, somebody told me that you were down there to tell people about Jesus Christ."

I go, "That was the Holy Spirit that told you that." So I know the whole thing. It was really exciting, because I don't even think he's a Christian, but...

So you have attendants come in and take you down there or how do you -?

~~Uh-uh~~ Oh no. I'm very independent. I'm an excellent driver. I've been in it for eight years, so I think I'd know. I just fly down the hill. I don't have to go on the highway. I go, let's see...- Go out my entrance, down the hill and to my left. But if I want to go to Route 19, I wait till all the cars are there, then I go. No, I just wait, but, you know, like when we went to the movies at Galleria, there weren't any sidewalks cuts. So when I went off the sidewalk, it was a real small sidewalk, took my wheel off, so I'm on the way home, hoping I'm going to get home, and a man walks across Route 19, all the way from

the other side, and then three men appear with tools. They fixed my wheel! Isn't that great? Because, you know, I'm like this with Jesus. Now he does everything for me, that's why, you know, people steal from me and do all this stuff. ~~But~~ I don't care, cause Jesus will take – he sees everything. All these stupid people. It's hard. Stupidity is hard to deal with.

What kind of experiences - tell us a little bit about that? Tell us about what you've experienced.

Since I was married, I moved here because my physical therapist moved here, but she moved out cause it's too expensive. If you live in a two-bedroom with two people, it's not bad.

You said it's \$3,000 a month? That's \$1,500 a piece! I couldn't afford it.

Yeah. But if you call around here, it's higher. Cause this is a really good location, cause we're really close to Pier 1. It's right there. Pier 1 Imports, my favorite. I had my bridal registry was at Pier 1. And Macy's. ~~Or~~ something. I had 100 people at my bridal shower. I am so spoiled, cause my church had a bridal shower for me, ~~a~~ and my church loves my parents. ~~S~~ so there were 100 people there and we had a sitdown luncheon with Rania Harris, catered it, so everything was nice. You know, we do things right.

Is your dad still alive?

Oh, yeah, he's married to a woman twenty years younger than him.

See, that runs in the family? Dating younger people!

Well, um, my dad had my mother, which he is totally spoiled. My mother was so perfect, and when she - when he lost her, God knew my dad can't live by himself. And then this woman that was at prayer meeting. Well, they have Bible study, too. My dad's like very - lots of charisma, really good-looking, really cheerful, but he's a jerk! But nobody knows that and his wife didn't know ~~that~~ until she married him. And he says, "You're not like Clara."

But they're still married. And, you know, she was married to an alcoholic, so it's better than that.

So when you got into the wheelchair you stopped working? Right?

Yeah I don't know when I went on disability. I don't know dates, cause I don't have a job right now, which is bad.

So you get SSDI.

Well [Track 3] I only know SSI, I don't know SS-

When you said disability that made me think SSDI.

Maybe it's disability.

It depends. On SSI, the most you can get is \$600 and something a month.

Okay, I'm on SSDI.

Yeah, cause SSDI is dependent by your work history, and you've had a work history.

I never knew that.

And you get more – normally, depending on the kind of job you've had.

Unfortunately, I did not claim my massage. I did not claim those hours, and I was making like \$32 an hour.

Oh wow. So, tell us some of the - you said there's a lot of stupid people out there. Tell us about some of your experiences.

Oh, I don't know, it's hard to think about that. Um,...

Well then, let me ask you this. What do you do all day?

I go to Giant Eagle for a long time. ~~My-I socialize life is~~ down there.

Every day. Okay. Did you see Paula Dean when she was down there?

I didn't see her, but I did see her picture. Every day, well not every day, they have, like they had ribs and something else. I don't know what. Every day there's food. Well, you go around the Giant Eagle and people are munching everywhere. Cause there's samples everywhere. So I didn't see Paula Dean. I saw this nutritionist that was there.

So you go down to Giant Eagle -every day?

Yeah, I get coffee and meet people and talk to people. A, and my another thing is I go to church every Sunday. A really cool church.

What is it? Give it a plug.

Assembly of God!

South Hills Assembly?

Yeah. Do you know where that is?

| **Actually, yes, I do because Vince Gastgeb – do you know who that is?**

Yeah.

| **Vince Gastgeb, ~~W~~we work for**

(phone rings)

I thought he's from my old church.

| **No, we work - you know I work at Allegheny County, for the County. ~~r~~ a A And he's the County Council person. Vince Gastgeb.**

| Oh, Well, he goes to my old church, my Nazariene - South Hills Church of Nazariene.

He asked us to come out and talk to - not just me, but some other people that work in the County – to come out and talk to the pastor at South Hills Assembly to talk about -

(phone rings)

Sorry. Go ahead.

| **-To talk about how they can help the less fortunate, if you will, in the community. So we were out there – not just me, but other people from other county offices – and so him, and -**

| Well he knows my dad. My dad's kind of famous. Well, hHe's a local celebrity. When he retired he was sales - Vice President for sales in his company, and the other Vice President retired and they had twenty people. Well, mMy dad had 200. Cause everyone loves everyone, you know? I'm just becoming loved, you know, because I'm lovable now. It's good.

What's your dad's name?

Chuck Irwin.

Never heard of him.

| Oh, you haven't been around. He's a good man, except I wouldn't tell you to marry him. He's a jerk. But he's a good guy, you know, ~~he had~~ five kids, he was a milkman, and he moved. We were lived in Pittsburgh. He moved all of us out to South Hills, where everything is a lot more money and I'm proud of him for that. His kids are all...like my brother, he manages assisted living. Makes a lot of money.

Like I was gonna - I'm going to call the Catholic thing or something and see if they can pay for the walls getting fixed. And then, um, drywall is really wimpy. Like I tore that wall up, just from standing and eating right there. That's all I do! I don't bang into it or something.

Well how did your dad react - or your brothers and sister react when you discovered you had MS?

Nothing. What were they supposed to say?

Well, I mean did they feel sorry for you? Were they upset?

Nah. If they were upset, I didn't know about it. We don't... I've had MS for 25 years, and the doctor told me to lay down. And I haven't laid down yet.

I don't have time. Except I'd like to get a job. — I think I should get a job on the computer. Because it's hard, you know, to make fr- find help,[?] sometimes. Then I have somebody that comes back at night.

How do you get your lunch?

Oh, she put it out and I ate it all. Usually I don't eat until my help comes for dinner, but I was hungry.

Well, because you're snacking at Giant Eagle, right?

Oh yeah, I drink coffee, coffee makes me not eat. But now that I gained weight, I want to make sure I don't gain more weight.

He's got really pretty whiskers.

You know there's a – I don't know if you're researched this or not, but there's some research that's been done - that if you stay off of fats when you have MS?

I've done all the diets. I'm done. I mean everything. Oh, I went off fats and I stopped taking my EPA, my blood got really thick. It was really bad. So I did that diet. I've done, I wish I had written everything down, cause I could have write a book. I have some journals. ~~I've done everything~~ But— I've tried everything. I've done bee sting, bee venom therapy, stung myself with bees, every other day— it It gets kind of addictive, you want to sting more. So you sting yourself and then somebody pulls out the stingers. Well, that's supposed to make it – I think it's supposed - the Cortisone or something. It doesn't work, obviously. I tried everything. The only thing I wish I would have tried was acupuncture, cause I would have been a lot better off, cause that stuff works. My friend, he went, cause he was dragging his foot, and they fixed him. Doesn't drag his foot. If I would have done that, but I didn't think about doing acupuncture. Now, I'd like

to go back. I had migraines, but they don't seem to be really bad now. But I want to go to an acupuncturist. There's one where my psychiatrist is. You know what that is?

Doctor of Physical Medicine.

Yes. People don't they think I say psychiatrist.

I know, I know. Where do you go for that?

It's on Jane Street in the South Side. His name is – can't think of this name - Horton.

[Track 4] Horton. And there's an acupuncturist there?

Yeah, I wanted to go. ~~It's s~~Seventy-five bucks a pop. That's not bad, cause I've looked into other places. ~~I and~~it's the cheapest I've found. So now I will go there, but I can't think of, well, I was in a lot of pain and I asked Jesus to take away my pain and he did. That's unbelievable. It's really cool. So, my butt hurts because I'm laying on it, you know, I'm laying in bed or sitting on it, but anyway, everything - you know, I feel...yeah, my mailman, he's really cute, his name is Jimmy. I gave him a massage when I was walking. He knew me since I was walking. He's cute. He says, "Well, God doesn't give you more than you can handle. Obviously, you can handle a lot." That's funny. ~~J~~Jimmy.

Do people at your church think - pray for you to be healed?

Well, I went to Oakland to a healing service, and the Holy Spirit said, "I want to heal you, I don't want anybody else involved."

So I stopped going to them.

But I was at my church this woman went up front and said, "Lord, people are going to be healed" and blah, blah, blah, so whoever wants to get healed come up. So I went up and I don't because of the Holy Spirit telling me that, but I went and the ~~p~~Pastor's wife prayed for me and I cried. You know, I could feel it. Oh, yeah, all the people want to make me walk.

So you go to Giant Eagle then you come back home. Then what do you do?

Go on the computer. Do the computer. I don't know how my whole day – I can stand at the Giant Eagle for a long time. You know, I'm friends with all the people. They work for - I can't think of what agency it is – but they're~~re~~ the ones that hand out food. Now, since I've known all of them, I'm friends with all of them. I was talking to one woman and my dad walks – well, he hit me on my arm and I looked, and there's my handsome father – she goes, "Man, he's really handsome." She couldn't believe how old he was. He's going to be...you know, after the- when he got brain damaged from the car accident, I thought his looks were gonna not be as good, but...

He got brain damaged from the what?

He was in a car accident with my mom, and then my mother had Raynaud's and scleroderma, and Raynaud's is really bad. I have Raynaud's, and the doctors, you know. 'Cause I was sick and my mom was going to all these doctors, I wanted to take control of that – they were cutting her fingertips off, like that's going to help. It was causing her a lot of pain. So now she's in heaven. I went to this woman, and I'll never go back because I don't know if she believes in Jesus Christ. And she told me she goes into your soul. She says my guardian angel is my mother. I'm really, you know, I've got it.

So my helper, because she gets paid for five hours, and she's laying in the recliner.

And where are you?

Well, I roll over on my stomach for twenty minutes, cause-so she lays down and I roll over.

This is in the morning?

Yeah. I've told her to clean that bathroom because the woman at night doesn't have time to do everything. And she says, "It's not fair."

I'm like it's not fair for me to be in a wheelchair, but I am in a wheelchair, but I've learned a lot about these black people – totally different from than what we see.

Do you like the ~~one~~-woman at night?

(silence)

Nope?

I want to be positive here. I'm positive I don't like her. No, she's okay. She's 49, so we kind of see the same way.

What time does she come?

She comes at five.

How long does she stay?

Till nine. She leaves earlier. She always wants to watch TV. I'm like, I don't watch TV. I watch at night. I'll watch, uh, different things that are on. Oh, I love that *Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?*²² I love that show. And the one show was by, there was a really good comedian that was the MC, and now it's somebody else – I can't think.

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But that woman, she wants to watch TV all the time and get paid for it. You know, I don't want to stay in my bedroom, we stayed in the bedroom. So I finally said, "Hey, this is my house. I don't want to stay and watch ~~W-UB~~."

And she said, "You're right." She realized.

Well, what's she supposed to be doing when she's here?

Well, she has to do my stretches and the one in the morning is supposed to be doing it and she's not doing it, and we eat and I drink Metamucil, so I can poop in the morning.

'Cause I've had MS for 25 years and now the pooping is kind of... And I'm glad I have to do that because I'd hate to poop ~~in~~ my pants. I've never done that. I don't want to do that. But everything, you know, it's really – I have a really great life.

Now, are you being serious, or not?

Yeah. I'm really happy and everybody – you know and I'm supposed to tell people about God. That's what my thing is.

Who's had the biggest influence on your life? Besides God.

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Jesus. That's it. I don't look up to anybody.

Nobody's had an influence?

Well, Sacagawea. ~~Sacagawea. I~~ I love Sacagawea. Do you know who she is? She was fourteen years old when she led the Lewis and Clarke Expedition across the Continental Divide. I love her. You know, I've seen healers and stuff. They tell me I was an Indian in my past life. That was before I already had this stuff, but, you know, the Bible really doesn't talk about that. So I don't know, but

Oh When I had my horse I rode her bareback. My [Track 5] friend – my boyfriend told me if I can't get on my horse bareback that I don't deserve to have her. So I worked really hard, put her on a hill so I could jump on her...and then I got to where I could just jump on, and people are like "Wow". Cause other people have to have step-ups with stirrups. I loved to ride bareback and I believe when I'm healed I can ride bareback again. I wonder how old I'll be when that happens. But, you know, God can do anything.

So you said you have a boyfriend now?

Well, one boyfriend, I don't think we're going to see each other any more, cause he's allergic to my house. He's sixty-five. I have another one that's 62.

Where'd you meet him? Don't tell me Giant Eagle.

Well, no. He works for me. I'm embarrassed. I never kissed somebody that worked for me. I had another guy that worked for me and then he quit working for me and he came over and kissed me after he quit.

So he worked for you doing what?

| Well, taking care of me. So I'm going to take him to Arizona.

Oh yeah? What are you going to Arizona for?

To see my best friends. I have two best friends. One lives in Phoenix and the other one lives in Sedona. She's in a scooter, but you know, when I met her we were on the phone and email for nine years before I met her, and when I met her it was like we were friends – you know we were always -you know cause my sister and her girlfriend cried, because it was really- what's that called when you have that connection?

Italians call is simpatico.

Okay, it was simpatico. It was really cool.

And you met her online?

Well, a guy, this jerk guy that had MS. He learned about this doctor that believes the no fat in your diet. And he was a jerk, but Cynthia wrote him and he showed me her email, and I said, "I want to write her." So we've been friends ever since.

So when are you going?

Well, I'm looking at getting my walls fixed, and then I'm going to go, so I'll have to call Judy and see when's good. But Judy, I used to ride horses with her, see I always rode bareback. Other people they shouldn't ride bareback, so Judy cause I was riding bareback she was riding bareback - and she fell and she was in the hospital. Cause she's Catholic, so she doesn't have a relationship with Jesus Christ. ~~s~~ So now she went to school to be a plumber and now she's a building inspector. The prettiest building inspector. But her problem is she's very shy and she got hooked up with the wrong person. And this guy, yo know he's got a lot of physical problems, but he doesn't tell her how wonderful she is. I tell her how wonderful she is. I tell her, "You're beautiful, Judy." Just cause I love her.

And my friends, the friends I used to have, when I got in a wheelchair they weren't my friends anymore. They were using me and I didn't know it. So, like whoa, that's it. I don't cry about it, cause that's not worth crying about. I don't know what I would cry about. I don't cry about anything.

That's a good thing.

It is? I live in denial. Yeah, I'm queen of denial. I don't know, I feel really, ~~good. I'm~~ really, really, ~~really~~ blessed. I have so much. And I'm really healthy. Other than the ten pills I take or something. I have Raynaud's, but it's not bad like my mom. And no doctor's going to collect my fingertips. They can't do that! Can you believe that? Raynaud's is a circulation disease and my hands and feet are ice cold when it's July. I have to wear winter socks and down slippers when I go to bed. My brother goes, "Well, you don't have to do that, you know, when it's warm." I go, "Yeah, I do." My hands are so freezing cold.

Do they ever turn black?

No. But my feet because, ~~m~~—My sister goes, "Your foot's black." But I went to a doctor. I have this really great doctor, and he goes, and he put my foot up, and then it totally went normal. So, I like him.

What would say is the hardest thing for you throughout this journey?

I haven't found anything hard yet. Cause when you surrender your heart to Jesus Christ, you don't ever have to worry anymore, cause at first I thought, worrying is a sin? But now I see that once you do that he can take over everything. So I don't have to worry about anything. It's so great. That's why I feel like I'm so fortunate and so blessed, because I don't worry about anything. I don't worry about these incompetent people that work for me. I mean, even if my basil doesn't get transplanted into the planter, that bums me out, but I can't worry about it.

Well, the people that work for you can be fired, you can get other people.

Well, I'm going to try to get that Care Solutions. Do you know who they are? Nice. Africans, they're good. They're intelligent, too.

But in the meantime, you can call Moriardi and tell them you want someone different in the morning.

Okay, I'll try that. They don't listen. I say, "She doesn't do my stretches." She ~~says~~ goes, "I don't do any stretches." Well quit!

Well, that's a danger to you.—_She should be doing it. I meant that's a personal health issue for you, that's not -

My arm hurts.

Well, if you want help with that, we can help with that. We can pull some strings.

Alright! I like strings. I'm into strings. Now what's your name so I know?

Judy Barricella

Judy Barricella, what a cool name. Well I like to get - the one thing I like about this girl in the morning is she gives me a shower every day, and you can't find many people who do that.

Why? They have a job, The job is what you tell them it is. If it's a shower every day, if it's stretching every day, that's the job. I mean just because you're in that wheelchair doesn't mean you have a right to be taken advantage of. It's not like you're asking for some outlandish crazy thing.

Yeah, and this girl wants my brother to pay for her, the \$100, [Track 6] and she says, "Tell your brother I want a money order."—No, my brother's not going to pay for it anymore. Cause I really want to get Care Solutions, because I want good people cause I really relate to them, and you know, I'd like to have somebody like normal, like these black people, they have a whole different, like the woman at night, I'm like you want me to be in your lifestyle, in your reality. I don't want to be in your reality. I have my reality. She gets all mad because I expect too much.

How long they been with you?

A few months, but it's too, but I have really high standards.

There's nothing wrong with that. Tell me about the blue glass.

Do you like it? Well, it all started with Skyy Vodka is blue. And then that black woman put my stuff up, but I don't want my wine glasses up there, but she said, "I'm doing you a favor." So I'll be changing that. But I got all those tall things at Pier 1. So anyway, I started – I like cobalt blue. I got this new bottle of vodka that's really good. It's blue bottles, there's a lot at the State Store. It's a German vodka. It's like called, look at the one with the green ball.

Polka dot? That's all it has on it. There's nothing else. Nothing! I like the Rieisling.

Rieisling! That's it. Lemme see, pull that one up.

This one?

Yeah, Rieisling. That's a good wine. I drank all those bottles.

Did you? So that's what you do during the day! I got it.

Yeah! I bought that one bottle cause it was blue, in the Giant Eagle. But the rest of them, I bought – that tall one – that was a terrible one. But I buy bottles for the look. That Baja Rosa, a woman that used to work for me, she bought that for me. Yeah my house with my husband, we had lots of cobalt blue. We had a lot of everything. But I feel bad that he died.

Where'd you go to high school?

Bethel Park. Lot of people, like a thousand people in my class. But ask me a question, a good question, I don't know what -

Well, what did you do after High School, did you go to school?

I went to massage school. And I loved massaging. Really, that was so great. So that's what I did. I should have gone and like joined the Air Force.

Why?

Because I could have gone up in rank, cause I'm more intelligent than most people that go... You know, I want to do one thing, and then...at first I wanted to go to Colorado. I worked on a dude ranch. And I was a secretary, so I could get lots of jobs, cause these people, the teachers that apply for jobs, summer jobs, you know, they're not secretaries, and I was a secretary. So I worked at Peaceful Valley Lodge. It was nowhere. Then I went to Beaver Village or something. That was nowhere too. I got sick. I got mono. Cause at Peaceful Valley Lodge they had me working 24 hours a day. I'm a real hard worker, so I just went go, go, go. I don't know, you know, resting.

So then you moved back to Pittsburgh?

And then I got married to the wrong person, and that was the worst day of my life, and it was a very beautiful wedding, but, big mistake.

So I'm just trying to get the timeline. So you fell off your horse before you got married?

I fell off my horse, but I was still walking. MS came – then when my husband started yelling at me, that's when I was in a wheelchair. It was only from being yelled at, cause my family, they're like the perfect family, they don't yell. It's all wonderful – I love you, I love you, I love you.

So you were in the wheelchair when you got married?

Yeah, because John made me in a wheelchair.

Did he say something like, "Well, I'm still going to marry you because you're in a wheelchair," or he was angry?

Well he yelled at me, that's why I was in a wheelchair.

Why was he yelling?

Well, he had intimacy issues, and I knew he was a most fearful man, but I didn't have confidence in myself to know not to marry him. But we had a beautiful house, but it was terrible. We never had sex. We had been married only two years and I said, "We're allowed to now." Still couldn't have it. Well, the doctors, he had MS – ohm he had MS too - but he walked. The doctors told him, you know, his dick couldn't get hard or something. You don't believe the doctors. I never believe the doctors. Like the doctor told me to lay down. I don't lay down. The one thing I did have to do is get a Baclofen pump. It's in my stomach, because my family's athletic and my legs were wrapping around my neck. My sister said, if I wouldn't have gotten that pump, I'd be all like curled up. So I got that pump.

But your chair goes back, right? If you want to sleep you can tilt it back?

I don't sleep. I only sleep in bed. I sleep really deep. Yeah, I don't rest or anything. I'm a pretty high-energy person.

So your attendant puts you in bed at night and then you're alone? Do you have a lifecall or anything like that?

I used to.

What if you have an emergency during the night?

I don't. I have God. Everything will be okay. I'm fine. I don't know. I used to wear a watch, that I could call an ambulance, and they came a lot, [Track 7] cause I had a cot for a bed. ~~-a~~ And you know, I don't ever move out of my bed, but then I was falling out of bed all the time. And I called them and they would come, and here I'm sitting there, picked me up and - put me back in bed. And I had this one nightie that was showing my nipple, and all the guys knew about that. They had a name for it and I forget the name.

Have you ever had an experience when your attendant doesn't show up in the morning?

No, but I'd call my sister.

You have access to a phone while you're lying in bed?

Yeah, I have this phone, but I want to get another phone, but this phone is with me always.

Well that's good.

| Yeah, so I'm... I'm happening.

Is there anything that you really want to say that we can get on the recording that we haven't talked about?

I don't know. I wish there were something I could say that was really deep.

Well you said a lot of things. Why did you want to be involved in this?

Well, anything to help. Well, now, because of Jesus, I want to tell everybody about Jesus. You know, that's what he wants you to do. So I think it's real easy to do. I think about Jesus all the time. My friend, there's a picture of her she sent to me. She had MS, and then she was healed. She walks. She was living on a houseboat in Florida, now she's in Alabama. Really cool.

So how do you know so many people with MS?

I don't. Well, I know Wendy because I went to her church and someone said, I said, "I have MS" and they said "Wendy used to have MS" She was a secretary of the church. And, that's you know – I don't go to MS stuff, and I'm not into, you know, because they talk about drugs and stuff and I'm not interested.

I thought maybe you were in some kind of chat room on the computer.

No, I'd like to be. I want to get a dragon. You know where they get them?

Oh, you mean Dragon Dictate? ~~That's software.~~

No, I could have one that blows fire out!

Yeah, that's what I thought you said. We can get that, I mean, that's software.

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Yeah, how much is it?

Well, it depends. There are different versions of it.

The best.

Must be about three or four hundred dollars.

Well I'll have to try and get that. Well, because that would, I thought I was going to write a book, but now I don't know what I would say.

I think that'll come to you.

Well, my bridal shower, I asked God because 100 people were going to be at my bridal shower. I asked God to help me write a thank-you. And that thank you, man, the Holy Spirit is a really good author. People said, "I want a copy of that." It was so great. So that's the way to go. Just rely on God to do everything. He works out, man, he doesn't let you down. Not like my friends ~~who that~~ let me down when I got sick.

But now you have different friends, right?

| Yeah, but I don't have... Like, -but it's not like, the friends that aren't my friends anymore, we went out together and stuff. Went out to bars. But I don't go to bars anymore.

You just drink vodka at home? Or wine?

| Always wine. I like the Rieisling. That's the one that's good. See what happened was, this guy, he worked at Giant Eagle in produce, and he has long hair, so I call him long hair. I say "Hey, Long Hair." And he says, "Rieisling has good, blue bottles," so I got that, what's it called? Polka Dot. And I went back to get another one and they didn't have it, so I bought another bigger bottle of the Rieisling. It's really good. Easy to go down, man. That's the kind of wine I like.

So I think I did all the talking.

| **That's what you were supposed to do. You're telling us you're story.**