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Interview Questions and Answers for Don Hussey's TICKET TO RIDE

1. What prompted you to write this memoir now?

At the age of twenty-seven, shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001, my son Gregory gave up his career in Chemistry to join the U.S. Army. He completed basic training and Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Ft. Benning, Georgia. As a then 2nd Lieutenant, he was assigned to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma for field artillery training and then to Ft. Casey along the DMZ in South Korea. I expected, and he confirmed, that he may be sent to Iraq. It was at that moment that I began to realize, at some point, I may lose him and decided to write him a letter detailing my life and those who influenced me, long before he was born.

2. Growing up as you did in the 50s and 60s, do you feel your family was typical? Did you feel outside the norm at the time?

There were times when I didn't notice or fully realize my childhood years were much different than others; it was when I began school and developed friends that I felt a disconnect with my peers. My parent's divorce when I was three was the beginning and end of a real family for me. None of my friends' parents had divorced or had different last names than their parents. Nor, did it seem, that their home life was as disruptive as was the case in my house. My brother was always suffering from the effects of hemophilia, and because my mother and stepfather worked, I was responsible for him much of the time. My stepfather, who I believed hated me or at the very least was jealous of my relationship with my mother, restricted my life and my free time to the point where friends were afraid of him and wouldn't come knocking at my door.

3. What do you attribute your drive and perseverance to? What prompted you to work your way out of the rut your family had fallen into?

We had moved so many times during my formative years that it was impossible for me to estab-

lish roots or lasting childhood relationships. I was always the “new kid.” After three different high schools in three years, I had had enough and began planning my escape. I had seen and experienced enough of the drinking, hatefulness, deprivation, foul language, cracks in the head, and going nowhere people around me; I never wanted to be like them or waste the one life I was given.

4. In 1965, you suffered a horrendous accident. How do you think this shaped your future?

It took me years to put that behind me. After my relationship with Janice fell apart, I figured I'd never find a wife or have a family. I came to realize that my insecurities were more my responsibility than anyone around me. My perception of how others perceived me had taken control of my psyche. I concluded that, after many years, those thoughts were standing in my way, so I developed a personal philosophy that if others turned away from me, it was their issue and not mine. I learned to do everything I had done before. Every word of this manuscript was typed by me...no electronic voice system, just a keyboard and a computer. I routinely shook hands with bankers and business people with a smile and without hesitation, and when I entered public life, I never let it get in my way.

5. The 1960s were tumultuous times, but also politically exciting. Is that where you first became interested in politics? Or was it something later on?

I don't know where that comes from. My mother was quite openly patriotic and maybe I inherited that from her or through my earlier ancestry. I saluted the flag in school with great pride. I studied American history on my own. I was always moved, sometimes to tears, on Memorial Day and later on Veteran's Day. I'm convinced, and I have no research to bear this out, that much of who we are as individuals has been passed on to us through the our own DNA—interests, talents, attitudes, ambition, patriotism, etc. I attempted to trace my heritage and became convinced that because we came from, on my father's side, Berwick, Maine in the 1700's that at some point we descended from Berwick, Scotland, where during the invasion of 1066, the Normans massacred everyone who did not escape. My great-grandfather, on the mother's side, immigrated through Scotland to Ireland and then to America in the early 1870s.

I've been to the Memorial in Pearl Harbor, walked the sands of Omaha Beach, looked over the cliff at Pointe-du-Hoc, and visited the American cemetery in Normandy where I came upon the first stone in the third isle from the right, which was that of a young man from Massachusetts: Died June 6, 1944.

I was driven into politics in 1989 mainly because of my business experiences. When, in the late 1980s, the then Governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis, proposed legislation to tax every business owner \$1,700 per employee to fund his Universal Health Care Plan, I sold my business and convinced myself I could change the world, or at least I could make changes through elective office here in Massachusetts.

6. The memoir ends when you are still quite a young man. What will the next installment cover?

I think I've brought the reader along to the present through the epilogue. I do however intend to write two additional books, one of which I have already begun. The subject of this next book, details my experiences in the construction business in and around Boston. An inside view of what it's like to hold together a business in a chaotic, waterfront environment where incidents, accidents and legal disputes occurred nearly every day.

How I survived those years I'll never really know.