

## Transcript of Interview with Al Bailey by Kathleen Bailey

**Interviewee:** Al Bailey

**Interviewer:** Kathleen Bailey

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**Location (Interviewee):** Florence, Kentucky

**Location (Interviewer):** Cincinnati, Ohio

**Transcriber:** Kathleen Bailey

### Abstract:

Al Bailey grew up in the Midwest. He joined the Navy and worked on nuclear submarines for six years, has a degree in nuclear physics, worked in many nuclear power stations, and has been retired several times. He is an avid collector of paper money, enjoys ham radio, and is planning to go to law school this August. He has been married twice and has five children. Al and his wife Sara Bailey are currently living in Florence, Kentucky, with their youngest daughter Melanie. Sara is working in Kentucky at a chemical plant and is currently not required to stay home. Al's life has been filled with many interesting events and experiences from his time in the military to 9/11 and more. In this interview, he reflects on current events related to COVID-19 and its political implications as well as how he and his family are handling the social distancing and isolation.

**KB:** All right. It's started. So, let's start with the, the metadata, your name, where you are, what day it is. Anything else you want to add about your background?

**AB:** Well, I'm in Florence, Kentucky, in state imposed self-isolation. I'm 29 years old. [Laughs] Oh excuse me, I'm 60 years old and oh, I don't know, I'm your dad.

**KB:** And what's your name?

**AB:** Oh, my name is Al Bailey.

**KB:** All right. So, what do you know about the coronavirus?

**AB:** Well, biology is not my particular forte, but clearly, it's a, it's a virus spreading around the United States in the current moment. We were all, of course, very concerned about it. And then of course, from my perspective, I'm probably a higher risk candidate for it being potentially life threatening. So, you know other than getting into some real technical issues in terms of infectious rate, mortality rate, you know, yada yada. Which I'm really not an expert on. I just can only repeat what I'm reading and hearing. That's pretty much the summary.

**KB:** All right. So how are you preparing, or have you gone past that, and how have you prepared for this?

**AB:** That's a good question. I have obviously been washing my hands a lot. But when we were still not quite totally on self-isolation here in Kentucky, I was still going to the gym -- work out -- but you even see it. There were a lot fewer people that last week. There are a lot fewer people a lot more concentrated wiping down of equipment. And I have always at the gym, washed my hands thoroughly after a workout just because you just don't know -- and -- but I've continued that. During that time when we began to see how serious it was really getting the -- I had Sara [Bailey] my wife, your mom -- I kept telling her we've got to go to the store and kind of stock up on some of the more mundane things that I'm carrying probably a higher inventory of unsalted crackers. [chuckles] Yes, low salt. The... interestingly, those seem to be the last ones to go off the shelf. [chuckles]

**KB:** There is that.

**AB:** We ... we eat Ritz that your mother likes, we're -- we're you know, we're -- we've just upped what we're holding in the pantry. Whereas we might've had two boxes of Ritz, now we're probably carrying three to four. On... on unsalted saltines, which is really an oxymoron, the... we're... we're carrying probably three boxes of those. We probably... we started to gather a little more on the canned goods side. One of my favorites, those little tiny beanies and weenies. [KB laugh] Oh yeah, those are... those are a good, you know, apocalyptic meal.

I think we've just increased what we've typically had by a little bit. We're not, in my opinion, hoarding large quantities of materials, food stuffs, and, you know, toilet paper. The last time I had an opportunity to buy toilet paper was several weeks ago and I got one package. We're okay. We're still... just because I normally had a, a large inventory of toilet paper. I have not had a... felt the need to increase that. But it is slowly dissipating down. I think probably the most important thing that's happened is, is kind of a lifestyle change. Sara has been... has continued... (\_\_\_??) Sara now is working at home, my wife, at home every other day. And I think that's a little bit of an adaptive situation in terms of I'm used to having no one or almost no one around during the day and I get to do what I want. Suddenly, there's this other person hanging around who has other needs... (bad connection) CNN or you know, a news, a news broadcast of the Governor DeWine of Ohio. So, there's, there's been some adaptations. Certainly, the funny story is the... [chuckles] Her first day back, I slept in that morning and she got up and she made coffee, which I was really grateful for.

And... cause I normally make the coffee, it's one of my things to try and make her life a little easier. And so, we, we had coffee all day and boy, all day I just started feeling really tired and I'm getting a headache and she's getting a headache and we're both thinking, ah, crap, we've been tagged, you know. Here we go. There we go. All right, here it is. And somewhere towards the end of the day, you know that the coffee was gone. She made another pot and she, and then she realizes that I had not put the regular coffee back into the cabinet. It was only decaf. So, we've been drinking decaf all day and we can laugh about that now. But it, it kinda shows that really even, even you, you can't help but think that if you get a headache, oh my gosh, is this it? You know, and I think that's a different way of living right now for most people. I think most people are, are in that boat. So I hope I've answered the question without wandering too much.

**KB:** That's perfectly fine. So, what has changed about your life? You are retired, you spend most of your time at home anyway, but what has changed about your life and what has stayed the same through all this?

**AB:** Well, laundry is still the same. [laugh] I still get to do the socks, underwear, sheets and towels. You know, I, I, I made a journal entry about this the other day. It's really strange. So much of my life is different in the sense that now you don't get very close to anyone. Even when we go for walks, all the neighbors stay... most, most of us neighbors are staying 12 to 15 feet away from each other. That didn't used to happen. But at the same time with all of this, you don't go anywhere. There's nowhere to go. No restaurant, no movie theater, no protein shake, no gym. All the things that I used to do out of the house because I don't like to be stuck in inside a house and retired. All those things you don't get to do, but at the same time with, with a little bit of of concern associated with the coronavirus. At the same time, there's still the same functions you have to do. You have to cook. You gotta, you gotta do dishes, you got laundry. The good news is, and it is good news, it's warming up and that means we get to putts outside and do lawn stuff. So, this year my lawn is going to get massaged. [chuckle] What else can you do? You know, so it's, it's, it's, everything has changed and getting up cause all this things happening [bad connection] in context [bad connection]

**KB:** All right. So last question here officially, what other crises have you experienced? And how have you handled them?

**AB:** Yeah. [chuckle] You know, it's... There's, there's never been a thing like this where it's, where it's affected everyone around me. However, when I was in the military, there were some pretty close calls. And... you... I think the advantage then was that I was young. I, I do remember being at the submarine electric plant control panel and in, in maneuvering, which is the control room for the entire engineering spaces on the submarine. And, we're encouraged to regularly take what they call DC ground readings on the DC bus. So, you have an AC bus that provides the electrical loads, then you have an emergency DC bus and it's the one your life depends upon. If anything, ever happens, that's what you need. So, I was just sitting there and I, I can be... or you're bored. So, I just took a reading. They want you to take readings randomly and, and record them when you do. Which is fine. And I took one and I couldn't believe the reading. It was like almost a direct ground to zero. I mean it's not zero. I was like, you know, several K ohms but extremely low. And that is very bad. And I'm looking at it, I'm thinking, and I did something wrong. And I did it again, and I said, I pulled the EL in, look at this, I'm looking at this going... and I'm switching and I'm doing the things I'm supposed to do. And all of a sudden, across the one MC, which is the ship's announcement system from forward to aft. So, everybody's hearing the same thing. We got the flooding in middle compartment. This is bad. Okay. That's not a survivable event. [chuckle] Okay. It's also where the battery is at, which was the ground readings I'm taking. Also not a survivable event. It was pretty scary. I mean it was intense. The, you know, it, it, it... what did you do? I mean, you do what you're supposed to do. I mean, in any, in any kind of real emergency training helps.

What are you going to do with the coronavirus? We're going to do what we always do and, and, and, and try to adapt to new ways of doing things associated with the current emergency. In the submarine, at the time, we had the advantage that we had trained for this and trained for this and

trained for this and it was a close call. That ship almost went down. You, you don't realize that because, you know, we don't talk about that very often. I don't tell you many of the bad things about the military. I usually tell you the funny stories and the, and the enjoyable, enjoyable ones. But I assure you that was a, that was a tight one. We got it. We got it done, but... and, and got to the surface, figured out what was wrong. But then we had to spend the next several weeks with people off of the watch bill trying to repair the damage that had occurred. Underway, still, still maintaining the mission. Those are tough times. Those are tough times.

I know another tough time again, military, but it had to do with being poor. You, you don't, you, you know, you, you, you, you're my daughter and you realize that life's pretty good with dad. [chuckle] You know, you want something, come talk to dad. But long ago, I mean I was married and so poor we slept on cardboard boxes. That was our bed. We had, we lived out of cardboard boxes because we didn't have dressers or furniture or anything. We had toothbrushes, toilet paper and barely enough food. Jamie [Bailey], your brother was a baby then. And... It was tough. It was very tough. If you just pull your belt tighter, try not to complain. That's hard. You know me. I tend to be a critic of many things. [Laugh]

But you know, have I ever been through an, a crisis like this? No, this is, this is probably the worst because [bad connection] maybe just, you know, my family and child. This is all of us together. Now, on the submarine. It was all of us together. We lived and died together. Right. If it goes down, you all die. There's no second chance. So, this is where we're at. You know, to a certain extent today with the coronavirus, we are all going to take our shot. Since it appears no one has immunity, that means eventually every one of us will come down with it at some point. Or there'll be a vaccine hopefully. But that's, that's a year and a half out. So, if you come down with it, you're gonna have to take your chance. Right? It is what it is. Certainly I don't wish it upon anyone, but, if I, if I get it, you, you know how sick I get when I get a cold and the asthma makes me a very high risk candidate and I'm like get it and go down, well you know I love you very much. Sorry. But it is what it is. So that pretty much takes care of that. I hope I did okay for you.

**KB:** Yeah, yeah. Just a few follow up questions I guess, cause it's supposed to be about 45 minutes total and we've hit about 15. So where, where do you go for information?

**AB:** Where do I go for information? Oh, my goodness. I, I have a pretty wide net. I, I go to the Ohio COVID website, the Kentucky COVID website, the CDC. And then from a news perspective in terms of what's going on, which is different, you know, those are more, those are technical in the sense that what happens with the virus, but they're also like what's happening in the local area where you live and I live. You know, we're, we're, even though we're in Kentucky we're, we're so close to Cincinnati, we're heavily influenced by what happens in Ohio. I also plot every single day, [chuckles] the, the number of confirmed cases in Ohio and the number of confirmed cases in Kentucky. And then I take the derivative and plot that. Which is really the better measure of the rate of change of infection. It's just not the total curve going up. It's exponential, which is very scary to see. But it's the rate of change of that curve, the slope, if you will, at the intersection point of each, each point on the line. And I've published that to you several times. It took fairly nasty jump the other, as of yesterday, I haven't plotted it today. I will after this. But I also go to CNN, BBC, PBS, Fox news, ABC, CBS, NBC, Reuters and AP. And

from there I also tend to expand. Those are kind of my core things. And then I expand from there for other, other news stories.

And you know, I will say one thing I've started doing is to a certain extent, it's just been too depressing. So, I try not to turn it on until later on in the day. I was extremely disappointed today because Sunday, as you know, if it's Sunday, it's Meet the Press [chuckle] and I like Meet the Press, Face the Nation, George Stephanopoulos. Stephanopoulos on ABC has one of the best ones going right now in terms of political discussion. You know, politics and coronavirus are highly linked. And, all of those were not on the television today because there was a, unfortunately a funeral for a police officer that had fallen in Ohio. And so that was taking up the, that lady's funeral and, and certainly our, our, our best wishes, their family and condolences, every one of those was, was preempted by the funeral. So none of those was on today. But that's, that's kind of my sources of information.

**KB:** Yeah. And then, so you talked a little bit about the, the mental impact of the virus as well. Just the, the being cooped up in one place and how are you handling that and maybe trying to combat a lot of the, I don't know, depression, the fear, the anxiety that goes along with the coronavirus.

**AB:** Yeah. That's a good question and I don't have it figured out yet. Like everyone, we're, trying to figure this out. I mean, it, it's, I try to make a list of things I'm going to do each day. Because again, this is going to sound so terrible, I... Through a long sequence of events and I'm on the mailing list for several hundred annual reports on companies and this is annual report season. So, I am reviewing anywhere from three to 10 annual reports a day. I try to make sure that I get at least three or four of them done a day. Today I've only done two, but I don't have any really backlogged. I don't read them cover to cover, but I analyze them in terms of an investor and what I think about the questions are asked are they doing a good job or not, blah, blah, blah. So, but anyhow, I tried to get a list, a to do list. I try to stay on a basic schedule. I'm trying to go to bed at night around 10 30. I'm trying to get up around 7:00, 7:30.

Again, regular schedule because Sara has me... and I agree. I'm, I'm fairly high risk. I tend not to go to the grocery store. I'm really not going out very much. And then how do you, how do you deal with the, the, the mental end of it? Well, reading was, was really a big part of it. When the library was open. But now I've down in my last book. [chuckle] So, well, OK. Pretty soon I'll be reading Sara's romance novels. [Laughs] Won't that be joyous. We did order some books yesterday. The other thing I do is I try to do a little bit of study time associated with prepping up for law school. Which I intend to start in August. And that's led to some interesting challenges and stuff I don't know about, but anything that I can do to keep myself active. So, I try to do a to do list, schedule, still trying to do some exercise either daily or, or like today, not so much, but yesterday was a really intense 80 minute workout. I went walk... I rode my bicycle with Sara while she walked, but I did all the hills up and down around her circling while she was doing that. So she might go up the hill once, I might go up and down and two or three times, that, that's, there's a lot of work. But it felt good. It just feels good to get the kind of exercise. Eating healthy as best we can. And, and, and I think we're, we're lucky in that area.

So schedule, workout, to do list. And then truthfully, every so often you know this, occasionally I get frustrated and then I call you and we laugh about it. [laughs] So laughter, laughter really helps. You, you, you've gotta be able to reach out somehow to other people and find ways to communicate even in an isolation situation like this.

**KB:** Yeah. And then is there anything that is just gone that you cannot do at home or you cannot find in the store? Something that is just gone.

**AB:** You mean like to buy or to do?

**KB:** Well, let's start with to buy. Is there anything that's just not available at your store right now?

**AB:** We have not had toilet paper in several weeks. I got a supply, but I probably can last another week or two. But, we're not toilet papering any houses around us. I can tell you that. [laughs] We, we need to find a way to get some toilet paper in eventually here. I, like I said, I, I don't think it's going to be a concern, but that's the one thing we haven't seen in weeks.

In terms of to do, which is related to buy, that I can't do. Is... I used to go to the gym three to four times a week and while I always concentrated a lot on aerobics, the other thing I like to do is weights. And I have two 10 pound barbells at home, but I used to do 17 or 20s. And I, I actually looked up online a 17 and a 20 pound barbell set just, just those two. And just to have either one, it didn't matter which one it was. And amazingly the stores are sold out of those. [chuckle] How can that be? You know, I'm obviously slow on the draw. But I don't get to lift weights like I used to. I don't get to do that which is something I do kind of miss. There's a, there's a good feeling about it. Aerobic is good cause you get the flush feeling all over, but then there's also a certain feeling you get with your muscles when you, when you isolate muscles and do some concentrated, I would use the term low intensity lifting. I'm not a high intensity lifter. I'm not a gorilla that's going to scream and yell and then drop the weight when you go "uhhh" all over the room. That's not me. But those are the things I think that I've not been able to do. And, and just go out. We don't get to eat out at all. So we are, we are delicately trying to support specific restaurants that we really enjoy. But, you know, Old Al can't support all of them.

**KB:** Yeah. And then, when do you think the state impo, imposed quarantine will be over?

**AB:** Boy, if I knew that I'd be on television. [laughs] And no one knows that, you know, and I think to some extent there's going to be a, it's going to be longer than any of us want. It's going to be several weeks in order to, in order to really relax this. So, we're going to have to have several weeks after we see a marked change in the rate of change curve. So, in the curves that I'm sending you, that's the blue line underneath. The red one is the number of cases in Ohio. The blue line is the rate of change of the red line. And it took a marked increase yesterday a severe up. So you're going to have to, since the number of cases in essence represents two weeks previous infection or exposure points, we're going to have to see that curve flat, that rate of change curve flatten out and then I would suspect 10 to 14 days after that it would be reasonable. Assuming it doesn't continue, you didn't then again have a spike occur. It would be reasonable to see to, to expect that increased social contact would be more probable.

**KB:** Yeah. And then do you have any big plans for after all this? Travel Europe, go see something?

**AB:** I'm going to go to law school. [Laughs] Which is going to be an interesting time because law school teaches by Socratic method. And they're all struggling with, you know, your last question was how long will this go? I, I don't see us coming out of this anytime in April, you know, May, maybe a different time. I do have a reservation and a hotel, and an airline trip to go to Kansas City for a paper money show. It'll be the last one I would be able to go to for like three years while I go to law school. I think that ones in serious danger of not being, of not happening.

Other than that, in essence, I would like at some point for Sara and I to be able to get away from work, her work. We haven't had a vacation time for several years because of moving, her job, all those types of things. And, you know, we had our 25th wedding anniversary where we went to dinner and then I went home and she went back to work and that was several years ago. [chuckle] And that's all we've done since, you know, we just don't have that kind of time. It was kinda hoping before I started law school we could get away. And kind of was looking at the places but I don't know, that's going to happen this summer. I don't intend to celebrate with a cruise or trip or vacation or anything. I intend to celebrate by going to law school. Isn't that great?

**KB:** That's, that's very on brand for you though.

**AB:** Yeah. I, you know, me, I'm a big education person and I am really excited about this opportunity. I, I, you know that. You know how hard I studied the... I, I will never forget the discussion we had and laughed about whether or not I'm driven. [chuckles] And Sean, you're your boyfriend looking at, at me going, after I told him [bad connection] I took a couple of, you know, sub tests today and scored, you know, 35%. Ugh. You know, that's hard. It's hard to keep going when you do that. And he looked at me when we're having the discussion on driven and he goes, yeah, somebody who keeps going when they score 35% tests and keeps going, that's driven. [laughs] So, you know, its who I am, I make no apologies for it.

**KB:** Yeah. And then I just thought of another question here. How is technology helping you? But also is it hurting at all?

**AB:** Well, doing this interview is kind of interesting. Are you still there?

**KB:** Yeah.

**AB:** Okay. Here your picture froze for a minute. It gave me a green circle around your nose. It looked like a little clown nose.

**KB:** Wow. Thanks.

**AB:** The technology technology's helping. I mean, look, this is... Rather than doing this in person, which is how I would've done it, to do this interview, like this is kinda cool. I obviously text and email, which I consider technology probably the younger generation is rolling their eyes

at this point. Like going, Whoa, what a dinosaur. But you know, that's how Bob [Vandevender] and I stay in touch and how we argue all the time. I've reached out to a lot more friends than I have in a long time. Some people up in Michigan, Michigan's being particularly hard hit, especially down at the Detroit area, Wayne County and, Midland has I think, eight coronavirus cases and, and that's a lot. It's more than what we have in Boone County. I think we have five in Boone County right now. So, I've reached out to some of my ham radio guys up there, the emergency management coordinator at Midland County, Jennifer. She and I obviously went through some emergencies together and I'm just gonna reach out to some people and they're, they're applying there. They also are at home and you know, that's, that's how technology is kind of helping us reach out. It's still feels a little weird at times. You got to write it all out and we don't do a lot of the Skype type stuff.

**KB:** Yeah. All right. And what about, well, maybe, maybe the last question here, what about misinformation? Have you run across any problems with finding credible information even on the sites that you visit that are usually pretty good about that? Is there still some misinformation or things like that?

**AB:** There have been, there's been misinformation. I kind of, I'm kind of an amateur fact checker, so I've kind of learned the hard way by taking a stance on something only to find out that I didn't do my homework and should have. The... all the news sources at times are getting it up and down. I mean, there's just so much in the long, the voluminous material out there on COVID-19. I tend to pull back a little bit and try to catch it on a couple of different sources, but even then, you don't know if they're both quoting the same source. So, you know I, I just over time it tends to come out pretty straight forward. I mean, let me give you one example that I did have to backtrack a little bit on even recently, this is a Trump, before he became serious about COVID. He was at a rally and he made the comment about "this is a hoax." And, and that's been quoted, that's been widely quoted. But when you look at the context of that statement, and I do hate to be a defender of Trump, but nonetheless true is true. When you look at the context, he's talking about the way the Democrats are talking about it, not that the coronavirus itself is a hoax. And, and that is a, it is a nuance and one certainly hates to give Trump any extra credit, but it is what it is. It's still it in context. It took a while to, to kind of uncover that one.

But that's what I'm telling you over time, I know which sources I trust. And usually with a high degree of precision, they're able to get me that information. In my journal I tend to record stuff that's kind of escalating, showing the escalation within the world. So the number of deaths in Italy, Spain yesterday had over 800 people die in one day. You know, before that Italy was happening, a thousand people die in a day. These are, these are astounding, numbers. And, and to think that we're heading there the other thing happening in terms of...

I think there's a tension right now between when you talk about false data information and not, not false information. There's a tension between what you see the President and the staff saying on the daily briefings and then what the Governors of individual States are saying. And then when, when Trump ridicules them for not telling his line. Now to some extent, right, would, when, governor Cuomo says he wants 30,000 ventilators and Trump sends him 400. The first shipment was 400. And he did get pretty unhappy about that. And then, and then, and then the next day, Trump has said, well, we're going to ship 2,000 today and 2,000 tomorrow, whatever it



was, but another 4,000 and Cuomo responds with, well, how am I supposed to decide? How are we supposed to decide which 26,000 people die? You know, that's, that's pretty political. The, the follow up to that is when Trump was talking about those, those ventilators were there and they didn't know they were there. It appears now that that's not an accurate statement. So it takes some real time to kind of figure out these nuances within the story.

If you're new to this, this is going to be a bad time to try and decipher it. But, but I think even on Fox News, they're taking it seriously and they're you know, it may not be serious enough to suit some Democrats view of what Fox News should say. But I'm sure that Fox news doesn't think many liberal news stations are saying it the right way either. So, we leave that alone.

**KB:** Yeah. All right, well that's all the questions I had. Is there anything else you'd like to say about the situation or the virus or anything at all?

**AB:** Well, I would, I certainly hope in a totally selfish manner that our family gets through this in time. You're there, Melanie's [Bailey, my sister] over at her boyfriend's house. She's staying there and now evidently is what it looks like. We're here, mom and dad are in Illinois. You know, I have some aunts and uncles and cousins hunkered down. Liz [Selzer] and Don [Selzer] think they had it. And I don't think, you know, that they, they got so sick, they said they've never been that sick before. And Liz is still somewhat bed ridden and it's been about four or five weeks. And, that's, that's some pretty kick butt flu. And, and they just, you know, they didn't get tested, so we don't know that's what it was. But it was, it was bad. The whole body, respiratory, cold headache had all the symptoms, fever. They had diarrhea real bad, and they had backaches and, and down their sciatic nerves that were just horrifically painful. He, he thinks it was. Hopefully he's got immunity now. Right. Cause they're, they can be in, in some dire situations. So, I, I certainly hope that, that our family through this and then by extension our friends, you know, and, and I realized that, we'll see what happens. Right. It's a serious time. Oh, it's a serious time. And I appreciate you asking me this question, so I'm not sure I've provided you any great info, but I certainly enjoyed it.

**KB:** Yeah. All right, well that's great. I'm going to, stop recording now.

**AB:** Okay. Well thank you very much. I love you.

**KB:** All right, now it's done recording. Woo

**AB:** Woo.

ENDING TRANSCRIPT HERE (37:57) EVEN THOUGH THERE IS MORE IN THE RECORDING PAST THIS CONVERSATION.