

Willie Austin, Jr.

UNNAMED HOST stands before a seated audience.

HOST: Good afternoon. [*Audience responds.*] I'd like to welcome you to our first I Remember Hour for 1990. Our speaker today is going to be Mr. Willie Austin, who is the Chief Marshal for the State Court in DeKalb County and the Chief Constable for the Magistrate Court; and he's been a Court Marshal for about thirty-four years. He's going to tell us how the number of marshals grew from about one or two to about eighteen today and some of the more unusual cases that he's been involved in. So, Mr. Marshal, if you will. Not Mr. Marshal, Mr. Austin [*chuckles among audience*].

WILLIE AUSTIN, *from the audience, off-camera*: You want me to stand here or sit or just--

HOST: Whatever makes you comfortable.

Mr. Austin takes his place at the front of the room, facing the audience.

WA: As they say, I'm Willie Austin, Jr., the Chief Marshal; and two or three years ago I took on another title as Chief Constable. I'm the Chief Marshal and Chief Constable of the State and Magistrate Court. Of course, some of you are probably aware of the court. It was founded in about 1951. At that time it was known as the Civil Court. And later on it's become known as the Civil and Criminal Court; that's when they started trying criminal matters.

When I first started, I was the third marshal there, Deputy Marshal, and Arthur Withers was the Marshal at that time, and Tom Young was the Deputy Marshal, and I became the third Deputy Marshal. And, of course, a series of events happened, unfortunately. Tom Young died a few years after he was there; and I succeeded him as Chief Deputy. And, of course, eight months later Mr. Withers died; and, of course, I became the Chief Marshal back in 1967. Of course, I'd like to say we grew from three marshals, and we had one judge and one clerk and about three deputy clerks. And, of course, we just started at that time covering DeKalb County, which, a lot of you know, was just beginning to grow. You go back over the county now and see all the growth, especially in the Dunwoody area and the Executive Park area and, of course, other areas in the county. It's just unbelievable to see what's there and what was there thirty-something years ago. Executive Park back then was just a cow pasture there, the old Tullie Smith homeplace and pond there. Dunwoody was out in the country there, just a

small crossroads there, a small store and a post office in it and just a farm region, really. And, of course, like I say, back then the county was beginning to grow; and all out in the Glenwood and Candler areas, Second Avenue, and Flat Shoals area, you know, subdivisions were going in seemed like almost daily. Of course, that was when the school system started to have a tremendous growth, building schools everywhere. I know I used to ride over the county, especially in the eastern part of the county, around Lithonia and Browns Mill and Klondike area. When we'd ride along, I used to comment to my partner, "What in the world is all these fireplugs doing out here in the country? There's nothing here." But, of course, Mr. Scott Candler had a lot of insight to the future how the county was going to grow. Of course, he had the water system in place; that's one of the things that helped DeKalb County grow, was the water system we had.

Of course, the court grew later on, as the population grew. And today we have--let's see, I don't know how many employees we have over there now; I'd say a hundred or more, I guess, in all the courts. So today, instead of serving about three or four thousand papers when I first started over there, were serving--in my area we're serving about 70,000 papers today. Of course, forty-something thousand of those papers this past year was dispossessory warrants. Of course, we have a lot of apartments in DeKalb County and a lot more under construction. And it's unfortunate that you have a lot of those, that many dispossessory warrants; but, nevertheless, you have them, and somebody has to serve them. Of course, the Marshal's Office is the one that serves those. We serve lawsuits and personal injury suits--that's lawsuits on notes, contracts, and things of that nature. And if you're a merchant, of course, sometimes you have to have means to recover your money, you know; you have to go into court to sue an individual to try to recover your money. I often tell them that I guess the only people we make happy in the county are bankers, merchants, and landlords and things like that that have property. And, of course, they have to have means to recover their money, you know. Otherwise, there wouldn't be any way for a lot of them to get their money, because you're always going to have people that for a lot of reasons--some has sickness and unfortunate things that comes on them that they can't meet their obligations. And, of course, in these days and times, you've got a lot of people that're just out to beat the system anyway. They're going to run up a lot of bills on their plastic that everybody has now. If you don't watch them, they'll wind up in court and

go bankrupt on them. But, nevertheless, that's what we're involved in over there, of course.

[*To audience*] How many of you have ever heard of the Marshal's Office? How many? Raise your hands again.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [*Laughing*] I've heard, but I don't know [rest inaudible].

WA: About four people other than [rest inaudible]. So many people in the county don't know anything about the Marshal's Office. Of course, a lot of times what we do, the sheriff gets the credit for it. They think about the marshal, they think about the Old West, the old days in the West, where they had marshals. They don't think anything about an urban county having a marshal, but we do a lot of work. Like I say, we have about eighteen people out in the field. Of course, we handle, like I say, suits--all type of suits. We may serve a personal injury suit, you know, where somebody's been involved in a serious accident, you know, and their monetary damages may be up in the thousands, \$500,000, somebody may be suing for an accident they've been involved in. We handle personal property foreclosures. And we're the ones, if you don't pay for your cars you promised to pay for when you bought it--the GMAC or the bank or whatever--of course, we're the ones that picks that up, forecloses on it. We work suits, garnishments, FiFas, or attachments.

One of the more interesting cases I like to refer back to--of course, I've gone over [inaudible] just now--now, this happened back along, best I can remember, around 1959 or 1960. It's a very unusual case, I think, and it may be the only one in Georgia; I'm not sure, but someday I'd like to really know. [*Opens a folder to read from notes.*] Fred [last name inaudible--sounds like "Newman" or "Noonan"?]. Some of you might remember Fred; he used to write for *The DeKalb New Era*. Mr. McWhorter owned that; it used to be on Atlanta Avenue here. And it's titled, "Corpse Rolls from Coffin in Rare Legal Action Here." And what happened, there was a Black fellow that worked, he was a cement truck driver for Whitley Concrete Company when it was down here on Maple and Ponce de Leon years ago. And we received what was called at that time a bail trover. They don't have that particular court paper today, thank goodness; it was too vicious to work, and I'm glad they did away with it. Nevertheless, when we had it, we received a court paper at that time that this Black fellow that drove--his name was Willie Ivey [spelling?--could be Ivy?], and he drove a cement truck. And he was down off the

Rockbridge Road area, and he was attempting to climb from the vehicle while the motor was still running, and he was caught in that--you know, the big, revolving drum on the cement mixer. And he was crushed; and, of course, he was dead on arrival at DeKalb General Hospital.

Arthur Withers, the marshal at that time, and myself, we had this court order to go down on Atlanta Avenue and Trinity, down at the Tyler Funeral Home--it's still down here in the flat down here. And when we went in with the court order, of course, we told the funeral director there that we had a court order to pick up his body. And, of course, we went in; and, of course, he was laid out in the room there, you know. In the meantime, there was another funeral director out of Atlanta that had come out to pick up the body. And, of course, we were standing by while they removed him from the casket there and took his clothes off and put him under the sheet and left with him. And, of course, I told Mr. Withers at that time, the marshal, I said, "Well, we've levied on hogs, cows, bulldozers, airplanes, everything else. I never thought we'd levy on a dead body," which was very unusual. But the reason we was levying on this body, this fellow was living with a common law wife; and, of course, I would imagine that even back then, there was probably several thousand dollars' worth of insurance that was involved in the death, accidental death. And then, too, his mother wanted to make her own arrangements for her son down at where they grew up, down in Warrenton, Georgia, down near Augusta. But anyway, in filling out the bail trover, this attorney in Clarkston told the judge, "Well, we don't have any experience in putting a value on this body." So the court put a value on the body of ten dollars. Of course, like I say, she got her son's body and had her own private [inaudible--*interrupted by sneeze from audience member*] she wanted for her son. But that was one of the more unusual cases that I've been involved in over the years in my court experience.

Of course, I've also been fortunate to not be involved in too many bad situations. But I have been in two situations where I've had guns drawn on me. The last one that was drawn on me, some lady had a shotgun about this long, and I didn't know how we was going to come out on that. Thank the good Lord He watched over us and took care of us in that situation. But we've been very fortunate in levying on people and evicting people. Of course, these days and times the job is more dangerous for the reason that there's so many drugs in our society now. We hardly ever go into these apartments on an eviction what we don't find some form of drug. I would imagine in a

lot of cases that's the reason they're unable to pay their rent; they're spending their money on drugs. Of course, many years ago, the thing that was taking a lot of the money at that time, of course, was alcoholic beverages; you know, they're spending their money on those type things. And now it's drugs that they're spending money on. Of course, you don't ever know, when you go into one of these places now where they're using these drugs, what's going to happen.

So it has danger to it, even though it's not like police work as such, you know. They do a lot of high-pursuit chases and a lot of domestic situations and all. We did have a situation back in '79, in 1979, when the marshal was attempting to levy on an automobile on a foreclosure action over in the Glenwood and Austin Drive area. We were very fortunate that day not to lose some men. Before it was over, we had about half the DeKalb Police force over there. They finally got this man out of the house over there by shooting tear gas in the house and bringing him out. We were very fortunate that day, the way he was taking potshots at everybody.

But over the years we've managed to do this tremendous job in handling all this paperwork in the courts without any serious incidents. You have a lot of people that likes to hurl insults at you and do a lot of cursing and taking on and all that, but we've managed to do the job without any serious injury. This fellow that was over there that day got shot, it just happened that the tree that he was behind wasn't big enough. He was a big guy and happened to get his arm there; it was the only thing, the wound that he suffered. But anyway, we was very fortunate to not lose somebody there that day.

Of course, this past year, just to give you a summary of how the court has grown, we served 15,382 State Court lawsuits and 4,500 Magistrate Court lawsuits; 4,400 garnishments and nearly 42,000 dispossessory warrants; and we served 400-and-something personal property foreclosures. And we served what we call in the legal profession "second originals" from other courts, such as Cobb, Gwinnett, and Fulton and other court systems all over the state. And, of course, we had 856 personal injury lawsuits. That's mostly involving accidents that people had that have so much traffic in an area like this; you have a lot bad accidents and a lot of injuries sustained in those accidents. And then we had 500-and-something FiFas after people had gone to court and got a judgment and received a FiFa. And over the county last year we had approximately 3,587 actual evictions--that's people that's actually put out of the

apartment or home or whatever out onto the edge of the street, along with their belongings.

So you see it's a very busy court there that we operate in the State and Magistrate Court. And it's not a pleasant job, like I say; and we hardly get any applause for doing this job, because you certainly don't make people happy bringing a lawsuit out to their home or putting them out of their property or taking their automobile away from them or automobile or whatever. Nevertheless, somebody has to execute those papers in the court; and that's what the Marshal's Office does. And really and truly, that's about all I can tell you about it, other than it is just continuing to grow. Of course, I don't have to tell you the county's growing in a lot of ways. It's changing in a lot of ways, in demographics and population, there's a lot of change in that. So it's going to continue to grow.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Question

WA: Yeah

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: When you started in the office, how many judges were there in the State Court or just the Marshal's Office?

WA: Well, it was known at that time, like I said, as the Civil Court. It had one judge and one clerk and three deputy clerks and three marshals.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: And now how many are y'all--

WA: Well, now we have twenty-something in the Marshal's Office and--of course, you know, in the clerk's office, Chandler, I imagine there's probably sixty or seventy in the Magistrate--I mean, the State Court Clerk's office. You have five State Court judges, and you have one Chief Magistrate Court judge, and how many--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Twenty-two

WA: How many?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Twenty-two

WA: Two?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Twenty-two

WA: Twenty-two. Twenty-two Associate Magistrate judges. [Name inaudible] is one of them that hears a lot of those cases. Part-time judges, all are lawyers.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Three full-time

WA: Three full-time

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Tell them about the airplane you had to levy.

WA: Well, we've levied on airplanes. Of course, when you levy on airplanes, you know, it's usually at DeKalb-Peachtree Airport. And, of course, you make arrangements for one of the air services there, you know, to chain the plane down and tie it down with the apron there. And, of course, you put a court document on it, you know, that the plane has been levied on. Of course, you have to get an order when you sell it at the courthouse for the order to read that it's sold at the courthouse but remains on the premises, because can't bring an airplane, you know, down Clairmont Road; there's too much traffic [*audience laughter*].

But one of the more interesting things, too--it was unusual. Used to be an old Black fellow--I can't think of his name. He used to live on Atlanta Avenue here when houses was all down that street there. Of course, you remember, there was a guy named Louie Rosenbaum that owned most of those houses back then.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He's still out there, too.

WA: But--Louie's dead.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Oh, is he?

WA: Yeah

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: He was--the last couple of years ago, wasn't it?

WA: Well, he died three or four years ago. But anyway, this old Black man had a hog that somebody bought from him up in the Doraville section. And again, he took out one of those Bail Trovers [*laughs*] that you don't have anymore. Anyway, we went up for him to get this hog from this fellow that he sold to him. And, of course, you can imagine trying to catch a 300-pound hog in a hog lot, you know, a quagmire [*audience laughter*]. And he was bad to stutter, you know. Of course, he was thinking all the time, you know, that these fellows already caught that hog out there. But they was just slipping and sliding all over the place there. They'd just about get it, you know, and it'd squirm out, and here it'd go in the mud and the slime, you know, and they'd have to go after it again. That was very unusual and very comical. I never will forget, he was bad to stutter, and he was [*Imitates stuttering.*] just that way you know, all excited about wondering why they hadn't caught that hog yet. That was another interesting tale that happened many years ago up there in the Doraville area.

Other than that, it's just, you know, going out from day to day with all these marshals. Of course, another thing now, you know, we have--let's see, we have one, two--we have about three or four females now that works as marshals. Of course, years

ago, you know, you'd never dream you'd have a lady being a marshal. Of course, you've got lady sheriffs now, lady policemen, state troopers, and everything else; you even have them in combat now. Of course, I won't go into that part of it now after hearing what happened in Panama.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: When you first began working in this work, there were a lot of dairy farms in DeKalb County.

WA: Yes, sir. There--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Did you ever have to levy against the cows?

WA: No, never did have to levy on any cows. We levied on a lot of horses--I say a lot of them; we levied on several horses in the old days. Levied on dogs and things like that, but there's a lot of dairies back then. DeKalb County was known, you know, as a dairy county. You had a lot of dairies, especially in the eastern part of the county, you know, around Lithonia and Redan. Used to be an older fellow in the northern part of the county, Mr. W. O. Pierce in Chamblee, that had a big dairy. Used to ride out in the eastern part of the county around Redan and Lithonia and all that area there. Wasn't nothing there, just wide-open spaces. You'd have dairies and just farmland, you know. Of course, the land I'm talking about now is rapidly filling up right at this time, because that was the only area that was left to grow, because most of the growth occurred in the northern part of the county and Tucker and all out that way. Of course, when I moved to Tucker in 1963, you know, 285 wasn't there and Northlake Mall, any of them--none of that was there. And it was just a little two-lane road coming out from Atlanta to Tucker. Of course, people used to take a Sunday drive out through there and get out in the country. That changed rapidly after the '60s because of the growth all in that area there. Now you can't move [inaudible].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Did you ever have any experiences with Rooster?

WA: With who?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Rooster Armistead? You remember?

WA: No, Rooster never did do that much civil practice. He did a lot of the--he was known as a "jailhouse lawyer" at the time. That was when you had the Civil Court and Civil-Criminal Court later on. But he handled mostly the DUI cases and things back then. His brother Dudley, Dudley [inaudible middle name] Armistead, he was a lawyer

that practiced in the civil field. In fact, he was one that had this paper, you know, that I was telling you about on the dead man there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What about, though, when you started out, was Judge Mitchell the main judge then? Or was Judge Hubert?

WA: No, Judge Mitchell was the judge then. Of course, Herman Austin--Herman and I are no relation. Herman was a clerk; of course, he was a judge many years till he got defeated. Before he got defeated, though, and changed from the Civil Court to the Civil-Criminal Court, they added another judge, he was Morgan. He was a judge, second judge. And, of course, like I say, it just kept rolling till now it's five State Court judges and all the other Magistrate Court judges. Are there any other--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: In the movie *Driving Miss Daisy* they mention Avondale Dairy. I can't place that, but I have heard of it. Do you remember Avondale Dairy?

WA: I saw that picture, too, Saturday night. Of course, I really enjoyed it, but I don't remember Avondale Dairy. But we have a lady in here that'd remember anything about Avondale. [*Points to the audience.*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *in response, off-camera*: I don't remember [rest inaudible].

WA: Now, there used to be a dairy on Clarendon Avenue and Columbia there, Mr. Hill, Redmon [spelling?] Hill, you know, an old-time DeKalb resident. He had a dairy there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: No, Avondale Dairy

WA: But did you know--I've never known of an Avondale Dairy. They may have just made that up. Of course, there's Mathis Dairy, you know.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: That's right, but Mathis Dairy got raw milk.

WA: Crow [Crowe?] and Shepherd [spelling?] and all them [inaudible] Lithonia, you know. Mr. Pearson in the north end of the county. And [Tucco? spelling?] Dairy on Briarcliff Road, but I didn't know anything about an Avondale Dairy.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Were you born and raised in DeKalb County?

WA: I was born in DeKalb County, been here all my life.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: So tell us a little bit about where you were born, where you went to school, who your parents are, and that kind of stuff.

WA: Well, I was born in the Scottdale area of DeKalb County. Of course, I went to Avondale School. Of course, back when I went, that's another thing that's very unusual

now. When I went to school--of course, Ms. Davis remembers it when it was Ingleside, Georgia. That's what Avondale and all that area used to be known as. It was 1900, wasn't it, when it was-- [*Inaudible audience conversation*] Anyway, I go back to this reference point: Ingleside Presbyterian Church was formed in 1900 with eighteen charter members; at that time, it was Ingleside, Georgia.

How many of you remember Dr. Allgood, used to be a general practitioner in DeKalb County for many years? Does that name ring a bell for any of you? C. L. Allgood? The name was Conrad Aloysius Allgood. House calls used to be two dollars and a half and office calls fifty cents. And to deliver a baby was twenty-five dollars, and most of them were delivered at home. Back then, he worked night and day, because, you know, there wasn't that many doctors in DeKalb County. Of course, the poor fellow was just going night and day all over DeKalb County. Of course, at that time, DeKalb County had mostly dirt roads, muddy roads. And he had thirty-inch wheels put on his Ford to get through those muddy roads, of course, to visit sick people and deliver babies and all. I think when he moved to Darien, Georgia, down on the Altamaha River when he retired, Judge Mitchell and them used to go down to the--well, they still go down to Fort Barrington Club down at the Altamaha River. And they used to talk with Dr. Allgood when he moved down there, and Dr. Allgood said when he left practice that--of course, no telling how much money was owing to him. You know, back then, with the Great Depression on, people didn't have that much money. Of course, some of them made a sincere effort to pay him when he left his practice and retired. But he told the judge he'd send out one statement, one letter, in his practice; and if that didn't do any good, he never did send any more. Said if they could pay him, they would. And there's no telling how many thousands of dollars was owing to him.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How did you decide to get into the marshalling business?

WA: Well, it was just by word of mouth [*inaudible*], Chandler. Somebody was telling me that he had some friends over at the Civil Court, and they were looking for somebody. He said, "Why don't you go over and talk to them?" He was telling me, you know, it was real easy; wasn't anything to it [*inaudible phrase*]. So I just went over and applied for the job and got it. Of course, that was in July of '56; and I've been there ever since, so I'm in my thirty-fourth year. I can retire under the state retirement

pension I'm under; it's what you call "thirty-four and out." Of course, I'll have that thirty-four July 1 of this year. I've been thinking about retiring, but I'll just have to wait.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Best thing that ever happened to you.

WA: See what my options are. Do you recommend it?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Highly

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What about you? You married and got any children?

WA: I'm married. I have one son. My wife's named Jessie, and my son's named Mark, and he's married. We live in the Tucker area, been living there twenty-six years. And I'm an elder in Ingleside Presbyterian Church.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Was your wife born and raised around here?

WA: Yes, she was born in DeKalb County. Dr. Allgood delivered both of us, twenty-five dollars apiece [inaudible] [*laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What's the biggest thing that you ever seized?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You ever seize Stone Mountain?

WA: One of the--I guess one of the biggest foreclosures was for C&S Bank, about \$1,250,000. And that was a guy that had a--he was a distributor for an ambulance and hearse business. And he had a lot of these big family-passenger sedans, you know, that the funeral home has, you know, that your whole family can ride in if you want to?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: They call them stretch limousines now.

WA: Yeah, but anyway, in that warehouse, I guess there were about seventy-five or a hundred of those things, hearses and everything else. We had to levy on all of them. We had wreckers out there just towing, kept towing. I guess people wondered what in the world they was towing all these hearses and ambulances for. So we've levied on, you know, big bulldozers, earth-moving equipment--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What'd you do with the ambulances? Did you--

WA: Well, you know, that case settled, you know.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Did they all go to Japan? [*Laughter*]

WA: That case settled before it was ever sold at the courthouse.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Do you know where the Decatur streetcars ended up?

WA: Where they ended up?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: The Decatur streetcars

WA: Oh, I guess, everywhere in the world, I guess. I heard some of them were in Japan.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: No--well, I didn't see any in Japan, [WA *interrupts to make inaudible comment.*] but in Korea--

WA: Oh, in Korea

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: --and it still had "Decatur" on the front of it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I have a couple of questions. What has to happen to bring something to the Marshal's Office? In other words, [inaudible phrases] mandated to serve a summons in person? I assume it can't be done by mail, is that right?

WA: So the marshal has to go out and serve the defendant, you know, either personal service--hand to him personally, you know--either serve what we call "notorious service," leaving it with somebody there at the home of suitable age, at the discretion of the marshal.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Do you get a signature for it?

WA: No, all we do is write up, you know, the individual who was served and the date and the time and all that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: But what happens ahead of that, to make you do it, to ask you to do it? To get to that point?

WA: Well, Chandler might can tell you more about that, of course, him being an attorney. Of course, you know, the lawyer represents the plaintiff, you know. Of course, before it ever gets that far, you know, all creditors write people that are delinquent on notes and bills, you know. They write them no telling how many letters, you know: "Look, you owe a certain amount of money and you're past due. And if you don't pay, I'm going to have to turn it over to a collection agency or some attorney, you know." You probably get eight or ten letters before you ever actually get sued. Of course, you know, eventually, they'll have to, you know, come into court to recover their money, you know; they'll enter a suit on the note or contract or whatever. And, of course, if they don't answer it, you know it goes to what's called default judgment; the judgment's, you know, rendered against the defendant. And then a FiFa is issued; that FiFa is good for seven years. And, of course, if there's nothing to recover during that seven-year period, you know, you re-record it again in the Superior Court on what's called a General Execution Document. You pay five dollars and a half; and, of course,

you pay the marshal five dollars to affix a stamp on the FiFa, on the judgment, for five dollars, and the Clerk of the Superior Court gets five-fifty for re-recording. It's good for seven more years. A lot of people, you know, they just take the attitude, well, you know, so what? They can sue me. A lot of people think they've got to have a lot of money and be wealthy before you can sue them and get anything. That's not always the case, because if you work anywhere, of course, they're going to seek a remedy, you know, through what they call a Garnishment Action--you know, garnish your wages, salary, or bank account.

There are a number of ways to recover money. Of course, there's some people that we call, as Chandler'll tell you, is judgment-proof. You just can't hardly ever find any assets or any way to get at these people. Of course, you can keep your judgment re-recorded; and I have known of lawyers and heard of them say by re-recording that judgment, after twenty years they finally caught them. You know, of course, at that time, you know, you owe thousands of dollars interest. You owe a lot more interest than than you do on your principal. Oh, they'll get you sooner or later.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What I wanted to ask you a while ago was, would you tell us the name of the man that had the ambulances?

WA: Gosh, I don't know. It was a place down on DeKalb Industrial Way. But that's been so many years. I think it was N&N, N&S, or NNS, NNN. I forget the name of it, a partnership thing. He was a distributor in that thing.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Do your marshals go by pairs? It looks to me like it would, particularly this drug era, if some young guy didn't want to give up his car--

WA: No, they go in one person to the car. Of course, when you're on an eviction or when you're executing a levy, two people are required, you know to do this, because it's--we have some people who don't do anything but evict. That's all they do all day long, is evict, handle evictions. Of course, a lot of them, you know, are well-equipped. These people now has to be trained; they have to go to school, you know, to learn what's called Basic Mandate Training under the Laws of Georgia to be a Certified Peace Officer. Of course, they have firearms training. The ones especially--like on the eviction team--wears bullet-proof vests, you know. You know, they have to have more protection for doing those type things.

A lot of those things, you know, are real sad. I remember a case--I'll tell this, and then we probably ought to close it out. Is that all right, Chandler? I remember years ago, on Fifth Avenue in Decatur, we had an eviction over there; and when we pulled up, it was a pathetic situation. I was talking to this little boy, and I said, "Son, have you had any lunch?"

And he said, "No, I haven't had any breakfast."

I said, "You haven't?"

And, you know, that just went all over me, just asking him if he'd had any lunch, and he hadn't even had any breakfast. And at that time the Elks' Club was down at Sams Crossing. You remember Pritchett's Restaurant that used to be there a long time? Any of you remember that?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Yes

WA: I told my partner, I said, "Well, I'm going down"--and, of course, I knew Jimmy Pritchett and his mother that operated that. I said, "I'm going down and get some hot lunches for these people." And I went down and told Jimmy the situation, and he fixed me up a stack of nice, hot lunches to take over there. And, of course, when I got back over there, somebody'd done went and got them some hotdogs. And, of course, naturally, the kids didn't want that lunch; they wanted those hotdogs [*laughter*]. But anyway, I did my part in trying to help them out there in a bad situation. That day, though, we tried to get a number of agencies to help these people out, for they really needed help. But some people have the misfortune at times, you know, of being evicted when, you know, they just can't help it a lot of times. And this was one of those situations. Of course, it's not that way in these days and times very often. These days, you'd be surprised; some of these people stays in these homes now under these government programs and different things. They stay in there sometimes a year without paying over \$200. [*Inaudible--recognizes another question from the audience.*]

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Some people seem to go to school and learn how to beat you out of your rent.

WA: But anyway, to finish that story, we tried all of these agencies. I had a friend of mine that was on the DeKalb Police Department--he's the captain of the Day Watch, Frank Roberts. Of course, he's dead now. He used to be--later on he was the adult probation officer in DeKalb here for a number of years. I had everybody over there I could think of, trying to get these people somewhere to go. And do you know was the

people that finally come to the rescue in this situation? How many of you can guess who it was? The agency that handled it? Just take a guess if you got it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Salvation Army

WA: That's right, the Salvation Army. And that's been many years ago. And, of course, I've made a commitment to the Salvation Army ever since that incident happened many years ago. And I never forget the Salvation Army. I usually do it around Christmastime, because that's when they, you know, have to feed a lot of people and buy toys for people and all. That was the agency that come to the rescue. That situation over there was real bad.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*:: They are still doing more for the homeless than most any other agency.

HOST: Well, thank you. We have some refreshments and give you a few minutes to converse and so forth [*audience applause*].

WA: Well, thank you. I've enjoyed meeting with you. Of course, I hope that I've enlightened you on some of the things that's happened over the years in the court system and the volume of work that we're doing and appreciate being with you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: We hope you don't come to see us [*general laughter*].

WA: Well, I hope I don't.

As recording ends, people are shown milling about and chatting among themselves.

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by CS