

Oral History Collection

Mr. Evan Stone

Interviewer: Shelby Flach

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Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Mr. Stone: My name is Evan Stone, and I do legal work for Frack-free Denton, as a copyright attorney. I've done copyright contracts for them and trademark work for them. And I've done very little criminal work in my time. I've done about three, full on, criminal jury trials. But it's not a regular thing for me to do. But there, but I am representing about eight of their "fractivists." They call them fractivists. Know about that? Fracking activists. They were arrested for trespass, when they were out there protesting the Vantage well site. And I agreed to represent them, pro bono, for their misdemeanor trespass cases, which, interestingly enough, still have not been filed. Like, they were arrested, but

the formal charges have not been brought yet. And it does take time. The D.A.'s office takes time to bring charges in some cases. But little misdemeanor stuff like this, I think they would have been filed by now. We don't know why they're not. But I agreed to represent them, no charge. [Break].

Stone: I'm running for state district judge for the 393<sup>rd</sup> Court, here in Denton County. [Break]

Stone: HB40 was totally targeted at us. It was really just, I think, a totally vindictive law, against local rule. It, it made a mockery of the democratic process. And ah, yeah, it pissed us all off really bad. I think maybe you've seen some of the flyers, some of the shirts that say, "We voted, we won, what the fuck." It's really kind of crazy. [Break].

Stone: Energy independence is important and I think oil and gas are still important resources. And I think oil is amazing. And there's a million things we would not have and could not do if we did not have oil. I get all that. My grandfather was an oil man. I used to work on my grandfather's oil field. I am one of the few people in this movement that can say, "I have spent hours and hours and hours working on

rigs, pulling pipes out of the ground." Ah, and yeah, there's safer ways to do it. I looked at what we did to the fields I worked in, it was fucked up. Don't censor that.

Flach: [Laughs]

Stone: It was awful. I mean, there was one lake out by the lease that I worked on, it was called Sour Lake. You figure out why it was called Sour Lake. [Named in 1835 because of the sulfur in the water, a sign that crude oil was close to the surface water. Oil was not discovered until 1901]. There was another creek, right next to our lease, called Black Creek, you figure out why it was called Black Creek. And that's what they're actually named. You can look at a map. This is called Sour Lake. There is now a town called Sour Lake [named that in 1835]. And the Creek is marked Black Creek on the map. How do those things get that way? And my grandfather, may he rest in peace, there were some things he did while I was there that just, that I later found out, were not really what you were supposed to do, like plugging old wells. You're supposed to fill them with concrete. If it's an 800 foot well, fill it with 800 feet of concrete.

No, he stuffed some stuff down there and filled the top 75 feet with concrete and just leave it. And they say "No, you're not supposed to do that" because if something, I don't know what, something broke into the 75 foot depth of ground, then you've got an open well. There's still fumes that come out of that. People have stumbled into open wells in the woods and the fumes coming out of the well killed them, knocked them dead. They found a guy out there who just stumbled into a well. It wasn't covered properly, it wasn't plugged, a big whiff of that stuff and just boom. Just lying there dead, next to that well. [Break].

Stone: So it needs to be regulated. It needs to be regulated. Oil is fucking incredible. You wouldn't have a phone to record this conversation on without petroleum. I get it. But regulations are okay. But industries with the most money and the right lobbying power aren't regulated the same way. [Break].

Stone: On voting day we showed up and, you know, all the Frack-free Denton signs are being held in place by volunteers and all of the responsible drilling whatever, all the stuff that's paid for by the oil

and gas, I think everybody holding one of those signs was paid to hold those signs. All the people that I spoke to personally said that they were paid to hold the sign. And we found one guy at the civic center, he was holding one of those signs, and he was trying not to talk about it. But I posed for a hilarious photo with him, where I'm holding one sign up, I'm wielding it like a weapon, and I'm swinging it at him and he's holding his sign up and he's swinging at me and our signs are clashing in front of the civic center. It's pretty great.

[End of interview]