

Cary Prague
Oral History Transcript
Interviewed by Sherman Tarr
February 1, 2014

TARR: [0:00:18.5] Give me a background on you, where you were born and raised.

PRAGUE: I was born in West Hartford, Connecticut, March 25, 1956. West Hartford was an interesting community. I fled West Hartford for South Windsor in 1978 and never looked back.

TARR: Oh, okay. Okay.

PRAGUE: It was too stuffy for me.

TARR: Okay. And what was your career path then?

PRAGUE: [0:00:56.9] I'd gone to school for accounting—to be an accountant—and I quickly learned that accounting was too boring for me, so I wanted to be an IT [information technology] person.

TARR: Oh, okay.

PRAGUE: And I certainly have made that happen.

TARR: How do you mean? [phone ringing] You've done—

PRAGUE: There we go. My wife's got it. And this is still on. Okay. Well—you know—I've written 65 books in the IT world.

TARR: Oh, okay.

PRAGUE: Several bestsellers. One was an Amazon #1. Several were on the *New York Times* bestseller list, nonfiction.

TARR: And what kind—what aspect of—?

PRAGUE: Database. [0:02:01.5] I've had books on dBASE II, III, IV, Microsoft Access, Paradox, R-Base, Framework, graphics. The dBASE, kind of my first start in 1986, and then the Access books took over in '93.

TARR: So how do these help people?

PRAGUE: It teaches them how to use the product. They were 1400 page books. They're like this thick, and it took me like 4 months to write them, getting up at 3:00 in the morning and working until 8:00, when I had to go to work, and then on weekends.

TARR: So you were working for a company in the IT—?

PRAGUE: I was working for Northeast Utilities and then Travelers. Then between I had some—I worked for some startups.

TARR: Uh-hunh [affirmative]. So what attracts you to information technology?

PRAGUE: [0:03:00.1] I think the programming part. I like to think in terms of algorithms. I like to sketch out algorithms and then make them—get more and more involved with them and—just programming is fascinating to me.

TARR: And so you're now working for this ticket—

PRAGUE: TicketNetwork.

TARR: TicketNetwork, yeah.

PRAGUE: Been there 2½ years. I'm product manager of something called Easy Event, which was my complete design. I've had a team of programmers working on it for 2 years. But it's my design, and it's an event management software.

TARR: So you mean event management in terms of the events that are being ticketed—I mean, tickets for—

PRAGUE: Yep.

TARR: Okay. And so this is part of the package that you offer to [0:04:00.3] companies, event planning and then ticket sales and the whole bit?

PRAGUE: Yep. All the buyer sees is what the organizer wants them to see, which is a—

basically a—pick the number of tickets you want, pick the type of tickets you want, check out, maybe some attendee management, but that's all they see—the buyer sees. The event organizer has to go through a big thing to—or a small thing, but generally they go through—you know—they go through a lot of steps to create the event and present it to the user.

TARR: And these are mostly, what, music venue kind of things?

PRAGUE: No. There's music venues. There's comedy nights, comedy clubs. There's fundraisers. There's—we have a whole bunch of athletic competitions. We specialize in athletic competitions, [0:05:00.3] because that was like the first thing that came to us, and they require waivers and attendee management. So we specialize in—we don't specialize. What we—lean towards it.

TARR: What kind of athletic events?

PRAGUE: CrossFit, mostly. If there's a CrossFit, we do it. We've taken away a lot of business from our #1 competitor in that arena. We also do restaurants. We take reservations. We're a—we're a cheap version of Open Table. You know, if I look at my list, there's just a thousand events at a time. But we have—we have sports. We have music. We have some Broadway shows, concerts. [0:06:00.4] Yeah. We do it all.

TARR: Yeah. So but before you were at Ticketmaster you were—you had your own—

PRAGUE: TicketNetwork.

TARR: TicketNetwork, yeah. You had your own business.

PRAGUE: I did. For 20 years I ran Database Creations, and that was an accounting software company. So we did it all. We designed and accounting product. We had a couple different versions, low end and high end. And we did tech support. I had 20 people working for me. We did tech support. We did development. We did quality assurance—you know—did it all. Did custom development.

TARR: And this was in South Windsor?

PRAGUE: Yeah.

TARR: Of course, TicketNetwork is in South Windsor too.

PRAGUE: Yes. I've never like to travel.

TARR: [laughs] Okay. So what happened to Database Creative? [0:07:00.6] Did you sell that, or did you shut it—?

PRAGUE: I kind of migrated away from it. I have someone working for me on the side. They do all the work now.

TARR: Oh, okay, so it's still—

PRAGUE: Yeah, it's still active.

TARR: It's still in South Windsor?

PRAGUE: Still in South Windsor, right here in this house. But for the persons in Massachusetts who I hire—

TARR: Yeah. Well, of course, everything can be done by—

PRAGUE: Yes. Virtual.

TARR: By computer. Yeah. So you say you came to South Windsor because you were bored with West Hartford.

PRAGUE: I consider myself not a West Hartford person. West Hartford was too aloof for me.

TARR: Okay.

PRAGUE: I didn't like West Hartford at all. I grew up on what's called the Reservation. It's a lot of Jewish people there. [0:07:59.4] And the streets are all named for Indian tribes, so hence the name Reservation.

TARR: Yeah.

PRAGUE: You know, I went to Hall High [William Hall High School], went to King Philip School, and went to Aiken [Mary Louise Aiken Elementary School]. I went to King Philip first. I did kindergarten through second grade there. Then I went to Aiken for third, fourth, and fifth. Then I went back to King Philip for middle school. Then I went to Hall High. I quit school when I was 16, and that's an interesting story. So I quit school, went to work for McDonald's.

TARR: The fast food?

PRAGUE: Yeah. And got involved with a girl. And then I got uninvolved with the same girl, and my parents arranged for me to—just—I only was short one quarter—credit in gym and one course that could be taken independent study. [0:08:59.3] So I ended up writing a book, and it was called the—the *Assimilation of the American Novelist*, and it was subtitled *Folklore or Fakelore?* And I basically wrote four 40-page chapters. One was on Paul Bunyan and Babe the ox. One was on Johnny Appleseed. One was on Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer. And I don't remember what the fourth one was. But they were all advertising campaigns, every single one.

TARR: [laughs]

PRAGUE: And I—so it was folklore or fakelore, because they're all advertising campaigns. And I uncovered them and—got a B+. [laughs]

TARR: Is that all? [laughs]

PRAGUE: I still have the paper today.

TARR: Oh, okay.

PRAGUE: I've never found the person that I worked—I did the writing for it, but—yeah. [0:09:59.0] And then I went to Northeast Utilities. I got my two master's degrees from them. They paid for both of them.

TARR: Where'd you get—UConn or—?

PRAGUE: UConn MBA and then I went to Rensselaer for my computer science master's. I worked at Northeast Utilities like—back then, if you worked—we could work any hours you wanted. I had unlimited overtime. I had the green light for unlimited overtime. So I would go to—I would work from 7:00 to—I wasn't writing books then, so I would work from 7:00 to 6:00, go to school, and come back and 9:00 and work until midnight. Yeah. I was making—I made \$40,000 my first year when the going rate was \$14,000. I did 3 years of that, and then they made me a manager. I went down to \$25,000.

TARR: Because no more overtime.

PRAGUE: [0:10:57.4] Yeah. And I was beside myself because—while I had progressed, I had not progressed.

TARR: Well, yeah.

PRAGUE: So I took it upon myself—I said, “I want to get paid for every hour I work,” so I started working 40 hours, and started writing books. My first advance was 5000, then 10, then 20, then 50, so I was making \$50,000 advances.

TARR: Who was the publisher?

PRAGUE: Well, let’s see. First it was TAB Books, which you never heard of.

TARR: No.

PRAGUE: They got bought by McGraw-Hill.

TARR: Okay.

PRAGUE: And then I worked for Wiley Press, and the Dummies press, Wiley’s.

TARR: Oh, the Dummies, yeah.

PRAGUE: So that was another interesting story. I was walking—I’m in this big, cavernous convention center, and a guy is yelling at me, “Hey, Cary, Cary Prague!” I’m like, who the hell would know me here? Because it’s out in San Jose, California. And he goes, “I’m John (s/l Kilcoyne).” **0:12:00.2** I said, “Huh?” He goes, “I sold you the old (s/l CUE) books, the black books, the big ones.” I said, “Okay, if you say so.” I didn’t remember him at all. I said, “So what are you doing now?” He goes, “Well, I’m CEO of IDG Books,” which was the Dummies books. I said, “Wow!” He goes, “Your name came up yesterday. I had a conversation with Bill Gates, and they want you to write the Microsoft Access book.” I said, “Seriously?” [laughs] Well, I had seen Bill. I was also working for Microsoft at the time.

TARR: Oh, okay.

PRAGUE: I saw him regularly. I could walk in his office anytime I wanted. He generally always had someone with him. [laughs] I can just get in there and wave to him, just do one sentence. I work mostly for the—I work for the CEO of companies like Ashton-Tate. They would hire me as a consultant. [**0:13:00.6**] So I was going out to California like every 2 weeks. I was spending 4 days out there, and then I would take vacation days or sick days or whatever.

TARR: So you got into the Dummies books then?

PRAGUE: I never actually wrote a Dummies book. I had a contract for one—*dBASE for*

Dummies, but I never actually wrote one. My books were the first *Dummies* books. My books were in the style of a *Dummies* book, and that's why I was so successful, because I figured out the style of a *Dummies* book long before they existed. So I had Fred's Fish Market, and Fred had a brother or something, Frank, and a wife, Elsie, I think. And she would regularly pick the computer up and throw it in the ocean, so we had to wean her off that.

TARR: [laughs]

PRAGUE: [0:14:00.4] But yeah, those were the days. So my books went from 256 pages to 512 to 800 pages to 1300, and then my biggest book was 1576.

TARR: So how long did it take you to write a book that long?

PRAGUE: About 4 months.

TARR: Really?

PRAGUE: They were all 4 months because as technology [sneezes] changed, I could write the books faster. And as my typing skills changed, I could write the books faster. But I had a lot of screen dumps, and as the screen dumps changed—the first set of screen dumps I took were with a camera to that refrigerator—you know—just to—you could zoom in and there would be no flattening of the screen. There would be no curvature of the screen. But you had to get way away from it and zoom right in. The last time—the last time I took a screen dump, it was like Ctrl+C, copy, paste.

TARR: So from a computer files, you were able to—

PRAGUE: [0:15:00.8] Yeah. And you know, I quit when they started wanting your books desktop published. That was it for me.

TARR: Again, please?

PRAGUE: When they wanted me to submit a book desktop published, like the form.

TARR: Oh, desktop. Oh.

PRAGUE: That's where I lost it. I just couldn't do it anymore. Plus the advances had gone 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, 5. [laughs]

TARR: Oh, wow.

PRAGUE: So they said, “You know, if you don’t want to write a book, we have someone else to write it.” I said, “Then fine. I’m out.”

TARR: So you haven’t written a book for a while then?

PRAGUE: 3 years.

TARR: So what attracted you to South Windsor then, of all the 30 or 40 suburban communities around Hartford?

PRAGUE: Well, I probably would have gone to Glastonbury if I knew about Glastonbury, but actually I drove through South Windsor to get to Ellington Ridge Country Club, because my father belonged since I was 9 years old. [0:16:00.7] He would take me every day. I drove through this lovely town and just fell in love with it. That’s how I’m in South Windsor. Been here for close to 40 years.

TARR: Is this the house you were—?

PRAGUE: No. It was actually 56 Juniper Lane. It was a stucco Tudor. I lived there for like 7 years, and I moved here.

TARR: Was that with your wife [Karen Prague] and family?

PRAGUE: Yep. It was my wife and one child [David Prague], and she was pregnant then.

TARR: And is that it? You have two—?

PRAGUE: Three boys.

TARR: Oh, three boys. Okay.

PRAGUE: Two in the military.

TARR: Yeah, I think I’ve met one of your sons. I forgot. He was working with your company when I did a previous interview with you.

PRAGUE: Database Creations?

TARR: I’m sorry?

PRAGUE: Database Creations?

TARR: Yeah. Yeah. Over at the Kelly—

PRAGUE: Yeah, that would have been Jeff [Jeff Prague].

TARR: [0:17:00.1] Okay.

PRAGUE: My middle son. Yeah. My first one was in college by then. He's in Dayton, Ohio, now. He just finished up with the air force. And then I have a younger son who is in the army.

TARR: Oh, okay. What about Jeff? Did he—?

PRAGUE: Jeff became a construction management person, and he's working for a steel company now as a project manager.

TARR: Okay. Okay.

PRAGUE: So I've got 2 employed.

TARR: [laughs] So as you say, you just liked the look of South Windsor.

PRAGUE: I did. I like the rural part of it. It was very rural when I first got here back in the end of the 1970s. Buckland Road wasn't developed, and Ellington Road had about half of what it had on it. There was only Geissler's. Geissler's was our one store. I think it was Armata's first, wasn't it? [0:18:00.0] I think Armata's became Geissler's.

TARR: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

PRAGUE: It's a little too urban for my taste now.

TARR: Well, it has—yeah. It just keeps on getting developed.

PRAGUE: Yeah. In fact, I was thinking about moving to Ellington if I wasn't involved in politics and I didn't have the brain tumors. I was thinking about that. That's out the window. [laughs]

TARR: So in 40 years in South Windsor, how—when did you start getting active in town affairs?

PRAGUE: 1998. I first approached Joe Wood and Al Mugasile. When I learned—my son was a freshman—that there was no programming courses, I offered to teach one for free. I said, “I’ll just teach one.” Little did I know that though Al Mugasile welcomed me, the guidance counselors didn’t. And the union told the guidance counselors, “Don’t put anybody in Cary’s classes.” So that’s why my first—that’s why I’m thoroughly pissed at the teachers unions, and I always will be. I like the teachers but not the union. I’m never going to be a union guy because they screwed me. They told people not to go to my classes. They required a teacher to sit in the back of the room for nothing—certified teacher. I understand why, but I never understood why.

TARR: Yeah.

PRAGUE: I was very competent as a teacher. Everything I do is competent. In fact, I took a year off from my business and just worked on my teaching and gave up \$100,000 and \$200,000 in salary. Didn’t think it was fair that they didn’t include any of my courses. [0:20:00.1] First semester I surprised them. They didn’t know it was me. They thought it was just a regular teacher. The second semester and third semester was ridiculous. I had three people in the class. I decided it wasn’t worth my time.

TARR: So they were successful in blocking—

PRAGUE: Oh, yeah. Yep, successful. Very successful.

TARR: So you only did it for three semesters then?

PRAGUE: Yeah, in fact, I run into my students a lot. I only had like 35 kids—25 and then 5 and 5. But I run into them a lot. There’s one guy who is a salesperson for Office Depot, and another guy I ran into is salesman for some kind of Lexus company. Or do I have that right? Maybe the Mercedes company in town or in East Hartford. You know, you run into a lot of other students. [0:21:00.9] Yeah.

TARR: So does the high school still offer a programming course then?

PRAGUE: You know, they do and they don’t. I think they—I think they did, but the guy who was supposed to teach it wasn’t smart enough to teach it. His name was Paul. They teach business courses. They teach—you know—office. They teach typing, which is weird because everybody knows how to type by the time they’re in high school unless you live on another planet. So I think we’re teaching typing now in first grade.

TARR: So from that you went to other town activities?

PRAGUE: I did. My first political activity was—[0:22:00.3] I was on the Park and Rec Commission, and I was on the Board of Assessment and Appeals. That taught me a lot about finance. I got to deal with real people, and they came to me and they said—you know—they would bring a spreadsheet or a graph, and they'd say, "Look, this house here is this, and this house here is this. This is my house. I mean, they're all three the same." Well, they weren't the same. One had a finished basement. One had an upgraded kitchen. One had a—and I had to tell them why. But some of my best stories came out of that intrigue. Then I'll tell you about how I progressed to the Board of Ed and then town council.

But a guy came in—I'll tell you two stories. A guy came in and he said, "There's a trailer park right next to my house. I want an abatement because a trailer park is there." I said, "Okay." And so I was considering it, and he comes in the next day and says, "My house is next to a trailer park." [0:23:00.6] I said, "Yeah, you said that." "No, the trailer park is next to my house." I said, "What's the difference?" He goes, "Well, I own the trailer park." Uh-hunh [affirmative]. Denied, denied.

TARR: [laughs]

PRAGUE: Then another guy came in and said, "I've got a bunch of easements running through my backyard. I have a gas easement, there's a water easement, and there's an electric easement." I said, "Wow!" I go, "Your land must be worth nothing." He goes, "Well, it's not that, but it's a real pain. I can't do anything with these easements." So I went and looked it up, and I found that he had been paid \$90,000 for the gas easement, \$60,000 for the electrical easement, and \$40,000 for the water easement. Denied. [laughs]

TARR: He wanted to lower taxes because he'd made money off his—[laughs]

PRAGUE: Yep. I mean, I'd been in town for a whole bunch of years, but I didn't just get in yesterday. [laughs] Anyway, so that led to the Board of Ed. [0:24:01.1] I was on the Board of Ed for one term. And then I lost my Board of Ed race. I came in ninth—tenth out of tenth. And I was devastated. I thought I was the cat's meow, that everybody loved me because I was involved in all sorts of activities and everybody knew me. But you know, I realized that you've got to work harder, and so I worked really hard and got [0:24:25.5] Bill Inman's seat when he went to state legislature, and I've been in that seat ever since. Sometimes I do good. Sometimes I do bad.

I love being against rookies. This year I was against—who was I against?—Keith Yagaloff. I've been against him twice. I hate being against him. Sometimes he beats me. Sometimes I beat him. But we invariably split votes. But Saud [M. Saud Anwar] was against Kevin and basically trounced him. [0:25:00.1] But then Delnicki [Thomas Delnicki] was against Liz Pendleton and basically—she was against Steve Wagner, and he basically—trounced him, literally. But Kevin and Gary and Cindy didn't get in, so we lost—we lost that election.

TARR: Yeah. Well, it seems to bounce back and forth.

PRAGUE: It does.

TARR: In this town more than just about any town I'm aware of.

PRAGUE: I mean, the only reason we lost this year was because we pissed on Tom, because we would have won.

TARR: Well, that—yeah, I think that was surprising to a lot of people.

PRAGUE: He told us that he would bullet vote, he would be bullet voting, but then he would come together with us. Well, he never came together with us.

TARR: Oh, okay. He was bullet voting the primary.

PRAGUE: Yeah, but he was standing at the polls saying, "Vote for me only. Vote for me only."

TARR: Oh, I didn't know that.

PRAGUE: And that backfired against him. He won, but he lost. So he's not mayor anymore. We're all happy with that.

TARR: [0:26:00.5] Now, I'm not surprised that he's not mayor, but I figured that he would bullet vote in the primary, but I didn't know he also was bullet voting in the general election.

PRAGUE: Yeah, he had people going up to him going, "Just you, Tom, just you." I'm like, seriously? Just you? Really?

TARR: Yeah. Yeah.

PRAGUE: Oh, well.

TARR: So it's going to be an interesting session with the town council. The politics is more complicated than usual.

PRAGUE: Yeah. I mean, I just—I was just told by the town manager that this—this—we're never going to close by March 6, and I said I'm going to vote against it then.

TARR: The Connecticut studio?

PRAGUE: I'm going to kill the deal. I said, "They've had enough time. They've had 2½ years to beyond what we should have given them."

TARR: Yeah. Yeah.

PRAGUE: [0:27:00.3] It's ridiculous. They don't have any money. Now they're bringing another party into it? I said, "You know, this is ridiculous." They keep slicing the salami as thin as it can get. They keep changing the rules and changing the game. I say no. First they have the Danbury FuelCell Company. Now they have ClearEdge [ClearEdge Power]. You know, ClearEdge is learning what these guys are about. So I blame these guys for everything. They've brought in a money man. He went bankrupt four times, we found out just yesterday. They have a bankruptcy now against them.

TARR: In addition to the—?

PRAGUE: The—they invoked involuntary bankruptcy.

TARR: Yeah. I read about that.

PRAGUE: Yeah. You know, we're being taken for fools, so I'm going to vote against it next time.

TARR: You think that will kill it then?

PRAGUE: I think we're all going to vote against it.

TARR: Really?

PRAGUE: Except for [0:27:58.3] Saud. Saud has this dream that jobs, jobs, and more jobs. He doesn't understand that you don't get jobs by promising the moon because it's got to be net positive to the town. It's got to have a positive cash flow to the town. It's got to have a positive—something's got to be positive to the town. And he likes to give things away.

TARR: That's too bad. It's an—on paper it's an exciting—

PRAGUE: It is. You know, there's—there's all sorts of stuff that he's trying to do. He's

trying to become the WPCA. He's trying to float an ordinance for—you know, he likes big government. He's a Democrat. They like big government. I think you're a Democrat too, right?

TARR: Not really, but—

PRAGUE: Okay. So he's too ambitious. He's not—he's only—he's pushing people so fast and so far that we're going to rebel against him some day. I think that day is coming very soon.

TARR: [0:29:02.7] So what's—in all your involvement in the town, what's the thing that you're proudest of or most satisfied with or feel it was an accomplishment?

PRAGUE: Certainly being mayor was an accomplishment.

TARR: Yeah.

PRAGUE: I had a real tough time being mayor because I had people that were plotting against me on a regular basis and didn't realize it. I wasn't ready to become mayor. I am now, but I'll never be mayor again, and I know that. Proudest accomplishment was, I think, either—well, besides being mayor was my involvement with Community Foundation and the spelling bee. The spelling bee was big for me. And I hate what the library's done with it, but don't tell them that. [0:30:00.3] But—

TARR: Community Foundation—that started when you were mayor.

PRAGUE: I was a charter member of it.

TARR: Yeah.

PRAGUE: I was treasurer for 10 years. Yeah, that started when I was mayor. Well, no, it started long before I was mayor—2003. I was mayor in 2008 and '09.

TARR: Okay. And it was able to raise money.

PRAGUE: Yes, we raised a lot of money.

TARR: From the start, right?

PRAGUE: Right. We raised a quarter million dollars so far.

TARR: And this since 2003, right?

PRAGUE: Since 2003, yeah. About a quarter million dollars in 11 years. About \$25,000 a year. And then what else did I do? The spelling bee was good. Now, I'm the guy that put up all the signs in town and paid for them for about 10 years. Every single sign that you saw that was up was—I paid for it and erected it myself. [0:31:02.7] Things for the Women's Club, the Jaycees. I put up signs for the Historical Society, for—I don't even know what I put up signs for—Patriotic Commission, Heritage Day. I put up all those signs and paid for them myself. I don't think anybody knows that. But yeah, whatever. I'm not able to do it anymore.

TARR: Oh, okay. Too expensive?

PRAGUE: No, just too exhausting.

TARR: Oh, you physically put them up.

PRAGUE: Yeah, I physically put them up. Oh, yeah. And paid for them. Yeah.

TARR: What's the thing that you're—you feel that was not—didn't come through [0:32:01.8], that you're most disappointed or unhappy with?

PRAGUE: I wish I could be mayor again because I would handle it much differently.

TARR: Oh, okay.

PRAGUE: I—you know—just—I'm not going to say I blew it, but there were definitely things that were a drag. I didn't handle Connecticut Studios very well. You know, I let people play games with me. Keith Yagaloff, in particular, just rode roughshod over me and Kathy Hale. And I didn't allow Woodcock—Woodcock got me on the firehouse property. I really wish I could go back to that firehouse property and not do it—vote against it—and tell Phil Crombie just to cram it up his ass. Yeah, don't tell him I said that. [0:33:01.2]

So the firehouse property was probably my weakest moment. I let John Woodcock intimidate me. First of all, they wouldn't let Paul do his presentation, Paul Oates. Because he was—he was under the distinct impression that we could do a steel building. It would be \$3 million, not 8. We could do a—back the fire trucks into the firehouse, even on Sullivan Avenue or in the sedge property. If I had known the sedge property was as simple as you take the sedge out—you put it in a 5-gallon Home Depot bucket, and then you transplant it. Seriously? Seriously? I didn't know that at the time. But that's exactly what it was. To transplant that you just have to have moved it.

TARR: Really? And that would have met the environmental rules?

PRAGUE: Yep. Absolutely. [0:34:00.6] Yep. You know, these things with the tiger beetles and the—it's ridiculous. We spent \$150,000 to move the—the birds—the—there's a male and a female, supposedly, but nobody can find them. It was \$150,000 to move them from the—and we don't even know if they moved. We don't know if they moved. We just know we spent the money.

TARR: So what's the future? What are you planning on?

PRAGUE: Well, I'm planning on dying. [laughs]

TARR: Well, yeah. What is the prognosis? You know, you've been through a lot of crisis, I know.

PRAGUE: I feel good right now, but—you know—[0:35:01.1] every time I go for an MRI it's a whole other story. And on March 5 they can tell me I'm going to be dead in 3 weeks, you know? [sighs]

TARR: Let's hope not.

PRAGUE: Yeah. My hand shakes more and more every day, so I'm pretty sure it's invading my motor strip. I'm still at work.

TARR: Yeah. Yeah.

PRAGUE: I work from 6:00 to 9:00 in the morning. I go to work about 10:00. I'm at work from 10:00 to 3:30, and then I come home and I take a nap and have dinner and I go back to work for a couple of hours. I work all day Sunday.

TARR: Really?

PRAGUE: Yeah. Saturday is my day. But I put in—you know—I put in 60 to 70 hours a week. [0:36:01.1]

TARR: And you plan on doing this even with the MRI?

PRAGUE: I'm going to do this as long as I can.

TARR: Well, yeah.

PRAGUE: There's going to be a time when I have to go—I'm—you know—full disability I

will. But the 6-month exclusion to where I—you know—by the time I think I quit, I won't have 6 months left. But I leave my wife in a very good place. I have lots of life insurance. About 6 ago I bought a big policy, and I also had a million dollar policy from 20 years ago that's—it's over when I'm 62, but I'm not anywhere near there yet.

TARR: And when did this tumor, or tumors—I forget—begin?

PRAGUE: Well, December 28, 2011, I was—couldn't speak when I was at work, and I got taken to the hospital in an ambulance. [0:37:01.3] They told me I had a brain tumor, and it would involve surgery, and I needed to get it done right away. And on January 10, 2012 I had it done and went through radiation and chemo.

And then I was—I was good for a while until 2012—April 2012 when I was told I had another tumor in a whole different area of the brain. And that was unbelievable because it's never happened to anybody before. In all of recorded history we cannot find a single person who ever had two in the same—in the—as far away as they were. And so I had that one out. And I remember my doctor came to me and said, "Well, the tumor board will not let me operate on you." I said, "Then I'll kill myself. I'll just kill myself." And he said, "Well, let me go back and see what they say." And he got the approval to operate on me, and I was fine until—well, until October [0:38:00.7] when there was something on the MRI. And on Halloween I had radiation scooped out of my—radiation—they don't expect people to live for more than 2 years, and at about 2½ years radiation anomalies start creeping in. And so they scooped the radiation out, and—you know—we don't know if it's another tumor or it's radiation changes, but that was 6 months ago. So—on March 5 I'll find out what it was definitively and whether anything's growing there or not or do I need another operation or what. I can handle the operations. They're like outpatient surgery for me.

TARR: Yeah.

PRAGUE: But it's getting really close to my motor strip.

TARR: Yeah. Because you said your hand—

PRAGUE: Yes. My hand is weak. If I pick up something it shakes. [0:39:03.7]

TARR: And then you've done something unusual, both in terms of the sign in your front yard and then gatherings that you've held, I guess, to celebrate your—

PRAGUE: My brainiversary parties.

TARR: Your continued existence.

PRAGUE: Yep.

TARR: What prompted you to do this? I mean, this is different.

PRAGUE: Well, the sign in my yard was not put there by me. It was put there after my first operation by some of my good friends, which was Bill Aman, Kathy Dougherty, Ed Streeter, and the folks at XL Color. But I had my first brainiversary party and then my second, and they both went well. [0:39:59.9] They were both at the—one was at Wood Library. The next one was at the Mill. I just had to cut back. If I had to pay for everybody who wanted to come to the Mill I would have been out \$10,000. So I uninvited people or didn't invite them. Yeah, I gave away little brains. Did you ever get one?

TARR: I think so, yeah. I think I got it somewhere.

PRAGUE: You were at both, right?

TARR: Yeah. Yeah.

PRAGUE: Consider yourself lucky.

TARR: Okay.

PRAGUE: You made the guest list for both.

TARR: Well, it was unique, you know.

PRAGUE: Yeah. And I'll have one next year too. [laughs]

TARR: I hope so. I hope so.

PRAGUE: If I make it. But there's nothing that I feel bad about that would preclude me from living. [0:40:59.7] I don't know that I'm sick. I have to have someone tell me I'm sick. I mean, I'm a little weak. Actually, I'm a lot weak, with the exception of my hand trembling or a few other things. But I'm on chemo every day. I'm on 6—I take one pill every 6 weeks. That's my chemo.

TARR: Really?

PRAGUE: Yeah.

TARR: Wow.

PRAGUE: Because it's so toxic that it screws your blood counts. And then I take chemo every 2 weeks in the hospital. I get an infusion.

TARR: This is IV?

PRAGUE: Avastin. So between the two of them, hopefully it will shrink the tumors or stave off the tumors or kill the tumors or whatever.

TARR: But as you say, there's also the possibility of more surgery then.

PRAGUE: Yeah.

TARR: If that's warranted.

PRAGUE: Yeah. [0:42:00.3] I can't have any more radiation because just I can't. I've had too much already. And I'm also on Coumadin because I had a blood clot, so my nose bleeds sometimes.

TARR: And that means frequent blood tests?

PRAGUE: Oh, yes. Very frequent blood tests. I've got new words in my vocabulary like PT/INR.

TARR: Which is?

PRAGUE: I don't know. It's a measure of your Coumadin levels. And CBC and Chem 7.

TARR: I was a lab technician in the air force, so I did a lot of—lot of blood work. Well, but if you survive all this, [0:43:00.9] will you run again for—?

PRAGUE: Yep. I will run again.

TARR: Okay. Let's hope.

PRAGUE: I love being on the town council more than anything else in the world.

TARR: Oh, okay. What attracts you?

PRAGUE: The challenges. The challenge of dealing with people and politics. You know, I'm just waiting to tell Saud that there's only one of you and nine of us.

TARR: Well, yeah. [laughs]

PRAGUE: Or eight of us.

TARR: Yeah. Well, anything else that you want to say at this moment?

PRAGUE: No. Maybe a good overview of my life.

TARR: Well, yeah. [0:44:00.3] So this is a—

PRAGUE: Which side do I sign?

TARR: The interview—your signature.

PRAGUE: By the TARR:?

TARR: No. Oh, no. You're narrator. I'm sorry. Yeah, right.

[0:44:47.6 end of audio]

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