

Tape: 8 of 9
Interviewee: John Ritter
Interviewer: Kim Schmidt
Location: Bowling Green, KY
Date: May 11, 1988
Transcribed By: Larry Morrissey
Transcribing Machine: Panasonic RR-830 Transcriber

SIDE A

Counter #

[Counter begins when interviewer begins speaking]

000 KS: This is tape two of my interview of my interview with John Ritter. I have a few questions left. Did you want to tell me anything else about your children first?

JR: Nothing, nothing.

KS: O.K. Describe Mania Ritter now. How would you, how would you describe her?

JR: [laughs slightly] You're asking me to tread in deep waters Kim now [KS laughs] [JR laughs].

KS: Well if you, if you'd rather not.

JR: She's a, for a, no, I'm not going to get into [KS laughs]-. She's, she's a very attractive lady, I think. I don't know whether this opinion is shared or not. She seems to have a personality that people like. She seems to have a lot of friends and I, she's, I'm in no-. I, I would-

KS: Is she still hard to keep up with?

JR: No, no, she's settled down [laughs]. No, I'm not going to go any further with that.

KS: O.K., O.K. O.K. Tell me your general opinion of life with Mania. Just sort of-

JR: [laughs] Well, there's highs-

KS: Is this another one that-

JR: Yeah, there's highs and lows, just like there is with everyone's life. Life with Mania is life with Mania, you know. You have to, she puts up a lot with living with me. And I'm sure she thinks that she puts up a lot with living with me and I think I put up a lot living with her. And yet we don't get into any deep, long range arguments, things that, that are said, quickly forgotten. We say things in a probably, you know, in a very quick way. We're both quick to respond, but half an hour later, we're ready to say, "Well, maybe I was wrong." And we don't go through effusive apology periods, but we just probably, both of us say, "Well, you know, maybe we made a mistake. You know, let's forget it and go on and do something else."

Life with Mania, she says that she's afraid that she can't put up with me when she retires and I can [KS laughs], I can see that, you know. And we might get on each other's nerves being around each other all the time, but it has to be seen, we have to know whether we can or not.

KS: You'll both have to explore new avenues, pick up some new-

JR: That's right, that's right, something (KS: -hobbies.). Yeah, I'm, I tend to be lazy and to be content to lay around and read a book and kind of putter around and do things on a small scale. And she wants to do the big things and wants to do this and do that. And jump from one to the other and I say, "Go ahead and do them, you know." It's fine but anyway. It's difficult to, to describe a life with anyone, I think. For me it is, now (KS: I agree.), a professional probably can do it, but I can't.

KS: Oh, I'd hate to hear my parents talk about life with each other [JR laughs]. You have to catch them at just the right moment [laughs] for it to be anything but bad. So they have their good moments-

JR: Oh sure, we all do.

KS: [laughs] Are you content living in Bowling Green? Do you think after, after she retires, do you think you'll stay in Bowling Green or-

JR: Uh, probably so. We, you know, Mania and I just went to Champaign/Urbana this last weekend and we spent three days up there. And I told Mania, you know, on the way back, I said, "I'll be glad to see Bowling Green." I've always thought, well, the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence as probably all of us do. But after looking at Champaign/Urbana and seeing how flat and boring it is up there, and how hodge-podge the housing is in the area we were, which was an old section of town. The houses are postage stamp yards, sitting next to each other and just a driveway separating. And little plot of grass on each side about ten by twelve, you know, carpet size. I was glad to get back in Bowling Green and see what Bowling Green, how Bowling Green, to me looked better than Champaign/Urbana. And it's so, so boring up there. It's just, as Mania said, "Where do you, where in the world do you go for Sunday drives?" And they said, "We don't." Because fifty miles in each direction is just flat prairie. And there's not a hill to, or not a dale or not a river, it's just flat, flat, flat, flat, flat.

050 I like Bowling Green, I like my old home territory in southern Illinois, but I don't know anyone up there anymore. I like to go back up there and visit. I have good friends there, I enjoy going there, but after two or three days, I'd probably be just as happy coming back here. I don't know, I'm, I may be happy living in Florida, I may be happy living in California. I-

KS: What about Block Island?

JR: Block Island, I don't think we would live at-. You know, Block Island is so isolated, It's nice in the summertime, but it's so isolated in the wintertime. Depending upon air traffic, which can keep you immobile because of fog and weather conditions. And also ferry conditions in the wintertime. They don't go, the ferries don't go because of bad weather sometimes. And the winter population is oh, what? Five or six hundred people? There's very little to do. I don't know, we may try it on one winter basically just to see what it's like. I don't know, we'd just have to try and see. I like Connecticut, I think Connecticut is a great place to live, but I like Maine, I thought, we loved Maine. We thought Maine was a great place to live. But whether we'd like it now or not remains to be seen, you know. We, we loved Maine, we thought Maine was great, but we may not like it at all now with all the-. Of course we were younger and could handle the snow and things like that. Now whether we want to be up there now and handle all that snow or not, I don't know. Mania's uncle is eighty- eight years old, he lives in Connecticut out on a farm, it doesn't bother him. He lives in a big old seventeen room house. I spent three months with him last fall, or two years ago in the fall. And I thought it was a lot of, you know, it, there's a lot of advantages up there, but it's extremely, extremely high cost of living in that country. I don't think we could stand that, not with what, what we're going to have in the way of resources, you know [laughs].

KS: Do you think you would ever consider settling in Europe?

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JR: No, unh-uh, I don't think so. No, there's too many things you have to consider. You've got to consider, you know, your health insurance and Medicaid or Medicare and all this stuff. Unless you have, a person's of means and can forgo all those things, Europe is just a fantasy for, you know, visiting time and that's it. No, I don't think we would. It's probably, well, you might fantasize on it, but I don't think practically you'd, you'd do it, or we wouldn't, we couldn't. Not unless someone, unless we win that 16 million dollar lottery in Illinois [KS laughs] [clears throat]. Then we might [laughs].

KS: Do you have a ticket?

JR: Yep [laughs].

KS: O.K., good luck. Maybe you'll win it and you won't have to share it with anybody either.

JR: We bought two tickets last weekend and there was eleven million last weekend and no one won it, so it's sixteen coming up this weekend. And you have to have all six numbers. And the most we had on any one ticket was two [both laugh]. We had ten tickets. I had ten and Mania had ten. So I don't guess our, our star lives in that horizon, you know. We've got to be more pragmatic than that.

KS: Oh, goodness.

JR: These people seem to be moving.

KS: Yeah, they're moving from upstairs to across-

JR: Over to that house, yeah. More room?

KS: Yeah.

JR: Yeah.

KS: Do you have anything else you'd like to add?

JR: No, I don't think so, Kim.

KS: O.K.

JR: You about wore me out [laughs].

KS: Well thank you very much.

090 JR: O.K., you're welcome.

END OF SIDE ONE, END OF INTERVIEW.