

COVER SHEET

TRANSCRIPTION NUMBER: 2 OF 17

Transcriber: Amanda Fickey, ABD, Independent Contractor

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Duration: 1:01:46 Track 1, 1:02:13 Track 2

Interviewee: George Wakim

Interviewer: Bob Gates

Cinematographer: Sean Anderson

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Transcription Notes:

BG: Bob Gates

GW: George Wakim

In some cases, words such as "um", "uh", "and", "so" and "yeah" have been excluded.

Time notations have been included at approximately 2 minute intervals.

... Indicates pause, delay in conversation, or, weak transition/no transition in themes.

Attempts were made to verify the names of all musicians, luthiers, instruments and geographical locations referenced throughout this interview.

0:00 – 0:33 (Musical performance by GW)

0:34

BG: What was that?

GW: Just an improv...

BG: Oh was it?

GW: Shakes head in agreement

BG: Ok. And, what's that instrument?

GW: Hmm?

BG: What is that instrument?

GW: That's the oud.

BG: That's the oud? Ok.

GW: Oud, as in David.

BG: As in David?

GW: Yeah, Oud, meaning wood.

BG: Ok. And, when did you build this one?

GW: Two years ago.

BG: How many have you built?

GW: This is number three, working on number four. I've built two oud tops as well which involves popping out an old commercially-made, heavily built oud top that doesn't sound good to my ears, pulling it out of an oud and starting with a fresh responsive top.

BG: Ok, and doesn't a woman in Louisville have one of yours? She lent it to us...

GW: Yes...

BG: She lent it to us for the exhibit... Ok.

GW: Absolutely, that one was all curly maple.

BG: OK, and what is this one?

GW: This one is claro walnut, curly mahogany, claro walnut, curly mahogany... curly mahogany (**moves hand to neck area of instrument**), kind of alternated.

BG: Why'd you pick that?

GW: Good question. Bass response. I feel like the claro and the curly mahogany have almost a similar nature in the way they respond to bass and help out the base response of an instrument. They are not the stiffest, they're resonant, and they serve it well. They do a good job.

2:09

BG: Ok, so it's not just for looks...

GW: Both...

BG: Both...

GW: You think of aesthetics and you also go for the sounds. I'm not shooting to just make a good looking instrument.

BG: Yeah...

GW: Anybody can copy, and work on inlay, and get busy on inlay, but I'm in the business of making an instrument that will actually serve the musician and will emanate and give the best sound that it can.

BG: I saw that you were using this note here (**points to oud**) as a drone maybe...?

GW: Yes. This is just one string. C string. That's a C also (**demonstrates on oud**).

BG: That's nice. And are the other two strings the same note?

GW: Yes. They're all the same. That's the same... C, D, G, E, A, F, and C.

BG: I see, ok.

GW: You can't put two together here, if you put two together at the same distance, that's 3 mm, they'll be hitting each other and buzzing and everything.

BG: Oh...

GW: So one is enough.

BG: Ok. Now is this based on a tradition design or have you tinkered with it?

GW: Yes, this is based on a Nahhat oud. Nahhat ouds are made in Syria by a family, the Nahhats, a bunch of brothers, George, Roufan, Twafiq, and so on(**spelling verified via www.droud.com/Nahhat.html**), they made ouds. The ratio on this oud is in the half ratio (**uncertain of description of ratio**).The length from this point down to string is .81 of the face length (**demonstrates**

on oud). My next oud I'm going to vary that, because I think that's limiting to tone. The more you can bring the bridge into the resonating area, which practically in an oud or a guitar is anything below the sound hole is what resonates, all this area here it's not serving you much, area from here down... My goal is to go and to push the sound up a little bit and put two sound holes, gain more area and see if I can bring the bridge in for a better resonance.

BG: So no one has done that before?

GW: No, everybody... If you look at different sizes of ouds, you see all different kinds of recipes.

BG: Ok.

GW: There's not one set recipe, but the more I do studying about the acoustics of stringed instruments the more I realize that there are things you can do to help yourself make a better instrument. From which, like I say, you can gain more fluttering. The oud has, they call it letter raising underneath, and I'll show you I have an old Syrian oud, and they're like this (demonstrates on oud). And with that, what you're, what you're talking about is the top vibrating in a ripple effect.

5:15

BG: Oh it is, ok.

GW: Mostly... Now you can also help it vibrate in what they call a one pole, monopolar, effect, meaning having the top work almost like a speaker or a sail, like it is pumping up and down to have the bass response. Then you have to appease that through working the bracings and the support of the top, and also through the thickness of the top itself. This thing graduates from 1.9 mm down... some taper it down to 1 mm down here. It just depends on the wood you are dealing with.

BG: Ok, so it's thinner down here?

GW: Yeah.

BG: Ok. Well, we were going to go inside and talk about the history, how you learned it and everything, but while we're out here can you go through the steps of making one?

GW: Sure.

BG: Do you want me to put it in the room?

GW: I will (**walks off set to put oud back in storage**).

BG: Ok...

6:21

Wakim leaves and returns to the room...

BG: We just saw what an oud looks like, right?

GW: Yes.

BG: So, can you kind of go through the steps of making one? We got a couple of days so we can...

GW: Alright...

BG: Just basically how you...

GW: Go about it.

BG: What the pieces are...

GW: Sure. The way I would start usually is by making the peg box and the neck block, this is the neck piece that's gonna go on the oud. This is the new designed peg box that I've come up with. Um, like I told you, I have spent considerable time, it's funny because, God rest his soul, Steve Jobs would spend weeks on like a little curve. He would obsess over the corner of the iPhone, and I found myself doing it without evening knowing that that man did what he did. I'm like, this is, eh, that old design is a little straight, I mean its ok, it just goes like that, yeah it helps the slippage of the string, but how about we just give it a little curvature.

Well, I looked online, looked at different designs, Turkish ouds, everything, and finally I can call this pattern mine. It works for my eye, it's...

BG: And what part is this?

GW: This would be the peg box. This would be the area where you would put the pegs.

BG: Oh, ok...

GW: And the neck. So, actually like this **(demonstrates with pieces)**. I'm left handed.

BG: And the other piece is the...

GW: So when you do that, you're happy with that, next thing I'm going to create a notch for that peg box. So I'll bring this in, this is going to be the neck block. I'll mark it here, and mark it there. Take it to the saw, cut that notch, in which the peg box will fit. That's very delicate work, you want to use the bend saw and be careful not to cut too much. If you over cut it, you can't put it back. It's like they say, measure twice, cut once.

When I'm, I'm happy with how the peg box fits in the neck, then I'm going to take the neck and make it like the neck block I've already carved. This is soft wood. This is Port-Orford-Cedar, that is how my tree book has is, that I'm still using from the last stock. This is what goes on the mold down here... It goes down like so **(demonstrating using pre-made oud body)**.

The mold is waxed. So when I start gluing the ribs on there the glue is not going to stick to the wax. I've used a bunch of wax on this.

9:39 – 10:07 (Demonstration with materials – no talking)

10:08

BG: So is the back soft wood too? Back piece, or the tail piece, is that what you call it?

GW: That's the same material.

BG: So that's how you are going to bond the laminated pieces?

GW: Yes, sir. Yes. Add a little wax to help it go in; it has to come back out when I'm done with the mold.

BG: When everything is on there, when all the pieces are on there, how do you get in there to unscrew it, through the bottom?

GW: Yes, through there... yes, exactly.

BG: So, before you put the pieces on you're going to have the neck on already?

GW: No.

BG: No, you're not.

GW: I would have made it, the neck lock to the neck, through another jig... I would make **(demonstrates on wood)** where this fingerboard is going to go, that to this, and I will drill for two pins, one for the main screw that goes in the middle here like I showed you, and this neck is going to be an adjustable neck with a knurled knot.

BG: Ok, but you do that after you put the back on?

GW: I do it before.

BG: You do it before? Ok.

GW: I make sure that everything is going to work before I even put that on there. So, the next step when I'm ready for the ribs is to start with a fresh piece of wood. This is claro walnut **(selects piece of wood from pile)**, look how pretty. This thing has some patterns, has some waves, you don't have to spend a whole lot of money if you know how to pick your wood you can help your instrument by looking pretty naturally...

BG: Sure.

GW: Without having to resort to inlay and laying simple wood like black walnut without much of a curl. I will, I've decided I will learn inlay as I go, but at this point, in my experience, I like pretty wood. I'll start with the prettiest wood that will work, I'll do that...

BG: Where do you get your wood?

GW: This I bought through eh, Marksman Wood online. Pennsylvania.

BG: Ok. So you pick out what you want and they give you pretty much...

GW: They have pictures of the wood. You can see the wood, you can call them, and you can talk about it.

BG: So, you get what you see?

GW: Yea. And then you bring that big chunk of wood and you cut it into this big thick strip, and then saw it and get those strips, then I'll take the rough piece to a cold(**?, unsure of word**) worker friend in Frankfort where I work, he also has a wood shop. He has a drum sander that he thicknesses this stuff for, take it down to about 2.8 mm.

13:33

GW: And then...

BG: Are you already done with that piece?

GW: With those?

BG: Yes.

GW: Yea, those are thickness, those are ready...

BG: So that's ready.

GW: Then I will just sit here and bend the wood. This is not hot (**using machinery in studio to help bend**) so it's not going to bend, I'll just pretend for a second here. Just work it very slowly. If you push too hard you'll break it. So this will teach you a whole lot of patience, and also that the thing can heat up and if you aren't careful you can burn your finger.

BG: You don't daydream while you're doing this...

GW: Yes. So you just make sure you bend it, and then go back to this piece and then see that the curve, that you are following this curve. Then, when we're done with that...

BG: Are they all curved the same way?

GW: On this thing, because I've toned it down about 5 mm, it's gonna change, it's gonna go a little different, it will go back to circular from this point on down, on down here. It's going to be just a little bit flatter. And this is the line that represents that drop.

So I'm going to match the piece of wood to the outline. And, I see here that there is a spot that needs to be brought back in and I just sprinkle some water, water with fabric softener, just a little spritz...

BG: Fabric softener? What does that do?

GW: It kind of helps soften the wood. I learned that recently.

BG: Ok.

GW: Then you just work that and then you got. You want to make sure that you put it on here and you kind of see that it follows the same pattern here. So there's another double check. But the first time you bend them you want to leave them alone and come back within a few days because then the pieces are going to relax back out a little bit.

15:12

BG: So you have to bend them again?

GW: You'll have to readjust them a little after, yes.

BG: Is that the width you use then? Because I thought...

GW:No, this is excessive, this is a whole lot. On this oud that I'm going to make it's going to have 23 pieces. So if you look at the circumference and divide by 23, it would be about an inch. Each strip will be about an inch wide so you take that... I've created this thing as a template...

BG: Ok.

GW: Put it in there... Let's use that other one.

BG: After it's matching you use a template.

GW: After it's matched... use a white pen because you are working with walnut, you look at the center here, and you use a clamp to hold it for you, and you can do that **(difficult to hear this section due to bell ringing outside)**.

BG: Are all of them the same size then?

GW: Yes.

BG: Ok, so you don't have to make each one different.

GW: You could. The sky is the limit. You could make narrow ones, fat ones; it just depends on what pattern you can think of. So after that's done, now we have this pattern and I take it to the band saw. I'm going to follow the line and rip those pieces. I'm going to stay about an 1/8th of an inch outside the line. Cut it on one side first, and then when it's cut, I'm going to bring it down here and flatten it, which then will give me this one side. And I'll take that...

BG: What do you mean, flatten it?

GW: Flatten it on this inverted plane.

BG: It wasn't flattened when you cut it?

GW: When it's cut it is very rough.

BG: Oh, ok, you are smoothing it...

GW: Yes, it is very rough. What you want to do is basically use this, it is an inverted plane, 22 inch, 7 ½ jointer plane, and then you want to slowly shave off with a blade and make sure that it's following a flat pattern... you want to follow it, and then remove all the excess wood, that this surface is flat. Then that's checked. I have this aluminum plate. I can move it and put it up here for demonstration purposes... definitely don't want to dent this piece here **(moving aluminum piece in studio)**.

18:23

GW: This is a chunk of aluminum that's flat.

BG: Where'd you get that?

GW: Frankfort. So I'm going to take this piece and I'm going to put it here. See how it fits? That's not exactly but it could have twisted with temperature...

BG: You want it to touch all the way down?

GW: Yes. You want it completely flat. Touching the whole base, so you can tell, you can touch this thing and make it dance, and you can tell that's the highest part. See that, where it's...

BG: Yea so then you go back...

GW: That's the high spot. You take that high spot, and go back. Work it a couple of times, and bring it back. And then when you're happy with it, you sand it, basically to bring those steps, the plane steps together, because there's a chance when you target one area with the blade, you are going to create some sort of a step. And with the sanding here, that will smooth that ridge. When that's flat, then you bring it to the mold. And let me move this back... **(Interruption while moving items...)**.

BG: Now that's a piece of spruce that you were showing me before, right?

GW: That is European spruce from, that's Alpine spruce from the mountains in Switzerland, Germany and Italy.

BG: You going to use that for a template?

20:18

GW: Yep. Ok. Now, we bring the piece to the mold. You apply the glue to it. Hold it with those pins.

BG: What kind of pin is it?

GW: Push pins.

BG: Oh, ok. That goes right in the center where you want it to be.

GW: Draw a line, you can do a few things where...

BG: So that piece doesn't go all the way down to the bottom.

GW: No, it does about an inch, that's the point at which the pattern circulated 180 degrees. It's half the face, rotated 180, which gives this volume. And then you do the same thing here. I've already applied the glue here, and applied glue there. You just hold it there, and put this push pin, then you... **(Unable to transcribe due to hammering by GW)**. Let's do another one on this side. Actually, I'll do about 3 on each side.

BG: So how do you put the next one on if those pins are in the way?

GW: This is the first one. When you are done with the first one, and you pull the pins, then you start working from one side and then the other. So when that's glued you pull it out.

BG: How long does it take to glue it?

GW: Couple of hours.

BG: Then you come back...

GW: And work the next strip.

BG: Right next to it?

GW: Yea. But you pull. Two hours is enough for the glue to set and you pull that, and then you bring the next strip over and do the same thing. Let me do, this is only for demonstration purposes. This will come off. Next strip, we have to change color. Use this strip. Do the same thing over. We've already bent it, sawed it, planed it, checked it flat and sanded it, and you put it right here like that. Give me a second please...

Before you put glue and glue the next strip, you shine a light. There, I don't see any light. If you see any light, there's a high spot right past it. You gotta work that high spot down. And you move, slowly. Check for tightness here... there... there. Now, it's tight. You're gonna put the glue with this implement. With this you squeeze a little bit and it will only give you the glue, this little nipple, and you go down that slowly. Make sure that it fills up with glue and...

24:10

BG: Is the glue going to push out when you...

GW: Yes. And I'll put some tapes that will angle down here, that, when I put it on here I bring the tape and I tape it above, it connects to from here and comes up and goes on to this strip, so I'm kind of clamping it gently with the tape.

BG: Won't the glue get on the tape then?

GW: it will always come off, it's not the hardest thing, it's above the glue, it will come off. And then there is a lot of scrapping and work after you...

BG: Sanding...

GW: Yea. So you gotta do the same thing here.

BG: Who designed that little device you've got there? (**BG referring to device holding the body of the oud**). The device that holds the piece on.

GW: That? That's a camera device.

BG: Oh, is it?

GW: Yes, I've talked to a friend of mine, we do oud making online and we email back and forth. Saw a little video and he goes, you can get that from somewhere, so I ordered it. And I think it works good. Now you see, that's how it goes. It's just like making a boat. And then you just keep bringing them in and at some point you're going to have them all the way down, and all the way down here. Get in there, remove the screws. Remove those screws here in the tail end block. Take it out. It will pop out, and you have a bowl.

BG: Oh...

GW: And then the next project is to basically bring the bowl and sand the top... My friend and co-worker, Jason at work he has the drum sander, he will drum thickness, sand this down to maybe 2 mm, then I'll take it from there.

BG: This is the same depth across the whole thing?

GW: You want, where the bridge sits, you want this band to be the thickest band, to basically withstand the torquing because this is going to get glued on, this is a torque kind of bridge. The strings are going to be coming out of here; they are going to be pushing and torquing out, in this way and out this way. And, with that torque...

BG: You need it to be thicker.

GW: You need it to be thicker under it to make sure that you can withstand that structural element.

BG: So when he sands it, does he have to sand it different amounts for you?

GW: He sands it down to about 2 mm, when I get it, then I'll work fine tune it.

BG: And then you carve it, ok.

GW: Yea, I have a little hand sander that I can take it down to 1.9. Then you got to feel it.

BG: Yea.

GW: Then 1.8 maybe, feel it. Then, depending on what happens here with the grain, see how wide that grain is, how it goes from dense to wide, in this situation you may not want to taper as much around

edge for treble response anyways, because you have wider grain which might represent less stiffness. So every piece is different.

BG: So you're reading the grain here, can you show us the grain?

GW: Those are the growth rings of the tree. Those lines here. This is book matched. Find them here, I just jointed that yesterday and wanted to make sure that this joint is completely invisible. You shouldn't be able to see it. This is one critical joint you don't want to see any line, it needs to be tight.

BG: Right, you've made it very clear.

GW: See, can you see the line?

BG: No.

GW: You can't see it.

BG: No.

28:25

GW: There's what you'd call a shooting board, you bring the pieces like this...

BG: Oh sure...

GW: And you put them together. Right, that way, then you bring the same plane at a 90 degree and you are actually cutting this way, up, and make sure you cut and that there's no gaps whatsoever. Then you candle it. Basically, when you do that joint, you want to do this, and turn it to the light. If there is any light coming through, not good. You gotta go back and do it again. Sharpen the blade.

BG: Then you've already cut it too big haven't you?

GW: Yea, well you got to go back to the shooting board basically.

BG: Ok.

GW: So you can remove more wood in the high spots or the low spots and make sure that this whole surface is perfectly flat.

BG: So that one there was two boards.

GW: This one was two pieces exactly.

BG: Ok.

GW: Here, I'll just... It was a guitar top.

BG: Ok.

GW: And it has some bear claw (**referring to pattern on wood**), but not quite as visible as that bear claw. And another tonal thing that you want to watch for, for top tone wood, is resonance. Listen to this... (**Demonstrates tapping on wood**).

BG: I can hear it vibrating.

GW: Sustained.

BG: Yea.

GW: It goes (**imitates sound**)...

BG: What's making it do that?

GW: It's the type of wood.

3:02

BG: So you want it to be that way.

GW: Yes.

BG: If it wasn't that way, could you make it?

GW: Uh, I've never tried. I've always shopped for the best wood that I can get. When I put my hand into making an instrument, the last thing I want to worry about is having a bad piece of top.

BG: But if you buy that online how do you know that it's going to be good?

GW: I bought this though Metropolitan Music, the same company that J.P. Miller used to deal with. They are the most honest people, I know the guy that cut it in Germany. I've emailed him. Andreas Pahler. There is a little story about this wood. I've done some research and emailed some people and they recommended that I get Pahler tone wood. P-a-h-l-e-r, Pahler, Andreas, his first name, and he is from Germany. He is actually, he has studied forestry, he is also a violin maker, has studied violin making in the Mittenwald, Germany, school of instrument making. He knows all about it. He goes out to those forests, looks at the tree, taps it, cuts it, splits it, and saws parallel to the split line of that cut. In other words, you're going to have a stiff piece that's not going to fail on you.

BG: So you don't just buy a piece of wood, you buy wood made for use in this.

GW: Absolutely.

BG: Ok, I get it.

31:33

GW: Has to be for top wood because the sound of an oud and a guitar, and any stringed instrument, mostly comes from the top. You got to have tone wood that's light; you got to have tone wood that's stiff. So there's this stiffness to tone ratio that you shoot for. If it's heavy, it's going to impede the vibrations. You want it as light as is possible.

BG: Ok.

GW: And as flexible, I mean as stiff, so it can withstand all the string tension and the structural forces that... **(Video stops at 3:06, resumes at 3:09).**

BG: And so, when you're gluing them on this piece of wood here you have three little stops there...

GW: You have three little stops... Let me move this out of the way again.

32:29

GW: Ok, these are the book match. Book match means it's like you're opening a book, right, it comes from the same practically, and these two pieces were one piece that was cut in the middle.

BG: You said it was a certain part of a tree...?

GW: And this, they call those quarter sawing. You have the center of the tree here, or close to it. And the bark out here somewhere. So this is going to be like (demonstrates circle) a huge tree. And if you look at the one video that I saw, huge trees are tall and straight. Quarter sawing, because you want the grain in the top of the pieces to be running vertically, just like structural beams in a structure, I-beams, like I-beams.

Each one of those dark growth rings that you can see on those, just like that, that is a stiffer material, or a stiffer wood, than the soft wood in between the growth rings. This is summer growth, or dry growth. The light growth is the winter growth, or whenever there is rain a tree grows faster. Slow growth, fast growth, you can call it whichever you want. You don't depend on the light material in between the growth rings for stiffness. It helps, but it is like a sponge...

BG: You depend on the dark stuff.

GW: You want those dark lines in there...

BG: And that's summer growth?

GW: Right.

BG: Ok, when you don't have water.

GW: Yea. You get less water.

BG: Why does it get less water?

GW: Because it is denser.

BG: Ok.

GW: Not as much water and it is sticking to each other. There is this thing in the tree, they call it vascular cambium, is this line from which tree cells are made. It makes xylem and phloem, two different types of cells, but this is the hard material, this is the structural element in the top. And there are vertical beams, so you want them that way. And this is quarter sawing again because these lines are parallel. We have, in a shooting board you want to do this and bring your plane and make sure you are all flat very well, you run a plane on both... When that is clean, then you are ready to glue.

35:17

GW: Then you set that first piece here, I made those stops so this thing can't go any farther, and this other piece I'll set it right next to it, and I'll bring three blocks... let's see I had those somewhere. **(Looks for blocks in studio).**

We will make three of those. One, two, and three, clamped. And when they're clamped, then I bring the three wedges, like a triangle wedge, an 1/8th of an inch on one side and a quarter of an inch on the other, which slips in between the block and that piece.

BG: So, three wedges?

GW: Three wedges. Three of those clamped down so they won't move anywhere. You bring this, run the glue, bring it in, rub it, rub it a couple of times, and make sure that the glue is spread evenly. Those are clamped, bring the wedges in, tap the wedge, tap the wedge, tap the wedge, hold this, tap them again, put a weight on here, leave it at least a half hour. For half an hour the glue sets, I let it go for three or four hours. I don't risk it. Then you unclamp, pull the wedges out, and it's all one piece.

And then we get something like that **(shows finished piece).**

BG: Where you can't see the line.

GW: You can't see it, can you? That's the joint. On the back it is also tight.

BG: Which is going to be the outside?

GW: This is the showing face. This is what you're going to see. This is the side I'm going to use.

BG: Why'd you pick that side?

GW: Because if you look closely near here you can see the bear claw pattern. Can you see it? Can he see it?

BG: Yea, I think so, like little lines going...

GW: See that, if you look, it's those squiggly lines on there, it's called bear claw.

BG: Uh huh.

GW: I'm doing this for the aesthetics. If it's there, it's delicate, it's pretty, it's going to help the look of the oud, I don't think there's a bear claw oud ever. Never seen one. Usually their top wood is very cheap, in most cases. Might as well make it look good.

BG: Yea.

GW: And show the aesthetic, the outside, and that's what I'm sticking with.

BG: And you're going to cut that out and glue it to the bowl, right?

GW: Cut that out, and then I'm going to put braces underneath.

BG: Oh ok, braces underneath.

GW: Yea there's going to be braces...

BG: Are there going to be braces in the bowl too?

GW: No. The braces will connect to the bowl.

BG: Ok, alright, got it.

GW: See, this is the edge of the bowl and the brace is going to come and glue to it right here, and it's going to be a lateral thing going from here to here. One here, one here, one here, and then sound hole, and one right above it, and one right in the middle of it, and one right here. And then the block. Braces are fit to the bowl; you want the braces to fit the shape of the bowl. You don't want them big; you don't want them small, just right.

BG: You cut those out by hand?

GW: Those are cut by hand. Braces are made out of this piece. This is a cello base bar piece. Also a Pahler tone wood from Europe. Very dense grain. Straight. I'm going to cut it into two, and probably rip three braces from each. You need seven for that so I'll have enough. Braces are about 4 mm around the edge. They taper, as they come in, they taper to 3 mm, and taper back out to 4.

39:57

BG: Ok, well I think we got enough out here. Ok, great, let's go inside.

40:02 (Sound check by videographer, movement from studio to inside home)

40:45

BG: So we are at your house here in Lexington and the date is April 18th, 2012. Well, we were just outside and you showed us some of the steps that it takes to put one of these ouds? How do you spell that?

GW: Oud, as in oud in Arabic basically meaning a stick of wood, it's a kind of simplistic way of calling it.

BG: And how do you spell that?

GW: O-u-d in English. There are variations, there's u-d, and a-u-d...

BG: So it's...

GW: Mostly its o-u-d.

BG: And you were telling me earlier that there are lots of variations of how it's made in different counties.

GW: Right.

BG: It's mainly found in the Mideast?

GW: Uh, it started... when the Arabic culture came about, they I guess, got the influence from the Persian culture. And now, if you want to trace it back, there's a legend that talks about, that the 6th grandson of Adam, Lamech, his son died, and he hanged his dead body on a tree. And then, that inspired him to make an instrument in the shape of the dead body of his boy, after he was dead.

BG: Why'd he hang him in a tree?

GW: I'm not sure. I don't even; I couldn't even think that somebody wants to make an instrument after his son died. Must have been a healthy son though. With that said, that's, if you look at the history, that's where some information comes from, there's a legend that's where it emanates, that's where it starts. And then, you know, it was probably in the area where Iran and Persia took it, and then it moved around and Arabs took it, the Greeks, the Turks. Then the Arabs took it with them to Andalucía. And, after a while, the Renaissance lute movement came about.

BG: Which looks similar...?

GW: It's based on the Arabic oud. Which, some people say, the word luthier comes from luter in French, which has to do with the lute (luter, French spelling, verb).

BG: Are they played the same way? Are they tuned differently?

GW: They are tuned differently. There are a lot more strings on the lute, and there are also frets. The Arabic oud is fretless.

BG: Ok.

GW: If you look at the fingerboard...

BG: So, just to begin with, you came from Lebanon to the United States, when did that happen?

GW: August 1984. Came for my engineering studies. I have a master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Kentucky. I even finished all of the PhD classwork. At some point I got tired of schooling, I got engaged, took the first job that came about, and joined the state.

BG: So you've been working for the state ever since?

GW: Right.

BG: Where do you work?

GW: I've worked in a few different places. I've worked with environmental protection, Division of Water, worked for the two branches, the sewer part and the drinking water branch, and moved to hazardous waste with the Division of Waste Management, worked there for 6 years, and then finally took a job with the public service commission and I'm still there.

BG: Is it in engineering?

GW: Yea.

44:32

BG: So your engineering background...

GW: Yea. Right now we deal with service quality. We monitor and check for service quality for water and sewer utilities within the state.

BG: When I first met you, you were part of our first festival I think, you appeared at our first festival, playing the oud... **(Year not confirmed by interviewer, unable to locate via internet)**

GW: Oud and violin.

BG: Oud and violin, ok.

GW: Right.

BG: You were on the main stage I think?

GW: I remember opening for Jean Ritchie on the main stage once.

BG: Yea, Yea. I remember that.

GW: Right.

BG: That was pretty neat.

GW: But I've also done a few venues on different stages and have even shared stage with Homer Ledford once.

BG: Oh, did you?

GW: When we talked about instrument making, yes.

BG: Oh, ok, you were talking about instrument making back then. Ok, in the first festival?

GW: In the first festival? Earlier?

GW: I don't quite recall.

BG: Ok. But uh, so in, I think we ought to say, talk a little about how you got into music. Where did you learn that?

GW: Um, it's almost something that grows under your skin without knowing it, you know... I heard, I've always wanted (gnat distracts speaker, restart). I was hooked to music ever since I saw a violin player on my uncle's television when I was twelve years old and I started nagging my parents, I wanted a violin, I wanted a violin. My dad was in the army, we didn't have, he didn't make a lot of money. Got me the first violin, and then the next thing, the violin will do something to the arteries in your neck, so my mom made me return. And then the next thing I nagged again, and then I wanted one and I got a Chinese one. That's how it started and then a year and a half later I joined a band, learned by ear. Got me a book and studied it on my own.

BG: Studied what?

GW: Violin.

BG: Violin, ok.

GW: Then, right before I came here, in the early to mid-eighties, in 84, 83, I grabbed an oud that my neighbor had. I was walking by, down the street, and I heard this plunk, like ting ting and I thought hmm, what is that? And then I bartered back and forth and gave him \$20.00. Got the first oud and that's how it got started. Then I had to come and continue my engineering studies here at the University of Kentucky, I'd left Lebanon, left the oud there,

BG: Oh you left it there, you didn't play it there much? Or did you play it...

GW: Started playing it there but then I had to come and finish my schooling.

BG: Did you take lessons in it?

GW: No. No, I just depended on books. I'm self-taught.

BG: Ok, all the way huh.

GW: Right.

BG: But you heard that kind of music when you were growing up.

GW: Yea, absolutely.

BG: So you knew what it was supposed to sound like and you listened to it on the radio I guess.

GW: Radio, television, anywhere you can. I played in a band back then, of course, it was the violin that I played, but we had an oud player and it was not a foreign thing at all. It was like a little affinity...

BG: What kind of music did you play in the band?

GW: Arabic. Lebanese.

BG: Ok.

GW: Restaurants.

BG: Ok.

GW: I was sought after even though I was self-taught and played by ear. There were a few restaurants going, "We want that violin guy".

BG: Yea?

GW: Yea.

48:00

BG: So, that kind of music, I don't know much about, I don't know anything about really, what is, I guess, what kind of songs were you playing? Can you show me something you played back in the band?

GW: Sure. Let me think. You want the violin, or you want the oud?

BG: Whatever you feel like. I guess you played the violin, didn't you? So go ahead and play violin.

GW: I'm just trying to think what kinds of songs we played back then, and it's been a little bit.

BG: Something that made you sought after, right.

GW: Yea, I have, actually the thing was, when you do improv, when you emote and people can sense it, you're improving and so I will just do a little improv...

49:06-50:09 (Music performed by GW)

50:10

BG: Ok, so you would have been able to play that.

GW: That would be when, say a song stops or slows down, and the rhythm goes in to the slow mode, and there's a (demonstrates musical style) you've seen belly dances do their solos...

BG: Sure, sure.

GW: With the sword and stuff. This is when an improv comes into play. Of course I was also doing different songs depending on singer. There were some singers that came from Beirut, singers locally, we had to play, all the songs, and you know I was the violin player, that was my part.

BG: And what other instruments did you have in the group?

GW: There was an oud, there was a nay, n-a-y, which is a bamboo flute, my brother, Pierre was on the keyboard. There was an electric guitar, a bass guitar, and a drum set, and a doumbek(**goblet drum**) also, just like that instrument there, for rhythm.

BG: Did you guys make money on it?

GW: We did, we did. We stayed up late. It was fun. You know, the party starts 10, 11, and you stay up until 3 or 4, and then have you a big table of food that you sit there and eat, and you come back and play, it was fun.

BG: Was there dancing?

GW: People in the restaurants would usually come up and start dancing and stuff, yea. Ok.

BG: So you had that background when you came to UK in Lexington.

GW: Right.

BG: Did you find any outlets for that when you first came here?

GW: I did. I've met a bunch of Lebanese. There was a guy here who played the keyboard. We connected and I decided I'll do oud and he can do keyboard, and we went around playing for the area. We did weddings, we did festivals and stuff, you know, up to the point when he had to move. And then I also met J.B. Miller, then I took off on a different tangent.

BG: And that's when you started getting in to instrument making. Tell us a little bit about how that happened.

55:22

GW: The violin that I had in Lebanon, cause I'm left handed I could not make myself play right handed, and mostly anywhere you go and you want to learn it officially they will send you home because you know, you are not right handed. At least in Lebanon they can turn you down because of that. The right handed violins switched, where I am left handed, switched the strings the other way and the bridge without redoing the internals, the nuts and bolts inside the base bar and the sound post, left me wishing for more tonally on the violin that I had. Plus, after Homer Ledford had adjusted the sound post on that cheap violin, after he sent me to J.B. Miller, he goes, "You've got J.B. Miller in Lexington and you are coming to me for a violin!" So I went to J.B. Miller and that's how it got started.

J.B. Miller grabs it and he goes, "It's got some weight over here. This is heavy." He knew right away it was a heavy thing, too thick, base bar the other way around and so on, even though I've tried and I've

sent it to a local shop here and there I think they installed the base bar incorrectly at the wrong angle, so...

BG: This was a violin that you brought from Lebanon?

GW: From Lebanon, yea. Made in Czechoslovakia, and it was just one of them factory built, overweight, very cheap things. Too much wood...

BG: So, were you going to quit on it, or buy a new one or what?

GW: Well, it was my birthday and I bought a used violin that J.B. Miller had in his shop that he switched left handed for me.

54:11

BG: Ok.

GW: That's how it got started. Then I had my curiosity. I wanted to pop that thing open. So I popped it open.

BG: Wait a minute, he did all the internal stuff for you?

GW: He had another violin in his shop...

BG: That was for a left hander...

GW: Right. It was for right handers, but he opened it and put a base bar in it the other way, moved the sound post, new bridge, changed the pegs...

BG: Ok.

GW: So, then I bought that from him. That was his violin. Now, my violin that I had, I decided I can't lose, let's just pop it open. Popped it open, checked the graduation, too thick, regraduated it, scraped a bunch of wood out of it, took it down to the target thickness as the plans prescribed for a Stradivarius violin, put a new base bar, put a new sound post, closed it back, brought it back to life. It sounds good, now it is in Lebanon, my sister has it.

BG: How did you know how to do all that?

GW: Well, I didn't have a lot of experience, but when we were children I carved hearts out of rock with a knife, I widdled stuff, I knew I had the knack for it and the eye. I've also been involved in detailed retouching of sheet negatives when we were doing studio shots. My dad had a photography studio and I was doing the retouching, I was 12 years old and I was doing all of the zigzagging and cleaning up of shadows and pimples and making people look pretty. I knew I had the eye for it, so it was just a matter of using a tool to get to the target, envisioned surface, or you know, shape. Just got some tools. Old man Miller saw me carve a chin rest for a violin, but I took this little piece of maple and went back home, clamped it on the table in my living room, got the chisel, I bought me a chisel, I chiseled it and made it look like the inside of a spoon. It was smooth and nice. I took it back to him and he was like, "Hmm, ok,

you can work here.” He let me in to his shop and that’s how I made the first violin and the second, third, fourth, fifth,

BG: Did you ask him if you could work in his shop?

GW: We actually became friends... It’s complicated because it was a friendship. When we met you know, he told me, ever since the first time I saw you I knew I was going to like you. And so, there was this friendship. I was engaged at the time, you know, I wanted to hang out with him, hang around violins, met Art Mize through that, we would go out to dinners, go out to different restaurants. If he needed shopping done I would go and do it for him, you know, and then, he would let me, after work, come from Frankfort, go to his house, grab dinner, eat, and then I’ll just shoot into his back yard into the shop and carve away.

BG: When was this?

GW: Early 1990s.

BG: Early 1990s...

GW: 1990... Probably 91, 92, 93.

BG: Ok, how old was he then?

GW: He was 90 I think when I first met him. 90, 91... 90.

BG: Can you talk a little bit about what you knew about him? His, I don’t know, just for the history of him, what do you know about him?

GW: Oh, J.B. Miller was a Kentucky celebrity. He had pictures that you’ll see him right next to Roy Acuff of Opryland. Jascha Heifetz played one of his violins in concert. You’ll hear stories about him telling you that his violins, just like the one I have hear that he gave me, compare very well with Antonia Stradivarius violins. You know, some crowd in some hall they had curtains and somebody behind the curtain playing the violin, it was a Miller violin, and people would go “Good!” And then the next thing they’re playing the Strad and they couldn’t tell. Those things...

BG: He had been a luthier for a long time...

GW: He had been a luthier for a long time. He made about maybe 40, 40 something violins, and he also barbered. He cut hair.

BG: Oh, did he really?

GW: He was, he told me, he was the private barber for Adolf Rupp and Bear Bryant. Adolf Rupp that made Kentucky basketball what it is. Bear Bryant who made Alabama football what it is. And one time I let him cut my hair, just to see them hands, to feel them...

BG: How’d he do?

GW: Very well. You know the clipper was a little old, it was a little bit old, but otherwise no bleeding going on. He sharpened sheers when nobody knew how to do it. He's tightened racquets (eliminated "balls") when no one else knew how to do it. This man was a natural.

BG: Tightened racquet balls? Not the ball, but the racquet?

GW: Tennis racquets.

BG: He strung them?

GW: Yea, he strung them, and tightened them, and tuned them. He would, you know, basically he would pluck it, and they all have to have the same tonality or pitch, to know that it's the same tension.

BG: Sure.

GW: Because you don't want one line to be stiff and the other one soft. You hit it with the ball it's going to jerk. But if you want them all... He did anything that needed to be done. He was a natural about anything.

BG: Now where was his shop when you were, when you met him?

GW: When I met him, it was in his back yard.

BG: In his back yard?

GW: Yep.

BG: Ok. I thought he had something down at um, towards eh, the Chevy Chase area? (Lexington, KY) Did he have a shop there at one time?

GW: Not that I know.

BG: Ok. I must be thinking of something else. So where was his house?

GW: 300 Stratford, here in Lexington.

BG: Downtown?

GW: Off of Southland Drive.

BG: Oh, ok.

GW: Yea.

BG: So he had a shop there?

GW: He had the shop in the back yard of his house. There was just a little concrete walkway to it, out and back.

BG: It was a little building?

GW: Yea.

BG: Was it like Homer Ledfords, or bigger, or smaller?

GW: No, not the fanciest, not very big – one area where he did the work, another area where he had a little cabinet with violins and things, and another cabinet, but not too spacious. It was workable, it worked for him.

1:01:28 (Interruption, room tone, starts second track of DVD)

00:34

BG: Ok, so we were talking about his place.

GW: Yea, J.B.'s shop.

BG: Yes, so he would, he made something like 30 violins?

GW: I'd say like 40.

BG: 40?

GW: 40... 41.

BG: That's a lot for a guy isn't it?

GW: Yea.

BG: When did he start making them? Do you know how old he was?

GW: I think he was pretty young. It spanned over probably 50 years.

BG: Ok.

GW: I'm just guessing at this point. I know he showed me, I've seen his second violin and it got stolen from a car, there's a story about that... Sometimes you hear a story, you know, about a violin that he had to go to court for because it was stolen from him. I've witnessed, one Friday afternoon when I came after work and I saw this guy there, supposedly a minister that had ended up switching violins, and took one of J.B.'s violins in the violin case in the trunk of his car that he apparently rented and left in the airport. Guess what, J.B. gets that violin back.

BG: How'd he get it back?

GW: Because the man left it in the car.

BG: Left it in the car?

GW: Yea, he didn't fly with it. He must have had some sort of a remorse episode on the way to the airport in Lexington and he may have just decided to leave it in the car and J.B. just got it back. He told me that. I saw the man, he talked his head off. People, a bunch of people, go in there and talk forever. Wait on him to turn his back and steal stuff.

BG: Did he get things stolen a lot or just sometimes?

GW: Just sometimes, a few times, not a whole lot though.

2:18

BG: So, he kind of let you work there, was he paying you, or was he just...

GW: No.

BG: Was it like an apprenticeship?

GW: Not even that, no. He taught Eugene Lee of Georgetown, he taught officially also Art Mize the repair business and stuff, but I was not officially taught under him. I worked, if I had questions he would help me out. You know, the first violin that I made we were trying to varnish and I had it all carved and sanded and ready to seal it and, not knowing any better, I trusted a little bit in his hand working and we ended up ruining the color because the stain color was the wrong color, and no matter what you did to the oil varnish on top of it, it looked like a gun stock, kind of a greenish brown and very ugly. We had to strip it, change the color into maybe a reddish brown, and then we had to...

BG: He made this mistake?

GW: I'm not sure what happened. It was one of those things that I chalked up as experience, and that's how you learn; you just trample in your own mud sometimes and you pick-up and go.

BG: You can't sand it down at that point.

GW: No because the stain has gone down and penetrated the wood and it's in there. Even if you tried sanding you might remove some, and then some will stay. It'll be blotchy.

BG: Are you saying because he was kind of old...

GW: Maybe, maybe he missed it, maybe he wasn't paying attention.

BG: But he was letting you work in that shop?

GW: Right.

BG: Making your own instrument, and he was giving you help.

GW: He helped me. He gave me free wood. The tone wood that I used on the violins was his wood, free. He let me use his tools. He would bring me a sandwich.

BG: Really?

GW: Yea, back to the shop, you know, he would bring a drink. "What do you need, George?" He would come and see where I am, give me something to eat, and then go back to the house and watch some tv.

4:11

BG: Were there other guys working there too at that time?

GW: No, I was alone, sitting there alone.

BG: Ok and that was after work?

GW: That was after I finished the Frankfort job. I'd get down there, and I'd leave there about 9:30. Of course, he had to sleep at 9, so I let him go back and shut the door and lock it, make sure the lock was latched in and everything, and would then head home.

BG: Ok, so you worked till 5...

GW: In Frankfort, then I'd get to his house, eat dinner, work until 9 or 9:30, and then go home. That's how I did it.

BG: And you were doing that because? Why did you want to learn how to do a violin?

GW: Because the violin I brought from Lebanon, I knew that the tone of it was completely impaired, it didn't sound like the violin I had heard off this one tape of this famous Arabic violinist that I knew. When you'd get to the base string, that resonate frequency of the violin box, supposedly the C note, my violin was not blowing a C. You reach that note and the whole body will start going (demonstrates vibration). It just changes character. It wasn't doing it, I knew something was wrong, I wasn't fulfilled. I've studied about what's inside of it, and I got my hands in to getting into it, oh yea, I wanted to make one, to basically get that fulfillment of good tone, which will enhance the enjoyment in playing. You've got to have a responsive instrument under you to perform.

BG: Yea, so you were trying to make your tone from scratch. Right?

GW: Yea.

BG: And you made how many?

GW: Made 5.

BG: 5? Where are they now?

GW: I've given the first one to a friend. Number 2 and number 3 are in Lebanon. I play number 2 a lot, in Lebanon when I go I perform there and I use it. Number 5 I have here and I use it when I perform with the Fusion Flamenco group.

BG: Ok and what's the name of that group again?

GW: Alma Gitana.

6:15 (Skip in the video, unable to discern the question that BG has asked GW)

GW: I do have, I'm planning on working on one, yes. It's slowed up a little bit due to the oud. In the beginning I thought that I could work on two instruments at the same time. The more I dug in to the oud, and finished ouds, the more I started in my own mind wanting to learn more about its acoustics and what made it tick, it sucked all the energy from the violin making and towards the oud making. I've had the stuff laying out there for a year and a half, two years, haven't forgotten about it. I will get back to it and will make a violin.

BG: How did you get in to the oud?

GW: How I got in to the oud? Good question. I was asked...

BG: Well you said something, that you were coming back from Lebanon with one...

GW: I brought that oud, that other oud, from Lebanon. Should I grab it?

BG: Yea, sure. I'll get it. Was this the one, how'd you get that?

GW: I bought it from Beirut, Lebanon. \$2000.00. Every time I go to Lebanon I know a few musicians in my area that will give me advice, you know, where the better ouds are, so I went after this guy. I went to his house, and the oud teacher at the conservatory at the time came with me and his eyes lit up when he played this one. So we got it. Brought it here. No problem.

BG: Did you like it yourself?

GW: Liked it to a point. Like it for the lack of any other oud that I had. Didn't have a glued bridge oud, this was a floating kind of bridge, this bridge will move on the top, so it was fine. Decided to take it with me in 2006 up to Canada where my sister, my oldest sister evacuated from Lebanon after Israel and Hezbollah had their own episode. Between Lexington and Chicago, the hostess at the plane here in Lexington was like, "Uh." No, I said, listen, this is a delicate instrument, it might break down there. She said, "No, no, you'll be fine." I said, can't you leave it somewhere here on the cabin, in the corner; the pilot can put it behind them. No, no, she took it and gave it to the guy and they put it in the tail of the plane with the big luggage. Well, I get to Chicago...

BG: Was it in the case?

GW: In the soft case, yea.

BG: Ok.

GW: That's the problem. This peg box was broken, the neck was cracked, and the back was crushed. So I reworked all that after I got it back and I came back from Canada and so on, visiting my sister. And the good thing is, I've noticed that the top didn't have any problems, but I went back and fixed everything.

BG: How do you fix it when it is crushed in?

GW: It was crushed in. I brought the pieces back, and I used crazy glue, I used some super gel, then I used some wood putty and I filled in some spots and I held it together, and then sanded, and then filled again, and then sanded, and filled, and went back and forth. Filled inside... and this neck was broken. This whole thing, after this piece was hit that way, it popped this piece here out, and that was kind of easy because you can add glue and then put it back. And I did, I took it a piece at a time. Put it back together. And it's still here for a reminder. This is how things progress. My first experience in putting an oud back together.

BG: Did J.B. help you put that back together? Was he still here?

GW: In 2006... No, he had already passed.

BG: Did you ever talk to him about wanting to make one?

GW: No, he had showed me a few tricks on guitar making; he was talking about the x brace and steel string guitars and everything... He had his own design... But no, we didn't. I had given him one oud that I had, an oud which came back to me after he died, and then I gave it to John and Diana Rose here in Lexington, and they have it. They play with it and it is fine. When that broke, I borrowed an oud from a friend of mine here in Lexington that played the drums for me and that was a glued bridge oud. And when I took it and we played in Louisville at the Jazz Factory and I realized, this is the type of oud I want with that type of tone. The glued bridge will, if you design it properly you can get a whole lot of bass response to the note, a whole lot of fluffy bass and that's what they shoot after in oud making, you want the note...

BG: Did you say the C string is the bass?

GW: Well the C string is one of them, but actually each note, each note will have an element of bass attached to it, just like going to an equalizer and going to the low frequency area, just boost it up and you can hear (imitates sound) you can hear it. That was the goal. So, I knew.

Now the next thing, I got invited to, by the Arab community of Louisville to open for Simon Shaheen, a US Arab virtuoso on the oud and violin. He came to Louisville, I opened for him. I played a few pieces with the drummer and another tambourine guy. Then we all did a short introduction. When the show ended, we talked. I liked his oud sound and he led me to his brother in New York which got me started to think about what I needed to do to get that tone. See again, you are going from a dumb (uncertain of word used) piece of wood, like your knocking a table, so thick and unresponsive, up to a point where with each pluck you can feel the whole bowl shake under you. You know that's response.

BG: So that's what he was playing, one like that?

GW: He was playing an oud that was excellent, and it was his brother that had made that oud top. And apparently it's a lot easier, and of course a lot easier and cheaper, to just pop an old thick top and make a new top and glue it to the bowl and go on, because making the back, as I showed you earlier, it's actually a lot of hard work putting all these ribs together, light tight, no gaps, that's a lot of work. You got to give it time to cure. 23, there's 23 times 2 if you're working continuous. Or, if you do one a day,

then that's 23 days, and the neck and the peg box, you don't have to do that with an existing oud, you get an old cheap oud, you pop the top off, and you make your own top with the right thickness and the right braces and you got the tone of a fine oud. And that's what happened with Simon Shaheen, he was playing an oud that his brother made the top. So I called his brother after the show and he recommended that I do the same thing we just said, I pop an old top off and make a new top. And, let's see, I have it somewhere...

BG: With the new top?

GW: Yea, somewhere...

14:57

GW: First experiment. My old commercially-made Syrian oud had this top. I made sure I didn't destroy it because I just wanted to use it for demonstration purposes. You know some people think hey look, how are you doing? Do a little face with it... You gauge the thickness. Some areas here are up to 3 mm, so whoever made it didn't pay attention to thickness. And then workmanship, cutting the lines, curvature, smoothness of lines, not impressive. I don't see it. Inlay, again, cheap. Then you flip it and look on the inside. Look! Look at the texture here. These people never even bothered to sand the back of this top. This thing I sanded, it was almost as rough as it is back here. I've used the 220 grit and the 400 grit and cleaned it and softened it like that.

Then, ok, look at this brace, and right down here is the tail end block. You know, this is like putting a beam right next to the wall, what's the use? Why do you need this brace here? What are you trying to support? They glued right here at the tail end block. This is unnecessary. This is a huge difference, a huge distance back here. Then you look at this brace. Too thick. Look at the glue. High glue, it's squeezing out, too high... well, not necessarily too high here, but the way the brace connects to the bowl here, which the brace will come this way, this is over a cm high. With lutes, down to 7. Some ouds, 9. So you got to scallop it down on each end, and you got to thin it down even more. Plus they are rough cut, hand heavy, you can feel the weight.

17:25

BG: Now, could that have been because it was a folk instrument and made by somebody who wouldn't have, who just saw it as a...

GW: It's basically, it's just a quick and dirt assembly line with a bunch of people working and it was \$350.00, \$400.00 dollars, what I paid for it. You get what you pay for. Now, the unfortunate thing, most people from the Middle East will think an oud is an oud. They can't distinguish tone and they don't care as long as it looks like an oud, it's an oud. If it walks like a duck, it's a duck.

BG: What do you mean, most people in the Middle East?

GW: Some of my friends don't quite have the understanding and the appreciation of a fine instrument, of a fine responsive instrument. Some want to buy it for free if they could. They try to basically cut it down thinking that they can get it at the cheapest deal that they can.

BG: Have they tried to buy yours for cheap?

GW: Yea. I'm like no, I'll keep this, I'm not dying to have money for it. I'll keep it. I'll enjoy it.

BG: So what is that top made of, spruce?

GW: This oud particularly is...

BG: I mean the one that you've changed out, took that one off and...

GW: It was European spruce.

BG: Spruce is what, instrument makes for guitars use a lot.

GW: Guitars, violins...

BG: They all use that for their front board.

GW: Ukulele, yea it's the sound board.

BG: Sound board.

GW: You got to be, again you got to be stiff and light, and spruce has those characteristics.

BG: Stiff and light **(interruption by videographer)**...

19:35

BG: So ok, you make, all of yours are spruce, right?

GW: No, actually... The first oud top that I made was with spruce, and now it is being played with a good friend of mine in Lebanon. He actually has just joined an orchestra in Qatar, in the United Arab Emirates, and he's been there, I don't know that he has taken that oud, but he will show it to the person who was managing that whole show though and we are going to try to establish some sort of collaboration, some effort that I'm able to help him with the oud making because he wants to do an alto, a tenor, a bass and a soprano. This is what they are trying to do in Qatar right now. The man builds his own ouds but he needs help and I'm going to try to pitch in.

BG: So are you saying there are different sizes of ouds?

GW: Absolutely, this is starting to show right now in the Middle East. There is one gentleman that has done that. Some claim that Simon Shaheen brought in the bass oud, and so on. So it's all new and still happening, but the idea is similar to the violin family. You've got the bass, a huge thing that you stand by and play, and then you've got the cello, and then you've got the violin, or the viola, and then the violin which is the soprano.

BG: Ok then...

GW: So they are doing a similar thing like that.

BG: Ukuleles are like that too aren't they?

GW: I guess.

BG: I know we were talking about that earlier today and Cathy Currier, there's an old...

GW: Bass, tenor, alto and soprano...

BG: Yea, well, they don't call them all that, but they, so this is new, this hasn't been traditional...

GW: Not quite traditional, no, the oud, traditionally, is an accompaniment instrument for singing. Conservatory students in Lebanon of course, every time I go, I'm curious enough that I go to those schools and I look through the stuff that they teach. It's a requirement. If you're learning to sing, in the conservatory in Lebanon, you are required to pick up oud and learn oud because it does help clean up the intonation, the vocal intonation, you know what they call solfege. It's basically conditioning your sound, or your voice, to a reference, which the oud is a good reference. It will keep you in shape and in line with those notes.

BG: How does that, to get back to the different types, different sizes you said you go back to Lebanon and you look at how their teaching it, but that's...

GW: At this point in Lebanon the curriculum in the conservatory is only about I think the tenor. I think this is a tenor oud, the only shape that's out there that's being taught.

BG: That one right there?

GW: Yea, this size. Some of them come with a little more pearish shape, a little longer shape, and you know, about the same neck. You know in oud design your neck length is a $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ of the string length.

BG: Ok.

GW: So you have one neck length, and two neck lengths over the face to the bridge. So the whole string length is three times the neck length which brings the fourth position right at the interchange between the neck and the body. In other words, this is fourth position. This is first, second, third (**demonstrates on oud**). C, and this is a G. See, I know I am right there.

BG: That's where it's supposed to be then...

GW: Yea.

BG: You can't play any farther up can you?

24:15

GW: Oh yea, you can (**demonstrates**).

BG: Oh, you can? Ok.

GW: Now this oud, the top, we were talking about the oud tops and what material, I used spruce and then I kept reading and reading and you know, everybody, some guitar makers bragged about port-orford-cedar, so I switched to port-orford-cedar. So this is a port-orford top.

BG: Ok.

GW: The more I make, the more I need to stick back to the conventional material. I'm going back into more walnut on the back and also the spruce. Now as far as western red cedar, it might not take as much breaking period for an instrument, but it also dies and some people say it doesn't have a lot of longevity. The European spruce seems to be at this point the material of choice.

BG: So, is there a community of oud makers?

GW: In the states?

BG: Yea, that you communicate with?

GW: There is. The gentleman that I mentioned earlier in New York, his name is Jaheb(unsure of spelling) Shaheen. Richard Hankey, he is the author of an oud construction book. Jamel Abraham, out of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he is a fine workman. He makes ouds. He learned from the first book that he bought, from Richard Hankey. There's a few blogs, you get online there's all different kinds of blogs, all different kinds of theories. And then there's talking to the makers in Turkey, and the makers in Lebanon. There's a whole big, across the pond communication about oud making.

BG: And you're in that, they know you, too?

GW: Hankey does, Jamel Abraham does, Jaheb Shaheen does, I'm not sure about the Lebanese even though I just got into an article in 2009, in a magazine in Lebanon and I have the magazine here I'd be happy to show you, about instruments and stuff.

BG: So you're becoming known too, as...

GW: It seems to be that way, but I'm not going to go out there and broadcast it. I might, if I could, I will visit a couple of them and talk with them...

BG: Well, is the difference between you and them, you kind of do it as a hobby, right, and some of these other guys are doing it as their...

GW: Profession, yea.

BG: Profession, right.

GW: The difference, it's big because they are hanging on to their information, they are keeping their cards to themselves. This is how they, in the Arabic culture performs. The Nahhats of Syria, any oud maker, any professional in the Middle East, will hang on to that information. There's no sharing of information. And some of them will even give you, maybe give you incorrect information if they could just to mislead you. So you don't steal that and you don't compete with them because their livelihood is

on the line. That's all they know, that's how they bring the bread and butter to their family, it's a big threat.

I commend Richard Hankey of Oregon I think, or Washington, the state of Washington, for writing the first book on oud making. After Lundberg's renaissance lute construction book that came out, Hankey's book, he's opened up, he's broken up the secrets about oud making. It's not a taboo anymore. If you buy the book you can get in to it, you can see a few things. He doesn't teach you acoustics, he doesn't teach you the feel of the spruce, what's flexible, what's not flexible, what's stiff, he gives you the dimensions, here's a sample of an oud made in 1902, those were the dimensions, do it this way. Glue this, put this... Acoustics, which is the main ingredient and what makes an instrument responsive, a bunch of them will bring you to it and drive away from it. They will give you a little whiff, but they never sell it to you. So there's a whole lot of experimentation. Even in the western world, that's kept close to the chest, but as far as how it's made, parts are, how you go about it, how you put things together...

BG: Did your work with J.B. help you with the acoustic parts on this at all?

GW: Working with J.B. opened up some doors. Now, as far as the acoustics of a violin, it's a completely different method of vibration. The violin you know, flanks and everything around the graduations of the top you go from about an 1/8th of an inch in the center and you taper down to about 5/64ths (uncertain of fraction) which is pretty thin around the edges. Now you want that flexibility to help your treble tone, so with the movement of that top, which will go almost in a speaker-like fashion, even though some might tell you that the sound goes in circles and stuff. No, I mean the sound is nothing but a transferred pressure wave. Our ears get that pressure wave and our brain interprets that pressure wave for a certain frequency, for a certain sound, that's how we hear. So from your end as a sender, you've got to be creating pressure waves. The whole thing is an air pump. You have to vibrate enough and move the air in different frequencies so that those pressure waves will travel and get in your ear and interpret it into sound.

BG: Ok.

(Videographer switches tape, begins third tape)

30:59

BG: Ok, so we were talking about kind of all the different influences when you, you went to the hall of fame with...

GW: J.B. Miller, yea.

BG: Were there other people there giving you advice?

GW: Yeah, there was some, there was a violin maker, I remember, and I couldn't believe it. We all joked and laughed about it after it was said and done. This guy was claiming that he gets better tone if the tone wood is soaked in cow urine for a little bit for a while. I'm not sure...

BG: Do you clean it out afterwards, or just keep it in there?

GW: I don't know that we even asked him anything at that point. J.B. took his plaque and Bill Bauer of Louisville that had a Miller violin played, and we came back home when J.B. got that plaque and hanged it in the house.

BG: What was J.B. like, was he a nice guy?

GW: Very nice guy, very kind, very generous. Sweet man, whatever he has he will give you. He gave me that violin.

BG: Yea, tell us about that, can we look at that violin?

GW: Yes sir. This is a violin I've always liked. This is a J.B. Miller violin in curly maple. It had a little of a birth mark, I knew it because of this line and this little knot thing here. So what happened, this is after he started teaching Art Mize in the shop, I come from Frankfort and J.B. will break in his violins kind of in a circling fashion, he will circle them. He goes upstairs, he has this one area with two beds and he has all the violins lying on the bed with covers, and he'd grab one and bring downstairs into his bedroom and that's the one he plays. So I went into the house, and I kind of recognized it and I played it, and I was like man I love the way this one responds. I went back out to the shop, and I was telling that to Art Mize that was in the shop. As I was saying it I did not know that J.B. was coming from the house to the shop, and he heard me say that, and I said, Art, there is a violin on the bed in J.B.'s bedroom that's just absolutely amazing. Of course, to me, some people have different tastes and they may like and they may not, I'm not sure, but to me this was like a fine sounding violin.

Well I didn't make much out of it and I get back in to the house after I talked to Art and then the next thing, here comes J.B. with the violin and he had it in a paper bag and J.B. goes, "Son, I won't be here much longer. Take it." I'm like, oh, what? Like, no. I started crying and said no, I can't take it and he goes, "Well, how about if you give me one of your violins?" Will make it look like it was an exchange. I finally did. I gave him number 4 that I made and he kept it until after he died and then Art Mize got it, and Art Mize switched it right handed because it was left handed.

BG: And so it was yours? He didn't want to give it back to you?

GW: Well at that point it was part of the deal. I had J.B.'s violin and I didn't feel to be in any position to ask for it back because I have this.

BG: That's very nice.

GW: I didn't want to...

BG: Which do you think was a better violin, yours or his?

GW: This, his...

BG: Yea?

GW: Yea... Art, I just learned recently, around 2010 when the World Equestrian Games were going on Art was playing at the airport welcoming all of the international visitors and they had an article on him with his violin and so on and my violin was in there and I knew it right away because of the color it was.

And the next thing, he emailed me and tells me, "George, I think I have a buyer for that violin." And I said cool, and you know a few months went by and then he said that it sold for like \$3500.00 dollars to an orchestra player from either Centre College or Maysville, I don't remember the location, but I took it as a compliment. Definitely it's his money, he took it after J.B. died, I'm happy with this...

36:05

BG: Did J.B. leave a will?

GW: I have no idea.

BG: Ok.

GW: Yea, I didn't even...

BG: But Art kind of took over his shop after he died, right?

GW: Right.

BG: So, I mean, after you had been there I guess?

GW: Yes, I started making them and then Art came into the picture and I tried to help Art with a few cello bridges and so on, but he got too busy and was doing volumes and I couldn't help him as much and I got busy with other things. So, I'm happy to have this, really.

BG: Oh yea, it looks beautiful.

GW: It's beautiful. It sounds great. Can't complain. To me this is testimony of J.B. Miller, the man that he was, the man, he puts his heart into making an instrument like this that's worth thousands, that he hands it to you and says it yours, take it.

BG: He must have really respected you to give that to you.

GW: We had a good relationship. I loved him and he loved me. We were friends for 10 years. I did anything he wanted me to do, I helped him with a bunch of things that I could, and apparently he appreciated it and I appreciate this too.

BG: Did he have a wife or anything at the time?

GW: Yea. His wife was Mary Montgomery from Lancaster.

BG: Ok. And she was still alive?

GW: She was still alive. Yea, when he was 100 and 3 months he died.

BG: Wow.

GW: A month and a half after Mary died. They were in the nursing home and I used to go and visit them there and so on.

BG: When you make an instrument, what does it feel like to you? What kind of satisfaction do you get out of it?

GW: Creating something from nothing has a whole lot of reward inside. It's a very good question. I'm not sure that I can give you a few words, but there's a lot of pleasure, a lot of anticipation, it's like a pregnant woman wants to see her kid come out and wants to see what it looks like. You're working, it's like cooking a tasteful meal, you're working all the ingredients, putting your love at each step, caring for the elements and putting them together to a point where you're excited and anticipated the fine tune you are shooting for.

BG: That's a long process, right?

GW: Yes, yes, you got to have the patience, you got to have the talent, the skill to use the tools, I mean there are a whole lot of stations to stop and learn as you progress into the making. You have to do for example inlay, you want to do the purfling on the violin, well, you've got to stop the carving and now you want to dig a trench and sink the purfling into the trench tight without much mistakes around the edges that the eye can see. So there's a lot of stop and learn like you know, tangential tasks that you gotta perfect as you move forward.

BG: Sometimes you feel good, sometimes you feel...

GW: Sometimes you feel good, sometimes something breaks, and sometimes you're not completely happy with something. I have, even on this oud, when I glued the first two ribs on it, there was something that bothered me on the first rib when I lined it up and glued it that kept nagging me when I put the second one. I realized I had made a mistake and I decided...

BG: When you put the second what on?

GW: The rib of the bowl.

BG: Oh ok.

GW: This is the rib, the first rib and the second rib (**demonstrates on oud**). Glued both strips.

BG: And then you realized you'd made a mistake?

GW: Yea, and then I realized I wasn't completely happy with, I know, at that point I just break it, break it off the mold, pull it off the neck block, pull it off the tail end block, clean, start again. Don't want to have any regrets. You know, not necessarily be a perfectionist from the angle of you know, you're never happy. Like J.B. Miller will say, "Well enough, just shoot for good enough. If it's well enough, leave well enough alone." And I've learned that, but again, my well enough has to do with whether or not I can stand keeping something that's not right or that I should just stop, if it's worth stopping and starting again. There's a whole, I mean a final product, it may have been, it's a journey in making, making maybe slight mistakes, correcting, redoing, straightening out, it's tedious, takes a lot of patience, lot of love to do it.

41:16

BG: I would imagine if you...

41:17 (Interruption by videographer, slight glitch in tape, begins with discussion on new topic)

41:21

GW: Wipe it, brush it, 10 to 15 minutes, wipe it, brush it, 2 to 3 coats you're sealed and the next thing you put 4 or 5 coats of oil varnish and you're done. Then you put it down.

41:35 (Interruption by videographer, instructs interview to start again with regarding to using varnish on violin)

41:43

BG: So, I was talking about the finish on this. If you could hold this up...

GW: Yes, the way I finished this oud is, when, after sanding the wood down and I actually varnish it with steel, you know four zeros, steel... wool.

BG: Steel wool?

GW: Right. Make sure it's clean. Then I get the microfiber cloth and I clean out all the remains from the steel wool. Blow some air on it. Clean it up. When I'm happy, the next thing is to seal it, or if you don't want to seal it you can apply the oil varnish and it might be 12 coats, 12 to 13 to 14, depending on how thick the material is that you have, so you have to play with that for a little bit. You can thin it with turpentine.

What I've done on this, I have sealed the wood with egg white, I guess they call it albumin, if I'm not mistaking. It's basically breaking the egg, putting the yolk on one side, leaving it alone, straining the egg white through a little screen, putting the stuff in the cup, getting this wide brush, you know just take the egg white and brush it all over. If there are any lumps you want to remove those. You want to wait 10 to 15 minutes till it dries. Then you can give it a little steel wooling, even it all out. Do another coat.

BG: I'm surprised you aren't wiping it off.

GW: No. It goes in, it soaks in, and then it dries. If there are any lumps you can wipe off or you can sand down.

BG: Why is that better than sealer that you can buy at the store?

GW: It was one way that I wanted to try. You can do shellac, you can shellac it.

BG: So the egg white, it doesn't attract bacteria or anything?

GW: No, no, I did three coats, and I steel wooled it again, and I put on the oil varnish. Took about 4 to 5 coats at best.

BG: Are you hand rubbing it in like hand oil?

GW: Just a little piece of cloth and... **(Demonstrates rubbing on oud)**. Leave it alone. Come back and steel wool it for any lumps or high spots, and then come back and do another coat. And then give it, do one in the morning, one in the evening. Go to work, come back in the evening and put one. In the morning, in 2 or 3 days you've built it enough, then you basically pumice it, rub it down with the rubbing compound. Pumice, and then you can go to a finer compound, the grey rubbing stone. When that's done, then you can put a very thin coat of the oil back on there and then it will be as shiny as you see it.

BG: It's beautiful.

GW: Thank you.

BG: And is it walnut?

GW: Claro walnut and curly mahogany.

BG: Do you think its art what you do?

GW: Well, if it's not art, what is it? I don't know. I'll leave it to the viewer to decide. There's a love element. If there's no love, there's no work. If there's no love, there's no drive to make. I don't know that I will continue to become commercial in as much as I would probably want to be in the position where I can, where I will make one a year, but if someone wants two then I'll get to work, but maybe I won't have, I don't want to burn out. I don't want to go through a point where I'm like, oh, I don't think I want to do this anymore. I want to protect it by allowing it to be as comfortable as possible until there's high enough demand and then I'll deal with that situation when it comes.

BG: For now you've got it at a rate that keeps you happy.

GW: Mhm.

BG: If you did more right now it might make you burnt out.

GW: Right. Especially if there's no demand, and then it's like why am I making those?

BG: Well, do you see people buying them from you? Have you sold a couple?

GW: I've sold, yea, I've sold 2 or 3. My second oud is in Lebanon, I play it when I go, I took it with. The first oud is in Louisville.

BG: Now let me ask you about that one because she doesn't even play it, does she?

GW: No, she doesn't. Actually...

BG: Does that bother you?

GW: No.

BG: Ok.

GW: She wanted it, and she bought it. Now, she has gone through a bumpy road. It cannot economically, with her father dying, something about her job, found, I sent an email to my email list and I actually managed someone on the email list that had interest and bought it from her.

BG: Oh really?

GW: Yea, and so she got the money, she actually sold it, but then someone else has it and they're happy with it.

BG: Ok, because we borrowed it for the Made to be Played exhibit at the Historical Society, and it's funny because it was made to be played but she didn't play it.

GW: Right.

BG: That's kind of funny. Now it is being played by someone?

GW: I would say so, yea.

BG: That's good; it found a home where it can be played. It just bothered me to have an instrument that nice just sitting there.

GW: I played it actually. I had made it and started playing it until she saw me play it in Louisville at gig and she wanted it.

BG: Ok.

GW: That's how it became hers.

BG: How much did you sell it for, if I might ask.

GW: About \$1500.00.

BG: \$1500.00, ok.

GW: Yea, it was my first oud. That's probably reasonable for me. I'm not going to ask for a whole lot. I want to try to basically get my foot in the door, and in an attempt to recover some of the costs I've spent into the equipment and the tools.

BG: Are you happy with the results of your last couple of ones?

47:43

GW: Oh yea. This is super satisfying for me. When I play it I'm happy with it.

BG: Now, if you gave it to the superstar that you mentioned before, what's his name, that you played with before...

GW: Simon Shaheen.

BG: Yea, do you think he'd like it?

GW: I would say so, because I've showed him. One time he had a show at the University of Dayton, Ohio, and he said bring it with you. So I took that first oud top that his brother told me to make, in replacement to this oud top, he wanted to see it. Took it up to Dayton and watched his show and I showed it to him, and I played it for him and he was like, continue. Keep going. And, I kept going.

BG: Do you still play for the community, besides... you mentioned earlier that you played with another guy, you played for the Lebanon community...

GW: Not quite because the gentleman that I mentioned, he moved back overseas. I have played with another performer in Louisville. He moved back to Qatar. Right now I appease private parties in Lexington, Louisville, Cincinnati, if they need anything...

BG: What kind of private party?

GW: For like, maybe an Arabic group, that they want strictly Arabic music. Voice, I do the singing, and I also play the oud. I take my sound system, go there and give them a gig. I also play with the Fusion Flamenco group, Alma Gitana. We're at the point right now, we have an assortment of fusion flamenco, that I participate in, in terms of oud lines, violin lines, percussion, and also Arabic songs that are palatable. I use the word palatable to the local mind here. You don't want to give them a very juicy Arabic song that it might end up being a little hard to digest, you want something...

BG: You mean because it's long, or because its...

GW: Not because it's long, not the length. There are three quarter tunes in Arabic, there's a whole bunch of complex scales called maqams. You want to stay around what's acceptable, and so we discussed and I said look I'm thinking about this piece of music here and let's see, do you think we can run that in the group. And they say, "Yea, let's do it," or, "That's too thick," so we stick to what we think works best. And we have about 7 or 8 Arabic songs, Egyptian, Lebanese, slow, fast, people will come up and dance. So we are doing fusion flamenco, with Stuart Walden singing in Spanish, and then it's like, the next thing I'm on the oud or the violin doing a Lebanese song. So the ear, when they watch us play, it's never getting board, it's going from oh, what's this, to always keeping it wowed.

BG: Well the name is "Fusion," it's a fusion so, if you were going to play for an...

GW: Arabic community event?

BG: Yea, you'd do the thick stuff right?

GW: Yes, and it all depends on the crowd. It's a matter of judgment. You're sitting there, you're thinking, are they all Lebanese, do they like the fast stuff, do they like the juicy stuff, it's a matter of trying and then seeing how they respond and then you can switch gears and go back to other styles. At the end of

the session usually you would switch to the slower, mellower, but more enchanting. In Arabic music there's this element of, they call it in Arabic, tarab, t-a-r-a-b, as in the enchantment of the mind. There is this elevation, a state of being elevated above the clouds, emotionally and mentally, that you only get to through that style of singing. And it could be that the melody is so enchanting, could be that the voice of the singer is so enchanting, or that you have both. For example, Um Kalthoum, the woman in the book that I showed you a little earlier, her picture was on the cover, Um Kalthoum was the enchanter of the whole Middle East. When Um Kalthoum sang, way back then, it was usually Thursday night when she sang and she'd sing for three hours and everybody in the Middle East was sitting at the radio, and we're talking about 40 years ago. Thursday night, from this hour to this hour, everybody sat listening and, you know, the ah's, when they say something is ahh inspiring, as a result of being enchanted there's this ahh, the feel of, kind of ecstatic.

BG: But you kind of really have to be part of the culture to understand that right?

GW: It's very complicated, yes.

BG: And so, you saw your parents respond to it, and then you responded to it, and it just became part of...

GW: Right, right, and not necessarily that every person in the Middle East can favor that style. The more I go around there's a whole bunch of people that want the dancing style. They want this folkloric, almost like a line dance when they do the depka, they join shoulders and they do the swing, to me that's not enchanting, that's like repetitious of some simple melody.

BG: Do you think that's enchanting for western audiences? Or, are they not prepared for it?

GW: I have done that in Louisville at Café Classico, and it depends. You will have somebody from an American background that comes to you and says, hmm, what you've done over there with that song, you've grabbed my heart, and I didn't know it, I was just being myself, trying to emote a certain song.

BG: Does it help to give some background to it before you play it?

GW: I do, I do. I actually translate the words.

BG: Do you talk about the enchantment stuff that you just told me?

GW: Not necessarily in that fashion. As I would explain what the next song was going to be, and I translate, I make an effort to translate the lyrics.

BG: How you just explained it to me makes me want to hear something like that, but I would think if you talked about the enchantment and how you heard this when you were in Lebanon it might be a key for other people... Maybe not, maybe it's too complex. Know what I'm saying? I feel like I wouldn't mind going home and playing or hearing some of that, listening to that music and playing that, if I knew enough about it. That's how I feel about almost all music; I have to know something about it before I can...

GW: Right, right.

BG: ... understand why it's important. I guess you're saying that guy in the restaurant kind of got it by himself, which is good too, right?

GW: He invited me, and also it was more like a cosmopolitan café where people from different backgrounds came. There were people from North Africa, a bunch of people that knew Arabic and the Arabic community will come. I had a very diverse audience at the time.

Now with the enchantment, if I may say, it's this getting the mind to a phrase, a musical phrase, and the repetition of that musical phrase up to a point when you make a little twist. And so there mind's going ahh, every time you repeat it and twist it one way or another and change the length of a note in that phrasing at the expense of another one being important in an enchantment way, that's where you grab it. It's complicated.

BG: I've heard some Indian music doing something like that, like Robby Shankar. Is that similar in a way, where they go on and on and then they change it a little bit?

GW: Yes, yes a little change.

BG: And then you kind of relish that change?

GW: Absolutely, absolutely.

BG: So you really couldn't play something like that because you'd have to play it for a long time, like yourself, I was going to ask you to play something, but you can't really do that can you?

GW: We can try.

BG: If you feel like it.

57:33

BG: I think we're good. We can end after that if you want to.

GW: We can try if you want.

57:40 (Wakim performs on oud)

59:34 (Wakim stops)

GW: I'm sorry. I'm not quite getting the words. I've repeated the thing, I've made a little tweak here and there, and that's basically what it would do. Now, there might be other voices that can do it better.

BG: I kind of **(unable to discern due to strum on oud)**...

GW: Did you? But I've forgotten the words, so I don't know if you want to do it, if you'll keep this.

BG: I think it will be good for people to see what it can do.

GW: Want me to repeat and go through it? It actually continues (**demonstrates**), but I wouldn't want to go back to the beginning. Then we're like doing a recording thing.

BG: That's ok.

GW: It would be a little more tedious.

BG: Well I'd like to come down and hear you sometime when you play like that. Are there some records that you'd recommend to somebody that wanted to hear music like this?

GW: If you get on YouTube, very easily you can say oud Kalthoum on YouTube, you'll get all different kinds of videos of this lady here, an Egyptian band in the background. Let's see, Um, like in English if you were to spell it, U-m, K-a-l-t-h-o-u-m.

BG: Ok.

GW: Um Kalthoum, then you start getting all the different video clips. And...

BG: Could you send me that in an email tomorrow maybe?

GW: Absolutely. Yes.

BG: Yea, that'd be great. I'll try it out. Anything else you want to say? This is one of the longest interviews we've ever done I think.

GW: Yea, right. Wow.

BG: With the hour outside and then in here. Do you think we covered everything pretty much?

GW: I guess, yea.

BG: Well, thank you.

GW: Thank you.

BG: Is it ok if we keep this in the archives and let other people see it?

GW: Sure, sure.

BG: Ok, great.

GW: And, as far as the program airing at some point, do you all have a...

BG: Well, we don't know what she's actually going to do with these. There's no program planned right now. It's more, interview all the luthiers...

(Recording stops at 1:02:13)