

Russell: ^HHe's goin' OK

Checked against tape
Interviewer: William Russell

Brunis: Good morning, Ladies ³⁵ and gentlemen, this is Georg Brunis of the musical Brunis family of New Orleans. It's a little interview, the gentlemen would like to know--I was born New Orleans, in the Irish Channel, February 6, 1902. I am now 56 years of age, going pretty strong for my age, I came up from New Orleans. There was a telegram sent by a drummer that came up here first, Ragbaby Stevens, and he was working in a place called Campbell Gardens on Campbell and Madison, and he sent me a wire for my brother Albert, known as Abbie, for him and I to come up and join his band. Abbie was leery, he didn't want to walk cross ties back, and I was afraid to leave town, I was afraid of getting stranded, so I took it over to a friend of mine, Paul Mares, whose father was in the fur business. His brother now runs the Jazz the Southland label in New Orleans on St. Louis Street. So I says Paul, I says, Abbie don't want to go to Chicago, and I'm kind of leery, I'm afraid. Paul says, Man, give me that wire, ^{he says} I'll go. So Paul went up and introduced himself to Ragbaby Stevens and Ragbaby liked him and then I waited a while and Paul got the railroad fare from his father and sent me \$60. I took my little mackinaw, my cap, and my cowlick, and my hornin ^{the} that big piece of paper, newspaper, I didn't have no trombone case then, I had bought it in a hock shop, and I came on to Chicago, went to the Campbell Gardens that night and me being from New Orleans, I didn't know such a thing of snow, so we played the first set. Ragbaby and Paul, and there was ah--I just can't recall the piano player's name now, remember we had, oh who was playing clarinet, It's so far back, that's a long time ago.

Russell: Yeah, somebody from Chicago

Brunis: Uh- Ragbaby, Paul, myself, on trombone, this piano player, I just can't recall the piano player.

Russell: That's all right, yeah.

Brunis: so we played the first set and went over pretty good, and Rag and the boss, Stein, was very happy, so I happened to go outside and somebody said "It's snowing." So I wanted to see snow and it was snowing like the dickens, I never seen it, I seen it on Christmas cards, but I thought it was fictional. So I start rolling around in the snow and clowning and throwing snowballs and they were having a ball, so the boss comes out and says, "You're on," and I says, To hell with the job, I says, I quit. I didn't have a dime, in my pocket, I was so

happy. So the guy says, "Well, all right, have a little fun, and then come in and play," so I missed a set and I went back in and from that time on the job was all right. We stayed there, oh, pretty good length of time and then went to a place called the Lincoln Gardens, and ah--well, I'm getting a little ahead of my story, when I first came in ah--ah--after the what a name, we went down to Blatt's Palm Garden, that's where I met the famous Jack Pettis on the C melody saxophone, Frank Snyder and Elmer Schoebel, and then Mugsy could only play one tune at that time, a number called "Sensation." So these two racketeers, bouncers and hoods, they ah, after Jack and Elmer introduced Mugsy and I, I play, Mugsy sat in, we played, so after the night was over, they took us over to an athletic club, and they made us put the boxing gloves on. I said, "Man, I don't want to hurt this man, I just met him, I said, hello, How do you do," I says--So, they made us do it, you know how they do in Chicago, they made us do it, so we boxed for about two hours, I knocked Mugsy down, Mugsy knocked me down, I got a broken thumb, I broke on Mugsy's head, then Mugsy sprang out and he went with Miller's Black and White Melody Boys, and that's right after we played the Lincoln, after we played the Campbell Gardens we went to the Lincoln Gardens on Lincoln and Madison, that's where Pettis got the idea, he didn't get the idea, there was a telegram sent to go to work on the Stockfus boats, in St. Louis. There was, what's the clarinet player's, oh, Palisano, [Catalano ?]

Russell: Oh, yeah, I know who you mean.

Brunis: Oh, he's from New Orleans.

Russell: Is it (?)

Brunis: Well it was Paul Mares, myself, and ah Jack Pettis, and the rest of the boys were from St. Louis. So we went down there, we got the job, on the boat, and we lived on the boat, and ah---Tony Palisano

Russell: Yeah, something like that. I know the

RESTRICTED See staff for more information.

Russell: The Stockfus line. Was it the St. Paul?

Brunis: St. Paul, no the ah--

Russell: The SYDNEY? or the---

Brunis: I think it was the SYDNEY

Russell: THE J-S

Brunis: No, THE J-S was turned into THE SYDNEY. Yeah, that's it, it was THE J-S. So Rappolo, Rappolo got the job, they Palisolo go and Tony Polis, I think that's his name, so ah, Rap joined the band, and then we--that's where I met Black, the banjo player, and ah Bix used to come out and ah sit in, he was from Davenport, the world's great trumpet player, God bless him, and ah, then from the boat we'd ah--we got the offer to come in to the Friar's Inn.

Russell: Oh, can you tell me a little about Rapp, had he been living in Davenport working on a boat, or what

Brunis: Well, he was working in Davenport somewhere and he was going with this young, beautiful blonde girl, and ah, she, I think she was killed in an automobile accident.

Russell: Oh, do you remember something about Bee Palmer? She's

Brunis: Oh, well that's

Russell: She had brought him or something do you remember?

Brunis: Yeah, that's right, Bee Palmer, and there was Santo Picera who is now at the Famous Door, [in N.O., La.] Emmet Hardy on trumpet, there was the trumpet boy, ah, Leon Rappolo, Frisco on drums, no Martin Burke on drums, and ah, Al Siegel on Piano and she had a shimmy act that went out in vauville and it was a wonderful act, and ah then Rap--that thing broke up, it lasted for about a pretty good long time, a couple of years on the Orpheum circuit. Then Rap left, and that's when we got him in Davenport. And then we left the boat, and then we got the offer to go to Friar's Inn and the first band to go to Friar's Inn was uh Paul Mares, Leon Rappolo, Elmer Schoebel on piano, ah--Frank Snyder on ~~and ah--Steve Brown~~ drums, and ah--Lewis Black on banjo, who is now a police officer in Davenport I think and ah--Steve Brown. No, it was Arnold Loyocano first. And then that band split up and Elmer went out to the Midway Gar--oh we were there for three years, I think, no two years. Elmer went out to the Midway Gardens with his own band, and Snyder left and went somewhere, I don't know where he went, and ah---let's see, we got Mel Stitzel on piano [phone rings]

Russell: OK. I'll turn it off. Was Mike Fritzel, the boss there.

Brunis: Yeah, that's right, that right

Russell: You don't have to lean over close to the thing---just sit naturally and relax and you don't have to talk right into it.

Brunis: Well, we replaced Frank Snyder with Ben Pollack and we replaced Elmer Schoebel with Mel Stitzel on piano, then we replaced Arnold Loyocano with Steve Brown, who to me was the world's greatest jazz bass player, in fact he start all these guys slappin the bass. And I think he's now secretary ^{of} the union in Detroit.

Russell: Yes, he's an officer ~~there~~.

Brunis: So, then we went on.

Russell: Could you tell me about uh Pollack, you say he wanted to sit in, what was that story

Brunis: On that was ah, when one time he when he used to hang around Friars lot, in fact, Benny Goodman and all the kids were going to Austin Highschool and they used to, they couldn't come in so they used to sit on the outside and listen, so one time, ^{this} there's Benny heard us, Pollack heard us talking about Snyder couldn't make it, and he walked up to me and he says, "Do you mind, Mr. Brunis", he says, "if I set in?" I says, How you play. "Oh", he says, "I play pretty good." Well, all right sit in, I says, but don't give me no fancy damn beats, just hold a good New Orleans dixie beat," so he sat in, and then he made good from then on.

We liked him, and he was the first guy that I ever see do ah with the silver dollar or the key on the cymbal where you go--bum shhhhhh bum shhh with the cymbal, now they're all doing it now. So ah, we stayed there, and then we went out to a place called the Midway Gardens.

Russell: Oh, excuse me for interrupting, what kind of a place was Friars' Inn, was it in the basement?

Brunis: It was in the basement on Wabash and Van Buren, it was owned by Mike Fritzel alone, no syndicate, no Jacobson, and uh

Russell: Were was a lot of gangsters around there?

Brunis: A lot of hoods in those days--Can I mention their names?

Russell: Yeah, we could cut out anything -

Brunis: Terry Drogg, and Frank "Legs" Diamond? Schemer Drucie, ah Nails Martin, it was a place where the boys hung out and it was run pretty nice, there was never any trouble, and they had men entertainers and girl entertainers would go out and spread up after the set for and sing for each table, they'd sing "Ace in the Hole," and ah what's this other thing, this

torch song, oh, it made a million dollars, "Frankie and Johnny" and all those songs. The good old days.

Russell: What were your hours, how long did you play there?

Brunis: Well, we went to work at ah, well, we'd switched, first, we went to work early, then, we switched and went to work late. We'd get in there about ten o'clock, we first worked from eight until 2, then he changed the hours, business picked up so good that we start going in at ten and goin' till four and five in the morning. That's when we used to get, oh good overtime, we made good money then. So then, that band broke up after a short length of time, and then ah, I get the job at the Valentino Inn, which is on Adams St. and was owned by Dan Beroni. So ah, I had Kyle Pierce on piano, Cafarelli--on Gene Caferilli on trumpet, Bill Paley on drums, Dale Skinner on saxophone, and I sent to New Orleans for Chink Martin on bass. [check this] And ah--we stayed t ere, we played up in the balcony, we stayed there awhile, there used a couple of shootings in there, federal men shootin' ah--bootleggers. So, then, one night Ted Lewis walked in. He said, "Boy, he says," I want you for my band." I said, "Well, Mr. Lewis, I sez, I'm working here, I'm a leader." He says, "Well," he says, "come down and have an audition for me." So he was at the Apollo Theater now which is known as the ^{It's see} ~~it's~~ the United Artists now, isn't it?

Russell: Maybe, I'm not sure.

Brunis: Yeah. It is now know as the United Artists Theater, and he was with a thing called the 1923 Passing Show. So I go down there and there's about 25 trombone players sittin there. So, the tune called "Dreamy Melody" was popular then, and ah, me, I was playin the "Tiger Rag" forty times a night, so he asked me to audition, I play the solo' pretty melody, "Dreamy Melody" and he liked it, and we played "St. Louis Blues", not his arrangement, but then we played "Tiger Rag" so he come over and he says, "Listen, Bub", he says, "the job is yours, "he says, "but I have to show courtesy to these other boys," he says, "I have to listen to them, but the contract is yours." So I went out, and that's when--at that time my brother, Henry, who was to me the world's greatest trombone player, God bless him, and my brother Merritt, were in, when we left the Friars' Inn, I called my brother Merritt, and tried to get Chris Mann's band from the Plantation in Hollywood, and they had a big band. So Mike heard the band over the phone,

told me to change my name, and he took a couple of letters out. Steada spelling it G E O R G E he spelled it GEORG, instead of BRUNIES he put it BRUNIS which means the way he had it would be successful in the amusement field which it was, has been, has changed me. Course I made the money out ¹⁻¹⁻ of it, I'm broke, but I still made money, it's not nobody's fault that I throw the money away. So, then I ah, I defied myself, you know. It was Friday, the thirteenth. I'm walking down Broadway, and things are rough, after I left Lewis for two or three weeks, I live at the Palace Hotel on 45th St. so I says, I'm gonna defy. It was Friday the thirteenth. I walk under a ladder, a black cat crossed me, and there was something else happened, I says I'll either do or die. That afternoon about five or six o'clock I go home, there's a call for me to go to work at Nick's in Greenwich Village, there's a recording date for me and every-thing happened.

Russell: Gee!

Brunis: So, I call up Nick and he says, 'Ah, we got Sharkey, would you like to go to work ~~so~~ with Sharkey. And I says, 'What's money? What's the price?' *Everything was agreed. So* I went to Nick's Corners down there, the old place.

Russell: I remember that.

Brunis: So, ah, the band was pretty good, we were supposed to make a picture for "Damsel in Dispress, Distress," with Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, so a little argument came up between Sharkey and I, and I told Sharkey to go. I didn't want to go. So then, we stayed there and gradually ^{kiss} we each other, and Nick made enough money in there to build a new place across the street which was 1937, December tenth, I'll never forget it because Red McKenzie was almost killed when a cab--we were carrying tables across you know, in the morning, we were drinking all the beer helping them move. So, I stayed at Nick's for ten years, --I was a houseman down there with every band that came in there. Once I was a leader, then I play with another band, then I become a leader again. (End of spool)

Bobby worked for me, I worked for Bobby, Pee Wee worked for me, I worked for Pee Wee, same personnel, but they just switch around, and we did terrific business. So then I leave there and I go with this Mill's Cavalcade, a girl boy band, and Mills was booking me. In the mean-time, I had met a man that is becoming very popular now, Miss Kesley Smith's husband, Louis Prima. He came up, when I was going good at Nicks, he came up from New Orleans, he made a

batch of records, and he didn't know anybody, so he waked me up at nine o'clock in the morning, and get me to go around to the agent's office. And I said the agent's knew me, but they knew ✓ but they didn't want to talk to Prima, they heard Prima played like Louie Armstrong and they said if they wanted the original, they'd get the Armstrong, why get an imitator. So then, I get an idea, a job for, through Cole and Lennie Hayton, I think it was three musicians on the Famous Door, so they come to me and they ask me to get a band, they wanted a suitcase and whisk-broom with a wah-wah trombone, they wanted crazy effects, and sounds. So, I says, well I got just the guy for you, Louie Prima. So we had Prima and a piano player, from New Orleans, and ^{Alvin's} Garry McAdams on the guitar was killed, and this Jack Ryan used to be with Jimmy Dorsey on bass. So we go in there and we pack the joint. So, I used to play a lot of bass notes, and this arranger used to come in there. He's a big man, Gordon Jenkins?

Russell: Oh, yeah.

Brunis: And he'd sit along side of me and I'd play them low notes, he says, "hey Bub, can those things be arranged?" I says, "I don't know, you're an arranger, you should know that." I said, "I'm just playin' 'em it's up to you to get 'em on paper some kind of way." So Prima and I got into a little swivel and ah--I went to Cole and I says, "Look, there's no use to working with this guy," I says, "I'm detracting from the guy and he don't like it." So Prima goes up and he says, "I don't want to work with Brunis, he's detracting from me." I says "you're just two minutes too late, boy, I just quit you. I said this was my job, remember that, I gave it to you." This was supposed to be Brunis and his sextette. So then, we parted.

Russell: Did you make records with Prima?

Brunis: Yeah, we made 'em. Yeah, In fact they just released one where I was the side man, now I'm the leader, and Prima's the side man, the same record. It's bootleg.

Russell: Yeah, Oh, I saw that one

Brunis: "I Still Want You" Louis Prima and His New Orleans Gang Br 7320 La-da-di-da-da-da-da

Russell: On some cheap label.

Brunis: And then--I still went back, I was down at Nicks, in and out, in and out, in and out, so ah, then I leave there after I leave the Mills Cavalcade, aahh I went to Jimmy Ryan's for

five and a half months, did a terrific job there, thank God, and then, I went down to Connor's, and Conner's was a little bit under the red side. And Pete Pesci asked me if I'd go to work for him and I says, "Well," says, "you did a good job over at Ryans I hear,"^{well} I think I made about \$55,000 for Jimmy Ryan in five months, not bad for a small place. So they were puttin in different exits and everything, the police were there everyday, and the fireman it was--So, when I decided I told, I says, it's up to Condon, I says, I don't think Conden wants to work with me, or something like that. So, he says, "Look, I run this place." He says, "I'll take that name down and put your name up there." This is true, I can back this up.

Russell: Is this the new Condon's over there on?

Brunis: No, this is the old one in Greenwich Village, 47 West Third Street.

Russell: Yes, that's where--that's what I mean. I mean after he, yeah, that's right.

Brunis: So, Bill Davidson's wife went up when she found out, she says, "Oh, my Bill's gotta work with Brunis." So, ah--Bobby Hackett was standing at the bar, and we were talkin' Conden and Pesci and so Condon says, "well, he says," I gotta do something I hate--~~I~~ never did in my life, I hate to do, I gotta fire two guys." I think it was Brad Gowans and Max Kaminsky. So, ah we gotta put Barnum and Bailey in there. So, Bobby Hackett says, "Look, No matter who you put in there as long as you do business," he says, "Brunis can do business for you," so, ^{we} I went in and I stayed there three years. And I ran up a tab, I think of \$1200. Whee! So, then I got an offer to go out to come out here to Chicago to ah--the Sky Club. It wasn't much of a--it was a nice place, but they never advertise, and I had a, the ah, highschool kids, what's the name of that high school? Scarsdale High School kids, I had Johnny Glase, ah

Russell: Bob Wilber, was he with you?

Brunis: No, I had Harry Green on clarinet, and this drummer that plays like Buddy Rich, what's his name, [?] well I just can't remember.

Russell: Anyway

Brunis: Most of the guys, most of the guys were at Ryans'. So we came out here, we stayed we were supposed to be here two weeks, we stayed six months. And at the weekends it was beginning to pick up, my publicity, so then I got an offer to go into the Blue Note and just then, the band quit me, and went back to New York. They didn't like Chicago. So Mr. Holzfiend hired the

band on the strength of the band, you know, on the strength of the band, I had. So, I had to pay their fare back. There's a Union rule that if a musician quits he pays his own way back, but I was stuck, the Union stuck me, I had to pay their fare back. So I went down to the Blue Note and I told Mr. Holzfield, I haven't got the same band. He says, "Well, I gotta get somebody in." I went back to the Union and I got four or five guys, and ah, it was not like the band I had. So, I got up and said the first night, and I said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not the band I had at the Sky Club" and Holzfield says, "Don't ever do that," he says, "don't ever say that to an audience." I says "Well, look I don't feel right, I can't play with these guys, I never played with 'em I don't know what they're like." So, we battle through I think ah--two weeks. So then, I went back in again with [Art] Hodes and Lee Collins and stayed there fourteen weeks. And then, I went back again with ah--in the meantime I went over to the Jazz Limited for twelve weeks. And I worked there twelve weeks, and it was too quiet for me, I couldn't take that, so I checked out there and I went back in Blue Note again. Then I went back again for six more weeks, with ah--Slim Gaillard and ah the Old Smokeys. What do you call those, that seven, ^[four] the Weavers.

Russell: Oh, yeah.

Brunis: They sold a couple million records.

Russell: That "Irene" business ["Goodnight Irene"]

Brunis: And then from there I went into the Brass Rail for three weeks with Schwart^z and ah that's when the ll-ll come and got me.

Russell: What year was that now about

Brunis: Oh, ahh, I went in

Russell: That you

Brunis: I went in there fifty-what was it, '52? No, before that, I know it was June the sixth, because it was on Ted Lewis's birthday. I think it was fifty or fifty-one.

Russell: Been there about seven years.

Brunis: Yeah, I'm going on 8 now, it was about fifty or '51, I know it was June the sixth, and then I left ll-ll, and I went out to the Red Arrow for three months, did very good out there, came back, then I went out to the Tom-Tom with Danny Alvin for three months, did very

good out there, then came back to the 11-11. Then I left there, and went to the Prevue for three months, and here I am back again.

Russell: Well ah, ~~and~~ some of the old----oh, did you ever go to Europe?

Brunis: I was three times with Ted Lewis.

Russell: With Ted Lewis. What countries did you visit, do you remember?

Brunis: Ah, France, England, Belgium, we played in Ostend, Belgium, we played ^{for} La Ambassadeur in Paris, we played in the uh-L'Apolo, they called it the Apollo, L'Apolo they say over there, and we played in London, we played the Hippodrome, and uh-pl-uh the Kit Kat Club.

Russell: Did Ted Lewis feature you much? ⁱⁿ solos and ah ⁱⁿ special numbers?

Brunis: Oh, yes, ah, I used to sit down in front, I used to use the first wah-wah mute ever made that Paddy Harmon made, and he say give me rhythm, Brunis, give me rhythm, and I'd just have to hold the thing choked and pump out rhythm.

Russell: That was a regular Harmon mute, then.

Brunis: Yeah, that was the first one ever made, Paddy Harmon gave it to me. He run a dance hall, that's where Louie and Joe Oliver used to play.

Russell: Oh, is that the same Harmon mute, thought it was the manufacturer,

Brunis: No.

Russell: Sure, Harmon's Dreamland

Brunis: That's right, that's the guy that invented the wah-wah mute

Russell: Oh, I didn't know that, see, I was wondering what they were talking about, I never knew that in all my life.

Brunis: I still got the mute, it's all battered up, but it's over the 11-11

Russell: It had a little hole in the, ^{NEW} can use your hand

Brunis: Yeah, it look like a cuspidor

Russell: Yeah, while we're talking about those different effects, did you ever use ah, oh, things like derbies, or the plunger

Brunis: Oh, yeah, yeah, I used the plunger on a record, I think it was Muggsy's "Lonesome Road," people wrote in to [Jack] Crystal [of Commodore Music Shop] "What is that instrument on there," They didn't know it was a trombone. It was on "Lonesome Road." Then, Muggsy and I used to do a lot with Ted Lewis, and then we'd take the hats and that wah-wah, well, the big

bands are doing that now.

Russell: Yeah, tell me about back in New Orleans when you were a kid, did they use anything. Some people say they used oh, sugar cans or buckets, and things over it. What did you use?

Brunis: Well, molasses cans, anything, anything about this high.

Russell: About 7, 8 inch high

Brunis: Anything, a derby, or Dave Klein used to use the electric light bulb with tape on, used to do the "taps" with Ted Lewis, beautiful effect from the distance.

Russell: Who did that?

Brunis: Dave Klein

Russell: Don't know him.

Brunis: He is now a big man in California, got all the contract out there the the jingle, and things, gimmicks

Russell: Yeah, ah Did you ever use a bottle inside. I seen people do that.

Brunis: Yeah, used a bottle, I've used a record.

Russell: Phonograph record.

Brunis: Yeah, let it loose and it would vibrate. Brrr, Brrr

Russell: Right up against the bell. While we're on the ~~last name?~~

Brunis: Now, now, Nappy ^[Nappy] over at the 11-11 is usin a planter's peanut can.

Russell: Yeah. Can you tell me about your horn, what kind of a horn do you use, now, what make is it, and how big a

Brunis: Well, the first horn I had I bought for \$3 in a hock shop. And I got this thing, this thing is about, I had it overhauled once, I sent it back to King, it's a King, H.N.White in Cleveland, I sent it back once and the guy knew me, says, "Where did you get this horn, Brunis from Methuselah? It was all beat up, but they fixed it up good, and lacquered it,

Russell: This same horn, you have. How old is it?

Brunis: Yeah, it's about ah, oh, about forty, forty-seven years

Russell: Really, it looks good

Brunis: Well, I had, I had it fixed up. See my brother ^{Henry} played a Holton, boy, and he had adhesive tape and everything in the holes on the slide and everything. There was the boy that played trombone, I wish he was livin, (sigh) God

Russell: Tell me a little bit more

Brunis: All the stuff I do is from my brother Henry, playing with the foot, Mike Riley and those guys are getting credit. My brother was the first one to do that. My brother played bass on a little stool when he was a kid, my brother Henry

Russell: String bass

Brunis: Yeah, my ah, I think my brother Abbie's got pictures of that yet.

Russell: I didn't see that

Brunis: And ah, there's a guy could put a trombone in one position and play like the guy playing the bugle and all and play the national anthem in one position, what a control of lip he had. And ah, all that stuff, playing with the foot, and that marching around, and the "Saints" and all that stuff, my brother did that before any of those guys. Now the Dukes and everybody is getting credit for the stuff we did, I played Tom's Roadhouse, posed as a midget. Puttin black wrinkles in the cuffs, says get that school boys out a here, he says, that's not a school-boy, he's a midget, he's thirty-three years old." Oh, we did a lot of stuff. New Orleans is a crazy town, its fabulous if you gotta lot of money

Russell: Can you tell me some more about your home, when you started, your father and the rest of your family, what they played? ^(a) Be you remember?

Brunis: Well, there was Richard, and my two late brothers, Henry played trombone, and my brother Rudy, he was the last one we buried, he was seventy years old, he played bass fiddle.

Russell: Rudy, the oldest in the family

Brunis: Yeah

Russell: I thought Richard

Brunis: And he was a brewmeister. No, Richie's after, before, and Rudy was a braumeister, New Orleans brewing company and ah then there was Henry, and then there was Merritt and was Albert and myself. And my brother Richard, the four of us are living yet. And ah, my sister, my mother, they played guitar, both guitar and piano. An my old man would get us out after dinner and make us all, we had to We had Abbie, Merrit^{an}, Richie, on trumpets, and my brother Henry on the trombone, and I play the upright alto, I was playing the upright, that was my first instrument. When I saw Henry play the trombone, I drooled, and I threw the alto away and wanted play trombone. And, my sister, my mother, they'd get there with the violin,

play "The Mocking Bird," and "When the Maple Leaves Are Falling," and we'd start playing so nice, ^{For} when a couple ^{of} give him his kicks and we'd start jazzing it up and he'd run the hell out of us, throw the violin down and says, you little jazz damn fools, he says, so ah

Russell: Did you really play out there almost every night on the----

Brunis: Well, now when he felt in the mood, and if he didn't eat too much he'd say, all right boys, get the instruments, and we'd have to be there. And I guarantee you, it's not like today. At nine o'clock we hung out, when we weren't playing music. Pappa Laine used to pick me up, see, I'd play with his Reliance Band. And he picked me up and we played a dance, we get fifty cents an hour, Crescent Park, Owls' Hall, Suburban Park ah Alvero Park in Algiers, and we play the parades, but he pick me up and he'd take me to the job and if it's too far away from my house I'd sleep at his house, see,

Russell: Yeah

Brunis: And then he'd bring me home the next day, and he'd give my mother the money, and my mother would give me a dime to go get a piece of candy or something, and at nine o'clock if we weren't working, when that market bell rang, boy I hadda be in there at nine o'clock, he was behind the door, he'd brain us with a baseball bat. And there's seven of us, and thank God, there's none of us stepped outside the law, anyhow, and the kids today, boy whueiii. I advise kids to take music instruments up and keep away from those guns. Keep away from guns. I gotta boy up in Evanston, Wilmette, now he lives, and his name is Bobby Wright, and he's a wonderful boy, he's very good at school, ^{his} gradings are good,

Russell: Oh, I know him, he plays piano

Brunis: Yeah, he plays with the Storyville Seven Bunch O' kids

Russell: play the trombone now, too.

Brunis: In two years that kid accomplished, and I'm tellin you you close your eyes, he sits is with the 11-11 Club with me, and the people rave about him, I introduce him as my son.

Russell: ohhh--yes, that's

Brunis: He's seventeen now

Russell: That didn't register on me, Bobby Wright, the piano player

Brunis: Bobby Wright, yeah, he play with the Storyville 7

Russell: Oh, sure

Brunis: You should hear that kid play trombone, Oh, you close your eyes, you'll swear, he does the finger gag and the time gag and the drink gag and everything. People say, You gotta go, I says, Well, after he gets through playing, I say, well, now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I can die happy, there's somebody that sounds like Brunis and at least I'm dying I know he hasn't got a gun in his hand.

Russell: Did you give him lessons or, did you---

Brunis: Never showed him a thing, he just bought my records and he called up his dad, his dad come in and said, why don't you adopt this boy, that's all I hear is Brunis, around the house. He'd buy the records and go home and sit down and play with 'em. He's really a jazz enthusiast, he don't like

BRUNIS, GEORGE

<u>1st Draft</u>	<u>Spool Check</u>	<u>Tape Check</u>	<u>Retyped</u>
Reel I, Track I, June 3, 1958 x	x	x	x
Reel I, Track 2, June 3, 1958 x	x (To be checked by W.R.)	x	x
Reel II, Track I, June 3, 1958 x	x	RECHECKED * PRC 2/28/59	x

Brunis: He's a real jazz enthusiast, he don't like be-bop, he don't like none of that other music, he's strictly

Russell: I knew him when he played piano real well, too, started out on ragtime

Brunis: He was over at the club last Friday night, him and his mother,

Russell: Oh, I wish I'd been there, I'd love to

Brunis: How long are you going to be in town?

Russell: Tomorrow, I leave tomorrow

Brunis: Oh, I was going to say I'd have him come in and have

Russell: I have been up to their home when they have sessions

Brunis: Oh, we had some great sessions up at his house. There's another little kid I've got

[Machine stops]

Russell: O.K. It's goin'. Does he ^{has he learned to} this kid play, Bobby Wright play by ear, or does he read?

Brunis: Oh, he knows music, he's studied piano music

Russell: Yeah, I knew he studied some piano

Brunis: And there's another kid I got, he's fourteen or fifteen, now, Jimmy Butler up in the Columbus, Indiana, we had him in ^{with}, brought him in, his mother let brought him, come in, we picked him up at the train, we had a jam session, plays wonderful.

Russell: Tell me, I'm not trying to embarrass you, or anything, but ah, ^{could} did you ever learn to read any at all much

Brunis: Never, never took a lesson in my life. I took one lesson with Jerry Shermer, and he says, that's Gene Cafferilli's step-father, and he used to run the Conn Company, he says, you, you're ear's too good, you can't learn to read music, He says, I give you something and you come in and you fake it the next day, you hear it by hear say. I took one lesson. And my brother Henry taught himself how to read, and after he learn how to read, he passed away. That's why I was superstitious, I was afraid to learn how to read. I been doing better than a lot of guys that's reading.

Russell: I'll say ^{Anything} that. You can play anything. It's remarkable

Brunis: I mean, that sweet stuff or anything else

Brunis: I do have a good ear, that's not egotism.

Russell: Yeah, that's right. It's just a fact.

Brunis: That's God-gift.

Russell: Anybody's that's ever heard you would say that. Would you advise young kids if they have a lot of talent not to bother to read, just pick it up and use their

Brunis: Well no, I'd advise them to ^{take} get the fundamentals of the horn, learn the fundamentals, through music, and then, after they learn the horn, know the notes, they can listen to records. And listen to those ideas and try to improve the ideas, be original, don't imitate them, but listen to those, say you listen to Miff, or Lou McGarity, or Teagarden. If you want to be a Teagarden you listen to Teagarden records, then you've try to take what Jack's doing and do it a little better. That's what Ted Lewis always told me, He says, "Brunis, when you go out on your own, he says, take something that somebody else does and try to do it better." And he says, "when you make a mistake, he says, make a good one, he says, and then pull a gag with the audience. You make em laugh, and they'll forget all about your mistake." He's a great showman, he gave me a great schooling for talking to an audience.

Bussell: Would you credit Ted Lewis with being the inspiration for your showmanship?

Brunis: That's right. Well, ah, I don't say my showmanship, but through speaking to an audience.

Russell: Some of that is born, I mean, you can't learn.

Brunis: The rhythm I got in my body. God gave me that

Russell: I mean just the fact that you get up and crack these jokes and keep the audience entertained, even in this-----

Brunis: Well, they say it's corn. Bud Freeman used to say, "What are you trying to prove?"

Now Bud's dancing around, and telling jokes, and he's singing, I hear. I don't know. I don't know. There was a little professional jealousy in a lot of boys, everytime I work with 'em, I don't know what it was, I don't know whether maybe I was gifted with a little more on the ball. And then we had a couple of big name bands used to come in to Nicks, and say "What are you guys trying to prove with that Dixieland two-beat stuff?" I said, "to me Dixieland ain't strickly two-beat", I says, "Dixieland is a melody, variations, counter-melody, and a beat, whether it's two-beat or four-beat it's Dixieland.

Russell: ^{That's} A wonderful definition.

Brunis: So this guy's a big man today. And I think I mention his name.

Russell: That's all right. You don't have to use it, if you don't want to.

Brunis: Well, he's a big man, he sells a lot of records, and he's doing all big band arrangements of Dixieland numbers that we play that way. He asked what we were trying to prove at Nick's. And he's a big man today. Course I don't want any suit's coming in, I don't like to get up and go to court. I like to get the money if I whip em. So ah

Russell: Well, how did you learn to play so wonderfully. I mean, you not only you have a wonderful ear, and wonderful tone, but even your position, I mean you get around

Brunis: Well, Pansy Laine, that's papp^{his}a Laine's son, he's names^{his} Alfred, they called him Pansy, he played the trumpet and his brother-in-law Leonce Mello I was playing the upright alto, and he [Mello] was playing the trombone, see, he got under the weather one time and he didn't show up and ah, we were playing down at Crescent City^g Carnival Club, and ah Pansy says, "Geez, what we gonna do for a trombone." I says, "wall, I can play the trombone parts on the alto." He says, "why don't you try the trombone, Brunis," that's when the song was out "How Dry I am, Dry, I-i--a-a-m." So I put the trombone together and I start blowing, and I liked it and then I was thinkin' all the time about my brother Hen^{is}rie, you know, I says, Oh I could never be that way. So, we play, and I played dadadad, do a lot of guess work you know it was new to me, so from that time on I like trombone, I threw, left the alto with what's his name, he's playing with Bobby Hackett today, [Dick] Cary, that's the horn I used to play for the Mardi Gras parades.

Russell: Yeah, Monk Hazel still uses a —

Brunis: Well, that's a French horn.

Russell: Yeah, he used a round---melophone

Brunis: Well, it's an alto, but it's a French alto. Melophone —

Russell: Did you watch your brother, is that where you got a lot of ideas?

Brunis: Oh, (groans) I used to drool when that guy played, I wanted to throw that trombone in the hatrack.

Russell: There never was anybody that actually showed you where the seven positions were

Brunis: No^othing that came natural

Russell: Do you think about whether you were playing in the fourth position

Brunis: I feel it,

Russell: You don't even think

Brunis: My heart puts my arm there. Where to put a schmear, where to put the right notes, it's all done by ear and heart.

Russell: Uh, did you ever ask anybody about advice on tonguing, or breathing

Brunis: Never, it came natural. There's only one man to me, we never got along, God bless him he's passed away, to me was a great trombonist. He had something that not even my brother or anybody had, it's what musicians term as ^abreathing control and that--he's about the only one I ever heard that controlled it. I heard him at the Paramount one time in New York City, he played this "Trombonalogy",

Russell: Yes, who was that?

Brunis: Tommy Dorsey.

Russell: Oh, Tommy Dorsey

Brunis: Jimmy I loved, Jimmy was a sweetheart, and I loved him there was a little jealousy on the Tommy and our side, I guess it was, and he played seven choruses on a trombone with variations and all that, tonging and everything, and he hit a high cadenza on the finish with a high F without breathing, taking a breath. Well I do one thing now, in the "Saints", but I can only do it (skats) for one chorus, but he, ah, this man was fabulous for breathing control. Ah, but Jimmy was a doll, I mean. I loved Jimmy.

Russell: Did ah, did you ever actually practise by yourself, get the thing and try to learn scales or-----

Brunis: Never warm up

Russell: Never warm up

Brunis: That's what Pee Wee and Davison and all them guys. They'd be down at Nick's. They'd be warmin up in back for fifteen minutes, I walk off the street and go 1,2, and right into the number, and they say how does this guy do it, he's got an iron lip. And they pract--warm up for two, or three, fifteen minutes, and they come out and they ^{crack}clack all over the place.

Russell: Have you ~~never~~ ever tried practising long notes or anything

Brunis: Never, never for tone or nothing. Just natural, It's God-gifted.

Russell: Yeah, that's right, it must be. Still you must have worked on it. I mean you played

so many jobs.

Brunis: Oh, yeah,

Russell: Tell me about, can you remember any first, first parades you played, any other parades at ~~all~~.

Brunis: ^{That's -} Man, I was six year old.

Russell: How big were you?

Brunis: I used to play snare drums sometime, too. When Tony Sbarbaro had the Dixieland Band in Biloxi in the ^{Crockett} parade he used to say, Brunis, take my drums, I'm tired. He's playing, with the, he's with the Original New Orleans Dixieland Jazz Band, ^[D.D.J.B.] plays the kazoo.

Russell: He's still in New York, I guess yeah.

Brunis: Tony's a good drummer.

Russell: In your first parades then, you probably played alto horn didn't you

Brunis: Yeah, alto, and then when the drummer didn't show up I had to switch to drums.

Russell: Oh, another question, when you were speaking of Pappa Laine, the Suburban Park. Pappa Laine, we had an interview with him last year, before our Ford Foundation grant went through, and he mentioned Suburban Gardens, Suburban Park was it, where was--

Brunis: In McDonoghville

Russell: Oh, across the river

Brunis: You see, there's Gretna, there's McDonoghville, and there's Algiers. Then the upper part is Harveys and Westwego and it's on the other side of the river, and ah the Crescent City ah--Park was in Gretna, the Suburban Park was in McDonoghville, and the Elvera Park was in Algiers, and there was a club right on the river there by the ferryboat called the Owls Club, we used to play there a lot.

Russell: Well, you have a cousin over there. I've never met him, I've been in the place, runs a little corner saloon.

Brunis: Oh, Whitey's?

Russell: Yeah, that's it.

Brunis: Yeah, he plays trombone good. He plays with the juke box. He plays better trombone than a lot of guys I know up here. He just taught himself with the juke box.

Russell: We're gonna over and interview him some of these days.

Brunis: Oh, I wish, Oh, I wish, I tell you he looks something like Dorsey, but he's much bigger. And he's, oh, he's a bruiser

Russell: Is he younger than you or about your age

Brunis: Oh, yeah, he's a lot younger than me. I don't know how many years, but he's a wonderful guy. He's got a crazy saloon over there,

Russell: I've been in there ^{once} a lot. Didn't know who he ~~is~~, ~~it was~~ several years ago, didn't know who ran it

Brunis: He surprised me when he sat down and put them juke box nickels in and start playing.

Russell: Yeah, the first time I heard that I thought there was a band in there playing, I ran in there to see and there he was

Brunis: Oh, he idolizes me, he thinks there's nobody in the world like me.

Russell: I don't blame him

Brunis: He dropped everything. Mardi Gras day I walked in there, Dixie and I walked in there, and he says, "My Uncle Georg is here, drop everything." And he had it loaded with these

Russell: Oh, he's your nephew then

Brunis: Yeah, my sister's boy. Abbie [the drummer] that dropped dead, that's my cousin, that's my — —

Russell: Oh, they tell me, too every^{once} in a while you hear stories ^{about} like you say you fellows didn't ah, you all turned out well, and all, but they said that you used to play a lot of tricks. There's something Raymond Burke had started to tell us told something about a coffin or something you all fixed up! Was that your older brother; I never asked ^{them} ~~him~~ about that--

Brunis: Coffin?

Russell: Yeah, like at an undertakers parlor

Brunis: Oh, my brother Abbie played that joke

Russell: Some gilly joke or crazy, practical joke they did or something, do you remember anything about it?

Brunis: Well, the undertaker, we used to hang around the undertaker's and play cards in the afternoon. Ernie was a part-clarinet player and he was an embalmer. So we used to sit around and Uncle Fritz was the undertaker, he looked just like Mayor Behrmen, we used to sit around and kid around, so that his cousin "brother" ^{LITZ} ~~LITZ~~ they go to the Orphenm see and take

their wives, and then if there's anything happen they'd page them, tell them there was a body in the morgue and they'd embalm them, fix them up. So my crazy brother Abbie---There was a little trouble down where the Italians, and he darkened his face with Nelson's cocoa and he laid, we laid him on a table, with a sheet over him you know and put the basket there, the dim light, and the embalming tools, so Uncle Fritz called up the Orpheum, ^{and} paged Ernie, and said look Ernie, there's a body in the morgue, and he says, fix him up. So we were in the back. You know you could see right in the morgue room we were sitting under the hearse and we were laughing like hell, see. So, they lived upstairs. the undertaker lived upstairs, so Brother ^{Litz} ~~Lights~~ would go in the office to make out the death notice for the paper, and Ernie would walk in the back take his coat off, roll up his sleeves and put a hunk of chewin' tobacco in his mouth. So this dim light is on, so Earnie pulls on his chewin' tobacco, lifts up the sheet, and my brother goes Arghhhhhh ! The guy runs, chewing tobacco, swallows tobacco and Ernie got on the steps ^{he's yellin'} ~~yellin'~~ Oh, Ma, Oh Ma, he couldn't move he was so stunned. We died laughing at that. We talked about that for years.

Russell: I never heard anything

Brunis: Only Abbie would think of that.

Russell: Yeah, Abbie never told us about that. Raymond Burke had heard it, he told me about it, once.

Brunis: That Abbie is crazy. He's a great guy, boy, that guy can build more things. Let's see, were you in Biloxi?

Russell: Just one night to hear

Brunis: See the thing he built that little diner and that little house that he built he built that all himself

Russell: Didn't see that, no. I saw the place over there when they were playing there

Brunis: Oh, ^{Baricev's} ~~Baricov's~~. They're back now

Russell: No, they're in a different place now

Brunis: No, they're back. Dixie just got a letter from 'em

Russell: Oh, that's. I didn't know

Brunis: What's his name is going up for auction next week, the Broadwater

Russell: Oh, the Broadwater

Brunis: Oh, the same guy is the manager, Love or Darling, what's his name, Love I think his name is.

Russell: I didn't know

Brunis: Well, they're back at Baricey's

Russell: I wanna get over there pretty soon to see 'em again

Brunis: That's a great town, Biloxi

Russell: The part of town you were raised in, is that actually called the Irish channel, that you were in

Brunis: That's one block from the ah-Mississippi River, Tchoupitoulas street, and we lived on 2135 Roussa [Rosseau], and two blocks down was what they term the Irish Channel. They used to give lawn parties there. You know what they used to call the lawn party down there.

Russell: Oh, yeah, I've heard about them.

Brunis: They had oyster shells and bricks comin' up outa the ground and they'd get tarpaulion off the cotton on the river and put it down and people would dance on that. Then they'd hire a band, and ah twelve o'clock come, they'd say, "Well, how about the overtime, he says, it's twelve o'clock." They'd say well, we just sent out for another barrel of beer, keep playing. So they'd keep playing and the guys would beat it off with the money, wouldn't pay the musicians. They used to shoot cops in the feet and make em dance.

Russell: Really

Brunis: Then, the bunch from Basin Street used to come up in carloads with brickbats, and I was the signal man, I used to give them this, I'd be the watchout man, when they'd come out, I'd go (imitates, using hands to blow through) that means for the guys to get ready, they're coming. They had brick--oh, they used to fight like the dickens.

Russell: Really, throws brick back and forth

Brunis: All macaroos [procurers?] from Basin Street and would pick on the Channel, then the channel would go down to Basin Street. Oh, that was years ago, My God!

Russell: Were they mostly Irish?

Brunis: See That neighborhood now, you'd never know it

Russell: You're of French descent, aren't you, or what is it?

Brunis: No, I'm German and part Belgian, I think.

Russell: Belgian - well, that's practically French, too, Belgian

Brunis: Never did know for sure. My grandmother, my grandfather was born in Leipzig, Germany. And if the Kaiser would've won that war, we'd a been very wealthy people, which I'm glad he didn't.

Russell: Yeah. Was their name Brunis, or another

Brunis: B-R-U-N-I-A-S, that's the German way

Russell: Oh, is that right, I didn't know. Anything else you can remember when you were a kid any of the first music you ever heard, aside from home, were other bands around, for instance.

Brunis: Well, there was a band, they had a colored band ~~they~~ called sweet Buddy Petit. There was Pappa Laine's used to call his band, the Reliance Band. And then we played on a street car, Emmet Rogers

Russell: Oh, yeah, tell me about that

Brunis: And Abbie, Abbie--we had a uniform, Abbie had leader, I had manager, and Emmet Rogers on the drums, had Brunis on his hat. And we used to play in a sightseeing car and we made good money. We used to ah--they'd point out the interesting points of New Orleans, these three guys, ^{then} ~~and~~ we'd play, you know like harmony and stuff, then Rogers would go through with the hat, passing the hat, through the thing, and we made \$15, 20 to \$20 a day

Russell: You sit at one end of the car, stand in one end of the cars and play there?

Brunis: Yeah, So one day we sent Rogers out for ~~for~~ coffee and he got all excited. He laughed and he happen to--his nose went into the coffee, you know, we would drink it. So that's how we give him the name of "Snotsy" Rogers. "Scarfpin" and "Snotsy" Rogers we used to call him.

Russell: His real name, I believe is something----

Brunis: Boy, if you could only make money in that town, it's fabulous.

Russell: Yeh. Do you remember playing at the French Market. Abbie said you-----

Brunis: Yeah, we used to put celer~~y~~ and the what's it's name on our lapels and play for the butchers over there.

Russell: Go right into the French Market, the stalls there

Brunis: Well, play like--like the unemployed bands in England, you know, we play on the corner.

Russell: Yeh, yeh. You'd take up collections then, too, have a

Brunis: Well, we didn't do it, but they'd hand us money, they figure we were unemployed, or poor or something. It was all kicks in those days, we didn't care, we didn't figure things would be like they are today.

Russell: No, sure, Yeah

Brunis: I wished I knew then I'd be worth a million

Russell: Yeah, if you worked it right. Do you remember Fischer's Band?

Brunis: Oh, yeah, he was a pretty good clarinet player at that time. Fischer and George Schilling played trombone

Russell: Oh, yeah, I've talked to Happy Schilling.

Brunis: Then there was Didi Stevens, then there was Dan Hughes, the guy with a patch over his eye, we used to play to advertise the fights, walk around the streets and we'd have a fight on, "Kid" Karson ^(with RDS) ~~(Berds)~~ used to play the trumpet and the night he was fighting he'd come play and march in the street with us the night right before he was going in to fight.

Russell: Right before he went into fight. Gee, he must have been a tough guy.

Brunis: And he used to stop on the corner, in the barrooms, you know you play a couple of numbers, and they'd get you and have a drink, and we'd used to sit me on the bar

(end of spool)

Brunis: and serve me booze, that's what stunt my growth, I would be six foot somethin.

Russell: Oh, I don't know. That wouldn't have made any difference, would it?

Brunis: Yeah, they say alcohol stunts your growth, I was young then.

Russell: Merritt isn't-----

Brunis: Huh? Is still young

Russell: Merritt isn't much taller than you, is he?

Brunis: No. I say to Merritt, I says, how old are you now, Merritt? And he says, '62, he says that's not my age, that's the weather temperature outside.' There was a guy come in the club about two weeks ago, his name was Alexandra. He says, your brothers have got a pretty good band, he says, they played for our convention down in Biloxi, at the Buena Vista, he says, they've got a pretty good band for a bunch of old guys, but tell me, how does your brother get music outa that patched up trombone he's got. Yeah, it's all patched up with tape. I'm gonna buy him one and send him one. Well, he likes it, he's used to it.

Russell: Did you ever play valve trombone?

Brunis: Huh?

Bussell: Did you ever try a valve trombone?

Brunis: Oh, yeah, I can play that.

Russell: Did you ever play cornet much?

Brunis: I got a tape here, I got a tape here what we took last New Year's. Course we were all blind [drunk], at Abbie's house you know, and we tried to play on three way harmony with the trombone, and, two trombones--or and two trumpets and trombone.

Russell: They do a lot of that on the job, Abbie

Brunis: Yeah, that's what they like. They specialize in that harmony, that's pretty stuff. Course it's barbershop--a lot of these progressive guys call it corn and wicky, but that's what started music. To me, blues comes from ah the Jewish hymn, like Eli, Eli. (Sings this chant). Then they took the African bongos the tom-tom, and they made rhythm to it. That's my opinion of the blues. And to me all blues sound alike.

Russell: Well, they are somewhat. Any slow blues. Tell me about "Tin Roof Blues" when you all first played that. Was that worked out up here?

Brunis: Well, that was--Paul and I, we used to call it "The Rusty Rail Blues."

Russell: Oh, that's right, I heard the name, yeah.

Brunis: And we came up here and Melrose, Walter Melrose, the publisher, which I give him the title "The House That Blues Built" for his bottom of his music, he's in the real estate business out in Barrington.

Russell: Yea, I remember seeing - -

Brunis: He came up and like the tune, gave us \$500 advance. He just heard the tune at Friars'. So he says, you don't mind if I do anything with it. ^{He's} Never been ^{to} in New Orleans. So he says, we're gonna change the title to the, there's a place called the Suburban Gardens, they used to call it the Tin Roof Cafe

Russell: Where was that?

Brunis: In New Orleans, out in Gentilly.

Russell: Out towards Gentilly [Brunis confused]

Brunis: Yeah, And ah---he took it and he put these lyrics to it. "I have seen the bright lights burning up and down Broadway, There's no lights like my home town," and ah---Well then, at that time, we put Rap in, there was no Rap, Paul, and I and then we put Mel Stitzel and Ben Pollack in, because you know we didn't figure it was going to do anything.

Russell: No, you put all the names down.

Brunis: So years later, after 28 years, you're supposed to copyright a tune, I didn't figure on ^{if I'd've} it was nothing, cause I was getting \$12 and \$8 on you know, royalties. So one day I hear this thing "Take me in your arms and never let me go," I says, Man, that's "Tin Roof" note for note. So I called up Tenny, that Captain Harris's sister, that's Paul's wife, so I says, Tenny, have you got have you got a copyright on "Tin Roof"? And she says, "Yes, and she says, "you can thank me, because I just had it renewed, because those guys had it copyrighted, they were going ~~to~~ ^{and} try to have it copyrighted, they were going to steal it." So she ah, I said man, you saved the day," So she did, she had it copyrighted, you know after 28 years, if you don't have it copyrighted.

Russell: Yeah, yeah, I know it's a good thing. You have to split that royalty so many ways, of course, but

Brunis: Well, then we got the guy, they played it here the other night on the Hit Parade, the kid put the lyrics to it, this ah Copland, this is one of the writers. Well to me, what sold

the song is the melody, I--you can't get one person that can sing the melody to the, make love to ~~the music~~. I used to hear cops on the street whistling ^{skats} (he's the melody) it's the melody that sold it. So he's in on it, Melrose got the publishers right, I got the writer, Paul and Pollack, Teeny. So we made a few bucks, it wasn't much, but it was too many split.

Russell: Yeah. Is there anything of interest--your trombone solo, how you first, you might say, created that thing, you know, starting on that low note, and all

Brunis: Oh, we just played, (skats) then we play (skats) then Rap took that high chorus, and they pointed to me and I play (belches the low notes, skats) just played what felt natural.

Russell: Came into your head, huh. Cause everybody copies that mostly note for note.

Brunis: Wingy won't hire a trombone player, say "can you play Brunis's chorus on "Tin Roof" and he says if you can, you got the job." He's got a kid from Mexico, he calls him the "Brunis of Tiajuana." Jack somebody

Russell: Oh, he was up here

Brunis: ^{Jack} [Jake] Flores, is that

Russell: He was here at the 11-11 one time on a Sunday and Wingy [Manone] came in

Brunis: Yeah. He calls him the "Brunis of Tiajuana."

Russell: Yeah, that's probably the most copied and most famous trombone solo

Brunis: You know Wingy, you know that thing the late Glenn Miller made, "In the Mood"

Russell: Yeah

Brunis: That was Wingy's tune--

Russell: That's right--

Brunis: He had to prove that he wrote that, he had a record of "Tar Paper Stomp" he called it. (skats) and he got a lot of money out of that from Glenn Miller

Russell: He did

Brunis: Wingy's a pretty shrewd boy when it comes to money. He acts illiterate, but he's pretty smart, he's like Maxie Rosenbloom. The musical Maxie Rosenbloom.

Russell: Oh, I was gonna ask you could you tell a little bit about Rap, because he's not here to speak for himself any more.

Brunis: Oh he was great. Him and ^{Fazio} Fazzolo were to me the, the men.

Russell: What kind of a clarinet did he play, I guess Albert system, do you remember?

Brunis: I don't remember. I think it was, no, I think it was Boehm system. ~~No~~, it was Albert
See photo in Record Changer/

Russell: You don't remember any details, like what kind of reeds he used.

Brunis: No, I never worried about his instrument, you know, course I didn't know anything about the clarinet.

Russell: Did he ever practise much, or was he pretty much natural like---

Brunis: Oh, he used to run over variations a little bit, you know. And ah, the only one in the band could read was Elmer Schoebel. One night we surprised Mike Fritzel. We knocked off the "Song of India". He says, man, you guys play that thing like it wasn't written. I said, we sure do. He says, "but it's good." Yeah, he was a great café man, boy.

Russell: Yeah,

Brunis: He did more for jazz guys those days than a lot of people today, people don't realize it.

Russell: I'm sorry we didn't get to talk to him. We would have interviewed him, too. Died

Brunis: ~~Died~~ ^{Oh} groans. Oh, you should ask my brother Merritt about him, he loved Merritt.

Russell: He'll ^{know} tell us, he can tell us something about him. See if there are any more questions about the early days I can ask ya. Did you play at Milneburg?

Brunis: Oh, yeah, we used to go out there weekends, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Everybody had a camp, you know, you'd walk out about a block on water. One time I'm playing out there and I'm full of Italian wine, and the water's only upto here, you know, around camp. So I'm playing and I make a schmear, and the slide goes off, and it falls down in the lake, So I gotta. We were playing in bathing suits, I hadda go down and look around in the lake for my slide. Oh, I was pitched out full of wine. But they go out for weekends. They'd have a colored band here and a white band here, and a colored band there, and they'd all blowing against each other. That's why they called it the Milenbury Joys, down there they say Millen-
(phonetic)

burg Joy. Up here they say Milenburg. [spell (Milneburg)]
Russell: I don't know how that started up here, but down there it's Millenburg. Did you ever play at Buck town any time?

Brunis: Oh, yeah, That's how I got in the union.

Russell: Where was it
Brunis: A place called Brunies^{no's} and Martin's.

Russell: I believe Martins is still there.

Brunis: Well, my uncle owned that last, he sold it out before he died, he bought Martin out. It was called Brunies's and Bruning, no relation. So Bruning wanted me, I sat in there one time, and I wasn't in the union. I was a punkid. So ah Bruning say. The drummer at Brunings was the secretary of the union. He says "I want this boy in the union" he say "I want him to work here." So he put up the \$50, and I went, I hadda go down to the union for examination, you know, so I went in on cymbals.

Russell: Oh, was uh?

Brunis: To get in the union. So they put up the piano player, when he tried^S you out, he played the number I know by backwards, it was the "Spirit of Independence" (skats).

Russell: So you got as a cymbal player.

Brunis: Ching, Ching, Ching, So I start in. He says, you're in, that's enough. I couldn't get in reading a trombone

WR: Gee, you got in as a cymbal player.

Russell: Yeah, they'd make you read something

Brunis: They thought I was reading it.

Russell: Yeah. What I mean, with a trombone. They would

Brunis: That's what the drummer told me, he says, take the cymbals, it's easier. So I made an introduction, (skats) ching, boom, boom. Crazy. *It's a crazy world*

Russell: And how old were you then about?

Brunis: Oh, about 16 or 17.

Russell: And ah, oh, is there any more you can tell about that one picture we had here of Papa Laine's band. With ah

Brunis: aww

Russell: Well, do you remember now, they call him, they say, some people call him "Pansy" Laine, the name he did like ^{not} ~~of course~~

Brunis: Well, we went as imposters, we got a job in Alexandria, Louisiana, we posed as the "Original Dixieland Jazz Band." And they had a beautiful victrola in the Battle House Hotel, on the porch, and these soldiers and all sit on the lawn and these people are guests and they play the "Livery Stable Blues," and we we learn it just note for note like 'em (skats). So one

guy in the audience, he was a soldier, he says, Oh he says, look, I know the Dixieland Band, these guys are imposters. So the mayor made us get out of town.

Russell: Oh, really

Brunis: So I was broke, I'm always broke on them jobs. So, I didn't want to send home for money, it was only, Alexandria, Louisiana, ain't far from New Orleans, so I went to work in a restaurant. I didn't know anybody or anything, so I hadda work sixteen hours a day, so to work in the restaurant I had⁸ have needles shot in my arm, the government on accounta soldiers, so this crazy nurse breaks a needle off in my arm, my arm swells up. So I finally got well and I went in there that's where I learn how to holler a bowl of chili, a bowl of hell, and a oyster stew, a cemetery special. I learn all the waistress's things. I was getting \$16 a week and all I could eat, and 16 hours a day work...So I didn't stay long, I got enough fare to go back to New Orleans.

Russell: Yeah, Do you know any

Brunis: And then there was a play there in this place where we had this picture taken, out at the Airdrome, had ^{this} stock company, and I played a Jap valet. All I hadda do was be made up like a Jap walked in and say "Dinner is served, dinner is served." That was my line. I got paid so much a night for that.

Russell: For being an actor, too. And this personnel is right as it given here--in the second line [magazine] Charlie Cordilla

Brunis: Yeah, he was very good, he played with Abbie at the Half-Way House.

Russell: Yeah, I know, he's on record quite a bit. Jules Reiner, piano do you know anything about him?

Brunis: No

Russell: I don't know that name

Brunis: No, and I know, I know the bass player but I can't think of his name.

Russell: It says here, Herman Ragas, is that any relation to the piano player.

Brunis: Henry Ragas

Russell: Henry was a piano player with the Original Dixieland, Shields and LaRo-----

Brunis: That could been Ragas.

Russell: It says Hermann

Brunis: Let me see, that might be Ragas.

Russell: Would it be the same fellow, Henry, or was there a brother maybe Herman.

Brunis: No, that looks like Henry Ragas. I think that's before he went up with the Dixieland.

Russell: Yeah, might be. No, let see, 1919, no.

Brunis: That's when he left the Dixieland, and then they got Willard Robertson or Russel

[Robinson] no, Conrad, Con Conrad played the piano [it was Russel Robinson]

Russell: Yeah, I thought he died, though m-----

Brunis: This Ragas left the Dixieland came back to New Orleans or something

Russell: Yeah. ^{Oh, yeah.} Do you know how "Pansy" Laine got that nick-name "Pansy" that name, I think, I think Raymond ^(Burke, probably) says he used to be called "Pansy"

Brunis: No Julius ^{Reiner} Rainer is the piano, and Herman Ragas is the bass player.

Russell: Yes, that why I wondered about the bass player?

Brunis: No, that's a different

Russell: That's a brother the same family

Brunis: Might be. But Reiner is a piano player. Look at the hair cut on me then, will you.

Yeah, that was some days, boy.

Russell: Well, this hasn't much bearing really on our story, but I wondered how late was your father living when did he die about, huh? Before your mother, or ah?

Brunis: Well, yes, he died before my Mother.

Russell: Well, your mother died when you had just joined Ted Lewis.

Brunis: Yeah. When did my father die 19__ had it here somewhere

Russell: ^{Had} Did he play professionally, or did he have another job or what did he do?

Brunis: Who?

Russell: Your father.

Brunis: My father was a hotel, the maître, of all the Mexican Gulf hotels, he made up all the menus.

Russell: Oh, is that right.

Brunis: He did the buying, he had a pretty good job, andah, all these ^{his} menus, all these recipes were used in all the Mexican Gulf hotels, in the Southern territory. He supervised it; he was a helluva baker, oh brother, What a baker that man was!

Russell: Do you remember much about---

Brunis: That's why we all learn how to cook. Richie was a good cook, I cook fairly well, Abbie's a wonderful cook, my sister, my other brother, Richie was working on the ^{Coyle} Gayle boats.

Russell: That's right I heard that.

Brunis: He was cooking for the crew and they went crazy for his food. Richie's in a bad way now.

Russell: Yeah, I'm sorry to hear that. I was going to ask, do you remember anything about the old district in New Orleans, did you ever play up there.

Brunis: Well, I played through there during the fight, you know, we'd go up marching through there. And Mayor Behrman close the district. We all went through there playing "Nearer My God To Thee" and funeral marches

Russell: Were you there then?

Brunis: Yeah, and I went back there one night and my mother beat the dickens out of me, I used a pair of long pants and that's why I say, that was when I started posin' as a midget you know, puttin' them black marks^k in my hair---my head, looked like wrinkles. And the cop thought I was a school boy and they said he's a midget, I used to make my voice low like I was like a little man.

Russell: That's a pretty good trick. Do you remember much about Mardi Gras time, anything special, parades then---

Brunis: Well, most of the time, the people down there they'd hire crazy things like carriages and horses and things and they'd all get a group and they'd all go in groups and then everybody has open house, either have a drink, or you have donuts and chocolate or....They're supposed to serve you something, it's traditional. And then, ah, they had the segregation down there, the colored people used to wear certain masks so they could tell who it was,

Russell: Oh, they did, I didn't know

Brunis: Yeah, then ah, the ah, what was it, the nightclubs would be open all day and they'd pass the frying pan^f around all day long there's music going in the cabarets and everything, and that's when the musicians used to look forward to that day, that's when they made a lot. Ten, twelve times a day they'd pass this frying pan around like. Everybody was drunk.

Russell: Did you do much marching on Mardi Gras some of the Carnival clubs---

Brunis: Oh yeah, sometimes I play for the Garden districts or the different clubs.

Brunis: Oh, yeah, sometimes I played for the Garden District's or different clubs; most of the times I played for Pappa Laine, see there was a guy by the name of Benny Mars hired all the bands. They used to hire my brother Richie two years in advance, because he was the only guy with a little cornet that could hold a 17 piece brass band up with one cornet. They'd stop at City Hall and they'd hear Richie comin' ~~and~~ "there comes Richie Brunis" they could tell ~~it~~. Every chorus he'd go up an octave higher, a key higher. I seen him one day; his lip was bleedin', drippin' all over him.

Russell: He was still playing though, ^{HVVH?}

Brunis: The boy had an iron lip.

Russell: In those days did the Rex, now a days the Rex parade will use a lot of high school bands, American Legion, boy scouts, bugle corps and all?

Brunis: Yeah, yeah.

Russell: In those days did they use---Machine Stops ^(it) it's goin'. We were talking about Mardi Gras, the bands playing...

Brunis: Yeah, the union was more stronger then ~~and~~; there's more non-union musicians down there now than there are union. There's no union at all in Biloxi.

Russell: Yeah, that's right.

Brunis: Cause they didn't want union, and the non-union guys are making more than the union men. And the people in Biloxi didn't want the union.

Russell: Those brass bands on Mardi Gras, how big a ~~bands~~ ^{7/11/7} would ~~they~~ be?

Brunis: Well, they'd have two tubas, two baritones, two altos, two trombones, about four clarinets, four or five trumpets.

Russell: Pretty big bands, twenty-five pieces maybe, or so.

Brunis: And then they'd have the drum corps, and police band, or something. ^{7/11/7} now they puttin' high schools and all of them. Course they get paid. We used to get 7 parades-- we'd get ~~\$7~~ \$35. That's when I was playing 'em. We'd play one on a Thursday and then the following Monday we'd have to play a Monday day parade, and a Monday night, and a Tuesday day parade and a Tuesday night. There was five parades, we got \$7 an hour, I mean \$7 a parade.

Russell: How much did the dances pay in those days? ⁷ When you played, say, out at Milneburg-- those were ~~what~~ called picnics.

Brunis: We used to get fifty cents an hour.

Russell: Fifty cents an hour. I was going to ask a little bit more about your trombone, if you like a big bell or a little bell better, or if there is any difference.

Brunis: Well, the one I'm so used to now, it's a, that's a medium bore.

Russell: Yeah, about medium bore.

Brunis: It all depends upon the person himself, if they study it, they have to get used to something before they can, the advice ^{is to} get used to the horn first before you start taking ^{ING} lessons, that you're able to blow it, blow it properly. But the bore, some people like small bore for high notes, some, I specialize in low notes, bass notes.

Russell: Yeh. What kind of a mouthpiece do you use?

Brunis: I got an ^{H.N.} ~~H.N.~~ White and aqua, actra, I don't know how you pronounce it, AQUE, or something like that, it's 28.

Russell: I know people, it isn't like you say it's not good for some kid to ^{JUST} try to imitate you exactly.

Brunis: Well, I mean, ^{IT WOULDN'T BE} what I mean, good for a kid to go out and buy a 28, maybe a different sound would-uh-a different size will make a different sound for him.

Russell: Still, some people are going to be interested in knowing just what kind of a ^{MOUTHPIECE YOU USE.}

Brunis: That's like the ad I used to see in those books, "Buy a Benny Goodman mouthpiece and play like Benny Goodman." It's so ^{ASININE} assinine.

Russell: Yeh, but some people would ^{WONDER...} want to know

Brunis: I know Nick LaRocca's brother, with the Dixieland Band, his brother, tried to learn trombone, and he played and tried, and tried he could hardly get a note out it, ^{HE TRIED-} he threw it against the wall, he got mad. It wasn't in him. It's something that's---it's got to be in you, I don't know. If you haven't got it, you haven't got it.

Russell: Have ^{YOU} any advice on the style, what kind of ^A part to play, that is, some people call that the vamp style, sort of like a bass ^{STYLE} . . .

Brunis: No, the nucleus of Dixieland is a good lead trumpet, unless he's playing a solo, variations on the clarinet, and the ^{COUNTER} ~~contra~~-melody, they call it, on the trombone. That's the counter-melody, and the piano plays a good compah chord, 'cause Dixieland bands those days never uses ^{FIDDLE} a bass fiddle; they only ^{HAD} have five pieces, then, the drummer can play four or he

YOU KNOW

can play two, any way he feels ^{like}, all the while--like we're playing over here and Nappie will say, "Give me two", so "Hey Hey" [Humphrey] will give him two beats. And when I'm playing ensemble I'll holler "Walk it", and he knows what I want. That's what I call home cooking. That cymbal four on here and on his cymbals see that's march tempo.

Russell: Four beats with the pedal . . .

Brunis: Yeah. That's what I call, I holler "Walk it," and he knows what I want. I call it home cooking.

Russell: Is there anything you have, suggestions on tempo, whether it's played faster or slower, on some of these things . . . ?

Brunis: Well, some places you go, some people like slow music, some places you go they don't want to hear slow music, they like the fast music.

Russell: I noticed in general the --some of the New Orleans fellows, they ^{USUALLY} stick to a slower tempo, whereas some of the more modern guys will try to rush everything, so fast . . .

Brunis: Well, Muggsy's ^[Spanier] got a tendency to play a lot of fast music.

Russell: Yeah, that's right.

Brunis: And ah, now over here, we humor it, we open, say, with a number like "Muskrat" or "Jazz Me Blues," and then the second number we either play "JaDa" or what's that thing, "Someday Sweetheart," or "Squeeze Me," and then we'll build a semi--fast number like "Strutter's Ball," ^[DARK TOWN] or "Georgia Brown," then we close it with "Rampart" or something bright again. Give 'em a little different variety.

Russell: But, I meant, ^{SMM} take ~~you~~ a piece like "The Saint's Go Marching In."

Brunis: You can play that fast . . .

Russell: Sometimes they play that so fast you could never march to it.

Brunis: That's right.

Russell: But more of the real New Orleans bands they play it . . .

Brunis: ^{YOU'VE GOT,} Like "Panama" and that stuff, those are march tunes, you gotta play march tempo, you can't play race horse tempo with those kind of tunes.

Russell: That's what I wanted to know.

Brunis: And you don't feel it if the beat ain't there. And we call it circus music.

Russell: Some people talk about that circus style, that Dixieland trombonists use with a lot

of slides and all.

Brunis: Well, I'll tell you, I listened to an old guy, Ricky Toms, who's a great circus man; he's a terrific executionist, that's the first time I ever saw 'em using Cuticura Salve and water on a slide.

Russell: What?

Brunis: Cuticura salve and water, to make the horn slide. I use cold cream now. It's the same thing.

Russell: ^{YOU USE} Cold cream on yours, well, what is this when you squirt . . .

Brunis: That's water.

Russell: Water. OH.

Brunis: Water and cold cream, ~~that~~ makes it slippery.

Russell: But ^{DO} you rub cold cream on the . . .

Brunis: Yeah ^{THEN} wipe the slide off and then squirt the water, then put a little more cold cream and then you got a slippery slide.

Russell: Oh, I didn't know that. I thought it was an oil you were squirting on there.

Brunis: No, it makes an oil, like a greasy street-if it rains, it gets slippery. So I couldn't stand that other Holton trombone oil they had, it was Citronella, and used to inhale that stuff ^{AND GET} in your lungs, I mean your stomach. You know when you breathe that--bring the horn in there's a suction goes down your throat brings air up and you inhale ~~and you inhale~~ it every time you breathe in. So cold cream is cleaner and it smells nicer.

Russell: Yeah, I never thought. Sure, it's a good suggestion. Anything about the care of the instrument or anything you . . .

Brunis: No, just keep it clean; ^[JACK] Teagarden cleans his out after every set, I clean mine out every month.

Russell: And yet it's lasted 47 years.

Brunis: I had it fixed twice, twice I think I sent it in. I says, "I'm sorry, I'm used to that horn." I don't even have it insured. If I ever lost it, I did lose it once, and I was sober as a judge. In New York. It took this he was a racketeer and he was drunk, and I ^{WANTED TO} ~~wanted~~ take care of him so he ^{WOULDN'T} ~~wouldn't~~ get in no trouble. So I go down to Mulberry Street and got my horn, I gotta play for Rudi Blesh that day, you know, "This Is Jazz?" [a radio program]

So I leave the cab, I leave the trombone in the cab; we got out at Patsy's to get pizza and stuffed artichokes. Man, I went crazy; I lost that horn, and I looked around six, seven days. I call every police station in New York, and found it way down, way down, ^{TOWN,} way down, way down, ~~way down~~... guy found it for me, a sergeant.. He says come on down and get it, see if you can identify it. So I identify it, it was mine.

Russell: Gee, it was lucky I guess, gee-- .

Brunis: If I ever lost it, man I'd go crazy. I'm so used to it.

Russell: Do they still make the Kings, I guess still ^{but} not that model, probably.

Brunis: Well, I don't know, they're putting inferior material in horns today.

Russell: Does it feel a little heavier than some of them or - uh -

Brunis: No, I don't like ^{A BALANCER [PART OF TROMBONE]} them balanced any heavier. I like a horn where I can throw it.

See. Them balances ^R put you back, and they keep your head up, ^{AND} I like to play down, up, this way that way. / I notice you do get around all over it.

Russell: ← And Henry did all those stunts, too, you say, then ^{LIKE} Oh, you ^{HAD THIS ONE} have that stunt, I've never seen you do it - lying on the floor and people standing on your stomach.

Brunis: No, Henry didn't do that one. That was a dare. I seen a "Believe It or Not," once at Nick's. Read the paper and I saw this guy standing on his head smoking a cigarette, playing a trombone. So I says, I think I'll go him one better. So I took two chairs, put my heels there and my neck, let ^{THE} guy stand on here, ^{AND PLAY-- WITH} holding one foot ^{AND} playing the trombone, ^{DOWN} with my foot while the guy is standing on my stomach. It was in Time Magazine, they took it there the Brass Rail.

Russell: No, I never even saw that. Any other stunts that Henry did? I remember seeing a picture of him sitting up on a piano or something playing, too. I believe...

Brunis: Yeah, he played a little piano, he used to jump...

Russell: I mean sitting on top of a piano, playing the trombone, or something upon a piano.

Brunis: Oh, well, that's just the, that's traditional in New Orleans, a lot of guys sat on top of the piano. But he had a habit of shimmyin'. He'd sing a number, for a break he'd jump off the stand and shimmy and you know, and then jump back on the stand and start playing again. He did that in Biloxi one night. He liked the Chief of Police's daughter, and the Chief of Police didn't like him, so he put him in jail for it.

Russell: Oh, Gee, Poor Guy.

Brunis: He was fabulous on that horn boy, holy God.

Russell: How was his tone? well, he made a couple of records...

Brunis: Beautiful.

Russell: First time I heard him on record, I thought it was you. Very similar to your tone.

Brunis: Wonderful, boy. To me, I think the greatest tone I ever heard on a trombone was Jerry
CINERA
Shimmer, played with Sousa.. Was a teacher.

Russell: Jerry Shimmer?

Brunis: ^{CINERA} Shimmer, oh, I got a picture of him here somewhere, about 80 some ^{ODD} old; he's supposed to come down and see me.

Russell: Still living THEN?

Brunis: Yeah, he's stood in the next room, the day I went to take the lesson, he was playing-

I forgot the name of the tune, but gee, it sound like the human voice, the most beautiful thing I ever heard on a trombone in my life. To me the best record today for trombone, the way I think trombone should be played and ^{SOUND} sound is this Murray McAcker McEachern. He made a record of "Sleepy Time Gal," with the ^{CASA} ~~Gasa~~ Loma band, that one chorus-after that you can take the record, but he plays that so beautiful and phrases so wonderful. And then for trumpet, there's ^{BOBBY} Buddy Hackett with "Funny Valentine" - That muted style. I like that stuff.

Russell: What's your favorite record that you made yourself, if you had to pick one or two?

Brunis: I don't know, they all seem the same to me.

Russell: ^{OF} Course, the old New Orleans Rhythm Kings, you never, nobody surpassed that "Tin Roof Blues."

Brunis: Well, the record.. it was supposed to be my record date; they got ^[WILD BILL] Davison's name on it; it's "That a-Plenty" - "It's a 12" ^{INCH}.

Russell: Oh, yeah, yeah, that's a good one.

Brunis: Yeah, that was supposed to be my record date. So Milt Gabler says, "look, you got your name on records; Davison ^{IS} was going in the army; let's put his name on the personnel." I says all right. Supposed to be my date.

Russell: Sure, I remember that, that would be one I would one pick, too, as ^{ONE OF YOUR} outstanding. And the old "Tin Roof Blues," that you did for Gennett. Anything about that date you can tell

about those first records you made, you remember?

Brunis: Well, first I got in there, I think the "Bugle Call [Rag]" was the first thing we made, and I start blasting in that horn, boy, and the record start jumping all around, so they made me turn around and play to the wall, ^{AND} get the blast ^{FRAM} ~~in~~ the wall into the horn.

Russell: Oh, really.

Brunis: Well, then an argument came up with Jelly Roll [Morton] and ah, ah Paul Mares were going to record this, I don't know whether it was Milneburg or [Brunis] is obviously confused. Jelly Roll was not on the first NORK recording, *.. ONE OF THOSE TUNES.*

Russell: Is it "London Blues" maybe?

Brunis: Well, I wanted to do "Don't Get Funky on the Water" (skats) they now call it "My Brother ^{BILL} Going Across the Field," What do you call it? Louie [Armstrong] made a record of it.

Russell: Oh, yeah, "Brother Bill" or something, yeah.

Brunis: So ah...

Russell: What was the title you called it down there, now?

Brunis: "Don't Get Funky on the Water"

Russell: "Don't get Funky on the Water"

Brunis: Yeah, "On the Water" ^{YOU KNOW, THEY} you go swimmin and fishin and...

~~Brunis~~ Russell: ~~Yeah~~, so ~~an~~ argument comin, I walked out the studio, I didn't want to play it, I didn't want to play the other thing, I wanted this tune, I wanted to hear it on wax. So they - Paul come out and talked me into it ^{AND} cursed me and said, and I walk back and so...

Russell: Was Jelly Roll on that first date, do you remember, or *WAS THAT...*

Brunis: No, I don't think so, I think he went on the second date, I think. I think Mel Stitzel, or Elmer Schoebel, I think it was. I can't quite remember.

Russell: Yeah, I know it was along time ago, forty years, not quite; it soon will be-36 years ago, I guess, since they made those things. You made those down in Richmond, Indiana.

Brunis: Yeah.

Russell: How long did you stay on that trip, just a day or two?

Brunis: Two or three days, I think. It took Ted Lewis with Jimmy Dorsey on the clarinet to make "Aunt Hagar's Children's Blues" we made a ^{RECORDINGS} from ten o'clock in the mornin till six o'clock at night; we just finished it. Everytime we'd get going good, something would happen. The

banjo would pop a string, or some one would talk or forget and say something and we'd have to keep making it over. There was a fabulous guy, that Lewis. I made some records for ~~with~~ Chauncey Morehouse, [as leader], Charlie Spivak, Jimmy Lytell, ^C Claude Thornhill, we made them on Varsity records. It's been - uh - when Spivak says, "you know about the Blues, teach me how to play a chorus" he played a nice chorus of blues on there; I didn't show him nuttin! I said "Man, just play natural, just nobody can show you that stuff, it has to come to ya", he ~~he~~ played a nice chorus on it.

Russell: Does your lip ever get tired when you play? Do you, - some people say the more they play, the better it gets, you - -

Brunis: Well, right now, ~~when~~ I got this thing; I burnt my lip, I been sufferin the last four nights, pressin that mouthpiece up against it, I burnt it with a cigarette; and ~~and~~ I hope it'll be all right tonight.

Russell: I hope so, ordinarily, though ah, you're never tire in a night, would you?

Brunis: Well, ah, Billy Rauch, and I, he's a very good trombone player, played "Smoke Rings" with Casa Loma, we had a 3 hour talk one night and he says, "you see guys running around with drug stores in their cases, and they put this on their lip, and he says, "if you keep yourself moving", he says, "ah clean", he says, "you'll never have lip trouble", he says, "unless your stomach is upset", he says, "you'll never have trouble", he says, "if you have stomach upsets, you'll start getting fever, or cold sores and things. And then these guys put their Campho Phenique and all that stuff on there, I just press 'em and break 'em, that's all. Blow into them.

Russell: You do? Do you use much pressure or are you conscious of pressing? . . .

Brunis: It all depends; sometimes I use the lower lip, what's her name lip, and I have this here, see, and ah sometimes, well, ^[POINTING TO BURN] I got this thing, I put the mouthpiece way up here and use this, one quarter and this one three quarters

Russell: Three quarters on the upper lip, huh?

Brunis: Well ~~when~~ but when my lip is good I use this one quarter and this one three quarters.

Russell: One quarter on the upper, and three quarters on the lower,

Brunis: And ^{THEN} hold the horn up.

Russell: Yeah, hold the horn up higher. You change around, then sometimes, ~~you~~ don't you

Brunis: Yeah, well I'm got what they call a freak lip, like Louie's they say. Louie's got--

Louie does things with little scabs and things on the lip. He can do it; that's what you call born natural, a natural freak lip. Muggsy calls me Iron Lip ^{AND} ~~or~~ Liver Lip. Crazy.

Russell: Is there anything else you'd like to tell about; your early New Orleans days, either playing with your family bands; or the first dance jobs you played, who else was in the band?

Brunis: Ooh, I can't remember them now.

Russell: So many fellows

Brunis: Pappa Laine, ~~he~~ had a special band. We played a dance one night; it was cornet, Nick LaRocca, Martin Kirsch on clarinet, me on upright alto and drums. And we played the Lucky One Dance Hall up in Harvey and there was so many people in there the thing fell in, the hall fell in.

Russell: Oh, the roof?

Brunis: Yeh, No, the dance floor.

Russell: Oh, the dance floor fell.

Brunis: It was ^A on the second floor and it crashed in.

Russell: Gee, anybody hurt, killed?

Brunis: A lot of people hurt, yeah; not killed, but they were hurt. And he'd send that band around; it was four pieces, no piano. The bands down there were cornet, clarinet, trombone, upright alto, baritone and tuba and drums, never used - very seldom - the only times they used pianos was when they in nightclubs. On these picnicks and dances they used the brass band.

Russell: Yeh. Do you remember some of the other trombones players, like Tom Brown for instance? (Phone rings) I'll turn it off.

Russell: You were talking about the dance bands. Papa Laine had several bands...

Brunis: Yeah, oh yeah, he was the ah ~~like~~ like, they had years ago, they used to have a bookie here, that used to book all the bands; he was the ~~one~~ I can't think of his name now. And he had this one band; if they wanted a four piece band, he'd send this Martin Kirsch and myself on upright alto, Nick LaRocca and ~~he~~ himself on drums. That was supposed to be a dance band. You know, they couldn't afford no more.

Russell: Yeh. I started to ask you-did you know Tom Brown, and get to hear him when you were young?

Brunis: Yeah, they were terrific. They came up here.. ^{That's when} [Larry] Shields and Yellow Nunez switched jobs. Yellow Nunez came up with the Original Band and they played on the Red Lantern. A guy by the name of Harry James brought them up here, not the trumpet player. He's an old guy.

Russell: Yes. ~~he~~ ^{he's} still living, I think, in New Orleans. I'm gonna ^{TALK} to him.

Brunis: Yeah. And then the Brown brothers came up with the farmers ^[No just Tom Brown] uniforms and the straw hats and they played. So Yellow Nunez ^{WENT} ~~sent~~ with the Brown Brothers and Shields went with the Dixieland.

Russell: Oh, they dressed like farmers? I didn't know that. I ^{DON'T} ~~didn't~~ think Tom ever told me that.

Brunis: Yes. They had these dusters or overalls on with straw hats.

Russell: I have seen a picture like that.

Brunis: Sunhats.

Russell: Supposed to look like farmers.

Brunis: Yeah.

Russell: I didn't know. I don't think Tom ever told me that and now he's gone; ^{WE TALKED} ~~to~~ ^{TO HIS BROTHER}

Brunis: That's what they said; this guy Murray said he was colored. He wasn't colored.

Russell: No, of course not.

Brunis: That's Steve's brother, and there was another one, ah, there was Steve, Tom, and there was another one; I don't think he played anything; he was a tinsmith. They were all tinsmiths.

Russell: Oh, yeah, they even made violins and basses out of tin; Steve told me about that.

Brunis: And then there's another Loyocano that used to drive a beer wagon and ah, ^{he} was a tuba player. Bud Loyocano.

Russell: Oh, yeah, Bud. I think he's . . .

Brunis: He died.

Russell: No, I think he's in the mental hospital now. One of them is.

Brunis: Then there was Jack Loyocano [Joe "Hook"] played left hand trombone.

Russell: ^{Brunis confused. Joe was left handed trombonist?} ~~Was~~ Joe still plays bass and Arnold is still around. They're the only ones I've met

Brunis: That's mine; isn't that a foreign magazine?

Russell: Yeh, this is that English magazine; I was just checking threw here to see if there any other ideas about your life, any questions here. How did you enjoy working with Joe Mares's brother? I started to say Joe, I guess, I'll change it to Paul, Paul Mares.

Brunis: He was wonderful, he played wonderful.

Russell: I got to hear him and meet him of course, too. Is there any advice in playing together, that is, in harmonies, or things that you work out ^{BETWEEN} trumpet and trombone?

Brunis: Well, Paul ~~is~~ ^{WAS} like Muggsy; he had what you call a good drive. And if the trumpet is drivin', makes you drive. That's the way I feel. I ~~am~~ ^{am} course I drive too, if I play with Bobby Hackett; Bobby plays a different style altogether; to me they all got different styles. You hear Wingy, you hear Muggsy, you hear Butterfield, you hear ah ah Yank Lawson, you hear, they all got different styles.

Russell: Yeah. Do you sometimes consciously try to play sort of a bass part, since you don't usually use a string bass...

Brunis: Yeah.

Russell: ... in ^{your} the band or tuba

Brunis: ^{THAT'S WHY} I don't want ^A use a bass, because it would interfere with me.

Russell: It would interfere with that. . .

Brunis: Or a saxophone, however, ah, ah, a tenor saxophone would interfere with me. He'd be playin my parts or something.

Russell: Are there any other favorite musicians you had, ^{IVE} either on trumpet or clarinet; if you had to pick? . . .

Brunis: Well, I like Fazola and Roppolo, and ah, course Benny is there.

Russell: How ^{DID} does Harry Sh----Larry Shields? . . .

Brunis: Wonderful; his brother plays good too, . . .

Russell: I like him.

Brunis: This person was just here, they think that there's nobody like this Shields playin' down there now with Sharkey. She says she never liked clarinet, but she liked him.

Russell: Yeah, Harry ~~very~~ ^{good}. Any other trombone players? How did Happy Schilling play? He's retired now; I talked with him,

Brunis: Well, he played mostly valve trombone.

Russell: Mostly valve, huh.

Brunis: And ahhh, this Julian Laine played pretty good. He died. And ahhh well, there's a guy on the Coast I like, Joe ^{YUKL} ~~Ford~~ and Abe Lincoln, but Abe tries to do the impossible; ^{HE} plays high trumpet trombone.

Russell: Yeah, he's up there awfully high.

Brunis: Yeah. Trombone isn't made for that.

Russell: ~~So~~ you think you're apt to ~~to~~ ruin your lip by trying to play too high? Or ~~what~~ would you..Any advice on that?

Brunis: Well, you see Teagarden plays nothing but soft solos. And he don't enforce himself on ensemble. Sometimes you don't know Jack's in the band when they're playing ensemble.

Russell: Yeah, that's right.

Brunis: Because he saves that lip; ~~and~~ his lip is flexible for those pretty little lip trills and things he does on the solos. He's what you call a specialist. But if he blasts like I did he couldn't play them soft solos like he does. You either got to play one way or the other. Me, I ~~so~~ ~~me~~ ~~ar~~ into it and I jump up into the microphone and make it.

Russell: You use a lot of variety in which you - did you - in the old days, that's what I wonder; I never heard you, see, thirty years ago. Now you play something so soft and sweet and all, ~~to~~ and then you get. . .

Brunis: Well, that's what you call, that's what you call shading. Now all the bands ^{ARE} do it around here, like I play this "South Rampart Street" and I'll say subdued, and then we play soft, and all of a sudden I holler "walk it" and then we build it up and we blast ^{THEN} ~~we're~~ walking down the street.

Russell: In the old days. . .

Brunis: It's a contrast.

Russell:.. Did they blast more, did you use that. . .

Brunis: They just played "Blah" all the way through "blah."

Russell: Mostly in the old days. And you did, too, say when you started out.

Brunis: Yeah, yeah, I just learn that in the last ten years.

Russell: Yeah. What about Henry; did he have a big range, too, soft? . . .

Brunis: He could play anyway, any way.

Russell: I imagine he must have .

Brunis: Any way. I wisht I had a record of him and Emmett Hardy. If I only got a record of Emmett Hardy on trumpet.

Russell: Tell me a little bit about Emmett Hardy, yeah.

Brunis: Well, the kid was young, he had leakage of the heart; and if you ask Louie about him--Louie's a changed man now, all his opinions have changed.

Russell: Sometime, yeah, I wonder...

Brunis: And he's said that Emmett Hardy was the best. That's when Lo---

Russell: And you played with Emmett a little then, too, on the boat.

Brunis: Yeah, yeah, down there, but we never had luck enough to get him on the record.

Russell: That's too bad, It's a shame .

Brunis: Bix liked him.

Russell: Did his style sound somewhat like Bix, Do you think? Some people have said that.

Brunis: Yeah, yeah. Well, I think the closest thing to Bix today is Jimmy McPartland and Red Nichols.

Russell: Yeah, but did Emmett Hardy have that same kind of a style, or was he more like the others, say, more like Paul or ?

Brunis: No, he didn't blast much. He just play^{ed} little variations and stuff around. Improvisation

Russell: I just wondered if some people have said that Bix got his style from Emmett...

Brunis: And there was another clarinet player I liked-Don Murray

Russell: Oh, yeah, Don Murray.

Brunis: And ahhh.....

Russell: ^{And} ~~When~~, you said Steve Brown is ^{PROBABLY} ~~probably~~ the greatest bass player you say that you ever heard.

Brunis: That's right, to me.

Russell: Yeh. He was wonderful; ^{THOSE} ~~the~~ old Goldkette records you can hear him on, too.

Brunis: He was the first guy to slapp~~x~~ it around there. Met a guy ^{WITH} Ben Bernie went to the

Ben Bernie was the M.C., That's when they have those stage shows, so, this Russian bass player's in the pit, see, so he says, "show me how Steve Brown slaps the bass. Ooomphh, ooomphh slap that. So he's going down, he's playing an overture with Ben Bernie and all of a sudden :

a quiet spot, this guy starts slapping the heck out of a bass, and it breaks everybody up. He ain't supposed to do it there. He wanted to slap a bass like Steve Brown. ^{THAT FRI'S} And another guy plays good trombone, Lou McGarity.

Russell: Yeh, ⁹ sounds good.

Brunis: ^{CUTTY CUTSHALL} Gathy ~~C~~? Sounds Good.

Russell: What about piano?

Brunis: They made that album of ^[DIXIE BY DORSEY] Jimmy Dorsey's a very good Dixieland album.

Russell: Yeah. What about the piano players ^{IN NEW ORLEANS;} were there many of them or ⁹?

Brunis: ^{NAW,} ~~Oh,~~ there was ^[Buzzy?] Williams, ah Joe Farrell, ah, ⁹ who else? ⁹ that's about the only one I know ⁹ Williams, ⁹ and Farrell and somebody else. Can't think of him.

Russell: Some of those early dance bands, then, you played ^{WITH,} didn't even use pianos.

Brunis: That's right.

Russell: Did you ever play on a wagon to advertise anything?

Brunis: Oh, yeah, lots; that's where they got the word "tailgate" from.

Russell: Yeah.

Brunis: I was ^{WITH} playing with ^[Art] Hodes--I didn't know what it was all about. I'm playing ^{WITH} Hodes up at Childs. So they had a sign out there, "Art Hodes and his Columbia Five featuring the King of the Tailgate, George Brunis," so I said, to myself, "what is this, 'King of the Tail'---What is this 'tailgate'?" So a guy come in ^{AND} explain ^{ED} it to me; "why, 'cause you sit on the tailgate of the wagon you need more room to slide the slide."

Russell: But you'd never...

Brunis: That's what they do; they sit the drums up front, then the trumpet and clarinet, bass and trombone on the back.

Russell: Yeh, but you'd never had that term applied to you down in New Orleans.

Brunis: No.

Russell: Never called it that.

Brunis: You have to go places to learn ^{THAT KIND OF} later things. Oh, course we used to meet-like Buddy Petit'd be advertising a colored dance, we'd be advertising a dance, we'd meet ^{ON} the same corner, and we'd challenge each other; ^{AND} then they'd pull one direction, we'd go another direction, ^{THEN} and play "Get over dirty" with the instruments, you know; ⁹ se maybe an hour or so

later, we'd meet on another street, another corner.

Russell: Yeh, you heard Buddy Petit. I never got to hear him; he didn't make any records either.

Brunis: No.

Russell: Some people say he was as good as Louie.

Brunis: I never heard Bunk Johnson down there, and I never heard-ah, what's this other guy, I can't think ^a colored guy.

Russell: Well, ~~well~~ did you ^{EVER} hear "Kid", I mean, Joe Oliver down there [?] you heard him, I guess, in New Orleans when you were a kid.

Brunis: Oh, yeah, and Henry Allen, and ahh Keppler [Keppard].

Russell: I'm not sure just what we have on that early tape; I want to be sure about some those not dates necessarily ^{is} but how old were you when you first took up music? Your alto horn, you say, was first.

Brunis: I was about five and a half, or six years old.

Russell: Then how old were you when you got your first trombone? If you can remember; if not exactly, just about ^(?).

Brunis: About ten.

Russell: About ten, and you didn't long pants then, of course.

Brunis: No. I used to wear bloomers with a uniform and a cap with "Laine" on the cap.

Russell: Yeah, ^{AND YOU} you've got that trombone in a pawn shop, you say.

Brunis: No, well, I didn't have the trombone till I played this date with. I was supposed to play upright alto that night, and Leo, ~~ah~~ Laine's brother-in-law didn't show up [?] Leonce Mell so the trombone was there; he says, "try to play the trombone."

Russell: ^{THAT'S} When you first...

Brunis: And after I liked the trombone, then I went to the hock shop and bought me one. It crazy.

Russell: Yeh. And did you live down in that neighborhood all the time...

Brunis: Yeh.

Russell: You lived in New Orleans till you moved up here.

Brunis: 2135, the house is still there; I was down there, the neighborhood, you wouldn't know it.

Russell: What's the number again?

Brunis: 2135 Roussard [Rousseau] Street.

Russell: I'll take a picture of it some time, maybe.

Brunis: It's a corner store there, ^{DOWN} then there's two houses, the second house.

Russell: Did any parades go through that territory much?

Brunis: There was a trombone player dropped dead in front of my house.

Russell: In a parade?

Brunis: Colored, you see, they had the oyster shells, it was a sloppy street, so they're playing-like they said in this book, this guy was playing [imitates a slide], he makes a slide, and he drops dead right in front of my house. [stutters] ^{IN THIS BOOK} about Jelly Roll Morton's biography, this guy Lucas says, or is, or is it Dupas, who wrote that biography, Dupas or Lucas?

Russell: Lomax.

Brunis: Lomax, he says that my greatest idol was Watson; I never heard of a Watson.

Russell: Roy Palmer, was it?

Brunis: Oh, yeah, Roy Palmer. I never heard of him.

Russell: No; He came up here pretty...

Brunis: They say that was the guy that dropped dead in front of my house.

Russell: No, Roy Palmer is still living.

Brunis: I never heard of the guy.

Russell:

Brunis: I was going to send him a telegram and make him contradict that in some kind of way, ^{CAUSE} I never ^{KNOW} knew the guy; my brother was my idol.

Russell: Yeah, I know, everybody should know that. Well, that's why we're trying to get this interview; ^{IT'S} here in your own words so...

Brunis: If the guy was my idol, he'd ^A got credit for it, don't worry.

Russell: Yeh, I know.

Brunis: Man, I used to ^{DROLL} droll when Henry play ^{ED} that slush pump,

Russell: Did they ever ^{HAVE} any names like that for the trombone down there like "slush pump"?

^{NOW, YOU /} Brunis: \ Take the Dixieland tunes ; "Tiger Rag" was called "No. 1" [No. 2" actually],

"Dixieland One Step" was called "Mutt and Jeff" and ~~the~~ "Sensation" was called "Meatballs".

Russell: Yes, I've heard that.

Brunis: Nobody knows who wrote them tunes, and the Dixieland come up here and they had them copyrighted, and they claimed 'em.

Russell: I was gonna say, we don't want to put you on the ^{SPOT, SAYING SOMEBODY DIDN'T WRITE 'EM} ----- who did write 'em

Brunis: The only tune they wrote, I think, was "Clarinet Marmalade". That wasn't played in New Orleans.

Russell: Shields I guess, worked a lot on that, yeah.

Brunis: Yeah, Shields, Ragas, and LaRocca.

Russell: Well, I think we have just about everything we need, unless there is something else you'd like to add, that you can think of, either about your life or your trombone style, or playing.

Brunis: For kids who want to take up instruments, lead a clean life, get a lotta rest, and be good and polite to people and you'll always get by. Stay away from the lush [drinking]. That's all I ^{CA} tell 'em.

Russell: Well, thanks very much Georg. We certainly appreciate your advice and all your time and your story.

Brunis: Of course, I don't practice what I preach, but for newcomers it's a good idea.

Russell: (Laughs) O.K. Thanks.