

Talking with Jason Wolf for his mother.

Q: Did you grow up here, go to school here.

A: Was born in Sacramento, grew up in Citrus Heights

Q: What year were you born?

A: 1975 - Raised in Citrus Heights and Folsom; went to Folsom High School, and then moved up to Eldorado Hills before I went on to Colorado State to finish up my undergraduate school.

Q: Do you have a degree from Colorado State?

A: Yes, in Sociology, concentrating in criminal justice.

Q: Any sports activities in high school or junior high?

A: Yes, I played all sports growing up - elementary school basketball, Pop Warner football.

Q: In Sacramento?

A: Pop Warner football when I moved to Folsom - got in at the age of 12. Played a couple of years before high school and played in high school, and was a baseball player from a little kid all the way up through high school.

Q: So you played all through high school football?

A: All through high school. The fourth year it lasted for a game and then the season was cut short for me. I played baseball throughout except for about 3 years when I left to become a full-time batboy for Sac. State, when my dad was an assistant coach there.

Q: What's your dad's name?

A: John Wolf

Q: What position did you play in high school in football?

A: I was a strong safety on defense, and on offense, I was a wide receiver/flanker, and then I was a punt return and kickoff man.

Q: In high school, did you play all three sports; baseball, football, and basketball?

A: I didn't play basketball in high school.

Q: So you were like a 2-sport guy?

A: I was a 2-sport guy.

Q: You didn't play basketball; you played football?

A: Yes sir.

Q: What was the idea for the book?

A: It actually started with my mom. I'm a little foggy as to how it actually started, but I think she used to....as a family, my sister Shannon and me, my mom and my dad, growing up always on Saturdays in the fall, we would watch football all day. If we had chores to do they would be done by 9 in the morning because the rest of the day would be spent watching football. We would gather around the tube with a fire going, a blanket, and we would be good to go. But my mom would always ask - she was very interested in the venues where the games were being played. I mean even more so than the teams that were playing, and the situations during the season. It didn't matter if they were top ranked schools squaring off for the chance to play for the national championship; she wanted to know where they were playing and how many seats the stadium held. The start of the book was created by her asking those simple questions and asking me after a time if there had ever been a book that I had known of that had been written about this kind of stuff. Of course, I wasn't aware of any books that I had seen or hadn't known of any. So, she had made the comment "Why can't we write this book? Why not?" That was one of the things; that we weren't writers but we used to say that we could put together a project like this. She said it

made people like her who were interested in those kinds of things a great deal it would be more of a reference guide for them. She liked the idea of it, and I thought it was an outstanding idea, so I believe in.....I would like to think that in 1996-97 we started accumulating data from the schools about their stadiums. I had gone to the 1996 Fiesta Bowl between Nebraska and Florida. I just felt like going down and watching the national championship game so I went down there.

Q: Where was the game?

A: Tempe, Arizona.

Q: Who won the game?

A: Nebraska 62-24 When I got back from there is when we started gathering data from the schools. They didn't have the web sites up - well they had web sites up for the schools, but now they have web sites you can get on "Facilities" and they have an elaborate setup for the football stadiums or baseball diamonds or basketball arenas. All of them didn't have that at the time, I would call up each school and have them fax me that information that they would have in their media guides or.....

Q: They probably have media guides on their web sites now don't they?

A: Yes, I went to the Oklahoma web site last night, University of Oklahoma, and you can click on "Facilities" and they give you the whole shebang about the stadium and what not.

Q: What do you think this book is going to do for people? I mean it's one thing to gather information for your own benefit and curiosity and benefit, but what's your feedback on this?

A: Well I think people are going to be interested in possibly the schools they attended and schools that their sons or daughters attended. They are going to be interested in finding about the stadiums that their favorite teams played that they don't already know. Some of those schools have an interesting story behind their stadiums and when they were built and why they were named the way they are. I know at the beginning of any broadcast of a football game, inevitably the announcers tell you where they are broadcasting from, you know, and people say I wonder why they are named that. And, as the camera pans out to the stadium itself, it is huge and how many people do sit there, and what are stories. Are there any unique stories behind the stadium itself. It's a good reference guide I believe that people would enjoy to put on coffee table, and while they are watching a game, you have a question, and there's a good chance it will have an answer for you. If nothing else, you are going to see some great photographs of the stadium. I think it is a good reference guide.

Q: Do you go to many of the stadiums?

A: Yeah, I.....there's 117 of them and at one point in my life I counted up and I think I've been to a number of 45 or 50 of them. Not all of these stadiums have I witnessed games. I've just been inside the stadiums for various means.

Q: "Various means"? -- a little bit on that.

A: Oh boy - while visiting some friends back in South Carolina, I had m girlfriend take me to the University of South Carolina there at Williams Bright Stadium, there in Columbia, and we got there and everything was pretty much locked up with the exception of one chain link fence that seemed to be inviting. So we took a couple of steps inside on the field. I made sure I stayed off the turf. I didn't want to go prancing around on the turf or anything like that; or on the grass, excuse me. I got right up there and you know - it's a beautiful stadium on the outside and I wanted to see what it looked on the inside. And, in Murphysburrow, Tennessee, at the Middle Tennessee State University, they have a not very well known stadium; it's not a well-known school, they have a gorgeous stadium--Johnny Red Floyd Stadium. It wasn't locked up or anything and I just walked in there and it was just nice to be in there and you know. Seeing the different stadiums--I have been to the University of Georgia, obviously, University of Tennessee and the 85,000 seat stadium

at Georgia, and the 100,000+ stadium at Tennessee, and they are so huge and magnificent, and they you go to the smaller schools like University of Nevada or Middle Tennessee State, they have some nice stadiums. I mean they are not awe inspiring in terms of their size, but they are nice to be in and I know at Nevada, it's a nice place to watch a game and I assume it's the same at Middle Tennessee. I've been to Fresno State and it's one of the nicer places to watch a game. It's very fan friendly. I mentioned in the book, they bring in more people per game than there are seats. It's a nice place to watch a game, with everything included; the stadium, the view, and the crowd itself. It all makes for a nice experience.

Q: Coach Dooley mentioned something about the passion for the sport. The passion for the Division IA football.

A: Well down there in Athens, Georgia, they take football seriously down there. I can assume that they live vicariously through their team down there, and I guess that's where the passion stems from. Every I can honestly say, I've watched a game at the University of Texas; I've watched a game at the University of Georgia....I can honestly say that the people from both the home and visiting teams, are very nice. They are very supportive of their teams to say the least. They are loyal, diehards but they are also - they're classy. It's a word you don't really associate with football, but at the same time, the fans are. They are very intuitive - they are good - I like them. They know their football and they are passionate about it. They are not afraid to voice their concerns about their coaches, their players through various outlets down there, but they are behind them.

Q: We are going to be sending these press releases to journalists and publicists, not an English major, nor a publisher, not a writer--what the heck are you doing here. WHY? Because this a story that many people sitting in their homes have aspired to do. Talk to them.

A: Wow, I tell you what, I think I've done this because it's something that other people haven't been able to do. I'm not afraid to try different things. I want to be able to go ahead and write a novel in the future. This is obviously not a novel; it's a book of facts. You put down the facts in here, but the book's going to be sold for the great pictures that are in the book. And, there is a little bit of information for each school, but I wanted to do it because it's just something, you know, it's not something that's on my list of things that I want to do before I die, but I'm just not afraid to try things that maybe somebody may hesitate to do. I like to do it - I'm just not afraid to try things.

Q: What's been the most challenging part of the project?

A: Boy, that's a good question. The most challenging is keeping my focus on my writing. It's really easy for me to lapse to try to make it appealing to the reader. You know, as I said, the pictures are what's going to sell the book, but at the same time, I want what I write, I don't want it to be too elementary. I don't want it to be something I'm ashamed of, I want to keep the focus, I want to keep a focus on what I write to I don't do any school injustice to their stadium. You know, whether you go to the University of Louisiana Lafayette, or Notre Dame, I want them to be proud of what I've written about the book. So, I guess to keep my focus and concentration on staying factual, obviously, doing their school justice. That had to be the biggest focus obviously.

Q: What was your most pleasant surprise from this project:

A: I've learned so much from the book; the odds and ends of putting this thing together. Looking at the pictures and determining what are good pictures or not, or just....well, you know, I learned a lot about grammar. I'm not an English major and I like learning things that I didn't know before. I think it makes me a better person, so that when I do write in the future, whether it be periodicals,

articles or anything else--letters to my girlfriend or whatever it will be that much better. As far as a pleasant surprise, I would say just putting the book together, it is the facts that I picked from the various stadiums that I didn't already know.

Q: Historical and trivia....

A: Yes, not every school has a weird story, but there are some that make up for the rest of them. I guess those are kind of--when I get the information and I put it down on paper or on the computer, I'm just like anyone else who will be reading the book for the first time you know. Oh, that's kind of neat, you know. I learn a lot about different places.

Q: Is the process that you've gone through the last 3 years and especially the last few months, and the final outcome.....does this look at all like you thought it would? Did you have a vision?

A: I did have a vision of what I thought it might like, but it's more with what you've done with the pictures. It's more elaborate and more professional that I thought it would look like.

Q: And did the whole publishing process come to you differently than you expected.

A: Oh yeah, like I said before, I'm not informed; I'm new to this, and there are different things; it's not cut and dried. Different branches skewered off here that I have learned. No, it's nothing like I thought. I didn't know what to expect to be honest with you. To me it's just enjoyable because I've learned so darn much. I still don't know anything, but I've learned a lot more than I knew before.

Q: You and your mother came to me - well your mom did almost 3 months ago. It was in April actually, and we didn't start on the project until the end of May--not very long ago. Part of what I think has made this project move along so well and come to where it is today, is the fact that both you and your mother were willing to relinquish control. You were willing to allow other people in the publishing business to do what they did best. The rest I mention this, is that many people who read this press release who are aspiring to be authors don't understand the importance of that. They want to hold and maintain control all the way through the process, and they end up with material that doesn't look professional, that lingers on, that is a fight constantly with the publishing process. You didn't go through that. Normally, we would be talking to you three years from now about this book and you would be totally frustrated, but you apparently able to let go where you needed to let go. Can you talk about that?

A: I can talk a lot about that. I think it's my mom and I we know our limitations. One of the great things that my mom and dad did for me and my sister as we were growing up was; if you don't know everything, don't pretend that you do--you know. It's okay not to know everything and to ask for help. As I mentioned earlier, there are so many things that I don't have the slightest clue and have started to pick up on a little bit, but at the same time, she and I had to let go. We had to let go of it so we could grow. It didn't take me all of about 2 minutes after I met you over the phone that it was the right decision to let you take and do what you do best and run with it. My mom and I have, I wouldn't otherwise mention it, but we have a great faith in God that we gave everything out and trusted that everything would work out the way it's supposed to. We prayed about it and let it go, and there's no doubt in my mind that He led us to you and it's all working for the best and the way it's supposed to. You know, growing up, my dad was a baseball coach. He baseball and football at Folsom High School as well, and I grew up around the coach's mentality. One of the great things that coaches do is they give out authority and they delegate authority to others and let them take off and run with it. You look at a great college coach, for the most part they delegate to an offensive coordinator and a defensive coordinator, and they will sit there and

oversee everything, but they are smart enough to let a defensive coordinator to run and take off with the defense. Offensive coordinator the same with the offense, and special teams coach with the special team, and that's what you do. Again, I know my limitations and I have never done this before. Even if I ever did this again, I still wouldn't have all the answers and I would still be relying on you just as much as I did this time.

Q: This is a lot of what they are going to want to hear in these articles because they want material here that is going to speak to the public that wants to publish or be interested in somebody like them, who didn't come out of a great scholarly background, or credentials, or a publishing family, or related to a publishing in some way or another. They like to identify with you and they are going to be able to do it here.

A: I think it's just wise to go ahead and let people who know what they are doing do it, you know. I think, and they it's really I can see, I guess admittedly am a control freak myself and I can see how people that put so much effort in something would want to hold on to it, but at the same time, at some point in time, you have to trust other people and just let it fly and that's what we did here. The Publisher's Design Group has been better than we; than I could have ever hoped to imagine. It's fitting together like a puzzle and it's working out for the best like it's supposed to.

Q: I'm going to ask myself a question here too as to...we do quote me in these articles sometimes. We won't do it in many of them, but the one to the general audience who is looking on the publishing page or book page, what is different; tell us about this relationship here. To be able to push out a book like this in three months is a miracle; it really is. A number of things have to take place. I think of the hundreds of decisions that are normally made in the process of putting a book like this together, decisions of compromise where publisher fights with author, author fights with agent, designer fights with photographer; so many, many areas that would make this projects string out for 3 to 4 years in production, and people would be up in arms about it weekly. I've seen it many times. It has been a breath of fresh air to have worked with the Wolfes as far as I'm concerned, because they didn't want their desire to run and control the world to get in the way of their vision of success of the book, and they put it down. They put down where they didn't know and were willing to concede on points that may have meant a lot to them if what I brought to them seemed to make sense and be a better way to go. Personalities never, never ruled the day here on this project, and I want to say this is one of the few that I have had in all my years that has been like this.

Q: I want him to talk about his mother's role.

A: She's done a great job, I mean there so many things that she's done.

Q: How did you divide up the work and decide who was going to do what?

A: Since I graduated from Colorado State last June, she said Jay, let's go ahead and write this book, let's get it out. I wasn't doing anything else other than writing a book, and she was able to finance me and go ahead and pay me to actually write the book, figuring that it was an investment that she was going to be making that she was going to get back a major return on that we get it out. So, I would do the writing and we would split up trying to get the photographs in that would be used in this book, but that's how it was delegated. She has her own business that she had to run and she put most of her focus in on that, but she's done so much in terms of editing. She helped edit and proofed the book a couple of times, so she has put a number of, she's worked just as hard on this book in just as many ways as I have.

(She spent three nights until three in the morning at the publisher's offices entering edits into her book.)

She likes that stuff - she likes editing. I don't know if she intends on getting into it in the future, but she enjoyed it and she really worked, in my opinion, maybe harder than I did on this book.

Q: You talked about doing the research back in the days when the web sites weren't as progressive, so you did a lot of phone work. When web sites did start popping up, did you get information off the Internet.

A: You know, not so much, because you know, stadiums change annually. I mean they do, so the information I got in 1998, you know it changed. They had one thing at the University of Michigan, where for many years Michigan had the largest "on campus" stadium, and then Tennessee had, from what I can remember a couple of years ago, they seem enlarge their stadium where it was bigger than Michigan's. Well, Michigan didn't like that very much, so Michigan enlarged their stadium. You know, things like that. As the years went on, I was able to get things off their web site, but generally, when I was calling, when I would be calling around asking the send pictures, being a pest that way to those guys, I would go ahead and make sure that the attendance records would be accurate.

Q: Is three years accurate? I'm trying to figure out your time line.

A: Yeah, I'm guessing it was right after I'm thinking January of 1996 is when we first really started to do this.

Q: You started writing it in the summer of 2001. Roughly five years of research. You probably were still doing some research while you were writing.

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah, and of course, over the last couple of months because we were putting the finishing touches on it, I had to go back over basically, and make sure and most of the schools have been outstanding and helpful. Even though, like I said, I was being a pest and asking them send out pictures, they have been more than helpful, they go ahead and answer all the questions that I had.

Q: Did you get releases from the schools?

A: We sent out releases to them, yeah. Some sent releases back to us that we had sent them; others sent releases by Internet, and we worked with other companies to get photos.

Q: Did you have a room at your house to put all this stuff in?

A: Well my I live in an apartment in Fort Collins. It's so small that I think the whole thing is a darn war room.

(This has been the war room here for three months.)

I tell you what I have stuff in my apartment that I try to keep organized. I'm not generally an organized person, but I have tried fluttering all over. I have information from schools that they have sent me and then I have updated information on top of that, but it's been fun. Sometimes I didn't think it was fun, but it's been fun. If nothing else, I got a chance to talk to some really nice

people across the United States. In fact, there's a guy in the Sports Communication Department at The University of Oklahoma, who is just one of the many people. His name is Jason Rademan. He spared no expense in getting up photographs even at the least minute. Just one of the nicest people on earth. It's just not him, it's everyone.

Q: I guess if I had to pick one last questions it would be; "Do you and your sister and your mom and dad still sit around in September and watch football games on Saturday morning?"

A: Well, we're kinda spread out all over the United States, so I'm sure that if we could, we would. Generally I, well my sister's a huge fan of college football. She goes to the University of Colorado - well she just graduated, but my brother-in-law goes to the University of Colorado. So, I'll drive from Ft. Collins and intrude on their house, and make a fire and watch football from their house, but she will sit there with me and watch football all day long. The tough part is to try to get my brother-in-law to sit still for a while and watch games.

Q: What is her name? I'm not sure if we'll put it in there, but I mentioned your sister earlier.

A: Her name is Shannon Lacey.

Q: I like that image of the four of you sitting around watching football all day.

A: Oh yeah, growing up it was especially out here with the rain, we had the fire going. We all woke up early in the morning a it was, it didn't matter if it was the weekend. We were up at 7 or 7:30. I might be out watching *Mr. Ed* at 7:30 in the morning on Saturdays growing up. If we had chores to do we had them done by 9 or 9:30 because we wanted to rest of the day to sit there and not worry about anything. We watched college football and we all had our chairs. My mom and dad had the recliners the blankets on, I had the couch, Shannon was down there on the floor or something with the blankets. But 9:30, especially in November, you know "Rivalry Weekend", it turns out many times 9:30, we'd be watching Michigan/Ohio State. That was the game on early in the morning here on the west coast. And then later would be the Iron Bowl with Auburn Alabama, and then at night maybe USC and UCLA or something on the West Coast. But that was the thing. That was every weekend, we'd sit there and watch and mom would ask questions. Dad and I would sit and try to analyze games and pick them apart, but to me even to this day, I don't have a fireplace in my apartment, so I invade my sister's house, but I love sitting around, working hard through the and maybe even on Saturday morning, and then taking the time off to go ahead get the fire going, lay under a blanket and watch football. If I'm not at a game that's what I like to do.

Q: Any closing comments at all?

A: No, I'm just glad it's something I was able to do. I'm glad I was able to go ahead and put forth the effort and was able to do something that I would have wished that I could have done. I didn't want to sit back and wait for other people to do the same thing and go to a bookstore and see another book about college football stadiums. We had an idea and our whole thing was why can't we do it, so let's do it and we did it. I'm not ashamed at all.