

Intro: Welcome to the Bill Walton Show, featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneurs, artists and thinkers, fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics, and human flourishing. Interesting people, interesting things.

Bill Walton: Welcome Back, Carrie Sheffield.

Carrie Sheffield...: Thanks For having me, Bill.

Bill Walton: Yeah. It's great to have you here. Last time we were here, you [00:00:30] were coming from Independent Women's Forum, and our mission was to talk about the Federal Reserve, monetary policy, and the economy, of which you're an expert. You were an analyst at Goldman Sachs, as I recollect.

Carrie Sheffield...: Yes.

Bill Walton: And we got to talking, and then we wandered into the fact you'd written the book called Motor Home Prophecies, and then you started teasing that a bit, and I said, "Let's skip Jay Powell. We don't need to talk about the Federal Reserve. Let's talk about your book." [00:01:00] Since then, I guess that was last July, 2023. Since then, you've written the book. It's about to be published, and I've got a PDF version that I've bootlegged into my Kindle.

Carrie Sheffield...: Very impressive.

Bill Walton: And so I've read it. It's riveting, and it's astonishing because I feel like, as you sitting here, I really know you, and you've got an incredibly vivid human story to tell. You've [00:01:30] got the period where you're living with your family in a motor home. Your father thought he was a Mormon prophet. He left the Mormon church when you were 22 or 23. Then, you went through, I think, secular hell, as I would think about it, and then became Christian, and it is transformed your life.

Carrie Sheffield...: It really has. And I think in some ways, my life is almost like [00:02:00] a microcosm of kind of what's happening with the West, and I know you explore this a lot on your show.

Bill Walton: Yeah, all the time.

Carrie Sheffield...: That the West is committing suicide, and partially, because of all the CRT stuff and the toxic interpretation of DEI, they're rejecting Western principles because the West is not perfect. And so they throw the baby out with the bath water, which is what I did when I became, as you said, a secular [00:02:30] agnostic, because I was so angry at the Judeo-Christian interpretation that had been thrown on me by a very toxic family environment. So it took a while for me to disentangle what was true, what was good, from what was abusive and toxic. I think that a lot of people, especially a lot of younger people, they're going through similar challenges and existential crises. That's why you're seeing the

suicide rate skyrocket. [00:03:00] We had the highest suicide rate in American history ever recorded in 2022. We just got that data late last year, and the fastest growing group was women 25 to 34. So you had a 7% growth in the suicide rate among that age group, so I wrote the book, almost like a letter to my younger self. I wish that I'd had the book then, because it's like-

Bill Walton: Well, you went through that 22 to 35 [00:03:30] despair yourself, personally.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Exactly, yeah. And so I see the book, and I've just spoke to the Pepperdine University conservative newspaper, did an interview with them. I'm speaking to Palm Beach Atlantic University later this month. I've spoken at Liberty University. I love speaking to young people to talk about life, because when you're young, and especially in my case, when I didn't have older figures in my life that were mentors that I trusted, that I respected, that were [00:04:00] leading lives that I wanted to lead, because I felt philosophically aligned with them, I just turned to pop culture, and that's a mess, so I wrote the book almost like I said-

Bill Walton: Yeah. [inaudible 00:04:10] pop culture for wisdom and advice.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yes, yes.

Bill Walton: Big mistake.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Very big mistake.

Bill Walton: So we talked about last time, but for people, for anybody who didn't watch the earlier episode, you ought to go back and look at it, but after that plug, let me jump into this episode. Just [00:04:30] recount the outline of life with your family in the motor home and your father, I don't want to put words in your mouth.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Sure.

Bill Walton: Tell that story.

Carrie Sheffiel...: I call the book Motor Home Prophecies because my father, as you mentioned, he believes he's a Mormon prophet. He'll be 86 in a couple of months. He has very severe Alzheimer's. As I said in the introduction, I pray for him. I know that he's struggling, and I [00:05:00] try to be as honest in the book about the reasons why I believe he became the way he was. The short of it was that, because he believed he had this prophetic call that he would become president someday, that he had been-

Bill Walton: Of the United States?

Carrie Sheffield...: Of the United States. That he had this call on him and on our family, and he said that Satan himself had personally, reassigned was the word. He had reassigned lesser demons in order for Satan, himself, to personally [00:05:30] attack our family. In order to accomplish this call on his life, he said that we need to go wherever the Holy Ghost says, and we're going to live in a motor home. Sometimes we lived in houses as well. We lived in sheds and tents. My mother gave birth when the brother, just ahead of me, was born when the family was living in a tent in Greenbelt Park, Maryland, in a campground, so it was almost like medieval times.

Bill Walton: And you had four older brothers and three younger sisters?

Carrie Sheffield...: [00:06:00] Two younger sisters and a younger brother, so eight surviving.

Bill Walton: So eight altogether, and your mother and father in a motor home.

Carrie Sheffield...: Yeah, 10 people.

Bill Walton: Where'd everybody sleep?

Carrie Sheffield...: The three girls were in the overhang. A lot of motor homes have this little overhang over the driver's cab, so the three girls in the overhang. Then, my parents in the fold out couch, that became a bed, the day bed, basically, or sorry. The couch folded out into a bed. Then, in the back room, [00:06:30] the four boys were stacked, two and two. My dad, he fancied himself a carpenter, and so he made bunk beds in the back room and had the four boys stacked on top of each other. Then, the youngest one was against the back wall. That was where the day bed, and he was on the cushion back there.

Bill Walton: So this wasn't necessity. This was a choice. Your father, as you describe him, was a strapping guy. Six feet, blue eyes, blonde hair. His family was extremely successful. [00:07:00] His father was financially successful. A lot of other people in the family. The whole raft of people, highly talented, highly successful. He chose this life.

Carrie Sheffield...: Right, yeah. In many ways, his story was richest to rags. It's the opposite of the American dream, because he said his father had gotten his money through ill gains. My grandfather, my late grandfather was a very successful real estate developer in Utah, but [00:07:30] he had bought some properties on foreclosure. My dad tells the story once of a woman just coming to their house and just wrapping on their window and saying, "You stole my house, Ralph Sheffield. You're an evil man," and that just struck my dad.

The thing about my dad is, as I'm surrounded by art and music, and he's a very creative person. He had the honor of winning a nationwide composer contest for the up and coming young composer. [00:08:00] He got first place, and he won. He tells the story of they opened the envelope, and they say, "Where the

hell is Provo, Utah?" Because this is around the 1960s or so, and Utah was a lot less known. He got that from his grandmother, or from his mother, my grandmother who, she had done something similar, but it was for the entire LDS church, the global LDS Church.

Bill Walton: LDS, Later Day Saints.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Latter Day Saints.

Bill Walton: Yeah. Latter Day Saints.

Carrie Sheffiell...: The Mormon Church. That's the nickname that they've [00:08:30] tried to get away from, the LDS church, and today the LDS Church has 17 million people. Back then it was a lot less, but still millions of people. They had a contest, and she won that contest. She wrote some plays, musical plays, so that's where he got the talent. He ended up also being a protegee of Andre Segovia on classical guitar, and Andre Segovia, as I talk about in the book, was probably to date the known [00:09:00] best classical guitarist in the world.

He has an asteroid named after him. He has 10 honorary doctorates. He had Lifetime Grammy Achievement Award. He was knighted by the King of Spain, so he hand selected my father to be one of his proteges. Then, my father was a professor at Brigham Young University of Guitar, so he had all these accolades. Then, he said he gave up his secular music career in order to be this prophet, [00:09:30] because he was called to go and play his beautiful music with a little amplifier plugged into the base of his guitar, gorgeous music, and then he would attract people, and then he would pass out brochures that had a bunch of Mormon quotes.

Bill Walton: At what age did you go on the road, personally? Were you a baby? Were you born on the road?

Carrie Sheffiell...: I mean, the road's a tricky word, because we moved so much, so I guess-

Bill Walton: You went to 18 schools.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Yeah, 17 public and homeschool. So yes, 18 schools. [00:10:00] And so, doing homeschool in particular made it a lot more easy. We did that when I was in high school later on, which I'm surprised my parents didn't do it sooner, but I was actually glad that we didn't, because at least I had some exposure to the outside world, but he said that it was God's will for us to go and play. So he did it himself first by himself, playing the music and then passing out the brochures. The brochures were the key to the mission call. So the brochures, they [00:10:30] were folded up, quotes and quotes and quotes from the Bible, from the Book of Mormon, from himself, from patriotic leaders to try to instill this fusion of faith in God and the Mormon faith, which there's a dispute about, and

I get into the book a bit about the theology of Mormon versus Protestant, Catholic mainstream Christians.

Bill Walton: Well, I do want to get into that whenever it's appropriate in the story to tell it.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Sure.

Bill Walton: So you ended up [00:11:00] having problems with Mormonism, period, because of the theloogy.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yeah. Later on. Later on.

Bill Walton: But he had problems with Mormonism for different reasons.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yes.

Bill Walton: And he didn't really leave the Mormon faith, but he thought he had a better version of it. Then, I guess there are now dozens, if not hundreds, who have split off from the Mormon church that are similar to what he was doing?

Carrie Sheffiel...: Oh. From the beginning, there's been constant splinter groups. So I describe it as similar to Shia and Sunni in Islam. So [00:11:30] Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, there was a dispute when he was assassinated about whether or not it should be a genetic descendant of him or a spiritual call to be the next prophet, because similar to the Catholic Church, there's only one official prophet at a time, and so there was a schism about people who said it has to be someone in the Smith family, versus somebody who's spiritually called. And so the spiritual call fell on Brigham Young, so the biggest [00:12:00] group that's in Salt Lake, that's the Brigham Young Church. That's the big official one that you see that Mitt Romney was in. But there've been many other schisms. My father, I say that he was kind of almost like a Walmart Joseph Smith, in the sense that we were always in Walmart parking lots at our motor home, but he was also less successful than Joseph Smith.

Bill Walton: I like going to Walmart, but-

Carrie Sheffiel...: I do too. They've got great prices.

Bill Walton: [00:12:30] They're actually pretty good. So many questions pop out of that. So he had issues, but the Mormons deny the divinity of Christ. They call him the older brother.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yes.

Bill Walton: And that's a big difference.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yeah, so they don't believe in the Trinity, and that is the central difference that-

Bill Walton: God, Christ, holy ghost. Trinity.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Yeah, so they believe there's a distinct physical [00:13:00] genetic body, the Father, who is a distinct, genetic, difference body, Jesus. And so that is a big difference. Then, also this idea of being joint heirs with God, that the God of Earth was the former human, and because he was righteous and did good works, he became a God through his works, and that you, Bill, [00:13:30] if you were a Mormon man, you could be God of your own planet if you get married in the temple and you do all the righteous Mormon works, and you can have multiple wives.

Bill Walton: Well, you said, in your book, and we want to get into your personal story, but you said in the book that Mormonism is highly defective spiritually, but it's very attractive in this earth because of the message it gives to members and their exalted [00:14:00] place in it. Just like, "I can be a God in my own domain," that sounds pretty good.

Carrie Sheffiell...: I mean, I describe the [inaudible 00:14:08] Church today as, from my perspective, again, this is my perspective, theologically wrong, culturally strong.

Bill Walton: That's the way. That was the phrase, yeah.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Here in America, is how I distill it. I have a lot of my cousins and aunts and uncles who are still in the church, so I say in the book, I'm not here to attack the church, but I'm always happy to engage in a respectful conversation, dialogue, [00:14:30] talk about the reasons, theologically, that I disagree with the church. But if you look at the fruit of the culture, Utah has the top social mobility, that a child born in the bottom quintile of economics has the greatest likelihood of making it to the top because of such strong social ties. There's really strong social capital in Utah, in part because it's the strongest state with two-parent homes. As we know as conservatives, that's the top variable [00:15:00] as to whether a child succeeds.

Bill Walton: The number one. The number one variable.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Yeah, and so Utah has very strong families, the strongest in the whole country, in part because of the Mormon culture. I do say it is a double-edged sword, because theologically, they do believe that family life occurs, the family bonds occur in the afterlife, but only if you're righteous. So if you had a child and you were married in the LDS temple, if that [00:15:30] child did not fully participate and go to the temple as well, then you would be separated from that child for eternity because they weren't Mormon.

Bill Walton: Well, it's hard for me to watch television reports when they're showing inner city Black on Black violence, riots, and things like that, and not go quickly to an explanation that the number of these kids that are born in a two family or two-

parent household is close to what? 10, 12, 14%, something like that. [00:16:00]
There are no fathers in those houses.

Carrie Sheffiel...: And it's interesting because-

Bill Walton: By the way, we're veering way off-topic here. We're not going to talk about Jay Powell.

Carrie Sheffiel...: There are many rabbit holes.

Bill Walton: We're not going to talk about Jay Powell and the Federal Reserve though. We won't cover that.

Carrie Sheffiel...: There's a way we can get back there, I'm sure. No, but I think for the families, yes. It's interesting. There are conservatives. I love a EI, but they had a seminar two nights ago.

Bill Walton: American Enterprise Institute.

Carrie Sheffiel...: [00:16:30] Yes, the American Enterprise Institute with Bradford Wilcox, who a big fan.

Bill Walton: Yeah. He's the family guy.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yeah, ad he's written a book called Get Married and Defy the Elites. I think that's the title, and I love the concept, and he presents some great research, but the conversation to me, it didn't address at all what happens in underclass culture. I say this as someone who grew up exposed to it. If you are traumatized, and what's happening right now [00:17:00] is intergenerational trauma. That's why I wrote the book, is that I wanted to help sever the bonds of intergenerational trauma.

By that, I mean if you're born in the inner city and you're surrounded constantly by violence, gangs, drugs, single parenthood, you don't know any different. That's all you know, and so it's a traumatic environment. When you grow up, you become a traumatized adult, which is what happened to me, [00:17:30] which is why I ended up dating abusive, drug addicted, alcoholic men, because it's all that I knew. So when Brad Wilcox says, "Just go get married," it's like, "No," because what's going to end up happening? In my sister's case, she married an alcoholic man who beat her and then abandoned her. So yes, she got married, like Brad Wilcox wanted, but I'm so glad I didn't marry these men because I would've married an abuser.

Bill Walton: It's a necessary but not sufficient condition. [00:18:00] It's not just getting married, but it's all the other.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Well, yes. I think he talks about the success sequence. The success sequence is you need to complete high school before you get married and then have the baby, and if you do that, you have a 97% chance of being out of poverty, but the thing is, nobody follows that success sequence because they're traumatized. There's things inside you that make you believe that you're not worthy, [00:18:30] that you can't do it, or that it's not worth it.

Bill Walton: Well, I want to steer us back towards what's in your book, because everybody needs to read it. It's hard reading in places, because it's so vivid in what you went through, and in some ways is excruciating to read about it. I took the PDF you sent me, and I've translated into Kindle. When's the book coming out?

Carrie Sheffiell...: March 12th.

Bill Walton: March 12th.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Yes.

Bill Walton: March 12th, 2024. But I was able [00:19:00] to get it into Kindle, and you can do a notebook in Kindle, and just the first notes I've got here from page 19, your father, who you call Ralph, we get into that, didn't believe in health insurance. Talk about intergenerational issues. You thought health insurance was just for people plotting office jobs, and so he wouldn't go to an emergency room even because he didn't want to pay out of pocket. And so, [00:19:30] at one point, you fell, hurt yourself. Major, major gash in your head, and instead of going to the emergency room, he did what?

Carrie Sheffiell...: Well, it was Christmas time, and he said, "Well, Carrie. We can use the Christmas money that I'd spend to buy your siblings presents to buy them presents or to take you to the ER to sew up the back of your head. You choose."

Bill Walton: Oh my God. So that was not-

Carrie Sheffiell...: What do you think I'm going to choose? Do you think I want my seven siblings to hate me?

Bill Walton: So are you going to be a selfish kid? And so he did what?

Carrie Sheffiell...: Yeah. So he said, "It's your [00:20:00] choice, Carrie." Of course, I chose that I didn't want my seven siblings to hate me forever for stealing Christmas, so I said, bravely, "Let's do it," so he did sew up the back of my head.

Bill Walton: You said, using your mom's needle and brown thread, and while he was doing it, you could hear the excruciating sound of the "punctured weaving reverberating through my skull."

Carrie Sheffiell...: [00:20:30] Yeah.

Bill Walton: Carrie, you ought to become a writer. You're pretty good. That's vivid. It's filled with vivid stories like that, and then he also didn't believe in dentists.

Carrie Sheffield...: No. In fact, my advisor, yes, is totally dead.

Bill Walton: And because he did what?

Carrie Sheffield...: Because he would take the broken end of a Popsicle stick and push it against my tooth. He was trying to save money by not getting me braces, and so he did straighten it a little bit, but it ended up deadening the root, so my tooth [00:21:00] is brown. I've tried to whiten it, but it's totally dead and I had to get a root canal as an adult.

Bill Walton: So anyway, it turned out beautifully, but how old were you when that happened?

Carrie Sheffield...: Let's see. When the sewing or the tooth? The tooth was kind of over a period of years as a teenager, maybe around starting around seventh grade or so.

Bill Walton: Okay. This is Bill Walton show. I'm here with the amazing Carrie Sheffield, and we're talking about her book, Motor Home Prophecies, and we're kind of wandering all over the place [00:21:30] talking about global societal issues and family formation, while at the same time talking about her own, mostly horrific experience at the hands of her father.

Carrie Sheffield...: And like I said, I try to get into why he did this, and I think it was a combination of his extreme narcissism. So the ingredients of a homespun Mormon prophet are, in his case, extreme gifting, [00:22:00] highly, highly talented global music talent, sexual assault as a child, childhood trauma. He was very traumatized as a child. One of his trusted Mormon babysitters raped him, a female. He said, later on, as an adult, that assault made him suicidal. He had some other traumas that I talk about in the book. One of his best friends died in a sledding accident very suddenly. He also had [00:22:30] one of his teachers try to get him to stay after class and offer him candy, which he was terrified about, because his father had read to him about a stranger offering a boy candy, and then he raped him and murdered this little boy.

So he was traumatized by his teacher, and then also a stranger had tried to do that with him as well, and so it was just no adults made him feel comfortable. His own parents, when this woman assaulted him, the babysitter, they didn't call the police, they didn't [00:23:00] get mental health treatment. They didn't even call the Mormon bishop. He said all they did was they got him a little, shiny shovel toy, like one of these bulldozer toys was hit in the neighborhood, but clearly didn't help him heal from his child a trauma. So combine the exceptional gifting, childhood trauma with his interpretation of this magnificent doctrine of what a human can do in terms of become a God someday, whether you agree

with it or not, I don't, [00:23:30] but he did. That all combined to become who he was.

Bill Walton: Well, you explained in the book that there's a condition called emotional hypersensitivity, which is a neuro divergent individuals thought to be increased deeper, blah, blah, blah. You go on. It's pretty technical, but-

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yeah. It is called an HSP, a Highly Sensitive Person, and there's a scale that anybody can test. It's called the Aronson Scale. It was developed by [00:24:00] a psychiatrist named Aronson, and I've done it, and I'm off the charts for all of the indicators.

Bill Walton: You [inaudible 00:24:07].

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yeah, and for my father, in fact, I was on a seminar a couple of weeks ago with somebody, an expert in this field, because I want to learn more about it. As soon as I had heard about this, what exactly is HSP, Highly Sensitive People? It's not a disorder. It's a genetic wiring. So [00:24:30] it's actually your neurological system is different in the sense that, here's some of the differences; the way your serotonin and dopamine are managed, you have more active mirror neurons, so mirror neurons are the way that you mirror somebody. When you're talking to them, you kind of mimic them. You have empathy for them. So people who are HSPs, Highly Sensitive People, they're often called empathes because they have a very heightened sense of empathy.

[00:25:00] The insula and the cortex are more strongly activated. That's the certain regions of the brain. You have a stronger awareness of what's going on in your body. So you're more susceptible to just the sensations of hunger, thirst, emotions. Then, your ventral medial prefrontal cortex is more active and gives the vividness of emotions a greater sensitivity. I have a theory, and I need to do more research, but I do believe that musicians are much more likely [00:25:30] to be HSP, which my father was, and I've got his genetic code too, and I'm a musician. I'm not at his level, and I'm an HSP. And so learning that, even now as an adult, I understand myself more because I'm like, "Well, this explains why I let toxic partners into my life, because I feel sorry for them, and then I'm kind to them because I feel sorry for them, but they don't return the favor."

Bill Walton: Well, the book covers your years, you went from [00:26:00] a cocoon essentially when Ralph, you call your father Ralph, had the whole family either in a motor home or houses, moving from town to town. I expect he was one step ahead of the law, and so he didn't want to be in any one place too long. So you were isolated, cocooned in this warped world, and when you left it and you went to college and then later on, then you had to deal with the wider world [00:26:30] as a hypersensitive person dealing with all these interrelationships, and that was tough.

Carrie Sheffiel...: It really was, and to make it even more complicated, HSPs are actually pretty common. According to this Aronson scale, it's about 15 to 20% of the population. It's pretty common. But most of the HSPs are introverts. I am an extrovert. I'm a natural extrovert, and so only about 2.5% Of the entire population is an extroverted female [00:27:00] HSP, which made me feel even more strange, because I'm trying to process this as an extrovert, but I don't have the emotional tools because I wasn't taught healthy self emotional regulation. And so, as one of my therapists said, when I escaped and ran away from home, which I have a chapter about escaping, I was afraid my father was going to commit violence against me if I left, so I was able to leave four in the morning with a good friend. But the tools-

Bill Walton: That's when you were 18?

Carrie Sheffiel...: When I was 18. And the [00:27:30] tools that it took to mentally break away from a mind controlled cult, because I do describe what my dad did as a cult, and I'm very careful to say that what he did was separate from the LDS church. In fact, he was excommunicated from the official LDS church, but I do believe what he did to us was a cult. And so when I finally escaped from the cult, it took a lot of mental fortitude to be able [00:28:00] to do that, because I was the first to leave. Even though I have four older brothers, I was the first to leave, which meant I was the easiest to disown. Before I left, I told them I was going to leave, my dad raised his hand in the square, and he said, "I prophesied the name of Jesus you'll be raped and murdered if you leave," and by that point, one of my two schizophrenic brothers had already tried to rape me and groped me.

Bill Walton: This was your older brother, who was also a big guy?

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yeah, yeah. Very tall and burley, and [00:28:30] was able to defend him off. But at that point, it was part of why I left.

Bill Walton: But he'd been completely isolated as well.

Carrie Sheffiel...: And he was the oldest, yeah.

Bill Walton: Yeah.

Carrie Sheffiel...: And so I didn't blame him. I knew that it was his mental illness, but I knew that I wasn't safe, and so to have your father say, yeah, it was a lot of, like my therapist said, the tools that it took to get me out of that place are a totally different set of tools to succeed in a nuanced marketplace and business environment, and I [00:29:00] failed a lot.

Bill Walton: Well, wait a second. You went to Harvard, you got a graduate degree from Harvard. You worked your first job when you were 22, was a research analyst for Robert Novak. You've worked in American Enterprise Institute. You've been pretty successful in this environment. Now, but you thought-

Sarah Walton: You haven't talked about how really grim her childhood was, that you and your brothers and sisters were each assigned to an instrument and had to go out on the street corners [00:29:30] and get money.

Bill Walton: This is my wife, Sarah. We don't have time to bring a camera in, but anyway. Kenny, the director, is saying, "No, I can't do that." Next time let's get a mobile going.

Sarah Walton: Well, have her say that.

Bill Walton: Well, no, but I want to repeat it.

Kenny Reff: Yes, please.

Bill Walton: She's my stage mother over there. Thank you, darling. But yeah, your father was a musician and, I was going to get [00:30:00] to this, you played the violin, but it turned out he had a master plan. The master plan was each one of his children was going to learn an instrument, because he wanted to create an ensemble that he could take on the road and make it part of his mission, and you had no choice. If you wanted to play the saxophone, that was out, because that was not an approved instrument.

Carrie Sheffield...: Correct. Exactly. Yes. And so he was building this in his head, that that [00:30:30] was going to be his vehicle for this mission. I think, in some respects, he was trying to create the sense of belonging that he never felt he had while he was a child, and then later while he was an adult, because he had been fired from BYU, because he had been doing unauthorized concerts and events while he was in Spain and traveling around, sleeping in chapels, doing unauthorized things, which the LDS church is very [00:31:00] hierarchical, and so he was let go. I think that he took that to say, "Well, fine, I'm going to go do my own thing, and I'm going to do my own mission."

So he did it himself, again, playing the music on the street corners and living off of what people put inside the money that people put inside his guitar case out in front, while passing out the brochures and trying to convert people to Mormon. The thing about the money was we [00:31:30] were always living on the edge of collapse. We were on welfare. We were using Mormon church welfare. The Mormon Church has a wonderful welfare system to help people who are struggling. I personally think it should be a safety net. It shouldn't be a lifestyle because it's chronic. If you're living this way, it's chronic. It creates a permanent sense of chaos, a permanent sense of stress, and it wears on you.

Bill Walton: What was life like day to day?

Carrie Sheffield...: [00:32:00] Well, and yes, as you said, we grew up, and all eight of the children and my mom were assigned the instruments to play. We all sang together as well, and I was assigned the violin and the oboe, so I played some oboe solos

when we played Carmen, the Opera Carmen, so the strangest part of it, one of the strangest part, there are lots of strange parts, but-

Bill Walton: The oboe has the triple read?

Carrie Sheffiel...: The double read, yes.

Bill Walton: Double read.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Double read, mm-hmm.

Bill Walton: So you have a lip?

Carrie Sheffiel...: It's been a while, [00:32:30] but yes.

Bill Walton: Okay. That's a very hard instrument to play.

Carrie Sheffiel...: It is. The [inaudible 00:32:33] is very difficult. Also, you can't just go around the campfire, whip out your oboe, and hang out. It's not a casual instrument or for a wedding, so I play violin and piano still. I stopped playing with the violin for a while, because I was angry, but I've got it back up now, so I've played for weddings. I played the piano in the violin for my aunt's funeral recently, and [00:33:00] so those are more user-friendly instruments, I would say.

Bill Walton: You ended up doing extremely well academically, despite all these movements, schools, and things like that. Didn't you score 99 percentile on your verbal SATs?

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yeah. So I did really well, and that's part of what helped me escape, was that I was able to get some scholarships to take the edge off going to college without having parental support that was consistent in any way, [00:33:30] but to answer your question on day-to-day life, the dichotomy of this transcendent, beautiful music where we would spend hours and hours performing or practicing and rehearsing and then performing Beethoven. We played Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. We played Mozart's 40th Symphony.

We played [inaudible 00:33:49]. We played some Greig. Beautiful music, but then you're contrasting it with the abuse and the screams and [00:34:00] the assaults. It was so jarring, and in some ways it became kind of commonplace to have that fusion of the two, but then eventually, as I got older, I saw it in the theology as well, or just the preaching, where it's like my dad would be on the street corners preaching beautiful principles, the principles of Jesus, the principles of love, but then he would come home. He broke [00:34:30] my brother's rib. He knocked his tooth out, just assaults and screaming, and eventually I was like, "He's not behaving the way he preached."

Bill Walton: You researched a way out of his cult though, because you began to grow skeptical of what he was teaching, and you found a catch of his notebooks, and

you went and looked at the notebooks, and you began to reverse engine, to think through what he was really preaching and how different that was from-

Carrie Sheffiel...: Exactly.

Bill Walton: Talk about that.

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yeah, and that's sort of one of [00:35:00] the reasons why it's called the Motor and Prophecies, is because I found these handwritten prophecies that he had made. So we had this fiberglass trailer attached to the back of the motor home, and that's where he had kept a bunch of his notes and his personal effects. By that point, I had been writing a bit for the local newspaper in this column called The Young Voices segment, and that gave me some confidence to know that I had some writing abilities.

He said, at the time, he wanted to write his [00:35:30] autobiography, and so he said, "Would you help me to compile and type up?" So I typed up some letters, and just compiled them to be in an electronic format. It was very ancient word processor. That's when I was going through these documents. I found letters from his mother when he was a missionary, that were very concerning, because he was very arrogant to her and very preachy, telling her if she wasn't devout [00:36:00] enough, she wasn't a good enough Christian. But then what really struck me, like you said, was finding these documents that he had handwritten. They were handwritten prophecies, and they were written in the old English Elizabethan style, the way that-

Bill Walton: The And Thou and-

Carrie Sheffiel...: Yes.

Bill Walton: Yes.

Carrie Sheffiel...: The way that the King James version of the Bible is.

Bill Walton: Yes.

Carrie Sheffiel...: So LDS scripture has four books. They've got the King James Bible. They have the Book of Mormon. They have [00:36:30] the Pearl of Great Price, and then they have the Doctrine and Covenants. Of those four, only the doctrine and covenants is purported to be a modern day document. The rest are supposed to be ancient. Doctrine and Covenants is handwritten prophecies that Joseph Smith said he received from God on how to run the church while he was building it up, and Joseph Smith wrote it in old school English as well, or at least that's the way it was published in [00:37:00] Elizabeth in English, same.

So basically, I saw a knockoff version of the Doctrine and Covenants in my own father's handwriting, and it was God talking to my father, but he was using his

pen name, his God name, which was Daniel Strong, and he had told our family about Daniel Strong before, so I wasn't surprised by that, but I was shocked that my father was basically, in black and white, seeing what he was doing a knockoff version of Joseph Smith. I [00:37:30] started to shake, because I, at that time, was still very devout LDS and, like I said, there's only one prophet at a time descending from Joseph Smith spiritually. I knew that my father was not that man. There was one prophet. He lived in Salt Lake, and he was not my dad, so at that point it was a juncture. Do I support the LDS church, or do I support my father? I chose the church.

Bill Walton: And this was, you were 17 or 18, and then, shortly thereafter, you left.

Carrie Sheffiel...: [00:38:00] Yes.

Bill Walton: Where'd you go to college? Several places, But you ended up at graduating from BYU?

Carrie Sheffiel...: Correct, yes.

Bill Walton: And how'd you get into college from the motor home?

Carrie Sheffiel...: Well, it's interesting, and I talk about this a little bit, because there've been some pieces more recently in places, like I think the New York Times wrote something about it, and the Georgetown Hoya student paper wrote something about this, which is that entrance fees or application fees, so the Georgetown [00:38:30] student paper said, "We need to lower our application fees," because the median household income for a Georgetown student, I think, was over \$200,000, which is much higher than average.

Bill Walton: At least, yeah.

Carrie Sheffiel...: At least, and maybe it was like \$230,000 or something like that, much higher than the median household income for the average American. So they said, and part of it is the barrier of application fees. Well, in my case, that was 100% true. I did not have any money. I had maybe \$10 from Christmas. My parents wouldn't let me get a [00:39:00] job. They said, because I was a girl, I wasn't allowed to work outside the home. They were afraid, even though my brothers were allowed to have paper routes and do other things.

Since I was the first girl, I was the most controlled, and so I had no money. If I had had money, I would've gone directly to BYU or potentially some other school, but I had no money. That was a big barrier to me going to BYU. The other barrier was they required a bishop's ecclesiastical endorsement, [00:39:30] and I had theologically no problems getting it. I was slightly worried that the bishop might tell my father, and I didn't want my parents to know that I was applying, so that was the other reason why I didn't go directly to BYU.

Bill Walton: So you were applying to schools without your parents knowing it?

Carrie Sheffield...: No, because I was afraid. I was afraid. I didn't know what to expect, because nobody in my family had gone away for college, and so I did it without them knowing, so it's funny sometimes when people are like, "Oh. I'm taking my son to campus visit day. We're [00:40:00] driving over."

I'm just like, "This concept is so boring to me. I don't understand it."

Bill Walton: Exactly. My lived experience.

Carrie Sheffield...: No. When I spoke to the entire student Body of Liberty University, like 10,000 students, and I was telling them my story a little bit, and I said, "Freshman week for you, peanuts compared to what I went through," because thinking I'm going to be raped and murdered on campus pretty much immediately because I'm disowned. My dad [00:40:30] said my blood changed. I was no longer his daughter. I was not allowed home all through college, because my dad said I was satanic. So no holidays, no summer breaks, and that's part of why I pushed myself to succeed in my career. It was because it was all that I had in order to, for me, and I learned later this was toxic, but at the time it was how I gained a sense of validation.

Bill Walton: Sure. What school did you go to first before you transferred to BYU?

Carrie Sheffield...: It's called Truman State [00:41:00] University.

Bill Walton: Okay, so that's where you got started, and then you worked your way. You waitressed and did various things to pay the rent.

Carrie Sheffield...: Yeah.

Bill Walton: Wow. It wasn't really a complaint, but I was a National Merit finalist, and my father, who didn't make enough money, didn't want me to apply for a scholarship because they didn't want to disclose his income. I was getting applications sent to me from places like Harvard and Yale, because they were looking for, [00:41:30] but he said, "Nope, not going to do any of that. You're going to go to Indiana University," which is where I went, and the tuition was like \$1000. I was okay with it, but my tale of woe hardly compares.

Carrie Sheffield...: Well, you know what? You could have-

Bill Walton: And you ended up at Harvard, anyway.

Carrie Sheffield...: I had a pretty good time in Indiana, but anyway.

Carrie Sheffield...: Well, you know what you could have done is...

Bill Walton: Well, I needed you around as an advisor.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Exactly. Well, you could have gotten yourself [00:42:00] declared legally estranged from him if you wanted to, because then at that point you wouldn't have needed his financial information, because I went through that.

Bill Walton: He was mad at me because I'd been admitted to the Naval Academy, and I didn't want to go.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Oh, why didn't you go? I would be mad at you, Bill.

Bill Walton: I don't know. I was an idiot.

Carrie Sheffiell...: That's a great school.

Bill Walton: I was 17 years old. I was dumb. Yeah.

Carrie Sheffiell...: You didn't want the basic training?

Bill Walton: I don't remember my reasons why, but they were wrong. Mistakes.

Carrie Sheffiell...: Mistakes [00:42:30] were made.

Bill Walton: BYU, and then we're a long way into this interview, and I've covered about 2% of what I wanted to cover here, and the book goes on.

Carrie Sheffiell...: I'll let you go.

Bill Walton: You left the church, the Mormon church, so I did want to talk about that. That was when you were 22, you decided to do that. Why was that?

Carrie Sheffiell...: Yeah, so I have a whole chapter about that, and it's interesting, because I had some people say, "Well. Oh, you just want to leave because you want to go drink." [00:43:00] I dated a guy, I kid you not, he said I wanted to leave because I wanted to look at pornography all day. I was just like, "What? It's ridiculous. No. I've never looked at porn. I have no interest. This is not why I'm leaving. We're obviously not a match," but I left for theological reasons, and it started in the spring term after, so BYU Paxton, they have fall, winter, spring, summer. They're very efficient. They have four terms, and so for the [00:43:30] spring term of my junior year, I took a class called Journalism History and Philosophy. For that class, they had us look at 1800s microfiche, so newspaper clippings from the newspapers, different newspapers.

The one that really caught my attention was called the Desert News, which is still around today. In fact, I used to work for it while I was a BYU student in the Utah County Bureau, but back then, [00:44:00] it's owned by the LDS church, so it's an official church publication. Looking, scrolling through in the Harold B. Lee

Library on campus, scrolling through the archives down in the basement in the darkened basement, so you can look at the microfiche. These microfiche from the 1800s, I don't know exactly what years. The Mormons got to Utah in 1847, so it was probably maybe 1850s or 1860s. I'm not exactly sure, but in any case, [00:44:30] there were advertisements for alcohol and tobacco that were being sold by a department store called ZCMI, which was, I call it like the Mormon Macy's. It's now bankrupt, but at the time, and even when I was a kid, it was like a big deal.

It's like a general store owned by the Mormon church, but they were selling alcohol and tobacco. I was shocked. I was like, "They're making money off these things that we're not allowed to use? This is so strange. They don't do this now. [00:45:00] So it's called the Word of Wisdom, which is the health code. The word of wisdom was not enforced. I knew that it was not enforced until, I think, around the prohibition era. So Mormons actually drank from when it was founded in 1830, up until around almost 100 years, where you could drink and you could do tobacco. They had some problems, where apparently these Mormons were spitting tobacco all over the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith's house, and I guess his wife hated that she was not a fan of tobacco being all over her carpet. [00:45:30] So that's part of why, just culturally, it was kind of like looked-

Bill Walton: But these were not theological reasons. These were-

Carrie Sheffield...: Yes. Yeah, but the 1920s is when they enforced it, but at the same time, I was shocked to know that maybe they look the other way, but this was not looking the other way. This was, we were making money off this stuff. From a church, a store that's owned by the eldest church, it shocked me. I was just like, "What else is there that I don't know," and so that became my first [00:46:00] big investigative journalism project when I was a kid. Is my dad a prophet?

I came to that realization, no. My second big investigative project, do I believe the LDS church? I did the best I could. I found a lot more things about the history and the theology that really, really concerned me, and so I decided to leave. That was the first time in my life that I felt suicidal, and I was 21, and I had never, despite all the other [00:46:30] traumas, I had been depressed and things like that, but I'd never been suicidal until that moment, until that period. Then, that suicidal ideation just stalked me ever since, with the ups and downs of career and things like that.

Bill Walton: Well, as I said, there's so much more I'm going to dig into, but you've had several of us read the book. What's the pre-release reaction of the book?

Carrie Sheffield...: Yeah, so overall, there's the general public, and then there's [00:47:00] my friends. My brother has read it.

Bill Walton: Oh, those are the worst.

Carrie Sheffield...: No. He likes it, actually. My brother likes it. Yeah.

Bill Walton: All right.

Carrie Sheffield...: And it's interesting. He said, "It's your voice. I can hear your voice." But yes, I've had a friend of mine, she had traumatic childhood, and she said she's having trouble reading it because she's triggered, that it brings up emotions for her and the childhood trauma.

Bill Walton: You wrote about this in the most nakedly honest way I can imagine. I mean, it's really stunning, the courage. You had to write all this down [00:47:30] and tell us what you went through. Now, you can write it because you've come out so strong at the end, but that was tough.

Carrie Sheffield...: It was, and I think it's been healthy for me to be able to write it, to just say what happened, because for so long, because I didn't write it in a healthy way or I didn't process it. There was so much of a facade. I talk about later on going on TV and [00:48:00] building a TV career or a media career, and having a lot of public policy debates and going on shows in front of millions of people, but inside not having found a healthy way to process the feelings of insecurity, self-worth, and doubt, that it was a dichotomy. So part of it is, I feel like, just coming clean and just being like, "This is what happened." We need, as a culture, like I said, I didn't [00:48:30] write it just for myself. My goal in writing it is to just help address a lot of the mental health issues we're seeing right now.

Bill Walton: Well, we talked about before, self-help has become a pejorative, which it is too bad because you can read this book and all of us have recognition of things we've gone through. The thing that is interesting and so powerful about you is you've taken these troubles, and you processed it and figured out a way to come out at the other end. Between the time [00:49:00] you left Mormonism and became a Christian, what was that? 2017?

Carrie Sheffield...: Mm-hmm. December 3rd.

Bill Walton: You did a lot of things. You found stoicism. You found cognitive behavioral therapy, which actually works. It's one of the only therapy that does.

Carrie Sheffield...: Yeah.

Bill Walton: But various things, and so it's really a journey through the bad ideas of modern culture and how to come out towards becoming a Christian.

Carrie Sheffield...: Yes, exactly. I think, like I said, a [00:49:30] lot of what's happening in our culture, where we're throwing away what's worked over millennia of the human experience,

Bill Walton: Isn't that right? Isn't that true?

Carrie Sheffield...: Because we have suffered pain, and I did suffer real pain from my dad, who was claiming Judeo-Christian values. Now, my Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic friends will say, "Well, that's because it's theologically wrong. That's why he was wrong," but the thing is, we [00:50:00] see this in other denominations too, where you have, whether it's the pedophile scandal in the Catholic Church, corrupt televangelists, or sexual abuse in the Baptist convention, so this isn't a Mormon specific problem within the Judeo-Christian value set. And so, I wrote it as a challenge to that also, that the reason why a lot of people leave faith is because they've been hurt by Christian people.

Bill Walton: Well, it's the human institutions. [00:50:30] Once you take the faith and you turn it into an institution, it's gone.

Carrie Sheffield...: Exactly.

Bill Walton: It gets ruined. It begins to wreck people, and you create all sorts of barriers that have nothing to do with the faith.

Carrie Sheffield...: Exactly. That you become a stumbling block, as Jesus said, to God, and that is a tragedy, but it's also blocking people from realizing God is not religion. I think that's part of why so many young people, I know in your show you [00:51:00] have a lot of guests talking about truth and how there's this sense that there's no such thing as truth anymore. A big reason why so many people believe that is because they have corrupt human beings who are claiming to be a mouthpiece for God, and God is truth, God is light. Jesus said, "I'm the way, the truth, and the life." If Jesus is truth, and here you are, a corrupt, abusive human representing him, [00:51:30] no one's going to believe the truth, because they're so distracted by the evil human being in front of them. We see that. I think that's why people, a lot of young people, they see the hypocrisy of religious people.

Bill Walton: So we've got to get people to read the book, but I have an even better idea for people that have been thinking about you ought to take this book in. You've recorded it.

Carrie Sheffield...: I've got an audiobook, mm-hmm.

Bill Walton: You're the one that does the audio recording for this, and one of my pet [00:52:00] peeves is, I think 95% of the people that are hired to read the books are not any good at it, but the only good one I can think of was when Johnny Depp did Keith Richards' book. That was pretty good.

Carrie Sheffield...: I feel like anything Johnny Depp would be good in.

Bill Walton: But my bet is that this book in your voice has got to be one of the most powerful things imaginable to listen to.

Carrie Sheffield...: Well, thank you, Bill.

Bill Walton: Have you had any criticism, any feedback from people who've had a chance? Anyway, [00:52:30] send me the audio when you're ready to release it, and I'll plug it.

Carrie Sheffield...: Well, it's interesting you say that though in general, and I know different publishers have different methodology, but for mine, I was actually not guaranteed to be able to read it. You're not guaranteed, as an author, to get to read your book.

Bill Walton: Most authors are terrible at it.

Carrie Sheffield...: Yeah. Well, and you actually have to audition, so I had to audition to read my own book.

Bill Walton: You had to audition for your own book.

Carrie Sheffield...: Yes, so I am proud to say that I made it. I was allowed, bestowed the honor of reading my own book.

Bill Walton: [00:53:00] So before we close, I have to offer my peanut gallery here. Is there anything we should have asked that we haven't asked in the room?

Sarah Walton: I think reading the intense details of her childhood are hair-raising.

Bill Walton: Yeah.

Sarah Walton: You didn't go into that as much.

Bill Walton: Well, I didn't go into the hair-raising. The question was should we have covered the hair-raising details of your childhood more? Maybe. Maybe next time we can do that. When we come back, we get into it. Once [00:53:30] it's been released and people have a chance to pick up a copy right away, why don't we plan on having you back, and we will talk about some of the more, what's the word I'm looking for here? Adjective, help me out here. You're the writer. You get 99 percentile. Anyway, it's vivid. We're going to bring you back.

Carrie Sheffield...: The more colorful.

Bill Walton: So Carrie Sheffield, thanks for being here. This is great. Motor Home Prophecies, [00:54:00] soon to be coming out on available on Amazon. Who's your publisher?

Carrie Sheffield...: Hachette.

Bill Walton:

Hachette. And highly recommended it, and the audio version, I would suspect, is a very powerful listen. This has been the Bill Walton Show and, as you know, you can find us in all the major platforms: YouTube, Rumble, Substack, and all the major audio platforms. If you like this and you're not a subscriber, please subscribe. If you like it, you are ready, ask your friends to subscribe. Also, please send [00:54:30] your comments. We do take them into consideration. It helps guide us towards the next shows we want to do and, as Carrie points out, we are aiming at truth here, and truth is hard to find in the modern world, so we can enlist your help to help us get us there anyway, so thanks for joining and hope you enjoyed just a piece of Carrie Sheffield's story.