

EPISODE 429

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[0:00:32.9]

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[INTRODUCTION]

[00:01:23.2]

FT: Welcome to So Money everyone. How are you? How's it going? I'm your host, Farnoosh Torabi. Thanks for joining me on this Monday. I have to say, I just finished an incredible interview with the guest you're about to hear and he is one of my, if not, the oldest guest I've had on this show and also the most accomplished.

Howard Eisenberg is here. He is almost 90, about to celebrate his 90th birthday this year. He's an award winning author, journalist, song writer, and play write. He's written a film, he's written 10 books and he's also written a musical called *Million Dollar Bet* and later this year, Howard will be publishing another book called *Adorable Scoundrels*, which is a treasury of toddler poems for grandparents.

Howard was also the song writer for Eddie Fisher, the American pop sensation who sold millions of records and, quite notably, was one of Elizabeth Taylor's many husbands. And finally, if you

are not familiar with Howard or his work, you might be very familiar with the book that his late wife, Arlene, co-authored with her daughters called *What To Expect When You're Expecting*.

You know that book, the parenting bible. If you haven't read it, you have probably a friend that's read it or you're probably reading it in your future. I could have talked to Howard for days on end. Whenever I get the opportunity to meet somebody who has such perspective, I have so many questions, I don't even know where to begin and you can tell I am a little all over the place with this interview.

Because his stories are so colorful, so riveting, so life altering in some ways that he just takes you to another place, another world, another time and then you kind of have to find yourself back in reality to remember that you're here and you have to ask him another question because you're conducting an interview after all. Quite the human being this Howard Eisenberg.

We talk about how he developed his passion for writing, it was quite accidental. How life changed after getting married and his wife publishing this international bestselling book that for decades has been on the New York Times bestseller list and his views on the world today. How is the world doing in 2016? Is this the best of times? The worst of times?

Here is Howard Eisenberg.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:03:42.3]

FT: Howard Eisenberg, welcome to So Money. How are you?

[00:03:45.9]

HE: It's such a beautiful day, how could I be anything but happy?

[00:03:50.2]

FT: I know, finally a beautiful day, right? You're on the Upper West Side, I'm in Brooklyn, we've had a pretty long and difficult winter/spring.

[00:04:02.2]

HE: Well, it wasn't that difficult come on.

[00:04:03.9]

FT: You have a lot more perspective than I do Howard. You're 90 years old, you're my eldest...

[00:04:10.1]

HE: Three months to go.

[00:04:11.7]

FT: Three months? Oh almost okay. Almost 90, you are my eldest guest on this show to date and so I want to ask you what would you say is your best decade ever? I'm in my 30's and I feel like every decade, I think I know it all. I think I'm like, "How could life get any better?" But certainly, hopefully it will.

[00:04:37.7]

HE: That's a great financial question.

[00:04:40.5]

FT: It's not a financial question at all, we'll get to money in a second.

[00:04:46.7]

HE: I'm just thinking that this is a financial show. My best decade, there's no question about it, I met and married my wife. I was in my early 20's and she was 18, I met her when she was 16 and she just made my life wonderful and I've had 50 years with her and I'm sorry I break up every time I talk about her. Arlene was just, I called her wonder woman, I call her St. Arlene. She was just great. I was so blessed.

[00:05:25.4]

FT: She was an amazing woman. I read her books. I think most people who had children or are about to have children will be reading her books that she co-authored with your two daughters and in many ways, she was your writing partner all these years.

[00:05:42.5]

HE: Well yes, right.

[00:05:43.8]

FT: And it happened unexpectedly, it wasn't that you never I think even intended to be a writer and she perhaps fell into it as a result of being married to you. How did you work together? How did that collaboration worked?

[00:05:58.1]

HE: Well at the beginning we shared a typewriter built for two. I had a Smith Corona electric and its right behind me. I still use it for envelopes and the first time she used it was totally accidental and my fault.

[00:06:22.2]

FT: You had writer's block, right? You had to write a very long magazine piece.

[00:06:26.4]

HE: It's the first and only time that I had writer's block and I had a story due about Mother's Day and I spent about, well, I guess I had a month to do it and I kept rewriting the lead. I was new at this at that point. I had written for minor magazines, adventure magazines and that's how I got started but then when I got this it was my first major assignment and I had to make it work. It had to be right.

So I kept rewriting and the lesson I learned from this is, never keep rewriting the lead and that could apply financially too when you start a business. If you're doing the same thing over and over and it's not working just move onto the next thing. So Arlene, after I spent days and nights trying to get this article right, Arlene on the day before it was due, a Sunday morning said, "Howard move over."

She had been with me at the interview and she just wrote a draft of it that was just great. All I had to do was polish it so I brought it in to the editors and it was This Week Magazine that used to be, it's with one of the dead dinosaurs in the publishing industry. It was the Herald Tribune, weekend supplement.

So I bought it in, they liked the piece, they called me the next day and said, "The problem is we don't have room in the layout for her name so it's just going to be by Howard Eisenberg," and that was the last time until after she died that anything read other than "by Arlene and Howard Eisenberg".

[00:08:14.3]

FT: In some ways your writer's block was such a stroke of luck and it was meant to be in some ways because it was really what probably started her career as a writer. I mean between you and Arlene and your daughters, all of you, your family has taken over the book stores. You're probably, I read, on every shelf more or less. You kind of fell into this. But ultimately, do you think you discovered your passion or is it just something that you're good at and it paid the bills?

[00:08:44.8]

HE: Well, it started in the Army. I was 18 and it was the end of World War II. I was only there for the last six weeks, thank heavens. I was in the infantry and when we landed we finally wound up at a SS Barracks in Flossenbürg, Germany and my captain noticed that I've had two years of college. So he said, "Write me a newspaper".

He wanted to keep the guys busy, so I did. I wrote two issues of the Company K Riflemen and when I saw everybody reading what I'd written and I liked what I'd written, I said, "I want to do this for the rest of my life," and that's what's happened.

[00:09:24.4]

FT: Well, let's talk about money. You've been pushing money on me since we got on the show, I guess it's a financial show.

[00:09:31.9]

HE: Yeah, I think money is great but I really don't — I fortunately have enough of it.

[00:09:38.7]

FT: But you didn't always, right? Let's go back to a time when you were transitioning. My guess is that when Arlene's book became a multi-national, international bestseller, maybe your lives changed at that point but maybe it was even earlier than that? So when was there a time of financial transition in your life and how did you deal with it?

[00:09:58.2]

HE: After we got married, we moved to an apartment in Forest Hills for a year and then I was working for Eddie Fisher, the 50's singing star, 50's, 60's singing star and we had enough money to buy a house in Garden City and when we move there, the freelance life was beginning too and I guess I got my timing a little mixed up because Eddie was in the Korean War with the US Army band.

So all during his absence for two years, Arlene and I were freelance writing and when it starts, it's like any business I guess, although I never think of it as a business. You have to make contacts with editors. You've got to — things start to really get good and you get invited by the Reader's Digest to come and have lunch and then editors ask you to lunch and the assignments come in.

But there are moments when you don't have the money to pay for your electric bill or your mortgage and I just — going through stuff in the cellar the other day, I found letters in which I am pleading with the bank to give me an extra month. So yeah, it was tough at first and you have to keep going when you're a freelance writer or you are going to fall into a deep pit and be covered up with slime.

[00:11:42.1]

FT: And some things never change. I know people today have the same struggles with freelancing. It's that inconsistent paycheck. So looking back, what were some of the ways that you kept afloat, besides the bank helping you out maybe in a pinch?

[00:11:58.6]

HE: Well at that time, the ambition of every freelance writer, or almost everyone was to get to write a textbook because textbooks were called an annuity. So we were invited by McGraw Hill to do a health textbook for colleges and it sounded like a marvellous opportunity. So we spent the whole summer in Washington interviewing everybody at NIH and we got back.

We had volumes and volumes of notes and they had usually used academics to write textbooks so they wanted to try and experiment and use popular writers. So we got started on it and I had at the time a job with the medical magazine as well which is a way to be sure that you had an income and health insurance.

So Arlene was doing most of the writing on the book. So she wrote several chapters, submitted them. They're all passed out to academics for critics and the critics came back negatively, not all

of them but enough so that that McGraw Hill had decided in a meeting that probably they'd made a mistake in having writers rather than academics was not the way to go.

So we go into this meeting and it's a long mahogany table with editors and financial people on every side of it and little me and little Arlene at the other end and they said, "Sorry, we've got bad news," and then Arlene said, "Well tell us what it is," and they said, "Well, it's too didactic. You need to loosen up a little bit and I'm afraid it's not going to work."

Arlene said, "Give me a month." I was ready to give it up because she was doing most of it anyway. Arlene was tough and she was creative and she went home. She rewrote these two chapters, they went out to the academics and they came back with raves. So we did the book. Mostly I did polishing, she did most of the organizing.

She was a great organizer and in the end because they had not completely trusted that we would come through with the book that they wanted, they assigned an academic to do a paperback. So when our book came out, it did very well but kids started buying paperbacks instead of hard covers and so we never had the annuity, but it was a great experience.

[00:14:54.0]

FT: It sounds like it. What do you make Howard of the world today publishing you talk about kids wanting to buy paperbacks and fast forward to now, kids are reading — everything is electronic and the publishing industry in some ways is either dying or changing rapidly. So how have things change and how have things stayed the same for you?

[00:15:13.9]

HE: Well when we got into the publishing business, we had done an article for Parade Magazine and it came out on a Sunday and on a Monday, we got three publisher offers and an agent called us with saying he wanted to represent us. So he chose the one from, well it doesn't matter which one he shows but we wrote a book called, *You Had to be Your Own Doctor, Sometimes*, and it was pretty successful.

We got onto some major TV shows, but those are the days where you submitted a proposal to publishers and through an agent and they said “yes”, they gave you the contract and life went on. You wrote the book and the challenge of that first book was to say, “Can I write a book? All I’ve done is magazine articles,” and then I said to myself and to Arlene, “Well what’s a book? It’s like 15 articles. We can do that,” so we did write it.

Then came my neighbor next door who wanted me to write, *How to Be Your Own Lawyer Sometimes*. So he finally convinced me that we had to do it and we did it but I don’t want to be stuck in the self-help book category. So we moved off onto other things and I did a book with my brother who was an OB-GYN, which should have been titled, *Confessions of an OB-GYN* but I didn’t want to embarrass him.

[00:16:47.0]

FT: That’s a great title. That’s a great title. You could run into so many directions with that book.

[00:16:54.2]

HE: Well, I struggled to get it and better title it and we came up with *Night Calls* but it’s a really, really good book. I am very proud of it.

[00:17:03.7]

FT: Yeah.

[00:17:04.1]

HE: But my brother was very shy at that point in his life. So after he did his first tour and a TV show, he said, “I don’t want to do anymore,” so the book died. I really want that book republished and I’m starting to find somebody who could publish it because then we could use the title *Confessions of an OB-GYN*.

[00:17:27.1]

FT: There you go.

[00:17:28.0]

HE: Well, I actually sold five chapters from the book to magazines.

[00:17:32.2]

FT: Howard what would you say is, how you enjoyed your money? Tell us a little bit about your lifestyle as you were raising your family.

[00:17:39.8]

HE: Well it didn't start with a lot of money. We were living in Garden City and just meeting our bills and my eldest daughter came home one morning and said, "Raymond came to school today and he had photographs from his family's Christmas trip to London and Paris and can't we go too?" So I spent the next half hour explaining that on a freelance writer's income we could not go too.

But at that point, my youngest daughter, Heidi, who by the way joined Arlene in writing, *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, and has continued it all these years and expanded it magnificently into a website and a foundation that helps under income women with free books. Heidi walked in, she was three years old or four year's old, she was carrying a little child's duffel bag all packed and a pyjama arm was hanging out dangling from it and Heidi said, "I'm ready to go. When are we leaving?" And that was so beautiful that I said, "Well, I'll see what I can do," and I made phone calls and I got a free trip to Europe on an issue.

[00:19:11.4]

FT: Wow, who did you call?

[00:19:14.1]

HE: Well fortunately, it was a company who was just starting a passenger stuff, it previously had been freight. So we went on the SS America to England. We spent the next year travelling, three kids, a lot of textbooks, we went to all over Europe and to Israel living check to check. We rented our house, my father sent us the checks to American Express and we lived never knowing when the next grocery bill payment would come from.

Travelling to Paris, I remember going to Paris running out of gas, not having any money, hoping that there was money at American Express and there was. But that was a great year. We just loved it. So spending the money when we had it, we believe in tithing so that was one way to spend money.

[00:20:15.6]

FT: Donations.

[00:20:16.1]

HE: Yeah, we just liked to help people, people helped us and it's a great world. I don't believe in amassing money. I think that if you have enough, I feel so sad about the people who are at the top of the heap of this country who many of them are wonderful people and are very generous, but the ones who just want to keep piling up millions and then the billions and then the trillions, I pity them. I really do.

[SPONSOR BREAK]

[00:20:50.3]

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:21:51.2]

FT: You were not born during the depression, you were born a little bit after the depression. How did your parents raise you financially? With what sort of financial philosophies and mentality?

[00:22:04.8]

HE: Well, if you got a dollar a week for allowance, that was great and I learned a lot from my father who was very creative and very imaginative and was brought up on the Lower East Side and designed and made slipper socks that you could wear during the night because otherwise your feet would freeze and some years later opened his own slipper factory in New Jersey, which was very successful until — I have a photograph if I could find it quickly I would show it to you.

It shows a picture of him with some of the people in his factory, the staff. Well maybe six people and there was an electric lightbulb hanging from wires and that was the undoing of my father's factory. It caught fire and as the Daily Mirror, one of the newspapers long gone, wrote in a headline, "Not a soul was saved." But my father spent the next five to 10 years repaying money that he owed. He did not declare bankruptcy and his integrity is something that I am very proud of.

[00:23:30.8]

FT: What do you make of the world today Howard? I mean really, people say the world is getting to be a scarier place, a worse place. Do you agree with that or do you think that there's a lot that we can be joyful about and looking forward to?

[00:23:44.4]

HE: Well my hope is that creativity will take over and undo the damage. It's kind of a desperate hope but I know that if we think back to centuries and thousands of years, everybody has always felt like the world was about to end. It was a plague, a black plague or it was the flu epidemic during World War One.

It was the war to end all wars was then to end all war and people have always been the optimist and always been the pessimist and the world has looked bleak very often before and somehow or other it survived. The trouble is that we were pushing the envelope very hard these days and with what we call global warming but really is global chaos in terms of weather. The possibilities of coastal cities being washed away.

I'm living in Brown Stone in New York's Upper West Side and it's a very steep hill down to the Hudson River but I can imagine that this building which we bought for song and became a symphony can become a song again or become a plaintive cry *cree d'coeur* if the waters continue to rise. So we really, really must do something about it but in the meantime, we need to enjoy what life we have and I have a new girlfriend.

[00:25:30.0]

FT: You do?

[00:25:31.4]

HE: Yeah, she's only 76.

[00:25:34.1]

FT: Only 76, she's a young one. How did you meet? The Tinder? No I'm kidding!

[00:25:40.5]

HE: She's very beautiful, this is an old picture of her. She's very beautiful and she's very sweet and she so reminds me of Arlene and I don't like to say that's why — I'm with her because she's who she is, not because she reminded me of Arlene but there's just a great commonality that I feel very blessed again to enjoy our days. We need to somehow maintain being optimist and so in my writing, I need to live to be a 120 because I've got so many projects to do.

[00:26:15.3]

FT: Well, I have to ask you why work so hard right now. You should just be hanging out with your girlfriend, going out, having fun, relaxing, you have all the money in the world, why keep writing?

[00:26:28.9]

HE: Not all the money in the world.

[00:26:29.7]

FT: Well, you have enough right?

[00:26:32.1]

HE: Yeah, definitely.

[00:26:33.7]

FT: Yeah so what keeps you motivated?

[00:26:37.0]

HE: What motivates me? Because I love to write. I've been writing all my life and there's nothing as satisfying as looking back at a piece that you've just written and saying, "Dammit, it's good!" And then hearing people tell you. I did a piece for the New York Observer and they wanted something on a writer's journey, it's online I guess.

[00:27:00.8]

FT: I read it. I read it.

[00:27:02.6]

HE: Oh did you, really?

[00:27:03.4]

FT: Yes. Yeah and you said you love to write in the very first paragraph, that's ultimately what has kept you going so strong all these years.

[00:27:14.9]

HE: Yeah and I've tried everything that I can possibly try. I've written a film script. My son and I have written that, it was my idea and we just developed it together. I love working with my son who is a writer that's had two wonderful books and it's just — and I've written a musical and I brought him on that too. He wrote a couple of hilarious scenes in it. We had a second reading at the JCC in Manhattan and it was really, really well received. So we're just finding a place to go with it but from 80th street to 45th and Broadway, it's only a couple of miles but it takes 10 years to travel that far.

[00:28:02.2]

FT: Oh yeah, if ever. If ever you get there, right.

[00:28:05.0]

HE: Yeah, I don't know. But I loved writing it and as I sat in the second row watching it at the JCC, I felt like I was floating in air. I sat down as a writer and I got up as a play write. It's just so wonderful.

[00:28:21.7]

FT: Some writers would say and I think I would agree that, "While I don't love the process of writing, I love having written." That's a famous quote and I didn't invent it. Someone else said that, but what's even more beautiful and magical about something like a play is that you really get to see it come to life, you get to immediately see people react to it and yeah, that's quite the drug.

[00:28:46.8]

HE: Well, I have ideas for other couple of plays too. One of them with my girlfriend because she's involved in a situation that comes more and more with people our age, which is that — and this is the subtitle. I don't have a title for it but it's, "When children become the parents" and they try to dictate and usually out of the best of motives, they want to find you a place where it's safe and at the same time, leave you there so that they can just park you there so that they can go and live their lives. This is a play that exist into my head because she doesn't want to be there. She wants to be out in the world and we want to travel together but her family is making it difficult.

[00:29:39.9]

FT: Where would you like to travel to next?

[00:29:42.6]

HE: Well for my 90th birthday, which is in August, we're talking about going to St. Lawrence Waterway in a river boat and taking a lot of the family for four days and then if we really like it then Bonnie and I will stay on for kind of a honeymoon. We have to work this out and we have things that we have to accomplish first.

[00:30:08.0]

FT: Yes, Howard what's the one bit of advice that people ask you for time and time again that you find yourself being the expert on? That people say, "This is my friend Howard," or, "This is my dad Howard, you should ask him about this," because you know so much about it or you are so passionate, besides writing?

[00:30:27.9]

HE: Well let's make that question A but I hope you'll leave time for question B.

[00:30:33.8]

FT: Sure.

[00:30:34.3]

HE: They ask you about what you're writing these days, with question A, question A is I think I hear most often, I heard that night that we're having maybe 75 people in our living room, Arlene had died that morning and, this is going to be hard and they wanted to know, they wanted advice, they said, "Are you going to write something about what makes marriage so successful and what they need to do to have a happy marriage and keep a relationship healthy?"

I start to think about it and the first two pieces of advice came from, one of them at least came from her mother, which is a pretty common piece of advice, "Never go to bed mad." Really the word is "angry" not "mad" and when I was asked by another woman I'd been going out with sort

of for a while, “Don’t you ever have fights? Did you ever have fights with your wife?” And I said, “No, I never had fights with Arlene. Everything was always wonderful.”

Then I realized, “Yes, we had fights,” and when we did, I listened to the advice of her mother, which echoed in my ears, “Never go to bed mad.” So I would always apologize to Arlene even if I thought I was right and we went to bed happy and the other thing, at the moment I am stammering, I can’t remember. Maybe it will come back tonight.

[00:32:28.9]

FT: That’s — wow. I was going to ask you that question but you beat me to it.

[00:32:34.4]

HE: I got the second one, this was from Arlene and I think it’s brilliant. She said, “When there is an argument, the one to whom its most important should win and you take turns doing that.” There’s always more important and the fight can go on because anger builds up and you forget that it’s not really that important to you but it’s important to your partner. So let the partner win, if she or he feels at that moment cares about it a lot. So those are the two major things that I can say off hand.

[00:33:14.6]

FT: Well they say that one of the biggest reasons couples fight and sometimes divorce is because of money.

[00:33:22.0]

HE: Yeah, sure.

[00:33:23.2]

FT: Did you and Arlene have any disagreements around the money or different takes on how to manage the money?

[00:33:33.8]

HE: Not really, because money was never the important thing to us. It was doing what we loved doing and it was family. We had three wonderful children and I mean wonderful and they still are in contrast to Bonnie's and maybe I shouldn't say this but they're so concerned about her safety that they don't care what she wants. But my kids, they love the idea that I've got a new one in my life, a new woman in my life and whatever I want to do is just fine by them. So I don't know how that relates to your question but — what was the question?

[00:34:25.0]

FT: The question was did you and Arlene ever have disagreements around money? What kind of conversations did you have about money?

[00:34:33.9]

HE: Okay, there was one. It wasn't about money really. It was about, we were living in Rockland County and our children had jobs and had just gotten jobs in New York and Arlene was working and was an executive editor for a magazine just temporarily because she wanted to help them out. So on her lunch hour, she started looking for a house that we can all live in that would satisfy the children and would satisfy us because the children had said, "If you stay where you're living, you'll never going to see us because it's too far away."

And to me that was, "Okay that's normal. Kids go away and that's their right," but Arlene wanted to be with our children so she started shopping on her lunch hour for a Brown Stone and she found this one on West 80th Street and the people who got there before her couldn't get a mortgage. So she said, "We've got to move there," and we didn't have enough money to put a down payment but I was able to borrow it from my cousin's husband and \$5,000 to make it happen.

And so we bought it and moved into a place that was kind of a wreck but it's turned out to be a jewel and as I said, we bought it for a song and now it's a symphony but it was Arlene that wanted to move to New York and it was hard to get me to leave the country. I thought it was really nice there but it was more important to her and there goes that argument thing. So I said, "Okay, we'll do it," and it was a great move. She's always made great moves.

[00:36:27.5]

FT: How many years ago was this?

[00:36:29.0]

HE: It was about 1980.

[00:36:30.7]

FT: 1980, so about 35, 36 years ago. I don't need to tell you the math, that's probably a nice little nest egg you're living in.

[00:36:42.8]

HE: I can just tell you it's worth about, I don't know maybe 20 times what we paid for it.

[00:36:47.9]

FT: Oh my gosh.

[00:36:48.8]

HE: But we don't want that Hudson River to come up and wash it.

[00:36:51.0]

FT: No, and I was going to say and you're scaring me with your Hudson River story and I used to live on 80th street. We were neighbors all these years, maybe that's why I really just liked living up there so much. Your energy, your spirit was consuming the neighborhood.

[00:37:05.6]

HE: Let's hope. Well, I don't know about mine, but there is so much energy in the neighborhood. There are musicians, there are writers, there are therapists, Colin Powell's daughter lived down the street.

[00:37:18.6]

FT: You have a new piece of work that's coming out soon, right? It's your collection of poems dedicated to your grandkids and all grandchildren out there. Tell us about this piece of work.

[00:37:29.4]

HE: Well a lot of the things that I did over the years, Arlene and I always wrote articles together. We wrote for the Saturday Evening Post, we wrote for Cosmopolitan, for Ladies Journal, McCall's, Parade, Reader's Digest, it was always by Arlene and Howard Eisenberg and it was wonderful. We wrote for Lick Magazine and we got some awards and if it was a kind of article that she was best in and she would do most of the writing. If it was the kind of thing that I loved to do, I love to watch her writing.

But we always did it together and always shared the limelight and when she got involved with Heidi who was pregnant and they decided to write a book about pregnancy, that was a moment at which she continued to do some writing with me but she became Heidi's partner more than mine and I was fine because it was an important project. It's become important for millions, well almost billions by this time, of women in 37 languages and 34 million copies.

But at that point, she was doing book tours when the book came out and we went to Australia and New Zealand on two coach tickets because she had been given a first class ticket by a

publisher in Australia and she did not want to go without me. So she traded them in for coach tickets and we went that way.

When we got there, she did a whole lot of interviews and in Melbourne, there was a great zoo and I thought about doing a book about zoos. So I went there and took lots of notes about animals and when we went home, I had a lot of postcards and I started writing postcards to our grandchildren and instead of just saying, "Hey, we has a wonderful time, wish you were here." I started writing what I call "guess who?" poems and they were about the animals.

And there was a clue in every line because I had all this information about them and the last word was left blank so the kids could guess what the animal was and I got those books here. It goes, *The Guess Who Zoo*, *The Guess Who Farm*, and *The Guess Who Neighborhood* have occurred since then. So those books happened because again, Arlene, whenever she read to our grandchildren and she read poetry to them, they gather around her.

She would stop, she would pause to let them guess the rhymes and that's where I got the idea to do this book. The book is 43 poems and again, Arlene is involved because once she was doing *What to Expect in the Toddler Years*, I spent a lot of time with her and met a lot of toddlers and she used to introduce me when she did talks saying, "That if you're going to have a toddler, you've got to have a sense of humor," and then she'd bring me up to read some of the poems that I had before it was a book.

Afterwards parents would come up to me and say, "Where can I get the book?" And 20 years later, I actually got it published. For example, *Holding Pattern*, it's a beautiful stuff by Susan Robinson and illustrator, "Why am I pushing this stroller? Holding my toddler, looking hairy, I had no idea when I bought it, she'd want to be carried." She'd prefer to be carried and then I could open to any page.

Crisis in the Maternity Ward. "Chelsey, Kimberly, maybe Dakota, Geneva, Cindy, not one aota of time left to us before it's too late. I've got to name this child and it's going to be great. Valerie, Ivy, how about Sasha? Or would she prefer the sound of Natasha. We're going nowhere. Our quest much to a aimless, oops, here comes the nurse. Well for now, she'll be nameless." That actually happened with my first daughter. We couldn't figure out her name.

[00:41:53.4]

FT: How long did it take you to give her a name?

[00:41:56.0]

HE: Well...

[00:41:56.8]

FT: Did you bring her home without a name? Some people are doing that now, they're bringing their children home from the hospital without a name.

[00:42:01.9]

HE: It said "Baby Eisenberg" on her wrist when we took her home. It's so funny that we didn't know what to name her, but I'll just read one more because I know you can't go on forever. "Okay, careful what you wish for. We couldn't wait for her first step but that was ill advised. Suddenly he's a toddler and now, we're terrorized."

[00:42:30.4]

FT: Yeah, I'm a prisoner in my own home these days, what can I say? My son is two.

[00:42:34.2]

HE: Oh really?

[00:42:35.2]

FT: He's almost two, he'll be two in a month. Where does the time go?

[00:42:41.0]

HE: Well, it's tougher especially I don't know how old you are but if you're in 40's and you're having a child, you're more eager than ever. That's why I have *Mom in the Middle*. "It was simply grand 40 to have my first baby at last but now faced with reality, I sure hope he'll grow up fast."

[00:43:08.1]

FT: And on the Upper Westside, I'm sure there are more than a few parents in their 40's for the first time.

[00:43:14.1]

HE: It's an interesting thing is you see a lot of fathers pushing strollers now. That's changed a lot.

[00:43:19.4]

FT: Yeah, did you ever changed diapers Howard? Was that something that dads did?

[00:43:22.3]

HE: Yeah, I did.

[00:43:23.2]

FT: You did, yeah?

[00:43:24.6]

HE: There weren't many fathers who did in those days.

[00:43:27.1]

FT: Yeah, not so hands on back then but definitely these days. Stay at home dads some of them. I wrote a book called *When She Makes More*.

[00:43:36.1]

HE: Oh that's a good title.

[00:43:38.7]

FT: Howard, it's such a pleasure to connect with you. Thank you so much for sharing your stories with us.

[00:43:43.6]

HE: Well I had such a wonderful time talking to you. I have to invite you to lunch or dinner.

[00:43:49.1]

FT: Oh I would love that. Thank you so much. Have a nice day.

[00:43:51.8]

HE: You too.

[END]