

HOTFOOT 68  
COBURN  
SIDE 2

- JC In terms of maybe trying to steal a piece of candy at the drugstore or when I was a little boy or that kind of thing?
- KF No, not counting speeding, childhood stealing, smoking marijuana. Possibly counting covert operations in Asia, if you count that as being on the wrong side of the law.
- JC If I discount some of the things we did in Southeast Asia, I have never been involved in anything in my stateside assignments with the Army or EDS that was anywhere even close to being on the wrong side of the law. But I was involved in some things that I guess you can classify as... certainly the countries we were operating in would classify it as being on the wrong side of the law. We never looked at it that way. The mentality was not that we were doing something illegal, even though we weren't consciously...we were very conscious of the fact that there were activities we were going to do that we were breaking the laws.
- KF But you looked at it more as a combat situation. 245...this is the first time Rashid got his act. It is the first roadblock. He jumps out and begins talking to the people at the roadblock immediately. Goes into his act rather quickly. How did you feel about Reza at that point? Did you feel confident in him or apprehensive? Do you admire the way he did it?
- JC At that point?
- KF Yeah, this is the first roadblock.
- JC Apprehensive. Well not only just about him, but just apprehensive about the whole situation. Little different set of circumstances than when the Colonel and we went on a recon trip. We got stopped at a few places, but here we are now with a much larger group, only one Iranian, as opposed to two. Apprehensive, yes.
- KF Apprehensive about whether he could bring it off; whether he could do it.
- JC And really, Ken, what was really occupying more of my mind than whether he personally could do it was what are we all going to do? Because, in my mind, that's not necessarily the end of the road, even if they lock him up and throw the key away. We are still all around and maybe we can say things or do things or whatever that would allow us to continue or whatever. I wasn't looking at Reza at that point as a saviour.
- KF You were thinking if he fails, what will I do?
- JC Plus I'm in the second vehicle, so all the activity is taking place up here, and I'm sitting back here. So there's also a possibility I could have said, "Hey I never saw the guys before in my life!" "Who me?"
- KF 'No, I'm from the Embassy. William Sullivan's the name." When he put the oil in the can containing the money, did you think that was a pretty smart idea?
- JC Yes.
- KF 247...Tell me a few words what the Zanjan is like. Did you go through the town?

- JC Yeah, we went through Zanzan. Not a very big place, Ken. As I remember it, and maybe we didn't go completely through the town. Keep in mind, now, I went through Zanzan twice. So I get confused. But it's not a very...certainly not approaching the size of a Gazvin or ...
- KF A lot smaller than Rezian, I imagine. Stone buildings, was there a proper main street?
- JC A main street, some stone buildings, yeah.
- KF And the other buildings...
- JC Were more of the typical...when I think of stone buildings, I think of something like you see constructed in the office type building in Tehran as opposed to their housing type structures which are more...I don't even know what they are, but they are not stone ones. Kind of adobe or something. Maybe they are just cinder blocks. I never got into...
- KF But on the main street...were there dwelling houses on the main street? Was it that small a town?
- JC Yeah.
- KF Okay, pretty small town. Looked clean, dirty...?
- JC Fairly clean. Pretty squared away little town. And I can remember when we went through the first time because of this police chief business that we went through. We went by to see the Professor. Police department was fairly well kept up.
- KF 260...how did you feel going into Mahabad?
- JC I felt fine right before that because things were going pretty smooth. We hadn't even seen anybody for awhile going through the mountains. We saw some villagers, but everything had been pretty smooth sailing.
- KF Okay. 262...Gayden and Rashid did a little number with passports there.
- JC Oh yeah, shell game.
- KF What was your reaction to that? Did you think...notice it and think "hey, this is terrific". Did you think it was funny?
- JC Well at first I didn't really know what was about to take place. But then it dawned on me what they were doing and I was kind of in admiration of what they were pulling off here.
- KF And a little amused as well? Is there anything characteristic about Gayden in that? It must have taken a certain amount of courage.
- JC Yeah I think there is. Gayden's...
- KF Strikes me as the kind of stroke you might rely on Gayden for.
- JC I think it was a very...I don't think anybody would have said that they wouldn't have expected something like that from Gayden, let's just put it that way. It fits.

- KF You would look to Simons to scare somebody to death; you would look to Gayden to do something a little funny with the passports. Does he ever do anything with cards? Because he plays poker. Has he ever done card tricks or does he know how to cheat at cards, just for a joke?
- JC I don't know; I've accused him of it. No, I've never seen him do anything real fancy with the cards.
- KF But it's a bit like shuffling cards this fooling around with the passports.
- JC Plus he's pretty slick with the words on top of that, that kind of throws you. Very expected.
- KF Good. A characteristic Gayden number. Page 264...Oh, this is after Bolourian gets up and leaves the room. When he comes back, he's got an M1 carbine. But before he came back, I say, "Coburn thought, 'what now'". I'm sure you never told me that, but you must have thought 'what now'. How did you feel?
- JC I was very apprehensive, especially after we got this introduction about this guy being in the Shah's jail. We hadn't pieced together any of this thing about him being a Communist and all those kind of things. I don't remember that specifically at the time. I think we did all that after the fact. The story we got was that he had spent all these years in the Shah's jail. And I would just imagine had it in for anybody that was suspiciously associated with Savak in any fashion, or the Shah's crown in any fashion. It never dawned on me that we were going to actually be put under an armed guard for any length of time. So when he came back with the weapon and was clearing in and that kind of thing. Actually putting a round in the chamber I believe was what he was doing. Apprehensive, alert.
- KF How aware were you of Simons throughout this little scene? Were you kind of watching him out of the corner of your eye?
- JC Well he was on alert most of the time, Ken. Much more so than some of the other people. The eyes not missing anything, shifty; never said hardly anything. Stayed fairly close to Reza when he could. I was not privvy to all of their conversation, but there was some dialogue taking place between he and Reza. At that particular moment, since I was feeling that apprehension, I wondered what he might be doing. I don't know what he was feeling. Whether he was feeling apprehension or not. It was almost until...there was very little expression change. I don't remember him shifting position or anything.
- KF I thought you might have been keeping an eye on him for some kind of signal just in case it might come.
- JC We were kind of working in tandem. Me having the other group in tow and him having the first group in tow. So signal might not be the right word, but certainly I kept a close watch on him. But not only that, Ken, I didn't just do that by happenstance. He told me before we ever started to keep an eye on him.
- KF 278...you're in Rezia in the compound at the religion school. Rashid goes inside. You're all left outside. There are bullet holes in this wall and there are shot up cars in the compound. Paul's reaction was 'I think we bought the farm'. What would have been your worst fantasy at that moment?

JC I had two concerns. The crowd outside was really trying to beat the doors down, and they were very upset with the fact that we got in there as opposed to them. And I was somewhat pre-occupied with that. And what was going on around this gate where they were packed up against. Then just the wonderment of what Reza was up against on the inside. Because I was almost certain that there was going to be some contact with Tehran at this point. And I kind of had mixed emotions. I kind of felt like "well good, for once and for all, we're going to get that over with and that will be behind us". I wasn't that concerned that Tehran would know anything about us now. About us specifically. Whoever they contacted. What I was concerned about was them turning us around and heading us back to Tehran. That's what bothered me more than anything. In terms of...when something happened to us, I was fairly convinced that in civilization as we were in then, if it wasn't for a mob, if it wasn't for a group scene where things can get out of hand. If it was a very controlled environment then nothing was going to happen to us bad. They were really going to look out and protect. They didn't want any negative press, so to speak.

KF What about the mob outside the gate?

JC That was a concern. I was more worried about a mob-type thing. When you get that many people...there is really not a whole lot of control that takes place. That concerned me more than anything. That if they were to convince one of those goofy guards or something to open the gates, or maybe even one of the goofy guards to appease the people at the gates to take one of us to give him to them. You talk about fantasy; that's the kind of thing that I was thinking about. It was like the lynch mob thing. That's what kept going through my mind. Even though I didn't understand a lot of the dialogue. It was just frantic. Anytime you get that many people together, they can do a lot of things. And of course we had witnessed some of that. We also heard this story, it in fact happened, where this fellow in Tehran had gotten basically mutilated, arms, legs, just pulled apart by the crowds

KF An American?

JC No it was an Iranian.

KF What, in the demonstrations.

JC Yes.

KF I've got some more questions, but what I think I'll do is send you a note if I may.

JC Sure. When are you coming back? Do you know yet?

KF I expect it will be before Christmas. If you get to London in the meantime, if you don't call me, I'll cut your head off! As Simons would say.