

HOTFOOT 46
Interview with Bruce Simons
November 17, 1981

KF Okay. You know what this is all about, basically. I'm doing the story of this raid in Iran. Now tell me when you were born.

BS March 6, 1943.

KF And where.

BS St. Louis, Missouri.

KF What's your earliest memory?

BS I remember being washed in a sink. I think I was on the West Coast then. We went to meet my dad when he came back from the Phillippines. I think I was around 3 then; 2 ½, something like that.

KF You were living in California then?

BS No, we were living in Missouri. Then my mom went out there to meet my dad. I'm pretty sure that's what happened. We went out there, to the West Coast.

KF Was he away a lot when you were small?

BS Yes.

KF He was in the Phillippines and then where would he have gone from there?

BS Well, after he came back at the end of the second World War. He was away all that time.

KF But then you went to New Jersey.

BS We moved there, and he was working with my Uncle Stanley in the printing business until 1951, when he went back in during the Korean War to be head of the Ranger training camp at Eglin Air Force Base. So he was away during that time.

KF Let's talk about that period of 5 years. Stanley Simons told me he thought it was 1953. But I thought that was a little late, because wasn't the Korean War over by 1953?

BS Yes. We moved to Eglin Air Force Base in 1953; 53-54, before we went to Turkey. It was 51-53 that he was there and we were still in New Jersey, and my dad, at that time, was making up his mind whether he would go back into military permanently. He was sort of in-between. Then he decided to stay in the military at that point. Then we moved down to Florida.

KF Tell me about whatever you remember about those 5 years. So you would have been at the beginning 3 years old and at the end, 8 years old. What do you remember about time in New Jersey?

BS I remember that was a good time. I didn't want to leave New Jersey. I wasn't used to the military life at that point; just being uprooted and taken away. I had a lot of friends there. Actually I was about 9, closer to 10, when we left there.

KF What kind of house did you live in?

BS We had a big house there; it was an old house. About 125 years old that my dad had rennovated. It cost \$20,000 to rennovate it. It was a real old place; it was very big. It was actually two houses and my grandmother (his mother) lived in one side. The smaller side; and we lived in the other side. It was the kind

of house that had rocks in the foundation rather than bricks or cement blocks.

It was a pretty old house.

KF Nice?

BS Yes. Lots of room. Big huge garage.

KF What kind of things did you do there?

BS We used to spend a lot of time in the woods there. Still spending a lot of time in the woods. We used to go swimming a lot. Spend a lot of time. My mom used to take me swimming a lot in the brook that came through the town. It was a small town; a lot smaller than it is now.

KF Morris Plains.

BS I guess you were there just recently. We only had 2000 people then.

KF How do you remember your grandmother at that time?

BS I never was very close to her. She was there, but I wasn't really that close to her. She was, it seemed to me at the time, cranky. I was just wanting to go out and play. Used to play a lot of baseball.

KF At what point was Harry born? How old were you when Harry was born?

BS I was 4.

KF So he was born in 47. How do you remember the atmosphere at this home? Was it...

I would guess that you did a lot of outdoorsy things. A lot of sport rather than being interested in music or the theatre.

BS Well, I've always been interested in music, not the theatre. I still am interested in music. I play the guitar. I took piano lessons when I was in Morris Plains, too for 2 or 3 years.

KF Who's idea was that?

BS Not mine. But I always have liked music anyhow. But I never really...I still enjoy sitting down and playing the piano a bit, but I cannot...I just sort of play whatever I want to play. I can't sit down and play with both hands a tune, a recognizable tune.

KF But you can on the guitar.

BS Oh yeah.

KF Okay. So a little piano, baseball.

BS Actually I didn't even have a piano to practice. We had a pump organ. One you could pump with your feet that my dad had sent up from down south. We were still in New Jersey; he was down south. That's what I practiced on at home.

KF Looking back, does it seem to you to have been a happy family?

BS I don't think we were that happy that our dad was away. But my mom and dad's relationship was always good.

KF Between 46 and 51, wasn't he there?

BS Yeah, oh yes.

KF Okay. So from 51 to 53 is when he was away and started to be away from you. But the earlier period.

BS It was good. I was always closer to my mom than I was to my dad for two reasons. One, he was away a lot. And the other was he was the kind of person that wasn't that easy to get close to. Because to him, I think, his career was probably more important than his family. Although I don't know if he would ever admit to that if you asked him that question. But in practical, when it came right down to it, it seems that it was.

KF That suspicion has been growing on me as I've learned more and more about your father. But tell me why you think that. I mean, is it just on general principles. The fact that if a man chooses a job that takes him away from his family, that means that the career is more important than the family? Or is there some other feeling you have about this?

BS Just generally...because I was raised in that way, I'm just beginning to realize myself how important it is for a father to be around their children. To spend time with them. I don't think my dad considered it to be that important, because he didn't do that much of it. I think I figured one time that he was away from home for 8 or 9 years. There was 2½ years during the second World War, 2 years during the Korean War. When we lived in Turkey, for 2 years in Ankara, he was away all week and came home on the weekends. I guess that was about the extent of it while I was home. But then he was away in Thailand and Vietnam for a total of a couple of years. As far as I'm concerned, it's really important that a father be with his children. And I don't think my dad saw it that way. I don't think it was the idea that "well, I'm going to neglect my family". I don't think

that was the idea. I don't think he realized how important it was. Probably because his family was the same way. My Uncle Stanley could tell you more about that.

KF He didn't tell me that his father had been away a lot. But there might be something there that he didn't tell me that parallels. Let's move on a bit. 51 to 53, your father is training Rangers.

BS Yes, at Eglin Air Force Base. They have a jungle training camp there. Since he had been with the Rangers in the second World War and in the jungle setting, I guess they also had a Ranger training camp for northern climate too. Which we were almost sent to be involved in that up in Alaska at one point, but we didn't go.

KF Now 53 you think is when he made the decision to stay back in the military. Have you any idea why he decided to do that?

BS I think coming out of the Depression, that he valued a steady job for one. Also I think it was more secure of a job, although the job that he had with the printing thing was secure too. But I think he looked at that as being totally secure. But mainly I think it was the thing of adventure, really. If I remember correctly, he did not like the small town atmosphere of Morris Plains, because he was brought up in a bigger city. I think it was the adventure mainly.

KF Well that's interesting.

BS Or let's call it the challenge. There would be more challenge. Sure, he could have stayed in Morris Plains and made a living. But it wouldn't have been exciting enough.

KF Stanley Simons seems to have been content, spent the whole of his life in what is still a pretty smalltime operation, from what I could see of it. He appears to have done that successfully. But the interesting thing is he appears to have been content in that, whereas your father needed something completely different. It's interesting there should be that difference between two brothers.

BS I think one of the things that may have led to that was the fact that my dad was in the second World War and my Uncle Stanley was not. I think he had medical problems or something like that that disqualified him. He's had a back problem for a long time and different health problems. I think that's what disqualified him. My dad had just graduated from University and went right into the war.

KF In 53, what did he do? What was the next move?

BS We moved to Eglin Air Force Base in 53 from Morris Plains. Then in 54, we moved to Ankara, Turkey. At first he was going to be sent to Anchorage, then it was changed.

KF Do you know what he was doing in Turkey?

BS Yes. The American Army was there as military advisors to the Turkish Army. They were only there to train them. He went to a place about 90 miles from Ankara where they had a training area. As far as I can remember, I went there once. They trained them basically in infantry and probably armored tanks. He was their advisor during that time.

KF I have the impression that he liked to teach people things.

BS Could be.

KF How long were you in Turkey?

BS Three years.

KF So this takes us to 56.

BS 57. We were in Turkey in two different places. 54-56 we were in Ankara, then he went down to Ismir. They were starting some kind of training there which was more along the guerilla warfare type of training as far as I can understand. I never really found out all the details on it. But I believe it was closer to that type of training than the thing he was training them in outside of Ankara. He had gone down there just to advise them and then he like it so much there. It was so pretty there and really a nice place. So he worked it out somehow that the Turkish government asked the American government if he could come to be a permanent advisor there for a year in that training program there. So then we moved there for a year.

KF So at this point you were 13 or 14.

BS When we left there in May of 57, I was 14.

KF Interesting time of life for a boy. What kind of father was he at that point in your life?

BS That was probably the time that year in Ismir we didn't live right in town to start out with. We had a place about 25 or 30 miles out of town, right on the sea there. That was probably the time that the family was closer together than any other time. In fact, he spent more time with us and we had more time together on a daily basis. We did a lot of skin diving then. He was really into scuba

diving and also using a mask and snorkel and aqua lungs, too. I really got into skin diving then, too. I never used the aqua lung much. But I did enjoy skin diving a lot. We used to do that a lot.

KF And did Harry go diving?

BS Harry was pretty young then. He used to go swimming. I don't think he did much real skin diving then. Just spear gun, shooting fish and all that. He would have been 9 going on 10 then.

KF So this was a good time.

BS Yes. I regretted leaving there. Probably regretted leaving every place...you get there for awhile and don't want to leave.

KF What was the next move?

BS The next move was to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. In 57.

KF Was the family all together at that point?

BS Oh yeah. My grandmother had been with us in Florida when we moved from Morris Plains, but she went back to stay with my Uncle Stanley. I think she died not long after we got back to the States.

KF How do you remember your mother at this period in Turkey? Was she beautiful; was she a disciplinarian or a lax mother or...?

BS No, she wasn't lax. She was never what I would call exceptionally beautiful. But

she was good looking. I think we were pretty much seeing what we could get away with with my dad away. We got into plenty; always fooling around somewhere.

KF What kind of things did you do?

BS We were always getting into fights and throwing rocks. I did a lot of roller skating in Ankara. Had people chasing me; calling them names and stuff like that in Turkish. It's a real difficult thing for a mother to try and raise children without the father there on a regular basis, as far as discipline is concerned, it's not too easy. I never heard her complain about my dad being away.

KF Do you think that was because she was the uncomplaining type or because she really didn't mind too much?

BS I think she was the uncomplaining type. I think she would have much rather that my dad had been home, but she never complained about it. Because that's what he wanted.

KF And she felt that what he wanted was going to be what she wanted.

BS Oh yeah. In comparison to personalities, my dad's personality...she would have submitted to his decisions completely. It wouldn't have been a thing of "well, you may want to do that, but I don't, so we'll have to change". He was very strong willed.

KF Most people who weren't even married to him tended to submit to his decisions. Do you know what I mean by that? He seems to have had the ability to walk into room and take over. Was he a strict father to you two boys?

BS Sometimes. When he was around, he was. But he wasn't, things were a lot laxer. When he was home, things were quite strict. I always felt they were more strict with me than they were with Harry. The way I looked at it was that when Harry got to the age of 15-16, he was doing a lot of things they would have never allowed me to do. By that time, I figured they were a little bit worn out with having worked on me, trying to keep me in line.

KF I think that happens in every family, actually. Do you agree?

BS I don't know.

KF I know it happened in mine. I was the eldest boy as well. Eldest children always make that complaint. And I'm sure it's always right.

BS That's because you're the oldest child that you're sure it's always right.

KF Well, my own son makes that complaint, and I suspect it's true in his case as well.

BS Actually the eldest does have more responsibility, since the other kids do look up to him. I began to realize that not too long ago. That the eldest son has a lot of sway with the younger children. He influences them a lot.

KF How old are your children?

BS My oldest is 14; that's a boy. Then I have a girl who will be 12 next month. A boy that's 8½, a girl that will be 6 next month and another girl that's 3½.

KF Wow, five. Where were we in your life story? Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. How long did that last?

BS That was from 57-62, I believe it was. I finished high school while we were living in Ft. Bragg and went to the University of North Carolina, which was about 50 miles from Ft. Bragg. So then I was living away from home, not around home that much after 1960. But my parents stayed there until I believe it was 61 with Harry. Then they moved to Panama, the Canal Zone.

KF What was your father doing in Ft. Bragg?

BS When he first came there, he was the public information officer. He didn't like that. He had a degree in Journalism from University, so they decided to make him the public information officer at Ft. Bragg. It was right around that time that they started these Special Forces outfits at Ft. Bragg. He decided he was going to go through jump training and get into the Special Forces Units. I think he was 39, he may have been 40 when he did that. So then he went into the Special Forces outfit after that. He was a Major when he came out of the second World War, and promoted to Lt. Colonel when we were in Florida. Then he wasn't promoted to full Colonel until he was in Panama. He went into the Special Forces outfit. He went with them over to Laos around 62. He went there on a special thing to live amongst the mountain tribes people in Laos and I guess some of them were in Viet Nam too. And the whole idea behind it was to see if it would be possible to organize those people against the Communists because they had known anti-Communists leanings to start out with. They were a kind of people that were, you know, they didn't live down in the towns or the cities, so they were not up for being ruled by the Communists at all. He went there, and apparently got their agreement that they would do that. When he came back to the States, they canned the whole thing for some reason. He was mad about that.

KF How long did he spend in Laos, do you know?

BS Nearly a year. Just living amongst the tribesmen there with a small outfit. I

don't think it was very many people; American soldiers; it wasn't too many.

KF I think he may even have been on his own a lot of the time.

BS He could have been; I don't know.

KF Did he ever talk to you much about that period?

BS No. Have you found out anything about it? Tell me! I'll learn through you!

KF He hinted, and it was no more than a hint, to Stanley, that there had been a woman in his life while he was over there.

BS I have heard possibilities of that.

KF From Stanley or from someone else?

BS I don't know where I heard it, to tell you the truth. It must have been from Harry. I don't think it would have been from Stanley.

KF But he never gave you any hint of that.

BS No, but I heard something to the effect that in order to get really tight with the leaders of the mountain people that live there, Montinyards (sp?) was their name. That's a French name, probably just means mountain people. What I had heard is he had to go through the ceremony of marrying someone in the tribe. That's really faint. What I heard was that it was just the ceremony. Now whether there was really a relationship involved, I never heard that.

KF Everybody here, at EDS, everybody who was involved with your father on this Iranian adventure, is highly skeptical about this story of Stanley's. They say they find it very difficult to believe; they say it is completely out of character. Would you go along with that?

BS Oh yeah. I think there could be some truth to the possibility of a ceremony, but as far as a relationship, that always to me seemed to be really farfetched. I never heard anything to that effect. What I had heard was that there was some kind of ceremony in order for him to carry out the duties of what he'd been sent there to do.

KF Let's go back to you for a minute. What did you do at University?

BS I started out with the idea of becoming a doctor, but dropped that and studied education.

KF That's what you graduated with.

BS Yes.

KF You had no inclination to go into military.

BS Actually, I was in the military for awhile. I was in the Marine Corps.

KF When?

BS That would have been the summers of 62 and 63. I was in a training program where there was a program that the Marine Corps had for people that were in the University or college to train in the summer for two summers then receive a commission

when you graduated. Then you'd be in the Marine Corps for 2 or 3 years after that.

KF Why did you go in for that?

BS I think I was feeling very patriotic and figured that it would be a way...I think I was figuring "well, if I got drafted, I'd go in as a private, but this way I go in with a commission". I was sort of being in a state of turmoil. I had left school for awhile, then came back again. Just sort of took off, right in the middle of semester, wandering around; wanted to go to Alaska, but got as far as Montana then came home.

KF Why did you do that? Why did you take off?

BS Oh just felt at loose ends, I guess. I was doing well in school.

KF Was this your last year?

BS No, it was my second year, if I remember right. The idea of not much purpose or direction at that time. I was going to University, basically because my dad and mom were really in favor of that, and that's what you're supposed to do after high school because you need a college education. So I was going. It's probably better than a lot of things I could have been doing. As far as the idea of a career, I really settled on the education thing as a last ditch effort to get a degree and get out of the University. I was sorta floating from this area to this one. And you have to have so many hours and so many courses in one area before you can get a degree. You can go and keep changing around from area to area for years. It didn't seem to be much of a challenge to me. I had been able to do well in University, and still, I wasn't satisfied with it really. I guess

the whole thing of adventure and challenge has always been with me sort of like it was with my Dad in a way.

KF That's interesting. When did you graduate?

BS 1965.

KF What did you do then?

BS Well, I'd have to go back and tell you what I did before then so you'll understand what I did then. I had been involved in the civil rights demonstrations in Chapel Hill. They were non-violent civil rights demonstrations in 1963.

KF Chapel Hill where?

BS North Carolina. I had met the woman who is now my wife, she was a high school student then. We had decided to get married when she graduated from high school, the same year I graduated from university. She's negro and it was illegal for us to marry in North Carolina at that time. So we moved to Massachusetts. I knew some people there and it was legal for us to get married there. So we moved to Boston and I went into social work, not teaching.

KF And you got married in Massachusetts?

BS Yes. We lived there for little less than a year.

KF Tell me your wife's name.

BS Ruby.

KF How did your father get on with her?

BS He didn't like the idea.

KF Like on principle?

BS Yes. Well, the idea was he said that it would just make it hard for us socially. It would be socially unacceptable. It was him that had taught me that there were no people less than anybody else. He taught me that. Strange that I can remember him telling me that only once, but it did stick with me. He wasn't prejudiced, racially, but from a practical point of view he felt that it wasn't going to be the best. So he did not approve.

KF Did he go to the wedding?

BS No.

KF That's pretty heavy disapproval.

BS Well, I don't know whether or not we even told him when the wedding was going to be after the letter that he sent. He was in Panama at that time and we were in Boston.

KF So, you didn't even meet him to talk about it, didn't even have a chance to talk to him about it.

BS No I didn't.

KF Did he meet Ruby later?

BS Yes.

KF And how did they get on?

BS As far as I know, well. I wasn't there at that time. Ruby had come to North Carolina and we were living in Vermont at that time. We had only stayed in Boston a little less than a year and then moved to Vermont for four years. She went down to visit her folks in North Carolina for what was going to be a couple of weeks and what turned out to be three months because of a legal thing. Because when we had left North Carolina, she was on probation for the civil rights demonstrations-things, and we hadn't transferred the probation. We just left. So, when she went back, I wasn't on probation at that time, but she was. They had tried to give me a jail sentence and it had been pardoned or commuted by the Governor of North Carolina. So, she got to visit with Demitri, who is the only one of our children that my Mom and Dad ever saw, and he was only about a year and a half then.

KF He's the oldest?

BS Yes. She visited at Ft. Bragg with them then. Then her probation was transferred to Vermont and she was able to come back.

KF So it wasn't a case of blank hostility on their part. It was more like (a) they didn't approve and (b) circumstances didn't bring the two families together very much.

BS No. See, there was lots of times that I invited them to visit us and they never did. I was always inviting them to come visit us, but they didn't. So, actually, both families, the whole family never got to see each other together.

KF How did your mother feel about that? Did she have any independent views?

BS Well, I think she sort of felt like Dad that it wasn't the wisest choice. But that's the way it was. They weren't outspokenly against it. There was the first letter before I got married. They said they recommended against that. But then, from then on there was never any criticism that I ever heard. There were times when I was mentioning to them that we would like to come and visit them after he had retired and they were living in Florida, and they would say, "Well, no, now isn't the best time." I found out later they figured if our whole family came to visit them there, that they would have trouble from the Ku Klux Klan there. Harry still feels the same way. That we couldn't come because they would get all kinds of hassle from the local people there.

KF But still they didn't come visit you either?

BS No.

KF How did they feel about your involvement in the civil rights movement?

BS To me, at that time and now, I've always been very idealistic, and I wanted to help people. I felt, here's a situation and I've been taught that these people are no less than anybody else, which is true, and yet they are receiving treatment that is less than anybody else. So I wanted to do something. To me it was that type of thing. It was a thing of ideals and principles. As far as my Dad was concerned, it was politics. I didn't see it that way at the time,

Carolina just this past May and the attitude of people there, even though everything has changed on the outside, anybody can go to any of the stories, movies, etc., sit where they want to, but the attitude of the people hasn't much changed. Until there's a change in somebody's heart, inside of them. You can change things with politics, and I think politics should line up with what's right, but it's what inside people that makes the difference in everyday living. I don't think the people there feel that that the attitudes toward them have changed that much from where it was.

KF Did you do anything else around that period that your father disagreed with?

BS Well, I started getting involved with drugs during my college career and he didn't know about that until afterward. He disagreed with that and was right about that, for sure. I didn't see it that way then.

KF Did you get into trouble?

BS Well, I did get involved in an arrest that never came to anything.

KF No, but did you get hooked on something?

BS No, not physically hooked. I smoked a lot of marijuana.

KF Is that the only drug you did?

BS No. Marijuana, hashish, LSD, some amphetamines

END OF SIDE ONE

BS I wouldn't have anything to do with it at all. I would warn people against it as being very dangerous.

KF That's interesting. Why?

BS That's because of meeting Jesus Christ as my personal savior. You see I was always looking and searching for the truth. That's something my Dad really gave to me was the idea of truth. That to him was very important. What is the truth. He always looked at it strictly from the point of view of the mind and the intellectual level. But I pursued it in the spiritual area alot. Found what I was looking for in becoming a Christian.

KF When did that happen?

BS Six years ago, almost to the day.

KF Well, let's cover the period in-between before we get to that. At this stage now we're talking about the late '60's. Were you involved in any anti-war protests?

BS No.

KF That was a little late for you?

BS No. I was around.

KF You weren't in college then.

BS No, I was in college but I think just very shortly after I got out of the civil rights thing, I got into drugs more and more. At that point, because of that I

can see now, I began to be less and less concerned about what was going on. At that time, I was not in Marines. I had gone the first summer and completed that and the second summer during my medical examination they disqualified me for high blood pressure. So I had gotten an honorable discharge from the Marine Corps and never heard from the draft or anything after that. I never got involved in any anti-war demonstrations.

KF OK. You worked for a year as a social worker in Boston?

BS Well, for about six months in Boston and six months in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Then I got a job. During the time that I lived in Cambridge, I met a fellow who had gone to school in Vermont at Goddard College near Montpelier, Vermont, and he said it was nice up there and I should go for the weekend. So we went up there and I really liked Vermont. The only time I actually lived in a city was the time I lived in Boston. I decided I was leaving Boston for sure. I did. I had gotten a job as a social worker in Montpelier by that time. I had arranged it ahead of time. So, we moved up there. By this time I was about going full-tilt on drugs and trying to do social work. Meanwhile, living in the country I didn't want an office job anymore. What I went into after that was carpentry.

KF What year was this.

BS '66. I graduated and was married in '65.

KF This was the time of the hippies and that whole thing.

BS Yes, the back to the land, yeah, I was really into all that. Getting back in the country. We lived a lot of places in the country and it got to the point where we finally ended up, before I was saved, moved from Vermont to

to Northern Maine, lived there for a year, then moved to British Columbia because it was still civilized in the States, lived there for three years, then it was still too civilized there and I moved to the Yukon Territory and the place where we finally settled was 50 miles from any settlement at all and you had to walk in 3.5 miles to where we built our cabin. It was absolutely wilderness, nothing there at all.

KF Were you a good carpenter?

BS Oh yeah. Good enough.

KF Good enough to make a living at it.

BS Oh yeah. I've made a living at being a carpenter. The type of carpentry that I was involved in was not the traditional 2x4 stud carpentry. I was working with logs and post and beam constructions.

KF I see.

BS The guy I first got involved in carpentry with was into the idea of not doing it that way because that was the modern way. So we were going to do it the old-fashioned way, so I sort of picked up on that. Everything old-fashioned. We used wood-heat from ten years and I wouldn't use a chain-saw to cut wood, was so old-fashioned.

KF OK. You ended up in the Yukon. How did Ruby feel about that?

BS Oh she was still falling in love with me. See, she was a Christian all along. Was praying for me to get saved, I suppose, all along, but she always came

with me and stayed with me. I think she thought it was pretty far out when we moved into the bush in the Yukon.

KF But she went along with you, much as your mother had gone along with your father.

BS Yeah.

KF OK. Now, it must have been '75 when you were converted? You were living in the Yukon, still?

BS Yes. I was living up at the lake, back in the bush there.

KF In a cabin you'd built yourself.

BS Yes.

KF The kind of thing your father would do.

BS I don't know, he never did anything like that, but it's the type of thing, yes. It wasn't long after we got there that I began to read the Bible and I read it pretty continuously for about a year and a half before I was saved. Then I was water babtized about three months after that.

KF Was that at the church that you went to in that part of the world?

BS Yes. It was the first time I'd been to church in years. I went to a Presbyterian Church for about five years when I lived in Morris Plains, to Sunday School. I can't remember having a clear view of the gospel and of Jesus Christ from that, although I never missed a Sunday. I got my five-year pin and all of that. Maybe they told people, but I don't remember it.

KF Was there any religion at home, going back to when you were younger?

BS No. The whole thing in that area my Dad left . . . I found out later, going back to my Dad, his idea concerning it was you can do whatever you want to do, but there was no direction or guidance, or do it this way, or this is right and this isn't, there was nothing along those lines. From what I can find out, my mother had met the Lord when she was about 12-13. I found that out from my Aunt Jeannie , but she never said anything about the Bible or about Jesus or anything at home. Because, well I think, my Dad didn't want to hear it for one thing. I didn't know that at the time, but I found it out later.

KF Well, presumably you found it out when you tried to tell him?

BS Yeah.

KF Tell me about that.

BS Well he didn't receive it at all. He tried to talk me out of the fact and acted as if it were some kind of philosophy I had picked up, rather than a total change in the inner man. Tried to tell me it had never happened, really that I was just fooling myself to think that that were a possibility.

KF Let me just try and pin that down for a minute.

KF Did he say that nothing had happened to you, or that it wasn't what you thought it was?

BS The impression I got was he definitely didn't think that what I said had

happened to me, had happened to me. I remember I really just had to say that he was wrong, it did happen to me, I have been changed by Jesus and you could have the same thing if you wanted it. He was really adamant against that.

KF Were you disappointed, or did you expect that reaction?

BS I was a little surprised at how severe the reaction was.

KF When they were children, Stanley used to go to Temple, but Art never did.

BS To the Synagogue?

KF Yes.

BS Well, see, my dad's mother was Jewish. So was his dad. She came straight from Latvia and was of Jewish faith there. My grandfather, his family was of the Jewish faith. His family was from the Ukraine, I believe. His family had been in the United States longer than his family. I don't know how much longer. It could have been at least one generation.

KF At any rate, they don't seem to have been a devout family at any rate.

BS I think it may have been more so on my grandmother's part, it's hard for me to say. The amount that I know about the background of my family is ridiculously small. It's Uncle Stanley that probably knows more about it than anyone else.

KF Would you say there was an actual sort of quarrel between you and your father over your Christianity, or was it just that you didn't agree. You said it was a strong reaction. Was he cross?

BS Oh yeah. He was mad about it and when I tried to bring it up another time, he just didn't want to hear it. He didn't want to listen to it. He just did not to hear it at all.

KF And did you badly want to tell him? Was it tough for you to shut-up about it?

BS Yeah, it sure was, since it was the most important thing that ever happened to me. The most important thing that could ever happen to anyone. I thought it was important, but I don't try to shove it down peoples' throats either.

KF By that time, he had retired, I guess.

BS Yeah, well, that was when I went to Florida to visit. When my mom had cancer. They had told me that she did and that she might not live very much longer, so I had come down there. That was in 78, I guess.

KF Did you have the impression that before she fell ill, they had been contented on that farm?

BS Oh yeah. Well, I know she was just overjoyed when he retired and they moved there. Because they were going to have more time together. I don't know whether or not he was as happy. I was surprised that he had retired when he did. He would have been 51 then. There might have been the consideration of...he had taken the rank of full colonel, and the thing of going on to Brigadier General, because he never was a regular Army officer. He was always in the reserve.

Apparently, it came out, if I remember right, that he was never going to be advanced to Brigadier General because of that. I think he got disgusted over that and quit. I think that was part of it, then my mom pretty likely wanted him to retire as soon as possible too.

KF He seems to have made the switch from military life to the life of a farmer rather well. You might expect a man who spent most of his life in the military to be bored or at loose ends or something. But he seems to have done fine. Is that your impression?

BS I think it was good probably because just his relationship with my mom. They had a lot of time to be with one another. I think that was something that he was beginning to realize that he needed more of and she did too. So I think that was what really held it together than than...my memory of him and being interested in farming. He wasn't interested in farming. He just didn't hide his reactions to the idea of farming. Because my mom always had that in the back of her mind--farming.

KF Oh really. I wonder why.

BS I think where she was brought up, it was farm country. Although she wasn't brought up on a farm, there was farm country nearby. Her dad was the superintendent of schools in St. Louis, so they lived in town. But I think she used to spend quite a bit of time in the country and probably looked on it as something that would be nice. Sort of ideal; away from the rush of things.

KF Kind of a dream of hers perhaps? To live on a farm.

BS I don't she ever did actually until that time. And I don't think he was that

interested in farming. He was doing some gunsmithing too. As soon as she died, it was within a year that he went on the Iranian thing. When he was there by himself, I think he was utterly discontent at that time. I phoned him once during that time, and he wasn't very content at all. I think he was glad for something like this to come up. His attitude toward dangerous work was that it didn't matter how dangerous it was. It was just the challenge of it, the excitement of it, and if he got killed, he got killed. He never thought about that, he didn't worry about it. After Mom died, I don't think he had much interest in the farm after that. Harry would probably know more about his attitude at that time, although Harry went away for awhile then, too. The guy who lives across the street would be the guy that could tell you the most, John Woods. He could tell you most about his feelings and his attitude after Mom died and before he went to rescue the prisoners in Iran. He lives just about directly across the road there. I think he probably would have talked with them. And if not them, well they would know a lot about it, and there is possibly one or two other people around there that they would know of.

KF Would you say that the things you went through in your late teens and early 20's; do you think, looking back, that those were worse than the kind of problems that most people your age went through at the time? Or even the kind of problems most young people have that their parents get terribly worried about?

BS No, I think most of the young people of that time were going through a lot of the same things. We had been brought up in the generation just after the second World War that was pretty ruthless in a lot of ways. Things really began to change in the 60's in the States. I think when you look back over that period that the 60's were a great deal different than the 50's. I look back now on the 50's as being a time of real stability in my life. But in the 60's, every-

thing was just torn to shreds by the end of the 60's. I think it was pretty common to the time.

KF Would you say that your father overreacted?

BS To what I got involved in? No. If I was looking at it from my point of view and how I would react if my children were involved in what I was involved in, I would say that he underreacted; that he wasn't concerned enough.

KF You think he should have been more mad at you than he was.

BS I don't know about mad; maybe more concerned. The thing was that by that time, our relationship, not having been as close as it could have been, that even if he had been more concerned, I don't whether I would have listened to him or not. It's hard to say.

KF You had drifted apart already.

BS The thing was; we were never that close, really. Harry and Dad were closer. I was probably closer to my mother than to my dad because I spent more time with her. Whereas Dad was home during the time Harry was growing up till he was 18 or so. My dad wasn't away as much as he was during that period for me.

KF I can't see why that happened. What I'm searching for is an explanation here and I don't see one.

BS Why that happened in the 60's era or what came into my life...?

KF No. Why your relationship with your father was that way rather than being closer.

He seems not to have been able to help you too much at that period. You might not have been asking for his help.

BS He was away a lot, see. And we didn't write that much. When I left high school, all this began to happen pretty well in University. The whole civil rights thing, the whole drug thing. I ended up spending 5 years in University to graduate rather than 4. When I left University, he wasn't even at home then. I think that was when he was in Laos. I look back on it and see the basic cause of it was spiritual. That we were never given any...because my dad was against; not against, but he wasn't for anything of the spiritual realm, as far as he told us. And that we were sort of ruthless spiritually that that's why I ended up drifting as I did for a number of years; got involved in all that.

KF But he had the same kind of laissez-faire religious education as you did, but he didn't seem to drift.

BS No, but he had hold of a military career. And that was the thing, I think, that gave stability to his life. There was some purpose there, and he could look at it from the point of view of "the Communists are trying to take over the world, but we're not going to allow that to happen". The thing is, he came out of a generation that had faced probably a lot more serious situations than my generation, like through the Depression and everything. So things were a lot easier for my generation than they were for his. So I tended to take things a lot lighter in the area of a career, things like that, than he would have.

KF Maybe the things were easier, but the decisions were more difficult to make for that very reason.

BS Oh yeah. Well, that was the thing, as far as I was concerned, no one particular direction looked any better or clearer to me than another. I was just sort of

drifting from one thing to another, so to speak. If something came up, I went that way. There was no real direction until I became a Christian.

KF What do you do now? What is your job?

BS I am a pastor at a church.

KF Any particular kind?

BS Non-denominational, full gospel.

KF I see. Did you found it?

BS Yes. Not totally on my own. We are the people that started this church.

KF How big a town is it?

BS 500 people.

KF What were you doing until you became a pastor?

BS I was living in the bush up there in the Yukon.

KF How were you making a living?

BS I used to work about 35-40 miles from there, doing carpentry work when I needed to. I worked there during the week and go home on the weekends. But I didn't have to make much money to live up there. I think we figured a couple thousand dollars a year was getting us through, so I didn't have to work that much.

KF And that was what you wanted at that time?

BS Oh yeah. For I imagine for 10 years anyhow, I had set my...even before that probably, when I was a kid, the whole thing with building a log cabin, living in it, was there, and was realized then.

KF I would imagine your father might have been rather fond of you for building your own house.

BS Maybe he was; I never found out.

KF He didn't say. I've had that kind of answer from a lot of people who I've asked things like that "was he pleased that you did this". And the answer is always he didn't say. Do you think he had difficulty expressing that kind of thing or was it just a mannerism?

BS I think probably the reason for it was through a lot of experiences that he had starting out in the second World War with a lot of people that he was close to being killed. He had to bring himself to a place where he just couldn't be as attached to them and as close to them as maybe he was to start out with. Because it just hurt too much. And then that carried over. I know that he named Harry (his middle name was Fisher) after a doctor in their unit in the second World War; in the Ranger unit that got killed. He went and visited that man's mother a few times up in Vermont. So I think he was pretty close to some people that got killed, maybe quite a few, and he just had to take on that way of dealing with people. So if it came to that, it wouldn't be too much bothering him. The idea...it's something that carried over with me. That if it weren't for the Lord, I sure would have just been going on the same way. He had a real strong sense of duty; this is what has to be done, and it's going to get done. In the

sense of personal relationship, he never let that go too deep.

KF Okay. Well, I haven't got him figured out yet. But I'm still trying.

BS He's a mystery, huh?

KF I don't know if mystery is the right word.

BS I know that his reaction to my mother's death was very strong. That affected him more so than all the other people that he had seen die. Harry would probably be able to tell you more about that because he was right there and I wasn't.

KF What I want to understand and I still don't really understand, is that drove him. Because he was not obsessive about things, but given a task, he seems to have been unusually meticulous about doing it. Unusually determined to get it done.

BS Sounds like me. That's the way I am. The place where we ended up building a cabin, very few people would have ever done that. So that involved a lot of determination. I think it's the desire to excel; I think what may lie right at the bottom of it is insecurity and trying to cover that up with excellence, outstanding excellence in your area of pursuit. Some people can take the attitude, as far as the purpose of their life is concerned, is that there is no purpose and sort of do nothing. Just sort of float around, never really get involved in what they are doing. Just try and have a good time. But he didn't look at it that way. He was here to prove that he was good at something. I think at the bottom, there was some insecurity.

KF Where might that have come from, that insecurity?

BS Well, I'm not sure, because he never talked much about his early life. My Uncle Stanley would probably be able to fill you in more on that than anybody else. Whether he was...I think it may have come up with the time, the period in which he grew up in the Depression. And possibly living in a neighborhood where everybody was pretty rough. Also being the youngest child.

KF The way Stanley tells it, the two of them were the roughest kids in the neighborhood wherever they lived. That may be an old man looking back, nostalgia.

BS He and my dad were?

KF Yeah. They were both pretty big, too. I'll tell you one thing that happened. They moved house rather drastically.

BS They moved from Rochester to the city, didn't they? I think that was a severe thing when that happened.

KF And he went to school downtown. They both went to a downtown school that was pretty rough and tough.

BS I sort of remember that, vaguely. I think their reception was they had to get pretty tough to get the guys off their back for awhile.

KF Still, a terrible sense of insecurity ususally comes from much, much earlier in life than that. It comes from things like being abandoned by your mother as a baby. And there was nothing like that in Art's life.

BS No, really though, something like that could stem from not having the affection and love that you need from your parents. Not from something so dramatic as

abandoned or the parents splitting up or something like that. It can still come in. It wasn't something that severe. I know there was a drive in him to prove that no challenge was too big. What it was founded on, when it's carried to that extent. In his case, it was something that was exceptional. It wasn't even just high normal, it was beyond that.

KF So you would suspect that there was some exceptional insecurity at the bottom of it.

BS Possibly.

KF Tell me something else. Do you have any memories of him relaxing and enjoying himself, goofing off, having a good time.

BS Not really. The most relaxed period of our family life was in Ismire. He wasn't the kind of person that would just sit down and relax. Even when we were out relaxing, we were doing something. We were out skin diving, we were doing something, but it wasn't his regular work. But he was doing something. Activity was...the idea of sitting down and just relaxing was pretty foreign to him.

KF Even on that farm, he had to be a good farmer, good gunsmith, and he had 13 dogs. That doesn't give you a lot of time for relaxing, what with the pigs and the dogs and the gunsmithing shop.

BS I think the dogs was really...having that many dogs, and taking them in was an indication of how lonely he was in a lot of ways.

KF The dogs came after your mother died?

BS Well they were there when I visited before she died, while she was sick. I don't know when that started. My parents always had a dog, at least one. But he was

starting to pick up all the strays. Any dog around that nobody else wanted, he'd take it home. I believe it started around that time. The dogs were just all over the place; it was ridiculous. They were in the house sleeping. The dog hair; they'd just go to the bathroom all over the carpet every night. He was just putting up with them like I never would have put up with dogs like that. They would sleep all over the furniture, all over the beds, anywhere they wanted to. All over the house; they had the run of the place. And there was...he didn't let them all inside, but there were 3 or 4 of them that could stay inside. And litters coming all the time. Dogs everywhere.

KF And this started while your mother was ill?

BS Well you'll have to ask Harry about that for certain, just when the dog collection started.

KF It's a weird thing to do.

BS My mom really was the only one he was ever really close to. Then Harry would come after that. And then me. Even with Harry, I think Harry would admit that he never really got real close with him. But with Mom, it was different. They were really close; or as close as he ever got with anybody. I think he was starting to feel lonely about that time, because she was in the hospital pretty well all that time.

KF Do you think he had ambitions for you?

BS Yes. He wanted me to go into the military, although he never said that outright. He was disappointed when I didn't; I noticed that. I was even considering at one time, when I was in first year at University and I was doing well. I felt like that wasn't much of a challenge. I was thinking maybe if I went to West Point

that would be a challenge. But I just dropped that. I thought about it for awhile, considered it. Not that seriously, but it did cross my mind. But I think he was disappointed, and he was also disappointed that when I did go into the military, I went into the Marines, because he didn't approve of their way of doing things. The frontal assault type of deal, he thought it was too wasteful of human life. He didn't think that was the best.

KF What challenges are you facing now?

BS We're still in the process of pioneering the gospel in Hayes Junction, which has been a challenge. The challenge of bringing up 5 children; of really loving my family, that's a challenge.

KF How many in your congregation now?

BS About 15 or 20. We've been there for 5 years.

KF Slow work.

BS Well, it's the first work of that type that's ever been in that town.

KF Is there no other church?

BS There's a Catholic church and an Anglican church. But I don't know if any of the people that go to those churches are saved; it's just religion. They're not hearing the gospel and having a real change in their life through Jesus Christ by being born again. And it's the first full gospel work in that town ever, so there's a lot of resistance.

KF With a congregation of 15 or 20, the pastor probably doesn't make much more than \$2000

BS I just recently began to receive \$200 a month from our congregation. And I get \$250 a month from another congregation in White Horse that we're associated with. Actually the money doesn't come from then, it comes to them from another congregation in Vancouver and they decided to give it to us in Hayes Junction. I think the biggest challenge really, overall challenge, is just to be yielded to the will of God. To be used by Him. As I do that, I find my family life and work as a pastor improves.

KF Okay. I think I've run out of questions