

Oral History Interview for:

Riders from the Storm: An Oral History of Cannabis Smuggling

Interview with: John Dickinson

Interviewed by: Michael Ritter

Location: Seattle, Washington

Date: August 2 – 5, 1999

Transcribed by: Kim Roseman



Customs Collars Caller

A suspected international drug smuggler who had assumed a number of aliases on valid passports, birth certificates, and driver's licenses was arrested by United States Customs agents and the East Hampton Town Police on Oct. 20 in a telephone booth near the Town dock at the head of Three Mile Harbor in East Hampton.

John [redacted] 33, of [redacted] Wash., was charged with taking \$860,000 out of the country in 1980 without notifying Customs authorities and supplying false passport information.

The search for Mr. [redacted] which had taken over a year and involved Customs offices in five major United States Cities, culminated on Three Mile Harbor Road after agents received information that the suspect was in East Hampton to move his boat, a cabin-cruiser, moored at the Town dock.

According to Town Police, Mr. [redacted] had rented summer houses here in 1979 and 1980 near Settlers Landing and Lion Head Beach. Customs agents said they have reason to suspect that

Mr. [redacted] was running an "off-loading" marijuana smuggling operation here during those summers. "He rented beachfront homes; it was a very important item in his selection," said a Customs investigator.

Familiar Story

Another beachfront residence, on Milina Drive in East Hampton, was the center of a major suspected smuggling operation which was smashed by Customs agents, Suffolk County Police, and East Hampton Town Police in September. Thirty-three men were arrested in that raid, which netted 13-and-a-half tons of marijuana valued at \$15 million. There is no apparent link between Mr. [redacted] and the Milina Drive operation, police said.

Mr. [redacted] fugitive odyssey began in 1975 when the Drug Enforcement Administration issued a warrant for his arrest.

[redacted] For the next four years, Customs agents said, Mr. [redacted] lived in exile but returned at least once to the United States.

On Aug. 29, 1980, he reportedly left Kennedy International Airport with an attache case containing \$860,000 without notifying Customs authorities. Federal law requires that Customs be informed when more than \$5,000 is being taken out of the country.

Business In Bahrain

When Mr. [redacted] arrived at London's Heathrow Airport, British agents discovered the cash, but he was released after he identified himself as an employe of a San Francisco oil company with business to conduct in Bahrain (the United Arab Emirates).

Mr. [redacted] did have business in Bahrain — Customs agents contended — he was reportedly traveling there to make a major marijuana or hashish purchase. The Persian Gulf area is a center for cannabis transactions, particularly hashish. When Mr. [redacted] returned to San Francisco on Sept. 1, 1980, he was detained by Customs, but fled, leaving behind cash, a passport, and other personal belongings. Three days later a Federal warrant was

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THE EAST HAMPTON STAR, EAST HAMPTON, N.Y., OCTOBER 29, 1981

personable career criminal" who had "multiple and diverse forms of identification," including three valid Florida driver's licenses and several passports and birth certificates. At least one of the birth certificates was of a dead infant, Customs agents said, including one of a California infant who died at the age of one week approximately 30 years ago.

Despite intensive efforts, the search for Mr. Dickinson had been fruitless until last week. "If Customs had a 'most wanted' list he would have been on it," said one agent.

When Mr. Dickinson was finally apprehended on Oct. 20 at about 4 p.m. he appeared surprised but offered no resistance, police said. "He was well surrounded," said East Hampton Town Police Captain David Fithian, who participated in the arrest along with Detectives Van Quick and Todd Sarris, Sergeant Fred Notel, Officer Steve Doane, Special Customs Investigator Don Grattan, and a four man Customs "detail" which works full-time on the East End. Detained along with Mr. Dickinson was a native of Hawaii who was released after questioning.

Money Found

Mr. Dickinson was in the middle of a telephone call at the time of his arrest, Captain Fithian said, apparently with the Port Jefferson-Bridgeport ferry, arranging to transport his cabin cruiser

to Connecticut. The cabin cruiser, a trailer, and a rented Buick with Wisconsin license plates were parked across the street from the telephone booth, police said. The name "Rene Levesque" had been scribbled on the boat's outboard motors. Police allegedly found over \$50,000 in neatly wrapped bundles of \$10 and \$20 bills inside Mr. Dickinson's traveling bag.

The suspect was arraigned on Oct. 21 in United States District Court in Brooklyn and was ordered held on \$5 million bail at the Metropolitan Correctional Facility in Manhattan. He was indicted by a Federal Grand Jury on Tuesday on one count of illegally taking currency out of the country and three counts of supplying false information on passport applications. The \$5 million bail, Customs agents said, is the second highest ever set in District Court, which covers a jurisdiction of Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

Uri Berliner

COLLARS CALLER

Continued From Page 1

issued for his arrest.

During the next year, Mr. [redacted] reportedly traveled extensively around the country, passing himself off as an oil company executive, a representative of a non-existent electronics firm, and as a faculty member of the New York State University system.

Among his assumed names were John David Root, David James Root, Adrian Lacle, Philip Gerard Levasseur, William Benjamin Parker, and most recently, Rene Levesque.

Rene Levesque is the French-Canadian premier of Quebec, and is the leader of that Province's separatist movement.

A Career

Mr. [redacted] was described by Customs agents as an "intelligent and



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C6 Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Thursday, October 22, 1981

Seattleite held in N.Y. as key drug trafficker

By John Snell
P-I Reporter

A Seattle man accused of being one of the country's top drug smugglers was held in New York on \$5 million bail yesterday after being charged with moving U.S. currency to Europe without notifying customs agents.

William Dickenson, also known as John David Root III, is wanted on drug charges in Florida and California and is thought to have been involved in a 1974 Seattle case where O'Brien water skis were used to smuggle cocaine.

"We do have a John Dickenson we are looking for, and we are pretty sure this is the same guy," said Jerry Diskin, an assistant U.S. attorney in Seattle. "We're waiting for confirmation on the prints."

Diskin said Dickenson is wanted on a seven-year-old warrant charging him with conspiracy to import cocaine in the 1974 case.

Firm president convicted

Officials of the O'Brien Water Ski Co. had been using copper wall hangings and hollowed-out water skis to smuggle the illegal drug to Seattle from Colombia. The skis were carried into the United States by the Redmond company's International Water Ski competition team, which would travel to other countries to compete. Members of the ski team were not involved in the smuggling.

Herbert J. O'Brien — the former president of the company, which has been sold to another firm that retained the O'Brien trade name — was convicted of illegally importing 150 pounds of cocaine. Three of O'Brien's employees and a San Francisco man also were convicted.

Diskin did not disclose Dickenson's alleged involvement in the smuggling scheme.

In New York, U.S. Magistrate A. Simon Klein said he set bail of \$5 million yesterday because he was "convinced that the defendant would not return to court if released."

U.S. Attorney Kenneth Wirfel told Klein that Dickenson had a series of narcotics charges facing him and illegally had transported millions of dollars during 10 flights abroad in the past year.

He was described by one federal agent in New York as being "at the pinnacle as a narcotics trafficker."

The charge presented in Brooklyn accused Dickenson of failing to notify U.S. Customs Service officials that he was transporting \$700,000 in U.S. currency when he flew out of Kennedy Airport Aug. 29, 1980.

Using a false name and carrying bogus passports and drivers licenses, Dickenson was detained briefly in England after landing at London's Heathrow Airport on that flight, authorities said.

Had eluded arrest since Sept. 3

The British allowed him to continue but notified U.S. authorities, who intercepted Dickenson for questioning as he returned via San Francisco's International Airport the following Sept. 3.

However, before a charge could be lodged against him, Dickenson somehow vanished and eluded arrest until Tuesday, when he was seized while picking up a fast boat at Three Mile Harbor, on Gardiners Bay at the eastern tip of Long Island, N.Y.

One of two houses Dickenson had rented in East Hampton, N.Y., was found by investigators to contain two-way short wave radio equipment capable of communicating with ships at sea.

Dickenson's wife, Marie La Cle, was said to have fled to South America upon learning that she was to be subpoenaed as a witness.

Introduction: Jeff Bea

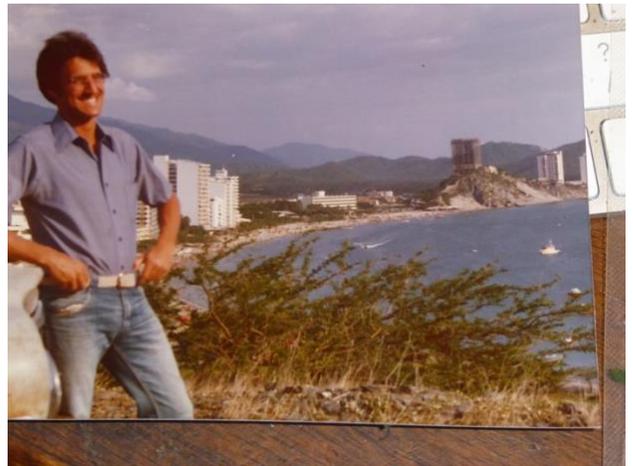
IN OVER MY HEAD
A Cautionary Autobiography
by Jeffrey M. Beal

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Red: edits

PREFACE

Everything should have a point. A story, a song, a poem, a movie, a book, and most importantly, one's life. I spent the first half of mine looking for some rhyme and reason for it, and the second part, so far at least, putting to good use what I learned at the junction of the two parts. People seem to find tales of my first half somewhat interesting, so I dedicate a disproportionate number of pages to it. Like a good joke though, most of it is there merely to set up the punch line, the point. I think it's a shaggy dog story worth tolerating to reach the payoff. By the time it's all over, I hope you feel the same.



As ghost-writing autobiographies for others has become my de facto job, it's no challenge to tackle my own with the same objectivity. Besides, I'm getting old and afraid my memory will soon start to slip. I can still rattle off the names of all seven dwarves, but I don't know how much longer I can rely on my faculties. It's now or never.

Some people might find themselves treated less than generously within these pages. To them I suggest taking pen in hand and hitting the facts back across the net. I can take it, so I hope they can too. Ultimately, this is not meant as a device for venting old grudges. It's intended to be a highly edifying and instructive saga of life, love and mystery. I'll try to keep author's messages subtle and nonpreachy, but sometimes the pesky truth somehow slips between the lines.

I got a few bullet holes in me, and diseases that prevent from me from donating blood. How these things came to pass, and other extraordinary events, might impart lessons which could be of some benefit to others, lest they make poor decisions themselves. At the very least, here's hoping you get a good laugh at my expense.



did.

I often

Jeff Beal
Greenwich Studios, 2011

CHAPTER I

Two dozen submachine guns on full auto. That's what I was staring at. We were waiting for T.K. to bring the sloop into shore to pick up the six tons of primo Colombian weed we had wrapped and ready for export, and twenty four trigger happy country boys were there to make sure it all went down as planned without anyone getting the drop on anyone else. As an American I couldn't help but admire the democratic ideal of leveling the playing field with



equal firepower for all, but in the back of my mind I felt edgy that one of them might get ambitious and try to take over. After all, there were many factions present, and one of them could conceivably vanish without interrupting the flow of commerce. First **was** the owners, the ones who had bought the pot from the growers. They were there to make sure it got on the boat without any bales vanishing into the dense jungle. Then, the army had some carabineers present to collect their tribute. My partner David Roote and I, the Americanos on the Colombian end of things, put in an appearance to make the boat feel safe and as always, get down and dirty involved with the loading. As we only knew the captain **and** the crew was another faction unto itself. Finally, our Colombian business contact, arrayed in his fashionable finery, was on hand, complete with his own gun toting entourage, to hook us all up. Lots of factions meant less profit for each of the others, and no one group would miss any other one if it suddenly got rubbed out. Conceivably, only the growers and American end user customers were vital, yet neither of them was represented here on the beach. But this was hardly an idealistic Marxist paradigm, devoid of excess. It was a classic western business model, replete with capitalist cockroaches exploiting the situation with a plethora of entrepreneurial middlemen. We were all trying to glom onto a piece of the pot smuggling action without getting our hands too dirty. Naturally, the man who made it all possible, the actual farmer, earned less than anyone else in the chain. But he did not lament the irony **of**

any of this as he was thrilled to earn five times what he usually did from growing coffee. And the college kids were too stoned to consider anything save their new Pink Floyd album. As for the rest of us, we were all eager to take advantage of that humble Colombian agriculturist and the American middle class attraction to the fruits of his labor. Those two ends of the chain were Uzi free, but keeping those extremes secure instituted the democratic principal of Uzis-for-all. Everyone had his own protection, no more, no less. The Uzi only fired nine millimeter pistol sized slugs, but at this range you couldn't miss on full auto, and most of us would end up equally dead, carrying that high-minded political ideal right to the grave. Not that it would accomplish anything. If one person started firing it would turn into a bloodbath with no winner. All of us were necessary, and that's why we were all equally armed.

Looking over the faces of those gun toting kids with their ready smiles and laughter you'd find hard it to believe they'd kill anyone. But after living on the North Coast of Colombia for five years I knew how casually they regarded life. Their passion for guns overcame any sense of precaution. How often had I heard the sad tale of Miguelito accidentally shooting his cousin Ramon? Barely voting age, they'd drive down the road and blast away at distant birds unaware that their bullets might hit someone hidden in the thick green foliage. Or



they would stand there, jiggling with the safety and nudge the trigger, sometimes even shooting themselves. Their firearms education was so rushed they usually weren't sure which way to engage the safety. "I thought red meant safety! Ay ay ay! Poor Ramon!" So, being surrounded by dozens of goofy gunmen made me feel less than totally secure. My

real insurance policy was the first rule of Colombian dope dealing: don't kill the gringos, because they're the damn customers. But with two different factions of Americanos one of them might disappear and still not

disrupt the venture. A really astute Colombian could even turn pirate, kill everyone with blond hair, blue eyes and straight teeth, and make off with the boat. Navigating through the Gulf of Mexico and landing on the sandy beaches of Alabama was not beyond the intelligence or talents of third world criminals. Only the promise of repeat business kept us alive.

The ever present danger prompted me to stash a Colt double barreled thirty-eight caliber Derringer in my shorts. It was only two slugs, but they came with the element of surprise. A cutie-pie of a pistol, any of our hosts would have killed to get one. Literally. My partner David, who never carried any arms, had just made a gift of a shiny Colt '45 semi-automatic to Luisca, our contact. He had recently shot and killed his own brother while at target practice, but his lust for a trusty piece curtailed the usual mourning period of two days



by half. He proudly displayed the impressive piece to his amigos, and obsessively polished it after it got handled by anyone he bumped into. Everybody knew everybody else in that sparsely populated part of the coast, so proper etiquette dictated that you show off anything new just to keep the envy index pumped. And nothing buried the needle

like guns and cars. Luisca, already a couple of years in the dope biz, had a small private arsenal, and a garage full of trophy autos. He was the typical nouveau riche poster boy for the Colombian north coast, changing vehicles weekly. He drove at a hundred miles an hour over hastily paved roads, dodging country buses bulging with traveling peons, produce and livestock. And when he had an accident he just left the charred remains of the car on the roadside and drove another. Colombian insurance companies don't offer much protection to their auto policy holders.

Thus was the financial future on the north coast. The wealth from fat cat dealers trickled down to the disenfranchised, predating Reagan's economic model by a decade, putting cash in the pockets of people who would never dream of smoking pot. Folks down there were eager to make money through any means, including selling pot, but they considered weed to be low class, fit only for degenerates and other low-lives. As proof of that we never observed anyone with whom we did business on any level, actually smoke the stuff, which left us to wonder what they really thought of us.

"See anything yet?"

I lowered my binoculars to answer David.

"Nah. You take a look. Anyway, you know T.K. He always waits for dark."

"I hope he brought some goodies."

Colombia had major reserves of sin. All the pot, coke, rum and sex any gringo could ever want were readily available day or night. But simple pleasures, like Chips Ahoy or Motts apple juice, were impossible to come by, and were usually placed on board for the trip south, like Care Packages for the expat. Even though it was the last quarter of the progressive Twentieth Century we were semi cut off from the rest of the civilized world and got our favorite sentimental munchies sporadically at best, and news only after it had turned ice cold. There were like two TV channels in the whole country and our part of the coast was too far removed from the broadcast booster towers to pick up any clear signal. We had no telephone in our house either and we had to stand in a long line at an office in the five block long business district to call the states. When we did we spoke in code.

"Hi mom, didja get those books? Hey. Little Bobby's going into the second grade."

"Hey partner, did the shipment arrive? We'll be ready again in two weeks."

For specialized sensitive communication with the north we had a wireless transmitter. Between coordinates and other crucially strategic data we'd hear of major political and cultural turns of events.

"Elvis died? No!"

Mostly, we were in the dark about the present condition of the world. But, so what? We had our own world in our little bungalow in Santa Marta, one of the oldest continually inhabited towns in the western hemisphere. Except for a few TV antennas and a couple of traffic lights, it probably didn't look much different than when Liberator Simon Bolivar lived and died there. It was a classic colonial town with thick walled buildings painted white and topped off with terra cotta colored barrel tiled roofs. It was hot but dry, with fine sand beaches and calm blue waters. We were in the demand and supply business, seeing to it that Ivy League college students had a reliable supply of pot.

The youth of America craved marijuana and we helped them get it. We had been students ourselves when we got the calling. Originally, I took up smoking it during my third year at the prestigious University of Florida, one of the more respected centers of higher learning in the south. But when an ounce of weed shot up from sixteen bucks to a towering twenty I determined to seek out its source. And if I made some money in the process, better yet. We lived at the foot hills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and climbed its precipitous slopes to watch it grow. We cleaned it in giant sieves, packed it into fifty pound bales, signaled the boats up north to come fetch it, flew up north to receive it, load it into vans for the trip to our end user customers in the green pastures of Harvard University, and collect our dough. We were getting rich, but there really wasn't much to spend it on down there. Basically, a rich hippie lived with the same degree of sense gratification as a poor one. We read lots of books, listened to Layla over and over again, went skin diving, and smoked and screwed a lot. And as long as we didn't get jailed, deported or shot, we were happy.

“Hey I think I see something.”

David's eyes were reliable; he had been in many of the world's deserts requiring good vision. He was tall, even by gringo standards, and handsome. He had a brilliant mind, a great sense of humor, and was a bona fide raconteur. He knew all about foreign cuisines, wine, art and fashion. We had endless discussions about classic films and history. And he was cool, keeping calm no matter what, never carrying a gun. A couple of

other things about David were that he could find the humour in every disaster and he always wore something pink, hence his nicknames, Pink Panther or PP.

I, on the other hand, was prone to panic. Shady Colombian drug lords gave me the willies, and I was constantly afraid we'd get robbed or worse. David grew up in the hardy northwest, surrounded by vast forests and other natural phenomena, experienced in walking into the thick rainforest alone, while I was from Brooklyn, and felt at home on the subway. If someone would've snapped a photo of us on the beach, surrounded as we were by gunmen and mountains of illegal substances, waiting for a smuggler's sail boat to magically appear, you might study it and ask, "What's wrong with this picture?" The correct answer of course would have been me. Simply put, I was in way over my head.

Life is precious, and I really don't want to do anything to put mine or anyone else's in peril. Specifically, I'd have to describe myself as a coward. I shrink from loud noises, let alone gun wielding thugs. Prior to coming to South America, the riskiest thing I had ever done was get on the Bobs, the biggest, scariest roller coaster in Chicago's major amusement park, Riverview. I had never touched a gun, and I went through the wildest shenanigans imaginable to get out of Viet Nam.

Like most college kids of that era, we had nothing against the Vietnamese people, and saw no reason to go over there and shoot at them. I mean, they weren't Nazis for Crissakes. While that was true it was also a high sounding alibi to mask my fear of death and discomfort. Its political content was bona fide, but the gut feeling was one of selfish self preservation, leaving in its dust the far second of idealistic concern for the peasants of Southeast Asia. The Viet Cong had guns and grit, and they would have almost certainly been a major impediment to my sense gratification. So naturally, my buddies and I wanted no part of them.

"Let me see." I took the binoculars back from David and scanned the Caribbean trying to find that dot on the horizon that was supposed to be T.K. and the boat.

"Don't you see it bobbing up and down?"

"No man, I just see water."

I always enjoyed conversing with David. He was not only a great conversationalist, he was the only other person I knew for hundreds of miles who also spoke English. We often saw and overheard other gringos around town, but we were paranoid of narcs, so we didn't socialize outside of our tight circle of friends. Once, after impatiently waiting for a taxi, a jeepful of gringos picked me up and gave me a lift. We had observed each other around town off and on for months, but had never dared to break that dangerously thin ice. It was obvious they were into the same game as us and played by the same rules, but that one time they made an exception and did me that favor. They didn't say a word to me though, or regard me in any way, not even to acknowledge my thanks. So, David was the sole soul with whom I could comfortably and regularly communicate. The other English language experience available was the cinema. Nine out of ten movies were in English, so I could listen to Charles Bronson or Burt Reynolds talk while picking up a few new Spanish phrases from the subtitles. Or course, my relationship with Hollywood actors was a passive one, so Burt and Chuck never heard a response from me.

Talking with David was actually a bit of treat, because his presence was sporadic. He traveled back and forth while I held down the fort. It was never declared as such, but I was like a perennial hostage. I was free to move around, but the fact that I was present in country made the locals feel better. So, my Colombian girl friend and I received frequent social visits which were really just to see if I was still there, waiting for the other gringos to return with good news of the boat's safe arrival, and the successful culmination of our mutual enterprise.

All things considered, there was really quite a lot of trust involved in an operation with a people not widely celebrated for it. Folks that traffic in dope are generally not inclined to consign merchandise with the hope of payment at a later date. Neighborhood dealers for example won't even sell a joint's worth of pot without getting pesos on the barrel head, yet boat after gringo boat sailed off, bound for a destination known only to us pale faces. Of course, if we screwed them they'd dedicate themselves to finding and killing us, so the coast of Colombia was one bridge you did not want to burn behind you. When Colombians kill out of revenge their

methods send out a loud message to other would be ripper-offers, usually having to do with the rearrangement of different body parts, occasioned in the presence of copious amounts of the victim's bright scarlet blood.

While not particularly subtle in the field of restitution they did exhibit great tact in business, never issuing warnings or threats, preferring to let their violent actions speak for them. They spoke indirectly and carried an enormous stick. I learned how serious they were during my first week there back in 1970.

I first landed on Colombian soil a long haired, bearded hippie, found of getting stoned. I had made my way to Barranquilla by jet, and then to nearby Santa Marta by bus. While strolling on the beach I heard a local hippie singing a Beatles song, so I befriended him, and in short order he steered me to a hut to score some weed. The scruffy inhabitant under the thatched roof took my ten pesos, worth around fifty American cents, and stuffed something botanical wrapped in newspaper down my pants, urging me to flee, lest the cops spot us. When I got back to my hotel room I discovered that Mr. Scruffy had sold me some dried dandelions, not a good value even for my four bits. Incensed, and certain the scrawny little local would cower before my righteous wrath, I grabbed the bowie knife that had made it through that era's loose airport customs, and went out to reclaim my easily earned money. As soon as I got to within fifty feet of the scene of the crime some kid set up a warning yell, alerting all within earshot of my nationality and what I brandished. The aforementioned scruffy and scrawny type and his buddy, scruffy type number two, emerged from said rustic hut doing some brandishing of their own. They displayed clubs and facial expressions that told me that I might not be the first gringo hippie that day that they'd have to kill and dump into the vast impersonal sea. Furthermore, that ominous premonition was reinforced by my recently acquired ally, likewise uncomfortable with direct physical confrontation, who turned tail and fled, abandoning me to the discretion of scruffy types one and two, both of whom seemed quite at home with brute force. Calculating that my precious life was worth more than forty six cents, and allowing discretion to be the better part of valor, I swallowed my bluff whole and skulked away to fight another day. Actually, I had no plans whatsoever of returning there for any reason, especially not to score reefer.

That episode let me know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I was in an ambience where nobody knew what the word ambience meant, and that sudden explosive violence was the norm. As plainly put as possible, I was in over my head, and would have to play it very cool if I was going to survive. Further flashy displays of bravado, or any attempt at imposing my will, would be met with immediate forceful rebuff, and there would be nobody there to mourn my not too noteworthy passing. This was the Wild West, where macho men would fight to the death before admitting they were wrong. As a banjo alumnus of the Old Town School of Folk Music my temperament was poorly suited for survival on such terms. I had no previous encounters with *pistoleros*, and though attaining the college honor roll in the study of Castellano, I was ill equipped to deal with anyone down there on a *mano-a-mano* basis, which was their preferred method for settling differences. And this here gringo couldn't have been more different. Not only was I repulsed by the Latino variety of violence, the same could be said for the North American, Asian, African, Australian, Arctic and Antarctic varieties as well. I basically avoided them all with equal and extreme prejudice. While backing down from fights was not my custom, everything possible was done to avert my share of them. Unless you were physically assaulting my mother, little compelled me to act with any discernable degree of aggression. When the counter culture of the sixties took root I identified with that bevy of peaceniks known as flower children, and was a make-love-not-war peacenik. Deep down though, I knew that it had as much to do with a faint heart as benevolence toward my fellow man. I was basically a chicken shit who dug pot, and Colombia was where they grew it, so I had to be there, where men were men and craven weaklings like me had to stay on their toes. I didn't even know if my Derringer worked or if my powder was dry, and I wondered how many other intermediate banjo students from the class of 1962 were packing. Probably, not too many.

When not directly confronted with the potential for savagery, which was far less frequent than I might make it out to be, there was much to recommend the place. The fact that we found some quaint charm there probably stemmed from our being the product of too much entertainment. My generation was the first to have mass amusement blasted at us every waking moment. While the same might be said of the radio generation that preceded us, television doubled sensory stimulation and thus we were distracted from reality in a much more

convincing manner. The portrayal of authentic existence superseded fact and everything we encountered around us was judged alongside its reflection and found wanting. But the Third World unintentionally possessed the veneer of an unreal movie set and captured our aesthetic sensibilities. We found it quaint and amusing. It was an alternate reality from the old one that bored us, and we were endlessly entertained by its new and exciting, and less violent, elements. The natives didn't so readily appreciate this charm, because they could not flee it. But if the going got tough, then the truly untough, like me, could go back from whence we'd come, full of anecdotes about our exploits among the less fortunate. We had all day passes to Latinland, and we could stay as long as we wanted or leave when ennui tightened its grip on us. We were there on a whim and regarded the situation with detached amusement.

CHAPTER II

It is well known, even by the most law abiding among us, that crime is best committed under cover of darkness. Just ask Batman. So, as soon as the sun set T.K. brought his boat to within one hundred and fifty yards of the shore of *Camerones*, Luisca's home town. Even as it was dropping anchor Luisca's trucks were roaring up with the cargo, their tires sinking into the soft sand. If any of those two dozen Uzi wielding country boys wanted to do something stupid, the convergence of boat and cargo invited that opportunity now. Notwithstanding, the plan had two steps. The boat would be loaded by the same process used all over the world where shallow waters have no docks, by hand. The Uzis were slung across the backs of the young stevedores as they hoisted fifty pound bales of cannabis onto their shoulders and waded through the dark surf

to the waiting bongos (sp) that would take the load out to the boat. The tide was down which grounded the boat until early the next morning, during which time the crew would paint it a new color. Changing her appearance was supposed to throw off satellite surveillance. Observing the same color and sized boat enter and depart from the coast of Colombia within hours would be a dead give away if they were watching, so that was part two of the plan. It all had to be done before the sun and the tide rose. The parade of loaders started in knee deep foam, but by the time they reached the side of the boat the water was almost up to their chests, a



depth that might invite a shark attack. Hammerheads were so plentiful on the Guajira peninsula, shared by both Colombia and Venezuela, that it was a staple of their diet.

The young men went back and forth, each of them making ten trips, and earning more than they normally would in an average month. After the cargo was aboard

the crew's provisions were brought out in a bongo, a canoe made from a single hallowed out trunk. Mangos, papayas and other exotic tropical fruits would make the return trip more of a South Seas adventure than the first leg of their trip which consisted of the same kinds of food that had always known back home. So, instead of Chef Boyardee and potatoes they'd be eating plantains and hunks of the non-aged white cheese they prefer down here. Also, a full pound of pot was set aside for the crew, so as not to rip open and expose any of the bales to the elements. Once everything was loaded I went aboard to visit with Graham, the only other crew member I knew besides T.K., the captain.

Skinny, sandy haired and bespectacled Graham had been my buddy since high school. He was like some character from Middle Earth, a jolly Hobbit off on an unlikely adventure, there and back again. He had poured through the Lord of The Rings, as most of us did back then, and he wore a wizard's hat like Gandalf with large

runes on the brim. He smoked his weed through a long stemmed glass pipe, and had the largest collection of records and comic books I ever saw. He owned mint condition first editions of all the Marvel super heroes, as well as every underground Robert Crumb he got his hands on. He loved to listen to music and had amazing rhythm. He would have certainly made an outstanding drummer for some band. He owned every piece of vinyl put out by the Beatles and dozens of other British invaders, and he absolutely worshipped the Jefferson Airplane. He was a big cinephile too. We probably saw a million movies together, and I wouldn't bet against him in a trivia contest. He was my best friend through college and my formative flower child years, and we were involved in countless stateside adventures. So, once things started to flow with Colombia he was brought in as crew. He had a cast iron constitution and never got seasick, so he became the cook. No matter how the boat got buffeted by high seas he stood firm, working in the galley even when nobody felt like eating. On one trip, taking a roundabout route to Lebanon by way of the North Sea, every single member of the crew had to carry a puke bucket, but him. To satisfy his own hunger he made some of his famous chili, and the aroma made every man jack on board fill his pail while Graham gorged himself on his spicy concoction. After several more trips and a long period of semi-retirement in Asia, he got busted and served eight long years of federal time. He could have easily cut years off his sentence by name dropping, but he was the original stand up guy, and did those eight years with the same serenity with which he lived his whole life. Had he thrown me under the bus he might've walked. Being the only English speaking mate on a large pot laden freighter he maintained he was just the clueless cook. With such a story he could've identified me as a person of interest and lived free under parole, but he copped no plea and took it like a man. Try as they might, the feds couldn't spook him, because Graham never got excited over anything. Devoid of strong political and religious conviction he simply went with the flow. Once, when I was in a particularly preachy mood, I asked him how he felt about killing animals for food, and he blithely said that if meat was made illegal he'd accept obligatory vegetarianism, but while it wasn't he'd just keep eating it. In whatever direction the wind blew so went he. Not that he would've followed a Hitler or a Mao. But as long as nobody got hurt he didn't raise an eyebrow. While I marched in protest of, and demonstrated against, all the politically incorrect things that merited our

generation's disdain, Graham preferred to let rock n roll wash over his prone form. He even stayed calm the night he was arrested for multiple homicide. He was eating take-out pizza in front of TV, his preferred place to perch, when a squad of detectives burst threw his door. They were certain they had their man, a brutal serial killer who, with his girlfriend, chained their victims to trees and rammed their car into them. Graham's late model two toned station wagon was the exact replica of that modern day Bonnie and Clyde vehicle cum murder weapon, right down to the cracked rear window and pile of dirty laundry on the seat. Solid circumstantial evidence. The jig appeared to be up, but Graham went along as calmly as Droopy Dog, innocent and blasé. A few hours later the real culprits were caught, and the cops discovered the different tire treads. Graham's only worry in that pre-everyone-owns-a-microwave-oven era, was returning home to a pizza that had turned cold. On another occasion he sliced open his hand and didn't flinch. Taking a break from my studies at the University of Florida, Graham and I, along with another pair of friends, opened Gainesville's first delicatessen, the New Delhi Deli. We had pastrami, corned beef and kosher pickles, but no Indian food, despite the name which we had merely borrowed from a Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoon. We cut the sandwiches in half to serve them, and Graham accidentally turned the knife upside down one day and divided his hand instead of a liverwurst on rye. He coolly requested that I drive him to the hospital where they stitched him up. I myself suffered a similar fate, slicing a number four wedge off my thumb when my hand slipped down the slick plastic casing of a long kosher salami into the rotating razor sharp blade of the circular slicer. We never found that chunk of my thumb, but assumed the customer did when he unwrapped his snack at home. That restaurant kept us alive for two years until we got sick and tired of eating deli for breakfast, as well as honest labor, and sold it. The guy who bought it transformed it from a deli into a pizzeria and it's there even now as I tell this tale. Our other partner in the deli was Ken Leonard who Graham met when they were both working at the Florida State Mental Hospital.

Both Ken and Graham worked the night shift and they used to ingest LSD there. Eventually, they both came to the same conclusion, that the only difference between the patients inside and the so-called normal people on the outside was the wall that separated them. They tuned in, turned on and dropped out together, and went

on their own Kerouac tour of America with an eight-track tape of the Jefferson Airplane's *After Bathing at Baxter's* as their soundtrack. Having that particular album stuck in the tape deck of the car, with the tape deck stuck on play, was as much a transformational experience as the hallucinogens they imbibed. There is no other time in the history of the world but the sixties that such music could've been created. It's counter cultural, and truly psychedelic, a word tossed around during that epoch but rarely used properly. It was the perfect background score for a road and mind trip that spanned America. On their way west they stopped off at the University of Florida to tempt me to join them, but I still had some changes to go through before going down that path. One year later however we were roommates at Mrs. Bennett's boarding house in Gainesville, dropping acid together. For many months Graham and Ken had been subtly encouraging me to try it, and I was curious as to the meaning of their knowing nods to one another as if I was not initiated into something extraordinary that I would surely dig. I had a year's worth of smoking grass under my belt, but lysergic acid diethylamide-25 had not yet passed my lips.

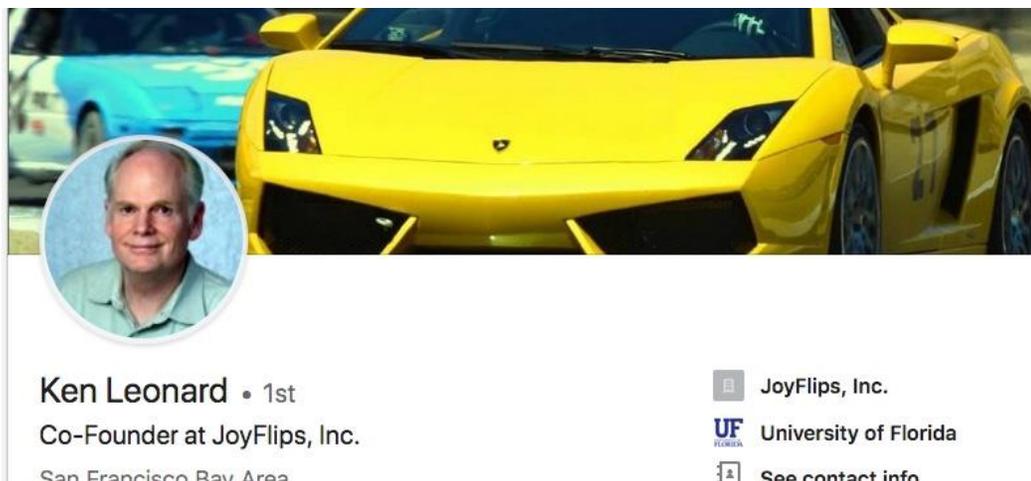
Though this seems a likely story, like not inhaling, but first experiments with smoking pot were motivated by the quest for better grades. Prior to big time higher education being an honor student was not an extraordinary challenge, but Gatorland classrooms were so grossly overcrowded the tests were designed to cast out as many people as possible from the overpopulated campus. Stressed from the academic competition I fell under the influence of some honor students I met in my dorm. They were nice Jewish boys, got great grades, and made me feel like an utter square for not smoking grass, or tea as they called it. Finally, one Saturday night, with the Stones' *His Satanic Majesty's Request* playing on the same portable stereo I had been schlepping around since high school, I gave it a try. Previously, a girl named Hope had tried to get me to smoke it, but I was clueless, both to it and the sexual fantasies I could have enjoyed with her had I been so bold. The sexual revolution had started without my participation, and it took me a while to catch up. Despite the trippy album cover, a clear attempt at competing with Sgt. Pepper, our little pot party did not give my brain the anticipated euphoria. A few days later however, bathed in Hendrix feedback, I gave it the old college try

and did indeed succeed at finally getting stoned. From then on every social gathering was a pot party of two or more. Along the way class attendance became sporadic.

Smoking pot was definitely not in the school budget my father provided for me, and Chris Penzel, the nice Jewish honor student who gave me my first joint, was not going to supply me forever for free. Of course, he was not a pusher, getting me hooked and then supplying me for sky high rates. Pot was not like that. Drunkards will borrow money from friends to buy liquor, junkies will rob or worse to supply their habit, but hippie potheads lack the ambition, and just got high if and when they can. To this day I have never heard of anybody mugging anyone to get money for marijuana. Anyway, I was stunned to learn that an entire ounce of the stuff cost sixteen whole Yankee dollars. Understand, back then hamburgers were a nickel and my rent was sixty two dollars and fifty cents a month. So, sixteen whole bucks was a serious economic commitment. Chris cut me off, but introduced me to his supplier, another college student. In the presence of my supplier I emptied my spare change sweat sock and counted up about thirteen dollars. Taking pity on my pathetic finances, and probably reducing his profit to naught, he sold me my first lid of marijuana.

Back then, to smoke was to deal. As soon as another boy got wind that I was holding he offered to buy a joint off me. Off the top of my head I tossed out the princely sum of fifty cents and he enthusiastically forked it over, eager to get high on a Friday night just like every other college student was doing. And so, with the acquisition of my first low count ounce of cannabis sativa I became a de facto dealer. That first four bit customer dated a gorgeous girl downstairs named Vivian, but I told her that I thought that she could do better and snaked her away. I was very direct, inquiring as to what she saw in him, a guy I considered a dufus, and she told me he had gentle brown eyes like a teddy bear. Such an analogy made me queasy of course, but I was filled with wonder that she found some good quality in him, albeit one I could hardly appreciate. It educated me as to the potential generosity of women, broadening my view of the world.

As Graham painted the decks and super structure, those parts of the boat that would be visible from a satellite, we caught up on old times. So and so got divorced, someone turned out to be gay, and somebody made it through Nam. We laughed about the time that girl broke his heart and he wouldn't come down from



the roof of Mrs. Bennett's three story boarding house, and remembered the giant rattler he blasted with his ten gauge. He had accidentally stumbled upon it in a field, and it

was about to strike when he swung the barrel of his gun around and fired from the hip, shooting its head clean off. He ended up with a beautiful souvenir of its skin and always said he'd turn it into a hat band, though he never found a hat that was suitably tall enough. We blabbed all night and in the morning the tide came in and he went out. We wouldn't see each other again for many years. After that trip to Colombia he and Ken Leonard rented the sister ship of Jacques Cousteau's Calypso, a wooden shallow draft mine sweeper called the Lisa Maru, and took a trip to collect some hashish from India, backed partially by a fifty thousand dollar investment by me. They hallowed out part of the ballast of the keel and filled it with the black gooey product. But they developed engine trouble after taking on the cargo, and put into the Maldives for repairs. As soon as they were lured into the shallows by smiling natives the boat was attacked by Maldivian pirates, smiling much less now than when they pretended to be simple fishermen. They fired volleys over everyone's heads and then swarmed over the decks. They took Graham and Ken hostage, beat them and wrapped nooses around their necks, threatening to hang them if the boat was not surrendered. When the assault began however, the radio operator locked himself in the cabin and radioed an SOS. In short order the U.S. Navy steamed to their rescue. The impressive and well armed arrival of our boys heroically saved the dope smugglers in all its ironic glory. The pirates beat a hasty retreat and Graham finished the trip successfully. Michel Cousteau never knew his boat's true mission, and he had used it as a research vessel carrying on his father's noble work, helping dolphins and other gentle giants of zee deep.



Four out of five doctors recommended that, after being kidnapped, beaten and nearly lynched by buccaneers, you to take a long vacation. So, Graham settled in Thailand for years and did little beyond sipping beer and having sex with willing Thai chicks. It's funny; in all the time that we hung out together we never

shared a brew. That's mostly due to the fact that our generation considered anything that our parents did so unacceptable as to be anathema. They drank booze so we smoked pot. I don't know at what point though we gave in to fermented hops, but I got introduced to cold Heinekens in Santa Marta and took to considering it part of a nutritious lunch, just like Cheerios was always part of a nutritious breakfast.

Even when I was a single digit aged kid those cereal commercials slew me. They always inferred that sugar coated grains were good for you by subtly suggesting they were a side dish in this huge repast that looked like it was laid out for lumberjacks. By the same use of smoke and mirrors I had convinced myself that grain in the form of German beer wasn't so bad for me. Anyway, if suds hadn't made the cut on my growing list of Latino luxuries, it would've been something else. Colombia has no shortage of attractive amenities in which to indulge. Besides pot and willing Latina ladies, cocaine was omnipresent. But absolutely nothing is as ubiquitous as coffee.

Colombia is a very mountainous region and that's not only a prerequisite for growing good marijuana, but good coffee too. Another TV campaign that sticks in my mind is one for Folger's coffee. For years their spokesperson was Mrs. Swenson the house keeper. She would brew a pot, pour a cup, and explain that it was so delicious because it was mountain grown. "It's the richest kind," she always explained. Now I know that

it is not only the richest kind, but the only kind. I never saw a coffee tree grow on flat land. Anyway, Colombia grows a heavy percentage of the Earth's coffee and the government protects it like gold. You can bring practically anything into the country and get away with it, except for something organic. If you try to bring in dried fruit or nuts they'll confiscate it from you, terrified that it might carry some bug that could conceivably harm the coffee plant. Once my dad visited me and brought dried apricots as I had requested. We were relieved of them by customs, and I naively commented that it was just a few pieces of dried fruit. Customs came back with, "Just a few pieces?" He led me over to a row of large barrels and removed the top of one, proudly exposing a ton of dried fruit and nuts. I thought he was nuts (sic), but they don't take any chances with their number one crop. Yes, even with cocaine and marijuana, it's always been their *exportación numero uno*. And after Mrs. Swenson ran her course Pernel Roberts of Bonanza fame was recruited to carry on. I ran him into him at the Bogota Hilton and that's how I kept up on American TV campaigns. But even with Adam Cartwright selling huge amounts of the stuff to North America they save plenty for domestic consumption. And naturally, wherever you go they push it on you. Even the most impoverished person, in order to be hospitable, can afford and will offer you some fresh, hot Java. They might not have cream or refined sugar, but they always have café. And with some degree of reliability they mix it with a dark brown sweetener made from boiled sugar cane juice called *panela*. They also drink that stuff on its own, boiled in water. I guess even Colombians get tired of coffee now and then. As for me, I was never a big coffee drinker before going there. Once in country however, it was impossible to avoid. It's a society rife with etiquette and protocol, and you simply don't turn down a poor peon's hot Joe. It just ain't done. Coffee bugged David, because he was a tea drinker, and he often ran into problems getting it. He had never drunk it in his life. In the big cities, like Bogota, he could usually find a café sophisticated enough to carry it, but in the countryside, asking for a nice cup of tea was like asking for Grey Poupon to go with your boiled yucca root. Actually, he confessed one time that he would probably like coffee, but he just didn't want to get hooked on yet another substance. He already inhaled pot and tobacco like he was vying for an alternate's spot on our Olympic smoking and toking team, and he wanted to limit his vices to those. Despite coffee and cocaine being shoved at our every orifice wherever

we went he never tried either. But the man loved to smoke, and thanks to the black market he could always get English cigarettes. I never smoked cigs myself before I went to Colombia, but hanging out with David I got into the habit of smoking one after a big dinner. It was usually a brand called John Player which came in round black plastic cylinders. It was a black market item, but that was easy to find, since every city had its own duty free zone for anyone who could afford it. Besides the cigs we used to buy such exotica there as Tiger Balm for our aches and champagne for our dinners. And they always had David's cigarettes. He was unconcerned about lung cancer, because he was fatalistic about his chances of enjoying a long healthy life. He had diabetes, and I guess if you feel you've already got a death sentence hanging over your head not much else worries you. Every day I had to pinch his upper arm so he could inject the insulin subcutaneously. And he warned me to keep an eye on him in case he suddenly exhibited an ashen pallor or started giggling, indications that he was in dire need of nutrition. Sure enough it happened when we were in a hotel on the fifth floor and the electricity went out and I had to run down ten flights of stairs to find him some orange juice and candy bars, and then run up again to force feed him before he keeled over. And then there were the moronic policemen who would search his luggage and confiscate his syringe, certain that he was a junkie, regardless of the evidence of insulin vials. Anyway, he drank tea and Graham learned to drink beer. After some years he was lured out of Thailand by that fateful voyage that sent him behind bars. Sadly, it was our old pal and deli partner Ken that put him there for so long. He sang like a canary, blaming him for everything. To this day I don't know why he didn't talk about me too. He might have feared me, because by then I had become an honorary Colombian of sorts, and he might have assumed that I would send a legion of cousins and in-laws to roast him over a slow fire. Ken had always been a bit on the selfish side, so I wasn't totally shocked to hear it. It was like hearing about Tessio betraying Michael because it was the smart thing to do and he always smarter. But it was betrayal just the same.

Ken and David were indicative of the kinds of people I associated with, at least with regard to IQs. Throughout my whole life I have been teamed up with geniuses. It really amazes me, because anyone who knows me will testify that I don't suffer from a surfeit of gray matter. Regardless, Mensa candidates have

somehow always ended up on my dance card. Maybe it's the sidekick syndrome. I was the Hope to their Crosby's, the Lewis to their Martins, the Costello to their Abbots. Hanging out with me makes anyone else automatically feel like they have more on the ball. I'm the Alan Hale to everyone's Errol Flynn. Or maybe my tendency to indulge in inane humor relegates me to a Robin status for my more mature Batmen? After all, being smart doesn't discount the ego. In furtherance of my pal paradigm I'd have to say that they often exhibited a superiority to me, thus suggesting that my Hollywood dramatic foil theory holds water, but their own inflated sense of self blinded them to the fact that I was always hip to their attitude. My own complex, inferior as opposed to superior, inherited from my father as you will come to see, allowed me to accept the arrangement of leader and follower, and I had the presence of mind to realize that a humble stance was beneficial to me in the long run. This is not disingenuous false humility. Childish narcissism often blinds me to the needs of others, resulting in impetuous behavior that is just down right dumb. My one saving grace is to be blessed with a modicum of objectivity that leads me to opt for the sagacious leadership of smarter people over my peculiar brand of ignorance. In other words, I'm just wise enough to know I'm not clever. By being forced to rub up against brighter bulbs, greater providence has given me the perfect vehicle to keep me humble, and I happen to hold to the belief that humility is good for the soul. This works on many levels. For one thing, being tolerated by beings with bigger brains has taught me in turn to be more forbearing to others. Of course, the sociopathic rascal within me has always exploited the sagacity of my more astute allies. It wasn't done by design; it just always worked out that way in a de facto sense. With David however, it seemed to be a combination of honor and generosity on his part. When we had just begun to share living quarters he allowed a breach of clear thinking to admit a bevy of corrupt policemen into our apartment, resulting in the loss of everything we had but our clothes. So, perhaps he thought he ought to make it up to me.

Actually, from the very instant David and I met he seemed content to share everything with me. I had been singing for my supper at a nightclub in Santa Marta, and a riot broke out over my non-Latino brand of music. It was a classic barroom brawl with flying chairs and glasses, and my girlfriend and I were lucky to get out unscathed. We didn't have enough for a hotel, but we met some American hippies named Scott and Barbara

who invited us back to their room to crash. We walked into a typically tiny Santa Marta hotel room and the bearded Scott told some large, bearded, sleeping form on a twin bed to move to the couch in order to accommodate this forlorn couple. The large form acquiesced without so much as a grunt, and in the morning we learned it was named David. A year later I returned the favor when we ran into each other on the streets of Bogota and I was in the position to invite him back to my apartment to occupy the spare room, the venue of the invasion that perhaps bonded us. In spite of the disparity in sophistication and innate intelligence we had similar taste in movies, music and humor, so hanging out was natural. We ended up sharing a lot of things, especially business. I was doing some small time dealing which covered living expenses and I was glad to have his company. I also got him a job at the school I was working at which gave us both legal long term visas, and a perfect front for our activities.

Once T.K.'s freshly painted boat left shore we had to clean up the site. It was really Luisca's responsibility, but one of his trucks got stuck in the mud and he needed our winch. When David and I left Bogotá, and our lives as teachers, he left first to make a side trip to Venezuela to buy a car for us. He originally thought we might drive down to Peru, and the idea excited me, but when we eventually met in Maico, the border town between Colombia and Venezuela, and saw the car he had purchased, I had serious doubts of ever seeing the land of the Incas. On the north coast of South America, which is where Rand McNally claims you'll find Colombia and neighboring Venezuela, one of the most respected and popular automobiles there were vintage jeeps. They're like giant Tonka toys, and were important evolutionary prototypes that led to the Hummer. David found a 1954 Super Hurricane F-Head model that required two batteries to turn it over, one of which would not fit under the hood and had to go on the floor between the driver and passenger seats. It was of course, a stick shift, and had independent four wheel drive that required you to convert each of the four hubs



by hand. It was painted army green and had a powerful winch on the military strength front bumper. It was a real brute of an auto, but required never-ending repair. Our local car mechanic was a happy chap named *Dibulla*, and we saw him with more regularity than any close relative. And on that night after T.K. weighed anchor it was the ideal contraption to pull Luisca's truck out of the

muck. We just had to secure the car to a giant tree and start up the winch. It slowly freed that truck, and our rendezvous was complete. We drove back to Santa Marta and reported to our females that the latest boat had come and gone without a hitch.

T.K. was a good sailor and undoubtedly the horniest guy I ever met. In truth he was quite handsome and resembled the actor Robert Redford. With matinee idol good looks you wouldn't think he'd have to try very

hard to score with chicks, but he was on the prowl day and night for any member of the opposite sex who would submit to his none too subtle advances. An American at heart he was an equal opportunity seducer, working his mojo on any female with the anatomy to accommodate him. He had originally come to Latin America with the Peace Corps mission to Nicaragua, but broke one of their eleven million uptight rules. He was mentioned in the same report as marijuana and inside of forty eight hours he was deported. Don't even think of messing with the Peace Corps. The same day the rumored report came in they sent someone out from the local office to hunt him down in the jungle and drag his supposed pot smoking ass to the airport. No appeal. No protest. No pot. One thing that T.K. got out of it was an excellent knowledge of Spanish. He spoke it better than any other gringo I met down there, and it served him no end in his never ending campaign to bed down the entire female population of Latin America. Naturally, using his little head instead of his big one got him into endless scrapes. Despite his Hollywood handsome appearance, which was really all he should have needed, he was always trying to impress his quarry by coming right out and telling them that he was a big time international smuggler. On more than one occasion I had to get up and abandon him in a restaurant where he was promoting himself to a waitress. I just found the habit of confessing your felonies to strangers to be less than cool. But he thought women would go ga-ga over a smuggler, and to prove his point he'd even buy his prey a car. Why he thought he needed anything beyond his looks and charm to get laid mystified me, but that's what he did. Eventually one of his countless conquests got busted and rolled over on him big time. More on that much later.



[SESSION ONE; BEGIN TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE.]

Q: Please tell me your full name, place and date of birth.

John: Born in 1948, April 13th. Fifty-one years ago. Small town hospital, which was almost twenty miles away from the small town where I actually grew up. Same doctor that delivered all five kids for my mother, the county family doc. The small town I actually grew up in was the town my father was born in. He later went on to run the town's water works is father built, the hospital commissioner, the fire commissioner, the fire chief and a lot of stuff. And the Board of Equalization; so quite the civic person, he was. I went to the same 'ring the school bell'

school where two classes were together into one that my father went to; and the same high school that my father went to. Interesting thing, there was a young guy who the year that he graduated from high school, 1938 or '40, he became a photographer. He started taking class pictures and still to this day, fifty years later, he is still taking class pictures of the graduating class. He might be in a cast or his back might be giving way but he's still taking the class pictures. Same person as my father had twenty years before. Continuity. Small town. Everybody knew everybody of course. My mother was a school teacher so she knew everybody's parents and then she taught their kids and the kids after that. She taught three generations in all three schools.

Q: What was the name of that town?



Mary Jane and kids in Hoodspert. Father and his brother in front. Dad's brother died falling through the ice on a lake.

John: The small town where I grew up was called Hoodspert in Washington on Hood Canal where Captain Hood went down, this singular fjord of salt water on the Olympic Peninsula. And what the 1990 census reported was one of the six ruralist counties in America. Because it had no support its services, whatever, there. It's also the summer home of Bill Gates and his family. But it has some good and some ugly, I guess.

I grew up in this small town of four hundred people, Hoodsboard. A little town on the water, a port town.

Mary Jane & kids in Nebraska

Used to have an active ferry service to Seattle. In fact one time in about 1914, my great grand uncle got kicked. The horses got loose of a buckboard, kicked him in the head. So they put him on the ferry, took him up to Seattle. And he never regained consciousness. He died in Seattle and he's buried up on Beacon Hill. And his father's also buried up on Beacon Hill. And my great, great grandfather's son in law is buried up on Beacon Hill. His wife, Mary Jane, coincidentally, (laughs) was quite a woman. This pioneering wife buried her brother, her father, and her husband and lived to get to know me. I knew her as a woman



in her 90's. Great grandmother. She came from a sod house in Nebraska and had all these kids, I've got a

picture from 1870 with her and my great grandfather, 1870's. And I knew her in the 50's.

<http://bit.ly/EarlyHoodCanal>

Q: Whose side of the family?

John: My father's grandmother. So she was my great grandmother on my father's side.

Q: So they were both together on the prairie at some time. Were they farmers on the prairie?

John: Farmers, windmill. They had a sod house in

Q: So, on that side of your ancestry

John: My great grandfather in Seattle- my great grandfather trying to save the



dirt farmers. They had a nice all did, everyone of them, but it was Nebraska, out there.

of the family where do you trace back to?

great grandfather who is buried here project that I mentioned that I'm graveyard were my ancestors are

buried, and other Seattle settlers are buried with the Duwamish Nation. He came from England in about 1855



up through Baton Rouge. My great great

grandfather came through New York City. His name was William Dickinson and this other guy was Samuel Bevan, he was my great great grandfather and the other one was my great great grandfather. One the father of

my great grandmother and the father of my great grandfather. William Dickinson did a few things and made his way west with a few land transactions. Became a Justice, voted for the first time for Lincoln, raised about eight or nine kids. One of his sons was named William Dickinson also. William Dickinson Jr married Mary Jane Bevan, and had five kids, three women and two boys. Mary Jane's brother, Olis, I mentioned, was kicked by a horse and brought to Seattle by steamer, and died at Harborview Hospital. The other brother I don't know, I have no record of him. So, we have Samuel Bevan, my great, great grandfather, Olis Bevan, my great grand uncle, and William Dickinson, the son of a recent immigrant from England, William Dickinson. All buried at this cemetery on Beacon Hill. The city of Seattle to this day denies that there is a cemetery there.

Q: Why did they come to Washington?

John: I don't know but both families, the Bevans and the Dickinsons both came about the same time, late 1800's, to the city. Bevan and Dickinson both populated an area called Georgetown and South Park. Samuel



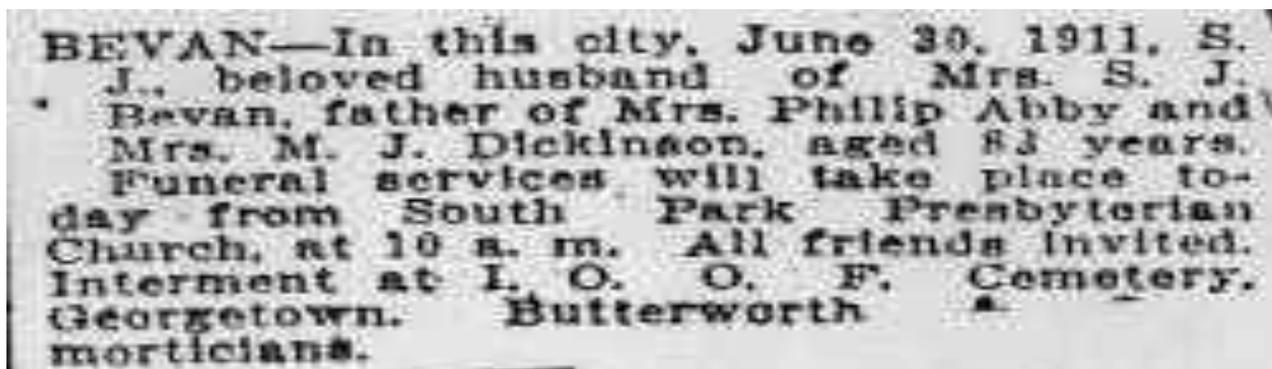
Bevan was the last mayor of South Park before it became annexed Seattle. They were all kind of the English Protestant working class, the bricklayers, the masons, those people. And then over on this side where we are today near the lake was called Garlic Gulch, it was all the Italian farmers. They were all buried in Catholic cemeteries, Calvary and another one up north. They're still very well maintained, the Catholic cemeteries.

Magnify the photo to see baby grave markers above the mourners' heads. After Seattle changed the zoning from cemetery to retail space and single family in 1986, the City bulldozed the gravestones on November 2, 1987, and trenched a sewer main. Today there are eleven homes on top of the Babyland section of the graveyard. (In 2018, the City admitted they changed the zoning to Retail and Single Family)

This cemetery was Native American, the Duwamish tribe, and English working class, the brewers- people who worked at the brewery. I have a picture of 1910 of about a hundred brewer and their wives gathered around a funeral spot for Johnny Jones who was the oldest brewer at that time at forty years old at the Rainier Brewery. The Rainier Brewery, by the way, just recently has been put up for sale, the building, after a hundred and some years.

Q: Do you have any Native American ancestry?

John: No. (In 2018 I had an Ancestry DNA test done.) I would certainly welcome that there was an ancestry there. I consider myself good friends with the Native Americans. I grew up with them. My mother taught, and I went to school on the Skokomish Nation. I went out to Neah Bay this last year to eat the mighty whale, and support them. Pat myself on the back, it took a lot of effort for my son and I to drive out there. It's a long, long, long, long, loong drive to the end of the nation. That's where it is, the very tip of Washington State. We drove there and we ate at the potlatch. Joined in the potlatch where hundreds got together and ate. It was very nice. It was a very good feeling, good time. I'm glad we were there.



BEVAN—In this city, June 30, 1911, S. J., beloved husband of Mrs. S. J. Bevan, father of Mrs. Phillip Abby and Mrs. M. J. Dickinson, aged 83 years. Funeral services will take place today from South Park Presbyterian Church, at 10 a. m. All friends invited. Interment at L. O. O. F. Cemetery, Georgetown. Butterworth morticians.

Q: Could you tell me your father's name?

John: [Gordon](#). And my mother's name was Mary. My father met my mother back east when he was going to



the King's Point Merchant Marine Academy. There are four academies and you have to have a Representative give you an appointment to get to those academies.



Q: King's Point is quite famous.

John: King's Point is on Long there and in three Merchant he did a

Island- The Great Gatsby and that whole thing. It's right it's got the big sailboats. You can get a Master's Degree like years. So he graduated from there and he went into the Marines, into the war in the South Pacific. He got out and couple private Merchant Marine jobs. Joined the Navy. But he knew that he had to get back to the forty acres that all Merchant Marines talk about, that they're going to retire and get that forty acres. So two of his very, very, bestest friends he has made the occasion to look for in Oregon or Nevada or in Florida. He has made the occasion because he's heard about them, but he hasn't seen them or talked to them for many years. Now my father's never been on the internet. He's got bad kneess and my computer was upstairs, this or that, or there's nothing there for him, nothing he wants. Where as my mother is very curious. She loves to get on it and see what's there- out of hundreds of billion pages there's bound to be something. So, one day he says "Oh, it's upstairs. I guess I can't go, I got my knees." This is a very touching moment. He wanted to. Then he looked, "Oh we've got a hand rail. Oh, I can go up that." So, he walked up with his knee replacements all the way up to the top of the stairs and says, "Okay, what's here." I said, "Well, most of the people, they go to porn and then ancestry. Here's a quick porn." He says, "Oh, that's enough. I don't want anymore of that." I said, "I don't blame you. But a lot of people go genealogy. That's the second most usage of the internet."

And he said, "Can it find somebody?" I said, "It can try. What's the name?" So, he gave me their names, there were two brothers, Greek names. And he hadn't seen them for fifty years and blump! [snaps fingers] There were their names, there were their addresses, there were their telephone [numbers]. I said, "Do you

want to call them? It's Sunday afternoon." He literally started to cry, tough for him, but he was crying. He had never gotten on the internet before, and all of a sudden, these people he had searched for, he had made the effort -for fifty years. And they went through some really far out times together in the Merchant Marines. He brought them up here many years ago and took them on deer hunts. They didn't believe hunting or salmon fishing. They didn't believe that you'd just catch them in creeks.

Q: Where were they from?

John: From New York, the Bronx or whatever. So that was a touching moment between he and I. His first try on the internet and boom! It was so important. And he went down to Las Vegas and he spent time with his old buddy and he talked to the other one years ago. So, it's been a real bridge. He says he doesn't know if he'll see them again but he made the effort.

Q: It was touching for you two, why is that?

John: It was very touching because we hadn't had that many connections. It was a bonding and you don't get that from being away, from being a teenager, from being pretty separate. You don't get that with a parent but for a few times.

Q: Did you tell me about your dad's career?

John: No, I didn't. He was the operator of a hydroelectric plant. It made the national news because this year it flooded. The Skokomish had been out there, the Skokomish Indian nation, had been out there beating drums on the bridge where the water comes through from the turbines. And after they left and the hillside flooded. The big mudslide came down and filled the generators. Knocked the whole system out. It was huge, several million dollars worth of damage. So, we went out there and looked at it, my father and I and my son. Somebody else, I forget, I think it was my wife.

Q: Is that a government job?

John: Well, yes. It's city of Tacoma. It's a public utility, City of Tacoma, like the City of Seattle PUD. My grandfather was among the first people on the board, the first to start the very first public utilities department where the people of an area that didn't have a town or they didn't have a big county seat, but they could just area their group of people. It didn't have to be county line just an area, got together and said, "Okay, we'll be part of the Public Utilities Department, it's called PUD # 1." And he was one of the founders of PUD # 1 where they could bargain who they buy electricity from. And it was Public Utilities.

Q: Sounds like you had a middle-class background but at the same time it sounds like your parents were pretty ambitious or progressive.

John: Yes, I mean we were comfortably middle class. And because my father, my father's job being operator was work twenty and get ten off he could get a couple of weekends. So, we did have time to take long car trips out to Montana or even to New York.



Q: Five children and the parents?

John: Five children, one parent.

Q: What number were you in the children?

John: I was the second. I had an older sister, two years older. All named with J's. There was JoAnn, then there was John after two years, after one year there was Jill, after four years there was Jim or James, James Michael, and after two more years there was Julie, Julie Gay. So JoAnne, John Richard, Jill Marie, James Michael, and Julie Gay. We're the five J's. My grandparents, Mom and Pop, would send cards addressed to 5'Js, Hoodsport.

Q: They must have liked J's.

John: It just happened. And the grandparents at that time were retired and travelers. They collected seashells in Borneo and elsewhere around the world. They just went all over the world. And then my grandfather died, and she traveled to all these friends that they had met before traveling. So, she just kept traveling around the world.



Q: Did that make an impression on you?

John: For sure, sure. She would get the town together, and she would show her slides and Super 8's. "Oh, Mom's back." Her name was 'Mom' and her husband's name was 'Pop', and they were called 'Mom' and 'Pop' in town. They were kind of old. Well, the town itself were all Dickinsons, so that was weird. There



was Uncle Lester and his wife, Uncle Floyd and his wife, Mom and Pop Dickinson, his name was Herb and hers Ruie. My mother's parents came out here, John and Vera. Old names and they came from New York after I was born. They lived in town and then there was Eleanor and Dick, Roger, and another one. In a town of four hundred, that's a lot of Dickinsons.

Q: But someone who traveled around the world at that time in a small town, she must have been very unusual.

John: She was, and she would get a crowd with her slides. She was a very good photographer. I have thousands of her slides, all well labelled.



Q: I wondered if that made some impression on you that one day you wanted to travel.

John: Oh, obviously. Yes. My first travel was at two months, I went to New York City from Hoodspott. My mother took me back to meet the grandparents at two months. So, I got the bug very early. At fifteen I became a diabetic, so I knew that I'd better get my traveling done quickly. So that was a traumatic change in my life, but it was a direction. It made me think a little. I better do things, and get some traveling in early. I was told I had about twenty years. I would work just to travel. People would say, "How did you get to India?" I would say, "Well, look. How much did you make last year?" "thirty-six thousand." This is back in the 60's, good money. I said "Well, okay, I made ten. How much did you spend?" "Well, I got the apartment, the car, the stereo. The iron and ironing board are all on time, I'm making the payments." "How much did you spend at the

bar?" I said, "You know I spent in a year traveling to India and back again less than what you spent at the bar." Yes, so it was a different priority.

Q: So, at the age of fifteen you started traveling?

John: At fourteen I was hitch hiking a hundred miles, I'd be hitch hiking at night a hundred miles.

Q: You just wanted to travel?

John: Well, it was just keep going. First explorer. You know, just had to go out farther, had to explore the boundaries, and certainly beyond. Of course, I was told to immediately hitch hike back home. Here it was nine o'clock at night and I'm out 125 miles away, and my mom says to hitch home.

Q: Your parents didn't mind you doing that?

John: Oh yes, they said, "What are you doing up there? You're a hundred and twenty miles away? What are you doing? You better hitch hike back." I said, "But mom, it's dark." And she said, "You better get your butt back here."

Q: At least you let them know. That showed that you must have got along pretty well. So, sounds like things were okay.

John: Never got beaten, no abuse, caring parents, mother a school teacher, kept a fastidious house, cooked morning and evening, and worked all during the days, and cared for five kids.

Q: How about political or religious attitudes at home?

John: Catholic. When I was in fifth grade, my mother went back to get her Masters, her teaching certificate. So, she packed up all the kids and the grandparents and went up to Bellingham for a year while she did twenty-five hours a quarter, finish up a quick program. Definite over achiever there. So, she got her degree. And that year for me I was in a Catholic middle school. When I was a sophomore, I was in a Catholic boarding school. My parents had sent me away to get an education basically. It's boarding school, you don't leave. You're there, Catholic talk.

Q: Where did they send you?

John: It's called Saint Martins in Lacey, it's near Olympia. And some people are sent there for prison, some people are sent there for education or both. Very strict, very corporal, a lot of beatings, a lot of everything.

Q: Really?

John: Yes, very corporal.

Q: Well that's an interesting change for your young life to go there.

John: Well, you know, whatever. You wake up in the morning and your bed has to be able to bounce a quarter everyday- every day, or hacks.

Q: But they sent you there for an education?

John: You went there for pretty much an education. Or discipline. Unmanageable, there were kids back then that weren't manageable.

Q: How many years did you go there?

John: Just one. I fell into it, a gang, essentially. There were 4 of us that were in charge of the snack bar crew at the movie theater. None of us had a driver's license although we had a pick-up truck and the ability to stay

out two hours later than seniors. They had to be in bed at ten o'clock and asleep by eleven and we got in at twelve because we were cleaning up the theater quotes end quotes.

Q: So what age were you there again?

John: 14-15. That was during Kennedy, when Kennedy was shot. You mentioned that was one of the high points or points to mark history. As Steinbeck says, 'Eventless time is no time at all. It's time that's marked by events, like fence posts, that you can count and see that is a full time, a long time.'

Q: What are some of the events you remember?

John: The Beatles had arrived. All students filed into a friendly Priest's dorm to watch Ed Sullivan. Did I say corporal? One student had his hair cut Beatleish. The priest refused communion, and told him to go to his office. There he gave the student 18 stiches. And certainly JFK. We were all in church. Because everyday you go to church at a Catholic boarding school. You pop in for a half-hour mass.. At mass all of a sudden it went zip, zip, zip, zip, zip transversing back and forth through the pews as everybody passed it along. And everybody heard it. Kennedy had been shot, he's dead. Just like that. And all of a sudden, a mood encompassed the entire little chapel there, with whatever grade that was there with me. I don't know if the whole school was there, but I don't think so. Maybe freshman and sophomores and then juniors and seniors – they kind of divided it that way –were at another chapel.

Q: How did you feel?

John: Well, certainly devastated but still kind of realizing that when we look at revolutions, Bolivia having a hundred and thirty of them and all these assassinations and El Salvador and different places, you look at that and we're the king of the banana republics. We've had more assassinations and or attempts at assassinations than any other country in the- combined, you know. So, we're the king of the banana republics. But any time they point to a bomb that kills six and injures twenty in the Middle East, whether it be Lebanon or Israel or anyplace, when that's the average day in one big city in America. I mean we have lots of cities that have over a thousand a year, murders. You don't get that in ten years in guerrilla fighting. So, people say, "Why did you travel to Beirut, Bangkok, and all these dangerous cities during dangerous times?" I say, "Because even the most dangerous cities back then, even if I went to Belfast and Baghdad, I'd still feel safer in the middle of civil war than any large city in America. And I was. I was in the middle of the civil war in Lebanon. I was surrounded by a different army this side, different army 50 feet away. There were 16 different armies fighting there. I had to dance between all of them, all the roadblocks and chit chat and etc., "What are you doing here?"

Q: I had no experience in Lebanon and I'm sorry I missed that. When did you first get to Lebanon?

John: I want to check to make sure, but I think it was '71 or '72. Because it was '73 that I went to South America. I think I was there at Christmas and New Year of '71 going into '72 and that was spent in the infamous Bekaa Valley.

Q: Did you go there specifically with intent?

John: Just an interest. I was traveling in tandem with another couple. I was traveling with a dog. They said, "We're going to go do this that and the other." And I said, "I'm going to go up in the Bekaa Valley." This is from Beirut, Christmas. And I went up there and I stayed. And I got accepted. I later went back there in '78 at which time I did considerable amounts of hashish. I did three hashish trips from there totaling 10,000 lbs, 20,000 lbs, and 45,000 lbs. were the different loads.

Q: Wow! 45,000. And that's the one you later got indicted on?

John: That's the one I got testified against. They didn't catch any of the loads. Not a gram not a cent.

Q: So, you worked Lebanon?

John: I worked Lebanon. In 1969 I smuggled from Pakistan. And then it was down to Mexico, then it was back to the States, then it was back to the Middle East in '71, something like that. Because I went to Mexico pretty soon after I got back from India. I was in culture shock. I was stammering, and it was not a pretty picture. So, then I pretty quickly went down to Mexico and just hung out there. Almost stayed forever down there; that was in '70.

Q: It's interesting stuff and it gives me a picture of where you were but let me go back and try to do the chronology a little bit. So, growing up. JFK was assassinated, and you were there in church that morning. Did you at that time feel any sense of conspiracy in the government or certain factions?

John: Didn't enter my mind. Just the loss. My feeling is that no person is more important than another person. The loss of any human life is the same as the loss of another human life. So, it was that sense that yes, but he wasn't worth a thousand somebody else. The dignity of human life. I'm a pacifist, I've been a member for almost 30 years of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. So, when I see all this condemnation for guerrilla tactics and I stack up the bodies, which is conventional war which goes a factor of 10 times how many or a factor of a 100 even how many bodies, I say, "Well, hold it." Maybe guerrilla war is a little bit more humane as they say.

Q: It's the principle, that's what they want to tell you.

John: Exactly. So, in '64 I didn't have any conspiracy thing.

Q: Did you have any fixed political views, religious views?

John: Well, I was only a sophomore. I certainly wasn't voting. I was pretty young but there was a whole childhood before it went to that. Did you want to touch on that?

Q: Sure.

John: I grew up in a same sort of country style life that you would see in some of the TV shows really. It's a small little town and there's three girls your age and there's four guys your age. Sometimes you play football with and against guys a little bit older but there's only three people your age. Age was very important then.

And so, you're playing tackle football in the rain. Now this is an area where I grew up where I think last year got 110 inches a year. Of course, the weather was more severe as you went earlier in history. When I was a child we used to get three or four-foot high snow and now they're lucky to get a drift or anything. When my grandfather was a child the Hood Canal froze over and it is salt water. It froze over so cars were driving across it.

Q: So, it was colder and wetter up there-

John: It was colder then in the teens, then it was in the 20's, than it was in the 40's, and 60's, and now.

Q: A really small town that you grew up in, just a few students, children your age.

John: You had a group that you could play with. You could get a basketball game, four on four, if you could get eight people together. We had a community basketball team that my father played on, and I played on. The Hoodsport Seals. We took last place. [laughs] There were only like six people on the whole team. But we got the consolation prize for being nice guys. We got beat of note: a new prison was built out there. Washington State Correctional Facility they built out there in my hometown area. We played the prisoners and we got beat 129 to 29, so we got beat by 100 points.

Q: I bet they had fun doing that.

John: Oh sure. They were playing full court, are you kidding? We had a $\frac{3}{4}$ court in our small town school. [laughs] Growing up, very early age we were educated to fire arms. At thirteen, I could be walking down the street with a rifle heading down to the hardware store with a buck and a quarter in my pocket to buy a box of shells. And then go up in the hills and go plinkin' at the garbage dump. Plinkin' rats or plinkin' bottles or cans, whatever.

Q: What about intellectual interests or pursuits? Were there any writers or scientists?

John: I was very fortunate. Right the summer after I was a sophomore at boarding school, I was let out – it was early.

[END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE. BEGIN TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO.]



This was the summer of '64. I had a couple weeks jump start on getting out ahead of public school because I was let out of private boarding school. And I got a summer job. At the age of – I must have been sixteen- running a boat marina on one of the most idyllic spots on maybe the face of the earth -- a little bottleneck harbor, fifteen hundred, two thousand feet long, a thousand feet wide [tapering

down] to, like, a hundred feet wide. A little bottleneck harbor with a small public dock and a private dock with a little shack for flares and bait, frozen popsicle sticks and whatever. Most importantly, it had fuel. And then over on the shore was this little shack about eight by eight with a little wood stove in it. Outside was a little faucet. And I lived there for three months. I couldn't get this job that I wanted going up in the mountains that Dylan sings about , going up into the mountains as a fire watcher where you're dropped up there for four months. I forget what they're called but it was fire watching up on one of those little shacks on the top of a mountain. I had a little shack right there at a boat marina.

Q: It was almost as good.

John: It was good in that I was alone with my thoughts and hundreds of books that I plowed through. Alone until the weekends and then Friday nights all the boats from Seattle would come and get moored. But during the week it was just very tranquil, very nice.

Q: What books were you reading?

John: I have to think about who. I remember there was some trash novels, there was also the Bond series, James Bond.

Q: Did you read Yogananda?

John: No. It was 1964. I read Hermann Hesse. Who was the guy that wrote- that made a movie out of- that was filmed in Guaymas- *Catch 22* was one of his books?

Q: Is that Saul Bellow who did that?

John: No. I read all Saul Bellow. (It was Joseph Heller, we were both wrong.)



Q: I was wondering if there was any particular philosophy, religion, creed, religious, political pursuits?

John: No. Just pounds of books.

Q: So you hadn't formed any kind of personal view.

John: No, I wouldn't say so.

Q: Well what were your main interests?

John: I don't know. Maybe anything beyond me.

Q: What do you mean.

John: Anything beyond me, beyond my present ability to attain.

Q: The big city?

John: It could be city or country or the stars, of course. At the time I was taking a pilot's license at fifteen. But the guy wrecked his plane. He had a little floatplane, a little fabric floatplane he used to fly into the harbor. And he would teach me how to fly. We would go up on the days when no boats were there, which was all week long except for the weekends. So, when people say what was the most idyllic job you ever had, that was it. Now it's all built up; summer homes and marinas. You can't even get into that harbor. It's just thick. It was a time to dream of being a pilot.

Q: So, you think back on that time with a real kind of golden memory?

John: Incredibly. Incredible opportunity. Number one to have the time, to read, getting paid for it. Self-reliance, self-assurance, how to cook for yourself on a wooden stove. Living alone and dealing with a lot of people. Most of these people are rich, most of these people are belligerent. One time I tied up a seventy-six foot yacht. At this time, it was kind of funny. Seattle was going through a major investigation. And they indicted, in the end, the Police Chief and all the way up. That's where they started. 1964 I think it was. The Police Chief and everybody up above them retired or were indicted.

Q: For what?

John: Graft, pay offs, everything. It was an amazing time. So, some of these politicians would show up there with their mistresses. One time I saw a woman getting beat the hell out of with an aerosol can and everything. I didn't know what to do. She was drunk and back and forth and he was beating the hell out of her and I said, "C'mon, c'mon." And I cleaned her up, dressed her and she stayed in my cabin that night and got her a ride home or took her up above to the highway and got her out of there or whatever. But it's weird, all kinds of people. Yachters, but a lot of people and I sold them their space. I gave them their berths.

Q: You were able to handle the job pretty well?

John: Yeah, just came naturally I guess.

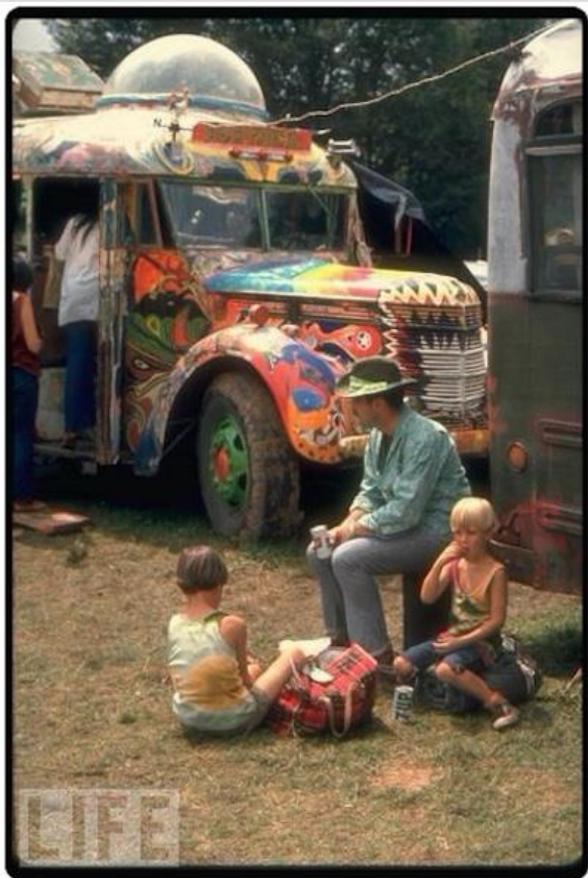
Q: Did you have any idea at that time of a career?

John: Career?! Hmmm. That's a good one. Oh boy.

Q: You're already a junior in high school now approximately, right?

John: I hadn't gotten to junior yet. But as I got into a junior, my kind of thoughts went to business, some sort of a business. And so, I was taking business classed in high school and I was told best to succeed in business yearbook type of thing. I don't know what it said but something about business. Then when I went to college in 1966 after I graduated in 1966, it was towards business administration.

Q: Did you finish college?



John: I spent a year, '66,'67, and the spring time of '67 is when Ken Kesey and Timothy Leary, and Dr. Albert, Baba Ram Das and Ginsberg. But some guy showed up with some LSD, okay, and I said, "Sure. Let's see what's going on." And I didn't know if anything was going on. I had this black room. I was still in college, you know, keggers. And I have this kind of a trip like with marbles kind of dotted all over the walls and ceiling and the floor. And I got some flowers and I got my bed on the floor and the whole room is painted black and I guess I just happened to move into that room. It was a kegger house for beer parties, a party house. So, I moved in there and I laid down on the pad and listened to *Lay Lady, Lay*. And what was the electric Dylan? Wasn't it *Lay Lady, Lay*? Yes, that one. And watching candles going back and forth and watching lights going back. And then I left that day. I remember this, it was pretty trippy of course. I hitch hiked and I got a ride in a Corvair Spyder convertible. That was a

Corvair with extra goomph, extra chrome, extra vroomph, so it was like I'm in a spaceship going up the hill to the college. And at the top of the hill college, the college common grounds the middle of college, was the Merry Prankster Bus. So, I get out of this this little space age thing that took me college from where I lived at the of the hill, tripping all the while and walked into the Further Bus. And then later on that night, of course I was



at the there in Spider, up to the bottom

of the hill, tripping all the while and walked into the Further Bus. And then later on that night, of course I was

thinking that night, was the Timothy Leary – Dr. Richard Alpert road show, which was a very trippy. It was very good. They played straight man and a tripster together on stage.

Q: Timothy Leary and Dr. Richard Alpert?

John: Yes, before he became Ram Dass.

Q: And the Merry Pranksters were there also? The Merry Pranksters were Kesey and Neil Cassidy.

John: I'm not sure if Cassidy was there, maybe he was there and Kesey was there. I didn't know them. I didn't know who they were or identify with them until I read- Tom Wolfe was talking about *The Electric Cool Aid Acid Test*. I didn't know them. I didn't know Kesey. I do remember that I was tripping in the original FURTHER bus with the plexy dome above the driver. <https://youtu.be/Uh2kK5IfS-8>

Q: But they were there?

John: I remember dancing in a big circle in Red Square with Allan Ginsberg, He was there. The bus was there. I didn't know who was there associated with that bus. I met a young sculptor years later at Burning Man. Years later. He did the machining of Segal's guns. He told me his mother was on the bus that Spring trip to Bellingham. I said, "Really? Maybe you're my son?" We both laughed. I didn't know the Pranksters' notoriety, so, no one was recognizable to me. And I was tripping, a bit out of sorts.

Q: Which school was this?

John: Western Washington State College. It used to be the Washington State Teachers College, so it was known for being a female teachers' college. About 60/40 women to men, still a lot of women to men and now it's become hugely progressive. They've got the Aldous Huxley College for Environmental Sciences, they got Fair Haven. The first co-op in the nation was started up there. A lot of very hip things because during that era a lot of people were leaving to go to Canada to escape the draft. They were refused entry. They ended up staying in Bellingham. A lot of people were dropping out of the college but not leaving the town. So, they were growing up with Bellingham. A lot of people just heard about Bellingham and were going there just to drop out. You go there, and you could lose a couple years and not even know it. You're immediately stoned, and you just get with the rhythm of the town very quickly and you could lose a couple years very easily. It's a very nice town.

Q: That's funny. I remember Timothy Leary and co. coming to my university too. I was at Santa Cruz and was very impressed with that. It's amazing to me how many people remember that show.

John: Yes, traveling road show. Well, it would be the spring of '67 for me. Dr Leary and Dr Alpert's road show was quite memorable. Dr Alpert travelled to India shortly after the tour, and got his Ram Das name at an ashram I too visited te ashram 6 months later.

Q: That's when it would be for me too. And he was hitting every campus he could, I guess. So that was the first time you took LSD?

John: That day.

Q: So, you took LSD not because somebody from the road show gave it to you but because somebody else had given it to you?

John: No, somebody else had given it to me. They were there incidentally at the same time. Orange Sunshine. https://youtu.be/ioDLsnkdh_8 perhaps.

Q: Was it a very strong trip?

John: It was strong. It was hallucinogenic. You know, just all kinds of things.

Q: Had you been smoking pot already at that time?

John: I don't think so. Oh, previously yes, but not that day I'm sure.

Q: But you had already turned on to smoking pot at that time?

John: Yes, that was the summer of '66. Summer of '66 I was working at Boeing. While I was training to work at Boeing, it was crazy, crazy times. You understand that Seattle had 400,000 people. 125,000 of them worked at Boeing. Yes, the head of every family, every single family. But these were people who were paid seven cents a mile to come from England or India to work in Seattle. They had people from everywhere. So, I went to work for them, and one day I saw this toolbox. They had twenty-four hour training and weeding out to see where you go, orientation, training, etc. —and I saw this guy's name. He was a guy I went to school with at the Catholic boarding school. So, we ended up living together with three others.

Over here there was a large public housing and a girlfriend of mine, she says, "I'll introduce you to this woman," who was a prostitute, fence, young black woman. The lady says, "I'll give you these two joints because I know you'll be back for more." Her public housing house was filled with TV sets and stuff like that. I never went back, but anyway, we were up on University Ave. at the Ye Olde College Inn- very historic- and we got into a shower tub, shower stall, put a blanket over it. It was like a cheap hotel 'cause it had little metal shower- those little shower things. So, we just put a blanket over that and we really didn't feel much. It was the first.

Q: Yes, Mexican weed.

John: I'm going, "What the hell's all this about? What's all the talk about?" You know, you were high but you didn't know it. I had a beer, said, "Okay." But with LSD definitely. So, we were picking up pieces of childhood also. I think I mentioned being thirteen years old and traveling with grandpa, grandma, and ma cross-country to New York. And sweltering heat. She tried to stay at motels that had swimming pools everyday, everyday at four o'clock in the afternoon. And we always ate at restaurants, still to this day she won't eat in a café. She has to eat at a restaurant.

Q: Grandma?

John: My mother. I remember Macy's, I remember walking up the Statue of Liberty, I remember going up to meet her family and where she grew up. She grew up in a town of four hundred people similar to Washington in one of the ruralist counties of the nation. She grew up on Lake Champlain, which is the lake that goes across to Vermont. And it's a historic town, the entire town is a national historic site, the entire town. It's called Essex. I've got it downstairs, the whole design and dedication, everything about it. It's got a famous style architecture about it, like Neo-Grecian or something. I have not heard of it before, but they are redoing the entire town. So anyway, that's where she grew up, but she had a friend who was a cousin of my father or something like that and they introduced them, at like, fifteen. Dated while he was at the Academy and got married and he went off. So, I'm thirteen, and these people are rural. I'm thinking I'm from the big city compared to these people in upstate New York, these rock farmers and people like that. Not so much my cousins but people in the area –very rural people. Like people you'll find in New York City. They're very citified but they can't leave the city. They're immobilized. They can't go to where these people are upstate any more than the people from upstate can go to the city.

Q: They're very locked in their territory. I think I know what type of people you mean.

John: A lot of people in New York City are that way. They're very metropolitan but not cosmopolitan. Cosmopolitan means aware of your surroundings, metropolitan means you're aware of the city that you're in, you're part of that. Yes, the metropolitan cosmopolitan. They say you'll find a lot of cosmopolitan people living in New York City. Well, that's true you find a lot of people in New York City but the bulk of them are pretty darn metropolitan –rural in a citified sense.

Q: Very good, I'll remember that. I was just there and you're right. So that was the first trip that you'd taken out of the state?

John: No, no. We'd gone as children to Spokane or Roseburg, Oregon every summer to visit relatives. We traveled to see relatives to Sun Lake State Park in eastern Washington, and then trips down to Hollywood, to Disneyland, trips out to Port Orange, Florida, and Montana. We had a friends and relatives, who had a big acreage farm out there.

Q: Lot's of trips.

John: Well every year - Oh, yes, yes.

Q: Did you have the taste for the traveling? Did you like it and look forward to it?

John: Oh, yes, yes.

Q: We touched on this a bit, but did that then inspire you to travel more?

John: Realize I wanted to travel more, yes.

Q: Okay, I'll be glad for anything you want to tell me about that period of childhood that stands out in your mind. I was just trying to get a general idea. Anything else?

John: Just playing games. Idyllic childhood- I would say from ten to about eighteen when you graduate, sixteen, seventeen. I grew up with a beautiful house, nicest house in town if that's presumptuous or whatever, in a town of four hundred people. And then we'd close that house up and we'd go to the summer resort area with a whole different crowd of people. And these were people from Tacoma, Olympia, and Seattle who bought these summer homes- all Catholic families. So, you grew up with a large amount of kids in this summer community of about forty families. Every family had at least three or more kids, so you get a good group of kids. We had a pack of kids that grew up together from two, three, four years old- up until they're twenty and they're still growing together today.



Q: Did you get along with pretty well all the kids there?

John: Oh sure, I was known as a Mr. Innocent or Mr. Gentleman type of thing because I would be out with the girls. Always sleeping out with them. "He's sleeping with Melody." You know, because they knew that Melody was safe then [laughs] that kind of attitude.

Q: Was she safe with you?

John: She was safe with me. They were all safe with me.

Q: So that's how your friends described you, as a nice guy.

John: Nice guy, yes. There were boys at the camp. There was one older boy who was gay and we had a pretty good friendship but he had other things going on. There was another guy who read comic books. I'm trying to think of the boys that were in this summer town that you could actually play tennis with- get a foursome going. So, it was mainly I would get foursomes going playing tennis or water skiing, was with girls. And they were girls that were a year or two years older than I. So that was my crowd as I was growing up.

Q: You tended towards an older crowd then?

John: Older in that sense I guess, those summers. We literally closed up our house and I'll tell you this summer home resort was only nine miles away. [laughs] It was like, "Wow." It was weird, it was bizarre. And I didn't see all the people I grew up with in the winter years. It was funny.

Q: You had a childhood that you described as 'idyllic' and with lots of promise. You didn't decide on a career, you say.

John: There was nothing in my parent's careers that they were working towards to pass on. I knew that, that was certainly obvious.

Q: But you could have done anything you wanted.

John: I could have been president. How many times I heard that. Yes, of course.

Q: I felt that way. I could have done anything I wanted, same kind of great promise.

John: That's right. And you make a choice. Of course, everything you do is a choice of something. Of something that your- call it what you want- your worldview, aura, psyche, your persona.

Q: So, about this time the war in Vietnam is starting to heat up.

John: I'm not worried. I've got diabetes, I'm exempt. I'm not worried but I'm losing some friends. But I'm not really thinking of them. You know at that age I am kind of self-centered. You're discovering yourself, you're discovering whatever. You're working, you've got other friends, you've left your high school friends behind or you're in college and you've left your high school friends behind. You're meeting new friends and whether some of your old friends are being lost in Vietnam or going to Korea or different places, you know and you don't know. And you see them when you do see them, and you share histories, whatever. I have a friend who went to Korea and he was affected by the war. And we're still, I would say, best friends even though he lives many miles away.

Q: We were born the same year and our year was hit hard for-

John: Paradox.

Q: That too, but our year and the year before was drafted for the war.

John: Did you get drafted?

Q: No, I got *4f'd*. But I had to do a routine for them, understand. I had to actually go the whole route with them and got *4f'd*. So perhaps because you had diabetes you knew that you weren't going to go in that the full impact didn't hit you.

John: Right, so you had to do, rather than myself who was passive.

Q: Yes. You were talking about choices and that was a very real choice you had to make.

John: Oh, friends of mine would get drafted and they would get hives. They would get this letter and they would go looney, they'd break down.

Q: Yes, but am I going to comply or am I going to run, hide, whatever it was.

John: So, I didn't have that.

Q: Okay. I'm just trying to think of what might have led you up to take LSD.

John: That spring of '67 I dropped out of college, no. That summer of '67, I partied very hard, living on the streets essentially. Yes.

[PAUSE]

The spring of '67 I took my first one and then that summer it was quite extensive. That fall when I was getting ready to go to college, I was up on the University of Washington lawns. I'd been sleeping outside, sleeping on the streets and I said, "Get away from me" to this woman I was sleeping with, you know, just in clothes out in the lawn. I said, "I've got to leave." And I went to the airport and I said, "I want to go to Turkey."

Q: Really?! Just like that?

John: Yes, and he said, "Well, you got to have a passport." I said, "Oh, how much is it?" "You got to have more than \$500 dollars." I said, "Where can I go for \$200?" He said, "One way to Hawaii." So, I got on a plane.

Q: No passport and you could afford it.

John: I just had \$200 dollars and I got on the plane and went to Hawaii.

Q: Fall of '67 you pile on a plane and go to Hawaii.

John: Yes, instead of going back to school. So, I spent the fall quarter in Hawaii and then the winter and spring quarter I spent back in school. And then that summer of '68, it was a very wild time. I ended up leaving in the fall of '68 for Europe, for India. And I left everybody behind and I just hauled off and left this whole city behind.

Q: You flew to which island in Hawaii, Honolulu?

John: I lived in Oahu in fall of '67.

Q: I was there in the fall of '67, we might have almost crossed paths.

John: I was living with two hometown friends and a friend that I'm end up being. A guy that was working computers back then, a guy named Chris. I would have liked to have been friends with him 'cause this was in the fall of '67 he was working on IBM computers, all the cards- everything was card punched. I think he worked for the State of Washington, computers down there. And two friends that I ran into from my hometown, Shelton- the town next to my hometown where the high school was.

Q: You ran into them in Hawaii?

John: Yes. So, I ended up living with these three guys and I stayed about four months. Traveled to the Big Island and saw that volcano blow, that would be in '67. And then I went back to school.

Q: Were you continuing to take LSD trips there during that summer?

John: Not really but my favorite records were The Cream and Jimi Hendrix *Experience*. Those two records came out about then.

Q: Were you smoking pot in Hawaii?

John: Very little. Not much.

Q: Why did you go to Hawaii? Just to go some place different?

John: Well, I was at the airport for one. And somebody had said, “Hey, people are going there. You don’t need money, live off coconuts”, or something in Maui. Lot of smoke everywhere. Yes, ’67. I made it as far as Oahu.

Q: That was one of my questions if you made it to Maui back then. Maui was one of the crossroad places.

John: I made it to Big Island and traveled around. And then I came back and in the summer of ’68, I had been spending time in San Francisco and Seattle and somebody had given me a ticket and they said, “Look, I think the guy that stole these tickets got busted but here’s a ticket. And it was first class through to four places. I was living in the Haight and in Berkeley, two different places staying with people. I got caught inside that no man’s land during the riots. I mean, we decided to drive through and all of a sudden there’s ten cop cars around you and there are six giants in every one and they’re looking at you. They were beating up people. So anyway, I was just a druggie, middleman, dealer, supplier, call it what you want. I did low level little dealings in weed and LSD.

Q: You were scoring from people near by and selling it?

John: Yes.

Q: Was that how you were supporting yourself?

John: I would say so. There wasn’t much to support. Our rent was five people, \$50 dollars. So, it wasn’t much, it wasn’t a business. It wasn’t consuming.

Q: Well what do you remember about The Haight back then? It was a pretty lively place with concerts in the park and-

John: My friend’s house was just two blocks up the hill, right in the middle of Haight-Ashbury Street. Spent a lot of time walking around the park. He had an ape that we would take down to the ave. Every once in a while you’d meet somebody. I did meet a woman and I said, “If you’re ever in Seattle, if you ever get the inclination, c’mon up.” And she came up and I was really, really, really loaded at the time. I just hugged her, and didn’t let go of her, and she stayed. We pretended like we were husband and wife for quite a long time, almost a year. Jennie Schmidt from Laguna Beach.

Q: People talk about the ‘60’s about having a certain mythology, a certain ideology or ethic but nobody ever really describes it in exact terms what they thought the mythology was, what the ideology of what was. Looking back now, can you-

John: I would say certainly, certainly LSD has a great influence. Very dangerous. Very dangerous because everything is, “Hey, we can deal with love, we can deal beauty, we can handle these things. We’re adults.”

Q: So that’s what was central to the LSD experience, you think?

John: I would say this naiveté of –there can be peace.

Q: So, there was a real strong ethos of peace, to make love not war, right?

John: So yes, definitely pot, LSD, and --

[END TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO. BEGIN TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE.]

At the time at Western Washington State College, I had political science and art majors. So, you say, “everything is art, and everything is politics” and back and forth. It was kind of an ethereal way to approach things. Everything you do is a political statement. And that kind of slid in through smoking weed as a political statement as say, “Look, this is something I’m going to do. I’m going to always do it. Screw you.” type of thing.

Q: Standing up to authority.

John: Whatever. It’s just part of that: *It’s just so silly, don’t even bother me.*

Q: It’s so silly that somebody requires it illegal, you mean?

John: Yes. Granted, I have no problem with this idea that there’s a difference between somebody with a pipe and somebody with a barge of cannabis, of course. But nevertheless, when you talk about the number of people who smoke in this country, and you break it down to how much has to be produced, grown, smuggled, imported, whatever, at a minimum of maybe thirty thousand pounds a week-

Q: Consumed in the United States.

John: Consumed- at a small guess- that’s a lot of weed. It’s got to be supplied- all year round.

Q: So, it’s a demand that wants to be filled?

John: It’s a demand that can’t be filled- almost insatiable.

Q: But that period of heavy demand only began in the mid ‘60’s while you were at school, while you started smoking weed.

John: Well, it developed very rapidly into *why should I wait around for this guy who’s going to bring me a couple pounds, so I could sell it in lids. I could go to India and get it for half that price and pay the flight.* I’m going, *Wait a minute. Something’s wrong here. If hashish costs \$2 a kilo and I sell it for \$2000 a pound, there’s something wrong here.* So, for the price of one kilo, you can go to the source. So, I went.

Q: What about the risk factor that it was illegal to import it to countries?

John: Well, hard to understand how somebody would ignore that, really tough to think how somebody would ignore that. Because I drove across Iran where a month before they had been shooting people and putting their bodies on the grill and driving back and forth as a show to what happens to drug smugglers. And then I’m driving into Turkey, where as you saw *Midnight Express*, they give you life. And then into Greece, in Greece they were given sixteen, twenty years. Italy wasn’t so bad, but you get into France and that was- who was the

writer, Baldwin? *Another Country*, did you ever read *Another Country*? You know caught up with a towel, caught up in Paris for theft of a hotel towel, and describes his time in jail.

Q: That's what Baldwin was?

John: Yes. So, everything I did, and it started to be that way- I said, "Well, okay. Let me do this." And, "Let me do that." I always wanted to have the Boston Tea Party- drop little samples off to everybody.

Q: Samples of cannabis?

John: Cannabis. Little packets. Other people have tried to do this- tried to bombard the country. And just a political statement saying, "Heck with you. Heck with you. What do you mean 'You' telling me?"

Q: So, it was really questioning the authority?

John: Very much so, I would say. Asking questions of all sorts.

Q: And they were questions.

John: Yes.

Q: So, you were thinking why don't you fly to India and presumably get hash instead of paying somebody else to do it. So, then you did that?

John: That's what I did. I drove from England.

Q: Start off from the U.S.

John: I had gone to Europe on that free airline ticket, on that bogus ticket, in '68. That trip got my feet wet to travel. The bogus ticket I filled out from San Francisco to London, Rome, Lisbon and San Francisco. First stop a cheap hotel in Paddington. Little did I know that this was a skin head neighborhood. I would get on a bus, and get my hair pulled by 3-4 guys in their pastel jumpers who screamed in my face, "Want bover mate, want bover mate?" Lucky for me I answered honestly that I didn't understand, and they let me go. Little did I know that bover meant we want to kick you to death with our bover boots: Doc Martins with razor blades. I took my long hair to Rome where I stayed in a youth hostel in the Olympics grounds. Harassed wherever I went. I took a train up to Marseille where a great meal was eaten near the train. French service, sweeping up crumbs with tiny brooms, was great. Back aboard to Barcelona. Somewhere I met travelers who introduced me to Gaudi's <https://www.lapedrera.com/en/la-pedrera> where somehow I got a room and an amazing experience. I was very fortunate to sleep there, very magical. I am still in love with this city. Then it was a flight to Ibiza. Back then this island was a sleepy hippy hangout, today it is wall to wall party. I was leery about my return ticket, so I flew straight through to Lisbon and caught the first flight to San Francisco.

I came back, and I explained that hash was out there to several people, got a few thousand dollars and went back to England. And I stayed in England for a few months until I got – I know what happened. I got hepatitis

in London and I spent a month on my back in the hospital at Coppet's Wood. I was treated very nicely. As soon as I got out the doctors said, "Well you're going to take it easy, aren't you?" and I said, "Yes." Days later I met somebody at the Post Restraint who was going to India, and I said, "I'll go with you." So, I hop in his van. He's a Looney from Santa Cruz, the Looney. He didn't care. He was going to head off to India without a passport, without car papers, without anything. I said, "I'm out of here." So, I jumped out in Munich. There I met a couple and they said, "Okay, we'll pool it together, we'll build a little camper. I said, "Let's get a Volkswagon van. I'll drive it and we'll build a little camper unit in it- because I was thinking about bringing it back with hashish. They, Ezra and Betty Milstein, had just spent a good time in Algiers, and were anxious to keep going.

Q: Where you thinking about leaving the other guy that's from Santa Cruz?

John: I'm already gone from there. I'm with a couple from New York City who don't know how to drive. They're twenty-six but they don't know the front end to the back end of the car.

Q: And they're going to India?

John: They're going to India with me. They'll share the expense. I'll drive.

Q: Well what are you all going to India for?

John: Just to head east. There's only really one road that heads east and people are on that road heading east to Kathmandu and Goa. Kathmandu is pretty much *the* destination. It's the only destination there was up in Nepal. So, the road takes you on the northern route, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.

Q: 1968?

John: 1968. So, I drove out there and I came back the fall of '69, just before Altamont, just after Woodstock I think it was. During the first step on the moon.

Q: Okay, that happened while you were out?

John: Yes, I was in Turkey and this guy said, "It's yours. You American? It's your moon up there."

Q: How'd that make you feel?

John: I said, "Well, I don't know. I haven't seen it." I was out in the middle of Turkey, only had kind of heard about it.

Q: This must have been a pretty exciting trip back in 1968. You just didn't go to India and come back. You crossed Iran, Afghanistan-

John: Pakistan, India, up to Kathmandu and then back again.

Q: But tell me along the way.

John: Oh, you smoked the whole way.

Q: Nothing particularly stands out in your mind?

John: Turkey. Turkish hashish is the strongest in the world.

Q: It was the strongest?

John: But the most paranoid. The tunnels and the alleys and the secrecy and the paranoia of just getting an ounce to smoke in Turkey was just beyond compare. I compared it to San Diego as far as paranoia. But excellent, excellent hash. Iran you didn't bother with because it's just so uptight there. It was the Shah's time, it was crisp white uniforms and fancy American cars. Very frightening with his Savak forces behind every bush. I was extremely supportive and happy for the peaceful peoples' revolution that ousted the worse dictator among all that we have supported over the years.

Q: Very, very right wing. Authoritarian.

John: And then there was Pakistan which was very gentle.

Q: What about Afghanistan?

John: Afghanistan was like, "You guys want to buy some hashish?" asked the customs on the border. [a bit slurred] We went in through Herat, down to Kandahar and up to Kabul. We took a side trip up in the mountains to near Russia. And we got offered hashish all the way up to Khyber Pass into the Peshawar and then you get to Peshawar and you're offered more hashish. Kandahar was our best stop where we were hosted by the Nasrullah brothers. I cried when we left their hospitality. I cried when, on the way back, we left them again. Afghanis are my favorite people bringing tears to me during the Russian occupation and now ours. A funny moment at the Herat border. I asked the customs about a bathroom. They pointed to a forty by forty foot building. Inside it was five feet deep with ancient dried poop. But the hash was excellent.

Q: Did you buy it?

John: Well, bought little bits. We became friends, stayed with people.

Q: How much time did you take to go through?

John: It was a few months.

Q: So, you were traveling fairly quickly?

John: Very slowly. Oh, oh, no. It was like four months going through Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and around there. Istanbul was a few days. In Munich I had met a woman who had traveled overland from Waga Waga, Australia- had traveled overland that direction to London. We had kind of talked each other into going back east together. We were in love ... or lust. Sue Skivos.

Q: Going back east again?

John: Yes. But we lasted as far as Istanbul and we said our goodbyes. She took a train to complete her journey to London. And then I saw her again in England when I came back. So, it took about eight-nine months, I believe, of '69 to go out to Nepal and back again. And you spent maybe a week or two weeks at places like-

what's that called on the Ganges? Benares. Watched the bodies burn, smoked a chillum. And you go up in the mountains in the Himalayas, and it's off limits because of the war between India and Pakistan. We were tripping, LSD, up there when police took us to the station, and asked us about our road maps. We saw the lake region, Nanital, and the Taj Mahal on the way to Nepal.

Q: By this time, had Eastern religion become important to you in any way after LSD-

John: I went to the ashram where Baba Ram Dass, Doctor Richard Alpert, got his ordination, or something. I went to that- I think it was called a Sikram, the temple where he received his name. Went there but didn't stay. And the road was closed to Rishikesh so we couldn't get there. It was washed out at that time.

Q: Did you feel in any way that you were on a religious quest at this time?

John: Religious and just exploring, anything that came our way. One night, people knocked at the door of the van that the three of us are sleeping in and said, "It's not good to sleep here." "Awww, please go away, it's okay." Other people would come, "It's not good to sleep here." "Awwwww, please go awwaaay." And finally, some people came by and said, "It's not good to sleep here. We'll show you where." And so, these people that were telling us "It's not good to sleep here." But we were like unprotected or something, whatever. So, they took us. And when we woke up, we were in the middle of a leper colony.

Q: Which country is this?

John: India. So, you had these local experiences. Wonderful times. I've heard that India has almost doubled population since then. Since '69, it's '99 now, in thirty years it's doubled its population and it's approaching one billion people. And I'll tell you five hundred million was a lot, a lot.

Q: Gosh, it's just so much country there. I'm trying to imagine there must have been some really interesting things that happened to you at some place here or there or along the way. And you got to Kathmandu in '69 then.

John: By this time in India, Ezra's wife had left him for another traveling group or person, left him in Delhi. So, he and I continued up to Kathmandu. We went through Benares but the whole country was suffering a heat wave, it was like, "Uhhhhh." By this time, it was really, really hot. So, we got up to Kathmandu. We rented a room for \$6 a month because it had an electric light bulb. It was a dirt floor room in a house. And the family slept in the top room and they rented out these other rooms. Dirt floors, \$6 a month, had a window.

Q: A lot of other travelers around?

John: A lot of other travelers.

Q: Did you get outside of Kathmandu much or just in Kathmandu?

John: This was called Swayambhunath, the Monkey Temple Village, where at the center of the village is the monkey temple. And the village itself is just a collection of mud houses with rooms built around the temple

and they would rent out rooms or work in the fields, that type of thing. Being with the monkeys was fun. Hilarious to watch because they were like people, and you always carry a stick or they'll grab what you have in your hand.

Q: I think they're mean animals.

John: Oh, they're mean and nasty, yes.

[PAUSE]

On that first trip to India, in Pakistan I picked up curios, antiques, and stuff. And so, I had them welded into the Volkswagon van, oh, I forget, it wasn't too many- I really do forget, I don't know how many but a few kilos, maybe ten, maybe twenty kilos of Pakistan Hash.

Q: Which place did you get it at?

John: Lahore. I had gotten it there after traveling through Kathmandu and all through India and all through Turkey and Afghanistan. So, I didn't buy any until the way back and that's what I chose of all of them, all the different kinds.

Q: You chose it for what reason?

John: As being a very good quality, good strength, good flavor, good malleability. Instantly malleable. If you can malleable it, then you got something going.

Q: Course you smoked it.

John: Yes, great smoke.

Q: Who did you buy that from?

John: Kind of hard to tell, very foggy. I still have the vest that I wore on the trips. They'd fill up the vests with these round surfboards, these long surfboards. Fill this vest inside out and I'd put a jacket on and take it back.

Q: Back to where?

John: Back to the car and made several of these trips and then I had to take it to welders and they welded it shut.

Q: So you would go in to buy from somebody in the market in town and put it in this vest and then brought it back to the car?

John: Yes. I still have that vest. A little gray cotton vest with all these little pockets around you.

Q: Do you remember how you met this guy or anything in particular?

John: No, don't remember really. Lahore, in the market, "hey about three kilos." You know, everybody's throwing it at you, constantly. I mean from Pakistan, Afghanistan, even in India. They'll throw anything at you that they think you might buy whether it's brass or silk or antiques or ivory. Anything. They'll throw it at you, you'll have it there, you'll have it in your car. And being in a car is very rare. It's not like you're riding the buses and the trucks and tractors that cross and the trains- as a foreigner with a car- very, very, very hot.

Q: That's pretty exciting.

John: Drove it through Turkey and I drove across Greece. And in Greece, this guy looked me in the eye and says, "Now look, you've been to Nepal, Afghanistan- you may have thought, *well, I'll just have a little taste or something*. And I'm standing there going, "Tooooo." (Breathes it out) And he says, "You know, the last person that didn't tell me that they had some, they're doing sixteen years. Yes, this woman. It's going to be a long time. So, did you, do you have any hashish?" and he's looking at me, staring at me. And I'm going, *Yes I do*. It was written on my forehead. (Laughs) And for some reason I say, "No I don't." and he says, "I believe you." Pssht. I thought, *Don't you read English? Look at my forehead, senior*. [giggling] Oh God. Drive through Greece, took the ferry to Brindisi, Italy, changed my passport back. I had two passports by now.

Q: In two different names?

John: Same name. I just said that I had lost my passport in Germany going out to Asia, so I had two of them. One had the Asian stamps on it and if I made it into Europe, I would switch the passports. I'd be just one of those people bopping around Europe. I took the ferry from Corfu to Brindisi, Italy. So I was all of a sudden in Italy. Here's my passport; I haven't left Italy. Whatever stamp next, I was in Europe.

Q: Where's the other guy at this time?

John: He leaves around Rome.

Q: So, you two guys came back together?

John: Yes. I think he leaves around Rome. And by Rome a person shows up from America to buy a new van to transfer this into a new van to take it into the States. They were like three thousand dollars back then. They weren't much.

Q: So, this was somebody you knew?

John: Yes, somebody I knew.

Q: Had you already set this up

John: Well, hopefully.

Q: So, you called him when you got back.

John: This is almost a year later. Long time, I'm here. I'm ready. Let's do it. This other guy he had left.

Q: The person that had been driving with you left and somebody-

John: Yes, never did learn how to drive. [laughing] So anyway, so I show up and I drove it, did the switch, I give the old van to somebody in Florence that I had met before- just give it to her- freaks her out, changes her life, having somebody just drop by and give her a van changes her-

Q: Is she American?

John: No, she's English but taking a class in Florence. This guy shows up that she just met at the fountain or something and gives her a van. And then it got tossed around because there was a carnet de passage associated with the van, it was official. And the ownership just kept getting traded around, nobody owned it. It was a funny thing. So, it was transferred to the new van and it was driven up to Paris to be shipped to the States. And it got into a little fender bender and I didn't think anything of it. I wasn't going to claim it, I wasn't going to do anything. Dropped it off, ready to go. [claps hands three times] They saw this scrape, they thought they did it so they took it to an auto body shop. And the auto body people said, "Wow! Hashish." So I don't know what happened after that.

Q: The auto body people saw it?

John: Yes. I really don't know what happened after that. I was pretty separated from that whole thing.

Q: So, it got busted?!

John: Yes.

Q: Oh, shit. That was a year's work.

John: So, coming home from India in the winter of '69, it was real freaky.

Q: Is this another trip now?

John: No, coming home from India, the same trip. I leave in '68, I get back in '69, what? Okay. [not sure] Shortly after getting back from India, I go to Mexico, spring of 1970, and travel to almost every state of Mexico, just traveling, with a best friend of mine that I grew up with. And we just travel around, we eat some mushrooms here and meet some people there. We almost end up staying there forever after we meet and fall in love with some girls and Mexico.

Q: Sounds like fun.

John: Yes, it was pretty wild. So, this was a couple months after getting back from India.

Q: Coming back from India, you didn't make any money but no—

John: Didn't make any money but I was in culture shock. I was blown away, stuttering and closing myself up in an apartment. So, I get a van with my friend, Larry Spaulding.

Q: But you didn't make any money so, you had a little money left over?

John: I forget. Maybe I had a little leftover of the investment.

Q: But you're not thinking, "Let's go do another one." Or something like that?

John: No, I am always thinking of the next adventure. So, I go to Mexico, travel all the way through Mexico clear out to the end of the road, Quintanaroo —Tulum and back again to Mexico, D.F. All except Chiapas and Guerrero, states down there, I visited all the states.

Q: Mexico's a beautiful country.

John: Oh! It's an amazing, amazing. During this time I had the occasion to meet a *bruja*. Laura. And she was what they called a green witch, *bruja verde*. She knew her herbs and this type of thing and that type of thing, whatever. When she was young, she took LSD and had weird thoughts. Her parents thought she had weird thoughts so they gave her, I think, 9 series of electro-shock treatments. Fried her brain, she didn't remember a thing. So, she took the mushroom, this is a Mexican woman, and got her memory back. And this is from a woman called Maria Sabena. Maria Sabena is a high priestess of mushroomhood and she lives up in a town called Huautla in the northeastern corner of Oaxaca —there's a desert town way up in the mountain. There's two towns and they grow the most incredible mushrooms in the world.

Q: During your course of traveling in Mexico you got to this area and met this woman?

John: Got there, I didn't meet her; I met her associate. We were given mushrooms; set up an altar; laid out te chocolate and offerings but noting appened. The second time we were given mushrooms was under a great stress. I swear there was this much quantity a teaspoon, maybe a little bit more quantity to the mushroom that we were given. What they were, were a lot of smaller than that, stems with little tiny tiny itty bitty bitty —caps.

Q: They were tiny mushrooms in other words?

John: Little tiny like straw mushrooms. A little cluster, usually a mother and a father- two big ones and a little tiny ones and that was separated into 5 pieces; one, two, three, four, five pieces. And everybody ate that, just that little piece of that piece and you were knocked off your heels. It was amazing, especially that you could stay at that level of being knocked for months or weeks.

Q: Really?

John: Yes, the Indians will bring them to you and they'll bring you honey, to survive on, and you can stay there for like ten days or two weeks. And you live in caves. There's this lush part of a river that has caves with big ferns in front of it.

Q: Did you do that? Did you stay like that?

John: No we had a van. I had a van with my friend and my girlfriend, Laura, and her sister, his girlfriend and her two daughters. And we're cruising around trying to go to Huatla. But they don't want you to because it's a mushroom area, long story. I wrote a 14-page letter describing this moment going up to Huautla.

Q: Wrote it to whom?

John: Wrote it to my mother; I have a copy of it. I have saved everything from pre-birth. Shower presents and shower cards and congratulations, pre-birth stuff to the birth to the christening to the first year all the way to now.

Q: Maybe I can get a chance to look at some.

John: Yes, we'll have a check see.

Q: Was that one of your intentions when you went to Mexico? To find something, find these Indians?

John: I figured I would learn how to speak English again. I was having real trouble. And I was speaking with this guy and other people and associating and learning Spanish and everything. I chilled out from this culture shock that I had from coming home from India.

Q: For many people just going to Mexico and coming back would be a culture shock.

John: Mexico was like, "Ahhh, this is nice." It felt like home. It was very nice. It's a very nice country. And I almost stayed there forever; it was just wonderful. It came down to a coin toss.

Q: Did you eat a lot of mushrooms there?

John: Not a lot, a bit. We ate the cow pie mushrooms out in Vera Cruz and the Sinaloa- what's the name of the mushroom? It's mentioned in one of the books. Special name with two words but I forget it. (San Isidro)

Q: Were you eating peyote?

John: Peyote several times.

Q: LSD?

John: Probably less than a hundred or more than a hundred, probably a hundred.

Q: So, you were generally on a psychedelic exploration path at that time.

John: Of the entire universe. Right.

Q: Do you remember any one particular trip?

John: Probably the highest I've ever been, and I'll save it for a whole hour, remind me, is the mushrooms of Huautla in Oaxaca. Then it was '70 or whenever it was and then it was back here, and it was to work and to school. Then I quit school.

Q: Where did you work at?

John: Oh, odd jobs for people.

Q: What were you studying in school again?

John: Political science and art.

Q: So, it wasn't for you.

John: So, it wasn't for me. There was a moment in time when I said it wasn't for me and that was when a professor who'd given me a straight F throughout the quarter gave me one of the few B's in the class. I called him and the grade baloney.

[END TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE. BEGIN TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO.]

I told him this is B.S. and he said, "Yes." and I said, "See you later." A large scale disillusionment although I never dropped out of per se the system. I used it to my advantage at times. Never dropped out of the educational system until 1995 when I finished my Masters at Seattle University. All during this period I was in and out, in and out. People would say they're dropping out of school; I would say I'd be dropping in.

Q: But that was a period of disillusionment for you when you dropped out of school then.

John: But there was always a need. There was always a need for something more than I could get, whether it's technical or-

Q: Something more than you could get at school?

John: That I would have to get at a school. I used to do weird things like hitch hike from here over to Bellevue twice a week to go to school, hitch hike both ways to take a class in welding from this super guy. Education is very important to me.

Q: Because you had wide ranging interests and weren't satisfied at one school.

John: Even at Seattle U I oftentimes went to the community college taking corresponding classes at the same time that they didn't have available at SU.

Q: What were some of the classes?

John: Algebra, things like that, undergrad to get into masters program. The same professor taught at both schools, same classes that were accepted for credit at SU. During my last year SU secretly bought the UPS law school. I was going to be its first student but my son was born, and I became a full time dad.

Q: It was the professors that interested you?

John: Yes and no. I entered to get my MBA but with the discovery of the cemetery, I changed to MPA, public administration, to save the resting spot of the Duwamish and my ancestors.

Q: Okay, maybe we can get back to the smuggling business then?

John: So, it started off when I was down in Mexico. This is after India, right? I still haven't heard a word. So now I'm down in Mexico and I give a bit to a guy who gives me a bit and he takes it across.

Q: A bit of what?

John: Of weed, just a few pounds. Coming back through Mexico from the side trip. And that's a little bit of a smuggle. I got a couple pounds out of it or whatever in LA.

Q: Some guy carries for you a couple pounds?

John: And he gets ten, something like that, I forget. Back up to Seattle and then what happens? [Long pause thinking] Trip to India, trip to Mexico, and then convincing several people of a trip to India again or someplace, whether it be Amsterdam or Turkey or India or Lebanon or whatever.

Q: A business trip this time.

John: A business trip, a hashish trip. Let's do it.

Q: Now you're getting serious now.

John: I've got a few thousand dollars of investment. I go to England and I put in an order for a Land Rover at the factory, a new one. During the wait I travel to Morocco. Looking for revolution, I hitch down the coast to



Western Sahara. A fun trip, Marrakesh, Goulamine and Tan Tan Plage. I returned to London not trilled with their hash/kif. I couldn't change the money fast enough. That was the year, twice this has happened, when Nixon revalued/devalued the American dollar like 12%. And I couldn't change it fast enough. It was like a \$3000 car became a \$4200 car.



Q: Holy shit, Nixon.

John: Yes. It's like I lost the value of \$3000, overnight it was a killer. And Land Rovers, are actually. But I storage units and

became \$4200 or whatever it was, it so, I got my car and these things, smaller than a Volkswagon bug had it tricked out into little kind of

that type of thing. I had built out space in this thing and I had it built out with woodworking. A bit surreptitious, a few things that are for security minded people. And people would build them any way, right? There was an interesting box. Right behind the gear shift of a Land Rover is a plate and you open it up and there you can work on the gear shift where it comes into view. Or you can put a box there and an armrest. So, it was level with the top but it had an indentation. So, it had a little cover and another thing. So, there was an armrest, you open that and then there was a plate and you pull that up and then there's a rest and then you pull the plate to see the road below So that's where I kept my little hit of heroin or something if I should get into an auto accident- hashish and dollars and my extra passport. Had to have a place where all that shit goes. And the other is all cabinetry. With the Land Rover went as far as I mentioned, the Bekaa Valley. Bekaa Valley, the

Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, and I ended up leaving the Land Rover there. And I came back because there wasn't enough money to finish the whole deal. So, I came back to the States and nothing became of that, there was no smuggle on that.

Q: Where's the Land Rover in the mean time?

John: Back in the Bekaa Valley.

Q: Still sitting there? But it was still a loss to you?

John: It still belongs to me but it's a loss 'cause I'm not going back, just one person. I don't have enough money to go back. So, cut your losses.

Q: Gee whiz, there's a happy camper back there.

John: While I was there, I had, for what it's worth, a special gas tank built on the roof of this Land Rover. So, if you put a stick in, you would feel all gas because in the back welded up in here was the hashish. It never got sent, it's still bopping around up there in Lebanon.

Q: Still bopping around there now, you mean?

John: I'm sure. So, nothing became of that, I came back. And then somehow, TV show or radio show or something they mentioned, \$122 round trip airline ticket to South America. I thought, "Jesus, I can get that together." So, with about a hundred and fifty dollars, I take a drive- away car from San Francisco to Boston to Miami and then I take the flight. And I come back, and I take a drive away straight to Seattle. And then my younger brother decides to go with me; we take a drive away to Miami, we both go down to Colombia and then we both come back. And somehow, I got down there one other time and I stayed down there for about 3 years.

Q: Are you scoring blow down there at this time?

John: I'm doing this once for my brother-in-law, Herb O'brien whose people work for him. I'm going to introduce them to somebody because I wasn't interested in coke. I'd just tell them it's everywhere, it's like finding religion in the Vatican, it's everywhere. Just come down, it's everywhere. You don't need an introduction. So, my introduction, because it's everywhere, led to being one of the top wanted people in the nation because of a sting operation in a large scale, two-three hundred pounds, back then operation of coke. And the coke was very pure, and it was all blamed on me. Two hundred pounds was considered a lot in the DEA's exaggerations. So, I went on the run and I was still just trying to do weed things, you know.

Q: So, you just stayed down there?

John: I just stayed down there. So that was '73.

Q: And you could speak Spanish already because you spent all that time in Mexico.

John: A bit, a child's Spanish.

Q: But at that time coke was just starting to come out of there, right? That's when the heavy weeds were coming out of Colombia and going into the southern part of the United States, out of the Guajira Peninsula. Wasn't that when a lot of weed was coming out of Colombia from the Guajira Peninsula?

John: From the Guajira Peninsula, that's where I was. I was living in Santa Marta for several years.

Q: That was the big town, wasn't it?

John: Well, Santa Marta is the sleepy little cowboy town but it's the big town for staging, etc. One of the oldest towns in South America.

Q: For weed smuggling. So, you were there for that?

John: Yes. It was wild times. It's still wild times. I don't know if I could even go back now because the same civil war that was fighting back then is still fighting now. Only it's even more crazed with the so called narco terrorists and it's even more crazed. And this is that, as we've spoken before, this evolution from weed. -- "Well, why don't you just take this coke at much less space." Or something like that, you know. "You don't have to worry. I got people that are waiting for you." It's that evolution into those that succumbed, that went into the coke, were a totally different breed than those that didn't; totally different. There were people that would put their brother off and say, "Look." Go off and do it. Here you are. Here's a whole country. Here's a whole continent. Here's Colombia. Goodbye. Put their brother off of a ship. Say, "Goodbye." 'cause they're doing cocaine. You just don't-the trains shouldn't mix (trails off)

Q: Oh, I see what you're saying. I agree with you. They shouldn't mix- Well, this is kind of an odd history for you so far. You got involved with the one trip to India and back that fell apart.

John: Wasn't successful.

Q: And then you were in Mexico and that worked out all right.

John: That was okay but just nominal.

Q: Then you go to the Bekaa Valley with the Land Rover and ditch the Land Rover and come back. And then you go to South America and now you're wanted for making an introduction. So, this is kind of a prophetic beginning.

John: Prophetic, good. So, I stayed there, and I immediately get a sailboat together.

Q: You're determined, it sounds like.

John: Oh yes. I get a sailboat together and we load it up with weed. And we unload it up in Maine. This time I'm going back to the States. I'm not in Maine at this particular time. The next ship was out on the Guajira



Peninsula to like a mile away from Governor Wallace's summer home in Alabama with John Davis. And I'm there helping to unload it. The next one was Block Island, Long Island Sound, which I again went out to unload.

Q: So you did several loads of Colombian weed?

John: Did a quite a few loads of Colombian weed.

Q: What was your job?

John: My job was for arranging for the connection and often times the offload, both places. So, I'm in two places that even the lowest person on the crew can't say that he was in. So, it instills a bit of belief of blind trust. Here's a guy; he's there and he's also here. I think I better trust him. And everything was fine until a person that I said should not have been trusted got in charge. So, every one of those things came in perfectly. And then the hashish loads, all three of them came in perfectly.

Q: Well this is interesting stuff. If you don't mind I think a few more details might be exciting. How did you make your connection down there in Colombia?

John: Colombia, I was walking down the beach and I was admiring a cute, cute, cute, cute girl and I put my finger through her belt loop and I said, "Come on." And she did and we ended up living together. I said, "Let's live together."

Q: This is a Colombian girl?

John: This is not a Colombian girl. This is an Aruban girl. I said, "Let's live together." And she said, "Okay. We have to go down to Medellin and get my daughter." So, I'm not sure what's going on. I'm a novice at this whole thing. So, she goes down there, and she does all the hoop-da-looing and the crying and all the stuff. And I go down there, and I meet the parents and we come back up to Santa Marta and we begin a household together. No, actually, well, it's called Rodadero. Rodadero is a little seaside resort near the casinos, it's an old family- So we're living there.

Q: This is after you've made the introduction and things down South?

John: After the coke connection, I was on the lam. That was all in Bogota during the time I was teaching English at Instituto Meyer. It was a job that allowed foreigners to get extended visas. The whole water ski group of Eastside spoiled kids bragged that the coke came from me.

My wife says, "Well, I know this guy." I talk to him and I say, "Well, I know this guy." And I talk, "Well, I know this guy." "Well, I know this guy." "Okay, let's put them all together." So we take it to our guy and

we say, “Look, I know this guy and okay let’s do it.” A lot of trust, blind trust. And when things go wrong, they really go wrong ‘cause it’s blind trust and there are some things that are out of your control of course but blind trust.

Q: And with the Colombians, they would accept that type of trust?

John: Pretty much so, because the pay off is so dear. They’re getting something for nothing. Instead of a dollar a pound, they give him a hundred a pound, fifty a pound, whatever.

Q: Will they put it up entirely without a deposit?

John: Pretty much so or maybe ten percent.

Q: They wanted some deposit?

John: Something to cover some immediate expenses because the expenses are very big. You might need a big semi full of diesel to get back to the States. One of my boats did. I had to have a whole flat truck filled with diesel cans that were taken out by hand in canoes out to the mother ship because they didn’t have enough fuel -- dug out canoes. I’ve got pictures of these things. They’re just little dug out canoes, little Briggs and Stratton engine on the back and one log canoe with the drum and fuel in it.

Q: I’d love to see that. This is exciting. The more details, the more exciting it becomes.

John: So I’m sitting in here, I’m struggling trying to do my part. I’m underwater, I’m struggling, I’m putting diesel barrels in canoes and working. I’m all sweaty and gassy and it’s my truck up there that’s doing all the work. It’s got this reputation as being ‘La Mula’ ‘cause it a huge semi out of the ditch with its winch. I have a ’54 station wagon and it’s got a winch on it that can pull semis the dungeons. So it’s called ‘La Mula’. So I’m up there all dirty and sweaty and here comes the Lieutenant or the of the who ever it is that is in charge of the protection of area. And he’s kind of looking down at you going, “Who guy? Un loco. Why isn’t he up here sitting on a log smoking a Cuban?”



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Q: But that wasn’t your philosophy?

John: No. It was get down and dirty, get wherever somebody wouldn’t be but beyond the scope of where people are asked to be.

Q: Because that was your operation. You were the leader of the show and you were figuring the best way to ask to gain trust was by giving trust and putting yourself in whatever job they had to do, right?

John: That’s right.

Q: Was that a personal philosophy of yours or did you think that was –

John: Always. I mean how can you ask somebody to do something that you haven't done or know 100%. If it's not 100%, then ppppp. (sound)\

Q: So they grew the weed right there in that peninsula, didn't they?

John: They grew it way up in the mountains. It's always a to-do, it's always a rig-a-ma-role. It's always a craziness and you've got hundreds of small boats or ships that are constantly in line. Everybody's vying for the same group of weed and it's beyond a pain in the butt to get any weed out of Colombia.



Q: Well talk me through how that might happen then.

John: There are freighter trucks that have got big freighter operations that are doing a hundred thousand pounds at a time. You might be trying to do six thousand pounds or ten thousand pounds. Whatever, it's a bulky thing so even if you're in a big, big, big, big, big sailboat the most you're going to get is four thousand pounds.

Q: Is that what you were running down there, sailboats?

John: No, the first boat was, I think, a buoy tender.

Q: That's a pretty good-sized ship.

John: It was a navy boat, a buoy tender. And then the next ship was a minesweeper. This is a whole story in itself. I took the minesweeper all over the world.

Q: Is this the *Alysse Maru*?

John: The *Alysse Maru*, yes, that Craig was on.

Q: Oh, now there's a connection here, The *Alysse Maru*.



John: The *Alysse* [pronounces it El-e-say Maroo] *Maru*. *Maru* means good wind. *Alysse* means the gentle breeze. There's the gentle breeze good wind, something like that. That was purchased about 1978, The *Alysse Maru*. And what it was, was the guy that captained the buoy tender, the first boat, the captain of the buoy tender had another guy and myself. But he knew about navy surplus trading, etc. So he found this bid. It was an as-is, of course, as always everything is in the government, *running-order mine sweeper coming up*. And the bids had been anywhere from fifteen to thirty thousand dollars for a twenty-five million dollar, today,

airplane practically. We put in the highest bid and that was \$32,000 at that time. And the second highest bidder paid us, \$16,000 the degaussing cable and stuff like that that had already been taken off the ship. And he treated us to a blow fish dinner, which is like \$100 or \$1000 or whatever blowfish dinners cost.

Q: The seller did?

John: The guy that had the second highest bid came by and said, "Well look, let me just take the stuff for salvage that's already off the boat." And we said, "Yes for \$16,000." So the ship essentially cost up \$16,000.

Q: Unbelievable!

John: And it was in running working order with the 500 pound bronze danforth anchor and brass chain. Thirty thousand evadure lag bolts, into oak ribs and double plank mahogany, 144 foot, no steel at all. It's called a minesweeper and there's absolutely no steel on it. Everything is non-ferrous. Stainless steel-

Q: U.S. Navy ship? Well, why would they give it a Japanese name?

John: Well, we named the ship but it was because it was built for the French in the defense treaty. And that treaty had given up and was reallocated to the Japanese, maybe for five years or whatever, and that year had been given up and they decided to decommission it, take the degaussing cable off of it and sell it surplus. There are hundreds of these things built. They were expendable but they were the Navy's Yacht. There was *Sparkman and Stevens* out of San Diego design and double plank mahogany ribs. Incredible boats. Especially this one, it was in entirely working order as a dive boat, one hundred and forty-four foot.

Q: This is pretty big time. You're down there and all of a sudden you're doing big ships? You didn't start off with yachts or anything like that?

John: No, the first one was a sailboat to Maine. Second one was a sailboat to Alabama.

Q: Okay, you used sailboats to start with.

John: The next one was the buoy tender to Block Island and then it was our own ship.

Q: So all those other ones was contacted with somebody else?

John: I put the money up for the boats. To essentially get it ready for taking it down there. Like the buoy tender had to have an extension over the bow to make it seaworthy to go all the way down. Needed a lot of work and money at the last moment.

Q: So you were essentially putting these things together then? You were the main guy, right?

John: Right.

Q: That's quite a leap then. You're up there doing upper management. It's rather interesting the whole thing. But your main base of operation was down there in Colombia at the time?

John: Colombia until '76. '76 I was in Florida and had a baby, my daughter was born and we moved out to San Francisco. During that winter of '76 I also brought in a load up in Long Island. Went to San Francisco, lived out there and the next year, I think it was '77 or '78, was to purchase the minesweeper. 'Cause I had

lived for a year in the city and then we moved for a period up in Healdsburg, or wherever it was, just north of Petaluma. So then it was buying this ship and then it was meeting with the ship in Japan of course. And then I was trying to meet with the ship in Wewak in Papua New Guinea because the very first thing we did was lease it to the Cousteau Institute. This isn't Jacques Cousteau, this is his son. His son has an institute or an organization called The Cousteau Institute or Organization; it's different than his father's, it's in South Carolina, I believe. And we leased *Alysse* to them with our crew. About sixty people were using this



minesweeper as the dive ship in the Bismarck Archipelago in the Hermit Islands off of the coast of Wewak in Papua, New Guinea. The Cousteau Institute said they think it's the least touched place on the face of the earth. That's their estimation. It was written up about quite a bit in the *Outside Magazine*. So then from there it went up to Singapore.

Q: Were you on the boat in the Wewak?

John: No, I was not. I was on my way and it was like a month before the revolution in Tehran and I think I picked up a bug there. By the time I got to Bangkok I was flat out. I was totally dysenteried out, passed out, just big huge puddles of water, poop water. They came in, changed the mattress, and it happened again. Total physical collapse. So I recovered in Bangkok with the right pills they brought me, etc. But I missed that every other week or that twice a month trip, because you have to go to Port Moresby and then every two weeks there's a flight that goes up to Wewak. I missed it. I stayed behind and I met them in Singapore. They were up in Singapore months after.

Q: Well, okay. We'll call this an outline but I bet there's a lot of juicy details for all these things. It just strikes me that you jumped in pretty much at a high level, so to speak, and didn't really work your way up through suitcases and that.

John: Well, you remember I talked to you about paying dues. I went all the way to Kathmandu and back.

Q: You paid your dues, yes.

John: I went all the way to Lebanon and back. I went all the way through Mexico and back.

Q: That's right, you did three times and then you'd been to Colombia and back too.

John: A few.

Q: So clearly you were thinking about this all the time and at some point just developed a plan that you were going to go for it at a certain level. But I think it is a bit unusual.

John: Well, if the first sailboat was very, how do you say, with providence. It just happened to be two gringos, a couple, and a solo saying, "Okay, let's share a taxi cab."

Q: They were down there in Colombia?

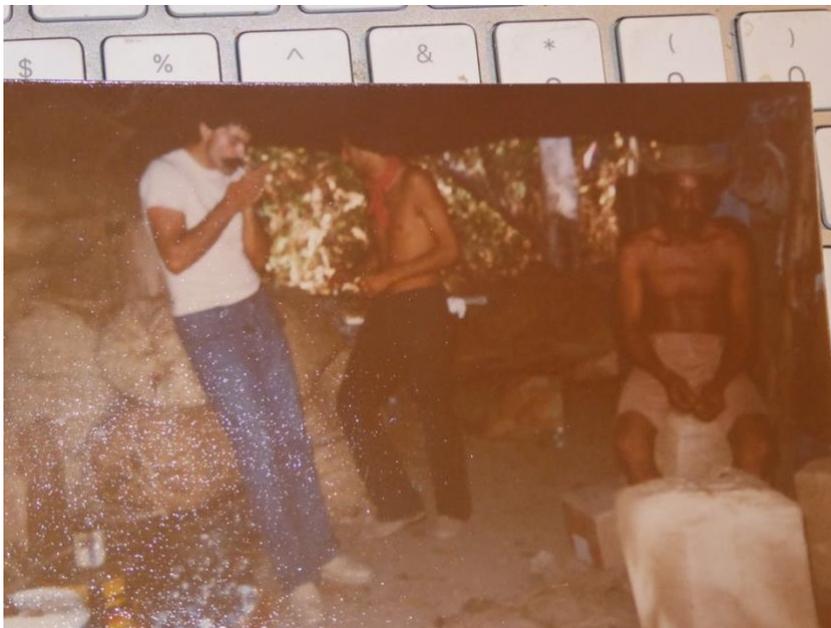
John: Right. So we shared a cab and we're still very good friends and we did trips together. See? Or just providence, you know. You got the boat? And I'm down here, I'm living down here or it looks like. And I've been there for a couple years.

Q: And you got the girlfriend that you're living with.

John: Subtle affair or whatever.

Q: Yes, supposedly you're the guy with the local knowledge like this or that.

John: And that's everywhere in the world actually. People will have a tendency to trust one of their own more than one of the locals. And it's very, very, very important in India. 'Cause the people that direct you to the store, they all make twenty percent. So you could be going to one of a hundred different stores and, you know, they're making twenty percent at each one of those. So maybe just that brief moment that we shared a cab for a couple hours that I became that guy for that person. It's that easy. They goof around and come back and I



told them where I was. I said, "If you can't find anything, stop by and see me." Kind of maybe, whatever. But I mean, I knew I could. I mean, I knew somebody up in Punta de Luna.

Q: They told you they were looking for a load or looking to put a load together?

John: Yes, or you get that impression and then they come back and say, “Look, we’re really looking for somebody. Can you help us out?” That’s the way it happened. And I knew somebody that was up in Medialuna. Medialuna is the very tip, tip, tip of La Guajira. I knew a local guy that was into weed so I said, “Let’s put together. How much money you got there? \$1000. Let’s do it.” And it wasn’t that difficult because it’s mostly done for you. There was one time when it wasn’t done for us and I demanded the best of the best. I stayed up in the jungle, in hammocks, hand cleaned myself, I think it was like nine thousand or twelve thousand pounds of weed.

Q: What did hand cleaning mean?



John: That meant getting stuff of this caliber, just like this. That Santa Marta gold look, this caliber, cleaned to this caliber without any seeds, ‘cause it’s very seedy stuff or with out any leaf, it had to be sifted by hand. So it was gold.

Q: You have a lot of people helping you?

John: I had about four people. But the Colombians didn’t believe in cleaning too well. You know, “Let’s get this bagged up.” – ‘cause it’s all down the drain, the thousands of pounds of seed.

[END TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO; BEGIN TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE.]

So leaving Singapore, this time at my direction. The *Alysse* heads west to rendezvous with me in Yemen. Little did we know that Yemen was a fire fight, incredibly- shooting every boat that came close to the harbor. But also little did we know, the people on the boat, about the Maldives and it’s reputation as being the Pirates



of the East there. So after radio calls and permissions and everything granted to come near an island a bunch of the natives in canoes came out and tried to steal everything aboard and disabled the *Alysse Maru* by tying up the winch to the propellers, etc. And so they were chased away and all this is captured on videotape too.

<https://youtu.be/Iq43TReKHTQ>

Q: Were you on board?

John: No I wasn't on board. But three different groups, Craig and the doctor and the Captain all we held in the Maldives and the rest of them got the ship out of there. They had a military escort to Diego Garcia. And they were widely talked about on every newspaper that ever was. It was like 1978. Every newspaper around the world talked about it. (mumbling). It was supposed to be big secret, Diego Garcia. We had just taken control of it.

Q: Was there any talk that this boat was involved in smuggling?

John: No, no. There probably quite probably was a- some sort of military boat of some sort, research vessel or whatever. It was given free berth.

Q: That was the perception that, that's what it was?

John: Yes.

Q: And who do you suppose has those videotapes?

John: I thought Craig was the last one. He may have a copy of it. I may have a copy of it somewhere.

Q: Craig doesn't have, he mentioned somebody having videotapes of that too.

John: I'll look around for them.

[END OF SESSION ONE.]

[BEGIN SESSION TWO.]

Q: You were moving along so fast yesterday in the chronology towards the end of our conversation. I wanted to back up a bit because of something you said interested me a lot. That's when you were talking about returning to the United States after traveling in India and having culture shock. A similar experience occurred to me. I had been traveling in India and Asia for about six months and came back. And I felt what I thought was culture shock. I was wondering what did you have? What type of –

John: How did it manifest itself? Well, it was a long trip out to Nepal overland and a fairly rapid return. Instead of 6 months it was like 2 months to get back. So I arrived in Seattle at the height of consumerism, the rush for Christmas shopping and all that. It just hit me like a brick. It just whacked me in the head. So I literally locked myself in an apartment and I watched soap operas. I was on a lake; I could have been water skiing, I could have been working out in a gym, I could have been doing anything. I didn't want to face people. I literally stuttered. You lose a lot of your English because you're using sign language and cluck, cluck, cluck, "Give me an egg to eat." type of thing.

Q: Really? You were talking like that?

John: When you're trying to convey to people you want something to eat or you want gas for your car in the hinterlands of Turkey—

Q: Oh, I see. When you were overseas?

John: Yes. You get by with just fifty words and sign language. So you've lost a lot of your English. I just, literally, stuttering and very self-withdrawn. For several months I stayed in an apartment just watching soap operas. I still didn't come to grip with it and I thought, *Well, perhaps a trip to Mexico, there's a lot of gringos there. And I'll be traveling with a friend of mine and I can get back into the route.* That type of thing.

Q: *Back into the route?*

John: Well, back into the living of western America, you know, whatever.

Q: Travelers, you mean?

John: No. Getting back into sync with the community here in Seattle of friends of mine. By going to Mexico, whatever- however you want to construe that. But we spent a good two-three months down in Mexico and it didn't bring me all the way out of that culture shock that I was experiencing. And I said, "The only way that I can really come out of this culture shock is immerse myself back into academia." So I went back to school after Mexico.

Q: But when you were in Mexico you went through a heavy period of psychedelics.

John: Oh, not a heavy period. We took them around 3 times, I believe. The only time we took mushrooms while we were driving around there, we took them up in Huatla a couple times in a religious type setting. We took them in Vera Cruz, that was a bit. We always had weed, we were always smoking weed.

Q: I had thought your intention in going to Mexico was to pursue the psychedelic experience vis-à-vis mushrooms and Indian spirituality.

John: In that vein I did end up living with a bruja, a green witch, an herbalist. She's the one who introduced me to mushrooms. We traveled together up to the mountain.

Q: This is after you've taken LSD now, when you had the mushrooms?

John: Oh yes. This was in the first of the '70's. I had LSD for the first time in '67. this is years later.

Q: I'm curious if in either time it was really a transforming experience for you that set you on a totally different path?

John: That path had already been set back in the '60's and I ended up in Nepal over it.

Q: Okay, that was it. Now you're back in America trying to re-immers yourself –

John: Back into America, yes. But it obviously didn't work. So I escaped again and went to Mexico. I came back. I went two quarters in school, dropped out again. And headed essentially to the Middle East with an ambition of driving across Africa and of course the Saudi Peninsula and eventually going into China through Afghanistan. I had a Land Rover and that was my intention. But I stopped at all the friendly Chinese Embassies. See, this was '71, '72 maybe.

Q: What a strange plan.

John: This is after Nixon had made relations with China and we could get that China word stamped out of our passport. So I had it stamped out of my passport and I proceeded to go to Chinese Embassies 'cause I wanted to go to China. And I wanted to go through the old route. I wanted to go through the pass up through Afghanistan into China. Afghanistan borders China and Russia, Tashkent, up there. But there's a little pass that you go into China from Afghanistan, the old trading route. So that's where I wanted to go. But none of the Embassies, their words were you had to be a group essentially. They wouldn't give me a visa. I went to Romania, I went to France, I went to different embassies and they would not issue me a visa.

Q: The Chinese didn't relate to the individual, it always had to be some group, some organization.

John: And also travel across Africa was impossible at that time. North Africa was impossible. There was unrest in Algeria, there was unrest of course in Libya. And in order to cross from Libya to Egypt you had to put your car on a train at night, or something, to go through the no man's land. It was a real rig-a-ma-role. Of course traveling to the Saudi Peninsula countries is very difficult at best. You usually have to have your passport translated into Arabic and you have to swear that you're not going to Israel and you can't have any of those stamps in your passport. You kind of have to almost be invited to go by a company or what have you.

Q: What a strange plan that you hatched there. I have never spoken with anybody who had such a strange travel destination en route, that back door route through North Africa, Arabia—

John: Well, I've always been interested in the Middle East. I'd just come back through- amazing times meeting people in Afghanistan where you cried when you left them. They were just such amazingly beautiful people, Afghani people, yes. So I had made very good friends in Turkey and some very good friends in Muslim countries which Pakistan was, so good friends there. Now Pakistan at that time was under martial law. You remember during '66, '67, there was this big protest in Paris, soldarity, soldarity with the workers, etc. They closed down Paris. And that was the real student unrest. There was a lot of it in the States, the SDS, and a lot of the stuff going on but it paled to in comparison to what was going on in Mexico City where perhaps five thousand people were killed. It was the largest University on the earth and it had something like one hundred thousand students at the University of Mexico in Mexico City. President left town and the tanks went in there and ringed the campus and they were shooting people. Red Cross workers say hundreds if not thousands were killed.

Q: Were you there?

John: I was there afterwards. So I had gone to Pakistan right afterwards and in Pakistan they'd burned eighty buses and the entire country was put under martial law. So when I got there in '69, '68, the country was under martial law from the riots in '67. Same riots that were in Berkeley.

Q: Student riots in Pakistan? Democracy riots?

John: The riots in America were like kids playing dominoes compared to the riots that were happening all over the world.

Q: Social unrest.

John: All over the world. You didn't realize it but it was huge and many many people were killed.

Q: This was on your first trip out there?

John: First trip out there, right. That was just after the student riots and the ramification of that were evident. Greece was under martial law. Remember the military moved in and took over.

Q: Well how did you feel about that? Did you feel sympathetic towards –

John: Well of course. I felt sympathetic. I really hated the Shah but that was a very very tenuous situation that you couldn't even speak out. I sympathized with the students of course. I lived and became very good friends with the student writer of the student speaker in Pakistan. And people in Pakistan you think, "Oh, do they even speak English?" Well, let me tell you. They speak English better than the English do. Some of them of course but the well educated are scholars in the language. This one guy I knew, this clique of students that I hung around with in Lahore, this one guy wrote the student speeches for the charismatic person who delivered the speeches. But this guy was the wordsmith. Amazing to listen to his English, just pure amazing. So I stayed with them and I certainly felt sympathy with them. And I stayed with the brothers, they were called Nazarullah and –

Q: Ayatullah and Nazarullah?

John: Nazarullah, the two brothers that were The Brotherhood's connection, that type of thing.

Q: They were in Khandihar in Afghanistan, right?

John: Khandihar, right. And that's where I stayed in Khandihar.

Q: But this was not on the first trip?

John: It was on the first trip to India.

Q: So you met them there at what, the tourist hotel?

John: Yes. They used to come by and they'd bring big bowls of iced fruit and they'd bring the big hookah and we'd smoke like twenty grams at one time.

Q: In 1968 you met them?

John: '69 by this time in the journey, yes. I did not know or have any dealings with the other groups that were around then. The Brotherhood in particular stayed in a nice hotel with a swimming pool outside of town. I had no dealings with them. I think they were there years earlier.

Q: Were they around then in 1968?

John: Yes, yes, they were smuggling from Khandihar but it could have been earlier.

Q: But you just knew they were around more or less?

John: Right but didn't have any contact with them. I learned this in conversations with Travis Ashbrook. —

Q: Why were The Brothers, Ayatullah and Nazarullah, coming around to your place?

John: Oh, I had a car. It's pretty obvious. You got a little van, blatant, along with hundreds of other vans that are all waiting and everybody's doing it. It was fairly benign but then like I say, it changed very quickly, where in Iran they were shooting people that they caught.

Q: Foreigners?

John: Americans, whatever, didn't matter. They'd say, "What's this?" and you'd go, "Hash." And they just shot you. Then put your body on the grill and drove back and forth as a warning to anybody else.

Q: Have you heard of other Americans or Europeans that had been shot?

John: Not personally but through the customs officers and people talking.

Q: That's interesting that you met those two brothers. They're kind of famous in the hash history.

John: One of them has his picture in *The National Geographic* with his leg blown off. The other brother died eventually. But these were the kind of people you just – you become brothers. I mean you're really, really tight in just a short period of time. You literally cry when you leave these kind of people, to describe it as soon as you get into Eastern Europe and definitely as soon as you cross the Bosphorus and get into Turkey. There's a day and night difference between the West and the East as you well know. And I kind of sum it up by saying well, the East, they're thousands and thousands of years old and they've had everything and they're kind of in a giving mode. Whereas the West is still climbing, taking, greed, want, need, take, take, take, you know. As you may have remembered you have to be very cautious all through the Middle East and into India when you admire something, "Oh, that's a nice cell phone you have." "Here, it's yours." You have to be very cautious or they just give you the shirt off their back, literally. Anyway, so I came back and I told you about that trip. I came back and I did a little bit of work and went to Mexico, very religious, very, very, very high, very spiritual existence that I had down there.

Q: That's what I was asking before. So you were pursuing a –

John: Well, it happens. Of course it's always searching at that age for those that- you have two options, *The Catcher in the Rye* I know it all or the doubt of information that you're given about a plant that makes you want to search the real meaning of that plant, or whatever. But I was always very curious and somebody told me about this and I would take it with a grain of salt and go find out about that particular.

Q: What were your religious beliefs after that experience?

John: After taking a bit of LSD religion is kind of *You are God, you're part of God, God is with you, God is in everything*. And my feelings, still to this day, is *God is in everything, even the rocks*. There's no reason rocks can't communicate just because we, on the lower scheme of evolution actually, have – we don't communicate with animals. They communicate with us. They know what we're thinking, what we're feeling.

They can read our communications without conveying it to them. They still have the capability and- to give you an example, you got a dog and you're sitting in your house and you're expecting somebody to come over. You're just kind of laying on your easy chair. Knock on the door and your dog just kind of lifts an ear and your buddy comes in and sits down and you smoke a joint, right? Another scenario, you're sitting in your chair, knock on the door, you're not expecting anybody and your hair kind of bristles. You go, "I wonder who's there?" just to yourself. And if you'll notice you're dog's hair will bristle and he'll start barking and he'll go to the door. Just without saying a word but just- you know the hair, you bristle and go, 'I'm not expecting anybody.' And you've communicated that to the dog and the dog is up and to the door.

Q: They're very good at reading our body language.

John: Very clear. So I believe that kind of Native American sort of an attitude that there are spirits in, of course, the plants and animals and humans, the birds and the fish, but also in the water and in the stones and everywhere. It's not limited by something we call alive. So there's spirit everywhere. And He is considered a he. He's spoken about as the Grandfather of all our relations. There is Mother Earth and there's the Grandfather of all our relations, meaning there's a supreme being, a spirit, that is in everything. Receives communications and communicates and helps top lead, whatever.

Q: Is that part of-

John: Native American and a bit of Buddhist thrown in there.

Q: That's very close to what I believe too.

John: You know, *you walked a good path and things will be good for you.*

Q: Do you think that describes pretty much the type of belief that was common at that period of time, late '60's?

John: I think so because the whole idea of – I think one of the outcomes of LSD is you doubt everything. When reality takes a left hand turn and heads nine feet underground while you're tripping, *what is real?* So you have a tendency to doubt everything. And of course you're at an age when you're doubting authority. And then you find things. *If you do this, something will happen.* And you do that and nothing happens – something else happens.

Q: Questioning all established models of behavior and official structure.

John: Yes, yes. So how do you build upon intelligence when you have so much doubt. It can't fully be from a book because that's written by the establishment or written by this or that. It can't be fully from a lecture because that's that person's worldview and he's never been to India. He's showing me a movie of what India is like in humanity's class and I'm going, *Hey, I just got back from India. It's not like that.*

Q: So you're talking about learning by direct experience?

John: Learning by direct experience. And of course that's limited. You have to have faith of peoples past learnings and how they communicate it. There has to be an ultimate faith in other peoples intelligence and their ability to communicate. But you know at this time that there's other things beyond that. There's other things that are only written about in things like Carlos Castenada's books or that type of stuff.

Q: Other worldly type things.

John: Yes. In college it started to be a little bit of, you know, lids- you get a pound and you break it up and you've got enough to smoke and enough to buy another one. That type of thing, just among friends, like I think most of it started.

Q: Distributing cannabis, you mean?

John: Yes. A pound or two.

Q: So you could get something for yourself?

John: For yourself and your friends and have enough to buy another pound, didn't cost you any money. And as the demand kept growing and your circle of friends kept widening, you could see, it's obvious that there's a demand for it so you buy five pounds. It kind of works that way, little bit more, little bit more and all of a sudden, "Hey, I can afford a trip to India and I can get ten kilos for the price of a half of one here." So it'd pay for my trip and so. I learned and experienced. And we took our time. There were people that were driving from Munich to Kathmandu in two weeks or eleven days or something like that. Ridiculous. Straight through. It took nine months to take this trip out and exploring different things. Wondrous things and you wish you had twenty years to do the same trip again to see the things that you missed.

Q: And the people that were with you, they were of like mind? They wanted to –

John: Like minded, they had traveled a bit in Algeria at the time. They were a New York Jewish couple who were very metropolitan. Knew everything and the guy reviewed books or something for *The New York Times*. So he knew everything about books, everything you could get out of a book but couldn't change a tire. And twenty-six years old but hip.

Q: But their intention was not commercial?

John: Everybody had that draw, that Hermann Hesse, that *Siddhartha* go to the East. You get caught up in it because it was more of a European thing to be caught up in it. Everybody in Europe, all the kids, France, Italy, England, were 'on the dole' as they say in England, and could save enough money to go to school, be on welfare and save enough money to spend the summer in India.

Q: Yes, they didn't have to buy an airline ticket.

John: No, you go overland. You go on the Oriental Express to Istanbul, on the train. And then from Istanbul maybe it's a train past into Turkey. But Afghanistan's all trucks. That's your mode of transportation, everybody's on a truck, brightly colored, tasseled, reflectered with wood slat sides, filled with people with

long muskets. They're occasionally laughing and shooting at your car behind them and goofing with you. And they're in robes and scarves and everything and everybody carrying these long muskets in Afghanistan.

Q: That country really made an impression on you?

John: Oh, they're amazing people. Purely amazing people.

Q: And that was the hippie trail?

John: It's the hippie trail. From wherever, from Munich or from Istanbul, there's only really one road that goes all the way to Kathmandu and back again.

Q: Yes, it was famous for a few years and then it was all over.

[PAUSE]

John: So like I said, coming back to Mexico there was a little bit of a tiny weed deal there.

Q: That's right. You're doing these little deals because that one in Europe fell through.

John: Yes.

Q: So your intentions now all this time with these deals is what? To make some big money?

John: Make some. Pay for the trip and make enough to do—

Q: To get you down the road a little?

John: Yes. Then it was planning out another trip to the Middle East and that's where I got the Land Rover from the factory. Proceeded to drive to Amsterdam and I went through France and Switzerland over to Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Istanbul, but then down the coast. Because I couldn't get, even in Romania I couldn't get a visa to China.

Q: Oh, you're trying to get to China?

John: On that trip. So instead I went down the coast of Turkey, it was very interesting. Amazing, this beautiful, beautiful, spectacular beautiful coast. Just a couple days before Christmas I drove into Beirut. I told this other couple who had a van and they were traveling down the coast with me kind of in tandem --We'd do tourist things, etc.-- I said I was going up to the valley, *meet the river*, as they say. And I went up there and I never left. I stayed up there for about two months living in this guy's house. This guy was the spiritual, financial god of a big family, a big family, okay.

Q: Remember his name?

John: [Chauket-sp?]. He had a grandfather

[END TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE; BEGIN TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO.]

John: I was in Beirut on Christmas.

Q: That's right. You went up to the Valley and you were staying with [Chauket].

John: Not Beirut but up in the Valley, Baalbek it's called.

Q: But the person you're with?

John: Cauket. In Baalbek, right. To give you the stature of this family, the grandfather used to take trainloads of hashish in the '20's or '30's down through Egypt, down through Jordan, from Lebanon down through Syria, Jordan, and Palestine back then and into Egypt. He'd smuggle with a trainload.

Q: So Egypt was his destination then?

John: Egypt, they consumed most of it. Everybody's smoking there. The Prime Minister smokes, everybody smokes. The men hang around in hubbly-bubbly rooms. So there was a constant passage of trainloads of stuff. Of course there's no train now, the war and all that stuff.

Q: So that was his grandfather's reputation?

John: His grandfather was ninety and he was still popping out kids. When I was there in the early '70's, this guy had sixty uncles and you didn't count the women in the family –they're not counted. So this guy had sixty uncles and his father had sixty brothers and maybe another sixty or hundred sisters but nobody counted them. The situation was his father had been a politician. He had been the kind of star of the family, the one that was going to take the family the next generation. He'd married a woman from *Hair*, an English woman from the musical *Hair*. The situation was male in the country in a very nice house in a male dominated atmosphere. The men would sit on pillows on the floor in different rooms depending on the time of the year and they'd sit around and talk all day long. They'd go through different periods of drinking, and then into scotch and smoking and playing backgammon and talking. And they would talk and talk all day long. And it would happen the next day and the next day and the next day.

Q: They drank alcohol?

John: Yes, fine scotch. Everything was the best.

Q: These were Christians or Muslims?

John: Muslim- but Lebanese, whole different thing. In fact, the Saudis and all the rich Muslims in the Saudi Peninsula would buy castles in Lebanon to live the life outside of their own country. You used to have the world's largest casino, The Casino Du Le Bon, which is what – what was his name, not B.B. Robozo, one of those guys, Vesco –was going to try to buy. Anyway, I'm with this family. I'm staying in this house. The women folk, his wife stayed in her room mostly. And his mother lived at the house. His father had taken another women but his mother lived at the house and took care of the house and every once in a while would knock on the door and hand in a big tray of food or drink or something and take out old trays. But she would never come into the room; she would just pass it in. We'd see her arm. So that's what it was. You just sit

around and talk. Of course they're all speaking Arabic. So I'm just sitting there and enjoying backgammon and hashish and that type of thing.

Q: How did you get to meet these people?

John: Just happened to meet in a coffee shop. One guy said, "What, you looking for hash?" Another guy, "You looking for hash?" And another person said, "Come with us." And I said, "Well, okay." And they took me to their nephew, this guy, and I ended up living there. I ended up going there six years later and getting almost one hundred thousand pounds of hashish. It was the family that I went to when I had my minesweeper. It left Papua, New Guinea, went to Singapore- waited around there, waited around there because I also had a 707 with a cargo door. It was the only privately owned 707 with a cargo door.

Q: Where was that?

John: It was out there ready for me to direct it to go someplace.

Q: In that part of the world?

John: I don't know where it was at that moment. It was being used. But a partner of mine bought it, actually without my permission. I ended up paying like six-hundred grand for this thing.

Q: But that's six years later?

John: Six years later, yes. I'd already smuggled some weed, four or five loads from Colombia.

Q: Let's talk about that a little because that's interesting to me too.

John: Colombia experience. Girlfriend who knew somebody and he knew somebody. They kind of went off and did it. We made the introduction and I got a hundred grand for that, for just making the introduction. They went off and did it by themselves.

Q: Did a coke thing?

John: No, no. A weed thing, sailboat thing.

Q: So all you did was make the introduction?

John: Made the introduction. It worked. And they ended up giving me a hundred grand up in Massachusetts.

Q: Wow! That's pretty good. This is the first pretty good chunk of money you've made then, right?

John: So I had a hundred grand. That was the first little pile of cash.

Q: You must have been thrilled.

John: Very thrilled. It was kind of funny actually. I buried it in the sand out in Cape Cod and I went back to get it in the wintertime. It was frozen. We were digging it out and it would come out in pitchforks. There'd be hundred dollar bills stuck in the pitchforks.

Q: Was it ruined?

John: Oh no, no, no. It was fine. I shared it with my partner and we put together a boat.

Q: Your partner was the Colombian man?

John: No. Like I say, they did all the back and forth. They did the whole trip. We just made the introduction.

Q: You and your partner did?

John: Yes.

Q: Well that's good enough. You just made the introduction. So you didn't even actually go down to the beach or any of that kind of stuff?

John: No. Didn't harvest, didn't pack, didn't stuff, didn't go to the canoes, didn't load, didn't do any of the work –just made the connection and got a hundred grand. So we put together a series of little boats.

Q: After this?

John: Yes. The first one was what's called a shell that's used for a mold to make fiberglass fishing boats. Somebody said, "This is a good boat." I got on board with two strangers- gnarly, gnarly, crazy people –not really knowing what I'm doing and we start taking off for Colombia.

Q: Where'd you get on the boat at?

John: Key West.

Q: So you jump on board this motorboat?

John: Exactly. And we get very close to Cuba, we can see Cuba, and the boat starts sinking. So we call and we get this German freighter about five hundred feet long. He could barely see us and finally he sees us. Comes close and takes us off of the boat, right? And we get the things that we can carry with us, which is a scurly mess of stuff- ammunition shells and a few guns and money, twenty-five grand. And they take us up to Baton Rouge. We clear customs there and the customs officer says, "What's all this stuff?" and I go, ehh, whatever. They don't bat an eye. We go into the New Orleans airport with guns and ammunition boxes and cash. And I say, "Is there something you want me to do with this?" to the police as I'm walking. And he goes, "No, just check it." And they just checked us in and flew to Florida and got off with guns in boxes. It was really weird.

Q: Jesus. But you lost the boat. That's got to be –

John: Lost the boat. Had I known anything about boats, it was a piece of junk. Okay, then it was the buoy tender.

Q: But that's pretty traumatic to have a boat sink with you on it.

John: Yes. I'm not going to go out on a ship again.

Q: That was your decision then?

John: That was my decision. That I was going to be on both beaches everywhere, do it all. But I'm not going to be on the boat. It's not a good thing, especially being a diabetic.

Q: You've had sort of what you'd call a roller coaster ride here in this business so far. It amazes me that you want to keep going at it.

John: You realize that the main thing is just to travel, right? To see. To see using these- making connections or making this, making that as vehicles to travel.

Q: So that was your primary motivation, travel?

John: Yes, to travel. To get out there and learn, travel, etc. There wasn't any auspicious goal of making a million and retiring smuggling weed at that time. No, it was just a kind of vehicle- just get down the road further.

Q: How about a kind of righteous, altruistic attitude to turn people on, did you have that?

John: Well sure, but in a limited way. These weren't big loads, six, ten thousand pounds. Sometimes they were only fifty pounds.

Q: Of Colombian?

John: Well whatever. The hashish was not much, forty pounds, twenty kilos maybe. The hashish in India.

Q: That you brought back on that first trip?

John: Yes. And the weed in Mexico was like five pounds or whatever that I got out of it. But it was dealing with a local person that does hundreds or thousands of pounds.

Q: So you were making the local contacts?

John: Making the contacts wherever I went.

Q: There's so much drama here. I'm a bit overwhelmed- boat sinks, this and that.

John: Yes, it was a little story but it was kind of cute though. It just told me that I'm not going to take the long trips.

Q: Did you terminate your business relations with these other people that were on the boat at that time?

John: Oh yes. I've never seen them again. You know you meet people on the blind sometimes. You know, here are a couple guys that can do the job. So you go with them. So we'll try it out. I mean everybody's a stranger at one time or another. My wife's boyfriend who she knew from sixteen to twenty-five, became a very good friend of mine. And became one of four people right underneath me in charge, Captains or whatever you want to call them, that became in charge when I went inside. And I ended up marrying her.

Q: Life throws us a few curve balls.

John: Yes indeed. So I'm working up to get another investment.

Q: You've got a little money left?

John: Yes. To do it myself- and I do the Land Rover thing but that dead ends in Lebanon and I leave the land Rover there. Okay, that's early '70's. Then I come back. I start to do trips in Colombia.

Q: You did the one where you made an introduction, made the money. And then you did this next boat that sinks, right?

John: That one it sinks. It didn't cost any money. I still had the twenty-five grand. Then there was the buoy tender. And that was an interesting story. We put it on a computer back then. This is early computer days. One of the guys that I'm working with built a mobile lap top computer in 1975. So we're pretty sophisticated. We got a lot of – and the Captain on the buoy tender is an electronics freak. So this thing is bristling with everything up to Satin Ave. Had we been able to put a satellite up there we would have had satnav, but they didn't have them then. Everything –omega, loran, single side band, all of those accoutrements plus servile motors and things.

Q: But this is a big jump. You've got fifty grand to your name or something?

John: Between the two of us, we have a hundred grand. So we're putting together this boat, this buoy tender.

Q: How can you do that? Buoy tenders cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

John: Oh no, this guy- it was a salvaged. Maybe cost four, five thousand. He had it. He had bought it. He was working at putting it together. But to make a crossing it needed a bow because it was kind of flat, it needed more of a bow.

Q: So you invested in this already existing project?

John: Invested- an existing project- invested to finish the hardware, to put some more radios on it, to put some more tanks on it or something, and get it outfitted, and put a crew on it and send it to Colombia to pick up a load.

Q: I see.

John: So we picked up the boat and we ended up taking it all the way to Block Island.

Q: How big of a load is this?

John: I think it was about nine thousand pounds, as much as it could hold.

Q: I've never been to Colombia. What happens there in Colombia?

John: The boat comes close-

Q: Comes right into the beach?

John: No, just hangs out there. You can see it from the beach. You make radio contact. You say, "Okay, you're here, we're here. Let's go." And trucks come in, these kind of oversized Ford trucks that have the wooden slat sides. And they have it all in gunnysack. There's two twenty-five pound blocks in each, like a dog food bag. Have you ever seen a Colombian bale?

Q: I never have, no.



John: They're in a gunnysack- that gunny material, that hemp material, burlap.

[interruption by John's mom]

So it comes close, you make contact, the trucks come in. You're either with the trucks because you've had a hand in it in the mountains. Or that's another group, somebody you know has the trucks and has the weed and they're going to deliver it.

Q: How did it happen this time?

John: On this particular time, there was no control. They had the weed, they were going to deliver it, they were going to load it.

Q: "They," the Colombians?

John: The Colombians, yes. So they came, they loaded. A truck would come and then you load it by hand. There's ten, twelve people, Indians. The most vicious Indians on the face of the Earth. Amazing.

Q: Vicious?

John: Well, they don't speak Spanish. They speak Guajiriano. And to people who speak Spanish, especially English, are considered outsiders and a danger to their culture. So they'll have a tendency to kill the group, just waste them. They walk around in kind of these underwear with kind of yarn tassels, brightly colored purple and red tassels, and a white shirt and a machine gun. That's just what they kind of walked around in, in the desert.

Q: That's desert out there?

John: It's all desert. It's an amazingly, amazingly spiritual desert. It's all desert. And there's jungle in the desert, amazingly thick jungle in the desert near the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Yes, it's very, very, trippy. And we lived up there for 2 weeks one time in the jungle in the desert. We ate rabbit, we ate pineapple, cornmeal. We ate more rabbit that they would go out and hunt and kill.

Q: Why were you living there?



John: The weed would come down from the hills in big gunnysacks. Then what we did was we put it on a screen in boxes, on a screen, and rubbed it until all the seeds all the heavy stuff – we eliminated probably two thirds- we threw away about something like a half to more that a half of all the weed. We threw it away. And it was a rainbow or gold. It was very nice smoke. It was very nice weed –it’s just that it had normally a lot of seeds and a lot of shake. So we eliminated all that, bagged it up, and we got about nine thousand pounds. We did this all by hand. Living in hammocks with the snakes and eating rabbits. You boil the rabbit whole and then you pull the meat off and you hang it on the line. It’s covered in flies for like two, three, four days and then you boil it up again. It was pretty funky up there. I got some good pictures up there.



Q: I'd like to see. So you and your partner were living out in this area and working with a group of Indians?

John: Not Indians but Colombians. We're near the hillside; we're in the foothills. Like I say, this is a jungle but it's in a desert. Our only source of water was this little tiny like a puddle that always had water in it. It was like this deep, deep brown. You'd take that and you'd boil it and that was our source of water. So this stuff is coming

in and as it's coming in, you're cleaning it. And using one of those- just an antique press, like a car press or something- in a box and that creates a cube about twenty-five pounds. Then that's wrapped in a paper that comes from dog food or birdseed, big wide brown paper. It usually has a label on it because it comes from some company, like dog food. And then it's wrapped and then it's wrapped in gunnysack. And then two of those are put into one gunnysack. So you got about a fifty-pound thing like that. Then they're stacked. I got a picture of this whole mound under a tent of all these things stacked up. The hammocks that we lived in and the meat-hanging maggots.

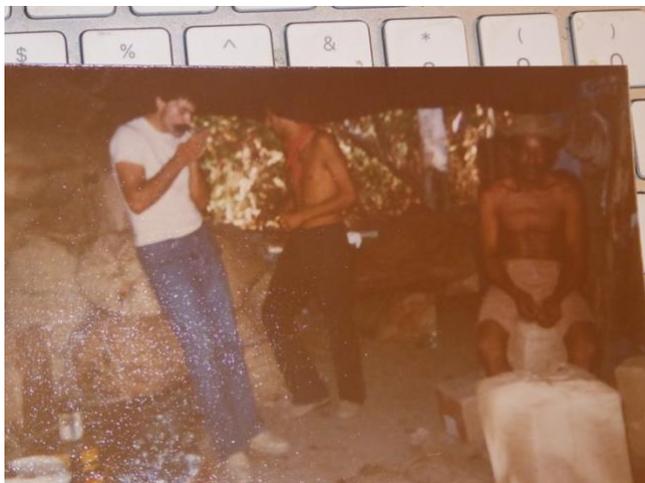
Q: This sounds very adventurous. Was it exciting for you?

John: It is. It was quite wild. I took quite a few wild trips hiking up into the Sierra Nevada. It's the wildest country on the face of the earth. It's the most amazing place on the face of the earth.

Q: You must have felt really removed, really out there.

John: Oh yes.

[PAUSE]



Q: I had no idea this place was so fascinating.

John: Did you ever read *A Hundred Years of Solitude*?

Q: Yes.

John: Where I lived was right in the middle, right there. And it was very similar to what he describes and that's where I lived. That rocky park was just a couple miles up

the road. And La Guajira is just right up the road. First town an hour away. And then you're just in the hinterlands, you're in the wilds. Wildest place on the face of the earth. And this is after a lot of travel. I've

been to Middle East, Kathmandu and back again, the hinterlands of Turkey.

Q: This is wilder?

John: This is the wildest place on the face of the earth. That little nipple on the head of the-[Guajira Peninsula].

Q: How do you get along with the people down there?

John: Good. I always get along. I just figure, maybe it's my naiveté, but if you're not rude, they're going to be gentlemen if we're going to be gentlemen.

Q: Did you and your friends down there ever get into conversations, discussions with people about politics, religion?

John: Of course you would enter politics. Politics is every place in the world. Politics is life. Politics is what you talk about all the time, all the time. The politics out there is pretty wild. It's kind of designated a free state, almost like a free country, a protectorate of Colombia. It's not really even a state. It's a pre-state. What you do you can do inside the state just don't do it outside the borders. So you can smuggle things but you do it in there. But as soon as you cross the border then you're going to have to start paying some people. Paying your rights to move it down to the city and sell it for ten times. There are people smuggling cars, trucks, machinery. One of the most dangerous things to smuggle, believe it or not, is coffee. Because the coffee is all picked by slave labor, like a dollar for two weeks worth of work, ridiculous slave labor. And it's all sold to the government. Coffee collectivos and they're sold to the government. It all funnels into the government who then in turn sells it on the world market. So if you decide to take it from the peasant farmer and take it out the boat and you get caught, it's like smuggling young babies or something. It's a serious, serious offense



to smuggle coffee. And that's one of the things they try to smuggle out of. And they're doing these things in big freighters. Coffee or weed is done in big freighters. People are doing a hundred thousand pounds at a time.

Q: Around you there while you're doing your thing-

John: While we're doing with a little sailboat, ten thousand pounds.

Q: Other operations are going on around you?

John: Yes, yes. It's just when you get the money, you do it that way. You get a bigger boat-

Q: Was there a community of fraternity of smugglers-

John: No there wasn't. You kind of knew when you got on the plane that the other person might be a smuggler. Just there was this kind of identity that you pulled off. The short hair, the topsiders, the khakis, there was just this- you knew that that's what this person was up to, a boat smuggler. There were all different kinds of levels. And it's still going on- all over the world.

Q: Yes. I just question how much of it's coming into the U.S.

John: Well, just the other day they say they get ten percent. And they haven't had a boat for a long time. But about a week and half ago, they got a boat up in Vancouver or someplace up there.

Q: Of what?

John: I think it was a couple hundred ki's of coke was it or weed? It could have been weed, weed from someplace, I don't know. And back then if you're in England or if you're in some select spots, you were getting "Durban poison" or "Malawi wowie". You were getting these things that sounded so exotic. "Durban" from South Africa, "temple balls" from Nepal, "surfboards" from Pakistan, "rope" from India, and these exotic "hand sealed" from Russia.

Q: I never heard about that one.

John: "Hand sealed", these little intricate seals from Russia. Tashkent are all Muslims, great hashish growing. And your "Afghani", your "reds" whatever. Your little tiny cellophanes from Turkey.

Q: Yes, it was pretty exotic.

John: Yes, and all these African weeds were coming in. Diplomats. So everybody had a different way of moving it around but it was always available, all these different exotics.

Q: So on this next buoy tender trip, you said you loaded ten thousand pounds?

John: I think it was like nine thousand pounds and we put it in the computer. And we figured it had a negative-chance of getting in.

Q: In the computer?

John: Well, we put the whole thing because it was a lot of fiascos and we put the whole thing in the computer and we figured it had like a minus ten percent chance of succeeding. 'Cause a one month trip ended up to be three months. Gary took the tender out near Africa to approach New York from the north.

Q: Already you mean?

John: This whole trip. It left and I forget how it ended up but it finally got loaded up but it had to go all the way up to Block Island. It went different places to get there.

Q: Her journey to the U.S. you mean?

John: Yes, up to New York.

Q: You intended to make some type of a model and put in the parameters of risk and everybody's time and –

John: Yes, it had no chances of succeeding.

Q: Who designed this model?

John: Oh, we just put it together. I forget who. But it was just you think about this. And it succeeded. And it was decent. By the time it got up there it was decent, not perfect. That led me to believe that you can't trust any – you know, the chain. So you wanted to get as close as you could to the farmer.

Q: Quality control.

John: Quality control. It's very important, especially in Colombia. It's very, very, very deceitful.

Q: Colombia is?

John: Yes. And you can get as close as you want. It's just a matter of do you have it in you to do that.

Q: How did you unload/ offload that cargo to the U.S.

John: It went up to Block Island and – let me think where it went from there. I'm a bit foggy on that. Whether it went to Riverside and then into private homes.

Q: How did you get it off the boat?

John: Oh, with a smaller sailboat.

Q: And then it would go?

John: And then it would go to the shore. Then loaded into vans, pickups.

Q: Ashore meaning a dock or –

John: A dock.

Q: Coming off in sail bags or something?

John: Coming off a dock in the night, just kind of moving along.

Q: You got quite a few people involved?

John: Yes, there were probably ten at any time. The first hashish load, we brought off, similar to Block Island, onto a smaller sailboat. It came into a beach in the middle of the night and it had to go up forty steps into the house. There were houses on each side. And if a person did look out they might notice a mast, they might

notice. But it was just thinking that no job there is, no smuggle you ever do, has a greater than fifty-fifty chance. It's either going to succeed or it's not. And it could be the woman walking her dog at night down the beach that's going to turn it into a not. It could be anything. We realized that you could go ad-infinitum with possibilities of things going wrong. A computer model as you were mentioning was kind of frivolous to even think about as more of a joke.

Q: Despite the best laid plans that it would-



John: Yes, it was never more than fifty-fifty.

Q: Just a roll of the dice is all it was.

John: Exactly. By this time I'd been rolling them, every single was a hundred percent. Every single load went through. Because I had a hand in both ends and I really exercised a lot of control over it. Up to the point of, as I said, actually cleaning the weed and packaging it myself. And I felt that that was the best way.

Q: Did you organize the off load too of all that?

John: And the off load. And the off load was usually, more often than not, a- like I say, there were four people lifting it from a boat up the steps into a house, you know, nine thousand pounds. Or the next one was a kind of a want-to-be mob sort of a group that handled the off load. They ended up taking all the profits. Everybody got paid but all the profits were taken. So that was a bit of a pain in the butt. It was about three million on that second load.

Q: So you didn't get any profit on that one?

John: Didn't get any profit. Everybody got paid.

Q: Did you get anything? No?

John: Not really. Everybody got paid but when you're at the top of the heap, you don't have any money. It's all being used to- you know, the ship gets a share and a retro-fit, the crew all got like two hundred grand a piece and there were ten or eleven of them. Captain gets a little bit more. Other people get more because they've reinvested from the trip before. But in the end there was about three million of profit, of would have been profit, and that was taken by these people who controlled the off load. That was contract. It was a separate contract by another guy. Not by me. He contracted these people to handle-

[END TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO; BEGIN TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE.]

Q: You were in Colombia and the buoy tender makes it.

John: Buoy tender and about that time there was a sailboat and I am on the beach at both places, in Colombia and in Alabama for the sailboat. That makes it through.

Q: That's after the buoy tender?

John: That's all around this time; there was a series of loads. There was the sailboat that got me the first hundred grand, then there was a sailboat that went up to Maine. I was not there in Maine but I was on the boat; I got a couple pictures on the boat in Colombia. There was a sailboat to Alabama where I was on the beach and I was on the beach in Alabama. There was a buoy tender which I was up in New York and I helped off-load the off-load boat. I was on the beach in both places. That's about it. About now I'm ready to retire. I'm telling my wife, "Where do you want to live?" And she's in Florida at this moment. She's pregnant or we just had a child, Zoe. I said, "Where do you want to live?" She says, "San Francisco." I said, "Okay." We go to San Francisco and get a little place, a little house. Her twin sister comes to visit and live with us for a little while. And then some other people, some people I'd been working with came to me and said, "Look, we've found a nice boat. We certainly want to get out of the Caribbean. It's become like a little pond to us. We want to get out of the Caribbean. We want to get away from Colombia, pain in the butt." And so here's this minesweeper. So the three of us go to Japan to check it out. It looks pretty good so we buy it.

Q: You had already retired but now you've come back?

John: Kind of retired but here was this nice ship, world class, so a good opportunity. It was a trip from San Francisco to Japan, back to Norfolk, Virginia and back to San Francisco, all within about a week. Boom, boom, boom. Plus a train trip near Yokohama. It's called Kure where the ship was. And train trip back was boom! Get on the plane and fly. Funny incident, here I am just flying minutes away. I've flown to San Francisco, I've flown to Norfolk, and I'm on my way back to San Francisco. This guy sits down next to me, tweed, beard. He says, "You know, people never even talk on these trans-continental flights. I'm so and so, so and so." I say, "Great, I'm so and so, so and so." As it turns out he's Doctor so and so from Lawrence Livermore Labs and he's in charge of nuclear weapons. One of the stops I've made was to Ground Zero in Hiroshima. I've been to the museum, been through the tour. After just leaving there I'm just on a series of planes and *boom!* –this guy sits next to me and he's from Lawrence Livermore and he's a chief designer of – you know down to a bullets size nuclear weapon. The only thing they could admit back then in the '70's was a one hundred fifty-five mm. A one hundred fifty-five mm, you put it in a cannon and shoot it at some place. Boom! you've got a crater. Tactical nukes. But they also had- I knew somebody who had a third of a suitcase. Three people come together put a suitcase together and leave.

Q: You knew somebody?

John: I knew somebody was in one of those groups, who had a third of a suitcase. They were all over Europe –tactical nuclear weapons that you needed three of them to put together and they became a nuclear bomb.

Q: This was government sanctioned type of thing?

John: American; just cruising along. Innocent because you just got a third of a –

Q: So if anything went bad, then the government would have these people here –

John: Come together. They knew who they were, come together. So this guy I'm sitting next to, he was in charge of weapon design. We were talking back and forth and I said, "You know, I just came from Ground Zero. My feelings are not very good towards nuclear weapons." So we talked back and forth all the way across. It's interesting to be sitting next to him just coming from Ground Zero. And he considered himself a dove in the whole thing. He says meetings he goes to, they're all hawks.

Q: Were you a confirmed pacifist at that time?

John: Oh yes. Sure, sure, from the '60's.

Q: Was, for example, Ghandi an important person to you?

John: Still to this day. I use him as a quote. One of the quotes I use is, "Be the change you want to see in the world." Member since the early 70's of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, one of the earliest peace groups. It's kind of a parent organization. Out of that group comes the ACLU, Amnesty International,- all came out of FOR. FOR started in 1916 under Ghandi sort of ideas that there's a better thing than war.

Q: I don't know anything about this organization. How did you come to join that?

John: just happened to meet this guy that had been a member for 20 years, an older guy. He brought me into it.

Q: Here in the U.S.?

John: Here in Seattle. Been a member since '72.

Q: What does it mean to be member? What do you do?

John: Just sign that you believe in peace. Don't send money, just sign that you believe in peace. A peaceful solution that things can be reconciled instead of fought over. They always sent the people to Baghdad during the war. Helped to train Aquino who took over for the Philippines. Helped the Sandanistas, helped Martin Luther King. I guess the ACLU came out, Amnesty International, The Stockholm Environmental Fair, lots of groups. There's an international group that's headquartered in Holland and the national group is up in [Nyack], New York and there's lots of chapters; there's three chapters in Seattle of FOR. Get a little newsletter and lots of meetings, march at the federal building, that type of thing.

Q: So you had decided to retire but now you're back with this minesweeper.

John: Got the minesweeper. Paid the big dollar to get out there. Still had to pay money. There were staterooms that had to be built. About one hundred grand to two hundred grand went into retrofitting.

Q: In Japan?

John: In Japan. Remember I told you about that time when Nixon revalued and I was buying a Land Rover, right at that time it got revalued again.

Q: Strictly against the yen?

John: Yes. So I couldn't move fast enough to get this money and lost fifteen grand just in the exchange on this bill that was coming due. It was a wild trip too because I couldn't go into America at this time and my wife met me in Geneva.

Q: You couldn't go into America?

John: I met my wife coming from the east to Geneva and she went down to the Cayman or San Martin and then wired the money to Hong Kong where it was wired up to Japan. And I lost like fifteen thousand just because of the exchange rate had boomed, just to pay this bill on the ship. So as I was saying there was some moneys to be spent outfitting this ship. It needed tanks for world travel, it needed a little bit of retrofit but it was in working order when we got it for sixteen thousand.

Q: Unbelievable!

John: Unbelievable. Right. It was a training vessel and the treaty had run out so it had to be sold. It was just kind of fortunate. Put on a crew, I think there were like twelve of them.

Q: Who organized that?

John: The guy that chose to be captain. We flipped a coin. You be a captain or I be a captain.

Q: You were one of the considerations?

John: I was thinking about being the captain because it was a learn-as-you-go. You learn with the people you're with and you hire the best you can come up with.

Q: Had he been a captain before?

John: No, no. Neither of us. He was a computer whiz, very smart. He was the one that built a lap top computer in '74, '75. He just got out of jail a year or two ago because he was testifying. He decided to testify and they kept him for years and years and years testifying.

Q: He testified and he got a longer sentence then?

John: No, he just was hanging out until the cases were done. He spent a lot of time in jail, uncomfortable, down in Pleasanton. But anyway, we're talking about getting the crew. The crew was taken care of and put on there. They went down to a charter because it would look good. First charter on the boat was a Cousteau Society down in Wewak.

Q: Did you arrange that?

John: No, I didn't arrange it. It just kind of came about. Somebody had heard about it and they said, "Hey, we got a boat." And they put about sixty people on board, experts and adventurers from all over the world,

and our crew. There were about sixty-three people aboard this boat at one time. They're diving and exploring. The Bismarck Archipelago, the Hermit Islands, north of Wewak on the north coast of Papua, New Guinea.

Q: Where is that?

John: Yes. You have to go to Port Moresby once every week, ten days, they'll fly you up to Wewak.

Q: Craig was on that trip he told me.

John: He was. [pause] There were some crewmen who tried to mutiny and they were put off the boat.

Q: What!? Tried to mutiny?

John: Yes, they wanted to take over the ship and figured they knew how to do it better than this captain who was learning as he was going along, you know, but who certainly has more smarts than everybody on the ship combined, took care of it. There were some riot or some moments as any crew because they were kept in the dark. They weren't told.

Q: They weren't told?

John: Well, to that sense. They knew why they were going to go but no details because they were influx at the moment whether to go to Thailand or whether to go to Lebanon.

Q: Who was making those decisions?

John: Me. Me. I was in Laguna trying to get with this guy. This guy who incidentally had purchased Robert Vesco's house in Costa Rica and got 30 years.

Q: Danny Mack?

John: Yes, Danny, yes, 30 years.

Q: He got 30 years?

John: He's still from last time I heard he was still down in Terminal Island. So I visited him in Costa Rica and then California.

Q: You had already met him?

John: I had already known him. We were trying to get something together because I had the ship and I also had this plane, trying to get something together in Thailand.

Q: This is late '70's?

John: Late '70's- '77, '78. This is the first trip with the minesweeper. Couple things fell through back and forth, communication, whatever. And I said, "Forget it. That's it. We can't wait any longer. We're going to Lebanon and I'll meet you in Aden." On the way some crewmen got off - and I think this might have been where- I don't know if Craig went to Wewak- but some crewmen got on.

Q: In Singapore?

John: In Singapore.

Q: And you were personally going to meet the boat in Aden?

John: In Aden or Yemen. This is the- I don't know maybe Craig told you about the piracy.

Q: Yes.

John: yes, this is on the trip across the Indian Ocean, across the Red Sea to get to Aden/ Yemen. that they get hijacked in the Maldives.

Q: How did you first hear about that?

John: I heard about it very quickly because it was relayed to me. I was in San Francisco at the time, it was relayed to me immediately and then it was in all the news. It was in every newspaper. The New York Times and L.A. Times did a big story with maps and everything because it was a lot about this island that didn't exist- Diego Garcia. The United States had taken it over and had proceeded to move all of the natives off of the island about eight hundred miles away and started to build a base. And they've been building a base for twenty years since then. And they keep saying it's just a radar, a nothing, don't think about it. It's huge, they've been building it for twenty years.

Q: I think we're pretty much aware of it now.

John: I don't know. What's your impression of Diego Garcia?

Q: It's a huge base.

John: A huge base? I think if you talk to twenty out of twenty people on the street, they'd say, "Never heard of it."

Q: I wouldn't doubt that. So did they communicate to you by radio?

John: During the time of the piracy, the radio officer- remember this guy with the buoy tender who was an electronics guy, had all these radios- he happened to pull in the President of the HAM Radio Office, HAM Radio Group from Connecticut who was in Nairobi at the time. He pulled him in and he patched him through to the Coast Guard, which patched it back and they said, "The best thing you can do is get the ship out of there." Well, you know, 'cause you're making this decision, "Do I stay and try to get these guys out?" Because there's three hostages now. There's the captain, there's Craig and there's the ship's doctor. "They're on the island. What do we do?" And they said emphatically, "Get the ship out of there. That's the best thing you can do. We'll negotiate to try to get the men back but get the ship out of there or they'll take the ship too." They disable the ship and they bring it on shore and they shred it. And they sell it for pieces, little pieces. It would have been a great find because they'd only been previously getting an occasional sailboat that every once in awhile that happened to pull up close.

Q: You were in San Francisco?

John: I was in San Francisco and I hear about it very quickly, very quickly. I forget how I got word but I got called very quickly. And there's really nothing I can do except for wait. Once the boat got up to Diego Garcia- and Craig and the captain and the doctor in the Maldives were just kind of put under house arrest type of thing

in a hotel and they just had kind of a life there while they tried to negotiate. They negotiated through Sri Lanka, through Ceylon, to the British Council there. It was kind of funny. The captain recognized the American counterpart that was in on the negotiation, recognized him as being a DEA person in Colombia previously. But this guy didn't recognize him.

Q: Was he at this time still with the DEA?

John: No, he was in Foreign Service somehow. Dealt to take care of this thing. So we did take care of it. I believe it took about a month, a month and a half. Craig would know more. It got taken care of. And I said, "I'll meet you in Suez." Because by this time they had learned about all the shooting and wildness in Aden or Yemen, whichever it was. Yemen? South Yemen? I think it was Yemen. And they were shooting every boat that came close enough to be hit. So I said, "Well, I'll just meet you in Suez." Come to Suez, I came there early and I said, "Is this boat here? It's supposed to be here." They had no word of it. I went back to the Suez Canal Commission in Cairo and I said, "I'm looking for this boat. It should be there." He said, "Well, it should be there." I went back and I found that it was there. I met this guy called the Prince of the Suez or Prince of the Red Sea, he had a name like that. He had a small ship's agent. He said, "Follow me, I'll take care of it for you." because we were in a different size boat. It was definitely a registered vessel but it was small. "I'll take care of it for you for a fee." etc., etc. He turned out to be very nice. What happened was very interesting. We went to the tower with a radio in it and we called that ship and got him on the phone and told him to come in front of all the vessels. I don't know if I could put a figure on it, I've really no way of knowing actually, but let's say at least fifty maybe a hundred vessels waiting to get into convoys waiting to go through and there's nothing there. You're just waiting in the heat. Hhhhoooot! Occasionally you're let to go into town but there's nothing in town but luke warm nothing. Suez is a pretty down to earth little scratch town. I call him in first and then I take one of these little boats, one of the Prince's boats, out to my boat. We start to party and start to hoot. (party noises) "Wow, what an experience" etc. And we notice that we're drifting because right in front of the canal was just all silt and the anchor didn't set. So we're drifting into the shipping canal and coming at us is a super large tanker. These things are about a thousand, whatever- it takes three miles to stop them and it's coming our way. We get on the voice tube, "Get down there, get the engine started. Get going." We just managed to get it back there and set a good anchor. It was pretty wild. Back to a little party and it was good to see everybody. Then it was Craig who went with me back to Lebanon. He went back with me to Lebanon to take the message that everything was ready and where to go to the ship.

Q: So he went to Lebanon with you to get the information to take back to the ship because you were going to go on?

John: I stayed in Lebanon. This is the first time, this is nine thousand pounds of hash. I had already been in Lebanon for a couple months.

Q: Back to see the same people that you had met years before?

John: Same people years before. And I packaged it up with them and we were getting this together getting all ready. We're in a beach apartment ready and he says, "Why don't you call them? 'Cause I got a radio." And I've told them that I'd call them at seven o'clock sharp, right? It's like five to seven, the guy's anxious, anxious, anxious. He hasn't seen me in five years. He doesn't know what's happened. And I give a call and they're on the other line. They're waiting. Boom! Went off smooth as silk. Several boats, some military, some regular people. Muslim and Christian working together. Hashish transcends politics, transcends religion. Really.

Q: What was it like when you went back to see this guy after all these years?

John: Well, it was like old home.

Q: You hadn't seen him since then presumably, right? Communicated?

John: No, no. Didn't know if I could find him. I found town. I recognized the house. I went up and did a traditional thing in Bedouin country. You take some sand and you just stand a couple hundred yards away until you're noticed and you wait out there. You don't come to the house. You take some sand and shake it around and just kind of stand there and you wait. And then somebody will come out to get you and bring you in or ignore you.

Q: That's Bedouin custom?

John: Bedouin custom. You don't just walk up to some guy's tent; he might be screwing somebody, whatever.

Q: So what was the custom there? To pay them up front?

John: You should, should pay a bit, cigarette and paper and all. So I had been waiting and getting it all together there. Packaged. Then waiting for the boat to get through all this rig-a-ma-role. Here's a secret little boat and all of a sudden it's major headline news.

Q: Yes. I'm surprised you decided to go ahead with it after all.

John: Well, we had to decide. All the time somebody had to make a decision, that was me. We just kept going for it.

Q: You figured that you weren't compromised then?

John: I figured we were but actually we'd been compromised in Thailand.

Q: How's that?

John: We'd been compromised a long time before.

Q: What do you mean you'd been 'compromised in Thailand'?

John: Well, where was it? (pause –thinking)

Q: Craig tells the story that he was- did you know Craig's part of this incident, by this time?

John: Not until I met him on the ship.

Q: He tells me that he had been growing and selling ganja in Thailand. Growing a considerable amount of ganja in Thailand and that a ship that had been intended to take that load had run into trouble in Central America.

John: Well this happened while I was in jail. I was in jail at this time and the same people- there was one other guy and there was the ship captain and this guy that's in jail now that was my wife's old boyfriend. There were four people that were kind of that way or underneath me as far as in charge of different areas and different groups of people, etc. Okay? And each had their connections and each had their ways of doing things. So it was just kind of separated that way. One of these four people was the ship captain and he became the ship captain; we flipped a coin. The other one got involved very late through a friend of mine but kind of moved up to that one of four people very quickly just on his own because of his arrogance. He was what you would call a landed family that came from old California with big land trusts and that type of thing. He had a young youthful but a very arrogance about him and very intelligent. So there were 4 of them and myself.

Q: So you were top management in this group? It was your trip then?

John: I was the top person. My trip. I knew before, people who didn't know each other. I brought them together. I knew the people overseas and I was there in all the countries and arranged things of state side.

Q: You're the man I wished I would have known. (laughs)

John: It definitely took people. I delegated.

Q: I'm a little confused. You were in jail at another time?

John: No, I wasn't in jail until '81, the last quarter of '81. And the first quarter of '81 I brought in my big one, just before I got arrested. While I was at this time considered by the customs officer, Donald Gratton, as being fugitive number one. The special agents made over two hundred stops, personally looking for me.

Q: Stops meaning people?

John: People stops. In 1980 I was held but not arrested at the San Francisco airport and they turned their back and I left. They were right behind me everywhere I went, right behind me.

Q: Couldn't catch you though?

John: They didn't catch me. In fact I was to meet my wife who was in a hotel in New York City and as I was crossing the block she comes walking up this way going [hand gestures] like this, "Get away." And I slipped by and we meet in Bloomingdale's both ways and get lost. Communicate that way. By this time I found a place on the east side of New York City and so I had a place to stay. She was staying on the west side taking them to school every day to the most exclusive school in Manhattan, most amazing school for children.

[END TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE; BEGIN TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO.]

Q: So things are happening pretty quick here. '78 or so, you got-

John: '79 I do the nine thousand pounds out of Lebanon. Now when I first go to Lebanon after five years of not being there, I take this other guy that I was mentioning that I haven't talked about too much. This guy is the landed family; the rich person from Berkeley. As you say in Colombia, "Putapaja." Bravado. At times no substance behind what was said. Ken Washburn entered the group with a promise of investment. He had none.

Q: This person?

John: Yes, yes. Who became one of the four. So we went to Lebanon together and we convinced this guy to do- whether it was six or nine thousand pounds, I forget. He leaves. I think at that time I stay and start to arrange the packaging. At this time it's hijacked and all that's going on. 'Cause I'm in Lebanon and in San Francisco.

Q: You must have been, "Oh my God, all of a sudden all this stuff is going on- hijacked, the boat's coming through."

John: And then I meet him Suez. We were just kind of there at that point. And at that point get them in a convoy and scheduled in front of all these other boats. Because Suez is very strange. It's very political and depending on who is favored at that moment in foreign aid and by the central government in Cairo, are the people who get in the first convoys. For a period of time there, Russia was favored in Egypt and that was the early '70's for a while. So their ships were the first in line. The other ones were just like, *Wait your turn, wait your turn*. And here was this little boat, all of a sudden just comes out of nowhere, and is told by the owner- (strange noise). They didn't know. Nobody knew. I'm the one that's talking to him over the little radio system at the Suez. I'm in the radio control.

Q: How did you manage that?

John: Well, with the Prince of the Red Sea, we just walked in and kind of bullied our way- whatever, packs of cigarettes or something, little payoffs- and says, "Look, we have a boat here and we've been told and you've heard to be on the watch out from the Canal Commissioner." All of a sudden this became government news and governments are talking in between and I don't know anything about. And it's like they know about this boat before I go into their office. The Canal Commissioner knows about this boat because of this incident in Diego Garcia and the Maldives and to let them pass. Just hands off- like one would say internationally, *carnet de passage*, a right, permit. The proper word and what I would love to have someday- I've asked for it several times in an official capacity- is a--. They used to give it to buccaneers- a paper. Those words just slipped my mind.

Q: Anyway, that boat gets through the Canal, right?

John: Get's through the Canal right up in front of everybody and everything is greased over and everything is fine. They still have some time to wait for this convoy to put it together. There's a convoy of five or six ships at a time depending on the size that you go with, you travel with and a pilot boat. Greased, you know. That's the way it's done. That's the way we do it. This is how much it costs. During that time they have the chance to get very high because I always bring plenty. And the Prince of the Red Sea arranges tours of the Pyramids for them and belly dancing girls. So they have a good time. Craig could fill you in on that 'cause he would know. Then Craig went back with me so he could go back to them and tell them the exact date to leave. I'm kind of confused now; there's two towns- one at the beginning and one at the end of the Canal. I forget.

Q: I don't know either but I got the general geography.

John: Suez is like this old colonial town- little one-story mason plaster buildings. Very trippy, just right out of *Casa Blanca* or the movies. You're meeting people at a bar with the fans. Whatever this town was on the other side of the Suez, the Mediterranean side, I spent one night, in a modern type stuff, Russian influence. We're all ready to go and Craig goes there and tells them what day and where. We start to move- I don't know if I was in and during the movement but we got to the beach and I know that it's standing by, a truckload. And I know that there are small boats like canoes, but they're smaller boats, that are standing by. When they show up, click, click the radio, everything fine. So seven o'clock I say, "Anybody there?" And they say, "How you doing? We're here. We're ready." I said, "Okay, we're ready." We go out and get in the smaller boats and take it out to the boat which is right pretty close in to the harbor at Tripoli- Tripoli? What's up north of Lebanon? North of Tripoli there's a big town. It starts with an M. Can't remember it right now.

Q: That's an exciting time when you're moving off.

John: Very exciting time.

Q: And when the hash gets transferred, there's all the people on the beach and all the high energy.

John: Yes. And then you go out with a little boat and then you meet. You say, "Hey, how you doing? Come on. Let's go." And you put it into little bags because it's all been arranged to go into bags because we got a hoist on the boat that just swings over, picks up the bag of netting material and takes them ten at a time or whatever. And we've got a hold. And one hold will hold forty-two thousand pounds- right up to the deck. You put the lid on it and it's filled all the way and it held forty-two thousand pounds on the last load. It's amazing that it did.

Q: The *Alysse Maru* was good to you, wasn't she?

John: *Alysse Maru* is beautiful. Nothing but good.

Q: So nine thousand pounds in that hold is barely-

John: It's nothing. But the next one was like eighteen thousand or twenty-two thousand. It went into- near Block Island, the nine thousand pounds and then up to Nova Scotia, up to Halifax, up there after offloading.

Q: Did you do the off load for that one yourself too?

John: Yes. And lifted it and my wife and another couple lifted up the stairs until daybreak. It was like the sun was coming up and we finished it. Small sailboats came from the big ship and came brought it into this house that we had on the north side of East Hampton on Long Island. You have the little hook, you've got Orient Point and you got this little hook and this is Montauk on the very end of Long Island and then you've got the Sound here and this is Connecticut. But then you've got this inlet here. So on this inlet on this side there's Montauk and then it goes down into East Hampton, West Hampton, South Hampton- there's all these Hamptons. East Hampton is the Lauren Bacall and it is the hangout of the entertainment world.

Q: You take this load into there?

John: We take this right into East Hampton. All of East Hampton is known for the arts. South Hampton is known for Shell Oil and the corporate level. West Hampton is known for biker groups and all kinds of people, weird groups. But East Hampton is the arts and then it's broken down into theater, movies, - and painters, you've got Jackson Pollack and he lived up in this place called Amagansett. My summer home was in Springs, Lion's Head. Springs is this little community within the township of East Hampton within the countyship of all this-

Q: So you bought a summer home up there?

John: No, I just rented. A little summer home and got kids.

Q: When you did this off load you had the house?

John: I off loaded it into that summer home. And the wife was helping out and people were helping out.

Q: This is a real down home then at the end?

John: Yes.

Q: The boat goes up to Nova Scotia-

John: Nova Scotia. Gets it retrofitted again, doo-dads and people get paid and things get settled and that takes six months. bv

Q: But you make pretty good money from this load, right?

John: Well, it's only nine or ten thousand pounds so it's enough to pay people and enough to do things. I think it might have been fifty thousand a trip then for each of the crew. Maybe one hundred thousand for the captain and other people. Then the next time it was a hundred for each one and then the next time it was two hundred for each one.

Q: You kept the same crew?

John: Same crew. Then they went back and this time they were off loaded up in Newport during the Newport races, during the last America's Cup won in Newport. We were in East Hampton and we were in Rhode Island. We had an apartment in Rhode Island during the America's Cup. This was held by these guys that I didn't

know were contracted to do the off load. And they did it but they held on to the equivalent of about three million. They were angry there was no honey oil. Accused me of stealing it. Everybody pretty much got paid and they were willing to let it ride. So there was cash; there was money available to let me take it back to Lebanon.

Q: But they claimed it was their money?

John: That it was theirs, that's right.

Q: Well, how did you feel about that?

John: Oh no, no. The three million would have been mine.

Q: Weren't you pretty upset with these folks?

John: Yes, yes. I confronted them and when it was suggested that they do the next operative I said, "Fuck you! They're out of here."

Q: So that's how you dealt with it?

John: That's how I dealt with it.

Q: You confronted them and what?

John: Confronted them but they came from this- lot's of strength. There was five of them, they were mob connected, they had bodyguards and this that and the other thing- lot of everything. So it could be intimidating. One time, just to give you an incident, there was a disagreement about where gallons of red Lebanese hash oil went. It wasn't found in the off load. They were angry at me and said, "Well where is this stuff?" I said, "I don't know. Maybe you should check your people." And saying that, this guy went into such a rage just stiffening the bristles on his back that his body guard- like an animal, like people of lower mentality do, can read other people- he had a glass of milk and the milk left the glass and it just went up in the air. My bodyguard, who is also my pilot- we had a twin engine plane out there- my pilot and body guard- he was reaching for a roll of - he said the only thing he could find were nickels. He said he wished he had quarters but in a pinch nickels will work. So he was standing there and it was all in this kitchen area. So that got into a disagreement and it turned out that my ship captain kept the oil in case something happened and took it up to Canada with him. So I was fine and it didn't matter. It didn't matter it's just that it didn't show up when he - I said that it was going to be part of this load.

Q: What was the reason for keeping the whole profit?

John: Ahhh, I- you know. I have it on tape. I taped him one time. I did. I confronted him and tape recorded the whole thing. A little micro cassette tape. It was like, "No we don't. It costs us more and we got less. And all in all, you got plenty and we just feel like heck with it." They ended up a lot of things happened to them. They lost five million in a Swiss thing. They lost a lot. I think a lot of things befell them.

Q: Are you saying that justice caught up with them?

John: Very much so.

Q: So your attitude then was-

John: Was go forward.

Q: Go forward but don't bring your old problems forward with you. So the way of dealing with people you didn't get along with was just to stop dealing with them?

John: Right. And that's happened.

Q: So that's the second load, the eighteen thousand something pound load.

John: eighteen to twenty-two, something like that. I forget what it was.

Q: In tons?

John: I think it could have been eleven tons. That's why twenty-two kind of rings a bell.

Q: Gosh, all that work kind of-

John: So that's work but the people in Lebanon have been paid decent money. They've been paid. At this time I had four hundred grand to give to them. And I left New York City in a rush; I had like five carry on bags, first class, British Airways –New York to London. But they were too much. They said, "We'll take some of those and put them underneath for you." "Well, okay, okay." But in almost every one of these bags were hundred dollar bills. Eight hundred fifty thousand dollars and that takes up a lot of room. It was in secret sides that were sewn in. It was in bundles just wrapped in pajamas. It was everywhere. When I got off the plane I had this routine of how to get to Beirut. You go one way to London and inside their international transit area, you can buy tickets to other places. So inside there I would buy the ticket that left in about an hour to Beirut. I'm leaving to London but I'm flying to Beirut. But in this case I had to go through customs because they have my bags. I had to clear the customs and then pick up the bags and then take them back upstairs and buy the ticket and go on. They said, "What's this." And I said, "Well, it's money, you know." And he says, "Yes, it's kind of 'thief row' here. That's what we call it. We call Heathrow airport 'thief row airport.'" I said, "Yes, I try to be very safe about this." "Well, what are you doing with all this money?" I said, "Well, I'm buying up oil contracts. You know what's happening don't you? They're finding oil all over and cash walks, you know. I'm buying up for cash, oil contracts around the world. In fact I'm on my way to Kuwait or someplace right now." He says, "Okay. I don't know about this. Looks kind of weird. But anyway, you're free to go." But they contacted Scotland Yard which in turn contacted the TEX –TEX computer system for the U.S. Customs which is nation wide. Immediately my name was investigated. And in three days time, they found that my address was a mail drop in San Francisco, my place of employment was a mail drop in San Bruno or someplace south of San Francisco, and soon they found aliases. Very soon that happened on.

Q: Aliases?

John: Well, they will very soon. Here's the flight I've got, New York to London, an hour later I've been essentially busted, I'm flying to Lebanon, I'm dropping this cash off, I'm flying to Bangkok to get money to there also, I'm flying to Hong Kong and then San Francisco, all in three days. Very quick. We get a private



jet from Beirut, I slap down American Express, ten, twelve thousand dollars, and get a private jet with what ever you want in the jet, whatever kind of alcohol, food, anything. We drive out and get in and flew to, I think it was Bahrain. So we fly to Bahrain and we walk on to a Concorde there. We managed to make a connection. The

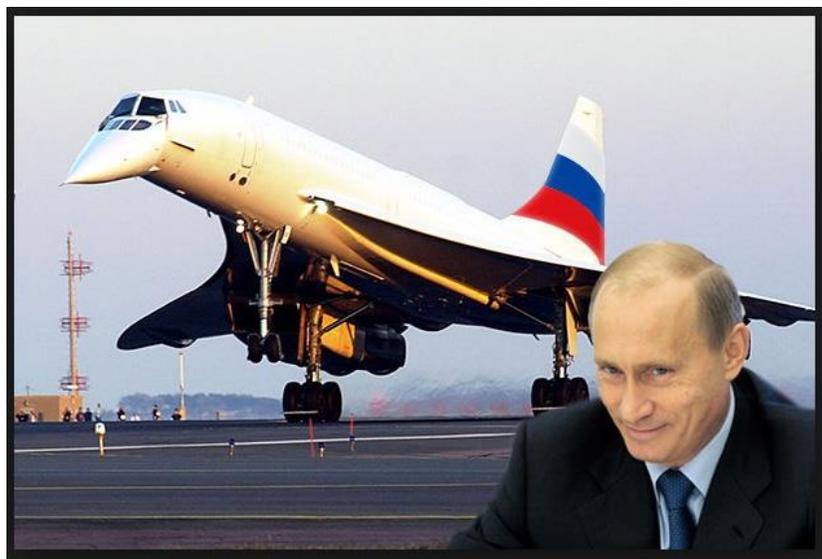
Saberliner was nice but the Concorde was superb. Funny in the Beirut airport the charter service, Arab Wings said \$25,000 to go to Bahrain. I said "Let me bargain. Let me on. That telex machine," to the shock of the operator. I sent a price of \$10,000, they came bck with \$12,000. I agreed. They said Captain x would be there and what did we want onboard.

Q: Why did you do that?

John: Because there were no connections. I had to get to Bangkok and back to San Francisco before customs had my name from London. They already had it I found out. It was put into the TECS system that was tracking passengers after Munich Olympics. <http://itlaw.wikia.com/wiki/TECS>

Q: You wanted to get out of Lebanon?

John: I'm leaving, yes. I'm getting to San Francisco because I know that they're going to be investigating. I'm trying to move as fast as I can.



Q: So you're moving fast. To make the connection on time you say, *Screw it. I'm chartering this jet. I'm getting my ass down the road.*"

John: Exactly. So he and I, this star of Lebanon who's never really been anyplace, a couple times in Europe maybe. And I on this grand adventure.

Q: The star of Lebanon?

John: This guy, this guy from Lebanon, and I on this grand adventure. We're going to Bangkok.

Q: This is the Lebanese guy?

John: The Lebanese guy. He's never really been out of the valley. So I'm taking him around and we get thoroughly loaded in Bangkok and he says, "These people, they're like monkeys. All these Asians are turning into monkeys to me. I'm hallucinating too much." Here's a guy who's smoked for twenty years. And with fresh Thai sticky. I'm not sure if I saw Craig but I did see Michael at that time when I was in Bangkok.

Q: So you dropped some money off with them for something that may be coming up?

John: Well, we've got a hundred acres in Burma. Craig could tell you more about that.

Q: He did tell me about that. I've got some photographs of that too.

John: Oh good! I've got some too. One hundred acres in Burma and it was just the most trippiest thing going and the wildest story going. I wish I had more of it but my only experience was going up there and sitting cross legged as about eighty people were in front of me and I was giving them money at the fields. All these people are lined up and they're waiting for me to show up with all this cash. I'm saying "thank you" in Burmese or Thai and their name and talking to them a little and just giving them a couple hundred, every one of them. And there's an opium den set up for me when I get there. We'd sit around, Mike and Craig and I, and smoke opium. That was kind of the high point in seeing this land just taken out of the jungle, turned into agricultural land, filled with pot.

Q: You saw it with the plants growing?

John: Yes, yes. He'll tell you more about that but anyway, same timing. We're covering our bases everywhere. We're doing different things all the time. We haven't given up on Thailand.

Q: When you say "we", you mean the you and the people working underneath you, right?

John: Yes. This is during an off time. The ship has just done a load so it's in off time. It's in the port and people are doing other things. Craig rendezvoused with me and Michael Ferguson in Thailand and we go back up into Burma and see that everything is moving forward on that trip. Our plan is to take it out of Burma on the west coast side of Thailand up there in the hinterlands- never been done before. Phuket is out that way. The west side of Thailand. There's a little bit of Burma that goes all the way down that peninsula of Thailand.

[INTERRUPTION WITH MOTHER]

Q: I'm talking about 1968 with *Golden Voice* and with *Park Lanes*.

John: It would be very close to that time. *Park Lanes* were hand rolled cigarettes with a filter and a sealed cellophane box- called *Park Lanes*. They were from Vietnam.

Q: Were those coming back in commercial quantities?

John: I don't know. There were a few. I saw them down in California.

[INTERRUPTION WITH MOTHER]

Park Lanes, they came in hand rolled filtered- the equivalent or better than *Golden Voice*. Incredibly, incredibly strong. Full sized Marlboro packed into a cigarette with the cellophane and they could buy them in cartons. Vietnam Veterans were bringing back duffel bags of those.

Q: That and then this product in Laos would be the first really strong pot that people saw in this country. Way, way more powerful.

John: What was the other thing- Buddha Gold or something?

Q: That was from Thailand I believe.

[INTERRUPTION WITH MOTHER]

John: ...yes, that three day trip. So I left New York City, flew to London and got caught with eight hundred and some thousand dollars, flew on to Beirut, immediately turned around and got a private jet and went to Bahrain, got on the Concord to Bangkok, saw those guys overnight in Bangkok, went to Hong Kong, and then to San Francisco. Boom! And in San Francisco I got busted. They were already waiting for me at customs. My name was John David Root at the time and they were waiting for me. In four days time they had been notified. Scotland Yard had notified customs and da da da da da and investigated. They even investigated my addresses and found out that they were mail drops. So they pulled me over. I paid my customs, I did all this and then they pull me over. I said, "Okay." I sat there for hours as they're asking. I said, "I don't know."

Q: You said *I don't know*?

John: "I don't know. Whatever." So finally they say after about the twentieth time, "Is that your address?" "That's my address." "Is that where you live?" I said, "That's my address." So about twenty times later they finally say, "No, that's a mail drop. You can't fool us. Is this where you work?" I said, "That's my address." [mumbling] They said, "That's a mail drop too, isn't it?" and I said, "I guess I better call a lawyer then, huh?" My lawyer, Metzger, are you familiar with him?

Q: No.

John: He's been around. He's one of the top in the nation. He got out of law school, University of Michigan, and went right into Hogan's. He's from New York City and he got a job with Hogan's. He was the most vicious, the wildest, craziest prosecuting attorney New York City's ever had. And he went right out of law school and became one of his troops and he was a star.

Q: Star prosecutor?

John: Star prosecutor working with Morgan.. Then he went out to San Francisco working for the FED's. One of his cases was a *Brothers Four*- a singing group from the early '60's. He said, "I can't prosecute these people. Ehh, smoking weed. I can't do that." So the attorney looked at himself and says, *You know, I got to go to the other side*. So he jumped and he got a little shack across the way and became a defense lawyer. Now he's in San Francisco. He does some interesting things. Like he takes [Shultase, Dr. Shultase -sp?], the most renowned respected mushroom studier, biologist from , I believe, Harvard. And a couple other guys and they go to Afghanistan for a client. What they do is they take some of the marijuana and they smuggle it through Australia or something and they get it back into America and they say, "See, this is not that." It's because years ago the law was *cannabis sativa*. And this guy had smuggled hashish from Afghanistan which is *cannabis indica*. He says, "You can put two cats in a blender and you won't know which is the tom cat and the endangered Bengal tiger. You won't know that. You have to define that and it's defined in the law, *cannabis sativa*." So they changed the law real quick on that one. He's done a lot of things. He recently died, tragically. I went down to San Francisco and took his wife out of the hospital. She had been shot too. It was a tragic accident.

Q: They were shot?

John: Well, it was tragic. Long story.

Q: Okay. So you go through customs and you want to call up your lawyer. Are you charged with anything at this time?

John: No. They have to wait, the timing, they have to wait for New York City to declare that there's a warrant for me, to issue an arrest warrant.

Q: For what?

John: For what they think that I did. That I went out of the country without reporting- remember the currency violation-eight hundred thousand dollars. Okay. So they think they got it. They know that I left New York, it was a non-stop and it went to London and I had discovered eight hundred some thousand dollars. That was pretty obvious, you know. But they didn't have a warrant so they kept me there for about four hours. It was about two and a half hours before they asked that-

[END TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO; BEGIN TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE.]

Q: So you call your lawyer, Metzger, and there in his office happens to be sitting the captain, one of your guys?

John: The ship's captain of the minesweeper, right. Ken Leonard.

Q: What was he doing there?

John: Just happened to be there discussing legal stuff.

Q: And meanwhile you're still at customs?

John: I'm still at customs. He came. I said, "I want to confer with my lawyer alone." I'm outside. Do you know San Francisco airport?

Q: Yes.

John: You know where by baggage claim is and all that?

Q: Yes.

John: You know where customs is?

Q: Yes.

John: It has those big double steel doors you can't go in. You're outside there. I'm out there fifty feet away from there at a phone booth and a chair. And he looks at me and says, "Are you charged with anything?" I said, "No." "They didn't arrest you?" "No." I can talk about it now but he did slip me a twenty. So in my pocket I had the parking stub and a twenty dollar bill and maybe some change; that's all I had. He looked one way and I looked the other and I said, "I'll see you." And I took the escalator and went up to the top. Up top is the departures. Technically a taxi cab is not suppose to pick up people; they can only drop off people. So I just walked out there and I grabbed him and I hopped in and I said, "Can you take me to San Francisco?" Young guy, he says, "Eh, okay."

Q: Where's your bags?

John: I got nothing. I told you, literally I had a parking stub and a- everything else was in customs. I left the car there, that's how fast I was moving. San Francisco to New York, New York to London, all that.

Q: Customs had all your baggage?

John: They had all my baggage. They're still at customs. In that baggage was my Macao money place and my deposit booklet so it showed that I put in a couple hundred or whatever, it was left over. Plus checkbook. One of the customs agents tore one of the checks out and wrote a check for twenty-five thousand dollars to himself. He was investigated years later. If you remind me I'll tell you about that because I found out many years later that he had done that. So they came to me and asked me about it. They thought I'd paid him, paid him off or something –a rogue customs agent.

Q: You must be pretty worried that they have all that information on you.

John: What can you do? I'm in this cab and I say, "Is anybody following us?" He says, "Who are you? Do you have any money?" I said, "Look. I'll be honest on with you. I've only got \$20. That's all I got." He says, "Alright." I gave him the twenty. "I'll take you where you want to go." So he took me to a phone and from there I called a locksmith. They had a small locksmith company in the city and he came over and opened

my house because it had burglar alarms. It was a quaint place up on the top of Nob Hill. It was a choice house, choice piece of property. I had a view of the bridge, fireplace, things going on.

Q: So your intention was to get back to the house and clear your stuff out of there?

John: Exactly. I'm there and I got some money there. I got a safe there. I'm getting it together. I'm kind of secure for a moment or two anyway. I get with one of my other one-of-four guys and I say, "Look, I need a plane. I need to go back East." Said, "Okay, let's go. You obviously can't fly commercial right now." We get the most ostentatious plane imaginable to mankind, our pilots in particular. It's either a King or Queen Air, whichever is more.

Q: King Air of course.

John: I didn't know this but wherever it goes it strikes awe to every little Tom, Dick, and Harry airport you pop into. Wow, dude! Twin turbo



props, it looks like a miniature 727 but more deluxe, more room, more of everything. We take that cross-country. First stop- was it Terra Linda or something like that, just north of San Francisco, there's an airport up there, north of Marin just south of Napa. Drew heads and then we went to Kentucky where the races are held, whatever that town is. It was quite impressive because you look over the years of what's happened at the airport. You see 2 little Lear jets and then you see 2 Lear jets and a full-willy jet, a private jet amongst all the King Airs and the other deluxe, nothing more nothing less than a twin prop. Then you see going up into the late as 1980, you see fifty substantial jets in this group photo of private jets that come in for the races.

Q: Well you're kind of on the lam right now.

John: Oh very much. I'm high priority. My parents' house is bugged, is tapped. They're making trips out there. I'm their number one suspect and they're going to every friend that I had, every person that I know because I left an address book of friends. No contacts, just friends. So they're pulling them out of high school- they're teaching high school. Or they're pulling them out of the bushes, throwing them up against the wall. *Who is this guy?*

Q: Heavy investigation.

John: Heaviness. They don't know who I am. They've got wanted posters all over the Bay Area.

Q: They don't know who you are?

John: They don't know who I am because more investigations turned up more and more and more and more and more- but they still don't know *who* I am. They don't know who I am.

Q: If they've got your parents' house bugged they know what your name is.

John: That's the DEA investigation for the O'Brien thing. I was being chased by Customs. For a while there they had, I think it was nine aliases on me and no name.

Q: So they weren't sure who the real Mr. *So & So* was?

John: Didn't know who he was. So that bugged them crazy. Supposedly he had a ship out there and supposedly he had a wife from Aruba, so he didn't have any ties to America. He was a free lance. He was out there, a buccaneer. A loose cannon, let's say. They didn't know who I was so they had wanted posters. Reward ten thousand dollars all over the Bay Area and all the post office. *Wanted for currency violations*- taking money out of the country without reporting it essentially. Then it says, *also known as* and there's a picture and no name. And it says *also known as*.

Q: All the aliases then?

John: All the aliases. Ohhhh, it was funny. So I'm flying up to White Plains and then we go up to White Plains and I take a cab from there to Manhattan. By that time I had a place rented on the East side but my wife and kids are in a hotel apartment- same building as Pachino- on Central Park West called The Mayflower Hotel -they also rent long term apartment like hotel rooms. They live there and they're going to this school on the east side, the Fleming School or the French School, which is an amazing story to tell. I should tell it here now. So got the kids, got New York, got to put them in school. Boom! Got to leave San Francisco, that's it. Okay, New York. Where do we go? Well, let's try the top of the heap, the cream of the crop, let's go to the French School, the Fleming school. We sit down. I was with my wife, wife from Aruba. Husband in the oil business, whatever, nebulous at best. And here's this little old wizened lady that runs the whole show, Mrs. Fleming. She's interviewing us, "Where did you meet your wife?" I say, "I met her down working the oil business in Aruba." She says, "Aruba?" And this is about how long it took. "What's your name [to my wife]?" -- [My wife answers]. "LeCle." She says, "Are you related to Adrian LeClay?" "Yes, that's my grandfather." "Well your grandfather and I personally partied throughout the Caribbean for years together. I just happen to have one chair left for your older daughter and I also have one chair left for your youngest daughter." And they were in the top school in the City of New York. I mean we're talking two houses six stories high between Park Avenue and Fifth Avenue, right there. Two townhouses separated by about a block. One whole room is just a bar room- your bar and floor to ceiling mirrors and incredible beauty for ballet. Two gyms and they always win national/international science programs and art. They got a floor for everything. She personally took us on a tour all the way up to the gym on the roof.

Q: Aren't you pretty nervous at this time?

John: Whatever, I got another name.

Q: So you figure that you can make it?

John: Whatever. This is prior to my trip where I got busted. I got them in school. Several weeks later I take off for Beirut to deliver this money. It's in a rush, just wanted to do it. Get it over with. I do it myself. And then there's that trip I told you and then I'm coming back, private plane across, and I finally reach New York City. I call her and I say, "I'm heading over there." She comes running up the block of the street going, [hand gesture?] They're in the room next door. A man and a woman had checked in. They're obviously from customs because she went back and could see them kind of leaving that area and stuff had been moved. And then she heard – always tip the cleaning lady because the cleaning lady said, "They've been in your room."

Q: In your room?

John: Yes, the husband and wife, she'd found them. So she took all the jewels and all the money, anything worth anything, any money wise, etc., anything I had left in her cleaning basket out the back door.

Q: The cleaning lady did?

John: The cleaning lady did. You know, she was paid. But she was always tipped. So she was hassled; she may have had to go back home. I'm not sure. She may have been deported, the sad part. I don't know. I don't want to say that she did or did not but she was found out about, that she had helped. So my wife met me there and then we met through Bloomingdale's and eluded them and we went over to the apartment that I had rented on the east side. We discussed our future and the future was, well, probably the best thing to do would be to go back to Aruba because it's hot. Very hot right now.

Q: Yes, for you.

[PAUSE]

Q: Maybe we can wind up the out line here first because I'm interested in how you go from this period into doing-

John: Okay. I meet her and say, "Look, we probably go back to Aruba because it's hot, hot, hot. They're going to grab you." Meanwhile I was calling her everyday and sending a bouquet of flowers everyday. You know, I had some money, I could do what I want. They're getting these calls, "Yes, I'm still in Miami." Of course they know I'm in New York City someplace. I send a bouquet and they know it's from me and they know it's from someplace in New York City. I'm just goofing. I'm putting it up against their noses basically. She's out on a date with some guy from CBS. They slam both of them up against the wall because they've slammed a number of guys thinking they were me. They thought Pachino was me. They thought everything. And women and people all over the nation they pulled out and said, "Who is this guy?"

Q: They pulled Pacino out and slammed him?

John: No they didn't. They were going to. They have delusions of grandeur, of course. They slammed her up against the wall and they played their card. They said, "You got to go to grand jury tomorrow." So they had already convened a grand jury. Sometime in that period they figured my parents' were them. So they brought them to the grand jury. They had to testify. And my brother had to testify.--"I don't know where he is. Can't you believe me?" And then they put a bug, a tap on their phone. Their phone was tapped for like six years and it took them years to even take it off. It was rude. Any mission's -in Bolivia or wherever - newsletter, or whatever was savagely ripped open and looked for messages. One day I was moving my base of operations from New York and all that heat in New York to Washington, the tip of the coast. And that was ginger. That was very gingerly, tip toe. I'll start there because that little story is quite expanding.

[PAUSE]

Q: So you were in Ibiza before you went to India?

John: Yes. That was that first trip to Europe that I took with that hot airline ticket.

Q: Why did you go to Ibiza?

John: I went to London, spent a couple months in London. I went to Italy. I took the train from Rome up through Pisa and up to Marseille, spent a day or two in Marseille. That's the wildest most beautiful town I've ever been in, wild town. And then the train on to Barcelona, stayed a few days in Barcelona. From Barcelona you take a flight to Ibiza. I stayed a few days in Ibiza and I came back and I hit the flight from Barcelona to Lisbon. I stayed in the airport and got my flight to San Francisco straight through from Barcelona.

Q: This is coming back?

John: Coming back from that little trip. It was only three months long in total; that first trip to Europe.

Q: You were talking about your slip.

John: This is 1981, the load had come in successfully, the forty thousand pounds.

Q: You went back and did another last load?

John: Right, the third load of Lebanese.

Q: After you left New York you did this or before?

John: I'm pretty much very undercover by now because I've been caught in between the second and the third load. And I managed to get a new passport and go back to Lebanon and complete the load. It was subsequently six months later that I finally got arrested. Fourteen months that they were searching for me. That's why they say, *He's on the top of our list* -the U.S. Customs number one wanted list. I was finally arrested in September of '81, after a load had come in. I'd already been to Hong Kong and Thailand arranging for that load. I'd

been to Lebanon and I loaded that load up right at the height of the civil war- bombs going off over our heads everywhere. The height of the civil war we left Beirut and went up to the Bekaa Valley, up to Baalbek. Right behind us towns were being closed down. We went to Tripoli, got the boat off and Tripoli was closed down. We left and we just got to the airport and the next day they closed down Beirut airport.

Q: When you say “we” who was “we”?

John: Another guy, one of the four, Ken Washburn. He was traveling with me at the time. Ken Washburn of Berkely.

Q: Was it easy to obtain a passport in those days?

John: I used the dead baby thing. You go into some county court house with records. You say, “Can I look at your records?” They say, “Sure.” You’ve got a choice of looking at birth certificates or death certificates. You look at death certificates of kids that were born around the time that you want to be the age of. So I looked at kids that- 1948, 1950. You get a death certificate. And with a death certificate you can find out the mother’s maiden name, where the kid was born, the hospital they were born, hospital they died because it was usually the same, and there was no cross reference. Then you walk out and walk right back in and say, “I’d like a birth certificate.” “What’s the information?” And you write down and you got the crib sheet, you write down mother’s name, father’s name, your name and \$5, \$15 later- you’ve got several copies of a birth certificate. So now you’ve got a birth certificate and with that you get a driver’s license. Twice I’ve sat in the same chair taking a driving test with the same inspector and he didn’t recognize me. I’ve gotten two birth certificates with different names and the woman didn’t recognize me. I’ve gotten two passports from the same person that didn’t recognize me. One funny thing was getting off in Aruba. I had been stuck at Aruba one time and I had a strip search and questioned, etc., etc. “Why are you coming? Why this? Why that?” And then I see this customs officer and he says, “Have you been here before?” He’s looking at me and I’m looking at him, “No, first time.” He says, “Oh, you look familiar.” And I’d been naked in front of him before. [giggles]

So we’re talking about moving and decided things were way too hot in New York. Decided to move operations to the west coast because we were getting ready for this big load. And it was just as easy to take the hashish from Lebanon or weed from Burma to the west coast as the east coast. We got up here, we took a plane and looked around different places. Then I started driving and looking at places and I rented a house. It was called a designer home. It was just somebody designed and built it. But these are loggers; these are pretty salt of the earth people. It was a pretty funky house. It was built, number one, in kind of wet lands- that’s a big no-no. There’s no perk at all so it had a butane toilet which burnt the shit. It was called a butane toilet. I’m being very finite. I’m writing down and I’m recording and I’m saying a specific story to a specific town of people. Everybody I meet. I meet the gas people, hook it up. The electric people, the phone people, the post office box people. I’m meeting all these people because that word of who I am is going to go out to the

town as soon as I start talking. There's a new person living in town. The closest town would be Forks, You've heard of Forks? Beaver's a town, it may have fifty people in it, maybe one hundred. It's so small it doesn't have a bar in a logging area. But this town turned out to be home of Christopher Boyce when he was on the run and two other fugitives plus myself. So there's like five fugitives living in a town of like fifty, a hundred people. There was also a U.S. Marshall's father living in this town. I rented a house and I set up a house. I had all this equipment- wraps, radios, survival gear and all this stuff. And picked places to off-load, do rubber landing craft off-loads, sailboats, etc. All of a sudden Christopher Boyce is caught. I rush out to this cabin and the landlord shows up and he says, "Things didn't work out in Alaska. I need my house back." And he thought we were still moving in but I was actually moving out in the middle of the night practically. So several trips later we did move out everything. And I asked the guy, just kind of took him aside, and I said, "Well, what's the scuttle butt about me? They caught this guy Christopher Boyce and there's bound to be a little talk. What did you hear about me?" He says, "Well, people thought you were an FBI agent because everybody was looking for Christopher Boyce." Because I had short curly hair, a story, and just came in and plopped down and left.

Q: You left then when Christopher –

John: As soon as Christopher Boyce got caught I packed up everything and split. This is in the summer of '81. And it was September I got arrested. There was one other thing to pick up on the east coast. There was a pile of I.D. and there was an off shore off load boat in East Hampton and a truck and a trailer.

Q: What do you mean to pick up?

John: To pick it up, it was there. I didn't want to expend it. I didn't want to let it go. If you ever talk to Michael Ferguson he might want to tell you this story. He and I went to pick up this truck and that's when I got arrested. I convinced them that he didn't know what he was doing or what he was getting into. They let him go and he beat it. He was gone. The next flight, he was out of there. [silence] I was standing in a phone booth calling up for ferry information because we had a boat which had been watched. And we had a trailer and a truck and a car. We were going to take the ferry from Long Island to Connecticut. And then drive to San Francisco or Washington. Or put it on a train in Connecticut and send it to California and then on to Hawaii. Whatever, there were a lot of schemes going on. Instead I got arrested and they grabbed everything and Boom! I was in jail, five million dollars bail, cash.

Q: What do you mean cash?

John: Five million cash.

Q: They wanted somebody to walk in with five million cash?

John: Right. And if somebody would have, they would have arrested him and it'd be ten million cash –just a joke.

Q: Where did you bring the forty-one thousands pounds into?

John: Maine.

Q: So you didn't take it into Washington at all?

John: It eventually got up to Washington. That summer we were distributing all over the place. Up to Canada, California, Santa Cruz, Michigan, Chicago, Montreal.

Q: You brought it back through Maine, back the same way again?

John: Back into Maine and then it was trans-shipped to New Hampshire to a factory there. It was vacuum sealed, wrapped and labeled, and put on semi-trucks and taken to California. Then it was put in warehouses and private houses. And then it was disseminated back east and up north, Canada, etc. back around America. But it ended up in Seattle, Santa Cruz – mostly in California it stayed there. While it was being sold in September and we were arranging for the Thai thing, that's when I got arrested. The Thai thing was not part of my doing. I had no knowledge of it after that. It went off on its own. It took a life unto its own. I had been to the plantation. We financed it and it was ready to go. We brought in vacuum machines and did a lot of things. Spent a lot of money.

[PAUSE]

I mentioned before a person I may put you in contact with. A writer and a good friend of Norman Mailer's. Been through a lot of trial, been through a lot of time. And similar to me, he was dedicated to marijuana and/or hashish and worked through the business through a series of being at the right place-right time, worked up to

kingpin sort of a status. Lived to survive it and worked hard to get back where he is now. He's been making movies; exposés similar to the LSD movie, and a book called *Smack Goddess*. Ricard Stratton.

[END TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE; BEGIN TAPE FIVE, SIDE TWO.]



One movie, RUSH...About a woman who graduates from high school and just goes right through the academy but goes through too quick. She's still a young kid. She gets through the Police Academy and put into undercover work, narcotics. She's told to use and abuse and get to know the people. And she did. And they left her strung out to dry. Her partner shot up and she's flipped out. Then they arrest her and they throw her in jail. Just for doing her

job. So when she gets out- real life. She goes and finishes her degree at Columbia, writing. And writes this book called, *Rush* about her life. It was turned into a movie. And she was paid a handsome penny for it. She wrote two other books. Kim Wozencraft.

[PAUSE]

Well, I was going to say that I was in a unique prisons and a unique time in history that I don't know if it will be replicated again. But it was certainly, to put it bluntly, quite bizarre where coed penitentiaries. My first encounter to coed penitentiary, men and women together in one prison, was a place called Pleasanton in Pleasanton, California. Down on the golden mile out there- Oakland, Martinez, etc. There's a federal penitentiary out there. It's kind of noted because a new wing and new tennis courts were built during the time Patty Hearst was in prison there. She never stayed in any of those places. She stayed in a private wing in the hospital. She had a private suite all for herself. But anyway, new tennis courts got built and they called it the Patty Hearst Wing. There's three buildings and they shuffle around between one male, two women and two male, one woman. They shuffle around back and forth. Right now, I believe it's all women. But when I was there, they were doing the shuffle from two women and one men to two men and one women buildings, all of

a sudden in the middle of the night. But some people knew and some people were agitated. It was going crazy. The rumors were flying a million miles an hour. In the middle of night they moved a whole building of women out into buses chain linked together, a chain gang. Moved them out; lock, stock and barrel. Boom! They put them on buses and they took them up the west coast, this is south east San Francisco, up the west coast and then as far out as North Dakota where there was a place opening up for women. It was in the middle of the winter, hardship we're talking major, and against the law. You're not supposed to technically keep people chained up. You can't keep them chained up for twenty-four hours on buses. This took like two or three days to get there. It was illegal and nobody knew about it and Boom! they were plopped up there. My friend- with the same birthday as myself who traveled to Ibiza same time I did, India same time I did, did a lot of the same kind of things- ended up in Spokane, Washington. She was in a coed place when I was -Pleasanton, as I was telling you about. That's where we met. She and her husband were there together. So all of a sudden he lost his wife and she was moved to Spokane. I was the first group of males to move into which was the women's unit the day before. I was assigned to be the inmate clerk for that building. It was heavy, it was big. I had a lot of perks. I had so many perks that when the new assistant warden came in, a woman who'd been in the prison system thirty years, she took one look at my room and said, "Lock this up. Inventory it. Eliminate that job. Transfer him. Get him out of here." She just locked up the whole room because it was like a palatial little estate, a private little estate of stuff.

Q: When you were first sentenced you went to Pleasanton?

John: No. This is the second time around. This is for the hashish. First time was for the money and the passports. I arrive in Pleasanton and the first thing I see is this sun deck. I see all these people in bikinis. I'm thinking, "Gee, I know there's men and women, but in the same building?" I'm going, "Wow! This place is really strange. This is going to take a hard time to get used to." But they were gays in bikinis that hadn't had the final chop. They had breasts and they were beautiful looking. 6'3 blacks and little guys and all different kinds but they were gays. Had they had the final chop then they would be with the women. They just happened to be in prison. It turned out that this place called Pleasanton is anything but pleasant. It's an administrative facility where all the people that they can't take anywhere else go to. It's wacko, it's a looney bin. It's crazy. You got all different levels from one to five, all different security levels, all thrown in together in one big hodge-podge. Here was a double hodge-podge because it was male and female. It was insanity. Just a keg of constant violation. Men and women can't really do time together. Ingenious plans for wild and crazy payoffs and all these construction equipment and things just to allow a man and a woman to get together and make love, would go through. And they'd get busted too. The most elaborate plans would get busted. People were always searching for ways to make love, places, because that was forbidden. There's no thing called a conjugal visit in the federal system. You have conjugal visits in state prison but you don't have them in federal prison.

They don't have them. They don't allow them. But they do have furloughs where you're allowed to be picked up and taken away for a certain amount of time to a certain area. They have furlough transfers that are a little longer than a bus ride, twenty-four hours on a six hour route. So you have almost a day and a half with somebody. And they know that. They let it go unless something happens that's drastic. They call it a furlough transfer where you make arrangements for yourself to go from one prison to another prison. I ended up with this woman in Pleasanton and in Spokane, two coed prisoners.

Q: You were there at the same time and you were friends who spoke a lot?

John: Yes, we still speak a lot.

Q: Looking back on that time that you were smuggling was basically the '70's. Can you think of what your attitude was like? Could you define it in one sentence or one phrase, would that be possible?

John: I think of Gandhi of course. I think of his quote. I think of, *Be the change you want to see in the world*. And of course I wanted to see a liberalization of the laws. How do you affect that? Or how do you dynamically oppose those? Is from direct action. That's a tactic that a lot of people take on. It's a direct action for something you believe in of course.

Q: What is a direct action?

John: Smuggling- against the state, against the king. Smuggling is a slap in the king's face. It's been that way for thousands of years.

Q: And you felt that at the time. That it was direct action?

John: It was direct action. It was a political statement. And there was an artful sense to it because it took twenty-four hour days for years. It took a lot of material and crafting, head banging. A lot of things that went into a smuggle. One time when I was in New York I bought \$15,000 worth of world charts, ocean charts, almost three complete sets for two directions for two ways to circumnavigate the world. For two different vessels and for the home base too. That's just one expense.

Q: Did you enjoy doing that and making those plans?

John: I did. Sure. I enjoyed looking at it as it unfolded. Certainly being in both the crucial places. Not to put myself up any higher than the people that have lived on a ship with tonnage of hashish underneath them at all times. That's a tremendous amount of pressure that's put on those people.

Q: So you didn't look down on them?

John: No, I'm not saying that there's a difference. Not to put myself in a higher position because I'm on the land in two places. I didn't think any less than equal. They were my equals in the amount of work and pressure and effort that went into each of these smuggles. It was a tremendous amount of work.

Q: When you think back, what was the most difficult thing about that period of time when you were actively involved in smuggling?

John: Certainly maintaining old term friendships and family contact, that type of thing. For all intents and purposes I was a non-citizen of America. I just kind of dropped out because you're living a world that you don't even see. It's an invisible world so you're invisible. You're not part of making contact and you can't be seen so you're just kind of a non-entity while you're doing this. Plus you're in a world unto your own and to a few people and privy to know. You're off in a world that's not seen by the average person that's going to work everyday. They don't see a life that might begin at ten o'clock at night and go into the morning. You don't see that group of people that are up there dancing or singing. They're not in a trendy place in New York City and watching hundred dollar tips being floated around. They're not in the most expensive restaurants in the world. They're not in these areas. There's only a few people in those. And therein you see some of these smugglers that are just like, *Oh let's hit this place*. And go in and drop a couple grand on an afternoon lunch.

Q: Did you enjoy that lifestyle?

John: Well sure, sure. It was very nice but you have to be very cautious on the potential for power and potential for it to go to your head. I thought I kept that into very good check. I kept in an middle class sort of neighborhood with moderate cars. Portrayal at all times was middle middle – pretty true to my early years.

Q: Did you have a cover business?

John: Not most of the time. It was just kind of being a non-entity. You're not part of PTA and children's things. That type of thing. Essentially you're gone because you're always traveling and you're always moving and going.

Q: Some people really enjoyed being elusive and a non-entity, as you say. And for some people it was a very difficult thing. How was it for you?

John: Well, it was good for a while but then you want the stability. You want some sort of concreteness, something that's not so elusive and just flying by. Time is flying by with it. Sometimes you want this world to slow down but then you realize that you're not suited for really anything else because you're on the run. You have to remember that you have to kind of stay a non-person or you'll be somebody that could be caught. By this time I was on the run for almost eight years.

Q: Really? On the run for eight years? I didn't realize that.

John: Yes. Haven't talked about that.

[PAUSE]

Q: When you were living in Colombia you did several projects out of there but what was your day to day life like down there?

John: About the first six months of going to Colombia- and that was in two trips, once alone and one with my brother-we traveled around the country, meeting people, looking everywhere. And all through Ecuador and down to Peru. Hitch hiking, taking buses, basically just cruising around, sleeping in hammocks. Traveling, always looking. Getting a feel for the place, for the country. Eyes wide open.

Q: Looking with the intent to smuggle cannabis?

John: Probably thinking in those lines, always thinking in those lines. But it's not like you're smuggling if you're down in San Augustine or in Leticia. Leticia is a little town in Colombia that touches the Amazon River. I've been in Brazil where Brazil touches Colombia at the Amazon River. And explored quite a bit of the country. Then went down to Ecuador, pretty much petered out of money and headed back to Seattle. This is actually my second trip with my brother that we went down to Ecuador.

Q: Then you go back and hook up with this woman that you met down there and you're living in Guajira?

John: Not yet. That's several years. Then I go back alone pretty much to stay. I've heard the scam is to get a teaching a job, teach English. And that gives you a visa. I went to Bogota. I met and was hanging out with some American people and they were teaching English. They showed me the ropes. We got a house together so we were two, sometimes three people teaching English in Bogota.

Q: You must have been learning Spanish?

John: No, not really. You're teaching English you don't speak Spanish. My Spanish is minimal.

Q: You were fed up with the U.S. at this time? You said you were leaving for good?

John: Oh no. Not left for good. Instead of weeks or months, left with the intent of maybe a year or so. I'd always thought of South America as being someplace I would eventually get to and probably spend a few years. And I ended up spending about three years down in the Caribbean and South America. The first year was just kind of traveling around and feeling it out, several trips back and forth. Nothing smuggled or anything. Then I moved down to and taught English, hanging out in the city there. I was there for maybe six to eight months. I forget how long. Some friends of friends showed up and said, "Can you make an introduction?" I said, "What for?" They said, "Cocaine." I said, "Well, I don't do cocaine. I don't eat it, snort it. You can find it here like religion at the Vatican; just look around. It's everywhere." I did eventually make the introduction for these people. It was all a big sting. It was DEA sting that had been worked out. For like three years they had been following these people. It was the largest cocaine bust on the west coast at the time because there was conspiracy for more. I forget how many kilos. It was only a few kilos but it was part of another two hundred kilo thing. This is back in '73, '74.

Q: It was going to the west coast to the U.S.?

John: Because it was busted on the west coast they called it the biggest cocaine thing. It was a very high profile situation because it had to do with the number one waterski manufacturer. Do you remember Herb O'Brien?

O'Brien Skis? He was my brother in law. O'Brien Skis, they were smuggling cocaine in their waterskis. Similar to the Brotherhoods kind of deal but they were smuggling it in waterskis. He was my brother in law back then, married to my sister.

Q: He was smuggling it or his people?

John: People working for him. He had a big manufacturing company. He was the world's largest manufacturer of waterskis. Tremendous success. They were manufacturing them in the States but international waterskiers go all over the world, teams, sails, promotions, they're all over the world. Several people came down with skis, I made the introduction and I stepped away from it. I don't know what happened after that until I hear a word that they've been busted. It turns out that they had been busted three trips ago. But the trips failed. Somebody did a switch of two hundred pounds of salt or something. So when they arrested everybody, they charged them with two hundred pounds of cocaine because the intent was there even though salt came across the border. It was trying to make a big mountain out of nothing. So I was the so-called "connection" from where it looked like up here. So the DEA was after me.

Q: God, already back then?

John: Yes, the DEA chased me for eight years before I finally got arrested by the U.S. Customs in 1981. It was in 1973 that this cocaine thing happened. I just kind of stayed down there. I didn't want to go back to the States. And what is there to do but smuggle weed. It was a bit of choice and a bit of happenstance. And then it was meeting the right people. Like I say it was just a chance meeting of somebody we shared a cab with. I kind of knew what they were up to and seeing them again and saying, "Sure, I can help you out."

Q: You said the Colombians are difficult to deal with?

John: Well, certainly there's a manana feel about many Latin American countries. Somebody says something's going to be here today and it may not be here today. Thing will be here next week. There's that edginess about it opposed to Asia or Lebanon where it's exact to the minute.

Q: Lebanon was very exact?

John: Lebanon is to the minute.

Q: I've heard Thailand is not that way.

John: Eh, back and forth.

Q: How about the people? How were the Colombians different from Lebanese people you dealt with?

John: How I kind of sum it up, Colombians- they're in the West and the West is a taking, needing, grabbing, greedy culture at this period of time. Where as the East- Asia and Turkey, Middle East, everything east of the Bosphorus is a giving country. They've had it for thousands and thousands of years, kind of in a giving mode, it's just the attitude.

Q: Do you think that changed the way you lived your life and your philosophy about life, dealing with Asians?

John: I dealt with all kinds of people. I dealt with every imaginable kind of people. I didn't have- maybe just blinders. I really didn't notice the slant or the color or the physical differences.

Q: No, of course not. But you notice that some people were easier to deal with than others.

John: Oh, yes. But then I'm dealing with Craig's friends in Hong Kong and Thailand. They seem very straight. Thais and Chinese. And those were all Craig's people and that was his whole operation over there. That was pretty much his.

Q: How did you two meet?

John: Geez, I forget how. Oh- remember I said to my Aruban wife, "Where do you want to live?" She said, "San Francisco." The reason why she wanted to live by San Francisco was that her old boyfriends and girlfriends lived there. She used to live in Medellin, Colombia. She lived with this gringo up on a big farm. They did a lot of weed. One day the United States flew down and kidnapped him. Instead of getting what they thought they would get out of the deal, he just got a couple years at Pleasanton- cake walk - because you're not supposed to kidnap people. And she went to jail but for some reason she got kind of scooted out the back door. When I met her she was kind of on the run in Colombia because she had kind of left the jail in Medellin where she was supposed to be serving some time. Her boyfriend was in jail in Pleasanton. So we moved in together. We went to Angel Falls for our little honeymoon sort of a deal. And then in '75, '76 she got pregnant. We moved to the States. Had a daughter in '76 who is twenty-three on Saturday. Then we moved to San Francisco. Okay, so one of the people was her old boyfriend in San Francisco- who's out of jail now- and the other one is one of his connections. There's these two guys and this guy over here's wife is a good friend of mine. My wife knows all these people. One of these guys was a Dave and Barbara. Dave still lives in Big Island now with Lana Parker. Dave was a world class sailor and he's still quite the boats man. And he knew Craig. Dave and I were talking and I said, "Well, do you know anybody that might want to get on a ship?" And he says, "Yes." Craig. Because he was a good friend of Craig's.

Q: You already had the *Alysse Maru* at this time?

John: Yes, I don't think he was in Japan. I would have to ask Craig if he went to Papua, New Guinea. Do you know if he did?

Q: I think he did.

John: I thought that he got on in Singapore.

Q: I think he did but I think he cruised out there on the boat and went all through those islands and then back to Singapore. I was just curious how you met him.

John: A Medellin, Colombian wife of Hawaiian friend of a friend- Californian connection.

Q: Here's kind of an off the wall question. Thinking of all those people that you met through the years in Lebanon and Colombia during your career years, anybody stand out in your mind? Anybody as being the most memorable for example? Somebody that you really respected?

John: I suppose I respect the Lebanese the most. Just amazing, good people.

Q: Anything else why you respect them the most. The way they do business?

John: Well, the way they do business, it's very forthright and accurate. There's no bullshit about it. But beyond that, when you're living for months and months in a person's home.

Q: Here I've only been two days. I know what you mean. And then you get to know them.

John: Oh yes, very much. And then you travel around the world with them. Then you bring them home. I brought quite a few Lebanese to San Francisco.

Q: From this family?

John: From the people I was working with in Lebanon, several families. It's pretty tight. It was quite amazing. Lebanon's a very strange country. Craig felt very honored that he got to travel through there. I always feel that way when I get to travel through there and survive. One time I was back and forth with these shuttles because the border was opening and closing. And the airport was opening and closing. It was right at the height of the civil war-

[END TAPE FIVE, SIDE TWO; BEGIN TAPE SIX, SIDE ONE]

Q: If you want to go on, you show up at the border-

John: I show up at the border and the border crossing between Syria and Lebanon and they look at me and they say, "Look, we know kind of who you are and who you're with. We just can't let you in the country." I said, "But I have to." What happened was the second in charge of the Palestinian Liberation Front was in a hotel and it was bombed. This guy is quite the worldly guy. He married Miss World, his wife. He's educated, etc. He was number two and he was bombed.

Q: Killed?

John: Killed. They blamed it on Israelis, two men and a woman carrying false passports. It seemed like there was a Canadian connection to it also, I forget. Here obviously I was carrying a false passport. Not obvious but you know. I said, "Well, can you turn your backs?" They turned their backs and I walked across the border. I caught a cab as far as the cab would take me. Then I caught another cab. I'm up in Baalbek. In Baalbek not only is it kind of the weird situation in the civil war because it's in the heart of the valley. The big valley that at one time in history or another it's either growing hashish or it's growing opium- The Bekaa Valley. But the Bekaa Valley is a strategic area because there's an air force landing strip in this valley. The Syrians would like to control the whole country so they pretty much occupied the entire country but they really

control that. Then there's Fettahin and Iranian trainees and guerilla groups that are training here and there in the valley. Or it used to be when I was there in '72 or whatever it was, they were training right down town. There'd be that block of no buildings and trees and you'd see the red army out there training. All these different revolutionary groups would be training outdoors in guerilla warfare. Wild times. But when I was there later, that was after Syria had occupied the country and it was back and forth and all the craziness. So then I went up to the valley and somebody, I forget who, but somebody managed to get a stamp because I didn't even have a stamp. Here I'm in the country unstamped on a false passport- Boom! I'd have been dead if a Palestinian had picked me up. It was just luck. So I managed to get there and get a load out. And get back on a plane and get out of there. I think that was the second load that I was working on at that time.

Q: But got it out, they then delivered it somewhere?

John: Oh no, the ship came and I met the ship. I did three loads from Lebanon - the one coming from the Maldives. Then they went to Nova Scotia and then they hung out in Malta for the next load. As soon as it was ready, I went to Malta and said, "Okay, it's ready." And met them back in Lebanon from Malta. One load was very interesting because they off loaded it in the Azores, way over in Europe. But you got to imagine, this ship has already been from Nova Scotia all the way up the Mediterranean all the way back out of the Mediterranean. They just didn't want to take it all the way across the pond. So the off load boat essentially came all the way from Massachusetts all the way out to pick it up.

Q: These were the guys then that kept the profit so to speak?

John: No, no, that was the final trip that I'm describing right now where they off load in the Azores.

Q: This was the final trip? The forty thousand pounds or something?

John: That was the final trip. Forty-four thousand pounds, whatever.

Q: What did they come out to the Azores with to pick it up?

John: A large hulled fishing boat from the east coast.

Q: That one made it back in okay?

John: They all did. Never lost a load.

Q: All the hashish made it?

John: Yes, and it got distributed – actually it went on a big truck, a lot of it, and it went down to New Hampshire where a factory was rented and it had this little assembly line going. And we were just in and out. Rented this factory and before the little towns people and the little town could realize what happened we were out of there. We used this building, this kind of conveyer belt to load trucks for cross-continental, cross-country travel. We had a heavy-duty very thick mylar vacuum pack with nitrogen fixed seal. A machine would do this. And then these big blocks of hashish they in turn were put into boxes and then they in turn were put onto pallets. And they in turn were tied down with shipping labels for clay, the label said "clay".

Q: So you brought the load in here off the boat, off the off load boat, it went into the factory and then you repacked it and then sent it out from there labeled as clay.

John: To California. A lot of it went in moving vans, like a U-Haul. Whatever somebody was comfortable with. Some people are comfortable with a U-Haul with lots of old furniture, the mom and pop type thing. Whatever people were comfortable with. Some people were just comfortable with a motor home with a little bit.

Q: You hired these people?

John: People who came through from different directions through different people through different knowledge bases. That did that kind of work – would drive across the country with a thousand pounds for a dollar a pound or whatever.

Q: That's exciting that factory with conveyer belts, in and out, packaged and labeled.

John: We drove out of that town real quick.

Q: Weren't you on the lam at this time?

John: Oh yes! I was dropped off up in the woods in Quebec. I'd be dropped off and then I would walk across the border.

Q: Fly into Canada on your U.S. passport and then somebody would drive you down into the woods near the border?

John: Yes, and then I walked through the woods and then somebody would pick me up.

Q: Any close calls doing that?

John: No. It wasn't like I did it everyday. It was a lot of effort.

Q: People talk a lot about honor related to this business. "He had honor. He had no honor." And of course honor relates to some kind of a code that you either live by or do your business by. Did you have any kind of a code?

John: I wouldn't say anything was codified. You work with people, you get close with people and you give them a supreme amount of trust that no matter how big of a link in the chain, they're still just another link in the chain. Everybody's just as important. People give their words. I felt like my word was pretty strong. I could borrow a couple hundred thousand dollars in cash just by saying, "Hey, I need it. I don't happen to have any cash with me and I need the cash." And somebody would loan it to me. But then again I was borrowing at three and four to one. One guy loaned me a hundred and twenty-five grand, I had to pay him five hundred grand.

Q: I guess that was pretty standard rate- three, four to one.

John: And of course they knew, they took the risk that if it didn't succeed then – but everybody knew you get a load in, you got a load in. There's so much trust. I look at people and I look at ten, twelve crewmen and I

say, "I'll be there." They're going into a war. They're going in to where their ship is being flown over about ten feet above with Israeli jets. One time there was rockets overtop the ship going both directions. The Palestinians were bombing down south and the Israelis, or whoever, were trying to bomb the Palestinians. This is up near Tripoli where the boat was. There's a lot of craziness. And then they'd already been through a lot of craziness. They had been through it in the Maldives.

Q: That's right. Same crew. This is a pretty tough crew.

John: Same crew. So they'd been through all kinds of weirdness.

Q: Did they enjoy what they were doing, you think? The crew- did they like the adventurous life?

John: I suppose so. Most everybody would love to go back and do something like that again.

Q: They would, huh? When you talk to people now, they reminisce and say, "Gosh, wasn't that the time?"

John: Oh sure, talk to them all the time. Loved it, would love to do it again. The trust – I don't want to toot my horn or anything but I did do contempt time. Very few people ever do contempt time. They wanted me to testify against people I knew. They wanted me to testify against people I might have known in about twelve different States. Had I started testifying in New York, I might still be on some stand today. I nipped it in the bud in New York. I said, "Fuck you! I'm not testifying. Nothing. I don't care; you can keep me in forever." So I let it be known that they could keep me in jail forever and I wasn't going to say anything.

Q: That's very rare.

John: It's very rare these days because there's many ways to coerce people. And that's one of the stronger ones because your time stops when you're doing contempt time. Your time stops, you do the contempt time and then your time starts again. I did it in, by far the pit of the entire federal system, New York MCC, and that's an area where you are lucky to get one hour of fresh air a week. Take you up on the roof, let you run around for a bit. Otherwise you're in a sealed building.

Q: That's very intense. You were in there being held on contempt, dead time, can you recall what you were thinking or feeling back then?

John: I was arrested and taken to New York MCC in '81. So I spent the last half of '81 and the first half of '82 there.

Q: At MCC?

John: New York MCC.

Q: While the grand jury was convened?

John: No, this is trial. My trial, I went to trial. Then out to Seattle. That was rude.

Q: You're still on trial?

John: No, I'm through with trial in New York and I'm coming out here to go to trial in Seattle.

Q: Why two trials?

John: This is the cocaine thing.

Q: The first arrest is for currency violation?

John: Currency and passports. This is for the cocaine. And then I go down to Terminal Island and start doing my time.

Q: For what now?

John: For all the stuff that I'd been convicted of.

Q: So what were you convicted of?

John: Cocaine.

Q: What was the charge?

John: Importation. I plead guilty rather than stir this all up. It'd been ten years or whatever and I didn't want to stir all these people who testified against me. I didn't want to stir it all up again. They had businesses. I thought maybe they might appreciate it. Nobody does. I don't know. Nobody's ever came up to me and said, "Hey I appreciate you not talking about me." "I appreciate you did that extra sixteen months in prison and refuse to talk about me."

Q: Nobody ever did?

John: No.

Q: Well, I'll tell you. I've talked to a lot of people and it's very rare what you did. I think it's very admirable.

John: Yes, it's just my own code. It was kind of a funny thing in there. I'm pacing around and I'm thinking of a book or a quote. I kept looking around going, "How do I- where did I - how did that- I'm thinking it was Lillian Hellman and she said, "I won't cut my conscience to fit today's fashions." And this is kind of what she said to the House Committee on Un-American Activities. She refused to testify. So I'm thinking where can I get it and I just happened to look under a little table was a book- I think I still have it- called *Scoundrel Time*. I copied it right out of there. I copied a letter and I sent it to a prosecutor. I say, "I won't cut my conscience to fit today's fashion." He took me to the grand jury. And the grand jury is quite a process. But before they took me to the grand jury, they disqualified my attorney from representing me. In a grand jury an attorney can represent you outside the door. So after every question, you are allowed to go outside the door and confer with your counsel. They took away his right. It was the craziest- it was written up all across the nation, back and forth, this decision by this judge to take away my right to choose the attorney that I want to represent me outside the door. This is Michael Metzger, and he's the one who's dead now. So they took away my right to him.

Q: Any attorney or just Metzger?

John: Just Metzger, but he was my attorney. So when they brought me to the grand jury, they said, "Will you answer this question?" I said, "Well, let me go confer with consul." So I went outside the room. There's

nobody out there. Sat down on the floor and started to smoke a cigarette. The prosecutor came out, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm conferring with consul, myself." He said, "Are you going to answer these questions?" I said, "I don't think so." The thing is, before that, I had already filed a Freedom of Information Act form to see what the government did know about me. They knew the names of every crewmember on the *Alysse Maru*. They knew I was in a hotel room in Bangkok and who was in the room next to me. They knew travels and hotel rooms and Craig and Lebanese and they knew a lot. So there wasn't anything I could do to, let's say, perjure myself in a grand jury. I just couldn't start talking period. It would have never ended. I would be here twenty years from today. I'd still be testifying in some grand jury or another.

Q: I think that's the way it goes. When they say, "Talk." They mean everything.

John: Forever.

Q: I think you're right. And I'll say it once more I think it's very unusual and very admirable. Your stance—I don't think anybody else really looks at it that way or does care. But you said you were listening to your conscience, what was your conscience telling you?

John: the same sort of thing that Lillian Hellman said. That- just raised in the country and you don't cause ill on somebody else just because you're having ill put upon you to lessen your sentence. It's just not right.

Q: Where do you think that you learned that? From your parents? At home?

John: Sure. (reaching in book shelf?)

Q: I'm sure we can find a reference.

John: I'll give you a reference. About that personal principle, let's see if I can find that. Here's a good place for finding my sources of reference. It would be "*The Falconer and the Partridge*."-- *A partridge being taken in the net of a falconer begged hard of the man to be set free and promised if he were let go to decoy other partridges into the net. "No." replied the falconer. I did not mean to spare you but if I had your words would now have condemned you. The scoundrel who to save himself offers to betray his friends deserves worse than death.* And the moral of it is 'Better a death with honor than a life with shame.'

Q: Whose book is that?

John: *Aesop's Fables*. (giggling/laughing) We had those read to us. They're the same in every country. It's where you get ethics, where you get your ideals- basically your ethics.

Q: Did you have any sense of community amongst smugglers? That there was a community or that you were part of a secret community, an elitist community? Anything like that?

John: Well, like I mentioned before, it was pretty easy to recognize a fellow smuggler. You just kind of – you got a feel for the person, how he sat, how he looked. And there were plenty of women smugglers too. There were plenty of them who were bosses and had many ships.

Q: Really? I never knew any. I knew of one. You knew of some?

John: Yes, but mostly a male thing I guess. Community? Yes, I suppose there was a community. There was a certain camaraderie. But you understand that my predicament being on the run and then being on the run and then being on the run. Really being searched for didn't allow me the leeway. I didn't have that freedom to go out and be a party animal. I was pretty reserved, pretty tight.

Q: You lived a pretty quiet life?

John: Yes.

Q: Was that hard?

John: No, I was still doing things. I had a big loft in Soho and I had an Eastside apartment and a Westside right across from the Dakota Building apartment that just had a phone in it. I had a girlfriend on the west side and a wife here. There were things going on. I was traveling.

Q: Living the life of a smuggler, what was the best thing about that period? The adventure, the money, the free lifestyle?

John: Ohhh. Money was probably the thing that got in the way the most.

Q: Got in the way of what?

John: Just got in the way. If you could do everything without money, it would have been great. You felt more comfortable stashing in your house maybe a couple thousand pounds of hashish, rather than a couple hundred pounds of cash. It was much easier to put away some big quantities of hashish rather than deal with the quantities of money.

Q: That's odd.

John: Well, I mentioned that I took in duffel bags in hundred dollar bills mostly almost a million dollars out of the country. Just walking through New York City, getting in a cab, going here, going there. And you've got a million dollars. Even if half a person knew you had a million dollars on you in cash.

Q: God, they'd think of a way to get a grab at that, wouldn't they?

John: Yes. So it was a bravado. It was a confidence that you had in yourself.

Q: That's how you moved money around, was just in cash?

John: Money was a real pain to move and you wanted to get it away from you. Because you get busted with money and you could be thought of as anything but a marijuana smuggler. There's guns, there's heroin, there's cocaine, there's terrorism, there's a lot of other things that money would point to rather than marijuana. So it was in the way. And of course it was needed but you wanted to get it out. One time I had a funny deal. Certainly we counted a lot of money. We had little machines that would count money. And you're always counting money because you want it pretty accurate before you take it to a bank and get it into the banking system. We had a machine and we were counting fives. And fives you just- what are you going to do with

fives? So this one guy says, "Look, I'll guess how many there are." And his wife says, "No, I'll guess how many there are." And I said, "Okay, I'll guess how many there are." And whoever was the closest just took all the fives. You use them for tips or cab rides, whatever. You can exchange fives in machines for quarters because you're making a lot of calls. But for the main part, they're a pain in the butt, fives. He guessed 220 and I guessed 221 and she guessed 222, so they had me. Either way they had me. And it came out 221. I guessed it to the exact number.

Q: It's amazing how uncanny you can be with things, like knowing how much money was in a certain pile or how much product weighed or how much space it would fill.

John: How much space it would fill was always always a concern. Always. And how much you want to use of the space that is available. Sometimes in a sailboat, they only want it behind the berths or behind this or behind that. "Well, we've got more weed here." "Not taking any more." Other people want it clear up to the gunnels. They'll sleep on it. It doesn't matter, all the way to the top.

Q: How would you deal with that? Just give them what they want? Do it their way?

John: It's usually fairly close to what they want but the Colombians might want to throw in extra at the last moment. "Try to take some up for my brother, this is free."- that type of thing. And like I said, I'm pretty small time when it comes to the marijuana down there. The largest marijuana down there couldn't have been over twelve or fifteen thousand pounds in one time down in South America on sailboats.

Q: That's a lot of marijuana I agree but I've heard of monster loads of eighty thousand pounds-

John: In freighters. All the time.

Q: We were talking about money and counting money. What was the most money that you ever handled at one time?

John: Probably a million and a half, something like that. Cash in one room, at that time. but you know, it's going out as fast as it's here. It's going out.

Q: Did you ever figure out a dollar value for the product that you imported into the U.S.?

John: Total of everything I imported in my life? Geez, I think I figured it out to be like 100 million. But what was realized or what went through my hands are two totally different.

Q: What went through your hands then?

John: Well at different points there were different people. There was ten million dollars worth of marijuana go up to Boston and I'm given like I said \$100,000 for making the introduction. So what was the value of the product that I assisted in and was a part of.

Q: I meant the ones that you were-

John: Kingpinnish over? So I guess that would be the nine thousand pounds of Colombian, maybe \$200 a pound at that time, what's that? One million-eight, a couple million on that one. There was – I would say that that would be-

[END TAPE SIX, SIDE ONE; BEGIN TAPE SIX, SIDE TWO.]

--just kind of retired, get away from it because the Caribbean was getting real small. And then it was my money and these two other guys' insistence that we go to Japan and check out this *Alysse Maru*. That's what we did and we bought that. I had more than a major share, more than a major stake in the *Alysse Maru*.

Q: Were you more or less comfortably retired at that time?

John: Comfortably retired? No. I never had over a million for me, ever. I had I think six hundred grand in the accounts in Macao and Hong Kong but I couldn't get to them. They eventually went to attorneys and the wife, government stealing.

[PAUSE]

--and all the people in Lebanon.

Q: Yes, you're the guy with all the obligations.

John: All the obligations. And the ship is a constant drain, constant battle. "Oh, we need more for the ship." "Well, I just gave you two hundred fifty grand for the ship. How much do you need?" Captain at that time was at two hundred fifty grand share, at the end. The off loaders wanted something like three million for that night of working. There were twenty people and trucks and big things happening on that night. That's what they wanted. Then there was the off-load boat. They wanted several million. But they went all the way to the Azores- big time off load boat. Then there were smaller boats that came out of that boat. (whispers) –lots of different- pay off schemes. (Normal voice) And most of the times people would just take product.

[END OF INTERVIEW]



SONS OF THE MAYFLOWER is an hour long weekly documentary "reality show" starring 60 year old Edward Brewster narrating his youthful worldwide adventures as he relives them 30 years later. Ed takes the viewer through a bit of character development, reminiscing about his idyllic childhood in small town USA. Growing up near the summer home of Bill Gates on the Olympic Peninsula... Photos and videos will enlarge the magnificence of this beautiful land as well as the many countries that Ed traveled to during his early years.

"in the north-west of Washington State, the Olympic National Park is renowned for the diversity of its ecosystems. Glacier-clad peaks interspersed with extensive alpine meadows are surrounded by an extensive old growth forest, among which is the best example of intact and protected temperate rainforest in the Pacific Northwest. Eleven major river systems drain the Olympic mountains, offering some of the best habitat for anadromous fish species in the country. The park also includes 100 km of wilderness coastline, the longest undeveloped coast in the contiguous United States, and is rich in native and endemic animal and plant species, including critical populations of the endangered northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet and bull trout. ...". This area is recognized as one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites because it "contains the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation." UNESCO.

But enough of trees and boundless diversity and beauty, this all American boy was bored. Coming from one of the sixth ruralist counties in the nation he did as many of his neighbors did, he got out of there. First stop, Europe. There he met the wild ones who excited him with tales of the road to Katmandu and all the adventures they had along the way. With a bit of investment money from a local manufacturer, Ed bought a van and outfitted for sleep for the long trip to Katmandu, Nepal. It was now 1968.

Upon returning with his treasures from the orient, our friend suffers acute cultural shock.

Mexico has helped, and so did the brujas of Hautla in the mountains of Oaxaca. Ed flips a coin...stay or return? The States can now be faced, he thinks, and the coin toss points northward. He goes back to university to learn that what is taught is not what is. "India is not like that, I've just returned" he screams to an auditorium of 800 students and a teacher's assistant who hasn't seen the meadows of the Olympic Mountains let alone the Himalayas or the River Ganges.

Another investment and he is back on the road, hopefully to make the trip through the trail in the mountains that barely leads one to China through Afghanistan. China had just been opened by Nixon and the Bloomindales, but they still didn't want anyone without designs for large scale sweatshops or a delegation. "I am a delegation of one" He begged blank-faced Chinese embassy personnel. Rejected? not at all, he is just diverted down different roads. He tries for visas to cross North Africa, but one must put their car on a train to enter Egypt from Libya. Ed heads back across Europe taking a route leading to Baalbeck at the head of the Beckah valley. He arrives Christmas Eve at the Temple of Bacchus. There he stays until Spring, when it is time to return home with his booty.

By now traveling is must, the drug of choice for this youngster. South America? He had confided that he would eventually go south, but knew that that venture would take perhaps five years of his life. He goes there to explore, to adventure and to bring back knowledge for his manufacturing friend. He ends up staying nearly five years. With another bit of investment, he takes up an Andean life in Bogotá. Adventuring puts him on the run and he officially goes underground. Completely dropped from the radar screens of INTERPOL and US Customs, he is now free to travel as any other on the plane. At this point his story goes worldwide, not just Beirut, Baalbeck, Bogotá, and Barranquilla. Now he hits his stride with Bahrain, Burma and Bangkok added to his x'ed out atlas.

But not to stray, Edward Brewster's story, the one to be recreated today, began in Kure, Japan. Here a US MSC was purchased from the United States Government for \$32,000 in fine working condition. It had just completed the treaty service with Japan who used her for a training vessel. The Navy's yacht, this 144 foot specimen of fine design had not an ounce of magnetic material aboard. Nautical types can appreciate the twin 500 pound Danforth anchors made of bronze, the power plants of aluminum and the generator plants of stainless. All wood, mahogany, held to oak ribs by over 30,000 evadure lag bolts, this ship could travel up to 17 knots per hour.

The first cruise was to rendezvous with the Cousteau Institute in what they described as the least touched place on the face of the planet. The minesweeper, with its crew of 14, took on Jean Michel's, crew of 60 adventurers at Wewak and took them to the Bismarck Archipelago and the Hermit Islands for months of diving.

Radio contact with the president of the ham operator's organization was established. He patched the connection from his vacation in Nairobi to stateside and the Coast Guard who instructed the acting person in charge to get Alice away. "Keep her safe as negotiations are made for the hostage's release" they are instructed. Alice is then dropped food and water and escorted to Diego Garcia by a US Navy plane. There the crew waits out the international diplomacy and worldwide press reportage about this secret base in the middle of the Indian Ocean that the US had been building for 25 years.

<http://www.mydiegogarcia.com/court.htm>

<http://www.mydiegogarcia.com/history.htm>

So this is the story of the Alice returning to her old adventures and making new ones with many of her original crew still anxious to return to sea. The episodes will explore a new genre of moviemaking. Footage will arrive on a continuous basis via robotically controlled internet video cameras on person and on board. Editing and considerable time delay will allow for the live adventures to conclude stateside before airing on a weekly basis, but meanwhile the past adventures will be shown in a combination of narrative, photos and new and old video to keep the audience hooked into the new adventures.

Production costs can be kept at a minimum.

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| Re-purchase of the Alice: | \$500,000 |
| Outfitting/stores/fuel: | 500,000 |
| Travel for crew: | 200,000 |
| Editing facilities: | 100,000 |
| Incidentals: | 500,000 |
| Total estimate: | \$1,800,000 |



