

Interview with Bill Haynes

Interviewer: Tim Miller

August 1, 1996

**Q:** We're just trying to find out what life was like, and I am interested in what would've been your early years here, especially. You came here when you were 16 -- I'd be curious to know something about your story. Did you come here with your parents?

**A:** No. My father -- I'm the youngest of 6 kids, and my father was a military officer. The last place he was stationed was in Colorado Springs. In 1968, I was a junior in high school. I wasn't really enjoying being in high school. It was a real conservative school in Colorado Springs, and that was the year that my father was getting ready to retire, at the end of his service in the military. And all my brothers and sisters had already left home. My brother Dallas was working up in New York, for a man named Mark Subra [?]. That spring I went up during the Easter break, I went to Chicago where Mark was doing some sculpture pieces and stayed with him and my brother Dallas and his companion. That was really an eye-opening experience for me, being in the junk yards of Indiana and East Chicago, making these monumental sculpture, or helping out. I was just pretty much a young kid, gopher kind of guy there. But then that summer -- I pretty much wasn't going to go to high school anymore. So I actually had all my credits that I needed to graduate, done by the end of my junior year. The high school, I think, was as happy to see me not be there for my senior year as I was. I sure wasn't going to be there. My brother came out from New York. I had really long hair, rebellious. He came --

**Q:** When was this?

**A:** 1968.

**Q:** That's when you were 16?

**A:** Yeah. And he was going to go on to California and build a tree house in the redwoods, and move away from New York. He and his companion, Jesse, came through, and I actually had an accident, I fell out of the back of a truck and cut my face up pretty bad. So they were there -- actually, I fell out of his truck. I was young, hard time for me, I really wanted to get away. Anyhow, he ran into Tony Megar [?], who he knew from the Park Place Gallery, and Dean. Dean had been living down in New Trinidad, and Tony was up in Denver. Since Dallas at that time was doing steel rigging, for artists, mostly, he hooked up with Tony and Dean, and they were putting up together this sculpture park in Burns Park in Denver. I guess around then, Dean and Peter Rabbit had gotten together with Rick Klein, and to get some funding for Libre. I'm not sure exactly who was one of the -- if it was the Burns Park people or one of the arts foundation people in Denver, had some money also to buy the land for Libre. But it was mostly Rick's money.

**Q:** Yeah, Rick's the one I've always heard.

**A:** Yeah, there was some other grant that came to through Burn's Park. And also, there was a lot of plywood. It's like the plywood industry was supporting the sculpture project. So Dean and Peter were master scroungers -- Peter Rabbit was actually a true master scrounger. He said, "Oh, we need hundreds and hundreds of sheets of plywood," and of course, they used a few to make the sculpture, and a lot of it came down here to build the domes. So anyway, I went up to Denver, and was there with my brother and Tony and Dean, and helped build the sculptures, and then we all came down here and started building the domes. That was really amazing to me. I was living in a tepee, down at the Pink Adobe. The guy that sold us this land had a funky adobe adjacent to Libre that he was letting us stay while we were

building the houses. So I stayed through October, and then went back to Colorado Springs and lived with some friends who were at college at Colorado College. That spring I enrolled in the community college in Colorado Springs. Then the next summer I had an opportunity to go to Outward Bound, and that was a really positive experience for me. After that I hitch hiked down here, and spent some time here, and then went out to California, and just on the hippie trail. I think that's when I moved to Morning Star. Met some friends who actually got together and went up to Southern Oregon, to Tacilma [?]. They were squatting on a piece of land, I was hanging out with them for awhile, and they eventually bought that land, and they're still a really strong commune there, a place called Meadows. They have a really close, they're brothers and sisters to me. At that time, I could've either stayed with them in their commune, or gotten involved in Libre. I hitch hiked through Canada, all around, and came back through Libre, and went to New Buffalo, I made the circuit for a number of years that way. When I came here, I'd always help out, because there was always a lot of building projects going on. I remember we used to have a communal garden, and we had this whole flatbed truck that had a 14 foot bed on it, it was like a '48 Chevy or GMC truck. It was all made up psychedelic, and we'd all get together to go down to go on manure runs. We went down to this old Chicano sheep ranch on Turkey Creek, down below near Feracida [?], this guy named Montaño. We had some sideboards, so we could really load this big truck up with manure. He had these sheep shelters that were just full of manure. There was so much manure that you had to really bend over to get in there. Like a couple feet of this prime composting shit. So we all show up there, and getting it out of the barns and loading up the truck, and Nick is kind of looking at us in a bemused manner. He had some pig pens up the arrollo from where his rancho was there, old adobe house he lived in, these little sheep barns and these pig pens. And he had this hose, and he was filling up buckets of water with this hose, and then carrying the buckets of water up to water his pigs. And Peter said to him, he said, "Nick, why don't you just get an extra length of hose, you'd save so much time watering your pigs." And Nick looked at him and said, "Oh, what's time to a pig?" Which was -- that was a good one. In those days we had a communal garden. [Unintelligible].

**Q:** Was it pretty focused? Did you eat meals together?

**A:** We used to have community dinners. It seemed like the idea was like once a week on Sunday, and that was sort of once a month. The people at Libre were pretty much anarchistic. The communal garden pretty much fractured pretty quick. We mostly got up to having little gardens around their house where they could control things better. The original idea of Libre was that it wasn't going to be a communal living situation, it was going to be a community of artists. My friends in Oregon, their situation was much, much more communal. They'd buy food. They had a big garden together. They'd all work together. Of course, it was a much smaller group of people that had a similar vision. The people at Libre were all pretty much involved in the arts in way or another, at the beginning. So the egos were pretty strong. So it was good. I had a -- I really just fell in love with this place here. The land is spectacular, the space and beauty, it's amazing. I wanted to -- I was pretty much younger than everybody by at least 4 years. I guess Pat McMan [?] was the next oldest, and she was about 4 years older than me. So I was kind of a young kid on a commune there. So all through all this stuff, all the -- I was always pretty much single. And I was observing the different couples going through their different psychodramas, psychosexual dramas and break ups. I got involved in it a little bit, but it was a lot of stuff going on. The free love and the rock and roll and the drugs and everything was [unintelligible] . . . it was a lot of fun,

but not real -- people were really driven by their desires and all. So that was [unintelligible] . . . interesting lesson.

**Q:** It seems to have been much livelier in that direction then, than it is now. Pretty settled down.

**A:** I was kind of surprised. I built this -- I finally, after having 3 or 4 councils here, to be accepted as a member and having a house site, I finally got this house site here, which turned out to be perfect. It's good that the other places I wanted to build weren't acceptable to the community, because the way it worked out was just right. Each time I was rejected membership, that was always a pretty hard one for me.

**Q:** Sure.

**A:** As it turned out it was the best thing. I just built this little cabin here, and then over the years I've increased it, and built an addition, and then I went to San Francisco, and got legitimate, in the sense of I've got a contractor's license, and I got married to a woman who was living there in San Francisco, and every summer I'd come back here -- this was from '82 to '92 or 3. I got an electrical contractor's license, and a general contractor's license. I was buying tools. Every summer I'd come back here and work out this house and take the resources I was making in San Francisco and put in a septic system and a water cistern, got the house stuccoed and finished the addition. During that time, different people were staying in my houses, as guests of Libre or of me, some, but a lot of people I didn't have people staying there, mostly because it was a construction zone, I really wanted to finish it up. My brother and his wife stayed here one winter just before I came back. They got a house site where Peter Rabbit's house was to be. That's where they are now.

**Q:** Are they are Credo [?]?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** So that's where Peter's house was, up where that trailer is?

**A:** Yeah, actually Peter's house was right where that intersection, where that road is. But that area where the trailer is, is where he used to have a garden. He was out in that area where the intersection is, my driveway and the road up the ridge. Yeah, Peter's house was always a focal point of activity. He was very social. [Unintelligible] . . . he had an open kitchen there, it's really nice to go and hang out there. A lot of the fellowship there. But also it kind of got rowdy, difficult also. [Unintelligible] . . . went through those changes.

**Q:** Did Peter stay up here the whole time up until he got busted? Ten years or something?

**A:** Ten years ago is when he got busted?

**Q:** No, about 10 years from the time he came.

**A:** Yeah.

**Q:** I think he got busted in the late '70's.

**A:** Yeah. He would go on trips in the wintertime. I remember, we all went to Rumkey [?] in the Bahamas together. Used to go down there, this island, a real small one called Rumkey. And there was a place where we could camp out, this old house that had been pretty much completely termite eaten. There was some of the roof left, and the walls were coral stone masonry. So it was like a great place to camp out. It was like the bonus point. We'd fish. Went and spent --we'd been going there for a number of years, and one year I went down there, [unintelligible] . . . great time. We were snorkeling and fishing for food. It was really -- we ate their prickly pears, go out conching and trade fish with the natives on the island for fresh vegetables. And his companion towards the end of, before he got busted, was this woman Annie, and her parents had a piece of property in [unintelligible] Harbor, up near Seattle, Puget Sound. So he spent some time up there. I didn't go there. By that time, I was pretty much estranged from him, because of his arrogance. It was so uncool how he was acting, his activities made it really hard. Because he was -- I feel like Peter always really wanted notoriety -- to be a hero, or to have acknowledgment, to be famous in some way. He really -- and he wasn't a hero, so he thrived on being notorious. And that's -- that kind of guerilla theater that he practiced was fine, as long as you're not breaking the law, but he can really get into just drawing all that attention and energy towards himself, really turned [unintelligible] . . . and ended up pretty tragic for him, I really feel bad for all the things that he had to suffer through.

**Q:** He spent a year in prison, didn't he?

**A:** Yeah, almost. I think they let him out into a halfway house. But it certainly, a good part of the year. And it was Canyon City, it was like max. It wasn't Club Fed or anything.

**Q:** How did Libre cope with that? I mean, basically this place is somewhat anarchical, in a sense. You're all pretty much off doing your own thing, and living your lives. Is there a mechanism where you go too far, you get kicked out or something?

**A:** I'm -- you probably asked that question to other people.

**Q:** I actually haven't -- just talking about this makes me wonder. People have stressed the fact that the structure's pretty loose.

**A:** Basically we have a council that consists of the householders of Libre. The idea of the council is that it's a consensus sort of situation. So if there's no agreement, if somebody wants to do something or the community has some sort of project in mind, or if one person disagrees, then it isn't -- it's not going to happen, theoretically. That's the idea. More specifically, to become a householder, to get membership to Libre, it has to be, everybody has to agree, all of the members. And since there's some people who live here part time, like when I was in San Francisco, I was gone most of the time. I was very careful to maintain my membership while I was gone. The way that I did that was I paid my dues. And I would come back every year and work on this house, and keep in contact with people. The same with Linda. But during that time, there were lots of decisions that the community would make, like the water system or the roads, spending money. They wouldn't call me up and ask me what I thought about that. Sometimes they would, but if somebody wanted to become a member, or they were going to change the bylaws, theoretically then everybody has to agree to that. So, what happened was like the year

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before Peter got busted, I really felt the whole situation was out of control. I didn't like it, I didn't like what was going on, growing the pot here. It made me nervous. I didn't like the fact that around the pot plantation, there was like alarm bells, and people had guns, they were guarding it. The whole thing seemed to me to be really bad. The reason that it got to that point was in the years past, people would have their patches ripped off by the local bandito kids. The whole thing had gotten to the level where it seemed to me that either there was going to be a bust, the following year, or that there was going to be a big rip-off, and somebody was going to get hurt. In a way, I would rather have a bust, than the banditos. I didn't want any of it to happen, I thought the whole thing was stupid. We had a council that fall, after that one year that was so crazed, and people were saying, "This isn't good." I told Peter I felt that this was bad. I thought he was putting everybody in jeopardy with his activities. And nobody was really benefitting from it except for him, in a material way, and even that was - and I didn't want any of the material wealth out of the pot growing. It wasn't what I was here for. I don't believe in buying and selling drugs. That's bad karma. So Peter basically said, "Well, I can't tell you what to do, and you can't tell me what to do. I'm totally responsible, I'll take care of whatever comes down. I've got it under control." It was like a big blow-up kind of a meeting, where everybody was kind of yelling at one another. Kim was saying, "Oh, yeah, we can't tell Peter what to do, and Peter can't tell us what to do, this is true freedom." My hit on anarchy is, anarchy is great, as long as everybody's responsible. If they're selfless and conscientious and responsible, then it's great. But if they're not selfless but selfish, and they're not concerned about everybody else, they're just concerned about their own greed, then that's a whole other story. Then Peter and Annie went off that fall, they went off to Friday [?] Harbor, and I was really torn by the whole situation, because I knew that the next year it was all going to blow up. In my heart, I knew, just by what I was seeing. I even had the thought that, "I could go down to the feed store and buy a bunch of rock salt and salt this patch," so that the pot wouldn't grow there. Then I thought, "No, that's not right. Don't poison the earth." I thought, "I don't have to get my karma involved in Peter's karma." So I didn't do anything. Actually, that spring, I went to San Francisco and actually got really a great carpentry job. I was working for an anesthesiologist who had a house in San Rafael. He wanted some decking, and I just became his handyman carpenter there. Worked through the summer, and there was the dope bust. All of that stuff hit the fan while I was gone. Basically I had just moved away, got a job in the city to make money. It was good for me to do that, because I was able to buy more tools, and get myself together. But it really hurt to hear what went down. But I was glad that nobody was physically hurt. I was glad that I hadn't participated in it. It was just -- It was way out of bounds. So Peter, when the bust happened, the story was that he had the -- he was warned, he was coming, but he didn't do anything about it except for -- he had a really great library, and he had a law book that was open to the statute on his kitchen table when the police came. It was the statute that he was eventually sent to prison for, is what I heard. But he didn't get apprehended at that moment, he ran into the woods, and then split and went to Mexico. The people here felt that instead of facing up, like he said, and take care of whatever came down and be responsible, he just split. So the people here were very irate with him. He also had the files to Libre, and the corporate papers. When he split, some of the people here seized those papers and --

**Q:** --I was going to say, he wouldn't have taken them with them.

**A:** No. And apparently -- I can't verify this as truth or not -- but the story goes, what I heard from Dean and Linda and I don't really doubt it, was that he and Annie had forged some papers and changed -- were trying to take control of the community for themselves. Made themselves the president and the vice president. I think they might have gotten rid of a whole bunch of the board of directors, and had been doing this thing. The funny thing about it was that they made Dean and Linda officers also, who were, both of those guys were really anti-pot -- they were just serious artists, not potheads. In a way it was kind of strange that they had chosen those two as the other people that were controlling the community. But it was like a whole bunch of weirdness that was going around the papers. I'm not sure exactly what it all was. But people were really irate about it all. I had come back from California at that time, late summer, and I spent some time here. It evolved that -- we decided that we didn't want Peter here anymore. He wasn't really in a position to fight it. Especially since we took down his house.

**Q:** This was while he was gone, right?

**A:** Well, see he had decided to turn himself in and stand up for trial in Walsenburg [?]. He had a meeting -- he came up with Bill Girsh [?], who lived down at Magic Tortoise, at [unintelligible] Mountain. He's an artist down there, and a communal brother. Before that time, we had gone into Peter's house and dismantled his kitchen and took everything out of the two wings and the bedroom, and packed it all into the third wing of his zone. We basically got all this stuff, and put it into one wing of the zone, packed it all up -- I'm sure he felt we were destroying it -- so he couldn't just move back into his kitchen. It was like we disabled his house. And so it wasn't someplace where he could just move right back in. The feeling was if he got back in here, it would be really hard for us to get him out. It was very reactionary kind of situation, the communal mind, it was really an upsetting, reactionary. I think we were acting way over what we needed to be doing. But considering how Peter was so volatile in the past, in not being sensitive to where he was at that moment, it seemed like it was the only thing we could do. By that time, he was really beaten down by the whole trip. In his life, it got worse, as far as I can see. So he came and had this meeting with us, and Bill Girsh was to actually provide security for Peter, because, to try to keep it cool. It was basically, everybody said no to Peter and Annie. And he was really upset about how all his stuff had been shuffled around in the house. He took a bunch of stuff with him to New Mexico. Then the next day, the -- oh, we had had the electricity turned off there too, the meter pulled. The next day, the electric company came up. The line man, we know him, he's like our neighbor. They came up, and I guess it was Jim and Dean saw him and said, "Hey, what's going on." "Well, I came to plug back Peter Rabbit's meter." And that just set Dean and Jim off, because they figured that Peter was going to move back in, that he had called and was going to move right back in, and he was going to disregard what we had just decided in the meeting before. We went around, and everybody said no to Peter. "You can't live here anymore, you've blown it in a big way. We don't want you here." So that completely enraged Dean and Jim. And so they destroyed one of the wings of the zone. It was all rotted, it was -- the building construction of the original domes was real funky. It just had wood in the ground, and so that -- it came down pretty easily. So that got knocked down, and I think Peter came right after that and saw what had happened, and quick got the rest of his stuff out of there, and then the rest of the dome came down completely after that. It was really a traumatic time. And then he had his trial, and had a plea bargain arrangement with the D.A. Everybody that had gotten

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busted that year -- it wasn't just Libre that the police had raided -- they raided all the dope growers in the valley. In a big way. And everybody had gotten off with various fines and probation and stuff. And Peter worked out a similar deal with the D.A., and so he pleaded guilty, and the judge sentenced a year on Canyon City. He said, "I don't care. It's in my power to sentence you, and I'm not going to go with this plea bargain. You pleaded guilty, and I'm going to give you the maximum sentence." I think a lot of that had to do with Peter's, what he was doing while he was living here with us -- getting welfare, food stamps, just his notoriety of being really public about being a bad boy. So the -- the judge was really pissed at him. He looked at Peter as being the main bad influence, I guess. In a sense, Peter had been around for many years. He was in Drop City, and he was actually the first hippie to live up here. We were all up in Burns Park working up there, while Peter was here, living on this land. And there were no other hippies in the valley, he was the first one into this canyon. So anyhow, he got slammed. And his son died, it was totally tragic, it really made me feel bad.

**Q:** Was that here?

**A:** No, it was in Texas. His son got meningitis. His older son died. He actually lost both of his sons. The older son had died that fall that we had the meeting. Or, in that summer that that meeting happened, where he said that he was going to be responsible for anything that happened, and then when it happened, he ran away, but anyhow, his son John had died that year, and he was buried up right over there. That was like -- in my way, the way I was seeing it, it was just another indication that the whole trip was falling apart. It was real tragic. I just really didn't know what to do, other than tell him how I felt. Since there was no -- he wouldn't [unintelligible] to any of that stuff, went away.

**Q:** Now I gathered from talking to other people that time has kind of healed the wounds to some degree. Dean speaks of Peter more positively than I would expect. When I saw Jim a couple of years ago, I asked him about Peter, and he said, "Well, Peter's got a lot of interesting things going." It sounds like to some extent people are getting along now, at least.

**A:** Yeah. I mean, I saw Peter a couple of years ago. It sort of amazed me, he seemed just the same guy. He's really interested in power, personal power. He's just the same, really. He's older, he's had a lot of tragedy go down. I mean, I love the guy. I'm really sad that -- I miss him. Because it was like we had a lot of -- it was really great to hang out there and have coffee and pancakes in the morning at his place, help him put up cherries. He was always bringing in food and canning and stuff. So you stop by and have coffee and drink a beer, and just sit there and help split peaches and whatever. I miss that, because it was really nice. But it's just -- it just was, he wasn't being responsible. It was excessive. He's a macho guy. He wants to be in control of his fief [?]. It was difficult with him when he was here too, because he was using a lot of water for his gardens and his crops. He grew lots of different things, and it was his, the way he would deal with that was he would just turn people off, so that he could have what he needed. There wasn't that kind of sensitivity. And on the other hand, I think he was rationalizing it by being so open and sharing in his kitchen. I think that's how he was working in his mind. He's like involved in the poetry in Taos [?], and I think he's doing pretty good. Like all of us, he's getting older.

**Q:** Yeah, he's well onto his 60's, I think. He's older than Dean even. About the same anyway.

**A:** Dean's 62 now?

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**Q:** Dean's 62 or 63. Peter seemed to be older.

**A:** I think he's a year or two younger. But then he got shot down on the Taos reservation. He got shot by a young Indian boy who was hunting and thought Peter was a deer. He got shot in the leg and was seriously wounded. He almost died. The kid flipped out, he really felt bad that he shot this person. So they got him to the hospital, he lost a lot of blood, they saved his life, but that really set him back. He's got a lot of problems. I don't know. It's like this kind of drama. So when I went to -- after all of that happened, and it sort of settled down, and then a couple of years went by, and I was still going to the city for shorter periods of time, a couple months here and there to get carpentry jobs to get money to live on here, then when I moved to San Francisco, I'd come back every year. After being there for 10 years, I wasn't really liking it anymore. I really was yearning to come back here and live. I had gotten this house finished to the point where it would be comfortable with the bathroom and all of that stuff. My wife, I had always wanted to have kids, and raise them up in the Gardener [?] school, and when it's time for them to go to high school maybe, then move back to the city. Caroline was, "Oh, I'm not ready to have kids." This was when we first got married. Then as the years went by, I realized that she wasn't really interested in having kids. When we would come out here in the summer, or around Christmas time, her whole face relaxed and had a really great time, but as soon as we got back to the city, she'd really bad mouthed, "Oh, you don't own that house, there's no security, what will we do for health insurance?" I went, "Well, gee, okay. Just because you have insurance doesn't mean you're going to be healthy." So I was really tired of being in the city. And it was apparent to me that she didn't want to come back here. I was riding my bicycle in Golden Gate park, and I got hit and broke my hand and screwed up my back, and had surgery on my hand. That slowed me down. As soon as I got that cast off, after the surgery, I had gone back to work. The first day I was driving back from work, I got rear ended. And a month later I got rear ended again. So I had these three automotive accidents, and it really trashed me. I said, "Caroline, I can't live here anymore." She said, "Well, I'm going to divorce you if you leave." "Well, that's really too bad. See you later." So I left. I moved back up here, and I ended up having to go back to San Francisco and have spinal surgery in my neck to repair the damage from the rear endings. I got insurance money, and paid of the doctors and the lawyers, which took a lot of it, but it gave me enough money to build my studio here, and get a new truck, and set up with making my art here. I can focus on that. Which is really great. So I'm just hanging out here now on my own, doing my art.

**Q:** From what I hear from other people, you're pretty successful at your art. There's a big demand for your stuff.

**A:** Well, it's looking more positive than it was before. I need to pursue it. It's a lot of work marketing. I just recently ran into a designer, an interior designer in Santa Fe, in a really nice store in Canyon Rd. He just really liked my lamps. I have galleries around that like to take them, but it's always on consignment. Then when they sell them, they keep half, and often they don't really let you know that you've sold them, you have to go check. And they say, "Yeah, we sold that." "When are you going to pay me?" "Oh, we'll pay you within 30 days," and you don't get the money for a long time. It's just hard. Dewey [?] in Santa Fe, he just really liked the lamps, he bought a bunch of them. I mean, he just bought them outright, ordered them. I realized what he's doing, he's buying the stuff as material for his art, which is decorating houses for really wealthy people. So he just buys stuff -- it's like me going into the junkyard



to buy materials to make my stuff, or going into art supply to buy watercolors and stuff -- I spend a lot of money buying materials that way, that's what he's doing. He's just buying more materials, his materials happen to be pieces of art or furniture. So it's really good, I've got to get busy and finish up this order he made. He said that he doesn't ever know until the check clears, but he's negotiating to do a restaurant in Santa Monica, wants me to do the lighting in there if he gets that job. That would be really great.

**Q:** For a starving artist in rural Colorado, that seems like a pretty good sign.

**A:** I was a little concerned, but I have a lot of skills from being a contractor. I'm not allowed to do electrical contracting in Colorado, because I don't have the license for it. But there's always stuff to do. For people who have the tools and the skills, you can always keep the wolf at bay. But at this point in my life, after having those accidents -- the neck surgery really saved me, because I was literally losing my grip. I was starting to drop stuff. It was really hard. That's what I do, is work with my hands. But I'm moving to the point now where I know that I only have -- I'm really aware that the one thing that I really feel is true is that this physical body of mine is going to die.

**Q:** Oh yeah?

**A:** Humans have this great ability -- we have the freedom to believe whatever we want. People believe the most amazing things. It's just outrageous. For myself, I look at a lot of things, and I say, "Well. . ." I can have an attitude about something, but what I really believe in, I'm not so sure, I'm kind of agnostic about a lot of things. But one thing I know is that this body's going to die. So the point is that I really hope to be able to use my energy and be the most creative I can. I'd much rather be working on my art than framing some rich person's house. I'd rather do more creative stuff.

**Q:** It's nice to have that though, as a cushion.

**A:** Absolutely. And I'm using it that way. We also -- my friend gathers herbs, and she hired me a couple of times to gather [unintelligible] on the Spanish [?] peaks, and those were the lucrative days. Big bucks. It's \$100 to \$200 for a day's work, picking flowers. It was hard work -- stoop labor. It was really pleasant, because building the lamps and everything is totally industrial. You have this full on head gear, ear phones and goggles, coveralls and steel toed shoes, gloves and all that. And then to go out and pick flowers to make some money is really pleasant.

**Q:** So you want to stay here forever?

**A:** Yeah. I think so. I love travelling. All during those years -- I went to South America before I built this house. Dean was down in Ecuador visiting for awhile, then he came back, and travelled around Ecuador. When I came back from there is when I built the house. 1973 or 4. In '78, I went to Asia, into China, on a tour. That was really great, because that was right at the beginning when China opened up. [tape ends] . . . wonderful. At the time [unintelligible] Hong Kong and Japan. I had worked in New York for about 3 months with my brother to get the money together to go on that trip. I love to travel. I figure, at some point, I'd like to have a companion up here. That was the point about it, is that, like moving back from San Francisco, coming back here, I sort of kept in my mind, thinking, "Oh it will be like the old days." Like lots of people coming through, and I'll be able to have relationships, stuff happening, we

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used to have a cabaret and all. And I got here, and it was really, really quiet up here. It's amazing, just in terms of the activities. I mean, we used to have Saturday night dances in town, and all that stuff is like, really low-key. It's pretty neat, though, because there's like a bunch of younger kids, who have got a lot of good energy. Some of the kids are from the commune, other kids are just like in their 20's, and believe in living in the country, sort of the hippie idea, whatever that is. Counterculture guise. So that really makes me feel good to see that, there's like another generation that's got a lot of energy and has a lot of the ideals that we had when we started this place. I see that as good. The old days, like when the Black Bear caravan came through, there was a lot going on. Now it's pretty quiet.

**Q:** Yeah, not too many people passing through, huh? I've been here twice, now, and [unintelligible] . . .

**A:** Yeah. In the summertime it's more happening. Wintertime, it gets really quiet here. It's neat, too, for me, because it's really helpful for me to figure out a bunch of stuff for myself. Living in the city, and watching -- we had cable TV there, and I think that was just a really horrible thing. I know that it really meant that my relationship with Caroline was sorely crippled, because of the television watching. It's really a horrible narcotic as far as I can see.

**Q:** I'm raising my children television-free. It's one of the best parenting things I've ever done.

**A:** Yeah. And divorce -- she took the TV and the VCR, and she let me have the stereo and the CD changer, and I said, "Fine." That's good, you know.

**Q:** Let me ask you just one question -- this is something Peter Rabbit told me -- the last time I had a serious conversation with him, I think was nine years ago, '87, when he was in Lawrence. We sat down for a cup of coffee and talked about stuff. He told me a story -- I'm never sure when he's just telling stories, and when he's telling me facts. He's got a real ability to embellish. So I'm just curious if this is true or not. Remember Steven Gaskin and the Farm in Tennessee and the caravan that came up? Peter told me that they wanted to come here, or at least there was fear that they wanted to come here. And Libre actually, for probably the only time in its history, went down and locked and guarded the gate to keep them out. Do you remember that?

**A:** No.

**Q:** It didn't quite ring true with the other things I had heard about Libre. I just wasn't sure.

**A:** No, I remember Peter chasing the building inspector off. I remember a couple of FBI agents getting chased off. The FBI came around thinking that Patty Hearst was up here. They checked us out. As a matter of fact, a couple agents came out -- that was funny, they took off, and they were going down the road in reverse, really fast.

**Q:** What were they scared of?

**A:** I think Peter was armed at that moment. The way he handled things was not the way I -- not my style at all. But then this other guy showed up, who, he was a really funny guy. He was obviously some sort of undercover agent, and he stayed parked in the parking lot there for a while. I think Juan or Peggy, I think they were scoping on him to see if they could get a little nooky or something, I wasn't sure. In the meantime, he's like this really uptight guy, scoping things out, but also very uncomfortable.

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We were having a lot of fun with him, in fact. But Patty Hearst never came here. At one point, some Weather Men came. It was like way early. They wanted to do an arms stash, and set up Dallas' [unintelligible] as a bunker. We sent them back, said, "No, no, we don't need that."

**Q:** Would be a dramatic change in the history of this place.

**A:** If we had a fire fight here?

**Q:** Or just even having that - trouble would've been guaranteed.

**A:** That was actually a curious thing, because I was real political -- there was that schism between the -- I went to that one semester of college in Colorado Springs in 1969. Then the following springs semester I did a semester of college in Washington State University, where my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, was teaching. That was the year of Kent State -- I was totally radical, we were on strike on the whole time. A lot of stuff was going on at that point. But after that semester ended, it ended in strike, they pretty much shut down the university, then I was hitching around. That's when I went back to Tacilma [?] to visit my friends here, and by that time they had gotten an arrangement with the guy that owned that land, and they were squatting on it to buy it, and I spent time with them and all. But it changed, it was like there was the hippies, and then there were the political radicals. It was 2 different things going on. And then within the hippies, as far as I was concerned, there was the agricultural, back-to-the-land people, which was epitomized by my friends in the Meadows. Their scene now is just incredible, it's such a beautiful place. The gardens they have are just amazing. Or, being here, with the artists. To me it was clear that I wanted to -- my creativity was in doing art. I wanted to be hooked up to a grid. I'm interested in using power tools, and being creative -- but using the resources that are available. Whereas other people are really focused on farming. Like Steve Gaskin -- well that would be another sub-group, the people that were into religious or spiritual things. So I think a real positive thing about Libre, in a way, was that we never did have any head man or woman here. It was always autonomous households. Although Peter was like acting like he was, and Dean definitely is the elder here, but he has no aspirations to be the boss or anything -- that's the last thing that he has in his mind. Which in a sense, really gives him a lot of moral authority. But he doesn't wield it in any way, he's just a really humble guy. Whereas Peter was a little different, with his personality. And it didn't work out for him here. And the fact that -- since none of us own our houses here, we just sort of own the key to the house, in the sense of like, I control this house --

**Q:** --You [unintelligible] on the land under it, right?

**A:** No.

**Q:** So it's not really yours in a deed and title sense.

**A:** No, not at all. So people who live here, and have put all this energy into it over the years, since there was no easy way out, like I couldn't just, say I had 35 acres here, I couldn't just put it on the market and sell it to somebody. Since I can't do that, it's meant that, if you're going to leave the community, you pretty much leave it all behind. So it's maintained its stability here, in a way. On the other hand, I sometimes feel that -- well, I've thought, but I don't know how true it is, is that it's sort of -- it's very cloistered up here. Actually, the people that are living here are all really, have adapted really well to

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having different ways to make money, like Leon does his carpentry work, his construction, and they have their horses in the stable. And Jim does his art, but mostly he makes money by repairing automobiles. You know, just providing service to people in that way. It's certainly cheap to live here. My dues are \$120 a year. And that's it. I have to pay my electric bill and all of the food costs and all that, but as far as rent or mortgage or anything like that, it's just \$120 a year. And sometimes we do a special assessment to buy a new pump for the well or something. But it's very cheap to live here, especially now that I've got the house finished, and I don't have any mortgage on it or anything. That's another thing, since I don't own this house, I could never put a mortgage on it. So in a lot of ways, that kind of protects the land as a unit itself. It drove Caroline crazy. She couldn't grok how that could be a positive thing. To her it was all a negative thing. As far as I can tell. It continues along. It will be really interesting to see what happens with the . . . how the houses are . . . going to -- what's going to happen to the houses when people die. That's one of the issues now, the way it's set up is, if there's no longer a house holder, then the community, the house reverts to the community. Then anybody can petition the community to become the house holder for that house. And if everyone agreed, then that person would be a member, and they would be the new householder. They would have the responsibilities of paying their dues and maintaining the house. But some people feel like, "Well, my children should have my house." That there should be something like that. The way it's set up now, is that, say Dean was to no longer live here, say Dean was to die. His dome and his studio would then be Libre's, and if his son wanted to take it over and be the householder, well the way it is now, he would have to come to the community and say, "I want Dean's house." I'm pretty certain that he would be accepted. But I think the people would want him to have a commitment that he was going to live here and use it, rather than be doing something else. This is all pipe dream in a way, but it's sort of like, he's a young man now, he's in New York City, learning the saxophone, and what would he be doing up here at this point in his life. It's sort of like me when I came and wanted to have my first counsels here, and people kind of looked at me and said, "No, you need to go out there and do things out in the real world for awhile, and then come back in a couple of years, and then you'll find a spot." How all of it unfolds in the future, will be interesting to see. I feel good about the way it's set up. I think that if any of the kids wanted to move back here and live here, that would really be great. But I think that it would be really good for them to have to go through that same process of being accepted by everybody, and to take the house that way. That's down the road. As it stands now, the way I see it is that -- and there's been a little bit of precedent for this -- is that it would be possible, if I wanted to give up my membership at Libre, say I decided I didn't want to live here anymore, which I personally can't imagine, because it's really beautiful, and this is my major work of art, is this house. But say I decided that I didn't want to live here anymore. It would be possible for me to find somebody who wanted to, in a sense, buy the key to my house, and the way that would work would be, say you decided you wanted to live here, and I decided I didn't want to live here, I could in fact rent my house to you. I'd have to go to the council and say that you wanted to be a guest at Libre, and that I was going to move somewhere and do my thing, and you were going to stay in the house. And then during that year, we wouldn't say anything about you wanting to be a member, or I wouldn't say anything about me wanting to resign my membership, it would sort of be like a trial run. And during that period of time, you would do all the political things to become friends with everybody here, like be involved in the community, and make sure that everybody felt that you were an

asset to the community. Then say, after a year or so, we could come to the council and say, "Listen, I've decided to give up my membership," and you want to be the new member, and you're going to take over my household, and does anybody have any problems with that. We'd have to do some politicking out front. And then between us, we could have a monetary exchange, where you would give me something in exchange for me giving up my membership. Although none of that is codified in the bylaws, it's sort of worked that way in a couple of instances. That would be one way that a person here could get something out of what they've put in, by giving up their membership in a controlled manner to a specific person who is acceptable to everybody else. Like I say, that's not my idea of what I want to do. That happened in a divorce situation here, where Muffin and Tony Megar [?], they were cohousholders, and she basically said, "Listen Tony, I'll give you a bunch of money if you bow out," and he said, "Okay." So they came to the community, and Tony said, "I'm bowing out." And Muffin said, "I'm going to be the sole householder," and everybody said, "Okay." That's what happened. I don't know what she gave him, but I'm pretty certain that's what went down, a settlement between the two of them. They weren't legally married, but it was a way they worked it out. And then Brent gave up his house to his sister-in-law, Betsy, in sort of a similar way, although I don't think he got any real money, except for some of the fixtures in the house. His house he gave up was pretty modest, it was a small cabin. He just built an addition on it, put in a bathroom, and some improvements. But it was a controlled transfer -- he gave up his membership, and Betsy took it that same moment. Whereas in other instances, people have just left, and it's fallen to the community, and people have petitioned the community for that house. Like the house that Sabilla's [?] in now went through a number of people who were living there, sort of householders or guests of the community. And then Sabilla came back from being in Boston, and she wanted to live here, and she didn't want to live in Kim and her house, that they built together. At that time, that house was free and vacant, and a number of other people wanted to have that house. Since Sabilla still had her membership in Libre from being Kim's wife, and they had their house together, she'd maintained their membership. I think that was the main reason why the community gave her that house, as hers. So that she could be a householder and a member. Because of their divorce. So things kind of work out that way.

**Q:** Anything else you want to say? Any grand tales? I'm really looking for amazing anecdotes.

**A:** There was the story of the 4 flat tires, but that's really long. The first summer we were here, we were going down the Simmeron [?], to a lumber mill down there, to buy the lumber for the domes. And Peter had this panel truck, like a Chevy panel truck with a really long bed to it, it was like one of these really long, one ton panel trucks. It actually was an old school bus, but it was a panel truck, not a school bus type, you know. And Dean had his truck, and Tony Megar had his truck. And we went down there on a Saturday, and we all drove down in a caravan. It was like one of those summer rainfall monsoon seasons, where you could see the thunderstorms and you drive through it. We went over Raton [?] Pass, and down to Simmeron, New Mexico. Peter had been going there for years to buy lumber there. It was a real cheap, funky lumber mill. I guess when he was at Drop City, he knew these guys. So they had 2x4's, and they had culls [?], which were \$10 for 1,000 board feet. And then they had #4's, which was as step up from culls. Since we went on the weekend, and we knew the guy, the guy would give us #4's for the price of culls. So we get there --

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**Q:** --\$10 for 1,000 feet is real cheap! That's amazing! That's a penny a foot, right?

**A:** Yeah, it was cheap wood. Of course, the culls were mostly bark. And the #4's, we're not talking about #3's, or even standard or better, we're talking about #4's -- this is not #1's.

**Q:** It's still workable stuff, to some degree.

**A:** Well, Dean's dome is standing. Barely. Keeps adding tar. So we go down there, and I'm just like this young hungry 16 year old, I'm always hungry. So we get down there, and Peter says, "Okay, load this lumber." So he's got me loading the lumber. So I'm starting to load it, and he comes back and says, "No wait a minute, stop." So I stopped. He said, "What you do is you take the spare tire and the jack and the lug wrench, and you put it all over here on the side. Then you put the boards in. When you get it all loaded up, you put the jack and the spare tire and the lug wrench on top of the load." I said, "Oh, okay, that makes sense." So I load all this lumber, and it was green lumber, and it was also wet, because it had been rained on, so it was heavy boards. We all loaded up. Peter and Tony get their trucks loaded up. Peter gives the guy a joint, whatever he was doing over there with the foreman. He had his ways. So we get in the trucks, and we're cruising. We get to the top of Raton Pass, and we're going down, and Peter and I were at the front of the caravan. And the state troopers pull us over. So we pull over, and Peter hops out of the truck really fast, goes back and talks to the state trooper. I think it was we didn't have a break light. Or maybe it was the tail pipe was dragging. One or the other. So Peter said, "Oh, yeah, we'll fix it." He knew the guy, because the state trooper would always be coming to Drop City looking for runaways and stuff. So Peter gets out of getting a ticket. In the meantime, Dean and Tony see us pulled over, "Oh, I'm not going to get pulled over, because they'll see that we don't have an inspection," so they went on. So we were at the last of the line. We were driving along, we go through another rainstorm, we get around Aggilaré [?] and Ludlow [?], and there was something in the road, because there was another car that had a flat tire, and we got about a quarter of a mile past them, and we got this flat tire on the left rear. So we pull over to the side, and I say, "Oh, now I see why we put the jack the tire on top of the load." So we jacked up the truck, and put on this spare tire, which was totally bald. Piece of garbage tire. And we get it off the jack, and we're driving, we go about 10 miles further, and we get pulled over by the state patrol again. I think this time it was the tail lights weren't working, and it was getting around dusk. He said, "Oh yeah, we're talking care of it, I talked to Bob," whatever the other state patrol guy was. I mean, it was a different thing, but the guy didn't give us a ticket again. So we get into Walsenburg [?], and it's dark. In those days, all the kids in Walsenburg were riding bicycles. They were like low riders, but they were on bicycles. And we get right in front of Unfug's [?] Hardware store there, and we have a flat tire. It's like a blow-out -- it was the spare we put on the left rear. I was getting really hungry at this time. I really wanted to go to Tessa's [?] Drive In and get a chili burger and stuffed sopapea, stuff like that. But we have this flat tire, so we get out, we jack up the tire, and we get the truck jacked up, and the jack breaks up in the air. I took the original tire, and took it across the railroad tracks, and they busted it open, and they looked at it, said "This tire's shot," because the cord was cut. Then Peter brought over the other tire that was on the truck, they busted that one open -- this tire's shot. So Peter said, "Well, put a boot in anyhow, patch the inner tube, take the best one, fix it. So we get it fixed up. In the meantime, the kids are riding their bicycles, "Ancient hippies!" But they were laughing. It was like this verbal abuse, but in a good-natured way. We were pretty outrageous -- we were hippies, and we were in this town where they had hardly seen anything like that.

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They knew about Drop City, but that was like the next county over. Of course, everybody knew that the hippies had bought land up on Turkey Creek. Anyhow, we get the tire on, one of them, and we just drove off the jack, we just pushed the truck over off of the jack. And I was really hot to get up to Tessa's and get my food. Get up there, and they had closed. It was really a bummer. So we go to Danny's, and the Shamrock Gas station. I think it was Shelly, I can't remember what his name was. She was great. She was this wonderful woman, and her husband was this alcoholic, real rough-neck worker. But they were always really friendly to us, they really liked us a lot. They had this liquor store. We go in there and we buy some soda pop and bags of peanuts. And Walter was there, and this guy who we called the Hunchback. Walter had the sweets on Janey, it was Janey and Danny. And Walter -- he was like this really aristocratic guy from Lithuania, and -- they were Slovenian, Walsenburg had a huge ethnic mix from the coal fields, when Rockefeller had [unintelligible], there was the coal fields here, and they were bringing all these different people off the boat. The Coal Field Massacre, the Ludlow Massacre, and all of that, the miners -- so Walsenburg had this real ethnic mix. And so anyhow, we were there, and we got peanuts and candy bars and pop and beer, and got back in the truck, and made it down to the Phillip's 66 station, where the turnoff to Highway 69 is, and we were just making corner there, and the tire goes flat again. So we pull in the Phillips 66, and that's where the police hang out. And those guys were -- as groovy and open as Janey was at the Shamrock, the Phillip's 66 was hostile to hippies. So we pull in there, and they say both of these tires are garbage. We'll sell you a new tire. We said, "No, we can't afford a new tire." And so he has them fix the better of the two again. Of course, they have their lifts and everything. So they fix the tire again, and put us on the road, and we're getting out, we're going on 69, and it's really dark, it's raining, there's no moon, it's pitch black, and we get out there near these mines out there, about 8 or 10 miles out of town, and we have our 4th flat tire. So we pull off the side of the road. All we really wanted to do was get home. It was late at night. We had this load of lumber, that wasn't worth hardly anything, a broken jack, and a trashed spare tire. So we're sitting there, and we see this car coming from Walsenburg in the distance, coming sort of over the hills and stuff. So Peter starts flashing the lights, and the van had pretty big lights from when it used to be a school bus. There were a lot of blinkers and flashers on it. So he's flashing and blinking, and I'm out there in front of the truck, and this car is coming, and then goes down out of our sight, it didn't come over the hill. Then it comes over the hill, and comes down the hill, and it comes by us, and it was going like 80 or 90 miles an hour. I jump out of the way, it was like swerving around the road and going really fast. "What was that?" He came really close to creaming us. So that was outrageous. They didn't stop. So we get back in the van, and we're sitting there, and we see this other car over the hill, Peter starts flashing the lights. This time I'm out waving, but I'm standing so I can jump out of the way, and he comes like this, and like this, goes behind the hill, then comes over the top of the hill, and then it's slowing down, and its headlights hit us. It drops into this low gear, and then it goes by us, and it's accelerating. It looked like a police car, it was going really fast, one of those late model white cars, goes racing by us. They didn't stop. So a little while later -- Highway 69 doesn't have a lot of traffic. So a little while later, there's a car coming from Gardener [?], right, and it stops. And it's a Walsenburg police car. In the back seat of the car there's this guy who's all fucked up, his head's cut, he's got blood on his face. Peter says, "What's going on." The cops say, "Well, we were catching a robber." So the first car was a robber, and the second was a police. And Peter said, "What happened?" And he said, "Well they robbed the Shamrock," the liquor store, they robbed Janey and Danny's liquor store, "and he went down the road and he crashed, and we got him."

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And they said, "But we can't help you guys, this is out of our jurisdiction." We can catch robbers, but we can't help hippies. That's the basic idea. But they said, "We'll send the wrecker from the Phillip's 66 station out to get the car, and we'll tell them you're out here, they'll help you out." And Peter says, "Oh, great, these are the same guys who wanted to sell us some tires." So they take off. So it was late and we were hungry, we just wanted to be home, and it's raining again. We were sitting there, kind of dozing off. The van had been customized, there were like these 2 bucket seats in the front. So I'm sitting in one seat, and Peter's in the other, just dozing off there, and all of a sudden there's a rap on the window, and there's this big face there, "Hey dude, let me in, it's cold, it's raining." So it's like one of the robbers. "You hippies, you can help me out!" He's all wet and fucked up. So I get up on top of the load of lumber, there was just enough space I could lay down on top of this lumber, between me and the roof of the van. So I get down there and stretch out. Of course it was kind of cold, it was like an evaporative cooler. So we're sitting there, and the robber says, "Yeah, we thought you guys were the road block. We all got out, and I'm trying to make it back to Gardener, but it's raining." So we were sitting there. Then the Phillip's 66 truck comes by, and Peter gets out and talks to them, and they tow the robber's car away. I'm up above, and we're sitting there. All we really want to do is go home. So we're hanging out there, and it's getting later. And then this pickup truck comes from Walsenburg. And it pulls up, and Peter unrolls the window. By this time it's raining, and they stop. It's Janey and Danny, they've got guns, and they're looking for the robbers. So they see the two of us in the truck, they see Peter and who they suppose is me in the driver's seat. It was actually the robber, who is like scrunching way down. And Peter hops out of the truck right away, and he goes to talk to them, and they say, "Well, so you guys broke down? We're out looking for the robbers, we're going to get those guys." And Peter says, "Oh, yeah, we saw them go by, the police, and the car got wrecked, and the wrecker just towed the car away." They said, "Well, why don't you guys hop in the truck, we'll give you a ride back up to Libre, give you a ride home." Peter goes, "Oh, no, no, if there are robbers out, we better stay, they might steal our jack and our tires. We've got this valuable load of lumber, they might take our stuff." Because he felt like he needed to protect the robber. These are like our neighbors. I was like up there, they didn't see me, I was like, "Oh, I'd love to go home." So Janey said, "Well, here, we're got some of these elk sausage sandwiches, and here, you guys have a thermos of coffee. Here, take this blanket, you guys look cold." So they drive off, and the robber is eating all the sandwiches, wraps up in the blanket, puts his muddy feet on Peter's lap, and falls asleep. So in the morning, Homer and Wilbur Northrope [?], these old guys that look like the Seven Dwarfs, they have a lumber mill down in Gardener, they come by. It was like at first light. They give the three of us a ride to Gardener. Peter and I walk from Gardener up to Libre in the mud. In those days, there was no gravel on the roads at all. It was like 10 miles, and the mud was intense. So we get home, and it was like, "Whoa, what a night." So a number of years later, maybe 8 or 10 years later, I was down in Ferecida [?], I had a girlfriend that lives down there, it was like a communal kind of scene. And Vincy was living there, Vince Montez. And he was with Pat in those days, and I was there, we were all fixing up this old adobe house that Lynn Ganeas [?] had bought, and there was like a communal scene there. Brook was living there, so I was hanging out with her. We're there, and Vincy's brother -- he comes in. It's like the summertime. And he's hiding out. Because apparently, the police were after them because they had robbed Janey and Danny's liquor store. It's sort of like every generation of the banditos robs Janey and Danny's liquor store. Vincy was really a cool guy. He's a creative jeweler guy, artist, but some of his brothers are fairly never-do-well. So he's in there, and



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Benedict [?], who was the local deputy sheriff, and he's really a good guy, he's like the peace keeper, he's always trying to keep everything cool. He likes the hippies, everything was pretty groovy with Benedict. He was a great peace keeper, a great asset. A number of different guys had been elected sheriff in Walsenburg, and for a bunch of different sheriffs, Benedict stayed the deputy out of Gardener. Anyhow, he shows up with another deputy from Walsenburg, so he's doing this whole -- they pull up in their 4 wheel drive vehicle, and they've got the lights flashing outside the house. He says, "Alright Jim, we know you're in there. Come on out. We'll go easy on you if you come out now." The lights are flashing, and Vincy goes out, "Come on Benedict, lighten up." "Well, we know he's in there, we want him." So Vincy goes back and talks to Jim, and back out to Benedict, and they finally agree to Jim surrendering, and they go off. So I started telling Vincy the story about the four flat tires. And Vincy says, "Well, you know who the robber that got in the car with you was, don't you?" I said, "No, I never really figured that out." He said, "Well, that was Benedict." But, I told Benedict that story years later. Benedict said, "No." Anyhow, Benedict always treated us pretty good. Certainly treated Peter good over the years, since he was deputy. So that's the story of the 4 flat tires.

**Q:** Well maybe we ought to quit at this point.