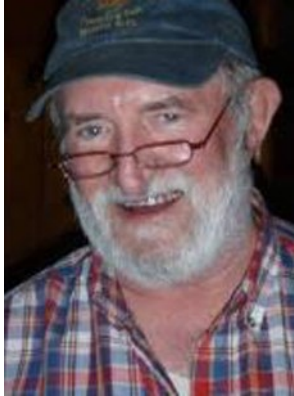




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This interview was conducted with Peter McVey on Sunday, May 15, 2016, at his home in Corbett Lake, British Columbia. The interviewers are Hugh Lewis and Bill Kindler.

HL: What I'm going to do is I'm going to put a pen in Peter's hand, and I'm asking him not to— This is a consent form that says we actually have the authority to interview you, by mutual consent, and so—

PM: I understand.

HL: — we'll put the pen in his hand.

PM: Where do you want me to sign it?

HL: That would be the interviewee, right? I'm imagining that you've never been referred to as an interviewee before.

PM: No, no.

HL: (*laughter*).

PM: So what am I, going to tick it? Oh, sign it there?

HL: Sign it there, right, right on that line.

PM: This one?

HL: Yes. And that authorizes Bill and myself to grill you —

PM: Good. How many hours do you got to spend (*laughter*)? I've got a million stories, but you know that anyway?

HL: I do.

PM: Yes, that's what Steve Raymond wrote about me, these books here. Have you ever met with McVey oh, he calls me a "blue belt conversationalist" kind of like in Judo, a black belt (*laughter*).

HL: Fantastic.

PM: I tell you what, I loved that.

BK: That's great.

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PM: Like a black belt conversationalist.

BK: Good writer, Steve Raymond.

PM: Oh, I love the guy.

HL: Yes.

PM: He did a lot for me, that guy.

BK: Did he?

PM: Yes, I mean all these books. And I met him when I interviewed for the [Kamloops book?]. It really helps you to— you recording some of this?

HL: Yes, it's recording now.

PM: It really helps you if you— you don't do this intentionally. You know these writers, they need something to write about. They've got to get the right kind of characters because that turns them on, basically, right? So, you know, it was good. So he wrote that Kamloops book to start with.¹

HL: Right, right.

PM: Yes, I'm all through that.

HL: Right.

PM: Then he did the other one, the last one he did there. Yes, great. And he was a good friend of mine. Anyway, he's the kind of fisherman . . . He's a hell of a fisherman, that guy.

I'll tell you a story. I went out there one day. I didn't know it was him. I was out there fishing, dry fly fishing. I had caught two or three fish on the dry fly, wasn't doing worth a sh*t, really. And so, anyway, there's this guy, because, you know, when you're out fishing, it's windy, everybody's got their bleeding hats and glasses, you don't know who's, who really. So this guy come over, and he was just on the, oh, you know, by the end of the kitchen there, puts his angle down. I don't know who he is. Of course he makes three casts. Boom! He's got a fish. I mean, it was unbelievable. He's pulling this bloody trout out of there, like, out of my fish farm. So that night we get in the dining room after I cooked dinner, and I know he's coming, right? Hey, how you doing, Steve? Great, he says, you didn't talk to me when I was on the lake. And I said, Oh really? Where were you? I said, you weren't that son-of-a-bitch sitting next to me catching all these trout? Yes, he said, that was me. And then I sat there all day and caught three, and he caught five in about an hour or 45 minutes. What did you get them on? Well he had a golden shrimp or something he used to fish with.

BK: Yep, yep, yep. Yep, that's his own pattern.

PM: He was good, that guy, and his missus. Yes, he spent a lot of time in Coeur d'Alene actually. That was what was so great about Coeur d'Alene. It's a nice atmosphere. The guys were relaxed around there, it was like a club, really. I wish I could have done it for nothing, because I'd have invited everybody. If I had a million bucks, I would've, yes, come on out, you know, we'll all get drunk and tell lies about fishing. That's sort of what it was like.

¹ Kamloops: an Angler's Study of the Kamloops trout, by Steve Raymond, 1980 Revised Ed., 1994 Revised ed., Frank Amato Publications

BK: Great spot.

HL: How did you get started in fly fishing?

PM: Well, it's not a long story, really. I was a chef, you know. I used to work at— when they first opened Gatwick Airport, in England, which is the auxiliary one to Heathrow —

HL: Yes.

PM: — they built the Gatwick. You probably know that name. So I got a job there as, not the second chef, I can't quite, I was, you know, one of the top guys, not "the" chef. Anyway, it was great. A catering company owned it. They owned London Airport, they didn't own it, but they had the lease on the catering. And they owned this little airport in North Hampton on a grass field —

Did you ever hear of a guy called Douglas Bader, the legless flyer? We had some crazy Englishman there, didn't have any legs, and he flew these bloody Spitfires all over the place. Now he's one of the great English heroes, this guy. He built a restaurant, him and some of his buddies, on this grass airfield that he used to fly out of during the war. So I get this job, that French-Canadian chef and the guy who owned the catering company, he said, Do you think you can — I'm only like 18 years old then or something — he said, Do you think you can handle that job out there? I said, Listen, I can do anything, man. Right.

And it was really funny because it was only about 30 minutes from where my mum is now buried and where she was born. I first used to learn to fish there in a little brook. I took Harry Lemire last time we were over there. I said, Here, mate, come and, I'll show you where I learned how to fish. This ain't fly fishing. This is drowning maggots, right, because that's what we did. And we went over this little bridge, and I said, Harry, there it is. Christ, mate, he says. And it's all filled with garbage cans and chips and crud. He said, You've got to be kidding me. I said, Yes, that's where I spent my childhood in the summer drowning maggots and worms and stuff.

So, anyway, Northampton is the place — they flooded all the farmland, not all the farmland, to create water for brick reservoirs. So in England we've got these reservoirs, right, and Northampton was the place where the best— they had more there than anywhere else. So what they'd do with these reservoirs, they let guys float around in all these sailboats, and they stocked them with trout, and you paid a daily fee to go and fish, pay-fishing. Well, so this is great. I can't fly fish, right? So I'm down, I met this guy, pike fishing, he's talking about pikes. This guy was a wealthy British farmer. He had like most farmers, and then they had a Jag and he had 3.8. Do you remember a 3.8? Inspector Morse, did you ever watch him on the TV? And he had that red Jaguar? That's a 3.8.

HL: Okay.

PM: And Ernie was a rich bastard. He had a 3.8. So I was fishing this pike reservoir on his property one day, and he was fishing on the other side, right? So he come over and he was kind of — he had a bitch of an old lady, and he couldn't wait to get away from her. He loved to bullshit. Hey, mate, how you doing? So I got talking to him. So he said to me, What do you know? You ever think about fly fishing, lad? I said, I see them flies in the shops, but I haven't got a clue what you do with them, right? Well, he said, come on over. This is the winter time, he said, I'll show you how to fly fish on the lawn. So I go over there and of course he's got this big farm. This is a great story. He's got a Hardy bamboo fly rod because he's got nothing but money, and he's a hell of a caster. I got really lucky. You know, I stood there with a guy who could put 90 feet of line out, and I didn't get any bad habits. He kind of beat on me there, and I got it down pretty fast. So that's one reason I'm not a bad caster, right?

HL: Right.

So anyway, then I got crazy about shooting shotguns. So this Jewish guy, he sold me all the groceries in this Douglas Bader restaurant which I worked, it was just about a mile away from this place where Ernie lived. So, I said, Jesus, you've got a lot of pigeons around here, Ernie. He said, yes, you want to shoot some pigeons, mate?

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He said, I don't want you shooting the pheasants. You've got to leave them alone. I said, Fine. So the guy who used to give me the meat, he had a shotgun. Well, he's handled these things. So I asked him if I could borrow it. Mr. Vineager his name was, he was a great guy. So there I am, so I'm standing in this goddamn bush, you know, bang, bang, bang! And you know, I'd go there a couple afternoons a week because that's what you did because I worked in the nighttime all the time.

There was always this grubby, old, Mini Minor truck sitting there, you know. I didn't know who it belonged to. It wasn't Ernie's because Ernie wouldn't have a truck like that, he's got money. So one day I go out there and [there is] this short little son-of-a-bitch with this beautiful black Labrador, so I go out and say, Hi, how you doing? And he really, didn't say hardly anything to me, right? He said Hi, and then he took off. And a couple weeks go by, and he's there again, so I got to chatting to him, and I said, Geez, I love that dog you got. I said, I run the restaurant up the road and I've got all kinds of scraps and bones and shit. I'll bring some down next time I see you. So I struck an acquaintance with this guy, and his name was Cyril Lynnwood. I've got a picture of him here somewhere, I don't know. And it turns out he's the best fisherman in England. He wins all of the prizes. You know the *News of the World* newspaper? Every year there's a competition in there, and for four years in a row he won it, fishing for sea trout in Wales. And he lives right in the middle of England. You can't get further away from a sea trout river than—we don't have sea trout in Northampton, right?

Yes, so this poor bastard, he had five daughters. He lived in a council house, and he was a floor layer, like when he was working. He was poor as hell, you know, a great guy. Come on around man, he said, I'll show you how to tie flies. I'd never done that, tying flies. So, you know, he took me in as a son, like. And so we fished together, and god, he was fantastic. He showed me how to tie the flies. We used to fish with bare hooks with peacock herl on them, we used to call them "footballers." And he'd never shown anybody these flies. He was an arrogant little bastard actually. We used to cue up around the edge of the reservoir. You know, one—you were over there, I was here, and then Charlie, there'd be ten guys, and he could—the son-of-a-bitch could go in between each one of them and catch a fish, on these bare hook flies. Then they knew he was fishing in their Hardy, you know, bloody butchers and all this crap. The trout really don't like that — that chironomid like fishing. So, he was—he'd be creeping around in the dark with these little bloody flies. He was interesting.

I left to go to Canada, so I kept in contact with him all the time. He loved that I'd write him, sent him pictures of these bloody salmon I was catching and all the rest of the stuff. He did a lot of salmon fishing too. So naturally, when I went back, I went to see him.

But he — this is a hell of a story. This guy, he was so good at fishing, and he loved to shoot, like pheasants and all that, but you know, in these [places], you don't shoot nothing but rabbits, basically. So these bastards— these rich people up in Scotland own all these estates and stuff, and they invited him, right, Come on up and teach us how to catch these fish up here. So he traded the fishing for the shooting rights, not the rights. He'd go - when they were doing all this lordly shooting, he's standing there with them, shooting. So one day, he was out there fishing on the River Spey or something and climbed over a stile and he had a gaff — of course they used to gaff fish. I'm glad we don't do that anymore. That's how the Scots used to do things. And he was an Englishman, but he laid the gaff down, and all of a sudden— and what he did is he picked the gaff up and he kind of slipped as he picked it up and it just pricked him a little bit, right? No problem, shit, he could deal with the kind of shit all the time. Holy Christ, he got home and he got deathly sick. And they couldn't figure out what was wrong with him. And he knew — looked after the people rallied around you know. We got to save him, and they hadn't a clue what was wrong with him. It turns out he's got bubonic plague.

BK: Oh geez.

HL: Oh, geez.

PM: And nobody had had bubonic plague in England since the 1600s. The last plague cleaned them all out. And what they reckon happened was, he'd put this gaff down, and a rat had pissed there, that's where you get it from, or wherever. Anyway, they saved him.

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But the last time I saw him, my old man was dying, so I went back to England, so, I'd better go and see Cyril when I'm there. So we fished for a couple or three days. And I said, Well listen, I've got to go back to London because the old man's looking pretty shaky. And I went back, and I was gone three days, and I got back and he was dead. He was driving down the freeway, his ticker gave out, and he just drove off the road and it killed him. Yeah, what a story. Cyril Lynnwood, one of the greats.

HL: That is a great story.

PM: Yes, it is great, and true (*laughter*).

HL: Those are almost the best type (*laughter*). I thought I ought to back you up on . . . you were a chef at age 18 when you started all of this. How did you become a chef?

PM: Oh, good point. I used to be a cook in the Boy Scouts. I like eating (*laughter*). I used to be – we used to go camping, right? I don't know, I just was the cook. I don't know how that worked. I mean, I used to – we all had troops. You been a Boy Scout?

BK: Briefly.

PM: You know what it's like. You're in this troop A, B or whatever the f*ck it is. Excuse the language, but.

HL: That's alright.

PM: So, what the deal was, I was cagey. Every time we were cooking bacon for breakfast I'd go around to the other camps and steal all the bacon drippings off of them. They didn't know, these other guys, and I'd save it up for a day, and then we could have French fries, right? Okay, everybody wanted to be in my bloody tent (*laughing*). None of this making scones out of a spick you know, putting jam and all that crap on it. Give us the French fries, chips, as we called them in England. So that's really where I started. Good story.

I was brought up in a Catholic school.

HL: Okay.

PM: I am not a Catholic anymore. I love the Pope though. This new guy's great. But that has nothing to do with the story.

So, great story this. I used to be a champion boxer. I was the South of England champion as a kid, just school boy stuff, nothing serious. I did get a bent nose, but, I also was the head guy in the school. I don't know why, because academically I can't write or read. I'm a very ignorant guy really. I had a terrible education. Anyway, so what the deal was, we had a Catholic school, right, and we had no facilities, but there was a school, a Protestant school, as we used to call them. That bloody Protestant school, the nuns used to teach us, they say you're a bloody heathen. You're an import from the Protestant schools and would whack you with a ring behind the ear, and holy Christ (*laughing*). You'd never get away, they'd lock you up. Hey, you goddamn heathens (*laughter*).

So what the deal was, you had a choice. On Thursday afternoons, you could do trigonometry or calculus or whatever, or you could go to another school and do domestic science. Well, we all loved that. All the tough guys went to the domestic science. We all figured it was sissy stuff. But it was my first endeavor in business. We'd go down to this other school and make these rock cakes, they used to call them, so a batch of rock cakes and then we'd wrap them up in a bag. We wouldn't eat them, we couldn't eat them (*laughing*), rock cakes, but we'd the next day take them back to the regular school and get all the little kids and force them to buy them, you know, for a sixpence or .. Here you little bugger, get over here and buy this rock cake. Jesus Christ it was funny, so anyway, that was good.

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So the lady, her name was Miss Wilson, and I obviously had a talent for cooking. I didn't know. I just used to like to make rock cakes. She said they're having this competition, and they were trying to find the best young cook in Britain. It was a Gas Council thing. You know, like selling gas stoves. So she like said, I think you should go and get into that competition. I said, Okay, whatever, show me what to do. So we had to write this kind of quiche pie thing, so she showed me and all that stuff. So we practiced on. Anyway, I went to this competition. I won the first round of it, I'm only like about thirteen years old now, or fourteen, and then I got to the semifinals of all England in this thing, right, and of course, talk about being a hero at school, the bloody – the mayor of Croydon – Croydon's a pretty big city. It's like half a million people live there. She comes down to get everybody out, a bloody band playing, get me on a stage. She gave me a ten pound note or something that was like a fortune (*laughing*.) I was written up in the newspaper. I got to the semifinals and then I didn't, because I didn't have no experience. So that's how I started being a chef.

This Miss Wilson, she could see I had talent. I mean, at fourteen years, they kick you out of school. I got no education. I don't know, I feel like I haven't got a grade eight education, basically. But she got me a job working in the kitchens of the Lord Mayor of London's kitchens, not his kitchen particularly, well we did. There was an older catering company called Ring and Bryant's, which was the oldest catering company in England. They'd been feeding these bastards for 500 years.

I don't know if you know anything about guilds. Somebody said something about a guild down at the lodge there yesterday. And I thought, that's what you guys are. Did you say that, the guild of rod builders?

HL: No. But I think I agree with you.

BK: Right, good term.

PM: Somebody said that. I don't know who it was. Maybe it was Tom or –

PM: Oh good. You guys have got that right. This is what we've got here, kind of a rod builders guild. You know in England, you got the Fishmongers guild, the Haberdashers guild, the Free Masons guild, the meat guild, the tailors, merchants, vendors, it goes on, and all through the City of London, they all have their own lodges, right, and they've been there for hundreds of years. And the biggest place is a place called the Guildhall. That's been there for a thousand years or – you'd love that. I'll tell you some stories about it. You got lots of time, man?

BK: Yes, we got lots of time.

PM: We haven't gone anywhere yet on this stuff.

HL: No, it's okay.

PM: So what we did is we got this, it's called Ring and Bryant's, is the company that catered for 500 years. And how the system works is– it's called Sunset Road, just a fabulous name. They've got this f*cking great building. It's like three stories high, and it's covered with soot, because that's what it was like when I was a kid in England, you know. The windows never got cleaned, like in this goddamn place [gesturing], but way worse than this. And if you looked out the windows, it was like twelve or fourteen railroad tracks below you. It was a switching yard. I mean, it was just the grungiest place you'd ever seen. So, we all used to go there at 8 o'clock in the morning, and sometimes there'd be a thousand guys eating dinner in that Guildhall, and grocers were having a party, so we'd prepare all the food in this three-decker place, and then put it in trucks. Depends what it was, we wouldn't roast potatoes, so we used to spend– you f*ckers won't believe this. It was really busy. Roasted potatoes are the big thing in England, right? We had to turn them, make them like little barrels.

HL: Okay.

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PM: You know, it makes them prettier.

HL: Yes.

PM: It's all bullshit. It's just the way they do it. So I'd sit there, doing – We've been here since 8 o'clock in the morning, and the chef would say, Now you f*ckers, you can't go home. We've got to do nine churns. You know those big milk churns? We've got to fill them full of turned potatoes. So they had this big wooden table and there's this East Indian guy named Charlie, what a great guy he was. He used to peel the potatoes in a machine, right, shuck them on the table, and we'd sit. And we had a special little knife because – and we got real experts at it. You got a lot there. But, we have to do nine churn loads (*laughter*). So, about 6 o'clock, you know, the peelings on the table, I couldn't see you. You'd be sitting there, I'd be sitting on this side (*laughter*). And we'd say, Hey, Charlie, get your ass over here and clean some of these peelings away. So he'd wash them off and sit there until 9 o'clock at night doing this stuff. So that's what we did.

So the next day, there'd be a banquet. So there were guys upstairs preparing the sauces. We were doing all the canapes, and we used to make all our own bread. It was really good food. Knowing – you got to get this, it's great – the best thing on the menu was turtle soup, right?

HL: Okay.

PM: From the Caribbean. I mean, I assume that's where they come from. I've never been to the Caribbean, but. So every Monday morning – my guys at that pub, they just love this story – we'd go in there, at 8 o'clock in the morning, go upstairs, and every Monday morning there'd be a live turtle, f*ucking big thing, two hundred or three hundred pounds, sitting there on his back, still alive, chained to the table, a big chain. Well the deal was, it would take like four of us to lift it up on the table, and then the chef had this little twenty-two and he'd shoot it right there. So the next thing is you had to cut its throat real quick and drain all the blood out of it because you used the blood in the process of making this turtle soup. And this is the most famous thing at these banquets. Every banquet had turtle soup. So that's not the thing. So he'd cut it all up, do the preparation. We had these great big fifty-gallon copper pots, stock pots, ten of them, put all the meat and stuff in there. That was it, 6 o'clock, everybody would go home. Well at 6 o'clock, we probably had to go to back in there and start cooking again until f*ucking midnight. And talk about slave wages. It was like 2 ½ dollars a week. Unbelievable. There's sawdust all over the floors, I mean, you'd never get away with it today. It was filthy.

So we'd come back the next morning, well there's rats all over the goddamn place. F*ucking rats would dive in the soup pots. So my job was to skim the rats out and chuck them in the garbage (*laughter*). The Queen was at all of these banquets. She had her own chair, you know. This is the real royal stuff, so. Can you believe that (*laughter*)?

Anyway, now the Guildhall, you'd love the Guildhall. Let's talk about the Guildhall. The Guildhall is a fabulous place. You go upstairs, the Queen's got a chair. Prince Phillips got one next to it. And you can sit about 800 or 900 people in there, all right. And they get turtle soup to start with, because that's what you do. And so, Jesus Christ, we worked in the crypt of this place, and in the crypt, it's all of these knights all laid out, carvings of them. They buried them but they put an effigy on top of them, you know, you've seen all those movies. They're all sitting there with a sword. They'd been dead for 500 years (*laughter*). We'd sort of hang the f*cking soup pots on their feet (*laughter*). And we had this oven. That was my job because I was the grunt of the whole goddamn place. This f*ucking oven, we would have a thousand baked potatoes in this oven, or whatever it was we were doing - sometimes it would be. And this oven was about this big. And halfway through the cooking, you had to turn the potatoes over. So the chef would say to me, Get the f*uck in that oven. I'd open these great big doors and let it cool down enough, and then I had to get in there and turn the potatoes over. Yes, Jesus Christ. You can't believe it, it was a dungeon is what it was. Jesus Christ, you can't believe some of this stuff (*laughter*).

And of course upstairs you got all the wealth in the world sitting up there. And the waiters used to steal all the booze. So we used to serve the stuff behind curtains. We were on the main floor there, where the Queen's sitting and the rest of the guys having dinner, they are all dressed up in tuxedos. Oh, this is a fabulous place, they've got

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hundreds of flags, all medieval stuff. It's been there that long. All along the goddamn side of the building, it's a massive building, right where the Bank of England is. And at one end is Gog and Magog and they're two mythical Greek gods. They're great big statues, right. Then when the banquet was done, and they have all these goddamn great big golden trumpets, all down in the livery (*horn sounds*), and then the Queen would walk in. Jesus, but we, the grunts, used to serve the food, cook it down there in the basement, you know, with the soup pots, but we had – that was in the crypt of the place. You packed all the food up to this level of the floor. I mean, these tables, the f*ucking – waiters – the goddamn waiters were a bunch of garbage people. They'd steal half of the booze off the table. And there was this curtain, and your hand would come through, like this, right (*laughter*)? And put a big glass of claret right on the table. We'd steal it all and they'd get pissed off. Where's that goddamn waiter? Too late mate we drunk it all. I don't know how anybody ever got served. Everybody was pissed and Jesus Christ (*laughter*).

So anyway, I ended up going to school. I got a scholarship so I used to work in these places, this joint on the weekends and, you know, blah, blah, blah. And I really couldn't go to school because I didn't have the education and I didn't speak French, because the kitchen language is French.

HL: Right.

PM: Especially in England. So anyway, I got interviewed. She, this school teacher lady that put me in the competition, she applied to the college to see if I could get some kind of a scholarship or whatever. So I went out there and I talked to this French chef who run the joint, and anyway, I got a letter, I got accepted. So, I left that place. I was the top student out of three hundred guys there. I still got my name on the wall.

HL: Wow.

PM: The last time I took my poor wife, she's dead now. Did you ever meet my wife? You did, yes.

HL: Yes.

PM: And I said, I'm going to show you my name on the wall in this f*ucking college, because they never believed me. I said, Okay, I can get in. There used to be a plaque on the wall, so every year you'd get your name on it, if you were the top guy (*laughter*) – that's another story. I'd won this cup. When I finally got to do this, there are three hundred guys – well its graduation day and I'm a poor guy. I'm in the lowest class. I've one of the bums, you know, the drop out person in the place. And I don't know, we were always these tough guys because we were boxers. And there were other people who looked, got more money, you know, classier, so they didn't mix up with us guys at all. So on graduation day, I'm right in the back of the f*ucking hall, and Charlie says to me, Here, Pete. They're calling for you. To do what? They're calling for you. And I said, You've got to be kidding me. So here I am, I got to go on the stage, so they gave me this. Hey, you're the student of the f*ucking year, or three years whatever I spent in the place. They gave me this great big silver cup. Well, great. So we went to the pub and filled it with beer (*laughter*). Everybody got drunk. Anyway, so I took it home with me. And I thought they'd given it to me (*laughter*). So the next year, there's a cop banging on the door (*laughter*). And my mum said, Yes, sir, can I help you? She was scared to death, because, you know, you see a f*ucking cop here you're in real trouble. They wanted to know where this cup was, they thought I'd stolen it. And it's sitting on my mantelpiece. Grungy old councilor, I said. So I had to give it back. I never got fined or the like. Geez, that was funny as hell.

HL: Well, what was the name of the college?

PM: The Westminster College.

HL: Okay. And it was there –

PM: It's the best catering school in Britain.

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HL: Got it.

PM: They teach chefs and – it's still there. We can look it up in the computer. I think they changed the name. No, I think it's still Westminster.

That's fun ain't it, we get drunk down at the pub and these guys say, tell the story Pete. And I say, Okay. These Canadians ...

Break

HL: Wait a minute, wait a minute. Wait a minute, wait a minute. We've got to get you - we've got to record this. We don't want to miss a word.

PM: Oh, Christ, gems of wisdom. Most of it's bullshit. Nah, it's not bullshit.

HL: So –

PM: So anyway, so I'm going to take Eileen to see my name on the wall. So we get up there, this plaque's not there. So I asked somebody where the plaque was and they didn't know nothing. Go and see the dean, his office is right there.

HL: Yes.

PM: So in we go. How are you? So I tell what I was doing and wanted to know where the plaque was. He said, Well, listen, old chap, he said, it was getting kind of scruffy. We've taken it downstairs to the janitors to get it fixed up. He said, What's your name? And I said, McVey, sir. I graduated in 1955, sir. He said, Yes, I know your name! He says, I was the top guy the year after you was (*laughter*). So we go downstairs, and sure enough there it is. They're fixing it all up. I swear it's on the wall where it should be right now.

So he's fascinated by me, this guy is. He's asking me questions about this and that. He's a shooting nut, likes to hunt rabbits and stuff. He said, You got moose and bears? I said, Are you kidding? Is the Pope Catholic or what? Anyway, by the time I left, he wanted me to get him a job in Canada somewhere (*laughter*). He'd had enough of that being the dean of the Westminster College. Yes, it was funny as hell. I felt sorry for the poor guy, really, because he was a bit of an outdoors type, and geez, anyway. So that was the – we said that didn't we?

HL: Yes. Okay –

PM: So what was your next question? No more turtle soup.

HL: No, I think the idea of the rats in the soup has got to be written down –

PM: And the Queen would – I mean, it's not going to poison you. Well what could you do? There was rats running all over. It was a hundreds of years old building.

HL: The Queen got bubonic plague as a result of –

PM: No, no.

HL: – Peter McVey's cooking. That's how it would have been written.

PM: No, she's 90 years old, for Christ's sake. She looks a lot better than I do. Well, she's got more money.

HL: Okay. So how did you get to British Columbia? What was that about?

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PM: Good story. Oh, I've got some great stories. But you asked me about Bob Southwell, didn't you? That's coming up.

HL: That's coming up.

PM: Okay. This is the story. When I was in the little Roman Catholic Church where the nuns used to beat the shit out of us all the time. And I was always a fishing nut. I've spent my life running around looking in puddles and gutters and stuff, looking for fish. Well you know there ain't none there, but that's what you do, right? And we used to have places you could get sticklebacks, gudgeons, little gudgeons. Fryers, you get a big one this big, boy you got it made. So we used to go out fishing. So there was this guy called Bob Southwell, had a little fishing shop right next to my school. So if I needed any fish hooks or maggots, because we used to fish with maggots in them days, we'd go in – you're going to love this. You think I can bullshit. I mean, this guy leaves me in shame. So, you know, he talked to me and I kept in touch with him, and so I get to – I told you the story about Ernie, didn't I, he taught me how to fly fish.

HL: Yes.

BK: Mm-hmm.

PM: And it was my 18th birthday, and I had a really good-looking woman, a girlfriend, and she got Bob Southwell to make me a fly rod.

HL: And that's Southwell –

PM: Southwell.

HL: Yes. And so, S-O-U -T-H-W-E-L-L –

PM: Southwell.

HL: Yes, Southwell.

PM: – to make me a fly rod. Now I didn't know about fly fishing. Well I knew about fly fishing because Ernie had taught me. So I was thrilled to death. So Bob took me down to Mitchell's Common. I took Harry to Mitchell's Common. It's another place where I learned to fish. You know, this pond is about this big as this little place here. As kids, we used to make money – we had the guys, we used to call them spides². The spides used to run the green grocer markets. It was all money under the table, right? Fillings, is what we used to call it, right? And they had money. And that asshole in France created a Mitchell spinning reel, right? Well guess what? They've all got these spinning reels, because before that we didn't have spinning reels. And there was pike in this place. But it was a garbage dump. It was full of bedsteads, dead dogs, you know, trees sticking out, bits of furniture floating around. I don't know how the fish ever lived in this bloody place. It was unbelievable. And of course these sprogs³ would be on the goddam side, so I'd be sitting there with a maggot trying to catch a little roach or something. And they'd hang up on a bedstead or something. Hey, you little bastards, you want to make six pence, you know? Yes, sir, yeah. Well, go ahead and get my spinner, because they were American spinners. We didn't have any money, well I don't think we made spinners in England. Most of it was American stuff. Colorado Spoons I think we called them.

BK: Yep.

² Short for "spiders" as in the Cockney rhyming slang "spiders & bugs" rhyming with "thugs"...

³ Kids...

PM: So we'd wade out there, and damn, Jesus, trying to hook that thing, and give it a little and back. We'd get sixpence and stuff, ah, Jesus. So I took Harry on another trip out to fish in Milton. Brook was the place I told you where this little tiny river used to be. And he looked at that and he said, I can't believe this. He was born out in Long Island, for Christ's sake. They had trout streams and bass on the beach. He shook his head, Let's get the hell out of here, I really can't stand it. Dead dog floating around, geez. Me and Harry, we had a lot of fun me and Harry. So where was I?

HL: Okay, so how did you get –

PM: Oh, to Canada.

HL: Yes, how'd you get to Canada?

PM: So we're at Bob Southwell's store, right?

HL: Yes.

PM: So he's got a friend called Albert Willick. Now Albert Willick is a hell of a caster. He could cast more line than a guy called Captain Tommy Edwards, who was the world champion caster, right? And Captain Edwards was on retainer to Hardy's. He found his way down to Bob's Southwell's place, because the Lord Louis Mountbatten was a hell of a fly fisherman, used to use these Hardy double-handed rods, and they kept breaking on him all the time. And Bob got to know this Captain Edwards guy. It was great. This guy's a rough f*ucker, you know, crude guy, but he was a captain.

.....

PM: So he goes and visits Captain Edwards. Somebody tells him that there's a guy in South Croydon that makes rods that you can't bust. So he goes in there, and he walks in and he says, Are you Southwell? Bob says, Yes, sir, because he's a quiet, conservative Englishman. Aye, sir, Southwell, I want you to build me a 9-foot rod, and I want you to take it to Serpentine pool, which is in Hyde Park in London. You know, it would take a couple weeks for the glue to dry and stuff. He said, When can you get it? Bob said, Well ... And so at 9-foot, and if it can't cast 90 feet, I'm going to wrap it around your f*cking head, he said to him. Oh really (*laughter*)? He wasn't used to having guys come in and tell him this. So Bob makes a 9-foot rod, for 7-weight or whatever, HCH in those days, and you had silk lines - I was fishing with a silk line yesterday and Jesus. So, he goes out to Hyde Park, gets the rod out, and Captain Edwards says, It'd better be bloody good, Southwell. So this guy can cast. He's the world champion, 9-foot of line, it's all gone right. Yes, bloody good, he said, make me two or three of them.

So, he got friendly with him. He said this guy was brutal. They go into some coffee shop or cafe, that had white table cloths, and he'd be sitting talking rod designs, because he knew – he . . . That guy did a lot for me because Bob really wasn't a great caster. And from his background, his father built fishing rods. I mean, we're talking about 160 years of doing it in one family. They used to make 16-foot rods with no reel on it and dapple it with a worm on it to catch these little perch. I mean, roach was the big thing. They'd get bread, mix a bunch of bread up, spit on it, put it on a hook and that's how they used to fish. So Bob didn't know nothing really about design. But he'd got around this Edwards guy. They'd go to a cafe somewhere, and Edwards would get a pencil out, Okay, Southwell, he says, this is how it works, and that's when Byers⁴ first come out. I mean that was the new thing. Do you remember that? You probably weren't around then. He'd be writing on this table cloth, Christ. The guys would be giving him sh*t in the restaurant, and he was a real asshole, this guy. Anyway, this is not really the story.

The story is he's mixed up with the Lord Louis Mountbatten. So he says to Mountbatten, he says, Listen, sir, don't tell anybody this, This is the address of this guy is South Croydon. He said, You go down and see this guy, see he'll make you a fishing rod that ain't going to break. So he went down there, and Bob made him a 16-foot double-handed Spey rod, right? And it didn't break. So that's how he kind of really – yeah, quite a story.

⁴ Brand of early mechanical pencil

So this other guy was on retainer to Hardy's. He's a real villain. And he had Bob build all these rods, and he'd be selling the other guys bloody fishing rods out the back door, but they were not Hardy's (*laughter*). He was doing a side deal, you know. Well they were bad quality, kind of hand made. Yeah, geez. So anyway, Albert Willick, he was a friend. This guy was a real villain, a house painter, you know, drunk like a goddamn Englishman, drunk all the time, well like most Englishmen. What did Hoagy say last night? I had this bloody Englishman he was pretty fond of the booze, and so he looked over at me and waved. Do you remember that? How you doing, Pete? Oh, that was cute (*laughter*). I think it went over most guys heads. But he looked at me and I laughed. I said, Yeah, that's good.

So and he – this is funny, oh my god. Albert, he's a pauper, because he doesn't go to work much, but he's a hell of a fisherman, this guy, and a fantastic caster. I'll tell you about the casting in a minute. But he's trying to make a living – he's the first guy that ever figured out to get line grease, or grease for flies.

HL: Yes.

PM: He's got this kitchen, he's got all this old fat sitting in there going rotten. Bob said it was disgusting. They had fat – had all these secret formulas and put them in a tin, you know, Albert Willick's Wonder or something (*laughter*). Now I never met this guy, unfortunately, and he's the reason why I am here. So back there, the guy was better than Captain Edwards, but he had, he would, but when he cast he got on a casting platform. Bob said he had arms like a gorilla because he was a house painter. But if you touched the water behind you, you were disqualified, and he had a bad habit of just the wrong stroke, and the water – the leader would just touch the water. But he could chuck the line further than what this world champion could. So he ends up, funny enough, at Lac Le Jeune. How the hell he ever did this. He left England. He got a job as a gamekeeper or something. I don't exactly know. But we're talking about a fair time ago, sixty years. So he got to fish the Thompson, and the guy was a fishing nut. And he'd send all these pictures back to Bob. So there, Pete. I was there to get some maggots or a couple hooks or something. I used to love talking to Bob, he was great. So he'd show me these pictures of all these goddamn steelhead and stuff, and I thought, geez, I got to, this is where I'm going, right? So, that's how I got here, basically.

I quit my job, got a woman, we got married in Toronto. She's dead now, unfortunately. And we came to B.C. She left me after about 15 years. These English women, they just don't like it here. It's not plain enough for them, right? But I ain't . . . I said, I'm not going back, to that nonsense? Christ, I can afford to smoke cigarettes here. Great story. I had this guy – I used to be the chef for a fancy English inn, West Vancouver, Park Royal Inn, beautiful place, on the Capilano River. Sort of a bit like where we were in there, but more Elizabethan style. And so, what was the story I was going to tell you about? Jesus, I can't remember now. I was the chef there, right?

HL: So when you made your way to B.C. and had to support yourself –

PM: I got a job the first day.

HL: And what was that?

PM: You'll love this. We got off the bus, spent our honeymoon on a Greyhound bus. That's exciting (*laughter*). I wasn't very horny in them days I guess. But how it happened, we're in Toronto, right? So I've got to get a job. So we, you know, as an immigrant, the DPs they used to call us, you know, you go get a labor exchange, or whatever it was, and they got jobs and stuff. And we saved us – we got married. We had to get some guy off the street at the registry office and he signed us up. So we went out and had a bit of Chinese food. Shirley was my first wife's name. And I was downstairs getting some cigarettes from the desk in the front. And geez, I looked up there and I wanted to go to B.C., but we're in Toronto. And I look up there and I could go all the way to Vancouver, I'm going to say for \$5. It was a ridiculous amount of money. I only had \$60 bucks, alright, penniless basically. I had a bamboo fly rod, Bob's rod, a suitcase, and a wife now. And so I went back upstairs and I said to Shirley, We're leaving. The bus leaves at 9 o'clock. Oh really, okay. So we checked out, go down get on the Greyhound bus. I mean, I'd never been out of England before. Well I had because I've been on the sea. I'd been to Australia and

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stuff, but you're on a boat, you're not driving anywhere particularly, right? It was bloody mind boggling. And it takes you nearly four days on a Greyhound bus to get from Toronto to Vancouver, because its stopping and geez, it was unbelievable. So I ended up in Vancouver. So that's how I kind of got here.

So we'll talk about the Park Royal Hotel. We've got to get a room, right? We've got to live somewhere, so we go to the grungy side of town. Well, it wasn't the grungy side. It was called Harrow Street. If you owned a piece of property near there, you had millions. So we rented a room, right? Couldn't stay there long, it was full of bleeding bed bugs though, the first time we ever found a bed bug. It's welcome to the real world, right? So I said, I'm going to go and have a walk around and see what's going. And there was this great big hotel. So Georgia Street is a main street in Vancouver. And there was this big hotel. I was living right out back of it, just up another street. So there's all these cooks sitting outside smoking cigarettes on their break. So you know, I'm not a bashful guy, as you've probably got that figured already. So I go up and, Say there, boys. Oh great, what are you doing? Actually I said, Listen man, I just got off the Greyhound bus and I'm a cook, I'm a chef, I need a job. So one guy said, Yeah. So I gave him a cigarette. He didn't have any fags, you know. I had a couple fags extra, so he smoked the fag. He said, I'll tell you what, I'll go and see the chef, he says, we might need a cook. So he went in, talked to the chef, and the guy came out and said, Yeah, he said come see the chef tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. So I went in there, and I'm pissed off because I've left all of my stuff from college, my diploma, you know, my good clothes and all that crap they give you, degree or wherever it was. I left it in a cupboard in this hotel before we got on the Greyhound bus, see. So I walk in and I've got nothing. I've got a picture of a smorgasbord I've done for Princess Di's dad in this restaurant I used to work in in Northampton. He was a big customer, the Lord – what's it, Spencer, Earl Spencer, right? And he used to bring his family in and entertain. He liked the way I cooked. And so, I took a picture of one of these buffets, you know, like ice carvings and salmon leaves and all that. You know, you've seen all that sh*t in some of these fancy restaurants. You ain't going to see it around here.

So anyway, I went in and I didn't have a reference. He said, Well what have you done? He was a Dutchman, this guy, a big tall Dutchman. He had two fingers missing, great guy. And you're going to love this, but – So I said, I need a job, sir. Yeah, he said, geez, I love you Englishmen, he said to me. I said, Oh really? He said, Yeah. He said, I used to have an English – because the Dutch were with the British in the war, right, fighting the f*cking Germans. And he spent a lot of time in England because he was in the Dutch Navy. And yeah, he loved the English. He picks the phone up. Oh geez, this is funny as hell. He got this faggot going in this kitchen in this Park Royal Hotel I told you, because they owned that place as well, right? Hey, this is – what was his name? I can't remember now. It can be Russ or something. He said, Get that goddamn faggot, the salad, he was the salad boy. He said, I've got an Englishman coming over. Get rid of that guy. I've had enough of that, and he went on and on. He'll be over there for lunch, this is 9 o'clock in the morning, so he went on for about half an hour. So he said, We've got to get you in a taxi, Pete. I said, Okay. So, I've got a suit. I used to have a suit. I've still got it here. And it was a good suit. Englishman, you didn't have no money, but I had a hundred dollar suit. Jewish guys used to make these suits. Jewish people make wonderful suits. And you know, after three fittings, you'd go in there, they'd always call you, Mr. McVey, how you doing today? Yes, I think we have another fitting for you. You know, I talk like the Jewish guys, great guys. So I had a really good suit. And so yeah, that was a sign of wealth was a bloody good suit. You couldn't get a girlfriend if you didn't have a suit anyway (*laughter*).

So, I walk in there in a suit, right, I got a suit, I got a tie, the whole nine yards. You're not too familiar in Canada because you know this place is a pretty laid back joint. So I get dropped here from the taxi and here I am. And Christ, I'm there till 2 o'clock in the morning, cooking in a suit. Well, no, I took the jacket off, you know, unbelievable. And of course I've just moved from England, and I've got this new wife sitting in Harrow Street. We haven't got a telephone or anything, and she don't know where I am (*laughter*). And I ain't got no way of telling her what's happening. They put me in a taxi again. I didn't get home till 2 o'clock in the morning. She thought I'd took off and left her in the wilds of Canada. She thought that was a helluva deal. How did we get onto that? You asked me a question.

HL: I just wondered how you had arrived in British Columbia.

PM: Yeah. So then I got a job. I hated that place. They were so cheap in this place. They used a kind of horse meat, not horse meat. It was a fancy restaurant. You'd have loved the place. Stone fireplaces, this kind of English furniture and all this crap, you know, real high quality looking. And we had the Henry VIII sirloin – sirloin, Henry VIII. It wasn't Henry, it was some other guy did the sirloin bit, a king. And it used to be like fourth grade commercial beef. It's what they fed the guys in prison (*laughter*). And then we had Princess Diane's roast chicken with rosemary sauce on it, boiling fowl. And I kept getting complaints about this stuff, and the chef, the head chef of the whole thing, he said, We've got a problem here, Pete. I said, Well. He said, How long did you boil them for? I said, I cooked them for two hours in the boiler pot, right? Oh, he said, that ain't good enough, you've got to keep them there at least for five, you know. I mean, so what the deal was, you boil them. These are old laying hens that are old, a hundred years old. Nothing else you can do it. And then you put it on a plate smothered in rosemary sauce, sling it in the oven and try to roast it. You know, I mean, it was disgusting really. And I used to get, and I'd give them shit, the cheap bastards. He had an Aston Martin, that guy. He had 007's Aston Martin, they guy who owned the joint.

BK: Wow.

HL: Wow.

PM: And he had it stuck in a glass case right outside this restaurant, and it sat there for years. And when he finally moved it, most of it had rusted out because in West Vancouver it rains like a son-of-a-bitch there on the Capilano River. Frank Baker, bloody faggot was what he was. Caught him with a chef one night, sitting there in the kitchen, and Jesus Christ, I thought, you – I had to get out–

So I finally got out of there, got a job running the biggest hotel in Kamloops. Yeah, that was fun.

HL: And when was that, approximately?

PM: That was in 1963.

HL: Okay.

PM: Or 1964 maybe, 1964. I had an Austin-Healey. I'd bought an Austin-Healey. It was January and I'd never been – well, I'd been in the interior before because I'd been through Spencers Bridge, but that was in June. I didn't have a clue what cold weather was, and this is a ragtop one, the 4 cylinder Austin-Healey. And I got to Princeton and the goddamn generator burnt out, which is usual Lucas stuff. Jag has the same crap. Prince of darkness, we used to call it (*laughter*). My mechanic there where I got my oil changed, and he's got Lucas Oil. And I said, Don't you put that goddamn stuff in my truck. And then he'd laugh. He said, It ain't the prince of darkness. The prince of darkness guy's Lucas makes space ships now. Can you believe that now? They've ruined the British car industry, and then they're sending, you know, satellite rockets and all this sh*t up, yeah. So I drive right by Corbett Lake actually, and I got my car fixed. There was a guy mechanic there who was able to fix it up. Christ, it was cold.

Now I'd never been a chef before – well, in a small restaurant. I walk in there, and the next day they have a banquet for 600 guys, the Cattlemen's Convention. Holy sh*t. I sit down, kind of, just multiply it – do it for fifteen, just multiply that by twelve, and you know, well it was a piece of cake. Day after that we had another one for 500, geez. So I quit that. And then I ended up, I've got a business going in this hotel up here, The Grasslands. It's not there anymore. You've been by it. It burnt down many years ago.

HL: That was in Merritt.

PM: Yeah, yeah, that was in 1964 or something like that. So I did that for four years. That's where I first started to make some money. I don't know, I didn't have any money prior to that. You know, I'm bloody penniless when I come here. So then I bought a fishing lodge. I bought Thuya Lakes up the North Thompson River, at Little Fork. I've got to have a drink, Christ, I'm drying up.

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HL: Okay, so you bought a fishing lodge.

PM: Yeah, I bought Thuya Lakes and then I worked in the ski resorts in the wintertime. I'd run this big ski place in, it's Tod Mountain but it ain't Tod Mountain anymore. It's in Kamloops. We drove by it, no we didn't, no. Anyway, what's it called, Crystal Mountain or something? It's a really good ski resort. And I only did that for a year, and then my buddy burnt the bloody chairlift down, so it went bankrupt (*laughter*). So then I went to Big White and ran the kitchen there for four years, at the ski resort there. And then I – the guy who used to own, a Polish guy, Henry Maischak, used to own Corbett Lake.

And I used to go out there for dinner all the time when I was cooking in The Grasslands. He's a pretty good cook. And so he heard I was leaving The Grasslands, this is how I ended up at Tod Mountain in the ski business. He was the manager of it during the wintertime. He no sooner, he's putting knives and forks – knives down in that kitchen, got in a pickup, put in his wife and the kid, his one-year-old daughter, and drove over. And I was cooking New Year's Eve dinner that night, and it was bloody hell of a deal, really. And I did that – we only did it for one year because the chairlift burnt down. And then I went to Big White, I told you that.

HL: Yes.

PM: Then Henry, I knew Henry quite well, and he wanted out. He was 80 years old, and he had a partner, right, so I worked for a year and then, you know, I was doing it. I wanted to see if I liked it or not. And then finally I bought these shares, that's what I did.

HL: And so when was that?

PM: That was 1972, sir.

HL: Alright.

PM: I walked in that kitchen after I come back from the Dean River. I was cooking on the Dean River then. I've been cooking on the Dean River all my life, basically.

HL: And tell me about that.

PM: I'll tell you about that.

HL: Yes.

PM: Yeah. Oh listen, that's a good, great story. Christ, I've done a lot of stuff, man.

BK: It's a lot of stuff.

PM: Send me the recording of this, will you– (*laughter*).

HL: Yes, we'll send you –

PM: No wonder I'm all goddamn worn out and can't walk now.

HL: We'll send you the transcript, don't worry.

PM: So the Dean River, ah, it's great. When I had run The Grasslands– Oh, let me show you a picture there. Yeah, what did I do with that son-of-a-bitch? Somebody sent it to me. You ain't going to believe it if I can find it. It's

me. It could be in my office out there. Everything's a bloody shambles around here. It's not over here. I wouldn't make much of a lawyer (*laughter*).

BK: This is great.

HL: This is great.

Mr. McVey moving in and out of the room, searching for something.

PM: You want a glass of wine, love? [*to Lynn Peterson, Hugh's wife*]

LP: No thank you. I'm good. Thank you.

PM: So, I'm in The Grasslands, and I love fishing, and we fished Spencers Bridge. Not fly fishing there. I can't wait to go fly fishing, right, because that's what I learned. It was really disappointing to me because, you know, all my friends around there, they're all fishing with bait. There ain't nobody fly fishing for steelhead. So, you know, I didn't bother.

It wasn't until I run into a few of the Americans so I could see what was going on. Jerry Winn, do you remember him? He just died here. So, we'd all go fishing. So we'd go to the Nakina River and the Bella Coola River, fishing for these big salmon, bait fishing. And on the way out there one day, we got – we got lucky. We got six thirty or forty pound fish in the back of a beat up old pickup, no ice, you know. They've been hanging in a goddamn drying house for three days because he didn't have any refrigeration there. I got to find this picture before you go. It's a great picture. And so, I stopped at Stewart's Lodge on Nimpo Lake and I go in there, and Bob comes. He looks a bit like you, I see old Bob did. His name was Bob Stewart. We've been talking about Bob Stewart all week here. So I went in there, and he said, Hi, how you doing, mate? And he could see I'm English, and he was an Avro Lancaster⁵ guy, a tail gunner, he was back of the plane. He was only like sixteen. He totally lied to get the job. A lot of Canadians did. I don't know why they wanted to go and get their ass blown off for, but I guess they didn't know more different really, really. Yeah, they'd never been at war really, right, you know. Anyway, that's what he did. So he'd been in the fishing business. Well, talk about Bob Stewart. You know that name, don't you? These guys own the Dean River fishing lodges?

HL: Oh yes.

PM: Anyway, so I got a catch, and I said, Geez, I've got some salmon here, sir, could we buy some ice off of you? Oh, no problem, he says. Go down, he said, we've got tons of ice. They kept ice in the wintertime to keep all the fish. So I went down and I wanted to pay him. There's no bloody way he'd take any money. He said, Come here and have a coffee and stuff. Well, it's iced tea because it's hot as hell. And I loved the place. You know, it's like Corbett Lake and I thought, this is it. And he was a great guy, this guy, and his wife. And then he had the kids were running around and stuff. So I got back to – that's when I ended up selling Thuya Lakes and buying a fishing lodge, because I wanted to do what Bob Stewart was doing. But he had the airplanes. He was, the Stewart Airways, they're still about the same place.

BK: Yes.

PM: You know what I'm talking about.

And so now, we've got the Dean River. We've got a guy called Ray McPherson, who's a real famous angler from Kamloops, the steelhead guy, not long gone, but I got mixed up with him. He loved this. Walking down the street, the main street of Kamloops, because I'm - Stockton's is up the road - I'm going somewhere, to the . . . Well, not the . . . I didn't have any money. Christ, I go along this street and I just suddenly saw something, I don't know what

⁵ British heavy bomber in WW2

it was. I turned around and he's got these two great galvanized trays sitting outside this fishing shop. The shop's down in a hole so I don't know it's an angling shop, right. But two steelhead there on ice, you know, twenty pounds. I mean, I'd never seen a twenty pound rainbow trout before. Holy Christ! So I was like a bird dog, "vroom," went down them stairs instantly, b*llsh*tting with McPherson. He loves me right away, right? So he gets me fishing. He was a fly fisherman, but – anyway, that's not what we're talking – So I got him to take me fishing. He used to sell tackle. He's a great rod builder. He didn't make bamboo fly rods, but he made, you know, fiberglass.

He was very good at what he did. He's pretty famous around here. And so yeah, he'd take me fishing. We'd go down to this cabin hole. You had to walk, and I looked at that place the other day. I took my girlfriend down to show her the Indians making salmon down in the canyon there. And I said, Well, I used to walk down. That's where I caught my first steelhead down at that big rock in this river. You got to walk down this mountainside, you know. At my age it didn't matter, I was just a young guy. And Ray Mac said, Okay, put this bloody spoon on because that's a spinning rod, and chuck it out down behind that rock right in the middle of the river. I made two casts and "whack," and I caught, I'm going to say it was nearly twenty pounds. It was a doe. I got a picture of that here somewhere, and that river was gin clear. It's an historic picture. You go down there, that river doesn't look anything – the rocks were white. And I've got that picture, and you can see the difference. You know, we're talking fifty years now. They put that f*cking pulp mill on there in Kamloops, which you smell coming up the hill remember. That's probably what's killed a lot of steelhead from that Spences Bridge in the river. So that was it, I loved it. I got famous around there because every time I'd go fishing, off the mouth of the Nicola River, I'd catch a fish or two steelhead. And of course you banged everything on the head in them days. And I'd have it hanging in the stockman's kitchen in the fridge keeping. And guys would come and look at them. Hey, how you doing, Pete? Then I got mixed up with a bunch of local guys, they were bait guys. This, it was spoon fishing, right? And so I'd go fishing with them guys, and they used to use great big chunks of bait or a prawn, you know, cooked prawns? And of course you hung up all the time, just bloody brutal really. And you know, you'd never catch nothing. So that was good. I would catch the odd one. And then – but I'm really sad because I had that whole river. Most guys who fly fish didn't go anywhere. They just sat around in the wide pool. You don't know much about Spences Bridge, do you?

HL: No, I don't know.

PM: Well around the place, it's the town of Spences Bridge, there's a bunch of really good holding water there. And in the old days, mostly Americans, not many fly fisherman, like Harry Lemire would be one of them, but I didn't know him then. I'll tell you how I met him in a minute.

HL: Yes.

PM: You know, and it was all there in front of me and I didn't know it, a bloody tragedy really, because I'd have had it to myself, if I'd known then what I know now. But that's not what happened.

So we're talking about the Dean River. So here we are, getting some ice off an old boat, poor old Bobby ended up in the asylum, he went mental – not mental, but Alzheimer's. About 53, it was really brutal, really. And he lived for a long time. Yeah, poor bastard – probably from getting his ass blown off. He told me one day that one hundred and twenty guys went there in a squadron and only four guys came back. So pretty tough old stuff. That's not the story.

The story is... I get mixed up with this Ray McPherson guy, alright I'm fishing. Now he is going to the Dean River. They just discovered the Dean River, because they put a logging road in there. They started to log it, right? I mean, McPherson's a great – he ended up being a guide out there. Ray Mac, we used to call him. That son-of-a-bitch (*laughing*), I invited him to my wedding, right? He got so goddamn drunk, we had to wake him up so he could be at the ceremony. He was sitting on the sofa around my fireplace (*snoring sounds*). You couldn't get him out of the chair, he was really shooting the whiskey. What a guy, what a guy, but he was a hell of a guy this guy.

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So he said to me, Yeah, we got to get going to the Dean River. I said, Well how do you get there? He said, Well he couldn't because he's got his shop there, right? So I thought, well, Bob Stewart's got an airplane, because I could see him on the lake. And I'd met Bob Stewart at a ski resort because he used to ski in the wintertime. He's a ski pro, so, because he remembered me. He'd come to the cafeteria and I'd cook some grub for him or whatever. So we got to be really good friends. And so I thought, well, the wheels are going. So I found Bob, I said, I want to go to the Dean River. Can you fly me there? He said, Yeah, I can do that. He said, I can't fly you onto the river. But there was a logging road. So he'd fly you down to the beach, and you'd go on the beach, and you had to walk. But what the deal was, you took a bottle of whiskey with you, and you'd flag a logging truck down – (*laughter*) with the bottle of whiskey or something. The brakes would go on. Hey, get in the back, mate. And we'd go out, there was a bridge across it. It's not there anymore, it all washed out. And that's where the fishing was, just above the canyon.

So that's where I met Dick Blewett, because he was building a camp on the Dean River, right? This is how I got to the Dean River and Blewett's one of my best friends. He's crazy. You want to talk about some guy who's been around the world. A grizzly bear hunter, owned a big thing out there. And Jesus. I was there last year. He's living along the road, in bloody old Bella Coola. And Floyd is his neighbor, this old guy Floyd, an old Norwegian, all goddamn Norwegian these guys. And he says, Hey, Blewett, I've got a problem here. And we'd been drinking, it's 5 o'clock, we didn't have dinner yet. Come on out, he says, I've got this grizzly bear that's eating all my apples in the tree. Ah, son-of-a-bitch, he said, okay I'll come and look after that for you. I said – shall we have another drink. He goes and gets his gun, goes outside and gets waste can lid and a stick. I said, Oh that's nice. What are you going to do with that, fight it off or what? Ah, he said, you'll see. So we go out in the road, and cars all along the road, right, and it's this little lone apple tree just across the fence, in the field, and there's a big grizzly bear sitting there eating stuff. So Blewett, he don't screw around, no gun or nothing. He just jumps over the fence, with a tin thing, starts banging it and screaming at the bear. You arrrrgh! Well that's great, but all of a sudden, two cubs are in this tree with him – We didn't know that, we couldn't see them. Holy Christ, I thought, oh boy, here we go. And he didn't turn a bloody eyelid. The goddamn bear comes scooting out of there, and he was chasing after it, banging on the lid. This is the year before, He fools me all the time.

He sitting out there, he's got cows, right, he's got ten cows. You'd love this guy. You talk about, you want an interview to do, this is the guy you should be talking to. He's got some cows, he's only got two left. He's got a fifty-acre field out there, right? I'm like, Jesus Christ, he's working out there and the biggest grizzly bear he's ever seen, I mean this guy knows about grizzly bears. He had operations on Owikeno - not Okanagan Falls, Rivers Inlet. That's where the big bears are. Yeah, and he was sitting there eating his cow, Jesus Christ (*laughter*). And he'd already killed one in the night. He buried that one. Jesus, Blewett, Christ. And he's out there, “bang, bang, bang!” I think it was about 1500 pounds, it was– Well, he said– he's on the Dean –

They built this camp on the Dean River, right, and it had all kinds of trouble with bears. So all this stuff is kept in refrigerators run by propane. In the middle of the night, “bang, bang, bang, bang!” Goddamn bears are in there, right, so he goes screaming out, nothing's happened. So the next night, the same stuff, but the bear takes off. So he wires it all up with a whole bunch of tin cans and stuff, so he can get there before the bear takes off. It's 2 o'clock in the morning, he comes screaming out of there with his gun and his flashlight, Where are you, you son-of-a-bitch? And he can't see the bear, but the refrigeration door is open. And of course he closes the goddamn door and the bear's standing right behind him. And it scared the hell of him, the bear took off.

Talk about a better story than that...

We were up on the river. Now I'm up on the Dean River, cooking. We hadn't got to that yet, but this is jumping the thing. We're on to bear stories (*laughter*). Blewett has built his cabin– we're all living there. There's five of us in this little shack, right, three dudes, you know, billionaire types. All sleeping in one little room, me and the guide and another guy sleeping in another little room, right? And when he built the cabin, they built one corner of it right against a great big Douglas fir, massive tree. That's what them guys did. They didn't give a shit, right? So Jesus, I'm sitting there, and Duncan Stewart, right, he's the guide. They owned the place by this time, they bought it off of Blewett. But I can hear the bears, bears are like pigs (*makes sound like pigs*). And we got– well it was a thin plywood building. I mean, there was nothing to it. And I've got my head against the plywood because I'm in a

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bunk. I'm on the bottom bunk and he's on the top bunk. I said, Hey, Duncan. Yeah, he said, I can hear it. And then all of a sudden, it goes a bunch of quiet, and all of a sudden the bear gets on the roof. He can smell the bacon in there, and he starts ripping the bleeding shakes off the roof (*laughter*). Holy Christ! So anyway, we go out and bang around, and it takes off.

The next night, we're sleeping, two o'clock in the morning, (*snuffling noises*). I said, It's there. And Duncan's getting really pissed off now. He said, We've got to get rid of that son-of-a-bitch. I think it's three nights now. If this bear had gotten in the cabin with five guys, you know, we'd be in serious trouble. So, he said, Where's the gun, Pete? I said, We left it outside on the veranda. Oh Christ! He's got his granddad's gun. He had one of those Winchester guns that's got a hexagonal barrel on it. You know, one of those— it can only shoot 50 yards. And he's got a bullet this big in it (*laughter*). He said, This is the plan. Here's the flashlight. We've got no shoes, we've got bare feet, sleeping in our dungies. He said, You rip the door open, I'll go out and grab the gun, and we've got to get this bastard. You shine the light on him and we shoot it. So okay, we've got the plan. I opened the door, he goes screaming out there. The bear had just shit all over the veranda, and he's walking around in it, it's still steaming (*laughter*). And he gets pissed off, Jesus Christ, get the light on that thing! He was really pissed off. So I get the light shining at these two green eyes, because they have green eyes. Bah-Boom (sound of gunshot)! The three guys asleep, they don't know what the hell — (*laughter*). One guy must have jumped a foot off the bed. That was the best bear story of all that was.

BK: That's a great story.

PM: So that's how I'm on the Dean with Blewett. And to cut a long story short, Blewett was in partnership with Bob Stewart, alright, the guy I got to fly me on the river.

HL: Right.

PM: And Blewett picked me up one day when I was walking up the river with the whiskey bottle trick (*laughter*). So he kind of liked me right off the bat. I don't know— kind of weird. You pick some guy up off a wilderness road and, you know, we've been best of friends ever since. So he dropped me off at the bridge. He loved this. These guys from Calgary were killing salmon, steelhead, because they used to kill steelhead. It was terrible then. I've killed a bunch and all. And they were smoking them, because there's no way of keeping them, right? And these guys were just pigs. They had sides of steelhead hanging there smoking, the flies all over them. And I kind of camped out with these guys. So they said, You want some fish to eat? I said, Christ, yeah, I'm hungry as hell. I haven't eaten for weeks, you know (*laughter*). So I ended up taking down two pounds of this bloody salted steelhead. Holy man, I was drinking water for a week. I was just thirsty, I was having a helluva a time. Yeah, those bastards. That was a tragic day, they lost a kid there. Next time they brought a freezer in with them, and I guess they hired somebody with a logging truck to get it up the road, and a motor, and they were freezing them and packing them. Well, you could kill six a day, it was legal. I mean, but Blewett was smart. We put a squeeze on that. You can't kill a steelhead anymore, and we got it down to one fish a day. Then we got it to no fish — otherwise there wouldn't be no fish there.

HL: Right.

PM: Because they're easy to catch, actually. Yeah, Blewett. So that's how I got on the Dean River, and that's— did that in 1972. So how I did it... I was skiing at Tod Mountain - that was Big White then. Bob was there and I said to Bob, Any chances of getting a job cooking on the Dean? Well, he said, I'll tell you what, Pete, we're thinking about having a tent camp on the pool below where we are now. And he said, We'll build it if you're going to cook. And I said, Yeah, I'll be there. So that's it, didn't see him for six months, showed up at the appropriate time. Looked terrible, just about lost it. Blewett, this guy's a nut case. He's a fabulous boat builder. The guy's a very talented dude. So anyway, I'm the cook for the upper camp. I've met him before on the road, you know, didn't know much more about him. He didn't know much about me because he lives in Bella Coola and I live here. So, they've got to run me up to the upper camp. So he just built a brand new boat for the upper camp because it's a very difficult place — the regular boats, they can't go there, they're too big. This green one, so he said, Get in that

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boat. Drive us up the river. Well I didn't even have a rowboat. Well, I had a rowboat, but I've never had an outboard motor or anything. And he assumed I knew how to run a river boat. So he's got his daughter in there, and he's in there, and we get going. And I'm doing alright, but I ain't got a clue what I'm doing. I'm hanging onto the handle, a 50 horsepower, goddamn jet motor, I mean these things— So we go in close to the first big wave like— I mean, this is a very treacherous river, a lot of water in it. And of course I headed into this wave and didn't know to crank the thing up, and turn this way, and boy that bloody wave caught that boat, and I fell and I was jamming the thing at full throttle. Just trying to stand up, and we went screaming across the river and hit a great big rock face.

BK: Oh geez.

HL: Oh geez.

PM: Geez, man, and his daughter was in there. Lucky we didn't get killed right there. We screwed the boat— well, the boat— yeah. I busted the sides. They had a whole bunch of stuff along the top that all got smashed because it moved it. But it was alright. Get in the back, he said. Christ, you know, I tried to explain it. But you can't explain nothing to this guy. He's that kind of guy, any guy who chases a grizzly bear around with a dusting can lid . . .

I met a guy on the plane at — No, coming back from Vancouver Island last year, I was over to visit my brother, and he was sitting there, he's looking at my hat. He said, Are you from Corbett Lake? And I said, Yeah, so I went to talk to him. And he said, Well, I've been there. I said, I'm sorry, sir, I don't remember you. So it turns out, he used to be a float plane pilot in Bella Coola. And I said, You know my friend Dick Blewett? Oh Christ, that crazy bastard? He said, Yeah. I'll tell you what he did one day. He said, I flew him into his bear thing on the— that big river. He had a big bear section up there. Hopped off the plane, there's a grizzly bear sleeping on the goddamn beach, and he runs out there and kicks it in the ass (*laughter*). I hadn't heard that story before, and I believe it because this is the guy. Oh geez.

Anyway, we're cooking on the Dean River, and I took after that, that was the first season in 1972 up there. When I left there, I came to Corbett Lake in 1972, but — because in August, there's no point in being there in August. I could make some pretty good money up there. I mean, they paid me well. I made more in tips than— I looked after a lot of really wealthy people, which was good because a bunch of them taught me about money and business and interest and — which I really didn't know much about, really. You know, when you come from a Catholic school and putting soup on King Edwards grave and stuff, you don't know much about compound interest. They don't teach you that there. Yeah, so I did it for, I'm going to say, forty years probably.

(the phone rings — a short interruption)

PM: Where were we?

HL: Okay. Well, so in the summertime, for forty years you were cooking—

PM: Yeah, I leave Corbett Lake, gave the keys to my crew. I have a wonderful crew up there. Some were there for thirty years. And I said, Well, don't lose too much money. Because nobody fishes in August, right?

HL: Right.

PM: You got to let the water cool down. So, you know, I'm doing a lot better working for these guys. Plus I could fish all day. So anyway, I cooked breakfast for these guys at 6:00 in the morning, you know, make them a pie to go on a boat, so it's fresh and — and they eat sandwiches every day, right? They got in that goddamn boat and I didn't see them until 6:00 or 7:00 o'clock at night, right? And I'm sitting right on the best pool on the whole river.

BK: Nice.

PM: Not anymore. We had a tremendous flood and there's nothing there anymore. Just sad as all hell, really. But it was fantastic. And I cooked – you know, I've caught hundreds of steelhead there. Well, after forty years, why wouldn't I, being there for six weeks, you know. It don't take a rocket scientist to do that.

BK: Six weeks.

PM: Yeah, well at first it was six weeks, and then I cut it down to four. I used to get back for Labor Day, but, yeah. And I finally got to a stage, my knee was really starting to hurt me. We're only talking about five years ago now. And the guys, really good kids who own it. Well, Blewett's kids own it, right. And I figured I know what's going to happen here. I'm going to get really hurting, and they're going to get a helicopter and get me out of there, and so I said to them, Listen, Billy, I've got a problem. I can't do this anymore, not then. I can't come back next year. I don't want to let you down. They understood that. But, I talked to Henry. You would love Henry. Henry's from Tennessee, apple pie. He talks like – he's one of them honky guys from Tennessee, Memphis, you know what I mean? Hey, give me some apple pie. Screw you guys (*laughter*). So I went out the back and me and Henry, he was having a fag, and we're sitting. I'm barbecuing some stuff on the grill. So I told Henry, Listen, Henry. He's like one of my best guys. I've looked after his family forever. The first guy ever up in that place with his uncle, who just died here recently, John Shrader. And they've had this week from the beginning of that camp, and I could see he was always having trouble filling it up. He'd take his son with him, and he'd pick some really good guys, holy Christ. But they didn't have any money. He'd get paid for it half the time, and it's like \$10,000 a week. It ain't cheap to go fishing the Dean River.

BK: Wow.

PM: So I said, Geez, I said, I'll tell you what. I don't want to leave. I've got to quit working. But you know, if you can – if that seat's empty in that boat... Come on in, boy. You know how they talk, them guys from Memphis. Glad to have you, buddy. So we did that for four years, and then the knee was getting so bad I couldn't do it. And I was going to get an operation, and it didn't work. So if I get my knee fixed, I don't think I'm going to be fishing in the river, but maybe next year, because I've still got a seat in the boat if I want it. It's very difficult to be – to get a seat on a boat on the Dean River. It's a very exclusive place, right?

HL: Yes.

PM: You don't fill the guide up like we do, you know, in these fishing camps here. So yeah, that was one of the world's great camps. Three guys, especially, out of them.

HL: Three guys.

BK: Three guys.

PM: Three guys. Five of us, me and the guide and the three dudes, we used to call them. We'd all sit around the table, swatting mosquitoes all night long. Sedge salad – we used to have sedge salad. Because when they made this building, they didn't have any insulation nowhere, you know, typical bullshit, a bunch of 2x4s, stuck on a piece of plywood, and that was it. You know, big holes this big, and you're right by the river, they got all these gas lines. There's no power there.

HL: Sure.

PM: And of course, all the sedges loved that. So put the salad out before dinner, by the time we got ready to eat it they would be crawling with sedges. It tastes good (*laughter*). And they'd say, where are we going for dinner, Pete? I'd say, Well, we can start with sedge salad. Oh yeah, we know about that. We had so much goddamn fun up there. And I used to have to keep quiet, right, because these guys are paying a lot of money, you know. And they're catching – we were all catching fish. But some days I'd catch more than the three of them put together. I just got lucky to be in the right place at the right time. Use little flies, that's the secret. I taught the Club about that the

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other day, saying the same thing. They don't like all these big flashy stuff. They like it for a while, but they get turned off of it. And the little flies that look like an insect when they were little fish, and they grab it with a lot more fury, a lot of times, anyway. Tough to land them on little flies, though sir. Not really though, but we had to put them back anyway.

HL: So during this period of time, you're owning Corbett.

PM: Yeah, yeah.

HL: And so you ran that during the – was it a three season kind of a thing?

PM: What, Corbett Lake?

HL: Yes.

PM: No, at that time, I just ran it in the wintertime.

HL: Okay.

PM: Christmastime. It was famous for Christmas banquets. It was the only place to go. It was a wonderful place to have a Christmas party.

HL: Yes.

PM: There's always snow there. Got them two great big fireplaces roaring on there and, you know, you ate a lot of it.

HL: So when did you start stocking the lake? So tell me about that.

PM: I'm going to get some more wine. Yeah, that's a long story. Well, it ain't that long. I'm glad that you reminded me of that, we had that for twenty-five years.

(Short break taken)

PM: So what were we talking about?

HL: Well, I was asking about stocking the lake.

PM: Oh, the lake. Yeah, okay. There was a guy called Bill Nation.

BK: Oh yes.

PM: You know about him, you know about Bill Nation? You know Jollymore⁶, right? He's the world's expert on Bill Nation. And there's a guy who done a big service for people around here, him and Lingren⁷, really.

HL: Yes.

PM: They're the only guys really recording us crazy bastards, other than what you guys are doing. I'm really upset about that, really. It takes an American university to come in and interview a bunch of hillbillies. But just that, when we're gone, somebody's going to know about us, right? And nobody's doing that here. They don't even

⁶ Bill Jollymore

⁷ Art Lingren

know who Haig-Brown is, half of these people here. I tell you, you ask them, they don't have a clue. Kind of weird though. You get these famous people amongst a bunch of hillbillies and, you know, they don't know him. We had a guy called Malcolm Lowry, a famous writer, *Underneath the Volcano*, he wrote. And he lived down in West Vancouver. He was another drunk Englishman. You know, and he's world famous. He got prizes for these books. Nobody knew who the hell he was either, until somebody put him on the TV one night, and now they all know him. Well he's dead now, but.

So what were we doing? Oh, fishing, oh yeah. So what the deal was is that Bill Jollymore and Steve Raymond wrote a book all about Bill Nation— well not all about him, but he's the front and center of it all. And I could find you that book, but. Have you got a Bill Nation book? Not on Bill Nation. You've got —

HL: Raymond.

PM: — Raymond's.

BK: Sure.

HL: Yes.

PM: *Kamloops Trout?*

BK: Yes.

HL: Yes.

PM: Well look through there, you'll see a picture of Bill Nation standing there with a whole bunch of fish falling off one of them wooden boats I got pictured there.

BK: Right.

PM: And they were six to eight pounds. And I looked at that picture and I thought, you know, what the hell has happened to this place? Because you can't catch six pounds— well, they're here, if you're "really" good, but the average, and this is really good fishing around here, but the average fish you're going to catch in most lakes, if you get a 14-incher you're doing good. Because they're stocking the shit out of it, right, for tourists. So I looked at that and I figured, something wrong here somewhere. So now I get involved with Minnie Lake. I was already involved in Minnie Lake in — don't ask me this because the manager phoned me the other day, he's a big buddy of mine. We're in a legal suit with a bunch of guys who are trying to ice fish up there. We can't remember— I can't remember. I'm going to say, 1964 I came here. I'm going to say around 1968, I'd left The Grasslands— no, I'd sold Thuya Lakes, and I was working in the Grasslands, just subbing. I would do a few shifts and stuff like that, right? And I gotf— no, you've got me wrong here. I've got it wrong. Minnie Lake is one of the most prolific pieces of water in the world, for insects. It's got an average depth of about 15 feet, but it winterkills all the time. And Stoney Lake never had any fish in it. Because Minnie and Stoney, you know these two names, don't you?

BK: Yes.

HL: Yes.

PM: They're private lakes, which I started. They weren't private, were all public in the old days. But Stoney Lake never had fish. There was no problem there. Minnie Lake would constantly winterkill. So, the guy who was the manager of the ranch at that time, we got to talking together, and I said, well listen, why don't you try to — I've got to see what you can do with this thing here. And I didn't have nothing to do in the summer because I wasn't — no, I hadn't bought Corbett Lake yet, right. I just sold Thuya Lakes, working in the ski resorts in the wintertime. So I went out there. That's where I met Harry Lemire.

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You'll love this, great, you'll love it, what a story. In rolls Harry and Mike Frith. He passed away here recently. They're all dying, ain't that a son-of-a-bitch? A great guy. So what the deal was, I was living on the edge of this miserable bloody lake. It's just a big, 300-acre puddle, where the wind howls 23 hours a day. And when the wind ain't blowing, you need a blood transfusion because the mosquitos definitely eat you alive. So you really like the wind. You're praying to the wind god, don't go away please. And you'd walk through the grass and there'd be hundreds of mosquitos, clouds of them. It was so bad, the American Army sent this biologist guy, or some guy who knew about chemicals, to see if they could find a solution other than DEET the stuff that they put on. So, it was his job, this poor bastard, everyday he'd come out there, roll his sleeve up, and he'd rub, you know, dog shit on it or margarine, just to find, experiment to see what – it was scientific experiment. Of course the things would be eating him alive. He never did find anything better than DEET, and he spent three weeks at it. Yeah, he lost all kinds of weight. This is a good place, it doesn't get much worse than this place. So anyway that's not the story.

So I've got a contract with Douglas Lake. I could charge for boat launching. And I've got no accommodation. I'm living in this old shack, with no running water, no toilet. I had an outhouse there. And you know, free, when my wife had left me. I don't wonder why. And I had my brother living in there with me, pack rats. That goddamn pack rat, man, the son-of-a-bitch would drive me nuts. I got this stuff one night, it's rolling around, so I got my shotgun, "Boom," blew a hole in the wall. I got the pack rat (*laughter*), but Jesus Christ. I didn't realize a shotgun would qualify as a pretty deadly weapon. There was shit flying all over the place.

Blewett did that one night, in his cabin. There were mice everywhere, right, and we were sitting there getting drunk around the kitchen table. This bloody mouse is walking along the top of the cupboard. He picks up this goddamn knife (*knife throwing sound*), Crocodile Dundee. Now that's a knife. Nailed the goddamn mouse right into the wall (*laughter*). Now that was some really fancy shooting, you would've loved this guy (*laughter*).

Anyway, where was I?

Oh yeah, oh Harry. So Harry rolls in with his fancy trailer, because Harry worked for Boeing. He wasn't rich or anything, but he'd got some money, you know. So he gets there and we say hi, and whatever, you know. How are you? We got time, and I'm sitting there for days on my own sometimes. Nobody there, right? I'm stir crazy. Somehow we start putting his fishing rods together. Holy Christ, he's got all these fly rods, bamboo fly rods yet. He's got two of them. I thought, oh my God, this guy's got to be the richest guy in the world, two bamboo fly rods. So I said, Jesus, mate, can I have a look at that fly rod? Yeah, he said, you can have a look at it. I said, Can I cast it? Oh yeah, no problem. So we spent the afternoon casting fly rods up and down the road. We never did go fishing. So that's how I met Harry Lemire. Oh Jesus.

BK: What year would that be?

PM: Well, not– what did I say, 1967? Yeah.

HL: Something like that.

PM: Yeah, because it was a great lake. Now I wasn't managing it then, right? We were talking about fish farming here, weren't we? But I wasn't managing the lake then. That was run by the [Department of] Fisheries.

BK: Okay.

HL: And this was at Douglas Lake?

PM: This was Minnie and Stoney Lake.

HL: Okay.

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PM: On Douglas Lake property.

BK: Yeah, yes.

PM: So, Fisheries did it, and I was trying to figure a way of diverting a creek that runs down through the mountains, through it trying to stop the winterkill. It was a crazy idea. Anyway, I kept the lake alive for about three years, built some dams. Just used dams to store water. And in the wintertime I'd be working at the ski resorts, right, so it was pretty good. And I used to tie flies. Talk about— we did talk about Jack Shaw, did we the other day? Did Brian Chan talk about Jack Shaw?

HL: He mentioned him.

PM: Yeah, famous. He was his mentor.

HL: Yes. And did teach him how to tie flies.

PM: Yeah, that's the guy. I used to tie flies for Jack Shaw.

BK: Wow.

PM: Three hundred dozen, three extra-long number 8 halfbacks, 300 dozen.

BK: Whoa.

HL: Whoa.

PM: I don't like tying flies anymore. I did that for quite a few – well, I needed the money, right. And he'd give me fifty cents apiece or more. I think it was twenty-five cents in them days. But, yeah, I knew him quite well. But that's not the story.

So, finally I put these dams in, on Walker Lake and another lake, I can't remember, it doesn't matter. And we had a horrendous snowfall that winter. And it washed all the dams out, and the snowfall was heavy on Minnie Lake, the fish all died. Everything got killed. So I said to Neil Williams, he was the manager of the Ranch at that time, I said, Listen, I can't do this anymore. I'm going to lose my ass here, is what happens. And then I run into old Henry Maischak, down at my buddy's store, I'm sitting there drinking coffee. And I said, How you doing, Henry? He said, I'm doing good. He's 80 years old now, right? And he said to me, I want to see you. And I thought maybe he wanted me to go down and fix some boats for him. That's a f*cking joke, me fixing boats, but I was a lot better than he was, because he was useless, so. He was a good bridge player. He was a gambler. Anyway, so I went up to see him, and he said, Listen, I've got to quit, you know. Would you be interested in buying my shares up? And I said, Well, you know, I never – So that's how I, I told you this story already. I finally bought his shares out, and he went and put a ranch over there. I don't know, he's about 80 years, buys a bleeding vineyard, just about killed himself. So then I walked away from it.

And I'm at Corbett Lake full time now, right. Then I went to visit a friend of mine, who's passed away. Most of my guys are dead. And he was the ranch manager of this Minnie Lake. And when I left Minnie Lake, I suggested that they should— I told them they should re-divert the road around the whole thing, because it used to be the main road that used to go to Pennask Lake, well it was just a little old goat trail, really. You know, it would be better for them, and everybody, the logging trucks and stuff. So, Christ, when I went back there, Helmut got to be the manager, so we were all good friends, and we went there for dinner one day. Come on out and have dinner. They built this great big new log house for him and the whole nine yards. And Jesus Christ, when I get there, there's a gate on it, and there's a fence, and there's a padlock on it. And I thought, geez. And I've got a combination, he's told me about this, so I opened the gate and we go in there. And I'm looking at that and I'm thinking, boy this is it, mate. And it

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was a year when there was no snow. And we'd go up there every once a week, and we'd go get drunk and eat and whatever.

And I said to Helmut one day, I'd like to kind of walk around it, around Stoney Lake. I'm interested in looking at something. He said, No problem, great. So, you know, we'd walk around in snowshoes, but there was no snow. So I got my hunting boots and away I went. I got to the end of Minnie – Stoney Lake, the middle of it, and there's water running out of it. And I thought, well that is strange. There shouldn't be water running out of Stoney Lake, right? Now before, what I'd done is, I'd – that was the plan when I first went there. I used to run, divert this creek through a whole bunch of Chinese flumes. Harry was there, Christ, putting them bastards to work, sweating away, mosquitos eating us alive. Because these flumes were built by Chinamen a hundred years ago to irrigate a half a mile or mile away, to a place called China Flat. Kind of a good name for it, right? And they kept falling down, and the water would – oh, it was brutal. Anyway, we did it. I kept the fish alive for three years doing that. And then I just told you, when we had this tremendous winterkill, I was out of there.

So, when I went back – and I was always fighting with the beavers. This is a great story, you are going to love this story. F*cking beavers. Every night they would block – we had the Chinese flume going good, then it would run through a bit of a gravel ditch for a while. And every night these goddamn beavers would get in there and block the thing off, cut the water off. Geez, we'd have to go and take the beaver dam out. It was a constant fight. So, a buddy of mine, Sherwood, had a shop down there, a novelty shop, and he's got all these Conan bear traps in there, beaver traps. What the hell he's doing with them in a goddamn shop, I don't know. And he's trying to get rid of them, so I bought them all, right, ten. So I loaded the creek up with traps. Hell, I used to be a real trapper. I'll tell you the dynamite story and all in a minute (*laughter*). I never did catch a bloody beaver. You know, beavers are smart.

But, so when I went back again and saw the water, this is when I'm partying in the ranch house, walking around, see the water running out of Stoney Lake, I get curious. I'm thinking, where is that water coming from? So I get walking near Stoney Lake, I walk out there and there's a natural ravine up it, right, and I more or less know where I'm going because we duck hunt there all the time. So to cut a long story short, what these beavers were doing were f*cking my creek up, running water down into this swamp where we used to duck hunt, and then they would go down a road... You see, I was trying to divert the water along the flume and take it to China Flats and dump it into another creek, half a mile from where I am now, three-quarters of a mile. The minute I saw that, I was thinking them beavers, they knew exactly what they were doing. They were blocking the water off, running it down into that great big pond, run it down the road, and then it went into a canyon, and then it run right in the head of Stoney Lake. It was a perfect diversion.

So, I looked at that and I said to my buddies, I have to go and see the manager. I said, Okay, Joe, I want to go back and try this again. So he said, Okay. I got screwed there. But he told me I was going to get screwed. Yeah, you know. He said, Listen, you can do what you want out there, he said, but you're never going to get any tenure. Chunky Woodward's place is what we're talking about, it's a billion dollar ranch, or more than that actually. But you can screw around all you like. And I did that for 11 years, and I created a hell of a fishery there, right? I finally got kicked out of there. I lost it. But having said that, I wanted – I was buying fish all of the time, so I figured a friend of mine has a ranch down here - Masonic guy I know- and he had springs on it. And I've been an Englishman. If you've got springs and water, of course you can grow trout. That's it right there, you know. I know that.

HL: Sure.

PM: It's part of being an Englishman. You know, the chalk streams and stuff. So I said to Jim, Geez, I want to try to grow some fish here. So we put a pond in and I went and bought some minnows from a guy, and I started trout farming right there. And then, so what happened then? So I finally made Minnie Lake into a world class fishery. It was unbelievable. There was a lot of 10-12 pound trout, beautiful fish. And they weren't done in a hatchery, they were growing that big in the lake.

HL: Right.

PM: Because I only put them in this big. One day, it killed me to fish them. I was trying to catch spawners in Stoney Lake. I've got Stoney Lake going now because I've got this mega diversion going the right way. When I first went there I was just trying to save Minnie Lake, right, not Stoney Lake. It really wasn't in the profile. I'd buy fish and chuck them in there, and it was full of saw mill crap, and it was teeming with shrimp. It was unbelievable. You'd pick the logs out of there, millions of them, because it was a low oxygen sort of place, and shrimp kind of like that a bit. So anyway, so I kind of left that alone until I got figured out that creek when I went back the second time. And – now I lost my train of thought here. Where was I?

HL: Well, we're trying to figure out how you started the fish production facility at –

PM: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. I went down to this buddy of mine, at the ranch down there. He's got a spring, a thousand gallons of water coming out of the ground. So when me and my buddy, another friend I've got, he used to run the federal hatchery here, and he lost it. Crazy bastard. He got mixed up with his Indian friends. Hey, buddy, I've got a thousand suckers, you know. I want to borrow your freezer for a little while. Neal was a great guy. And who knew? So he chucks these goddamn fish in the thing where they keep all the fish food, froze them all up. Federal fishery inspector comes rolling in there one day, checked the planner. What are these fish doing in there? That was it. He lost a hell of a lot. He lost his contract, and he had two contracts for the federal government, this guy.

Anyway, we built this fish farm over, him and his guys, we all got together and made this fish farm on this ranch down the road there. So that's where we first– that's how we really started growing trout.

HL: Did you move that operation to Corbett or?

PM: No. No, no, Corbett Lake's never been – no, all the fish were always grown at Ringgold, in the spring. It's called Stumbles Creek, is what it's called, basically. And then every spring you'd be there, I'd be packing them out. It was a lot of work, man. You know, you have to transport – we used to put 2,000 fish in there, in the back of a truck, and some were like – I've got a picture of an 18-pounder I put in there one day. It was a f*cking steelhead, really.

HL: Wow.

PM: He had lots of sixteen pounds and stuff like that. You know, they had tremendous fish in there. And I ended up losing the – when the guy who owned the Ranch died, his sons took it over. I mean, they've got billions of dollars, these guys, but they've never got enough. So I used to charge \$30 a day to go and fish. Everybody'd stay at Corbett Lake, and it's only about a forty-five minute journey from there to this place, this Minnie Lake.

HL: Right.

PM: So I'd go over and fish all day. You'd love it. So, you don't– you're a lawyer, but you're in Seattle?

HL: No, Bellingham.

PM: Yeah, right, it doesn't matter. Do you know the name Waldo? Waldo, Waldo.⁸

HL: No.

PM: Anyway, he belonged to the Pacific-Union Club and all that crap down there, real high end guys, lawyers, and doctors. Mason Clinic?

⁸ Attorney Jim Waldo

HL: Hm-mmm.

PM: You know about that?

HL: Yes, Virginia Mason.

PM: Yeah, and all of them guys used to come. And I couldn't get anybody to go fish at Minnie Lake, right? And I said, Geez, you've got to go. So one day I said, I've had enough of this bullsh*t. I said, Jump in the truck. I'm going to take you fishing. So I took them up to Stoney Lake. Meanwhile, these guys weren't the world's greatest fishermen, but they were historic, they'd fished in BC all since they were kids. You know, they're like Bill Nation type of guys. They knew Bill Nation and stuff. And so I'm at Stoney Lake. I said, I'll be back at 4:30 or 5:00 to pick you up to take you back to dinner. Holy Christ, man. They come back, they're all beaming. They never caught a fish that was under eight pounds, and it was unbelievable.

BK: Wow.

HL: Wow.

PM: Yeah. And that's when they went back to Seattle and got to bullsh*tting around that Pacific-Union Club or what you've got down there and all the high rollers, and boy, and then Jim Teeny showed up, a little asshole that guy. And he moved in on the action. He was like – pissed me off. And when I lost it, nobody would ever come and visit me anymore, so you know. Just using me for work really.

HL: Yes.

PM: I got him one day when he had come to the lodge many years after that, and he walked in. He had a good looking wife. I don't think he's got her anymore. I think he's a bit of an abusive little bastard. She always looked like she was scared to me. He walked in, you know, I didn't recognize him – I did recognize him, I thought, screw you. And he walked around for like – And I said, Can I help you, sir? And he looked at me, I mean, Jesus. He said, You don't know who I am? I said, Well, you look kind of familiar (*laughter*).

PM: He could promote god on an iceberg, that guy. So I just cleaned him right at it. I was kind of nice to him. I let him go fishing. So where were we at?

HL: When did you move the operation so you were actually getting your clients to fishing on Corbett Lake? So that –

PM: Oh, okay. This is what happened.

HL: – going to Minnie and Stoney?

PM: What happened, this is a good story. They're all good stories. What happened was, I got kicked out after eleven years of running that place. They come along and said, Listen, no more \$30 a day. And I gave them like 30% rent every day. If I took \$30 bucks, I'd give them \$10. I mean, what bloody business pays 30% rent? Nobody. I was really trying to be honest with them. But they figured I was getting \$200, scamming money and – and of course I'm driving around in a Jag, but they don't know – (*laughter*). I mean, they don't know it only cost me \$3,000 and a nice paint job, you know. So, finally they kicked me out of there. They didn't kick me out, I'm still welcome. I can go anytime I want. But I lost all the business.

It went, like the Waldos of this world. I mean, they got lots of money but nobody wants to get screwed. You know, they don't mind paying you \$30 bucks a day, but now I've got to say, I'm sorry, but it's got to be a \$100. I don't own this place, and they told me that. Say listen, you little bastard, you might be – And I was pretty cocky, you

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know. I was the king of the fish. He said, You know, you can't forget, we own this place, and we want you to charge \$100 a day for those clients of yours over there. And I figured, that's the end, the death knell. So I went from one year prior to that, I put eight-hundred rods in there, in a year. The next year, we only got eight. So my involvement there was gone. They put a freeway berth – that freeway from Kelowna. You ever been on it? It didn't always come all the way to Merritt. It used to run – it wasn't double lane. It used to be single lane, then it was a two-lane road forever and ever. But the guys could come from Kelowna, and the guys really started to move in from the coast, because it's not very far to Abbotsford. It's an hour's journey, really. So everybody from there and there all converging on Corbett – and it's a public lake now. You'd have loved this as a lawyer.

I found that book, yeah there, it's sitting right there, ain't that amazing. I'll tell you a story. You'll love this. This is when I'm getting kicked out of Minnie Lake. So I've got my buddy, my friend who's the hatchery guru. I get him to come with me over to Woodward. He said, You're going to get screwed here, Pete. I said, I think we are. So there was a book in my library up there, and it's by a guy called Ben Goldberg, or some Jewish name, a very famous lawyer, a negotiating guy for the unions in New York City.

HL: Okay.

PM: So I spent the night reading the book. And I read it, and my buddy was right, I was going to get screwed. What the guy said in the book, when you're negotiating, never assume anything. If the guy says it's black, it's probably white. You got to go to the [very] end to find out whose bullsh*tting who, right? So of course then, when I get talking to the guy who owns the Ranch, the kid, you know, and he was kicking me under the table, and I said, Well, this is the end of the gig on this deal, right. So fine, that was great. Put the book away, I'm gone. Doing business as usual, but now all these people started to come when they put these freeways in, right? I was having to deal with the – the government was going to put a turning lane into Corbett Lake, and they weren't going to pay us enough money. So we've got a real smart lawyer in Kamloops, Reinhard⁹, and I liked this guy. So I phoned him up. I said, Listen – because he was doing the work for me on the turning lane, and he was doing good. And so one day, I come to work and there were sixteen vehicles along the road, and there's boats all over the lake, and all of a sudden the light went on. I've always assumed, this is the truth of it, always assumed that public access was public. Why wouldn't you? It was public when I bought the place. And I thought, uh-uh. I picked the phone up, I said, Listen, Reinhard, I want you to do an in depth legal study, survey, of the access at the other end of the lake. He said, You want to do what? And he said, That will cost you five grand at least. I said, I don't care. I don't know why, I didn't have five grand, but I just had something in my head, I thought I was going to walk away from the money, right.

Anyway, he went at it. Six months went by, I get a phone call, Hey, it's Reinhard. How you doing, Reinhard? Great, cut the bullsh*t, you know. He said, Put a fence up. I said, What the hell are you talking about? Yes, put a fence up, he says. You own actually – you don't only own the access to the lake, you also own half the highway, because they said it all wrong over the years, and it used to be a two-lane road then. It wasn't a freeway like it is now, right. So I thought, you've got to be kidding me. So I didn't do anything for six months because I don't really know the guys at the Fish & Wildlife Department, and it's their game. So I had enough. Those guys, they're cleaning the lake out. And I thought, well, I've got to do something here. And Reinhard basically what he said was, and it's old ancient English law. We have a lot of English law here. You guys don't, I don't think. You've got your own.

HL: We've got a fair amount, but we've changed it.

PM: Yeah. See, everything is run by the Queen here. You know, if I go to battle, I'm fighting with the Queen. You get a lawyer's letter, it's Her Majesty, Regina.

HL: Yes.

⁹ Attorney Reinhard Burke from Kamloops

PM: Whatever it is versus Corbett Lake or Peter McVey. I had to learn one of those. I think it's ridiculous, but I love the Queen.

So, away we go. I got to bite the bullet. I go over to the Fish & Wildlife office, Kamloops. I walk in. Hey, Pete, how are you? I haven't seen you for a while. Because I've dealt with these guys at Thuya Lakes, Minnie Lake... I mean, I've been in the fish farm business all my life, basically, more than anything else. What can we do for you? The guy who was the chief guy there, the Fish & Wildlife man, he had a real bad coughing kind of – it was one of these kind of things (*coughing sounds*), clearing his throat. A bit like me but way worse. So I sat down there. Well, I said, I've got a little problem. I want to put a fence up. I didn't put it that way. I said, I've just had this work. Reinhard, what he told me, getting back to English law, if a beaver blocks your creek up, right, now the government can grab the land above you. But if you go and put a manmade dam below, somebody who owns the property above you, he could actually – this is a really sensible law, because the guy below you could be flooding the sh*t out of you, stealing your land.

HL: That's right.

PM: But, when – so there's been a dam put on that lake in 1900, and it flooded the land, what the law says basically, I own the water, the land under the lake up to the high water mark. And that's what the premise of the whole thing was.

HL: Right.

PM: And he said, This is the way it is. And I said, Geez, you've got to be kidding. They're going to crucify me when I walk in that office. The guy's name's Cartwright, see? John, great guy. So, you'd have loved to be at this meeting. I should have had you there. You'd have probably done a better job than me because you're a lawyer. I says, Yeah, I want to put a fence on it. Hah, what are you talking about? I said, I don't quite understand. I tried to explain it to him. I said, I really – so I gave him Reinhard's card. I said, Just phone him up and he'll explain to you why he figures I got legal tenure to shut the public access off. Nobody's ever done it before. I mean, this is like – you just don't do that kind of stuff. But, this guy told me that we could go to court on it, and this guy's a pretty famous lawyer around here. He kind of does a bunch of tricky sh*t like that. So anyway, I left it for six months and didn't do anything. And in January, I figured I got to get – I don't like causing problems. I'm not that kind of guy. But I've got to make a move here. And so, I phoned him up in January. But I don't know that Cartwright was retiring in July. Why would I? So he just took the whole mess here, because I went to see him in May or something like that, and he just chucked it in on the corner, chucked it on the back burner and did nothing about it.

So then the other guy who got to be his replacement is a guy I know really well, MacGregor, Ian. And I walked in there in January, and he said to me, Hi, Pete. Good to see you. I know why you're here. He said, Come into the office. So I tried to make a deal with him. I didn't want to shut the public access off. I just wanted to get some reasonable control to cut the number of boats down, controlled access for management. And he said, No. Anyway, he thought about it for a while, and he said, Well, come back and see me in a couple of months. And so I went back over there, and he said, No, we've talked about it. Now I know it's been in the attorney general's office for a year now. There's no way they'll ever let anybody put a fence up on a public lake, and they shouldn't be able to put fence on a public lake. It's that simple, really. That's why we live in Canada. You know, we're not living in England here now.

But I got a legal tenure to do it, and this guy says we could. So I think they looked at it for a year and told Cartwright or MacGregor that, I don't know that, but I assume that they told him, Listen, if this guy takes us to court, we're going to lose. So why waste the public's money. So he said, Yes, sit down. We thought this over. We're not too keen on the co-management thing, but he liked me because I've been managing sh*t around here. Brian Chan, you can't believe some of the crap me and Brian Chan used to get up to. I won't tell you, but.... But that was it. I helped them pull the fish out. It was all good. They had a compressor in there to keep the fish alive, which I had one originally, a little tiny one. They had this great big English one, five horsepower. It broke down all

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the time, typical Adler cooling type. So I just got my old compressor out I had had there for years before they put this one in, to stop the winterkill. You've got to stop the winterkill there.

HL: Exactly.

PM: So we got that old thing all set up. And we parted company, but I really didn't give a sh*t because he said to me, Well, you know we can't use - you can't get fish from us anymore. So well, geez, I understand that. You can't have public fishing with no public access. That's not the way it works. But I got my own fish farm, right. So that's how I got it. So I'm not in Corbett Lake, but I was growing fish for Minnie Lake as well at that time.

HL: And when was it that you actually fenced –

PM: We're thinking about that, twenty-five years ago. What would that put you at?

HL: Oh about –

BK: 1991?

HL: – 1990, 1991, something like that. Something like that.

PM: Yes, I'm not going to be positive on this.

HL: That's okay.

PM: Joe Gardner asked me about it. I think it's been fenced for twenty-five years or twenty-four.

HL: Okay, well tell me about Harry. I mean, you told us how you were sort of introduced to him and his two Orvis rods, so how did you become buddies?

PM: Oh, that was it right there, because Harry loved bamboo fly rods, right? So any time they had any time, he'd come up and visit. So then we went fishing on the Kispiox. You'll love this story. This was good. Can we drink to Harry? What a guy.

HL: What a guy.

PM: Finally we drove a thousand miles to the Kispiox, and it's at nighttime, and Gerry Mulligan comes on the radio, and I know about this jazz stuff.

HL: Yes.

PM: I didn't know he was a jazz nut. I'd known him for two or three years, but yes, he lived on jazz, that guy. Yes, isn't that bloody strange? We'd known each other there, but we'd never been anywhere there was any jazz being played. So we got another good thing going there. Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker.

(Break in recording, Mr. McVey walks out of the room)

PM: Did I tell you the story about when shooting clay birds last weekend? I'm standing there, getting ready to make the shot. I go, Pull, and a dragonfly comes screaming out of nowhere. "Boom," and instinctively I shot it. I mean, that wasn't – Jesus Christ. Brilliant shot. It just caught my eye and I just couldn't stop myself. Anyway, where were we at?

HL: Okay, well we were talking about –

PM: Was it Minnie Lake, Harry?

HL: You were talking about you and Harry.

PM: Yes.

HL: And I gather he just kept showing up at Corbett Lake.

PM: Well, him and – right. My wife and his Molly – you know Molly.

HL: Yes.

PM: They were the best of friends, they got to be. Now I wasn't married then. It was the beginning of the Minnie Lake thing, right. That all came later. I was married for twenty-eight years, so we're talking about a lot of time here. So, yes, Shirley was around then. And Harry didn't come to visit me for quite a long time. This is a good story. I didn't see him, and I didn't know why. And somebody told me he was fishing on the Dean River on the Rabbit Run. It used to be just a logging road there, and you could walk down to the Rabbit Run. It'd be a three-mile, two-mile hike. So after lunch one day after we got to feeling on the go kind of, I wanted to go and visit him, because I just don't know what went wrong with our relationship. So we hiked down the river. I hiked down the river and met him and Mike who was there with him I think then, it doesn't matter. We were camped by the Rabbit Run, and I went over. So I said, Geez, I haven't seen you around lately. He said, Well I'm sorry, mate, but with Shirley, we got the feeling like we weren't welcome in your place. And she was leaving anyway, so that was – And she left shortly. So then, I said, Well you've got to come back and visit me again. And I think I was married again by that time, or maybe not. And then Marlene and Harry really got on well. They used to come here at Christmastime.

I'll tell you about Harry. Son-of-a-bitch, this is how crazy this guy is – I've told you the story I think about where he got frostbitten fingers? Do you remember that?

HL: No.

BK: No.

PM: He went down to the – he'd go fish at the rock pile; that is where we used to really catch fish. He'd stay here he'd go fishing every day. Because I was running the restaurant out there then. So, we go down, get back out there at night with him. How you doing, Harry? Christ, he caught eleven steelhead that day.

BK: Wow.

PM: – on a dry line. But it was like twenty below zero. He said, Jesus, mate, my goddamn fingers ain't feeling very good. So, he's holding up his fingers. They're looking kind of black. I said, Get in the truck. We've got to go to the hospital because you've got a real problem. Yes, he froze his fingers, crazy. But fortunately he didn't lose his fingers. That's how nuts he was, standing there catching steelhead and he's freezing to death. Jesus Christ. So that's how I met him. That's what the relationship was. You know, I've always – like when Shirley left, you know, I was on my own there for a bit, and Harry spent a lot of time at Spences Bridge, in the fall, right. He'd spend his holidays there.

HL: Yes.

PM: They're buried in there, actually, right where we used to fish. Anyway, so we'd go down, standing occasion in a grove, the grungy goddamn place. Harry, he'd be up at his trailer. So my missus and his Molly, they'd sit and stitch and bitch all day and go drive into Ashcroft. You know, it was good, me and Harry would go fishing.

HL: So –

PM: I'll tell you a good story. One day –

HL: Go ahead.

PM: This is a double-handed one. I wasn't interested in double-handed fly rods, but I started to get tennis elbow. So he said, You've got to try this double-handed stuff, because we invented this double-handed fly rod. There's one that all these guys fish with. We were in Scotland, and I kept telling Harry, These fishing rods that you are making, the Americans were making in Seattle, they were like spears. They were sixteen foot dry fly rods. And I said, This ain't the way it's supposed to be. It's supposed to be butt swinging. He said, You're full of sh*t. So we were in Scotland on the River Spey, in the holy of holies, and there's a rod builder, a cane rod builder, Trossachs Rod Company. His name was Harry¹⁰, good memory, eh? So I walk in there and I'm looking at the bamboo fly rods, and the bullsh*t's going. So I said to him, Do you know anything about Grant's Vibration Rods? And he said, Yes, by Jesus, we're making the Grant Vibration Rods. We're making them out of Kevlar. He made it out of greenheart, the guy, this Grant guy. This is a little Scotchman, about my size probably, could stand in the River Spey or wherever he was fishing – it was one of them, not the famous river. And he could chuck about 125 yards of line, it was unbelievable, you know, switch casting. So, and Bob Southwell knew all about that stuff, and he used to make kind of Grant's Vibration fly rods. But Paul Young did those, Harry brought it once, set your swing from underneath the handle.

HL: Yes.

PM: So that's what a double-handed – So, anyway, this guy, he said, There's the rod there, but it's not finished as you can see. He had a handle on it. So I gave it to Harry, no rings, nothing. I said, You give that a flick, and tell me I'm full of bullsh*t. So he gives it a flick. Christ, mate, he says, I think you're on to something here (*laughter*). I said, I know I'm on to something. I'd never seen one before because I hadn't been dealing with double-handed fly rods. So I knew how to measure a rod with a piece of cardboard. You can do it. It's very, very crude. But you can get some sense of the rod's properties. So Harry had to go feed his dog, or some bloody thing. This is the other Harry. So while he was away, I measured the rod. I took five or six measurements with a cigarette packet, because they got thick cardboard on them, right? So anyway, we stole the idea, and then that was it. We come back. We went to Grantown¹¹. Did you hear that story? We went – I could go – You aren't going to have enough time for all this.

We were in Paris. We got ripped off, because I got drunk. I read the Michelin guidebook, and it says in the Michelin guidebook, every restaurant in France has to have the menu, the table d'hôte menu, planted on the door, you know, especially if it's three course. Table d'hôte, fixed price, same thing. And you can see what you get. So we just got off the plane, and we're happy as hell. We're in Paris, f*cking great eh? We got settled in the hotel. That was a joke and all, poor old Molly, she had booked this fancy hotel, and they sent me down the street the Rue de something, or some bloody deal to find out where it was. So I go down this hill, and there's this f*cking old hotel with this single lightbulb, you know, hanging out there. You know, the windows are all dirty. It's unbelievable. I looked at that and I look around the corner and this Hotel Nouveaux is built on the hill, but you can't see it from there. So I thought I'd have a joke on her. So we got five f*cking suitcases. It was ridiculous. We just got off the bloody tube, you know, the metro there, a Friday night, oh my God. So I said to – and she'd made all the bookings for this stuff. So I said, Well there it is, Marlene. Oh my God, she said, what did I do? You know, lightbulb hanging, shutters all blown out. No, I said, don't worry, just walk around the corner there. That was fun.

So what we did is we left there. We got ripped off. We spent \$600 for a lobster, because I got drinking too much. And the reason I did it was, trout, because I had to read the menus. I'd been a cook, right? So we got the *truite au bleu* on the menu, the main course, I know what it is. It's just trout with vinegar poured over it.

¹⁰ Harry Jamieson owned Trossachs at that time

¹¹ Grantown-on-Spey

HL: Yes.

PM: But they got this tank full of trout, and half of them were dead on the bottom. And it's some special. So I said to Harry, We ain't eating that, because that's what they're going to sell you. I mean, that's what you do in restaurants, right, especially the Frenchmen. They want your money. So the waiter comes out, Monsieur, how you doing tonight? Would you have Macon-Villages? I really like Macon-Villages wine. It's like white Burgundy.

HL: Yes.

PM: Or would you like the Chablis. I said, No, we'll have the Macon-Villages. So we hadn't eaten any dinner yet and we got two bottles of wine down us. So, Monsieur, you have the menu. What are we doing here? Tonight we have the fine lobster. So I said, Write down on a piece of paper what it's going to cost. So he wrote it down. I thought it was sixty francs, a gram. They sell everything by grams. So I mean, I was – he bought a five pound lobster. I mean, I should know, you don't eat five pound lobsters. But, you know, I was happy and drunk. So he sells us this five pound lobster. And you could hardly eat the goddamn thing because it's tough as hell, and that ain't the point. So I thought the bill was going to be like, you know, \$150 or something. But Jesus Christ, I've got the zeros mixed up with money, and it was \$600. F*cking Harry, man, he was pissed off. He was a pretty tough guy, Harry was, you know. He was pretty crude with the language sometimes. And he said, Jesus! He wanted to wait, come back and pick this guy up in the back alley and beat the sh*t out of him (*laughter*). He did. He was so mad. I said, Christ, Harry, we can't do that. We'll end up in the French Foreign Legion, on Paris Island or some goddamn deal. So that was it. We had to leave France. He'd had enough of that.

So then we went to visit Bob Southwell because he knew Bob. Bob used to – you'll love this. I said to Bob, Harry's there. I want you to make a steelhead rod for Harry. He said, Okay. What kind of ferrule? Probably for an 8-weight, you know, 14/64, something like. So I'm cooking, it's lunch time. So we all go over to do a bit of cooking, go back half an hour later. I said, How's it going? He said, Oh it's going great. He said, It's nearly finished. He could make a fishing rod that quick.

BK: Wow.

HL: Wow.

PM: Of course it wasn't glued.

HL: Sure.

PM: Yes, yes. It would be 45 minutes, we've got the top and the bottom joint. Harry loved that rod. He finally blew it up, mind you fishing f*cking stuff. What are you going to do, I mean, you want to fish with an 8-weight trout rod? Harry thought that was great. So we got it all glued up. I put it together for him and stuff. He fished it forever, and then finally the glue went on it, so I made him another chunk, the bottom, and I resurrected the tip. He's still got that – I still had that then.

So the trick was, we went to visit Bob, then what are we going to do there? So I said to Harry, Let's go to Scotland and look at the River Dee where the – Arthur Wood's book, *Greased Line Fishing*, is the bible for steelhead fishing.

HL: Yes it is.

PM: Yes. I said, he lived – he's on the Royal Dee. Canton is the name of the piece of water. And he said, How are we going to do that, Pete? I said, Don't worry. So I said to the girls, Well I'll tell you what, you guys love Shakespeare and Stratford-on-Avon and all that crap. We're going to go and visit where Shakespeare was born, right? So we're heading north now, right. So we were in Stratford-on-Avon, wining and dining for a couple of days. So what's going to happen now? So now we've got James Herriot, the vet on the TV. Do you remember

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him? He lives north of there. So we got to kind of see where he's hanging out. So we're heading north, go through the black country of England. It's a bloody grungy looking place. Staffordshire where all the industry was?

HL: Yes.

PM: Just brutal. So, what are we going to do now? We're only about an hour and a half to the Scottish border now see. So I said, Well, Christ, let's go and look at the River Tweed. That's the first river, right. Oh we had a great time. Sh*t, we went there, stayed in the Knock-a-doo pub. It was unbelievable. Got pushed in with a bunch of guys, Scotchmen, poured them a bunch of whisky. Christ, got up in the morning, went to breakfast, and they'd decorated our place with Atlantic salmon flies.

BK: Whoa.

HL: Nice. That's sweet.

PM: They'd gone over and, yes, unbelievable.

HL: That's very sweet.

PM: Yes really. We were going to get to fish. One guy on a chunk of the river there. He said, Come down tomorrow morning, you can fish for the day. But that night when we were staying in this fancy fishing lodge there, it started to rain, f*ck it, the skies opened up. And we got up in the morning and looked at the River Tweed, and it was just a jungle, bloody Amazon. So I phoned the guy up and I said, I assume it's useless. Yeah, he said, I'm sorry, sir. You know, we would have loved to let you have a go at it on our beat. The Stanley Beat, I think it's called. The famous beat there.

So now we got to head north. We're going to go to the Royal Dee, so that's what we did. Get to the Royal Dee, Balmoral, where the Queen lives, and we stayed in the Banchory Hotel. This is great, unbelievable. We're sitting drinking at the bar, we're always drinking, never saw a fly rod anywhere. Spinning rods and Ambassadeur reels. And I said to Harry, Where are the f*cking flies? Geez, mate, I don't know, he said, it doesn't look quite right to me. So there's these two old Englishmen, well, old, this was a few years ago, tweed coats, you know, the hats. And I heard one guy say, That goddamn American blighter. This young American kid had a blue ski jacket on, jeans. I mean, he's way out of his f*cking place in this place. These guys have all got Benders¹² and sh*t outside, you know. And he's got a salmon under each arm, and they've got these trays. In England you display your catches. I mean, it's really like a gong show. And for three nights he brought two salmon in, laid them on the ice, and he's the only guy in the whole hotel that has gotten any. That goddamn son-of-a-bitch has done it again, Freddy (*laughter*), and Harry was laughing, Holy Christ.

So he said to the guy behind the bar, we want to go to Canton to see Arthur -- they didn't even know who Arthur Wood was. I mean, he's just down the street. It's the most famous goddamn pool on the River Tweed. They ain't got a clue. But he said, I know where you're talking about. He said, You go down the road. It's been snowing all night, right. In the morning after breakfast, he said, you go down the road. You go down the road for about three miles, you make a little bit of a left hand turn. So we go down. He said, You'll see a wee cottage on the side of the road. So I said, Okay. So away we go. There's not much snow on the road. We stopped for breakfast there, good breakfast, great bacon. So we get down there, and there's this f*cking Scotchman, got the hood of a truck up, flat on his bum. He's down inside of it, fixing the motor. And I said to Harry, This can't be it. This don't look right to me. You know, because we're talking about one of the great fishing beats in the world. So this guy, I tapped him on the ass. He f*cking jumps up, hits his head on the bonnet. He ain't too happy right there. So we calm him down, so he tells us where to go. There's this road, there's not a track on the road. He said, Just follow that road, sir. He said, You'll find Mr. Carrick, or whatever his name, the guy who owned the place there. And Harry wouldn't go. Well I'm driving. I had to drive all through there. He didn't know how to drive. So I said, Piss on that. I said, Listen,

¹² Bentleys

man, we've come all the way from Paris to see this. It's like Christians going to Jerusalem. Really, it's like what we did this weekend.

HL: Yes.

PM: . . . showing up. I mean, you know, if you're a Christ lover and met Jesus in Jerusalem, that's what we were doing there, really. And he's quite a humble guy and doesn't like to hear that, but. Well, we talked about it before – So, I said, Get in, we got to go. Six inches of snow, this rental car ain't going worth a sh*t. So we drive for about a mile, and then we come – and I suddenly recognize the house because this house is in that book. It's a little stone lodge.

HL: Yes.

PM: So, I walk out there through the snow, get my feet wet, bang on the door. The door opens. This nice lady comes out the door, Can I help you, sir? And I said, Yes, we would like to go and look at the river. Anyway, we go up – the guy who owns the joint, he's standing behind the door. So he opens the door up, and he's a handsome dude, gray hair, blue eyes, you know, mustached, all that. Can I help you gentlemen? He's really upper crust. Well he's got to be if he owns this bloody place. So I said, I'm Peter McVey from British Columbia, and this is Harry Lemire from Washington State, and, you know, we've read the bible, Wood's book. He knew we weren't bullsh*tting. And I said, We would like permission to walk down to the pool, just to show our reverence and to see it. So he said, Yes, no problem, my boy. He said, On your way back, you come and see me. I'll buy you a Scotch. So I said, Okay, that's fine. So we had to walk down to the river, that much snow to the bloody – I've got these fancy tweed shoes I used to wear in them days, getting them all screwed up, you know. So we go down. We saw a couple fish jumping and stuff. So we got back. He said, Well, if you gentlemen had been here yesterday - same as the other guy in the Tweed, I'd have had my gillie. But you understand, we can't fish on a Sunday in Scotland.

BK: Yes.

PM: He said, But come on in, I'll show you around. So he brought us in, showed us the guy's diaries, flies. And he said, I've got a real, real special pleasure for you. I said, Okay, what's that? He said, I've got a little museum in the back. He owned, you know, fifty acres of f*cking land there. He said, I'm just getting it together. I'll take you over and show you some more stuff. He's got the rods hanging. So we – you'll love this. Hanging on the wall, there's a whole bunch of spinners on a piece of wire. So he looks at me and Harry, he says, You chaps, you don't use those things, do you? I look at Harry, and I said, No, sir, we don't use those things. Those bloody blighters across the river. He only owns half of the river. So any opportunity he gets when he's fishing out there, if he can hook their lines, he winds them up and cuts them off and hangs them on the hook. Anyway, so that's the story about that guy. I had to tell you that.

Then we go to the Flyfishers' Club in London. This is fabulous. There's a guy there, a famous angler. I'm going to say his name is Clarke¹³. He wrote fishing books about fly fishing - Recently. Very good books. We met him on the Dean River, drank all his whiskey. Poor bastard, he got stuck in a flood. So he said, Well, when you guys come to London – we told him we were going to go to London in the spring – come and see me. He said, Come by, have a beer and some bangers and mash. So we got there, he said, I'm sorry, ol' chap, I'm just going shark fishing in the Canary Islands, or some goddamn – I'm just getting ready to leave. So we wanted to know where we could go trout fishing, or salmon fishing. Well, he said, I've got this friend of mine who owns the [Air-N-dare Lodge]. It's funny, I'm reading the *Trout & Salmon* book that come this week, and they're advertising it still. And it is [Air-en-dare Lodge] where that great caster, a double-handed guy, the English guy, works for –

BK: Yes.

¹³ Brian Clarke, author of *The Trout and the Fly*, with John Goddard

PM: – a fly line company. Ah, it'll come to me, yeah, great guy. So that's where he started, his father was the instructor there. So we go there and the guy who owns the joint and his old lady, he is the angling editor for the *Times* in London.

HL: All right.

PM: Yeah, very famous guy, can't think of his name. So he comes and visits while we're eating dinner (really good food in this place). It was really a top notch place. So, he said, Do you chaps want to come over to my cottage, or his cabin, or some goddam deal, after? We'll have some claret or a bit of brandy. I have some fine brandy, you see. So I said, Yeah, that's great. So we go there. He's got this cottage, three times bigger than this joint, you know, full of treasures. So we get in there. He just loves us. He thinks we're great. We're telling him stories. I had to say something about the Flyfishers' Club in London because some of them guys on the Dean River they belong to it, right, so I was– I've never been there. I would never be let in. So as we were leaving, this guy gave me a letter. He said, Oh, Peter, I've really enjoyed your company. He said, There's an invitation to the Flyfishers' Club of London for lunch. Ah geez, I said. He said, Make sure you've got a tie and a coat on (*laughter*). Fortunately we had a tie and coat, no suits. So this place is in Savile Row where they make all the suits, right? So we go down there. There's this green door, you know, it's just a green door, knocker on it, brass knocker. No signs, nothing. Ding, ding, ding. The son-of-a-bitch who opens the door is in livery, you know, like at the old Guild Hall, the guys with the trumpets playing when the Queen walks in. He was all done up with knickers and stuff, you know. Can I help you, sir? I gave him the letter. I mean, this is how it's got to be. Yes, come in, Mr. McVey. So he sits us down, and it's unbelievable. They've got– the first Garrison fly rod I ever saw was in that place.

BK: Wow.

PM: And Hoagy¹⁴ actually said he'd given it to them. I told him that last time I was in there. And they got Izaak Walton's fishing basket and *The Compleat Angler*... it's all there. So we're sitting in the corner, the guy said, Would you like a drink? The waiter comes over. I like sherry at lunchtime. So we get some sherry going, and we're sitting there, and it's fabulous looking at all this. A lot of your stuff. Who was your famous dry fly fisherman? The American guy? Not Halford, he's English.

HL: Oh, um –

PM: You know, Gordon, maybe.

BK: Theodore Gordon.

HL: Theodore Gordon.

PM: Theodore Gordon. They had a whole bunch of that crap in there. Yeah, real good. I mean, it's world class. They've got all of this stuff.

So we got left alone. There was a whole bunch of Englishmen, pin striped suits, Brylcreemed hair, ties, grinning, you know, sitting in the f*cking corner having a huddle, doing a business deal. We're kind of listening. They're doing some oil deal. So anyway, that was – we're sitting there, we're all on our own. All of a sudden, this Mr. Robinson guy, he peels off the table and he comes over, and he said, You know, I'm Charlie Robinson, and he said, I'm today's secretary of club. He said, The regular guys have gone fishing somewhere. So I'm looking after the place today. I'm really pleased to see you, I'd like you to come have lunch with us. So we go to this special table. Now, now it really starts. So we got to have trout, right, because they've got trout. The food was really good in this place. They've got trout on the menu. Now we got to have some wine, so the wine waiter said, Would you like some wine, sir? I said, Yes, could we look at a wine list. Holy f*ck. He gave me the wine list, and I'm looking at it. You know, they've got Chateau Latour on there for \$20 bucks and stuff. Thousands of cases of wine in the

¹⁴ Hoagy Carmichael, Jr.

basement, unbelievable. So I know a guy, my lawyer, saved my ass a few times. Tom Ladner, from Ladner Downs in Vancouver. And he owns a vineyard in Burgundy.

HL: Yes.

PM: Down below Beaune. And I'd been visiting that place, so I thought, Sh*t, maybe I'd taste some of its wine. So, you know, white Burgundy, it's really like Chablis. It goes great with trout. So we – and you know, if we would've been anywhere else, it would have probably been \$500 or something. I think it was ten quid, it's ridiculous. And these guys down there living – So we sat there and we got the bullsh*t going with these guys. And the wee women have gone to Harrods, shopping, right? So we got there at 11:30 am. So about 2 o'clock, we get through the dinner with wine. So this Mr. Robinson said, Do you chaps like vintage port? So I said, Well is the Pope Catholic? We've got some bloody fine brew, he said. Peter, come over and serve these guys some vintage port. Holy Christ. At 5 o'clock, we're still there. They didn't want us to leave. He even wrote me a letter after we left, of the stories we were telling them, because, you know, there are fishermen like me and Harry there. And we got to laying it on pretty thick. Finally we get out of there. It's 5 o'clock, Friday afternoon, we've got to get on a bus and go to Harrods at rush hour in London, and these women have been sitting waiting outside for at least an hour now. Man, we got sh*t over that. But it was one of the great days. Anyway, let's talk about something else.

BK: A great day.

PM: I'm going to have a drink. (*red wine is poured*)

HL: Let's talk about your building bamboo fly rods, because I think –

PM: Okay.

HL: I know that people back home, they're aware of it, they know you're really good at it. So how is it that you first started to build them?

PM: Well, what happened was, when I went back to visit my dad dying, remember we talked about that?

HL: Yes.

PM: And I went fishing with Cyril Lynnwood –

HL: Okay.

PM: –I went to see Bob [Southwell]¹⁵, obviously, because he was my second dad, better than my dad actually. But, you know. And for some unknown reason, and I don't know where this thought come from, but I wanted to learn how to make a bamboo fly rod. Now, I don't – I've always fished with cane because there was nothing else when I was a kid. Well, there was fiberglass, but that was just coming on then. So when I was in, and this is great (*laughter*), you would've love it, Christ. So I go to see Bob. He's got a little shop, right? It's not very big. And he's got a bunch of bamboo cane rods, fly rods, because this is back when he built any kind of rod. He built a rod for a guy called Bernard Venables¹⁶, one of the revered guys in England, who caught a 2 ½ thousand pound white shark on a quad built troll rod.

HL: Yes.

PM: It was like that round. (*gesturing*)

¹⁵ JW Southwell, proprietor of a rod shop in Croydon, Surrey.

¹⁶ Author of *Mr. Crabtree Goes Fishing*, an angling cartoon book serialized in the London Daily Mirror that sold two million copies in the 1940s

BK: Oh wow.

PM: Yes. And he got the world record for a long time, caught off the coast of Africa or something. But anyway, that's not the story.

So we get in there. So Bob's really happy to see me, because, you know, I wrote to him all the time when I was over at – keeping in touch with him. So we get going. So I just said, Jesus, Bob, How the hell do you make a bamboo fly rod? I just love fishing with them. I'm still fishing with the one that the girlfriend bought me for my 18th birthday. Well, he said, if you really want to know, what are you doing tonight? I said, I ain't doing anything. I'm staying at my mom's, and my dad's dying out there basically. He said, Well, come back. When I shut the shop, I'll show you how it's done. I said, Oh great, great. I didn't have a clue. So I go in, we walk through his kitchen that I've been in many times before. And we go into his little tiny back garden. It's about this big. And there's this greenhouse in there, opened the door, there's shavings this deep on the f*cking floor. Oh this, it was great, right now, oh, this looks fantastic. Well, he said, we need a bit of bamboo, Pete. I said, Okay, whatever, you're going to do it? So he fishes around on the floor and finds a piece of bamboo that's been baked already. He gets a dinner knife, one of them ones with the bone handles on them, yeah. No, no, no, just plain, an English dinner knife.

HL: Yes.

PM: He just goes, “shwick.” He marks the thing up. I can't tell you, this is – I could tell you, but you don't need to know that, how you do it.

HL: Yes.

PM: Basically, he took this piece of cooked bamboo that had been laying there, he couldn't find it in the sawdust. We're walking around like a goddamn snow storm in there. And so okay, he gets this bloody knife – no, I'll tell you what, no, it was a Boy Scout knife. He puts the thing on the floor, gets this goddamn old hammer that's laying around, “bang,” splits it in half right there. Then he puts a mark on it, spaces the knots, right. So we've got a 2-2-2 thing. He gets the knife, saws this end off. Saws like (*saw-like sounds*). Well you've watched that movie. You've probably forgot about it.

HL: The one –

PM: There might even be one in the truck there –

HL: The one with Garrison?

PM: No, Bob Southwell.

HL: Bob Southwell? No, I haven't seen that.

PM: Haven't you?

HL: No.

PM: Christ, I've got it in the truck if you want to watch it, but it's just a fascinating movie.¹⁷ Like this, picks an old dinner knife up, goes (*saw-like sounds*) – marks a whole bunch of scratches on it, goes “choo, choo, choo, choo,” splits it in half, splits it in half. Lights this goddamn Bunsen burner thing up (*flame sounds*), f*cking flames. I mean, I can't believe with all this fuel on the floor we didn't burn Croydon down. Actually, Croydon did burn down

¹⁷ The “movie” is a video taken of Southwell at work making a cane rod blank from scratch. A link to the video appears at the end of this Oral History.

right close. You probably don't remember, but about five or six years ago, big riots in England, and they were setting stuff on fire, that's right where that was. But I don't think that shop got burned, but that ain't the story. So anyway, we went about twenty minutes, and then he gets a chisel (*more cutting sounds*) –

HL: Knocking the dams out?

PM: No, they're gone a long time ago, sh*t.

HL: (*Inaudible*)

PM: Yeah, no he didn't do that.

HL: So what's he using the chisel for?

PM: Well, he's just using the chisel to get rid of the – to create a –

HL: Oh, to see the initial

PM: Yeah, you've never see this movie.

HL: No, I haven't.

PM: Oh Christ, this is unbelievable. All this crap we do is ridiculous. I was watching that machine they had there yesterday.

HL: Yes, the –

PM: I mean, it's great. It's so much easier with a chisel. This guy was making his living, made hundreds of blanks. He'd make forty rods a week.

BK: Wow.

PM: With a piece of wood and a chisel.

BK: He used the chisel to bevel it?

PM: Yeah, I can show you that, all that stuff Gary left because all that sh*t's laying in there.

HL: Yes.

PM: And yeah, and I was fascinated. And you know, twenty minutes later there's half a fishing rod, not glued, laying there. Oh, so this is f*cking unbelievable. So I said, God, I've got to write this down, Bob. And it's too late. I've got to leave, not the next day, but the next day after I'm booked out on a plane. So he said, Well come around again tomorrow and bring a book. I've got that out if you want to see it. So I sat there, and I wrote it all down. Now you've got to realize, what I'm writing down is what we used to call the know-how. His dad was 90 when he died, started building fishing – that's a fascinating story, how he started building fishing rods. How much time do you guys got?

This is how it all started. This could be – I think these guys built bamboo fly rods before you American guys did. This guy's name's [Gord] Andrews, and he was a mold guy, you know, making molds, because they didn't have molds. They used to do it by hand in them days. And he had all these planes and whatever, and he was a real drunkard this guy. He lived in this little town called Oakland which is on the Eyebrook Reservoir, the River Eye, runs through the bottom of it, and that's what he did for a living. And he was a fisherman, and this was a little trout

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stream. And they used to use greenheart, right? And this is a great story. They were going to make a movie of it. David Wayne used to come to the lodge, he's one of your famous actors, he's dead now. He was fascinated. He wanted to take me down to Hollywood to make a movie of this. Anyway, this guy goes to the pub; Mr. Andrews goes to the pub. Now Bob's father now is ten years old, lives in this little village, down the street, because it's a tiny little place. They live and die in these places, right? So, Mr. Andrews goes to the pub and gets drunk like he does most nights, and he's got this bamboo plant in a pot. That's what they did, kind of like flower pots, you know, little shoots are in that. Christ, because he comes stumbling around there, he gets in a fight with his f*cking pot with his bamboo in it. And he's so drunk he's thrashing out around and trying to break it, you know, kicking the doors down. Anyway, he couldn't beat it, he couldn't break it, right? So he goes to bed and he's just six sheets to the wind. But when he gets up in the morning, he gets this idea. He couldn't break that goddamn bamboo, and he was a carpenter, right? So what he did is he went and got himself some bamboo, and this is like a real growing one, and he fashioned – this is a great story. It was four pieces. He split it up and made it into four squares and glued it together. I think that's what happened. And he did it for himself, and he put it on the top of his greenheart fly rod, right?

HL: Right.

PM: So he was down fishing this little river, this trout stream one day, and some crass Englishman come up, and he said, I say, my man, what manner of fly rod have you got there? And Andrews said, Well, you know, it's a bit of something I made up here, mate. He said, It looks quite interesting. Can I have a look at it? So this guy looked at it, he said, Do you think you could make some of them? He said, I own a big like Hardy shop in London – it wasn't Hardy but it was another outfit. Thomas, not Thomas – it doesn't matter¹⁸. So this guy started playing in these four-siders, put them on the train, sent them to London. And then them guys in London would start putting them on the top of the greenheart rods. And now, they want more of it, because it's way better than a greenheart tip. You know, we know that.

HL: Sure, yes.

PM: So anyhow, he needs an apprentice. This is where this guy wanted to make a movie. So Bob's dad who's ten or twelve or something, he's living down the street. Hey you little bastard, you want a job? So his job was to straighten the bamboo. So they had this little shed with a wall and a hole right there, right? So this kid, Bob's dad, could just get on his hands and knees, straighten a piece of bamboo out, push it through this hole so he couldn't see what the master craftsman was doing, right?

And this went on for five or six years, and then Bob's dad got inquisitive, so he started to watch what the guy was doing. And then Mr. Andrews ends up getting a stroke or some goddamn deal. So, unknown to the guy at the shop, he started making the rods. He was sending them down, so he gets, not a phone call, I don't think they had telephones. They sent him a letter or something, wanted to know if he would come down to London, Carter's was the name of the shop, and talk to Mr. Carter.¹⁹ You know, he had never been outside this village. There's trains everywhere, right, so he gets on a train, he goes down, and he's got an appointment at 9 o'clock in the morning, and he's scared to death. He'd never been to London before. Can you imagine that? Coming from a place – the steam engine hadn't been around that long, really. And he walked on down, [and around] the store all day, scared to go in. And finally the guy in the shop, What, can I help you, sir? He said, I've seen you walking up and down outside for six hours. What can we do for you? So he said, Well, I did have an appointment with Mr. Carter, or whatever his name was. So he went in there. So to cut a long story short, they offer him a job. Got to move to London and make tops for, you know, the rods. So they told him – so the deal is, he gets a penny a foot. So they put him in a basement [sic] way up out in the middle above the shop, right. So away he goes, man, he's – this guy was industrious. And he's making more money than the manager of the store because he's getting paid on piece time. So the manager goes, Hey, Southwell, come and see me. So he said, You can't – I can't have that. He says, You are making twice, four times more money than I am. He said, You've got to do it for half a penny a foot. So Bob's dad

¹⁸ Perhaps Farlows...

¹⁹ Alfred Carter, proprietor A. Carter & Co., Ltd, then at 124 St. Johns St. Rd.

said, Okay, fine, who cares because he could – Yeah, but he had it all set up. He had a table that was on hinges, because these guys were constantly trying to creep upstairs to see what he was doing, because they didn't have a clue what he was doing, right? And he was going to keep it secret. So he loosened a few screws on the stairs, so the minute that somebody was creeping up the stairs, he could hear them, got a forced alarm. And he had this table, and it all folded into the wall like a Murphy bed, and he'd be standing there with a fag going, you know (*laughter*). And they were looking around, you know, shavings all over the place, and there's no work, no nothing, no tools. Yeah, it's an unbelievable story, yeah. I can't imagine that.

HL: That's fantastic.

PM: That's what this guy Wayne thought, so he thought it was so funny. But he got sick and died that guy, David Wayne. I made him a couple of fishing rods, actually.

So where are we at?

HL: Well –

PM: That's an interesting story.

HL: You've gone to Southwell's shop, and he's –

(Inaudible, multiple speakers)

HL: You've actually built this rod together –

PM: No, well yeah.

HL: He's planing the strips with a chisel.

PM: No, he's – yeah. And I was doing nothing. I'm sitting watching it.

HL: Yeah.

PM: So I go back the next night with a book and a pencil. I've got that little book out there. So here I am writing down 80–150 years of rod building experience –

HL: Wow.

PM: – how to do it, in a book. So I'm happy as a pig in sh*t, man. I've got it all there. It's like two pages. You split the bamboo with a knife, you know – oh really (*laughter*)? So I get back to Canada and now I've got a problem. I've got to get some bamboo, and there ain't no bamboo. So somebody says to me, there was a great rod builder they called Cliff Welsh.²⁰ He was a very fine rod builder, in Vancouver. And he died, lung cancer. And he had four hundred poles of bamboo, his wife did, in their basement, and somebody told me about this, John Massey, another good friend of mine. You should go and see her if Mrs. Welsh might sell you a pole. And I didn't want to buy – but she wouldn't sell me a pole. She wanted to sell the whole lot, and she had 400 poles, right? So I didn't have the money, and I was working at Big White Ski Resort then, and my brother was there with me. So we went out there and we worked all winter and stuff, and I said to George, this was the next year. I said, Christ – No, no, was that the same year? We were there in the fall looking at it, and I said to George, Let's go and buy that goddamn stuff, 200 bucks each. That was a piss pot full of money.

²⁰ Cliff for most of life worked as a salesman at Harkley and Haywood sporting goods store in downtown Vancouver. It was the shop to deal with from the around the end of WW 1 up until it closed in the early 1970s. He retired in 1965 and is known for his bamboo rods and the local steelhead fly called Cliff's Special.

HL: Yes.

PM: So he said, Why not? I'd love it. Middle of winter, same stuff as my Austin-Healey story. We've got this great big Pontiac station wagon, but these poles are 10-12 feet long, so we can't shut the back window up, even though we've got the goddamn poles banging on the front. It was a big vehicle. You know, it was a shoot and break thing. Christ, it was cold, going on in the Okanagan there. So I think I've ruined the best part of it. I got the book, eh? I got the book, man. So the ski resort had a work shop. So after we get cooking fourteen hours a day for the skiers, me and George, we'd go into the workshop and they had a tiger torch there and the whole nine yards. So, away we went, Christ, burning bamboo, burning it and, geez, and I finally made one. I've got it sitting outside, and I'll show you before you go.

HL: Okay.

BK: Good, good.

PM: The first one I ever made. And I gave it to a lady as a present, and I got it back off her. But, the guy who owned the place, he was getting really pissed off because we've got shavings all over the goddamn place, and we were using all the propane up. So, that was the first one that we made, right. But now I'm beginning to realize that, you know, this little book I've got— so I start— I phone Bob up. So he writes, I've got layers and layers here, it's unbelievable, of him trying to explain to me, really, 150 years of know-how, you know what I mean? Like reading Garrison's book. Who can understand that stuff? But this is not as intelligent. This is more mind stuff. This guy's got it in his fingers. There's no figures here. This is all up here. (*pointing*) He's chiseling a piece of wood, right? So he would write the stuff and so it went on and on. And then I bought Corbett Lake, so, and I've got an old bamboo — I've got that old shop out the back there.

HL: Yes.

PM: So the first thing I did, it was in the springtime, after I'd bought it, I said, Listen, Bob, I said, I want you to come out and show me how to make fishing rods, and I'll pay your airfare, and we'll look after you. Well he couldn't wait to do that. So he come roaring out here. He spent six years in the summer waiting tables. We used to call him the butler because he was like Garrison. He used to wear a tie when he was making fishing rods, you know, a gentleman (*laughter*). It was in that Garrison movie, he's got a smoke —

HL: Yes.

PM: Yeah, but Bob didn't smoke. He always had a shirt and a tie on. So after we get through making rods all day in the rod shop when he was teaching me, I'd say, Well, I need somebody waiting tables. They loved him. They'd say, Where's your English butler? We want him to serve us tonight. And he'd get tips and so, yeah. He loved this. He thought this was the f*cking best place. And he run into a guy, it's really a coincidence. There's a guy called Earl Anderson. You know, being an American, you wouldn't know, but you could talk to any of these Canadian guys, they'd know who he was.²¹ He was a legendary angler here, tied flies, and made bamboo fly rods. But he didn't make bamboo fly rods. Woodward's store sent him to London and told him about Bob Southwell, and he got acquainted with him, and Bob used to — he said he'd send him 500 rods a year.

HL: Wow.

PM: Yeah, on a ship. Oh, just the blanks. He didn't make — Bob couldn't finish a rod worth sh*t. And I'm the same. When I've glued a handle on it, the f*cking rod's finished. You know, the action's there, and that's what the rod is. But you guys, not you particularly, but some of those rods they've spent weeks polishing them, and it's a

²¹ Earl and his brother Reg Campbell taught fly casting and fly tying at Vancouver Tech. Earl worked in the sporting goods department at Woodward's department store on Hastings Street in downtown Vancouver.

work of art. And when you're making, trying to make your bread and butter, like he did all his life, because he never did nothing else, you know, you had to get your ass in gear. He was a chief maker for blanks in London, I think. Most of the shops that had bamboo fly rods, he used to make for them.²² He mentioned that. Him and another guy called Arthur, when he wasn't drunk, he's another – Everybody drinks in England, a terrible place, really. But so, anyway, he came out, yeah.

BK: These are six-sided rods?

PM: Oh yeah, yeah.

BK: And how did he taper them?

PM: With his head and a piece of wood. I'll show you before you go. I've got all the sh*t laying out.

BK: That would be great.

PM: Oh, it's a f*cking mess in there, but if I can find it. But yeah, remember I told you about the world champion caster?

HL: Yeah.

PM: Scribbling on the table?

HL: Yes.

PM: Bob wasn't stupid, and he learned about curves and bends, and the guy – because it's all about bends.

HL: Yes, it is.

PM: Doesn't matter what, figures are figures, but the visual bend is the ultimate criteria. That's what makes the fly rod work, or works well or doesn't work. These American rod guys, they've got it figured. That Payne and them guys? I was fishing that Payne there yesterday, I mean, it's a hundred years old, but Christ, them guys knew about the bend. There's only so many bends you can have. You know, it's very technical but really it's not. And he had it in his head. You got to see this shop. How much time do you got? Well, it's only 3 o'clock.

HL: Yes, we've –

PM: You can stay the night if you like. I've got some beds here.

HL: We probably got to get going that's the problem, when we run out of this.

PM: Yeah, let's keep talking about this stuff.

HL: But, at some point you ran into Glenn Bracket.

PM: Oh I did, yeah.

HL: And I remember seeing in your shop, ten years ago, maybe twelve years ago, a bunch of us were there, Bracket was there –

²² A somewhat inaccurate description of Southwell's place in British bamboo rod making history may be found at <https://nobbystackle.wordpress.com/page/2/>.

PM: Yeah, yeah they were all –

HL: You had–

PM: I used to invite them up, you know, the whole shop.

HL: Yes.

PM: But they invited me down there, so I figured, sh*t, man. And it was the best thing. I mean, where the f*ck are you going to go and have the Winston fly rods, real bamboo. I thought that meant, that did a lot for that organization.

HL: Yes.

PM: You could sit and talk to a guy who makes his bread and butter. Nobody in there – well, Bob does, Bob Clay.

HL: Yes.

PM: But he’s the only one that makes – And I never did.

HL: Right.

PM: I mean, I had another business. It was just a hobby for me, basically. But I made nearly 500 rods.

BK: Wow.

PM: 485 or something, but doesn’t matter.

Okay, Glenn Bracket? How did I run into him? Well, I was going to Chile – Cuba, no – Chile, yeah, and I had a layover there. The guy who I was going with, who was taking me, this Jim Cox guy, the guy who used to call me “Mr. Dover”, right, 6-foot – I’m down at Aspen with this guy. Can you imagine that, Aspen Ski?²³ He bought it. If you go to Aspen, there’s a building that goes like this, like a wedge-shaped building? Yeah, he owned all that. I mean, a smart guy, really a bright light. You know, he had made millions. He just died here recently. He was 92. He was a hell of a dude, this guy. So, Glenn Bracket, so he dropped me off one day because they knew – I was making fishing rods then.

HL: Right.

PM: So, they said, You’ve got to go down and see the Winston rod guys. And so they took me down there, and I got introduced to Tom Morgan. Tom Morgan was really not a very friendly guy. He’s a Welshman, he can’t help it. He’s a wonderful guy when you get to know him.

HL: Yes.

PM: I’ll tell you that story in a minute. So, then Glenn Bracket, he’s the salt of the earth that f*cker. I mean, you can’t find a better human being than that dude. And yeah, we got on right away, right off the – So, and I used to start – And I spent a couple of afternoons in there before I blasted off down to Cuba, or Chile, wherever I was at. But they had all these nice reel seats. You see originally, Bob used to bring reel seats from England, but anodize cracked.

²³ The reference is to California attorney James Ellingson Cox, an avid Dean River steelhead fisherman whose James E. Cox Living Trust owned a lot of property in Aspen over the years.

HL: Yes.

PM: You know, but you couldn't buy it. I mean, the stuff that was on the Payne rods, that wasn't available there, 30-40 years ago. That's all gone. Them guys are all dead. Nobody's making it. But now you can buy fabulous stuff from REC Corporation.

HL: Yes.

PM: You know, I don't have to tell you that. So, I got a real dialogue going with him. Got all of my, you know, reel seats, and then I couldn't get tubes, like real tubes²⁴.

HL: Right.

PM: We used to put them in, plastic fu*cking, you know, stuff you put in the ground and sell it to you.

HL: Yes.

PM: And that was wonderful. Of course, I'm getting the thing to look a lot better than they did. And I'd phone him all the time. Hey, what about this? I'm having trouble with glue or some goddamn deal. And so Glenn said, Yeah, listen, quit phoning me. He said, Come down and visit me. I'm fed up with talking with you on the phone. He said, I'm busy. I said, You're going to let me into your shop? Oh yeah, Christ, he said, come and stay with me at the house and stuff. So I said to my wife, I said, I've got to borrow the car here. I had just bought a new car actually. It's a 16-hour bloody journey to Twin Bridges from here. And away I went, spent a week down there.

But Glenn said to me, When you come down, he said, bring two or three fishing rods with you, finished, and the tools that you use, right? The other guy wouldn't talk – well, he hardly talked to me. And I met Gary Howells there, and oh he was kind of a strange guy, great rod builder. And so one day we were in there, I'd been there for three days, and it was like Pandora's Box. I mean, you've seen my old shed where I used to work. F*ck, this was a factory, man. There's machines. Every time I opened the door, I thought I'd gone to heaven and died. And Morgan was looking at me, and I was f*cking happy as hell, laughing, and asking a few good questions, I think. I don't know. So after three days, he said to me, Okay, Pete. He said, I've been listening to your bullsh*t for three days. You know who I am. What do you do? Glenn's sitting there grinning, because he knows this is coming, right? He said, You make – you make fishing rods obviously. I said, Yeah. He said, Well, have you got any? I said, Yeah, I do have a couple in the car. He said, I really want to see. I've been listening to all this bullsh*t. He thought I was a bullsh*tter, because you get a lot of guys talking in places.

HL: Sure.

PM: You can tell in a second if a guy's a rod guy, or what elevation of rod builder you're in. You ask the wrong questions, right, you're dead. And if you ask the right questions, they know that you know something about it. So he couldn't put me together. The reason was because – he'd never made a fishing rod by hand. It's all machines, right? So I'm a caveman. He doesn't know how I did it. So it was great. It was so good, I started a company called Caveman Enterprises (*laughter*). I took these rods, and there's three rods in there, laid them – And they bought a brand new lathe, it's a beautiful lathe. I mean, a lathe, I don't even know how to switch the thing on. And I laid the rods on there, and he picked them up. He spent half an hour looking at them, turning them around, flicking them, looking at me. So then he said, Well, how the f*ck did you do that? So I had the block of wood and the chisel, and that was it (*laughter*). I said, With that. Then he said, You've got to be kidding me. And Glenn said, Yeah, that's how he does it. So after that, me and Tom Morgan were the best of friends. He accepted me for what I – But I was something that they'd never seen before. So that's how I got mixed up with them. So when that machine become available –

²⁴ Aluminum rod tubes

HL: And it was a milling machine like the one that Winston was using –

PM: No. The same principle. This is a better machine than theirs. Theirs, you have to have two guys to make it work.

HL: Oh, okay.

PM: And mine, I can do it on my own. But they were made by Al Talbot.

HL: Oh, okay.

PM: He was a famous guy who was a master machinist, run warehouses, sawmills or some deal. He could walk in places, one of these mechanical genius guys. So when these guys bought, they got really f*cked. When he bought that company off of Doug Merrick—

HL: Yes.

PM: – they had – the heart of the business is that milling machine. You get the sense, watching these shows we're watching.

HL: Yes.

PM: You know, Payne and Leonard, and you know. I've asked where the machine went. That's the first thing I asked there. I don't know if you noticed that yesterday. When I was talking to one of them. Where did the machine go? A lot of them kept their machines locked up, and nobody would ever go in there.

HL: Right.

PM: Well, it was your trade. So anyway, so they – Glenn said, Come on down, you know. So there we're having a f*ck of a time. So anyway, we're trying to make fishing rods, and you'd go out the back and it would be full of strips that weren't worth a sh*t. And I looked at that and I thought, geez, I don't think I'd be too interested in anything like that. But what happened was, Gary Howells was a great guy, and a really good friend of theirs, and he used to fish, loved it. He spent most of his time in the Blue Anchor Bar there, but I probably would these days. But he – and he felt sorry for these guys, because he left Winston's. This Al Talbot used to go every weekend, because he used to let guys go in there on the weekends, or any day, and give you a piece of sandpaper, and you could sand a blank. You know, they were that kind of people.

HL: Yes.

PM: And if you went there for more. So this Talbot guy kept going back all the time. So he's watching these guys struggling with this machine. I mean, half of the rods they had to sand the tips on them. They couldn't get the tolerances. The machine was – I think that Doug Merrick could run it, but it was a Heath Robinson affair²⁵. It was one of them things that, you know, I could run it but you couldn't, because it wasn't right. And Al Talbot said to him, after about four or five weekends in there, he said, Listen, I can make you a f*cking machine that would. So I guess Gary Howells said, Okay, go and make me one, and he did. And he made himself one, and that's the one I've got out the back here.

HL: Oh.

²⁵ W. Heath Robinson was an English cartoonist and illustrator best known for drawings of ridiculously complicated machines for achieving simple objectives.

PM: And the minute Howells got that machine, he left the Winston Rod Company, because that's, he's a master rod builder, that guy was.

HL: Yes.

PM: So then he went, then he went up to Twin Bridges, and saw these guys struggling because they inherited that machine that he was watching them guys struggling with in Richmond where the place was, right.

HL: Right, and then –

PM: So he got Gary Howells, no, not Gary Howells. He got Al Talbot out there to tweak them up all up and get it changed all over, right? And then after that, they started – But they were having a f*ck of a time. I think, I'm not sure of this, don't quote me on this, but I think that Glenn, not Glenn– Tom Morgan, I think he f*cking sued them guys over that. But that's another story.

But anyway, so once I got accepted by the king who owned the joint, well they owned it together.

HL: Yes.

PM: The machine come along. Glenn said, I've got this machine and this guy's died, and his widow wants to sell it, and he said – I didn't know what I was buying, because I don't know about machines. And after what I saw them guys doing in San Francisco, I didn't want a machine, when I could do it a lot better with a hand plane and a piece of wood. So I thought, well. He said, You should buy this machine. They wanted seven grand for it. It was a lot of money in them days, but you couldn't build it for \$7,000 bucks, I'll tell you that, from scratch. But I thought it would be good, would be a machine like that guy I had out here yesterday, just get to get rid of some of the outside stuff quicker.

HL: Yes, sure.

PM: Get rid of the manual labor stuff. And he said, No, he said, this machine, you're going to be surprised. So anyway, I said, F*ck it. I ... didn't have a lot of toys, and I got the money anyway. So I said, Yeah, I'm going to buy that. I pissed a whole bunch of people off, because they were trying to knock this widow down, right? These guys, it was from Palo Alto where the machine was. And the bastards stole the templates from it. So I never got any of his templates, his patterns, right?

HL: Yes, right.

PM: So you can't run a machine without a pattern²⁶. So Glenn went and made me a bunch of patterns to run the machine. So anyway, these guys were pissed off because this Canadian guy had scooped it up, and they missed the opportunity. They didn't want to pay her for it, right. They wanted it for a thousand bucks or something like that. So I ended up with a machine. But now I got to go pick it up. So I go down there, he says, Yeah, come on down. You've got to spend a week with us. We'll show you how to use it. Because I'm very un-mechanical. I'm like an ape with a typewriter, really.

BK: When would that have been that you got the machine?

PM: Oh geez, Christ, geez...I would say 30 years ago, probably. I really don't know, I mean. It's not that important, is it?

BK: No.

²⁶ Patterns are forms that permit the milling machine to cut bamboo to specific taper dimensions

HL: No, it's not, but it's after – it's after Winston moved –

PM: Oh yeah, I got the machine when they were at Twin Bridges.

HL: Yes.

PM: So we could phone up them and find out when they did that.

HL: No. We got it.

PM: But this is a few years after that. It was at a meeting. I invited them all up to one of our meetings, and Glenn, or Jeff Walker told me about it. And I said, Jesus. He said, You should go and look at this. And I liked Jeff Walker, he was great. I loved them all.

HL: Jeff is one of the guys who was working at Winston at that time –

PM: Yeah, they were. Yeah, Jerry Kustich.

HL: Yes.

PM: Jeff.

HL: I remember meeting Jeff –

PM: Wayne Maca.

HL: Yes. And Jeff showed us at corporate how they –

PM: Big tall guy.

HL: – how they straighten –

PM: That's right.

HL: – and he used a tea kettle to straighten the nodes.

PM: That's right, yeah.

HL: Remember that? That was -- oh, okay, that's what you do.

PM: So, and then they trained me. I've got a movie of it. I found it the other day because I was going to sell this machine to that, what's his name? Proctor. But he's been looking at it for two years. He's f*cking nuts, that guy. Anyway, no problem. And I found the instruction movie. Yeah, they spent a week with me training me, made a movie of every move, because I'm very un-mechanical. You know how dumb I am really. I can't even switch the TV on half the time. I'm not that kind of a guy. So, yeah, it was great. But you know, I've got the master of that for it. I was amazed. We made a piece, the top joint, there, and Christ almighty, it had a 35 thousandths tip²⁷ on it, and I thought, geez, what have I got here? I'm thinking it's just a machine. I'm just going to scrub a bunch of stuff off and then spend the next hour with a chisel. Well, it wouldn't be an hour anyway, but you know what I mean?

HL: Yeah. 35 thousandths tip?

²⁷ A tip diameter of .0035 inches is extremely fine, considering that the tip is made of six pieces – allowing for a thousandth of an inch of glue, each one of the constituent tip strips ends at .0017"...

PM: Tip, yeah. And it's getting, well, maybe forty, but you know like thin as those Paynes that we were looking at yesterday, that kind of stuff.

HL: Yes.

PM: So I thought, holy smokes. Glenn said, Well, I told you, didn't I? I said, Yes, you did (*laughter*). So I put it in the back of the truck, and Jesus, whisked it off out of there, and away we went. Then I stopped building by hand. It's really a shame about that. There's something about hand building.

HL: There is. I think that's why we all tried this.

PM: And with a machine, you do not – your heart's not into it. It's a production. Monday, we do this. Because I spent a week there. You go through a week's work. They made blanks every week, right? They split on Monday, split it again, straighten it – well, they don't straighten much, them guys, actually. Then they got to bake it, right, and then we machine it. It takes a day to do that. Then they got to glue it the next day, then run it through the gluing machines. And then they've got stacks of them. They've got drawers full of blanks. They're always like 1500 blanks ahead. So it gives them time for, you know, using that blank next year. But if you don't just keep adding to it, the whole production's going to come to a stop at some time down the road.

HL: Yes, right.

PM: So I go for a week's session, and we, Christ, get at it, sit there and smoke dope. Want a drink? He liked drinking wine, good wine. And we had fun.

I went fishing with him once. You've got to come fishing, Jerry Kustich one day said to me. Enough of this bullshit, let's go fishing. I said, I haven't got a rod. Oh, Christ. He picks the four-sided rod, it's their top model, off the bloody wall. He said, Yeah, we'll use this one. Holy crap. I loved it. And I started to make some four-sided rods after that. He took me on this Ruby Creek or something, catching these trout. Boy, it was tough fishing, little mayflies coming up.

HL: Yes.

PM: Yeah, a lot of fun. That Jerry Kustich, great rod builder. But you know, they're all – you can't make no money-making fishing rods.

HL: No.

PM: It's a starving artist game, I think, really. I don't think Glenn is – well, he's got a few bucks, hopefully. He doesn't care though. He's that kind of guy. Glenn's Glenn, you know. He's just happy as hell doing what he's doing. But you know, you can make some pocket money. I did pretty good, but I didn't need the money, see, because I've got a job, you know. I've got a business, right?

HL: Right. And you had a natural market. You had people coming through to watch -

PM: Oh yeah, yeah. Everybody on the Dean River, I was building fishing rods for. Not steelhead rods because I wouldn't do that, them guys didn't know how to handle it. But you know, trout rods, yeah, we all fished trout. I've got one guy who bought thirteen off of me. I've had two guys. I've got one guy bought nine off me. He just died, that John guy, Stewart's – Henry's uncle, John Trader. He loved them. He'd go to the Pocono [sic] clubs. It's in the Au Sable River or –

BK: Oh.

PM: Is that where it is? Pennsylvania?

BK: The Poconos are in Pennsylvania.

HL: Yeah.

PM: Yeah, this wealthy – talk about wealthy, boy, you’d love this guy (*laughter*). He couldn’t see worth a shit, he was blind. He had all these kind of glasses and stuff. You know, he looked like a real idiot. And he was the chief lawyer for the Burlington (sic) Railroad down there. What’s the big railroad? B&N or something?

HL: Is it Burlington Northern?

PM: Yeah, that’s the one.

HL: Yes.

PM: Yeah, he was the chief lawyer for them. And you know, he’d get into court and they’d think they got a real hoser here. He couldn’t see, and he was falling over everything. Yeah, right. Graduated from Princeton, you know. Family been here for hundreds of years and stuff. So, yeah, he was good, that guy. Trader, what a great guy. So, Glenn, yeah. Glenn’s going to quit. Great rod builder, Glenn.

HL: Yes.

PM: He’s probably one of the best, I would say. That Per Brandin is pretty hot.

HL: Oh, Brandin is a wonderful guy.

PM: Yeah, he’s good. Guys like Glenn Bracket and him are about as good as it gets.

That Wayne Maca, I like what he does. He’s unbelievable. You pick them rods up, and they don’t weigh nothing. He gave me a rod to go fishing with on the river one day, and he said, How’s the rod? I said, I don’t like it. He said, What are you talking about? I said, It’s like a graphite rod. It’s that stiff and it didn’t weigh nothing, right? But I used to level with him while we’d sit there. You’d love it, there was a bunch of hippies living next door. The cops are all crazy about dope smoking, right? Didn’t give a sh*t about crack cocaine. And there was a crack house right next to him. And Wayne is a bit of an uptight guy.

He and Willie Nelson were big buddies. Do you ever hear that story (*laughter*)? This is great. He has all this artwork all around his house. This is a f*cking nutcase. I love this guy. I’m going to go and visit him. I spent a lot of time in his place. So his artwork and all. So I said, Jesus Christ, you know, it looks good, eh? Where did you get all of this stuff? I thought you didn’t have any money. He said, What are you talking about? I painted it. I said, You’ve got to be kidding me. He said, Yeah. So anyway, we were listening to some music and Willie Nelson come on. Oh, he said, there’s my buddy, Willie. I said, Oh really? I said, Do you know him? Oh yeah, he said. And he tells me the story. He painted the picture, a portrait, for some bacon and eggs in a local restaurant. So it’s the cook’s wife – the cook’s mom, right, the portrait.

HL: Perfect.

PM: So anyway, it was great. And he’s been eating bacon and eggs for a month or whatever he did. So one day he’s in Denver. He’s working for the US Ski Team, on their skateboards. That’s where he learned all about his glues.

HL: Yeah.

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PM: He's real classy. So he's living upstairs, there's a knock on the door. Yeah, what do you want? This is Willie Nelson here. Oh f*ck off, you know (*laughter*). Anyway, a bang on the door. This "is" Willie Nelson. So, the third time, Yeah, this "is" Willie Nelson. So I guess Wayne went down. There's Willie Nelson standing there. And the only reason he's there is because he's – Willie Nelson's aunty was the cook, or his mom or something that he'd painted the picture for, and he wanted to come and thank him. So, he invited Willie upstairs, right. And of course this guy loves smoking dope and drinking. So Christ, anytime he went to Denver, he'd stay with Wayne, take him golfing, and he was part of the pack. He had some great stories, this guy. Made great rods. And he made reel seats. I still laugh. He's got a willow tree in his backyard. And I said, Where'd you get them reel seats from? Well, they make them out of that tree there. I said, You've got to be kidding me. Yeah, he's got a little old lathe and stuff. And he's got this glue, it's going to kill him.

HL: Yes.

PM: I mean, I don't know, well he told me what it was, but I couldn't use that. But it's amazing. Sixty thousandths wall thickness, and I've made rods with sixty thousandths, but the glue that Glenn – I used to use Winston's glue. There's no way you can do it. They finally twist or break up, right?

HL: Right.

PM: Yes, a bloody shame, really.

HL: Yes. Wayne has a website –

PM: Is he still making – yeah, he is. I talked to Glenn the other day.

HL: –and I haven't looked at it in a while, but he has– he describes the fact that he's using really high tech glues that are very dangerous. They're very poisonous.

PM: They are. But he didn't put a mask on, or didn't when I was there. He said, Get the hell of here, and he's doing it in the carriage house with the door closed

HL: Yes.

PM: Geez. He loved the chisel. I'd give him the chiseled stuff. I said, You're wasting time on this shit, because he used to do a lot of sanding with a sanding belt. So I got a block of wood out and a chisel. I said, Give me that son-of-a-bitch, so I (*cutting or sanding sound*). Christ, he said, that's great. Because it cuts three-quarters of your time down. You get down to the meat and potatoes real quick. So I ground him a chisel and stuff. And you got to use an old chisel and you can't use a new one. New ones, they don't work worth a shit. The temperance has got to go out of them, and the blades, you get off the railroad tracks. And I was telling you that the other day, didn't I? Bob Southwell, they didn't use regular stuff, none of that crap you guys use.

HL: Really?

PM: They'd gone through all of that. I mean, he tried it all, and he found out that if you could get an old blade off of a metal cutting, like cutting railroad tracks. You know, one of those sawblades? But it had to be used. And you make a blade out of that.

HL: So out of the saw that cuts –

PM: Yeah, like you know, it would be a metal – metal cutting saw.

HL: Exactly, yes.

PM: And you find them along the railroad tracks because they bust –

HL: Oh.

PM: I've got a couple I've picked up at Spences Bridge, actually. My favorite one, red one. And what it does is - I've seen him plane two or three fishing rods without sharpening the thing. I mean, I couldn't – I mean the talent of the guy was unbelievable.

HL: Yes.

PM: I never got that good at sharpening them. You know, you had, that's what you do when you've made hundreds of rods, you know. But yeah, that was it. And he came to the conclusion that they own all this crap, and just did regular old sanding, none of – You guys have got -- I looked at what you guys have got, and you've got f*cking stuff and polishing, and Jesus, you know. I mean, it works.

HL: Yeah.

PM: But you know, when I look at it and I think, Holy Christ, you know. If I only knew (*laughter*). But you can't, yeah, it doesn't work. It works really good on wood. It doesn't work so good on metal.

HL: Right.

PM: But yeah. You've got to watch that movie some time.

HL: Well you know, why don't we stop the interview, and why don't you show us the shop. And then you can tell us about those movies, and particularly the Southwell movie.

PM: Yes.

HL: It would be lovely to have the ability to see that.

PM: Well, it cost me three fishing rods, that movie.

HL: Wow!

PM: A friend of mine who was a CBC Canadian Broadcasting camera guy –

HL: Yes?

PM: You know, really a good guy, and he liked fishing. Dave his name was. I said, Geez, I've got to record this, just for my – I ain't worried about anybody else, because he's going to die and I'm going to forget what he showed me. So we spent three days making this movie on a big wide reel. Turned that to a VCR, one of them big fat ones, but yeah, three rods. That was worth every penny of it, yeah.

BK: Yes.

PM: I showed you the – were you there when Hoagy Carmichael watched it?

HL: Yes.

PM: After the lunch. Well, you probably weren't watching it then.

HL: I remember him watching it, and –

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PM: He was mesmerized.

HL: Yeah.

PM: He sat there and he said, My God. He just had put Garrison's one on, one stroke of the plane, light the pipe, you know, look around, do the tie, hard work. So I got up and said, Okay, that's great, we loved it all. We watched the king here. I said, I'm going to show you a little show here. I don't want anybody laughing at this, you know. This guy and his father made rods for about 150 years, and this is how they did it. So, he was drinking – he wasn't drinking much at this thing, was he?

HL: [*shaking head No*].

PM: He could drink.

HL: He may have realized that he shouldn't be doing that.

PM: Yeah, well, I might get around to that one of these days. I think he was telling me that. He didn't tell me that personally. But, he sat in the chair, we had some Beaujolais, because I like Beaujolais. And he sat there and I put it on, and, F*ck, he said, unbelievable. He couldn't – and he said, I've never seen anything like that. Nobody has.

HL: Yeah.

PM: (*Laughter*) You got to watch it. It wouldn't take you five minutes. Yeah, let's go around here.

HL: Alright.

PM: It ain't that long a movie.

(End of recording – the movie is fascinating and may be observed at [\[insert link to website\]](#))