

Narrator: Philip H. Red Eagle

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Interviewed by: Jordan Woolston

Place: Tacoma, WA

{JW} We are recording on both devices. You gave me your CV and I read your article and I read as much as I could about you and I am just even more astounded at how much you've done and how many questions I have, I could focus on every little aspect of your career and your life and ask you a gazillion questions, but for the sake of time and not driving you crazy, I thought we, since the last recording was damaged, I wanted to circle back a little bit and talk about your childhood in Tacoma, you mentioned Cushman Hospital a couple of times, that it closed, and that's why you had to leave...

{PRE} Mhhhm.

{JW} Why did the closing at Cushman hospital force you to leave? What was it?

{PRE} Well my dad worked for the Public Health Service, which Regan shut down in the 80s. And it was good, the Public Health Service was a good thing, a lot of people you know, we have all these homeless people we have to deal with these days, well the public health service used to take em in and heal them, and then you know, it did a lot of good. {Sighs} I don't want to talk about politics.

{JW} Oh yeah, we don't have to go into politics [laughter].

{PRE} [laughter] Don't set me off [laughter].

{JW} [laughter] I don't want to do that. I just sort of wanted to know, we talked about your dad a lot, but I don't think we ever touched on that he was involved with the Public Health Service.

{PRE} Well, he was from Fort Peck, he was born there in 1916, I think I showed you a picture of the log cabin. He was born, one week and then a week or ten days later they finally got him into town and registered him as having been born. You know everybody traveled by horse or wagon, or sandwagon, in those days, or they walked. And he used to tell me stories about walking behind his sisters to school and they would cut a path through the snow for him and he'd walk in the path.

{JW} In Montana?

{PRE} Yeah [laughs], he was born in the time just before we entered World War One, and I think, my uncle Elmer Red Eagle, was my grandpa Harold's brother, he took off to World War One, and there's a whole story there.

{JW} There's lots of stories.

{PRE} Oh yeah, tons, I don't think you could make a single movie about it, I think you'd probably have to make a dozen movies, [laughter] so yeah, on the way back, Elmer stopped in Chicago, and he wanted to go party and he met this Chinese girl in Chinatown in south Chicago, and took up with her for a while, and evidently he had a son, and his grandkids came out to Fort Peck and said, "we're part Sioux" we're Elmer's grand...[laughter]

{JW} So your dad got meet?...

{PRE} We got to meet the Asian relatives, Chinese.

{JW} Very interesting.

{PRE} Yeah so you know it's all those kinds of stories you grow up with.

{JW} Because you used to spend a lot of time out there too, right? in Montana.

{PRE} No, not at all

{JW} Not in Montana? You didn't go back?

{PRE} We would go out there once or twice a year maybe, and depends on what happens, like in '54 when my grandma died we went out and stayed a little longer, I started grade school for a while, I think it was 4th or 3rd grade or something like that and we moved back. And we went and moved out to 74th and Wapato which is right next to the freeway now, we lived there for a bout 4, 2, 3 months, and then we moved to Sprague, 15th and Sprague next to Peck Field... And I went to Stanley School for two years, and we went to McCarver for two years and then '59 they closed Cushman Hospital, PHS Hospital, and then we went to Sitka. And there were only like two job options for him, because I think they were... they were basically, they were...Cushman was a TB hospital but during World War Two, they discovered that penicillin could cure tuberculosis.

{JW} And so that ended that?

{PRE} Yeah, but I had my tonsils outs there,

{JW} At Cushman?

{PRE} At Cushman, dentistry, my dental was there. Like I said I had eczema and so they treated me with radiation...

{JW} Which blows my mind.

{PRE} I know, isn't that weird?

{JW} It is so weird.

{PRE} You know back in, you know, in those days they were looking for the "Indian solution."

{JW} Yeah.

{PRE} And it just seems so bizarre and weird to know people that are like that, it's just weird, you know, like it would be like knowing Hitler.

{JW} Isn't it strange?

{PRE} Sitting and drinking wine or coffee with Hitler [laughter].

{JW} And you lived that in your everyday life, right? Did you have to deal with that?

{PRE} Pretty much, Yeah, you had to deal with people that didn't think you should be alive.

{JW} I can't imagine that.

{PRE} Well the kids were different, it was the adults that were the problem. It was the adults that are always the problem, it's never the kids, the kids are great [laughter]. It's adults that turn men to monsters.

{JW} Yeah.

{PRE} And it's the adults don't take responsibility for that, they, you know, they raise sociopaths and they don't know it.

{JW} Until it's too late

{PRE} Until it's too late, yeah.

{JW} So was there not any, you guys had to go to Sitka, why was Sitka the option, why couldn't you stay here?

{PRE} Because there was only two places to go, Albuquerque or Sitka.

{JW} To?

{PRE} And mom and dad decided, dad was thinking about going to Albuquerque and mom was thinking, 'I think we ought to go to Alaska', because you know, it's clean up there.

{JW} And was this so that you guys could have access to care or so that he could work?

{PRE} We would always have, as long as he worked for, there's the Indian Health Service now, but back then it was PHS that gave health service to the Native American people

{JW} So it was two-fold, it was work and access to health care...

{PRE} Did you know there was a PHS hospital in Seattle?

{JW} I did not know that.

{PRE} Yeah, it's the big yellow brick building

{JW} On the hill!

{PRE} On the hill.

{JW} Really?

{PRE} Yeah, that was the PHS building...and Reagan closed it up. That's where the Seattle Indian Health Board started.

{JW} [Inaudible]

{PRE} So we went to Sitka and there was a hospital there and it served the Native American community.

{JW} What was the name of the hospital, do you remember?

{PRE} Mount Edgecumbe (spells name) PHS hospital and that's where we got our dental and health care. Except it served not just the native community there, it served the people who worked there, so we didn't have to have insurance or anything.

{JW} Just go in...

{PRE} We had the hospital right there, you know all the doctors and nurses not doing much of anything [laughter].

{JW} [laughter] Did you utilize the hospital often?

{PRE} Oh Yeah, yeah, and it was also because it was the main heavy duty concrete building on the island, you're gonna have to google Mount Edgecumbe...The facility not the mountain, there is a mountain 14 miles away called Mount Edgecumbe, it's a volcano, supposedly extinct, and that's where we went for, what do they call the waves when they come in?

{JW} Tsunamis?

{PRE} Tsunamis, there'd be an earthquake and there would be tsunami warnings and we all go up to the hospital because it was the highest point on the island and it was this totally concrete building, you know like a fortress

{JW} So the safest space to go?

{PRE} Mhhmm, safe. Four stories, yep. So even if a big sixty, seventy foot wave came in, it wouldn't..

{JW} hopefully be okay...

{PRE} Yeah so the whole population of Mt. Edgecumbe right into the hospital building,

{JW} Was it a small, I'm assuming, a small community up there?

{PRE} Uh, I think when I was there was probably three thousand people, I guess you'd call that small.

{JW} By today's standards yeah.

{PRE} I think there were like twenty-five in Sitka and maybe five hundred on the island. Yeah, and the island people were a more liberal community because that's where all the Indians went to work and the Black people and the Filipinos and the Asians.

{JW} On the island?

{PRE} They would come work for the government on the island

{JW} Doing what?

{PRE} Anything, there was nurses doctors, you know.

{JW} Why do you think they hired....

{PRE} I think they had priority, I'm not sure, but you know in a big picture of Mt. Edgecumbe staff, was about this big, you know 24 by 12 picture, and they took of the staff at Cushman, it was mostly people of color. Even our doctor, family doctor, was a Japanese man, Dr. Kasuga.

{JW} At Cushman?

{PRE} Dr. Kasuga, now he was, when they closed Cushman, he became the director of the Alaska facilities, so he came and offered my dad those two positions. He said, 'You can come up.' and uh, 'What if they fill that role?' And he said, 'Don't worry about it, you'll go where I put you.' [laughter]They'll take you. Yeah. and like I said, they were kind of a tight little community 'cause you know everybody that worked there and then there was the teachers that worked there and the doctors. We went to school with all of their kids. So there was no...

{JW} Everybody just got along?

{PRE} Everybody just got along.

{JW} So it was a nice environment to spend your teenage years?

{PRE} Yeah, it was a liberal open environment. I guess that's what's wrong with government [laughter].

{JW} I think those environments are important for raising decent children.

{PRE} The Republicans always have so much trouble with it.

{JW} Hey you didn't want to get into politics [laughter]. So, I know you left Sitka at some point.

{PRE} Mhmm.

{JW} And that was to join the Navy, correct? Or did you join the Navy...

{PRE} Um, yeah, sort of. I had to leave.

{JW} You had to leave Sitka because of the...

{PRE} I was getting too weird. You know evidently I was smart. I needed to go somewhere. I couldn't continue to live in that kind of world

{JW} And that was a world of?

{PRE} Partying, yeah. Party life.

{JW} And I'm assuming you were a teenager?

{PRE} Well it killed my friends.

{JW} Is that why you decided you needed to leave?

{PRE} Before I left, you know, like five of my friends had already died. When I got back there were five more and, also I learned over the years that Vietnam had killed more of my friends as well. There's a building in Juneau at the University of Alaska campus in Juneau and it's a multipurpose building, or multi-service, or dual service or something like that, and its name after them Bennet and Spurl. Charles Bennet was at SJ when I was there, he was a high school student and I was a community college student. It's funny I still have a lot of connections with the SJ people, Sheldon Jackson Junior College, back then. And lately I have been talking to the through Facebook and email through some of them, so were still connected after all these years.

{JW} One of the nice things about social media

{PRE} Yeah social media, yeah, keep in contact, yeah. It's funny...I was back in '65 I worked in Petersburg and while I was there I had a Norwegian girlfriend and she actually lived in California, but she'd come up in the summers and live with her grandfather who live in Petersburg and he was a fisherman, and he was also a, he used to make gaffes, you know what gaffes are?

{JW} Yeah for fishing.

{PRE} Yeah, and there were clubs and hookers you know, and I didn't learn till later that that's what he did, you know because I was paying more attention to her because she was a very tall beautiful Norwegian woman. And she found me, about 2010. Cause I had a...by then I was in the google...

{JW} Universe.

{PRE} Yeah universe. And you could google my name and she googled my name and found me. We started talking for a while, for a couple years and I had to go to a conference in Reno, Nevada and then I had to go to, right after that I I had to go to Santa Barbra to meet with the canoe people down there. And so I had to drive to Redding and over through the mountains to go to Reno and her house was along the way. So, I stopped for an hour, we talked an hour and a half maybe. Then I moved on and drove to Reno. A year later she came to Tacoma and brought me gifts and wanted to marry me.

{JW} [laughter] Did you do that?

{PRE} I mean holy cow. I mean I love you, but I have a different life you know?

{JW} I'm assuming much different.

{PRE} You just can't insert somebody in there and get married

{JW} So you didn't get married?

{PRE} No! I just. Part of me still loved her, you know because that young love stuff.

{JW} It hangs with you

{PRE} But um, you know I had changed, really, radically. Yeah. I couldn't even, I can't even conjure, couldn't even for a long time, I couldn't even conjure up those memories from you know, because the PTSD, I couldn't get 'til Vietnam.

{JW} Yeah. That's an important segue for me because I wanted to ask you, I saw in the beginning of your book, which I have yet to read, um.

{PRE} Oh, you read my book?

{JW} I haven't yet.

{PRE} Oh.

{JW} I haven't yet. I'm a very busy student. I read though that you talked about, and we discussed it too in our last interview, depression and PTSD.

{PRE} Yeah, I was depressed when I went. Like I said I lost my friends, so '66 was a bad year for me. And I was just getting worse and worse and partying and you know just being too casual and loose and...

{JW} And you decided to leave and then that led to...

{PRE} My brother was leaving to this Navy program, early enlistment program of some kind, so I decided to go with him. And that basically was a transfer for me because a year before I had joined the Alaska National Guard and I had trained with them and I trained with them on the weekends. That's where I got into military stuff. I learned how to, you know, we had all these veterans from Korea and World War Two and they would take us on these trainings. You know we'd go out into the rainforest and go on movements. And they told us, you know, we had the roller, some of us smoked and we'd have to break down the tobacco and put it out, and roll it up and roll up the piece of paper and put it in our pocket. That's when I first learned about that.

{JW} Not getting caught out in the wilderness

{PRE} Yeah, you know and of course in Vietnam they could smell you coming from miles anyway. Cause we all smelled like American tobacco. But I wasn't in the jungle, I was, it was funny because I was on the river. That's so not jungle. It's like being moving targets down the target range.

{JW} So you've been on, uh I guess boats then, right? Boats, canoes, ships

{PRE} Yeah boats, canoes, and ships, everything.

{JW} Waters played an important part in...

{PRE} Yeah just learn how to cover up.

{JW} And I read on your CV, I think it was your CV, where you were stationed at, so I'm gonna make sure I add that in. Unless you want to discuss that?

{PRE} Yeah I'm pretty open with it all, I have to be.

{JW} That's what I find very interesting because it seems like especially...now people are becoming more open talking about issues like depression and PTSD and it appears you've been pretty open with it for a while, why do you think that is?

{PRE} Well I wasn't open with it and it caused me problems. One we didn't know that we were having problems. We knew in our heart and in our brain, we were having problems but there was no acknowledgment of it until somebody in the mid-eighties said, 'oh you guys have hyper vigilance.' I said, 'Yeah, look at that!' Hyper vigilance that's the word.

{JW} So discussing it in a way sort of helped you...



{PRE} Well the place that I felt comfortable in was in the University of Washington. We had a closed case life. Hardly anything coming from the outside, hardly anything. A very protected life being a student, and so it was very good to be a veteran and be in that environment where you could shut out, and they help you shut out everything that can trigger you or...

{JW} And you found...

{PRE} Plus, you've been everywhere and so nothing bothers you anymore anyway. Including dead bodies and everything

{JW} There's not too many of those on the campus, though right?

{PRE} Not too many, I didn't see any. [laughter]

{JW} So being a student helped you...

{PRE} Oh yeah, it's a very closed, tight community and you know everybody and I worked on campus and several, worked in the...and worked in the libraries and even had a student job downtown in Seattle Public Library as a printer's aid, a printer's assistant. I learned how to set type...

{JW} Which they don't do anymore

{PRE} Yeah its funny because I came here and uh, I could read upside down, and backwards, and but I'm also dyslexic, so I think there's a lot of, with dyslexia comes an ability to...your brain can un-sort.

{JW} So you have super-powers? [laughter]

{PRE} Yeah Super powers. So, when I get tired it starts to scramble the road signs.

{JW} That's not good, at least they are all colored, Stop is red....

{PRE} Well, like, I was driving back from Montana and we decided to make in a day straight through.

{JW} That's a long trip

{PRE} We were coming down out of the mountains in Coeur d'Alene and I knew we were gonna stop at Ritzville, but every sign, road sign, the green ones, every sign said Ritzville on them and I couldn't figure out why they all said Ritzville. [laughter]

{JW} You needed some rest...[laughter]

{PRE} Yeah, [laughter]

{JW} Do you still go up to Montana?

{PRE} I haven't been out there since we buried my dad in 13, October 5th of 2013.

{JW} Is that where he's buried?

{PRE} Yeah, we took him home. He was going on 97, 97.

{JW} Is your mother buried out there?

{PRE} No my mother is buried here at Steilacoom, right next to her, there's almost a family plot there. All of my grandmas and grandpas and uncles and aunties and mothers and nephews and nieces.

{JW} Um, so you came back to Tacoma...

{PRE} In 76' I went home in '76 I drove up the coast that's when I first started encountering my PTSD, 'cause I was with this beautiful young German woman she wanted to drive up the coast with me and I freaked her out in the first 24 hours and I said 'what the hell is going on with me?'

{JW} And you had just gotten back?

{PRE} Oh no, I had just left the service, it triggered. Leaving the service and heading out into nowhere land on highway 101 triggered my PTSD. And I had to deal with it all the way to Sitka, but once I got home in my old bed, I was fine. Then I worked there for five months, working on boats, for Wayne's Marina. He died, about ten years after that from a heart attack I guess. I asked about it and they said, 'Oh, old Wayne died a long time ago.' He got stressed out and he died of a heart attack.

{JW} That happens.

{PRE} Actually, his wife ran the business, she was a native woman from there. And I think she was an [inaudible], I can't remember, beautiful woman. So anyway, I worked there and I drove back down and it kicked in a gain, the PTSD kicked in again. I couldn't sleep. And then I was good for a while and then I started getting, in 82' I started getting, started coming back a little bit. I was getting antsy and in 84' it came back when I was in Europe. And I was sleeping out in this Volkswagon van out next to this orchard where the horses were, cause they didn't have room in the house, in Geneva, and I couldn't sleep. I kept on seeing things. I wasn't seeing things; I was seeing the horse move in the dark [laughter]. I said 'what the hell was that?' I didn't know they were there until the next day.

{JW} And you, at this time, probably didn't understand what was going on right?

{PRE} I didn't know, yah. Finally, about three o'clock in the morning I went and knocked on their door. I said 'I got sleep, I'm going to sleep on the floor.' And they said, 'okay, what's going on?' and I said, 'I just can't sleep, I'm just getting freaked out there.' So, I slept on the floor with

my head against the wall and I slept fine. You know with everyone inside, but out in the Wagoneer where, what is it Vanagon, yeah it was the old bus-type van...

{JW} Volkswagen Van.

{PRE} With a little bed in it and stove, and uh. That one belonged to the people we were staying with. They had a house in this little, In Geneva, um, you go north and then there's the airfield, and the airfield is split in two by France and Geneva. So you have to fly into France and then you have walk underneath and go to the other side and get you passport checked on the Geneva side, but Northeast of there was this little farm community and that's where they lived, and it wasn't even a farm community it was a wine community, wine fields everywhere, grape fields, that's when I saw my first European woman. They were... [laughter]

{JW} Different?

{PRE} Yeah they were different. They laid out in the sun naked you know, they thought we were weird [laughter], Hey there's a girl naked!

{JW} And their like yeah, yeah, we know [laughter]. You were in Switzerland why?

{PRE} Huh?

{JW} Why were you in Switzerland?

{PRE} To take No Beads No trinkets to Geneva which is a contemporary Native art exhibit that was being put together, actually in the Southwest and we picked it up in '84 early '84 and decided to take it to Europe. So was like all of the, you know I don't even know who the originator is, I just know it fell into our hands, Jackie Rosebrook, fell into her hands and she wanted me to work with it because I had an art degree and was working with the native artists already.

{JW} And that was up here?

{PRE} In Seattle, Yeah. Jackie Died from cancer about three years ago. I wonder if she had a picture of, I had a Swedish girlfriend [laughter] My girlfriend I lived with, I was going out to catch the train and plane at SeaTac to fly from, by SAS from here to Copenhagen and then from Copenhagen to Geneva. And I was going out the door and she says uh 'I don't want to hear anything; you do what you want and I don't want to hear anything about it.' [laughter] I said, oh don't worry about that.

{JW} And.....

{PRE} I didn't.

{JW} How long were you over there for?

{PRE} Six weeks. Yeah, we moved from a few places, I think we lived in about three four places.

{JW} How was the art received over there as compared to up here?

{PRE} It was a very diverse community, but you had the UN community, kinda like a university, you know all those people that come from around the world and they are all there and learning and talking and negotiating. You know the worst people at the UN were the Americans and the Russians.

{JW} Really?

{PRE} They couldn't get anything done, they'd just come in and take over the whole meeting they'd filibuster everything with these hours-long presentations.

{JW} We're still pretty good at it aren't we.

{PRE} Yup, Regan was President, everybody hated Americans.

{JW} So, similar to now

{PRE} Like now, yeah

{JW} Well you've got some experience to get us through it though.

{PRE} I learned a lot talking with all these experienced political people from all over the world, I met uh, why am I forgetting her name. Darn it this is what happens when you get old. You forget names. I just saw her name two days ago on TV. She ran for president of Guatemala or something. And didn't win, but she was Miskito Indian, and uh, it'll come up. I'll remember the name about 3:30. [laughter]

{JW} [Laughter] I can always look it up too, that's the wonderful thing about the internet.

{PRE} Yeah I wonder how she's doing. I saw her picture on line, her name, very short, you know, very quiet, was able to speak several languages, French and Spanish and English, and I uh, don't know what else. You could probably look her up on, she's [inaudible]

{JW} Where'd you meet her?

{PRE} I met her in Geneva, but she was from Guatemala I think, wherever the Miskito Indians live. It's funny I just ran across her name the other day. So, she was there, very calm, very deliberate, very interesting woman.

{JW} You said she ran for president?

{PRE} Yeah. I think [spells name].

{JW} Yeah I found it, Miskito, is it Sandra Tores?

{PRE} No it' and Indian name, or Spanish

{JW} Hmm.

{PRE} It's on my brain, my brain is not putting it together yet.

{JW} Yeah I'll have to relook it up, um,

{PRE} So, I met her there and I met another woman from, she was Sami.

{JW} Oh yeah from um,

{PRE} Norway.

{JW} Yeah.

{PRE} And her family had been a family of people who were fighting for human right in Norway, or Laplanders as they called them. I like her a lot. I pursued her a little bit but she kept on putting me off. But she was only like four feet ten, if that, you know very petite, very smart.

{JW} And were they working on similar issues?

{PRE} Everyone at the UN was working on, the indigenous populations were coming and trying to reform the Western world basically. Europe and American and their treatment of Indigenous peoples.

{JW} Which is still

{PRE} It was called the Human Rights Conference

{JW} So you were there?

{PRE} I was there with the art show, and talk about all of these people, I learned a lot. Just, the Sami woman came to the table and she looked at me and she says, um 'I gotta get away from this.' She came in with the tourists and she said, 'I gotta see someone important and how do I do that?' And I said, 'Well first you take off that pin that identifies you as tourist and give it to me and then I'll walk you to the office where I know this guy who can help you.' And she said 'Really?' And I said 'Yeah, just take off that little tag.' So, she took the tag off and gave it to me and I said 'C'mon.' So I walked her to the office and this old guy from South American who was a really good politician got her to the door and says this is (inaudible) and that was it.

{JW} Really?

{PRE} Yeah, so I was working undercover. [laughter] I didn't have any fear back then.

{JW} Do you have any now?

{PRE} Yeah I think I have more, you know getting older you know you get a fear of growing old and... Vietnam took away the fear. You can have anxiety and stuff like that but if anything happened you'd be in the middle in the fray, you just shove it aside and go. That's the first thing you learn. The first time we got hit in October of seventy, snipers came after us and I went to my station, and we were actually a vessel, you know, we worked on the boats, but we worked out of this main vessel, called, uh Tutuila, and back then I had multipurpose jobs cause I was an engineer with the ships propulsion and I worked with boats as well so I had to work that out with command cause I wanted, the guys that I was working in the hole with, I didn't get along with, a couple of them were racist, you know eventually I did beat the shit outta him.

{JW} So you said they were racist, how did they show that?

{PRE} It was just common, you know racism is rampant, it's just a thing out there, I mean you may not be familiar with it.

{JW} Well I'm privileged in that way.

{PRE} Yeah that's called white privilege, and uh, you just get treated and pushed around. When I was in the navy I had you know, two hundred fights, the bulk of them were these southern white guys who thought they could push you around, so I retrained them. I didn't want to take their crap. I beat up two guys in boot camp, so...

{JW} And they didn't get the memo not to mess with you? [laughter]

{PRE} They did, it went out. [laughter] I think we went into, where did we go? We were coming into the Philippines and all the sudden these couple guys show up and I says, 'Hi how ya' doing?' They said we're going into town, you going into town?' They said, 'We're going with you.' And I said 'Why you going with me?' 'You know how to fight.' Everybody said if you're going to town and trouble starts, Red Eagle will take care of it.

{JW} Is that still true? [laughter]

{PRE} I guess so, yeah this all the stuff with the racism, you just get tired of it, you just get sick and tired of it and you start beating people up. I even had difficulty with a couple black guys, mostly 99 percent of the time I got along with the black guys. We did okay, we had each others back, every once and a while this punk would turn up and I'd have to straighten him out. There was, when I was on my first ship, uh, was it my second ship, I think it was my first, and we had a young black guy from Chicago and he was just picking on all of the white guys he could. It didn't bother me, but I came and I told him you gotta cut this down because we don't do this here, we work together. So the first thing he did was reach out and pushed this white guy, and I decked him. Well, he jumped off of the deck and ran up and told the black chief of our division and the black chief came down and chewed my ass. Six months later when we were on our way to Vietnam, about halfway over, he was my watch chief, and in the engine room, and the maintenance room. He says 'Red Eagle.' I say, 'Yeah chief?' He says, 'See that boy over there?' I

says 'Yeah.' He says, 'You go show him how to take readings.' And that was my permission. I walked over there to the other side of the engine room and I walked up to him and his eyes got big like an owl and he backed off a couple steps and I said, 'Chief wants me to show you how to take readings.' And he says 'Yes sir.' And I never had any trouble with him again. He was one only one of two black guys I ever had trouble with.

{JW} Was it mostly white guys?

{PRE} Mostly white guys, they just get full of themselves and they're privileged and...

{JW} That's still an issue.

{PRE} I didn't give a shit about privilege, I just wanted, you know, you're not gonna treat me that way, if you're gonna treat me that way then one of us is gonna get beat up pretty bad.

{JW} (laughter) That's a way to solve it huh?

{PRE} Well, yeah it's personal way, they are personally feeling they are king shit, yeah.

{JW} I love it, it's great.

{PRE} But the military was pretty racist back then, back then they had just taken the blacks and the Filipinos and allowed them to break into other ratings, so we had a lot, we had couple black guys and a couple Filipinos guys down in the hole who just got said, they were asked what they wanted to be and they said well I wanted to be a machinist. Otherwise they were attending to the officers, in the officer's mess. They worked as stewards work for the officers, they kept their bedroom and fed them and I don't know what else they did. But all of the sudden the word came down that they could choose whatever rating they wanted and we would send them to school and so, they all went off to school and all of the sudden they were appearing and they didn't know anything cause they had worked their way up to E5 and E6 they didn't know anything about, they had to maintain their rank, but they had to learn a new field, so we uh, so we were teaching these Filipino and theses black kids, who had been stewards, how to do their job.

{JW} That wasn't a limitation that was put on...

{PRE} They didn't put any limitations on them anymore. It was different with Native Americans, we seemed to be able to move pretty freely, I think it was because of our history of service.

{JW} Yeah, which is very rich.

{PRE} Well the reason the Native American people have the right to be a person, we have citizenship in the United states, that didn't happen till 1924, four years, five or six years after World War Two, and Congress said, we'll make them citizens now. A lot of people don't understand that. You know, there was a young man that goes around the community bad-mouthing veterans, so I guess he doesn't understand that the reason he has citizenship is because of veterans who served

{JW} What communities?

{PRE} Native communities. Yeah he's just a young guy who doesn't know any better. Actually, back at his home, his village, they shamed him. The village elders took him into the house and uh, told him what's going on and all the vets turned their back to him.

{JW} Wow

{PRE} Yeah, but I guess he still thinks he, I guess now it's worse I guess.

{JW} Is this up here, in the Puget Sound Community?

{PRE} Yeah, but I'm not going to name...

{JW} Oh, I wouldn't expect you to...

{PRE} But we have this issue in our communities where a lot of the reason that we have the rights we do have is because of service, yeah. All, when I was growing up, my house was full of all these vets from World War Two and Korea, dad knew them, some of them were relatives, it was dad's relatives of my mom's relatives. They would come over and party, and... So, you grew up in that environment, where all the men drank and smoked.

{JW} That's the environment I grew up in too [laughter]. Um, I did want to talk to you about obviously, I want to focus a little bit on your art

{PRE} Rigaberto Menchu

{JW} Oh, you remembered it! K.

{PRE} Rigaberto Menchu, now look her up.

{JW} If I can spell it correctly... [Phillip spells out the name] There she is!

{PRE} Little brown Indian woman dressed in her traditional dress? Yeah that's her.

{JW} [laughter] Political activist,

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} Publicizing the rights of Guatemala's indigenous feminist during and after the Guatemalan civil war in 1960-96. Yeah I've read some really horrifying things from the civil war.

{PRE} She used to hang out with us, but I guess we used to hang out with her.

{JW} Yeah exactly, right. Well she's still around kickin' somewhere.



{PRE} That was a long time ago, that was thirty years ago.

{JW} That's pretty cool.

{PRE} Lucky I remembered her name.

{JW} I'm very, very, proud if you.

{PRE} I'm trying to remember the name of the young Sami woman, she was a force. There's a common name, like John, you know, except it's a woman's name, Norwegian.

{JW} Do you want me to look up common Norwegian women's names?

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} Um, do remember what it started with?

{PRE} H.

{JW} Hilde?

{PRE} Hildegard! Hildegard. And her last name, just look up Sami activists, women activists.

{JW} I looked up all that except for women.

{PRE} Her family name means, is interpreted as activist.

{JW} Really, and she's still around?

{PRE} She was a little older than me, probably ten years, so maybe not. She had a lot of energy.

{JW} I'm not finding anything

{PRE} I'll come up with it. But you know dealing with European women and dealing with these very powerful political women, was very interesting.

{JW} Yeah?

{PRE} Yeah?

{JW} I mean there's increasingly become more in America

{PRE} Yeah but this was 35, 33 years ago.

{JW} Did that affect you at all seeing that?

{PRE} Well that Swedish woman, Ava that I hung out with she spoke five languages, was a teacher, got a round really well. Her sister was even, I think if there was a measurement she would be twice as liberal, she was pretty intense, her older sister.

{JW} And this is in a time, in America, Reagan is president and they're going back to conservative values and all that stuff.

{PRE} Yeah all that bullshit.

{JW} Yeah that which we slowly dug ourselves out of and are knowing go back into.

{PRE} At least we know how to laugh at it.

{JW} Well, you guys do, my kids don't.

{PRE} We can laugh at their face now. There was one woman from Austria there, she was just very interesting to deal with. European women, they were just so causal, it was just strange to deal with them, as an American.

{JW} I feel like it's probably going towards that way, or it has been recently in America, women are much more empowered...

{PRE} Yeah you know the Swedish women had been empowered all ready but they still had a lot of the macho.... imprisonment. I have a picture of the Austrians.

{JW} I'd like to see it.

{PRE} She was one of the security guard at the UN building and I just saw her walking down and she was wearing a uniform and very tall beautiful elegant and I said, 'Holy cow.' I said... I waved her over and she looked at me and came over. She said, 'What can I do for you?' I says, 'Can I take a picture of you, can I have a photo session with you?' She said, 'Why do you want pictures of me?' I said, 'Well, cause you're beautiful.' And she said, 'Oh, okay.'

{JW} Like nobody had ever told her that before?

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} [Pauses to look at pictures] So, you did a photo session with her?

{PRE} Yeah! Her boyfriend was in the next room.

{JW} [laughter] And her name was Anna?

{PRE} Her name? I'm not gonna say.

{JW} You don't have to.

{PRE} I'll say her first name, Brigitte. Yeah I started taking pictures in Vietnam in '71. I didn't know, I just could see all of these things, you know there's an irony in it too, because I was in Vietnam and we were moving down the river once and there was helicopters going and rockets and tracers and I said, 'I'm gonna get pictures.' I took my camera and I went out, behind the bulkhead you know, taking pictures. Well I didn't put the film in right and it wouldn't take it up. It was weird.

{JW} You figured it out though didn't you

{PRE} Well I was at home thinking I got some good pictures and I wound it up, and nothing on them. You had film back in those days and you send it in Saigon to get it...

{JW} Developed...

{PRE} Yeah but they would watch you, they would have these little sleeves with your negatives on it, and there would be little x's on it.

{JW} There were looking at them?

{PRE} They'd look at em.

{JW} Makes sense. So, you did eventually get some pictures?

{PRE} No I did take a lot of pictures, but not in combat.

{JW} Interesting

{PRE} Yeah, so you know when you're in combat, the only guys taking pictures are the journalists. So I was just like a tourist. Because like ninety-five percent of the time nothing was going on.

{JW} You just sitting around?

{PRE} Except being shot at, guys killing themselves, and things like that, yeah. It's a lot of pressure, so when you come home you're really different. Back to Vietnam. I remember being in Long Beach because I had gotten home for 45 days and I was drunk on wine and smoking dope because it was legal in Alaska in '76. It was '72 when I came home. I don't remember anything much going on, it was just like Sitka. And when I got down to Long Beach I was like... I was walking down the street and going into the little, what do they call those doorways that come out, look around, and walk down to the next one, you know go in? You know the little opening where the door is deep set and it has a little area.

{JW} Mhhmm this is Long Beach, Washington or California?

{PRE} Long Beach was California, yeah. Down next to LA. I got in a fight in a bar there and years later I was talking with the guy who was in there with me. He says, 'You know what I

remember about my service?' I said, 'The fight at the Pago Pago? He says, 'Yeah.' And I beat up these two guys. They were bikers I guess, or wanna be bikers or something. Just started a fight. I started beating up this guy and I thought my friend was beating up the other guy and I had this guy hanging on the wall. I had him lifted up on the wall with one arm, just holding him there and he's beating up my arm trying to break loose and I got him like this. Yeah. Then I felt this thing on the back of my head. I turn around and I see my buddy and I say, 'Get him off my back.' So I dropped him down and threw him across the room, probably seven, eight feet. He hit the wall and went down. And I walked over to him and I grabbed him by the collar, picked him up again and threw him on the table. And Joe goes down and... I was just gonna mess his face up. This gun appeared on the end of my nose. And I says...I was thinking about it, should I just take it away from him and shove it up his ass or should I just let it go? So I stepped back and I pulled the guy and I threw him aside and he lands on the floor and I put up my hands and I says, 'You sure you wanna do this?' He says, 'You gotta leave, you gotta leave.' The gun was shaking. I should have taken it away from him but I didn't want anybody to get hurt. It didn't bother me, it was just some stupid guy with a gun and I walked out. Me and my buddy, and then I was over looking that guy, blood started dripping down and landed in his face and he was going....

{JW} You got hit in the back of the head?

{PRE} He hit me with a gun butt, right here, I didn't pick it up until it appeared on my nose. And I wasn't thinking, oh, I'm gonna die now. I was thinking should I take this guys gun from him and shove it up his ass or should I just back off so no one gets hurt?

{JW} Why do you think you didn't fear for your life?

{PRE} Because I had already been in life and death, It just wasn't an issue anymore. That's what changes about you. It's not about your life anymore, it's about how many people will I hurt?

{JW} So you eventually had to deal with all of this stuff?

{PRE} Yeah eventually.

{JW} And you mentioned the university community has helped with that. Has your involvement with any other communities helped at all with that?

{PRE} Oh the canoes!

{JW} That's has helped you deal with...

{PRE} Oh a great deal. The only place I feel really comfortable, really at ease is out camped in a tent in the village, the moving village.

{JW} And you have been participating with it?

{PRE} Since ninety, for me, ninety-three.

{JW} So almost the beginning, really close to the beginning?

{PRE} I had actually been asked to go on the Paddle to Seattle because they were running out of the pullers. And Larry Beck, the artist, said, 'Phil, I need pullers, you want to go pull?' And I said, 'Pull what?' And he said, 'A canoe, paddle a canoe.' And I said, 'Oh. Nah.' [laughter] I don't have time. I was really busy. And that was a year into my PTSD at the time. I wasn't sleeping, I hadn't slept for twenty-seven months or something like that. It started with a dream in '88, 88 I had the dream.

{JW} You remember when?

{PRE} Oh yeah. I had this dream which basically threw me into that. Opened me up, here it is, there's the door, you're going into your PTSD.

{JW} Wow.

{PRE} Yeah. I had another dream in 2000 and it was strange because when I was at the University of Washington I had a girlfriend and later she got married and I took up with another woman. She had a kid and then I went through all of this stuff and everything happened over the years and then 2000 she calls me up and says, 'Phil I've got a room at the resort on the coast, do you wanna come with me?' She was trying to get away I guess. I said, 'Sure'... So I met her jumped in her car and went out. Thing is, we had an experience back in '80 where she was working on her... either her masters or PHD. And she was across the street on 15<sup>th</sup>. I just come out of the bookstore and looking across the street, waved at her, she came across, I waited for her and she says, 'Oh I'm going interview this psychic healer, you wanna come along?' I said, 'Sure.' So we drove out to Bothell and met her, her name was Tia and she smiled when I came into the room. She said, 'Oh a Native American!' I said, 'Oh no, not one of those.' Oh its good though because we Native Americans are connected to the land here and they are good to have around because they are connected, you know a good resource. This stuff was backed up years later. So, I met her and we talked and she said you're closed really tight and I'm gonna open you up. So she walked over to me and goes [makes gesture] and I go, 'Wow! Wow!' You know this Sufi, was her religion, she had married, she was an Anglo woman who had married a Sufi man and he had been her teacher for years and years and years and she became a teacher and a healer. And it was like, wow. But that was in '80 I don't know if it was '81, maybe '82 I was walking around I could see all of these things. And later I figured out those are the souls of the trees that used to be here, because they were like this {gestures} and they were stumps, and it was strange, really weird. And just to be popped open like that and she said one thing to me, She says, 'If you need to shut it down, just say so.' I didn't know what she meant at the time but... [laughter] she told when she did it, she said, 'If you run into any problems just shut it off, you can do it just say so.' So she knew what she was doing. I didn't have any idea. And I was coming up with people and I'd say something to them and they'd step back and say, 'I didn't ask you yet.' I'd say, 'You didn't?' They'd say, 'Yeah I didn't even ask you, you gave me the answer but I didn't even ask you.' It was strange and it got so intense that I made it shut. I just went, I'm closing this and back to normal.

{JW} Really?

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} Can you open it back up?

{PRE} I can, I don't want to. It's too intense, to have that line on the world it just too much, for me it was overloading. Just tremendous overload I just couldn't handle anything else. I was just always dealing with this stuff. Yeah, it's like having a new set of glasses that you put on that you can see things. Like these old trees, you know different sizes and you could see these things, like little dogs and puppies, light, little light things like bugs, and they were everywhere.

{JW} Has that experience affected your art or your...

{PRE} Oh yeah, yeah. I never grasped those visions in that art, but it's there. And opening it is really weird. In 2000 when I went to the coast with Michelle, she had been studying with this woman for twenty years. She says, 'Phil, your all tied up, I'm gonna open you.' And she goes... [gestures] Wow, again? It was wired cause I was sitting there eating a candlelit dinner and she started talking to me but it wasn't her. It was the woman I lived with for six years telling me about how she was feeling. And I said, 'I'm in a strange place right now.' I was kinda living that way and I was just overwhelmed with all of this emotion, just a tremendous, years of emotion was coming through. And I had been kinda sweeping it aside. And I said, 'We're leaving.' And the romance part kinda ended because I was all the sudden dealing with this openness again. We were in the car and stopped for coffee on the way back. She drank coffee, I dint drink coffee, I drank tea. But she was kinda put off, but it was her fault.

{JW} Right she's the one who did it!

{PRE} She was looking for physicality and all the sudden I was... I said, 'I'm gonna live like this for four days and then I'm gonna call you and you can take me outta this place.' She says, 'Okay.' I said, 'It's like being in a white room.' And I'm seated in this white room and it's just full of this emotion, just coming in waves; waves of emotion. And I stayed in there for four days and I had to stop listening to the radio because I was crying at all of the songs. You know just all of this... overwhelmed with all of this emotional stuff but I wanted to go through it. Finally, the fourth day came and I called her and she didn't pick up the phone. Eventually, I found out she had been out of town. She got called out of town because she had a business. So I called up my friend, John. So I had been in AA with John for a long time. Decades. And he'll know. He's a poet. And he's a famous poet, you could probably look him up.

{JW} John?

{PRE} Olson, Son. Yeah, he's a very intense man himself.

{JW} Is he from here?

{PRE} He lived in Seattle. His wife's a poet too and I called him and I said, 'John, I have a problem.' And he says, 'Oh yeah, what is it?' I said, 'I'm trapped in this room of emotion, it's too white and I can't find the door.' He says, 'Oh, wow that sound familiar. I think I just read

that.' He says, 'Wait a minute.' He put down the phone, comes back. I can hear him paging through a book and he goes, Oh, yeah, here it is, page fifty-seven. Oh yeah, this is it.' And he starts going through it and he says, 'Phil, you can't take on this responsibility, you have to....' I knew that there was a door and I knew that he had to open it and stand in that door and he kind of understood that and he stood in the door talking to me and I came out.

{JW} Wow. What was the passage that he found, that he was reading to you?

{PRE} I don't know, don't care. [laughter] Yeah. Whatever it was, I called the right guy.

{JW} That's very interesting.

{PRE} Yeah so I'm having a lot this mental and spiritual stuff going on in my life and it's not even pure Native American, it's this whole psychic world that we all share, you know, that people speculate on all the time. But I've been in it. People come on television and talk about and say, 'Yeah.' [laughter]

{JW} You've seen it?

{PRE} Yeah I've been in it.

{JW} Does that affect the way you interact with the greater world?

{PRE} All the time, yeah. I avoid certain things still.

{JW} Like what?

{PRE} One thing that is really highly emotional and volatile for me is the police shot my grand-niece Jaqueline, in January of '16. There's a movement afoot now, Justice for Jaqueline. I was gonna kill somebody. I was gonna go kill somebody [laughter].

{JW} You were angry?

{PRE} Yeah, so I said I can't do that. I gotta back off. So, my brother Keith, I encouraged him. He said, 'I'm gonna be doing this.' I said, 'Good you do it. If you need any help you let me know, but I can't touch that.' Cause I'll hurt somebody, and he doesn't get it, you know? Because he's never been involved in life and death stuff. The funny thing about it was, we were at her funeral, they had a funeral and then they have a dinner afterward. I went to the dinner and this guy come up to me and he says, 'You were on the river weren't you?' I said, 'Ya, where'd you hear that?' And he said, 'Oh somebody told me, said you were on the river.' I said, 'Yeah.' 'Oh, are you related to Jackie?' And I said, 'Yeah, I'm her uncle.' He said, 'Oh man, me and my buddy, I was on the river too, and me and my buddy were both on the river in Vietnam.' And I said, 'Oh wow.' And he said, 'Yeah, we picked up our guns and we went hunting for that guy.' Not the police officer; the guy that got her into that position [says name]. 'We went hunting for him and we were gonna kill him.' And that was the way I felt, but I wasn't gonna go there and they were just gonna go do it. And they found him. The police did. He eventually turned himself

in. Maybe he found out people were after him or something, I don't know. I'm not sure that I wouldn't respond, so I'm keeping out of it.

{JW} So highly personal thing that involve life and death

{PRE} Yeah plus I have, there's this other stuff.

{JW} You don't have to go into it if you don't want to

{PRE} Oh no I'm talking about the stuff we went into before. The visions and everything and its still there, I can utilize it. That's protecting me. You know I have a friend who said 'people are after me' [inaudible] I said, 'Hey, you just gotta shut that off. Don't go there. You can do it. People can't do things to you without your permission. Just say you don't have permission.' I don't know if he heard me or not.

{JW} Which has sort of been what you've been doing.

{PRE} Yeah. This is more emotional than the last one.

{JW} I'm sorry, if that's a bad thing. I think it's been a wonderful discussion. We can move to something a little less in-depth if you want to?

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} I would like to talk...

{PRE} I remember her name now.

{JW} The Sami lady?

{PRE} Yeah Hildegard, oh no. Sara [spells it] I just heard it. She was a very intense woman. You're lucky I'm remembering this stuff.

{JW} [laughter] Hmmm [continues to look up the name].

{PRE} She's Sami, Sami leader, Sara. [spells name]

{JW} Nope, I'll do a little more research.

{PRE} Her whole family was known for, what's that Mexican guy who organized the pickers, yeah she's like that. Yeah.

{JW} Like, really grassroots...

{PRE} Yeah, Cesar Chaves, she the Cesar Chaves of the Sami.



{JW} Well I'll have to research some more and find out more information on her. I did want to talk to you, I don't want to keep you forever. [Discusses parking and interview length]. I do want to talk about the canoe journeys a little bit more and your role in that.

{PRE} Well you read the article and that's pretty much it and there's little details that I don't talk about too much.

{JW} Because you're not willing to?

{PRE} Well it's just nobody has the business to know that, little stuff, it could be, it depends on what kind of mood I'm in.

{JW} So the article will suffice for a lot of things?

{PRE} Its pretty much true.

{JW} Its very well written too.

{PRE} Oh, good. My editor didn't think so.

{JW} No?

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} I like it.

{PRE} I think it's kind of earthy straightforward, do you think?

{JW} Yeah I really do, and writing like that is important because its assessable to everybody.

{PRE} Well this editor is a journalist type of person you know? I'm not, that's why I'm not a journalist.

{JW} You're a writer and a poet right?

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} Poets write different than most people.

{PRE} Yeah we're weird.

{JW} [laughter] Good weird. Well I will use this article as a basis for discussion around that. I did want to ask about the ten rules of the canoe.

{PRE} You can go online and find the ten rules of the canoe.

{JW} I just wanted to ask you what your favorite rule is?

{PRE} I don't.

{JW} Which one rings most true after going on so many of them?

{PRE} I don't have one, I think rule number two; no abuse of self or others. And we talk about that constantly. No alcohol, no drugs, no intimidating people, no bullying people.

{JW} Do you have issues with that ever?

{PRE} Oh yeah, it comes home because I drank and I went AA. I went to naval rehab in '75.

{JW} Really?

{PRE} Yeah, I went out and had a fight first. [laughter] I picked a fight with the doorman guy... what do they call em?

{JW} Bouncer?

{PRE} Bouncer.

{JW} [laughter] That's not a very good idea.

{PRE} Evidently he knew karate. [laughter]

{JW} was it a good last fight

{PRE} We just sparred around because he saw my moves and he wasn't about to make his moves, I wanted to be careful about not getting seriously injured with him, because he knew things too, see. And I knew mine from experience, I trained as a boxer and as a wrestler and had never taken karate, but I have beat up several karate guys, cause one is, they practice all the time but they don't really fight.

{JW} You gotta get out there and do it right?

{PRE} You gotta get out there and do it and learn how to be in the fight, not practicing, so you can really whip 'em, do it fast and early [laughter].

{JW} I like it, hopefully I'll never have to take that advice.

{PRE} You gotta get beaten up a few times to learn how to fight. I remember one thing was funny; I was in Vietnam and we were on the river at what they called the Acey Deucey Club on the base there. It's an organization run by the first-class, second-class, petty officers, and they established a bar where you could go drink, see bands, and stuff. USO shows and things. And they had it on base there. And we were in there... and this was the guy I told you about that I

worked with and he didn't like me and I didn't like him and for some reason...we wound up on the street walking back, gonna catch the boat out to the island there and he started saying some nasty stuff to me and he started swinging on me and I went right into like boxing stance. I was bobbing and weaving and then I came up and I popped him on the jaw, right here on the cheek. And later, when they dragged us apart you could see that I opened it up. A really nice cut that I opened up that was bleeding really good... which I really enjoyed [laughter]. And all of the sudden there were like twenty guys there and they were dragging us apart and I licked him. The next day I was off working on the boats and the executive officer of our command came up to me and he said, 'Phil.' I said, 'Uh oh, he called me Phil instead of Red Eagle.' You always gotta be suspicious of officers that call you by your first name. He says, 'Phil.' I says, 'Yes sir.' He says, 'Aw, you don't have to call me sir.' He says, 'Phil, how'd you like to go to Japan and get in the ring and box in a tournament there?' I said, 'Oh, no sir I can't do that.' He'd heard about the fight and the way I fought and he was gonna take me out to Japan and throw me in the ring. I said, 'No sir, I'm not that good of a fighter, in that way. I don't think it would be a good idea if I went.' He said, 'Okay, you think about it and let me know.' I said, 'Yes sir.' I never did, but it kind of indicated to me that he had hear that I had kicked ass on this guy.

{JW} You could have had a completely different career path if you would've gone.

{PRE} Yeah but if you get in the ring with guys that are experts that are training all the time, you can get hurt. Get your teeth knocked out. A little bobbing and weaving, doesn't mean much to them.

{JW} You're pretty tall too though.

{PRE} Yeah I gotta long reach.

{JW} [laughter] That's a pretty funny story

{PRE} But also I had already been on R & R in Bangkok and I knew what it was like out there, because you go right into PTSD, so whatever it was that I had, which I didn't had a name for; nobody had a name for. I didn't want to go through that again. That whole week I was drunker than a skunk. And when I got back in the country again, I felt comfortable. I felt more at ease in the war than I did out there in R&R.

{JW} That's interesting why do you think?

{PRE} Well I know why guys go back. We had guys in our unit that had four or five tours and they all said the same thing; they felt they had to come back because that was where they felt useful. I said, 'Yeah.'

{JW} You understood that?

{PRE} Yeah. I recognized it. I don't know if it's me, I think we all go in it with our stuff, so PTSD is gonna affect you in regards to who you are in your weaknesses and your strengths. I think because I became an artist and a writer and kind of leader, that was in me, it's always been

there. So it affects those sensitivities of being a poet. That was there. So you interpreted that through that filter, even if you don't know you're a poet yet, you still have that filter, it's there. You don't become a poet because somebody says, 'Oh you ought to be a poet.' You become a poet because it's there. The first time I wrote a poem, I was thinking someday I would write poetry, this was back in the '80s. I was hanging out with poets and writers and stuff. I had organized the Raven Chronicles, as a journalist, as a publisher. I never thought about being a writer, just and organizer. And it was there and it came out one day. I just had to write it down, so I wrote it down. And it came out to a beautiful poem about... You'd think oh, my poems are gonna be about Indian activism or war you know? And there was a song when I was young called 'Sleepwalk.'

{JW} I know that song very well.

{PRE} Yeah steel guitar.

{JW} Santo and Johnny.

{PRE} Santo and Johnny. Sleepwalk. And then I heard that song and somehow it triggered all this stuff. And I was at this gathering in West Seattle and there was a young woman there and music had really changed, and dance had changed, you know. I said to her, 'Have you ever heard of Santo and Johnny?' She says, 'No.' I said, 'Oh, too bad. That's what we used to dance to when I was young.' So, that went in and boom, popped out a few days later as a poem.

{JW} I would love to read that

{PRE} I think you probably can. [inaudible] Just go ahead and google my name and sleepwalk.

{JW} That's the title of it? [looks up poem]

{PRE} Philip H.

{JW} Yeah I ran into that earlier. I saw lots of pictures of your dad.

{PRE} So you realized that he was an athlete?

{JW} Yeah I read that, A basketball player.

{PRE} Yeah he was more than a basketball player, he was a horseman.

{JW} Really?

{PRE} Yeah he was really good. Is sleepwalk in there?

{JW} I don't see it

{PRE} You can go with poetry sleepwalk. Otherwise I'll send it to you. It's a song about dancing. And it kinda has a rhythm to it, Sleepwalk.

{JW} Oh I'm very familiar with the song, it's one of my favorite songs.

{PRE} Somebody put words to it later.

{JW} It doesn't need words, if you could send it to me, I can't find it.

{PRE} I published it in like the 3rd or 4th Raven Chronicles, I was gonna bring you some copies, so I'll get some copies and bring it to you.

{JW} You said it was in the third or fourth?

{PRE} Somewhere in there. Then the next poem I wrote was like, I think I wrote that in '92, or 3 or something like that. A couple years after we had gotten started. So the poem wasn't about the war, about Vietnam or politics or [inaudible] it was about this old song, and dancing with this young woman. My next one was a little more serious. It was about Vietnam and experiences back then. It was actually called 'June 11, Diary,' cause I went to a school in the Great Lakes, we called it beep school. Basic engineering and propulsion school. And she was a WAVE there. A woman's, they actually didn't have any term, she was just an enlisted woman, we called them WAVES cause during world war two they started it, Women's Auxiliary something and called them waves. That's what the women in the navy were called. This was before they could hold jobs on ships. And I was still in the Navy when they brought women on board. It was kind of strange we were thinking wow, women on a ship, it's kind of weird.

{JW} I have a few female friends that have gone into the Navy.

{PRE} Not just in the Navy but on ships, where they hadn't been before. I remember when the first female pilot got her wings. Women have come a long way. But there was a lot of these women pilots in World War Two, flying in all of these combat planes and bombers overseas so the men can pick em up load em up with bombs and fly em to the bombing zones.

{JW} Women are pretty amazing.

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} Your book that you wrote, what pushed you to write a book. That's a pretty big undertaking.

{PRE} Hmm that's another strange story. There's two versions [laughter].

{JW} Are they both true?

{PRE} Sort of. [laughter] I tell you version one, I won't tell you version two which is closer to the truth

{JW} Maybe someday.

{PRE} Yeah well see. It depends on my mood. I went to a writer's gathering because I was the publisher of the Raven Chronicles. I went down there to get writers involved, let them know they could submit and everything and be there. And I fell in love with the environment of all of these writers being there and all of these ideas floating around, and all of these people who have written stuff, and all the big name people were there at the time. It was pretty amazing in '92 in Oklahoma, summer of '92. Tom, whom I worked with, he had decided for some reason not to go. I didn't know him yet, then I found out later why he didn't go, cause he had cancer. He said he wanted to go but he couldn't decide what would be the right thing to do or not. And I had seen his writings and they were stacked this high with manuscripts that he had written [Gestures to chest height]. He wouldn't change the content of this manuscript to meet the demands of the publisher, so he never published. So, I don't know whether his wife has them or threw them away.

{JW} I would hope not.

{PRE} Well, women don't want to deal with stuff they throw it in the trash can [laughter].

{JW} That's a generalization, now. [laughter]

{PRE} Okay, she recycled [laughter]

{JW} That's what a modern day woman would do

{PRE} Yeah so I went there and picked up this energy and I decided I was gonna go back but I didn't have a way to do it, I didn't have any money. That first one in '92 was paid for, you just signed up for it and they accepted me as a publisher of the Raven Chronicles. And they flew me down there and put me up and flew me back. '93 you're on your own. And I said, 'I gotta get there, how am I gonna get there? I'll win the writers prize.' So I wrote these 11 short stories and submitted them. I wrote them in 30 days cause I decided I was gonna do that. And then version two, I'll tell you why. I'll tell ya.

{JW} Oh thanks [laughter].

{PRE} I fell in love with a woman writer that turned out to be a lesbian. I wanted to see her again.

{JW} And that's why?

{PRE} Not because she was a lesbian, I just like her work and had been reading her poetry for years. I had seen her in '88 at Berkley. I went down there to take some art to San Francisco and she was reading at Berkley, so I went to Berkley. She had like this aura on her when she was walking around and I was like, wow. She's quite famous. And I said 'I'm gonna go there and I'm gonna see her.' And I was telling Tom and I says, 'I'm gonna go down and I'm gonna see what's her name.' And he says, 'What, you're not gonna do that, she a lesbian don't you know that

Phil?' {laughter} But I had already won the contest [laughter]. Now I have to go. Yeah, so then I won the contest, the publishing right, and then the publisher wouldn't publish short stories, so I selected two stories out of these 11 short stories and I was gonna connect them and make them into a novel. But they never came together, so there are two novellas in the book.

{JW} Alright and I haven't read it yet so I can't really ask you any specific questions unfortunately.

{PRE} Mythical realism.

{JW} Mythical realism.

{PRE} Yeah it's what the natives call it, the native writers call it mythical realism

{JW} And what would you say is the definition of that?

{PRE} In western sense?

{JW} In either.

{PRE} I call it mythical realism, that's what it is.

{JW} Is that in the western sense or the indigenous?

{PRE} In the western sense they don't have a, they call it fiction.

{JW} Just plain fiction?

{PRE} Well it's kind of like, it's not sci-fi, Are you familiar with what's his name, South American writer from Brazil, he wrote 'The Palm Wine Drunkard', look it up. 'The Palm Wine Drunkard', or 'Drinkard.' (The Book is titled 'The Palm Wine Drinkard' by Amos Tutuola).

{JW} [Looks up poem]

{PRE} Cause it's his work where the word comes from.

{JW} You said he's Brazilian?

{PRE} The 'Palm Wine Drinkard.' And I read him at the University of Washington in a lit class.

{JW} I can't find it. You keep on coming up with stuff I can't find.

{PRE} Yeah. I'm trying to think about how, it was from... the white people had a name for his type of work and the native people had a different name which is mythical realism, which is like dealing with mythology, mythological reality.

{JW} Yeah, is it Amos?

{PRE} I don't know I'd have to see the name.

{JW} Hmmm. So, mythical realism

{PRE} Yeah. I don't think you'll find it because it's a word we use in the native writer's community where you blend a reality with a myth.

{JW} Which I mean most myths are based on some sort of...

{PRE} Superhuman characters.

{JW} Yeah there's no mythical realism, there's magical realism.

{PRE} Magical realism is what they call it. Magical realism. Of course magic is this. [gestures]

{JW} I like it, so the book is essentially two novellas that are written in mythical realism?

{PRE} Yeah, we called it mythical realism because some characters are thrust into a mythical realism. [laughter] Yeah, mythical reality.

{JW} I'll have to read it on my break

{PRE} You ever watch the movie Jupiter Rising? (The movie he is referencing is actually 'Jupiter Ascending, c.2015)

{JW} No.

{PRE} It's about a young woman from Chicago and she's kinda spoiled and snobby and then all of the sudden she's swept up into this universe where she's the queen of Earth and they have to get her permission to do anything on Earth. In the business world there's this contract that says you just can't go and resource earth you have to get the permission of the Queen of Earth. It's like that.

{JW} Now I have to check out both of those. [laughter]

{PRE} Its a new movie came out last year.

{JW} I don't watch many movies. I will check it out though.

{PRE} I just saw it on T.V. the other night, part of it the last hour of it. I was doing some work and it was in the background, it was kind of interesting. I saw the last half hour in that.

{JW} I'm assuming there's some lesson to be learned?



{PRE} Yeah so she had been swept up out of Chicago reality of being a spoiled young woman, beautiful young woman, being swept up into the world of universal business. The business of the universe. Mining, they were mining Jupiter. And they had to get her permission so they were tricking her, trying to get her to sign things put her thumbprint on, marry her and kill her off and all these very complicated stories, but this one man this one character was saving her. Yeah, that's mythical realism.

{JW} I'm gonna have to immerse myself in that so I get a better understanding.

{PRE} Yeah in the end she's back in her home and she cooking breakfast for her mother and auntie and she's cleaning toilets. And is very quiet and nice.

{JW} Because she learned something

{PRE} She learned something, and then she says, 'I'm leaving. I'm gonna go out for a while and she winds up going to Sears Tower and meeting her space boyfriend.

{JW} [laughter] Are there any space boyfriends in your book?

{PRE} No.

{JW} Darn it.

{PRE} Well it's kind of the same story, there's this myth of space reality. You know Star Wars, Star Trek.

{JW} Its interacting with...

{PRE} Ordinary earth people, this mythical reality that they had heard about but nobody ever goes there and suddenly you're thrust into that, into our case it would be native reality in which things happen. You know, thunderbird. And there's a language for it, medicine language, you hear these stories about raven, blue jay, tricksters you know. Trickster stories are a good example of a mythical realism. Where you get to crawl up your own ass. [laughter]

{JW} I've heard a few of them, so stories?

{PRE} This is kind of borrowed, it's a warrior, basically a soldier, gets thrust into after his experience in Vietnam which pulls him out into this other reality and then pushes him back in.

{JW} So hearing that and hearing the conversation we've had for the last two hours, is this at all autobiographical in nature?

{PRE} No, some of it is, there's a couple things. But at the time I was in a vets group in Seattle and I hear all these guys telling me these stories. Eventually a couple of them killed themselves, so that's what PTSD did to them. But you hear these stories and they can't talk about them and I

tell you, like in the movies, your sittin there saying tell me about it. 'I can't. If I tell you I have to kill you.'

{JW} So you've taken stories that are from other people as well...

{PRE} Their stories were interesting so I blended our stories together. In the beginning of the book I dedicate it to them.

{JW} I can't wait to read it.

{PRE} Mmhhhm. Still in publication, 20 years.

{JW} I know I saw that. I was trying to see if any of the local books stores had it so I wouldn't have to order it on Amazon.

{PRE} I hate my publisher

{JW} [laughter] Do you want me to put that on the record?

{PRE} They know it. Don't ever sign a contract with the English.

{JW} No?

{PRE} No, they're English, they have an accent and they are offering you something, don't do it.

{JW}[laughter] That's an unfortunate lesson.

{PRE} She want to get in done and I want to help her. I was thinking good thoughts and good things, you can't think that working with the English Yeah my lawyer said don't sign this Phil, I said, 'I got to sign it, it's for a friend and her project.' I'm racist. [laughter]

{JW} Against the English? [laughter]

{PRE} Yeah. I can't understand why we have these English people coming to our country and they are popular on television and everything.

{JW} No its the accent.

{PRE} Why is he popular? we have Americans that can do the same thing. Why are we doing this to the English? Why are we letting them do this? We left that behind 250 years ago.

{JW} [laughter] You're making my jaw hurt.

{PRE} I remember the first time I smoked grass in Long Beach and it was good. These black girls were calling me smiley, well I think I'm gonna be smiley. The next day my whole face hurt. Smiling so hard. [laughter]

{JW} [laughter] I think that's where I'm going right here, no grass involved.

{PRE} Who needs grass we got humor.

{JW} I'm going to have to leave here in a little bit unfortunately, are you going to be taking part in the canoe journey this year?

{PRE} Oh yeah I'm the ring man.

{JW} So I'll probably see you out there. I'll have to find you and high five.

{PRE} What are you doing out there?

{JW} I'm doing Cynthia and Charlottes study abroad.

{PRE} Oh that'll be fun. You're gonna travel with us, yeah my group, find out what it's like to relax.

{JW} I've heard that's not the case.

{PRE} Really? No you're talking about work, I'm talking about [gestures to head and heart with hands].

{JW} The mind and the heart relaxing, I'm very much looking forward to it. Once I found out there was a study abroad where I could camp every night, my prayers were answered.

{PRE} I'm trying to get more people to do, I'm working on people now.

{JW} It definitely something I'm thinking about participating in a study abroad ambassadorship after I take part so I can say...

{PRE} Go to the UN

{JW} Go straight to the UN and say we need to do this?

{PRE} No just be there.

{JW} I don't know how likely they'd be to send me, yeah I'd definitely...

{PRE} It's an experience. That's where I learned a lot about politics and how to carry yourself and how to present yourself and how to tolerate Americans and Russians.

{JW} I'm still trying to figure that one out

{PRE} Oh man they were just going on for hours they weren't even talking about human rights they were just talking about political bullshit. We were saying why don't you just get this shit

over with so we can get human rights out there. It's simple. Oh, now we can't do that it's not that simple [laughter].

{JW} So the Human Rights Declaration came from that right, the meeting you were at?

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} I remember reading one of the nations...

{PRE} Rigaberto Menchu.

{JW} I think it was an eastern one, they were talking about, what was their names? It was an indigenous tribe. I have the book.

{PRE} There were some people from the Amazon there and I'm pretty sure that they spoke Spanish and understood English but he was gonna be Indian and he walked around in this loincloth thing with all his feathers sticking out and everything and I used to watch him and think what the hell is he doing? He didn't need to do that. Maybe I was embarrassed or something, but his wife kept on bringing him his dinner and he'd just sit there and eat slow.

{JW} Why do you think you were embarrassed by that?

{PRE} I don't know, maybe he had picked a role and a way to present himself.

{JW} You didn't feel that was a correct representative?

{PRE} Yeah.

{JW} Yeah I get that.

{PRE} He was a real. I guess he wanted to pass himself off as not, as, what's the word? He wanted to be who his people were. Decolonized.

{JW} Yeah.

{PRE} And I was colonized and you know.

{JW} That's definitely something that's in people's discussions and stuff.

{PRE} Well here we are 35 years later and the words finally coming. I haven't seen decolonized in a long time, out in public. It's always been in our circles, we've been colonized we need to decolonize, this is what we need to do. And that was part of our common, we talked about a thousand things, and I can't talk about 999. You know. [laughter] Yeah. The basic ideas on how we constructed this, that's where the word came from, having to sort through colonization and get to a place of decolonization and how to exercise it. Exercise not exorcise. Colonialism.

pioneer colonialism. Oh, you wanna read a book? Oh, I don't have it here. It's the history of the United States through Indigenous...

{JW} I have it, I own it.

{PRE} Oh good did you read it?

{JW} I'm part way through

{PRE} Oh read that. I'm read in it too and I love it. I opened it.

{JW} Dee Brown, no not Dee brown.

{PRE} No its a Spanish name Ortiz.

{JW} Yeah I have it.

{PRE} Ortiz.

{JW} Yeah I'm partially through it's unfortunate.

{PRE} It's very sad but its enlightening. I knew much of it already because it's kinda common. When you live in a native community and you hear the talk. It's just like my dad, there was this song up in Seattle I listened to on channel 99 FM and it just was a haunting song. And it as about Maria's place. The title was Maria's Place. Un Batoche. And it was a bout Louis Riel and Dumont, Gabriel Dumont. And their fight with English and the Canadians in the battle and everything. Well, my great grandfather had been up there and he had fought alongside of Riel and he got shot up pretty bad and they got rescued by this woman who brought him down to Fort Peck. And they never talked about that but it was in this song. And I said, 'Dad I just feel like I have this urge to play this song for you and I don't know why.' So, I brought down my tape player and it and this tape in it and I turned it on and I played and he listened to it for a while and he said, 'Oh yeah, yeah. Grandpa was up at Batoche, he fought there with Riel in 1885, but we don't talk about that.' And I said, 'What?' The only talked about in Dakota and he never talked to anybody about outside of the Dakota people. They never told us because they didn't want us going out and letting stories slip out because they are gonna come down and get our family and take us back to Canada and hang us. Because they hung Riel. And it was weird I was just fascinated by this song and I could figure out why and I played for my dad and there was the answer. Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont.

{JW} You go that long and you just have to ask a question.

{PRE} But why though, why was I sensitive to the some in the first place? Why Out of nowhere.

{JW} It's in your makeup

{PRE} Yeah it's in there somewhere. Maybe for some reason I understood Dakota and I didn't know that I did.

{JW} Was it spoken around you a lot?

{PRE} Yeah and they would sit around at the reservation and that's all they spoke at Fort Peck. And we grew up with it. You know we were never allowed to speak it, but it was there around us all the time.

{JW} Why weren't you allowed to speak it?

{PRE} Because my mom wouldn't do it because she was they were both Indian school people. My mom started Indian school when she was 5 years old. Grade school, high school, was a Chemawa Indian School in Salem Oregon.

{JW} And they weren't allowed to speak their language?

{PRE} They weren't allowed to speak and that's what came home with her. Don't speak Indian. But my dad he would get drunk and speak it anyway. All his Indian buddies they'd speak it. We'd go and listen, hide behind a doorway and listen to them. In Fort Peck everybody spoke Dakota. But we couldn't. We could listen. So, I'm thinking maybe something...

{JW} Yeah I'm sure.

{PRE} Some subconscious intellectual level that we don't know about, which I reached into in 1982, [laughter].

{JW} Yeah. If you're having something spoken around you from when you're born, even if you're not allowed to speak it I'm sure there's still some sort of understanding.

{PRE} Its still there. I can tell when they're talking to me, I turn.

{JW} Yeah, huh.

{PRE} I met that, who's that tall guy that's in that movie, he was in the sanitarium here in Washington? Um, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. remember the tall Indian?

{JW} Yeah it's been a long time since I've seen that.

{PRE} I was at the University of Washington and I had arranged, I was on the team for arranging the powwow in the spring. I was on it for two years and I met Billy Mills, there were two of them standing together and I saw their movies and I knew what they did and the big guy starts speaking to me in Dakota and I says, "I don't speak Dakota." And he says, "Oh." [Laughter] We shook hands, the hand of Billy Mills, we talked for a bit.

{JW} So you never heard your mother's language then either?

{PRE} Not until these last 20 years.

{JW} Its starting to come back?

{PRE} No, its foreign. They'll go out on the floor and speak it because still speak it, people still speak it. Mary, one of the people my group speaks it, she's not native. A friend of mine I went to u w with wrote a book on, [inaudible] she was there, she speaks it she goes to the Salish conferences every year. I'm trying to get them out to the journey to go around and have little groups that speak, that's what they do. Immersion.

{JW} That'd be great.

{PRE} That's what Zeke Zahir wants. He's a middle eastern adopted into a Native American family and that where he started to learn and he's become obsessed by it and now he teaches it.

{JW} Just out and out Salish?

{PRE} He's not even Salish by blood, he's Salish by being raised by a Salish family, he's adopted.

{JW} I have to get wrapping up.