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Interviewee: (John) Chris Badgley
Interviewer: Leif Fredrickson
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Leif Fredrickson: This is Leif Fredrickson interviewing Chris Badgley. Did I pronounce your name right?

Chris Badgley: Perfect.

LF: November 22, 2019, or 21st—one of those two.

CB: I think it's the 2ast.

LF: Yeah, the 21st century, somewhere in there, and we're in Missoula, Montana. So, let's just start. Can you tell me where you were born and raised?

CB: Certainly, I was born in Ohio; however, I don't feel I've ever been there because we left after six months. My father was at Johns Hopkins after that where we were until my mother had stroke and we moved back to Missoula when I was six, I believe. They were both born and raised here and so moved back here because they knew where they stood, and Mom needed a lot of help. I moved back to Missoula then and was raised here up until I was 18. Went through the Missoula county public school system, Hellgat High, and graduated half a year early and got out of town in search of music, a scene, excitement—all those things one leaves home for.

LF: How did you first get into music?

CB: I sang choir in grade school, high school here in Missoula—All City Boys—but I was very much into music. That got me into music initially, in the sense of music, and then I had a really great sister [Lya Badgley] who turned me on to a lot of great music at a young age. Bands like the Clash, Devo, The Ramones, Blondie. She was not living here in Missoula at the time, but Christmas was 'here's a package of music,' which I attribute to saving my life.

LF: Why is that?

CB: It gave me hope that living in a place that was isolated like Missoula—generally five years behind the rest of the world, not a great environment as a child—it made me feel that there are other people out there like me. I didn't feel quite as alone, and that there were other people that were dissatisfied in ways and were expressing it. It gave me an avenue to follow. I stand on the backs of giants. There were so many people who cut the way before us that showed us the way, and for me, that I would say saved my life.

LF: When was this that you were first getting into punk music, and your sister was sending you stuff?

CB: I was, oh, probably seventh grade, eighth grade. That was '79, '80, a little bit behind the bell curve for the real movement. And I didn't go into it wholeheartedly; it took a little time for me to really embrace that movement. When we're kids, we don't really have any taste, or we think we do. It takes time to develop that. But again, it was 'wow!' I liked music before that, and there were bands I listened to a lot that, but things like Cat Stevens or Don McLean, or stuff my parents listened to. I remember a big influence was Utah Phillips at a young age, who I think really put the idea of dissent into my sphere and critical thinking on some things that I had never thought about before. The punk thing, I see, came out of people like Woody Guthrie, and it's just the truth reframed.

LF: How did you get into Utah Phillips?

CB: The folks. So, my parents founded the Institute of the Rockies here in Missoula. Part of the reason they moved back was to do this, and that was an organization that still exists today—a non-profit that dealt with adult education and public policy. In those years, the big emphasis was a project called the Columbia River Watch, which encompassed a number of different things with water: state rights, federal obligations, people who live on the water, people who use it. In that project is when I first found out about Utah Phillips. He played at a couple fundraisers, so I got to meet him first as just a person and he's a nice guy. He was, 'wow, this guy's character and grit and he swears and he's not holding back.' I was kind of wowed by him and some other characters who weren't necessarily musicians at the time that I was exposed to like Jim Cole and Bud Moore and Norman McLean, and these people. Meeting them in person, kind of having them be part of the family, in a sense; they'd come eat at our house or interact with them. I didn't, at the time, know who these people would end up really being in the mind of us as Montanans, and I think they gave me some fuel which led to where I went. But it just seems to me—in looking back in hindsight that Don McLean, he had a song called "The Grave" which was critical of war. I was very much a pacifist, and that struck a chord with me very heavily and influenced me. So, I think you come out of that, how can you not be a punk if you listen to this stuff?

LF: When did you start...what were some of the first punk shows or other live music that you went to that was like really formative for you?

CB: Well, for me, the shows that really started broadening my mind were things involved with my sister's store, Urbane Renewal, and she had a couple shows and there were local people playing like Deranged Diction and Ein Heit and some other creative folks: Tom Kipp, Matt Crowley, some of these people who were just not satisfied with the status quo. So, I kind of remember this first, this event Avant Garde Show being, I think, my first counter-culture show that I went to. I remember being a little like, 'whoa, these people are extreme. Not that I hadn't been listening to music beforehand but experiencing it was a little different.

LF: So, that was the punk new wave fashion show that was at the Circle Square Community Center?

CB: Correct.

LF: Can you describe what that was like?

CB: My memory is not vivid of that event because it was 40 years ago or so, but it was a building that was abandoned—not abandoned, but empty—and so it wasn't really, there was not a lot of production value, I guess is what they call it today. It was a lot of odd ducks kind of all in one place at one time. People you might see walking around and go, 'oh, they must have something going on,' but suddenly they were all in one place together. I remember being a little intimidated honestly and the feeling of 'my sister's doing weird stuff,' I think, was a lot of that. I'd seen live music, I'd seen Phillips play and events where someone's playing, but this was the first time I was at a show sort of autonomously. It was weird.

LF: You said it was kind of a mix of punk and new wave people but also maybe some artists?

CB: A lot of artists. I think it was, in my mind, predominantly artists over musicians. It was a music show, but it was also a fashion show. I think it just had all the usual suspects from Missoula at the time in a place that wasn't alcohol-driven, a bar. It wasn't the Top Hat, it wasn't Luke's or something. So, it was a first sort of, in my experience, a cross-pollination of the older guard and the kids interacting with each other in an environment like that.

LF: Did that end up producing...I mean, what was the impact of this, if any, on this sort of—

CB: I think the impact of that was a number of people realized, 'wow, there's enough people here that we can actually maybe put on shows, and people will show up and at least pay for the sound man.' I'm relatively certain a number of people said, 'hey, let's start a band' after that event. It's sort of one of those things where you're...I've had bands start where you're at a show and you meet a couple like-minded people, and you kind of look them up and down and go, 'let's start a band.' It was innocent. There was no agenda other than let's have a good time and do something. I feel that that was a pretty seminal point for Missoula in the punk scene, not that there wasn't things happening before that. There were bands playing before that, but this galvanized something in a way, in my mind. Again, 40 years ago, it's a little hazy.

LF: Was this before Lya opened Urbane Renewal.

CB: Well, Urbane Renewal was open. It was just starting. It either was open or just opening when this happened. My sister had gone to Bassist Design School in Portland so she had been doing fashion. It leads me to think that kind of the culmination of her studies was brought to this.

LF: You said that there was a punk scene or there were bands at least before this, and Urbane Renewal—or you guys pronounced it Urbane Renewal?

CB: When she tried to open it, the city council said, 'well, you can't call it Urban Renewal because it's going to sound like compete with the city,' which is preposterous. So she put an e on the end with a little—I would call it a little flare—but Urbane Renewal. But everyone all just called it Urban Renewal. [laughs]

LF: Do you have much of a sense of what the punk scene was like before 1982 or whatever when this—

CB: Prior to that, the punk scene was very insular. I think there were a lot of people listening to the music; they hadn't found each other yet. They were they were like-minded folks, but there wasn't a place to meet them. You might see them walking down the street and call them out, which is what happened with Sergio Avenia and I, is I saw Sergio and approached him on the street going 'you look like you might like punk rock music, and you look like you're old enough to buy beer. Let's be friends.' It was as simple as that kind of...that's how we met each other. I think there were people who were in school together at the university who were a little more focused because they were in a group. They were in dorms together and had more interaction, but for a kid, pre-high school, there was nothing in public schools or there was no emphasis on that at all. In fact, there was a real negativity associated with the punk movement. I recall hearing on the local news about, 'look at these kids in England, what they're doing and how horrible this is.' I remember seeing those ads, or those not ads, but those news pieces going—and myself wondering 'what the hell are these guys doing? Why would you do that?' In a matter of months, everything changed. You realize, 'wait, I know exactly what they're doing, and I like it.'

LF: So, where would bands have played before Urbane Renewal?

CB: The Top Hat would allow, have local shows. Music, in my naivety, didn't seem to be...touring bands were a different thing then than they are now. So, bands would come through. They'd play maybe The Forum. I think The Forum was open then. But the Top Hat was really—that and the Trading Post Saloon, which is now, I think, where Fox's Club is or something. They would have kind of the glam metal band like Pegasus, and it [phone rings; unintelligible] I can't remember. They would have these sort of butt-rock bands, for lack of better expression. We called them that later. I remember my sister going to those shows, going to the Trading Post with her friend because that was the only action in town to see live music. Then there was a few regional bands that would come through, and again, they were all kind of butt rocky so I think we were kind of void.

LF: Other than that, it was like Battle of the Bands.

CB: Battle of the Bands, talent show things. The Top Hat would have some stuff, but they were more of a bluesy thing action. Yeah, I don't recall. Again, I was young, and being underage, even though in Montana it was drinking age was 18, there still wasn't a big emphasis for that. There could have been things happening at the University that I wasn't aware of.

LF: So, around 1982 you had Urbane Renewal and then The Forum. Were those kind of the two main spots?

CB: Main spots that I recall unless someone put on a DIY show, which they'd get a space, figure it out. The thing that all these early shows had in common was terrible sound. It was loud; it's energetic. [laughs] It was ours. It was something different to do.

LF: What was Urbane Renewal like as a space? What were the sort of things that happened there?

CB: As a space, it was, predominantly, a record store—used record store, not new records. So, as a space, Lya was trying to sell records, but there was some fashion things. You could get your studded wristbands—first place to get kind of that punk gear. As I recall, there was as many art shows there as there were music shows, and there was some amazing art. This is before Missoula had an art walk. It was an opportunity of a place for people of a divergent point of view to interact, in my memory. I remember seeing a couple art shows there that were incredible that, to this day...I've seen a lot of art in my day and a couple of them are still amazing to me in hindsight.

LF: It sounds like the early punk scene was very much, like there wasn't much of a distinction between the music and fashion and art more broadly, or they were pretty—

CB: They were all pretty interconnected, it seemed to me. The fashion part was a way for people to set themselves apart from the norm, so fly your freak flag so to speak. Generally, you'd see someone with a sticker on their notebook or a patch on their coat or a t-shirt—t-shirts weren't as prevalent as they are now. You'd be like, 'oh you have a...I see you have a Damned t-shirt or a [unintelligible]. Wow, we're friends.' There wasn't much of a vetting process with who you ran with other than, oh, you like Durante [Mark Durante]? Oh, we're friends then, which has changed a lot. There was a innocence, at least for me. I can't speak for everybody, but it kind of felt that way with the people I ran with.

LF: So, Urbane Renewal, it kind of continued on like with this event Avant Garde thing did, which was continually mixing art and music in sort of counter-culture way.

CB: Counter-culture is very much...I would frame it as it was a counter-culture haven. Not that people hung out there all the time. It wasn't always someone sitting there; there weren't couches or anything. It was a business, but things did—people met there. Other people would meet each other there. You'd hang out. Someone would come in you didn't know from Bonner

or from Stevensville, and they'd walk in like they they've been going across the ocean and this is the first land they've seen in in months. Again, it kind of fell on deaf eyes to me at the time, but in hindsight looking back on it, it was definitely a lighthouse for people. It was only in existence for a year or two under Lya's...Lya sold it to Rich Landini and his wife Jenna. I don't recall Jenna's last name but, and they continued on with it. I'm not sure how many more years they went on with it.

LF: Was it a similar sort of thing under them?

CB: Yes, as far as I know. I had left Missoula. I couldn't wait to get out. There was bigger, better shows. A lot of the people who were driving forces in the Missoula music scene had already left for Seattle. People like Jeff Ament, Sergio, Bruce Fairweather, Tom Kipp—the Deranged Diction crew. Shawn Swagerty. There wasn't any future in having a band in Missoula other than having fun. Lya had moved, prior to that, to Seattle, and it's kind of planted a flag there for people from Missoula to follow because a majority went to Seattle, not to Chicago. Steve Albini went to Chicago, went east, but most everyone else went westward. Again, Lya kind of saved the day. she worked at a restaurant called the Raison d'Etire [Café], and I'm pretty sure everybody who moved out there ended up working there at one point or the other. Randy [Pepprock], Jeff, I worked there, Sergio, on and on, Sabina. I think most everyone ended up working there at one time or the other. The owners, Stacy and Shelly, were...they embraced the weird, and I think they also realized that people from Montana have a good work ethic. They kept hiring people out of Montana. Jeff worked there for a number of years. I think, five years. He's probably their longest employee. I was working there with him. I remember the day clearly. I was washing dishes, he was pulling coffee, and he had a band out in Seattle at that time. He said, "This sucks. I'm gonna be a rock star," and he did it. [laughs] I distinctly remember him saying that going 'okay, Jeff, you go for it,' and he's succeeded. So, kudos to him for keeping his eye on the ball.

LF: For yourself and what you know of other people and the early Missoula punk scene, what were the influences, or where were they coming from? I mean a lot of, as you're just saying, a lot of people moved to Seattle, but did places that were close geographically have an influence? Because when Lya was talking about it, a lot of her influence came from London when she was there. Based on what I've seen of Who Killed Society, they seemed to be pretty...like this poster here Anarchy in the U.S., they're pretty influenced by the Sex Pistols. For Missoula, was it like New York might as well have been London, or I mean, in this pre-internet era—

CB: I think there was a lot of...sorry [reaches for something], there's a lot of...This probably had a big influence, which is the *Rolling Stone* magazine with the Sex Pistols on the cover.

LF: Oh, okay, when did this come out?

CB: That came out in '77. Actually, Monte Dolack gave me that when I was working with him years ago. I think what really fueled...I remember a real fuel coming out of Saturday Night Live. John Belushi was a big fan of punk stuff, and he had Fear on there. I remember seeing like Don

Kirshner's Rock Concert, The Ramones being on there, Devo, Blondies, sort of those—The Midnight Special. That was another show. So, before MTV, before when they actually showed music, [laughs] before that there were these shows. I take it for granted, but they were they had a huge impact on these smaller communities because you watch it and go, 'there's Alice Cooper.' You go, 'wow, someone's doing something crazy, 'so I suspect those kind of made people go question what's going on here? Like, wow, there's something big happening elsewhere. Also, when local news talks about these kids desecrating their bodies and dyeing their hair and all that, you watch it and go, 'wow, those people are not part of the norm.' So, I think there's a desire by a certain set of people to not fit in, or they don't fit in and they are in dire need of finding a scene. The punk scene back then was—I felt there was a sort of a coalition between the punks and the Rastafarians and the gay community. At least I felt this in Seattle, that we were all allies in a bigger fight for freedom, for equality, for all these things that are still talking point issues to this day. Though it felt much more...there was much more of a camaraderie because we were definitely easy to see in a crowd and easily identifiable. The jocks in Missoula—it was running from jocks, not getting your ass kicked. That was a big part of it. You can really bond with people when you have a common enemy, and I think, that helped fuel it.

But back to influences. I can't speak for Randy and some of the people are a little ahead of us who had an influence on us, but it was New York. San Francisco had a really great scene. L.A. had a great scene going on. New York—all those scenes logically were very different in what they were about or pressing for, but they all had influence.

LF: What kind of people were attracted to the punk rock scene? Like what was their—

CB: Young white men, a lot of young white men in my experience. Well, we're in Missoula which is for—one of the reasons I didn't like Missoula was this lack of diversity. I think it was a real feeling of not wanting to be part of the status quo, desiring some independence from wrongful thinking. That we—speaking for myself, it was a quest for something bigger. That I was dissatisfied with the narrative that we were expected to follow.

LF: I mean, it seems like for some people, punk was more of a subculture. They wanted to be different, but that's all they wanted. For others, it was more like they wanted to change the world or whatever.

CB: For me, it was definitely I wanted to change the world, or at least shine light on the things that I found that were wrong with the world. So, it was almost a desire to be in the press in a sense, in a different medium than writing. At least for myself. I wouldn't propose to say that's other people's motivations or were, but again, it gave me—from a dissatisfied childhood or unpleasant childhood—something to believe in and something to strive towards. Equity.

LF: I think you were mentioning earlier, for you, a big thing was the peace movement or anti-nuclear.

CB: Peace movement, anti-nuclear. I was very anti-nuclear. I protested that; I continued to protest that after moving to Seattle.

LF: That's like nuclear power, not just—

CB: No, nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapon proliferation. At that time, I was anti-nuclear energy as well. I've since changed my tune a bit on that; however the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the atomic clock, the fact that Reagan was in office. I mean people look back at his as this sort of great guy; he was really a shit heel and destabilized the world in a lot of ways that we're still rolling from. I think for me the big...when I found out Missoula was a primary target for the Russians because of our highway system, that kind of freaked me out. I wasn't old enough to do the duck and cover drills in school, but they were still, that mentality was still very much prevalent.

LF: Felt like a real, existential threat?

CB: Very much a real, existential threat. I felt our days were very much numbered. I never expected to make it to the year 2000, and I don't think I was alone in that fear. There was a lot of fear.

LF: You said the punk scene here was mostly white male. Were there any people who were not white? What was women's involvement or people who were gay or queer?

CB: There were women definitely in the scene and doing their own...By the time I was leaving high school, there were all-girl punk bands coming out, doing their thing. It was, I felt, very inclusive that everyone was welcome in that scene, and I felt Missoula was good about that. There were some people with disabilities. Again, I didn't see, I don't off the top of my hand remember a big flood of any particular minorities in Missoula, or in the scene in general, sad to say. There were gay folks. There were probably more gay folks than we knew because at that time it was real dangerous for anyone to—especially in a town like Missoula, anywhere in Montana—to come out. So, I suspect there was there was probably more of that than I was aware of, but it not that it was...There wasn't a, yeah, I don't know. That wasn't as much on my radar. Eighth grade, you're not really thinking on those levels as much, but I do know there were there were folks. It was a counter-culture, and it was inclusive, so I think it attracted those folks. I would hope they felt welcome. I felt like I was welcoming everybody, but again, I can only speak from my perspective. My sister was very much in the same ilk, having lived abroad.

Once you leave Missoula or the United States, you come back with a much different perspective, which I think is a good thing. I think travel and reading are very important to one's development.

LF: There's something, oh, I want to ask what were the...you said there were some all-female bands that were starting up when you were—

CB: Yeah. Trying to remember the all-girl...What was their name? They played a couple shows.

LF: Was it Vicious Fits?

CB: Vicious Bitches [Vicious Fits] or something. [pauses] Who was in it? Because they were all...I graduated half year early, so I was only at Hellgate, a senior, for five months. As I recall, most of these girls were all sophomores at that time or something, so they were pretty younger. At that point, my eyes were on horizons farther.

LF: What year did you graduate?

CB: '85, but I was done in January of '80...'85.

CB: What were they called? God, I cannot remember. It might be in the yearbook, the later yearbooks. But yeah, they had a really funny song I remember. "It's green on the wall; it's green on the wall." It was just a song, was kind of like droning along kind of like a flipper song. And it's, "Oh, I think I'm going to be sick; it's green on the wall." But it was really inventive. It was funny and good. That was the one that stuck in my head, but they had other stuff. I believe, at that point, venues had expanded in Missoula. I think there was a show at the university in the...what do you call it? The UCT?

LF: Oh, UC Ballroom.

CB: UC Ballroom or something.

LF: Upper Commons.

CB: Yeah, the Commons. I believe that was a show they played [Vicious Fits played in the UC Ballroom on April 19, 1985], and that was right before I was heading out of town. So, things have changed where suddenly other venues had opened up; people were like, 'oh, these punks aren't necessarily going to destroy the place. Let's let them have a show.' Because Missoula is liberal, right? For the most part, they embrace the weird traditionally, and so that seemed to be taking root by the time I left.

LF: Well, I was going to ask how did Missoula, how did this place, affect the sort of punk scene that was here, whether it's like the landscape or the culture of the place or the politics of it?

CB: Well, that's a big question. I think fundamentally I thought...I've done a lot of thinking on why Missoula produces all these exceptional people in many realms, not just in music but in arts and in leadership. Missoula's got something. I think that's the \$50 question through, not

just this project, but every project in Missoula. The city council's talking about that. What makes us marketable? For lack of better terms. I think it's a crucible geographically. If you look, we're surrounded by mountains; we're in this little bowl. I feel that the university is a huge driver for the arts community. I think the long winters, where we're stuck inside, having to talk to each other. [laughs] Extreme snow sports weren't the norm in the '80s. People were pretty broke. Skiing's expensive. A lot of this snow machines are expensive, all that. So, I think a lot of people, if you weren't into hunting, if you weren't into outdoors, we sat in basements a lot and listened to records and went, 'oh, wow, we can play that. Oh, let's start a band.' I think geographically and environmentally were huge factors on what makes this happen in Missoula. It's just sort of this micro-melting pot for lack of better words. Then we have the rivers coming through which give new, renew, and flush. The university again is part of that renewal in that every year you have a new crop of people coming to school here from different places, and they bring their culture here. Like John Donahue who came from L.A. to go to school here, who had a huge impact on a number of people. I don't know if you've heard his name yet, but ask Randy, ask Jeff. I feel that John brought a lot of the driving force into it.

LF: Was he in a band here?

CB: I think he was not a musician per se. He was a skate guy. I think he might have been the original singer for Deranged Diction for like 10 seconds, but I'm not certain about that. I just remember him bringing in a lot of that conviction, for lack of better words. So, I think Missoula has, environmentally is a huge factor for it—for what happens and how that. Plus, we are an inclusive community. We're willing to listen to each other, or were in the past, and I think that makes a difference after living elsewhere, being in other places around the globe. I don't see environments that nurturing toward finding oneself in a way like that. Once you hit the city, you're just trying to survive. We seem to have enough time here to kind of ferment and stew like a crock pot rather than flash cooking like you have in a city. How's that for a two-bit analysis of why Missoula is what it is?

LF: It seems like in the early '80s, there were pockets or there were aspects of Missoula that were like welcoming and open to what you're doing, but also others that weren't—

CB: Oh, yes. Missoula 60-40—60% liberal, 40% conservative. So, yes, there was definitely...people don't talk about it but the big Friday-Saturday night thing to do in those days for kids, especially high school kids, was a drive up and down Higgins Avenue in a loop. They'd just cruise the street, and this is something that's disappeared out of America as far as I know. Maybe somewhere in Topeka they still do it, or Salinas, but that was a real thing. Whenever you had a punk show downtown and the jocks going up and down the street, there was always inevitably some sort of confrontation that happened. I remember one, in particular, there was almost a big riot. Someone came into a show at Urbane Renewal. I don't think they threw a punch or they shoved someone or said something to somebody, but the whole venue flooded out after them down Main Street toward Higgins. Everyone was out there. I mean, people had their spikes around their fist. It was gonna go down. It would have been the great punk rock riot

of Missoula; however seeing this mass—when I say mass, it's not hundreds, we're talking maybe 25 people maybe 30—going down the middle of Main Street, Sentinel High School cheerleaders were in the car cruising. They all were watching and didn't notice the car ahead of them had stopped, and they rear-ended him, which defused the whole riot in an instant because all the punks started laughing at them. We went back to the show, and the cops obviously came and dealt with the rear-end thing. But everything could have changed drastically, I think for the scene, that evening. I don't remember which show that was or who was playing, but I just remember us all shoulder to shoulder like, 'this shall not stand,' and 'let's go!' No violence happened other than somebody's dad's car got dented. But there was palpable tension to go to school with your mohawk. I remember being scared to death what was going to happen to me going to school when I got my first mohawk. There was threats; there were threats. There was a lot of stuff that was, in hindsight, was really scary that now if someone was threatening my child that way, I would be very upset. However, it just kind of happened back then, and that was what was going on. It was a different time for what people would put up with.

LF: You said you almost got hit by an ashtray at one of the shows?

CB: Oh, yeah. So, that was a Battle of the Bands show, and it was Who Killed Society playing at the Carousel. Not the carousel down in the park. The Carousel was—I think it was called the Carousel—was, yeah, it was a bar that was attached the Eagle Manor over on Stephens Avenue, where the news station is now. There's a big round building there. That was a bar, and Eagles Manor was the old folks home that's—I think it's still old folks home—but the Battle of the Bands. Who Killed Society played, and that was a big deal, so everyone got come out and support Who Killed Society, so we were all there. They got up and did their show. In perspective all the other bands were these sort of butt-rock, KZOK, top-40 sort of bands, and we were very unwelcome. Not that I was in the band, but I was in the crowd. They went on to play, and people started throwing things. They used to have glass ashtrays—ashtrays were everywhere—this is for posterity. Smoke was everywhere back then. Everyone smoked. Not everyone, but...So, this glass ashtray missed my head by about two inches. It was thrown at the stage. It wasn't thrown at my head, and it was a pretty scary moment. I don't recall anyone actually being injured at that show, but it was palpable the disagreement. You might see it in—it's like watching a city council race in Missoula. Again, there's 40% of the people really are thinking in a different framework than the other 60. Obviously, there's probably a 10% in there that are independents or somewhere in between.

But that show, that was the first time that the scene forayed into their scene, in my memory. We had our own gigs going and our own things going on, and we weren't putting it in their face. That seemed to be the first time I recall seeing it put into their face, and they didn't like it. Again, there's people who—Randy probably has a much better recollection of this, being the guy on stage watching the crowd. [laughs]

LF: What were some of the other really memorable shows or any other crazy stories from then?

CB: Well, one of the shows that really, in my memory, changed it from kind of our gang to a larger forum was when The Rejectors and The Accused came and played at Cowboy Bob's, which was the basement of the Urbane Renewal. They came from Seattle, and they were—The Accused more of a metal, sort of thrash band, and The Rejectors were kind of a hardcore band. I'm not sure who promoted the show; I think maybe Jeff brought them out or had connected with them. But they did all-ages show in the basement, and that was when it seemed suddenly we weren't alone anymore—that we had somehow graduated to the next level as the Missoula scene went. Like now, we're not just entertaining ourselves; someone else is coming here to entertain us. So, that, in my memory, was a real tipping point where suddenly after that we had bands coming through, and you would get a band an alternative band that wasn't a top-40 cover band or Boy Toast, who were playing top or cover tunes predominantly but they were B-side cover tunes or they might play a Clash song. We'd all go sit through a bunch of stuff that eh, but they play that Clash song and everyone got up and danced. It was a big deal just to hear "Should I Stay or Should I Go."

Just the other day I was in a grocery store or something they're playing "Should I Stay or Should I Go," and never in a million years thought I'd be hearing The Clash in a grocery store. So, it's changed a lot. There was a palpable "us against them" vibe. I remember having to always be looking over your shoulder to a degree. Again, you were safe in a basement with some buddies and a record player, and that's where a lot of that scene was for, at least for me and a number of the people I hung out with.

LF: How had the punk scene changed by...You said you left in '85?

CB: '85. Spring of '85.

LF: So, it was kind of a three- or four-year thing that you were involved with here?

CB: Right.

LF: So, part of the change was that you got out-of-town bands that came to play—

CB: We started having that. Well, MTV came out, right? I remember a house party once—the first punk house party I went to—and I think it was might have been Wayne [Erickson] or Wally's [Erickson] house or somebody. It was over sort of by—as I recall, jeez—it was over kind of behind where Tower Pizza was, where Bridge Pizza is. Sort of in that neighborhood over there. It was the first time that us high school kids got invited to kind of a party where the college people like Deranged Diction were and stuff. It was, again, a goofy party. The TV was playing. I remember "Let's Dance"—David Bowie's "Let's Dance"—was the big video and on high repeat. So, it was that period of MTV. That would come on, everyone would watch it, because David Bowie was cool, but then Golden Earring would come on or whatever, bah! We're listening to music. It was such a...people drinking beer, who knows? Wasn't drug fueled.

But I remember there was a jar of...We were young and naïve. It was a jar of rubber cement, and we all were just sitting around giving ourselves scars because you could paint rubber cement on your skin and fold it over. Silly little...it was still...there was a childlike quality to it at that point, which was changing rapidly. I just sort of remember that being a, wow, this is cool we're at the big kids table, or we're at the adult table at Thanksgiving. That was sort of a moment where it was changing for me and a couple other people.

Then I think what really changed it was venues opened up to having bands. Again, again with MTV, it put music—people got interested in music in a way they weren't before, and I think that brought in a lot of new blood into it, who weren't necessarily punks but they liked hearing David Bowie or the B-52s. There was all this sort of new wave that corralled them, and as they got into that more, they discovered there's higher-octane music that was a gateway. The gateway drug was new wave to punk rock for a lot of people. I guess that's my...and I'm speaking for me so I mean, my viewpoint is skewed because that's how I see it kind of affecting me, but I don't think I was alone.

I remember, I worked at The Shack as a dishwasher when I was a sophomore in high school, and Scott Bauer was in my class. His older brother Jay Bauer ended up going on to be in The Dwarves and other acts later on. Scott was a middle brother my age, and then Dan Bauer his younger brother was in my first band Nuclear Youth. But Scott and I both worked at The Shack, and so we'd be in the kitchen washing dishes on a Saturday morning. It was a big triumph if we could get them to put the Violent Femmes on the tape deck in the kitchen, and everyone would listen to it. By that point—that was about 1984—we're listening to the Nip Drivers and the Violent Femmes, and so we've broadened a little more. No Means No was...and DOA. My tastes were broadening a little bit. [laughs] It was funny Bill Warden, who owns The Shack, was in there working, and he thought that the band the Violent Femmes were Scott and I in our basement playing. [laughs] I remember him saying that to Scott and I, and we were both like, 'thanks!' But Scott and I never played a band. He wasn't a musician, but we were definitely like-minded. I think there was a lot of us who were just together because of the music. There was an excitement; a band's coming out with a new album.

Another big show—going back, backtracking a minute. Another big influence for me was when The Who did their farewell tour, and The Clash opened up for them. My folks let me go to that it was in Seattle at the Kingdom. My folks, amazingly enough, let me go with some college students, who they didn't even really know, and drive out there to see the show and drove straight back. Seeing The Clash was a big, big deal for me at that time. That was a pretty big—

LF: What year was that?

CB: I think that was '82 or '83 or something. I have a ticket stub somewhere for it. That's sort of like when we all thought punk had died because The Clash were playing a stadium show. "Should I Stay..." or that *Combat Rock*, and we were all like—there was a real feeling of, well,

maybe punk's dead at that point because if it's commoditized, it's on MTV, it's done. Sell out! That was a big battle cry back then was you're a sell out.

LF: So, in Missoula there was, I mean the bands, the key bands, seemed to have been Who Killed Society, Deranged Diction, Ein Heit. They're all obviously very influential.

CB: Surfer Ruth, Boy Toast. Just Ducky I would say, I've never heard Just Ducky play, but arguably I'd say Just Ducky was, if not the genesis, right there for the Missoula punk scene. There could have been a random punk who came to school here, but they were so isolated no one ever knew it. But I would say for Missoula that real, the counter-culture music-wise was probably '78, '79. Now, I'm sure there were bands during the hippie period and stuff that were doing...I used to see Kirk LeClaire's movie [*...so good I can't take it*]. What amazed me about watching that was like we felt alone in Missoula, that there was nowhere else anything going on. Lo and behold, there was a scene in Bozeman and there was something happening in Billings and there was something happening in Helena. Seeing that years later made me very happy because we felt like we're in a petri dish—that no one else understood, no one else could see the light. However, these mushrooms were growing everywhere in America, and once that fruiting body goes to seed, there's no way they could have put it back in the bottle.

I'd say punk rock didn't start in 1976. I would argue that Jerry Lee Lewis in his temperament and his attitude, his expression, was a punk. You look at bands like The Sonics, who drove their instruments screaming.

LF: Played in Missoula.

CB: What?

LF: They played in Missoula.

CB: The Sonics did? When?

LF: Probably in like '65.

CB: Oh, back in their heyday. Yeah, I remember the first time I heard The Sonics in Seattle. I had never heard them, and I was like this band's great, when we go see them. It's like, well, this is 19...they were playing before I was born. The Whalers. The movement has always been there. The moniker we hang on it changes. The Doors, even, were pressing morays that, I believe, punk rock just picked up that ball and ran with it. You can go into a number of other bands that were huge influences. Zappa. I've never been a Zappa fan, but in hindsight I'm like that guy was questioning authority. Fundamentally, I think that's what it all came down to is question authority. So, if you go by that argument, hell, Socrates was a punker, right? Age and time change one's perspective. When it felt so immediate at the time, you realize it was immediate for you or for me, but it wasn't necessarily immediate for the humanity.

LF: In the Missoula punk scene, you'd have...Deranged Diction played kind of—

CB: They were hardcore.

LF: Then you had Who Killed Society, they're a little more—

CB: Rhythm driven.

LF: Then Ein Heit.

CB: Art. The art band.

LF: They all played together. I mean, were those—

CB: People like I mean were those people didn't sit through every band.

LF: People had their own sort of sub-genre they preferred or whatever?

CB: They did, but like I said earlier we were all part of the same protective umbrella. I remember, there was a show where it was Tom Kipp and Shawn Swagerty did some..or no, not Shawn Swagerty. It was Tom Kipp and Matt Crowley did this art thing. Now, the cool thing was Missoula would put up with someone doing their weird thing, but there was no real music to it or anything. I remember a lot of people sort of sitting through the first five minutes, and we all went outside to drink beer. So, there was a lot of moments that were fantastic, but there was a lot of time that was just spent sitting around. And that was okay. That's what life is about. [laughs] Hopefully, you have some moments of thrill, but most life is sitting around waiting for someone to do something. They were kind of the—arguably Who Killed Society, Ein Heit and Deranged Diction were the big three. As far as Missoula went, they were at the top tier, and then there was a number of other projects underneath that that either had a member of those bands in them or everyone knew everybody right.

What I don't know about is the Jay's Upstairs. I left in '85, and the scene kept growing. It actually, arguably, was amazing what happened after we left. It wasn't a handful of people, but it was 20, 30 people. Then I hear Charlie Beaton was getting band like Green Day to come play. I mean, there was definitely a growth in the scene, but I don't know if it still had that feeling of us against them. Other bad elements probably came in at that point. Drugs really screwed up a lot of scenes, predators screwed up a lot of scenes, and it was...There was one questionable person that I remember that I didn't give much mind to but turned out to be a real awful human being turns out. I think that infancy and that naivety would attract some unsavory things especially when it became larger than a small group of people who actually knew each other that's when things can change. But I can't speak for that, Jay's. If I'd still been in Missoula, I'd be playing there. I would have played there but I ended up being an "ave rat" in Seattle.

LF: An ave rat?

CB: An ave rat, so University Avenue, which isn't actually an avenue in Seattle, is where people would hang out. When I moved out there I ended up—up things didn't quite work out the way they were supposed to, and so I was homeless. You'd have a lot of disenfranchised youth who would hang out there. Met a lot of people had bands come out of that, but there was a lot of other elements. That's a whole other scene and ball of wax that's arguably a lot more complex than what I see happened in Missoula.

LF: I wanted to ask you first about...Two things. One was you were in a couple bands in Missoula, and then...but you also said that you did a lot of, you did more behind the scenes. Not like not behind the scenes, but non-band stuff that was part of the scene.

CB: Kind of promotion stuff. I tried to help my sister as much as I could with what she was doing. Though flyer-ing wasn't something really happening so much back then not like it grew into.

LF: Why not?

CB: I don't think there were enough people that you could put flyers up. I think everyone knew everybody. Right? So, if there's a show coming up, word of mouth. I mean, this is pre-social media, but people would call each other. You'd know when something was coming up because shows were maybe once every few months if you were lucky. Everyone would start getting itchy, and then someone put on a show and everyone'd show up. I played some bands. I also tried to help promote Boy Toast. I remember, on my own dime, I had Wayne and Wally print up 50 shirts. I'd show up at shows and try and do the merch thing before merch tables existed. I would have a bag of t-shirts at their shows and try and sell them to people in the audience and things. It was folly. I spent a good bit of time hanging out with them, and they moved to Seattle as well. They were one of those bands that, I mean, everyone ended up kind of...Not everyone. I'm sure there are people who will be happy to stand up and say, "I didn't move to Seattle. I moved to Portland," or "I moved to Chicago," or "I moved to Washington D.C." Swagerty, I think, went to D.C. All of us kind of went out, and, boom, then we got more influence.

But for me, it was I felt a need to do service to the group that I felt included in. I think that probably just comes from being raised by a political scientist or something, but I, still to this day, it's important to help those around you. For me, I felt punk rock really embodied that at least a sub-genre of it. We'd slam dance and kind of wreck the hell out of each other, but if someone fell down, you'd lift him up. No one got seriously injured. It certainly looks incredibly violent from someone who's never participated in a mosh pit, but I remember in Missoula, it was all good fun. Though it looked scary, it was not, and we all took care of each other. That was true in Seattle in the punk scene as well, for the most part, that, again, we're all...Our fun is weird, it's different, but we're having fun, and we're not hurting anybody, so just leave us

alone. Obviously, the powers that be see that completely differently when you have 200 people crammed in a basement of a condemned building—that if someone lights a match, and they're all dead. So again, age and perspective change things.

Also, I didn't mention my sister after selling or moving...After leaving Urbane Renewal, going to Seattle, she was there; I would go visit her there and go to see shows there that were in all-ages shows in these venues that were, essentially, doing the same thing Missoula was and got to get influenced by a lot of bands that we couldn't get here. And come back feeling energized by there is more to this than...There's hope; there's a lifeline. There's an island out there we can go to. It's called punk rock island, and you can go there too. That's sort of what Seattle embodied to so many of us, I think. Opportunity.

LF: It seems like there was like a little Missoula then?

LF: Oh, without a doubt there was a little Missoula [in Seattle]. The interesting thing about the little Missoula is initially we all kind of kept in touch. But everyone quickly kind of went, found their own jam going on, because they found their own inclusive groups. So, there wasn't, didn't seem to be a lot of 'hey, let's all get together.' It's sort of like I know what you're all about because we all sat around for so many years. Now, I'm going to go do my own thing and try and meet girls, or whatever, or get a gig. It almost ended up being a little more competition because there were so many other bands so to get on a bill was a little hard, was harder. If you're the only gig in town, the only thing you had to worry about was playing too much because then people wouldn't show up. You get to Seattle and there was, I mean, it was fertile ground. We all know what happened out there with the music scene.

It wasn't just Missoula that made that Seattle scene happen. It was people coming there from all kinds of towns just like Missoula going, hey, there's a place where something's going on. I would argue that San Francisco for that music scene that was the island. Austin in the '90s became that island, and Detroit in the '60s was that island. Places pop up and become that breeding ground, that pollenization. L.A. People who moved to L.A. often seemed to end up being disenfranchised. It seemed like a lot of the bands that made it in L.A. were from L.A. That was one...Randy would talk better to this because he actually moved to L.A. to try and do music, but it was a much different paradigm to break into.

LF: Were you in a band or bands in Seattle?

CB: I was. I was in a band called 18 Helicopters. I was in a band called Volvaleen. I was in a band called The Swinging Cannonballs. Those were the three bands I did in Seattle. We never pressed any vinyl. We went in the studio—18 Helicopters went in the studio a couple times. Then I moved from Seattle to New York—Ithaca, New York, which is very much like Missoula in a lot of ways. It's strange. Had band there called The Buttered Hose Experience. Moved from there to the city and lived there and ended up moving back to Seattle. So, there's interlude for me to get out of Seattle, and I left Seattle right before Nirvana broke. It was funny, we were playing a lot.

Everyone was playing, and you leave a place for two years and come back and everything changed. Where if you had a band name and a pulse, you got a record contract. That happened within six months after me leaving. It was kind of fun to be there for the build-up of all these things. In some ways being anonymous is almost better. You don't get chased down the streets. I ended up going to New York and got some fame from that band and had a taste of what celebrity was in Vietnam in a foreign country and realized I didn't really particularly want to be famous because you lose a lot of your privacy. A lot of your identity gets skewed when you're living for your public than if you're living for yourself. I attribute that experience to my anonymity, which is fine by me. [laughs]

LF: Can you tell the story of playing Vietnam?

CB: The Vietnam story, that's a long story, but I'll try and make it in a sound bite. I had left Seattle, 18 Helicopters, to move to Ithaca, New York. My father had recently divorced and was living alone, and he seemed to need some...It was a good time to reconnect with him and maybe give him some assistance. So, I moved out there. Just like in the old days, I was out. I went to a bar called The Haunt in Ithaca, which is a pretty famous place at the time. A lot of bands would come through and play there. Everything from Maceo Parker to Psychedelic Furs to blues acts—big blues acts. It was known, had a good reputation for good shows. I went down one day and just to have a beer, and the bartender and I started talking about music. You have that conversation, oh you like that, oh I like this. Oh yeah I love that band. Hey, you play music. Yeah, I play music. Let's start a band. So, we started goofing around together, and one night after, I believe, it was the Spin Doctors, or...No, Phish had played or something. We're all sitting around the bar 2:30 in the morning, the staff talking about stupid band names. We came up with the name The Buttered Hose Experience, and the owner of the bar is there. He thought that was the funniest name he'd ever heard of, and this guy has been booking acts since the '60s. He said, "Look, if you guys make a band with that name, I'll give you a headlining gig." So, we're like, okay, let's make a band.

So, Mario and I and "Filthy Bottom" (Phil Rainville (?)), who was a bass player—we all worked at the bar—and another bartender's boyfriend was a drummer. We're like, okay. We practiced 10 times. The concept was to take the Sex Pistols and Spinal Tap and mash them together and offend—something to offend everyone in the family. So, we did this gig, and we had a girl in a cage dancing and she was a feminist studies major from Ithaca College. It's very tongue-in-cheek. There has to be humor in in life, right? So, if you read the lyrics, they're incredibly offensive, but you have to understand, it was humor. My father was a curator at the Echols Collection, which is a southeast Asian book collection at Cornell, and he's always been a big fan of his kids and supporting our endeavors. So, he brought the library staff to the concert, and one of these librarians was a woman who had somehow gotten an internship from Vietnam to come to Cornell—a paid internship. We're not sure if she's actually a librarian or if she was just a [unintelligible] woman, but she somehow managed to get there and came to this concert and saw it. She didn't speak any English, but she apparently liked what she saw and knew that my father was going on a book-buying trip to southeast Asia for the library and I was going to

accompany him on that endeavor. So, she said, “Oh, you have to play Vietnam through an interpreter. My brother is a promoter there. So, you'll play Hanoi; you'll play Saigon. I need all the lyrics written out. I need the music written out and a tape, so we can send it ahead. A Vietnamese band will learn it, and they'll back you up.”

Well, that's a terrifying proposal for me at the time. I'm like, well, this sounds really jinky, but okay. So, we kind of hammered it out and gave it to her. Someone's explaining all this through an interpreter, and it sounded really fly by the seat of your pants. Anyway, I provided her with that, and we don't hear from her again. She goes back to Vietnam and...Or no, she didn't go back. She was still in Ithaca. We go to Vietnam—Dad and I—and we landed in Hanoi the day the First Gulf War started. So, bombs over Baghdad, flying into Hanoi there's craters everywhere, it's still 1973 there. We somehow find out that her brother is out of the country, the show's not happening in Hanoi. I'm fine with that. I'm like great. I didn't want to do this anyway. She insisted I bring all the same clothes with me that I brought. We spent a few days there and—

[rummages for something] I'll find that later.

We fly down to Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City. I'm thinking this isn't going to happen, and that's okay. Well, we get off the plane, we're getting a ride into where we're staying, and there's banners with my name over the street driving in. I mean, they're in Vietnamese, but I can read my name. I'm like, oh, well, this is a new development. We get to the guest house we're staying at, and there's a kid there who is apparently the son of the woman, and if you remember a show called *Saved by the Bell*, there was a kid named Urkel on it. I think it was *Saved by the Bell* [the character of Urkel was part of the show *Family Matters*]. Well, this was the Vietnamese version of Urkel. He thinks I'm Bruce Springsteen or something. He has this impression that I'm some major rock star, and he is star struck and shaking my hand feverishly and says, “Welcome. Tomorrow you'll meet the band. The next night you're performing at the opera house.” All news to me. So, the next day we go and meet the band, and I meet the director of the opera house, who is a trained conductor—Soviet-trained conductor—fluent in Russian. Technically we're still at war with Vietnam at this time. This is 1991—January of 1991—so things are a little fluid. I meet the band, and they don't speak English. I don't speak Vietnamese. They never got the music. They never got anything that was sent ahead. Who knows where that ended up. But I had a cassette tape off a boombox of that first live concert, so as everyone who has ever had a boombox recording knows, it sounds like crap. We kind of hammered out a couple songs off of that, and they're awful. I mean, I've been in some bad bands, but this is really one of the worst. Not that they were a bad band. They were technically great, but there was no communication. Reluctantly I said, “All right. Let's do the show.” They're already billing it, and they had all this advertising up.

The next night go out, and we kind of pooped out the show. There was all these opening acts because we only had three songs—three or four songs—and if you recall a show called *Star Search* with Ed McMahon, it had that feel about it because all these acts weren't just singing. Some of them were dancing acts and duets, and they're still playing stuff from 1975 on

instruments that were left behind by the U.S. when we pulled out. I just sort of shook it and blurted out as best I could. I couldn't hear myself through the monitors. Somehow, we squeaked out a show, and the crowd was sold out—opera house—and they loved it. The powers that be said, 'oh, that went so well, we want you to do it again tomorrow night on national television.'

So, I said, okay, so we practiced another time, and it was still awful. I mean, this is on par with my first band as far as how professional it sounded, and we did it again. We did the show, and I actually have what was broadcast on a DVD. Because I told the Urkel, I said, "Look, if you play in America, they give you a tape of what you do," because I knew no one would believe that this ever happened. I actually have the footage. The concert went over well. The KGB were there, the CIA, the Minister of the Culture. I mean, this was a big, big deal. I was interviewed by a number of Vietnamese papers. The Russian who was ex—he kept insisting he was ex-KGB—he was there on vacation. Everyone in this whole scenario looked exactly like they came out of central casting. He's like, [mimics deep Russian accent] 'oh, oh you're singing, eh, not so good. But you're dancing very good. You must come to Moscow.'" He wanted to me to go back, get the band, and tour Russia. The Vietnamese wanted me to bring the band back and tour Vietnam—37-date tour—but they couldn't buy us our tickets on the airline to come over because they were enemies and sanctions. So, we would have had to pay our own dime over. The Buttered Hose didn't have money, so we couldn't afford to go do it.

There's a number of other side plots that go into this story, but at the end of the show, they all sing this song [begins singing], 'Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh,' and everyone stands in the aisle, on the stage and takes a big bow. They're bringing me flowers and all the acts are out there and it's a big nationalist song. The first night I sang along with it, but then my dad mentioned on the second that you might not want to sing along with that this next night since it's televised and there's still a lot of animosity in the United States over the Vietnam War and there's still a war going on between two factions of people of that country. So, I kind of stood back and didn't sing along with at that time even though they're trying to get me to do it and they paid me. So, technically what I did was treason. I was paid by a hostile enemy power to entertain them, so with that explained to me, I was a little concerned about coming back to America and being arrested in San Francisco for treason.

Well, a number of things happened, but we came back and nothing. Great, good. Being arrested for doing that crappy a show would have been horrible. Well, about six months later, three months later, something like that, this guy shows up at the house to interview my dad. He was a CIA guy and was asking about some other things. In that trip, we had gone to Burma and Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia and Indonesia, Japan, a number of places. So, I was just sort of listening in because I accompanied my dad through a number of these. Part of the reason, I think we this all happened was I was obviously not a company man. I was traveling with my father who was an academic, so we were able to get into some situations where your typical State Department person wouldn't. I think that's what they were asking about. Well, my dad

brought up the issue of the show and if they were aware of it, and the guy—can't remember his name right now—said, “Oh, yeah, we know we know all about that.”

So, well, “What’s the verdict on that?”

He said, “As far as the company’s concerned, the CIA’s concerned, you won the Vietnam War.”

“Oh, really? Please explain.”

He said, “Well, the U.S. invested in a project called the Phoenix Project during the Vietnam War which was to flood Vietnam with American goods and culture to drive them away from communism to capitalism and consumption.” He said, “The fact that they invited you there and did this show, shows that they have since gone away from communism and they're now embracing capitalism. So congratulations.”

So, my response was, “Well, are you going to pay my college tuition?”

They said, “Absolutely not.” I got the impression that they believe they don't owe me anything for winning a war, but the interesting thing is within a year, we normalize relationship with Vietnam. So, it’s a funny story. I’m gonna write a book here one of these days and talk about it. But strange things happen when you are willing to take risks.

LF: Was that your last band you were in?

CB: No, the last band I was in was The Swinging Cannonballs. We were more sort of a rockabilly, almost country outfit. All the players were pretty much punks, but we were...before the big rise of the sort of cowpunk resurgence we saw with bands like The Supersuckers and stuff, kind of nodding to country-western, we were doing a lot of these old standards like Hank Thompson and Hank Snow, Hank Williams, Johnny Cash. Some of that old, really fun country stuff. But we were doing it hard, and it was a fun act while we had it. Again, it just sort of...who wants to keep playing other people's music?

LF: When did you end up...you said you moved back to Missoula?

CB: About seven years ago I moved back to Missoula. I became a single full-time parent when my daughter was 10 months old, and I had done...I was planning on moving back to Missoula anyway. I went to University of Washington to do a history degree, and there was a teacher at Hellgate named Kermit Edmonds, who had a big impact on me along with a number of other teachers. There were some fantastic teachers who encouraged all this behavior: Tom Graff, Robin Hamilton, and Kermit. So, Kermit also taught a class called thanatopsis, which was the study of death and dying, and I remember taking that class and my mother died like six months after that class. It had a profound impact. We just lost Kermit this year. So, I thought about coming back and teaching at Hellgate, and that was my plan. I went back to school and to UW

to do a history degree, and I was planning on moving the family back here and trying to take up that mantle. Due to unforeseen or some foreseen complications, that derailed; however, the plan to move back here I kept and did move back with no regrets in that raising my daughter here—this is a great place to raise kids. I realized why my parents raised us here, and why so many of us choose to be here. This is an exceptional community in so many ways, and so I'm happy to be here and be part of the Missoula community, and hopefully contributing in some fashion to keep that alive.

LF: You mentioned this a little bit, but how did your...You've actually had a very long engagement with punk and underground music and stuff like that. But how has that shaped your life in various ways? I mean, outside of even that stuff?

CB: Like I said, in the very beginning it saved my life in that I...My mother was really sick; my childhood is less than ideal in many ways. I'm not alone in that. I think there's a lot of people in that category, but for me there was a hope in punk rock, in counter-culture. There was a feeling of not being alone because life was very isolating. There were times where it was very depressing for me, and so that knowing that there were other people out there dealing with shit and talking about it, for me, gave me a lot of hope. I felt at home there. Us weirdos, us fringe people, the people who think differently than the masses. It was important to surround myself with other people like that and find encouragement there that I was not, I feel, getting from the traditional avenues because I chose to dress differently or look differently that, in Missoula, there was still very much, there's still, a large percentage of people everywhere who are not willing to take have the courage to step out of their own skin. For me, punk was a logical fit. The wonderful thing is it led me into so many other avenues that through that I was not alone. There's millions of us out there, and that's powerful.

LF: Did it shape at all...you said you just ran for city council.

CB: City Council, yes. Part of my desire to run, to participate, I truly believe that we are...The world's an onion for each of us. For lack of better analogies, but we are the center of the onion, and our family is that first ring of the onion—our immediate family. Then our secondary family and then our friends, and so that's our spheres of influence. As we get older and learn responsibility, I feel that it's important for us to take responsibility for our onion, our spheres, and try and improve the lives of people. My desire to run for city council was merely to represent my ward. I don't have political aspirations. I honestly, coming out of punk rock, I have nothing or a lot of contempt for politicians. So, I don't consider myself necessarily in the same ilk as that, other than I believe that there are people in my immediate community who need representation, and that punk rock represented a lot of people. For me, it's not...it's just another avenue of being in a band. I'm just in a band with people who aren't musicians is what I was trying for and that we're all working toward, ultimately, a common goal, which is a better life for people. I don't care what political spectrum you're on, you're my neighbors, and fundamentally in Montana we push each other out of the snow. It doesn't matter what your bumper sticker says. I feel that punk rock was a lot about that.

LF: All right. Those are all the questions I have, but I wanted...Is there anything like other aspects of this or things that I should ask about, or we should know about?

CB: Well, in hindsight, tomorrow morning or the middle night, I'll wake up and go 'oh, I never talked about that!' But I'm very thankful that this project is happening. I think it's important to find commonalities in us as a city, as a state, as a country, as a world. Do answers come out of punk rock? Well, I don't know if we've solved the world's problems, but I think we're on the right track. I think dissent is American. I think it's important that we analyze our world, our politics, our people who affect us, and I think it's important to speak up about it. Fundamentally, it comes down to truth. There's a nugget of truth in punk rock, in counter-culture. That's, I think, the driving force, and we should all do what we can to foster that in our society.

LF: All right. Thanks, Chris.

CB: You bet. Thank you. I hope that was okay.

LF: It was wonderful.