

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History Number: 172-003, 004**

**Interviewee: Dean Johnson, Steve Reynaud**

**Interviewer: Nick Sundt, Charlie Bragdon**

**Date of Interview: June 28, 1981**

**Project: Nick Sundt Smokejumpers Oral History Project**

*Note: Because there are multiple speakers and the interview was conducted in a bar, the speakers may not be properly identified throughout the transcript.*

Nick Sundt: —trouble is one time they're going to not give us standby and everyone's going to take off and you're not gonna be able to get anybody.

Dean Johnson: That's the best thing that could happen. [pauses] I know it might hurt you in the short run, but they shape up in a hurry when they need them and they ain't there.

NS: Yeah, that's what I figured.

DJ: That's the hard thing to get across to people, and Tom doesn't care. Tom's pissed too, he doesn't like them just calling you up on the spur of the moment and expecting [unintelligible].

NS: What I've done is me and Charlie put our heads together the other day and come up with a—

DJ: Good-sized garage.

NS: Well, we came up with a lot of questions that we want to ask a lot of people. I think what I want to start with is [pauses], you were saying that you started back in [unintelligible]. When did you start actually jumping?

DJ: '74.

NS: '74. Where did you train exactly? I'm going to ask you a lot of dumb shit questions too.

DJ: Just right there at good old [unintelligible].

NS: I guess the first thing I'd like to know is how it was different from the way it is today. Whether the same kinds of people that you have today or whether they're totally different types. Were they mainly students?

DJ: No, I don't think it's changed a lot. I think that basically it's, just you go through pure hell just like you did when you rookied. Probably equally as hard or it's just as bad as what you [unintelligible] here.

NS: How many people were there?

DJ: We started out with. 13 and wound up with 9, which was pretty good really.

NS: Who was training you then?

DJ: Pat McCauley (?). He'd been around a long time, and he started jumping up in Winthrop in the early '60s. He came up here in '64 when the base was built. So he'd been around a long time.

NS: One of the things I was wondering about training is that it seems to have other purposes than simply to get people in shape. A lot of different things. I was wondering if you could describe the people...if you can even remember them, the people that didn't make it and why they didn't make it.

DJ: People just really deep down in their heart didn't want to do it bad enough. The training is designed to put a certain amount of stress on a person. In a way, it's the same type of stress that you might encounter when you're at a fire or a blowup or a hazardous situation. It tends to weed out the people that just wouldn't function under a high-stress situation.

Charlie Bragdon: It seems to me...well, were there any people that like you...you pretty much decided to weed out after they made it? Like that's the way I look at Sullivan. Were there any people at your time that—

DJ: Yeah. It seems like there's usually one or two that can do everything, but just don't have an ambitious attitude toward...they just don't have an aggressive attitude toward work basically. I mean, they can do it when there's somebody there watching them and when they're told to do it do, but you leave them off by themselves, they just flake off. Those are the types that you can pretty well categorize those type of people. They'll usually jump for one or maybe two years, and then we get rid of them.

NS: When you first started out, was the jump equipment basically the same as you use today?

DJ: Yeah, basically. We were in a transition period. Then we were changing over from the FS-5As to the FS-10s, in much the same way that we're now changed from the FS-10s to the SD-5s. It was an issue. In fact, people had all kinds of scary reports on it. How dangerous it was.

CB: The 10?

DJ: Yeah, in much the same way that they're talking about the 5s now.

CB: What were they telling you about it?

DJ: Unstable, [unintelligible] close to the ground. Had too much forward speed and just...In fact, one base—McCall—weren't jumping 10s until their foreman retired about four years ago. They were jumping at the old FS-5As all the time just because he thought the FS-10 was not a safe parachute.

NS: Was he catching grief for that?

DJ: Well, yeah.

NS: From over head?

DJ: From just jumpers. [unintelligible] tired of jumping out of the airplane and getting blown away from the spot. When everybody with 10s was coming right here.

NS: The old 5 didn't steer, did it?

DJ: It steered very slowly. It was a real lumbering type parachute, had little if none forward speed. Then again it was kind of hard to get heard of because you couldn't do a whole lot or [unintelligible].

CB: Well yea, but you weren't very accurate with it, right? So seems to me you could get blown in a tree.

DJ: Yeah, a cliff.

NS: Yesterday, you'd screwed up, it was possible. A lot of cliffs [unintelligible].

CB: Well, there must have been some kind of equipment changes in the last seven years. You're just saying they're just small, minor modifications of different things, like the [unintelligible] bag changed during the summer.

DJ: The climbing belts have changed, the jumpsuit and the harnesses are all still the same.

CB: When things change, it's usually just if someone sees something they can do and does it have to go up the line. Like if you see something, you say well, look—

DJ: [unintelligible].

CB: If you see something, can you say, 'let's do this,' or do you have to go up to Tom or—

DJ: Depends on what it is. Basically all the changes have been for the better.

NS: Changes are mostly procedural, aren't they, in the way you go about doing things?

DJ: Yeah. The size of our life pockets was reduced in about '75 or so to just cut down on the amount of gear people could put in them, thus they've become more weight conscious in the last few years. Basically other than that, the jump suit and the harness and the parachutes are pretty much the same as when I started.

NS: Something that's kind of intrigued me, talking on some of the older jumpers, there's certain things that a lot of the jumpers pack...like a lot of guys pack Vuarnet sunglasses or their Buck knives in their belts, things like that. I was wondering if there were things that people didn't carry with them before that they carry with them now, or...I don't know. Can you think of anything that's being used now that wasn't used before when you started out? I'm just wondering how these things get started. Like everybody wearing a certain kind of sunglass, and a lot of people wearing certain kind of knives.

CB: [unintelligible].

DJ: It's probably similar to being in the third grade and one of your pals comes in with a new brand of chewing gum. You're basically still all adolescents. If it's a trendy thing and it catches on, like a knife is a pretty popular thing because just about every jumper has to carry a knife with him. If somebody comes in with a newer and better knife, well, you can bet that before long, everybody else will have one too. Yeah. It's just like the White boots is probably the most popular gestation of a smokejumper. In fact, White's even call it the "smoke jumper".

CB: I think a typical stereotype is just that type of person—[unintelligible] person, the person who's out in the field of natural science too. There's a lot of forestry people in it [unintelligible], or working their way towards those goals, a fire science team or Forest Service career people, or anything we get into.

NS: What do you call that when you cut the bottom of your pants off.

DJ: [unintelligible].

NS: People don't do that anymore.

DJ: That's one of the [unintelligible] that's kind of went by the wayside.

NS: Why?

DJ: Well, I don't know. I think it's probably kind of hard to use your pants for anything else besides jumping if you do that because you don't lounge around in 12-inch high boots during the winter. It just used to be kind of a popular appearance.

CB: Is it because we do a lot of sawing? Do you remember doing a lot more saw work or no?

DJ: No, not really. Basically, it started just so you wouldn't be snagging your pants on stops and stuff.

NS: Usually, if you do a lot of walking in slash.

DJ: You've seen a lot of choker setters and people like that. They have high-top pants. But I got away from it when I went up north because mosquitoes like to fly up pants. I like a long pant anymore, something I can tie off on my boots.

CB: Prevents black leg.

DJ: Black leg and bugs and stuff from crawling up there.

NS: How much were you paid back in '74? Do you remember?

DJ: Well, when I started out on the [unintelligible], I was making \$2.03 an hour.

NS: [unintelligible].

DJ: Yeah. [unintelligible]. '74, I believe I was making...oh, it was about \$3, \$3.30 an hour. It was \$3.30 an hour, yeah.

NS: Do you think it was worth it?

DJ: Oh yeah.

CB: Then that was considered a good wage. Higher than minimum wage.

DJ: [unintelligible] where \$6 or whatever [unintelligible]. It's just a little bit more of what you might make if you were working at a mill or something.

NS: Were the overtime regulations the same? I mean, were you getting time and a half?

DJ: We started getting time and half in 1970. My first year, I made 330 hours of overtime. This is when I was on the IR (?) crew. I grossed \$1,900 that summer, and I got \$1,200 in the bank. But I went to college, and went through a 4-year college on that \$1,200.

NS: My first year, I made about \$1,500 in '70.

CB: Were most of the guys students when you started out?

DJ: Almost entirely. That's probably one thing that's been changing over the years is used to be 90 percent students and maybe just 10 percent of people weren't student. Now it's probably 75 percent of us are just doing it for a job.

CB: Do you think that if somebody wanted to just do it for a job back then that they could have made it on that amount of money. In other words, I'm wondering if maybe it's easier to earn money during the winter, or somehow to get money during the winter than it was before.

DJ: I think they could. I think people were just more oriented toward getting a job after they got out of college than they are now. There's a lot of people who are getting out of college now that are realizing that they're probably happier just work during the summer and then do whatever they can during the winter to get by.

NS: That's been my lifestyle since 1970.

DJ: It's worked.

NS: And it's worked. I pick up a job like skiing or fence contracting.

CB: What do you remember specifically about training? When you actually went through training, do remember exactly what you guys did? Was it exactly the same as it is now, or are certain things that you did back then for training that you didn't—

DJ: No, I think it's probably pretty much the same. I just can remember being about an inch away from death for three weeks. It was reassuring to look over and the next guy was just as close if not closer.

CB: Just as sore?

DJ: Yeah. Just going home at night and going to sleep as soon as I got home. Getting up and trying to live through the next day.

CB: Did you guys use the torture ride back then?

DJ: Yeah.

CB: Why did they drop that and when did they?

DJ: They started filling out too many injury reports on it.

CB: Back injuries?

DJ: Knee injuries?

CB: Knee injuries?

DJ: Yeah.

CB: What would happen?

DJ: They'd just bend over and you'd lean all the way back and touch your head, and they'd just blow out their knees. It was a pretty worthless exercise. They put all the stress on your knee, which was a pretty foolish place to try to build muscle anyway.

NS: Instead of [unintelligible].

CB: Do you think that the training that you went through was effective in eliminating the people that shouldn't be jumpers? In other words, were there any people that made it through that maybe, looking back, shouldn't have made it through? Even in your sense—

DJ: I think there was probably the one or two that could do everything, but maybe quit jumping a year or two later, yeah. I think it probably was as good training as what they could get.

CB: You have people that continue year after year after year, and you have people that just jump for a year, maybe two years. What do you think accounts for that? Do you think those people are different in some way?

DJ: No, I think that they experience the thrill of it, and then go on to a more family-oriented career or oriented type of life.

CB: Well, what keeps you coming back after every winter? You've been at it for what, seven years?

DJ: Eight years. I don't know. Probably just satisfied with the job. Must be. I can't imagine anybody coming back because they were bummed out

NS: —because they didn't like the work. I've been in it for 12 years in fire, seasonal fire for almost four years of actual work. [unintelligible] 12 years.

DJ: I've talked to people that can't stand fire. They can't wait to get into timber or recreation or some other function, and that's fine.

NS: I think it gets in your blood. Some people it does. [unintelligible].

DJ: I think probably after a while like me you get to where you don't know how to do anything else so you don't have any choice too.



NS: You're comfortable too. [unintelligible].

CB: What did you do when you weren't on a fire during the season? The same kind of the things you're doing now, that is, packing chutes and mopping the floors?

DJ: Basically, yeah.

CB: Whatever has to be done. Were there any big differences that you can think of? Did you spend any more time doing PT than you did [unintelligible]?

DJ: Yeah, we used to be able to play a lot of volleyball and baseball. That was an accepted form of PT back then. We filled out an awful lot, filled out more injuries on that than we did on the job. I could see the end of that coming. We used to play jungle rules where guys would hang one arm on the net and smash the ball with their other hand, and I can remember once going up to the net...I'd wear sunglasses whenever I played volleyball, and somebody hit me right in the eye with their fist. Shattered glass all over me and all over the court. Just injuries like that. People would dislocate their shoulders, and one guy blew out a knee totally. Eliminating him from jumping forever. A sprained ankle, about one or two sprained ankles a week was about average. I think that the program has gotten a lot more...obviously has gotten a lot more safety conscious than it was. They didn't even used to blink an eye on an injury back then. Didn't even blink an eye at it.

CB: Used to hear horror stories of hardcore trainers that made you run in your boots. Were you part of that too?

DJ: My first year in '69 on the IR crew, we did all of our PT and all of our training in boots.

NS: Why did they stop that?

DJ: I think somebody finally entered the program with an IQ higher than 100, and said it's a waste of energy and money wearing out your boots [unintelligible].

NS: What about after hours? When the workday was over, did people generally just go home or did they—

DJ: Back in the early days, they used to sign out if you ever went anywhere. If you didn't sign out, they could hold you responsible. That changed over along about '71 or '72. Also, they used to force a hair cod back in the days. I can remember one guy that he had moderately long hair—it was past the middle of his ears. It wasn't a ponytail or anything, but he finally had had enough so he shaved his hair off into a mohawk haircut. All he had was a strip of hair running down the middle of his head. They saw that, and they says, 'that won't do.' So he shaved it all

off. Then they wouldn't let him in the mess hall, so he had to wear a stocking hat whenever he went in to eat lunch. [laughs] Until his hair grew back. It's a pretty wild time.

NS: We had a dress code in Idaho when I first [unintelligible].

DJ: They used to enforce that stuff.

NS: [unintelligible] no beards.

CB: Back in '74, did you guys ever come here to this bar here?

DJ: Oh yeah. We got thrown out of this bar several times.

CB: Why?

DJ: We spent a lot of money in here, and we raised a lot of hell. But it's a good bar, forgiving.

NS: They would get drunk and stare at the wooden Indian across the street. They'd go steal it and bring it back and get in trouble for doing that. Now, it's chained up with a notice.

CB: Do you remember any particular episodes where you were kicked out of this place?

DJ: Oh no. One night everybody was in here...Another thing that's changed. We used to be a lot younger people jumping back then, where maybe a third of the crew would be under 21. A lot of 19 and 20 year olds [unintelligible] back then. It got so out of hand, everybody just kind of came in and what were they to do? Run around and ask everybody for ID? So they called us up the next day and told us that nobody under 21 would be coming in after that.

CB: Did you live out of the barracks?

DJ: We had to live there. That changed in '73, I think. They also used to require you...you had to live at the barracks, and you had to be in bed by a certain hour. It wasn't all that much different than being in the military, really. They made you toe the line. We still had a lot of fun.

NS: Oh yeah, you invented fun.

CB: Was there initiation?

DJ: Oh yeah, yeah. Much the same as it is now. Sometimes, it was semi-tragic results. It's one of the reasons why I don't get into hazing anymore because I almost broke my neck that year.

CB: How do you do that?

DJ: I went headfirst off of the loading ramp there into the BC-30 (?). Another guy split as his head wide open ended, had to [unintelligible] and have stitches. That stuff gets out of hand.

CB: What did you do for your initiation? Can you describe it in detail?

DJ: [unintelligible] and blindfold you and spray water on you and have you do rolls.

CB: Did they take you in the cart around?

NS: You were a special case because you missed all of that.

CB: Was that the night before?

DJ: The night before your first jump. Then they'd always take all of the toilet paper out of the johns the next morning before your first jump, and so all the rookies are running around looking for a place to shit [laughs] and there isn't any toilet paper anywhere.

CB: That's cool.

NS: What was your first jump like and where was it?

DJ: Well, it was out at [unintelligible] Meadow.

CB: Your first jump?

DJ: Yeah.

NS: In the meadow, though, not in the field.

DJ: It was way out in the middle. No way could we go wrong. All I can remember is being in the door and then getting hit. It was just a wall of air, and I couldn't penetrate. I remember lifting my seat up off of the plane, and I was just suspended in air for, seemed like several seconds. I couldn't move forward and I couldn't move back, and finally I got outside the plane [unintelligible]. Really quiet. As soon as the chute opened, the only sound you could hear is the airplane in the distance. I looked up to check my chute, and I could see about, oh, 125 or 150 darns. I thought, is this how valuable I am to them that they give me this chute for my first jump? It had little darns, somebody must have skewered a lodgepole pine with it or something. It was full of darns. Why waste a good parachute on this guy? He might not make it. The first one.

CB: Did they do anything to try and scare you in the plane on your first jump?

DJ: No. That's taboo. Just going through that.

CB: Well, Nick heard a story about...on a first jump where the guy was sitting—an old man was in there first—the spotter goes, “All right, we're going to jump,” and the guy goes, “Fuck, we can't jump there,” so he shoves him out the door and goes, “Anybody else not want to jump?”

DJ: It might go that far at other bases, but it doesn't at Redmond because the idea is not to hurt somebody.

NS: Or to frighten them to a point they would hurt themselves.

CB: Why do you think it wouldn't be that way at Redmod compared to other bases?

DJ: I don't know. It just started, I guess.

NS: I always heard it had a stricter discipline than the other base too.

DJ: I think it probably does.

NS: I heard it had a stricter discipline and training program.

DJ: I think it probably does, and I think just from being at other bases that it's got a lot better crew because of it.

NS: Also, it's the central regional jump base too for Region 6. It's kind of—

DJ: Personally, I don't go for all this nit-picky stuff about making people do everything exactly the way it should be done, but then I don't believe in totally letting somebody drift off and just go their own way either. The way I look at it, it's a job and you're not going to go downtown and then work somewhere and just be able to wake up and tell somebody to go to hell. It just doesn't work that way. There's work there to be done and it should be done and it should be done right. If you can have a good time doing it, fine. Let's do it that way.

NS: How did you feel about the year, back in '74 [unintelligible] years ago?

DJ: Well, I have mixed feelings. I think probably overall, they're not a lot different than they are now. The head of the Center, the guy who was in Tom Bowen's position [unintelligible]—

NS: What was he like?

DJ: Well, I guess, I don't know. I didn't get along with him personally, which is why I went to Alaska. [unintelligible], probably a lot like any other foreman would be.

NS: Was he an ex-jumper himself or was he—

DJ: Oh yeah.

NS: —have to be a jumper [unintelligible].

DJ: Yeah. [pauses] He started jumping in the '50s at NCSB.

NS: They have [unintelligible] powwow for the year is in Warm Springs (?). All of the Indians in the area are up here, from the Northwest.

CB: That would have been nice. Yeah, when we came back from that fire, we saw their tents set up.

NS: That would have been fun to go to and celebrate with them and watch them dance and drinking whiskey.

CB: Nowadays, we get together for—

NS: Utah. [unintelligible].

CB: Rookie party, initiation party. There's keggers that are [unintelligible] when you find a patch on your shoe. If you don't find a patch on your shoe, or when you have your 50th or 100th jump, your 150th. Was that pretty much the same way back then?

DJ: Yeah.

CB: Got together for the same reasons, the same things?

DJ: Yeah. We used to have our beer bash much the same way that we do now.

CB: Did you have the patch on the shoes?

DJ: No.

CB: You didn't. When that start here?

DJ: That was an idea that came over from LaGrande. [unintelligible]. I'm not so sure it's a good idea myself.

NS: Why not? Seems to me—

DJ: I have a feeling that...on practice jumps I don't see anything wrong with it. But on a fire jump, I think you should be concerned with getting down and to the ground—

CB: [unintelligible]

DJ: [unintelligible] chute for a full canopy and getting that spot. Personally, I don't look for the patch until I've made my initial turn and am headed the way I want to. Then I look for the patch.

NS: [unintelligible].

[Break in audio]

CB: —do you notice any difference.

DJ: No, not really. There might have been a little more macho-ism back then than there is now.

CB: I mean would you ever walk into a bar and start giving people shit, or groups of people doing that?

NS: Yeah, how did you get along with other people in town?

CB: The “public”.

DJ: About the same. I mean it was frowned on if you went downtown and got in a big fight. I can remember a time in Alaska when there were three Alaska smokejumpers at [unintelligible] Junction in the wee hours of the morning, and there was a band—a Native band—playing. Maybe 30, 35 Native Alaskans in the bar, and they got into it and it was a pretty bloody brawl.

CB: I don't know if it was bloody. [laughs]

DJ: Yeah, I guess it was a pretty exciting time. But generally, there's no problem.

CB: Something that I've always wondered about is competition between other bases—other jumper bases—and competition between other crews.

NS: [unintelligible].

CB: Was there then or do you think there is now any kind of competition—a feeling of competition with other bases? And the same thing with other crews. Was there competition with helicopter crews back in '74?

DJ: Oh yeah. Yeah. Everybody wants to be the best. A lot of it's foolishness because basically we're pretty much all the same.

CB: Just get there differently.

DJ: Yeah. There's always a lot of talk about how bad they are and how good you are, and you'll find that in any job probably that you're in—how bad the competition is and how good you are. It's just pretty much of an ego builder if you're into that sort of thing.

CB: Were there any nicknames that you guys gave other bases or other crews. Like they call helicopter people "rotor heads". Can you think of any of those off hand?

NS: [unintelligible].

DJ: We all had our nicknames. The Rogue River crew was the "rough riders"; the Wenatchee crew was the "bushmen".

NS: They still retain that.

DJ: I can't remember what the [unintelligible] crew was. We used to call them the "Walla Walla wussies" or something. "Walla Walla wussies".

NS: W-2s, something like that.

CB: Did you guy's see Nick's brother was on that crew, wasn't he?

NS: I was on that crew. [laughs] But I'm sure that was before the time they called us that.

CB: Before they got good.

NS: Yeah, before we got good.

CB: You bet.

NS: Did you guys have hacky sack back then?

DJ: No.

NS: When did that start?

DJ: Basically in pro soccer emerged a couple years, three years ago.

NS: Can you remember the first time you ever saw hacky sack?

DJ: Last year.

NS: Really? [unintelligible].

DJ: Well, '79.

NS: I figured when we came there that it had been a long-established thing that people have always played hacky.

DJ: No, it's just kind of one of the trendy things that just came in.

CB: It's a good pastime. We play kickball and hacky sack.

DJ: Teaches you agility in your jump boots, I guess.

CB: Good eye coordination.

Okay, one thing I'd like to know is, like to compare what it was like in '74 with what it's like now. Could you think of any differences? You mentioned the fact that there were a lot more students before, maybe that they were younger than they are now. Do you think that the jumpers now are just as fit and just as capable as they were before?

DJ: Yeah. I think they're probably fitter, probably better than they were.

CB: Why do you say that? What do you figure accounts for that?

DJ: I don't know. I think that there's...we call out more people than we used to. I think there's people then that made it that wouldn't now. And I think that on the sideline, it's just a sign of the economic times. Money is unbelievably tight. They couldn't give us enough money back then.

NS: Really, they were free with it?

DJ: Just totally. I mean, they won't they won't even turn loose of a dollar now. The complete opposite.

CB: Do you think that smokejumpers are going to be around for forever, I mean, for the conceivable future or slowly dying out?

DJ: No, I think that it's just experiencing a downturn due to economic conditions because there's still fires and there's...A smokejumper is still a highly utilized mobile force, which just this last weekend. I mean, people can come down here from somewhere else and they can go out and jump in fire. They can go out on hill attack. They can go out on [unintelligible] fire. Most of your people in jumping have a lot more experience than anybody else in fire control than



you'll find. They do a quick, efficient job. They're just always a real dependable source of manpower to have.

NS: What about helicopters? Don't you think that they—

DJ: I think that helicopters, their only drawback on them, the only reason maybe they haven't taken over is that they haven't figured out how to design a helicopter that's dependable.

CB: They're always down.

NS: Or the economics. They're terribly expensive.

CB: The Twin [unintelligible] are never down.

NS: Well, compared to choppers, though, they're extremely expensive.

[Conversation with another bar patron]

CB: We've been tapping Dean for some of his info.

DJ: It's not too deep yet. We're not up to the top of the table anyway.

CB: We're going to get to some male and female—get into some controversy here. What I'd like to know, what would you feel about women being a smokejumper?

DJ: I wouldn't have any adverse opinion on it at all, but I don't think that they should have to lower their standards of smokejumping to allow women to jump.

CB: Why not?

DJ: Because it's not part of the job, we would have to change the whole scope of the job if we did. Like packouts. I mean, what are you going to do? Are we going to write it into the operating procedures of smokejumping that we won't do packouts anymore?

CB: Well, you don't think then that the guys should carry a little bit more than the women.

DJ: No.

CB: Everybody should carry the same amount?

DJ: No, I don't. In the same vein that I don't think that a man should have to go to work in, say, a fabric factory and expect to be as agile with his hands doing that type of work as a woman is.

CB: Somebody was saying that the rumor is from up above—from I guess the RO [regional office]—that if there were to be any rookies this year that they would be women. Do you know anything about that?

NS: The rookie women were to be called nookies.

CB: Instead of rookies, they're nookies.

DJ: That's a well-known and substantiated rumor that if we hired rookies this year, ten of them would be women.

CB: Would we apply the same standards to them. All ten women be washed out, is that conceivable?

DJ: Well, we try to maintain our standards. What pressure we would get to change them, I don't know.

Steve Reynaud: What makes you think they would wash out?

CB: Well, I don't know. I'm just wondering what would happen if all ten of them did wash out. Would there be political pressure?

DJ: What I'm saying is I'm sure somewhere that there's are women that can carry 130 pounds for 15 miles, but I don't think there's very many of them.

SR: And down a 6,000-foot mountain.

CB: What do you think about that, Steve, about women smokejumpers?

SR: I don't really have any problem with it, but I don't think the standards ought to be changed or I don't think that the...Well, let's face it. It's absolutely insane for anybody of any size or frame to pack the loads that we pack. Just ask any doctor—over broken terrain you're packing more than half your weight—and see what he tells you. I can attest after a few years of doing it that you don't get up so easy in the morning sometimes, and you don't bounce back. I think part of it is because of the punishment in this job you put your body through.

CB: Well, let's say...take the hypothetical situation that indeed women are brought in and pressure is put on us to lower the standard somewhat. What do you think the consequences of that would be on the whole jumper organization? If we had people that weren't as fit as they were before. Essentially that would be probably the main difference.

SR: I don't think we're talking about fitness because there's probably women that are more fit than I am. It's just [unintelligible] ability to deal with or frame-wise. As far as I'm concerned, the

smokejumper program is in pretty skinny water anyway as far as...I don't think we need to lower the standards any...I think it would only hurt program. I don't think the program's that strong at this time. I think there's a lot of people that would think that it's time that we changed to some other type of transportation with fire or whatever. I hear that—

NS: Build roads into the wilderness so that you can drive your Winnebago in there.

SR: Right.

CB: Do you agree with that?

SR: Oh, no. God, no I don't, but I hear it's and it's coming from pretty high places. So I can't really see lowering the standard even for men.

CB: The question I would have is we haven't had...There are no women smoke jumpers right now. Presumably if the SO wants women rookies, then presumably what they expect is women jumpers. I'm just wondering how that's going to be accomplished unless something is changing. Are they going to actively recruit, or are they...How are they going to get women, number one, to get in and, number two, to get through the training? How do you—

SR: Well, with women more actively in sports now maybe within a few years there would be women that have started at a younger age to build it. See, I don't think you do it in one or two years if you haven't started from younger people and build up to it. Maybe then there is. But as far as I'm concerned there, no one has the rights...We've established that, and I don't think that the regional office or anybody else has the right to tell us that we should lower our standard in order to accept someone. We've weeded out probably good people in years past. The standards have changed where they were too light, too short, too tall, and they went down the road because of that physical, you know, probably. And eyesight—we're probably just as physically as fit as anyone else and capable of doing the job, but we had those standards and we didn't live by them. Some have been changed, but the physical standard has never been changed.

CB: Let's say the standards aren't changed, and that some women come into training and they make it through it given those standards. Do you think that will change anything about the way we behave or the way we do things? Do you think it'll change, let's say, initiation? I mean, some guys have brought up the idea, well what do we do if there's a woman an initiation? You just drag her out of bed and give her the same thing?

SR: [unintelligible] her hands and legs and make her do [unintelligible]. Do you think that's change the action of the [unintelligible]?

Unknown Speaker: Yeah, I think it has.

SR: Do you?

US: I was on an [unintelligible] with one of them, and I mean, we weren't as gross. Well—

SR: [unintelligible].

CB: You just make them sing the songs too.

US: Make them sing the dirty parts.

US: [unintelligible]. I think it's going to change initiation as well; instead of glass (?) taping their knees and legs together, glass tape them spread out.

[general laughter]

CB: Let's see...

US: Into bondage these days?

US2: Can't whip it out and whip them.

US3: When in doubt, whip it out.

CB: Let me just finish up with you, Dean, a few more questions, and then we're going to go the 1960s.

US: And now, Saudi Arabia, [unintelligible].

CB: I was just wondering if there were any customs and traditions that you can think of offhand that you've known since you've been on the jumpers. Things like the patches on the chutes, the initiation party. Just go through, even the ones that we all know about, just to get them in.

DJ: Well there'd be one where if you had a hole in your shirt, that if a squad leader ever saw it, he'd rip your shirt off. Some people reacted rather violently to that. There was a few near bloody noses over it.

US: Is that like the old fruit-loop syndrome?

DJ: Yeah.

US: [unintelligible].

DJ: No, not really. Pretty much have stayed in the same vein.

CB: Let's try to enumerate them here. We've got the patches on the shoes. We've got the keg (?)...Well, the keg, if you have a patch on the chute and you don't notice it, you get the keg. If you've got 50 jumps or 100 jumps, any multiple of 50. What are some of the other ones?  
Termination party.

NS: Rookie party.

CB: Rookie party.

US: Nookie party.

US2: Drop your [unintelligible].

US: Well, let's face it, we like to party.

US2: Drop your reserve [unintelligible, and then if you use your reserve, [unintelligible] handle...Well, you might drop it, but you pick it up on the ground, but if you came back without your reserve [unintelligible], that was a keg.

CB: One interesting one we used to have was called a rookie death [unintelligible]. All the old men, as soon as the rookies would qualify and get together, they would all pick a rookie that would be that would be the first one to bung himself up on a fire jump.

US: Oh yeah, first one to get hurt.

CB: That used to be a pretty...I mean, there was a lot of hard feelings over it. The rookies would go around mumbling, "Well, that so-and-so kicked me."

NS: So you had some rookies that had a lot of people betting on them, and some rookies that that...

US: Oh, you could bet on more than one guy, more than one rookie?

NS: So, it wasn't like you pulled a name out of a hat. You actually figured the rookie—

CB: Yeah, the rookie that you figured would get hurt first [unintelligible].

US: Funny thing of it was, every year, there was an old man that got injured [unintelligible].

US: My old man got hurt last year. Wheeler had me.

NS: Wheeler [unintelligible]. Every year, it was that way. An old man [unintelligible].

US2: [unintelligible] I got you, and I paid double for you.

CB: Well, but the old men didn't have to pay out to the rookie if gets [unintelligible].

NS: Was running in boots a tradition?

CB: Yeah, it was actually. He was saying that [unintelligible].

DJ: I don't know if it was a tradition; it was the law. That was the way it was.

NS: If you can't run in your boots, imagine [unintelligible].

[general conversation]

US: Remember that day, [unintelligible] ran around the oval?

[general conversation]

CB: Okay, now we're going to have to hit you up for a good war story. Do you have any outstanding personal ones?

DJ: I have a war wound.

CB: Did you have any close calls? Did anybody else you knew have a close call? Major screw up?

DJ: We didn't have any of those at all. Not for repeating.

US: Assholes that puckered up in the door when [unintelligible].

[general conversation]

NS: What was your scariest?

US: There I was...

NS: He's got got ice water in his veins.

US: [unintelligible].

DJ: I don't know. It's probably in Alaska but when I got out of a plane, I had a really bad episode and it was about 100-acre fire. By the time I got untwisted I was directly in the center of the fire [laughs], and I didn't know which way to turn.

CB: What happened? What'd you do?

DJ: Finally, I turned toward the spot, and I hoped that if I did land in the fire, they'd be able to fly. But it was really erratic winds, and the wind blew me quite a ways but I made it back to the spot okay. I could feel the heat waves coming out of the fire. Really, it was really a bumpy ride for a while.

CB: But you made it to the ground all right.

DJ: The best war story probably is falling out of the trees. The typical war stories.

CB: Did you fall out of a tree?

DJ: No, I never have. I've never really come close. There's been more of close calls about falling out of trees...Even today I can understand why somebody hasn't been killed doing—

US: I think were the most serious accidents occur.

DJ: Yeah, all the broken back and arms and legs [unintelligible].

[general conversation]

US: Went to McCall Springs and he showed me two frames of a picture somebody took of him. He had time to take the picture, cock the camera and take the second frame before he hit the ground. He went down through a Doug[las] fir—

CB: He was shooting while he was—

US: No, it was the guy on the ground, his partner was on the ground. He caught a [unintelligible] in a tree. His feet were in the air, head down, and he's collapsed. The next picture all you see is this white suit in the trees. [unintelligible]. He hit the ground, got up and walked away with a sprained ankle.

DJ: [unintelligible], I went all through high school with him, and he started jumping at Redmond in '70...in '70, and in '72, he was jumping on the Oak Ridge district, where there's a lot of old-growth fir. He free fell about 70 feet and broke his back. Then Tom Bowen was in the plane, and so he jumped to try to help him out and he fell through the trees and dislocated his hip.

US: Did they send anybody else after him?

DJ: They jumped the whole plane—

CB: [laughs] And they all ended up in the hospital.

DJ: The story that struck me most about it was John Twist (?) was on a plane at the time, and he was a kind of a cocky little guy and he was only about five feet, five. He must have just been barely over the minimum height. Anyway, Bowen wasn't suited up. He was assistant spotting, and after Neil broke his back and they figured out what was going on, Bowen says, "Who wants to give me their jumpsuit?" Twist was immediately had his suit off, and they said Bowen really looked funny with this guy's jump suit on because he was so short. It was almost up to his knees on the pants. Anyway, he jumped and twisted his jumpsuit and dislocated his hip.

CB: What were the rest of the people saying when they said, "All right, you go down and follow."

US: Two guys down and—

DJ: Two out of the first four were hurt really bad. They had 16 in the plane, and the other 12 had [unintelligible].

CB: A few other concluding questions.

DJ: Ready.

CB: What do you think sets jumpers apart from other people on other crews or from people generally, or do you think we're just like anybody else?

DJ: Oh, nothing really. Of course, there's a sense of camaraderie. It was the same when I was on the IR crew. You work with people and you respect them; you get along real well. It's hard work, and it's dangerous sometimes.

CB: What do you think's going to happen, let's say, in the next decade, next 15 years with the jumper program? Do you think it'll remain essentially the same, or do you think there's important changes coming along?

DJ: Well, I think it'll probably be a little more specialized in the type of use that it gets. I think I probably...they'll probably be looking at just using us on a fire where they think they're probably get their maximum use out of us. Like in a high-risk area.

US: [unintelligible].

US2: Yeah, well, the reason they called us in there yesterday is because they couldn't crews in there, I thought. That's what the dispatch [unintelligible].



DJ: Yeah, and I think that what we saw last year will probably keep happening. We'll probably be used more as [unintelligible] functions besides jumping.

CB: Pine cones.

DJ: Climbing for [unintelligible] and burning in the fall and going on [unintelligible] fires—however they can utilize us.

CB: Do you know of any songs that originated with the jumper program?

DJ: No. We used to have several when I was on the IR crew.

CB: Yeah, right, they're pretty prolific.

DJ: I can't ever remember learning a song jumping.

US: [unintelligible].

[general conversation]

CB: How about words? Was "embo" (?) around when you started out?

DJ: Oh yeah.

US: I'm going to get that personalized on my [unintelligible].

CB: What about "eyobo" (?), was that...eyobo? [unintelligible].

NS: Eat your own butt out. Or, "emho", early morning hard on.

US: That's "yoho". You got that all wrong. Especially when there's women on the crew when you wake up with one next to you.

DJ: No, not really. I probably ran into that type of stuff [unintelligible] than I did back then.

CB: Well, spinning back into the '60s...Listen, any of you guys, any questions that you guys have just shoot. I mean, the tape recorder...

SR: Into the '60s.

CB: Steve started in—

SR: '65.

CB: You rookied in '65.

SR: Then I had two years in the service, '66 and '67, then straight in '68.

NS: Did you jump in the service?

SR: No.

NS: Did you want to?

SR: No. No, I scoped that out pretty quick and found out where those boys were going. [laughs]

CB: That's too many in the air at one time.

NS: Vietnam.

SR: Vietnam, I said, hey.

CB: Cooking hash.

SR: The odds were too great of going if you were airborne.

CB: Didn't they demand that you do it when they found out your background?

SR: No, they didn't demand, they just asked. They hit you with...what was it? Fifty bucks a month more.

NS: Oh, nobody was that hard up.

SR: [unintelligible]

[unintelligible conversation]

CB: Where were you stationed in Germany?

SR: Heidelberg.

CB: Heidelberg? That's where my father lives right now.

SR: Is that right? Really nice.

CB: In fact, I was there a couple of Christmases ago.

SR: Frankfurt? Did you get over to Frankfurt?

CB: I lived over in Frankfurt for four years.

SR: [unintelligible] was over there in '67, '68.

CB: Yeah, Heidelberg's a real romantic kind of German town. Castle on the Hill.

Well, what do you remember about out your initiation. Just kind of start at the beginning here and work our way up.

SR: It was a creek toss. I guess that was kind of...during the day it was...From the time you started it was an initiation, I mean, the whole time. Right around the airport, your boots, you'd be doing PT, the old men would come down and set along the PT thing and drink Kool-aid while you were doing PT. Walk right in amongst you while you're doing pushups and whatever. Course, stand on you and just...

NS: Were you at NCSB when Larry Hyde (?) rookied?

SR: Yeah.

NS: Is it true that if you were walking down a walkway and an old man was walking toward you had to go off to the side?

SR: Well, some of the walkways you had to get off of, and then where they were split, there was a rookie side in an old man side. A rookie table and an old man's table, and the rookie set down, and the old men dished their plates up and started eating and then they'd say, "Okay, you guys can go ahead and eat."

NS: Was it true that Larry wasn't really cooperative with the old men sometimes?

SR: Yeah, but a lot people weren't cooperative. There was a lot of them and they were big.  
[laughs]

[Break in audio]

SR: —maybe.

CB: Smaller and [unintelligible].

NS: We got a lot of little guys down there.

SR: I don't think jumpers drink as much as they used to. I know I don't. It was every night. I mean, every morning feeding the sharks is what we called it when we started running PT, there's be two or three guys every morning, different guys before they got around the run, would be feeding sharks.

CB: How do you explain that?

SR: Well, that's throwing your chunks over the edge or whatever.

CB: No, I mean, why did guys drink more?

SR: I don't know. I think it does seem to be the thing to do. A lot of them smoked. I would say that it was more of them smoked than not smoked.

CB: Cigarettes, we should clarify, not grass.

SR: Right. But when I was a rookie or maybe the first year out of the service, we had a little fellow that was from California and he was kind of a biker. Name with Ahern (?), and he'd smoke a Camel while we were running around the airport. [laughs]

CB: He was running and smoking a cigarette?

SR: Yeah, he was running and smoking a Camel.

NS: Did he run pretty fast?

SR: No, nobody ran fast at all in boots.

CB: What did the other guys think about him smoking when he was doing that? Was there any—

SR: No, it was everybody...

CB: Did you guys chew tobacco as much around here?

SR: I don't think [unintelligible]. Not that many.

NS: When did that change?

SR: I don't know.

CB: Maybe when they found out cigarettes were dangerous.

NS: When they started putting the little message on the cigarette box.

SR: It might have been. I just think that the guys then were probably as physically fit, but they didn't worry about being physically fit. I mean they didn't worry about what shape their body, so it was the drinking and smoking. But I think it was not only the [unintelligible]; it was just everybody in general.

CB: Well, can you remember [unintelligible] about the guys that you rookied with? Were they students; were they just local guys who just needed a summer job or?

SR: Well when I am rookied, I was, I guess, the first and the last...No, I wasn't the first. I was working on the district, [unintelligible] district, which was right next to the base—one of the district's around here. And the year before there'd been a guy that worked there, and he went...[unintelligible] at the district, or off the district, and rookied. His job was to come back to the district, and then they needed him, he'd go back out. Sort of like Redding's re-tread (?) program used to be, and I guess the IR crew here is something like that now. Well, the next year he asked the ranger if I could, or somebody could, go out and train so he'd have a jump partner because he didn't like to go out and jump with somebody he didn't really know. I think when he kind of went through the rookie training, they knew that he wasn't going to be a full-time jumper so he didn't get the camaraderie, the friendship, that you get that it takes to do the job, really. If you're not tight with all the people, it gets pretty hard on you, you know. If you're not accepted, it's pretty hard group to live with. So, I went out as a GS-3 [unintelligible]. Then the last, about the 5th jump I guess, of the rookie training, a guy named Vance turned and ran with the wind and ran into the side of a tree and he fell out. It was low on the tree, he busted his arm when he hit the tree [unintelligible]. So then he got out of his gear and he took off. He was in shock. He took all of us about a half an hour to find him and run him down.

Then when he was not...They say he went back to the district, so they asked me if I wanted to jump full time. So I didn't have to apply. I didn't have to go through all that. If you went to the base and they liked the looks of you, or you were a local guy, you usually got hired. A lot of the guys got hired right out basic, never been on the fire or anything, but that was acceptable standards then.

CB: So, a lot of these guys weren't students then?

SR: Well, they went on to school, but I think probably more of them were students than are now. Most of them now are ex-students. They've already graduated or quit or whatever.

CB: What do you think accounts for that change? And just the kinds of people?

SR: Maybe not as many jobs or maybe people's values have changed. They decided that they didn't need to be so goal-oriented. Then smokejumping was just a summer job—a glamorous summer job—but it was just a way that you could make the most money to go to school and

that was...It was something you could talk about, you know, "I jumped for three years or whatever." Then you went on to be a whatever—accountant or whatever you had to do. But now I think people's values have changed and if they like doing something or other, it's not how much money they make or how many months a year they work—

CB: It's how they like the job.

SR: [unintelligible].

CB: When you were going through training, what exactly...Do you remember what exactly was [unintelligible].

SR: Well, pretty much what we do now.

NS: How many miles a day did you run?

SR: We ran about a mile in the morning and a mile in the afternoon.

CB: And that was in boots.

SR: That was in boots.

[general conversation]

SR: But I think that was about the distance. There was a rookie running and there was an old man running.

[general conversation]

CB: What did you guys wear when you were jumping back then. I mean, did you have Nomex, or did you have something else that you were wearing? [unintelligible]

SR: [unintelligible] I don't think they've changed them. The coat's changed. But pretty much the same. It's just that white-colored nylon. Similar to...trying to think...they probably make tents out of it now. It was a non-breathable—

CB: Right, urethane-coated, nylon.

SR: Yeah, right. It's a big thing on [unintelligible], and that's all it is.

CB: What about when you actually...once you got out of the jumpsuit and you were fighting fire, did you have a Nomex outfit or did you just wear whatever you wanted to wear?

SR: No, just whatever you wanted to wear. I can't remember when the orange fire shirt came into being. Whether it was then or shortly after that, but—

DJ: '69 or '68.

SR: Was it?

CB: What did you...did you guys all wear just totally different things, or were there certain things that most of the guys wore, like Big Bend jeans or—

SR: Yeah, I think Levi's were pretty much.

CB: Did you guys cut them off at the bottom? Or did you—

SR: Yeah, if you didn't stag your pants, well, that was—

CB: Unaccepted.

SR: Well, if you didn't stag them and wore them to work, you just went and bought you another pair because they were too short to wear for anything else but shorts. They just grabbed and took them and cut them off wherever they wanted to.

CB: How about hair. Was there anything about having long hair in the '60s?

SR: In 1965, there just wasn't anybody that had long hair, and then at the end of the '60s and into the '70s, the early part of the '70s, it was half. A lot of people didn't get their opportunity for advancement because of that. You couldn't really prove it, but it was facial hair or [unintelligible].

US: Part of my sign-in in 1969, my first year, was to sign a paper along with my address and Social Security number to send my check to, I had to sign a waiver releasing me from not growing my hair past the middle of my ear, or my sideburns past the middle of my ear. No facial hair. You signed that paper. That was part of your initial initiation when you signed up. Right in the form that you signed.

NS: But that eventually came to be accepted? Eventually jumpers started having beards and longer hair.

SR: I attribute that too, to the change in the culture like women or anything—whatever it is advancing in a society. It's a job. People can't tell you what to do anymore. [unintelligible] become more permissive in their own standards.

CB: Getting back to this stuff. How much were you getting paid in the '60s, mid-'60s?

SR: I think it was around a buck ninety-eight, something like that.

CB: As a GS-what? Five?

SR: GS-5. Well, now it might have been more than that. I think that's what I started...a buck ninety-something, but it was at three. But I think, if I forget, two-something. Probably 2.49, somewhere in there.

CB: You said you went into the army after your first year.

SR: First year, yeah, I got drafted after that.

CB: Oh, you got drafted.

SR: I got my papers about the end of June, and the head of the base wrote to the...called or whatever and I was deferred until the end of the jump season.

CB: In terms of money you did think it was worth the money—the job [unintelligible] because you came back afterwards.

SR: Yeah. Well, I don't know. Once you do it, it's hard to leave. And if you don't have another job, I would think that would be the first one you would go to.

NS: I have a question. I've heard that the old smokejumpers when we first started were like COs—conscientious objectors.

SR: Yeah, that was—

NS: Pre-World War II. And then after World War II, and after the '50s, the initial Korean conflict, and up until like you were saying Vietnam, was there anybody involved in that still? Could you, like you said you got a stay of deferment or whatever.

SR: My training foreman was—

US: I got a deferment to go to college rather than go to Vietnam and get shot in a rice paddy, but did anybody you know get a deferment because they were—

SR: No. I got one to just postpone getting drafted is all. A couple months.

NS: You're still the same government employee, but—

SR: Right.



NS: Basically, you were in the army, you were just a—

SR: Yes, but there were still some conscientious objectors left that were training foremans and base managers.

CB: Were they any different from the newer guys that were coming on? From you, and—

SR: I don't think so.

CB: Did they ever talk about was it hard for them to work into the jumper program? I mean, was there any animosity or anything?

SR: Well, no, they never did talk about it to me, anyway.

CB: Animosity?

SR: I understood there was some no matter what job they were in. Whether it was smokejumping or whatever, when the other guys came back in the service and they had jobs and they were foremans essentially and making more, I imagine that there was.

NS: I'd like to ask a question about...I don't know maybe it's hard to ask, but it's about dealing with harsh...light hand on the land. And this is a new thing back then. I don't think it was that way. I think it was you go in there and you totally...like spade out and bone yard. You destroy [unintelligible].

SR: Yeah, that was...See, it's not that far away, or it hasn't been that long that standards have changed.

NS: I was at—

SR: You were at NCSB so you know.

DJ: I can remember stories about them like on all their long packouts at Redmond, they used to just chuck their crosscuts and just twang them down the rocks and listen to them "twang", "twang", "twang". They never packed them out.

SR: The only thing that was that was sacred was anything that had to do with the jump gear. I know a guy and I think some you know him, Ash Court (?), he walked 18 miles back to get his harness on his own time.

CB: He forgot it?

SR: He forgot it, and they sent him back.

CB: And radios too.

SR: And radios, yeah. But that was...boy, you didn't forget anything or lose your gear. That was taboo, and now it's [unintelligible].

NS: It's personalized too because it's part of your life right there.

CB: Was he encouraged to do that? Were there any threats or anything?

SR: He was just told to do it, and he understood if he didn't do it, it was down the road. Francis Lufkin ran a...It was a dictatorship if you...closest thing I can come to it.

CB: Wait, what about Francis Lufkin? Was he in charge?

SR: Yeah, well, I mean that was just the way he ran the base, and it was—

CB: But he wasn't your boss, was he?

SR: Well, yeah.

CB: He was?

SR: He was the smokejumper foreman. I mean the base manager.

CB: He was the first smokejumper.

SR: Yeah, one of the first. That thing is argued back and forth between Region 1 and Region 6. You know how that goes. They did jumps—experimental jumps—first at Winthrop.

NS: Then they moved on to Missoula.

SR: Yeah. He was a Forest Service employee, him and a guy name George Honey. They jumped experimental jumps then. Like Missoula said it's the first people who were hired for smokejumping were hired out of Missoula and jumped out of Missoula. It's kind of all in how you—

CB: And where you jumped. [unintelligible]

SR: But it was, it's just law. I remember that you didn't...If you were sent to the office, it was worse than having a stripper just...Butt-puckering, that's all there was to it. You had to go talk

to Francis. And you didn't say anything. It was, "Okay, yep, all right, yep." That was it, and out you went.

CB: Is he still around?

SR: Yeah, he's still there.

CB: Where is he? Winthrop?

SR: At Winthrop. Last week, I took him up and trained him how to be an observer, which was kind of...whatever you want to call it. I mean he knows every nook and cranny there, but he is retired and so we needed some observers to pick up on fire time slips when we got busy and all of us were busy. So he went up, and I showed him the roof and everything. But I didn't need to train him or anything. It was kind of ironic to me, anyway, that I was—

CB: How is he to get along with?

SR: Oh, fine now. I get along with him fine. It was just that I was just scared to death of him the whole time he was there. But I think that's most the way that most of the smokejumper bases were managed. Were a pretty heavy hand, and you didn't—

CB: Almost a military kind of.

SR: Right.

NS: Did Francis used to jump back on fires that you were on and check them [unintelligible]?

SR: No, he wasn't jumping when I was jumping. He hadn't jumped for quite a while.

NS: Because at one time, Bill Moody, he would jump back on fire that the guys were on and check and make sure everything was okay.

CB: After they were done?

NS: Yeah.

CB: When they left and signed out.

SR: Well, the width of the line had to be in, and no one burn inside the line and the bone yard had to be just right.

NS: This is before light hand on land.

SR: I can remember spending like extra hours, maybe even an extra day on a fire because I knew he was coming in. I could have hauled it out a long time but it was just beautification which was not what you call beautifying land; it was tearing it up, but it was beautification to what [unintelligible] wanted to see then. But that was the standard he grew up under, and that's the only thing that he knew and that's what most of the old firehorses districts and everything—that's what they believed in and wanted.

CB: So you didn't guys get together and decide that these new regulations, you're going to follow them. They did that at Redmond here. How many years ago was it? '72, or something like that, they came up with the criteria that they were to follow for fire line, for putting in your bone yard, things like that. This is Bill Moody's?

SR: Well, I think it was Francis Lufkin. I think it was before Bill Moody. Maybe before Francis Lufkin. I mean that was the way district crews fight fire, and it—

NS: Just the way it was passed on.

CB: Just the way a lot of district crews still do fight fire for them, especially down in Southern California.

SR: It was automatic. If it re-burnt, that was all over. It was down the road, and I seen that happen. It was two old guys and...Maybe three old guys and one rookie. The rookie said that he wanted to stay and work longer on the fire and the old guys want to get out, and go for another jump and it re-burnt. Then all the old guys were canned and the rookie wasn't. Because he...Well, they said, yeah, he wanted...They were honest about it and said that, we told him to leave type thing. Quit worrying about it, and what do you know, you're a rookie.

CB: Well, how did you get along with the other guys that you worked with? The rookies and the older men? You guys get along pretty well?

SR: I don't know. I don't think the rookies were accepted as quick as they are now. They're pretty much dog meat for the first couple of weeks and then they kind of get...They still can catch a few cracks and stuff like that. Probably the first year, the whole year, and then maybe just depending on the...A lot of the...You're a second-year rookie, that type of thing. So, I think that's changed a little.

CB: Did you have any guys that were, any geeks on your crew? I mean people that, for one reason or another, were—

SR: Never accepted?

CB: Yeah.

SR: Yeah.

CB: Did you have nicknames for them? Do you remember any nicknames off the top of your head?

SR: No, there probably was, but I can't remember.

CB: Like cull(?).

SR: Oh, culls, that's been around for a long time.

CB: What about in training? How many people did you start out with and how many people did you end up with?

SR: You know, that was funny. In '65, there wasn't any washouts except for the fellow that broke his arm, and I don't think there had been any washouts that were washed out. If you quit and went home on your own accord, that was...If they could make you quit, well, that was fine, but I mean people that really wanted to stay they would work with you. There was no PT test or anything like that.

NS: Everybody got the exits down good enough? And letdowns and stuff? Or would they just work with you until you got it?

SR: Yeah, I think everybody got it down. I can remember being hung up there, not doing it right, for a couple, three hours. Not [unintelligible], hanging there in the sunshine, but—

NS: With the advent of the [unintelligible] test, washouts—the number of washouts—climbed.

SR: Well, you had to have a standard, but I think maybe they just went about...when they kind of...This is just a theory, but before they had a standard, they could do about anything they wanted. The employee didn't really have any recourse of anything so they stood on you really hard. So, if you didn't wash out on your own, well, then you were around. I think after the...You really couldn't be that hard on people when the standard came in. Actually the standard isn't that difficult.

CB: No, it's not at all.

SR: I mean, it's a pretty Mickey Mouse standard really.

CB: Hundred and thirty pounds is pretty light.

SR: Yeah.

CB: Let's say nowadays, if you do identify somebody that you don't really want on the crew, how do you get rid of that person? Up in Winthrop?

SR: Well, we haven't had any rookies for quite a while, but counsel, go through the warning thing, two weeks, documented, and all that. Where before you just, they just say, okay, you won't have to show up tomorrow.

CB: Were people ever dropped for other than strictly performance reasons? Let's say, if there's somebody that people just didn't think that they would like around. Were they ever somehow singled out?

SR: Well, I can think of one case and maybe that...I'm not really sure. The fellow just never came back, and [pauses] I really don't think he got that high of evaluations. I think it was just because he just never fit in. Physically he was just as capable as everyone else, and he just didn't fit in with...He didn't go to town and drink. You just didn't see him, and he was shunned and he just couldn't handle the...you know, being there all day by himself so to speak.

CB: So, there is some pressure from outside, I mean, from the group to kind of conform to some extent?

SR: Yeah, I think so. Probably more in the earlier, in the '60s than there is now. People have a little more respect for people that, just because they don't agree the same as you do they're, you know, you don't completely shun them or whatever.

NS: How do you think women might change smokejumping? If they're capable of getting in, passing the physical tests, and things like that?

SR: There's no doubt in my mind there's a lot of women that could pass the pull-up, chin-up, run type thing. It's pretty much just the grubbing all day, or maybe for two days and then having to to put that 100-plus pounds on and walk out of the Mount Baker or something.

US: That's where you have to look at the dividing line. Most women may not be capable of packing out 100 or so pounds.

SR: Well, 100 pounds over half of our body weight, and 130, or that's probably about the max. But there's quite a few times I can remember them weighing 110, 115, and those occasional ones that were 130 or whatever. So, if you weigh 150 to 180 pounds and you have that much weight, well, what someone's going to do that—

CB: Weighs a lot less.

SR: Weighs a lot less. Weighs almost as much as the pack? Then again too, you're looking at bone structure and the size. You can have a little frame and strap a lot of muscle on it. I

suppose a girl could do the...build herself up that way, but then how long is the bone structure going to hold with that weight. Watching those gals on TV bench press and stuff. Well, obviously they can bench press more than me. But if you put that on their shoulders, and they had to walk with it, how long would it be before that thing started to break down and tear apart?

CB: Do you think most of the other jumpers that you know think the same way about women that they would...Do you think they would be accepted within the group? You said that there's some pressure to conform. Do you think that women would have any problem conforming to the code?

SR: I really think that, at least most of the guys at Winthrop, if she could do the job and they would make some allowances as far their gross swearing, whatever, I really think they would. I'm sure they would have to, that she was going to have to accept some of it because that's just the way it is.

CB: That's the key point though right there. A person can do it. Doesn't matter who it is. Most people that I know that have jumped are the type of person that are intelligent enough that they'll respect a person for that ability. Although I've heard so few people talk and say that they don't want anything to do with women, most of us just go, she can do it and I respect her for that fact and I'm not going to put her down.

NS: But you don't think...It seems that nobody, none of the jumpers, that I've talked to think that standards should be lowered—physical standards should be lowered to accommodate.

SR: Okay, how can they be lowered?

CB: They can't get much lower.

SR: We can lower the seven chin-ups, and the mile and a half run, but I don't think that would be a big problem to a chick that was in shape.

NS: Well, I'm just thinking of actual double standards: one for men and one for women.

SR: Well, what do you do? You load the airplane up, and it's by [unintelligible], you kick the girl out, but it's a 12-mile packout, then you a guy up from the—

CB: That's the questions.

NS: And you draw straws to see who gets the two-man with her.

CB: That's my point right there. When it comes time for packouts, I don't know anybody who's going to carry more than they have to for somebody else. That applies amongst any male to male or male to female.

NS: Unless they're paid off. When I was in [unintelligible], there's be pay offs. They get a man, and the man would do the work for them.

[Break in audio]

US: You're carrying so much weight as it is, [unintelligible].

SR: It comes down to the fact that, okay, you jump on a fire with a chick...okay, let's say it's 10-mile packout, and the first three of it isn't a trail. You've got to lower your pack part of the way over cliffs and let yourself down and you got to wade a river with your pack on. Okay. So when the first bunch of cargo comes out, it's streamers. So that automatically puts you up over 100 pounds. Depends. Or it rains on you before you get your chute in. That automatically puts you over 100 pounds no matter what you do. Okay, I jump with the lady, and I say, "I know you can't carry this." We're just to the point that I can't carry it either. All I can do to carry what I have to carry. I can't take any of yours. It's just physically impossible. So, if there was...even if you wanted to say, "Okay, I'll take your reserve because you're not as big as I am or whatever," and sometimes that happens with some of the guys if a guy's got a sprained ankle or whatever, you try to divvy up a little gear, little gear there. But if it's in one of those situations, it's just I know if I want to make it off of that hill without hurting myself and I've got about 80 percent chance of doing it anyway with 110 pounds, why do I want to put 125 or 30 on my back and know that I ain't going to make it. Well, we're both up shit creek then.

CB: Do you think that there's going to be or do you think that there has been any kind of pressure from let's say the regional office or above somewhere to actually lower standards? Has there been any kind of—

US: That's the word coming in from Missoula.

SR: That they want them to lower the standards?

US: Yeah, they're getting a real big push to get them in [unintelligible]. I think one reason is because Missoula is there at Region 1, the Region 1 headquarters, and they're under extreme scrutiny from people all the time.

SR: Well, true, and then they have rookie crews like 30 or 40 people. If we hire ten people on this [unintelligible], there's probably the chances of only one chick showing up on it, but you hire 30 or 40 off of one roster and there's going to be eight or ten of them are going to be chicks. And that number is going to keep growing and keep growing and keep growing. I really can't see that anyone would even consider asking someone else to lower the standards for that. As



far as I'm concerned, that would be an insult to any kind of women's movement at all. If someone asked me to do it that's the way I would approach it. I would say—

CB: That women are fine but let's not lower the standards.

NS: If they can do the job [unintelligible] their weight, then great.

CB: As far as I'm concerned, every guy that ever washed out this program because he couldn't meet physical standards would have a legitimate grievance against the Forest Service and probably would be that eligible for all the backpay for all those years in the same way as it...There's been a lot of those cases, and then the Forest Service has lost for different things. Some of them with chicks because they get weeded out or something, and then they came back and said, "I was discriminated against because I was a chick." And the court upheld it, and they had to. So, I don't see any way that all those people wouldn't have a legitimate case.

CB: Let me change the subject here. Did most of you guys live on base when you first started out? Do they still live there at Winthrop on the installation itself, or do they live in town? How do you guys work that out, like right now?

SR: There's only three at the base. I can remember when the bunkhouse was probably full. There was 15 to 20 people staying there, but we only have ten people. I think that probably smokejumpers are older now for the most part, and they're doing the job, like I say, because they like to do it and it's not used quite as much as step in their education just for the money. Or it was at one time, but maybe then when they got out of school, they didn't want to...They went back jumping until they decided exactly what they wanted to do. Those people probably are married or require a little more independence or their lifestyles are different. They have a lady or whatever that...I think it's just the changes of our society has changed that.

CB: Do you still have a mess hall at Winthrop?

SR: Yeah.

CB: Do most of the guys eat there?

SR: Yeah, I would say that it's good chow.

NS: I heard real good stuff.

CB: All the meals, or just the...

SR: They only have one meal a day now.

CB: Oh, just lunch?

SR: Yeah.

CB: Okay, so everybody eats elsewhere.

SR: Because they don't have enough people to run the...It's subsidized now anyway so I mean...

CB: I'm just wondering what it was like...what the differences are between when everybody lived on base, and now when a lot fewer...lots more percentage lives on base. Do you think that's changed the nature of the whole bunch?

SR: Yeah, it probably has. People have other lives outside of the day to day thing. I have a wife and a kid; I don't go to town as every night like I used to and tell war stories and whatever. And there's probably more and more people in that same situation that have other things to do. It probably all is back to the same thing. It's not just the school time thing. When it was that way, you didn't have anything else to do. You didn't have no studies to do at night and you were away from home.

CB: You mentioned that before that it took rookies a little bit longer to become accepted into the group. Do you think then that means that there was a greater pressure back then to conform than there is now or not?

SR: That's kind of hard to say.

CB: Yeah, you've been around for a long time, so you haven't been...I'm just wondering what, say, a rookie...how a rookie nowadays would feel at Winthrop as opposed to how rookie would feel back in 1964. Just wondering if he felt maybe as intimidated.

SR: I don't think he would. I don't think there's that much intimidation. Well, there's not the...They don't let you come down and drink Kool-Aid while the other people are doing calisthenics. [unintelligible] They don't let that happen anymore.

NS: Who came up with that.

SR: Well, I don't know how that...I guess they figured that somebody would complain, and a grievance or something.

CB: Do you think that there's more of that, more recourse to...every equality type issues or just saying, hey, that's not fair they can run to the overhead and complain? Does that happen?

SR: Well, I don't know. I think maybe that everybody's little more conscious of people's rights and the fact that they do have recourse and...

CB: What about the whole issue of the RO, our people in D.C., essentially people from outside of the jumper organization interfering with day to day operations? Do you think that occurs more often now than it did before? Or do people feel differently now than they did before about the RO stepping in or about outsiders stepping in [unintelligible]? Were you more independent early on?

SR: I think so. I think so. It pretty much that the smokejumper unit just did exactly what it decided it would do, and it was a shared resource. I know we didn't have as much restraints or as much...

CB: Bullshit rules?

SR: Right, like the Okanagan has...We work for the Okanagan now. I mean everything goes to the Okanagan. Our dispatch is all in the Okanagan. You want jumpers at Redmond, you call your dispatch and they call our dispatch. There's still the communication back and forth; it's doubling up is all it is. You can't convince everybody that after your dispatch calls our dispatch, Moody doesn't call back down to Bowen and say, "Now, just what do you want."

"Well, give us a few jumpers and couple chutes."

Okay, and then everything goes, but I really think that there's a lot of duplication that doesn't really need to be there.

CB: Do you think that's changed the whole nature of the group or not? I'm just wondering whether more interference from the outside it is somehow changed the way you guys are. The way the group operates. For example, somebody recalls somebody complaining about interference with what you could and couldn't do during training. I'm just wondering how that will affect the kinds of people that end up making it through training and hence the kinds of jumpers you end up with.

SR: I think that more interfere with the policy as far as, well, women or whatever. But I don't think that their interference is deterring from the group itself as far as us as smoke jumpers. I still think we're just as tight as we always were.

NS: [unintelligible] morale though.

SR: Well, yeah, they might but that's all connected with how many bucks or how many hours overtime or whatever.

CB: It's also a lack of camaraderie amongst the general—

NS: Is that true?

SR: I think right now at the regional office level, I think there's really trying to cause some splitting between Redmond and the rest of the bases. It's probably—

NS: Probably forcing it too.

CB: In what way? Because we're becoming the kind of the hub? We're the power center now?

SR: Yeah, just putting us on because they would've had to pay you guys overtime, and they don't have to pay us overtime.

NS: You think that was a political move? I mean, we're not going to tell anybody. [laughs] I'm really interested. I'm wondering why they did that. Was it economic?

SR: There was a couple, three of us—this is our day off anyway—so you're counting them out, and they got to [unintelligible]. The airplanes were up. I can see it, says, we got to keep Winthrop here anyway because their airplanes are here. We're not going to let them go home, so we won't put Redmond guys on. We have to pay them. Let's face it. There's just too many people in the regional office, and on down the line, they don't have enough to do. They're always...jockeying around.

NS: It's like we're pawns in a chess game.

CB: Something that's interested me is how come, or what is the reasoning behind Redmond rigging all the chutes and flying them up. I mean is that supposed to save money or is it to show that they can do without the loss of everybody else?

SR: Pretty much. I haven't got anything really good to say about who's running our fire in the regional office now, but when you take the loft from the smokejumper base, you've just broke it's back. You really have. Where do you go when you have a meeting? We go to the loft. Where does everybody congregate in the morning before they go to work? Well, maybe you guys don't, but we go to the loft. That's the way it always was in LaGrande when I was there too. That's where the work list was posted. Let's face it. Other than building fire packs, that's the only meaningful job there is. The rest of it's all busy work. All summer pulling weeds and cleaning the toilet gets morale pretty low.

CB: Do you feel like maybe you're losing, somehow losing control of your own operation? That some of the basic requirements are...I mean some of the basic tasks are just falling to somebody else? That decisions, important decisions, are going somewhere else?

SR: Yeah. It's hard to say. It's hard to say. All the guys that are still at Winthrop won't be able to compete for jobs with people that look at Redmond.

CB: Because they don't rig.

SR: Because they don't rig, and every one of the squad leader positions says you must be a certified and qualified.

CB Do you still have a sewing room.

SR: No.

CB: You don't?

SR: If a zipper, like we sent down a PG bag to put a new zipper in it. Well, geez, there's no big safety thing, and that was as far as I could...The big thing was that we've got lofts around that aren't certified, and they don't meet this and Redmond does. It has the humidity and everything else. Well, the FAA don't care. You can rig your chutes out there in the street as far as they're concerned. They don't really care what you do with them, and it's not a safety thing.

CB: Is the guy who's in charge of the jumpers in the region, is he an ex-jumper?

SR: I don't know. [unintelligible].

CB: I don't know who it is. I was just curious about [unintelligible].

US: He's supposed to be an ex-jumper.

DJ: Yeah, he is.

SR: Is he? I know he ran the base down at Redding for a while or was connected there.

NS: Wisconsin is [unintelligible] so that they would be independent [unintelligible] be a burden. Like in Missoula where they have—

SR: Well, see, Missoula did this—exactly what we're doing right now.

CB: Oh, with all the other [unintelligible].

SR: They took all the rigging in and about two years they said, hey, this is costing us bucks and it isn't doing any good at all. So, they went all back to Rangeville (?) rigging, back to West Yellowstone rigging.

CB: Well, you guys, did you used to modify your own gear if you saw a little problem or something that you wanted to add; you just go ahead, take it to the sewing room and [unintelligible].

SR: Oh, yeah.

CB: You can't do that now?

SR: We don't have any means to do it.

NS: Innovations come out of these different bases.

he adds we can't do that. No. We don't.

SR: Let's say that probably nine out of ten innovations as far as smokejumper gear being changed came from Winthrop and LaGrande and Cave Junction. I'm not saying anything about Carl or you guys are anything else, but if you have 100 people coming up with ideas, you're going to come up with better ideas than having one or two people coming up with ideas. If I have an idea, I can't go to the sewing machine and [unintelligible] for a while and see if it works. You just—

US: Plus, you have all the heads these lofts sitting out here, and they can get together and have a meeting, and say, "We tried this," and the other guy, "We tried this." They can get together their ideas and come up with a better thing.

US2: [unintelligible].

[general conversation]

SR: That came from a combination of things. That didn't all come from Winthrop. Cave Junction had the first...as far as I know had the first teardrop kind of design, like a daypack or whatever. Then we said, oh well, this suits us better so we'll put this on.

US: [unintelligible] tried to modify his. [unintelligible] trying to carry it easier than trying to grab two shoulder straps. Dean Johnson went, "Hey, you can't have that: everybody doing their own thing." [unintelligible] bags sitting around, won't do any good. [unintelligible] every winter. [unintelligible].

CB: Back in the mid-'60s when you guys were up in Winthrop, how did you get along with the folks in town? All right? Any problems at all?

SR: Yeah, I think there were probably more fights.

CB: What kind of fights? I mean, who against who?

SR: Fist fights.

NS: Loggers against Forest Service?

SR: Not really that what you call a logger-Forest Service collision type thing. People just didn't...you know, didn't take as much. Somebody's is rowdy over the bar now, everybody just kind of ignores him. But we used to just get up and punch it out or whatever. I think there was probably more fights probably I caught about the tail end of it. I probably started with kind of the peace mode, as you might want to call it or whatever. And people didn't [unintelligible].

CB: Was there much grief between the peace boys and the old boys? People come in and say, hey, don't give me any shit. I know what I'm doing; just leave me alone.

SR: That was one thing about it. If you were a smoke jumper, you've got...Right at that time no matter whether you were pro-Vietnam or anti-Vietnam or how you wore your hair or whatever, if you was a smoke jumper, you was a smokejumper and that was it. Even if you didn't agree with the guy, there wasn't a whole lot of conflict at all. It wasn't [unintelligible]. The way you looked or whatever, but pretty much the jumpers all accepted—

CB: You're a jumper. You're okay.

SR: Right. You could have one guy in your group with long hair, and if they wanted to hassle somebody at the bar long hair, they went ahead and did it. But they didn't hassle the guy that was...and he just sat there and kept his mouth shut. I mean, he didn't stand up for the guy with long hair. He was a jumper and he was jumper.

NS: What if a smokejumper wore an earring? Would that be going too far?

SR: I probably would have been pushing it, yes.

CB: Or put their rookie pin in their ear. [laughs]

NS: In your nose.

CB: How about rivalry between other jumpers and between, let's say, you guys and helitack crews or you guys and IR crews? Was there any kind of...was there any name calling or anything like that?

SR: I think so. More than there is now.

CB: Like what? What did you call a helicopter...Helicopters, well, were they used very much in the '60?

SR: Well, just to just to carry us out.

[several people talking at once]

CB: [unintelligible] IR crews. Were they rotors? Were they rotor heads or what'd you call them?

SR: We had it pretty good, I guess. We were initial attack, and on the Okanagan when somebody said 4-11, the siren went off and you were gone. Nobody had to say, well, I don't really think we're going to need. We jumped on haystacks in the middle a farmer's fields or whatever. If it was a 4-11, we were there, and we took action.

US: What's 4-11?

CB: Fire. [laughs] They don't use it anymore in a lot of places.

SR: So we really had it good on the Okanagan as far as—

CB: It was [unintelligible] territory.

SR: Well, the idea was that the jumpers went to the fire first, and then the ground crews came and relieved them and then the jumpers went back if that was the type it was.

CB: How did the ground crews feel about that?

SR: Great. Great, because the ground people, most of them were just older guys in the districts, and that was before they really had the big buildup after '70 of fire crews and all that. I know several guys around the [unintelligible]-Winthrop district, they'd turn a fire in and they'd pull the rigging underneath the tree somewhere, sat there and yeah, let's wait for the smokejumpers. They'd never even start up the hill. They figured they had it lined, and then they'd go up and mop it up because that's what they liked to do. They had the overtime for three or four days, and then the smokejumpers went and jumped on another fire.

CB: But you don't think that the way it is anymore?

SR: Oh no, everybody races. You know.

CB: So the competition has intensified over the years.

SR: I think so. Well, there's more people, less fires.

CB: What do you call the helicopter people up in Winthrop?

SR: I don't really think we have a—

CB: You don't have anything? What about IR crews? Do you call them ground pounders, or?



SR: Yeah, pounders.

CB: What about repellers? Any nicknames for repellers?

US: [unintelligible].

SR: Well, when they just took a fire from you, generally, it's because you want to come right down to it, unless they're over...if they're not over about ten minutes from their home base, there ain't no way they can beat us to it. We just get off the ground faster and that 99's faster. So we're there. But if we got any gripe, it's with the people that didn't call us at the same time, or if we get there first circling the fire and they'll say, well, let's wait a minute; we've got to reporters come in.

NS: They send you both to it just to see who'll get there first?

SR: I'm sure they play their little games.

US: That brings up a point. Have you ever wished for a fire?

SR: Wished for a fire? Every second!

US: I was in a bar one time in Winthrop, and some guy came up to me, and he said, "You know what I don't like about smokejumpers?"

I go, "No, I don't."

He goes, "They always wish for fires, and I don't like them because of that."

I said, "Well, screw you, buddy." We almost [unintelligible] fists, and I had to get far from him because of that. I wasn't sure if he was going to jump on me. So have you ever wished for a fire?

SR: Well, every day. There's been very few days that I've been there and goes, "Oh, not the siren again." But there has been those times.

CB: It's hard to explain to people. In the wintertime, you're going, god, I just can't wait for next summer. I can't wait for the forest to burn so I get my [unintelligible] People go, that's horrible! Things burning up and destroying trees and whatever else can happen. Just so you can get a jump.

US: See, the thing is, I told this guy after a while, while we were still at arms, I said, "It doesn't matter how much I wish for a fire, I don't have any control over nature. It's going to come or go whether I wish for it or not."

SR: Probably what we wish for more is that we'll called if there is one. Because we realize that other than paying someone off [unintelligible]. Just because we have a trunk full of [unintelligible].

CB: Has there ever been a case of smokejumpers found that paid other people to start a fire?

SR: I don't think so.

[general conversation]

US: One other thing on that conversation I had with that guy though, that I would like to bring up, is that he worked for the engineering department and he made roads. He was a grader operator, and in our little conversation, I told him he was pretty screwed going out there and he destroyed much more land than a fire ever destroyed putting in his roads.

SR: I can see why he wanted to be fisting with you.

CB: I'm wondering whether the jumpers that started out in the mid-'60s, or in the '60s period, were any different from the ones that came before or the ones that came after, or whether pretty much jumpers have been the same from the very beginning all the way through today. From your knowledge of people—everybody ranging from Lufkin all the way to us, I guess—we're rookies, we were rookies last year, do you see any big differences? Are we basically the same thing? Same material?

US: I think they're hornier today.

SR: No, I don't think they're hornier. I would say on the average now, that a smokejumper has sex about eight times as many times a year as the smokejumpers back then did.

US: Which means they have it eight times.

SR: Eight times. Exactly. [laughs]

[general conversation]

CB: Is it true that smokejumpers substitute jumping for sex? [laughs]

NS: We were told it was better than sex.

SR: Well, I have got off of fires when I didn't really want to look at anything that even resembled sex. It didn't last long. Two beers maybe. [laughs]

CB: Have you ever seen another jumper down this gear and see stuff all over his suit?

SR: No, I haven't seen that. Jumpers are discreet.

CB: They'd excuse themselves first.

NS: That's why they make white jumpsuits. The white knights of the Forest Service.

CB: Well, we're running out of tape. Let me see if there's any—

SR: I'm running out of time.

[End of Interview]