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Oral History Number: 139-001

Interviewee: K. Ross Toole

Interviewer: Walter Gallacher

Date of Interview: November 12, 1976

Walter Gallacher: What I'm interested in, what my first question is just what's your background is, and your interest in Montana. (Unintelligible) the plains.

K. Ross Toole: I live on the plains. Well, my interest in Montana is first of all that I'm third generation Montanan, my great grandfather came here in 1859, which, here, Missoula wasn't here undoubtedly and that most of the members of my family have been here ever since, and this is a therefore personal claim, as far as I'm concerned. And secondly, I have a family cattle ranch over in Carbon County, which is at least on the edge of the Great Plains, and I've spent...I ran that ranch for seven years, so I'm familiar with what you do on the Great Plains with cattle, and what you don't do. And thirdly, I'm a historian, and have been...especially in the American West with great emphasis on the Great Plains.

So the whole coal issue gives rise to very serious questions in my mind, based on the fact that the people who intend to do the mining, and the United States government, the Bureau of Reclamations, the Bureau of Land Management, all the other bureaus involved seems to be totally ignoring certain basic facts about the Plains. And every time that's happened in the past, of course, there has been tragedy and consequences. It seems to be in the best interest, not only of the people of Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota, and the Northern Great Plains, but of the coal industry and the people involved in the energy business to understand what they're really doing, (unintelligible) understand something about the perils in which they themselves are involved, which they don't understand, and won't apparently listen to.

I don't know. There's billions of dollars involved here, it's their money. If I were, you know, the presumption is that business men are always business men, are very brilliant, and that they don't make mistakes. Well, that presumption, I think, is incorrect. I think they frequently make terrible blunders. Now you're talking about gargantuan amounts of money. Which can go down the drain very readily because, in spite of their assertions to the contrary, they have not studied the land or the water or the weather patterns, all of which can shut them down. How do you advertise an investment notion. Those investments, you see, are being made on the basis of the doubling of power every ten years, which is very, very dubious projection. Secondly, they're made on the basis of adequate water, and that is an even more dubious proposition. That has...study of the inadequacy of water on the Great Plains goes back to John Wesley Powell, way back in the 1860s. Apparently, none of the people in the coal industry, none of the bankers backing, for instance, the consortium have, amid any such basic studies, those studies are not only historical, of course, they're hydrological, they're topographical, they're studies by agronomists. They are available. When I've talked to the coal company people, which I've done repeatedly, and to the power company people, which I've done repeatedly, there is no

indication that they have the remotest idea that all this material is available to them, and it has struck me, that in their own self-interests, they ought to be doing this, and they're not. They simply aren't.

WG: And they're not being made accountable by any agency?

KT: No. You know, Montana has laws on power-citing; it has laws on water disposition. As a matter of fact, we've got good environmental laws. But it doesn't do a bit of good to have good laws on statue books but we do have environmental laws. Unless, number one, you have the money to implement those laws, number two, that means the staff, that means the expertise. And that means the time. So that in so far as Montanans feel comfortable, because there are very strong environmental laws, they should not. They have...the new constitution charges these environmental agencies, which were created as a mandate of that constitution, with all kinds of awesome responsibilities, but they have not, the legislature has not funded them adequately to make the studies, and to keep on top of this thing, by any means.

The Department of Natural Resources, you know, has I guess five or six people. My lord, you can't handle the water problem in Montana, just alone with five or six people. One of them is lawyer, you've got one hydrologist, you've got one geologist, you've got a clerk, and a couple typists. Now you're talking 274 coal companies operating in Montana, involving hydrological studies of very, very great import, and we don't have the money to do it. There's no doubt about the staff of the Board of Natural Resources, and their agitation, and their concern, and their frequency to panic. But what are they going to do about it? They desperately need help, and that means money. It is my contention that the money should not come from the legislature, should not come from the taxpayers of the state of Montana, it should come from the people who pose to do this thing, mainly the coal companies. That they should be assessed, if you're going to do business, if you're going to propose to strip here, if you are going to propose to put up a nine-mile generating plant of 700 megawatts, or 10,000 megawatts, you are, first of all, going to have to put up the money so that we can make the studies, not you. Because those studies are obviously terribly biased.

The state of Montana can make the studies, which is really a gathering of material which is available. It's not that you have to out and spend ten years in hydrological work. That hydrological work has been done, but it's scattered, all from here to hell to breakfast. And until you do this, until you arrange to have the state given the money to do this thing properly, you may not break a single piece of ground. Because you're in very, very dangerous areas, playing around with very, very dangerous problems and situations with devastating potential effects for Montana. So, you're not going to move until we have the money, from you, to gather in all this material and make our judgements.

WG: What are the possibilities of something like this happening in the state of Montana, forcing the coal companies to become responsible for this?

KT: Well, the coal companies' argument, first of all, is that we have a 30 percent severance tax on coal right now, which means that, that's a sales price tax. Used to be a net proceeds tax, which was silly, since they could manipulate, and did manipulate, net proceeds. Coal companies' attitude is that, well, you're taxing us right now. For every ton of coal we sell, whatever the sales price is, you get 30 percent, there's your money right there. My answer to that is, but the damage has now been done. No, that's not the kind of money we want. The kind of money we want is the kind of money to study exactly, precisely what you're going to do, where you're going to do it, how you're going to do it, and what the consequences will be before you do it. Not after you do it. The money isn't going to do us any good. Well, that isn't quite true. It will go into a trust fund. But what you really have done is wreck a tremendously valuable agricultural area, and put money in the trust fund, in the state treasury. Well, that's not a tradeoff that I think is fair.

There are undoubtedly areas in Montana where we can strip mine coal, where we can do it with minimal, if any, environmental damage. It's my own view, of course, that the Board of Natural Resources, which has the power, and the legislature, which is the power, should absolutely prevent stripping elsewhere. Should, above all, prevent it in the alluvial valleys. I guess one of the real hopes here is not Montana at all. It is the election of Carter. I'm not a devotee of Carter's, except in one regard. And that is that he has asserted positively, over and over again, that if a bill, a federal strip mining bill, were again introduced, it's been vetoed twice, he would sign it. Congress passed the last bill overwhelmingly, but not overwhelmingly enough quite, for the Ford veto. Now, that bill would prevent strip mining in the alluvial valleys, and it will, it will come up in the next Congress, and Carter will sign it, which, of course, is a tremendous boost to us.

Because the simple fact of the matter is, no matter how powerful the state legislature may seem to be on the books, that coal is federal. Or 80 percent of it is federal, and what's going to be done is going to be done, determined by the federal government, the federal agencies. It's not going to be determined by Montana. Any time you say that, well, Supreme Court decisions, or Court of Appeals decisions have held (clears throat) that state laws shall take precedence over federal laws in certain instances. Nonsense. If the federal government wants to, they can, they will. Over any state law. On clean air, on water, on strip mining, or anything else. And because there is an energy crisis, which no one denies, and because we have to use coal, which no one denies. Before electoral votes, with two congressmen, and two senators, what is our political clout in Montana?

It's negligible, vis-à-vis New York. No, let it get cold. Let a few office workers in (unintelligible) New Jersey have to put on coats in the office, and where the hell do you think the clout is? The clout is on the West Coast and the East Coast, where political clout always is. Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota have none, relatively speaking. The federal government pays lip service to the fact, well now, we're not going to come in if you have strict environmental laws, and undo them. My only answer to that, is, bullshit. Of course they will come in and undo. There's no question about that.

The EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] has already done that. EPA has just passed a regulation which has the force of law, which in effect says, if your air is already dirty, you can put in an institution, you can put in a plant now, which continues to make it dirty. It's going in precisely the opposite direction. And there's an irony in the fact that this is called the Environmental Protection Agency. It's not protecting the environment. It's doing quite the opposite. It, like many other agencies, is in a close and intimate partnership with industry. It's not in a partnership with (laughs) the American people. The regulatory agencies, for instance, the Federal Power Commission, just one example. Who are the regulators in the Federal Power Commission? They come from the power industry, almost overwhelmingly. They come into the government and regulate the industry from which they just came. They go back to the industry after they have served their time in the federal government, usually at a much more salubrious salary. This is the putting of the fox in the hen house. It's absurd. We don't have regulatory agencies. Not when you fill them with personnel from the agency which they're supposed to regulate.

Now, human nature is human nature, and we know perfectly well the consequence of it. This is true of almost all of the regulatory agencies. They are set up to be public service, to protect the public. Their names indicate that the Forest Service. It's supposed to be a service to the American people; it's supposed to be a consumer advocate, really. That's a new phrase. It isn't. It's in league with, and has been in league with, for many years, the lumbering industry. When you talk about multiple use, the Forest Service has not defined itself to multiple use at all. It favors the cutting of timber. It's in bed with the forest industry, the forest products industry. I don't think anybody really denies that, except the forest products industry. And the Forest Service. I don't think anybody else has any doubts about it. This has not been true in the past, but these regulatory agencies were set up; they were set up under the aegis of anger of the American people, and the Progressive Movement, the Progressive Era. Forest Service was, literally, then, the Forest Service. It was to protect the forest. The Federal Power Commission, and all of the regulatory agencies that came in to correct abuses, the idea, the concept was fine. And for quite a long time, it worked. They did, literally, regulate and say, "No, you may not do this, it is not in the public interest." They have progressively and progressively become the handmaidens, or the partners, of the very industries they are supposed to regulate.

WG: (unintelligible)

KT: It happens because power is what power does.

WG: And the growth of the industry, and therefore the—

KT: Sure, you bet

WG: The regulatory agencies lost theirs.

KT: Sure, look at the pressure. They lost it in two ways. They lost it, primarily, because, let's take the oil industry, which desperately needs regulation. It needs regulation from the Department of Justice, it needs regulation in terms of the various agencies having to do with energy. There is absolutely no excuse for our refining capacity in this country to be constantly slipping, rather than increasing. And it is slipping because it's cheaper to refine outside the United States of America. They don't pay any taxes outside the United States of America. So our oil industry, both in terms of refining and in terms of the manufacturing of oil products, has moved out of the United States.

This, of course, should be stopped. As a matter of fact, must be stopped. We are now 40 percent dependent on imported oil. Even then, we can't refine our own oil, because the refineries have moved out of the United States, because they're tax free out of the United States. All it takes is an act of Congress to prevent that. Why isn't the Congress acting? Because of the enormous power of the oil industry, and the lobbying, buying, and otherwise influencing Congressmen. The 20 percent depletion levels, for god's sake. We have known for years that the 20 percent depletion allowance was wrong. Morally wrong, wrong in every other respect. Can you get rid of the 20 percent depletion allowance? Well, just recently, I guess we got it down 15, or something. Why? Enormous corporate pressure. I sound like I'm a socialist. I'm not for the nationalization of the oil industry; I'm not for the nationalization of the railroads. I am for control, or for the utilization of governmental agencies, set up to do that, governmental agencies that did it successfully for a long time.

There's no reason that we can't go back and make them effective again. If we have enough anger, or if the American people know what a rip-off is going on, the Congress will then respond to the pressure of the American people. So long as the American people shrug their shoulders, and say, "Uh, well, um, there's nothing we can do about this," you bet that vacuum left by us is going to be filled by the power. It's going to be filled by the power industry, which is enormous, in league with the oil industry, which is enormous, in league with the coal companies, which are enormous. As a matter of fact, these are really energy cartels, to divide oil and coal is absurd. More than 50 percent of all coal in the United States is run by oil companies. What you're really looking is, not the face of coal companies, or the United Mine Workers, for instance, you're looking at energy cartels. They're interested in uranium, geothermal power, coal, atomic power, et cetera. They're involved in all of the aspects of power. And when you pool all of these companies, the same intent – the companies have the same intent. Look at the power that they can exert in the Congress of the United States. When you say, Can the state of Montana, through its legislature, meeting biannually, amateurs, the best of heart, can they stand up in the face of this pressure? The answer is no. No, they cannot. We can sue, we can delay, we can try to get publicity; we can try to invite the attention of the rest of the American people to what's happening to us, and then say to them, "And you're next." We can say, "Do you want this to be a democratic republic, or do you want it to be a corporate state?" Because it's rapidly turning into a corporate state. And if, I suppose the only contribution Montana can make, is.

This is where the action is right now, on coal. And if we can make enough of a stink, and if we can put it in enough courts, and if there are enough reporters who pay enough attention, make enough noise, the rest of the country might wake up to the fact that something very important is happening right here. And if we should win, or if we should even partially win, it's not just a victory for Montana, it's a victory for the whole damn west, certainly. But in a larger sense, it's a victory for the United States of America, and the people thereof.

I don't want to abolish the oil companies, I don't want to abolish the power companies, I don't even want you PUDs (Public Utility District). I want the Public Service Commission of Montana to actually be in there regulating the rates of the Montana Power Company. I want them to have a fair return on their dollar. I do not want them to have windfall profits, which are absurd. We know perfectly well, during the oil crisis, when everybody was wondering whether the hell they could heat their house, or drive their automobiles or not, that many of the large oil companies made a 400 percent profit. That's wrong morally, I think it's wrong legally, I think it should be stopped. I don't think it's anti-free enterprise, or anti-capitalistic system to insist that it be stopped. But that can only be done by the Congress, and the Congress will reflect the will of the greatest power exerted upon it. That's human, and it is also democracy.

It so happens that the powers now directed at the United States Congress do not emanate from those most deeply involved, the American people. They have a profound mistrust of that Congress, they're disgusted with it; they don't vote. They voted a little better than I thought they would. There isn't a reason in the world, because it's happened before in our history, why we can't stop this thing. But we're never going to stop it until the people decide that, one, we're being ripped off, and two, that they understand how they're being ripped off. You know, it's very, very human, until your own ox is being gored, you don't do anything. But when your own ox is being gored, you're damn right you do something. When the ox... Dennis!

[unintelligible sound]

Unknown party: Yes.

WG: And you think the ox is being gored?

KT: I think more and more people, the ox is being gored. I think, for instance, there's no question about what OPEC is going to do at their meeting in January. I think they're going to put the price of crude oil at 15 cents. Well, that's going to put the price of gasoline up in this country not seriously. A penny, perhaps. But what it's going to do to the economy of this country, but more particularly in Italy and France, is catastrophic. And that, of course, affects the United States tremendously, since we have a very, you know, relationship, trade relationship with these people.

If you begin to think about, if you begin to ask questions of the American oil companies, why have you let us go from 29 percent imported oil in 1973, to 40 percent in 1976? The answer,

well, there is no more oil in the United States. There is no more oil that we can get from non-OPEC countries, is simply not true. And when that dawns on the American people, that gigantic problems were made by the OPEC embargo, by American auto companies. Gigantic problems. Then, I think, you're apt to get a kind of a backfire which would translate itself, and put pressure on the Congress, to do something about it.

As I say, this is not at all impossible, since it's happened in American history periodically. The Progressive Movement is the best example, although there are many others. One time, the railroads of this country were setting their rates the way they wanted to set them. They were violating all kinds of federal laws because they simply weren't being enforced. They were working tremendous hardships on both laboring people, but particularly on farmers, who, after all, depended on railroads for shipment of all their goods. The prejudicial freight rates were just wrecking them.

So that you get the formation of a thing called The Nonpartisan League, which moves into politics on a national basis. It was not really a political party, it was a national group of furious farmers. Goddammit, you will do something about these railroads. It is at this juncture that they did something about railroads. They established the Interstate Commerce Commission, the object being to set railroad rates to see that the railroads got a fair profit, but that the farmers, the ranchers, small businessmen, so forth, were not bilked. It worked. It worked for a long time. The Progressive Movement brings in the initiative, the referendum, the recall, the direct election of senators. Senators were elected by a state legislature, you see, were purchased very easily. That reform, which is embodied in La Follette in Wisconsin, which is embodied in, well, Woodrow Wilson, brought about very deep-seeded reform. And precisely the kind of issues which are now facing this country.

The problems now, however, are much greater, the problems are more complex, and the time is shorter. I'm not pessimistic enough to think that we're going to go down the drain, or that we're actually going to become a corporate state, but I think that depends, however, on what's happened before. There is a critical point at which the American people simply won't take something anymore. Once they understand it, they simply won't take it. And then their power, their aggregate power, is greater than the power of the oil companies and the corporations in the Congress. And the Congress responds to that because if they don't respond to that, they aren't going to get elected. And their hope, their aim is to get reelected. Where that critical break point is, vis-à-vis the environment, God only knows. God only knows. Thus far, people's point of view, the people who have emphysema, black lung, silicosis, the kepone poisoning incident, the awesome being done to the American people in polluted areas, their deaths, for instance, even that has not gelled to the extent that the Congress will take really aggressive action. But somewhere along the line, it will. There are those, of course, who have ardently advocated a catastrophe, so that that would bring to the attention of the American people, "My god, we've got to stop this."

But I hope we don't have to go to that kind of an extreme, to have five or six thousand people drop dead someplace because of pollution. But maybe it will. Maybe that's what it will take to touch off the American people so that they simply demand, "We want this done now, and if you don't do it now, we'll throw you out." This is what happened during the Progressive Period; it's what happened during the Populist Period. It can happen again, and it must happen again. Because it's not going to be little environmental groups, and it's not going to be pointy headed communistic professors like me that bring this about.

The best, I think, that environmental groups can do is keep bombarding, in their own specialized area, bombarding the public, bombarding the people. You know, let's take the Northern Plains Resource Council in Billings. It publishes a monthly magazine called *Plains Truth*. I don't know what its circulation is, I would guess 3,000. But it's doing something. Somebody's reading the *Plains Truth*. Incidentally, their statistics that are in there are impeccable. It has a fine reputation for credibility, very rarely makes mistakes, doesn't use emotional arguments, but uses factual arguments. There are 20 to 30 of those kinds of groups in Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota, working constantly. Flathead Coalition, as a matter of fact, one clever fellow put out a little book of acronyms, of just how many of these groups there are. There's no question about the fact that they're being effective. But not effective enough. They're effective, pretty largely on a state level. They keep constant pressure on the Montana legislature. And they do. But the total budget of most of these outfits is 20,000 a year, 30,000 a year. What's the budget of the Montana Power Company alone, when it comes to putting pressure on the legislature, advertising, TV, misleading television advertisement. It's huge. Now, if you take all of it, let's run from Exxon, on down, their capacity to put out their propaganda, and it is propaganda, is simply enormous. So that the American people are, I suppose, in a state of genuine confusion.

Again, it may taking a real ox-goring on a very widespread basis, to bring about this sharp change, this critical change, in the attitudes of the American people. It hasn't occurred yet. I don't know what it's going to take. It's interesting that in 1936, an aluminum plant in Belgium, emitting huge amounts of sulfur dioxide, and all the rest of the stuff that they put out, did kill, in the period of about a week, 3,000 people. They just dropped dead on the street. That was 1936, however, so they buried their dead, went back to work in the aluminum plant, and went on. It was an inversion, is what happened.

If that happened today, however, I think the repercussions would be very, very widespread. People would begin to say, "Now wait a minute." And we're beginning to see a theme. We're beginning to see some of this with PBB, for instance. My god that was a catastrophe, and is a catastrophe. It was a violent poison, affecting thousands of people, and we're beginning to see it now, with kepone, dumped into the Hudson River. We're beginning to see the fishing industry, for instance, destroyed. We're beginning to see that the Hudson River, you can't fish in the Hudson River anymore. Now, PPB, kepone is in the fish, and the fishermen are going out of business. I think you're beginning to see it with oil spills, which obviously are going to increase. You know, the Santa Barbara Channel thing is still in people's minds. Well, let that

happen on a larger scale somewhere again, people are going to say, "Now wait a minute." There are other values involved here. Other ways must be devised to get this oil here. We're not going to accept the argument any longer that we have to go on doing this thing. We're pretty much acceptable. Well, you know...

WG: These companies are forever using the threat of jobs (unintelligible).

KT: Oh, of course, that is their most potent threat. It always has been their most potent threat. Pollution, for instance, in this state, goes way back. To give you an example, on one occasion, the emissions from the smelter over in Anaconda in 1903 just destroyed the cattle and the horses and the sheep and the pigs in the Deer Lodge Valley. One rancher by the name of Nick Beelenberg lost a thousand head of cattle, 800 head of sheep, and 20 head of horses in one week. They just dropped dead. Arsenic poisoning, ulcerated noses, the blind staggers, and they dropped dead. Okay. Deer Lodge Farmers Association was formed. They go to court. Damages were paid, incidentally, before court. The Anaconda Company settled. They paid \$330,000, but the poisoning went right on. This was the famous Bliss Case. Now, the Bliss Case was won by the Anaconda Company on the basis of one single proposition. If you close us down, it will mean economic ruination for Anaconda and for Butte, and therefore, for Montana, which in 1903, was perfectly true. But nobody was trying...

[End of Side A]

[Side B]

WG: You don't have to put arsenic (unintelligible).

KT: Oh no, Anaconda Company, because of the Bliss Case, when it found out that it was losing tons of copper, coming out of the stack, among other things, incidentally, they reclaimed six million dollars worth of property, simply by taking road graters, and scraping up the earth for many miles around the plant. Antimony, arsenic, sulfur dioxide, of course, which is poisoning plants, they found out there was a market for arsenic. It was a very valuable commodity. Now, *mirabile dictu*, all of a sudden, they find a way to put traps in the flue, and they reclaimed the arsenic. There's no arsenic coming out of that stack now. There needn't have been then. They were unwilling. The court makes this perfectly clear. We will not go to the expense of installing arsenic traps, unless you can prove to us that arsenic is really doing any damage. And they fought ardently—

Be with you in just a moment. [speaks to someone else]

—saying it is not, they brought in 20 to 30 experts, veterinarians and others from all across the United States, saying, "Oh no, this is not arsenic poisoning." They called it the "drying-up disease," unique to the Deer Lodge Valley. All kinds of terrible crap. And for god's sakes, you could take the tissue, which was down at Montana State University, just loaded with arsenic, among other things. It's only when they found a market for arsenic that they cleaned up the arsenic.

You know, you speak about the social conscience of a corporation, which it's supposed to have. That's errant nonsense. It only has one job. Its job is profit to the stockholders. So the corporation itself is not going to develop a social conscience. And so long as professors, like me, advocate a solution, which involves corporate social conscience, we're being very foolish. We're being totally unrealistic. Corporations don't operate that way. Nor should they. They should be forced to operate that way by a referee. The referee is the United States government, or state government, or a combination of the two.

So, insofar as we make pleas on bended knee to good citizenship on the part of corporations, it has never work; it never will work. It's unrealistic, and it's a diversion from what we ought to be concentrating on. Forcing the government of the United States, and the government of the states involved to act on behalf of the people. It is not to throw people out of work because it is technically feasible to do these things. There is, indeed, a certain tradeoff. In other words, we are not going to be pristine as we were when Lewis and Clark were here. But this concept, that it must be black and white, either there is no development, or there is total development, this polarization is stupid because that is not true. There is a way to keep relatively clean, relatively helpful, and relatively healthful in terms of our economy and our jobs. It is industry's repeated canard, "Oh, if you do that, we will lose 400 jobs, 5,000 jobs, 120,000 jobs, 6,000 jobs," that has been their most effective single point of attack. And it's incorrect. It's wrong, and it can be

demonstrated that it's wrong. Yes, they're going to have to spend money, and lots of it to clean up, but it can be done, and that's what we have to force them to do. And we have to force it, or suffer the consequences, which are devastating. Devastating. And they're not just devastating in terms of one locale or another.

Unfortunately, the atmosphere, biosphere, is one thing. You can't isolate poison, you can't isolate, or call the national sacrifice area. "Well, we have to sacrifice eastern Montana." Because the moment you say that, it's like saying that cancer does not metastasize. Well, cancer does metastasize. So does the ruination of one area affect another area. The wind makes no distinction in terms of where the pollution comes from. It carries it wherever the wind goes, and where does the wind go? At 300 miles per hour up in the stratosphere, it goes all over the United States, and we are simply polluting the hell out of it. So, you say, "Well, we're going to put these polluting plants out where there aren't any people. New Mexico, Four Corners, eastern Montana, Wyoming, and therefore, yes, it's a tradeoff, and yes, we feel badly about that desert, barren land out there, but after all, we have to have the energy, so we'll sacrifice this area."

That fails to point out that, well, that area is covered by huge rivers that run downhill. Along those rivers are cities, including the city of New Orleans. After all, the Tongue River runs into the Yellowstone River, runs into the Missouri River, runs into the Mississippi River, and we are now dumping cadmium, lead, nickel, zinc, already. Does it stop someplace? No, it doesn't. It goes right down that river. Now, what are the people going to drink, who are dependent on the Missouri? And the Mississippi. How are they going to irrigate; what are they going to pump into their feed lots? So you already...and admit it, no, we can't stop the national sacrifice area.

Now, that's the water. How about the wind? What are you going to do? Change its direction? Are you going to ask it to stop blowing? What are you going to do about the ozone layer up there? The ozone layer doesn't give a goddamn what particular point the damage to it comes from. The damage is universal. I'm not going to make a point out of ozone, because the case...the danger of the ozone layer is still...we haven't done enough research yet to know. We have some warning signs, but we're not quite sure. But there are other things which are beyond argument. There's no argument about what we're doing to the water. There's no argument about what we're doing to plant life. There's very little argument about what we're doing to human beings, to lungs, primarily. Certainly to hearts (unintelligible). So, the argument that you can isolate is just totally false.

Number two, the argument that you're going to lose jobs has to be put up, I suppose, another argument. One, I think the argument can be blown sky-high. Cleaning up pollution creates an enormous number of jobs. It creates a whole new technology, which in turn creates more jobs. Number two, even if that weren't true, in order to hold on to 4,000 jobs, are you willing to kill 4,000 people? Because that's exactly what it's coming down to.

Now, is that a tradeoff that you really want to trade off on? Do you really want to let it go that way? Because that's the way it's going. Do you really want to say, "We must mine coal, but we will accept the deaths in coal." Eighty-thousand men, killed in deep coal mining since 1900. One-hundred and twenty with silicosis in this country right now, doomed, they're going to die, black lung. You're going to do this to maintain jobs, especially in view of the fact that in Germany, Australia, there hasn't been a single case of black lung in Australia for one decade, yet that's a coal mining country, deep coal mining country. There's absolutely no excuse for silicosis in the United States of America because of deep mining. There is absolutely no excuse, as West Germany is demonstrating right now, as England is demonstrating right now, for you to have these colossal mine disasters.

Our Mine Safety Act of 1969 in the United States is a disgrace. Number one, the Act is totally inadequate; number two, it's never enforced. The Peabody Coal Company, right now, is being sued by the federal government, simply because the environmental groups forced this suit for falsifying air samples in its deep mines in Appalachia. They took out the air samples showing that there was just massive amount of coal dust in the mines, which of course is causing silicosis, along with all kinds of other things. Substituted clean gauze, which essentially that's what it is, and sent it in as a report to the United States government. We are a clean mine.

That kind of thing can be stopped. Why isn't it being stopped? Why are we killing people when it is not necessary? Australia and Europe demonstrate that it is not necessary. Incidentally U.S. Steel finally decided for some odd reason, I don't know why, that they would make safe mines, coal mines. U.S. Steel has a magnificent record. There's no silicosis involved, there have been no explosions involved; there hasn't been an accident involved. All we have to do is enforce...well, get a decent mine safety law, which the 1969 law is not, and then enforce it. We can mine coal. We can mine coal and we lose no jobs, and we don't kill anybody. So that the tradeoff that they keep insisting upon is no tradeoff at all. It's a sacrifice of human beings, human comfort, human life, and human health, on the basis of the argument, "If you don't let us go ahead with this thing, it's going to hurt the economy." It's fake. It's fake, it's not true. It's demonstrably untrue. But the American people just don't know that, just don't know it, and until there is this recognition, it's going to go right on. I can't solve it. I don't know when that recognition is coming. I think it's coming. I really do.

WC: So do I

KT: And the alternative is just too damn grim. Well, you better turn that thing, because I've got to—

[End of Interview]