

Maureen and Mike

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**Oral History Number: 396-075**

**Interviewee: Pat Williams**

**Interviewer: Bob Brown**

**Date of Interview: November 20, 2015**

**Project: Bob Brown Oral History Project**

Bob Brown: This is Bob Brown, and I'm interviewing Pat Williams, Montana's congressman from 1978 to 1994, right?

Pat Williams: '97.

BB: 1997, excuse me. Here at the University of Montana in Missoula, Montana. Pat, when and where were you born?

PW: My mother, as I'm told, was passing through Helena, Montana, and I decided, probably getting a peek at the dome there, I decided this would be a good place to be born. So, mom had to stop and go to the hospital, and I was born in Helena but moved fairly quickly to Butte.

BB: Was she bound for Butte when you were born in Helena?

PW: She was coming from—she went from Butte to Great Falls and then was coming back, on a short visit, coming back to Butte.

BB: I see.

PW: And we stopped off in Helena (laughs).

BB: So, your family, actually, was situated in Butte, when you were born in Helena?

PW: Yes.

BB: Well, I didn't know that story. What were your—are there any early memories that stand out in your mind? That when you, perhaps a toddler, when you were a quite a young person, that that you still remember? Some of your earliest memories?

PW: Well, isn't it odd with I think probably most of us, Bob, that when we see a photo of ourselves at one or two years old, we say, "I think I remember that." And I have those kind of recollections come back to me, but none of them bring with them an event or an occasion or a happening. I do remember being very young and bouncing around one of our two restaurants in Butte. My dad was a restauranteur and an investor in restaurants. A very good businessman. And I can remember bouncing around those restaurants, and—which were always crowded in those days. You know, 70 or more years ago at this recording. And I think, Bob, that you know, that Butte comet blazed across the Montana skies, and I wasn't born in its heyday, which would

have been in the 1800s. Rather, I was born in the tail of the comet, but the sparkle was still there.

BB: What year were you born?

PW: 1937.

BB: Ok, and of course, now, today is November 20 of 1915—or 2015.

PW: Yes.

BB: So, you're maturing.

PW: Yes, yes, I'm starting to show the years.

BB: Were your parents both from Montana?

PW: My dad was from the Kansas-Missouri border, and his dad, my grandpa, fought in the Civil War. So, I'm one of them [clears throat] you know—

BB: But Kansas was a border state. Which side?

PW: Yes, they were from an area called "Little Dixie" in in the Kansas-Missouri border, and they were, they were for the South, so my grandpa fought directly under Robert E. Lee. And there are some stories in our family about that.

BB: Really?

PW: Yes. I'm, you know, I'm one of those, I say few, there's probably thousands, but one of those relatively few individuals whose grandfather fought under Robert E. Lee.

BB: Wow.

PW: Yes.

BB: So were you—was your father fairly old when you were born?

PW: My dad was—it was amazing to me when I learned it later in my life. I mean, not much later, I was, you know, in grade school when I realized that my dad was considerably older than my mom. My dad was fortunate, he always looked young, but he was actually, I suppose 25 years older than my mom. He married her in her early 20s, and he was in his 40s. And of course, died, oh, 25, 35 years before Mom passed away. I was just getting ready to enter high school when my dad passed away.

BB: Oh, so you were just an adolescent when your dad died?

PW: Yes, and Mom and I then took on the chore of running the restaurants. And it was a tough go. I went to very few football games. I was preparing with mom, I was preparing the restaurant for the crowd that would come up for sodas or dinners or whatever after the football game. So, my life in high school after Dad died was really a working kid's life.

BB: You had to work.

PW: Had to.

BB: You had to work to help your mother.

PW: I worked prior to that, because Dad would insist on it. He just thought showing up on time and having a few hours work shift every day at the restaurants was a good thing. And I would always be on time, and never tardy, and I remember one time I was coming to work, and there was a fella that owned a clothing store right next to our main restaurant. And the guy was rolling out, for the morning, rolling out the one of the awnings. You know those sun awnings. He had the long pole, had hooked it, and was rolling out this awning. He was a wonderful old guy, very friendly with our family. He was Jewish. And we had a thing we'd do. I would say to him every morning, "Good morning. Mr. Schwartz."

And he would act surprised each morning. And he would look down at me and say, "Oh, good morning young Williams."

And I would say, "Mr. Schwartz, how's business?"

And he'd say, "Business is wonderful. But it'll get better." (laughs) And I've told a number of my small-business friends that, and so whenever I go into a certain store and see the guy, I'll say, "How's business, Charlie?"

And he'll say, "Business is wonderful, but it'll get better." (laughs).

BB: (laughs) Oh, what a good story.

PW: Working in the—working in the—the place was called The American Candy Shop. It was right in the middle.

BB: That's your business?

PW: Right. That—my dad's restaurants. The big one was named—a three-story restaurant. Two and-a-half stories. And it was named The American Candy Shop because the lower floor, at one time half, and then eventually all of the lower floor, the basement, was a candy factory. And we sent candy, particularly during World War II, we sent our candy around the world. It was wonderful homemade candy, and then, in that same building, as I'm saying, was this really fine, well, a good breakfast, lunch, and dinner restaurant.

BB: You must have had a fair number of employees for an operation that size.

PW: Yes, we did. It seems to me we had on each shift about 10 girls and men. We call them, you know, for some reason, a waitress is always a girl (laughs). We had about 10 or 12 per shift. And yes, we stayed open 16 hours a day.

BB: Now, most everything was unionized in Butte, then. Was your business unionized?

PW: Not most everything. Everything. It was all organized.

BB: Yes, so your business was unionized?

PW: Oh, yes, yes. It was organized. Dad was on the other side of the table from unions, but very, very supportive of them, because he understood what a well-paid workforce meant to his business. And he would, by the way, pay his long-term employees more than the union wage, to be sure he could keep them around.

BB: So, I'm thinking that, frankly, that might have influenced you somewhat. I mean, there's not every kid who loses his dad when he's 13 or 14 years old, and has to assist his mother managing a business, and the business probably typically wouldn't be very large either. So in your case, it was one where there was real management involved. I mean, there was a payroll that had to be met, and that sort of thing. And then, also, contracts had to be negotiated with the workforce. So, you grew up in that world, and you didn't resent it, you were accepting of it. Is that correct?

PW: Yes, accepting of it. Proud of it, that my dad was paying good wages. And in those days, wages were a lot less than today, but good wages. And also, understood the necessity for small business to be able to survive. But my dad had this interesting theory about that, and that was if you put it back, if you put some of the profits back into your business, for example, I remember a recession in—I suppose it would have been the 1950s. And my dad told my mom, we should put a new front on the store, which is a very expensive proposition. You know, you put new glass, new windows, new signage. And my mom, who was in charged in of hiring, and the menu, hiring, firing, and the menu (laughs). Her name was Libby.

BB: Your mom was Libby?

PW: Libby. And, by the way, absolutely a stunningly beautiful woman.

BB: Right, I remember.

PW: Yes, I know you do, she liked you a great deal. And she knew who you were, and she liked you. And she, at that time she was at Jorgenson's in Helena. Yes, she ran Jorgenson's.

BB: (laughs) I remember you told me one time, you said, "Yes, my mom's a great political asset, she's charming and everybody loves her, and on top of that, in that political town with all those legislators over there at Jorgenson's having lunch, she pours the slowest cup of coffee in Montana." (laughs)

PW: (laughs). Boy, she did, too. She just, she'd call me up and say, "You know what I heard?" And I'm thinking, "Oh, god, Mom. Don't." (laughs). But Dad, so, this recession is on, Dad decides to spend a ton of money on redoing the front of the place. And my mother, who realized that our profits were pretty slim for the last few years, said, "No, we can't do that." And the only argument they ever had, and it wasn't very high-pitched, because they were both gentle people, but the only argument they ever had in my presence was over that. And they argued two or three times about it.

BB: And you remember that?

PW: Yes. And I remember my dad saying to my mother, of course this is the time to do it. We need more people to come in here, and we'll get them with a new storefront. Plus, our workers here need the money. They're out of work (laughs). So, that was sort of this businessman's philosophy, and I guess it worked. Something worked, because we quite frankly made a lot of money. We had that restaurant and a luncheonette in a department store in Butte. And then my dad invested in restaurants in, if I remember this right, in—I know he invested in Butte, and also in Helena. And Pork Chop John's is a famous Butte sandwich shop.

BB: Yes, yes.

PW: And my dad was the money in Pork Chop John's. The initial money, yes. And he always said, "I don't know why I didn't buy into that place instead of just loaning them the money." (Laughs).

BB: (laughs) Are any of those—are there restaurants still in Butte that was a restaurant when your dad was there?

PW: Are there any restaurants left in Butte?

BB: Yes, well, because I'm—there are probably businesses in those locations, but I just wondered if there's a restaurant still in any one of them.

PW: None of the restaurants that my dad invested in are still there, with the exception of Pork Chop John's.

BB: Yes.

PW: And that's there and has expanded. Now has two outlets for its food, mainly sandwiches.

BB: Your dad obviously had influence with you, Pat, and you obviously respected him greatly. I'd just be curious to know, in addition to both your parents, who you were close to, was there a relative or a friend or a schoolteacher in particular that stands out in your memory, that might have been a mentor to you as you were a young person growing up?

PW: Well, you know Bob, as I've gotten older, I've realized that the most important person in my life, with regard to somebody who was motherly to me, was interestingly not my mother, who I dearly loved, but it was my grandmother. My parents were so busy with the restaurants that I would go—I'd stay overnight a lot with my parents, but not always. But then I would go, you know, to school when I was old enough, and from there go up to my grandmother's house.

BB: Your mother's mother?

PW: My mother's mother, who was an Irish immigrant named Mrs. Lizzie Keough. And by the way, Bob—

BB: Keough?

PW: K-e-o-u, that's odd, K-e-o-u-g-h.

BB: Got you.

PW: Elizabeth Keough. People called her Lizzie, and I couldn't say grandmother, I guess, when I was young, so I nicknamed her "Gu." And she'd actually get mail, "Gu Keough, Butte Montana." And they'd deliver the mail to her, you know how these towns are. My grandma was a wonderful old, older Irish woman, and took care of me.

BB: Did you know your grandfather?

PW: He died when I was born. Just—he lived a couple of months after I was born. Yes, he was a miner and a union guy. I think, but we can't prove that he was on a couple of the union negotiating committees. But he was a strong union guy, and when he died, they had the funeral at Duggan Merrill Mortuary in Butte, which is right across Montana Street from the courthouse. It's still there, the building is still the same, exactly the same. And it was the last day of my grandpa's funeral, and the funeral director came to her and said, as they were all in the crowd,

the casket have been closed and they were waiting for the pallbearers to come down and pick up the casket, put it in the hearse and take it out to the cemetery grounds.

And Johnny Duggan came up to my grandma, and said, "Mrs. Keough, one of the pallbearers hasn't shown up, we wondered if we could just choose someone." And my grandma said, "Yes, sure, that'd be all right." And so, she watched to see who they had chosen, and the music started, organ music started, and the pallbearers came down the center aisle. And there, my grandma always would describe them as wearing their Sunday best suits, and little white leather gloves with a pearl button snapped at the wrist. That's how she described them. Of course, these were all men up from the mines, you know. And as she looked, she noticed that one of them had been a friend, but had broken the picket line on one of the strikes a few years before, which was not done in Butte. You know, you were an outcast if you did it, for better or worse, right or wrong, you were an outcast. Because they were up against the Anaconda Company, which at times was a brutal company. At times.

And my grandma saw this fella, and she stood up, and faced the crowd. Room was completely packed, I'm told. And she said, "Johnny," meaning the owner, Mr. Duggan. "Johnny, would you ask that lad to quit playing the organ?" The music, quit playing the music. And that brought a bit of a hush to everything. And the music, you know, died down after a few keys were hit mistakenly on the organ. And she said, "Folks, you all know me, and you know I'm not one for trouble, or making trouble. I have enough of that in my house right now with these kids." She said, "And neither am I much for embarrassing anyone, but folks, no scab is packing my Paddy. Let's go back to my house, we can bury Paddy in the morning." And she went up the center aisle with the kids following, and when she hit the porch, the crowd, some of the men in the crowd, picked her up, put her on their shoulders, and a hundred or so people marched the several blocks to her house up on Montana Street. That's how firm and committed the people of Butte were in those days. One would have to live through it to understand it.

BB: Yes. But it's obviously in your bone marrow, isn't it. I mean—

PW: Oh, it really is, yes.

BB: That experience in your family.

PW: Sure, absolutely. Yes, I've been a supporter of most of organized labor, and much of what they do, all my life.

BB: Now, you might not have understood, you probably didn't understand the significance of that story when you first heard it as a little kid. I don't know when you first heard it.

PW: What it meant to me was my grandma was sure tough. That's all I got out of it, yes.



BB: Yes, yes. And certainly a person of convictions. I mean, a person that something—things meant something to. So, I'm kind of wondering when you first became interested in politics. And I don't know whether that would be an example, or whether—what triggered your interest in politics?

PW: Well, I'm sure you've been asked this question, Bob, because you've had a stellar Montana career, and I'm sure it's difficult for you to quite answer why. At least it always is for me. The thing with me is that I'm basically shy. So, going door-to-door, and people that know me have trouble believing it, but going door-to-door, or you know, going up to a stranger and telling them who I am and asking them for a vote for all those years was really difficult. But I like crowds, despite—whatever it is, you know, I ought to go talk to a professional and see what this is about, but I kind of like crowds, and in the end, I like campaigning. And in particular, I like trying to both move and persuade people by speaking to them.

And so, during classes where we would get to learn speech, in speech classes, whether in high school or college, and then give a speech to the class, I realized that I really enjoyed that. And when I was going to give a speech, I could look at my notes or my speech, then put it aside and give it word-for-word. You know, three, four, five, six, eight-minute speech, give it word-for—virtually word-for-word. I've lost some of that skill now, but I had it from 50 years. So, I think that led me to politics.

Now, having said that, there was this in it also. I remember as a little kid running into our main restaurant, and I'd have three or four kids with me, and we'd be, you know, we'd probably be talking too loud when we walked in, or yelling and having fun, and more than once my dad would say to me, “Shhh, shhh, shhh, the president's on.” And I'd stop, and I knew what he meant. I'd stop the kids from shouting, and my dad would have put four or five radio sets around the restaurant, and either Roosevelt or Harry Truman would be talking to the masses. And so I, from that, I think, gained enormous respect for government, for leaders. To me, they became people that, whether you agreed with them or not, you were required, as an American, to listen to them. And so, that was—that was stuck in my childhood, and it's been with me ever since.

BB: That a public figure is someone to be respected.

PW: Yes.

BB: Because in this day in age, now, when we're having this interview, that seems to be less the case—

PW: Sure.

BB: Probably than when you were a kid. Would you, do you think about it that way?

PW: I do. And I'm saddened by it. It's a sad thing for me that toward the winter of my years, people have lost faith in the Congress, faith in legislatures, faith in elected officials for the most part across the board. It's a sad thing for me. I do think that that some of it has been earned by officials who really, who we really grew not to respect because of their shenanigans in office. But for the most part, that's not it. People have just decided they don't like government, and they think all elected officials are corrupt. And as I said, it's a very sad thing for me.

BB: When you were a young person in the '30s and '40s, though the country was pulled together by government. In the Depression era, government was riding to the rescue as far as the way most people saw it. And then certainly during World War II, we were all unified, you know, in support of our government in that big war. And so, those things, when you were listening to FDR and Truman on the radio, were still powerful motivations, weren't they, in the country.

PW: They really were.

BB: That's the world you grew up in.

PW: Yes, indeed. And I want to add Eisenhower to that list, even though I'm a Democrat. I used to—I had enormous regard for Ike. I liked Ike, too. And (laughs) I think everyone did. And I think he was a heck of a good president. So, my thing was, in a way it was partisan because I preferred Democratic policy, but the respect I had for all officials. When I was in Congress, I didn't think that with the majority of Americans, by the way, that a lot of Ronald Reagan's policies were right, but I had an enormous liking for the guy, and enormous respect for him. And, you know, tried never to say anything that was belittling about him.

BB: I know that about you, too, Pat.

PW: Thank you.

BB: You know, when you were a young person, because Butte was such an overwhelmingly Democratic town, that must have that must have rubbed off on you, too. I mean, because you—can you remember about when you understood that you were probably a Democrat, even though you may not have known in detail why, but you were—

PW: Yes, it was before I was in high school, so somewhere in grade school. You know, if we had to pick up sides and do a debate, I would grab the Democrat side. And I think it was because of how I was raised, and the town itself. The town was not just, you know, organized by labor. It was a very solid Democratic town.

BB: And both your mom and dad thought of themselves as Democrats?

PW: Yes, they did.

BB: And that's how most of us were influenced, you know, by that, you know, how our parents are.

PW: Of course, of course.

BB: Did you—were you involved—just a couple more quick things in your youth.

PW: Yes.

BB: Were you involved in any kind of activities? When you were in high school, I know you had to work, and so—but obviously you had a proclivity for speech and debate. And I wonder if you were involved in any kind of drama activities, or speech and debate activities, or anything like that?

PW: I did a couple of plays. You know, was an actor in a couple of high school plays. And I wasn't in debate. I couldn't take the time to do it after my father's death, and he died just as I was entering high school. So, high school, to me, was a tough time, and I didn't do a lot of extracurricular activities. I don't think I saw three football games in high school. So—and it also, I'm sure, I can't identify quite how, but I'm also sure it hurt my friendship with kids. I could have known a lot more young people from Butte if I could have done more extracurricular stuff with them, but you know, it wasn't there so I didn't do it.

BB: Do you remember Alec Hanson?

PW: Yes, Alec and I are pals, yes. Knowing him all those years, yes.

BB: Yes, he knew you when you were high school kids.

PW: Yes.

BB: He said to me one time, he said, “We always thought Pat was a pretty smart guy. Pat was a kind of a bookish guy. While the rest of us were out raising hell, Pat seemed to be home kind of reading about stuff, thinking about stuff.

PW: (laughs) Yes, I wasn't reading, I was mopping the floor (laughs).

BB: And that's what I just was coming to the conclusion of. He probably didn't know for sure. But you must have been somewhat of a scholarly kind of a kid, too.

PW: Well, sort of, but I was one of those kids who if I liked the class I'd get really good grades, and if I didn't like it, I didn't try.

BB: When did you decide to become a teacher? Or did that just kind of happen?

PW: Well, I attended a number of colleges. I did that on purpose. I thought maybe part of education was to, you know, see the U.S.A. in my Chevrolet (laughs). So, I was out there. I started at here, where we're transcribing—or, doing this, at the University of Montana. And then, from here I went to a little school that my—an uncle of mine knew about near my dad's birthplace, his brother's birthplace, my dad, in Liberty, Missouri. The name of the school, William Jewell College. A Southern Baptist school, extremely conservative school, and frankly, I didn't care much for it there. It had a bias against black people and it was—today, I understand, it's a lovely progressive place, but it wasn't back in my day. And so I left there after a year, entirely dissatisfied. And I went to Colorado, to the University of Denver. And I lived and worked in Denver. My mother, by the way, had a sister and a brother-in-law lived in Denver, and so she left Butte and sold the restaurants, finally, and left Butte and went to Denver. So, I lived with my, with that family, including my mom, and went to school at DU, and had a major in public relations and advertising. Went to the business school there. I came out and went to Montana State for a while, just to get some more courses in business, and then I went into the radio business over in Butte.

BB: Oh, I didn't know that.

PW: Yes, I didn't start the business, but I hooked up with Shag Miller.

BB: I know him. I knew him, yes.

PW: Yes. Shag's passed away, bless him, but he was a good radio guy. Had been a newspaper guy, and then he bought KOPR, which appropriately in Butte, spells "copper." (laughs). KOPR radio. So, I was in there with Shag for a while, but I didn't care for it, so—

BB: But you were on the radio? Broadcasting?

PW: Did some broadcasting, did a lot of advertising work with them. And then I decided, you know, I don't think I want to do business. And so I started going down to Western [University of Montana Western] and got a, got a major in elementary education, teaching. Came back and was fortunate to get hired right away. And so, the next year or so I started teaching, and I taught—

BB: Elementary education in Butte?

PW: Yes, yes. And I—that's right. And I was at the Blaine School, which is now gone, although the building is there. It's a senior citizen's center now, I think. It's up on—way up on—well, it's in Walkerville. And—quite a ways up there on the hill. And then taught for a time with junior high kids and high school kids, and then—

BB: What did you teach in the high school level?

PW: Taught, let's see, with high school, I taught American history. Then I decided to run for the legislature.

BB: Well, before you did that, you were the president of the Butte Young Democrats, weren't you?

PW: Yes.

BB: Wasn't that how you really broke into politics?

PW: Well, that was my first, you know, foray into organized politics, yes. I had campaigned for candidates before then, and enjoyed that. But, you know, campaigning for a candidate was to me very closely connected to getting things done in government. Putting the right person in would get what you want done. And I saw that firsthand so much in Butte. For example, I remember my grandma lived down a corner, and neither street had a name, except across the street from the original mine in Butte, one street was more like an alley, and the other was a real street. But neither one of them had a name. And people said, "How did you get your mail?" And I'd say, "Well, they created—they said Mrs. Keough lives at 204 ½ West Woaman (?). And so we lived just half a block off of Woaman. But that's what we called—that's what she called her address.

But, any event, the alley was—that street was a lot of sand. It was primarily sand. It had been paved here and there, but mostly sand, and after a wet spring, the sand had all washed away from my grandma's house, exposing the foundation. And so she called, I think the precinct worker in the government's organization. I think the precinct worker was a guy named Timer Kelly, I think. But I remember her on the phone saying, "Timer, could you get a load of sand with a couple of kids on it, come summer, to dump it in the alley out here, and pave it and roll it." And she said, "Oh, ok, well, I'd appreciate it, Timer." Well, within a day and-a-half, you know, up comes this whole truck with the summer workers, the kids on it, you know, four kids per truck, that was standard then. And they did a beautiful job on the alley, and afterwards, Timer was at the door. And he said, "You know, the primary elections are coming around, Lizzie, and we'd appreciate it if you'd put his honor's," meaning in the mayor, "his honor's sign in the window."

"Oh god love, Barry, I love him." It was Barry O'Leary. It was, "God love Barry, love him, thanks for bringing that. Give me another couple for the neighbors." So she went around, and after the election, the mayor called her. "Lizzie, I want you to know how much you helped me up there," and, "Oh, love of God, Barry, don't worry about that. I'm glad we got the sand for the alley." He said, "Well, anytime Lizzie." And of course, he meant it. So, to me that was government. See, that's how it worked. And I'm not sure the Butte system was the most honest, but it certainly was the most effective.

BB: When you mentioned the mayor of Butte, your wife, Carol, her father was mayor of Butte, wasn't he?

PW: Yes, thanks, he was. His name—he's passed away now, bless him, he was a fine mayor, his name was Vern Griffith. G-r-i-f-f-i-t-h. Carol's, of course, maiden name is Griffith. And our son's middle name is Griffith. We call him Griff. He's an artist, an art gallery owner in San Francisco. But yeah, Carol's dad was mayor. He was mayor for, I think, two or three terms, and then when Jack Kennedy was elected president, they started an office called the—oh, goodness, I'm forgetting the name of the office, but it had to do with commerce. [Montana director of the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity.] I want to say EPA, but that would be environmental protection. I'm going to think of it, but any event, Griffith, Vern Griffith whose nickname in Butte—everybody had a nickname in Butte, his nickname was "Hanna." And Hanna became the Montana director for that agency.

BB: Hanna Griffith, I know that name.

PW: Yes, yes.

BB: So, that had to have influenced your getting involved in politics, too, I suppose, didn't it?

PW: Yes, sure, yes sure, sure.

BB: That connection.

PW: That's right. And yeah, and so I decided to run for the legislature after Carol and I were married. And my own recognition in Butte, plus, and it was a big plus, being married to Carol brought her family's connection in, too. And they worked hard to let people know that, you know, I was Hanna's son-in-law. And I'm sure that helped me, there. You ran statewide in those days. I mean, excuse me, countywide in those days. And Butte had, I think seven legislators then, and I believe there were 12 or 14 of us that ran, and boy, I went all out. I went door-to-door, and had signs everywhere.

BB: But, pretty much, the ball game's over in the primary election.

PW: If you win the primary, and I ran second out of those fine candidates.

BB: The first time you ran?

PW: First time I ran, I ran second out of, you know, seven winners. And so—

BB: Well what did you do?

PW: Campaign-wise?

BB: Yes. Obviously you're respected, you're a young guy, you make a good appearance, people have heard of you, the Griffith connection probably didn't hurt you any. Being president of the Young Democrats probably gave you some friends that were helping you. That sort of thing. But you probably burned up some shoe leather, too, I'm thinking, right?

PW: Going door-to-door.

BB: Yes.

PW: Yes, I really—again, shyness gets me, but I forced myself, went door-to-door. When I came home from Helena, where I filed with old Frank Murray, his office, you know, God love Frank.

BB: (laughs)

PW: Frank had been secretary of state, you know, right after the Wise Men, bless the baby Jesus, that Frank was elected Secretary of State in Butte, in Montana. I swear he'd been there forever. But in any event, I filed for the legislature, and as I was coming home, I was getting ready to drive up and park the car in front of this fourplex that Carol and I lived in, we lived upstairs, and I saw an old rickety ladder against this rather tall building. The building, even though it was just a fourplex, was two stories, but ceilings were all like 12 feet high, so it was quite a tall building. And there was this rickety ladder up to the roof. And and I could see two guys up there. One was the owner of the building, and he had a friend with him, they were tarring the roof. And I got out of the car, and I thought, you know if I could climb up that rickety ladder and shake hands with those guys, maybe I'd get rid of this nervousness. So, I climbed up the ladder, and it did have a couple of broken rungs on the way up, and it was swaying, you know. And I climbed up and I said, "Hey, Mr. Dick." He owned the place.

"Hey, Pat, what are you doing up here?"

I said, "Well, I just wanted you guys to know, you're the first ones to, that I get to shake hands with in my attempt to become a legislator from Silver Bow County."

And the one guy said, "Well, are you a Democrat or Republican?"

And I said, "Well, I'm a Democrat."

And he said, "Well, I'm a Republican, and then he looked down at the tar, and he looked kind of over at the ground, and he said, "But any SOB that'll climb that ladder has got my vote."  
(laughs) Yes. It's what we do.

BB: Yes. Well, does that help me understand at all because, you know, people from Butte are known for being, for kind of having Irish senses of humor. You know, I mean, because he might have said so you've got 35 seconds to get down that ladder before—

PW: (laughs) Descend the ladder, yes.

BB: That's right.

PW: Yes, I didn't know what he was looking at when he was looking back down on the ground.

BB: But, if you could just, you know, briefly kind of describe the culture, the political culture in Butte. Because you've got this enormous influence of the Anaconda Company, and you've got the enormous influence of the labor unions. And I'm sure that the Catholic Church was probably important. And the different ethnic groups, you've mentioned the Jewish guy that lived next door to you, and there were other ethnic groups there. You know, you hear people refer to the "hunkies" from Butte? I'm not even sure what they are, but that sort of thing. So, maybe you could talk a little bit about that, because that's the milieu that you found yourself in when you started to run for public office. It was a county-wide deal, and you had a much more of a melting pot of humanity in your legislative district than most of us had in ours, I think, when you started out. Any thoughts on that?

PW: Well, Butte really is, was, a very different place. It still can sparkle occasionally, but it really was a different place. And the Irish and the Serbs and, you know, I know them all by their nicknames, but—

BB: That's another thing about Butte.

PW: The Irish were the "micks," you know (laughs), but I'm not sure—

BB: But even individuals had nicknames, I know—

PW: Oh, they did, yeah.

BB: So, commonly in Butte.

PW: Right, Well, my name is, by the way, is Edward John Williams. But people in Butte will name you whatever the hell they want. And I became Pat, and we legally changed my name—

BB: Really?

PW: Because everybody called me Pat.

BB: I'll be darned.



PW: And they did it in honor of that grandfather of mine who died just a couple of months after I was born. So I became Pat.

BB: Really, that was his name?

PW: That was his name, Patrick Keough.

BB: How old were you when your name was changed, legally?

PW: Oh, I don't know, grade school? Late grades maybe? Or, perhaps, going into high school. In those days the grades were eight. One through eighth grades, and no junior high, yes.

BB: But they commonly called you Pat?

PW: Yes.

BB: Because I darn near don't know anybody from Butte in your generation that doesn't have a nickname of some kind.

PW: Yes, that's right, they do. Yeah, they all, we all have nicknames, yes.

BB: Very common.

PW: And so that ethnic flavor in Butte was comprised primarily, but by no means exclusively, of Irish. And it was the Irish with whom I grew. Grew up and grew, both. I remember the different days for New Years. There was, for example, Chinese New Year's. I remember the different days to celebrate, because the Jewish community, the different days to celebrate what we would call Christmas, you know, but the different celebrations that they would have, and there was a big enough community that there were two Jewish synagogues there. Now, or during most years while I was in Congress at least, Butte didn't have a rabbi. I mean, excuse me, Montana didn't have a rabbi. But—and the Jewish people and religion have been extremely important in Montana. There haven't been a lot of them, but there were a lot of them in Butte when I grew up. Butte was a place of—

BB: Were they a force in politics? The Jewish community?

PW: Yes, yes, you'd—you know, you'd go see the Schwartzes and the Rhodys, and different families, big families, and sort of get their blessing. It was—

BB: Were there key people?

PW: Yes.

BB: In the Irish community—

PW: Yes, there were.

BB: Or some other communities that you—

PW: I mentioned one of them earlier to you, Barry O’Leary, the mayor, who my grandma, when she knew I was going to be running for office, she said, “Well, you have to go see Barry.” And you know, I was just in a generation that was out of that. Even though I was born in Butte and I understood the legend of it and all, I didn’t understand the necessity of it until I ran for office in 1966. And—but the necessity of it was still there. I was kind of more of a reformist, you know, so the boss thing, and the heads of the families and all didn’t mean that much to me, personally. But even in the late ’60s, you had to go do it.

BB: Sure.

PW: So, I’ll just give you one quick story, but I went up to Barry O’Leary’s house, which was only a block and-a-half from my grandma’s house. The two of them had come over on the boat together as immigrants, and so they were, you know, great, fast, fast friends. And he had a large screened-in—and in the winter, glassed-in porch with a sofa and a chair on it. And the word was that if you—he’d ask you what you wanted when you came to his door, and if what you wanted was significant enough, he’d invite you into that that porch, and you’d sit and talk there. I showed up at the door and said, “Hi, Mr. O’Leary, I’m Pat Williams, Lizzy Keough’s grandson.”

“Oh, Pat, come on in.” So, we got into the porch.

Well, that was pretty good, so I sat down, I said, “Where should I sit?” H

e said, “Well, you sit on the couch, I’ll sit on this chair, here.” And he asked about my grandma, and he told me a couple of stories, and he said, “What brings you to see me today?”

I said, “Well, I wanted you to know I’m thinking about running for the legislature.”

And he got up, and I thought, “Oh, this is it, he’s going to leave me sitting here, or tell me to leave,” and he opened the door to the living room and he yelled in, “Pat,” or excuse me, he yelled in, “Mary,” his wife, as I recall the name. “Will you put on a couple of cups of tea? Lizzy Keough’s grandson”—Lizzy Hagan, he called her, maiden name—“Lizzy Hagan’s grandson Pat is here, and we have to talk seriously.” And he brought me into the living room.

Well, I thought, “My God, I’ve been elected.” (laughs). And so we sat around and we just visited. His wife sat down, and she visited with us, and he didn’t ask me a single thing about my

plans to run for the legislature. So, as we were getting up to go, as the meeting with the—time was ending, finished my tea, and I'm a little nervous, because I want to talk about it, but he's on to other things, and he didn't give me much of a chance to bring it up again. You know, I could tell he was determined not to talk about it. And so, he got up, finally, he said, "Well, Pat, I'm delighted you came to see us. It's wonderful to get to know you better." He, again, said, "Please tell Lizzy I said hello."

And he put his arm around me and he walked me to the door, and he said, "Patrick," he had a terrific Irish brogue, by the way. Never got rid of it. Let's see if I can do it. He said, "Patrick, this bit about you thinking about running for the legislature."

I said, "Yes, sir, and I was hoping for your help."

He said, "Well, let me tell you a story." He said, "Do you remember Spud Murphy?"

I said, "Oh, sure, I know Spud."

Well, he said, "Spud Murphy came up to me on the corner of Park and Maine." And he said, "I heard," he said—he was in that little alcove off the corner right there, and there used to be a, I think there was a taxi company in there. He said, "He was in that little alcove," and he said, "I heard, 'Psst, psst, psst.' I looked around," and he said, "There he is, hiding in that alcove. And I went over and said, "'Spud, what is it?' He said, 'Your honor, I'm thinking about running for alderman.'" And he said, "I grabbed him by the shoulders and pulled him out into the middle of the corner, and I yelled at him the top of my voice, "Spud Murphy, how the hell do you think you're going to get elected if you keep it a secret." (laughs) So, he said, "That's my advice to you, Patrick, don't keep it a secret; thanks for coming."

BB: (laughs) Do you know if he was helpful to you?

PW: He was helpful. He put a sign up, and he talked to his friends, he made a couple of calls. Yeah, sure.

BB: And just the fact that that word around probably was helpful to you.

PW: It was. And then, you know, I went to see the Serbians and so on. It was a matter of families, and it was a great way to do it. But I also just knocked on doors randomly. And then I spent a lot of money, which I think in those days was \$700. But it was either the most, or the second most, spent on a legislative campaign that year. And—

BB: Putting up—for posters, printing materials?

PW: Signs.

BB: Mostly signs?

PW: Yes, signs. I forget—we did a lot of radio. I don't think we did any television back then, even though television was significant then. I remember putting sign—there were buses, public bus system in Butte, the buses all over town, and I had wonderful fluorescent, huge signs made, and we put those on the side of the buses.

BB: Wow.

PW: So, everybody knew the name Pat Williams by the time it was over.

BB: So, Barry O'Leary's advice you took in that regard?

PW: I took it, I sure did.

BB: You got the name out.

PW: Even with fluorescent paint.

BB: Now, Pat, you know, there's the impression, I think on the part of many people, that the Anaconda Company was a major influence in the politics of Butte. And yet at the same time, you know, you talk about, you talk to people from Butte, and they resented the Anaconda Company. So you wonder, how could some big corporation that was so resented from the labor strife and that sort of thing, at the same time have big influence? And I don't know if I know what I'm talking about with this question—

PW: You do, no you do, yeah.

BB: Well, help me understand.

PW: Well, I'm not sure I understand it. You know, there was a hate-love relationship between Anaconda and Butte, and I guess Montana. You know, there's a lot of objection by some people with me saying—whenever I say this, but certainly western Montana sprang out of Butte. And maybe the whole state spring sprang out of Butte. The Anaconda Company, you know, found a place that was literally, for a long time the richest hill on earth. And there were great fights over wages, and there were terrible strikes. There was more than a little violence, and I saw it firsthand. As scary as hell when you're a little kid. See people throw a piano, a full piano through a bay window of a person's house because they broke across the picket line. You know, just—it was tough stuff. So, in Butte there was this hate-love relationship.

People in Butte fully and totally understood that without the Anaconda Company, or somebody to replace them—but you know, nobody thought that would happen. So, without the Anaconda Company, there was no Butte. We understood that. But we also understood what it did to a lot

of the miners. Killed them underground with unsafe working conditions. Mining is a tough business, though. An unsafe business. Even when you have good regulations, it's an unsafe business. But, in those days, too unsafe. And Anaconda knew it. There's evidence since that, yes, they knew some of what they were doing was bad, and was toxic and the rest of it. But again, you know, what are you going to do without them?

Did they have influence over the politics in Butte, which was pretty much the politics of Montana because so much of the population of Montana was centered in Butte. Absolutely had influence over it. I mean, they—William Clark won a seat in the U.S. Senate because he paid for it. He paid the legislators for it including Butte legislators, who took money and paid other legislators to be for Clark. And so, yes, Anaconda's influence was extraordinarily significant.

I remember having a mine reclamation proposal when I was first elected to the state legislature, and God, it was laughed out of town. I mean, what do you want us to do, fill in the Berkeley Pit? You know, it was that sort of thing. And so, yes, they could pull strings. I think my favorite story—and of course, they usually had the governor in their pocket, or pretty close. It was the old copper collar. They talked about wearing the copper color, you know, if you were for Anaconda. When I get—one of the reasons I—

BB: But yet, that was meant as an insult all over Montana?

PW: Yes, it was meant as an insult, yes.

BB: And if you were accused as a politician back in that day and age of wearing the copper collar, that certainly wasn't a compliment.

PW: Right.

BB: And yet, historians look back and think, "Well, to some degree or other most politicians for several decades in Montana history at least didn't get too far cross ways of the Anaconda Company."

PW: Right.

BB: Is that your impression? Do you think that's accurate?

PW: I do think it's accurate. So, even on the rural areas as far away from Butte as you could get without being in North Dakota, there was some influence of the Company.

BB: Yes, yes.

PW: And part of that was because the Company also owned Montana Power Company, the electric provider, right? And the Montana Power Company really had a better street,

neighborhood, small-town politics than Anaconda ever had, because the Montana Power Company had a branch office in so many little and larger cities. And so the Power spread that way, too. There's not much about that that's been written, but that, too, was a way for Anaconda to keep hold of things.

BB: And I know I've read, too—in fact, I've done some of these—as you know, some other interviews, and this has come up a time or two, too, that the Anaconda Company would buy advertising in little weekly newspapers, or the Montana Power Company would, that they didn't really need to buy—

PW: Sure.

BB: But they wanted to remain in the good graces of the little newspaper editors around the state who were all hungry and needed the advertising. They also would pay a little money, as a retainer, to different law firms in towns around the state—

PW: Interesting, yes.

BB: Even though they didn't necessarily have any litigation. But they might sometime or other. So, those things kind of helped and other things, too, but those things to kind of help to create a network of people that they had who were friends, all over in the hinterlands of Montana that could help them from time to time if they ever needed it.

PW: Well, I think Montanans underestimate the wealth of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, with offices in Butte and in New York City. It was one of the richest companies in America. Their offices in New York, I'm told, were absolutely magnificent. Gilded. And they were a very, very wealthy company, and bought up—I mean, literally bought land all over Montana. Owned a lot of land.

BB: Did you know any of their officials when you were a kid?

PW: Barely. You know, to see them.

BB: I'm thinking that there might have been sort of a class kind of a—like there was a—like the upper officials, these wealthy people, these managers in the Anaconda Company were almost like a royal class of people in Butte, and the general public probably didn't know them very well. I don't know, but—

PW: I think the initial group, Con Kelley [Cornelius Kelley] and Clark, and there were another dozen or so of the top people. I think they were a class almost to themselves. They had mansions on the west side of Butte. Beautiful homes. Really, truly beautiful homes, most of them still standing. And, yes, I think they were. But the group right below them, the captains we might say, lived throughout Butte. And, you know, we'd go in at noon and have a sandwich and

a shot, and a glass of beer in the M&M. So, there were—there would be a really well-dressed guy, probably earning a considerable salary as one of the—I'll use the word lower, but I don't mean it that way. One of the lower managers in the Anaconda top corporate guys, who hung out with everybody else and knew everybody else. That, too, helped to personify and personalize Anaconda. The Company's no good, but gee, Charlie Grimm's a good guy.

BB: (laughs). And there were a fair number of those guys? There had to be in order to make the company work, I'm sure.

PW: Oh, absolutely.

BB: And in many cases, they might have been locals?

PW: Oh, they—a lot of them were locals, yeah, a lot of them. Although, there are still families in Butte whose grandfathers or great-grandfather's were brought in to help manage part of the company.

BB: Yes. But in times of labor strife, the battle lines were drawn.

PW: Yup. And the guys that, you know, were fully salaried but not workers from the standpoint of being muckers in the mine, the rest the Anaconda staff went to work every day and, you know, collected their checks, and were good citizens.

BB: And they weren't in trouble?

PW: And they weren't in trouble because they didn't cross any picket lines. If there was a picket line, they were told, "Don't cross it, except to come to work. You got to come to work." But if there's a strike, if the restaurant workers are on strike, don't cross that picket line. Anaconda laid that law down to their managers, yeah. So, they understood the social mores and requirements and demands, and they met them, yeah.

BB: So, where I'm going with this, Pat, is that the culture wasn't such that you felt you needed to go, after you'd talked to Barry O'Leary, to go talk to some chieftain in the Anaconda Company and say, "I just want you to know, I'm running for the legislature." I mean, did you feel it was important to perform that courtesy, or, how did that fit in?

PW: Well, I can't name the people for you because I've forgotten, frankly, I've forgotten their names. But I did make sure, with a couple of the—you know, I'm calling them captains. This almost sounds like the Mafia. I don't mean it that way, but a couple of the high management people in the Montana, and not the New York operation, but the Montana operation, I did make sure that I saw them and said to them, "You know, I'm going to run for the legislature." And they were, they were—and I went to their chief lobbyist, a guy named Glen Carney, and I told him. And they were glad to know that. And then suddenly I began to be invited to

breakfasts and lunch, and, "Pat, can I pick up this dinner for you? if I was out to dinner." You know, that stuff was going on.

BB: So, they obviously appreciated that.

PW: Yes, they wanted to know who was running, because they wanted to cuddle up to them. There was a guy named Glen Carney that I've mentioned who was the chief lobbyist, and then his assistant, who came along later, was a fellow named Dennis Shea. Both Glen and Dennis have passed away now. Both as nice of guys as you could ask for, but absolutely committed to the company, as they should have been, and the well-being of the company and its profits. And I was sitting in an area you know well, Bob, between the House and the Senate chambers in Helena. In the legislature there is a snack bar and a long bench along the wall, and I think it's the same bench I was sitting on one day when I had, when I was a legislator. Had been elected, probably only a few weeks earlier in the beginning of the session. And I'd become friends with Glen Carney and Dennis Shea, although I wasn't following their line. But you remained friends. And I was talking with Glen, who was a great old guy and always had a few good stories, and Dennis Shea, who was fairly new, the new lobbyist, came around the corner, and he's trying to reach a legislator who's going for the chambers. The House chambers. And Dennis comes flying around the corner, running, and he's trying to get this legislator before the legislature gets into the inner sanctum where Dennis is not allowed to go. And he's reaching out for the guy's coat, and the guy's moving fast because he's got a vote to make or something, the legislator. And as Dennis flies by our bench, Glen Carney is saying to me, "Excuse me," at the same time he reaches out and grabs the coattails, the flying coattails of Dennis Shea's coat and stops him. And pulls him back, and says to him, "Dennis, don't run. They'll think we're behind."

BB: (laughs).

PW: Yeah. And I thought, "You know, they're—they have it so finely honed that they know who to talk to, when, what their attitude should be, whose sister-in-law they might know, they can make a call for them." I mean, they had it honed down.

BB: And they wanted the impression to be clear that they were pretty influential, and that they didn't need to run some guy down in the hallway.

PW: (laughs) They'll think you're behind if you that.

BB: Well, there's probably literally—it's funny and it's a good story, but it's probably illustrates something, too.

PW: Yeah, no desperation may show here.

BB: Yes, that's right. Darn right. When you—that's a wonderful story. So, you won the election, you ran second in a field of seven winners, so you got a good strong vote, and you went over to



Helena, and that was one of your early experiences in Helena. Were there two or three legislators that impressed the young Pat Williams when he came to the legislature? People that kind of stand out in your memory in that first session in the legislature as particularly significant people, on either side of the aisle, and for whatever reason?

PW: Yes, indeed. You know, that happens to all of us, and it certainly did to me. I had a seatmate that first session. I was blessed both sessions, I served two in the Montana Legislature. In that session I had a seatmate named Bill Christiansen, who later went on to become lieutenant governor. And Bill was one of the truest and smartest legislators that I ever came to know, be it the Congress or the Montana Legislature. Bill was a real great guy, had a fine sense of humor, and understood the legislation not only with regard to what the words in the bill meant, but what the effect would be on his county, and on Montanans, generally. He had a great look at these things, and Bob, you were a fine legislator, you know the type. And Bill was the type.

Jim Lucas from Miles City, one of the sharpest debaters I've ever been around. Jim and I became friends. His wife is from Butte, and she and my wife were friends when they were girls, so Jim and I had a reason to, you know, talk to each other and get to know each other. I suppose the most—

BB: And Bill Christiansen was a Democrat, and Jim—

PW: Bill was a Democrat, Jim was a Republican. Jim was a Republican leader, yes. You know, they're all people, on both sides of the aisle, and they ought to get along. Unfortunately, in the Congress, and maybe in legislatures, now, they don't do that very well.

BB: So much anymore. But—

PW: Well, one reason is, they represent people who don't like government, and don't like legislators, who think they're all crooks. Well, it's hard to be friendly with somebody if that's how you came along in politics, I suppose. But the fellow that really impressed me, and I think has impressed every legislator that ever had the good opportunity to serve with him, is Francis Bardanouve. Francis was a genius. He had a disability. He had a speaking difficulty, and his cleft palate, I think. And his wife, they were married late in life, but Venus Bardanouve was a speech therapist, and so she was a great help to Francis. But he was a terrific legislator, particularly when it came to tax and spend. He knew his way around revenue, and he knew his way around appropriations. And he had been a longtime legislator, which is frankly what we need again. Our longtime legislators unburdened by this thing called term limits. There were a number of other people. I'm just going to name Bill and Jim and Francis. But there were a number of other people who I thought were pretty impressive. And then there were, you know, there's always legislators who don't do much studying, they're not sure what the bills are, they have to ask, you know, "Is this a yes or a no for me?" And there aren't many of them, but there are always a few. They're good guys and good gals, but not terrific legislators.

BB: I remember about Francis Bardanouve—I served with all three of the ones that you mentioned there, too—

PW: Yeah, I know.

BB: But I remember, in the case of Francis, we joked one time about how he was considered, I think, philosophically to be a pretty solid liberal, but he was also a pretty solid conservative when it came to spending money.

PW: And I used to say to him, “Francis, you can't be both.” He'd say, “I have been so far.” You know, he'd been there for so many years.

BB: And he was, he was pretty much, he was pretty much. He had a—definitely had a heart and compassion, and that sort of thing, but he wasn't a spendthrift, by any means, when it came to the public money. But he was, philosophically, a pretty solid political liberal, and somehow he managed to make that balance work.

PW: Yes, well I liken it, interestingly, to Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton is a fiscal conservative. Now, like Francis Bardanouve, he also believes that there's certain social spending that's essential, to sort of buck up America and keep the most difficult people ok. And—but the sameness between the two of them was this: they both believed in a certain degree of spending, but then it had to be paid for. You couldn't put it on the cuff, and add it to the debt.

BB: And we're facing the opposite of that, today, for sure.

PW: Yes. And have with most presidents in my lifetime.

BB: Before we leave the legislature, was there an issue or two that was especially important when you were in the legislature? We talked about one, I think you either introduced or supported, that made some political trouble for you when you came back home, but that may—there may have been others, too, that you were involved in. But big issues before the legislature when you were there, and then, what, was the '67 and '69 sessions?

PW: Right. Well, I had, you know, I had education as being a teacher. I had education as sort of the front of my mind all the time. On the front of my mind. And I was on the Education Committee, so I was able to help with different things that way. I was also, you know, always concerned about education for the disabled. It did seem to me that that was a requirement of government that we had to take seriously. But all through my life I've tried to find niche bills, unusual bills that, you know, most legislators haven't paid a lot of attention to. And I was reading the *Montana Standard*, the Butte paper, one day.

There used to be—when I was young there were two newspapers over there. *The Standard* and *The Post*. *The Standard* survived, and I was reading the *Montana Standard*, and I was reading about a guy in Whitehall who was coming home one night, and he ran into a horse who had gotten out on the highway. And I've forgotten exactly the details, but I think the guy lost one or two members of his family, and the rest of them were in the hospital for a long time. And he sued, and the owner of the horse sued, and the owner of the horse won, and the guy had to pay for the horse, despite the fact that the fence wasn't repaired, and the horse got out. So, I thought, "Well, that has to be taken care of." And so I had a bill that went by all kinds of names, because everybody thought it was, despite the tragedies going on, they thought it was funny. And that is, you know, you had to fence your cows in. And if your cows got out, because they were unfenced, the gate was left to open, the fence was in disrepair, you were responsible, as the rancher. And one wag in the legislature referred to it as "Williams's udder disaster bill." Udder, u-d-d-e-r. And cow bill, and it went by different names. I didn't get it passed, but we did get the flagman. You know, if the sheep are coming down the road—

BB: Yes.

PW: At least there's—yes. So, we did get that, but I didn't get that bill done. It's funny how you get to be known for one niche bill that you introduce.

BB: Bet that happens too. But Pat, I think you told me that you were connected with legislation, and when you came home, you ran second in a field of 14—

PW: The first time.

BB: The first time, but the second time you didn't run as well, and you had—

PW: Next to last.

BB: And you attributed it to some bill.

PW: Oh, yes, yes. Sure. Thanks for reminding me of that. Well, I had a proposal on mine reclamation. Restoration of the landscape after mining. Well, that sent shock waves through the Anaconda Company all the way from here to New York. We're not going to put back these landscapes we've wrecked. It would cost us a fortune. And they came to me with the amount of money they'd have to pay to properly restore just the hill in Butte. And I flat thought they were lying to me. I have learned in the decades since, they were telling me the truth. This is an enormously expensive process, and virtually only the federal government can afford it. States cannot even afford to do real, full-scale reclamation. You know, the river that runs through it, runs into the Clark Fork River, and the federal government has spent tens of millions just cleaning up the Clark Fork River from Butte to Idaho.

So, when I have that mine law reclamation act, it was clear to Anaconda—two things were clear to Anaconda. One, as I've said, enormously expensive. Two, it could become enormously popular. And eventually, reclamation or restoration in America did become popular. Not because of me, I didn't do much after that one bill, except later in life I was a restoration guy. But yes, that bill about did me in in Butte.

BB: Because the people there, the word got around?

PW: That Pat wants to put the Anaconda Company out of business. And the other thing was that I was I had voted in favor of raising the tax on copper. The Metals Mines bill. I had voted in favor of that, and that, you know, that was recorded. I mean, the restoration bill never came to a vote, but raising the tax on the Anaconda Company came to a vote, and here was this kid from Butte, unlike all the other members of the delegation, voting to tax the Anaconda Company. And so, here's what happened on that one. People in Butte kind of liked the fact that I voted to tax the Anaconda Company. And so they'd go up to their legislators, the other—their friends in the legislature, and say, "Hey, how come this Williams guy voted—why didn't you vote for this?" And so the other members of the delegation had to have reasons, sometimes pretty creative reasons, why they don't vote for it. Otherwise they'd be given the copper collar, right? They'd be wearing the copper collar, which they really didn't want. They wanted the goodies, they just didn't want the collar.

BB: Is the fact that they voted with the company an indication that maybe they, at least had a copper-tinged collar?

PW: Yeah, absolutely. Oh, the Butte delegation, with the exception of a few members from time to time, from time to time, the Butte delegation was wrapped up by the Anaconda Company.

BB: That was my impression.

PW: Yup.

BB: And I think it is with most of the other legislators that served with them. And it just takes me back to what we discussed before, and there may not be a real easy answer to it, but the Anaconda Company was never particularly popular, statewide in Montana. And the Anaconda Company, of course, was the focal point of some bitter conflict within Butte. And it wasn't particularly popular, I think at least, in a populist sort of way. The politics of Butte. And yet, year after year, legislators, session after session, these new guys had come in, some of them young, you know, that sort of thing, and we called them silvercrats, because, you know, they were Democrats. But a silvercrat was a little different than a, you know, a more mainstream—

PW: (laughs) Right.

BB: And they were closer to the Anaconda Company. No two ways about it.

PW: But they were silvercrats, not quite coppercrats yet?

BB: (laughs) Oh, I guess maybe that's right, too, yes.

PW: Can you, Bob, can you just—

BB: Yes, pause?

PW: Yes, for—

[End of Interview]