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Hudson Holloway oral history interview by Andrew (Andy) Huse, June 7, 2002

Hudson Eugene Holloway (Interviewee)

Andrew T. Huse (Interviewer)

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[Transcriber's Note: Ellipses indicate that a word or section has been removed at the request of the interviewee. Footnotes include elaboration/clarification provided by the Interviewee. Interview begins in mid-sentence.]

Andrew Huse: —ugly thing, and it was a major reason why they moved on, you know, to Burger King. There's no threat of unions there.

Hudson (Gene) Holloway: Well, I got through that. I don't know, it probably cost me one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, but I broke their back. I (inaudible) for all of them that were sympathizers and part of the organizers and I fired every one of 'em.

AH: So did you have, did you have problems with people stealing from the restaurant? Embezzlement? Things like that?

HH: I had one. A guy named Fuzzi. He was my comptroller. And he was a Lebanese guy. People had warned me about Fuzzi but Fuzzi was pretty knowledgeable and—warned me that that there was—that Fuzzi was dishonest. A lot of times you're better off having someone work for you that you know is dishonest, so you can halfway keep an eye on 'em, than someone that you really trust and then find out that you were wrong.

But Fuzzi was my comptroller. He was in an area that he could do me harm, and I would have these daily reports, all cash payout, would have to go across my desk. And I would have to okay 'em. And, so, I—and sometimes they would stack up before I would go through 'em, and so I come up missing about seventeen reports. So I went to Fuzzi and said, "Fuzzi, you know, I'm missing seventeen cash reports." He said, "I don't know, Gene, where they are." I says, "All those things is supposed to end up on my desk." And I said, you know.

But anyway, later in the day I had this camera that went around to different sections and here's this big dumpster that I have in the back. So I notice Fuzzi peering into the dumpster and he's got this busboy, he's cleaning out his office, and I didn't think anything about it. So the cameras made all their stops and there's Fuzzi still peering into the dumpster. So a little later in the day I say, "Hey Fuzzi, we havin' a problem with our dumpster?" "Oh, no, Gene, no, no problem." "Okay." So that night, I'm going to go into Fuzzi's office. So I've got a detective that worked for me who gives polygraph tests.

AH: Mm-hm.

HH: So, Charlie Miranda was there and I said—So, Fuzzi had his office locked tight. Couldn't get into it. So we're takin' out a window so that we can get into it, and as we was takin' out the window I remembered earlier in the day. I said, "Guys, we're too late. That sucker's already done away with all the evidence." So I went out to the dumpster. There was a busboy around and I says, "I'll pay ya; I need for you to get up in that dumpster." And luckily they hadn't dumped the dumpster.

AH: Mm-hm.

HH: It was one of these great big long 'uns that compacted. And, anyway, so, they, he started diggin' through, and after he'd been in there for about ten minutes I says, "Well, come on. Let's get out." He got out, and I thought for a minute and thought, "Just get back up in there for another minute or two." He got back up in there and says, "Is this what you're lookin' for?" It was a brown envelope. With the receipts in it for the day.

AH: Mm-hm.

HH: So we went through 'em and found all seventeen of 'em. And, so, I took 'em into my office and I laid 'em out on the—some of 'em out on the floor. And (inaudible) was there. And right away I found where Fuzzi had stolen from me. And, so I called Fuzzi on the phone, and here he comes. Lickety-split. He was there in just minutes. "What's up? What's up? (inaudible)" I says, "Don't talk to me. Talk to that guy behind you [my detective]."

So, to make a long story short, the insurance company paid me thirty-five thousand. He was bonded. And, how much more he got from me than that I don't know but I was able to account for thirty-five thousand.

AH: Um-hm. So when did the difficulties really start? You opened a Lakeland Sea Wolf [Restaurant] in seventy-seven [1977], was it?

HH: No, it was seventy-six [1976], I think.

AH: Seventy-six.

HH: Wait a minute. Seventy—guess I started building it in seventy-five [1975].

AH: Okay. And you ended up selling it in, what, 1980, right?

HH: 1979.

AH: Okay. The, and right about that time or right after that you went for your short run for the presidency [of the United States]. So looking back on it, was it serious?

HH: Well, I was member of the Rough Riders. And, uh, anyway, I was really ticked off with—with what was happening to our economy there and the economy that was affecting my restaurant. You know, I dropped a couple million dollars in sales because of the gas crunch, and I was ticked off with what was going on over—overseas and, um, so I said, “Someone oughta do something about this.” Someone said, “Well, Holloway, why don’t you do something?” But anyway, it was more of a publicity thing. Like I told you, I always try to keep the ball bouncing. And it was one of the bouncing balls that I had. I had Tony Saponi that worked for me. I told Tony, I says, “You know, Tony, why don’t you see about renting Madison Square Garden?” (phone ringing) What I was hoping to do was to get enough money coming in that—that it’d make the whole thing worthwhile. (electronic phone dialing)

AH: Yeah.

HH: And, uh, I said— So my plans there with Madison Square Garden were to—if you take a big area like that, it kind of has a sound of its own. (female voice in background conversation). When it’s empty. So the camera is there and it starts to pick up that sound, trying to pick up that sound, that empty sound. And, um, uh, way up there in um—in the (female voice continues in background) bleachers is, let me see how that thing went, um, uh, no.

We’re in the center (sound of door closing) of Madison Square Garden, you know, I took the stand in—with a combination of Billy Graham and Adolf Hitler, you know, I gave them one of those kind of speeches, and, at the end of the speech there’s this one applaud going on that echoes through the whole arena. And you can hear it and there’s this one guy sitting way up there in the bleachers, and the camera keys in, and it’s Uncle Sam. And, at, and as the camera closer he stands up and says, “Gene Holloway, we need you.” And, uh, that was (laughs) one of my promotions for—anyway.

AH: So why sell off the Lakeland restaurant?

HH: I just did not want be going back and forth between Tampa and Lakeland. I’m getting very tired, very weary. I’m stagnated. I’m stagnated. I don’t like my life. Um, I’m a prisoner. You know, I’ve been a prisoner there for too long a period of time. And, so, uh, anyway, I sold off the Lakeland restaurant. The Lakeland restaurant was really a nice—I had very little debt service there, and really a nice, nice restaurant. But, anyway, I sold it.

AH: Yeah. So. So, once you sell off the Lakeland restaurant, then all your chips are on the Tampa restaurant.

HH: Yeah.

AH: It's—

HH: And what I hoped to do, building the hotel.

AH: Uh-huh—with the Condor complex. So by this time your life's getting a little wilder. And there's stories about cougars eating peacocks in the, in the (sound of telephone ringing) garden. Did that ever happen?

HH: No. It never happened. I had, uh, my two (sound of telephone ringing), or, my one tiger. And my brother-in-law, he was a pothead, but he was there and (sound of telephone ringing—female voice in conversing in background) it was on a Friday night. And I told him. I said, "Let the cat go." It was a big enclosed area and here's the cat goes and, and right away he sees a pigeon. And he grabs the pigeon and eats it. And—

AH: Okay.

HH: And the customers (Holloway makes sound of customers in alarm).

AH: (laughs)

HH: And this pig— this pigeon took off, and I guarantee you that pigeon was a lot higher than this ceiling right here, and that cat just leaped in the air and caught that one'n come down [and ate the pigeon]. But that, that was the deal there.

AH: Okay. Um, so you—obviously your, your marriage is suffering, there's—

HH: Yeah.

AH: You have so much time invested in the restaurant. And then, in the meantime you just, the way your life is going, like you said, your life is stagnating. And, so, tell me about the—the airport [North Tampa Airport] there. Um, there was an awful lot of the Walker—was the name Robert Walker?

HH: Yeah.

AH: And, he ended up getting—getting killed. And getting (inaudible) and everything. And ...¹ And, uh, it seemed like there was an awful lot of just shady stuff flying around at this time, you know—

HH: ...

Well, one thing, I was a skydiver, and at one time I used to jump out at Zephyrhills and, the, uh, there were some drug smugglers out there. And, uh, then they become friends of mine. Not that I was a drug smuggler.

AH: Sure.

HH: I never was a drug smuggler. But, um, even though the Feds wanted to, um, connect me with drug smuggling, I was never a drug smuggler.

AH: Sure. Well then—

HH: I could, whenever I was going through my trials and tribulations, they kept bringing it up to the judge. You know, this and that. So I went and had a polygraph test made and the polygraph stated that, No, I have never have been involved in drugs and, and whatever, and so I wanted them to put it into my records and they said, “No.”

So (clears his throat) I got on the telephone—I knew I was being monitored over the telephone. I said, “Well—” I was talking to my pilot, and I said, you know, “If they don’t accept that within a couple of days, I’m going to have about five hundred leaflets made of that and I want you to drop it over the courthouse in Tampa for me.” Well, the next day they took it in. (both laugh).

AH: That’s great. Yeah, that’s a good one. Um, so, but you have to admit, if you were an investigator, and you’ve got, on one hand, in the Cayman Islands, you’ve got, what is it, Searl?

HH: Yeah. Uh-huh.

AH: Jeff Searl. And then, in Land O’ Lakes, you’ve got James Thrasher.

HH: Yeah.

AH: And these two had a history, you know, before all this and everything. And, you have to admit it looked a little funny.

HH: That’s right. That’s right.

¹ Interviewee clarifies: “I didn’t know Robert Walker during that time. I only read about him in the newspaper.”

AH: But they were, they were avid skydivers, and that's how you met in the first place, right?

HH: Well, Jeff was Jeff—whenever Debbie and I got married in Lakeland, Jeff was there and—there was three of us. There was about twenty jumpers that went in over my home there in Lakeland. Lake Hollingsworth. And, then the three of us jumped out—Jim Hooper, Jeff, and myself. Jim was a marryin' man so he married us. And, uh—

AH: So then when did the whole idea of the—the escapade come along? I mean, obviously you felt embattled, between the restaurant, the wife, the debts. Everything seemed to be closing in at once, right?

HH: I had this one guy—Robert Dourney—that wanted to buy the Sea Wolf. And he just couldn't seem to put it together. And, well, I'm getting ready to go, and the summer—summer's going to be slow. I'm stretched out. I'm physically weak, and so I called Dourney. Now this is after Debra and I'd separated a time or two and, uh, I called Dourney and, anyway, Dourney—

I told Dourney, I said—asked him, “Well, how much money do you have?” and he said, “Well, I got this.” I said, “Well, this week I want you to be in the Sea Wolf.” (phone ringing nearby) So I took the money that he had, and took the mortgage on it and, um, that's how I got ...² there. I, uh (clears his throat), you wanna turn that off for a second?

AH: Sure. Yeah. Let me stop.

pause in recording

(women's voices in background)

AH: So, uh, when he, you know—So the decision is made to, uh, to get outta Dodge, at least for a little while.

HH: Yeah. Um-hm.

AH: And, uh, but, so later you said that you weren't sure you really did anything illegal. That, you know, you, you disappeared and, you know, like, you really hadn't thought it through, you know, and—

HH: Yeah.

AH: And that, while you were up in, you know, Niagara and New York and Canada, you know, you weren't—you obviously weren't too concerned about keeping a low profile or anything.

² “out of running the Sea Wolf.”

HH: Yeah. That's right.

AH: So, so looking back, how do you, um, how do you explain that? I mean, you weren't—you weren't running from the police.

HH: No. No. I was really enjoying myself. You know, here I'd been a prisoner to this restaurant for all these years and, and I've—I got some freedom and I'm enjoying it.

AH: And you met a new lady friend?

HH: Yeah.

AH: In Canada.

HH: Yeah.

AH: So, um, so you're still married?

HH: No. No. Susan was with me through the whole time I was in the federal pen [penitentiary], and, uh, you know, after I got out I opened a place or two here in the Tampa area, and I ended up going to Homosassa, and Susan didn't want to go to Homosassa. So—and she wanted some children and—but Susan was a great lady.

AH: Yeah. So, you didn't want any more children at that point?

HH: No.

AH: You had, you had children with your first wife?

HH: Yeah.

AH: Um, let me see here. So, so, I am interested in, you know, you go to trial and everything. And that's something I really—I don't want to get into courtroom drama in my (inaudible). But—

HH: I don't mind talking about any of that, but—

AH: Yeah. The, the, of course the—you were acquitted for the arson charges and that kind of thing.

HH: Yeah. Well, turn that off and I'll tell you an interesting story.

pause in recording

AH: —get along very well and then after the case you were pretty happy?

HH: He come by my restaurant and, uh, later on and, you know, walked in and I recognized him, “Hey, Gary.” And, so, I said, “Have you had dinner?” He said, “No.” I said, “Be my treat.” So I set him down, gave him a prime rib dinner, and he sat there and he said, “Aren’t you angry?” I said—you know, I wasn’t going to let those people get the best of me. I said, “No, Betz, why would I be angry?” (inaudible)

“But this, and that, and I know that I would really be angry.” And I said, “No. No. I’m not angry. In fact it really did me good. I got away and you guys gave me a gym to work in and a place to run and I brought my health up and—” I said, “No, I’m not angry.” But he wanted to, wanted to hear something bad from it.

AH: I see. So this was afterwards, after—when you opened a new Sea Wolf?

HH: Yeah.

AH: Yeah. Okay. Let’s talk about that briefly. You know, you—your time in prison. Obviously you cleaned up. You know, you’re—you cleared your head and got healthy. And then the, and then the Tampa Sea Wolf and the, not the Homosassa—Homosassa—just did not work out. None of ‘em worked out.

HH: Well, what it was was that I was really undercapitalized and, uh, the one I had over in Palma Ceia [Tampa neighborhood]—I had, I think, six investors. And, and that location, by the way, is the first location that the Outback Steakhouse had.

AH: Okay.

HH: I was doing more business than what they were doing. And, uh, you know, I coulda carried—it was a small restaurant and I coulda carried it on but there was dissension between the stockholders and, uh, myself, and, uh, so I closed the place up and moved over on Busch Boulevard. And I’d be close over at the Busch Gardens [Amusement Park].

And there, again, I run into a situation with the owner of the property, John Greco. And, uh, him and I had a coupla knock-down drag-outs and this place up in Homosassa was offered to me, and I up and moved all my stuff out of, out of his location and moved it up to Homosassa.

AH: With Joe Redner as a new investor, right?

HH: Yeah. Joe was an investor.

AH: Um-hm. And, so, between—

HH: But all this time, you know, I’m undercapitalized. What happens is that a strong wind comes over—comes round and gives you a blow, you’re going to be blowed over if

you don't have the funds. And I just didn't have the funds. When I got out of prison I was given a brown paper bag, and that was basically what I owned.

AH: Yeah. And, well, it seems a little strange, too, you got out prison just in time to see all those antiques auctioned off afterwards. You mentioned you were sitting there and felt like a lightweight with a hundred dollar bill in your pocket and that's all you had. And here are all these people in these—the kind of people, that, um, that, that made you popular for what you did. You know, just dull developers, people like that who, you know, get their kicks by buying these things and stuff, but—so the—let's, let's go after Homosassa then. Obviously that didn't work out. It just seems like Citrus County was just not very kind to you.

HH: Well, I had a heckuva, heckuva restaurant up there. And, uh, not being good to me is that I, uh, I knew that there was a lotta rednecks that area where I opened that place. And, I knew that I was going—a big part of that restaurant there was going to be the lounge, and the restaurant was going to be the incidental part this business. And, uh— So I hired—I talked to my bar manager, and, about a bouncer, and he said, “Well, I know this guy Mike—Mike Joyner.” And, so, anyway, I hired Mike, and I didn't know it, but he was an undercover agent for the Sheriff's department. He come in from Texas and that's what he did. (woman's voice talking in background) He would go into different places and he was a “good ole boy,” and, you know, try to get in on the inside of everything and whatever, and he was there to, um, to put his finger on the drug business in Homosassa.

And, so, it went on there for a while. I had ups and down but I had a good business. I made money. And, um, but there towards the end Mike come to me, and—you know, I would have that place filled. (women's voices talking and laughing in background) I mean, it was scary. I'd have a thousand people in there. And, you know, if a fight—all those people up there wanted to do was drink and fight. And, uh, I just knew that if a fight broke out I'd be in trouble and, so I had, probably, on a busy night, seven or eight bouncers, and my barbacks were trained to be bouncers. I even told the band, I said, “Look, things get out of hand, y'all drop those guitars, get down here, and help us control it.”

And, but anyway, I had brought in people like The Outlaws, Molly Hatchet, and a lot of big groups. But anyway, so Mike comes to me there one day and says, “Boss, you know, my past is catching up with me, and I'm going to have to leave. I just want you to know that if anybody ever asks me about you, you run a real good ship.” And, he finally said, “You know, I'm going to stop and say that I've been acting as a bouncer in lots of places, and you run the best that I have ever seen.” I said, well—

AH: Now who was sayin' this again?

HH: This is the undercover agent that I have no idea that he's a undercover agent. And so I said, “Well, Mike, those sure are nice words. I sure do appreciate that.” So, anyway, he left, and probably a week after, two weeks after he left, there was indictments up there,

twenty something people. One of the people, my music man there in charge of bringing in groups and whatever, was arrested.

And, uh, but they tried to set me up up there several times, but I wouldn't buy it. I preached no drugs in my restaurant, checked the parking lots. No drugs in the parking lots. You find something, report 'em to the cops and I had a strong hand. They still tried to set me up. And, uh (laughs), numerous times. And, uh, so, what happened is that after that hit the newspaper, you know, here's a real busy place, and you could actually fire a cannon through the place and not hit anybody. Everybody was pissed off at me. They thought that I'd brought all this down on Homosassa. And so, it ended up hurting my business. And that was it. I had enough of it after that.

AH: Yeah. You just—after that, you just wanted to wash your hands of the whole thing. So, then, this was in what? Ninety-three [1993]?

HH: No, this was back in about eighty-eight, or '89.

AH: Nineteen eighty-nine [1989]?

HH: Eighty-eight and '89.

AH: Okay. So, um, so then a couple years go by before you get into the treasure hunting?

HH: Yeah.

AH: So, what—what're you doing in that—those two years, you're kind of regrouping?

HH: Regrouping. I—I was looking at different things and just regrouping.

AH: Yeah. So—

HH: I lived in Homosassa for a while and then moved back to the Tampa area.

AH: Um-hm. So then, and then, what, a friend of yours called you up and wanted your help on a site that they already had?

HH: Yeah.

AH: Yeah. Was it one or several, or—

HH: It was, they had seen some brass cannon, you know, while they were diving, and, uh, they felt that it was a treasure site. And that got me started. I should've brought some pictures in of mine, but I've been at that for ten years this September, and that business right there—there's a lotta money out there in the Gulf [of Mexico] in those shipwrecks. I don't mean millions of dollars, but I mean billions of dollars. And (phone ringing) I've got a claim on some sites out there. And it's like these women that was trying to climb

Mt. Everest and they were, what, 253 feet from the top (phone ringing) and had to turn back? They just couldn't make that 253 feet?

Well, 230 feet below the surface I've got some real serious wrecks and I'm just not able to get down—it's very expensive to get down there and do it. I just can't do it. And I had some bad experience in the past with partners and I'd just rather not have partners and I guess that, at some point in my life, if I see that things are slipping away I might try to put some people together to help me out there.

But I've looked on land for—for gold and just feel that, um, the other treasure hunters clear out land. Shallow waters—the Spanish was real good at recovering their treasures so, you know, the *Atocha* [*Nuestra Señora de Atocha*], Mel Fisher, that was, that was a circumstances there where the Spanish knew right where the wreck was, and they tried to break into a strong room. As they started to recover and the storm—or they didn't have the tools and they went back to Havana to get the tools, and on the way back a hurricane hit. Covered everything with sand. So they weren't able to recover that. He was in shallow water there. For that wreck.

But there's not many wrecks in shallow water. Least not in this part of the world. I don't think. 'Cause I've covered the coast and, uh—so the shallow water diving with thirty, forty, fifty, sixty feet diving, they could dive a (cough) hundred feet. And, um, the good stuff is in hundred feet plus out there.

AH: Yeah.

HH: I've got underwater cameras and, so I can drop down and drop cameras and I've got—I've got some good sites. And, hopefully, one day I'll be able to work 'em. The last couple years, year and a half, I've, I—like I was going to go out, back out, on the water this summer. (sighs) But it's a big expense. It's a big expense.

And, uh, not only that, you have to put up with other people. And I got interested in looking for meteorites, about a year and a half ago, and there's big bucks in meteorites. I mean, you're looking, if you find the right meteorite, two thousand dollars a gram, twenty six hundred dollars a gram. They all sell by the gram. And, uh, they're around. All you gotta do is—is be smart enough to learn how to find 'em. So, the technology I've used in finding my wrecks out there, I'm putting it to use trying to find meteorites. One of the things that I found out is the frequencies with stuff coming in from outer space is different from the frequencies here on—on earth. We have iron at one frequency—earth iron—but if you have iron from outer space you have a different frequency.

So, I've had my—my ups and downs. I've found a few. In fact, when we go back out I'll show you one that I found. But anyway, that's where I am.

AH: Yeah. Yeah. Great. Well, it's a—I feel like we've come full circle. At the beginning we were in Antarctica and you were gonna go it alone the rest of the way, and whether, you know, whether they said so or not, and here you are doing it today.

HH: Here I am. Yeah. I brought this one portfolio. I don't know if you want to look through it (sound of papers)—

pause in recording

(sound of papers)

AH: The best of times and the worst of times. When was—when was the best? I mean, when was Gene Holloway just totally—you felt the best about the way everything was going, and—

HH: Um.

AH: Excluding the present day, of course.

HH: Okay. Excluding the present day? I would say that whenever I saw all the happy customers and all the masses of people that would eat in my restaurant, then, and to look back and look at the creation—at my creation, was a very happy moment.

AH: Yeah. No one else could have—could have made the Sea Wolf.

HH; Yeah, I don't know if anyone else could have, but I just haven't met 'em.

AH: Yeah. So, then, what was the—

HH: The worst moment?

AH: The worst, the lowest.

HH: The worst moment was probably whenever I'm in Lexington, Kentucky in prison. And I'm laying in bed, it's early in the morning shortly after I arrived, and I'm saying, Okay. I'm going to wake up in just a minutes and it's all a dream. And I wake up in the morning, and there's a black guy laying over there in the room there's some more, and that was a pretty bad moment.

AH: Yeah. Yeah. I could see that. So, what about if you could change anything? If you could go back and, you know, how far back would you go?

HH: If I could change anything it would probably be that I would build small places, maybe even open a McDonald's. I would build small places and go on the stock market with 'em like some of these local people have done. If I had to do it all over again. If I had to do it all over again as far as the federal government, I would've never plea bargained with 'em on the second go-round. I'd have gone to court, ... [and won] ... like I did the first time. That was a mistake. (women speaking in background)

AH: Yeah. Hm. So, why, why did you plea bargain? Did you feel a lot of pressure?

HH: (exhales) Well, I was tired. Drinking too much, under a lot of pressure, just, you know, you know, here I got another indictment that's been put against me and, um, so I told my attorney, I said, "How about checking about plea bargaining. I just—I'm tired." And so he comes (sound of recording fading out) (recording fading back in)

AH: With the book, um—

HH: Jack London and *The Sea-Wolf*?

AH: Yeah. I just finished it.

HH: Yeah. Well, you know, whenever I was looking for a good name for the restaurants that I built I liked the novel Jack London *The Sea-Wolf* and I used a lot of the different names in it. Wolf Larsen. Wolf Larsen's lounge. The Ghost was one of my drinks. There was Jack London—Anyway, uh, I, I liked the book and thought that, that it had a lot of strength, and I wanted to add that strength to my restaurant.

AH: So when did you first read it?

HH: When did I first read it? Probably back, oh, whenever I was a young man. Probably whenever I was in the Antarctic. Yeah. I read it whenever I was in the Antarctic in about 1956.

AH: Yeah. So, was there something that you could relate to there in either one of the characters? Both of them serve such, uh, you know, you've got Van Weyden who is kind of cast adrift in a moral sea, I mean, kind of, everything he knew, he's—the land and security is all left behind. And then you've got, on the other hand, this kind of cool, kind of beyond-good-and-evil type of character in Wolf Larsen.

HH: Um-hm. Right. I, uh, (clears throat) I'm going to tell you a little story about my trip to the Antarctic. Whenever I was a young man, that was a, a—first of all, I was, I was raised very poor in a children's home, and, you know, not around real intelligent people. You know, I notice that children and whatever that are raised around intelligent people that, you know, they pick up on a lot of things at an early age that I wasn't able to pick up on. That I picked up on later in life through learning.

And, um, but, the trip to the Antarctic and, where I joined the Navy, I, one of the first things that I had the opportunity to do was to volunteer for a trip to the Antarctic. In fact I went twice. And the first time I was in charge of the two dog teams and I liked that. I'm an animal nut. I like animals. And, anyway, the second trip I was up on the fo'c's'le [forecastle] and talking to an Englishman by the name of Sir Raymond Priestly that was on our vessel going down to be an observer for the United Kingdom.

And so I was talking about Mount Erebus [the southernmost active volcano on Earth], which was a large, the highest mountain of—at that time in the Antarctic and—so he said that Shackleton’s group had climbed it fifty years earlier, and that Edmund Hillary and a group of New Zealanders were going to scale it again in his honor in fifty years. Well, whenever I got back down below after talking with, with the gentleman, um, the captain sent a messenger down for me and, you know, “Seaman Holloway! Seaman Holloway!” I wondered, What in the world would the captain want to see me about?

So I went up to see the captain, and he said, “Do you mind if I ask you what you were talking to Sir Raymond Priestly about?” and (background voices), “Talking to the two of ‘em about climbing Mt. Erebus.” And, um (background voice is near interviewee) that, really, it had been climbed 50 years ago and some New Zealanders and Sir Raymond Priestly had planned on climbing it the next weeks. And he says, “Well, do you mind if I go with you?” You know, I’m a lowly seaman. Here’s the captain of my vessel saying, “Well, do you mind if I go with you?” I said, “No, Sir. Please do.” And this is a man that was in his early fifties and he was striking for admiral and he wanted to kind of make a name for himself. (woman’s voice nearby in background) And, so, he put together the program. (audible exhale)

And, um, the program—he got a scientist from Cal Tech University [California Institute of Technology], a newspaper reporter, Charlie Mayer from the Associated Press, and I think Charlie Mayer’s still floating around. And myself and himself. And, so he wanted to have a scientific reason for climbing the mountain and, that, and he also wanted some publicity. So, anyway, we, we started out at sea level and I was a strong, young, dumb guy. (AH laughs) And, um, we started out at sea level and pretty soon, you know, those guys are wearing out and I’m still going strong. I wanna carry their packs and my packs and everything else.

And we were pulling two sleds and so, at about six thousand feet [altitude] they, we were camped, and so the captain—I heard—the captain and the newspaper reporter were in one tent, and myself and Hugh Anderson was in the other tent—so I heard the captain talking. So, it’s “Well, I guess we’re going to have to turn back. It’s just too much on us, and this and that.” (woman laughing in background) And I’m thinking to myself, I’ll be damned. You know, I come here to climb this mountain and I’m going to climb this mountain, even if I’ve got to slide out of this tent with my pack and go up that mountain, I’m going to climb that mountain, I’m going to climb that mountain.

I guess that one reason why I wanted to tell you this story is that that, uh, that thought, that reasoning kind of went with me all of my life. It was that, you know, yes there’s authority, but I was my own person. You know, I was prepared to make my own moves and, you know, uh, you know, be damned I was going to do it if I choose to do it. But, um, I told you that story for that part right there.

AH: Yeah.

HH: But, anyway, we went on, Anderson and myself, went on to climb the mountain and we were the first persons to climb it in fifty years and now I'll get back to the restaurant business.

AH: W—uh—um, that's great. I mean, I knew about Erebus but I didn't know about you had to kind of—so, your captain, did he allow you to go on the—?

HH: Yeah, I talked with the captain. I said, "Captain, you know, ... I come to climb this mountain, and I'm strong and I can make the top." And, anyway, he said, "Well, if you feel like it, and that you'll make it, and Anderson has said that he'd like to go with you." So, anyway, Anderson was a so-so climber. He wasn't as strong as I was. And, um, you gotta remember that I'm twenty years old, I'm an uneducated person and at that point in my life I don't even know what roast beef is, you know? I think a hamburger is made out of pork.

AH: Yeah.

HH: So, you know, but anyway.

AH: Um, Red Lobster.

HH: Yeah.

AH: Did you—what did you have to do with that chain? I mean, did you just supply it? Or were you one of the founders? Or—

HH: Well, Red Lobster, um (clears throat), Red Lobster built their first restaurant in Lakeland, Florida.

AH: Okay.

HH: And I had a home there. In fact it's on Lake Hollingsworth Drive. You ever go thataway and drive by, it's the English Tudor home on Lake Hollingsworth Drive. But was (sighs, clears throat), I was in the seafood business, and I sold to people. But anyway, I'll back up a little bit.

So Red Lobster built their first restaurant there. And the guy that was really the brains behind the Red Lobster was a guy named Wally Buckley. And Wally Buckley got the financing from Lawton Chiles' [Florida Governor Lawton Chiles] family to build the first one and, and so forth, and, anyway, so they had the one restaurant there. And, um, oh, the director of operation, Charlie Woodsby, and myself were friends and—so they wanted me to sell to Red Lobster.

I owned a company called Service Brokerage Company and International Seafoods. And, well, that time, I guess I just owned Service Brokerage Company. And I represented Booth's Fisheries and several other seafood suppliers. And so, I told old Charlie, I said,

“You know, I sell to Donald Cate over at John’s Seafood Company. And he’s selling to you, and Donald wouldn’t like it if I ended up selling to you direct.”

So after they built five restaurants, Charlie come to me and says, “Gene, if you ever want to sell to us, better do it now. We just—we’re selling out to General Mills [Food Corporation] and we’re going to really expand and so forth.” So I went to Donald and I said, “Donald, I’m going to sell to Red Lobster. They’re going to be big time and I’m sure that I’m a friend of yours and you would like for me to have the business.” Anyway, Donald was a little perturbed about it but, anyway, I went ahead and sold to Red Lobster. So that was a start. And after that I sold, basically, the Red Lobster, all their seafood. And I sold it—my suppliers weren’t able to take care of Red Lobster’s needs. So I formed a company called International Seafoods as to, where I could represent and buy from a lot of companies. Any company.

AH: So before you were Standard Brands³?

HH: Yeah.

AH: Okay. And then I—then you started International Seafoods on your own.

HH: Yeah. Yeah. Well, my first company was Service Brokerage Company.

AH: Okay.

HH: Foods Brokerage Company.

AH: Okay.

HH: And then International Seafoods. So, anyway, I, um, I ended up selling to Red Lobster, and I used to write ’em some invoices that was a million and a half dollars. And I made a big buck. At that time I also sold [to] Morrison’s Cafeteria chain and some of the other big chains. Morrison’s was a very good customer of mine also.

AH: What were any of the other big chains? Do you remember?

HH: That I sold?

AH: Yeah.

HH: Well, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Morrison’s, um, Maas Brothers, back in those days, had four or five restaurants.

AH: Oh, yeah.

³ Interviewee clarifies: “Service Brokerage Co., which I founded.”

HH: Oh, um, I sold some seafood to McDonald's for their fish sandwich.

AH: Okay. Yeah. I just wanted to (inaudible) more thorough. So then you sold to General Mills, then?

HH: So, anyway, after they'd built about a hundred and fifty restaurants or so and I'm supplying 'em 90 percent of all their seafood, their—one of their lead guys approached me and said, "Gene, we—we're at a turning point here in this business. We either want to buy your business or we're going to go into business ourselves." You know, buy me.

AH: Yeah.

HH: So that's what happened. They bought my business. and I—I've (audible exhale) I've always, in a roundabout way, regretted selling, selling to them. I sold it for a pretty good buck, but the pretty good buck that I sold for I could make every couple of years, you know?

AH: Yeah. Sure.

HH: But anyway, so, so then, so Buckley and myself—Buckley was ticked off at the Red Lobster. Like I said, he was really the brains behind the Red Lobster.

AH: What's his first name again?

HH: Wally Buckley.

AH: Wally.

HH: Yeah. So his son got fired from Red Lobster. He was a manager. And so Buckley was even more ticked off. So we went over to Satellite Beach and opened a restaurant called Bahama Joe's Lobster—no that was PegLeg's Oyster Bar. And we went to Vero Beach and opened up a place called Bahama Joe's Lobster House. Then one in Daytona Beach and—anyway, we opened up another three or four restaurants. A little later on I went in with some guys and we opened up the Fish House which was a restaurant in Pasadena, Florida.

AH: So, um, how did you get from being an uneducated young man—you know, thought a hamburger's made of pork—to a someone so knowledgeable about seafood? And, of course you got into art, into antiques.

HH: I usually—whenever I went in—I remember the first time that whenever I left Standard Brands and, then I went to work for a food broker. I remember walking into Morrison's Cafeteria chain and Mr. Westrick, a wonderful guy, Vice President in charge of Purchasing—I walked in and—his secretary was a lady named Donna. And, uh, so I sit down across from Mr. Westrick and I said, "Mr. Westrick, I want to tell you this. I'm new in the business."

And I was real apprehensive about—here I am, you know, an uneducated guy walking into a big chain like this. And I see all these guys, these dudes that come and go in their big cars, and I had a yellow Nash Rambler back in those days. And, so, here I am, you know, “Boy, what am I doing? (child’s voice in background) Am I going to compete against these people?” And, so, I sit across the desk there from Marty and I said, “Mr. Westrick, I don’t know much about this business. (noises nearby) I only can tell you this. That if you give me a shot at it, I will do you a good job.” And he said, “Well, that’s okay, Gene.” He said, “We like to do business with new young guys comin’ up, and, you know, you stay in there and we’ll get your products approved through our quality control and, and we’ll do business. If you have the right price and the right quality and the right delivery and whatever.” “Okay, Mr. Westrick.”

And, so, I represented a company out of Eau Claire, Michigan. Silver Mills Frozen Foods. Mainly packers of cherries. And, so, I’d gotten my cherries approved and, so, (audible exhale) Donna called me up and said, “Gene, we need five truckloads of cherries.” “What? Five truckloads of cherries!” “Yeah.” (audible exhale) “Okay, Donna, I’ll come back to you with five.” So I called George Dent. I said, “George, look, I got a big customer on the line and I need a real good price on U.S. Grade A cherries for delivery such and such.” And he said, “Well, Gene, the price is—” I forget. Thirty-six cents or thirty-four cents, whatever it was. And, so, um, I called Donna. I said, “Donna, I got this price of thirty four cents.” And she says, “Uh, now, what did you say, Gene?” “I said thirty-three and a half.” “Well, your—our purchase order number is such and such and such and such, and we need two truckloads sent to Louisiana and three truckloads here to Tampa.” And, so, I was on my way. (laughs)

AH: So, you—

HH: But what I, what I did is, you know, if you don’t know something then you—I would sit there and keep my mouth shut and I would listen. And, uh, you know, by listening and, uh, you know, I picked up. I become self-educated.

AH: So the same thing goes for the art and the antiques as well?

HH: Yeah, I always had a real interest in art. And, at one time, I owned the world’s largest collection Louis Tiffany windows. Not as lamps, but as windows. I had one window that was forty feet tall and twenty-four wide. It was the third largest one that he ever built. And—but, I owned a large collection.

AH: So. So you were—you were basically sold for several million at age, what, thirty-two?

HH: Yeah. Um-hm.

AH: And, um, and then of course there was the clause in the contract—the non-competition clause, right?

HH: Yeah.

AH: You couldn't open a restaurant for five years, so you—

HH: No, I couldn't op—go in the seafood business for—

AH: Oh. I see. Um, so you helped people open restaurants and helped them decorate restaurants, right?

HH: Well, not really. Um, I really wasn't, um—Buckley and myself, we opened three together, and he was the lead partner, and then I opened one in St. Petersburg that I (clears throat)—I felt that I was getting the short end of the stick. And—

AH: I see.

HH: That I wanted to open my, uh, my own restaurant. So I opened my first Sea Wolf in Lakeland. And, you know, I did an outstanding business right there from day one. And, as soon as I opened that, I had gotten a contract to buy the thirteen acres for the—where the Sea Wolf across from Busch Gardens was. And, um (clears throat), that was a real trip. But I had a real good, growing business over in Lakeland, and it took me a little over a year to build the Sea Wolf. I had my own cabinet shop that built all my fancy woodwork. I had my own electricians, my own carpenters, my own construction company—built the thing myself. Did all the landscaping myself. I would go out on weekends in local areas and buy specimen plants out of people's yards and whatever. Like, I was probably one of the first people—persons to do something like that. And, then Scott Lender lent me a twenty ton over-the-road crane, and so I had two digging crews and loading crews and they would go and dig the stuff that I would buy and load it on the trucks, and bring it in and plant it.

AH: Um-hm. The Fish House restaurant. There were some gardens and exotic birds there, too, right?

HH: Um-hm.

AH: So, did you feel, like—when you—especially when you opened the Tampa Sea Wolf, that, kind of, everything you had done before then was just, kind of, all leading up to that? I mean, did you have a feeling like, “this is it?”

HH: Uh, yeah. That, uh, that was a big help. It certainly was. I went—first of all I want to say that the City of Tampa will never see another Sea Wolf. Anything of—close to that magnitude. First of all, a prudent businessman in today's market is not going to spend over a year building a restaurant, have all the fancy woodwork, the wormy chestnut, the oak, the walnut and everything I put in the paneling works and whatever. And they're not going to have the extensive bird gardens and the wild animals, the tigers and the cougars.

They're not going to have the landscaping that I put in there. Then they're not going to have the affordable price that families—families can go there.

AH: Yes.

HH: They're not going to have the art collection that I had. I had a (sound of a cabinet door closing) really expensive art collection. So the City of Tampa, in its history—in fact, I don't know of any area that will ever see another restaurant of the magnitude of the Sea Wolf.

AH: Yeah. Well, probably most of the other cities in America, for that matter.

HH: Yeah.

AH: I mean, saying that economically (inaudible)—

HH: When we opened the—when we opened the Sea Wolf it was like a scene out of *The Great Gatsby* [F. Scott Fitzgerald].

AH: So everyone is taken aback. I mean the—there's lines streaming outside the front door and everything. People are coming from Busch Gardens. But there's also the locals are just flocking to the restaurant.

HH: Yeah (inaudible)—those locals—one of the things that hurt me several years, years later was the gas shortage. But I had people from Sarasota, Bradenton, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, New Port Richey, you know, that would drive to the Sea Wolf.

AH: Um-hm. And I remember your—

HH: Lakeland. Plant City. All over.

AH: And I remember your promotional efforts, giving away the gasoline and everything.

HH: Are you from Tampa?

AH: Um, actually, I've been living here for about six years now.

HH: Okay.

AH: But, uh, Clearwater—I moved there when I was five, so—

HH: Oh.

AH: I spent most of my time growing up in Clearwater.

HH: Uh-huh.

AH: I never got to make it to the Sea Wolf, unfortunately.

HH: Yeah (laughs).

AH: But I hear an awful lot about it.

HH: Yeah.

AH: So, let's see, the—all right, so the Sea Wolf is doing really well,

HH: Uh-huh.

AH: And you've got—you've got huge crowds coming in. I mean you were even talking about open competition with Busch Gardens itself and not some kind of symbiotic relationship where—but more of an outright—your restaurant being an attraction unto itself.

HH: Right.

AH: And, uh—

HH: I had my Clydesdale horses also.

AH: Uh-huh. So what was this about the, the lady dressed up like a New York cop driving the team of Clydesdales? (laughs)

HH: Well, let me think about that.

AH: See, I never know if the papers exaggerate or—(laughs).

HH: Yeah, that was, um, Karen—I'm trying to think for what promotion I did that for. I always had some kind of promotion going on. What it is is that if you can get—and I ended up hiring a newspaper guy that worked for me just to get me free advertising. If you can get free advertising it's a whole lot better than paying big bucks and, um, paying for advertising. And, so I was—I always had some kind of gimmick going on that, um, you know, to get free advertising.

AH: So. So when, when did things start looking difficult in the Sea Wolf? I mean—actually let me ask you another question. Let me put it a different way, I guess. Your—Pat Patterson. I remembered a newspaper article quoting her as saying that you loved to, “Build, build, build.” That when all was said and done and everything was built, you kind of got this feeling of like, well, “I want to go on to the next thing then.” Did you get that feeling?

HH: That's absolutely true. I didn't mind building something and getting it going. But I had virtually (female voice in background) become a slave—I've—my, my reasoning with the Red Lobster, or with the Sea Wolf was that, if I could build a place (sound of electronic phone ringer) that would do five times as much business as the Red Lobster, as Red Lobster, it would take five Red Lobsters to do as much business as I would. I would have a real moneymaker. And, actually, I did, probably as much business as seven Red Lobsters.

But what happens is that you can't find anyone to run it. You know, I was doing the seafood buying, having the—it seemed like every time I turned my back, no matter—there was no amount of money that I could pay people, you know, the magnitude of the place was just so great, that they just, they just couldn't hold on. I have not yet met one person today, even, whom I felt that could operate the Sea Wolf.

AH: Yeah. Especially someone you could trust.

HH: Yeah. And so, what happens, I'd become virtually a slave to the business. And, you know, it just—on and on and on and I just—I was trying, wanting to build a hotel. I had a loan of three million dollars to start the hotel. And I, I started with thirteen acres of land and ended up with twenty-five acres. And I had the property zoned for commercial high-rise. And, so I was going to build a hotel and I was going to have it overlooking the African Kingdom [part of Busch Gardens]. Build a building overlooking the African Kingdom. And I was going to build these little time share deals whereas—you know, where people would buy the rooms, and then they could stay there for a couple of weeks out of the year and we would rent 'em out. Thataway the thing would be paid for (male background voice) basically (inaudible) I finished building it. I got involved in Jimmy Carter's money, 20 percent interest, and there was no way that I could borrow or pick up the three million dollars and start the thing and pay the interest on it while I was getting started. I'd just become real frustrated.

AH: Yeah. So this high-rise you were talking about, is that the Condor complex?

HH: Yeah.

AH: So, it seems like on the one hand you're overwhelmed (noise on tape), but on the other hand you're looking to expand. I mean, the first year after you opened you expand the Sea Wolf, you're getting a hotel.

HH: What, what happens is this. You take so much of your money—like, I was buying land. Okay? The revenue from the Sea Wolf was good. The revenue from the Sea Wolf in Lakeland was, was good. Very good; in fact, very good. But when you're buying all these things and I'm buying art collections. This forty-foot-tall Tiffany window's here that I was going to adorn the hotel with, the lobbies, and all the different things that I was buying and putting in the warehouse, that can catch up with you.

If I would've been able to continue to build, to recoup my monies that I'm putting into all this land and, and other things, I would've probably just kept going, because I liked that. I liked the building, the creative. But the everyday monotonous thing of operating a restaurant is no fun.

AH: So is that why you started giving Pat Patterson more and more, not really control, but, I mean, day-to-day managing things?

HH: Yeah. She was more of a—of the office manager. Not the manager on the floor downstairs. Upstairs, you know, she was, she was office manager up there.

AH: So, what were the most difficult things, I guess? Like, when you talk about the day-to-day and it's really—I mean obviously you've got, you have employees, you have, you know, the seafood to keep coming in and everything. What were the most difficult things?

HH: Well (sighing breath), one thing is (female laugh in background) all of the things that you've got to keep an eye on. People stealing from you. And, here's a thing (female voice in background) being, you know—if you decide that you're going to take off for a couple of days and go to New York, it's like—Charlie Miranda, who's running for mayor now, used to work for me. And he was one of my managers there. And I was in New York, you know, in the early days after I opened the Sea Wolf, I bought the contents of a big church up there, at auction. And I was busy—I had a construction crew up there busy disassembling it for about (door closes) four or five months. Stuff that I bought at auction. That I was going to use in the hotel.

And, I just had a feeling that something wasn't right. So I called Miranda and I said, "Charlie, you know, I just have a gut feeling that something, something's wrong there (female voice in background) and he says, "Well, Gene, I don't know." He says, "Let me check around and I'll, I'll call you back." So several hours later he called me back and said, "Gene, I looked around. I just don't see (reedy cracking sound) any, any problems anywhere." I said, "Okay."

So I got in that Friday night from New York and here's all the managers all huddled in the—in the back area and I said, "What's wrong, guys?" "There's a union meeting going on and they're at such and such a place and, uh, um, you know, (male voice in background) this and that and—" I'm not about to have the union in my restaurant. And the help and this—the people that went to the university that you go to or teach or I'm not sure what you do, had taken it on as a project to unionize the Sea Wolf.

And, so, you're not supposed to go around any of their meetings but I slid around and I'm looking through the door here and what's going on there and—with all these employees. And they're getting up and this and that, and I'm looking at their faces and figuring out who they are and whatever. And, uh (electronic phone ringer) this one girl that was—was a friend, always—a waitress, but always friendly, was, "Hey, how ya doin'," and all this. And she was up there gesturing and running her mouth. So I went back. And so the next

day, here they are, you know, here she, “Oh, how ya doing, Mr. Holloway?” and I don’t even give her the time of day. So she couldn’t stand it. Pretty soon here she comes up to my office. And, “Mr. Holloway, what, what, what’s wrong?” I said, “You know, I really thought you were a friend of mine and, you know, loyalty is—means a lot.” But, anyway, she finally told me who the organizers were.

Pause in recording

Tape 1 ends, Tape 2 begins

AH: (background voices like a public place) So, we’re back with Gene Holloway. It’s October 8, 2002. We’re going to clarify some of the issues covered in the last tape.

HH: One thing, Andrew, is this Bob Dourney. You say that he did sixty percent more business than I did. I just don’t think that—of course I don’t have his records, but I don’t think there’s any way that he did that kind of business. First of all, my former servers, you know, whenever I got back in town, they told me what—how bad the business was. And, I think that (background laughter) also, in one of the newspaper articles Steve Otto talked about going in the place and there was no customers. And he also talked about how greasy the food was.

One of the things that even surprised me about Dourney, because he was a, I think, once a pretty big (inaudible) for Campbell Soup Company. But, you know, whenever you get into seafood, you need to use peanut oil. And that’s one of the first things that he eliminated was peanut oil. And I used to have peanut oil, I think, in—by the—I think in thousand barrel, thousand gallon containers that they would bring in peanut oil in trucks, and we would—we were very careful about our oil.

And, but, another thing about Dourney. I had signed an agreement with him prior to me leaving town and going to Canada. And this agreement was that he had an option to purchase and he was supposed to pay us so many thousand dollars a month. Lease option agreement. I really knew that whoever leased the thing with Dourney wouldn’t be able to handle the business.

AH: Yeah.

HH: But I needed a break. I wanted to get away. I didn’t like some of the things that were happening. Debbie and I was going through a divorce. We were really in—at odds. And, with Debbie, come her brother Gregg. And her brother Gregg was—could be a very vicious, cruel guy. I didn’t like what I was being caught up in there. At that time Debbie had a ten million dollar life insurance policy. I had—I guess I had the life insurance policy, but she was the sole beneficiary. And, uh, but, uh, (clears throat) now I can’t really remember if she owned the policy or I owned it. I wanted to say that from the beginning, many years before, that in the event something happened to me, she wouldn’t be stuck with a lot of taxes and whatever and, I think that I made her the owner of the policy.

But, anyway, back to Bob Dourney. Dourney had tried to buy the property from me months before. And he kept coming around and coming around. And, you know, one day I just said, “Well, you know, this is—this is it.” So I called Dourney and said, “Hey Bob. How much money can you come up with?” And he said, “Well, I can come up with this and that.” Which wasn’t really a whole lot of money for something like the Sea Wolf Restaurant. But it was a, it was something that would give me some freedom and let someone else operate. And he had enough money invested that he sure was gonna try hard.

And, so, I said, “You know, Bobby, by this time next week I want you in the Sea Wolf Restaurant.” So just that quick I come up with an agreement, with a lease purchase for Dourney. He was supposed to pay so much money a month. Well, he made—during, during that whole period of time he made two payments, and that was it. And I had a, oh, I ended up with a judgment against Dourney. And (clears throat) John Cicero was my attorney with (inaudible) the judgment against Dourney. But, uh, so this, this is whenever I brought in Ryan [Martin Ryan]. I was already at, at, in, at the government boot camp.

And, so, I—here’s Dourney’s not making any payments and not getting any money in off the place. I, uh, um so I made a decision—Debbie and I was at odds. There’s no way that I could—felt like bringing Debbie into it. I really wasn’t close to anybody. My brothers—I didn’t want to get them involved in the thing. So I—Ryan, I’d known for a number of years, and he was a fairly good businessman. So I said, you know, “I’ll check with Ryan.” So I get Ryan in and said, “Let’s boot Dourney out. You know, you’ll pay me so much money.” I had—by the time I had Susan up in, in Kentucky with me and I needed some income coming in for her. So I cut deal with Ryan and he brought in this attorney from New York and it took him a lot of months to really get Dourney out.

And, uh, so they finally got Dourney out. And, whereas I thought I was going to be in prison for a year or two, it turned out to be that I was there for the maximum sentence of almost five years. And during that period of time I just saw everything disappearing. You know, before I went into prison, I had a net worth statement of twenty-six million dollars. Of course a lot of that was in antiques. Fourteen million dollars of that was in antiques. And the rest was in my ranch house, my restaurant, which I had high value placed on it. And I say this, that—I’d have to say there’s probably a lot of error in it. ’Cause it was—it was basically a sound statement. Because one thing that the feds tried to do was to break my statement down. If they would’ve been able to break my statement down, they would’ve nailed my ass for a lot more years for giving banks and borrowing money from banks based on false statements.

AH: I see.

HH: So that was one of the things that they tried to do was to break my twenty-six million dollar statement down, and they couldn’t do it. The biggest thing, like I said, was the fourteen million dollars in antiques. They couldn’t break that down, because I had

appraisers from Christie's [auction house], from the Metropolitan Museum [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City], I had good strong statements on my major pieces.

(rapping sound on microphone)

So, when I get back in town, one of the things that I did with Dourney was to put a judgment against him for going after money. By then Ryan had already declared bankruptcy. I had—you know, Ryan owed me something like six million dollars, and Dourney owed me two, three, four million dollars. And, so, Ryan declared personal bankruptcy, and that wiped him out of the picture. And, so, that money was lost and—along with a lot of my art and antiques. And, which, later on, the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] auctioned off a lot of that stuff.

But, anyway, with Dourney we tried—John Cicero tried his best. He hired this guy that serves papers—tried to find Dourney. Couldn't find Dourney. And, so, after six months or so I said, "Well, let me see if I can find him for you." So I went to, to work and, um, Dourney had a friend—

AH: Now was this—were you still in? Or you, were you—

HH: I'm out.

AH: Okay. You—

HH: I'm out.

AH: Okay.

HH: So Dourney—let me back up and say this. When you're in—you're not really supposed to conduct any business from prisons. There's business conducted. I had a visiting room meeting every day with Susan. But there's little she could do. I could make a (sound of door closing and women's voices in background) telephone call, collect, out. And, for a long time, Ryan would accept my collect telephone calls. Then he got to where—here he is in my damned restaurant, he won't even accept my damned call. And the little money that was—less than a thousand dollars a month—that he was sending to Susan, he quit sending to her. And, um, selling off my antiques and whatever and—

Anyway, so I'm, I'm in prison, and I see all of my—my lifetime worth of work going down the doggone drain. And it'd probably cause a lotta guys to jump off the bridge. But, anyway, I took it the way it was and figured it was my fault for be—for being there. Being caught up in that position. But back to Dourney.

So they couldn't find Dourney. You know, I was thinking, "Well, maybe Dourney has got some money and maybe I can tap into that." Dourney's wife was supposed to have some money, and she had died, and I thought, "Well, maybe there's some money there."

So I called—I got in touch with this friend of Dourney. And I can't think of his name now. And I'm—act like an old-time friend of Dourney's—New Jersey. He was from New Jersey. And I said, "You know—" What was his real name? But anyway, um, "I'm here in Florida. I'm just going to be here in a few—for a few days and I'd like to drop in and see my old buddy Dourney. I used to work with him." "Oh, oh. Well, that's great. Well, Bob is getting ready to fly to New York this next week and, er, at such-and-such a date, and he won't—he won't be in town."

I said, "Oh, my goodness. I'm sorry. What—What airline is he flying?" They gave me the name of the airline. So then, I guess, this guy called Dourney and said, "Hey, I talked to an old friend of yours and he—" "Bullshit. I don't have no friend like that." So I'd already called the ticket agency and they had Bob Dourney's schedule.

AH: Ah.

HH: So I had let the paper server know that, "Hey, we're going to trap Dourney, okay?" (AH laughs) This paper server had been trying for eight months and he couldn't—wasn't having any luck in running Dourney down. We were going to have him cornered. And I said, "You're going to have to be there, there at a certain time and whatever." So, he says, "Well, I'll be surprised." I said, "Okay." So, um, anyway. Dourney had called and changed the reservations into another name. So I called back and, "Dourney's not—not on the flight." So I thought, Well, I'm going to be at that airport anyway. Something tells me that, that he's going to be there. So here I go. I get to the airport and I'm on time. The paper server is a half an hour late.

AH: Okay.

HH: I'm standing on one foot and the other, and I see Dourney over here talking to people. So now we're going to trap this ... [guy], okay? And, uh, like I said, he's probably over three or four million dollars. I don't know what the—what the thing was—the judgment that we had against him. And, um, so finally, here comes the guy. He shows up. "Well, I had this problem, that problem." "Okay." "There's Dourney." "Are you sure?" (AH laughs) "That's Dourney, I know him." "How about going over to Dourney and start a conversation with him." I said, "Oh, okay." So I go over to Dourney and say, "Hey, Bob!" "Hey, Gene! Man, it's so good to see you, and how you doing?" And, um, so, um, anyway, um the paper server's coming up. I says, "Bob, this guy needs to talk to you about some paperwork, but it's good to see you, buddy."

AH: Uh-huh.

HH: Here comes the paper server and hands him the paper work. Well, to make a long story short, John Cicero was never able to extract any money from Dourney. So that was a dead issue there. So that—that was just all lost in the shovel. You know, whenever I—I made myself a couple of notes, 'cause I forget about all these doggone things.

AH: Um-hm.

HH: One of the things that I did. I don't remember if I told you this earlier, Andrew. But when you're in business you get—like I was—and you got a lot of, lot of irons in the fire and all the things that are happening, you get people that try to screw you. And, um, I got to where I was pretty good at turning the tables on them. What I call my checkerboard move. Where I've made up my mind that, Hey, that guy just screwed me. He's trying to screw me. He just screwed me. I'd secretly pull out my little game that I would play with that person. Did I tell you this story?

AH: Was this the finding the thing in the dumpster?

HH: No.

AH: Okay.

HH: So, I would, um, I would pull out my little, my little game that I would play with this individual that was trying put a screwing on me. And I would never say a word to this individual, but (inaudible), "You're just trying to screw, me buddy." I'd go to work. And I would come up with a method where I would turn the tables and I would screw him. And then I'd walk away from him and never have anything more to do with him.

AH: Yeah.

HH: And, basically, that is what it was with Debbie. I made a mistake with Debbie, but then I let her back in. But Debbie left at one point, and I was really in a good position to follow through with a divorce. And, so, I pull out my checker game, and I had played the checkers, and I was in a good position with her. She come back in, you know, the restaurant to be going for thirty days. "You know, I love you, love you, I'll do this and I'm sorry and, that I left, and all this, and can I please come back." I said, "Debbie, you can come back. But I want to tell you this. I work too hard, too many hours to have someone destroy me like yourself." (background laughter) I said, "You can come back with—all I want to know is that, in the event of a divorce, what I owe you."

I said, "You just go ahead and tell me what you want. And make a list of what you want. Since you have the attorneys, just go ahead and get 'em to draw up the paperwork like a, a nuptial agreement. You draw up the paperwork and you—tell me what you want." (television audio in background) "Well, I want this and this, this and this." "Okay, that's fair enough." And she called me back on the phone and says, "You know, I decided this." And I said, "That's okay. Just get your guys to draw up the paperwork." Well, the ranch was not included in, in our handshake agreement that allowed her to come back into my life. I should've just cut it off right there and taken the losses and whatever.

So, I let her come back into my life after pulling out my checkerboard with her. And, so, anyway, after about a month or so I asked Debbie, I said, "Debbie, did you get your attorney to draw up any paperwork?" By now Debbie's back living with me at the ranch house. And the ranch house, even though I had bought it after Debbie come into the

picture, it's part of my estate, that I used the monies to buy it before I ever met Debbie. And I thought it was my piece of property. And Debbie said, "No, I haven't had a chance yet." "Okay." So after a week or so goes by I said, "Debbie, did you ask your attorneys to—?" "I don't want you to ask me that again. I'll do it whenever I get around to it. You just want a divorce anyway." And so I thought to myself, Well, you ..., you know? I shoulda nailed you when I had the chance.

So, by then I'm staying at my apartment over next to the restaurant, and Debbie and her brother are staying out at my farmhouse. And, uh, so he steals all of my—my gun collection. Sells it for drugs and whatever. And, um, so anyway, kind of getting off base. But I'm just trying to this say whole checker game that I played. And, uh, so after I sell the—lease the property to Dourney, I, uh, I call in John Adcock, who's my insurance broker. And John died six months ago, anyway. And I told John, I said, "I don't like the position that I'm in with Debbie and her brother. I don't know that Debbie would ever hurt me, but ten million dollars is, is a lot of money—a lot of money." And I said, "I don't want to walk around with two bodyguards and a gun in my boot and whatever. I'm afraid someone's going to kill me. You know, I've already had some things happen that makes me real nervous." (clears throat)

And, uh, so, um, John said, "Well, Gene, I had an idea." He says, "This is what you wanted so I've checked and with your net worth statements—you can have sixteen million dollars worth of life insurance. And I suggest you do it, since you're going to build that hotel, you're going to have to have life insurance, I suggest that you take out the other six million dollars. The ten million dollars, when you quit making the premium payments on it, it will be null and void. And then if we need more, we'll take out more." But either John Adcock—and I have an idea it was John Adcock—didn't want to lose the, that policy, told Debbie that I'd quit making the premium payments on it.

Well, she started making the premium payments on it. You know, usually, anybody that tells my story gets this insurance thing wrong. Most people, they say, "Well, what did you do with all the money you got, from the insurance company?" Well, this was, this was in my portfolio. I don't know if you've read it.

AH: Okay.

HH: Okay. What to tell you—a year or so later, after I left—this was in July, August, September—someone was making the premium payments on this, uh, on this policy and it was Debbie.⁴

AH: Yes.

HH: Debbie and her boyfriend.

AH: I see.

⁴ Interviewee clarifies: "Ten million."

HH: Made the premium payments on my life.

AH: Okay. So what's interesting about it, and this is where, I guess, the newspapers got it wrong, so, here in 1982, that's when it finally went.

HH: Yeah.

AH: It—it—I mean the policy—

HH: I'm in—I'm in prison by now.

AH: Sure.

HH: And, uh, Debbie paid up to that point—

AH: And then—

HH: I'm in prison—

AH: And then it was finally cancelled.

HH: It was cancelled.

AH: So, what's interesting about it is that there was articles talking about, uh, you know, there was a lot of conjecture. Where you disappear. Then, you know, you made a call to Pat Patterson. And then—

HH: Let me tell you the rest of the story.

AH: Okay. Sorry.

HH: (clears throat) Well, whenever I saw this insurance wasn't—I wasn't cancelled out, I'm—my life was still in danger. And if I had not of left, Andrew, I'd been a dead man. Someone would have gotten to me. (inaudible) group, was a friend of Debbie. He was a gangster there in the Tampa area. Greg and Jimmy D'onofrio's right hand man, you know, whenever I come back home from Canada, when I was out on bail, Greg come by and was all buddy-buddy and this big motorcycle guy who was Jimmy D'onofrio's bodyguard wanted to take me for a ride. "Why don't we just go out and discuss this." (they laugh)

And I'd had a wire around my neck, you know, a block away from the house. So—but anyway, before I left now I'm ... [mad] at the insurance company, you know? In fact, really, if I could ever find out who told Debbie that— if it was John Adcock that told Debbie that, and not the insurance company that they needed to start making the premium payments, I'm probably in a position for a big-ass lawsuit. But, uh, I never really asked

Debbie who told her. Whether it was this insurance company or John Adcock. I think it was John Adcock.

AH: So—I—maybe you can clarify something for me. So, you're the one that started the policy, but you couldn't cancel it?

HH: Well, I did—I was making the premium payments on it.

AH: Yeah.

HH: And, um, I—the policy would be cancelled if I stopped making the premium payments.

AH: I see.

HH: But it was in her name in such a way that, that, you know, I couldn't—

AH: She could continue to make the payments.

HH: Yeah. I think that's the way it was.

AH: I see.

HH: I can't remember, really, if it was in my name or hers. But the insurance company notified her and she started making the premium—her and her boyfriend started making the premium payments. So now I'm ... [angry]. I'm ... [angry] at John Adcock.

AH: I see—just one more question. D'onofrio, how do you spell that? D-o-n-a-?

HH: D'onofrio?

AH: Yeah. Jimmy?

HH: D'onofrio(??)—

Waitress: I just want to let you know I'm leaving. So Jessica is going to take over for you.

HH: Oh. Can I—let me go ahead and pay your bill.

Waitress: Okay. Sure.

Pause in recording

HH: So, like I said, the mobster in Tampa. The old man's dead by now. But I'm sure the bodyguard's still around. But this is the way it come down. So, by now I pulled out my

checkerboard and I'm ... [angry]. I'm ... [angry] at the insurance companies. For one, when Greg stole all of my damned guns the insurance company figured out, and it was a heavy duty collection, not to pay me for this collection. So I didn't get paid for that—for all of that. And I was ticked off. Ticked off with John Adcock, either him or whoever let Debbie know that, that she needed to start making payments if she wanted it. So, anyway, uh, I set out—

AH: All right. So you got out the checkerboard.

HH: I got out the checkerboard. I had played that checkerboard many times before. In fact, I'm going to change the subject a little bit, but—one was Ralph Lupton that used to own Lupton's Barbecue [Ralph Lupton's Fatmans Restaurant and Catering]. Ralph Lupton, Debbie used to stop up there for breakfast every so often and here comes old Ralph. He slides up to her and, trying to make out with her and, you know, really bad mouthing me, and he knows what a son-of-a-bitch I am and whatever, and I had helped Ralph through a lot of things. I'd sent him some of my carpenters (inaudible) remodeling. Gave him some ideas. I was a good customer of his—more so than he was of mine.

And here's this ... [clown] trying to make a pass at Debbie, and telling her what a no-good ... [clown] I am. So Debbie comes back and tells me. So now I am ... [angry] at Ralph. I pull out my checkerboard and so I order this big smoker—barbecue thing. (loud woman's laugh in background) ... So I put in this big smoker and started serving—I had these colored guys used to work for me make some righteous barbecue. And I put up on my marquee, "Ralph, smell—" he had on his marquee, "Smell this smoke"—I put, "Ralph, smell *this* smoke." (AH laughs)

Okay? That was part of—one of my checker games. But I had played that checker game many, many times before. So, anyway, back to my stories. Where was I? Oh. So I'm ... [angry] at the insurance company. Okay? ... And, uh, so, I said, "I'm going to ... [be dead for] the insurance company. If I can." Well, first of all, you know, even then I knew that, that if I died supposedly, that before someone would pay off that much insurance they'd probably want to see a body or have some pretty doggone good reason, you know, for a lot of years. So I put together my (inaudible) and Thrasher and Marlene Padovan which—Thrasher ended up stealing three of my airplanes and, um, there was a lot of money involved there. He'd stolen three of my airplanes from me. Uh, Marlene Padovan was part of it and she was caught up in that. I paid her attorneys' fees and I gave her twenty-five thousand dollars for her problems.

AH: I see.

HH: Sheree whatever-her-name-was—

AH: Patterson.

HH: [Sheree] Patterson was caught up in it. ... [I] paid her attorney (laughter in background). And, uh, so, um, anyway the deal when I was with—when I was going

to—first of all, then I’m involved in a heavy duty divorce with Debbie. She’s coming at me with—with—and I’m ... [angry] at Debbie and I’ve got my checker game out with Debbie. Okay? Um, so, I’ve—I knew that, um, right then, that there was too much of my assets or whatever on top of the table, that I needed to shuffle some things around and whatever. So I wanted to—I had a divorce hearing, I think, a week before I disappeared.

AH: Okay.

HH: So I was, I was trying to waylay that divorce, and Debbie was wanting big bucks and whatever and I was—not wanting to give her big bucks. So I, I devised this plan that it would appear that I was dead and that would stop the divorce proceedings. And if I got a chance to—to nail a ... insurance company along the way that would be good, too. Okay? And, um, so, that was my, my reason for putting this thing together. Was that. And, uh, was to disappear off the face of the earth. Thataway no Jimmy D’onofrio and his buddies and Greg and whatever would be trying to nail ... [me] for ten million dollars. So, anyway, (clears throat) that whole thing backfired on me. The, um, there was never a claim made to the insurance company.⁵

AH: Yeah. I never thought there was. So—

HH: Never.

AH: So—

HH: How did they do it?

AH: Yeah.

HH: Well, I made a call to Pat Patterson from New York, and I let Pat Patterson know that—that I was in New York and, and that I would be in touch with her every so often. So that call that I made to Pat Patterson was supposedly, in effect, put the insurance policies into effect. So they got me for wire fraud.

AH: Yeah.

HH: Wire fraud is what I went to prison for with that one telephone call.

AH: See—

HH: In Canada, my—my attorney told me, he says, “They’d never have gone—they’d never have gone to trial with anything like that.”

AH: Yeah.

⁵ Interviewee clarifies: “By me or anyone.”

HH: But I went to trial for—that was, that was what I was charged with. That’s what I went to prison for.

AH: Just the phone call.

HH: The phone call.

AH: See, ’cause the—the newspaper said that, after the phone call, Pat Patterson made several payments on the insurance—on the insurance policies that you had.

HH: Well, if she—if she did I don’t think Pat Patterson did it. I think that, um—

AH: Right. It was Debbie.

HH: Debbie. Yeah, I’ll tell you what Pat Patterson probably did. She probably made premium payments on the six million dollars.

AH: Okay.

HH: On the six million dollars—

AH: On your policy.

HH: On my policy. But not—not on Debbie’s policy.

AH: Okay.

HH: That’s probably what—what that was.

AH: I see. So, so, so basically that phone call was wire fraud because you were calling Pat Patterson and that—

HH: Yeah.

AH: And that she made a payment on—

HH: Can I—can I—I want to tell you this. In all honesty, sitting here looking you in the face and in the eye, I intended to ... [nail] the insurance company if I could. I intended to. That’s what I told the people around me. “I’m going to ... [nail] the ... insurance company.” And, uh, but bottom line, I—and once I was away and, you know, it become even more impossible—even Sheree and I talked about it, “Well, Gene, you know that’s an impossible dream.” I said, “I know it, I know it.”⁶

⁶ Interviewee adds: “Most of the time when I played my checker game I won, this one I lost. But, no maybe I won. I’m still here.”

AH: But Sheree—

HH: (clears throat) No one is ever gotten this insurance thing straight. I never collected any money. I never—there was never a claim turned in—you read that one agreement there. Pat Patterson, I guess, probably made those payments—

AH: On the six million dollar one.

HH: Yeah. At probably my request, I don't even remember now.⁷

AH: Yeah.

HH: Debbie—I felt, you know, at one point there, that that was going to be cancelled out. But, you know, two weeks before I left I found out that no, it was not cancelled out, and I was in jeopardy. And—

AH: So did she have that divorce hearing right before you left? Or did—were you able to—

HH: No. No, I—that's the reason why I left. I left a week before—

AH: Oh. Before the hearing—

HH: Before the divorce hearing.

AH: Okay. Interesting.

HH: So, that, uh, that right there was some bad moves on my part. 'Cause I went to trial with the federal government and I whipped ... [them] in the first hearing. And if I had it to do all over again, I'd go to trial with them again. I plea bargained with them and that was a mistake.

AH: Yeah. Well, they certainly didn't give you any breaks. That's for sure.

HH: No. They gave me everything they could. And then, when I got back, it was the IRS harassment (yelling in background) that cost me also.

AH: And not only were you saddled with all these debts but that you had a lot of people like Dourney who weren't paying debt money that they owed to you.

HH: If people would've paid me the money they owed me—Ryan and, uh, Dourney—any of the monies that I owed other—I'd a paid off and still had most of the money in my pocket.

⁷ Interviewee adds: "But really, why would she make any payments on someone who is presumed dead? Just the mere fact that I called her from New York set the justice wheels in motion."

AH: Yeah.

HH: But, uh, you know, they mismanaged my affairs and, uh—Ryan—and like I said, I'm—I really just didn't think I would be away that long. But I saw it all disappear. Whenever I left prison, I had a brown bag and that was, basically, everything that I owned.

AH: Yeah.

HH: So was there any other questions about the insurance, or did I make that pretty clear?

AH: No, I think you made it pretty clear.

HH: Was that basically the way that you had—saw it or was it—?

AH: No, I actually, I, I just went by the, the newspaper sources—

HH: Newspaper. Yeah.

AH: And they had it—they didn't even, you know, know about the Debbie thing. They didn't investigate into that. So, as far as they were concerned it was all you and, um, they didn't—they didn't know about all this other stuff.

HH: You see, if I would have gone to trial, I could have made a real good case about me fleeing with what I might be faced with.

AH: Exactly.

HH: And, um, if I'd have gone to trial I would've used it.

AH: But you were just—you were tired of the whole process.

HH: I was tired of it.

AH: Yeah.

HH: I was drinking too much, and tired of it, and whatever.

AH: Yeah.

HH: Just wanted to get it over with.

AH: Yeah. Understood.

HH: But here is, um, you said you (inaudible) with the portion right there.

AH: Okay. We're looking at a newspaper article. (sound of newspaper page turning) It's the *Tampa Trib* [*Tampa Tribune*], February 9, 2000, page 6. And the—it's something about Gary Betz here. (reading) He put a lot of bad guys in jail, Ryan said. "In recent years Betz had joined Butterworth in tackling white collar crime including cases against insurance companies and sweepstakes empires, American Family Publishers, Publishers Clearinghouse. When he advised me a couple of years ago I should sue Ed McMahon and Dick Clark, I thought the man must be nuts." What is the section you wanted to—?

HH: Oh, this—no, we need to read this, this—

AH: Okay.

HH: Right here.

AH: "In his heyday at the Tampa Federal Courthouse, Betz prosecuted a Russian spy and deported a Lithuanian who participated in Nazi activities during World War II. He presented the government's cases against flamboyant Tampa restaurateur Gene Holloway, accused of faking his death at sea." [Feb. 9, 2000 *Tampa Tribune*, obituary of Gary Betz] So there you have it. You've got a Lithuanian war criminal, and—

HH: What, what, what gets me is that, you know—

AH: That you would be mentioned—

HH: I would be—I would be mentioned in the same breath as a Russian spy and—

AH: Yeah. It's kind of like the difference between Kenneth Lay and Martha Stewart or something and, uh, it's apples and oranges.

HH: Yeah. Let me see what else I've got. I think that that was most of my notes. Sometime I would, um, like, when we start out again, I'd like you to really read through a little this closer and, uh, see if I've cut it.

You know, the thing that I like about this, Andrew, is that, you know, just scanning through it like I did the other day it just, kind of, all brought it together and everything has been kind of piecemeal, like, here and there and whatever.

AH: True.

HH: And nothing is ever going to draw it together. And just having it all brought together was, um (male voice in background), was worthwhile in all this endeavor I'm doing with you.

AH: Yeah. Well, I appreciate that. That's one—one of the reasons why I wanted to tackle this story so much. It was because I read all these things but there was so much, in the

newspaper article, so much speculation, and there was so many unanswered questions and, uh, nobody had ever attempted to really bring it together, everyone. There was, like, the Hal Robinson article was neat but that came out, like, shortly after all stuff happened. And, really not everything had settled down enough yet for, uh—to be able to put it all together into one—one big package. So—so, yeah, so I appreciate the fact that—that you put it all together now. But, what—how did you meet Marty Ryan, anyway?

HH: Marty Ryan, um, I used to buy these Louis Tiffany windows. And, um, there was this auction going on in New York someplace that they were auctioning off six or eight life-sized Tiffany windows out of this church. And, uh, they were authentic—they were authentic Louis Tiffany windows. And, uh, so, um, I went to New York and, um, they were religious windows but they were still, you know, still Louis Tiffany's work, you know? Louis' religious windows didn't bring the prices of, um, like, some of his other windows that were not religious.

AH: Sure.

HH: So, anyway, I bought all six of them and they wanted someone to haul them down and I guess that, um, Ryan hauled them down and I met Ryan at that point. And Ryan's, kind of, become like my antique field man, you know? He was going around to these different places and whenever he saw something that he thought was—first of all, I didn't really buy anything unless it was a great buy.

AH: Yeah.

HH: And, uh (clears throat), I, uh, then I would get it appraised and, uh, that would increase my net worth statement. If I bought it for two thousand dollars and it's worth twenty-five thousand dollars, you know, I'd get a certified appraiser and—(clears throat) one—one thing that, uh, places Ryan—All Angels Church in New York—I don't know if I told you about that—was having a auction. And, so, so Ryan and I flew to New York—they had a big—they had some Tiffany windows. One was a thirty foot tall, twenty four foot wide Louis Tiffany window and it was called Angels Ascending to Heaven. All these figures, um, in this big window. And, uh, so (clears throat), the church had it appraised, uh—insured for half a million dollars.

And, so, uh, I felt that, um, I wanted—wanted to buy it, but I wasn't going to spend big money, so Ryan had kind of wanted to know what I wanted to pay for it and I said, “We'll see when we get there.” I really didn't want to let the cat out of the bag, you know. I had first thought that, I forget the name of (inaudible), I bid up to twenty-five thousand (inaudible) pick it up to fifty thousand.

So (clears throat), when the auction started, uh, there was, uh, seven lancet windows (inaudible) windows as tall as this ceiling, Louis Tiffany windows, and I bought them at ridiculously low prices, five, six, seven, eight hundred dollars, something like that. And they should have been eight or ten thousand dollars. So I said, “Something is wrong here, Ryan. I—something is wrong.”

But what was wrong—Christie’s, who had never done an auction outside of their, um, auction house, sent all these flyers out, these booklets out that All Angels Church was being auctioned off. But they sent it to the wrong people. Instead of architects and dealers and whatever, they sent it to doctors and this sort of stuff. And a doctor come in and look at something that size, you know, and, “How in the world am I going to carry that home in my briefcase?”

AH: (inaudible) (laughs)

HH: So, uh, what happened is that there was nobody there at the au—the auction that—

AH: That knew—

HH: That knew what and how to get the stuff apart and whatever. So I walked away with the auction. But, uh, when we got to the window, I bought the window, I think that—and Christie’s made a terrible mistake. They started the, uh, the auction off at, um, thirty-five hundred dollars and it should have been a hundred thousand dollars. So it went up to fifty-two hundred dollars and I bought it. And, uh, well then, let’s see, was it Christie’s? Yeah, I think it was—yeah, it was Christie’s that appraised the window for nine hundred thousand dollars. So even though I paid thirty-two hundred dollars or fifty-two hundred dollars, my net worth statement was now based on almost a million dollars on that window certified by—

AH: Well—

HH: Christie’s.

AH: Yeah.

HH: So. With this big painting that I had. (clears throat)

AH: Is this the religious one that—

HH: Yeah.

AH: You wanted the Pope to come pick up?

HH: Yeah.

AH: Uh-huh.

HH: Well, that one right there, the Metropolitan Museum appraised it for a million bucks. And I, uh, I had five thousand dollars in restoring it, I think, and that—and that’s about it.

AH: I see.

HH: Uh, you know, even though—and I showed those on my net worth statement. I have a net worth statement that's worth, uh, twenty-six million dollars, but I got all these things at I might've paid. So that's what the government tried to tear down but they couldn't do it.

AH: So, then, whatever happened to that, uh, that painting?

HH: It was bought at auction along with—

AH: Okay. The IRS, yeah.

HH: I'm not sure where all that stuff ended.

AH: Yeah. Interesting.

HH: Anyway, that's all that I had—all on my mind. Do you have any more questions that you can think of?

AH: Not that I can really think of. Um, definitely the, uh, one, uh, you know, if you don't want to answer it it's fine. But I wanted to ask you about you—you had cancer a few years ago, right?

HH: Uh-huh. Yeah.

AH: And, uh, so what did you—did you have surgery or chemo or—?

HH: Yeah. What happened was as a young man, I got struck in the back by lightning. I had a big scar on my back and, um, that, uh, I didn't take care of that scar. I got it sunburnt out in the sun with my shirt off and whatever.

AH: I see.

HH: So it developed into a big tumor on my back and became cancerous. (clears throat) I had that removed—surgically removed. It was a big tumor, and then I had radiation.

AH: So how did you get struck by lightning?

HH: (coughs)

AH: What were the circumstances?

HH: I was, um, working—I was a young man. I was working up under the eave of my house. And, um, this—I was on my hands and knees and this big, black cloud, seems like it was no higher than the tallest thing comes—started coming over and, um, I sensed something was going to happen, something was wrong. And I started to get up. At that

time lightning (loud male laugh in background) caught the flashing around the house and went down and caught my back. Knocked me out there for a few minutes.

AH: So, how old were you when that happened?

HH: I must've been in my early twenties, twenty-two, twenty-three—

AH: You had your own house at that time?

HH: Yeah.

AH: Yeah. Oh. (laughter in background) What about, um, one thing I wanted to ask you—Mt. Erebus. That was an, um, an active volcano?

HH; Um-hm. In fact there's a really—a real, real good article and, when, if I find out when it's going to show I'll let you know. (more laughter) And it's called, um, hot—Hard Water with the Block, I think, I think that's it called, the Discovery Channel. But it shows Mt. Erebus and how it controls all the weather around it and conveys how the—how they tried to get down into the crater. There's actually (more background laughter) a, a lake of molten lava. And then way down below that is the earth's—and the hot, and it pumps up that molten lava into this lake. And, uh, we had tried to go down to the lake, um, and, uh, but, uh, it's really, really—it's the best I've ever seen on it.

AH: Yeah. Interesting. Yeah, definitely, let me know. (background laughter) Um, yeah. I don't know. I can't really think of anything else. Uh, we've covered our ground pretty well.

HH: Yeah, Like I said, I'd like to get together with you some other time and scan this—

AH: Sure.

Pause in recording

AH: Okay, so we're talking about Homosassa?

HH: Homosassa. And (clears throat) the reason why—one of the reasons why my failure at the Sea Wolf Restaurant there. Uh (clears throat), whenever I, I went to open the Sea Wolf, I, uh (clears throat), I just felt that I was going to need some bouncers. Those people up there in that area, they started drinking—

AH: Oh, yes. Yes, we did talk about this.

HH: We did talk about it?

AH: And it was the undercover agent.

HH: Undercover agent that finally nabbed all these people that were my customers and, uh, whenever that article come out in the paper and they started prosecuting those—those people, next day after that article come out—the day before my place was filled with people. The next day it was zero.

AH: Yeah. Nobody wanted to tangle with that kind of stuff.

HH: Nobody—everybody was ticked off at me, because they thought that I was in cahoots with, um, with the government trying to—and—but anyway, I had already told you that story.

AH: Yeah. And you had cleaned up in prison. Right? I mean, by the time you went to prison, that was it?

HH: Yeah. Yeah.

AH: You never relapsed after that?

HH: No. I've never—I was a heavy alcohol drinker, but I was really never much of a drug user.

AH: Yeah, I see.

HH: It, um, you know, maybe some of my girlfriends were—

AH: Yeah.

HH: Were drug users. But I myself never was into that.

AH: Well, alcohol was usually the only thing mentioned and if there was anything else ever mentioned, um, it was Valium.

HH: Yeah. Yeah.

AH: And that was when you were getting all stretched out with the Sea Wolf.

HH: That's true.

AH: Yeah. But, uh—(sound fades)

end of interview

[Interviewee adds: “We are put here on this earth to learn. I've had/have a lot of learning to do. I'm grateful to have all the wonderful things that a person can have, art, antiques, beautiful homes, offices, beautiful women, business that I founded, a love of exist animals and I had these things at a young age. No matter who we are or what we have, at

some time we have to give it up. My life is a long ways from over; in the year 2008 I'm in great health. Each day of my life is a challenge to be successful in what I have been doing for eighteen years: a hunter of gold, jewels, treasure. My life is far from over. How wonderful it is to have opportunity. Thank you, America.”]