

AL 153

Interviewee: Scott Camil

Interviewer: Stuart Landers

Date: October 20, 1992

L: This is an oral history interview with Scott Camil being conducted at his house in the southern part of Alachua County. Today is October 20, 1992, and my name is Stuart Landers. Tell me your full name.

C: Scott Camil.

L: Is there a middle name?

C: No.

L: Where were you born?

C: I was born in Brooklyn, New York, May 19, 1946. I will also say that May 19 is also the birthday of Ho Chi Minh [1890-1969; Vietnamese Communist leader], Malcolm X [1925-1965; American civil rights activist], Augusto Sandino [1893-1934; Nicaraguan guerrilla leader], and Kemal Ataturk [1880-1938; first president of Turkish Republic, 1923-1938]. I was actually born with the name Scott Abramson, but my mother remarried when I was four, so Scott Camil was always my name. I never changed it back to my original name because my name is who people know me by.

L: Do you know anything about Abramson, your biological father?

C: Yes. He lives here in Gainesville. He works for the state in the health department. He is a veteran of World War II. He has also done time in prison for marijuana.

L: What is his first name?

C: Sanford.

L: You are Jewish, correct?

C: Yes. I was raised Jewish, and I was bar mitzvahed. I had to go to Hebrew school because the family made me, but they said that after I was bar mitzvahed I would not have to go anymore. And after I was bar mitzvahed, I did not go anymore. So I am Jewish as a sort of a race, but I do not have a religious belief. I really consider myself a human being; I think that religion is one of the things that divides human beings from each other, and that makes me not happy with religion. When I was against the war and I tried to get help, I could not get help

from the Protestants or the Catholics or the Jews. The only people that would help me were the Unitarians and the Quakers. Even in Vietnam, I wondered why they would give prayers for our guys that were killed, but they would not give prayers for the guys that we were killing. I thought that in religion we were all supposed to be the children of God. I just thought it was hypocritical.

L: So you moved away from religion at a fairly early age, I guess.

C: Right. I am proud to be Jewish, but it is not a religion to me. It is more like a culture; my culture.

L: What was your stepfather's full name?

C: Walter Camil.

L: What was your mother's name?

C: Gilda Hersh, later changed to Gida De Hersh. Her last name now is Peterson.

L: So she has been remarried again.

C: Yes.

L: Where are your parents and stepfather from? What are their backgrounds?

C: My real father, my stepfather, and my mother were all born in New York. Actually, all three of them were Bohemians in the Village. On my mother's side, my grandparents came from Romania and Russia. On my father's side, they came from what they called Russia-Poland. So my parents were first-generation Americans. I was a second-generation American, but my grandparents were born in Europe.

L: Do you remember anyone speaking Yiddish?

C: Yes.

L: Your parents or your grandparents?

C: My grandparents and my great-grandparents.

L: I understand that you grew up mainly in Dade County, in Hialeah.

C: Yes.

L: When did you come to Florida from New York?

C: I do not really remember the early time. I was told that we came here when I was four, but I was too young to remember stuff like that. I have a few memories of the tenement building in Brooklyn: a big, red building with an elevator, and we lived on the second floor. The milkman used to put the milk and the eggs and the butter by the door. Then I remember living in Florida, where we lived in different houses. We lived in Coconut Grove. I went to different schools. But I actually do not remember getting in a car and driving from New York to Florida.

L: Okay. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

C: Yes. I have a sister named Starr who is two years younger than me from my real father, and then my two brothers were fathered by my stepfather. Their names are Eric Camil and Clay Camil. They are both City of Miami police officers. My brother Eric is a veteran – not a combat veteran, but he was in the army. He is ten years younger than me.

L: So your stepfather was in the Miami police force?

C: Yes. He was a civilian employee of the Miami police department. He was an I.D. technician. He took fingerprints and photos at crimes.

L: What do you remember about growing up in Hialeah and Dade County?

C: I have talked to my brothers about this. When I left the house, I was like seventeen, so my youngest brother was seven, and my other brother was probably nine or ten. I remember growing up in a house with four kids, and the three boys shared one room, and my sister had the other room. But my brothers remember growing up in a house with two kids because my sister and I were grown up and gone when they were growing up in the years that they remember.

I remember being able to go to the beach. I remember going fishing off the bridges. I remember that we were real poor and we ate potatoes a lot. A lot of nights we did not have food and went to bed without food. People did not like us because we were Jewish. Since my parents had trouble paying the rent, I remember getting kicked out of places all the time. The landlord would come, and there would be arguments, and we would have to pack up and leave. My grandparents would want to help out, but my parents did not want any help from them.

Looking back at it now, one of the things that I remember a lot that disturbs me is that we children were not treated as human beings. We were more like property. [The attitude was that] children are to be seen and not heard. When my parents

had friends come over, we could not address them. They had to address us first, and we always had to call them "sir" or "ma'am". Our ideas did not count. Our thoughts did not count. If my father or mother said to do something [and] you said, "Why?" you would get your ass kicked. I [sometimes] went to school with a bloody nose [or] with a black eye. HRS never came. The police never came to find out what happened. Beating your children was acceptable.

L: We are talking about the mid to late 1950s, right?

C: Right. At the time, it seemed normal because everybody got beat. You could always hear someone on the block screaming and yelling because they were getting beat with the belt. It was just normal. Now I have three kids, and I would never hit them. I mean, it is totally unacceptable to me. If I ask my kids to do something and they have a reason for not wanting to do it, if their reason makes sense then they do not have to do it. They are allowed to express themselves, and they are allowed to win. I was not allowed to express myself, and I was not allowed to win. I was just property, basically.

I also remember, on the other hand, a lot of love from my grandparents and my aunt and my uncle. I ran away a bunch of times because I hated my stepfather and I did not like getting beat.

L: Speaking of your stepfather, in some of these articles that I have read, you mention that he was a member of the John Birch Society.

C: Yes. He made tapes. You would dial "FREEDOM" on the telephone and you would get a message about the communist conspiracy. I was real young then, and I did not know what any of that stuff meant. What I do remember about it was that they would have meetings at the house. When they would have meetings, I would have to go to my room. I also remember (I do not know why I remember this in particular) that they had pictures of Martin Luther King at a meeting, and they would say that he was a communist and that the meeting that he was at was communist and [the people] were communist.

There were TV shows like "I Led Three Lives." On TV, you would see the map and it would be turning red, and it would be the communism spreading. In school, we would have air raid drills where we would have to hide under our desks. All of this had to do with [the fear that] the communists were going to bomb us and that the communists were trying to take over the world. The communists were the Russians. I would not have been able to tell you what a communist believed except that they wanted to take over the world and they were the bad guys.

I remember [during air raid drills] that we were supposed to stay away from

windows. We would get under our desks until we got the "all clear" sign. I remember Jack Webb [1920-1982, American actor] being one of the proponents of the good guys. [He was] telling us what we were supposed to do and stuff like that. Some people would build bomb shelters.

In my memory, the most evil thing you could be was a communist. It was even more evil than when we were kids and we would play war: there were the Japs and the Jerries, but nothing was as ominous as being a communist. Of course, back then, I did not know that the Russians were our allies in World War II. I just knew that they were the bad guys.

L: Did you go through the public school system?

C: Yes, I did. Because we were poor, we had vouchers for lunch at school, and kids made fun of us because we had holes in our clothes. My stepfather really resented having us there. He liked my mother, although he beat her, too.

L: [He resented] you and your sister?

C: Me and my sister. My two brothers really got treated nice. We got treated bad. He would send us to bed all the time without food, and my mother would come in in the middle of the night and sneak us food. He was a bully. He was just a really mean person. I always hated him.

L: Did your mother work during these years?

C: No. She did not work during our younger years. Later on, she got a job. I have talked to her since then. There came a time when I finally stood up to my stepfather and was willing to fight him. I was in high school and I started gaining confidence in myself. One of the things about when you get beat is [that] after awhile, you get used to it, and it is not so bad anymore. If you get punched in the stomach, that hurts. If you get burned, that hurts. A slap in the face hurts, but it is more humiliating. Getting punched in the face really does not hurt that much. It might split your lip or something like that, but it is not really the kind of pain that a punch in the stomach would be. There came a time when I had just had enough, and I was willing to fight him. I answered him back one day. He said, "You cannot hang around with any of these guys." He named three guys that I could not hang around with and told me that they were a bad influence on me. I said, "How do you know I am not a bad influence on them?" He really got pissed, and he said, "Okay, big shot, we are going to go out in the backyard and settle this like men." I said, "Okay." I went out in the backyard. He came to the door. He looked, and he said: "You are a punk. You are no good. You are going to end up in prison. You have no respect for your elders." He would not come out. Then I knew that everything was different. Then when he and my

mom would get in a fight, she would come in my room. So I moved out and I went to high school. I worked at Grand Union as a bag boy.

L: A grocery store?

C: Yes. It was a chain, like Publix.

L: You said you moved out and then went to high school?

C: I was in high school, and I moved out of my parents' house, and I moved in with a family called the Perrys. Then I later moved in with a family called the Molesworths. The Perry family was a Catholic family, I think, and the Molesworth family was a Christian family. The Christian family put a lot of pressure on me to convert. They wanted to convert me. But I needed to be away from the hostility of my parents' house.

Now that I am older, I have talked to my mom about this because it has always pissed me off. When I had children, I got more angry about how I was treated when I was a kid because I got to see through my children that children are really innocent. They are really good-natured, and they are really pure, and they are really smart. They pick up on everything that is going on. They are so neat. They are so unique--until they get contaminated, I guess you might say, by grownups in society. They are perfect when they come out, basically. When I thought about how we were treated, it made me even more angry. I talked to my mom about why she kept us in that kind of an environment. She said that she did not have an education, she did not have a job, she had no credit cards, she had no checking account, she had no money in the bank, she had no driver's license. She said: "Scott, there is just no way that I could take care of four kids. I was just stuck there. If I wanted to keep the family together, I just had to put up with it. There was nothing I could do about it."

L: You mentioned earlier that there were a lot of Cubans in this neighborhood.

C: Yes. This came later on. This came around the mid-1960s. It was really in my high school years that I mostly noticed it. All of a sudden, everything got overcrowded. All these Cubans came.

L: Fleeing Castro and the revolution?

C: Yes. They all came to Dade County [and] to Hialeah. They looked different. They spoke a different language. They dressed differently than us. There were no blacks in our school. I cannot really tell you why exactly – except as sort of a thing to do – we did not get along with them. We fought with them. We did not like them dancing with our girls; they did not like us dancing with their girls. We

resented them speaking Spanish in the hallway. We fought with them a lot.

I guess one of the things that I remember most was that when Kennedy was killed, I was in a government class. They broke in and announced over the loudspeaker that the president had been shot. The Cubans started cheering, and a bunch of fights broke out. The Cubans did not like him. I will just never forget that day. It made me dislike them a lot.

L: Why did they not like Kennedy?

C: At the time, I did not know, but now I know. It had to do with the Bay of Pigs. They felt that they were betrayed by Kennedy.

L: For not doing enough to overthrow Castro?

C: Right.

L: Okay.

C: What really happened was that the Bay of Pigs plan got started under Eisenhower, and Nixon was vice-president. When Kennedy was running for president, he was briefed about it, but he was not briefed to the full extent of it. He knew that we were training them and supporting them, but he was not aware that they had been promised military support. When he became president, even though it was against the U.S. law for an attack against another nation to leave from the United States and for us to be involved in that, he allowed that to happen. He allowed the Cubans to be trained and to be armed and for the Bay of Pigs to happen. [He gave] them intelligence support and stuff like that. But he would not give them air support, naval support, or support with soldiers. Because they had been promised this before – through the Eisenhower-Nixon administration – they felt, and the CIA felt, that they had been let down. [They felt] that they were put out there like sitting ducks.

L: So the Cuban students in the high school . . .

C: Did not like Kennedy. And we did not like them.

L: When did you graduate from high school?

C: I graduated from high school in 1965. I actually should have graduated in 1964, but I did not graduate until 1965 because I had a lot of disciplinary problems that resulted in me being suspended. It was a traumatic time for me. I was really unhappy with the treatment I had at home. The poor treatment I had at home, the lack of support at home for things like homework and stuff, going to bed hungry, going to school without food, [all led to school-related problems]. The

discipline I had from my parents had to do with things like: "Shut up. Be seen and not heard. Do this. Do that. Wash the dishes. Take out the garbage. Be home at a certain time. Go to bed at a certain time." It was not stuff like, "Can I help you do your spelling homework? Let me check your math homework. Let me read your book reports." It was not that kind of interest. So I did not do that well in high school until after I moved out of my parents' house. I was a discipline problem. I got in fights in the hallway. I skipped school.

One of the things that I really resented was that if I would get a ten-day suspension, [it would result in a failing grade in each class]. Let us just say I had a 99 average in the class. For each unexcused absence you had, you would get three points taken off your grade point. So a ten-day suspension would mean that thirty points would come off my average. So if I had a 99, I would end up with a 69. Regardless of what scores I made on my tests, I would get an *F* for the six weeks. So if I got a ten-day suspension, I knew I was going to get an *F*, [and] I would not do any homework. I would not do anything. I just said: "Fuck you. I am not going to do it."

So I hurt myself. In high school, they were sort of like your parents. It was an authoritarian trip. They did not make it relevant [by saying,] "This is why it is important to learn something." Basically, it was memorizing dates and stuff. To this day, there is stuff in my mind like, "Am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been, has, have, had." I do not even know what the fuck those words are. They were just things that you had to fucking memorize. They did not put things in context. In history, you had to memorize dates and presidents and battles, but they just did not put things in perspective. Like why the hell did I have to know about the *Canterbury Tales*? What the hell does that got to do with anything?

My last years in high school, I took vocational instead of academic. I took drafting, I took machine shop, I took auto shop. Then I started doing really good in those classes. Then I got to do things that were useful. In machine shop, I made tools. I made a toolbox in metal shop with all my own tools. In ceramics, I would make ceramic stuff. We had leather-making. I could work on my friends' cars. I bought a car – a 1950 Studebaker. I could work on that in auto shop and learn how to do stuff. I was learning how to do stuff that made sense to me instead of memorizing stuff just to get a certain letter on the fucking test. I did not have any understanding of how those things fit in. If they would have been explained, and if the teachers would have been more friendly, rather than everything being so authoritative and so disciplinarian, [I probably would have done better]. You just did not count. Also, I will say that we had forty people in a fucking class. I do not really know what kind of education the teachers had or anything like that, but they really did not take any interest in me.

L: So it was not a very good experience.

- C: No. To me, the important part about high school was that for every *F* I brought home, I was going to get my ass kicked. The sooner I graduated, the sooner I got away from those fucking teachers. [I was] just socializing: Where is the party going to be on the weekend? What day am I going to skip school and go to the beach? Was there going to be a fight at the bicycle racks after school? Those were the things that were important. It was social. It was not education.
- L: Just for the record, what was the name of your high school?
- C: Hialeah High. [We were] the Hialeah Thoroughbreds.
- L: What did you do upon graduation in 1965?
- C: All seniors got draft notices. We had to go down to Coral Gables and have tests to find out what our status would be. Then the recruiters started hitting on us in high school; they sent us letters. The marine recruiter came and talked to us, and said: "Look. When you guys graduate, you are all going to be drafted and go into the service. We will give you an opportunity to join the service now."
- L: Were the recruiters aggressive?
- C: Not only were they aggressive, but they were very professional. I did not see it at the time, but we looked up to them. They had uniforms. They had medals on their jackets. They were very impressive, you know? Back then, being macho was important. The Marine Corps' motto was, "The Marine Corps builds men." They came to school and said: "Look. You are going to get drafted, and you are going to end up in the fucking army. What is the army? The army is just a bunch of shit. You can be a fucking man. The Marine Corps builds men. You can join right now. You can be proud. You can come home wearing a uniform that you can be proud of. Would you be proud wearing an army uniform?" There was a certain group of us [to whom] that kind of argument would mean something – those of us who thought we were tough guys. Impressing the girls, lifting weights, getting in fights after school, smoking cigarettes, and all that kind of stuff was important. It fit right in.

Now it is called Delayed Enlistment Program, but back then, it was called the 120-Day Plan. You sign up 120 days before graduation. Then when you graduate, you go right to boot camp, and you start boot camp with four months in grade. When you join the military, you get the lowest pay. After four months, your pay goes up. As your rank goes up, your pay goes up, but also, as your time in goes up, your pay goes up. There are two categories. They told us, "You could have a jump on everybody else because you will go in with four months in grade. You will also get out of the Marine Corps four months earlier."

L: So you bought all this, right?

C: I certainly did. You could also go in on the buddy plan. You could also be promised a certain kind of a job. So we took tests, and I made a high enough score on my test to qualify for the MARCAP (Marine Corps Aviation Program). I made a high enough test score to qualify for a commission as an officer.

But I was just dumb. I thought you start off as a private and can end up a general. I did not know that there were two classes of people – officers and enlisted men – [like] labor and management, and that enlisted men were always going to be labor, and officers were always going to be management. They were always going to be treated good, and we were always going to be treated shitty. I did not know that there was a difference between officers and enlisted men.

I got this aviation guarantee for a high enough score. Then the recruiter started working on me and said, "You might end up having a job washing airplanes. Are you going to be able to come home and say you went to Vietnam and all you did was wash airplanes? Don't you want to be a real man and go up there and fucking fight and kill commies?" [I said,] "Yeah, that's what I want to do." I signed to get off that, so I would not do that, and I did not realize what I was signing away because I was easily manipulated and very impressionable. I was just a fucking kid and this guy was a professional. This was his job; he was a recruiter. He would do things [favors for us]. We were under age, but we would go out and get drunk because we were his buddies. We were Marines. So I graduated from high school, and three days later I was in Parris Island [South Carolina] in boot camp.

L: So we are talking June or July of 1965?

C: No. I graduated in summer school. I had to go to summer school every year for English. English was my hardest subject. My handwriting was poor, my spelling was poor, and my attitude was poor. I just took a lot of things literally. I remember I got in a lot of trouble because, for instance, I had to write a paper on "I am a clock." I just thought that was stupid. [I thought,] "I am not a fucking clock. Why should I have to write a paper on 'I am a clock'? I am a clock; I go tick-tock. Fuck you."

I did not understand that they were trying to teach me that there are different ways to express yourself. There are different kinds of [perspective]. They did not explain that kind of thing. We had to do another paper on our pet peeve. I did not know what a pet peeve was. I wrote a paper that I had a goldfish named Peeve, and that was my pet peeve. Goddamn. I was in all kinds of trouble. I was just dumb and naive about a lot of stuff. I had a good sense of logic, but I

just took things too literally.

I had a stereo, and I really liked Jackie Wilson. In the morning, I would get up for school, and I would turn it on. I had the windows open, and I would turn it on real loud. The mother of the kid across the street was a counselor at the high school.

He came walking across the street and said, "My parents want to know if you can play it a little louder." So I turned the motherfucker up louder. I did not know that they were being sarcastic. I did not know what that meant. It is really strange. Now I look back and think, "Damn, I was dumb."

So I graduated in summer school, so I got to boot camp July 29, 1965. They give you a yearbook. I got my boot camp yearbook with pictures of all that training and all that shit. I just know that I signed up in March 1965. I do not really know when the hell it is. I got out in July of 1969.

L: You re-upped somewhere in the middle there, right?

C: That is sort of a misconception. It was four years that I signed up for – four years active and two years reserve. But when I was in Vietnam, I signed to stay in Vietnam. I had four years to do in the Marine Corps, but when my first thirteen months in Vietnam were up, I signed to stay for another tour. Some civilians would call that re-enlisting, but re-enlisting means you up your time in the Marine Corps. I just extended my tour of duty in Vietnam.

L: I see. How long were you at Parris Island? How long were you in boot camp?

C: Parris Island was like ten weeks. It was pretty short. It was real severe. [laughter] It was the most scared I had ever been. The first day I woke up, and it was like it was a bad dream. I was trying to wake up and get out of it. I could not believe it. I had never been through anything like it. You get there in the middle of the night. You are a high school kid; you are a big man now. You are a senior; you just graduated. You are chewing gum. I remember I got a haircut before I went. I bought some new shoes and stuff like that.

The Greyhound bus stops at the front gate of Parris Island, and everybody that is going in the Marine Corps is supposed to get off the bus. You get off the bus and there is a guard at the gate. You walk into the gate with your orders. [You are told,] "Go line up over there." As soon as you cross the line, all of a sudden these fucking people are yelling at you and screaming at you: "Get in line! Shut your mouth! Spit out that gum! Get that smile off your face! Eyeballs straight ahead!" [They are] just yelling and screaming at you. You get on the bus, and people are talking, and the bus driver stops the bus. (He is a Marine.) He says: "You guys think you are smart or something. Next person who says a word, I am going to kick his fucking ass. Anybody want to try it? Go ahead." He would

walk up and down the bus with a real mean look. [You are thinking,] "Damn. This guy is a real mean guy." We get off the bus and go into a room. Everybody is searched. You have to empty out your pockets. They take everything away from you, and you are assigned to barracks.

The next morning, probably like 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning, all of a sudden the lights come on, and these guys are running up and down the barracks, yelling and screaming, "Get out of your bed! Get out of your bed!" [They are] pushing people out of their beds, pushing these double bunks over, yelling, screaming, [and] throwing garbage cans down the middle of the hallway. I could not believe it. I mean, it was really scary. The whole time, they are yelling at you and screaming at you. You get marched to a place and they fucking shave your heads totally bald. They give you uniforms to wear. They give you little red books to read. You go to chow. You are fucking running all the time. You are doing exercises all the time.

L: Little red books to read?

C: Yes. It is the Marine Corps handbook. I have mine.

L: Okay.

C: It is all the rules.

L: That sounds like Mao and the cultural revolution in China when you say "little red book."

C: Well, it is a red book. Marine Corps colors are red and gold. You have absolutely no rights whatsoever. For instance, I want to go to the bathroom. I have to say, "Sir, Private Camil requests permission to speak, sir." He would say, "What do you want, maggot?" I said, "Sir, the private requests permission to make a head call, sir." He would say, "Is it an emergency?" I would say, "Yes, sir, it is an emergency." [He would say,] "Show me it is an emergency." I would have to run around the barracks three times. I would make [noises] like a siren. I would come back, and he would say, "That wasn't loud enough. It's not an emergency." Then you would run again and do it louder. Then you would come back, request permission to speak, and ask. Then he would say, "Okay, make a head call." Or he would say, "We're going to wait an hour. And if you don't piss on yourself, you lied, and I am going to kick your ass." So now you either got to piss on yourself or you gotta get your ass kicked. All these weird trips are happening to you that never happened to you before.

I got beat up once for . . . I was standing at attention, and he told me to jump. I jumped. Then he said, "Private Camil, who gave you permission to come

down?" Now I knew that he knew that I could not stay in the air. But nobody gave me permission to come down, and I got my ass kicked. It was a pretty awesome thing. [laughter] It was real bad. They told you, "If you tell on us for beating you up, whoever takes our place will know it was you and you will never get out of here alive."

What helped me get through was I kept thinking about people who I knew who had gone in the Marine Corps. I kept saying, "I am as good as him, and if he could do it, I can do it." In my mind, it was like a game. They are going to try to make me fuck up, and I am not going to fuck up.

At the time, it was very traumatic and it was very scary. But now I am telling you that I appreciate it. I learned self-discipline. I got two teeth broken, for instance, in something called "closet motivation," where I was put in a closet and beat up for not doing something I was told. We had to run three miles before and after each meal. I threw up. When you are running in formation and the guy in front of you falls down, and you go around him, you are going to get your ass kicked. You step right on him, and if you do not, you are getting your ass kicked. So everybody knows that.

L: That is to keep them from falling down.

C: Right. People are not going to fall down because they know they are going to get trampled. It is to give them a little incentive. When you start running, your stomach starts hurting, and you might have been a quitter in the past. No one could make you do something like that before. So I stepped out to the side, and people ran past me. This fucking guy came up to me, and he said, "What's your name?" [I said,] "Private Camil, sir." [He said,] "You are going to be sorry." I said, "I am already sorry, sir." [He said,] "Get up in the barn." So I went to the barn.

L: What is the barn?

C: The barn is where we live. We are animals. We live in a barn. [laughter]

L: All right.

C: His name was Williams. He told me to go in the closet. I went in the closet. I was standing at attention in the closet, and two of them come in. They said, "About face." I turned around, and boom – two fists hit me. Then they kicked my ass, and I did not fight back.

On another occasion, I got grabbed by the belt, and he kept hitting me in the stomach until I fell down, and then he started kicking me. He said, "Private Camil, my three-year-old daughter can take harder hits than that. Get up! Get

up!"

L: Were they doing this to everybody?

C: They did not do it all to everybody. They made examples. You fucked up, you got your ass kicked.

L: And the rest of them heard about it.

C: Everybody saw it. There was no secrecy about it. If somebody was kicking your ass, and I looked over, then I would get my ass kicked. If I laughed, I would get my ass kicked. They say a lot of funny stuff. They might come up to you and say, "Private Stuart, what are you looking at me for? You eyeballing me? You like me, Private Stuart?" Then, if you said no, you would get smacked. If you said yes, [they would say,] "Oh, you're a faggot, huh?" And you would get smacked again.

There was just nothing you could say. There were words that you could not say, like *you*. The word *you* was not acceptable. A *ewe* was a female goat. So if he would say, "Private Camil, who gave you permission to do that?" I would say, "You did, sir." [He would say,] "You? Do I look like a female sheep? Do you want to fuck me, Private?" Boom, boom, boom. [He would] kick your ass.

They had all these things that they would do to you. There was something called "playing with the Green Marines." Those were the footlockers. You would have to hold this footlocker six inches off the deck, bent over. Your sweat would be pouring down onto the footlocker and then onto the deck. You would be holding it and holding it. You would think you could not hold it any longer, and then somebody would drop their footlocker or pass out and just fall over. He would say, "You fucking ladies. We were just about done. But Private Asshole over here thinks he can fuck off. Now all of you are going to have to do it for fifteen more minutes." That puts Private Asshole over there in shit with everyone else, so there is a lot of peer pressure. You fuck up, everybody pays for it. Then everybody is on your fucking ass. So it becomes really important not to fuck up. You learn that you can run farther than you thought you could run, you can carry more weight than you thought you could carry, you can stay up longer than you thought you could stay up, [and] you can take more punches than you thought you could take. You find out that your limits are much further than you ever gave yourself credit for, but you never would have known unless somebody pushed you past your limits. They push you and push you and push you, and most people would quit and say, "Fuck this. It ain't worth it." But you are not allowed to quit, and you finally see that you can really do a lot more than you think you can. What I am saying is that I never would have been as ballsy a person as I am if it was not for the confidence and discipline that they built into me.

We talked when you were here before, I think, about going out to the gate in Vietnam. Every day, we went on patrols, and every day, people stepped on mines and got blown up. There is no way that you can even imagine in your mind what it would be like if, for a whole year, every step you took could be your last step. Every day, you would see people get their legs blown off. You would see them get both legs blown off. You would see them get blown to shit, [and] their fucking brains would splatter all over you. Their blood would splatter all over you. We are talking about stress that is totally incredible. [They gave us] the kind of discipline that we would have to have to get up every day and walk through that same fucking jungle, knowing that some of us were not coming back. Nobody said no. Nobody said, "I ain't gonna fucking do it." We did it, and we did it every day.

L: What did they do with you once you got done with boot camp?

C: After boot camp you went to infantry training. Infantry training, I guess, was several five weeks. It is where you learn infantry tactics. In the Marine Corps, everybody is in the infantry to start with, and then you learn a secondary thing.

Also, in boot camp, besides all the discipline stuff, you have karate, judo, knife fighting, bayonet fighting, target shooting with a pistol, target shooting with a rifle, weightlifting, [and] all kinds of exercises to build you up and make you strong. You are learning tactics, fighting, history, all this kind of stuff. You are practicing this with other people. You put on helmets and stuff to protect your body, and you go out there with sticks with sandbags on either end and you beat the shit out of each other. You are also packed together like sardines. The position that you are in is called "asshole to belly button." Anytime you are at attention, you are asshole to belly button. Everybody has to be touching. You have no space. You are always touching each other.

After that, at ITR (infantry training regiment), you learn tactics. Then, after that, you go to your first duty station. You get to go home on leave. At your first duty station, you are assigned an MOS – your Military Occupation Specialty. That is what job you are going to have. The job I was assigned was artillery.

The higher score you have, the more technical kind of job you are going to have. So you take these tests. I did good on the tests, so I became [artillery]. In artillery, it is broken down into the people on the guns who work on the artillery, or the people in the headquarters who are your fire direction control using slide sticks and maps and stuff like that. My job in Vietnam was called Forward Observer. A forward observer spots the enemy [and] radios in the enemy's position to the FDC (fire direction control). I would plot that on a map. Then I would take a range deflection protractor, and I would read the range to the target

and the azimuth to the target. Then I would figure out on a slide rule something called a quadrant. That is the number that would be put on a gun. It would be called down to the people on the guns, and they would put that on a number on their gun. Then they would turn the wheels until two bubbles were level. When the bubbles were level, the gun was set at the right angle and the right azimuth, facing the right direction. They would shoot, and it would land on the target. My job was working in the fire direction control center (FDC). My first job was FDC then I volunteered to be an F.O. They had quotas for Vietnam. I volunteered for Vietnam. I wanted to go to Vietnam. That was what I wanted to do.

L: Why?

C: The whole purpose, to me, of being in the Marines was to go kill commies. What am I going to do, sit stateside? Polish my boots and have inspections all the time? I want to go there and fucking win medals and kill commies and make my family proud and be a good American and serve my country and all that good stuff. So I went home on leave, and then I went to guerrilla warfare school in Camp Pendleton. [We learned] mountain-climbing, escape and evasion school, and guerrilla warfare school.

Then I went to Okinawa for more escape and evasion school and guerrilla warfare school and more conditioning. So then, I do not get to Vietnam until March 1966. I get assigned to my first unit, which was A-111 (Alpha Battery, First Battalion, Eleventh Marines).

L: This was where in the country?

C: This is in a place called Hoi An, which is south of Da Nang somewhere. I do not know exactly where, but it was in I Corps, the northern district. First of all, in boot camp, you are with all your guys. Then you go from boot camp to ITR, and it is the same group of guys. You have developed a camaraderie together and an ability to work together. Then, when you go to your unit, you are a new guy. All by yourself, you report to this unit. You are a replacement. You do not know anybody there. All of a sudden, the attitude changes. The whole time, you are real proud to be a Marine. Then you get there, and people say to you, "When do you get out?" I would say, "1969," and I would hear sergeants say, "1969? I would kill myself if I wasn't gonna get out until 1969." There is a whole different attitude about the Marine Corps then.

Since I am a new guy, the first thing I get is shit duty. It is called shit detail. It is either guard duty or mess detail. So I had guard duty. We were guarding an artillery base.

In my third week (it was the night of April 17 and the morning of April 18), we

were attacked by VC (Viet Cong) sappers, a hard-core Vietcong suicide unit. They overran us. So [in] my first battle, we were totally overrun. They destroyed our ammo dump, they destroyed the guns, they shot people. We killed a lot of them. Like, here I am standing guard, [and] I am told we are in the rear. Our rifles are not loaded; we are not supposed to shoot without permission. We have these rules of engagement. The grenades have tape around them so that if the pins came out by accident, the spoons would not fly and people would not get hurt. They snuck in under the wire. They turned our Claymore mines around on us. Somebody hit a trip flare, they all stood up, they were inside the wire, they attacked us, and they just beat our fucking asses. That night, as soon as I saw them, I started shooting. I got out of my bunker because I saw their rockets were hitting the bunkers [and] blowing the bunkers up. I did not want to get blown up in the bunker. So I went outside the bunker, and I laid on the ground, and I fired from the ground, where I thought I was the least amount of a target. The other three outposts were all taken. My post was the only one that was not taken, and it was only not taken because it was not in the way of their objectives. It was the furthest away from the artillery pieces and the ammo dump. They could have taken it easily. They hit us with rockets [and] with mortars.

The next morning, it was all over, and I walked around. I saw the dead Americans. One of them was one of the first guys I met. His name was William Terry Main. He was from Jacksonville, Florida. I remember that he would get up on his post, and he would say: "Fuck you, you commies! Fuck you, you cowards! Come and get us! Come and get us!" He was one of the people that was killed.

A bunch of things happened to me that day. First off, I went and looked at the Americans, and they were dead, but they looked different than the dead Vietnamese. The dead Vietnamese did not look like human beings to me. It was really strange. I have pictures of all this, by the way. The Americans looked like dead people to me. The Americans were like dead humans; the Vietnamese were like dead animals. In our training before we went, they were always referred to as "gooks" or "slant-eyes" or "zipperheads." So when you would stab the dummy, it was: "Kill the gook. Kill the gook." They were really dehumanized a lot.

L: They taught you this before you ever got to Vietnam.

C: [Yes,] in boot camp. Now I realize it was racial and dehumanizing, but I did not realize it at the time. I looked at those guys, and I thought to myself: "Damn. People are really allowed to kill me, and if I get killed, that is the end. There is no second chance. There is no King's X. There is no time out. This is really serious, and I can't fuck off anymore. I really have to pay attention." I made the decision that I was going to kill every fucking Vietnamese that I came in contact

with. That way, even if I killed a hundred innocent, good Vietnamese, and got one guilty one, it would be worth it, if that one guilty one would be the guy that would kill me when I was leaving his village. If we went into a village and killed everyone that was in the village, when we left, there was not going to be nobody to snipe at us. I made the decision then, "Fuck them." No doubt about that.

Another thing that happened to me was I picked up a rocket that one of them that was shot and killed had dropped. It had not been fired yet. I did not know jack shit about it, so I disarmed it. I took this rocket. I guess you do not know what a rocket looks like. It is a tube, and on the front of the tube is a projectile. I took the projectile, and I pulled it out of the front of the tube. It went "twang," and my fucking heart dropped. I thought I was blown up. It is the kind of rocket [where] the fins are folded.

L: This is not one of those RPGs with the directional charge on the nose.

C: Yes.

L: I have seen those.

C: It scared the shit out of me when it went "twang."

L: Was that the fins popping up?

C: It was the fins popping out. I never touched nothing again [laughter]. I learned my lesson real quick about that, too.

The next thing is that we followed blood trails. I killed an innocent person later that day. We were following blood trails, and here I am, this is my third week there, I do not know any Vietnamese. All of sudden, there is a guy working in a rice paddy wearing black pajamas. The guys we killed had black pajamas. The guys we killed were young, muscular guys. This guy was an old guy, but he had black pajamas on. I was not thinking about the distinction. I grabbed him and asked him – there were blood trails we were following – I asked him where the VC went. He said, "Khong biet," which means, "I do not understand." I kept asking him where the Vietnamese went, and he would not tell me. I took my knife out and killed him on the spot. I had made my decision, "Fuck these people. I am going to kill them." He did not know what the hell I was talking about. I did not get in any trouble.

L: Was that standard behavior, standard procedure?

C: Everybody had their own level of what they would do. I would say the standard procedure was that there was not much respect for the Vietnamese. Those that

did respect the Vietnamese did not fuck with those that did not respect the Vietnamese. Like, I would kill a prisoner; I killed all my prisoners. But I never tortured a prisoner. I felt if I got captured, just kill me or leave me alone. That is how I did them. But guys would tie them up, they would fucking smash out all their teeth with their rifle butts, they would kick them in the balls, they stomp on their balls, they would break their arms, they would break their legs, they would cut off their ears, they would cut off their heads. They would do all kinds of shit. I never did any of that, but I would kill anybody. It did not matter – their age or their sex, nothing. Different people have different ideas about morality.

L: None of the officers were saying, "Don't do this; this is against the rules"?

C: No, because we were keeping score with how many people you killed. It was by body count. When I think now of the vocabulary we used, it is incredible. If I killed somebody, I would say, "I wasted a gook today." I never thought, "What does the word 'waste' mean? Why are we using the word 'waste'? How come we are not saying, 'killed,' [or] 'shot'?" [We said,] "I wasted three gooks today," or "I wasted a gook today." "Wasted" was the word we used. I cannot believe now that we talked about it being waste, and it really was waste, and it never dawned on me what the fuck that word meant.

Another word [referred] to the two kinds of people we encountered. We used the phonetic alphabet, so VC for Vietcong would be Victor Charlie. S is Sierra. If we would catch someone without a rifle, they were a Victor Charlie Sierra. They were Vietcong suspects. Every single fucking Vietnamese we contacted was a Vietcong suspect. Just the word 'suspect' was a negative, derogatory word that marked the individual. It was not like you were innocent until proven guilty. It is just like it is in this country if someone gets arrested. Even though the Constitution says they [should be] presumed innocent, just because they get arrested, and the paper says you were arrested, you already have a stigma on you. You are a suspect of a crime. In Vietnam, you were Vietcong suspect. You were stigmatized. You may as well have been a Vietcong. I never thought about what that word 'suspect' meant. To me, it was just like saying it was a Vietcong that we have not proven yet – an unconfirmed Vietcong. As soon as you killed them, they became confirmed because you did not kill civilians. You just killed Vietcong. So, if they were dead, they had to be Vietcong. So we automatically made them Vietcong.

People would get different reputations. If I saw you raping a woman, I ain't gonna interfere. I would not do it, but you are my buddy. You guard my back, I guard your back. I'm not going to fuck with you. If that is what you want to do, you do it. I would not do that. There was one time when a woman was shot by one of our snipers, and she had the side of her face blown out. When we got to her, the guys were just finishing raping her, and they were mutilating her body.

They had slashed her tits. They had shoved different things up her vagina. First it was an entrenching tool, then it was a fucking tree limb. The woman was still alive, and she was asking for water. She kept saying, "Nuòc." We got up to her, and the lieutenant was real pissed. He was yelling at these guys. He told them to kill her, and nobody wanted to kill her. He said to me, "Arty, kill her." I killed her. I had a reputation: I was a bad person because I murdered people. But in their eyes, they were not bad because they did not murder people; they just fucked people up. In my eyes, you would put a wounded animal out of its misery. I put this person out of her misery.

So the kinds of values and moralities people have are really different. Here I am murdering people, and I think that is treating them better than other people that are breaking their arms and legs and raping them and mutilating them. They think I am the bad guy, and I think they are the bad guy.

L: You had said they called you Arty.

C: Yes.

L: What was that a nickname for?

C: I was a forward observer from the artillery, attached to the infantry. Basically, on a patrol, you have your point man. Then you have a couple of men behind your point man, and then you have a squad leader or a platoon commander. Behind that person is a radio operator. Then you have your forward observer and your other odds and ends – whoever everybody else is. As soon as contact is made and the shooting starts, what you hear is, "Arty up" and "corpsman up." The corpsman has to come up to take care of the wounded people, and the artillery guy has to come up to pinpoint the enemy's position on the map to call in artillery, mortar fire, airstrikes, [or] naval gunfire. So that is the name, Arty.

L: So you called in everything.

C: Right. I was really only trained to call in artillery, but sometimes they would give me naval gunfire. Sometimes they would give me mortars. Sometimes they would give me airstrikes.

L: They would give you what they could give you.

C: Right, depending upon what we were being hit with also. Most of the time, what I called in was 105 howitzers. But sometimes they would give me something else.

L: When in all of this were you wounded? I understand you were wounded twice.

- C: On Operation Stone, I was wounded. On Operation Stone, we were walking and firing on a village. The lieutenant kicked open the gate, and a bouncing Betty exploded, and it got a number of us. That was the first time I was hit.
- L: A bouncing Betty is a mine that is thrown up out of the ground and then explodes?
- C: Right. The lieutenant never should have kicked the gate open, and we should not have been standing close enough together where one mine would get a bunch of us.
- L: What happened? Did you just get sloppy?
- C: When you are moving across an open field, you are spread out. When you are moving through the jungle, you are spread out. But you have to be close enough to see the guy in front of you. When you are converging on a place, you get closer together. Now, this village was all fenced in with bamboo. To go through the gate, you have to come close together. If you are firing on a village – you hit it with artillery, and then you go towards it, and you are firing – and you are not getting any return fire, you start moving closer together. I mean, you are not supposed to, but it just happens.

And we got hit. I was not hit that bad. I got shrapnel that stuck in my leg, [and] I got shrapnel that went across the other leg. It went across my shoulder and a piece [went] across my face. Those were just surface wounds. But the lieutenant had been knocked out, and his radio operator had been knocked out.

- L: Killed or badly wounded?
- C: Badly wounded. I stayed. They just bandaged me up, and I stayed because they needed to have somebody to read a map. Plus, there are these other factors that feed in, like the macho factor. You know, "I am a fucking Marine, and I am an American. You can't knock me out." The strongest factor of all is the camaraderie factor. I have never been as close to human beings in civilian life as I was in combat. We shared each other's letters. We put medicine in each other's wounds. We washed each other's backs. Four of us shared a fucking toothbrush. They would call you a queer if you did that in civilian life. If somebody has a shrapnel wound in his ass, he pulls down his pants and you put medicine in his ass, you know? You are taking care of each other. Of all the things that I miss out of the military, I miss the camaraderie the most. You really counted on each other, and you were really close. You do not want to leave your buddies. They depend on you. You do not want to fucking leave them.

So that was on Operation Stone. We were out for a few more days – I do

not remember how long. We came in. I went to sick bay. They took out surface shrapnel. Other shrapnel was left in; it was no big deal.

L: It is still in your leg?

C: Yes. Right there. That is a piece of steel.

L: Why have you not had it removed?

C: They decide what to take out and what not to take out. I do not really know. I do not have anything to do with that. I get disability for it now. That counts as ten percent [disability].

L: You got the Purple Heart for this, right?

C: Yes. All a Purple Heart means is that you were wounded. Let us say that you get a scratch across the side of your face – no broken bones, no torn muscles, nothing – you get a Purple Heart. Let us say you get both arms and both legs blown off. You get a Purple Heart. Let us say you get your head blown off and you are dead. You get a Purple Heart. All it means is that you spilled your blood. It is considered a medal, but it really means you were in the wrong place at the wrong time. You were not ducking when you were supposed to be ducking [or] you stepped with your left foot when you should have stepped with your right foot. What it means to people in general is that you were willing to put your life on the line for your country, and you were hit by the enemy.

L: When were you hit by the enemy the second time?

C: The second time was on Operation Medina. That was my last operation, and that was in October of 1967 in the national forest.

L: And this is after you extended your tour.

C: Yes. That was really one of the times I was the most scared. Different people are scared about different things. I was not scared in firefights. If you read my service record, you will see my Vietnam record will say, "Sergeant Camil is extremely cool under fire." If they start shooting at us, I would go to wherever it was coming from, and I would engage them. I was not afraid, but that was because I thought that I was a better shot than them, and I did not think I was going to get wounded. I did not think they were going to get me. I think that bravery is really when you do something and you do not think you are going to survive it. So it is not really the act you are doing – it is what is in your mind when you are doing it.

One time, I picked up a grenade, and I threw this grenade back, and I got put up

for a Bronze Star for it. I was not being brave in my mind. In my mind, people are shooting at me. There is no place to run. If I stand there and look at the motherfucker, I am going to get blown to shit. If I jump on it and save your life, I am dead. The only chance I have to live is to get that fucking thing away from me – to pick it up and throw it. The brave thing might have been to jump on it. I do not think what I did was brave; I think what I did was smart. There is a difference.

I was scared of stepping on mines, and I was scared of the mortars. The mortars, the rockets, and the mines scared me much more than shooting it out with people or fighting hand-to-hand. I thought that I could win. But when you are crossing a field and you hear in the background, "tump, tump, tump," you know they have just fired mortars at you. You hit the fucking ground, and you are covering yourself up. You are all tensed up, and you have this feeling in your back – I do not know if you have ever had it – like someone is going to punch you in the back. It is a really bad feeling. You are just laying on the ground shaking, and these things are blowing up. Some people are getting blown to shit, and some people are not. You just hope that none of them land on you. You are real fucking helpless. I could not handle it. That really fucked me up. That would give me nightmares, that would give me jitters, that would freak me out, you know? I could not deal with that; it just fucked me up. I was scared to death of that.

One time, we got caught in a mine field, and they opened fire on us from two sides. Being stuck where you cannot move when people are shooting at you – that's fucked. That is really fucked. When you are walking and the guy two guys in front of you steps on a mine and the guy two guys behind you steps on a mine and you know that you are in a mine field, you just start shaking. You are just scared to shit. Those were the things that scared me.

On this last operation, it was a five-battalion operation, so we are talking about 5,000 men. That is a lot of fucking men. We had moved up into Quang Tri, and we were going to secure the area and build an airstrip. We were the first Marines up there, and we were going to show them that we were not fucking around. So when we first got there, we went into this village, and we burned this village down, and we killed all the people in the village. We stuck axes of spades in their mouths, and we let them know that we were there – you know, macho fucking guys and all this shit. Then we went on an operation in the national forest where they were supposed to be. They ambushed us, and they overran us, and they kicked our fucking ass. That day, I thought I was going to be killed. I was wounded, and I did not see anybody left laying around me that was alive. I thought that everybody was going to be dead. I thought about shooting myself because I did not want to be taken prisoner and tortured. It was the first time I ever thought about killing myself. Then I thought that if I killed myself, "I am out.

That is it." But I could fight so hard that they would have to kill me and not take me prisoner. I would not put my arms down, no matter how many of them there were, and I would just put my bayonet on my rifle, and I would just fight until they killed me. I would not let them take me prisoner. So I decided not to kill myself, and even though I was wounded, I crawled to other people that were dead, and I took their ammo, and I used their ammo to fight with.

L: Did you get shot?

C: No. I got hit with a grenade right here.

L: Okay. The grenade blew up at your feet.

C: Yes. What happened was they had an ambush at the top of this mountain. Along the ridgeline, they had machine guns set up on the front and on the side, and they were sitting in the trees with grenades. When we walked in, they just started dropping grenades on us and opened up on us from the front and the side with machine guns. They just wiped the shit out of everybody. Our company, Charlie One One (C-1-1, C-Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment), was the lead company. There were 1,000 meters between each company, and, basically, our battalion (1100 men) was going up this hill in a single file. So you had like 270 men and 1,000 meters, and then 270 and 1,000 meters, etc., men strung out real long. Then we had blocking forces on the other side of the mountain, and people going around the mountain, and people doing all different kinds of shit, and everybody had different objectives. We were the lead group. Also, I think that they had a vendetta to get us back for what we had done to that village.

L: These are Vietcong or North Vietnamese Army?

C: These are North Vietnamese Army, NVA.

L: Okay.

C: And they wiped us out. All I can tell you is they wiped us out. There was a lot of hand-to-hand fighting, and we were just about out of ammo. My buddy Jim Fife was with Delta Company. It was triple canopy forest. It was real dark, and we could not see that well. I was wounded, and I was shook up. They were making charges into us, and there was hand-to-hand fighting going on. I was having trouble; I could not get the artillery adjusted. Jim climbed up in a tree where his company was, and he could see where the artillery was hitting. I could not see where it was hitting; I could just hear it. So we adjusted the artillery together. I would shoot an azimuth to the artillery, but I did not know where it was. He would move the artillery down my azimuth. They got the artillery all around us

until his company broke through and saved us. *Leatherneck* magazine did an article called "Go Charlie," and it is not a truthful article. It has a lot of bravado in it. It says that we ran out of ammo and after we ran out of ammo, the survivors were singing the Marine Corps Hymn when we were saved. We were not singing the Marine Corps Hymn. After that battle, everyone [who had been] at that battle was an old man.

L: It sounds intense.

C: It is just like the movie *Platoon*. It was just incredible. I was thinking to myself, "Why did I stay here? Why did I stay here? That is just crazy." Then I am back in the rear now, and they are going to send me home, and I am asking to be able to stay, because I am so close with my friends. I get this idea that I am going to go home, and all my buddies have to stay in this shit. The captain came up to me and said, "You ain't gonna stay. You don't really want to stay. You've been here too long."

L: So you wanted a second extension of your tour?

C: Yes, not because I really wanted to, but because of this idea I had growing up that real men do not run from a fight, and real men do not leave their friends behind. That is one of the problems that a lot of guys have [after] coming home from Vietnam. When it was their time to go, they left, and things happened to their buddies, and they were not there, and they feel responsible for that. But that was just the way the war was. In World War II, you went over in a unit, and your unit all came home together. It was finalized; you knew who was left and who was not left. But when you are coming home one at a time, it is just a whole different trip.

They did not do that in the Gulf War. Not only that, in the Gulf War, they had counselors for people before they went, [and] they had counseling for their families before they went and when they came back. They really dealt with the psychological impact of it, plus they had a strategy. I am against the Gulf War, but [at least] they had a strategy. There was never a strategy in the Vietnam War. Like in a football game, you have an hour to play. Whoever gets the ball across the opponent's goal the most times wins. In Vietnam, there was no such thing as "capture the flag and you win. Burn down their capital and you win." Winning was staying alive and killing as many of them as possible. That can go on for a long time.

L: When did you leave Vietnam?

C: I got back in November of 1967.

L: You were still in the military for at least two more years?

C: Almost two more years. I first came home to Camp Pendleton in California. Then I get sent to Camp LeJeune. At Camp LeJeune, I go to a unit called India-3-10--India Battery, Third Battalion, Tenth Marine, an artillery unit. The first thing they do is send me to the rifle range because the rules say that you have to qualify with a rifle every certain amount of time, and I had not been to the rifle range in almost two years.

L: You had been in combat for two years.

C: So I am pissed off that they make me go through this shit, and I am a sergeant now. Then I come back from the rifle range, and I go to embarkation school. We go on a Med cruise to Europe. During this period of time, I am going to non-commissioned officers' school, embarkation school, nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare school, survey school, [and] riot control school. I taught a regimental fire direction control school.

I go six months to Europe. In Europe, we are on ships. You go to these different countries, and you play war games with different countries. The U.S. has ships all over the fucking place. The ships rotate around; we always have ships everywhere, and on all these ships are Marines. Their job is to do what Marines are supposed to do. So you climb down the side of a ship [and] into a little boat and attack islands and you play fucking war. We came in and went to Italy, Greece, Sardinia, Malta, Spain, [and] Germany.

My lesson in Vietnam was that we might be big tough Americans, but when we first got there we thought we were going to kick their ass in six months and it would be over. Then I found out that being six feet tall and white did not mean you were the best and you were going to win.

One of the things that I learned [in Europe] – this was another big lesson for me – was that [everyone in the world did not want to be like Americans]. I still had this idea that everyone in the world wanted to be like America. We were the smartest, and we were the best. Everywhere we went, people did not like us. They thought we were arrogant, and we *were* arrogant. All they cared about was our fucking money. You do not really get to see these countries. You get to have liberty, but what happens is you get off the ship around two in the afternoon, you go into town, you get drunk, you buy souvenirs, and you get laid. You do not get to go very far because you have to be back on the ship at midnight. As an NCO, I would have one day as a Marine on liberty and the next day I would have shore patrol. The Marine Corps is part of the Navy, so they had one Marine NCO with two Navy personnel. You wear a white armband that says SP, and you carry a fucking nightstick, and you have a white belt, and you

walk around and arrest drunks and stop people from fighting and all that kind of shit. You do not really get to meet the people or know the people. You are just dealing with whores and people who want your fucking money.

Then I came back from Europe, and we went to Vieques – an island off of Puerto Rico – and played war games there. We went to St. Thomas. [It was] all training and stuff.

There was no way I was going to stay in the Marine Corps. I got offered E-6 (staff sergeant) to stay in, but it was obvious to me that I was not really cut out to be in the Marines. I did not really like the idea of all the bullshit. I did not like the way people of higher rank talked to me. I did not like being made to do things that were stupid. I could have really stayed in the Marine Corps [because] I really liked the order and the discipline. I just did not like the fucking bullshit. Stateside, there is a lot of bullshit. In combat, there is no bullshit. In all of my antiwar stuff, just to give it balance, I have to tell you that when we were not getting our asses kicked, it was very exciting and stimulating. I enjoyed a lot of what was going on in Vietnam. I enjoyed the authority; I enjoyed being able to call in airstrikes [and] artillery. You know how much power it is for a fucking nineteen-year-old kid to get on a radio and say, "Fire mission," and have jets strafing the fucking treeline, having fucking artillery and naval gunfire and the whole fucking place blowing up? Here I am, [saying,] "Left two hundred, drop two hundred." It is an incredible amount of power, and it is an incredible amount of responsibility. Then you come back to the States and you are twenty-one years old, and you ain't shit. Nobody gives a shit about your sacrifices, and all of a sudden, you have no responsibility. You heard the song "Readjustment Blues" earlier tonight when you listened to that tape by John Denver. One of the lines in that song that really gets me is, "This time I'm the citizen, and they're pointing their guns at me." It is really a role reversal. We would be crossing a road, and there would be Vietnamese set up on the road selling booze and selling boots and stuff like that. Here all my guys have tape around their boots to hold their boots together, and we cannot get resupplied. All these fucking guys in the rear have new fucking shoes, they have new fucking pants, [and] they have new fucking clothes. We cannot get anything. We are the guys that are out there. There are ten of them in the rear for every one of us that is out there, and they have all the fucking supplies. The Vietnamese would be selling boots, and so we would just take them. They would bitch about it, and we would just fucking shoot them. You know, "Fuck you guys. These are our supplies anyway." I do not remember the point that I was trying to say.

L: Becoming a civilian and losing all of this power and authority.

C: Yes. Now you come home, and you are not shit. You settle a dispute in Vietnam by shooting someone, and then they do not fuck with you anymore.

You come home, and boom! You do that, and you are a murderer. You are in trouble. Once you train a person, condition a person, and program a person like that, you cannot get that out of the person – I do not give a fuck what they say. It is really criminal for them to put us through that and then to drop us off on the street. One day you are killing people, and the next day you are walking around home, and the fucking cops are pushing you around. What the fuck do they expect? I think that we really behaved well, considering the amount of anger that we had and the amount of authority and tactics that we were once used to. Now all of a sudden, we are getting pushed around by fucking kids who were not in the service, wearing a blue uniform and beating you up with a fucking stick because you are fucking exercising your rights.

L: When did you get out of the service, and what did you do once you were not a Marine anymore?

C: First I want to tell one more part about the service. In 1969, I went to Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. I was still in the Marines, and I went there for four days to lecture on why the war was right. Here I am, still proud as hell of being a Marine and having served my country. I paid my dues, you know? I earned respect. I am a man now. I know about responsibility. I have taken people's lives, [and] I have ordered people to do things that have caused them to die. It is a lot of responsibility for a kid. Now I am a fucking man. I am an adult. And I have had a lot of responsibility: taking people on a patrol through the jungle, reading a map, making sure that we are not in the wrong fucking place, getting stuck in a minefield, getting them out of the fucking minefield, bringing back the fucking wounded, bringing back the fucking dead. There is a lot of responsibility there, under a lot of stressful conditions. I am here at the Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, a beautiful place, and people want to know what we did in Vietnam, so I am telling them. People are hostile towards me. I am saying: "What the fuck is wrong with these damn people? I just do not understand." Someone said, "Were you killing women and children?" I said: "Of course we were killing women and children. What the fuck do you think we were doing over there? Playing patty-cake? We were killing women and children. They are fucking commies." [They said,] "Well, it is not right to kill women and children." I said: "Bullshit. A woman can kill you. A kid can kill you. When it is in the best interest of your nation, you fucking kill them. I do not hear anybody bitching about all the women and children that were killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. What the fuck is the difference if you drop the bomb on them or if you fucking shoot them with a gun? There ain't no Goddamn difference. They are fucking dead. Women are just communist baby factories, and you have to wipe out the factories. Their children are just gonna grow up to fight your children, and you have to kill them. What's this bullshit about women and children? It's a fucking war." I believed everything I had just said to them, and they were pissed at me and thought that I was a fucking Nazi. I am saying: "I

wasn't even old enough to vote. You guys were the fucking voters. You guys decide who our leaders are. They're the ones who decide our fucking policy. You shouldn't be mad at me for what I did; I should be mad at you for fucking electing the leaders that put me over there." The Marine Corps took me out of there. I did not understand why I was in trouble for being adamant that what we were doing was right and telling them what we were doing – *all* of the kinds of things we did.

It is against the rules of war, for instance, to torture people. Some people tortured people, you know? If you get captured, and we think you can tell us where a minefield is, and that is going to save our men, do you think that somebody's not gonna fucking get it out of you? Instead, we are going to march our men into the minefield to treat you good? Fuck you. It just don't work like that.

Booby-trapping bodies is illegal. That is something we did all the time. You shoot a person, then you put a grenade under their body, and you pull the pin. Their body is laying on top of the spoon. Then you go. Then they come to pick up their dead. They pick the guy up, and as soon as they pick him up, the grenade goes off – boom! – and gets a couple more.

This is a really important thing to talk about for me – this idea about rules of war. In reality, war is the ultimate human rights violation. Everything that takes part in war is part of war. The act of war itself is a major human rights violation. The torturing of prisoners – and everything else – is just a little piece of the big picture of war. To say that you can have war and you are going to have fucking rules [is ridiculous]. Where the hell did this idea come from? This is the most stupid, insane, ridiculous, hypocritical thing that there could be. If you have a way to make and enforce rules, then why can't you use those same means to solve the fucking problems?

L: Instead of having the war.

C: Instead of having the damn war. But once you say my life is on the line, you are going to tell me what ways I am allowed to live and defend myself and what ways I am not allowed to defend myself? And I am going to say: "Okay. I will die rather than cheat." I mean, give me a fucking break! If the choice is dying or cheating and staying alive, you show me one person who is going to fucking play by the rules and die. It ain't gonna fucking happen. This sanctimonious bullshit about after the war you punish the people that cheated is just total bullshit. The war itself is the ultimate human rights violation, and if there is going to be punishment, it should be for the people who made the war come about on both sides. It should not be for the little guy who burns down the village and tortures somebody, you know? It should be for the people that put that fucking guy over

there in that goddamn village. I really resent [that].

What Lieutenant Calley [in *Platoon*] did was not right. He lined up civilians, and he fucking mowed them down. If a B-52 would have flown over My Lai and dropped a bomb and killed all those fucking people, they would be just as dead, and that fucking pilot would have a goddamn medal. What is the fucking difference? One guy looked them in the eye, and the other guy was fucking 30,000 feet in the air. It [makes] no difference to those dead people. You cannot have rules of war. You cannot have rules unless people are willing to obey them. If they are not willing to be civil in the first fucking place, how are they gonna obey fucking rules about how to kill each other? That makes me almost more angry than anything else – this idea that war is clean, that war is honorable, that war is just, [and] that it is civilized. War is barbaric. It is not clean, it is not civilized, [and] it is not just. All it is is organized murder. That is all it fucking is – organized murder.

Then we come home, and all of a sudden we are supposed to fall in line and be just regular fucking dudes again. You cannot take those experiences out of a person. I will never be a normal person. I will never be a normal person. They owe me for that. This country fucking owes me for that. As far as I am concerned, I should never have to fucking pay taxes again, and I should have a fucking renewable "get out of jail free" card. They made me what I am, and now they are going to punish me for what they made me. What they made me was okay over there, but it is not okay over here. That is fucking wrong.

Thirty percent of all the people in prison are Vietnam veterans. Thirty percent of the fucking homeless are Vietnam veterans. That is the pay for what they did? Go look in a VA hospital and see how those fucking people have to live there, and tell me that is what they fucking deserve. You think of the people who did not go who made money off of the war and have big fucking fat bank accounts and living fucking high on the hog [like] the arms manufacturers and the people in the business of providing military stuff for war. People like Colt who provided us with those piece of shit M-16s that did not work, and my buddies died because they had fucking shit that did not work, while they were selling that stuff to the government at a profit.

What I really believe is just is that if you are going to ask the young people to prove their patriotism to their country by being willing to sacrifice their lives and their safety for the country, then the country should have to make a sacrifice, too, and that sacrifice is in profit. There ought to be a law that says when the men go to fight, all the people that are making the stuff for them have to provide it at cost--no fucking profit. [There should be] no profiting from war. You take the fucking profit out of war, and you are gonna see that people are not gonna want the war anymore. The only reason that there is fucking war is because people

make money. Bankers make money, and the munitions makers make money. The wheelers and dealers and politicians make money, and they sacrifice our fucking children to do it. It is immoral, it is disgusting, I cannot even think of a low enough word to tell you how I feel [about] people that consider it okay to profit while other people are dying. They have no right to make a profit. They should fucking have to work for cost. If we are willing to sacrifice our children, then they should have to sacrifice their fucking profit. There is nothing more unpatriotic than making profit while Americans are dying.

The only thing more unpatriotic than that is giving the weapons to the people that you send the Americans to fight. In the Gulf War, we fucking arm Saddam Hussein, and we make him strong. Then we send Americans to fight them. Anytime an American is killed by people who were armed by our politicians, do not tell me there was a mistake. Put the people who made the decisions to give them arms in prison. Put them in fucking prison. In the state of Florida, if one of my kids gets my gun and shoots someone, I am liable for that under the law. If you are going to send Americans to Panama to arrest Noriega, who trained him? Who made him what he was? Who gave him his fucking arms? You punish the people that fucking do that. I have so much anger in me about all this stuff. I cannot even articulate it all, I am so pissed.

L: Did you have this set of opinions when you first got back?

C: No. When I first got back, what was on my mind was: Where am I going to live? How am I going to pay my bills? What am I going to do to earn money? That is what I thought about.

L: So what did you do?

C: I tried to be a cop, and I could not be a cop because I admitted that I used marijuana. Here I have been killing fucking people and that is okay, but I smoke and get high and do not bother anybody, and that is a crime. What the fuck is wrong with these guys? If I was getting drunk and beating people up in bars I could be a cop, but because I am fucking smoking marijuana and more interested in eating ice cream and getting laid, I am a bad person? I knew I could get money by going to school on the G.I. Bill. So I only went to school to get the money to give me the time to figure out what I was going to do.

L: This is at Miami-Dade Community College?

C: Right. The law was that if you were a veteran, you did not have to take any tests. My grades in high school were not that great.

L: Tests to get in?

C: Right. I did not have to take any kind of test. I automatically qualified. I am not sure I could have passed the test to get in because I was not an academic kind of person then. But when I got into college, it was like 180-degree turn from high school. To start with, I was older than the people in my class. They were people out of high school. I had four years' experience, plus I had gone to a lot of school in the Marine Corps. I had learned how to pay attention and how to learn. I had taught a lot of classes; I had learned how to teach. I had started to understand. I was a mature person. Plus, I was treated like a human being. I was not treated like a fucking piece of shit [the way I had been in high school. Back then, when] I came into class late, [the teacher said,] "Where's the fucking note? Go to the dean's office." If I missed a day, [the teacher asked,] "Where is a note from your mother?" If I did not turn in any homework, [I would be asked,] "Scott Camil, why didn't you do your homework?" [They would] humiliate you in front of the class. [There was] none of that bullshit. If you made it, you made it, and if you did not, you did not. It was not any hair off their fucking backs.

But what I really found was that if you asked a question, like if I would go up after class to discuss something, the teachers would get really excited that I was interested. They would spend time with me and talk to me like a friend. It really turned me on to school. It made me love school. I had this teacher at Miami-Dade named Jeanette Levy. She was an English teacher. [That was] the first time I ever got A's in English. I got D's and F's in English [in high school]; I hated English. I was getting fucking A's because she made it interesting, and she treated me like a person. She made it relevant. I love that lady. I have no idea what ever happened to her, but she was one of the people who made me into a human being.

I took all the psychology courses, and I learned about positive reinforcement, and I learned words like tokens for reinforcement for behavior. If you want to reinforce someone's behavior, you give them something good (a "thank you" or whatever it is), and they will keep doing that behavior.

I learned about history. In history, I wrote a paper once about the French Revolution. I talked about all the things they wanted me to talk about, [like] the letters of Cachet. In the paper, I wrote that I did not think that the way the teacher was doing it was right, that I did not think it was important to understand the dates of battles and the names of generals. To me, what was important in studying the French revolution was: What was the government doing that pissed the people off? What could the government have done to make the people not so pissed? What did the people do? What alternatives did the people have? The concepts are important. Learn from those fucking mistakes. I got a good grade, and I had criticized a teacher. He did not fucking kick me out of class. He talked to me after class about it. [He said] it was easier to grade papers this way than the way I was talking about. Giving the person a multiple-choice test is

easier to grade than having to read 1,000 fucking pages. He gave me his side of the story.

History was really, really stimulating to me. In my class, I had a guy named Sam De Frawley. He was in his forties, I guess, and he was from Egypt. He was an Arab, and I was a Jew, and he became my best friend.

L: He was a student?

C: He was a student. He had come out of his country. There were problems in Egypt, and his government would not allow his records to be sent here. He was at odds with his government. He had to go to school all over, but he already had a doctorate, so school was a piece of cake to him. He was a really gentle person and a really nice person. He is the one who told me about the war in Vietnam – that we were really the aggressor. He got me looking at that stuff. It started upsetting me. I wanted to be the fucking good guy in the white hat. Now I find out that I was a fucking Nazi. I grew up as a Jewish person and was told the stories of my family – people who I had never met – who were killed in concentration camps for being Jews. When I was a kid and they would tell me about that, I would think, "Why would soldiers kill women and children and put them in ovens and stuff?" It did not make any sense to me.

One of the things that caused me a lot of psychological problems when I came back was why, with that background of hearing the stories about the Holocaust and the murdering of women and children, I turned around and did the same fucking thing. Where the fuck was my brain? Why did it take me so long to figure it out? I can rationalize and say that, well, in the Holocaust they were actually civilians and were not fighting, where in Vietnam, there were women guerrillas, and there were children who did things to us. They could throw grenades and they could plant mines and stuff like that. But the general concept disturbs me because I was in their home, fucking with their place. They were not over here fucking with me. I was fucking with them, and they were the defenders. I was the aggressor. He made me really think about stuff, and history really made me think about stuff. I had this rush to get through. I come back, and where are all my friends? They are all gone. They have moved away, gone to college, they have jobs. There is no classroom to meet people at every day. I had to meet a whole bunch of new friends, and these were all fucking kids and stuff like that. I had this need to catch up. I was taking twenty-one hours a semester. These were not quarter hours; they were full hours. I just overloaded myself. I was making really good grades because I was really interested, and I really liked it. I graduated with an AA degree from Miami-Dade.

L: About what year?

C: I got out of the Marines in July 1969 and started school in September of 1969. I had my AA degree in December of 1970.

L: About a year and a half.

C: A year and three months.

L: That was quick.

C: Yes. I just popped it right out. I got a degree in pre-law at Dade, and I transferred up here. I had a triple major: political science, psychology, and philosophy.

L: So you get to Gainesville when?

C: December of 1970. I moved straight up here and started school in January of 1971.

L: Do you remember your reaction to Gainesville when you first got here?

C: When I first got here, there were trees. The streets were not big, wide streets. There was not tons of traffic. There was a lot of green. It was slow. Miami was fast and crowded and noisy. Gainesville was beautiful and green and slow. I fell in love with Gainesville. I loved it. There was more space between the houses. In Hialeah – where we lived – all the houses were the same. [It was like] the song, "Little boxes on the hilltop." There were different kinds of houses. [There were] older houses.

I am also smoking pot and doing drugs. My hair is long. I am not political yet, but I am into music and that kind of thing. I am really also into learning stuff. Registration was a bummer. I could not figure out why they did not do it like they did it at Miami-Dade. Miami-Dade's registration was real smart. At Miami-Dade, they had computer cards for the classes. You look at what you want. You go to the history line. If you got the card, you had the space. You were in. Then you would go get another card until you had your schedule. Here, you fill stuff out on paper, and then you would go and find out something was full. You would have to keep changing your schedule all around. You could not take it and have it. It was fucking bullshit. Up here was totally bullshit for registration. I took the classes that I wanted. The things that really interested me were history, political science, psychology, and philosophy.

L: How would you describe the student body then? Was there a big movement? Was there some political activity?

- C: When I got here, I heard names like Marshall Jones [and] Bob Canney. I hear that there has been a lot of strife with the black students and that black students have been arrested for demonstrating and that some teachers have been fired for anti-war activities. I first drive up here, and I do not know anybody – not one fucking person. My mother has a friend who went to Harvard with [someone who is now] a doctor in Newberry named Karelak – Doctor Karelak. He is still here. So I go to him and say who I am. He hooks me up with a friend in Gainesville who is a realtor, and they get me a place to rent. It is the corner house on University Avenue and East 8th Street, right across from the Salvation Army. It is \$100 a month.
- L: You are getting how much?
- C: I am getting \$130 from the government, plus \$46 for disability. So I am getting \$176 a month. I find this place to live in a big building; there are four separate apartments. I get to meet the other people who live there, and they become my first friends. [There] is a young guy and a girl. The guy has real long blond hair, and they are hippies, and they smoke dope. Downstairs is a guy from Columbia and his roommate, and they sell dope. Next door is a divorced woman with two kids, and she smokes dope. Everybody in the building is doing marijuana.
- L: And you are 300 yards from the student ghetto.
- C: The real student ghetto is past 13th Street, between 13th Street and 18th Street, by the University post office.
- L: Yes.
- C: I am over here in the east side of town.
- L: Okay.
- C: There are students that live there, but that is not what we call the student ghetto. Right next door to my house, on 8th Street behind me, is a house called the Eye House. There is an underground paper in Gainesville called *The Eye*. They live right behind me, but I do not know anything about them yet. I am kind of materialistic, like I am still ironing my clothes, trimming my beard, and shining my shoes.
- L: Making sure you have a belt on, right?
- C: Yes. [I am] just being a Marine, looking nice and wearing nice clothes. I had velour shirts and Madras shirts and Levis and loafers. I am driving a 1968 Camaro; that is what I bought with my money from Vietnam. I had a stereo

system.

When I am at Miami-Dade, I am dating somebody who works at K-Mart, so I go there and I shop, and I go through the register, and they charge me twenty-five cents for this and thirty cents for that. I am getting \$100 stereo sets and stuff like that. I am filling up baskets and going through, and my bill is like \$18. They gave me a list of what they want.

So when I came up here, I am stocked full of fucking socks, underwear, jeans, and all that stuff I really got unfairly. In Vietnam [once], we needed a generator. So they sent a group of us Marines into Da Nang, and we went to the Air Force base, and we stole a fucking generator. You just get what you fucking need. I am not saying that makes it right [laughter]. I am saying that that is the behavior I learned, and that is the behavior I did. I know it was illegal, but it did not fucking matter. Basically, you do not get in trouble for breaking the rules; you get in trouble for getting caught.

L: Right. How did you become politically active?

C: I was going to class, and I became politically active [due to] a number of things. Because I was a Vietnam veteran, some of the teachers were interested in talking to me. I was going to school on the G.I. Bill, and they knew it. They talked to me, especially Dr. Marilyn Zweig (now her last name is Holly) in the philosophy department. We read the Wilhelm Reich book.

L: On fascism. [*The Mass Psychology of Fascism*]

C: Yes. I read the book and wrote a paper. The book was about how you make a person into a fascist. Everything it said that you do to break a person down and rebuild him as a new person was what they did to me in Paris Island, and I wrote the paper about that. She was really impressed, and she put me in touch with the *Gainesville Sun*. To her, I was confirming her ideas about our government being fascist, and it was very political. To me, I was just putting together my experience and relating it to something I had read. I was not thinking in depth.

Then, Dr. [Ralph E.] Page [professor of political science] did a talk on the draft on the "Dialogue" radio show, [and] he asked me to come with him as a Vietnam vet. There was one guy who was for the draft, and [Dr. Page] was against the draft. I really had not thought that much about it because it did not affect me. When people are shooting at you, everybody shoots back. It does not make any fucking difference whether you joined or whether you were drafted. I did not see any difference in that in the early part of the war. He took the position that the draft was wrong [and] that it was unconstitutional. The Constitution says that slavery and involuntary servitude should not exist, and [the draft] is involuntary servitude. Well, I agreed with that. The other guy took the position that the

Congress has the right to raise an army and that is how they can do it, and they have the right to do it. [He said] that everybody should have to serve their country.

I was trying to balance between them, and the guy asked me what I thought. I said that we did not need a military [and] that basically, we had enough atomic bombs to blow up the world a bunch of fucking times and I would just say to anybody, "Fuck with us and we'll nuke you. You do not need a fucking army. Why half step? If you have to fight, go drop a bomb on them. Why waste your fucking kids?" Boy, it generated a lot of phone calls. People thought I was nuts [laughter]. You had World War II guys calling in and saying stuff like, "I served my country, and you should have to serve your country. Young people should have to serve their country, and if you fight with nuclear bombs, then you put the old people and the people who have already served at risk."

Anyway, it was fun for me. I was taking philosophy courses, and I really liked ancient philosophy – Plato and Aristotle. To me, it was just like taking an idea and kicking it around. I did not really have my mind made up about anything. I was just kicking this idea around about the draft.

Then Jane Fonda came to talk. I saw in the *Alligator* that she was coming to talk, so I decided, "Fuck. I am going to go see what she looks like." There was a lot of controversy about her. I went there. I knew she had been to Vietnam, but I did not really have anything against her for some reason. The only [person] I ever had anything against was Joan Baez [1941-; American singer, political activist]. When I was in Vietnam, I had read that Joan Baez had organized something in San Francisco, and people had donated blood and sent their blood to North Vietnam. I am thinking, "You mean that I might get killed by some fucking gook with American blood? This is crazy." It made me pissed that they would send blood to the fucking people who were trying to kill me. I did not like that at all.

I really had not thought much about Jane Fonda. I really had not paid any attention to any of that shit. I did not read the newspaper; I did not know what the fuck was going on. I went to see her, and she is the one person who changed my life. She is the one that made it all come together for me. If there is anyone I would give credit [to] in the whole world for making me from a Neanderthal, go-along-with-the-government, right-wing fascist into a sensitive, thoughtful human being, it would be Jane Fonda.

L: Was she genuine and sincere in what she was doing against the war?

C: I believe she was. I believe that she was a hero. She was really fiery and committed in her talk, but the things that she was saying were logical and made

sense. Her background gave it credibility because I thought: "She is rich. She is fucking beautiful. She is an actress. She could be on the French Riviera, sipping champagne, [and] laying on the fucking beach. She does not have to be here getting jeered and booed. She certainly is not doing it because it is fun. Why is she making this sacrifice? (It is obviously a sacrifice.) Why is she doing it?" To me, that gave her credibility. She was not doing it to get out of anything. She was not doing it for any kind of gain [or] to get any fucking money or stardom. She could be a star already. The only reason I could think that she was doing it was because she believed in it.

She said this was supposed to be a democracy, and the people are supposed to be in charge. The people are not getting the truth, and without the truth, a democracy cannot function; it cannot live. The government is lying about Vietnam. Vietnam veterans should come forward and tell the truth about Vietnam because the government is not.

I already knew that I had gotten in trouble for telling the truth [at] Western Carolina. So I went forward to meet with them, and I did not really get to meet with her. I got to meet with the people with her. I might have been able to say hello to her; I do not really remember.

L: You said people were booing?

C: It is just like any demonstration – you have pro and con. There were some people there who did not agree with what she was saying.

L: I am just wondering if there were any strident conservative types on campus.

C: Yes. The Young Republicans were there [as well as] Young Americans for Freedom (YAF). On the other side, you had SMC (Student Mobilization Committee), YSA (Young Socialist Alliance), and I do not know what other groups were there.

L: Do you remember anything about the Student Mobilization Committee?

C: When I started doing stuff, they were one of the groups I worked with. The groups that I ended up working with were the Student Mobilization Committee and the Gay Liberation.

L: Gay Liberation?

C: Yes. The president of Gay Liberation was named Julius Johnson. He was probably about 6'4". [He was] a big, black guy. He was a really nice person. He was really friendly to me. When I started doing stuff, he and the people from the Young Socialist Alliance and the Student Mobilization Committee came and

offered me advice and help. Those were the groups that came to me.

L: Do you remember any names from the Young Socialists?

C: The people who headed YSA were also the people who headed SMC.

L: Harris Freeman?

C: You got him! You are right. I would never have remembered that. What happened to him? Do you know?

L: I got his name out of a newspaper article.

C: Margie Zander is now a teacher at Jordan Glen School, where my kids go. She was in SMC. There was also a journalist named David Miller. He put out something called *Gainesville Journalism Review*. I have a copy right here.

L: This is dated May of 1975. Do you know if he was doing it earlier?

C: I cannot tell you that.

L: It says volume number three, so maybe [he was doing it] as early as 1972.

C: If I look through some of the articles, [I may remember some other names]. Other people who were active back then that I remember were David Chalmers [professor of history], Michael Gannon [associate professor of religion and history], Dr. [Herschel] Elliot from the philosophy department, Dr. [Thomas] Hanna from the philosophy department, Dr. Page from the history department, [and] Ken McGill.

I did not particularly care for McGill because I was not what I would call political, again. He was one of those people who put things in terms of Marxism and communism. I was not into that shit. I was not prepared to defend capitalism or Marxism or communism. I did not care about any of that shit. All I cared about was [that] I knew what we were really doing in Vietnam, and the government was fucking lying about it. The people have the right to fucking know the truth. [I felt] we should not be sending guys over there to get killed. Those were my first feelings. So when Jane Fonda told me about the Winter Soldier Investigation that she and Mark Lane [1927-; American lawyer] were putting together in Detroit, I went up there for that.

L: Before we get into that, can I ask you a couple of other questions about the Gainesville movement?

C: Yes.

L: Do you remember anything else about this Gay Liberation group? You told me the guy's name. Was this a big, active group? Was this a small group? Was it one person?

C: It was a group; it had members. All I can tell you is: we were allies. I really liked this guy Julius Johnson. He was a really nice person. I cannot really tell you why a macho ex-Marine who is very heterosexual would be friends with gay people, except to say that if somebody was nice to me, I was nice back to them. They came and were supportive of me. My meetings with them did not really happen until after the Winter Soldier, because I am still not connected with anything yet.

L: Okay.

C: Actually, Jane Fonda says there is a group in town called Veterans for Peace who are connected with this. So I go and meet them. I have my maps from Vietnam, [and] I have tons of pictures of dead people. I am being very honest with you: I did not go up there because I believed in democracy and that the people should know the truth. I went and showed them my documentation (they were looking for people with documentation). I had dates, I had names of operations, I had maps, and I had pictures.

L: This is in Detroit?

C: This is here in Gainesville. So the Veterans for Peace here made the arrangements with Detroit. I do not know the connection with Jane Fonda and the Veterans for Peace and how that worked and how they put me in touch with this group to go to Detroit. Someone had paid for my plane ticket and flew me up to Detroit with my documentation. I had another more selfish motivation. I was looking for recognition. I wanted to brag about all the gooks that I had killed. I wanted to show off my medals. I wanted someone to pat me on the back and say, "You did a good job, Scott." I was proud of what we did, and I was looking for some fucking thanks.

That is not what the thing was about up there. That is what I was about when I got there. Then I ran into Ken Campbell, who you saw in the film, *The Winter Soldier Investigation*. He comes up to me in the very beginning and says, "Sergeant Camil, is that you?"

L: [This is] the guy who looks like Peter Fonda?

C: Yes [laughter]. He said: "I was trying to remember about Bravo Company. I am

trying to find someone who was there." I said: "Goddamn. I forgot all about that. That was the last one we did. Are they still doing stuff like that?" He said, "Yeah, man, it's all the same." So now I am listening to everybody talk. I am listening to people talk about racism. All of a sudden, all these other things I talked about in the past (learning that we were really the aggressor, getting in trouble for telling the truth, the Holocaust) are starting to come together. I am starting to get the bigger picture finally. The Winter Soldier Investigation, which I am motivated to go to by Jane Fonda, is all of a sudden starting to jell things. I met some Vietnamese people there, and they were nice people. I am thinking: "Damn. These are nice people, and I can be their friend. What the fuck was I [doing] over there in their country, burning down their houses and killing them? They really helped us in World War II; they were our allies. The OSS [Office of Strategic Services] trained Ho Chi Minh and his soldiers to fight with us. What the fuck were we doing? I liked these damn guys. They talked about how we treated our prisoners. I killed all my fucking prisoners, and I still feel that if you are going to send me to war, I would do it again. Here we are in the jungle, and we catch some prisoners. Our mission is to go off to a certain fucking point and save somebody or capture something or do something. You [as my prisoner] are going to fucking slow me down. If we run into a bigger unit, you are going to yell and give away my position. I ain't gonna leave any men behind with you because I need all my men, and I ain't gonna let you fucking go. I am going to kill you. That takes care of the problem. It is simple. It is all tactics.

You saw the video. For three days, I listened to all these people talking. I listened to the Indian guy talk about [how] we did to the Vietnamese exactly what we did to the Indians. I am listening to the black people talking about [how] this is just fucking racism. This stuff is all feeding into my brain, and all of a sudden all these things are starting to come together. Now, I am starting to think we were the bad guys.

L: Do you remember the dates of this?

C: January 31, February 1 and 2, 1971.

L: It does not take you long after arriving in Gainesville to get somewhere.

C: No. But [to put it] in perspective, I came back from Vietnam in 1967. It took four fucking years to get into my hard head. [laughter] I never get my feet on the ground in Gainesville, and I am already in it.

Then a guy named Michael Oliver has a meeting with the veterans on the last day and says: "Look. We're fucking those Vietnamese. We are fucking those Americans. Our government is fucking us. They made us do things that were wrong. They lied to us; if we would have known the truth, we wouldn't be doing

it. They're still sending other fucking people to do it. They're still killing people over there who are just protecting their fucking homes. It's our job to get them out of there. It's our job to stop the fucking killing. Ain't nobody else gonna fucking do it. We need to organize, guys." I believed that. I am in there with all these guys, and they are talking about all this shit, and I am thinking: "They're right, and I'm gonna do this. I'm gonna be part of this. I want to do this." But still, subconsciously, I am more motivated by the fact that I do not want any more Americans to go through what I went through, [and less] motivated by the suffering of the Vietnamese. I am still pretty bitter about the Vietnamese. I feel that we were over there supposedly helping them, and they did not even help us. In the daytime, they are our friends, and in the nighttime, they are fucking killing us. I still have a lot of resentment and bitterness, and it takes me a few more years to overcome that. So I am fighting to end the war, but I am not necessarily doing it for all the right reasons. I am doing it because I do not want Americans to have to go through that shit, and I am pissed at our government for what they did. I am still not that keen on the Vietnamese. I finally recognized that they are not gooks and that they are human beings. It takes awhile for that to soak in.

Now I come back, and [I am in Detroit]. They say: "What we need to do is to form a national organization. We need to put these kinds of displays on in every town across the country. If everybody goes back to their hometowns and organizes the veterans in their hometowns and the people of their communities see the people that they know talking about this, we are going to change this fucking war."

- L: Is this where Vietnam Veterans Against the War comes into existence?
- C: Yes and no. Already, there is a Vietnam Veterans Against the War in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. They have been working since like 1968. Now this is the first time that we are talking about doing it nationwide. These guys who are talking are organizers.
- L: From this existing group?
- C: Yes.
- L: Okay.
- C: They are trying to organize the rest of us. They are guys who have organized unions. They have organized civil rights stuff. These guys have been doing movement stuff. I have not been doing shit. I agree to be on a list of people to try to do this.

I come back to Gainesville, and I come back to Vets for Peace, and I give them a

report. [I tell them,] "This is what went on, and this is what we should do, and I think we should organize it." They are real cold to me. From their point of view, "Who is this new guy? All of a sudden this guy comes out of nowhere. He ain't never fucking done nothing, and all of a sudden he wants to take charge and do this shit. Who the fuck is he? He is an awfully suspicious character."

The people in YSA and these people who are Marxists are kind of purist people. They do not want to do things that are illegal. They know I smoke dope. They feel that if you smoke dope, you are undermining the credibility of what you are doing. Fuck them. Who gives a shit if I smoke dope? To me, it ain't no big deal. From their point of view, here is a guy who is doing dope and comes in from nowhere, and we do not trust him.

L: What do you remember about the Veterans for Peace other than the fact that they were not interested?

C: Just that they seemed a little bit older than me. A lot of them seemed to be working on their master's and stuff like that. They were older people.

L: Did they have a well-worked-out political agenda?

C: I do not know because I just went there the one meeting to show my shit, then I came back to a meeting to tell them what I did. I never really heard what they did or what they were into.

L: I was wondering if the names Bob Clark or Gary Saunders [ring a bell].

C: Both those names sound familiar. I was not with them. There was never any time to get anything going. I came back, and I was kind of motivated. I came back, and I have a Vietnam Veterans Against the War button; I am the only one in Gainesville. [laughter] I get a call from Mike Oliver, saying: "We are scheduling a conference for the end of February in New York City. We are going to organize nationally. We want you to come up and represent the South." I said, "I don't have any money." They said, "We'll send you a ticket." I said, "Okay." I went up for that, and the United States got broken into twenty-eight parts, based on where the people that came are from. So I end up having Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee. There is nobody from any of those states but me.

L: You were the only one.

C: I was the only one from any of those states.

L: Did this ever change?

C: Yes. It changes later on. What happens is, we draw up the objectives: what we stand for, the constitution, and the by-laws. It is really neat because I feel like one of the founding fathers.

L: How many people are at this national meeting?

C: There are the twenty-eight of us who became coordinators, and then there are the four people who got elected to run the national office, then girlfriends and other people, so there might have been fifty of us.

L: Okay. So you draw up all these constitutions and by-laws.

C: We fight over every fucking word. It is a battle to cross every T and dot every I. The group is made up of all people who agree the war is wrong, but you have the right-wingers who feel that we are not fighting to win, so we should not be doing it. Unless we are going to fight to win, we should not be doing it. [They believe] the war is really right; we are just not fighting it right. You have the people who feel it is racist and for that reason, it is wrong. You have the people that feel that it is all the fault of capitalism. You have the people that feel it is just not being a decent human being. So you get all these people who really are not together on much of anything except [that] we are all Vietnam veterans, and we all think we have been fucked by the government and the war is wrong. It is kind of neat. There is a lot of arguing going on about whether or not it should be called a racist war, whether or not we should attack capitalism, etc. I am saying stuff like: "I can go and talk about [how] it is wrong for what we are doing, but I cannot attack capitalism. I do not know anything about capitalism and communism and all that. From what I have studied in school, they both have their good parts, and they both have their bad parts. No system is perfect, and all systems are made up of people. If you have lazy people in a capitalist society, you are not going to make it. If you have people in a communist society that want to fucking work more and have more, they are fucked. There are just different kinds of people. Some people are smart and some people are dumb. You cannot fit all the people into one system. I do not want to have to deal with that. That is a sidetrack for me. I want to fucking deal with just the war."

They are saying: "The war? That is just a symptom of the problem. We have to deal with the problem to take care of the war." There is all this fucking shit going on. That is where I did not fit in – the dogma.

L: Right.

C: I was just different than a lot of those people, but I was articulate. I spoke from the heart, and I was a logical person. I had a lot of experience as an NCO, and I

had been through a lot in Vietnam. So I had a lot of things that gave me a lot of power, and I was one of the stronger people there.

Now I come back to Gainesville. During this period of time, *Playboy* gives us a free full-page ad saying that if you think the war is wrong and you want to do something about it, contact this group. Twenty thousand veterans send their names in to *Playboy*. I get a printout from headquarters of Vietnam Veterans Against the War of all the people from Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, [and] Mississippi who answer that [ad]. I compose a letter and I send it to all of them. [It says] who I am, explains what the Winter Soldier Investigation is and [tells] what we want to do. I send each person a list of all the people in their city and say: "Here is what I would like you to do. Contact the people on this list. Have a meeting, get together, and pick a leader. Call me, and I will come and help you get organized. Then, all of a sudden, chapters spring up all over the fucking place. I get a call from Birmingham, Alabama, saying: "We called everyone on this list, and there are twenty of us here, and we want to do something, and we would like you to come up and help us." Boom. I drive up to Birmingham; I drive up to Tuscaloosa; I drive to Miami, Tampa, Daytona, and all over the place.

L: The national office is financing you?

C: No. Now I am financing myself. Now we have to turn off the tape recorder for a minute.

[Interruption]

I am driving around and organizing veterans. I am setting up Winter Soldier Investigations all over the Southeast. I am meeting a lot of people, and we are getting donations from people. Our initial thing was the Winter Soldier Investigation. Now, other people come. The people who came to the Winter Soldier Investigation here in Gainesville, [some of whom were] Quakers, came up to me and talked to me. People from the Gay Liberation came and talked to me. People who were involved in the movement came. SMC would sponsor a demonstration, and they would come and say, "Would you be a speaker for us?" Everybody that would set up a demonstration would want me to come and be a speaker.

L: Do you remember any feminists being active [like] Gainesville Women's Liberation [or] Campus NOW?

C: There definitely was not a Campus NOW back then. This was still the time when sex was clean and air was dirty [laughter]. Being promiscuous was okay. There was feminist stuff in the sense that there were a lot of women involved in the

movement, but there was not the kind of feminist stuff that there is today, which is male-bashing and kind of separatist. It was more like equal rights for blacks, equal rights for Indians, equal rights for gay people, equal rights for women, [and] equal rights for veterans. It was all working for justice and equal rights for everyone. We were not pitted against one another.

L: Do you remember Judith Brown?

C: Yes. I knew Judith Brown's name, but she was more like the old guard. We were friends, but I was an elitist kind of person. Like all these other groups had their own things. I did not want to fight on those issues. I did not know anything about those issues. My issue was Vietnam. I did not really like working with civilians because they had collectives. They had all this stuff where they would sit around and criticize each other. A lot of their time went into dogma. I did not have a taste for any of that. I was not going to go to a meeting [to hear], "How come you don't have any women?" Well, damn, there were not a whole lot of women who served in Vietnam. What do you mean we do not have any women? I mean, fuck you. I just did not have time for any of that stuff.

L: Right.

C: Some of them considered me to be sexist, but it was really elitist. I just wanted to work on the issue I knew about. I am an expert on this issue. I was there, I did it, I know what I am talking about. I cannot go and talk about communism and capitalism and racism. I have not read about that stuff. I do not know about that stuff, and it would be easy to trip me up. Talk about Vietnam, and I will kick your ass. I know it.

L: What about Young Americans for Freedom? I think in the *It Did Happen Here* book, you mention that the Young Americans for Freedom house was right across from where you were living.

C: It was, but it was an interesting kind of thing. Brian Donnelly was one of the people. He was actually a libertarian, I think. The libertarians, Young Americans for Freedom, and the Young Republicans hung out together, but they did not agree on everything. The libertarians were against the Vietnam War. The Young Americans for Freedom and the Young Republicans were not. The head of the Young Republicans and the Young Americans for Freedom was Mike Carr, and he was a Vietnam vet. He was part Cuban. I met him real early on. He was a personable guy, but kind of a trickster – like how I see Republicans.

Republicans like to play semantic games. People like [William F.] Buckley [1925-American editor, author] want to get out there and astonish you with their fucking vocabulary and trip you up on vocabulary without really talking about the

real shit. They have a good vocabulary and they know the different meanings of a lot of stuff, and they play word games. It is more like a chess match than dealing with the issues.

Mike Carr came up to me and introduced himself to me and mentioned that he was a veteran. We shook hands. I told him that I had just come up from Hialeah, and I was glad to get away from all those fucking Cubans. He said, "I am part Cuban" [laughter].

L: Oops [laughter].

C: Also, I was positive about my feelings about Vietnam. I agree that those other guys that went there that were not in combat had a right to resent the things I was saying. They did not fucking kill women and children, they did not burn down villages, and they did not want that fucking rap. I agree with them, and they have the right to that feeling. But I also have the right to what I saw. We could not have done what we did without their fucking support. So they have blood on their hands, too. They might not have it eye to eye, but the people that loaded the bomb on the plane are just as responsible for the people that those bombs dropped on as the people who pushed the buttons. The people that sat there and fucking gave us intelligence on where to go, they are just as responsible.

We [Mike and I] ended up liking each other, and we did not allow the politics to get between our relationship. He was also into political science and philosophy.

L: Did any of those people smoke dope that you can remember?

C: I do not think that Mike smoked dope. I do not remember ever smoking dope with him. I am pretty sure that he was against it. Now the libertarians, I think, probably got high. It was just the YSA people and some of the Republican people that did not do it, but I know that some of the Republicans did.

L: The YSA or the YAF?

C: The Young Socialist Alliance – Harris Freeman. Those people were real strict about their rules. The government was really against them. The government was really hitting hard against the socialist groups.

We had a fundraiser on Florida Field. We played a football game. It was the Young Republicans and the Young Americans for Freedom versus Vietnam Veterans Against the War. It was an hour-long game with referees. It was tackle [with] no pads. We all wore combat boots and jeans and fucking green shirts. They all wore running shoes and shorts. They had a lot of ringers – jocks – in

there. They won the game. We each had a person carted off in an ambulance to the hospital. It was a really hard-hitting game, and they would never play us again. And it was fun.

L: About how many people were in your local chapter of VVAW?

C: We had almost eighty people. It was like seventy-seven people.

L: All veterans?

C: Yes.

L: And I take it all male.

C: All male as far as the veterans went, but we could not have existed without the female support – the wives and the girlfriends. There was a woman named Nancy McCown and Carol Gordon. You met her; her name was Carol Matzkin. Without those two women, I would not have been able to do anything.

L: Were they doing secretarial things?

C: It was secretarial things, but saying that downplays the significance of their work. Carol did the typing. I would sit there and read something in the newspaper and rattle off a letter to the editor. All I did was talk. She sat there, she typed it, I would sign it, [and] she would mail it off. They would make sure all the words were spelled and that everything was punctuated right. They would make phone calls. They would also talk about tactics (not security tactics, because that was really more my department), but [they would tell me,] "If you do this, Scott, it's going to turn people off." [They would advise,] "You ought to talk with this group, Scott, because this is a good group."

L: [They would discuss] political tactics.

C: Political tactics [and] consciousness-raising. I just have to tell you that I got all the glory, but without the help of Nancy McCown and Carol Matzkin, none of this could have happened. They also gave me love [and] emotional support. They were my friends when I was down. They would help me when I was overwhelmed. They gave me strength, love, [and] support. I definitely was not shit without them. I really feel bad [that] people come to interview me about all those things I did in the past, and it could not have been done without them. So to say that they were secretaries [minimizes their contributions]. They were like the heart, the soul, [and] the conscience. I was just the brawn [laughter].

L: How many of your members were black?

C: Three.

L: Three out of eighty?

C: Yes. [They were] Alan Jackson (who worked at the VA Hospital), James Brown (who is a minister in Gainesville now), and one other person who was a friend of theirs, Charles Goston.

L: Was this because there were not many black veterans at UF?

C: No. It is because they had a different struggle. Their struggle was civil rights and racism and dealing with "Whitey" and his shit.

L: Were you in Gainesville when the Black Student Union took over Tigert [Hall on] April 15, 1971?

C: Yes, and not only that, I supported them. Sam Taylor was the student body president. He was black, and we were good friends.

L: When you said you supported what the Black Student Union did, what does that mean?

C: That means that they would call up and say, "We're going to do this. Will you speak?" I would come and speak; I would bring my friends. The vets would come, and we would be there. They came to our demonstrations; we went to their demonstrations. We were 100 percent supportive of them. They are the ones that all got put in the buses and sent to jail. We supported what they were fighting for, but it was not our top priority. We came to their demonstrations and marched in their marches. We talked when they needed speakers. They came and did the same thing for us. We were a student organization; we had student funding. We got to march in the Homecoming parade. We kicked ass in the Homecoming parade. I would say the best demonstration we ever had was in the Homecoming parade.

L: Tell me what year that was. Was this with the guerilla theater and the flag-draped coffin?

C: Yes.

L: Is this before or after you are indicted with the Gainesville Eight? 1971 or 1972?

C: I could not tell you without looking in the newspapers. I am telling you, every day I was speaking somewhere or going somewhere. I was totally overwhelmed.

- L: Okay. I will look it up. Tell me about the Homecoming parade.
- C: This was so good. The theme of the Homecoming parade was "The Impossible Dream." We had a sign, and it said, "The impossible dream – no more war." What more impossible dream could you have? First we had three people carrying the big banner that you saw that said, "Vietnam Veterans Against the War." The sign was tacked onto the front of the casket. Four of us carried the casket. I was one of the people that carried the casket. It had a flag draped over it, and it said, "The impossible dream – no more war." Then, behind the casket were two reinforced squads of veterans dressed in Vietnam garb.
- L: Bush fatigues?
- C: Jungle utilities. We carried toy M-16s, but we wore real bayonets and real kaybars. A kaybar is a Marine corps fighting knife.
- L: With the leather rings and a handle?
- C: It has like a wooden handle with the rings in it with a flat back end. [It is] sharp on both sides [and has] big blood gutters. [It is a] really nice knife. I like that knife. I still have one.
- L: Okay. I have seen those.
- C: We had done practice with people from the Quaker Church and the Unitarian Church. They were stationed at major intersections like University [Avenue] and 13th Street. They were hidden in the crowd in groups, and they had packets of blood under their clothes. There is a hobby store over there by Albertson's. I bought these colored balls that you would light. They looked like cherry bombs; smoke would come out of them. When I would see them in the crowd, I would light [a smoke bomb], and I would throw it into the crowd. Immediately upon doing that, a squad from behind the casket would break off and charge the crowd, yelling and screaming, grabbing these [planted] people, throwing them on the fucking ground, [and] stabbing them. Blood would start coming out from the blood packets. The people freaked out. I am telling you, people freaked the fuck out. The cops were going fucking crazy.
- The second squad would hand out leaflets to the crowd. (I have the leaflets here still). [The leaflet] would say, "A U.S. infantry unit has just come through here. If you were Vietnamese, we might have killed you, we might have killed your children, we might have raped your wife, we might have raped your daughters, we might have burned your village, [and] we would have done all these things in the name of the American people. If it bothers you that your husbands, sons,

and fathers are being sent to do these things to other human beings, join us to end the war." Kick ass. Let me tell you, the pigs were so pissed.

L: I will bet.

C: They were so pissed. We came around Main Street where it ended. About forty of us were walking back in a group to my house, which was the headquarters, and the police came. They wanted to arrest a couple of us for profanity for saying, "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war." People took their fucking shirts off, unsnapped their fucking knives, and we said, "Come and get us." The cops backed down.

L: How would you characterize the campus police, the city police, and the Alachua County sheriff's deputies? Were they out to get you? Were they restrained?

C: Let me say that it was a mixture. I would say that it was new for them. They were not used to having their authority challenged. They had never been in a position to back down, but [they knew it would not be wise] to get in a big fight with veterans over this issue. We were going to fight. They were going to have to fucking shoot us. We would not allow them to take a man. They were not going to take one of our fucking men. [Remember] the camaraderie that we talked about before? In those days, there was no way you could touch one of us. The police did not like that, and the police did not make an issue of it. I have to say, actually, we had a pretty good relationship with the police for the most part.

What happened in the May riots really was because they were so overwhelmed that they brought in police from out of town who did not have the experience of working with the students. More than half of the Gainesville police [force] were students. [They were] people taking classes. They brought in Levy County Sheriff's Department, Marion County Sheriff's Department, Florida Highway Patrol, [and] Marine Patrol. Those fucking people were fucking rednecks. They were going to fucking beat up some fucking hippies, and things got out of hand. Eighteen police [officers] were hospitalized. Fifty-four police [officers] were treated on the scene. Four hundred people were arrested. Not fucking one of my men was arrested, and we did damage to them. I mean, we fucked these guys up.

L: How did these riots get started [May 9 and 10, 1972]? I know that they were in response to the mining of Haiphong and to the expanded bombing campaigns over North Vietnam – the extension of the air war over North Vietnam.

C: Right. We decided to have a demonstration. The demonstrations would start with speakers at the Plaza of the Americas.

L: Who is "we"? Is this just Vietnam Veterans Against the War?

C: No. We call a demonstration. I get on the phone, [and] I call up SMC – Student Mobilization Committee – [and tell them,] "We are going to have a demonstration." [I] Call up YSA. [I] Call up the Gay Liberation. [I] Call up each group. [I call] the Black Student Union. I say, "This is what we are going to do; can you provide one speaker?"

Also, we were real handy with the press. We would call up the *Alligator*, the *Gainesville Sun*, [and] all the radio stations. Right away, I would make a press release, Nancy or Carol would type it out, somebody would go deliver it in all their boxes, and boom! It was on all the news. It was the fucking news. So as soon as it was on the news, people came. I also had permits to block the street at 13th [Street] and University [Avenue].

L: Why block the street? Where does this idea come from?

C: My idea was that we were going to inconvenience the people of Gainesville. It was not a major inconvenience. It just seemed [to us] that unless they were being affected by something, they did not give a shit. So we had to affect them. The people of Vietnam were being "inconvenienced" by being bombed, murdered, burned, napalmed, [and] Agent Oranged. The inconvenience of the people of Gainesville is just having to drive out of their way a couple of fucking blocks. Big fucking deal. But we wanted to get their attention.

This is sort of like a double-edged thing. We could not get news coverage unless we did something real graphic. We could talk all day long on the Plaza of the Americas. The only people that were going to hear us were those that came, and they were basically people who already thought like us. The press was not going to cover that a whole lot. In order to get the press to come, we had to do something graphic. If our job was to educate the people, we needed to get our message to the people, and the best way to do that was television and the newspapers and radio. But we did not have money to buy ads, so we had to create news.

L: The reason I asked the previous question was that this is 1972, and this is a new type of tactic. University of California students occupied the city airport in Santa Barbara, [and] students in Colorado are blocking roads and bridges with trees and things. I am wondering, is this an idea that is filtering down or being discussed with your national connections?

C: This was [a] spontaneous local [effort].

L: Okay.

C: Let me tell you that the streets had been blocked before. After football games, people would go out in the streets and raise hell and party. They would block it, but the police did not stop them or anything. It was just like people were happy about winning football games, and that was okay.

When we mined Haiphong . . . one of the things that got us into World War II was people fucking with our shipping. What if we start blowing up Russian ships? Is this thing not going to escalate? This was a serious escalation to us. So we had the permit to block the street, and we blocked the street. When the time was up, we pulled down the barricades and unblocked the street. What happened was, spontaneously, people decided to stay in the street.

L: What kind of people? Students, non-students, members of organizations?

C: All of those kinds of people, but not [our chapter of] Vietnam Veterans Against the War. We were very disciplined. To me, one of the things where I differed with the other groups, especially Vietnam Veterans Against the War, [was discipline]. For instance, Vietnam Veterans Against the War took over the Statue of Liberty. That was one of the things that they did.

L: And flew the flag upside down on it?

C: Yes.

L: That was in the Winter Soldier movie.

C: They said, "We are going to stay here until the war is over," and they did not. To me, my credibility has always been important, so I would never say I would do something that I could not do. If I said we were going to do something, we fucking did it. Now, we had a good relationship with Mayor [Richard] Jones. I met with the police. We marked out the fucking rules. We blocked the streets, [and when] the time was up, we unblocked the streets. We kept our end of the bargain. We had very strong discipline. Other people decided to stay in the streets, and we tried to talk them out of that. It just did not work. What happened was, some asshole called the fire [department]. Rather than paying no attention to it, and letting it wind down on its own pace, they made a confrontation. They did not understand the concept of riot control.

L: The local police?

C: The government. They understood the concepts of authority and force. They were not going to have their authority messed with. They did their end of the bargain, and now they were not going to be flexible. Mayor Jones, Father

[Michael] Gannon, and I all spoke to the people, trying to get them to leave the street. That is documented. They would not do it. So now the government comes in with heavy-handed tactics.

Here it is fucking May, and it is hot as shit. The first thing they did was come out with fire hoses and spray people down. That turned it into a carnival atmosphere. That turned it into a fucking party. People were not there because of politics or the war anymore; they were there partying.

L: I read in one of the newspaper accounts that the fire engine did not have enough pressure to do anything [effective] with water, so it became an eyebath for tear gas victims.

C: That is the other thing. They hit people with tear gas. Let me tell you how stupid these assholes were. They were downwind. You do not do it that way. The tear gas came back on them. They were just stupid. When they escalated, the crowd went from like 250 or 300 to 5,000. Then they had a fucking mob. I am remembering now that I have already been arrested for some of my other charges by this point.

L: The kidnapping thing and the pot bust?

C: And the drugs, yes. I remember that I had a trial coming up the next day, and my mom is in town, and my mom gets tear gassed. They start beating people up. The vets start coming to me and saying, "This is not right. The tactics that they are using are not right; they are hurting people. We can't allow this to go on." It was not a decision that I made. Normally, I made the decisions. This was a decision where the vets came to me and said, "We have to do something," so we sprung into action.

L: One question. We were talking earlier about wrist-rocket slingshots.

C: Yes.

L: I recall seeing – somewhere in the accounts of the May 9 and 10 riots – a picture of a police car door with ball-bearing holes, and [there were] either rumors of slingshots or the police saw people with slingshots.

C: We did [have them]. They were tear gassing people, and they were beating people up. We were going to fight them. One of the things you learn in riot control is to use the minimum amount of force necessary. Also, the slingshot was semi-lethal. We did not kill anybody with it, but the psychological effect of it was that there was no muzzle flash, and there was no noise. You could not see where it was coming from. People could be deployed with them and could use

them without giving away their positions. It was sort of like the Indians fighting the British, where the British are in red coats. Did you see the movie *Last of the Mohicans*?

L: No, I have not.

C: The British are in red coats, this fucking wide and this fucking deep, and the front row is kneeling and all this crap, and the Indians are hiding behind the rocks and trees, just kicking their fucking asses. That is what these guys presented – that kind of a fucking target. We got balloons of ammonia. We hit them first with the balloons of ammonia. They had on the helmets with the face shields. The ammonia hit, [and] off came the face shields.

We are highly organized. First of all, we have learned a lot of guerrilla skills and a lot of combat skills. We certainly have learned how to hit and run. I mean, that is what was done to us. So we are monitoring the police radio. We have four-man teams all over the fucking place that we are deploying to where the hot spots are.

L: Were these plans that you already had that you all of a sudden put into effect when you found this riot going on? Were you hoping something like this would happen?

C: No, we did not have any plan at all. We did not get geared up until really the next day.

L: So this is the second night of rioting you are talking about.

C: Right. We were able to monitor the police right away, but we did not have the slingshots. We did not have our shit together. Our people did get into fights the first night, but they used rocks and bricks and stuff. I have pictures of stuff to show you that they had plainclothes police officers behind the demonstrators, and they threw rocks over the heads of the demonstrators at the fucking police in uniform. The police in uniform charged the crowd, beat people up, and these plainclothes people beat the shit out of people. We had pictures of that; we got the pictures developed right away. (We worked with people from the *Alligator* who had access to the place where they develop the pictures.) That night, we were able to pick out who was doing that shit, and they were fucking undercover narcotics agents. Right away, we saw what these guys were doing. They were just kicking the shit out of students. It was fucking wrong.

So we went into action that night to stand up to them. But we also made a plan of action of what to do if it kept on going. If it kept on going, then we broke into police cars, turned on their radios, pushed the button for the mike handset, and taped it. Now, they cannot communicate with each other because their lines are

jammed. We are monitoring their lines. [If] they send a fucking group over to the Krystal, we are going to send a fucking team over to the Krystal. We set up ambushes for them, and we just ambushed them. We hit them real hard, and they were totally blown away by it. They were not used to anything like that. They were totally freaked out.

People will say that is violence. Sure, [but] they used the violence first. People will say that is against the law, and I will say that the authority to govern comes from the governed. The government [consists of] public servants who work for us, and we have the right to discipline them when they are wrong. They are our servants. They are not our fucking kings and queens and bosses. The power of the democracy is in the people, not the government, and we exercised our authority over the government. I still stand by that.

L: What was your relationship with someone like Michael Gannon? What do you remember about him?

C: Michael Gannon was level-headed. He was a good person. He was soft-spoken; he was very knowledgeable. He also had a lot of credibility because he had been around awhile. He had the support of the Catholics, and there are lots of Catholics.

L: I understand that he was Stephen O'Connell's confessor, too, for a while.

C: I would not have any knowledge about stuff like that. O'Connell was a racist fucking pig. They took student funds – when you pay your money to go to school, some of the money comes out for student activities – to build that O'Connell Center. When they had a vote to name it, the students did not want to name it after a racist pig who on the [Florida] Supreme Court voted against integration and had the black students beaten and arrested. We did not want it named [after O'Connell]. It was our fucking money, it was our right to have it named, and the goddamn legislature overruled us and named it after this racist fucking pig.

L: I remember there was a battle, but Gannon was not a bad person at this time.

C: No. Gannon was a person whose word was good, who was a humanitarian, who I liked very much.

L: What role did he take for himself in those riots?

C: He was one of the speakers, and he was a peacemaker. At first, I was a peacemaker, but then I was a defender of the people.

L: When was the candlelight march that you and Gannon did?

C: That was the third night. They had a curfew, and they had a rule that you could not be in groups of more than two people walking down the street, and we actually challenged them. We had the candlelight vigil to try to break up what was going on. What happened really started getting out of control by students taking the street and refusing to leave, and the authorities, rather than being mature and saying, "Okay, if they want to block the traffic a little bit longer, we'll let them block the traffic a little bit longer," [turned it into a confrontation]. That would have diffused it.

One of the things that you learn in riot control is you always give the group that you are trying to control an avenue of escape. You always give them options; you do not push them into a fucking corner. You do not alienate them. You give them every opportunity to do the right thing. These guys [have an attitude of] "The clock says it is three o'clock, you are still fucking out there, you are going to be arrested. We are going to kick your ass." It is fascist. They just were not mature about it.

L: This is the coalition of regional police forces?

C: I do not know who actually gave the order, whether it was the city manager, the mayor, O'Connell, [or Gainesville Police Chief] Nolen Freeman. I had a good relationship with Nolen Freeman; I really did. I liked him, I trusted him, [and] I talked off the record with him about stuff.

Once it became confrontational, and it was us against them, they would get in their lines, and they would start marching toward the crowd. This was on the first night, really. When it became confrontational and we did not have any weapons or plans, we had to use tactics. (This really pissed them off.) We got the people to move back and back off from the cops, and they would push us down University Avenue to around 17th Street, where the Florida Bookstore is. At that point, we would break and run across the Plaza and come out over in front of Tigert.

L: And go sit in the street again, right?

C: Yes. It would take them a fucking hour to get that whole fucking unit turned, marched around, get everything set up, [including] the guy with the bullhorn [saying], "Okay, you have thirty seconds to move." [It took an hour] to do all that shit. I will open up the files and provide you with the police report so you can see a minute-by-minute [account].

L: That would be interesting.

- C: [I will also show you] photographs showing what these guys were doing.
- L: Who was it who decided that students should sit in formation on 13th Street and spell things out?
- C: I cannot really remember that. It is probably in the report. They were flying over with a helicopter.
- L: The Duval County Sheriff's Department.
- C: We decided to say, "Fuck you," to them, and we spelled it out with people. It was real simple. It was harmless. It might have pissed them off, but there was a Supreme Court case around that time. Someone (not from Gainesville) had had a sign that said, "Fuck the draft," and they got arrested for obscenity. It was argued in front of the Supreme Court that it was not obscene because you cannot imagine having sexual intercourse with the draft.

Basically they thought that they were in charge of the people. We were the people, and we wanted them to know that we were in charge of them. They were not used to having their authority questioned, and that is what it was really all about. They accused us of using communist guerrilla hit-and-run tactics by going back and forth across the Plaza. It was a defusing thing, but it also let us make our point. It frustrated them because they could not get things under control. We were not doing anything bad enough to call in the National Guard. I have to tell you, we were having fun. Not only that, but when it was over, I think there were 396 people arrested for misdemeanors, and one person [was arrested] for a felony. His name was Chevron. He was an *Alligator* reporter. He was driving his car and the police smashed his windshield. He hit the gas instead of the brake, and he was charged with a felony.

- L: Some kid tried to jump in the window and turn the car off?
- C: I do not remember, but there is a picture of Father Gannon kneeling down next to him in the street, I think, and he is all bloody. They were beating the fuck out of people.

Let me tell you what they did. They beat up the goddamn newspaper reporters the first night, and that turned the press against them. They wore jumpsuits, they had their nameplates taped over, they had the badges on their uniforms taped over, [and] they had the license tags on their cars taped over. They did all these things so they would not have to be held accountable. When they came in like that, we knew they were going to just kick ass and fucking try to get away with it because nobody could say who did it. We stood up to them, and they did not like it. We won. We absolutely won.

When we went to court, first of all, the community was really pissed at the tactics that were used. [Through] the press talking about it, we had total community support. We had a press release that said, "Everybody who was arrested, come to the Florida Theater and meet with lawyers, and we will do this together." A lot of the people who were arrested were not involved in the damn demonstration. People would throw rocks at the cops, [and] the cops would chase them. They would run into an apartment complex. The cops would tear gas the apartment complex, [and] everybody would come out in their fucking nightgowns and shit, and they would take people to jail. They were totally indiscriminate. They were grabbing girls' tits. They were pigs. They earned that fucking name.

It was a two-tier thing. The one tactic was dealing with people who were arrested, and the other tactic was dealing with the community. We had the press to help us with the community. Our message to the community was: "If you think that the behavior of the police was unacceptable, you can tell them that it was unacceptable by serving on juries and letting these people go. [Tell them] we will not stand for that. You work for us, and we will not stand for this kind of indiscriminate treatment." That was our message to the public.

Our message to the people that were arrested was, "Look. They only have jury trials for misdemeanors twice a week. There is a fucking speedy trial rule here. They have ninety days to take everybody to trial. Mathematically, they cannot do it. It cannot be done. We want everybody to plead not guilty and to request a trial by jury. We will fucking burn out their fuses. They will not be able to do it. They cannot handle it. We can beat them." We offered them a deal. We asked the mayor to have them drop the charges. It was too politically hot for him; he could not do it.

So they took their best shots. They had pictures of people sitting in the street charged with sitting in the street and blocking traffic. The first four, five, or six trials they had, the juries found those people not guilty, [and] they dropped charges on everyone else. We fucking beat their fucking ass – on the street, in the arena of public opinion, and in the fucking courtroom. We, as a people, exerted our authority over the government, and we won.

- L: How did these riots affect the local movement? Do you remember any big difference a couple of months afterwards – other than this conspiracy trial?
- C: When we get to the conspiracy trial, we will go back to the riots because a lot of our guys were undercover agents, so the federal government knew . . .
- L: Who were out there beating the hell out of cops.

C: We had four-man teams assigned to do stuff, and I cannot tell you the specific actions that each team did. They had different positions and different things to do, but their basic job was to relieve the pressure from the students when things got out of hand. We wanted to stop them from attacking and divert their attention to us. We were going to divert their attention and get them off the fucking students. That was our job. People came back and said, "Hey, man, I did this, I did that," [but] I do not know who did what. I do know that the police undercover agents that were among us knew that we were the ones with the slingshots and we were the ones with the ball bearings and the marbles and the fucking balloons of ammonia. [They knew] that we were taking aggressive action against them. That is one of the things that made them scared of us. One of the things that upset them most about me was my ability to put plans into action and that I had followers and people would follow me. It was that potential that scared the fuck out of them. In Gainesville, to me, [the behavior of the police during the riots] jelled the press behind us, and it jelled the community's support behind us. There were people who did not think we should have blocked the streets and shit, but in general, public opinion was on our side. The proof of it is the fact that the juries let those people go. That concept is the concept of jury nullification. It is a concept in legal jurisprudence, but it has been ruled by the Supreme Court that it is a concept you are not allowed to take to the jury. You can take it to the public before the jury, but you cannot go before a jury [once it is assembled].

Let us say you get busted for pot, and I am your lawyer. I say to the jury, "If you think marijuana should not be illegal, let this guy go." We can change the law by challenging the law. You are not allowed to do that anymore. The judge gives a charge to the jury, and says, "The law says, if beyond a reasonable doubt you believe this guy had it, you have to find him guilty." That is really not what it is. The purpose of having a jury system is so those people can not only examine the facts, but the extenuating circumstances, and [to] affect the government and exact their authority over the government by their decisions. That is not allowed in the jury system [any longer]. The jury system has been corrupted.

L: But it worked in Gainesville.

C: Yes. There is something special about Gainesville. I cannot tell you what it is, but Gainesville is a very unique place. Gainesville is in the national news a lot, and it is not that big of a city compared to cities all over the country. The Gainesville murders put us the press a lot. [So did] the Gainesville Eight [and] the Gainesville riots. A lot of things happen in Gainesville.

The land behind me here is Indian holy ground. There are Indian mounds and stuff back there. I really believe in karma, and I believe in stuff that I really cannot articulate. Gainesville is a holy place.

- L: This sounds like a good place to stop.
- L: This is a continuation of an oral history interview with Scott Camil. Today is October 26, 1992, and we are once again at Scott's house in the southern part of Alachua County. One thing that we kind of skipped over last time that I wanted to talk to you about is the march on Washington to return the medals. How did that get started, and how were you involved with that?
- C: After the Winter Soldier Investigation, I came back to Gainesville. Then I got a call, and we all went to New York and wrote the constitution for Vietnam Veterans Against the War. We divided the country into twenty-eight sectors.
- L: This is the spring of 1971?
- C: It seems to me that it was at the end of February that we first went to New York and wrote the constitution. Then we set up another meeting. We will have to look through the files to see where because I do not really recall. It might even have been at that meeting that we decided that we needed to do something besides [draw up] the constitution and objectives of the organization. We needed to do something. The thing that we decided to do was to march on Washington, so the twenty-eight of us planned the march on Washington. We planned what we were going to do when we went there. We were supposed to do guerrilla theater (like we did at the Homecoming parade) [and] lobby with our congressmen. First, we were supposed to get there and assemble. Then we were supposed to march and pay our respects at Arlington Cemetery. We had gold star mothers with us. (Gold star mothers are mothers of those who died in battle.) When we got to Arlington Cemetery, they closed the gates and would not let our people in.
- L: Really?
- C: The Nixon Administration ordered that. They tried to provoke violence from us right at the beginning to discredit us.
- L: "They" being D.C. police?
- C: The Nixon Administration. I guess Arlington [Cemetery] is really controlled by the [National] Park Service.
- L: Okay.
- C: The whole time, they tried to provoke confrontation because having veterans marching against the war gave a lot of strength to the anti-war movement.

- L: Had you publicized this before you made the march?
- C: I do not remember whether we had publicized our itinerary or not. Because of the fact that we were so heavily infiltrated by government agencies, there were no secrets about stuff.
- L: How big of a group was this?
- C: I would have to look this up because it has been a long time, but it seems to me we had about 2,000. The paper says 900-1,200.
- L: Okay. Vietnam Veterans Against the War and gold star mothers.
- C: Right. This march sort of coincided with a march that was planned by the regular anti-war movement, but we were going to go there first – a week before that. After our march came the regular peace march, and after that was the May Day demonstration. So it was broken down into three parts.

The thing at Arlington was really a heavy trip. When you have friends that are buried there and you want to pay respects to them, and they close the gates and say, "You cannot come in," people wanted to go to war right on the spot.

The coordinators wore armbands to do policing. What I had to do to get people not to crash Arlington was to say: "We'll get them at the Capitol. Let's not do it here. If we're going to fight, let's fight at the Capitol. If we fight here, we are going to lose all public support." People wanted to crash the gates and kick their fucking ass and go in there.

We had one congressman marching with us, and that was Paul McCloskey [1927-; Republican congressman from California]. He was an ex-Marine, and he was a Republican. He was the only Republican to go against Nixon in 1972.

- L: Where was he from? What was his state?
- C: California. Coincidentally, in 1976 I went out to California to work for David Harris, who was running for Congress, [and] it was McCloskey we were running against. It was David's district. *Time* magazine wrote it as the cleanest campaign of 1976. We had something like forty joint appearances, and there were no dirty tricks or bullshit. Everyone was really friendly. It was a really neat campaign.
- L: Who won?
- C: McCloskey won. The march on Arlington was the first thing. Then we had a

confrontation. The police tried to break our formation to let traffic through. That is a no-no. You do not break a military formation. Again, they did it to try to instigate trouble – to provoke us.

L: Had you arranged any sort of a permit to do this?

C: I was not in charge of that part, and I cannot remember, but they definitely knew we were coming. I know that we felt that we had a right to assemble. I do not really remember the permit part. When they tried to break the formation, McCloskey came out in the street and told the police not to disrupt it and to let us go. That allowed us to continue. When we got to the mall – that is where we camped out – they were not going to allow us to camp on the mall.

L: Were you trying to set up tents and actually spend the night?

C: We were going to spend the whole week there – five days.

L: Okay.

C: So the Justice Department fought us on this issue. It went to the United States Supreme Court. Ramsey Clark represented us. If you can imagine, we were only there five days and within three days the Supreme Court had ruled that we could not sleep on the mall. I will show you the newspaper articles later. We slept on the mall, and the police refused to bust us. The headline of the *Washington Post* the next day was, "Veterans Overrule Supreme Court." The fucking Supreme Court was hot on the ass of the Justice Department. They were really pissed that the Justice Department went to the trouble of taking this up to the Supreme Court and then did not enforce it when the Supreme Court allowed it. That whole week, we had that action, that battle, which was not one of the things that we had planned. We had people lobbying every day in the Congress and the Senate. I have a report that I will also show you. I spoke to all of the Florida representatives and the two senators personally. I wrote a report on what each one of them said to me about the war. Don Fuqua was the congressman from Gainesville. He told me I was a stupid ass, [said] I did not know what I was talking about, and kicked me out of his office. I went there with eleven other guys from Alachua County.

One of the mistakes that I had made was that I wrote a letter to each of the congressmen from the state of Florida and the two senators, saying: "I am a Vietnam veteran, and we are coming to demonstrate for the week of such-and-such, and we would like an appointment to see you." I sent each one of them a letter. I did not get any answers. When we got up there, I did not have any appointments. Then I learned how the system works. The administrative assistants would get the mail, and they would look at the return address on the

mail. Since my return address was Alachua County, all the letters I sent to the other Congressmen were diverted to Fuqua because they figured the public was too dumb to know who their congressman was. If they saw a letter to Congressman [Claude] Pepper of Dade County from someone in Gainesville, they just forwarded the letter to the Gainesville representative. That was one of the things that screwed us up. Nobody wanted to talk to us, so we used several tactics. One tactic that we used was threatening, saying, "We will kick the fucking door in, and we will see him. Whether you like it or not, we are coming in."

L: Was that successful?

C: This is kind of embarrassing to say. The first time we did this was at Sam Gibbon's office. He came out, and he started yelling at me. He said: "Why don't you do your damn homework? I have been voting against the damn war. I ain't one of the people you should be seeing. You should be spending your time talking to the people that voted for the war." He really made me feel like a fool. I was real hostile. I just cannot tell you the amount of hostility that I had in me. The tactic that finally worked was that we went and got somebody from the *Miami Herald*. I think his name was Rob Elder. As soon as we got people from the press to go with us, everybody saw us. We got somebody from the Associated Press, the *Miami Herald*, [and] maybe the *Tallahassee Democrat* (I do not really remember). As soon as the press was with us, all of a sudden, people would see us, and they were very nice to us.

L: Of course.

C: That was the key to getting in to see all these guys. Then these guys were all a bunch of assholes. They would say stuff like: "You do not know what you are talking about. I just came back from a four-day visit in Vietnam, and I know what is going on." Well, we fucking knew that when congressmen came, they would get a tour by an asshole whose job it was to take them on a tour not to see anything important. They came back and they [thought they] knew what the hell was going on. They did not know jack shit.

One of the real interesting things that I also learned was the two different sides of the argument. If you talked to a Congressman who came from a conservative place (like maybe Orlando), he would say, "I agree with what you are saying to me, but the people in my district are for the war and against communism, and I am just voting and representing the people in my district." Then you would get to a guy like Fuqua from Gainesville, where the people were definitely against the war – a liberal area, and he would say: "The people do not have all the facts. I have all the facts, and it is my job to not only listen to what the people want, but to look at all the facts and make the decision that is best" [laughter]. They would

use the fucking rules one way or the other to justify their bullshit.

L: Right.

C: So we did a lot of lobbying. We had learned about using the press. The guerrilla theater was to get the press. Since the Supreme Court was going to rule on whether we could camp [on the mall] or not, we had a demonstration at the Supreme Court, and we had 110 guys arrested at the Supreme Court.

L: Where had you learned about guerrilla theater? Where did you get these ideas? Do you remember?

C: All I can tell you is that when I got involved in this, I started stuff here in Gainesville, but the people who organized it were people who had done civil rights marches, antiwar stuff, and union work. They were actual organizers-- people who knew how to do stuff. They helped us. When I came back from the Winter Soldier Investigation, all I was going to do was the Winter Soldier stuff. But I got sent a flyer from the national office saying, "An American infantry company just marched through here. We could have burned down your house, raped your children," and all that stuff. That gave us ideas when we saw how people reacted to it.

We learned that the press was not going to come unless we did something graphic. They were not going to come just to hear people talk. They wanted something graphic, so the press used us to have stuff to write about, and we used them to get the stuff written about that we wanted. It was a two-way street. We had a really good relationship with the press. We learned which guys you could talk to and which guys you could not. It was really [a matter of] learning how to manipulate the press and learning how not to be manipulated by the press. Those were important lessons. For instance, I could say to a person from the press at a press conference, "We are going to have a demonstration to do X," and they would say, "Are you planning any violence?" Nothing in my press release mentioned the word `violence.' I would say, "No." Then the headline of the story would be, "Camil Claims No Violence is Planned." So they would take a word that they decided to use, initiate that word into the conversation, and then make that word the key thing to sensationalize their story. It used to piss me off. I had to learn to not allow them to ask questions that used words that would take the focus off what we wanted, especially the radio announcers. [They used] a lot of sensational fucking bullshit. Violence was a key word that they would use.

L: What sort of guerrilla theater did you perform in front of the Supreme Court?

C: Basically, people stood on the steps, and there were chants. There was guerrilla theater out in Washington like we had here. Actually, the picture in the paper--

which I can also show you – is guys lined up on the Supreme Court steps in five or six rows with their arms around each other doing the can-can. [They were] all in combat gear, [chanting] "One, two, three, four, we don't want your fucking war." The police came and said, "If you don't move, we are going to arrest you." So then the focal point became to stand our ground and be arrested.

L: Were you arrested that day?

C: No, because I had an armband. I was a marshal – a peacekeeper. I was there on the Supreme Court steps, but it was my job to make sure that nothing got out of hand. So I did not get arrested, but I was there.

L: What about returning the medals?

C: Returning the medals was planned for the last day. Senator [George] McGovern [1922-; Senator from South Dakota, Democratic presidential candidate, 1972] also had some hearings that a number of us testified at. I was one of the people that testified at his hearings about the war and what our policy really was. John Kerry [1943-; Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, 1984-] was one of the people, [and] I was one of the people [who testified]. I guess there were about six of us that testified at that. Also, we planted a tree in the Mall. [It was] a memorial to the people who died in Vietnam. There was a little bit of a hassle over whether we were allowed to dig and desecrate the damn Mall to plant the fucking tree.

There were all these little things that went on. When we were planning throwing the medals away, we were talking about stuff we could do that the press was going to pick up on. Our job is to get the message across to the public. If we just go and lobby our congressmen about that, there is not going to be jack shit about that. What can we do? How can we make a point? How can we bring attention to us? What are things that we can do? In our meeting, when we were planning this stuff, there were a lot of different kinds of ideas of things that people wanted to do. (I will get back and tell you one that is not public but which will become public knowledge after I tell it to you. I have not told it before.) Throwing the medals away did two things. One, it dramatized the commitment that we had to what we were doing. You saw *The Winter Soldier Investigation*. You saw people crying. It was a really hard thing for me to do because all I had to show for two years in Vietnam was shrapnel in my body, bad fucking dreams, bad fucking memories, and these fucking medals.

L: What medals did you have at this point other than the Purple Hearts?

C: I had two Purple Hearts, the Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with a silver star, Vietnam Campaign, National

Defense, Vietnam Service with several stars, [and a] Good Conduct medal. [It was] nothing fantastic, but more than a lot of people. We talked earlier about [the fact] that I thought that anybody who ever walked through a minefield and went back the next day and did it again deserved a fucking medal. Basically, if you were an officer and you got wounded, you got a fucking medal besides the Purple Heart. If you were an enlisted man [and got wounded, it was] just tough shit. Medals really . . . I do not really know how to articulate it. There were people that got medals that deserved them; there were people that did not get medals that deserved them; there were people who got medals that did not deserve them. It is how the military pays you for . . . it is a way of buying your soul, sort of: "Here, I am going to give you this piece of cloth and metal. That is for all the sacrifices you made or to forget the bad things you did (or whatever the fuck it is). Now you are paid." The first time I was wounded, the first thing that came to my mind was I was going to have a medal.

Growing up, you are so ingrained and conditioned with nationalism and patriotism and militarism. When I went to school every morning, they played the bugle, and everybody stood at attention when the bugle played. Then there was the fucking salute to the flag. You had marching in phys- ed. Things were really military [oriented]. You had air raid drills; we were hiding under our fucking desks. I was raised to believe that this was the best country in the world, and every single man had to give service to this country for being able to live in the best country in the world. Plus, when I was young, something that was a common thing to hear about kids was, "Boys are better than girls." There was a lot of sexism, and there was a lot of conditioning about being a man and being macho, except it was not put that way. It was just put [this way]: "A man has to face up to certain things. A man has to do those hard things and those dirty things that are really hard to do." The Marine Corps motto was, "The Marine Corps builds men." When I joined the Marine Corps, I wanted to find out whether I was a man. I wanted to go to war and find out what it was going to be like to kill a person. I wanted to see if I was really a man or not. The idea of it was of prime importance to growing up. Being a man was more important than being a high school graduate.

- L: So by throwing your medals away, you were sort of turning your back completely on these sorts of things [and] breaking that link?
- C: It is like cutting the umbilical cord between me and all the bullshit. On the other hand, I wore my uniform proudly, and I was proud to have those medals on my uniform. It is all I had for the sacrifices. Intellectually, I understood that they were just basically – in psychological terms – tokens for a certain behavior. It was positive reinforcement. If you want to train a person to have a certain behavior, you have to give them some sort of positive reinforcement so they will keep doing that behavior. Medals are something you can give somebody, and

they have a lot of reinforcement [power] because they have so much tied to them. Intellectually, I understood that, but emotionally, it was so hard for me to throw those medals away. Of all the things we did there, that was the hardest thing for me to do. They hung over my fireplace. They were important to me.

L: Did you throw them on the White House lawn?

C: No. It seems to me that we threw them over a fence at a statue of Justice Marshall. I cannot remember [where], but the newspaper clippings will tell us exactly. They had everything fenced off and stuff. People threw away their crutches. People threw away a lot of shit. Some people took off their artificial limbs and threw them.

L: Really?

C: The thickness of the air, the fervor with which people . . . after a week of them stopping us at Arlington Cemetery, arresting our guys at the Supreme Court, fucking with us when we were trying to lobby with our congressmen, trying to arrest us for camping out, it was so hard to keep the people peaceful. We knew one way to deal with shit, and that was to fucking fight. We were exemplary in our behavior because we understood the importance of the image.

I have to tell you, going back to the planning of this, I was one of the radicals. I was really hard-core. I was not a radical politically, in the sense of Marxism and all that kind of shit; I did not want to attack racism, socialism, capitalism, and all that. I just knew the war was wrong and the government was fucking lying. I was really angry at the hawks. I was also really naive. I cannot tell you how naive I was about everything. When we were deciding what we were going to do in Washington, I put a plan on the floor which caused a ton of disruption. There were a lot of people really pissed at me for putting the plan on the floor because they felt that the undercover agents, all the people that were there that were organizers from before knew how this game was played. I did not know about undercover agents, and I did not know about all that kind of crap. I was exercising my constitutional rights. I believed that free speech meant I could say whatever I wanted, that there was nothing against free speech.

L: What was your plan that was so terrible?

C: I did not think it was terrible at the time. My plan was that, on the last day, at a certain time, probably 11:30 or 2:30 (either right before or right after lunch) we would go into the offices – in our schedule with our congressmen, we would schedule the most hard-core hawks for last – and we would shoot them all.

L: Were you serious about this?

C: I was serious. I felt that I spent two years killing women and children in their own fucking homes. These are the guys that fucking made the policy, and these were the guys that were responsible for it, and these were the people that were voting to continue the fucking war when the public was against it. I felt that if we really believed in what we were doing, and if we were willing to put our lives on the line for the country over there, we should be willing to put our lives on the line for the country over here. There was no way they could catch us all. It would let anybody who took these people's places know that if they do not represent the people, the people are going to come in and kick their fucking ass.

L: Did you have any support in this?

C: Yes, but there were people like John Kerry who totally flipped out. There were people who accused me of being an undercover agent trying to discredit the organization. I thought they were just full of shit. I just felt: "Put your fucking ass where your mouth is, you fucking pussies. You say that these guys are pigs, you say that these guys are the reason that it is going on. When you kill a snake, do you cut off its tail? Fuck, no, you cut off its head. These are the fucking people responsible." Even if the President wants to have the war, if the Congress does not fund it, it cannot go on. The Congress did not have the Goddamn balls to declare fucking war, and they did it through a back-door way of providing the money for the war. So, the President can say: "Well, the Congress is behind the war; they are paying for it. Don't blame me for the war; don't blame the executive branch for it. It might be [that] we developed the policy, but the Congress is paying for it." It was true. These guys were just as arrogant as they are today. [It is] these same fucking assholes that give themselves pay raises in the middle of the fucking night for mismanaging the country. Not only that, their cost of living increases are higher than social security or anything else. That was my plan. My plan was to just fucking shoot the bastards, and I would have done it.

L: But they talked you out of it?

C: No. There was a vote, and it was voted down. Just the fact that it was discussed pissed a lot of people off. It pissed me off that there were people that were not willing to discuss it [and] that wanted to table it right away. It was the most divisive thing that took place in the discussions about what we were going to do in Washington. Now it makes you understand more why the government was keying in on me.

L: Because these meetings were infiltrated.

C: Yes. They were concerned about my ideas and more so about my ability to put

plans into action – the fact that I was charismatic and people would follow me and listen to me. There were people who wanted to do this who argued on my behalf at this damn thing. I wanted to do it. It was a great plan. What the hell was wrong with it? I really believe that they work for us, and if they fuck up, we have the right to discipline them, just like it is my responsibility to take care of my children. It is my responsibility to feed them, clothe them, [and] take care of them when they are sick. It is my responsibility to help them with their homework, [and] it is my responsibility to discipline them when they are wrong. It is the people's responsibility to discipline the government when they are wrong. You have to remember that this government was founded by a minority of people who used violence against the established fucking government. They overthrew the established, legal, legitimate government with fucking force of arms. They set the precedent, so I did not see anything wrong with that. We were just doing like the founding fathers. They set the precedent that when the government is against you, it is okay to use whatever means necessary to get rid of them.

L: How did the fact that your plan was defeated in this meeting affect your future in this group?

C: It made me real popular with some people and real unpopular with other people. Some people did not talk about stuff, and some people talked about stuff. I was one of the movers and shakers. I do not really know how that came to be. A lot of it has to do with my Marine Corps training. I was an NCO. I was used to standing up in front of people and giving orders or making plans. I just did not have any trouble with it. Maybe [it is] just my personality; I am a Taurus. I do not know what it is. It is just how you are cut out. I cannot really tell you how I was able to do that. That was just me.

L: We stopped in our last conversation right before the beginnings of the events leading up to the Gainesville Eight and the marches on the conventions. How did the planning start for the marches on the conventions in 1972?

C: There was so much arguing and bickering over everything. Fundraising was a problem. To make it a democratic organization, it was decided that the people inside a region made the decisions for what happened inside that region. So somebody from New York could not tell the people from another region what to do. When the people in New York decided to take over the Statue of Liberty, I had no say in that. That is their region, [and] they have to deal with the credibility in their area [and] their relationship to their people.

One of the rules was that an outside group could not come into my region and do a demonstration without my permission. Anytime they did, they had to fall under my control. Let's say that I was asked to come and speak in Wisconsin at the university there. The Wisconsin VVAW would be in charge of making all the

arrangements, and I would have to really be submissive to their rules because it is their region.

When the Democrats and the Republicans decided to have their conventions in Florida, that was my region. That automatically gave me a lot of power. So the national office and the regional coordinators at our conventions would plan what we were going to be doing there because it became a national project, as opposed to a regional project. These rules really had a lot to do more with the Northeast where they had a big chapter in Brooklyn and a big chapter in New York and where they had so many fucking people that they did not want people from one area fund-raising in another area or and all damaging that chapter's credibility. In Florida, I had a bigger area than people. I had all these damn states. I had extra power because I was a regional coordinator, and this was taking place in my region. It was the responsibility of all the coordinators at the convention to decide, "Okay, this is what we were going to do at the convention."

L: I have a quick question about your region. I know you had a large group in Gainesville.

C: Yes.

L: Where else in the South were other large groups located?

C: We had big chapters in Dade County, Broward County, St. Pete, Tampa, Winter Park, Orlando, Jacksonville, [and] Tallahassee. Smaller chapters were in DeLand and Daytona.

L: About how many people in Florida would you estimate?

C: Oh, gosh. I should be able to tell you that, and I cannot.

L: Five thousand? Twenty thousand?

C: No. Nationwide, we only had like 20,000 or 30,000. So we are talking probably anywhere from 750 to 1,000.

L: And in other states in the South?

C: There were big chapters in Atlanta, Birmingham, [and] Tuscaloosa.

L: Was the one in Tuscaloosa affiliated with the University [of Alabama]?

C: Yes. Everything was affiliated with universities because most of us were going to school on the G.I. Bill. A lot of us had funding from the Student Senate (or whatever it was back then). I had a lot of support here because I got along really

good with Sam Taylor. It is just a whole different trip. The campuses today are not very political, in my idea.

L: Was SG [Student Government] funding you here in Gainesville?

C: Yes. I had Student Government funding.

L: Okay.

C: So it was my job to get the permits for the convention, it was my job to meet with the police, it was my job to handle security; all of that stuff fell under my responsibility. What you have to understand here now is that you are young, and you are a student. When I was twenty-one, I had been to Vietnam twice. I had killed people. I had a lot of responsibility. I learned to organize and to plan militarily. I thought like a marine sergeant.

Now we know that we have demonstrations and the police try to disrupt them, and the police try to provoke us into violence to discredit us. It is our job not to allow them to do that, but it is also our job to protect ourselves.

I had told you before that I had done riot control. So I wrote a plan of action for the convention. That plan had to include: "What we would do in case of A? What would we do in case of B?" It had to include contingencies for anything, just like we have contingency plans if the United States is attacked by Canada. We do not expect Canada to attack us, but we have plans to bomb the shit out of them if they do. We did the same thing. That was my responsibility, and the people I pulled in to work with me were people that I trusted.

The organization of Vietnam Veterans Against the War was something like 89 percent infantry people. You had 300,000 guys who, I think, were wounded in Vietnam. Our organization was made up of the fucking fighters, not the people who sat on their asses in the offices somewhere. We had a different way of looking at stuff. We had all had trouble with the authorities in our different cities because the authorities were working against us, but the press was for us, and the people were for us.

Then we had this other aspect, which was agent provocateurs: infiltrators and undercover agents. They were divided into different groups. You had federal people, you had people at a state level, [and] you had people at a local level. You had people who were actual trained, sworn government officials, like FBI agents or sheriff's department agents or Florida Department of Law Enforcement people. Then you had this other category called "informants," who were citizens who made money by ratting on people or telling on people. Some of these people were professional informants who made a monthly stipend for doing this

kind of stuff. The way this thing works is, let us say that I am FBI, and I am going to get you to spy on Mothers Against Drunk Drivers. If you go to the meetings and keep coming back and reporting to me that they are not doing anything illegal, why should I keep paying you to go to their fucking meetings? But if you come back to me and say, "They are planning on taking license plate numbers of drunken people and going down there and blowing up their cars and shit," I want you to go back to that fucking meeting and get me more information [such as] who the planners are. So these people had incentive to lie, not only to keep their jobs, but also because a lot of them were Vietnam veterans. There is an ego problem and what is now called post-traumatic stress [disorder. There are] a lot of psychological problems involved when you are dealing with veterans of war. You had guys who needed to feel like they were doing something brave for their country. They wanted to glorify themselves to the FBI. They had to make it seem like: "Hey, man, I keep going to these meetings, and these guys are crazy. I am risking my life. If they catch me, they are going to kill me. You guys are not paying me enough to do this. I want more fucking money. I want more glory."

L: So you had developed these contingency plans.

C: Right. But I have to explain to you that in developing these contingency plans, a lot of it had to do with our intelligence operations, because we also were gathering intelligence. We had informants coming back to us [and] giving us false intelligence. We had provocateurs saying: "Look. This is what the cops are going to do when you go down there. You have to be ready for it."

L: I see.

C: So they knew how we were going to react to that. When I say provocateurs, it was really planned. If they say to us, "The government is going to do A," they know what a fucking veteran is going to do. They know what you are going to do in combat.

What are you going to do if you hear: "This is the enemy's plan." What is your contingency for that? They knew of our psychological problems – the post-traumatic stress. At the time, it was called post-Vietnam syndrome. They planted false information in order to entrap us into a certain behavior. This is a very important aspect of it; this is psychological warfare. William Lemmer came back to us and said: "Look, I just came from Washington where they had demonstrations, and I heard people talking. They are going to fucking shoot somebody at the convention."

L: Was he a member of the local Gainesville group?

- C: No. He was the regional coordinator for Arkansas.
- L: Who was he really working for?
- C: The FBI. The Louisiana coordinators were [also] FBI agents. There were a lot of FBI people involved in the direct planning of everything.
- L: Did the FBI ever approach you or try to develop you in these ways?
- C: Yes, they did. [It was] very early on, before I even became involved in the anti-war movement. When I first got out of the service and started junior college, they got me out of class at Miami-Dade. They came and told me that somebody had stolen either test questions or answers to the test to be a sky marshal. They wanted to know if I was interested in helping them catch the person.
- L: What is a sky marshal?
- C: Hijacking planes had just started, so the government got sky marshals. It was a new field. So I guess [they sought me out] because I was an ex-Marine with a good combat record. Also, I had gone down to the Federal Building to inquire about this job of being a sky marshal. So they knew I was interested in it. They wanted to know if I would be interested in trying to help them [by] going to meetings and reporting back to them and stuff like that. I was real naive, and I said: "Why would you spy on people? I don't understand." They said, "Somebody stole the answers to this test." I said, "Why don't you just make up another fucking test? Why go through all this trouble?"
- L: Whose meetings did they want you to spy on?
- C: They were not specific about it. It was general.
- L: Okay.
- C: It was just to find out where I stood.
- L: What did you end up telling them?
- C: I ended up saying, "Why is it against the law to smoke marijuana? Why do you guys hassle people over marijuana? There is nothing wrong with marijuana." I got in an argument with them over arresting people for abortion and marijuana and why they would spy on people and all this shit. The bottom line was [that] it did not work out.
- L: So the Arkansas coordinator, Lemmer, comes to you and gives you this false

information.

C: He gives us this information that they are going to shoot someone at the convention [and] blame it on the demonstrators. Are you familiar with Miami Beach?

L: No.

C: Miami Beach is an island, and there are just five bridges that link it to the mainland. He said they were going to raise the drawbridges and cut it off from the mainland, do in all the demonstrators on the fucking Beach, and say that the demonstrators started the violence and the shooting.

L: Both conventions were headquartered at Miami Beach?

C: Right.

L: First the Democrats, then the Republicans.

C: Right. Our tactics were different for the two conventions. At the Democratic convention, we were going to go down there and support them because McGovern was [running on] an anti-war platform. The Republicans were pro-war, so we were going to go down there and confront them with the war. We were going to be more aggressive there. But we had no violence planned. We were not going to initiate any violence. Any violence that would take place on our part would be purely self-defense. So we were charged with conspiracy to disrupt the [Republican] convention, and they used some of the plans that I had written as proof that we were going to go down there and disrupt the convention and that we had violence planned.

L: What happened with the Democratic convention? I know it was first.

C: We never made it to the conventions on time because we were in jail. They arrested us before that. I will get back to that in a minute.

When he [Lemmer] told us they were going to raise the drawbridges, we looked at a map of the Beach and [said]: "This is not a good fucking tactical place for us to be because they can cut us off from any help; they can cut us off from being able to retreat. This is not good at all." So we had to develop contingency plans. Our plans called for forming teams that we called fire teams. A four-man Marine Corps unit is called a fire team. The teams were assigned different targets for different purposes. There were teams that were assigned to the bridges. If trouble started on the Beach, and the government raised the drawbridges to try to cut off escape and hurt people, their job was to take the bridges, lower the bridges, and blow the mechanisms so the bridges would stay down. That way

we could get in reinforcements and evacuate the wounded. So one of our plans included taking the bridges back and blowing up the mechanisms.

Our main plan – which was a plan of violence – was for diversionary actions. We decided if the government raised the bridges and started trying to wipe out the anti-war demonstrators – who were exercising their constitutional rights on the Beach – that we had to get the fucking pigs off their asses. In order to do that, we had to make them go somewhere else. So our contingency plans called for attacking all police stations, fire stations, courthouses, recruiting stations, [and] all federal property in Dade County and Broward County. [We were going to] firebomb them. The purpose would be that the police would have to come off the Beach and defend the county.

L: All of this [was] built around the report given to you by this agent provocateur.

C: Not only him, but other people were saying, "Look, man, we just came from a demonstration here, and the police beat the fuck out of us." [We thought,] "Okay. This is what they are doing; they are beating the fuck out of people."

L: So you reacted.

C: So we reacted, and I wrote the plans. The plans would say – I was real careful about the plans – "This will be done for defensive purposes only. This will be done for defensive purposes only." No weapons were allowed to be brought onto Miami Beach. That way they could not say that any weapons were ours or that we had planned to do anything on the Beach. But we would have weapons stored off the Beach. We would have teams of men. The way that I did all of this was to try to protect everybody. In the Gainesville Eight case, they arrested those of us who were the leaders of this. We were indicted, but they did not bust one fucking fire team because they were not able to get down to that level; our security was too tight, even as highly infiltrated as we were.

I picked regional coordinators who had sided with me before. There were a lot of people in VVAW who were pacifists, who said, "We should have learned in Vietnam that you can't fucking get people to think like you using a fucking gun. You can't force people with a fucking gun." [They] were very against weapons. I did not bring any of those people in on the plan. The people who I brought in were the people who thought like me. [They] were from Wisconsin, California, [and] Texas. These were the people who I trusted.

L: [They] were indicted along with you.

C: Yes, some of them. After we laid out the plans, we had to [decide] how we were going to build up this army without leaking out who these people were. It was

each of our jobs to pick the team leaders of the teams. I did not know any of the team leaders from the Texas teams. I did not know any of the team leaders from the California teams. All I knew were those of us in the central planning. None of them knew my team leaders. Each team leader then had to develop his own team; he had to pick his own team. None of the team leaders knew each other. A team leader only knew me and [the people] on his team. I did not even know who was on his team. So if I got busted, I could not tell on anybody. If you are one guy on someone's team, you can tell on your team, but you cannot get anyone else. It was made in such a way that the team leader was responsible [and] his ass was on the line. If he picked the wrong guy, then he was in trouble. I did not need to know who his men were. He did not need to know who the other team leaders were. I communicated with all of my team leaders separately, plus each other person did the same thing.

I gave each team leader (of my teams) their targets, but I would give them several targets. So if you were a team leader, I would give you five targets. If you got the word that we were on full action, then it was your job to pick the target. So I could not set you up because I did not know which target you were going to pick.

L: Right.

C: So we had maps. During the Gainesville Eight case, the police showed the fucking maps of us marking all the targets – primary targets [and] secondary targets. They were all government buildings: fire stations, police stations. We were just going to fucking firebomb them in order to make them have to spread out all over the place so that we could evacuate our wounded.

L: I understand that Vietnam veterans did manage to protest at the Republican convention.

C: Yes.

L: Ron Kovic was beaten up during this march?

C: Yes.

L: Are these Vietnam Veterans Against the War people?

C: Yes. The convention was supposed to start on Monday morning. You read the motion I wrote on why I wanted to represent myself.

L: Yes.

C: You saw how, on Friday, right before the convention, they whisked twenty-three of us up from all over the country and made us go to Tallahassee to the grand jury.

L: Before the Democratic convention.

C: Yes. So now they have taken away the leadership. Now their provocateurs that are down there can manipulate the organization or try to manipulate them to do something violent that is not well-coordinated or planned [in order] to discredit us. So they knock out the leadership. But they did not know who all the fucking team leaders were, so they did not do significant damage to us. The things that they were going to do to cause us to react did not happen, so the teams did not have to react. So they did not really knock out the teams, but they knocked out a lot of the leadership.

Now, on the last day of the convention, they let us go, and we get down there for the last fucking day of the convention. At the Republican convention, they have us have to come back for an arraignment. So again, they tie us up in court. During election day we had two arraignments [and] bond hearings. Every time something came up, they whisked us away to Tallahassee to keep us out of the way.

L: Was Kovic a member of VVAW?

C: Yes. Kovic was a leader of the California people. I do not know if you saw *Born on the Fourth of July*.

L: Yes.

C: That was not the real Kovic. Kovic was one of the people like me. He wanted to fight. He was in a wheelchair; he could not really fight good, but he could carry arms in his wheelchair, and he did. Also, he used drugs. They showed him as an alcohol person; he was a drug person, but the movie did not picture that.

We were not perfect, you know, and just like they tried to manipulate us, we tried to manipulate them. One of the tactics that we used was to [provoke the police]. If we could get the police to beat people up, we could motivate people against them, and we could manipulate public opinion, especially with the press.

Kovic was a front-line person. He could mouth off to the cops because he was in a wheelchair, and it was real easy for him to push them to hit him and turn over his wheelchair. As soon as they would knock over a disabled veteran in a wheelchair, the press was on our side. So that was one of his jobs. They did not show that in the movie. He would call them motherfuckers or sons-of-bitches [or] tell them that he was fucking their old ladies. He would run over their feet with

his wheelchair. He would instigate [trouble] and provoke them. That was one of his jobs.

With the press, he was a focal point. The things that they picked out were people on crutches [or] people without arms and legs [with an attitude of,] "Look at these poor guys." If we knew that is what drew their attention, those were the people we put in the front.

I like Ron Kovic a lot. He was crazy, just like me. He used to let me drive his car. They did not show that he drove a car in the movie. He drove a car, and he was crazy behind the fucking wheel. His car did not work with feet; it worked with the hands. I like Ron a lot. He was able to get credentials somehow and get on the floor of the Republican convention. He just made contacts. There were people in the press who were on our side who got us stuff. They gave us information that helped us sneak into places. [They] wanted to see something happen.

L: When did they officially indict you for conspiracy?

C: We were subpoenaed on the weekend. Friday and Saturday, they rounded up twenty-three of us from seven different states. They made us hang out at the damn courthouse. [They] brought us in there to question us.

L: They brought all twenty-three of you to Tallahassee?

C: Right. They did not bring us there; we got pieces of paper that said if we did not show up, we were going to jail. They would not give us any fucking money, and the burden became our responsibility to get there. We could not go to the courthouse to get the money they were supposed to give us to go there because the courthouses were all closed. We could not get lawyers because it was the fucking weekend. I mean, they planned this to fuck us as bad as possible. Since the grand jury only sees one person at a time, why did all of us have to be there the whole time? When it was over, there were seven, eight, or nine people that were never called before the grand jury.

Luckily for us, these lawyers flew in from out of town. These lawyers had been dealing with this shit – the government's abuse of the judicial branch against the anti-war movement (and many other groups fighting for justice and equality). These lawyers came from two main groups; [the first was] the Center for Constitutional Rights, out of New York. Morty Stavis, Arthur Konoy, and William Kunstler founded that office. Morty Stavis came to Tallahassee with a bunch of lawyers. The other group of lawyers that came to our aid was the National Lawyers' Guild. Cameron Cunningham and Brady Coleman out of Texas came because three of the defendants were from Texas. From Gainesville, Larry

Turner came. There was also a movement group here called the Gainesville Legal Collective. It was law students and fresh lawyers who were involved in the peace movement and civil rights. So all these lawyers came to our aid.

L: Do you remember any names from the Gainesville Legal Collective?

C: Yes. Carol Scott, who is now in Atlanta, I believe. We can contact her. Steve Johnson. He is a practicing lawyer here right now. Judy Peterson and Judith Brown. Also Clyde Ellis, who is a local lawyer now.

L: Do you remember if they had any faculty support or faculty advisors? Do you associate any faculty with this group?

C: It seems to me that the dean of the law school, Joseph R. Julin [Dean of the Law School, 1971-1980] was supportive of us. I will have to look for his name.

L: I can find out whoever he was.

C: Okay. Harold [M.] Stahmer [professor of religion and philosophy] was one of the people who supported us. His wife, Jean Stahmer, from the University of Florida, supported us. Dr. Elliot from the philosophy department, Dr. Page, Dr. Ken McGill, Dr. Hanna, Dr. Zweig [Holly], and Dr. David Chalmers [professor of history] were all real supportive of us.

We had a run-in with the lawyers. First of all, we were really grateful that they came to help us. They were the ones who taught us about the grand jury system – how the grand jury was originally supposed to be a body of your peers to protect you from the government. Before the government could take you to jail, they had to prove before a body of your peers that there was reason to believe you had done something wrong. The origin of the grand jury was [that it was] to be made up of the people to protect the people; it was not really to help the government investigate. It was to see whether or not the government had enough on you. It has been totally corrupted since then.

They could give you an immunity before the grand jury back then called "act immunity." They could order you to testify. You would refuse to testify on constitutional grounds – like the Fifth Amendment – not to incriminate yourself. Then they would say, "Okay, we won't prosecute you. Now you have to answer the questions." So you could not say, "I refuse to answer on the grounds that it will incriminate me," because now they have promised you and the law said you could not be indicted. Now you had to tell them everything.

These fucking pigs on the Supreme Court changed that law, and they came up with another kind of immunity called "use immunity," as opposed to "act

immunity." Use immunity said, "Whatever you say cannot be used against you, but we can still punish you for the crime if we can get someone else to say that. We cannot use the fruits of what you say." But then you had to trust them.

For instance, let us say that you and myself and Denise are planning to do something. The only three people that know about it are you, me, and Denise. Now they call me in there, and they say, "Were you planning to do this?" I say, "I refuse to answer on the grounds that it violates my rights." Then they say, "You have use immunity." Now I have to say, "Yes," and they say, "Who with?" I say you and Denise. Now they get you guys in there and do the same thing to you. Then they are going to end up using your testimony against me and Denise, and they are not supposed to do that.

L: I see.

C: But now what they are going to say is: "We already knew about Stuart and Denise. We got their names from a confidential source, and we can't disclose that confidential source because these people are dangerous and that confidential source's life will be on the line." Then the judge says, "Okay, I believe you," and they never have to prove they had a confidential source because they give their word and that is fucking good enough. So it is all bullshit. It is a complete disruption and undermines the whole judicial process.

L: Did they tangle any of you up in this?

C: Yes, they did! [Laughter] First of all, four of our people went to jail for refusing to answer questions. They randomly took four people. Of those four people, three of them still live here in Gainesville.

L: They are . . . ?

C: John Chambers, Jack Jennings, and Bruce Horton. Wayne Beverly lives in Texas. All of those guys went to jail for thirty-two days until Justice Douglas signed a writ to let them out.

L: Okay. So they would not testify.

C: They refused to testify. All of us who went there refused to answer questions, and the lawyers taught us how to play the game. When you go before a grand jury, your lawyer is not allowed in there with you. The questions that they asked were incredible questions. They would say to me: "Name all the times between September and March that there were meetings at your house. Name all the people who came to those meetings. Name all the places those people came from. Name all the people who traveled with them. Name where they stayed. Name their means of transportation." [They asked] real huge questions like that.

The first question they asked when I went there was, "Are you the same Scott Camil that was subpoenaed here today?" My answer was, "I request permission to consult with my attorney." Then they would get mad and say, "You know what your name is!" I would say, "I request permission to consult with my attorney." Since your attorney is not allowed in the grand jury room, you have the right to go out after each question and consult with your attorney. They were going to fuck with us; we fucked with them.

It pissed them off that these lawyers came in. One of them was James Reif, and he was known as Mr. Grand Jury. These fucking lawyers knew every fucking rule, and we fucking fought them in there. It was a hell of a battle. A lot of other stuff went on in Tallahassee too, which I will tell you about. There were so many significant things that happened there.

All of us refused to answer questions. Then they randomly picked four people, took them before the judge, and gave them immunity. They said, "Now you have to answer the questions."

The lawyer would send me back in there and say, "Refuse to answer this on the grounds that it violates your rights under the First, the Third, the Fourth, the Fifth, and the Eighth Amendments," (or whatever it was). What they try to do with immunity just takes care of the Fifth Amendment. It does not take care of the First or Fourth Amendments. So giving you immunity only takes care of one of them. He did, anyway. So they would give you immunity and say, "For refusing to answer, we're not going to accept this, and you are going to jail." And they put people in jail. They put four guys in jail. I gave you three of their names. The other one is Wayne Beverly from Texas. Three of them are still here in Gainesville. I cannot tell you how good it made me feel that these people were willing to [help us]. John Chambers' mother was all over his fucking ass.

L: I will bet.

C: [She said to him,] "Why are you doing this?"

We are talking about combat veterans: "You are going to put me in jail? Fuck you. What can you do? Send me to Vietnam?" It was the camaraderie that Vietnam veterans at that time had amongst ourselves. [We] were so tight, there was no way they could bust us up.

L: What happened after the indictments came down?

C: First of all, when they are done with the grand jury, they say, "Okay, you can go." The next thing that happens is we all go to our headquarters house, which is Frank Hall's house in Tallahassee. [We were] meeting to decide: "Do we have

time now to get down to the convention? What are we going to do?" In the meantime, I get word that Mike Oliver is flying in from New York. I have to go pick him up at the airport. So I go to pick him up at the Tallahassee airport. On the way back from the airport, Stanley Michelsen pulls me over (because he knew where I went). He said: "Forty police just raided the house. They tore the house up, and they are looking for you. They blocked off both ends of the fucking street at Frank's house. We got a phone call saying that they are going to arrest you. They are going to say you tried to escape and they are going to kill you."

L: Now was he an agent provocateur?

C: No. He was one of our guys that was later indicted; he was not indicted in the first group. So he pulls me over and says, "Look. They are hunting for you, and they are going to kill you."

L: And what did you do?

C: I said: "Shit. What the fuck am I going to do? They're out to kill me." So the decision that we make is [that] I cannot go back to the house, and I have to go hide. So I went to this lady's house. This was a neat, neat lady. (She has passed away now.) She owned a business called Tallahassee Travel and Tours. Her name will come to me. Dr. Marion Haye. She was a very special woman. She was in naval intelligence during the Spanish-American War, and her husband was a British pilot in World War II who was shot down and killed. While we were in jail, all these old people from Tallahassee came to our aid. There were the Lewises from the Lewis State Bank – they are still around – and this other little old lady. I went to her house and I knocked on her door. During the whole week, we were at the grand jury up there. It starts at a certain time in the mornings.

L: Did one of these families in Tallahassee live in a house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright?

C: I believe so. They are real rich. There were the Shaws, who owned Shaw Furniture, the Lewises, who owned the Lewis State Bank, and this other lady.

So while we are there at the grand jury, each morning we all report in front of the courthouse in uniform. Somebody takes roll to make sure all twenty-three of us are there. "Florida." "All present and accounted for, sir." "Alabama." "All present and accounted for, sir." Just like in the military. The press is eating this shit up. Right across the street from the federal courthouse is the police station. So then we would run around the block. There is a thing of trees in between, and we would run around in uniform in the street clapping and singing. Then we

would all report back to the front of the courthouse and we would go in in single file with our hands over our heads. Each one of us would have to go through a metal detector to get upstairs in the courthouse. We did a lot of guerrilla theater there.

L: You had said that you received this death threat and went to hide out.

C: So what happened is, during this period of time these people from Tallahassee came to us, and that is how we met the Shaws and the Lewises and this lady. I liked this lady right away. So I went to her house, and I knocked on her door. I told her what had happened, and I asked her if I could spend the night in her house. She was so thrilled and excited that I trusted her, and she took me right in. So Mike Oliver and I went into this lady's house. I decided that I would turn myself in the next morning with the lawyers and the press there at the jail so they could not shoot me for trying to escape. I called the press, and I called the lawyers and let them know not where I was, but where I would meet them in the morning. In the morning, I met the press and the lawyers, and I turned myself in. Several guys came with me [when I went] to turn myself in. It was the funniest damn thing. John Kniffin was one of the people, and it turned out that he was indicted, too. So as we went in there, they arrested several of us. So it ended up with six of us being in jail for the indictment for conspiracy to disrupt the Republican convention.

L: How did they eventually add two more people to this and make it the Gainesville Eight?

C: They just wrote up a new indictment; [they] added two more names to it. [They] had another arraignment in Tallahassee and threw us all back in jail again.

L: How long were you in jail?

C: It is hard for me to remember this part. It seems to me that we were only in jail for a couple of days at a time. It was split up. Our bonds were something like \$150,000 apiece; I cannot remember [except that they were] real high bonds. We could not raise enough money to get everybody out, but we raised enough money to get some people out. So some of us got out, and some of us stayed in. So then we would go back and rotate. So if I turned myself back in, that would release the bond, and then that money could be used to get someone else out. They were getting tired of all the shit that we were doing to them, but this was one of the games that we were playing. We were going to use the rules to the best of our advantage. When we went for our hearing, this was a real kick-ass. The judge was Judge David Middlebrooks.

L: Here in Gainesville?

- C: In Tallahassee. Now he is a lawyer in Tallahassee, but he was a federal judge, and he was a pig. You can interview him. What the government used against us were our service records. They said: "Look at these men's records. [They have] Silver Stars, Bronze Stars, Purple Hearts. Obviously these are violent men. They don't get medals like this being nice guys. They are a danger to the community." They used our service records against us.
- L: That is ridiculous.
- C: It is on the record. Talk about being pissed! We came back and threw the medals away because they stood for something bad! Our bond was maybe \$50,000 apiece, but the Lewises from the bank board got this money together. They raised this money really quick, and we were able to get out. After we got out, we went right down to the convention. It might have been the grand jury was Monday and Tuesday, and they let us go maybe Tuesday or Wednesday. That night they indicted us. Then we were in jail maybe Wednesday and Thursday. We were able to get bonded out and get down there by Friday.
- L: For the Democratic or Republican convention?
- C: For the Democratic convention. Then, for the Republican convention, it was the same thing. We were back in court in Tallahassee, and then they released us and we got down there for the last [day]. Actually, we might have spent the last two days and one night there for that convention.
- L: Did anything happen? Did you participate in any marches or anything?
- C: No. There was a march on the Fontainebleau [Hotel], which was really neat. Hunter Thompson, in his book *Fear and Loathing [on the Campaign Trail 1972]*, writes about that march.
- L: That is right.
- C: Also, there are newspaper clippings concerning the security measures. Our discipline was real strict, and we were not going to do anything to cause any problems that they could blame us for. There were some people caught selling drugs inside our perimeter, and we kicked them out.
- L: Your people or somebody else's people?
- C: VVAW was asked to handle security for the other organizations, so if there was any trouble at the park, we were the ones that were called. The main thing we had was – this was incredible, too – the fucking Nazis raided the park.

L: The American Nazi Party?

C: They certainly did. [This was] on Miami Beach. At the time, it was all Jews that lived there. What happened is, the women's libbers (the feminists) wanted to handle their own security.

L: Were they from all over the country?

C: Right. So Flamingo Park (I do not know what the name of the park was; I cannot think of it offhand) was divided into sectors, and different groups had different sections. VVAW provided security for everything except for the women; they were going to do their own security. The Nazis came in, tore up their fucking displays, and took over the soundstage. We were called in, so we brought in about 250 Vietnam veterans. We put a double line of people around the stage. The inner circle faced the stage and the outer circle faced the crowd. Steve Dupee was in charge of the security at the time because we had spent so much time in court. He climbed up on the stage to talk to them, and one of them hit him in the face with a chair. We then kicked their fucking ass, and it was a lot of fun. We beat the fuck out of these Nazis. The police stood by. We carried them out and threw them in a fucking pile in the middle of the fucking street, and all these little old Jewish people were clapping and stuff. The police stood by and did not get involved. These guys were wearing black pants, boots, white shirts and fucking swastikas. There are newspaper clippings on that, too. After that, the women allowed us to help with security in their area. So there are some newspaper articles about that kind of stuff, but in general, nothing bad came down, and none of our teams had to be put into action.

But some of our teams had been disrupted by the Gainesville Eight stuff. Not only that, it caused a lot of divisiveness inside the organization because the same people who thought that I had provoked trouble when I wanted to do the action in Washington felt that I was just doing this to discredit the organization.

L: Do you remember any other Gainesville movement groups sending contingents down to the Republican convention?

C: I am sure there probably were, but I would have to, again, look at the files. We are talking about 20 years ago. Everyone else went to the convention, and I got to both conventions late. Going to the Republican convention, we had a convoy, and the police stopped the convoy. Or it might have been the Democratic convention that we had the convoy. I cannot even remember that. It might have been both, for that matter. I guess it had to be the Republican convention. I rode down in one of the convoys, and then I had to shoot back up to Tallahassee. But the highway patrol pulled us all over on the [Florida] Turnpike, and fucked with everybody.

L: After the conventions were over, did you go back to movement activities in Gainesville?

C: I came back to Gainesville, but Gainesville became the headquarters.

L: For the Gainesville Eight?

C: Right. The trial was going to take place in Gainesville.

L: Why was Gainesville picked?

C: Because Gainesville was the place that they said the conspiracy was plotted.

L: In your apartment house?

C: Right. In the attic [laughter]. The government wanted to have it somewhere else.

L: Had you all even been using this attic?

C: Yes, but actually, the attic was sleeping headquarters. One of the things that made it easy for me was there were a lot of homeless veterans after the war who did not go to school. I converted the attic into a barracks, so I had a ton of mattresses up there, and I had all these homeless guys who were not going to school sleeping in the attic. In return, they had to pull duty. They had to go to demonstrations, and they had to do shit. I had a fucking army sitting in the attic to do shit, so it was really easy for me to get stuff done. Again, people were used to following orders, working in teams, and doing shit like that.

So then we spent the next about eighteen months, I guess, (I do not remember how much time; it might have been thirteen months) of pretrial hearings where we had to argue over all this different shit. At the same time, we were doing fund-raising.

L: Was there any other movement activity in Gainesville between the riots and the end of the Vietnam war? Can you remember? It sounds like you were really busy with the trials.

C: I was really busy. I was also going to college. [Laughter] We had a lot of support from the community. The Quaker church here in Gainesville (with Chalmers) was non-profit, so they allowed all the donations to the Gainesville Eight to come through them so they could be tax-deductible for people. The donations went through the Quaker Church, and the Quaker Church opened up a Gainesville Eight account for us in the Lewis State Bank in Tallahassee. That

is how the funding all worked. There were just a lot of people in the community that helped.

I was asked to speak a lot, and I went all over the country speaking [and] raising money. Whenever there would be a demonstration, I would speak at it. Because of the gag order, there were certain things I was not allowed to talk about, but I made fun of the government all the time. I ridiculed them; I made fun of them. It was a lot of fun for me.

L: So [there were] thirteen months of pretrial hearings and then the actual trial [took place] in the late summer of 1973?

C: The trial was around August or September, and I do not really remember the day it started and the day it ended. The trial lasted a month, and the government put on something like twenty-eight witnesses.

At this time, you have to sort of imagine a government being so arrogant and people being so backward that people would automatically believe the government. If the president would say, "This is what is going on in Vietnam," that was the truth. If we would say something else, the burden of proof was on us. The government made fools of themselves in court. The first day, we were in a room in the courthouse that the judge gave us to work with our lawyers. Someone looks under this vent, and there are some feet. We go get the marshals, the marshals unlock this fucking closet, and there are two FBI agents, special agents Carl Ekbald and Robert Romans, with bugging equipment monitoring us meeting with our fucking lawyers. The first fucking day! Right away, we have a hearing, and the judge says we are (this is a quote), "Making a mountain out of a molehill." The FBI said since we were in the federal building, they were in there to make sure that we were not bugging anything the government was doing. They did every kind of trick, cheat, and lie in the world. All this bullshit went on there.

At the end of the government's case, it was our turn to present our case. There were a lot of tactics involved here. Also, we talked before about the lawyers. Starting from when we were first indicted, we had a falling out with the Gainesville lawyers and we fired them.

L: All of them?

C: All except Larry Turner. Lawyers are also arrogant people and have big egos. We were arrogant, and we had big egos. We wanted to do it our way. The lawyers wanted to do it their way. From the lawyers' point of view, they knew the law and we did not. From our point of view, we were the ones who were going to go to jail if this thing does not work. [We said,] "We'll do it our fucking way." Our

idea was to use the platform of the courthouse and the international press to give our side of the story. The lawyers wanted to do things their way. So the lawyers really cheated us a lot in the sense that they tried to manipulate us. Now they were working for free, and their politics were the same as ours. I have to say with some humility we thought they were cheating us and stuff, but we could not have done it without them. But there was a lot of internal struggle that took place between the eight of us--fighting amongst ourselves. We each had different ideas.

L: So what was the final outcome of the Gainesville Eight trial?

C: I need to tell a little bit more about it.

L: Okay.

C: Because of the gag order, we had to open up a press office here in Gainesville. Some of us were not allowed to talk about the trial stuff. If the lawyers wanted to do something their way, they would say to us, "This is what is going to happen at the hearing," or "This is what is going to happen in the courtroom. You can do A, B, or C. If you do A, this is probably what will happen; if you do B, this is probably what will happen; if you do C, this is probably what will happen." They would present it in a way to try to get us to vote to take their recommendation of what was the best course of action. We were not really happy with that because we had our own ideas of what to do. So we would vote on stuff. All of us were real strong people, and the agreement was [that] we had to go by majority rule. So here we were, people that you could not really bridle, and sometimes we would have to compromise our beliefs to go with the majority. There was even at least one occasion in the house when the arguments got so strong about how we were going to do something that people pulled guns on each other. During this period of time, the amount of infighting was really incredible, but we kept it from the public. For instance, one of the people named Bill Patterson took the position of, "This is a political trial. It is all bullshit. They should not have the right to do this to us. Why should we play their game? Fuck them." So he would get up in court and start yelling at the judge and stuff. This made us all look bad in front of the press. It made us look like crazies. That was one of the things we had to deal with.

After the twenty-eight days were up and the government presented its case, they had not proven the charges against us. It was really obvious to us. So the lawyers said: "You can make a real good political statement by going in there and resting your case and winning without even putting on a defense. Also, tactically what happens is [that] the government puts on its case against you, you put on your defense, and the government gets a rebuttal. The government gives a closing argument, you give your closing argument, and the government gets

the last word. So you get sandwiched in between the government. But under the rules, if you do not put on any witnesses for your defense, then you get the first closing argument, the government gets their closing argument, and then you get the last word. The lawyers wanted to have the last word. They also felt that our jury was being sequestered.

(This is a really important thing, too. When you talk to Lois Hensel from Gainesville, [be aware that] she was on the jury. A lot of the jurors still live here. She was the foreperson of the jury.)

The jury was sequestered, and they were kept away from their families. They were locked in a fucking hotel. Whenever they talked to their families on the phone, U.S. marshals listened in on the conversation. Whenever they had husbands visit, a marshal sat in the room with them. They were not allowed to hear anything about the trial [from the] newspaper or TV. The marshals censored everything out of the papers before they would be given to the jury. During this period of time Watergate was also [going on]. So the judge ruled that the jury could not know about anything concerning government misconduct. They were cutting everything about Watergate out of the paper, [and] they were cutting *Doonesbury* out of the paper. This is just incredible; it is a significant political act. The Gainesville jury filed a petition against the court during the trial. They felt some of their rights were being violated. So there were all these little subplots going on. Just imagine a jury filing a petition against the government during a fucking trial. So we had to have a vote. The lawyers wanted to sandwich the government in between, and they thought it would be a great political statement to win without putting on a defense. Personally, I felt that here we finally had the fucking spotlight. It was our time to tell the whole world what pigs the government is. We can talk about Agent Orange, post-Vietnam syndrome (which was not recognized at the time), government provocateurs who came into our organization and tried to talk us into doing bad stuff, [and] all the dirty tricks they were doing. I mean, we could lay it to their ass. Because the jurors had been sequestered from their families, the lawyers said: "Let's say there's some people on the jury that are for you. You are going to tie them up for another month while we put on our case? They are going to be away from their families for two months then? Don't you think that they are just going to vote any way they can to get the fuck out of there? You are not going to have people sit there and fight for you when they have been away from their families that long. You have to take that into consideration." I personally felt that it was our time to have our say. They had taken all their shots, now we are going to quit right at the end? This is ridiculous. So the vote by the defendants was two to six. Two of us wanted to go on and put on our case, and six voted against it.

L: So it was you and [who else]?

C: Don Purdue. Don is an ex-Marine. I was so bitter about that. I called them pussies, I called them cowards. I said things like, "I'm glad I didn't serve with you guys guarding my back in Vietnam," anything mean I could say. I did not talk to those other six guys for years. I was so angry because we planned a case to tell our side of the story.

We really suckered the fucking government. Three of us were representing ourselves. So we also had this battle about, "How am I going to ask myself questions when I get on the stand? I want to be able to ask myself questions. How am I supposed to do that? I am representing myself." So all the fighting we did over that stuff made them think that we were going to put on witnesses and do that, so they were prepared for that. So when we rested our case, it took them by surprise. They were very angry. Once they rest, they cannot put anything else on except as rebuttal. They saved some information--some undercover agents--that they wanted to put on as rebuttal. So they were not allowed to use all those people. On the other hand, we were not allowed to find out who they were. Also, there is another Gainesville person who is really important to interview. His name is Emerson Poe.

L: Tell me about him.

C: He was the assistant regional coordinator for the state of Florida. He lived here in Gainesville. He was second in command to me.

L: How long had you known him?

C: A couple years. He worked at the VA Hospital, and it turned out that the FBI had gone to him and asked him to join us and spy on us, which he did. But his wife had a miscarriage. My girlfriend Nancy and I went out to his house and consoled them and took care of them. We did Christmas together [and] we did birthdays together. We were very close.

L: Did you ever have any clue or suspicions?

C: He used to give little hints, sort of. He had a look; I can pick an undercover agent out a mile away now. You can tell. He was older. He spent twenty years in the military; he was working for the VA. He was a government person. But if you came to me and said, "I am a Vietnam veteran; I want to join your organization," what am I going to do? Run a check through the FBI and see if you are really you or not? I had no way of doing that. To me, people that were willing to work got the job. I trusted him.

He was one of the people who was subpoenaed to the grand jury. So when these lawyers from out of town came in, they said to the judge, "We don't have

enough lawyers for these guys. You didn't give them enough time. We have to meet with these people one at a time. We need more time." The judge ordered the lawyers to work with us as a group. The lawyers said, "Some of these guys might be undercover agents. That will violate the rights of the others." So the judge had the prosecutor get on the stand. The judge said to the prosecutor, "Are any of the people subpoenaed here today represented by these lawyers government agents or have they ever worked for the government?" The prosecutor said, "No." It turned out that three of the twenty-three of us were agents.

L: Does that not throw the trial?

C: Normally it would. We sued the government over this.

L: This is the civil rights suit after the fact.

C: Yes, and we lost. This argument was just incredible. Poe admits going to the meetings with us and our lawyers. He admits to meeting with the FBI and telling them everything that is going on. But he denies telling them anything that went on between us and the lawyers. The prosecutor's point of view is, "This guy might have been at the meeting with the lawyers, and if he did not tell the FBI, and he did not tell the prosecutor, then the prosecutor did not know. Then the government did not know." We said, "He is the fucking government! What do you mean? We are going to take your word when you already lied and said nobody was working for the government? We are going to take your word that he did not tell you anything about what we were doing when we were talking with our lawyers? We are not going to believe that." But they were innocent until proven guilty, and we could not prove that he relayed any information between us and our lawyers. Just the fact that he was there should have been enough.

L: When did you find out he was working for the government?

C: He helped us select the jury. We got to have a list of all the people who were prospective jurors. Then we had people in the community like Father Michael Gannon, Dean Harold Stahmer, [and] the dean from the law school supporting us. We gave them each a list of the prospective jurors. Then they wrote on 3 x 5 cards what they knew about those people. So we ended up with a file on each prospective juror. We had these people who came in – Jay Schulman [was one]. They were experts. They were devising a new scientific system on how to pick a jury. The government would run all the people through the computer and see if they were ever audited by the IRS. If they were, they would take them off. The government would kick off black people. They would kick off teachers. We would be kicking off career military men, police officers' family [members, and] people like that.

In the Berrigan trial, Berrigan had a lot of friends in the academic community, so they devised a way to pick a jury. Then they took this formula for jury selection and brought it to Gainesville. There was a score given for each person. (I have all the questions and all that jury stuff here, also.) You got a score for your sex, age, religion, college background, [and] the kind of job you had. They had determined a certain score for all those kinds of factors. Then we took those 3 x 5 cards and found out what we could about the people. People also rode by the houses. Did they have an American flag flying from their house? Did they have a bumper sticker on their car that said, "America – Love it or Leave it"? Did they have children's stuff out there? Anything we could know about them to throw into the computer helped us figure out who to pick and who not to pick.

For instance, the person who got the highest score was an eighteen-year-old female student who was Jewish, who would typically be considered real liberal. But one of her teachers had told us that in class, when they were talking about the demonstrators, she said, "They deserved to get their asses kicked." So we knew that we did not want her. When you select a jury, you get to kick people off for Cause. If you can give a reason to kick the person off, you get to kick them off. Also, you get some Preemptory challenges, challenges for no reason that you can kick a person off. Each side is allowed to kick off X amount of people without a reason. So we made believe we wanted her on the jury. The government used one of its challenges to kick her off. We also had body language people who sat there when we were questioning the [prospective] jury, and watched. Did they cross their legs? Did they do this? Did they do that? Are they telling the truth? Semantics people analyzed the words that they used. The Gainesville Eight trial was the first trial in the country where this process was used and became 100 percent correct. Before we selected the jury, we were able to figure out who we were going to knock off, who the government was going to knock off, in what order they would be knocked off, who would be left, and who would end up on the jury. We wanted the people for us to be strong and the people against us to be weak so they could not form a core. Before the jury was selected, we were able to tell who the ending jury was going to be, who they would pick to be the foreperson, and what the first vote would be. All that was figured out before the jury was even selected. [It was] the first time in the history of the country that this process was used.

After the Berrigan case, they went and interviewed the jurors. That allowed them to figure out what was more important – sex or religion, age or working status. So they knew how to give the points and how to weigh things. It was really, really neat.

So then the government rested its case. We rested our case. Then the jury came back in four hours and found us not guilty. What was really cool about this was that before the verdict was read, we were out on the front lawn of the

courthouse playing football. They said, "The jury's in." We all go back up there, and the judge asked the jury if they had reached a decision. They said, "Yes." He tells the people in the audience, "No outbursts are allowed." Everybody in the audience has a tag. There is a press section for the press and a family section for the family and the defense (there are not separate sections, but numbers of seats allotted for the government and for the general public.) There were long lines of people trying to get in to see the trial. The judge said, "Anybody who makes an outburst is going to jail, regardless of what the decision is here. Everybody has to be quiet." The whole time, you had to go through metal detectors downstairs and upstairs; there are guards all around the fucking building trying to give the impression that we are real dangerous to poison the jury against us.

They tell the jury [that] after the verdict is read, they will hold everybody there and let them leave. So we all stand up, and they read the charges. It was: "Not guilty. Not guilty. Not guilty." You can see the prosecutors, and they are all shaking their heads in a negative manner. Then they say, "The jury can leave." The jury did not want to leave. So they said, "Everything is over." Then the jury ran over to our table and was kissing and hugging us, and they were kissing and hugging our lawyers, and we were kissing and hugging them. Everyone had tears in their eyes. It was like we were old friends. It was just unbelievable. The FBI and the prosecutors could not figure out what the fuck was going on. They were so immersed in their own authority and world that they never saw that it was easy to see through them. Watergate really helped because Watergate helped dissolve the illusion that the government is always right, always does what is right, and would never do anything wrong, would never lie, and all that shit. Then we had a party after the trial. The press came to the party, and the jury came to the fucking party.

The first time I knew Emerson Poe was an agent was when they called him on the stand. He was, I guess, the third witness they called. The first person they called was my landlord. He testified that he was a small arms expert in the military and that he came in the attic and saw cases of rifles. They were plastic rifles that we used at demonstrations for guerrilla theater. They were blue, but he was color-blind, and he did not know they were blue. And when he was in the military, they did not even have M-16s. So Larry Turner pulls one out of a bag and says, "Is this what you saw?" He says, "That's right. That's one of them!" Larry pulls the trigger and goes, "A-a-a-a, a-a-a-a [machine gun noises]." Everybody starts laughing, and the judge is banging on the table. Judge Middlebrooks was the first judge we had, but then we got another judge, Judge Winston Arnow, because we requested Judge Middlebrooks because he was such a pig. As soon as they called Poe to the stand, the lawyers yelled and objected. The jury had to go out of the room, and we had to have a hearing over whether or not he could take the stand. I could not believe it, I just could not believe it.

He had been the person who had gone with me to all these other meetings out of state. He is the one who xeroxed the plans that I wrote for the convention and took them to the FBI. The FBI took my original sheet, made copies, and mailed them out all over the fucking country. The FBI knew the plans before any of the people did.

L: Amazing. You were clueless until the trial.

C: Yes. And the jury got to see the plans, but every other word said, "For defensive purposes only. For self-defense only. Use the minimum amount of force necessary. These are the tactics that they are going to use against us. If they do this, this is what we're going to do." The government tried to make it seem like that plan was the offensive plan, and it was a defensive plan.

After the trial, I was pissed at the other guys, and we were not friends anymore. We were still suing the government. There still was a war going on in Vietnam to work against.

L: Right.

C: So I was writing the book about it all here in Gainesville.

L: How much of that did you get written?

C: I was doing a section at a time, and I had a bunch written. But it would have had to be put in book form and edited. I had a lot of photographs and a lot of information. I had moved out of Gainesville after the Gainesville Eight trial. I had come back in, and a friend of mine, named Randy Kaufman . . . let me just say this: It may be that some of these people who I am naming may be upset that it be known who they are because of their jobs or something. So I would ask you if you go to talk with these people, and they want anonymity, can we do that?

L: Sure. Also, when we send this back to you and ask you to edit it, you can take out whatever you want to take out of it, or add stuff if you want. So you will get a chance to proof it.

C: Randy rented a house for me in his name. He got the phone and electricity and everything put in his name. I was working out of that house.

L: VVAW?

C: I was not with VVAW anymore because the VVAW national office considered this to be an attack against them, as did we.

L: The Gainesville Eight, right?

C: Right. So they wanted to sit in with us and the lawyers and have a say in what went on. We said, "Bullshit. We don't know who's cops and who's not cops." One of the reasons we allowed Emerson Poe to sit in with us with the lawyers and make up our defense committee was because we knew that all the people who were subpoenaed to the grand jury were not cops because the prosecutor got on the stand and testified that they were not cops. So that is who we built our defense committee with. There was no way we could tell who all these other people were, so we would not let them in. They felt that was a usurpation of power because if it was an attack against the organization, then the elected national officers should have some say. We felt that we were the ones who were going to go to jail. So there became a split between us and the national VVAW. When the trial was over, we all dropped out of VVAW.

L: Did you form another organization or join another one?

C: I did not even talk to those other fucking guys. We were all independent then. I still did a lot of speaking. I was writing, and I was working against the war.

L: So you were working in this house that your friend has rented.

C: Right. And I meet this girl named Barbara Ives. First of all, I break up with Nancy McCown. She is now a psychology teacher or psychologist (I do not know which) in Charlotte, North Carolina. Her father was a dean of extensions in agriculture here at the University of Florida at the time. During this whole time, she lived with me. Through the kidnapping arrest, the drug arrest, [and] the Gainesville Eight trial, she stood by me. She gave me love and comfort. Without her, I would have never been able to psychologically make it. I never would have been able to do everything I did. I got all the credit for it. Without her, none of this could have happened. She deserves credit for this. I would have to say if there is any one thing that I really regret, it is breaking up with this lady. I was a real pig. I did not treat her that well. I was very bossy [and] arrogant, and I was hostile all the time. I was a really angry kind of person. The war made me really angry. She put up with all my shit. I never had anyone who loved me as much as she loved me, and I miss that. I miss her, and I love her still.

L: Then you meet this other woman.

C: I am not living with [Nancy] anymore. A little while after the trial, we break up. I meet this other woman who comes to the house allegedly looking for Randy. If you come to Gainesville looking for Randy, his phone number is in the phone

book, and his address is my house. She comes looking for him, and I believe her and say, "No, he is not here, but I can call him." I call him, and she gets on the phone with him and says, "Hello. I came to see you." She used to date him. She was coming to Gainesville to work at the Gainesville Women's Health Center. She lived in Orlando. So she was spending the weekends at my house.

The first day I met her, she came to the door, and I just had a towel wrapped around me. She came in, and she had brought some marijuana to town that she wanted to sell. I looked at it and smoked a little, and it was not worth a shit. I had some better pot. So we smoked some of my pot and did some cocaine. We went to bed, and we fucked. I had a good time. She was a nice-looking woman and had a nice body. She started coming up to spend every weekend with me. So we would just get high and have sex. I liked her. When you first meet people, everyone is on their best behavior. Then after a while, people start getting to be themselves again. She introduced me to some friends of hers. So one weekend, these guys call me [and tell me] that they are coming in from out of town, and they want to see me. They come in, and they tell me that Barbara is coming up for the weekend. I knew she was coming up for the weekend and that she wanted to get some drugs.

L: How long had you known her at this point?

C: First of all, when I met her, Randy said she used to live here, she used to date him, and she was cool. So I trusted that. I guess for about three months I saw her every weekend. There might have been a weekend she did not come up; I really cannot tell you that for sure, but we were very intimate. So they came in from out of town, and they were going to get some coke. I wanted to get some too, so that when she came in we could have more fun. We went for a ride to get the drugs.

L: This is in 1975, right?

C: Yes. One of them is driving, I am sitting in the shotgun seat, and one of them is behind me. The one that is behind me grabs me around the neck, pulls my head to the headrest, and shoves a gun to my head, right behind my right ear.

L: The car is in motion, and you are coming back from wherever it is that you went.

C: Yes, we were on the way to my house.

L: Why does he all of a sudden grab you at this point? That is something I did not understand from reading about this.

C: I thought that he was going to try to rip me off for my money. He says, "If you

make a move, I'm gonna blow off your fucking head." He starts hitting me with the gun. So with his left hand, he has my head pinned to the headrest, and with his right hand, he keeps jabbing the gun into my head. I did not know what they wanted me to do, but whatever it was, I was not going to be cooperative.

L: Did you know that they were police at this time?

C: No. About the third or fourth time he pulled the gun away, I grabbed his wrist, and I pinned it to the headrest of the car. So now his hand comes off my neck, and he is struggling for this gun. I unlock the door of the car, and I am going to jump out into traffic. I figure, if they try to shoot me in front of people, they will get in trouble, so they will not do that. While that is happening, the driver hits the brakes of the car, and we all go forward. There is a red light, and there is a car in front of him, I guess. I really do not remember, but [I know] he has to stop because there is traffic and a red light. He grabs both my hands and pulls them back like this, above my head and behind, and the guy pulls his hand loose, puts the gun up to my back, and shoots. I was opening the door, and the impact knocks me out of the car, into the street. I get a gash in my leg from hitting the curb. I was wearing the same exact brand and style of shoes that I have on now – five-lace Converse tennis shoes. The impact left the shoes in the car, but put me out in the street. If you can imagine . . . people do not really know what it is like to be shot, but you are talking about a lot of force to just pick you up so quick that your shoes stay in the fucking car.

L: Was this on University [Avenue]?

C: No. This was on NW 10th Avenue and 2nd Street. If you are at the light at Main Street and 10th Avenue, there is a little shopping center there. If you are coming up Main Street you pass University Avenue, then you pass 8th Avenue. The next light is 10th Avenue. You turn left there, go to the next light, which is behind the shopping center, and you make a right. It was that street. I lived on 10th Avenue at the time. I lived at 424 NW 10th Avenue.

L: Was this during the day or at night?

C: This was about one, two, or three o'clock in the afternoon. It was daytime.

L: After you are thrown out of the car, what happens?

C: I am talking to you slowly, but things are going on real fast. I get shot. I know that I am hit. I have a lump here in my stomach that I can feel. I hit the street, and as soon as I hit the street, this guy is on top of me. He has the gun to my head. I am saying, "You shot me, man! You shot me!" It just surprised me that he shot me. I did not think he would take the chance. He showed me his badge,

and told me I was under arrest. During this period of time, I was saying, "My blood type is A negative; I am having trouble breathing. I am a disabled vet. Take me to the VA." That is all I was saying. "You shot me, man! You shot me! I need an ambulance. I am having trouble breathing." The next thing I know, the Gainesville police are there, and they take over the scene.

L: And they arrested these two guys, right?

C: I do not know if it would technically be called an arrest. They took their guns and took them to the police station.

L: Okay.

C: There is a ton of shit going on. The fucking press is around, [and] the fucking ambulances are there. they take me to the hospital, and my lawyer, Larry Turner, comes in. He says, "Scott, are you okay?" He is checking to see if I am okay and what he can do for me. He tells me that they are raiding my house and all kinds of shit. The feds are in Alachua General, my lawyer is in the hospital, the Gainesville police are in the hospital, all these medical people are there, and I am laying there, all fucked up.

L: How much damage did this bullet do to you?

C: It fractured one rib, went through my left lung [and] collapsed my lung. The concussion of it going through my body caused trauma to my liver and kidneys. It caused me to have blood in my urine. I lost four units of blood. (You only have five units of blood.) It caused stomach damage and lodged in my abdomen.

L: Are you recovered from this, or are there permanent effects?

C: There are not any real large permanent effects. If you look at an X-ray of my left lung, [you see that] it is blunted. The bottom half of it is not operable. I cannot take as deep a breath as I used to be able to take. Also, I do not have quite the twisting ability that I had. When it is cold, I feel pain and tightness. Aside from that, everything else works.

The Gainesville police and the feds were arguing over who was going to get the bullet that was in me. The doctor was refusing to take the bullet out. (His name was Mantini.) He did not want to get caught in the chain of custody. Whoever takes a bullet out is going to have to go to court and say they took the bullet out. The hospital is not allowing him to do anything until I sign a release. I am not willing to sign anything because I cannot read anything. [laughter] So there was a lot of commotion going on. The feds and the cops are arguing; the doctors are

arguing with me; the doctor is arguing with the nurse about who is going to take the bullet out; other administrative people are yelling at me to sign the papers; the police are trying to get me to sign the fucking papers; the lawyer is trying to talk to me. Finally, I signed the paper. I said to one of the cops, "You are my witness. I am signing under duress because they are telling me I am going to die if I do not sign this fucking paper. I do not know what this paper says; I am just signing it so they will take the bullet out and fix me up." They already had intravenous stuff going into me, and I am awake. They make an incision here and take the bullet out. I am awake for all this because I just believe— from Vietnam — that when you get wounded and close your eyes so you will not feel the pain, that is how you die. If you are willing to put up with the pain, then you can live. I just wanted to stay alive.

L: What caliber gun did they use?

C: It is a 380. It is also known as a 9 mm short. The government basically claimed that we went and we bought drugs, and then they told me that I was under arrest, that I attacked them, they pulled their guns in self-defense, and that I yanked on the guy's arm and it made the gun go off by accident.

L: Which is not what happened.

C: No. The best thing that happened for me was when the Gainesville police took them in, they separated them, and they made them each give a story about what happened. Then when we went to the trial, they had to stick to those stories. But the stories that they gave did not match the evidence, and all the evidence matched my story. As soon as I got out of the hospital, I went right down and tried to press charges on them.

There were three weapons involved. They each had their own weapon, and then there was the third weapon that I was shot with, which was not registered to either of them. One of them claimed it was his backup weapon. I personally believe that they were going to shoot me, use that as a throwaway, and say it was my weapon. I have learned since then that they were going to kill me, that the whole plan was to kill me.

L: How did you learn that? Where did you get this information?

C: The woman, Barbara Ives, who I was dating, told her friends that she was working a case with the government to kill me. She told that to her best girlfriend and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. and Donna Grenfell, who lived in Gainesville. He came forward and told us, and he testified to that. That is how we knew about that.

L: It turns out that she had been . . .

C: She was assigned to come up in the first place and set me up.

L: What about your friend who had rented the house for you?

C: He had not seen her in four years (or whatever it had been), and he did not know that she had been in Orlando working for the cops.

L: So he was not in on this plot.

C: No. Right before she did this with me, she did a case where she set up a judge in Orlando, Judge Andrew C.B. Baron.

L: She worked for which agency?

C: The Drug Enforcement Administration. She knew the whole time that we were having sex that they were planning on killing me. When I found that out, it really disturbed me that a person could be that intimate with me and make believe that they were warm with me. [Here she would] learn what kind of person I was – that I was not a bad person – [and] she would suck my cock and we would have intimate sex together, and the whole time she knew they were planning on killing me. That fucking pisses me off. I cannot tell you what it does to a person's brain. It really disturbed me when Emerson Poe turned out to be a cop, and he was my friend, but we were not intimate. This was a pretty intimate relationship that we had. She testified in court that we never had sex and that she always slept out on the couch and all kinds of stuff like that. But she had told her friends other stories, so there was no problem with any of that. The government did not even call her as a hostile witness (they were too embarrassed); but we called her as a witness. The gun was a Lama 380. Do you know anything about handguns?

L: No.

C: This gun has a grip on the back of the handle, called a safety grip. So if I grabbed the barrel of the gun, put my finger on the trigger and tried to push the trigger, it could not fire. The grip safety means you have to squeeze the handle before you can shoot it. A .45 has that. The guys testified that I was trying to pull the gun away from them, and that he had his pinky and his finger in the trigger housing, and I yanked it, and it went off. First of all, the gun cannot shoot like that. The FBI lab did all the investigation of the [physical evidence]. Second, their report came back and put the gun around three inches behind my back at a place that I could not reach with my arms.

L: Are you saying that the FBI did you right for once?

C: I am saying that they told the truth [laughter]. The FBI was not involved in this; it was the DEA. My fingerprints were not on the gun. Only their fingerprints were on the gun. There was no powder [residue on my hands]. They did a paraffin test on me at the scene. When you shoot a gun, you get chemicals on you; you cannot shoot a gun without getting those chemicals on you. So not only did I not fire the weapon, but my hands were so far away from it when it was fired that I did not get any chemicals on me. They did the paraffin test on me right away. With my fingerprints not being on the gun, the gun not being able to fire the way that they said, and no powder or anything on my hands, [and] FBI ballistics saying that the gun was fired from behind, [it was obvious that the way I told the story was the way it really happened].

There were a couple of bags of cocaine in the trunk, and the only fingerprints on the bags of cocaine were theirs. My fingerprints were not on the bags.

L: And it was not your car, right?

C: No. It was their car. It was their cocaine. The other thing was that behind this shopping center was a Publix, and there were guys unloading a truck. At the other corner, where there is now some kind of store, was a restaurant called Bonnie's Restaurant. The people sitting in there saw these guys pistol whipping me in the car. So they called the police right away. The police station is on 6th Street and 8th Avenue; it is only a couple of blocks away. So they testified that they saw people beating me, they saw my hands in the air being held, and then they saw these people shoot me. Then these people got out of the car and were on top of me, and at no time did these people do anything else. The agents claim that after they arrested me, they took the cocaine that I had sold them from the floorboard of the car – inside the car – and put it in their trunk for safekeeping, and that is why, when the Gainesville police got there, they found the cocaine in the trunk of the car. But there were four fucking witnesses – who I did not know, who were just on the street – who testified that the trunk was never opened, and the cocaine was in there all the time. All of their stories did not match what they said; it just matched what I said.

This is the kicker. This is the real kicker of all this shit: the same prosecutor from the Gainesville Eight case was named Jack Carrouth [and was assigned to this case]. The press wrote a song about him during the Gainesville Eight case. The press wrote a song about the trial, and the punchline was, "Bald, bald Jack Carrouth; he don't care if they hid the truth; grand jury can't do no harm; meaner than a junkyard dog." It went to [the tune of] "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown." He got to read the statements that those fucking cops gave when they were first taken to the Gainesville police station. He got to view the evidence when it came back from the FBI. He could see that what they said did not match with the fucking

evidence. These motherfuckers still put me on trial, knowing that they were going to make fools out of themselves in court, but being so arrogant and thinking the people are so anti-drug and will believe the government. So the jury came back in two hours and found me not guilty. Not only did the jury find me not guilty, but the jury recommended that the agents be indicted for attempted murder.

L: Were they?

C: Fuck, no. So I went to the grand jury, and my lawyer says, "Scott, you are being a fool." I said: "I am going to go and get these fucking guys indicted. They tried to fucking kill me. I want them to go to jail for it. I had my day in court; let them have their day in court." He said: "Scott, the grand jury is the realm of the prosecutor. That is his fucking ballgame in there. He can do what he wants. He is going to kick your fucking ass." I said, "I don't care. I know people, and people ain't gonna let them get away with it. The jury is on my side." So I went in there, and they did not indict them. The press wrote that after the grand jury came out, people on the grand jury were crying.

L: Because they wanted to indict them and could not?

C: Some of them wanted to indict them. Some of them called me afterwards, which was illegal. (I do not know which ones called me.) They told me that when they raided my house, they found marijuana in my house. They also found paraphernalia – rolling papers, pipes, cocaine vials, a little spoon, and scales. They also found money in the house that they planted themselves. They said they took marked money out of my house from the cocaine that they bought from me.

So in court, the prosecutor thinks he is going to get me to lie. He is so stupid. He said, "Would you be surprised if I told you we found marijuana in your house and paraphernalia with cocaine residue on it?" I said: "No. That does not surprise me." It took all the wind out of his sails. He said, "You are admitting you had that stuff in your house?" I said, "Yes." He said, "But that's illegal. You admit that you were breaking the law?" I said: "No. I was working within the system. In this country, if you think a law is wrong, you can challenge it, and a jury can decide whether or not you are guilty. That is working within the system." It fucking blew him away.

But what they said to the grand jury was, "This guy had drugs in his house. He admitted having drugs in his house. He admits using drugs. Now, the police may have been overzealous. They lost their case. This guy got found not guilty. It all balances out. He had drugs, and he is not going to jail. They made a mistake, and they should not go to jail, either." My argument to the grand jury was: "Do you want these guys carrying guns, walking around the streets,

carrying badges, having the authority to shoot people? They could shoot you or one of your kids next time. You think that these people should be on the fucking street? I had my day in court. Shouldn't they have their day in court?" That did not work. I was so pissed when they let these guys go, I just said: "Fuck these people. Why should I put my butt on the line, working against the government, trying to expose all their shit, when the community is not even going to stand up behind me? Fuck them."

The same time that I was shot and was in the hospital, the Vietnam war ended.

L: Saigon falls.

C: Yes. So then, my battle is over. I am not going to do any more antiwar movement. Fuck that. I get out of the hospital, and I have to recuperate physically. Two weeks after I got out, my lung collapsed again, and I had to go back in the hospital.

After I was found not guilty, I had to go to court to try to get my stuff back because they had raided my house. They took the bottom drawer of my file cabinet, and they took my files. That was the book I was writing and all my documentation. For the trial, they brought in a special judge from Texas because I was suing the other judges for the Gainesville Eight case. He was called "the hanging judge from El Paso." His name was William Sessions; he is now the head of the FBI (fired for abuses, removed from office by President Clinton, July 19, 1993). Stafford, who was the chief prosecutor against me, is now the chief judge for the northern district of Florida. He is now the federal judge here. So my prosecutor became a judge, and my judge became the head of the fucking FBI. So you can tell those guys are close into the power structure. They were not just fucking dingbats. Sessions ordered them to return my files and stuff. They could not locate them, and I was never able to get that stuff back.

L: So all the work on your book was gone.

C: Yes. So I was demoralized about the fact that they could get away with trying to kill me, that they infiltrated my bedroom, that they stole my fucking files, and I could not do anything about it. At that time, I got a call from David Harris. He was running for congress out in California, and he wanted me to come out and work on his campaign.

L: This is Joan Baez's ex-husband. He was jailed for antiwar activities.

C: Right. He was student body president of Stanford University, and he went to prison for two years for refusing to serve in the military. That is all bullshit, too,

because he had a student deferment. A student deferment is just a piece of paper proving that you are a student so you cannot be drafted. He burned his student deferment, but he was still a fucking student; he was student body president. What the fuck difference does it make just because he did not have the piece of paper? To take him to trial, the whole thing was just stupid. It was just political.

Anyway, he ran for congress, so I went out to California and worked on his campaign. Then we lost the campaign, and I stayed an extra year to help work off the campaign debt. During that period of time, I decided that I was ready to settle down, and I wanted to have a family. That is where I met Sally. She was working on the campaign also.

L: Her last name was [what]?

C: Her last name at the time was Lima because she was married to a Stanford professor of economics. But they were living in separate houses; they were estranged from each other. We started dating. Then I wanted to move back to Gainesville. I had fallen in love with Gainesville because Gainesville is such a special place. A lot of people wondered why I would come back here, with all the bad stuff that has happened to me. But I have had three jury trials here, and each time, the community said, "We stand behind you." I made so many friends. So many people came and said, "We love you, and we appreciate what you are doing." The support and love that I got from this community was just fantastic. [I also loved all] the trees. It was so nice here before the fucking Chamber of Commerce and the developers took this place over and tried to turn it into another fucking Miami. I told Sally that this is where I was going to live, so we moved back here. I had gotten my pilot's license while I was working on the book here in Gainesville. I graduated from the University of Florida during the Gainesville Eight trial.

L: 1973.

C: Yes. I got a degree in philosophy. Then I wrote the VA, telling them I could not get a job with a bachelor's degree in philosophy, and I wanted vocational training. I picked commercial pilot. So they trained me for my commercial license, my multi-engine license, my instrument license, and the government paid for all that. So then I came back, and I started flying charter flights. That was in 1977.

L: Tell me the names and ages of your children.

C: Laurel was born October 28, 1979. We moved back here in 1977; we got married in 1978. We had Laurel in 1979. Robin is ten. She was born May 30,

1982. Holly was born in 1985; she is seven. At one time, they were three, six, and nine. Then they were six, nine, and twelve. Then they get weird [laughter]. It was a really good experience for me to have children. I always wanted children. Before I got married to Sally, she had seen what had gone on in my past, and she did not want to have a family, if she had to worry about people trying to kill me or throw me in prison. So I promised her that I would not do politics anymore. I moved back to Gainesville, and I stayed out of politics. I just did charter flights. I started buying broken-down houses, fixing them up, renting them out, and being a landlord.

L: And raising Rottweilers.

C: Yes. Then, in 1987 – maybe at the end of 1986 – I started getting calls from guys I had known from the Marine Corps. They knew I was a pilot and had a plane. They wanted me to come out to California with my plane and help them smuggle supplies to the people in Central America. I just said, "I am old, I am married, I have children. I have responsibilities. I cannot do stuff like that. There is just no way in hell I can do that." They said: "Scott, if you saw what is going on down here . . . it is just like Vietnam. Our government has advisors down here, they are fucking massacring people; they are lying to the American public about what is going on here, [and] we really need your help." I did not want to do it.

But after about the third call, I got this feeling inside me. One of the psychological problems that Vietnam veterans have is that they wonder, "Why am I the person that lived when my buddies died? Why didn't I die? How come I am still alive?" Also, you get to trust your premonitions and your feelings. Something said to me: "Scott, you are supposed to go down to Central America. That is one of the reasons you are alive."

So I told Sally that I was going to Central America. I did not ask her; I told her. That is not really right. If we are supposed to be a partnership and be married, it should be something that we should discuss. But I was angry at her because I wanted more kids, and she did not. She would not discuss it with me. She said: "It is my body, and I say no, and that is it. There is nothing to discuss." So it pissed me off. It felt like that was not a partnership. It is your body, sure, but why not discuss it? When we had that fight about having another child, it sort of put a wedge in our relationship for me because I felt she was not treating me fair. It started the downfall of our relationship.

L: That is unfortunate.

C: It was just the way it was handled – the way she talked to me about it [and] the way she was condescending to me: "I am the woman, it is my fucking body, it is none of your fucking [business], there is nothing you can say. That is it." She

did not like being pregnant.

L: Was she a feminist? Did she spend any time in the women's liberation movement? That is what that rhetoric reminds me of when I hear it.

C: She had been involved in the movement. It is hard for me to say where she really fits into it. The feminists are divided into hard-core separatists, who want to have nothing to do with men at all, and who think that women who stay home and take care of kids are jerks. But she was definitely a feminist in the sense of believing in equal rights, like a man and a woman who do the same job should have the same pay and same benefits. She believed that; I believe that. Any normal person would believe that. I do feel that she sort of had a chip on her shoulder towards men.

When we got married, we agreed that we would not be monogamous. I just took more advantage of that than she did. But that was part of what we agreed. We also agreed to have children. I also agreed that I would not do politics. When she would not have any more kids and talked mean to me about it, I did not like the way she talked to me.

L: So you started doing politics again.

C: At the same time, I got these phone calls, and I got this feeling that I should go to Central America. So I went to Central America. The [essay in the] book *It Did Happen Here* really ends before that happens. I write that I had been silenced because I was not going to do politics anymore. That is the last paragraph in the book.

L: Yes. That is where you leave off. Where did I read, then, that you had been to Central America and Israel?

C: Reports I wrote? I do not know.

L: It may have been in the *Gainesville Sun* retrospective from 1990, "Whatever Happened to the Gainesville Eight?"

C: Could be.

L: So what all did you do in Central America?

C: There was a trip being sponsored, and the group that sponsored it was called Veterans for Peace. Actually, there was a group of veterans called Veterans for Peace going to Central America. It was recommended to me by someone to hook up with them and go with them. The trip was sponsored by IFCO –

Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization. [It was] the Pastors for Peace group. So I called up and said I wanted to go on this trip. They told me, "Okay." So I sent some money to them. Then they called me back and told me that I could not go, that there was opposition to me going. As you remember, my friends called me up about going there. I decided to go down there and find out what was going on with a neutral group, rather than go get involved right in the middle of this shit. They told me that they had received word that I worked for the CIA.

L: [Laughter] Not again!

C: They received that word from Vietnam Veterans Against the War, who had run the national office back during the Gainesville Eight case. [VVAW] felt that my violence-prone activities of being willing to fight the cops, and the fact that I was always found not guilty, [were because] that whole time, I was a CIA agent just trying to ruin the credibility of the peace movement. When the police shot me, the reason they did not kill me was just to make my cover better. I was really pissed.

L: After all that time.

C: After all the dues that I had paid. Then it turned out that there was a woman named Marilyn Clements on the board of directors of IFCO. She was also on the board of directors of Amnesty International. In 1971, Amnesty International adopted me as a political prisoner in the U.S. Also, she was on the board of directors of the Center for Constitutional Rights, who represented us during the Gainesville Eight trial. She cleared me so I could go on this trip. I was going to tell these guys to shove it up their ass, but I really had this feeling that I was supposed to go. So I went down there, and while I was down there, everything changed.

I have three little girls who are perfect, beautiful, and loving. People think kids are dumb. Kids are really very innocent. They are very sharp; they see everything that is going on. They pay attention to everything, but their hearts are pure, and they are all good. As they get older, society and adults corrupt them. But when they first come out, they are perfect. They are just all good. They are full of love. They are tender and smart. I love them more than I can even say. I have a lot of eye contact and hugging with my kids.

When I went to Central America, I missed my kids. Then I saw all these poor kids in Central America. When I looked in their eyes, I kept seeing my kids. When I saw how they were being treated, I kept thinking, "If I had been born here, they would be doing this shit to my kids." If it is unacceptable to me to happen to my kids, it has to be unacceptable to me to happen to your kids.

I had an emotional breakdown there. I cried a lot. It just killed me. I started thinking about the kids I killed in Vietnam. I just kept thinking that the kids are the only ones on the fucking planet who are decent. The adults have fucked the whole damn thing up. The adults are liars and cheats, greedy and dishonest. Kids are not any of that. I kept thinking, "I did not choose to be born in America. I could have been born in Guatemala. Death squads would have killed me; my fucking kids would be living in the streets. They would be prostitutes at seven years old." That just killed me. Lots of little things were happening to me with kids that broke my heart. In Guatemala, we were in this restaurant, and this kid came in to beg. I am thinking, "Why the fuck do they let kids come to beg in a restaurant?" Here I am, a nice, warm individual, right? But that is what I am thinking. The kid comes up to our table, and he is pointing at the food. The guy sitting next to me says, "Okay." We move over, and he sits down. The guy puts his plate in front of the kid. The kid takes the salt and goes like this, and the guy says, "Yeah." The kid pours salt all over the food and ruins it. I am saying, "What the fuck is he doing?" The kid gets up off the table and pulls out a dirty plastic bag from his pocket and opens up the bag. My friend scrapes all his food into the kid's bag. My friend explains to me that they know that if they fuck the food up, we will not eat it. Then they can get the food. So we followed this kid. He goes around this building. There was – calling it a shack would make it seem like the Fontainebleau Hotel or something – just some cardboard boxes leaning up against a fucking building. Inside of it was a lady with a baby, and he brought the food to them. It really upset me that I had been so callous about it to start with, and that this is what this kid had to do to bring back food to his family that now you could not even eat. The kid could not have been but about ten years old.

I saw all these kids on the street begging and stuff. I went to refugee camps. I went to other countries in Central America. The stories I was told . . . The guerrillas in Guatemala operate in this village. So the Guatemalan soldiers will go into a village, and they will grab children under the age of six by their ankles [and] out of the house, and smash their heads into trees and kill them, as an example so that people will be afraid to help the guerrillas. I am thinking, "What would I do if someone did that to one of my kids?"

I came back from Central America totally broken-hearted and totally devastated. There was no way that I could come back from seeing all that kind of shit that I saw there and just go back to my fucking life. I had to do something. I decided I was going to work for the children of the world. So my involvement in Vets for Peace came because I wanted to work with veterans. I do not know how to work with civilians, and I like the credibility of being a veteran. People will listen to a veteran.

L: Are you a civilian now?

C: [Laughter] Technically, I am a civilian, but I am still a soldier. I am still a Marine.

L: So a veteran is something in between soldier and civilian.

C: I am a Marine still. The person inside of me is a Marine. I am the same person that volunteered to go to Vietnam to fight for what was right. I am still fighting for what is right, except I am not doing it with a gun. I am in a battle against an enemy.

L: Has your attitude toward the government changed since the mid-1970s?

C: No. The thing of it is, you keep thinking that they are finally going to square away and be decent. But they are still corrupt. They are still corrupt as shit; they are just smarter and do not get caught as much. They are very dishonest. In this country, in my view, the purpose of the citizenry is to pay the bills for the fucking government and to give the government an aura of authority. They do not really give a fuck about whether people are homeless. They do not care whether or not people cannot afford doctors. They do not care anything about the people, as long as the people give them the money so they can play Monopoly and do what the fuck they want. Basically, the government represents business, and the government represents the idea of the right of the few to accumulate as much wealth as possible and no rights for the people.

I can go to prison for smoking marijuana. [On the other hand], I can have a company, and you can work for my company for thirty years, and you can have retirement benefits [and] medical benefits. [If] I decide to fucking sell off the good parts of that company, put the rest of it in bankruptcy, and put 1,000 people out of work [so that they] lose their retirement [and] have no fucking medical benefits, [it is] tough shit for them. If one of them gets caught stealing something out of the company, they will go to prison. But I can steal their retirement and their health benefits from them, and all the rules allow that? That is all a fucking crime. That is corruption, and that is what our government stands for: protect the rights of them. It does not protect the rights of the people.

We cannot find enough places to put all of our fucking garbage, and people are starving to death. A lot of that garbage is food! There is no reason for people to be starving to death. There are houses sitting empty everywhere. How come people are living on the fucking street? They have this category of people called professionals, like lawyers and doctors. That means you pay them whether they do the job or not. You go to a lawyer, you get found guilty, [and] you still have to pay him because he is a professional. You go to a doctor to get fixed, they cannot fix you and you die, your estate still has to pay him because he is a professional. Professional means you get paid whether you fucking get anything accomplished or not.

L: So what are the local veterans chapter's projects right now?

C: I need to tell you one other aspect of my work here. When I started working for the rights of the people in Central America, I felt that, since it was my tax money paying for the evils that are happening to them, and my government supporting those dictatorships, I bear some responsibility. Every American that pays taxes is responsible for the children that are being murdered in Central America or the Middle East or wherever the fuck it is. If your money pays for it, you are responsible for it. Your government is giving those soldiers guns to kill people with, like in El Salvador, where Archbishop Romero [was murdered]. Four nuns [were] raped and murdered. Eight priests [were] murdered. Now they just found that village with all these fucking skeletons in it. Those fucking soldiers were trained at Fort Benning, Georgia. They were trained and armed by our fucking government. Stuart, your fucking tax money paid for it. You have blood on your hands, buddy.

If one of my girls picks up a gun and shoots someone, I am legally responsible in the state of Florida under the law for letting her have that fucking gun or leaving it where she could get her hands on it. If I have to fucking abide by that law, then my government should have to pay when people are murdered with the guns that it provides people. It is just that fucking simple.

But the final thing in my growth – because I am still growing – is that I am Jewish, and I always supported Israel. People would say to me in the peace movement: "Scott, you are doing all this work. Where do you stand on the Palestinians?" I would say, "They are a bunch of fucking terrorists. I support Israel. They would say, "How can you be such a fucking hypocrite?" Well, I was not willing to believe that Israel would do anything wrong. I really believed that we have the biggest souls – that we have suffered the most, and that we are the most human, that we have the most love. Blacks were slaves for a couple of hundred years, but for thousands of years, Jews were slaves.

I met this guy in Gainesville named Larry Ekin from the University of Florida. He is now working in Washington. He was one of the people that talked to me [about Israel]. I said, "I just cannot believe that shit." He said, "Why don't you go and find out?" I said, "I'd love to go." He said: "I can arrange it. There is a tour going." So I went on this tour to Israel. That killed me; all the other stuff did not hit me as hard as going to Israel did. The Palestinian children there looked more like my kids than the Central American kids did. You cannot tell a Jewish kid from a Palestinian kid except for their clothes and where they live. I could not believe [that] they were being treated worse than the treatment I saw of the people in Central America. They were being treated worse than I treated Vietnamese – not in the sense of death, but in Vietnam, we either killed you or

we left you alone. You were still allowed to dress like a Vietnamese, be a Buddhist if you wanted, vote for your own village chief, have your own schools, and have your culture. In the Middle East, the Palestinians have been robbed of all that. Soldiers do not go through their villages, burning their villages down and murdering them like we did. They do not rape them like we did. But they are not allowed to have any elected officials of their own. They are not allowed to wear their own colors [or] sing songs of national origin. If you are a Palestinian, you cannot even grow a fucking tomato plant in your fucking yard without a permit from Israel. Israel controls everything. What Israel wants to do is cultural genocide. They want the Palestinians to just disappear. They live in the most horrible conditions. They have to carry passes to move around. Israelis can stop any Palestinian on the street and ask for his identification. They can take their identification away and make them work. If they just try to go somewhere and get caught without identification, they are going to prison. I went in the hospitals, and I visited children that were shot by soldiers. I brought back rubber and plastic bullets that were taken out of children at the Makassed Hospital and handed to me to bring back to show Americans. While I was there, the fucking Israeli soldiers tear gassed the damn hospital. Every hospital I visited, while I was there, they were bringing in bloody, shot-up children.

L: From the Intifadah.

C: Yes. Let me tell you – the courage that I saw of the Palestinians outweighs any courage I have seen anywhere. Can you imagine little children, just like my little girls, seeing the soldiers coming down the street, picking up rocks, waiting for them to come, and throwing rocks at them, knowing that they are going to get shot? Stones against bullets? [It takes incredible courage] to say, "We are not going to accept what you are doing to us, and you are going to have to fucking kill us all. We want self-determination, and we are not going to accept this."

Let me tell you, you shoot one of my fucking kids with a rubber bullet . . . a teacher paddles one of my kids in school, and I am going to go kick someone's ass. You touch one of my kids, and you have a fucking war on your hands. The discipline of these people to watch their children being beaten up, shot, humiliated, kicked down in the street, and having to live in the conditions of the Gaza Strip (and the Jabbaliya camp, for instance) and not pick up a gun, that is fucking discipline. That is a discipline that I could not do. That is an absolute discipline that I could not do.

I came back from there being ashamed of my race and my culture. People say, "Scott, you hold Jews to a higher standard," and I do. I feel that people who have been downtrodden as much as we have, people who know what it is to not have a homeland, to know what it is to want self-determination and to finally get it, to turn around and deny it to somebody else, that is pretty fucking bad. That is

pretty fucking sorry. You can tell me all the bullshit you want. I had relatives that died in the concentration camps; I never knew any of them. But the fucking Palestinians did not do it. It was the Germans that did it. It was the fucking Americans that sent those boatloads of Jews back to the concentration camps when they came over here.

Now, in my work, the Middle East has become one of the prime pieces of work of the Gainesville chapter of Veterans for Peace. [We are] working for the rights of people of Central America and working for the rights of the Palestinians. Now there is a big peace movement in Israel that nobody hears much about. There is a veterans group in Israel called Yesh Gvul. It means, "There is a limit." These are made up of soldiers who will serve Israel and defend Israel if Israel is attacked, but they refuse to go to the occupied territories and beat up Palestinians that want human rights and self-determination. About 400 of them have gone to prison.

L: Good for them.

C: You do not read about them in the United States. They are a sister organization of Veterans for Peace. The Gainesville chapter of Veterans for Peace has brought two of them to Gainesville on two separate occasions to speak. One of our biggest projects in Gainesville is bringing speakers from the Middle East to Gainesville. The opposition that I got coming back from Vietnam, being against the Vietnam War, pales in comparison with the opposition of the Jewish community to my work here in Gainesville and in the United States for the Palestinians. Per capita, there are more Jews in the peace movement than anyone else. But they are so close-minded on the issue of Israel. It is sort of like a Catholic person talking bad about the Pope. A Jewish person who speaks against Israel is like the lowest form of low. People who know me and know that I am honest and know that my motives are sincere are pissed at me about what I am doing.

L: But you do it anyway.

C: I do it anyway because it is my conscience that guides me. What I have discovered over all this time is that the main thing that I am is a human being. I am not an American first. I am not a Jew first. I am not a white person first. I am not a man first. I am a fucking human being first, and I am not going to let religion or national origin or any of that shit divide me from other people. I am going to do unto you as you do unto me. You come to my house, I welcome you here. Use my bathroom, use my refrigerator, that is fine, and I will treat you how I want you to treat me. But if you fuck me, then I am going to fuck you, buddy. That is how it is.

I just finished watching the movie *Gandhi*. It really made me think a lot about my willingness to fight and my hostility. He was a pacifist, and I am not a pacifist. One of the things someone said in this movie was, "An eye for an eye." [It was] the same thing I heard in Israel. I wish I had been smart enough when I was there to give that answer that Gandhi gave in the film. He said, "An eye for an eye, and everybody ends up blind" [laughter]. That makes a lot of sense. I wish I would have thought of that. Now my work really has to do with the Middle East [and] Central America.

But we are starting a new project now. The Gainesville chapter of the Vets for Peace has taken on a new project called the Vietnam Restoration Project. The members of Veterans for Peace in Gainesville have decided to take on a new project. This project is going to be run by us, but not as Veterans for Peace. We are going to have a new organization called the Vietnam Restoration Project.

L: What kind of work [will you be doing]?

C: We are building a village in Vietnam. This village is going to be an example to the world of how things can be. The Vietnamese have already given us the land for free with a fifty-year lease on it. The Vietnamese government has also agreed to provide all the labor for free. We just have to provide everything else. In this village is going to be a hospital, a school, and living quarters for people. We are taking about 150 homeless children from Vietnam, 200 old people with no families – whose families have been wiped out by the wars – and we are putting them together in this village. The young people will have the experience and wisdom that they can learn from the old people, and the old people can have the strength and the love from the young people. We are going to teach them how to become self-sufficient. Hopefully, this will be the first village of many. We are working on this project with people from Japan, Great Britain, France, and Germany. We have to raise \$4 million for this project. That is our budget. The United States' portion of that budget is \$800,000. The United States has been divided into two sections: east and west. Gainesville will be the headquarters for the eastern United States. California is the headquarters for the western United States. We are drawing up a brochure that we will mail out all over the country. We will provide speakers. We are going to raise \$800,000, and we are going to go to Vietnam, and we are going to build this village. Groundbreaking is in February. We are going to take the throwaway people of society – the young, homeless children, and the old people, and put them together to function again in a village/tribal kind of situation. [It will be] sort of like the Native Americans had, where it is one big extended family. I am really looking forward to this. This is going to be the first project that I have worked on that is *for* something, not against. It is not against the way the U.S. is treating the Vietnamese. It is not against what is going on in Central America or against what the Israelis are doing to the Arabs.

L: Does this mean you are going to go back to Vietnam?

C: Yes. I have never been back there. It is sort of significant to me that Gainesville was chosen as the place to be in charge of this for the eastern United States. There are a lot of other places. There are places like Atlanta, New York City, [and] Washington. There are a lot of big places where you would normally think you would put the headquarters for something like this. Gainesville has been chosen because the people from Germany who came here to meet with me know all the work in the national Veterans for Peace. The Gainesville chapter is the most active chapter. The national Veterans for Peace did not want to take on this project.

L: I see.

C: So we have taken on the project.

We also have another project we are working on called Project Hearts and Minds. That is getting supplies to Cambodia and for normalization of relations with Cuba. I worked on those projects, too.

L: Okay. It sounds like you have a full plate, as usual, and are still out there fighting all the battles. I would like to thank you for talking to me.

C: I am really glad that you are doing all this. I want you to come back when you have time and look through the files. The newspaper clippings will give you so much more information about each of the trials, the march on Washington, the Winter Soldier Investigation, [and] the Gainesville riots. I have a ton of shit here.

L: I will definitely take you up on that sometime in the near future.