

**Oral History Interview of  
Clyde Jones**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall  
November 21, 2003  
Lubbock, Texas**

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## Interview Series Background:

The Natural History oral history collection includes interviews with individuals involved in biological field research, especially in mammalogy and ornithology. Most of the interviewees are faculty members in biological sciences at research universities. The collection focuses on academic studies in botanical and zoological taxonomy, ecology, conservation, and animal behavior.

## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Clyde Jones, who discusses the changing nature of research in the field of natural history, modern environmental concerns, and his experiences as a museum director.

**Length of Interview:** 01:58:01

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### Keywords

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**David Marshall (DM):**

Today is November 21, 2003, and this is David Marshall along with Bill Tydeman, interviewing Clyde Jones at his office at the Natural Science Research Lab, Texas Tech. And this is part two. We talked to you a couple of weeks ago, so we just have some follow up questions for you, didn't have time to finish everything last time. Bill, do you have anything to start out with?

**Bill Tydeman (BT):**

No, go ahead.

DM:

Okay. Well, I wanted to ask if—when you were in the doctoral program at UNM [University of New Mexico]—if there was any kind of influence from the work of Ernest Thompson Seton. You know his collection, he did a lot of work in New Mexico, he has his collection there, at Cimarron. Was there any kind of influence from that work that you felt?

**Clyde Jones (CJ):**

You know, some. We talked about his work a lot, and Ernest Thompson Seton was, yeah, he had some influence in what was happening there at that time. There were others that had influence, perhaps even more so. Vernon Bailey, of course, surveyed the mammals of New Mexico and published his work on that. And another person that had influence was David Ligon who lived in Carlsbad, and he wrote *The Birds of New Mexico*—

BT:

Stokely Ligon

CJ:

Stokely Ligon! David Ligon was later a chairman at the department. Stokely Ligon. And the very first trip I made as a graduate student there, Gene Fleharty and I drove to Carlsbad and stopped and talked to Stokely Ligon, and he gave us directions on how to get into the Guadalupe Mountains. That was long before it was a national park. And he instructed us on where to go and camp, and how to hike up to the bowl, which we did. But Stokely Ligon then later gave the university his collection of mostly birds, a few mammals, and eggs from his era. There were lots of oologists and he gave us his collection. Another, while we're on the subject of influential people, another person who was very influential and very helpful was a guy named Bill Healey who was with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. And he was, for some reason, he befriended us, probably because he didn't understand really what we were doing studying mice—we should be studying deer or something. But he befriended us and supported us for years, and he later became the director of New Mexico Fish and Game. And he was very helpful, and influenced us a lot.

DM:

How sizable was the specimen collection?

CJ:

When I first went to New Mexico it had probably a thousand or twelve hundred. When Gene Fleharty went there a year before me, it had about six hundred. And then one of Findley's goals was to prepare a new *Mammals of New Mexico*. And they started collecting, and they probably had a thousand or twelve hundred when I went there. When I left there eight and a half years later they had more than twenty thousand.

DM:

So you kind of got in on the ground floor of all that?

CJ:

Yeah, Gene Fleharty and Arthur Harris, and I were Jim Findley's first Ph.D. students.

DM:

Was there any effort to acquire previous specimen collections? For example, the Seton Collection went to the museum at Cimarron, but were there other collections out there that they attempted to acquire?

CJ:

No, there really weren't any, other than those which had already gone some place or Stokely Ligon's, who gave us his stuff. There really weren't any. New Mexico was just mostly overlooked. There were numerous people working in Arizona, but New Mexico was just sort of overlooked, bypassed for some reason. But under Findley's direction we collected. We spent the summers in the field collecting everything that move—type of thing.

DM:

Not just mammals?

CJ:

No, we were into mammals.

BT:

I mean, don't I remember right, apropos your comment about New Mexico being overlooked, that even Bailey's survey work didn't get published until like thirty or forty years after the fact? It was quite late, I mean he did all of that work at the turn of the century.



CJ:

Well, I have it here, we can look it up. I think it was published in 1935—something like that—but he worked a lot in the field in inaccessible areas. He hiked in or rode a horse in, or did things like that. He—Vernon Bailey, he's a hero to me, like I really admire his fieldwork. Well, he was probably the best field man in the biological survey, by far, and I admire his fieldwork and I also admire his taxonomic eye, if you will. He described a lot of things, and more recent studies continue to show that he was right. For some reason he knew that he had something different, and with some very difficult groups—microtine rodents for example, he knew, and he was right.

BT:

I just wanted to ask a follow-up question. I was intrigued by people like that, Clyde. I mean, he didn't—Bailey was part of that generation that really did not have college training in biology. I mean, at an early age as a youth, I think eighteen, nineteen, he's in Death Valley or some place in the west, and he's getting field experience. And with your interest in history of biology and the discipline, is that kind of eye, as you call it, is that just something you have or you don't? I mean as you train students and work with them—you know, how much of that is intuitive?

CJ:

(laughter) Well, I'm a poor one to ask that probably. Some people just have it, and some people just don't; and I don't think it's due to training or anything. Some people just have—they have the eye, or as Jim Findley used to say, "Some people have a systematic mind." And he always accused me of having a systematic mind, and I didn't know what that meant for a long time, but probably that's true. Remember, in those years, there were no places to go to get training in mammalogy. I mean there were biological programs in universities and those trained med students, medical students, doctors and nurses and the like. There were no places where you could be trained as a mammologist. That hadn't been invented yet. And then it sort of emerged, I think heavily influenced by C. Hart Merriam and Vernon Bailey and E. A. Goldman and that group. And why—it's still a mystery to me on why they did these things, why they taught themselves to collect and to prepare specimens and the like. I don't know why they did that. C. Hart Merriam, you know, he was trained as a physician, but for some reason he taught himself to prepare specimens. And Vernon Bailey was a farm boy, and he sent Merriam some shrews that he had prepared, and Merriam thought those were great, so he hired him, and sent him off to do things. I don't know if you've read the history books written by Keir Sterling. His first one was titled *The Last of the Great Naturalists*, and it was a work on the history of C. Hart Merriam. And he's got a lot of neat anecdotal statements in there from Merriam who was kind of a nut, I think. Well, all of them were kind of nuts, and mammalogists today are kind of nuts. Aren't they? (laughter) And that's sort of a perverted look at them, but they are. They're kind of nuts. My wife says when she meets somebody she looks at their shoes, and she can tell if he's a bonafide mammologist or not because he has some kind of trashy shoes on—you know socks sticking out, or something, or no socks. Yeah, she says, "That's the way to tell, you look at their

shoes.” (laughter) That’s her perception. But yeah, they’re kind of strange people, I think, and they have systematic minds, or they have the eye. And you go look at their collections and everything is lined up like that, you know, everything is in a row, it’s neatly curated.

DM:

You’ve had the chance to talk to some people of the previous generation of biologists, like Stanley P. Young. Can you give us some biographical sketches on some of these people?

CJ:

Now, there was a nut, okay. (laughter) Unfortunately—I first met him at a mammal meeting in Tucson, Arizona in, I think in about 1959 maybe, or ’58 or ’59, something like that—and he was old, and actually he was dying but he didn’t know that yet. But he regaled us with several stories. I told you though, I think I told you the one where he followed a wolf and followed it into Mexico and looked up and he was surrounded by horsemen and Pancho Villa and some of his group. And he was an old man storyteller by that time, but he had a background to back up his stories. I mean, whether they were true or not, or highly embellished we didn’t know, okay? But his legacy was very real when I went to the Fish and Wildlife Service at the National Museum [of Natural History]. Everybody talked about Stanley Young, and everybody talked about Hartley Jackson. And my boss was a guy named Dick Manville, and he had known all of those people for years, and he too was, he was an interesting guy. He was an editor of the *Journal of Mammalogy*. And when I arrived at my position at the National Museum in January of 1970—he’d hired me, and his boss had convinced me to take the job, and said, “If you take the job, we’ll make this outfit grow.” And I thought, well, there’s a chance, there’s a chance. And any young man who doesn’t want to go to the National Museum is nuts also, okay? It’s wonderful; it’s a wonderful place for someone like me. And God, Dick Manville was full of stories. I went there to take this job, and he greeted me and we talked, and he got in his file, and he handed me a file that he had as an editor of the first paper that Fleharty and I had written and published in the *Journal of Mammalogy*. He kept that and he gave it to me. Now, this guy is nuts, you know? (laughter) They do things like that.

DM:

You know, we didn’t get Stanley Young’s Pancho Villa story on tape?

CJ:

Yes we did.

DM:

Okay, I’m sorry, that had slipped—what about Hartley Jackson?



CJ:

Hartley Jackson, yeah, he's a booming mammologist but he was very quiet and very shy. And a lot of things Stanley Young did really upset him, because Stanley Young was loud and boisterous, and Hartley was very shy, very quiet, and very strange. I thought that he was strange.

DM:

But they collaborated on some—?

CJ:

Yeah they worked together, they got along, they really appreciated each other, but totally different personalities, just totally different.

DM:

Did they have different methods—field methods, for example? How can you distinguish them? Give us some comparison between them.

CJ:

Well Young, you know, "Mr. Coyote" of his generation—and his works are still, they're still good. And Hartley worked on small—you know mice and shrews and stuff like that. Stanley Young was a big steel trap guy, steel-jawed trap guy. Hartley was a mouse-trapping guy.

DM:

How about some other individuals? You talked about Gene Fleharty and Jim Findley, how about J. Knox Jones?

CJ:

(laughter) I was afraid you would bring that up. (laughter) For some reason or another, Knox Jones and I were associated with each other for thirty-five years—for some reason or another. We would encounter each other and decide to do something together, and we just became friends for sometimes unprintable reasons. We were associated together for thirty-five years, and it seemed to become closer and closer associated as we progressed age-wise and professionally. And then I came to Tech, and I came as director of the museum, but I wanted an office back here [at the Natural Science Research Lab]. And so Robert Baker gave me an office next door to Knox's office. And that was an interesting life for several reasons. There's a festschrift for Knox that's been written that has encomia in it. Do you have that?

BT:

No, I'm not seeing it.

CJ:

Well, I'll see if I can get one or—

BT:

Museum publication?

CJ:

Yeah, organized by Robert Baker and Hugh Genoways, and it has contributions from Knox's associates and students, but it's an interesting one. It has encomia in it, you know what those are? Yeah, I didn't know what they were until I was asked to write one, and those are of varied levels of probably truth and legend. Knox Jones undoubtedly was one of the greatest mammalogists in his generation. He was absolutely one of the greatest ones.

DM:

In what way?

CJ:

His knowledge of mammals, and he was absolutely uncanny in knowledge of his library, especially his reprints. He had them organized in reprint boxes, like those, and you would ask him about something that somebody did and he said, "Oh yeah that was Sid Anderson, 1945, it's right there in that box." Absolutely uncanny! And you'd go there and it was there, and he would say, "Yeah, you can borrow it, but you put it back, okay? In the same place!" So he'd know where it was. An uncanny mind, and his knowledge of mammals was like that. Something he'd never seen before, he would look at it, and he would sooner or later tell you what it was; he was uncanny. He was a difficult man to be associated with, he was difficult. It's no secret he was a very hard-drinking man, very hard drinker, which increased as he got older. But for some reason that didn't seem to interfere with his uncanny knowledge. Drunk or sober he knew things.

DM:

How was his fieldwork? How was he in the field?

CJ:

(laughs) It is probably best described as a wild man in the field.

DM:

(laughs) What do you mean?

CJ:

"Here are the goddamn traps, what are you guys standing there looking at me for? Get them out. You go that way, you go that way, and I'll take this batch and I'll go that way." Yeah, and he'd

pick up the traps and he would say, "There's something wrong here, I caught more than you did, you must be lazy." Or, "You must be some kind of special asshole." I mean, his language was unprintable, okay? Un-recordable, I mean, incredible language, just incredible. "You caught fewer traps than I caught, so you're some kind of dumb son of a bitch." I mean, just on and on, okay, incredible.

DM:

He was some kind of a no-nonsense kind of a fellow or what?

CJ:

When it came to trapping and preparing mammals, [he was] absolutely serious. Even though he was joking and telling stories, absolutely serious. You prepared mammals in one way, that was his way. And he came to me one time—we shared some graduate students in those years—he came to me and he said, "You're taking them out into the field, you've got to work on their preparation, they're backsliding on me Clyde, they're backsliding. Look at this stuff it doesn't look like we taught them how to do it, doesn't look like that stuff, you have got to work with them, they're backsliding."

DM:

And he was talking about the preparation of the specimens?

CJ:

Yeah, "These specimens don't look like the early ones that I taught them, they're backsliding, you have got to get on them." Well, you know, I thought they were doing perfectly well. (laughs) He was very particular about the specimen and how it looked, and anyone who couldn't prepare one that looked exactly like one he prepared was some kind of "dumb son of a bitch." I mean, there are other words that I won't tell you about, while your recorders are on. He had an incredible repertoire of combinations of words for everybody. Incredible, incredible man.

DM:

A perfectionist?

CJ:

Yes, very much so. And he led an increasingly interesting life as time progressed.

DM:

Overall, how did he affect the program at Texas Tech? What did he have when he arrived, and what did he leave behind?

CJ:

He and Robert Baker—there are variable stories—but he and Robert Baker ostensibly designed this building on a napkin in some bar some place. He left a legacy of—he came here as dean of the graduate school, and he left his mark there as one truly supportive of appropriate graduate students. In other words, you had to be some kind of a—he supported graduate education in general, and he built an atmosphere of support and tolerance for graduate students. It's hard to pinpoint some “thing” that he left—he left a philosophy that graduate students, especially mammalian ones, that they were good, that they were special and they were treated that way, although he treated them personally, “Okay you dumb shit, get in here”—you know. And he treated me and his other colleagues that way. I came in one day, and I found one of the maintenance workers measuring a space on the wall of my office. And I said, “What on earth? What are you doing?” And he said, “Well, Dr. Jones has requested that we cut a door here, cut a door through this wall from his office to your office.” I said “Like hell! No way, no way, no way.” And Knox was sitting at his desk, and he said, “Jones get in here.” So I went in, and he said, “Well, it would be much quicker for me to just shoot through that door into your office.” And I said “Absolutely no, no way.” He was—that's the way he was, constant vigilance to keep me in my space and him in his space under control, and the same way with the graduate students. I would take them out on a trip and we would come back and he would say, “Well, you were gone a day longer than you were supposed to be.” He said, “You screwed me, you screwed me.” And I said, “You had nothing to do with it, Knox.” He had an idea about publications. We had to file an annual report, and our annual reports went to biology. But we always gave the director of the museum a copy and we always sort of—we read our reports to each other. And in later years, this is a marvelous story, he came into my office with his annual report and he said, “I'm carrying you. I'm carrying you.” He said, “We have six or seven publications and you're a co-author on each one of them.” And he said, “I'm carrying you. I'm carrying the load, I'm carrying you.” And I said, “But Knox, I have several pieces published or in the works and you're not involved.” And he said, “Why not?” (laughs) That's the way he was. (laughs) No, that describes him.

BT:

“What do you mean you didn't include me?”

CJ:

Yeah, “What the hell do you mean you're doing something without me?”

DM:

If you would have let him build that door, maybe he would have— (laughs)

CJ:

Absolutely no way, no way would I allow that. (laughs) That describes Knox's philosophy, "Why not?"

DM:

Who was responsible for the Texas Tech biology department becoming mammalogy-oriented?

CJ:

Robert Baker.

DM:

Well, give us some information on Robert Baker, whatever you're willing to give.

CJ:

Well, I will respond to your comment first. It used to be said—I mean when I was a graduate student at New Mexico—and remember, Findley came out of the KU [University of Kansas] program—and the comment was made that "If you fuck up, I'm going to send you to Texas Tech." That was the comment. That was the comment made in mammalogical programs at KU and at Arizona and at New Mexico, and everywhere. "If you fuck up, I'm going to send you to Texas Tech." And Robert Baker turned all of that around. Now, in those mammal programs, the comment is, "If you're good enough, you might get to go to Texas Tech." And Robert Baker almost singlehandedly caused that reversal.

DM:

How?

CJ:

In what he's done, and how he has built the mammalian program here. The program here is world-renowned, and there are more mammalogists here within it than the National Museum, for example. And Robert Baker has built that program and changed it from the former statement, to the latter statement. He has done that. Knox Jones didn't do that; I didn't do that; we were well known before we came here. I mean, we didn't come to Texas Tech and become well known, we were well known, if you will allow, before we came here. Right or wrong, we were well known. And there have been a lot of people that have come and gone, Hugh Genoways, who are well known. A mammalian paleontologist from Nebraska, Bob Wilson, was here. I mean, Robert Baker made that happen, and Tech changed that. And when he was a graduate student he heard that too. But, in my perspective, Robert Baker has almost singlehandedly reversed that from the former statement to the latter.



DM:

Did he do it through recruitment? Recruiting the right faculty?

CJ:

He's done it primarily through his training and his placement of his students. He has trained some very good students, and he has placed them well in crucial positions. I think that's the primary thing he has done.

DM:

Was he part of the brainstorm behind the NSRL, Natural Science Research Lab?

CJ:

Yeah. Yes.

DM:

Is that another way in which he built this program?

CJ:

That's another way. This is attached to the museum, but this is an academic operation here. I mean, students are trained here; they work here; they're trained here. And Baker, at one point in his career, he saw the need to learn about molecular biology and he took a year's leave of absence and went to Harvard, and learned how to do molecular biology. He saw the need for that. And he has built a program in molecular biology as well, but he's still the director of the NSRL. That's what he has done here, in my opinion. He has changed that viewpoint of Texas Tech from one to the other. You agree with that? I think that's the best way to describe him.

BT:

Clyde, the question I want to ask you is about fieldwork, and field experience, and field mammalogists. And when you talk to people on the outside, not part of Texas Tech, but aware of Texas Tech's prominence in the mammalogy field, we continue to hear that Tech students and Tech faculty still believe in fieldwork, and that firsthand encounter with place and flora and fauna. Is that just a function of the individuals that are here, or does that represent a more encompassing philosophy? How would you explain that as opposed to the other programs that might be molecular, or genetic, or not insist that students be out [in the field] to the degree that they are here?

CJ:

Well, all the mammalogists that are here, or have been here, have been trained in field mammalogy, all of them. They're trained to go out in the field and catch your own stuff, and prepare your own stuff. That's how they were trained. That's the first level of their training, and

Baker still goes out in the field, I mean, maybe in the Ukraine or maybe in Ecuador, but he still goes out in the field. Robert Bradley goes out in the field, frequently teaches a summer field course that trains students. I still go out in the field. And so again, that aspect is an engrained philosophy. Going in the field is very important for numerous reasons, maybe not always to catch mice being the number one reason, but it's very important, it's very important that the students are trained to do that. And that's still a facet of mammalogy. Incidentally, there isn't a person at Texas Tech who was hired to be a mammalogist, we just happened to be. We were hired for some other reason. Baker was hired to teach psychology and histology, he was not hired as a mammalogist. Knox Jones was not hired as a mammalogist. I wasn't hired as a mammalogist. Robert Bradley, he was hired as a mammalogist, nobody else was. It's interesting as to why through various circumstances these people have sort of gravitated to Texas Tech.

DM:

Will there continue to be an emphasis on fieldwork as a basis for being a biologist?

CJ:

I worry about that.

DM:

One comment you have made is: we need more data. We have the technology to process this data. We're well beyond the data that we have; we need more data. So is that where—

CJ:

Technology has overrun our data. We need field data. I think we especially need it now. Well, let me tell you about a conversation I had yesterday. Global warming is real, okay? I mean, I believe in it, it's real. And there have been a couple of interesting pieces of work written about Texas mammals and what may happen to them with the advent of global warming, it's a computer model predictive thing, but it's real. And it predicts changes in distribution and the like. And we're seeing those changes take place because of global warming and because of the human population and because of habitat modification and all the things—and urbanization—all the things that go together. I think there's an increasing need for—I suppose, naturally, I think there's a need for the kind of work I do. Go out in the field and survey; find out what's there, because five years from now it will be different. And my students and I—in fact, when I'm not talking with you guys or wasting my time (laughs)—I'm trying to write a paper on changes in distribution of some mammals that we have seen take place in recent years. In 1988, the first specimen of *Cryptotis parva* was reported from the Llano Estacado. Now they're all over the place. I mean they're everywhere. My wife and I and a guy named Mark Lockwood recently analyzed a bunch of owl pellets and we—from one locality—and we came up with a thousand mammal remains, well, nine hundred and ninety-six mammal remains. About a third of those were *Cryptotis parva*, which raises a bunch of other questions, but—western yellow bats were

first recorded from Limpia Creek in the Davis Mountains by me and a couple of other people, but it's been recorded from Big Bend National Park, it's been recorded from Del Rio, previously known only from Arizona and Southern California. What's happened? The eastern pipistrelle is obviously moving west. Frank Yancey and I got one at Big Bend Ranch, which was its westernmost. There's one from Tom Green County. There are a couple of specimens from eastern Colorado. There are a couple of specimens from eastern Wyoming. Mike Bogan and Tony Mollhagen got one at Clay Miller's water hole there in the canyon. One of Mike Bogan's people has one from Carlsbad. There's no doubt about it, they're going west. Why, I don't know. The one that Bogan and Mollhagen got at Clay Miller's place, its wings were full of holes, little holes, and I helped prepare that specimen. We looked at this and wondered, "What in the hell is this?" It tried to negotiate spiny plants with which it's not accustomed; it's the only logical thing we could think of that might be the reason. Right? It's not used to mesquite, and that might be the reason. I don't know; I don't know the reason. Anyway, the species is moving west, there are more than a dozen examples like this. I'm trying to write a summary of all of that.

BT:

Moving east to west, is that a function of—well, I mean, you don't know in many cases but, is the supposition that these areas are warmer and therefore more likely to support species that—?

CJ:

Yeah, and the people that caught the western yellow bats at Big Bend National Park, they put a transmitter on one, and it was roosting in dagger yucca. Normally in the west they roost in palm trees. They're sort of a—I mean with a little imagination there's a visual image there that's similar. Tom Reed got one in Del Rio, it fell out of a palm tree, at a motel in Del Rio. One can concoct a visual image of—but what in the hell a bat is doing here in the first place is the mystery. These are not vagrants or wanderers, these are, most of them are pregnant or lactating females, so they're not vagrants or wanderers. There's some north and south movement too. A little mouse called pygmy mouse has moved north and moved into the Panhandle of Oklahoma, it's up in the Panhandle of Texas. One of the last papers Knox and a couple of the graduate students and I wrote was titled "Westward Ho." (laughs) And yeah there are a lot of these things. The prairie vole is going from numerous localities in the Panhandle down about as far as Amarillo. Well, specimens are known from the Pantex, the Pantex piece of property.

DM:

This is kind of related to something else I wanted to ask you. And that's about changing conditions, in general terms, changing conditions in the Chihuahuan Desert, mostly in regard to water availability and mammal populations. Can you say some general things—?

CJ:

The key is water. For almost twenty years we have been in a drought situation and the Chihuahuan Desert is drying. I mean, if you can believe it's become dryer, it's drying. The key is water.

DM:

And what's the immediate effect that that decline in water availability is having on mammal populations across the board?

CJ:

Decline in water, changes in vegetation, changes in the compaction in the substrate—

DM:

Migration?

CJ:

Yeah, migration, changes in migratory patterns. At Limpia Creek in the—you've been there—the Davis Mountains, that now is in the migratory pattern of Hoary Bats, which it wasn't before. What the hell they are doing this far east? I don't have any idea. But that's a migratory pathway. You could go down there in the spring and spend two or three weeks catching nothing but hoary bats if you want to, things like that. Water is an important key. And, well, we can discuss the water issue if you want to, water is an important key, and water is a real problem. I think I told you that some years ago a former governor of Colorado, a guy named Richard Lamm, he's kind of a nut in his own right—I know him so I can say he's kind of a nut. But he wrote a futuristic proposal for Colorado and predicted it would be a solid urban system from Fort Collins to Pueblo, and he also predicted that potable water would cost more than a gallon of gasoline. We're already there. I don't think a lot of people realize that. Before I retired I taught a seminar for graduate students and we talked about water. I sent a graduate student to go to United and buy a bottle of water off the shelf that all the students were carrying, never mind the brand, just buy a bottle. And he bought it and we extrapolated that cost, and that's very expensive stuff, you know. I don't think people realize what they are buying and how much it's costing. Drive at campus during class changes—seven out of ten students are carrying a bottle of water around right?

DM:

It's almost as basic a necessity as a cell phone. (laughs)



CJ:

That's right, and most of them have both. Most of them are walking and talking on the damn phone carrying a bottle of water. That's the picture of a Texas Tech college student. My God, what's going to happen to us?

BT:

I was talking to our friend Darryl Birkenfeld who works with this Sustainable Land Network, very interested in water and water issues, and he was ticking off all the counties in the Panhandle that are embracing this Boone Pickens idea of selling that water. It's much bigger than what I thought.

CJ:

It's a major, major issue and we're not—Lubbock is not dealing with it the way they should be. They will, sooner or later, they will deal with it because the real answer is, there is no water. Now—and Lake Meredith is at an all-time low, and it's not recharging. While there's no rainfall it's not recharging. And what little rain we get, it evaporates. We need a slow steady—about a foot of rain, immediately. The thing that's impacting the environment is air pollution. There's been some excellent research done, results published in *Science*, that pollution abates rainfall. And all these factors are really hitting us here in Texas, I think. I think all those factors are coming together here in Texas.

BT:

I mean, and you as much as anybody have seen the effects along the border right? From the Big Bend to the Davis Mountains about pollution and—

CJ:

The best thing to do is take a doubter and get him in your car and drive from Fort Davis to Presidio, and you go through Marfa, and then you come over a high pass just north of Presidio and stop the car right there and say, "Just look out there." What do you see? It's a big cloud, it looks like LA in the old days, there's a big cloud just hovering from the smoke stacks in Ojinaga, just hovering and moving eastward. There are studies, ongoing studies in Big Bend National Park of the effects of this pollution on vegetation, on wildlife. The current chairman of the biology department is John Zak, and he is the one who is conducting the study. And he and I had a neat conversation about all this yesterday. Sometime, if you're interested, you should talk to him.

BT:

He is an interesting guy; I see him in the rec center.



CJ:

Yeah, he works out over there all the time. You know, I am very interested in the water issues and I'm very interested in T. Boone Pickens' Mesa Water Company, would you believe that? You know, we used to have Mesa Oil, remember that? And you know, he made Shell and some other companies sort of stand up and pay attention; now he's organized Mesa Water Company. And he's developing a system to purchase easement rights to build a pipeline to El Paso and San Antonio and places like that. How do you feel about that? You know, he owns the land in Roberts County and he's purchasing water. The Texas water law is: if you have water under your land you can sell the water if you want to. It's the Ogallala Aquifer, folks. It's also being tapped into in Nebraska and other places. We're on top of the Ogallala; it's a problem. Some of the members of the Lubbock Water Planning Group, they say, "Well, there's no problem, we're sitting on a dome of the Ogallala Aquifer." I mean, there're problems with the stadium. They have pumps to keep the field from flooding. The basements of Chemistry and a couple of other buildings are crumbling because of percolation of the water. The water is so polluted, it is so polluted with agricultural chemicals and things like that. To treat the water is going to cost a lot of money, folks, that's the bottom line. Isn't that right?

DM:

Let's look at something else. I want to look at natural history museums. Can you kind of give us an idea of the successes and failures of natural history museums? The strengths and weaknesses: maybe looking at the NSRL. Maybe looking at UNM's museum, that you were closely associated with at one time. Just in general what has been the trend in natural history museums? Are they improving techniques, what do they need to do?

CJ:

Right now, due to a whole bunch of factors, right now, there's trouble in paradise. Some natural history museums are closing, essentially boarding up their collections, and are laying off the curators because of budget problems. I mean, we all know what the economy is. Your investments are worth less than what you paid for them. The economy stinks. Sooner or later it will get better, but we don't know when is sooner or later; it will get better, sometime. But there are a lot of things that are affecting Natural History Museums that trend toward—there's this part of a trend toward molecular biology that says you don't need big series of specimens, you need one or two or three, and mathematics has been developed so that's a good enough sample, in some cases, and that effects natural history collections. The animal rights people have an impact, the anti-kill people, PETA organization has an impact. Michigan State University has sort of boarded up its collection. The University of Nebraska at Lincoln has sort of boarded up its collection. Hugh Genoways is on a three year plan, this is one year, next year is year two, next year is year three, and then he's out. That's the plan negotiated with the administration. I guess I'll have to mention the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Their curator of mammals has been notified that December thirty-first is her last day. That happens to be my daughter.

DM:

What will happen to these collections?

CJ:

They're just—the collections are literally just being boarded up and just allowed to sit there. The collection at Champaign–Urbana, Illinois is in a resting phase. The collection at the University of Texas at Austin, that mammal collection is here. Baker negotiated with them, and that collection—that collection of mammals has been moved here. There are preliminary discussions with these other places about their collections. Collections—they're fine. In the one sense there's power in collections, there's some power in the collection here, okay. But in another sense that power works against you. When you become too great a power, then you develop enemies, okay, in a power struggle. Baker has tactfully I think, and sometimes without tact, he has avoided that here. Everyone is supportive of this collection and what we're doing. Well, they're going to build a new building. They're going to build a mirror image of this building; that says something. Now, the fact that that's private money says something also, right? Baker has found a believer out there—that says something in its own right.

DM:

Is that the new trend, if a natural history museum wants to thrive, finding private money?

CJ:

Yeah. So the collections come and go.

DM:

And often change hands, like the transfer from UT? Is that common or uncommon?

CJ:

That's sort of uncommon. People don't—the power system with collections is funny. People sometimes don't want to support collections, but they don't want to give them away. It's really strange. I've never understood that, that piece of thinking: Yeah, we won't support it, we're not going to hire anybody, we're firing the curators, but we're not going to give it away, we're going to keep it.

BT:

I'd say that's true in the manuscripts field as well, wouldn't you agree David?

DM:

Yeah.

BT:

It's like, "Okay, we have got this stuff, but we sure as hell aren't going to give it to you."

CJ:

Yeah, "Let's board it up and keep it." It's strange, I don't understand it. LA County is another one I wanted to mention. They're reducing their curatorial staff. We're in that little trend of a downswing. This collection is safe. The collection at the University of Kansas is safe. The collection at the University of New Mexico is very safe. The curator of mammals happens to have become an assistant provost for research, so that collection is safe.

DM:

What can these natural history museums do better? How can NSRL, for example, be improved?

CJ:

You're calling for a personal reaction from me. I truly think we have not done a good job of selling what we do. That's another way that mammalogists are sort of strange, they sort of go off, and I think without intention almost secretly do what they do, and they publish their results in scientific works, but they don't educate the general public, they just don't want to be bothered with it. I think they don't educate the general public; they don't sell their wares to the general public. That's a general statement. Some do, but in general they don't.

BT:

I was just wondering, as a follow up to that Clyde, as a professional biologist, but one with an interest in history, and let's say a wide set of interests that you have—

CJ:

I don't have a wide set of interests. I'm interested in water, damn it. (laughs)

BT:

—The basis for everything else right? I was thinking about, I guess maybe we're also calling here for your personal opinion, or reaction, but what about the writers who are popularists, who take the work of the people like yourself, I'm thinking of a David Quammen, for example, people of that sort. Barry Lopez.

CJ:

I've included here, with great trepidation, I've included here a piece written by Sandy Tolan, who was recommended to us by Barry Lopez, and who accompanied us to Ecuador. And I spent a lot of time talking with him especially after we moved to Baños. He was there and he arranged for us to stay at a place, great job, great place, but I spent a lot of time talking to him, and then I read this piece he wrote, and I'm not sure I was there (laughs). I'm not sure where he's coming

from. He was recommended to us by Barry Lopez as an up-and-coming writer, and he was a joy to be around, I thought, but I've included his piece for you to read, and I think it speaks something for itself, and tells something about where his interests lie. Have you seen it?

BT:

No, I've only heard of it.

CJ:

It's not exactly terribly complimentary to all of us, but it's been written, it's a piece. We have a small debate going on, with Carl Phillips and me, over whether or not it should be included in this volume that we're about to publish. Initially I was opposed, after reading it I was opposed. I'm weakening my position. I think maybe it should be included; maybe people should read it.

BT:

So, I want to run this by you, by extension I guess, to cast the issue more broadly, I mean those writers who come from an avowed environmentalist position or who come from, let's say, concern for indigenous cultures, are likely to have a different take or a different perspective on—

CJ:

Well, David Quammen—I mean, what can you say about his things, huh? Whoof. I mean, he's a tremendous environmental person, and Barry Lopez certainly is, I mean, you can't argue that, if you read anything he's ever written. Edward Abbey was too, I thought. I thought the things he wrote were terribly oriented toward the environment. I mean how can you refute *The Monkey Wrench Gang*? I mean, my gosh, you know.

BT:

Classic pieces.

CJ:

Yeah, or *Desert Solitaire*, or—those are great pieces I thought, but who reads those? I mean, yeah, we read them; people who don't really need them are the ones who read them, right? I would have doubts that if you asked Marc McDougal about any of these things that he would know what you're talking about. I would hazard to guess there.

BT:|

I'm afraid you're quite right.

CJ:

I don't mean that [as] slapping him, but that's another topic we can discuss sometime when you



have your recorders turned off. (laughs) But we need more of that, and we need more of those, I mean, yeah, how many more writers like that can you think of? That's just about the list, right?

BT:

Yeah. I mean, I think about that in reference to your interests and really what ought to be a concern for every thinking person about water. I mean, but we don't have an Edward Abbey of water, we don't have someone who's been able to communicate those issues about a basic human biological concern to a bigger audience.

CJ:

Yeah, and why—well, why has Lubbock finally awakened to the fact that there's a problem with water? The reason is Lake Meredith is at an all-time low, that's what has driven them to, I think, to think about it. There are some people around who've thought about water for a long time, but again, they sort of secretly thought about water. I don't care to go speak out to the city council or somebody about my views on water. I would rather not do that because I don't want the associated publicity or the associated criticism, or so on and so on. It's like the Prairie Dog issue. I'm through discussing Prairie Dogs with them, okay? Do what you want with them. Somebody else can argue the Prairie Dog issue. I don't want to do that. I want to do what I do—

BT:

Not be distracted from your—

CJ:

—the rest of my life, you know, I want to do what I do. And that's wrong, that's wrong.

BT:

Yeah I guess that's the part that people like Lopez and others are prodding us about, is thinking about community, thinking about, but recognizing exactly what you say, the passion of the reformer is the path that few of us can handle.

CJ:

Well, some of them become sort of folk legends or heroes; I mean Erin Brockovich, she's a heroine, she's a hero, but look what she went through to get to that point. I don't have time to do that, there are a lot of mice yet that have got to be reported and studied, okay? There are a lot of areas that need to be surveyed. That's what I do. I don't want to go and do that. I went with, I told you, I went with Schmidly to a conference on water in Ciudad Juarez, very interesting, I mean, I'm glad I went, but he and I discussed on the way home we're both glad we went but we don't want to do that. We don't want to do that all the time. And that's wrong, that's what's wrong with us, and that's what's wrong with our profession is, yeah we don't want to do that. Robert Baker knows an awful lot about water, but he's not going to go do that.



DM:

I wanted to ask you a little bit more about natural science museums, another aspect, and that is preservation of field notes. Besides preserving specimens and holding on to large collections of published materials, do natural history museums typically preserve people's field notes adequately, or do those remain in private hands. What becomes of that material, and is it worthwhile?

CJ:

Problem is the word "adequately." Natural history collections with which I'm familiar make an effort to preserve field notes and field catalogs. They have policies that, yes, say at the end of every year, I would turn in my field notes and field catalogs, or a good machine copy of them, one or the other, okay. This place has a policy like that. We're behind in keeping up with that policy. The University of New Mexico has that policy. They're probably better off than we are in keeping up with it. Every place I know—National Museum has that policy, everybody I know of has that policy and they—but it's a hard one to keep up with, okay. Tulane has that policy. I think they're pretty well up to speed just because of the old curator that still hangs around there, who insists that you do this. You don't leave the place without doing this, you know. They do.

DM:

What percentage would you guess at most of these museums—what percentage of the field notes actually make it into the museum, and what percentage would remain in private hands, when it's all said and done?

CJ:

Oh, that's really hard for me to say—

DM:

I'm sure it would vary from place to place.

CJ:

Yeah, I don't think any place has a hundred percent. I don't think so. I'm sure not. No place I know of has a hundred percent of them.

DM:

Would those materials, if they didn't make it into the local natural history museum, would they possibly be at the university in another collection of that person's lecture notes and papers?

CJ:

Well, sooner or later, my own personal things will show up in your place, sooner or later.

DM:

I'm just wondering where a person would—

CJ:

I mean, all this stuff, whether you want it or not, will show up at your place. Bill and I have discussed that. We haven't done anything formal about it, but I think we have a strong gentlemanly handshake agreement, let us say. When I gave you a copy of the evaluation of my library for your interest—that does not include my personal field notes. For example, I have my own personal field notes from my sojourn in West Africa. I have the original copies, I should say. Machine copies are at Tulane, but the originals are in my possession because I struck a deal with Tulane that they have the copies, I have the originals.

DM:

I'm just trying to get a general sense for the record of where a researcher would look to find field notes of a field biologist. So they'd go to the museum, they might go to the institution. Is there something I'm overlooking, though?

CJ:

Yeah, I would start out with the museum with which a person was oriented. Well, for example, all of Vernon Bailey's field notes are—I know exactly where they are—they're in my former office in the National Museum. And there's a lot of concern about their safety and the like. Al Gardner has talked to me about the possibility of getting a grant to get those copied electronically. And that should be done, but he's busy, I'm busy, I'm not there.

DM:

What size is the collection?

CJ:

Like one of those book cases filled with them.

DM:

Eight by three? Eight by three feet.

CJ:

Yeah something like.

BT:

Is Gardner the guy at the Smithsonian?

CJ:

Yeah. He's the big, the great big guy that participated in that oral symposium. Don Wilson was the little bitty guy. And Bogan was the middle-sized guy. One of the best views in your life is seeing the three of them walk down the sidewalk with Gardner, Bogan and Wilson, and watching them, you know, that's something to watch. (laughs)

BT:

I was just thinking that—David's got more to say on this issue—so you know we're kind of asking you for historic overviews here, senses of change in your lifetime. How have field techniques changed? I mean, how has technology impacted the fieldwork that's going on? I'm not talking so much about preparation of specimens, as I am the transects and the use of computer modelling and things along those lines?

CJ:

Well, some things never change. I mean, some of the mousetraps that we're using today were used by Vernon Bailey and those people. Those things never change, and they're still manufactured by the same company, and the thing that has changed is the price. When I started out, museum specials cost \$0.35 apiece. Now they cost about \$3.50 a piece, which probably doesn't mean anything because \$3.50 today is probably pretty equivalent to \$0.35 then, but that's the difference. Techniques of preparation are the same. One change that has taken place is the availability of mist nets for netting bats; that has changed, and again, the price has changed dramatically. Now they cost about a dollar a foot. And, you know, poles are available, all kinds of things are available. I have aluminum poles with a driver that's available when we used to have to use, oh God, rebar and stuff like that, or used to have to cut wooden poles every place we went and stack them there and leave them for the next time we came by. Some fool would come along and make firewood out of them or something. The availability and use of liquid nitrogen has been a very important, positive change. The invention of computers, or the availability of computers, has been important. I have a—I don't remember what model it is, it's a Dell Inspiron type of laptop computer. One of my graduate students has it and carries it with him in the field and records his data, and he's essentially writing his dissertation piece-by-piece wherever he is. I mean prying this computer away from him is a real Mormon challenge, you know, that's very important.

BT:

Would setting the trap lines and determination of trap location, is that still largely the read of the field biologist about where the—?

CJ:

Oh, there have been some changes there, mostly with the application of mathematics and developing grids, and things like that that are supposed to be superior. I've had a long career of

working with grids, and I can summarize for you by telling you I hate grids. I will never personally do another piece of grid work. It's labor intensive; they're awful. I will do lateral transects, period. And I will discourage my students from doing grids. If one of them wants to go ahead and do grids then that's fine, but don't come bitching to me about the labor intensity aspects of it. But again, that's a part of the application of mathematics to design, which is good I think. The application of computer models is fantastic, and everybody uses those. The development of making karyotypes was very important. Baker started out with that as a graduate student; that led to the molecular techniques we use today. Those are all very important. There are a lot of questions that can only be solved by molecular techniques, and in fact now we're facing an important question: if something looks the same but differs in a molecular sense, should you name it as a new taxon? And Baker and I, and Bradley and Baker's students, we're heavily involved in that question right now. Baker and Genoways named a new species of bat some years ago based on molecular evidence. Knox Jones and I spent a lot of time looking at the specimens in the collection. We can't tell them apart. I mean, as good as we are, we can't tell them apart. But they're different. It stands. And that will lead to numerous questions in systematic biology: "What is a species," and so on and so on. To give you an example, when I first learned the species of one group of neotropical bats of *Artibeus*, there were four species. Now there are ten. Baker says in the near future there may be twenty or twenty-five. Those are neat challenging changes. Producing the end product is very different than it used to be. This thing right here gentlemen, that's a typewriter, and you know that the museum—and they've made the right decision—they will not pay for having it serviced. I have to pay for that. And my argument is, okay, well then I own it, and the museum director said, "Who cares?" (laughs) I mean, you know, those things have changed. I have a Dell computer at home, don't worry. I'm well established, okay. And I have promoted that. I think you would find if you checked the legacy of everywhere I've been, I have left a wake of computer, of modern computer equipment and methodology everywhere I've ever been, which is very strange because I'm not that kind of person personally, but I believe in it. And yeah, there've been a lot of changes. One of the guys that works here went out and bought a new one of these, and it's almost all the same.

DM:

How have students changed? I venture to say that more came from a rural or outdoors background in the sixties than today.

CJ:

Now you're asking one of the more sensitive questions.

DM:

Good.



CJ:

I don't like most of the modern students. First of all, they don't want to go out in the field, or if they do they want to stay in a hotel or a motel; eat in a restaurant. The idea of camping out is absolutely foreign, and they won't do it. There are a lot of good students who have an anti-kill attitude, and that's their business. But I don't think you can go out and be a field mammalogist and be an anti-kill person at the same time. I firmly believe in the collection policy that if there are a lot of them, you get as many as you can. If there are a few of them, you get them all. I have followed that policy all of my professional life. Although I consider myself an environmental biologist, on top of it all I consider myself one, but I am a collector. Another thing that really worries me about modern students is that my perception is: the vast majority of them don't buy books. You go in their offices and there aren't any books. They use the Internet, and I personally am disturbed by that; I'm disturbed by it because we could get on the Internet right now and put anything in there and it's not reviewed, it's not edited, it would be a piece of trash. But they use that. I had a call, say last week, from a young lady who said she was using information in the Internet to develop her dissertation, and her professor did not want her to use real library materials. And I said, "Well, I can't help you." I mean, rather than argue with her I just said, "I'm sorry, I can't help you." I worry about that, though. That extends to a lot of our young new faculty members. They don't buy books. You go in their office and there aren't any books. There are rows of disks, but no books. My old-fashioned philosophy leads me to buy books. And in spite of the fact that I've made some preliminary arrangements with him [Bill Tydeman] to give all of my library to you, I ordered some new books as recently as yesterday. It's just in me. I can't explain it. It's just in me to buy books. Those approaches are—I worry about that. I would not direct a graduate student unless they convinced me that they would go in the field, that they would collect, and they would do some of these things that I think are important.

DM:

Are you seeing fewer students come into the graduate biology program because they're not willing to go into the field, or are the enrollment increases keeping that general number up?

CJ:

The biology department this year has more students than it's ever had; has more graduate students than it's ever had. The classes are absolutely filled. I was talking with the registrar yesterday, the registrar in biology who is Sam Braudt, and he said, "Just about every class is full or overfull." Tech's enrollment in general is increasing.

DM:

But fewer of these students are willing to do fieldwork?

CJ:

No, they don't want to do fieldwork.



DM:

So the number of students that participate in these field courses or labs is dwindling while the overall number is increasing?

CJ:

Yeah.

DM:

Now, let me ask you another question—

CJ:

Well, there're a lot of things that have happened—excuse me, there are a lot of things that have happened that resulted in increases in biology students. For example, a whole new field has developed: sports medicine. Sports medicine, when I was trying to be an athlete, fortunately didn't exist, or I would be dead, you know. But sports medicine—it's here and it's an important—it's very important I think, don't you? I think it's very important. And you watch football games on TV; every team has some of these people. That's new.

BT:

Now they'll be biology majors as undergrads.

CJ:

That's right. And for example, Tech has provided some leadership in—if you want to be a biology teacher, you have to get your degree in education, but you have to major in biology if you're going to teach biology. I think that's very important. Used to be you majored in education and you might have had one or two biology courses, maybe. I mean, we all know those kinds of people, older people who are teaching in small town high schools and the like, and they're fine, but the whole philosophy has changed, and I'm glad.

DM:

As a faculty member, in the course of your faculty career, how often has this difficulty with creationism versus evolution cropped up?

CJ:

(laughs) Well, as recently as the last time I taught vertebrate natural history.

DM:

Can you tell me about some incidents?

CJ:

You want to record these?

DM:

Can I? (laughs)

CJ:

Well, a person came to me and said, "I just don't think I can believe in evolution." Let me back up and say, I taught vertebrate natural history for numerous years at Tech, and I taught it as a course in evolution, because that's, well, I believe in it and that's how I structured the course and that's how I taught it, as a course in evolution, but with all the other stuff crammed in. I went from lower forms of vertebrate life to so-called higher forms. And this person said, "I just don't think I can believe in evolution." I said, "That's fine, I don't care whether you believe in it or not." He looked kind of shocked and he said, "You must be kidding." I said, "I could care less whether you believe in it or not, but you have to know the major principles of it or you're not going to pass this course." And the person sort of went away shaking his head, but that's how I believe. And I had another incident where a small group of young ladies asked to talk to me, and they had a spokesperson and everything. She said, "I can't believe what you said, you said a fish crawled out of the water and turned into a horse." And I said, "I did not say that. I'm sorry. I know I did not say that." She said, "Yes you did. In the summary statement you said a fish crawled out of the water and turned into a horse." And I said, "No, I never said anything of the kind." And I said the same thing, "I don't care whether or not you believe in evolution, but you have to know the principles of it, or you can't pass this course." And she brought her grandfather to talk to me who had on a nice collar and a nice grey flannel suit. And we talked, and I said, "I'm not trying to teach your granddaughter evolution. I'm teaching vertebrate natural history, and she must know the basic principles of evolution, or there's no way she can pass this course." And he bought off on that. And I had a teaching assistant who happened to be one of my own graduate students, and he met me before class. And I was fussing around getting things ready in front of the room, and he was standing with his back to the kids, and he said, "When you look up you will see the student that wants to talk to you after class." And I said, "I will?" And he said, "Yeah, when you look up you will see the student that wants to talk to you after class." And I looked up and there in the front row was a kid with a sweatshirt on with block letters about that high that said "Jesus." And he came to talk to me after class. (laughs) No, that's my stand on it. I don't care whether you believe in evolution or not, but I would hope you would understand the basic principles of the theory, and it is a theory, or you can't pass my course.

DM:

Is it more of a bone of contention here than at other places where you have been? Do you have more people coming up and saying, "What is this about evolution?"

CJ:

Yes, it's Texas, and well if you follow the state committee that approves high school textbooks, oh Jesus Christ, I mean, please help us, that's an awful kind of thing, and it goes from the children that are trained in, mostly in small schools in small towns, where, with all due respect, one of the coaches teaches biology and he reads the biology book to them. And then it comes on.

DM:

What about at Hastings? Was there an issue there?

CJ:

Sorry?

DM:

How about at Hastings? Was there ever that issue in the biology department?

CJ:

Oh no, in fact, most of us, including me, minored in religion. And the guy that taught religion was very dynamic and it was one of the best programs I've ever had. We read the Bible, we read the Quran. I mean, it was wonderful. I minored in religion. So this really is my circumstance because I took all of these courses. No it was not an issue there.

DM:

So it really is a Texas thing from your experience?

CJ:

In my experience—Nebraska, New Mexico, Louisiana—By fortune, I lived and worked in New Orleans, which is a very cosmopolitan—New Orleans is very different from the rest of the state, okay? But yeah, it's a Texas thing in my opinion. But I've lived with it. I've been at Tech for twenty-two years now.

DM:

I want to ask you something else about coming to Tech.

CJ:

But it's a sensitive thing with a lot of students. I mean, they're serious, and they have their beliefs, and that's just fine. I'm not in the business of changing the mind, of changing the belief of a Texas Tech student. But they have to learn the principles of evolution as I teach it, or they will not pass my course. And I think Dr. [Michael] Dini does a wonderful job; he's teaching exactly what he was hired to teach and how he was hired to teach it. I was involved in hiring

him, and we knew a lot about his personal beliefs, but he's doing an outstanding job in my opinion.

DM:

Now when you came here, to the museum, can you tell us a little bit about Texas Tech Museum at that time? And talk about the components: the Ranching Heritage Center, the Natural Science Research Lab—

CJ:

Do I have to? (laughs)

DM:

—you don't have to do anything, I just hope you will. (laughs)

CJ:

What are you going to do with this? (laughs)

DM:

Put it in the archives.

CJ:

You're not going to publish this are you, or something like that, or loan this to somebody?

DM:

No.

CJ:

I came to Tech as the interim director because Jim Goss was my predecessor for a short period of time, and he suddenly and abruptly resigned. Jim Goss was my predecessor, and Les Drew was his predecessor; all of them were here. And Jim Goss suddenly resigned. Well, Les Drew was fired, he was fired. Jim Goss was appointed director and he suddenly resigned, and I came here as interim director. And a search committee was formed to decide on the permanency of the director and there were several applicants. And I was informed that a member of the search committee, when my name was discussed, said something like, "I don't think he's competent to hang a piece of art. I don't think he knows how to hang a piece of art." I don't know if I am or not; sometime I'll invite you to my house and you can decide. But I don't collect paintings. I have some, but I don't collect paintings as pieces of art. I collect other things which we can talk about later. During the interview, a prominent Lubbock person asked me, "What do you know about art?" And I thought I answered that reasonably well. Anyway, I was made the permanent director of the museum. And after I was made permanent director the person who had said I

probably didn't know how to hang a painting came and talked to me. And I said, when we finished our conversation, I said, "Oh, by the way, I heard what you said, I heard what you said, and I want to be upfront with you, I'll tell you, I resent what you said and I'm man enough to tell you that I hold it against you, and that's why I refused your proposal that you came to me with." I said, "I'm not sure *you* can hang a piece of art," and I never saw the person again. (laughs) The museum was in traumatic conflict between the university staff people, the West Texas Museum Association, and the group that operated the Ranching Heritage Center. The Ranching Heritage Center was part of my responsibility, and Jesus.

DM:

Was this an ongoing thing that had affected Goss?

CJ:

Yeah, that's why, and Jim Goss and I—we became friends. And Les Drew is one of my best friends, and we used to meet over a beer and talk about all of this, and yeah, it was a mess. The West Texas Museum Association had an executive director who really thought she ran the museum. And the executive director of the Ranching Heritage Center thought he ran the museum. And I thought I ran the museum, and so we had problems. We had massive, massive arguments and problems. It all sort of came to a head when—well, there was an employee of the museum who was having trouble in the exhibits division, and I thought this employee had a lot of talent, and so I made this employee a special assistant to the director. And that person's name was Future Akins, and she's kind of different. But I thought she had some real talent, and so I made her a special assistant to the director to handle all publicity and to do what she did best, which was talk to people about art. And she came up with an idea for an exhibit. I want to tell you about this because all of these things sort of came to a head—she came up with a neat idea for an exhibit about West Texas music. And through a series of meetings with, like, Paul Milosevich and Joe Ely and various and sundry people, it came to an exhibit linking art and music in West Texas together. I thought it was a great idea. And she went off and applied to the Texas—the state art group—and she got a grant to support this exhibit. I thought it was great. And she commissioned Paul Milosevich to paint—to form a painting depicting this—and they titled it *Nothing Else to Do*. And we put together a neat exhibit linking art and West Texas music. And, oh, I have to tell you one small thing that happened, the WTMA was meeting in their board room on the first floor when they decided to roll the pink Cadillac in across the main gallery and park it in the side gallery, and it was like we dropped a bomb. Several people took turns dressing me down, really dressing me down. One "people" said, "You're going to collapse the floor of the museum bringing that car in here." And I said, "Well," and you know, I mean we knew better, we had tested everything possible, and we had chosen that moment to wheel the Cadillac in. (laughs) And I paid for that; I paid dearly for that. And there was an art exhibit in the side gallery at the same time. And after this meeting, a couple of the WTMA ladies came and—



DM:

The West Texas Museum Association?

CJ:

Yeah, the West Texas Museum Association. A couple of ladies, not the executive director, a couple of ladies came and apologized to me, and said, "We want to help you." And I thought, hey, this is kind of new and different, you know. One of those ladies was Louise Arnold, and the other one was Jo Templeton, and the other one was Ryla Lott, who—man, we had butted heads, really seriously. But they said, "We want to help you." And I thought, hey, this is neat. And they did, they did help me, and Louise Arnold and I are still friends, and so on and so on. And Jo Templeton died, Ryla Lott passed away, but Louise Arnold is still around. She's still a major figure, okay, for several reasons, and we're still friends. She and Dr. Bob, we're still friends. But they said, "We want to help you." So, they helped me, and Future put together this outstanding exhibit. But there was an art exhibit in the side gallery, and another group of WTMA people said, "We, well we organized a concert, a free music concert." It had Joe Ely, they had Terry Allen, we had a group then called The Nelsons, which was a local rock group, and we had The Maines Brothers Band, of course.

DM:

And Greg Nelson? Was that Greg Nelson's deal?

CJ:

I don't know.

DM:

He had a little group at one time.

CJ:

They were a group called The Nelsons, and they were a rock group, and the Maines Brothers Band, we had all these people there, and Joe Ely and Terry Allen, they were the headliners of course. Oh, and Butch Hancock and Tommy Hancock—oh Jesus, it was strange, strange people, and we're all still friends, okay? Lloyd Maines, every time he sees me he tells me about that concert. And so we had this concert and it was free, but you had to pick up a ticket to limit the number of people, and we limited the number of people on the walkway upstairs so that didn't collapse for Christ's sakes, but we limited it and had security. But a couple of WTMA ladies came and said they were going to be there to guard the art collection, because this riff-raff would trash the collection. And I said, "Well, you can just guard away, you know, guard away, I don't care." We had the concert, it was wonderful. The best part was in the end. The Maines Brothers and The Nelsons, they just jammed for probably forty-five minutes. It was wonderful. One of the guys said, "You have a fifty-thousand dollar free concert is what you have." And it was great.

And afterward, I really got in trouble, I mean the contingency of the WTMA went to the then—John Darling. He was the academic vice president, they called it then. His name was John Darling. I reported to him, and he just gave me hell, and said, “Who do you think you are going against the wishes of the WTMA?” And I decided, okay, so I unloaded back and I said, “With about four exceptions, nobody in the WTMA knows how to hang a piece of art. They don’t know their ass from page eight, and this is the way that I’m going to deal with them.” And he was a Mormon person and he said, “You ought to try dealing with them with love.” And I said, “I’ve tried that. I can’t stand it. They’re all a bunch of pigs.” And he admonished me appropriately. However, a side story, a few weeks later the WTMA had a lunch, and he was invited to come. He came late, and a chair next to me was saved for him, and he sat there and I said, “I want you to look at the executive director of the WTMA.” And she had a third of a dinner roll stuck right there, and he said, “She’s a pig.” (laughs) The other group was the Ranching Heritage group, and wow, I thought maybe I could relate to them given the fact that I grew up on a ranch and I thought I knew the cattle business and I’m still a landowner in Nebraska, and man, I was wrong. I couldn’t deal with them. And their executive director was really a devoutly religious person who in his own words, “went to church every time they opened the door.” And so I just couldn’t deal with them. And I decided that the best thing for me to do was to just calmly resign. And so I called a couple of friends together including Louise Arnold and Jo Templeton, and I said, “Later today I’m going to resign,” and we had a good conversation and I resigned. I resigned as director of the museum.

DM:

And then you went straight to biology?

CJ:

I went straight to biology and here, well, I was up there first, and John Darling asked me about—oh, by then Darling had departed and Don Haragan was in. And he asked me what I thought about appointing Gary Edson as interim director, and I said, “Fine, that’s just fine.” I thought he was a good choice. I said, “I think he will do very well.” And I knew him, and Haragan said, “Well, can you get along with him?” And I said, “Yes, I can.” I said, “I don’t have to, but I can, I can get along with him. I know him. I think he will be a good director.” And he’s been successful. He got rid of the goddamn Ranching Heritage group, and he has molded the West Texas Museum Association so that they sort of work for him. One other thing, in the main gallery of the museum was a windmill, do you remember that? *The* windmill. And I thought, “Well, I’ll make an executive decision to take the windmill down.” And so the exhibits people alerted me that this was a no-no. And I said, “Well, let’s find out, take it down.” Oh Jesus, it hit the fan, man. It just went crazy. Lauro Cavazos was the president. I wound up in his office, with him telling me to put the windmill back up.

DM:

What was the big thing about the windmill? Why was there so much concern about removing the windmill?

CJ:

Somebody in the WTMA loved the windmill. They loved the windmill, and I thought they should take the windmill and do something very appropriate with it. (laughs) Put it where the sun never shines, I thought. (laughs) And I refused to put the windmill back up. I said, "I'm not going to put it up. We have something else coming into the main gallery." I absolutely refuse, and if my job is on the line because of the windmill, so be it. And Lauro Cavazos, quite frankly, before he was through with me, I had him in tears. He cried. And I thought, "I won that one, you know." Another one that came from Cavazos was that elephant head. There's an elephant head; it came from Bill McMillan. Bill McMillan came and talked to me, offered me the elephant head, I turned it down, I didn't want it. I didn't want the elephant. I had proposed a natural history exhibit in the museum and the WTMA went absolutely nuts, and said, "No, we need an art exhibit." So okay, we had an art exhibit, an art exhibit by Millard Sheets. Oh Jesus, I mean trash, trash, okay, just trash. Did you ever see the painting of the two-headed cat? That was one of my favorites, oh God. I mean I decided I didn't know anything about art, and I was glad. Anyway, President Cavazos accepted the elephant head on my behalf, and directed me to put it on exhibit, and Bill McMillan had his construction crew come over—I said, "Well, the wall won't hold it." Bill McMillan had his construction crew come over and put an I-beam in the wall from the floor to the ceiling to hook the fucking elephant head onto so it wouldn't pull the wall down. But we beavered around and made a little natural history exhibit in there. That was the time when the company that makes the animals that move, mechanical animals move, I rented a *Platybelodon*, which was an ancient elephant type. I rented that damn thing, and it bellowed and roared. (laughs)

DM:

And this was how close to the art exhibit? (laughs)

CJ:

This was across the main gallery from it. It bellowed and roared and I refused to turn it off, I refused. WTMA said, "You have to shut off *Platybelodon* because we're having a board meeting." I said, "I'm sorry, I can't shut it off. It's in the contract, I can't shut it off." (laughter) And Ryla Lott came and told me, she said, "I'm on your side." She said, "You've made lemonade out of a lemon." She said, "Jon and I will buy the *Platybelodon* for you." And I said, "No, I really don't want it, it was rented as a deal, I don't want it. If you wish to purchase the following things you may, but please don't purchase the *Platybelodon*." (laughs)

DM:

Oh, that's great.

CJ:

So I left. I moved here and devoted my life to teaching in biology.

DM:

(laughs) I'm out of questions.

BT:

(laughs) Yeah, I need to go to the bathroom so maybe this is a stopping point.

*End of interview*



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