

Russell Bixby

Interviewed by Diana Brown in Lawrence, Kansas

July 29, 2014

Transcribed by Diana Brown and Krystal Luce

Abstract: Oral history interview with Russell Bixby conducted by Diana Brown on July 29, 2014. This interview was conducted at the Java Break coffee shop in Lawrence, Kansas. Russell lives at "Thistle Hill," a piece of rural property in Bonner, Kansas, and is from San Bernardino, California. He has also lived in Colorado, and worked in Antarctica. He has an engineering degree from the University of California, Berkeley. In this interview, we discuss Russell's childhood, his engagement with Paganism, and his thoughts about the future of planet Earth. This interview was conducted for the Religion in Kansas Project as part of a summer fieldwork internship funded by the Friends of the Department of Religious Studies.

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Diana: So. If you just want to go ahead and say your name and your age and kind of where, where you're from and what you do, like, the basics.

Russ: Your name, your age, where you're--

Diana: Where you're from. Who are you?

Russ: Excellent question. Ask the caterpillar. Um, my name is Russ Bixby, I, uh, I'm 52, last I knew, uh, where from am I, all over the place, I was born in Santa Monica, raised in the mountains till I was twelve, imprisoned in San Bernardino the city, which is the ninth level of desolation on the nethermost pimple on the ass of creation.

D: Someday I'm gonna find out who was in the porn industry in the family. That's all I know San Bernardino for!

R: Oh, I see, well, no, Killer, Killer Amazon Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death as well, so.

D: Oh, okay.

R: Um, anyway, there until I could escape which was somewhat before it became fashionable to do so. Lived in Denver, um, when you have three deployments of over a year each, that's living in Antarctica, uh, worked in Russia, Turkey, the Netherlands, Spain, and, um, and Canada, um, lived briefly in Texas, lived for a, uh, quite a while in Denver and live here, since '01.

D: And how did you get here, to Kansas?

R: Uh, I had an apartment, uh, she had a farmstead, wasn't a difficult choice. Kace' and I are no longer involved, but that's why I moved here--that and after 9/11, it just, I needed a change.

D: Huh. What do you mean by that?

R: I couldn't, the the, the, great melancholy compounded by the number of people in an urban setting were more than I could handle.

D: I see.

R: It was [. . .]. I lived in Thornton, which is north of Denver, Thornton/Boulder, and, uh, that was my home, and I liked it, I loved it, I still miss it in some respects, I, uh, I miss the drierness, I miss lots of electronic parts store, um, and real hardware stores where you could, you know, if you needed a grade A, um, you know, 3/4 inch shoulderball [. . .] they have them in various lengths as differentiated from what passes for a hardware store down here, um,

D: And what do you do, that's sort of [. . .]...

R: Uh, yeah, anyway, I, I moved here, but I moved to Kansas and I like the Midwest, but uh, I could leave the climate. Um, what do I do? 'Bit of everything. After I had worked in the Antarctic, the job description for the administrative Unix systems was amended--they used this text, at least did at the time I left, "the successful candidate will be an all-around McGyver type." That's in a government job application. Um, uh, bit of everything, uh, I write poetry, I forge Damascus steel, I am an electronics, an electrical engineer, educated as such, I can design, and have, computer systems, uh, that does not mean [. . .] a motherboard to a case, that means figuring out, "Hm, what would make sense in an instruction set," and actually designing the CPU, um, woodwork, poetry, 'lot of things, um, kind of a, well, in the Denver community they called me Lugh, which was a, um, a, --L-U-G-H, basically a Celtic demigod who, uh, was kind of a Celtic deity of omni-competence and Renaissance man-ness, uh, and I'm not bragging, it's just kind of, if you ask me what I do, it's hard, it depends on what needs doing.

D: I see, so you've got to be more specific in the question.

R: Yeah, I mean what I do for a living now is I, mostly low voltage I install [. . .] alarm systems, security systems, fire, that sort of thing, uh, surveillance systems, the things that protect property and life, at the end of the day I can congratulate myself on not having screwed widows out of their pensions, um, I uh, yeah.

D: So you have a useful small business.

R: A useful small business, yes, which, uh, is very small, uh, and, and somewhat useful, but I can afford the coffee I'm sitting here drinking and the gas to get here, so I guess I must be doing something correctly. I did not walk from Bonner Springs.

D: That's good. That's very good. I think you would be sweating a whole lot more.

R: I am not built like you, I am, I am not, I also don't have your physiochemistry. I, uh, can be sitting absolutely still in a 77 degree room and I will sweat like a pig, because I have a physiology that generates heat when I'm sitting still, it's very much like the, uh, Inuit have and uh, an extra layer, a thin layer of an odd colored fat that all it does is burn calories and make heat, I have that same thing, so I'll walk around in McMurdo Station in the winter in short sleeves, but summer in Kansas on the other hand--

D: Not so well adapted for it.

R: Yeah. I am the only person in history probably who in Antarctica in the winter cobbled together a window air conditioner.

D: Oh.

R: Well, because they can't keep their rooms, they couldn't keep the rooms under 90 degrees for some strange reason.

D: Oh.

R: The thermometer on the wall was a bad joke.

D: I see.

R: A good joke would have been if you turned it up and the temperature drops and vice versa, bad joke is it does nothing, except take up volume, so yes, I actually built a window air conditioner out of various and sundry components in winter in Antarctica.

D: Well if it really was 90 degrees in those rooms, then I'm sure everybody benefited and was grateful.

R: Well, it was a single person room, but...

D: Oh, well. Then you benefited and were grateful!

R: The people would come by to visit.

D: Okay, and then be happy. Alright, so let's take it back to San Bernardino and Santa Monica and, um, I guess I want to know what--

R: Well I was born in Santa Monica General Hospital but I don't remember much, because they moved [. . .] when I was six months old.

D: Okay. And did you have, uh, prior religious background basically, did your parents do anything.

R: That's an excellent question. Um, I was raised by the village commies in the '60s, um, my mother, uh, legally is Jewish because she was raised Reformed by Jewish parents, but she was non-practicing, um, my father, his mother had at a very early age in a town outside, just outside of Lincoln, Nebraska, when she was fifteen and when she was fifteen, it was 1916, when she was fifteen decided that the hellfire and brimstone she was being fed did not digest well and rejected the kit and caboodle, so she was an atheist, and she raised him that way, um, I was literally in my late, no, 17 is not late, mid to late teens when I realized why so many friends of mine, people I knew had similar pictures of this weird drunken medieval party on their wall in the living room. I did not know what that picture was until I figured it out and interpolated from novels I'd read and things like that, I said, "Oh, so that's what that is. Okay then."

D: And can you say what that was--

R: The Last Supper.

D: The Last Supper.

R: Last Supper, yes, I had no idea why so many people had this picture of this big, you know, medieval looking party on their wall, um, um, I was not raised religious, I was not raised anti-religious, I was permitted to find my own path, and my own path was pretty much naturalism, my third parent was the forest, um, in fact when my father was largely absentee during the late '60s, early '70s, and my mother got heavily into the drug scene, at which point she also started talking about maybe a belief in deity, which I thought was kind of strange coming from her, uh, but, shamanistic awakenings, whatever, um, uh, I, I spent a lot of time even in the winter, even at night, even during school years, uh, school time, um, in the forest, instead of at home because home was weird. So I was, you know, I raised myself a feral child, but as an example, here's an example. Uh, when we went to sixth grade, walking to school was no longer an option, I did it once, it was eight miles, both hills in the snows, both uphill, I should say, both ways, because it was uphill, downhill, uphill, downhill, and seemed more uphill, um, so I walked to school once when I missed the bus and decided that was not going to happen again.

Generally we were on the bus, uh, because it was a ways, and, no, it wasn't eight miles, it was twelve miles, I forgot about the twin peaks, so it was twelve miles, I got there after lunch. Anyway, I got there--they were not going to dock me absent. Um, Mr. Abraham, I think his first name actually was Mister, um, the school bus driver, he laid down the rules of the bus to the first people on the way to school the first day, he pulled over in a turnout on the rim highway, and uh, and laid down the rules of the bus--what you could do, what you couldn't do, and what the penalties would be if you did this, that, or the other thing. Uh, the penalties consisted of being stuck up front, not able to socialize, under his wary and eagle-like eye for a certain length of time, and the last and apparently most serious thing in his book was the most serious thing that a twelve-year-

old could do, was taking the name of the Lord in vain. And when the bus stopped and all the other students got off, I said, "Mr. AbrHAAM, PRECISELY what do you mean by that phrase, 'take the Lord in vain,'" and that's roughly the way I talked, I don't remember the exact wording, but that was close, um, and he said, "You know what I mean," I said, "I do not. Please enlighten me. I don't know what you mean. Consider me ignorant. Help me out here." And he finally kept insisting that I knew what he was talking about and stop being a wiseacre and get off his bus, and I finally said, "God damn it, give me a straight answer!" In the bus, in the front, six months. So I was raised non-religious, and I, I took a very amused view of the religious activities of the world and of my peers, um, another thing is when I was six years old I asked the fateful question, "Where did I come from," and they gave me a straight answer, a very straight answer, down to the level of chromosomes and recessives and ova and spermatozoa and part names and place names and dates, um, they, they did not tell me one very very important piece of information, however, that I did add to the spiel when my own daughter at six asked that same question, and that is, "your fellow students will not honor you for this knowledge." They should have mentioned that part. Babies come from God, babies come by a bird, babies, god's a giant stone kangaroo in the sky, don't really know if they believed that or not, but this person insisted on it, uh, at no point did they caution me that, uh, that spewing knowledge at beliefs was contra-indicated in a small, 2,000 person resort community in the Vietnam era. So, I also had a lot of negative examples. The nagain, a great friend of the family was Father John Dolmas, the uh priest of the local Catholic parish, uh, who my father irreverently referred to as Papa John. A great friend of the family, but, you know, he was a Jesuit, and the Jesuits are the ones who codified the scientific method, um, you know, they, uh, they uh are a, a rather thinking sect, um, you know, there's no, there's no conflict between religion and science, there's a conflict between many desert monotheisms and naturalism, but that is not the same thing. I don't think you're going to find many Catholic parishes whose priest decries the law of gravity or preaches a flat earth, parenthetically the Spanish never believed the earth was flat, they just didn't think there was anything worthwhile to the west 'cause it was too far to sail to India, you know, Columbo disagreed and tried it, but, uh, no one believed it was flat, that was, that was in a story published in the 1890s that got that whole idea, I mean, we've known the world was round since ancient times, and very rarely was that knowledge lost.

D: So what do you mean by naturalism then? What does that mean?

R: Oh, the idea that, that uh, that, well, Darwin for instance, the idea that the natural world can create on its own, or operate independent of deity.

D: I see. Okay. So when did you start encountering, or, when did you first encounter things that, I don't know, you would call broadly Pagan, or, occult, or...

R: A cult is a very specific word, one that get's misapplied.

D: That's true.

R: Um, a cult typically revolves about a leader, and, if that, when that leader goes away, typically the cult disintegrates, not at all [. . .] such as the Scientologists.

D: Oh, no, I mean occult.

R: Oh, occult.

D: Yes, yes, yes.

R: Sorry, I apologize.

D: Oh, no, that's okay.

R: Uh, well, my father was heavily into ESP research. A number of friends of the family were also people deeply into, into that area, one of them was Luke George Lawrence, whose name you may or may not know, he was a ground breaking parapsychological researcher, up there with Edward Casey. He may still be, I don't know, he'd be very old now but I don't know that he's dead, uh, but he probably is. Luke was a, uh, fascinating fellow with whom to talk, so, as far as the occult goes and the meaning of that word, um, uh, the, the hidden, the, the not readily apparent, um, yeah, that was an early part of my upbringing, they viewed, if anything, my parents were humanists. When the Jehovah's Witnesses would come by, my father would talk to them instead of slamming the door, but he would insist that it was God in humanity that was ascendant. There were some very interesting discussions there, um, these days I simply you know inform them that I've been disfellowshipped and then they, they let that pass off, because the ones around here tend to be more preachy and less intellectual and less discussionary. I like a spirited discussion, I do not like the [. . .], I do not like to discuss things with a tape recorder, or a tape player, I should say.

D: I was about to say, I would probably invite somebody in to be preached at because that would just be interesting, but, but that's how I roll.

R: It gets old after [. . .].

D: Yeah, probably after awhile, you've heard the spiel.

R: Yeah, exactly, there's that too. "When you get to be my age, honey."

D: I'll know better.

R: Uh, so, but as far as my father, I think he was watching a movie, "Wicker Man," and he talked about his own experiences with people such as Sybil and another, because--

D: Sybil Leek?

R: Uh, not Sybil Leek, just somebody named Sybil who was not Sybil Leek, she just went by Sybil, who called herself a witch, was also a psychic researcher, and um, there was a lot of crossover in the '60s and '70s there, between mysticism, shamanism, Neo Paganism, and physics research into areas poorly understood. [. . .] some very interesting physics experiments with psychic phenomena, one of the less pleasant to

contemplate, but very effective, and they had a uh, a uh, a uh mother rabbit in a nuclear sub on one side of the world, and at very precisely timed intervals injured her latest litter of rabbitlings, whatever they're called, baby rabbits, and picked up a serious neural distressor each time that those happened, or that happened, and in fact because of very precise time pieces, it appears to have transcended the speed of light. They're taking a tenth of a second for the impulse to get to her, so there's definitely something there. The precise nature eludes us, but then again the precise nature of magnetism eluded Galileo, but they had compasses.

D: So, when did you start encountering, or--

R: When did I meet Pagans?

D: When did you meet Pagans, yes.

R: I will help you here.

D: Okay. Thank you.

R: Um, uh, out of the closet admitting they were such as differentiated from friends of the family who would come in from elsewhere and then go away again, uh, that would have been the very late '70s, uh, I would have been, uh, class of '81 from high school, except um, except that I, uh, got tired of high school, it was a, uh, it was a violent, unpleasant place with, full of unpleasant and irritating people, um, the only part of the school for which I really had a use was the electronics lab and I had pretty much done everything in there I could, couldn't [. . .], and the library [. . .], the library, um, and the only time you could get to the library, because no one would issue you a pass, was lunch, and then they closed the library during lunch, because people were hanging out in there, you know, messing with other people and just being rowdy because it was an air conditioned space, uh, so they closed the library during lunch, I went to my guidance counselor and informed him that I was dropping out, and he was, "Surely you jest," I was "Surely I don't," and went to college instead, and made an amazing realization at that point, was that as college is not compulsory, all the really unpleasant and well, small minded people don't tend to go there. College was bloss, even in San Bernardino, the junior college there, which was really, you know, the word Montessori never came about, but it was an amazing place, because they did, they didn't just teach, they did. The computer lab took in work from the city, the radio and television courses included a working radio and television station, um, the auto shop took in work from the city, and also did private work for people who brought in vehicles, that sort of thing, it was a functioning, you know, used car dealership slash garage, that was part of the school. They didn't have a football team, but they, but they, they did everything else, and you know, foot ball, I didn't miss, I've never been into that, um, although I do actually understand it somewhat having been in the marching band. The, um, there were, they were a few people I met, who referred to uh Pagan or witch beliefs, in college, I started hanging out with some of the around '83, uh, because they seemed to be interesting people with, uh, a less, what is the right word? Any one who believes or

is convinced that they know the one great truth probably doesn't. Or the one route to the truth, I should say--there may be one great truth, uh, you know, love thy neighbor, or, you don't know everything you think you know, or whatever, there may be one great--but here's an axiom--

D: One great truth: You don't know the truth.

R: Exactly. But an axiom by which I, I, which is not logically provable but by which I see, is that any one claiming to have the one route to the truth and that everyone else is wrong, probably doesn't. Uh, and there was far less of that in the Pagan community. Uh, hung around with the SCA quite a bit, I'm a moderately good, uh, swordsman, um, and, uh, you know, the SCA was a place to play with that although a [. . .] is not a foil, but you know, I'm a moderately good fencer, and uh, you know, [. . .] broadsword was enjoyable and there were, you know, I have always loved working metal, and, you know, you know, making armor, things like that was very enjoyable, so, there was a, um, a bit of that, and there's a very high percentage Pagan presence in the SCA.

D: I know. I was in the SCA for my, my one year, [. . .] and yeah, it was very crossover.

R: Well, it's kind of where it started, so it's kind of an obligatory, I think they give you credits for it.

D: Yeah really. You probably could set up something as a DeCal.

R: Yeah, I'll add SCA lettering to my, to my Cal jacket, I lettered in SCA. Um, but yeah, I sucked everything I could out of Valley College by '81 and went to Berkeley instead, because the local four year college, uh, Cal State San Bernardino really couldn't teach me anything, not in my chosen fields, because everything that they already taught in their four year courses had been in, you know, already in my head or placed there by the Valley College, the local two year college.

D: So this was a really good two year college.

R: It was a very good two year college. Their library, I could peruse issues of Radio Electronics or Electrical Engineering Quarterly back into the '20s. I mean, it was a very complete and some of the stuff went into the 1800s, uh, it was a very complete library, and they, uh, and the one place, the one library I've ever been in that did not use Dewey Decimal, I don't remember what the system was called, but it was the other system.

D: Did they use Library of Congress?

R: It wasn't ISBN numbers, no, there's another system that's not Dewey, that is not nearly as common but a lot of libraries use, and this was that, I don't remember what it was called, it's been too long.

D: I wonder.

R: It took me awhile to get used to how to work with it, because we were all taught Dewey Decimal like the ABCs, and this wasn't that. Um, but it, it was a good library,

and a good school. Berkeley was among other things a good library and a great school. Uh, having every school that's associated with a national lab, you get to have a lot of interesting experiences and, and they, they didn't mind that I was minoring in physics and psychology, and they didn't care how many course units I took as long as I actually completed them. They were very pure, before the, uh, educational system got kind of ruined by Proposition 13. When were you in Berkeley?

D: Um, I was there 2004, 2005, 2006.

R: So ten years ago, okay, so it wasn't ruined as California is now, but you, you certainly saw the writing on the wall.

D: But it was definitely, yeah. I mean my brother was there, my brother graduated a year ago, um, you know, and it was still, you know, he still had a good experience and everything, but it was, you know, the fees were obviously going up and up and up, so.

R: Yeah, it wasn't just the fees that I was talking about though, mostly because of the, the, when the California educational system worked was [. . .] when the tuition was so low, you got a much broader cross section of the population in college. And that experience is gone.

D: I don't know about that, actually. I found it to be very different, um, between Berkeley and going to a small liberal arts college, like Grinnell, there was still a much wider cross section of people at Berkeley than at my small college.

R: That doesn't surprise me. Ten years later, things are a little less [. . .].

D: But even with my brother, I was really impressed, when I, I don't know, went and hung out with his friends, and it was just like all kinds of kids, a very different kind of feeling, and it was very California in that way.

R: Well maybe Berkeley has escaped the worst of it then. I'm only speaking by what I've seen of what's happening in California overall, and some parts of the educational system, so if Berkeley's managed to escape the worst ravages of that, I'm very pleased.

D: Yeah, no I think that, I don't know, it still feels quite diverse to me.

R: Quite Berkeley-ish.

D: Yeah, yeah.

R: I'm glad to hear that.

D: Yeah.

R: Um, so, that's where I started hanging with them.

D: And what was, I guess, appealing, what do you think was appealing about them to you beyond their sort of openness, like what...

R: Sort of a feeling of homecoming, I think a lot of what Celtic or Nordic Paganism offers in its cosmology and its spirituality is things to which I already drifted while living by myself in a forest. It was, it seemed always like the natural state of the human animal as differentiated from something imposed from without, at least the natural state of this human animal. It seemed sensible. A thing you should know, um, most religions included a, two basic parts, a cosmology, this is where the universe came from, this is how it's organized, this is who's in charge, that sort of a thing, and a science--if you do this, that will happen. In Christianity, if you put your hands together like this and say words in a certain format, certain things will happen, that sort of thing. Um, in alchemy, for instance, they might say, um, "Mix these materials in a red jar, translucent jar, place them on a table three feet high, uh, and chant this prayer three times, while they're, while they're cooking, and this will happen." Now, three feet high may not have anything to do with it specifically, but let's take a photo [. . .] reaction, in which the heat of the light and the chemicals makes a difference, and a red translucent jar, most of the light that hits the thing, the stuff will be red and subdued, um, a three foot high table would keep it out of floor drafts, and ensure fairly narrow, you know, fairly still air where it's happening, a particular chant or prayer that takes a certain length of time to resolve, well that's a time piece, so, today, we can say, yeah, this is how you use aqua [. . .] to do blah, back then, they said, do this, do this, do this, do this, they didn't know quite why it worked, but they knew that it worked. A lot of the science aspects of, uh, of pure humanistic, um, belief in psychic phenomena, or the practice of a healing ritual performed by a group of witches, um, much that is about placing the mind into a particular sort of an auto hypnotic mechanism to place the mind into a particular state in which it can accomplish things it would not normally be able to accomplish, in the same way in which, um, in which quiet, quietude and, and thinking about your home can get you into a space in which having a dental procedure might be less traumatic, and from which you might heal more quickly after an extraction, simply because your body is more calm and more able to deal with that trauma, um, whether or not, um, it is not a matter of the belief in an individual called Titania or Artemis, but a belief in the archetype from which we drew impressions they gave unto us, the urge to think of a universal female principle and call it Artemis. It's along those lines. Um, there's a, there are great commonalities even in geographically and chronologically separated areas about how the world works, um, either there's a lot of wiring in, endogenic to humans that say "you will think in terms of theology," or there are underlying truths, which we can partially grasp. Shamanism is one of the best approaches to that. They use mind altering substances to, to kind of tune out this plane and get a little bit at the wiring under the board, how the world was actually plugged together, and come back with some idea of, why, when you do this, that happens.

D: Yeah. Have you ever read any Gary Snyder?

R: I don't believe so.

D: You probably, you'd basically just be reading everything you already think, but...he's a poet, and a, a, in the, most prominent in like the '60s and '70s, and he wrote a lot about, I don't know, everything that you're saying basically about being out in the woods, and then sort of finding, like being sort of raised in the woods in a certain way, and then finding these things that kind of latched with him in terms of like shamanism and also Zen Buddhism, observing the mind, and blah blah blah blah.

R: Mm, so did Henry David Thoreau to a great extent.

D: Mhm. I haven't read him as much as I should have.

R: You have time.

D: Yeah, that's true, hopefully.

R: Emerson and Thoreau. Two very important parts of the American experience.

D: Can you talk about, um, what you mean by "Celtic" and "Nordic," um, cosmology.

R: Although they're somewhat different, considerably different, I lump them together in that they, um, they both share a belief that is somewhat different to the desert monotheisms, or for that matter the desert polytheisms, and the, uh, such as the beliefs of the, you know, the Akkadians or the Babylonians or whatever, uh--

D: Or the Hebrews.

R: Or the Hebrews. Well that's one of the desert monotheisms, one of three great desert monotheisms.

D: Or possibly the polytheisms.

R: Well, yeah, "tehom." The ocean, or the goddess. Um, "moved," him, in what way "moved," maybe that has connotations, but anyway. Uh, the, um, I lumped them into the same overall, well, it's a series of Venn diagrams depending on what aspects you wish to observe, i.e. you can look at the religions, you know, let's look at the earth as a Cartesian map, first of all, instead of a glob, so you've got something rectilinear, it's easier to think of, and draw a bunch of circles on it, overlapping circles, you've got a Venn diagram, here are all the monotheisms, here are all the polytheisms where you have an equal number of male and female deities and blah blah blah, so, but depending on how you want to look at this map, uh, I will lump the, the, uh, Germanics and the Celts together in that they thought in terms of the gods as, as, of us as aspects of the gods, of the gods as having created us or watched us grow in their presence, and thinking of us as their equals or peers, as differentiated from, uh, you know, the toys, or, or ants, or whatever you might want to think of the Greco-Roman gods having thought of us in terms of being, or, um, as an, as a, a non-, a non-living, non-conscious entity, but a, but a, but a great spiritual set of principles that you might find in Buddhism, you know, Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, died laughing at his followers, saying, "Stop calling me a, you know, a deity, damn it, you know, I just had some ideas here, you

know, take the ideas, run with them!" And, a, "Oh, no, no, no, you are all, we are nothing, we can know nothing without you," you know, they've come a ways since then, but initially when he died, they just kind of deified him and that's not what he would have wanted, I suspect, since he was decrying [. . .]. Um, vastly different sets of beliefs, but still largely similar in the idea that the earth and the spiritual life of same are very old, very complex, we're recent additions to the, to the overall matrix that the elders, um, you know, the civil servants, the ones who put the fruit on the trees, that sort of thing, uh, are, have been here for a very long time, and that either as an expression of the life here, or as the origin, or at least, caretaker of the life here, there are aggregate, that's the wrong word, basically, you could think of a god or a goddess as the embodiment, the realization of a principle or an idea, if enough people have that idea, um, that, that's one way to think of it. The, uh, the idea of a, of a, uh, of a goddess who's primarily responsible for the bringing forth of life, a god who is primarily responsible for the maintenance of, maintenance of, of life, to, you know, provide the resources, um, that sort of thing, that, that's very much the way, the way humans largely do things and the way cats and dogs and, and bees largely do things, um, although you know, lions, that's a, you know, some of the lionesses hunt, while other lionesses rear cubs and the lions are mooches, but those cats are the exceptions, um, and even the, uh, lionesses don't hunt as often as they chase hyenas away from the kills, so. But, uh, that's, the hyenas are the hunters and the lions are the scavengers largely, but that's beside the point. Um, it does not really matter, from the point of view of a practitioner of the Wiccan religion, and, it took me a long time to be comfortable using the word religion, because to me the word religion means, you know, a dogmatic set of principles and preachers and things like that, and a religion is really a mixture of a cosmology and a science, which is a more comfortable way to think of it. It doesn't really matter if a goddess is this ancient spiritual being that helped nudge trilobites along and so forth, or if it is simply the sum total of the emanations of all life in this, in the embodiment of the female principle, or, or principles, uh, and that, that, and when you have, you know, complex polytheisms, what we call primitive religions but only because they're typically associated with relatively, compared to us, primitive societies, there's nothing primitive or simplistic about these religions, um, it's kind of interesting, as we, as we, as humanity grew, it became more and more generalized, now we are a planet of specialists, because there's such a vast body of knowledge, very few people can have the intellectual luxury, or have the capability, uh, to, uh, study and understand more than one discipline, let alone many, uh, in the same way, in many theologies, gods and goddesses are divided up into their aspects, their particular part in the overall running of things, but the overall idea, uh, is, is still very, between one and the next deity, is still very similar, in the same way that I'm in one aspect when I'm driving a car and in quite another when I'm tending to a wounded bird.

D: So you think, so what does that mean about what they're relationship is to each other?

R: Well, you know, father-son-holy ghost? Um, you know, so one thing is some religions tend to be more about honoring the various aspects, the various behaviors and tasks, others tend to be about honoring the basic principles, those tend to have fewer deities, not, not typically one, but fewer deities, and they recognize that, that, uh, there's a, you know, this one's basically the feminine, this one is basically the masculine, there's a bit of overlap, um, and then you get monotheism. Unfortunately about monotheism, well they tend to lump everything on one deity, they tend to subsume certain aspects of humanity that don't fit into their, you know, gender stereotyped deity. I suspect if you were to get Yahweh in an interview, he would be displeased with the way things are going. Just a guess. Well, as an aside, how much room do you have on that thing?

D: Oh, um, as far as I know, it can go on just indefinitely.

R: Mmkay. Um, as an aside, you take, uh, I can probably take a soft seven and if I knew in what direction to hit, I would hit the house, or head of somebody who is so bible thumpingly Christian that they believe that every word in the King James Version is the literal word of God. Are you familiar with the, uh, Aramaic word "kamel?"

D: Um, I've heard it, but--tell me more.

R: A "kamel," well, Aramaic, as in most languages, is a contextual language, uh, the meaning of, you don't have an individual word for everything, the meaning of a word varies depending on context, as in English, where it can be a right, as in, as in something you are invariably granted, permitted to do, a right turn, to write a novel, if we go onto homophones, instead of just homonyms, you know, homophones instead of homonyms, same sound, different spelling, uh, or a religious right, or whatever, um, scale has a lot of meanings, two has a lot of meanings, okay, "kamel." Three basic meanings. One is a beam, at least one cubit in, uh, in breadth, uh, typically the roof beam of a large, of a large structure, you know, a central roof beam, perhaps, perhaps a post that is used to hold up, you know, outer post, a corner post, something like that. But a beam, a good foot at least, um, on a side. You know, big piece of wood. The, uh, next meaning is a hawser--that is a rope at least three fingers in breadth, which is used for, uh, either as a mainstay or, uh, you know, main brace, or to, uh, to anchor, to, to moor a ship, uh, in a harbor, a thick rope. Um, the third is the animal, we call it a camel. Same thing--camel, "kamel." Um, "easier for a kamel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter unto the kingdom of God." Contextually, what would have the most to do with a needle? A thread, a rope. A hawser through the eye of a needle would be a trick! We translated it, the Greeks translated it as an animal, and everyone else has called it an animal since then. The sense in which the Ten Commandments were written, and it's difficult to tell because, in a language in which you don't write the vowels, in which tenses change, I've always interpreted them as the three promises, or, the ten promises, I'm sorry. If the spirit moves within me, bearing false witness against a neighbor is not gonna be something you're into. It's not a prohibition against lying by the way, it's a prohibition against one of the more pernicious

forms of lying, uh, you know, "he did it!" Um, you know, when you did it, whatever, or when you don't know. As differentiated from, "Does this dress make me look fat," "No, dear," which is perfectly permissible according to that commandment. Um, the, uh, another, another example, um, if you take the, uh, the writings of, or the speakings, I should say, of Yeshua ben Miriam, um, it is very possible, considering how things were written, that instead of saying, "the way to the Father is through the Son," or "I am the way to, to God," or whatever, uh, "the way to enlightenment lies within," "the way to paradise, the way to ascension lies within." Not, "I am the way"--within me is the way. Within me, within you, within you. Uh, which, to someone who'd spent a fair amount of time in the east, would make a certain degree of sense. But, uh, yeah, literal word of God, according to so many people, alright, um, because of these mistranslations and because of, of largely, um, authoritarian groups, God is liege lord instead of God is loving father, that sort of thing, um, God is the builder of our fortress, we are all soldiers, aspects of society, aspects of the individual, aspects of large segments of society get subjugated and/or eliminated from the overall canon. Um, that's why, there, there, there are two basic models for, for, for women in the Christian holy texts. You can be a whore, or you can be a virgin, there are no other alternatives. You know, one girl made mother, but she was special. Uh, as a for instance, um, you take, uh, a congregational and they would, they would argue the point, a congregational religion such as, uh, Sunni Islam, which, basically depending on which, on the beliefs of your cleric, a pretty simple and reasonable document can get interpreted in a hundred different ways. Uh, you can end up with either very open cultures like, oh, I don't know, the, the, the Court of Ataturk in the 1700s, or very, very dangerous cultures like that of Pakistan in the, in the, uh, in the mountains. Uh, all from the same text. The reason I, the reason I mention this is because in a basically earth oriented or nature oriented religion, you have less of that because the examples of how things work are all about you--in the barn, in the field, in the sky. There's less chance to get, for somebody to get submerged in doctrine. Uh, you do get people who are doctrinaire, but they are the exception rather than the rule, and fortunately they don't have a great deal of influence. Um, you know, "pagan" is from a Roman word, a Latin word, "pagus", it always amuses me thinking of church Latin versus actual Latin, uh, you know, uh, uh, in the Catholic mass they would say "circus." There's a bit of difference in the sound and feel of that word versus "circus" [pronounced with hard "c"s]. But anyway, pagus, from the country, hick, pagan means hick. This is what the guys out in the sticks do. Um, and even their polytheistic, very complex religion, just before Christianity took over, was a very civilized, urbanized, rigidified system, unlike the way the peo--, you know, they were far less pagan than my neighbor to the north, Larry, who plants by the moon cycles, and reads the Farmer's Almanac, and, and, and, and, and loves and is very attached to his land and his animals, um, the rhythms of life move through such a person, and, uh, I think, in the case of me, anyway, I came to a lot of the realizations about those rhythms of life and about, well, ebb and flow, life and death, renewal, birth, all of this, in, uh, you know, sitting under a tree watching snow fall, you know, bring a sleeping bag, intending to sleep a few hours, and then, you know, hike up to the bus station the next day, at the

bus stop, and go to school. I did a lot of my own parenting, and, uh, you learn a lot sitting under a tree watching the snow fall.

D: So, hm, so what is your relationship, then, to deity, or deities, or--

R: Drawing down is a very interesting experience. It's a lot like in Vodou, you have the, uh, which, you know, half Catholic, half central African religions, there's a lot of very interesting stuff there too, by the way, um, the Vodou, the Vodoun, I should say, the people who practice Vodou, have a, uh, a, a very interesting idea of deity, deity is these archetypal forces that are very much a part of how the world is run, but they kind of stand off to the side, if they need to do something, they do something through a person or persons. You, uh, you go into a trance, they take over, and you are ridden as a horse by the lwa, um, and they do what they need to do through you. Um, there's a certain similarity in, uh, in Wiccan practice, um, I can tell you that the first time that happened to me it was very, there was enough of me off in a corner to realize, yeah, this is me, oh, that's interesting, wow, look what's happening there, but there was another personality calling the shots, uh, something that bore no real resemblance to, uh, the ways I thought, the lack of niceties, some of the advice, or wording, or thoughts could be fairly brutal, ont brutal in a, I will hack and slash, but brutal as in a, this is necessary, I'm going to step here, and woe be unto to somebody who is where I need to step, um, you know, love, concern, but also, an imperative to do what needed doing. Very much, you know, the way the farmer might think about the mice in the field, but he's going to plow that field. Um, the, um, having that brought into one's head, which has happened to me on several occasions, including the other night, I am convinced that there is definitely something real there, and that it is sentient. Its precise nature escapes me, um, I do not believe that is beyond understanding, however its nature is outside, you know, is outside of my experience or ability to define at this time, um, I don't get the feeling that it's like, you know, [. . .] Job, "yeah, well, I did all these things, but I'm really, really big and you can't understand, don't bother about it, it's what it is." It's not so much like that. If you're standing in the center of Lawrence you'll have a damn hard time seeing the borders of Kansas.

D: Yeah, okay.

R: You have to have a different perspective. My perspective is too close to the situation. But, my, my relationship to deity, is, is, the definite belief that there are things that are more than us. Um, because I've experienced them. And I don't mean, an ecstatic trance, I mean, opening one's mind and something else takes hold. It's a difficult thing to do because, especially for me, because I am very intellectual, and letting go enough to be shown something like that is like, I ask a typical person, don't think of the word hippopotamus for the next five minutes--they're gonna find it extraordinarily difficult. Um, if they say their ABCs as fast as they can, over and over again, maybe, but aside from that, in my case, I had to actually quiet my mind to something less than the dull roar at which it normally idles. Um, so that and sometimes when you are out at night in the quiet of a wood, you can feel the presence of

something great and old and different. Most people freak, they feel like eyes are watching the back of their head, like something's gonna swoop down on them, all the fear of the dark, it's a normal thing, but I don't take it as fearsome--I take it as the same comfort that my cat feels when I walk home and it sees me. That, "ah, there's the thing that can operate the door, but it also brings the food." Uh, um, there, there's a comfort, a realization there. Once I had a dream, and it was a very strange dream. The world was warm, the colors were vivid, I was in the ruins of something--it might have been a temple or a government building. The proportions were wrong. The materials, the very shape of the carvings, was wrong. And I got the definite feeling that it was pre-human, that whatever had built this and whatever had faded from prominence, was not human, not alien, just pre-human. Uh, I don't know if it had any bearing on reality, but sometimes I get the feeling that these, sentient aggregations of light energy or whatever we want to call them, um, ghosts or gods, um, have been around a very long time, not throwing the earth together one pebble at a time, but about as long as life here has been in any way thinking and/or feeling, and that's a very long time indeed, I mean, we have found artifacts that were recognizably, uh, representations of the female form that are between three and eight hundred thousand years old. These are proto-hominids, before Cro-Magnon, before, before neanderthals, making these, you know, carving, scratching representations onto these little rocks, uh, the oldest [. . .] was in an area in the Golan Heights. Um, so, thought and, and wondering about the nature of the world and a belief in the importance of, uh, of life in its greater forms has apparently been around for a very long time.

D: [. . .] gonna use the bathroom real quick. ... Resume.

R: Something you might find amusing in all this rambling: I was with my daughter at the natural history museum, and there was a representation of almost any imaginable creature there. However, I got a startling little indication of the antiquity and the recentness of humanity, at least as far as our built in wiring goes. There was a representation of a proto-hominid, you know, a couple of million years ago, it was this, you know, about four and a half feet tall, black furred, pretty much upright, imagine Inka turned into an upright humanoid, you know, that kind of coloration, just black fur all over. Um, also in a corner of this same room, was a, uh, a mega therion of the, uh, one of the ancestors of, uh, of modern swine, think of this terminator pig, this large, flatheaded tusked thing, you know, fifteen feet long. Uh, also were dinosaurs and such, even some fairly fearsome ones. Turning one's back on the representation of the dinosaurs caused absolutely no discomfort. Facing the same way as with the proto hominid behind me produced absolutely no discomfort, and certainly almost a feeling of company. Turning my back anywhere in that room on that fifteen foot boar caused the hackles to raise, I'm getting cold feet just thinking about it now. Irrespective of how many Christians believe that we shared the, this planet with Godzilla sixteen thousand, or six thousand years ago, we didn't. Um, because I've experienced them. And I don't mean, an ecstatic trance, I mean, opening one's mind and something else takes hold. It's a difficult thing to do because, especially for me, because I am very intellectual, and letting go enough

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getting cold feet just thinking about it now. Irrespective of how many Christians believe that we shared the, this planet with Godzilla sixteen thousand, or six thousand years ago, we didn't. Large reptiles are not part of our collective, built in, watch out for this thing. Proto hominids aren't because they're us.

D: They're us. Yeah.

R: Large, dangerous mammals, even of a, you know, of a type that make a Siberian tiger look tame, those are terrifying. Knowing that that thing is behind you, not facing it--facing it is okay [. . .].

D: Then you know it's there.

R: Yeah, then you know where it is, know what it's doing, you know that, he hasn't seen me yet. Having that thing behind me, oh yeah, I mean, you know, large, horned, toothed monstrous dinosaurs--no. Not a bit of it. That thing--that thing, yeah, yeah, that's racial memory. Watch out for that thing, it'll get'cha.

D: Well I guess, speaking of your daughter, have you intentionally done any sort of religious anything in her upbringing?

R: No, but she was exposed.

D: Yeah.

R: Um, and, uh, and for awhile was very interested in that path, and then, as all children, she rebelled. So, the daughters of, the children of, of, uh, Christians become Pagans, and the children of Pagans become Christians, and her mother was really irritated, and my statement was, you are an immensely thoughtful, skeptical, um, intelligent little creature, who thinks things through, and doesn't take anything for granted. I welcome more such as you in their ranks. People who, you know, she's practically Talmudic in her, in her, intellectual rigor, and that is a good thing.

D: That's cool, then.

R: That's been that way for a very long time. One, you know, children are lawyers. Um, they don't know it, but they are. Don't go in the garage without asking permission. "Yes, Daddy," says the five year old. Three hours later, I find her out there, underneath a three hundred fifty one cubic inch V8 engine, suspended on a hoist, tapping at it, listening to the interesting sounds as she likely taps it with a small hammer.

D: Not in the garage.

R: In the garage.

D: Oh, in the garage.

R: In the garage, she was in the garage.

D: Oh, okay.

R: And, I was like, "Tanith, what are you doing out here, I said you couldn't go without asking permission!" "I did ask, Daddy." I did not say "without asking and having received permission," I just said "asking permission," and she took that as, and beat me over the head with it as a literal thing, which would have been cold comfort had that engine fallen on her, uh, but, yeah, she had me over a logical and legal barrel, and she knew it, and she reveled in it. I, it's like, making a deal with a genie or the devil, you have to enumerate every possible contingency or they will find a loophole.

[01:00:38.12]

D: So I guess not immediately related, sort of related, have there been, I don't know, books of any kind, writing of any kind, that's been particularly sort of important for you, influential on sort of the religious, spiritual, philosophical level?

R: Well there's a physics text called [unintelligible; *Bach?*]. Which actually is very interesting in its, because at the base definition, quantum physics, where the observer changes the observed, that sort of thing, the uncertainty principal, much of this falls right in line with magic, and magic is just a word we use for "We don't quite know how it works yet". Any technology sufficiently advanced beyond our understanding is indistinguishable from magic.

D: I think it's so interesting incidentally that you make these long 'a's. Haas, Advancement. Is that a southern California thing from back in the day?

R: No, no, it's the way I was raised and where I grew up and where I formed. Part of this I should think, well my father was a writer and such being the case he spoke reasonably good English to differentiate from everything terribly colloquial, but it was American English. However, I taught myself to read and write in my father's library before I ever got to kindergarten. And when we got to actually spelling words in school, they insisted that many of my spellings were wrong and I knew that, every book by Verner, Wells, or Lofting [SP; Names]. They didn't go into the extent that, "Yes, well Miriam Webster in the 1800s simplified the English language for the American variety and got rid of all those annoying 'u's." They just said, "You're wrong,". Well, I didn't accept that, I had to do what they did because I didn't like F's on my report card but I never accepted that and later I realized that they were not competent. They should have told me what wrong meant. They should have explained their position. So once I became an adult, I bloody well started using the 'u's again, but I also spent a great deal of time in the southern hemisphere and picked up many of the speech patterns that then continue to this day. So not so much a southern California thing as a southern Earth thing.

D: Anyway! Physics.

R: Yes. There's much relationship in the views of modern physics, and I do not mean particle physics and I do not mean the big bang, I mean observation of the quantum level between how magic will, being applied will, and physics work much similarity there. That was a poorly crafted sentence but you get the idea. If you want, if you're thirsty, and I'm sitting at this table and I'm thirsty and I do a little complete spell for a glass of

water, a glass of water is not going to materialize in front of me. But somebody will pour themselves a glass of water, they're walking over there to talk to a friend, sit it down a moment to tie their shoe and just walk on and forget it. Right here. That's kind of how the world works, you apply will to the way the universe is working and alter slightly its course. George Washington was a Deist. He believed that the deity, whatever it might have been, created the universe as a clockwork as it were, not automatic but as a machine, a mechanism, a system in operation and then ran off to do other things and had no part in the day to day operation of the creation, that it was running on its own after that and it could have been running on its own for a very long time. Charles Darwin had similar beliefs. The uh, the, many religions have reconciled naturalism and religion in that way, but the, how does one put it? [Pause] [1:04:59] There's a great reality in our ability to effect the world. We effect it as life, we are just our moving through it effects it, but also our minds do actually effect change. It is noticeable in some ways. Read me the question again because I want to formulate a very specific answer to it so we can move on and not give you a bunch of rambling.

D: I mean, the question was just what books or writing have been important to you?

R: And I went off to [Unintelligible; *Bach?*]. Which is what I got in that direction. Ok, thank you, because I'd lost sight of the original question. So in magic, actually only one. There's a bit of a debate about whether or not some recent practitioners made this whole thing up and it has no bearing whatsoever on the way things used to be done back in the day and whatever kinds of rituals the Celts might have been performing in the pre-Roman days, blah blah blah blah blah. There's a delightful little tome called *West Country Wicca* written by one Rhiannon Ryall, it's a very thin little—

D: Oh, I was looking at that the other, Chad had it in the back of his car.

R: I've known about that book for quite some time and I read it. It was truly delightful for its introduction and for what it was because it said, "I'm not going to say that this is any canonical reference, I'm not going to say anything else. This is just what they were doing in the area when I lived and always had been when I grew up." That gives a certain sense of place and purpose, a certain legitimacy, historical legitimacy, which is the thing we always conceive, and always wish. We wish to be standing on the bones of our ancestors instead of on *terra incognita* [Uncertain]. Which I find that, I found that very comforting. As books on magic go, I haven't really found any that have been profoundly efficacious upon my overall beliefs because they were already largely formed but that touched a part of my heart that was, that made me feel much more in place as it were because there are, there was a recognizable trail to a system that worked very well for a very long time and when you look at the British Isles and little outlying islands which have been inhabited obviously since the Paleolithic days and while we can't know much about those societies we can see such things as astronomical observatories such as Stonehenge and such things that they were obviously a functional society, they could do things, didn't have a lot of wars, you know, it was nice to be connected to such a thing.

D: And I mean, by the way when I ask about books or writing, it doesn't have to be something that's explicitly about magic or religion, you know it could be anything that was, poetry, it could be a physics—

R: Well that's one reason I mentioned [Bach?] because in the practice of magic, well I do have schooling in physics although I personally believe the big bang to be a version of stealth creationism. A universe that is both infinite in time and space is scary for a lot of people. I tend to be more an adherent of Alfen's Plasma cosmology which does not bespeak a fiery beginning in which the laws of physics didn't matter until they did.

D: What's Plasma cosmology?

R: Well it's a, I believe the universe is basically electrical in nature, for lack of a better phrase. This is the fellow who proved how the aurora's work. Nobody believed him at the time because space full of large generating machinery and electrostatic cyclotrons was just too weird for most people but in fact the nature of the aurora did prove to be accurate. He didn't believe that there's a giant black hole at the center of most galaxies, he believed that most galaxies have a great deal of energy that because there's a massive electrical current flowing through them and that the entire spiral nebula formation is an electro-magnetic effect perpendicular to that current. If you take a small chamber and run a current in a specific path through gases you get very similar formations to how spiral galaxies are formed. There's a certain sense to that, I mean, the idea that the galaxies are basically orbital phenomena. Then they would just be discs, they would be like Saturn's rings, they are not orbital phenomenon, you don't need 80% of the matter in the universe to be exerting a gravitational pull but otherwise undetectable, fictitious matter. They call it dark matter, I call it fictitious matter, to make spiral arms form the way they do. The, do you know what an epicycle is? [1:10:20]

D: No.

R: An epicycle, way back when, the belief that the earth was, the universe was geocentric, I should say. The Earth was the center of the universe. Of course the Earth was geocentric. And that the entirety of the stuff that we saw revolving around the Earth was on fixed tracks, like a railroad track or a trolley line or something like that, a mechanical system that made all this happen, but certain phenomena were hard to explain such as Mercury apparently going backwards sometimes and seemingly moons orbiting other celestial bodies and these were explained by other little sub tracks that made things happen. So you got on a spur line and go around that way, and then he'd go around and then he'd go around that way and all sorts of the railroad yard diagram for the heavens became very, very complicated with these epicycles. They still sort of what we were seeing until Newton. The dark matter inflation, dark energy, all these things are epicycles to shore up a hypothesis, the big bang, which has not, I will not dignify it by calling it a theory, even Phil Klein the former attorney general of Kansas knows the difference between a hypothesis and a theory. When asked if he believed evolution was a theory he said, "Yes, it's a theory. It holds a lot more water than any

other theory, it actually explains things, it can make usable predictions with it, I will differentiate this from a hypothesis.” You know, so, the big bang cannot be used to make useful predictions. It cannot be used to generate factual data based on observations of what will happen next, it is simply something that has become well, a religion with cosmologists. This is a situation which would not be tolerated in any other branch of science. Heretics are banished, cannot publish. People who don’t believe are disregarded. It is a religious doctrine in every way shape and form. There was an experiment that was based by, I don’t remember what university in space with NASA’s help, to determine if in fact there was a significant electric current in the solar wind, produced by you know, the sun interacting with nearby extra solar space. And what they were going to do, they had an insulated cable and an electrode like 10000 feet away on one end of the cable and another electrode, and they would see if a potential difference developed between these two electrodes while they’re in space. And the experiment was a failure and it has been determined therefore that there is no electric current because for some strange reason the cable melted.

D: Which would indicate?

R: A very strong electric current. I tend to think of the formation of spiral galaxies, the placement of galaxies, the, pretty much, everything that happens after the fusion and the closed star as an electrical and electrostatic phenomenon. The rules of electricity, plasma, and electrostatics tend to be very good at explaining how things look and how they behave and what will happen with them and I adhere to that philosophy. It’s a practical, down to earth approach, without any magic of dark matter but it is on the outs with contemporary physics.

D: So you think that the big bang is sort of a crypto-theological position?

R: That’s how I view it, yes.

D: Interesting.

R: Crypto-theological, perfect word. We have stealth creationism, and the, I remember one time, I don’t remember who it was but a theoretical researcher, somebody who does math and the equations are symmetrical and beautiful, whatever beautiful means, then they must be right, stated it was beneath his dignity to look into a piece of laboratory apparatus. Observation is irrelevant, the only thing that matters is whether or not you like the looks of the equations. How revealed. How deductive is that instead of observation and inductive, I mean reductive reasoning is a wonderful thing. If I’m driving along and the engine misses every once and a while I can use deductive reasoning to infer what is probably wrong, start looking in certain locations, but inductive reasoning is very useful, too. When I take out the fuel injector and look at it and see if it sprays or not, listen to its clicking, I can determine whether or not I need a new fuel injector that way. Deduction won’t do it, especially, and then it turns out to be a fouled plug or whatever. Both have a place in scientific and physical discipline. In other words, a purely Aristotelian dialectic approach to reasoning without any view to observation won’t

work right. I mean, Aristotle wrote, "Men have more teeth than women." Yours and mine dentition are identical except I'm missing one tooth. [1:15:59]

D: I've had some removed.

R: Ok, so maybe they are identical.

D: Maybe we're even.

R: Maybe we're even, yes, and then we're both odd. But he never asked missus Aristotle, if there was one, to open his mouth and look. Now you could defend him by saying, "Well maybe he knew somebody whose wisdom teeth came in," but it is far more likely that he simply imposed the Greek attitude towards women of that time on physiology without even looking. Because that was well the sort of thing he did. And in any event he didn't get a sample size large enough to get a useful deduction, because otherwise he would have.

D: So you need both.

R: Yeah. Yeah, you can't take revealed scriptural knowledge that's been passed on by the deity and say that this is how it works. Oooh, Big Bang, it doesn't work. The religion is very much the same way. A truism, something that I again is not provable but I believe it, the usefulness and practicability of a particular religious doctrine or system can be determined from the success with which it helps its adherents meet their stated goals. If the goal is world peace, for instance, many religions have failed totally. If the goal is feeling reasonably confident in one's place in life and accepting of what happens or a fatalism, Jainism has certainly done well. What I wish to accomplish at a religious level and how it effects my attitude towards others, attitudes towards situations, the path upon which I found myself seems to be working reasonably well and that is the [unintelligible] criterium by which pretty much any course of action may be judged, does it work?

D: And what are your goals? What are you trying to make work?

R: Oh, an example would be empathy and sympathy but not blind acceptance of stupidity or rotten behavior. You know, as I can, I can look at both sides of a situation I can understand why someone is behaving that way, but that doesn't necessarily mean that I am going to turn the other cheek if it's not appropriate to do so. I'm just as comfortable with it if someone comes to slay you, slay them first. Another example would be, well, there's a big argument in American society right now, a number of us believe that if it is the right thing to do, it is paramount, but the other bunch believe that unless it makes economic sense to do something, don't. You know, with that attitude we would still have slavery if nobody had picked up the ball and said, "Well, you know, irrespective of economic sense we really have to end this thing." The whole concept of a disposable Earth, we will all be raptured out, blah blah blah, is thoroughly abhorrent to me but I'm far more comfortable [Noise; Cell Phone?] Pardon me. Yes Casey? All right, well I'll certainly open it on time for you, babe. Take as much as you need. Okay. Bye.

[End Call] [1:20:16] Plenty of time to open the store, which opens at three. I do not consider it to be wasted effort, even though there is no economic benefit whatsoever to much of what I do, to not pollute as much or to I continue to work in renewable energy research even though there isn't a short-term profit to that. The belief in the long term instead of a short term. Those are in part effects of a religious belief and the religious belief is in part an effect of the intellectual core of knowing that that is the right thing. At least, I believe I know it. I could be totally wrong. But here's the real difference, here's the real and important differentiation between someone who believes as I believe and someone who believes as Jerry Falwell believes. If he is right, I'll take my lumps and spend my time in hell. Fine. I'm not going to declare chapter eleven in the spiritual sense and not pay my debts. If I am right and he is wrong then this is rapidly becoming hell. I prefer to think that I am right because mine, it's like a military situation, think of it in terms of a military imperator. You don't necessarily know what's causing a certain phenomenon or what particular action the enemy is taking, however one course of action, if you are correct in your beliefs of where they're going to be ensures your survivability but you do not have survivability if you are wrong about them. The other course of action ensures survivability under all circumstances even if it is not necessarily quite as effective .You take the one that is guaranteed to be right, or at least that is guaranteed to have a better outcome, even if it is not guaranteed to have the best possible outcome, it's guaranteed to have a better outcome. That is how military thinking works. This is the same way. My way, if everyone thought this way, would guarantee long term survivability unless God says, "Okay, it's been long enough," and smites the world. Their way, the only way out is the rapture, which is a pretty thin fate on which to hang the future. Did you know that the Japanese as a government, the Japanese as a people, are buying up massive numbers of old growth US trees as they get cut and changed into timber to, you know, plant new forests and more timber, but a certain amount of old growth does get cut nonetheless. The Japanese are buying up large numbers of whole trees.

D: Why?

R: And have been for twenty-two years. Why?

D: Yeah.

R: Because they weight them and they sink them in Tokyo bay. What happens when you take a log six or eight feet in diameter and sink it in salt water is the salt water intrudes about an inch and stops and the wood inside there knows no time. Ever. Ten thousand years from now, when there aren't any more old growth trees, when you can't find anything bigger than a chunk of grass or a stalk of wheat because everything has been domesticated, possibly, not definitely but possibly, when one of their temples needs a new beam, they'll have it.

D: Sounds interesting.

R: That's called the long view. Another example, at Cambridge University in England, I don't remember which building it was but some building or other needed a new oak beam. This was like a year ago, needed a new oak beam because the old one had gotten some bugs in it. And there weren't really any oaks that were big enough except in one particular portion of a very heavily protected area of the forest of Nottingham Shire actually, and when approached the conservator of that forest, when approached and asked if a large oak tree might be harvested for that purpose he says, "Well yes, we'll take you to the oak tree with the most [unintelligible]," and they cut the one from which that timber was made in the year twelve-something or other. They planned for that, too. That was planning when they built the first buildings at Cambridge, they planned for, they said, "Every tree we're going to cut down we're going to have a new tree here,".

D: We're going to plant.

R: United States is a spoiled teenager. We haven't been around long enough to know the folly of using things up as fast as we can. Europe has been around long enough, and only very recently finally figured it out, but they figured it out. [1:25:32]

D: And again, I mean, it was Europeans who first came here and started cutting down everything like crazy because it's just like, who cares? It's throwaway territory.

R: But the religious views of Europe of that time were the same way, too. The people building buildings might find new trees, but people were still over-reproducing and barely, barely living, barely able to keep themselves fed, that sort of thing. It's only very recently, really in this last century, that the Europeans figured it out and managed to get negative population growth and truly sustainable practices in which you might have a village and then a farm, and a village and a farm, and a village and a farm, and everything working very well together. Yeah, the Europe of when this country was founded was very much as this country.

D: Oh there's plenty, we'll just chop it down.

R: Yeah, exactly. They only grew up fairly recently. They're not trying to keep out swarms of Algerians because they want to keep Europe lily-white, they're trying to keep out swarms of Algerians because they've finally figured out how to not reproduce like insects and they don't want their infrastructure overrun by those who haven't. The—

D: I don't know, I also think they're probably also trying, I mean in Germany, for instance, where they already have all these Turkish people that they don't want to give citizenship to even though they're there and they're not going anywhere.

R: Possibly, but there's more than one aspect to the situation. On the flipside, while you've heard that in Europe you have--

D: Well they brought them there in the seventies to do work they didn't want to do.

R: Oh, I remember.

D: I mean, they imported them essentially.

R: I'm going in a different direction now.

D: Okay. All right.

R: You've heard that in Europe most electricity is at fifty cycles per second instead of sixty and most voltage is two hundred twenty instead of one hundred ten. Use a higher voltage at a lower frequency. That in itself is very specific to America versus Europe. In Europe they had a mature iron industry and making generators and motors with large iron cores was no problem. However, energy itself was scarce and if you could use thinner copper wire rather than thicker copper wire and have more efficient motors, that was useful because there was only so much coal to go around and generate electricity whereas in the United States, energy was cheap and plentiful and they didn't need to make things as efficient because there was tons of copper and an immature iron industry so they made motors and generators with smaller cores, used thicker wire, it was all less efficient but that's okay because you can throw more coal on the fire. The very nature of our electrical grids formed in the eighteen eighties is a reflection of two different worlds. One in which conservation is becoming very important because they realize the limited resources, the other in which it's not important because the resources are supposedly unlimited.

D: So what is it about this religion do you think that engenders this sort of ethic of?

R: Well for one thing a belief that we are a part of nature is differentiated from a belief that we are above it. Another part of the ecological system. We have the deep realization at the spiritual level, not just the intellectual level, that's the thing. Knowing something doesn't necessarily work unless you feel it. We feel, know, that we are as much a part of the Earth as important to it, as expendable to it, and as interrelated to it as any other animal or plant because of that there's less of a tendency to want to be mice, to tear up whatever we find ourselves and make a nest until it gets too foul for us because we pooped in the same place and move on to tear up something else.

D: And what do you think about it engenders the attitude you were talking about earlier, like, sort of accepting how people are but not turning the other cheek, necessarily?

R: A belief in one's own self-worth. A knowledge of divinity within, a belief or I should say, of the divinity within leads one to a somewhat different ethical point of view. Are you familiar with a fellow named Colberg [SP]?

D: Colberg? No. [1:29:54]

R: Last century, well I keep saying last century because I was born in the last century, and not the century before last.

D: Hey, me too.

R: The, Colberg came up with a scale of ethics upon which a newborn has pretty much the lowest ethical development and situational ethics, the curse word was considered the highest level of ethics. Broad-minded used to be an insult, too. But a baby will do something because it wants to, period. Oh, I want that? [Unintelligible; Noise]. Later comes, "I won't grab that because I'll get hit," after that comes, "I won't grab that because it upsets my parents," after that comes, "I won't do that because we've enacted, there's a law against it," later comes, "I will not do that because society has agreed that's not the right thing to do," last on the scale becomes, "I will or will not do that as is appropriate to the situation,". Having to think through everything, knowing that you are God, for lack of a better phraseology, or at least a piece or an aspect, is a difficult path, it means you have to think through everything, you can't just pawn it off on your pastor or scripture, you have to think about everything. I asked my daughter, I have a great story about this, I'm full of stories, I had a great story for her when she was asking about right or wrong. I said, "What would you think of a man who went to a town to which he'd never before then and within twenty-four hours he is kicked in the window of a closed store and stepped inside." And she would say, "That's a bad man." And I said, "That was me." And her eyes got to the size of saucers and said, "Daddy!" That was me in Chicago actually in the early eighties. I had gone up there the first time I ever visited that particular part of the world to visit a friend of mine from junior college who was doing journalism up there, just you know, I was on winter break and decided to go visiting. And I must have gotten something wrong. This is pre-GPS, pre-Map Quest and so forth. I gave the cabby instructions, the cabby dropped me off where I told him to, I wasn't really looking around, got out on the well-lit but very deserted part of the world that turned out to be a commercial district that was not doing its best business at nine or ten at night because well they hadn't done any business at all since five or so. And I was out there, taxi's gone, no other vehicles, I started really looking around and realizing, "Wow, I certainly must have had the wrong address," and started walking until I should see a payphone so I can call for another cab. Now there's snow on the ground and it's fairly cold and there's not another soul in sight. Next thing you know, I am waking up face-down in the snow, my hands are frozen solid, I determined later that my wallet is gone. There is no, I have a big old penguin egg on the back of my head, my face is quite uncomfortable because well, cold. I get up, stumble a block or so and realize that I'm in deep shit, that even if I found a payphone I couldn't really make use of it and that I'm probably in deep shit. My next action is to find a likely place, kick in a window to a pawn shop, which took a lot of kicking because it was a very thick plate glass but not a plastic pane so it was breakable. Kick in the windows to a pawn shop and climb inside with the twin beliefs that a: it had to be better in there than out in the snow and b: that there was probably some sort of security system or at the very least I could eventually thaw and use the telephone. And the security system did in fact summon help. It summoned a very angry cop who was then a very sympathetic cop that I made arrangements with the pawn shop owner who was very understanding all things considered and my father wired him money which I then promptly paid back to my father when I got back to my bank account. But ethically speaking there was no circumstance

whatsoever under what I did was legal. There was no circumstance under what I did was not ethical. It comes along to that. I am joyfully amoral. I don't have any mores. I don't have any axioms by which I behave because I was told to or because society told me to. I do have a deep respect or an understanding of every individual and every life as inherently sovereign. Having its own rights, its own world, and therefore extraordinarily respectful of rights and responsibilities and good behavior. To one extent or another I'll find that in most people who call themselves pagan they tend to take a greater degree responsibility for their actions, for their life, for their decisions, because they can't seek absolution. They can't pawn off the necessary thought processes on someone else. The very idea, I think you'll find, is abhorrent to most of them.

D: They're working out their own salvation. [1:35:29]

R. Basically. Their own way through the world and because of this you will find that then a number of them are more assertive in the face of something wrong done to them but are just as if not more sympathetic to somebody in a particularly bad place than your average Joe. Because there is a very strong realization that bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people and that the universe is basically a majority rule. If most of us believe it's day time, it's probably going to be daytime.

D: Well, somewhat related, I guess I want to ask about your involvement with communities. And I guess partly too whether or not, I don't know, how your sort of training worked. You know, has it been mostly sort of self-taught, or in communication with others, or having a community but not necessarily a sort of hierarchical like somebody is training you but you're all sort of like learning together?

R: Oh well, I learned what I learned a long time ago. I've audited a few of Casey's classes, I love just to learn where she's coming from and there's a lot of good discussion to be had in those. But yeah, I took some classes a while back taught by somebody who'd been practicing a very very long time and more of an idea than just hanging around what this was about, and I learned a few things, mostly technical in nature and I you know, had a lot of very lively dialogue of a philosophical nature, but beyond that this whole—there are degrees, which basically like initiations, the purpose of those is more an acknowledgment of someone's attaining a certain level of control. The basic plateaus can be considered: Can Lead would be first degree, Can Organize and well, actually, Can Practice Irrespective of the Situation would be the first degree, know how to set up what needs to be done and can design a ritual as needed depending on what situation there is. Can Lead a Group Reliably would be second, and Can Teach and Create would be the third degree. Myself, you know, I got initiated first and didn't see any reason to go beyond that, but as far as various communities go or places in them, we all tend to be pretty libertarian as it were. Wicca's a very, and Norse paganism most of these, most of these sets of wisdom is very congregational, none of this only a priest can make a priest.

D: And that's how you would kind of identify yourself as a Wiccan and sort of like Norse pagan, or how would you identify yourself?

R: Well how would I identify myself?

D: Yeah.

R: I'm an eclectic, I tend to think largely in terms of Celtic paganism because that is the group with whom I am most closely associated. However, there are elements of many systems that are also equally applicable especially where the systems cross and you can see their common roots. It's not a whole lot different from loan words in one language to another and heck they both have Indo-European roots anyway. You know, if I say [Uncertain; foreign word?] that doesn't have an Indo-European root, it has an Arabic root. African. But if I say you know, if I say "Metal" and if I say "Plastic" both of those words actually can trace their roots, one through the Germanic, one through the Latin, and both of them back to Indo-European. So there are many truths and attitudes that can help set the mind in a particular place to accomplish a particular thing to the Norse Path or to the Celtic Path or to the very inner spiritual paths of the East. Even though if you look at the Buddhism, there's very little in common with Celtic paganism but there's certain central concepts such as quiet mind and seeking what you need within instead of without that are very important. The, as far as other polytheistic religions, there are commonalities, great truths shall we say, I mean, did you ever see a beautiful little motion picture, it was called *Enemy Mine*?

D: Mm-um.

R: Did you ever see one called *Hell in the Pacific*?

D: No. [1:41:10]

R: All right, *Hell in the Pacific* deals with two soldiers, one Japanese, one American, on a deserted island in the middle of World War II. The war wages about them on other islands, but they themselves are attempting to figure out how to get along in their mutual predicament. Well, *Enemy Mine* was the same thing but in space. [Noise]

D: Oh no.

R: We'll get it back and I'll be right back.

D: That's a good pausing point anyway because I've got to use the bathroom.

R: But in space. Humans versus another race that's been out there for a somewhat longer time and does not like its colonies referred to as squatters because everything belongs to the humans. The alien is teaching his theology because there's not much else to do on this barren rock to the human with whom he finds himself trapped. At one point he reads the human is reading from this little book of scripture in the alien's language and says, "If someone gives you hate, give to them love so that they may be healed. I've heard this before." And the alien says, "Of course you have. The truth is the

truth.” There are certain, I would call them great truths of humanity, that are expressed in a lot of religions, not in some, but in most religions. There was a lot of that in Hindu that is universally applicable. I looked at the Hindu origin stories and they’re almost chillingly believable. And interpretation of how we got the world of today, but then there are great truths of humanity there and therefore one can for certain purposes think in terms of those gods, those aspects, or those goddesses, or those aspects as a way in which to view the universe depending on what you want to do. Western theology looks at Kali, you know, evil, nasty horrible goddess of death dancing on skulls. Also a nurturer. The very spirit of how that which is must cease to be and become anew. The very oddment of the wheel of death and rebirth. Very important. But hardly palatable for one who believes in death and heaven. There’s an origin story in Hinduism, one of the warnings of how things would work is that there would be commerce. Anyway, so ask me questions, I won’t tell you no lies.

D: Ok, a couple more. One being, you said you write poetry for instance, what, I don’t know, are art and creativity related to religion for you at all or?

R: I don’t know about that. Inspiration perhaps. I don’t really know. Some people supposedly can create or at least synthesize better than others. I find a disproportionately large number of creative and/or technically skilled people in the pagan community in the same way of which I found a disproportionately large number of creative or talented people in Antarctica. Lot of bands. Lot of sculptors. Things like that.

D: That’s interesting. [1:45:10]

R: Probably because while every pursuit is represented in McMurdo Station, other than legal, there is no lawyer, although there is a federal marshal, and many jobs there are therefore manual in nature, you have to be a certain sort of person to want to stay down there for a year at a time supporting science so irrespective of one’s position you end up with a larger number of intellectuals, also people who have PhDs will go down there to sweep floors just for the experience of going down there. In the pagan community, maybe it has to do with individualism, maybe the belief in the divine spark in the individual, maybe something of whatever that is also is what causes what we call creativity or at least leads to it. I really don’t know. But I do know, and this is not to say that the pagan community is some sort of panacea, we’re made of humans and because of that [unintelligible; gender?] we’re real dipweeds as well. And a disproportionately large number also are flakes because somebody who is all conspiratorial in their outlook on life or is paranoid or believes in persecution might gravitate towards a religion or religious set of doctrines or practices which historically has been rather persecuted or at least frowned upon so we end up with a disproportionately large number of flakes as well. Along with a disproportionately large percentage of creative and/or technically educated people. Lot of engineers and computer techs also tend towards thinking of God in humanity instead of God over humanity. Not sure why that is, I can only guess really, I can’t even theorize.

D: And what's your guess?

R: Well again that it has to do with somebody who is, somebody who inherently believes and is aware of their greater than average ability to come up with new or innovative things might go into the technical disciplines. Or somebody who does so in the form that they can come up with really good jokes or cartoon well, or have talent in instruments would go into those pursuits. Such a person who has demonstrated proof, has had it demonstrated to them, that they are not average, whatever average might be, might gravitate towards a religious path in which the importance of the individual and the divinity of the individual is stressed instead of be a good little cog in the communist machine.

D: And then—

R: And again, that's just a wild ass guess.

D: No, that's fine.

R: I mean, I did learn early on, one reason I am so good at so many things is because I learned a very ugly lesson early on which was not necessarily accurate, although it is accurate at the time and that is that I could not depend on anybody either to be responsible or do the things that needed doing, or do what they said that they would do and therefore I had to learn to wire a house or plumb a drain or to fix a car because otherwise it wasn't going to happen. This is not a pleasant lesson and it's no longer truly accurate although it's slightly more accurate than not. It's no longer what it was when I was fifteen. Also a strong disdain for centralized authority because of very bad experiences with centralized authority. My father nearly died thanks to centralized authority not paying any attention to the maunderings of a twelve year old, they're beneath contempt and therefore when I tried to tell them what was going on complete with medication names and timeframes, they ignored me.

D: What was going on? [1:49:43]

R: My father, when my mother left, which she had every reason to, he had a hard time sleeping and started to prescribe this wonderful new medication called [Uncertain; Plasedo?] which was very effective, had no side effects blah blah blah, more addictive than heroin and you needed more and more of it to sleep and then when the doctor got sick his prescription [unintelligible] he crashed very hard, very very hard. I tried to explain this to the police that I eventually called because he was in a state in which needed help and we were in a state in which we needed care, I being the oldest, I being twelve. They came, took him away, didn't listen to us, threw us all in a wagon, took us off to juvenile hall dependent, and he nearly died over a period of two weeks. Well they had no idea what was in his system even though I told them. I do not have a strong belief in authority, this has been beaten into me by experiences, it's not always valid but it's always safer.

D: Would you say in some ways you have this sort of mix of what is it, belief in the abilities of people and yet not so much a belief in people, almost.

R: In institutions. I don't have much of a belief in institutions. The police, the officer Rita, or whatever her name was might have listened to me, might have even taken down the notes, but the overall fast inertia of the system had no use for listening to a twelve year old. Not in seventy-four.

D: So you blame the sort of general structure more than the individual who came?

R: The centralized authoritarian structure, exactly. Yeah. And structures that are highly hierarchical and we are right and you cannot argue has turned me off immensely. So, you know, while those lessons aren't necessarily entirely accurate they are formative. Now you may ask your other question, I'm sorry. Or ask whatever you wish but that was an elaboration on what you had asked.

D: I'm sorry all of that happened to you.

R: Me too, but that's what it was. It was a long, long, long time ago. Forty years.

D: Well, I guess as far as your sort of current surroundings, can you talk a little bit about the covenstad and, I don't know.

R: What would you like to know?

D: Whatever you think is pertinent, I guess.

R: Well it's an interesting little archeology, it's not a bad way to live, you know. A good well, low energy bills and it's in Leavenworth County where they really don't care what you do as long as you're a good neighbor. So, you know, we don't go shooting AR-15s over the heads of the neighbors. A: We wouldn't do that, B: We don't have AR-15s. So it's a good little place. It has its problems, there are irritating factors. Casey's a little overly convinced about her knowing best, which she doesn't necessarily. Yes, she means well, yes the road to hell, but we've come to an accommodation and I do believe in what she's trying to do which is A: Survive and B: Kind of an outreach. A, not a missionary, but an outreach. You know, people come into the shop all the time needing advice or help and she gives it. Yeah, I can get behind supporting that. Very good water. You know, two hundred some deep sandstone well will result in that, and I don't see any reason not to live there and contribute.

D: Is the land meaningful for you?

R: It is. It's one of the two places on Earth that has ever told me I might unpack my bags and not be ready to flee. The other was Antarctica and they don't let you live there.

D: And what do you mean, who told you, just like a sense that this is a good, this is the right place?

R: A sense. Yeah. It tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Hey, you're home".

D: So do you think you'll stay there in the long run or not sure?

R: I've been there thirteen years. Probably. Help them build a large tornado proof sandstone structure that will last into the twenty-one hundreds.

D: Is that for real a future plan? [1:54:24]

R: Oh who the hell knows? I think probably something a little more permanent than the Sear's Kit Home that is the current primary structure on the land is probably called for, probably back from the road a little bit, like over where the old barn is, something like that. Something survivable as the climate continues to get worse. Something earth contact that would hopefully stay in the seventies or sixties even in the summer because it's massive and relatively energy efficient therefore. Some small turbines, some solar, the sorts of things that are necessary to work and continue in a world that is getting less sanguine. You know the United States is heavily heading towards a serious bunch of trouble because of so many people are convinced in their soul that the best thing to do is use up every resource as quickly as possible. Energy and water are taken care of. It's Kansas. I don't think it's ever going to drop bad enough that a two hundred foot deep well goes bad. Food, got really interesting. Transportation, that'll be interesting. We'll burn those bridges when we get to them. But as it is now.

D: And do you think that'll be an issue in your lifetime?

R: Oh, I'm pretty sure of it.

D: Both of those things?

R: Yeah, I mean hell, who thought it would be after the plentitude of the twenties and then look at the thirties. Look at the dust bowl. We have, we humanity, the, there was a senator, worthless moron, read as a refutation to climate change the first chapters of Genesis on the senate floor and, you know, the rainbow, the proof that God will never again destroy the world blah blah blah.

D: That's an interesting interpretation.

R: God ain't doing this. Humanity is. Only God can make a tree but any old sod can chop a tree down. Seven or eight or ten billion sods can chop down a planet. You know, God's not flooding Earth, humanity is drowning in the excrement of its own machines. Mice, fouling up wherever we are, and then moving on, only now there are enough of us, wide enough spread, that there is nowhere on to which to move. I do not believe that we are going to eliminate all life, for the first place that would be a nearly impossible job and in the second, even the most strictly everything-must-be-domesticated-there-must-be-no-wild-things-anywhere-a-friend-of-the-Earth-is-an-enemy-of-God-person has that as their goal, very few anyway, and you know the disposable Earthers will say, "Yes, we'll all be raptured out and God will end this particular experiment and all's good with the world," that sort of thing, they're nuts. The vast majority of people don't necessarily believe quite that, however we can certainly make it thoroughly inhospitable to us and

many larger more complex forms. I'm very worried about my children and their children, if any. Think globally, act locally. Acting locally is doing what I must to survive until I am tired of that and work on ways to mitigate the problem. We cannot expect a great awakening. We cannot expect an economic solution, we've already had our Wiley Coyote moment. We've already run off the cliff, looked down, and are scrambling our legs before falling. We're not going to get back to that cliff face, we're going to become a little dust spot down in the desert. Same as the Warner Brothers cartoons. As super storms and flooding coastal cities continue to mount more and more people are realizing, "Whoa, this is serious" and there's finally a slight shift into thinking, "Well if it's bad for business, we have to do something about it," but it's a little late. Things are going to get very, very bad and they're not going to get better in my lifetime, they're not going to get better in a number of lifetimes, and there will be a large number of extinctions. We live in the fifth great extinction, a period of life of the planet's geological history in which we live is akin to that which ended the dinosaurs. We are at the beginning of a great dying and it is largely brought about by the actions of bipedal mammals. The [unintelligible] survive and do as little damage as possible between now and then, whenever I die, and help as much as I can, probably technologically, but I don't have any great optimism for anything less than seven or eight hundred years hence when things start to equalize out again on their own, or if there are enough humans well enough educated to do the right things and somehow find a way to leech CO2 out of the atmosphere maybe a bit sooner. I hope someone has the forethought to take a lot of DNA samples and make more lions come back, but I don't know. [2:00:42]

D: Poor us, this is a downer.

R: Sorry.

D: It's so sad.

R: I could certainly covenstead where I live and a place that helps and works with people and a place that I would like to try and make survivable over the long term. Probably, let me get this. [Answers phone] May I help you? [Skip ahead?] Sorry, sorry, I didn't mean to be a downer, you asked what the place was and it represents many things including a bulwark since it is a piece of land that is far enough out that it is not likely to be turned into a development any time soon, is therefore survivable. One of the beautiful things about Leavenworth County, a very popular thing to do is to buy inexpensive land around a farm or an airport and then tax or complain the farm and airport out of business in order to make more house farms. "I moved under a glide path, but I hate the sound of it, shut down that airport, shut down that shooting range, shut down that farm" Leavenworth county, the primary method for doing that, is to get the land assessed as how valuable it would be as a development instead of as an airport or farm, and a lot of farmers get driven off their land. Leavenworth county has a rule in place that forbids the evaluation of a piece of property in any way other than as it is currently being used for tax purposes so you cannot evaluate a farm and assess it as a development and you cannot evaluate a single residence farmstead as a development

or something or a shopping mall or whatever. It has to be assessed as its actual value as its currently being used so you can't be taxed off your own land unless you have no money at all. Property taxes are about eight hundred a year and they're not going to change because some developer wants to put up an apartment building. So it's a good long term strategy. There are people who come, people who go, people who hang around, people who are interested in whom they interact. It is an outreach, it is a school, it is a refuge, it is a place of congregation, it is home.

D: Well, I think that's about all the questions that I really have. Was there anything else that you want to say?

R: Well, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to make you feel like slashing your wrists.

D: Oh, it's okay, I'll just go home and cry and cuddle with my cats. I don't know.

R: Well, humans are very resourceful, we're not going to kill ourselves off no matter how hard we try. But we're gonna do a lot of damage and have a lot of regrowth to survive through before we can begin to live again.

D: And I, frankly I mean I worry when you talk about things like that, I worry less about myself and other humans than I do about like, my cats, basically. Like, cat descendants.

R: Well, my cat is fixed.

D: Yeah, so are mine, so they won't have any cats, but it's like, I don't know.

R: The animals that do well ferally, I don't think cats are gonna go away. I don't think dogs are going to go away, but the more vulnerable species, they, I'm worried. And, you know, quite frankly I blame largely the more the merrier cults. There are many, cult is the only word to describe it, and I mean groupings on this planet whose primary focus is a: the enemy of God is a friend of the earth and b: the more the merrier. I blame them. Although greed is a big one, too, you know, short term. Somebody at Monsanto doesn't give one flying damn about his grandkids except in so much perhaps as hoping that they have enough money that they can live in an enclosed, you know, safe enclave while the rest of the world is enslaved. The very concept of wanting to own the entire food supply is the greatest imaginable evil. I mean, if I were to find a genie in a bottle and only have one wish, it'd be the vanishing of Monsanto and their ilk. You know, everything that takes sensible practice, sustainable practice, or ethical practice, and throws it under the bus in the name of profit. Every single, you know, I'm not espousing worldwide communism, I'm not even anti-capitalistic, I'm a capitalist myself, but subsuming everything in the name of greed, everything but greed in the name of greed, advance as far as you can by placing your foot squarely in the middle of your neighbor's face, that is the one thing with which I would do away. I would gladly die in poverty knowing that I had accomplished that. Be a bit much for a genie, but genies are good at what they do. [2:06:03]

D: Well, thank you very much for this interview.

R: You're welcome.

D: It has been illuminating, very interesting.

[02:06:14]

[End of recording]