

OH-3009, Marvin Robinson, 4-15-2014, Casper, WY In Flight

JUNGE: [00:00:00] Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, 2014. My name is Mark Junge, and I'm at the -- what building am I at here, Marvin?

ROBINSON: This is called the True Hanger. You're at the True Hanger at Natrona County International Airport, and talking with Marvin Robinson, who is a maintenance mechanic, lifelong -- basically, career mechanic, correct?

ROBINSON: Correct.

JUNGE: And Marvin, you and I are going to talk a little bit I guess about your background, where you grew up, where you learned to get interested in aviation and some miscellaneous questions, is that OK?

ROBINSON: OK.

JUNGE: I want to ask you this. Was your wife, Ann Robinson, she was in the legislature, right?

ROBINSON: Yes.

JUNGE: Did she introduce that bill that took taxes [00:01:00] off of groceries?

ROBINSON: She did.

JUNGE: My wife is so proud of her for that.

ROBINSON: It took her eight years to do that.

JUNGE: She just kept reintroducing it?

ROBINSON: She kept putting it in every year, and finally, after eight years through a process you'd have to ask her about -- it was quite a process -- she got it off.

JUNGE: That's great.

ROBINSON: Most of the people opposed taking the taxes off groceries, and groceries should never be taxes.

JUNGE: Is she a Democrat?

ROBINSON: Yes.

JUNGE: Are you a Democrat?

ROBINSON: Yes. Registered Democrat, yes.

JUNGE: One of the very few fellow Democrats that hears all the secret signs.

ROBINSON: Yeah, very few.

JUNGE: Give me your full name.

ROBINSON: I'm Marvin Dean Robinson.

JUNGE: And [00:02:00] your birthplace?

ROBINSON: Thermopolis, Wyoming.

JUNGE: What date?

ROBINSON: Thermopolis, Wyoming.

JUNGE: Yeah, when were you born?

ROBINSON: OH, what date? August 20, 1947.

JUNGE: So you are now going on 66?

ROBINSON: August I'll be 67.

JUNGE: Sixty-seven. Excuse me. You know, I'm 71.

ROBINSON: You're lookin' good.

JUNGE: The same to you. Where did you grow up?

ROBINSON: I grew up in Thermopolis until the second grade, then my folks we moved to Spokane, Washington -- they had a cleaning plant -- and then we was there for a few years, and then I ended up in Riverton, Wyoming in the fifth grade, and then I graduated from Riverton, [00:03:00] high school. So, I mostly grew up in Riverton from fifth grade on. I was born until the second grade in Thermopolis.

JUNGE: Your folks ran a cleaning plant?

ROBINSON: Yeah, they were in the cleaning business.

JUNGE: Dry cleaning?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: Why did they go to Spokane?

ROBINSON: We had some other relatives out there, and for some reason -- my dad worked in the laundry in Thermopolis, and then somehow his mother lived in Spokane. They wandered out there or -- I don't know how they got out there, and then he went out and a he bought a cleaning plant. It was the Veradale Cleaners.

JUNGE: What was it?

ROBINSON: Veradale Cleaners. It's a little suburb of  
Spokane.

JUNGE: How do you spell that?

ROBINSON: V-E-R-A-D-A-L-E, I think. Veradale, I think is  
how they say it. It's a little town, but that  
cleaning plant [00:04:00] that's the parking lot of  
the Kmart. They tore it out. We moved back to  
Riverton in 1957 or '58, we moved from Spokane back to  
Riverton, and they bought a cleaning plant in Riverton  
and they called it Paris Cleaners.

JUNGE: And that's what they did for a living?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: Until they retired?

ROBINSON: Well, my dad and mother they ran the cleaning  
plant, and then my dad worked with -- they didn't get  
along too good, my folks, so he worked out of the  
town. She ran the cleaners. He worked there quite a  
bit, and then I don't know, he wandered off up and he  
started -- he worked out here for -- there was a  
company in Casper called [White Ditching?], and there  
[00:05:00] was a horse -- the neighbors had a welding  
truck and they put a lot of pipeline in up here in  
Edgerton. Well then he'd come home, and then  
eventually my dad worked at South Pass. Then my folks

got divorced and they sold the laundry back to the original owner. Then my mother come to Casper. My dad stayed in Riverton and then he retired. He retired from US Steel in South Pass. He was working there when they closed down.

JUNGE: In that tachonite plant? What do they call it?

ROBINSON: The steel mill. It was the steel mill. He worked there until they closed down. He was up there 22, 24 years. Something like that.

JUNGE: Doesn't that have to be one of the most God forsaken locations in the world?

ROBINSON: Well, it's right along the highway. He drove back and forth from Riverton. It was 120 miles roundtrip every day to work.

JUNGE: That country is beautiful, especially Red Canyon and South [00:06:00] Pass City, and that area up in there, I don't take anything away from that. But I look at that taconite plant -- well, it's closed now -- and I looked and I thought my gosh, is this dreary looking.

ROBINSON: See, that used to be a real big hill there.

There was a large herd of elk that wandered around. I don't know how familiar you are with that country, but when I was a little guy, we used to do a lot of

fishing on South Pass, and then we -- they started that mine and we'd go up there fishing -- at that time he's working in the cleaners -- and he always started seeing that steel mill being built up there, then they started whittling on that hill and it was nice elk country in there, and he always cussed that steel mill. We'd drive up there to Sweetwater and stuff fishing, and then pretty soon eventually, he ended up tearing most of it down himself. He ended up being a shovel operator up there for US Steel for -- he [00:07:00] run the shovel for at least 15 years. He was up there 22, 23 years.

JUNGE: And he helped tear it down?

ROBINSON: He helped tear the mountain down that he always cussed them about doing and then they closed down and he lived in -- he retired. He lived in Riverton and my mother come down here and got hooked up with another guy, married him. She still lives here. My dad's gone.

JUNGE: How many kids in your family?

ROBINSON: There's four. I have two sisters and one brother.

JUNGE: Older than you?

ROBINSON: I have a sister that's older, a brother that's older, and the little sister -- the youngest one is my sister, young sister. She is the youngest but I tell people I was the baby.

JUNGE: Why?

ROBINSON: Because I got my own way. [00:08:00] That's why my brother and sister don't like me. I shouldn't say that, but anyway, that was four. The older sister and my brother and my younger sister.

JUNGE: What was it like growing up in Riverton?

ROBINSON: It was a pretty nice little town. It was OK. It was just like they're talking today. It was on the reservation and a lot of Indians walking around. There were more Indians walking around the streets than there is today, but it was a nice little town. We lived outside. I spent a lot of time down at the river, and we lived outside of town about a mile.

JUNGE: What did you do on the river?

ROBINSON: Just throw rocks in the river.

JUNGE: Did you hunt, trap, fish?

ROBINSON: No, we just hiked it. Just [00:09:00] hiked it. Yeah, down on the river we never carried guns or anything on the river.

JUNGE: You will probably tell me that you never got into any trouble as a kid, right?

ROBINSON: That's right; I never got into any trouble.

(laughs)

JUNGE: You know, you're the first person to ever tell me that?

ROBINSON: That's right.

JUNGE: You are an historic person.

ROBINSON: I was the perfect child. That's why I was the baby. (laughs)

JUNGE: So you graduated from Riverton High?

ROBINSON: Yes.

JUNGE: And then what?

ROBINSON: Then me and the wife got married in our senior year.

JUNGE: You and Anne?

ROBINSON: Yeah, in October of '65. Then when we graduated, we loaded up our '56 Buick and we headed to Spokane, Washington. That's -- I went to Spokane Community College, to the aviation department.

JUNGE: Why did you decide [00:10:00] on aviation? Tell me the story about that.

ROBINSON: Well, I have really no aviation background in my family. My aviation background was Saturday night

we'd got to the A&W, get a root beer float, and the family would drive up to the airport and watch Frontier's Convair 580 take off. That's my aviation history. Then I was supposed to be -- I was in the CAP. Me and my older brother was in the CAP that didn't have an airplane. We met down at the armory. We would march around a little bit.

You know, in Riverton at that time, kids didn't have a lot to do. There was a movie house and that's about it. But that was -- and then I was supposed to go be a draftsman, an architect drafting. That's what my dad thought I was going to be. Then when I went to sign up to go [00:11:00] to Spokane -- I have a cousin that lived in Spokane, and he'd become a draftsman and an architect and he worked up to be an electrical engineer, and he did pretty good, and I was kind of supposed to follow in his footsteps, I guess. So, I was going to go to Spokane Community College to the drafting department. Well, I'm looking through the book and airplane looks pretty good, so I signed up for the airplane business. Don't know why. My dad was very upset. He didn't care for airplanes anyway. He rode in them in the war.

JUNGE: In World War II?

ROBINSON: Yeah. He was actually in tanks, but he had to ride in planes a couple of times to go somewhere, but he was actually in the tank division. But he thought airplanes weren't necessary. And so, I went there and I went to school in Spokane [00:12:00] for the two year class, and then we liked Spokane, and of course there's no jobs. There's an A&P school there. The guy was hiring -- in 1968 we graduated, and they were paying A&P mechanics at Felts Field, and that's at Spokane, and minimum wage was \$1.25 an hour, and so, that's what he would pay because there was -- you know. So, I went to -- didn't want to do that, so we ended up -- airlines was the big thing. So, I went to work for the airlines.

JUNGE: Now, an A&P mechanic, you better explain what that is?

ROBINSON: An A&P mechanic is an airframe and power plant mechanic. It's two different licenses. You can just get an airframe if you just wanted to work on the airframes, and then the power plant would be if you wanted to go in to work on the engines. It's actually two [00:13:00] different licenses. You could have an airframe and then you could have a power plant too, if you just wanted to do -- I have both.

JUNGE: Did you get both very early? I mean, after school?

ROBINSON: No, I got my -- one year I got my airframe in Spokane Community College, and then the next year I got my power plant.

JUNGE: At Spokane?

ROBINSON: At Spokane Community College.

JUNGE: So, what was your dad thinking by this time?

ROBINSON: He got over it. (laughs) He lived in Riverton and then he worked and then he just got over it.

JUNGE: You started at a dollar-something an hour?

ROBINSON: You know, that's what the wages were back then. That's 1968. [00:14:00] Minimum wage was like \$1.25. I started -- I didn't want them wages, so a lot of airlines was hiring. You pretty much had your choice of airlines and where to go, so I picked TWA in San Francisco, and that, I started at \$3.25 an hour. I don't think it was four. I think it was \$3.25 an hour.

JUNGE: Was that big money?

ROBINSON: I think it might have been \$4.25. Might have been \$4.25. And actually, in the aviation world, that was big money.

JUNGE: But for mechanic's work? I mean, this work keeps pilots aloft.

ROBINSON: Yeah, that's true. That was -- see, at that time, I don't know what an airline pilot [00:15:00] was getting paid either, but that's what they got. And then shortly after that, I worked at TWA and then I -- we was doing OK there. Wife was going to have a little baby and then I got my draft notice. And so, I went ahead and joined the Air Force. So, I got my time with TWA -- you had to have six months with TWA to be recalled. I took military leave, went to the military, but then -- we'll stop it there. Then when I came back in 1973, I was making \$7.25 an hour [00:16:00] with the airlines.

JUNGE: When you came back from what?

ROBINSON: From the Air Force. There was a void there. I didn't know how much we needed to -- but when I left, and four years later would be 1973, the wages had gone up to \$7.25 an hour.

JUNGE: Was that because everything went up? Inflation?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: Or, the industry was just becoming more important?

ROBINSON: I think then at that point, we were -- it was union and we were out of a union contract, and they were talking to the union and the company. And then I left. I worked for a year and a half with TWA and went back to Riverton, back to general aviation, and I quit at that \$7.25 an hour at the airlines, and at Riverton Aviation I went to work for [00:17:00] \$3.25 or 3.50 an hour, and that was in 1973, '74. That was \$3.25 an hour.

JUNGE: How did you survive?

ROBINSON: Well, you know, you could buy a house for \$20 thousand. We bought a house in -- actually, we bought one in San Jose, California when I got out of the service in 1973. We bought a year old house, four bedroom 1600 square foot house in San Jose, California for 32 hundred dollars. It's a million dollar house today, 800 thousand, anyway.

JUNGE: Oh, yeah.

ROBINSON: And so, that was kind of [00:18:00] -- and so, that's what we -- so we bought that house, and then we moved back to Riverton and we bought the house -- it was a much smaller, older house. I wasn't making as much money -- for \$20,000.

JUNGE: Out in San Jose. Were you near the Rosicrucian Museum? That Egyptian Museum?

ROBINSON: Don't know. I was in San Jose, and was right up in the corner of San Jose and Milpitas on the northwest corner of San Jose. We was about three blocks into -- you could get to Milpitas. We did most of our shopping at the Milpitas Kmart. (laughs)

JUNGE: Were you very far from the ocean?

ROBINSON: Yeah, we was probably forty miles. We was clear across town, that even went over the mountain. We was all of probably 30 or 40 miles over there.

JUNGE: Why did you leave?

ROBINSON: [00:19:00] I just wanted to come back to Wyoming. It wasn't too bad out there, I just wanted to come back. Too many people out there. So, one day she awakened and she said, "Let's move," and so we did. And her head was still spinning when we pulled out of the driveway with the U-Haul truck. She didn't know what hit her. (laughs)

JUNGE: You had one or two kids at the time?

ROBINSON: Two kids at that time.

JUNGE: And you wound up with three?

ROBINSON: Nope, we just got two.

JUNGE: A boy and a girl?

ROBINSON: Two girls.

JUNGE: So you had two young children and you moved back to Wyoming and accept a job for half the wages or less?

ROBINSON: Yeah. It was -- we was about \$7.50 or \$7.25 out there, and then we went to Riverton at \$3.25 an hour.

JUNGE: Who'd you work [00:20:00] for?

ROBINSON: It was a place called Riverton Aviation, and there was two partners. They had a place in Idaho Falls, Riverton, and at Scottsbluff.

JUNGE: It wasn't a big outfit, or it was?

ROBINSON: No. They did some small maintenance. They sold a few -- just a small, what they called FBO fixed-based operations, and they did a little flight instructing and a little bit of charter.

JUNGE: Any spraying?

ROBINSON: No, they didn't any spraying. No, they had -- they owned a plane that they leased out to a guy out at Scottsbluff. They had this little Pawnee at the Scottsbluff operation, and they leased that out to some people, but they didn't [00:21:00] do any spraying themselves, no.

JUNGE: Was there any helicopter work?

ROBINSON: No helicopters.

JUNGE: Can you work on helicopters?

ROBINSON: I work on one. I work on a Bell 206 the company has out here.

JUNGE: So, you are A&P for not just fixed-wing, but for helicopters?

ROBINSON: Yeah, I -- yeah.

JUNGE: Or is helicopters -- do they have the same class? A&P?

ROBINSON: No, it's not a different rating. In the US you have one rating. You've got airframe and power plant. Unlike Canada, you have to get endorsed for every little thing you do. You have to have a lot more endorsements, and you have to go to -- of course, they call their mechanics in Canada engineers.

JUNGE: Why?

ROBINSON: I don't know. I've been to school with -- when I got to school they get into these Canadians, and they call their mechanics engineers, and they have to have a lot endorsed. Now, we have -- by law, we should -- we have [00:22:00] to be supervised and perform the duty under somebody that's done it -- under the supervision of somebody that's done it before, supposedly. But we don't have to have anything

endorsed or anything, but you have to have the proper updated maintenance manuals and equipment and stuff.

JUNGE: Do you have to be tested occasionally?

ROBINSON: Nope. Not as an A&P. Your A&P never expires.

It will go -- it doesn't really expire, and you can keep it forever, and then you can come back as an A&P mechanic at any time you wanted.

JUNGE: Pilots aren't that way though.

ROBINSON: The pilot license is still good forever, but you have [00:23:00] to have your biennials and check rides and stuff.

JUNGE: Why don't you?

ROBINSON: I don't know why the mechanics -- I have another certificate. It's the IA. I have to be renewed on it every two years now.

JUNGE: What is it called?

ROBINSON: It's an IA.; it's an inspection authorization.

And that one there, you have to -- it's every two years. You can X amount of works. You do so many annuals or you can go to some refresher classes. Now, if you don't do that, that one will expire and you will have to retest, but the A&P technically never really goes away. You could use that if you wanted to.

JUNGE: OK. So you're at general aviation. Then you go where from there?

ROBINSON: [00:24:00] Well, I spent between -- when I left, I got drafted and then I joined the Air Force. There was that four years I was in the Air Force, I was flying on C130s, and I spent most of my four years in Hawaii.

JUNGE: Yeah, tell me the story of that. How did you escape Vietnam?

ROBINSON: Well, they gave me my choice. I went to the Air Force and tech school and got into the aviation maintenance, got into C130s, then we got shipped to a place called Edwards Air Force Base around Bakersfield, Mojave desert area. And interesting place. So, we were supposed to be there a year [00:25:00] and a half, and they decided to downsize the base. So, after four months, just as we got used to living there -- we got where we kind of liked it. You had to have on-base -- first termers, they got base housing because you were out -- the base was 20 miles from the front gate, and you didn't drive to work. So we had base housing, got to know some friends, and I'm kind of a desert person and we had little motorcycles and we'd drive them.

Anyway, so pretty soon they come up and says we're gonna cut down the base, so we ask for volunteers. Airman Robinson, would you like to go to -- when C130s were active in Vietnam. You had a good chance of going there, and I was in a place that the squadron was the 6593<sup>rd</sup> Test Squadron. And so, they asked me if I wanted [00:26:00] to transfer out and go to Vietnam, or if I wanted to transfer over to Hawaii for three years. Let me think about it for a while. And here's your sign. So we wandered off to Hawaii and I was in the 6593<sup>rd</sup> Test Group. We were in to -- we caught satellites in midair with these C130s. It was a very interesting job. I was afraid flying; that's why I'm a mechanic and not a pilot.

JUNGE: You're afraid of flying?

ROBINSON: Yeah. So, I got this job. They put me in and it was classified. We were called load masters. Actually, we were aerospace recovery specialists, but we were -- our 4313, whatever, our job description, [00:27:00] called us load masters because it was technically -- part of it was real classified, and the small 200 pound satellites were kind of classified. And so, then we went through that.

So, the first day I went to Hawaii, the wife's in -- she didn't go right away. I get there and we get in a C130 and it breaks down. This happens to be Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, my first attempt to fly. So, we're -- one airplane breaks down, and so we get in the second one, and it takes -- something happens to it. I can't remember what happened.

So, we get in the third airplane, well it has an overheat problem on the runway and the pilot shuts it down on the runway and we jump out of this thing on the active runway and they used the Honolulu [00:28:00] International Airport, Hickam Air Force Base uses them. So, we abandon this airplane and the pilot, he says, I think it's Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> and three tips enough. Let's go home. And I said, it's going to be a long three years for Marvin Robinson. But I flew and then I become -- we did this aerospace recovery, and then I become an easy way -- I was to become -- I was actually called a flight instructor, but I just trained the backend crew.

JUNGE: Backend crew meaning what?

ROBINSON: The backend crew, we had this winch and this big -- we called it a dolly and we opened them back doors

-- on a C130 the backend opened up, and this dolly was  
-- it'd be really hard to explain.

JUNGE: A moving platform?

ROBINSON: It was a moving platform -- thank you -- and then  
it'd go out. Well, [00:29:00] we had a big winch tied  
to the -- it was in the airplane and it had a rope on  
it. We'll, we'd string this out and they had some of  
these 50-foot poles, and we'd attach this rope loop.  
We called it a loop and it had hooks in it, and we'd  
attach it to the end of these poles -- very hard to  
describe -- and there's this platform that'd go out to  
the end of the thing, and then the poles would  
hydraulically go down, and then there's the loop  
setting there. And we would fly over the top of this  
parachute and catch it with a 200-pound weight on  
there, and then we'd reel it in.

JUNGE: Wait a minute. You're catching something coming  
out of the air?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: You're in the air yourself, right?

ROBINSON: Yes.

JUNGE: OK. So, the backend is open, and you've got this  
net, right? Effectively, a net?

ROBINSON: Yeah. It'd be a rope loop with some hooks on it, yeah.

JUNGE: What could you possibly catch [00:30:00] in the air with that?

ROBINSON: A parachute that this -- the satellite -- it was actually a little 200-pound satellite would come out, and then they'd deploy the chute and it'd float down and we'd fly over the top of it about 10 feet and we'd snag the parachute.

JUNGE: What if you missed the parachute?

ROBINSON: Then they had several attempts to do it. That's why we practiced four hours a day.

JUNGE: What happens if you don't hook the parachute but you tear it instead?

ROBINSON: Well, if they get a tear-through and if it doesn't stream too bad, they can go back around and catch it again, if they have a tear-through. But you know, they didn't have a lot of that. They would have some that would tear through the parachute if they didn't catch the risers just right that was in the parachute, and they'd tear through and then they would still make an attempt to catch it.

JUNGE: [00:31:00] So where were you positioned at the time?

ROBINSON: We were -- there was five of us in the back of the C130, what we called the backend crew, and there was four of us in each; two up front, plus the winch operator. That'd be three, and then there was two on the backend. See, I'm scared of heights and I used to sit at 42,000 feet, we used to open that door up, and I'd set out there and look out the back window, look over that ramp at 42,000 feet and you were so high it didn't really bother you. It was cold. It was cold. It got pretty scary -- when you got down to 2,000 feet, it got pretty scary setting on the end of that ramp.

JUNGE: Were you connected by a safety belt?

ROBINSON: Yeah, the two aft people were connected with some safety cables, yeah.

JUNGE: Did you fall out?

ROBINSON: No.

JUNGE: Never?

ROBINSON: No.

JUNGE: Did you see anybody ever fall out?

ROBINSON: Nope, nobody ever fell [00:32:00] out.

JUNGE: What would you do if they did fall out?

ROBINSON: You would die. (laughter)

JUNGE: The short and sweet part of it is that you would die.

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: Oh, boy. Yeah.

ROBINSON: That's all. You'd just fall out and you'd be gone, yeah.

JUNGE: Well, you'd be hanging from your safety harness, right?

ROBINSON: Yeah. You know, there was not enough wire. You couldn't fall over the edge. The restraint was a reel -- [nursa?] reel, and you could clean out. There wasn't enough rope. You could lean out and tilt probably about 30 degrees out, is about what the -- yeah. There was not enough cable -- you could not fall off that ramp.

JUNGE: I don't recall ever reading about catching satellites. I don't think I ever -- I don't think I've ever heard about that.

ROBINSON: If you was to get into the *Reader's Digest*, December issue, 1968, there's [00:33:00] an issue called "Spies in the Skies." That's what we were supposed to tell our people back home. They really didn't want us to say too much. Everybody in Hawaii knew about this. I mean, you go around with suits on

with your patches. So, they would just tell us when we got over there, that if you want to tell your people what you're doing, then you can just tell them to look at this edition of *Reader's Digest*, 1968 in December, "Spies in the Skies," and it'll tell about this. And it was interesting. I was on about 12 real missions where we actually caught real, little satellites. Little gold little round things.

JUNGE: How big are they? Three feet?

ROBINSON: Yeah. Probably three feet, yeah.

JUNGE: Three feet [00:34:00] in diameter?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: And, why did you have to -- why were these things falling out of orbit? They were just -- used up their useful life or something?

ROBINSON: Well, they were -- no, they weren't -- they had to collect -- you know, this is old time stuff, I guess. I don't really know why, but they would shoot them out of orbit. I mean, they had this all planned to come down. When we went to get them, there was five airplanes involved in different places. They wanted the information inside of them, and I don't know if they reused them or not. When we seen these things and put them in this can and locked them up,

from that point on, we knew nothing. They were taking pictures, and why they couldn't get what they wanted to from a TV set or whatever, like they can -- see, that outfit is all gone now. They do it differently now, of course. [00:35:00]

JUNGE: These were spy satellites?

ROBINSON: Yeah, that's what they called them, and we were spying on the -- supposedly on the Russians or whoever. I don't know who we were spying on. They orbited the Earth and took pictures.

JUNGE: So, what were you thinking at that time about these spy satellites? It was just part of your job?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: Nothing more, nothing less.

ROBINSON: Yeah. When you're in the military, you just -- you was in the military, you just do what they say. (laughs) And we went and then that was it, and we caught them things. And they wanted them -- I think mainly they wanted them to see if -- they wanted them whole to see if they were coming out of orbit OK, not burning up or something.

JUNGE: How did they get them out of orbit?

ROBINSON: I don't know how they -- they shot them down just like they do the -- how they -- [00:36:00] and what

they're in when they come out of orbit, I have no idea. I know when we pick them up, there's a parachute with nylon ropes on them and there's this satellite on the bottom of it.

JUNGE: It'd be interesting to know how they got them out of orbit.

ROBINSON: And just whether that parachute had to be setting in some kind of a heat capsule or something.

JUNGE: Yeah.

ROBINSON: But see, we never did know anything. We knew that pretty soon we'd look around and somebody would say, "There it is!" and we'd catch it, and then we'd bring it back. (laughs) There was a box -- we'd put it in this canister, and then they'd bolt it up and when we got there, they carried it off and it went to Sunnyvale, California, I guess, is where I think they launched some of them out of there. There was Sunnyvale and Van Nuys, I believe. Some come out of Van Nuys, I think.

JUNGE: So, did you usually get them on the first try?

ROBINSON: Yeah. Very seldom they ever missed them.

JUNGE: [00:37:00] It's a good pilot that can manage that.

ROBINSON: Yeah, they started tracking them way up high, and then they would follow them down, what they called the box. They'd fly a box, and they'd watch them, and then when they got down to 12 or 15,000 feet, then that's when they'd open up. Normally they'd try to get them down where we could breathe a little bit better, and then they would catch them.

JUNGE: OK.

ROBINSON: I think at probably 15,000 feet they had room for like ten passes to go over the top of that thing. They had a lot of time to do that. It was interesting.

JUNGE: Yeah, I've never heard anybody talk about that. So, what did you think about -- you had a choice to go to Vietnam or Hawaii?

ROBINSON: Yeah, they asked me, do you want to go to Vietnam or Hawaii, and I said, let me think [00:38:00] about it. Well, you dummy. So, we went to Hawaii.  
(laughs)

JUNGE: Did you really have to think about it?

ROBINSON: Nope.

JUNGE: Yeah. What were you thinking about Vietnam at the time?

ROBINSON: That's why -- I didn't really think much of Vietnam. I wasn't too -- I knew it -- everybody knows what's going on, but that's why the wife didn't me to -- I was just going to stay drafted and take my two years and whatever. "Oh, no, no, you're going to go in the Army and get shot." So, we picked the Air Force, and actually talked to the Navy, and the Navy would not take me. I had to have -- because I had a kid now. She's had this kid. And the Navy wanted me to have a supplement income over the Navy pay.

JUNGE: Really?

ROBINSON: The recruiter -- the recruiter said -- my old brother was in the Navy and that's how I went down to the Navy, but they wouldn't take [00:39:00] me. I had to have a supplement income because the naval pay -- because I was married and had one child.

JUNGE: I don't see how the Navy could ask you to have another income when you're serving the country.

ROBINSON: They did, so we said thank you and we walked over and the Air Force guy took us, but the Navy wouldn't.

JUNGE: What was -- did you have -- see, I went through the Vietnam experience, but not in the military. I was stateside the whole time. I lucked out on my deferments. What were you thinking about the war when

you went into the Air Force? I mean, did you have a political opinion about it? Did you have a --

ROBINSON: Nope.

JUNGE: No?

ROBINSON: No, I don't think we need the war. I think there's got to be a better way of doing that stuff, but evidently there isn't because how many of them we got going on right now? You know, there was a wise old -- Bob Peck in Riverton, [00:40:00] he was a Riverton Ranger, and he always said --

JUNGE: I knew Bob, yeah.

ROBINSON: -- in today's world, there's got to be a better way than war. But evidently there isn't. No, you know, I never really had -- I never was much -- I knew there was a Vietnam and some of my good friends went over there, and a couple of them got killed the first day they were there, and some of them made it clear through. Wyoming, for percentages, young lads that went to Vietnam, really got killed, percentage, Wyoming is one of the -- you know, we donated a lot of kids for over there. Percentage-wise, it's terrible.

I got a classmate, [Jerry Deck?] in Riverton, he was over there a short [00:41:00] while and got shot in the head, and it removed most of his brain, and

they -- he didn't die. They don't know why he didn't die. He's alive today. He comes to our class reunions, and he can -- I haven't seen him now for five years, but he was at our last class reunion. He can feed himself. He's in a wheelchair, and he knew me. I seen him out at Golden Corral place up there, and went over and his family really takes care of him, and I seen him at the reunion and he knew me. But his -- most of his head was removed and they don't -- and they told his -- they shipped him home to Riverton and told his mother and dad that he will never talk and never do anything, and him and his mother and his sister worked with him and he drives the family boat. They've got to set him in there. He can move his hands and stuff. He's got a -- they give him a ride -- for graduation he got a 1966 Mustang [00:42:00] 350.

JUNGE: Ford Mustang?

ROBINSON: Shelby 350. They've still got it today, I believe. Worth a lot of money, I believe, and they take him for Sunday rides. His brother is Wayne Deck and he's got a motorcycle with a side car and they take him. He's lived all this while. But anyway, my opinion of the war was, you know, I really didn't know really why we was over there. Even -- I don't know if

anybody really did or not. (laughs) I have a brother-in-law that he spent, he spent some time over there. I have one friend in Riverton that spent, I don't know how many tours over there, because he liked to hurt people. That was a place that he could go hurt people and not in trouble. (laughs) That's some of my buddies. [00:43:00] But he did a couple of tours over there, and then he ended up getting killed out here.

JUNGE: How did he get killed?

ROBINSON: He -- a truck blew up when he was fueling it out here on Poison Spider. They do this -- they load this gas out here and for some reason the truck blew up and it killed him. Anyway, so I had a lot of friends of course, and the wife had a lot of classmates, and they didn't come back.

JUNGE: There was a lot of smoking of pot and stuff like that, and there were some pretty fatalistic attitudes among the soldiers, and maybe that's why they smoked pot, was to relieve the pressure, but did you have the same kind of -- it wasn't the same way in Hawaii, I take it?

ROBINSON: No, we didn't have a lot of that. Of course, I went to work. I was married. I lived in the barracks

[00:44:00] about three or four weeks until the wife moved over then we lived off base. When I wasn't working at the Air Force, I was working at either -- I worked at the base bowling alley as a janitor for a few months, then I went to work at this Piper Flight Center.

JUNGE: Yeah, that was the next thing I was going to ask you about. Where is the Piper Flight Center?

ROBINSON: It was right on the Honolulu Airport in Hawaii. It was the Piper Flight Center. It was a big flight school. They had like 40 little Piper 140 trainers. But I worked over there at night, and then when I wasn't in the Air Force working, or at Piper Flight Center working, then I tried to get out to -- we did scuba diving when we was -- I don't know how [00:45:00] we did all this stuff.

JUNGE: I don't either.

ROBINSON: But that's what -- so I wasn't too much into the -- we would have like a New Year's Eve party and some of the young kids would come out, and I don't know if any of us -- if any of that bunch was even doing any kind of marijuana or anything. I don't think -- I'm sure some of them had to be, the young kids.

JUNGE: What did you do at the Piper Flight Center?

ROBINSON: I was -- I was a mechanic.

JUNGE: The same as you are now, only you were working on smaller planes?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: OK. Now, you got out of the military, you left there. You were no longer working for the Piper Flight Center?

ROBINSON: Right. Yeah.

JUNGE: And you went to where?

ROBINSON: I went back to TWA.

JUNGE: In?

ROBINSON: San Francisco.

JUNGE: OK.

ROBINSON: Yeah, when we got out -- that was kind of that void I [00:46:00] -- we went to the military four years, Piper Flight Center I was working, then we went back -- we went back to TWA in San Francisco. Ended up living in San Jose because we couldn't afford to live up closer to the airport. Even in 1973 it was fairly expensive. We were making \$7.25 an hour.

JUNGE: Did you drive a car to the airport?

ROBINSON: Yes.

JUNGE: How many miles was that?

ROBINSON: It was 40 miles one way, and then I did get in on a car pool, and there was four to five of us, and we'd car pool, so it wasn't too bad. See, the traffic was a lot -- we worked graveyard shift, so there was -- we went to work at midnight, and then in the morning coming down, coming south, there was no traffic. Everybody was going north toward San Francisco, and it was at that time we always [00:47:00] called it the world's longest parking lot, because even then, the traffic was nothing like it is today out there in California, but it was -- but going south, when you got off at eight o'clock in the morning, there was no traffic. It was not a big deal, but if you were going to go north of the airport, there was traffic.

JUNGE: Yeah.

ROBINSON: And so we car pooled, and about every fourth week you'd drive, so it wasn't too bad.

JUNGE: But then you came out to Wyoming, you went back to work. You then -- you were in Riverton and Scottsbluff, correct?

ROBINSON: Yes.

JUNGE: And then back to Riverton?

ROBINSON: No. I came from Scottsbluff to Casper.

JUNGE: To work for who?

ROBINSON: Casper Air Service.

JUNGE: Was that a big outfit?

ROBINSON: Yes. It was -- it was started -- it was -- the Werner family owned it. Dutch Werner started this back [00:48:00] in 1951, and he called it Casper Air Service. And then somewhere his kids -- he had two sons; Fred and Wayne -- that got involved with him. Fred was kind of the mechanic type, and Wayne was the pilot. So, in about 1974 or '5, they bought it from the dad, but I come from Scottsbluff in 1977, and Fred and Wayne owned Casper Air. Dutch still had an office. Dutch Werner was a fairly -- if you go around town, maybe people probably forgot about him by now, but they were out there and he started Casper Air and it ended up being a very big Cessna service center.

JUNGE: Was he in the military? Dutch?

ROBINSON: [00:49:00] I think he was in the military. He came -- I'm sure he was in the military, and he was actually living in -- he worked for United. United had an overhaul base in Cheyenne, and he worked there, and somehow then -- and his son Fred was born in Cheyenne -- but in his -- I don't know if -- I'm sure he was in the military, but the real clear recollection is that Dutch worked for United in

Cheyenne. Somehow he started flying a DC3 or a Beech 18 for the oil company here called Laughlin Brothers, and they were -- owned Casper Air. [00:50:00] And Fred ended up -- Dutch ended up buying Casper Air from this oil company from Laughlin Brothers. I hope I got that right. I think it is Laughlin Brothers. And then he proceeded to run it as an aviation place.

JUNGE: Are his kids still in Cheyenne or here?

ROBINSON: No. No, his kids are -- Wayne lives over in Washington now, and Fred is retired and goes from Arizona to Casper, retired.

JUNGE: He'd be interesting to talk to about his dad's adventure.

ROBINSON: Yeah, you would probably need to get a hold of -- Fred Werner was like raised on the field, and like Dutch Werner rebuilt a DC3 for Arthur Godfrey.

JUNGE: Oh?

ROBINSON: And Dutch would have a lot -- you know, he loved -- Dutch was into aero where this was an interesting business, I think.

JUNGE: [00:51:00] So, Fred -- how to do you spell that last name?

ROBINSON: W-E-R-N-E-R.

JUNGE: Oh, it's an E.

ROBINSON: Yeah, it's W-E. This one street you come down,  
they named -- after he retired, they named it after.

JUNGE: Oh, man. I bet he has some stories to tell.

ROBINSON: Yeah, he would be good because, you know, he was pretty much born and he run that show down at Casper Air, and it became a very big -- we had -- or, he had 110 employees down here, and it was the number five Cessna dealership in basically the world. One of the biggest parts businesses going. They sold a lot of parts around the world. A lot of people didn't want to be bothered with exporting parts, but he had -- it was a quite a deal. So, I worked there, under the Werner administration I call it, for 21 years, and then they sold [00:52:00] it, and I can't remember what year it was. I don't know if we could ever remember what year the Werner's sold it to an outfit out of Texas.

JUNGE: By the name of what?

ROBINSON: They -- they were called -- they kept it as Casper Air. They kept the name as Casper Air and ruined it, but they were called --

JUNGE: You'll think of it. Don't worry about it. You said they ruined it. What did they do?

ROBINSON: Well, they just -- they parted it out. You know, we had a prop shop, an accessory shop, and they just -- they bought it and then they started selling it off, and then they didn't pay their bills. And part of the deal was -- what they did was, [00:53:00] they painted big airplanes -- wish I could pop the name into my head -- but in Texas, they had a paint booth where they painted Fed-Ex's airplanes, United's airplanes, and what they were trying to do, from what I gather, is build a bigger -- a bigger empire, and they were trying to get Boeing's paint business, but they had to show that they had whatever big deal. So, they were buying up a lot of stuff. Well, they went broke, and then they sold it to another bunch in Texas, and they switched the name. The name was tarnished now. The Casper Air name was tarnished.

JUNGE: Tarnished now?

ROBINSON: If you walked downtown and you had anything that said Casper Air on, like if the auto parts store wanted to get something, they would tell you, if it's something to do with Casper Air, [00:54:00] don't come in.

JUNGE: Because they didn't pay their bills?

ROBINSON: They didn't pay -- we was down to getting the lights shut off. It was aviation -- anyway. They tried to -- and they all went broke. They lost their paint business and they lost everything. They painted a plane for Boeing. Down in Portland they've got some big hangers and they made a paint shop down in there, blimp hangars around the Portland area. And they bought a brand new Boeing -- what would it have been? Some -- and they painted it. Well, the hanger caught on fire and destroyed the airplane. Well, that really raises cane with your insurance premiums, and I can't remember if it was the 777 -- I think it was when the 777's were new. They had it down there and the hanger caught -- it destroyed everything. I don't know what the particulars were.

JUNGE: You were working for [00:55:00] Casper Air all this time?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: And you saw the changes?

ROBINSON: Oh yeah. When Casper Air sold out, then we went into Av Group -- Aviation Group is what that was called. They kept it, and then the second people out of Texas, they changed the name to Jet Center. They started buying places up and it would be like Casper

Jet Center, and they -- they did pretty good. Nobody wanted maintenance. See, now they want to sell fuel. These companies don't want maintenance. They tried to lease the maintenance to people and all this, and so then our service centers -- we had a lot of service centers. Casper Air had Mitsubishi, Commander, Garrett service center, and that's where you get your business, is having service centers. Well, then this started just [00:56:00] kind of depleting as they didn't want to do this stuff. The world's changing. And so, the Jet Center, he was -- they were pretty nice guys. And then, he was going along -- there was -- he was like really a nice guy, one of the owners, he come up and he was like a Pakistani or from India or something, but he was born and raised in Texas. He had a Texas accent. They were headquartered out of like Durant, Texas. Anyway, this guy was really nice and I think his name was -- just went by Thomas. But he was a nice guy and they went along. Well, his -- they ended up selling out. They had a partnership. So, they sold out to another group and they changed it [00:57:00] -- this Thomas bought it. He bought -- the five guys from this, his partners, he bought his partners out.

Well, he changed it from Jet Center to Gateway. His main thing was -- we were Gateway number -- Gateway One, see? Well, when they tell these pilots taxiing in, go to Gateway One, hell, they'd taxi to the terminal. (laughs) But his idea was, it was Gateway to Yellowstone. Well -- and he ended up buying five of these others, and he called them -- we was Gateway One, and then whatever, there was one in Greely. Well then he -- he went along and he sold out to a place called Trajen. This company bought him out.

JUNGE: How do you -- do you know how to spell that?

ROBINSON: Yeah, it's T-R-A-J-E-N. [00:58:00] Trajen. And so, then Trajen goes for about another year or so, and then they sell out to a company called Atlantic Avia -- that's what it is today. Atlantic Aviation.

JUNGE: How many -- that's about a half a dozen different owners.

ROBINSON: Yeah. In a timeframe of -- when I came down here nine years ago, it was 2005. It went from Casper Air to Jet Center to Gateway, and then now, in nine years, it's been -- it's been --

JUNGE: Now it's Atlantic.

ROBINSON: Yeah, it was Trajen. It was Gateway for awhile after I left, and then it was Trajen and Atlantic.

[00:59:00] So, actually that's not too bad. In eight years it's been only two owners.

JUNGE: Well, how did it affect you personally?

ROBINSON: Well, that's when I started looking for jobs, see. I started looking right -- because the place wasn't -- each time somebody'd buy it, they don't want the shop. So, they would get somebody when -- when Trajen bought it, they had some places that done maintenance that was under -- it was called, not Pro Air -- what was it called? That leased their maintenance. This outfit had leased the maintenance from them because Trajen didn't want maintenance.

JUNGE: Well, if they're selling av fuel, if that's what they want to do, then it seems like the burden comes down on guys like you, and it seems like your value ought to go up.

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: Is that right?

ROBINSON: [01:00:00] Well, I don't know if it did or not. The -- they didn't want -- they did not want the maintenance. You know, these people don't want the maintenance because they want to sell fuel because they can -- they've got their little cards and they can take the card from the pilot and they go like this

and in a few days to get paid. The maintenance side of it, a guy brings his airplane in. He wants to do an annual inspection or do some maintenance, and it takes awhile to do it let's say, well then you send him a bill -- nobody -- nothing is cash in aviation. If I go take my car to [Driner?], I've got to pay for it that day, you know? Well, the aviation world still runs on charging it. Send me a bill. And so, you send him a bill in 30 days, then he comes back and he don't want to pay part of it because he thought you overcharged [01:01:00] him, so then he takes -- so, after 30 to 60 days, you get most of your money. So, it costs you, and that's why they don't want these maintenance shops, see? But some of the bigger shops that are doing jets and all this. But that's why these guys want to sell fuel.

JUNGE: You didn't do jet engines?

ROBINSON: No. I worked on the turbine -- the turboprop engines. That was the Garrett engine? We was very big into the Garrett. It's Allied Research, and now it's called -- I think it's something else now, but it was Garrett Air Research.

JUNGE: How long did it take you to do an annual inspection on one of those?

ROBINSON: Well, it would depend. The engine would only take you a few hours, but if it -- Garrett was on a twin Commander -- an Aero Commander, be a twin turboprop, and it's like a 40 hour job.

JUNGE: To do both engines and the whole plane?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: Airframe?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: [01:02:00] So your inspection is not just with the power unites; it's with the whole airframe?

ROBINSON: Yeah. You would do -- when you did -- and they called them 100 hour inspections, and every 100 hours of flight you'd have an inspection.

JUNGE: Well now, Marvin, you were making -- how much an hour were you making when you were working on them?

ROBINSON: Actually, when I started -- in 1977 at Casper Air I started at \$7.50 an hour, and when I got done in nineteen -- in 2005, I was making \$18 an hour.

JUNGE: And how much were they charging for an annual inspection?

ROBINSON: Their hourly rate -- their hourly rate was up to about \$70 an hour.

JUNGE: They had that much overhead, or they just made that much profit?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: What? They had overhead or profit?

ROBINSON: Well, there was some overhead. [01:03:00] Just how much profit was made -- I know Fred Werner retired OK. The Werner's did OK there, but you know, they worked hard and they ran a good business, and they were there for years and they had quite a deal. But when I started -- when I started in 1977 for \$7.50 an hour, I think their shop rate was around \$35 or \$40 an hour.

JUNGE: So, this is the kind of business I should -- anybody should go into. Is, get a guy that's technically competent like yourself, that's passed the test, that knows how to do the work, and then charge, you know, five time the amount. Five times what you're making anyway.

ROBINSON: Yeah, there's a lot of -- there's a lot of equipment and a lot of regulations you have to put up with, and then so, that would be -- you can say there's probably quite a bit of overhead in there to get your -- to keep [01:04:00] the equipment up and then all that.

JUNGE: Well, you've got rental of your space too, right?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: And heat and light and employee pay and so forth.

I see. OK. But these guys didn't die poor?

ROBINSON: No.

JUNGE: No. Did you work on a plane today?

ROBINSON: I did.

JUNGE: What'd you work on?

ROBINSON: I was working today on mainly a Cessna 340. It's a little twin engine. It's our smallest twin out here. We've got -- and I'm changing an engine on it, is what I'm doing.

JUNGE: I think Bob -- you know Bob [Chaney?]?

ROBINSON: Bill?

JUNGE: Bill or Bob, his son, Bob.

ROBINSON: Now, I don't know -- I know Bill Chaney, but Bob Chaney, is that his son?

JUNGE: Yep.

ROBINSON: Never met him.

JUNGE: Did you work on Bill Chaney's planes?

ROBINSON: You know, I did not work on -- Bill Chaney always took his airplane to a fellow that's called [Gary Luce?]. Gary had a shop [01:05:00] out here in the dirt strip and he's in Lander now, but Bill always -- I don't think I ever even changed oil on Bill's plane because he didn't get along with the Werner's, I

guess. But he always had this -- I never did work, technically on it. I know Bill really well, yeah.

JUNGE: I'm kind of curious. This wouldn't be probably the case in San Francisco, Chicago or New York, a large metropolitan area, but do pilots have their favorite mechanics?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: Do they?

ROBINSON: Yeah. I think you get people that you trust.

JUNGE: So, it's not like a major airline company where the --

ROBINSON: No, I think if you have your little -- littler airplane, even your smaller corporate planes, you go to a shop and I think you get where you like them. You get your mechanic that you know and you trust and [01:06:00] --

JUNGE: And you've worked on his plane so you're familiar with the engine.

ROBINSON: I was- I worked -- I got involved with two -- well, I had -- at Casper Air, I was the turbine shop foreman. What they called me; the turbine shop foreman. I had one employee; me. I supervised myself. But anyway, it was kind of a weird deal at Casper Air, but I got into the turbine shop, I started

working on the MU-2's. There was a -- they started an MU-2 service center. Mitsubishi.

JUNGE: Mitsubishi?

ROBINSON: Mitsubishi, and they called them MU-2's. They were a twin engine turboprop, designed in Japan, built in Texas, and that was my first experience with the bigger turboprop airplanes, and I don't have a picture of one here, but that was Mitsubishi Aviation Industries of Japan. And they built [01:07:00] these planes and they assembled them in Texas, in San Angelo, Texas -- no, no. Not San Angelo. Somewhere in Texas. San -- not San Antonio. Maybe it was San Angelo.

Anyway, they built them there and we was -- there was this young man that came up. He was a tech rep for Mitsubishi, and they hired him when they started the service center. Well, he's a Texan and nobody wanted to work with him. So, he went around -- they had 19 mechanics at this time, and I was the last one that this -- and his name is John Paul Jones. Famous out there. John Paul Jones. Famous. Anyway, I said, I'll work with you. So, the next day I went to MU-2 school down in Houston is where you went to, and I stated working on these airplanes, and then that's how

I got into the [01:08:00] turboprops. Well then, about two years later -- he quit. So, I became the turbo shop foreman, and then we was in the bust of the early '80s. People were -- as people quit they weren't replaced. So, I ended up -- I was the turbine shop, basically. But we did a lot of work on Mitsubishi's.

JUNGE: So that -- the early '80s was a tough time because of what, deregulation?

ROBINSON: No, just the economy went down, is what the deal was. I don't know what caused all that. I know when I got here in '77, I was the 10<sup>th</sup> mechanic hired at Casper Air and they just -- and when I got there a year later, they added on the second part of that building down there. There's two buildings put together at Casper Air; one being the turbine shop. And it went really well. We had like six to eight MU-2's. We did work [01:09:00] for the factory there. When they would buy and sell, we'd do pre-purchases and stuff, and then we got into doing hot sections on the Garrett engine that was on them, and the gearbox work and stuff.

JUNGE: Hot sections? What are hot sections?

ROBINSON: Yeah, that's -- they're part of the engine they refer to as the hot section, and every so many hours you have to take them apart and inspect them and put them back together.

JUNGE: These are piston driven engines?

ROBINSON: No, these are turbine engines. Yeah, these are turbine. They'd be turboprop engines.

JUNGE: OK. Let me ask you this, Marvin: what does it take to be a good mechanic? Airplane mechanic?

ROBINSON: You just have to -- you have to be clean, you have to be neat, you have to be organized, and you have to be careful. (laughs) And, I don't know if it takes too much -- I don't know if you have to be all that bright. It's nice to be able to read and understand [01:10:00] some directions, but I don't really -- what you have to be is really careful and watch what you do. There is a lot, a lot of liability and the pay is very low, and even today -- and you've got a lot of liability. You know, if I do something out here and my -- we've got planes that carry ten people out here, and if something happens I could kill ten people if I didn't something wrong. I've been pretty lucky.

JUNGE: So, it takes a cool head?

ROBINSON: Yeah, you've just got to be -- you've just got to pay attention and watch what you're doing.

JUNGE: Where did you learn that from?

ROBINSON: I don't know.

JUNGE: Were you born with it? Was your dad that way?

ROBINSON: You know, I never was much around mechanics and around my dad. He worked in a cleaning plant and he worked [01:11:00] at US Steel. He would change brakes on his car or something, and then -- I just -- I think it's something you develop. When you go through A&P school, they kind of teach you. You know, watch where you put your wrenches. If you drop a bolt or a nut in a certain area, you want to go find it. You don't want to leave it there. It could get in something that doesn't work out right. And you've just got to be that way. Be careful.

JUNGE: Have you had any screw-ups?

ROBINSON: Oh, yeah. Everybody has screw-ups. I haven't really had any major stuff. I've worked around people that's had some real good major screw-ups, and I'm trying to think what my biggest screw-up would be, would -- not really anything very serious. I'm trying to think what [01:12:00] I -- haven't done anything that's had a flight problem. I'm trying to think of a

-- I can think of some real good ones that happened at Casper, but I wasn't -- I didn't cause them.

JUNGE: Like what?

ROBINSON: Well, people putting jacks through the wings.

Nothing that -- nothing that the plane was going to really going to take off after. You know, people[01:13:00] would drop the planes on the jacks and just various stuff. One -- actually, you know, one kid he did work and it was quitting time and -- [interruption -- phone]

ROBINSON: Anyway, you know, it's hard to say. I've been around -- I've been around the --

JUNGE: Let me put this back on. I've got it right here. OK. Got it.

ROBINSON: Been around what I call sloppy mechanics that leave their tools and stuff, so it's hard to say. But some of it, I don't know. You know, the most interesting thing that I had happen probably, and it wasn't my fault but I was -- we had this plane out of Riverton. It belonged to US Energy, Jack [Larson?], the boys from Riverton, and we maintained this Commander at that time, for him, and it was what they called a Twin Commander. It was a pretty nice plane. Well, [01:14:00] his pilot landed down in Ft. Collins

and the gear folded up. Well, we went -- being that we were a service center for Twin Commander and the Garrett engine, me and this [Kim?], we went down there and got it jacked up and got the gear back down, and then we had to change the engine.

So, we get a loaner engine from Garrett out of Phoenix -- they've got loaner engines -- put it on, we take this engine off, and we'd either decide whether we wanted to look at repairing it, or this other one was going to go off to the factory for repair. So, we change this engine and I just get in this airplane to start it. I just start this airplane and it's running, and pretty soon I heard this beeping noise in the cockpit, and about that time the same landing gear folds up. It collapsed with this loaner engine running, and it ruins the engine. Smoke all over the place, the airplane setting on [01:15:00] one side, see? And we don't know what happened. But that would be my -- that was probably my most -- one of my more interesting --

JUNGE: Well, what was the reason for the second failure of the landing system?

ROBINSON: You know, we don't know because we moved that plane around and we -- down in the old Ft. Collins

runway, that -- them planes would sink in the ramp and we would push that thing back to get it moved to a hanger. It was sunk into the pavement. It was on water there. That's why they shut that airport down and moved it. And we had to tug on it, we'd rock that plane back and forth to get it out of the holes, and we moved it over there, and alls I was doing was running that plane, and I -- you run them on what you call the start locks on the propeller, sets at a flat pitch, and then when you take them off the start locks, the plane moves a little bit and it just -- the gear collapsed.

So, I hear the great Marv Robinson [01:16:00] has to call [Mirna Green?] down in Phoenix and say, "You know, do you have another engine? I just ruined this one," so she says -- we worked a lot. She says, "Oh, no. Let me check." So, they had another engine. So, they shipped another engine up so me and this Kim that was with me working, we came home for a day or two and then we went back and we changed the engine again. But, we wanted to get -- so this time, we went and got some metal and clamps and we wired the gear down. It wasn't going to move before we ever started it, see? Because we would have flown this plane home stiff

legged. We wouldn't because it had a gear problem.  
And this young man that was relatives of US Energy was  
a welder. He went downtown to get some angle iron to  
make some braces, and I -- I'm just going to start it.  
I wanted to leap check it. And I did. [01:17:00]  
And then we did it again. And then we got it home and  
then I was -- I always feared after that of running a  
plane with a lot of power. It still scares me.  
That's been -- that's been probably 19 -- oh, maybe  
1990.

JUNGE: Now, you had -- according to what Anne wrote, you  
had a plan at one time.

ROBINSON: I did.

JUNGE: Do you fly?

ROBINSON: I have a -- I have a private pilot's license, but  
I'm not current.

JUNGE: Tell me about this plane that you -- you built a  
plane?

ROBINSON: I bought a little Pipe Tri-Pacer. It's a little  
fabric airplane. Like a Super Cub. It's a little  
different but it was -- Piper made what they called  
the Tri-Pacer. It's a little fabric plane, got four  
seats in it. Actually, in that day, in that day it  
was the plane, back in the '50s. [01:18:00] It was a

four-seat plane and they used them for charter. They carried people. That's about what they had. Casper Air, Dutch used to carry bodies in them and stuff. He flew charter with these Tri-Pacers.

And so, I bought this thing out here. It sat right out in front of this hanger and it was in pretty bad shape when I first moved here. And I bought it and I rebuilt it, and I converted it back to a tail-dragger, which was called the Pacer. See, they had the Pacers -- they had these tail draggers -- that's the tail wheel on the tail -- and then they're a little trickier flying, so they started building Tri-Pacers and they put a nose wheel on them. It had a nose gear on it, and they're a lot easier to control that way. The difference of pulling a chain or pushing a chain, would be kind of -- and they get little -- but anyway, I [01:19:00] rebuilt this thing and I learned to fly in that airplane.

JUNGE: So, who owned the plane?

ROBINSON: Hm?

JUNGE: Who owned the plane?

ROBINSON: I did.

JUNGE: No, before.

ROBINSON: There was a guy here, a young kid, that bought that plane. His last name was [Moyer?] I think. It's been a long time ago. I bought that thing in about 1978.

JUNGE: What'd it cost you?

ROBINSON: I paid \$1800 for it.

JUNGE: How much did it take to -- how much did it take you to fix it up?

ROBINSON: You know, dollar-wise, it was -- I probably only had maybe a -- through the conversion I probably had \$2000 of materials. The conversion kit was about 1500 to convert it back to a tail dragger.

JUNGE: Where did you do the work?

ROBINSON: In my garage.

JUNGE: At home?

ROBINSON: At home.

JUNGE: How'd you get it into your garage?

ROBINSON: It was all tore apart. I had the wings off of it and stuff like that. Did it a piece at a time.

JUNGE: Wait a minute, though. Your [01:20:00] garage has got enough room for a Piper with wings?

ROBINSON: With the wings off of it, it'd fit. Yeah. The wings were off.

JUNGE: When did you put the -- how did you put the wings on? You drove out to the drive -- pushed it out on the driveway?

ROBINSON: Yeah. When we -- I came over here and tore it apart here on the ramp, took the wings off, took it home. It was a couple of years. Nobody knew our name in the neighborhood, but if somebody was hunting, oh, them are the people with the airplane in the garage. That's how we was known over here. So, when I got it all done, I got a few of my friends and we towed it over here. We had the fuselage off, just the fuselage. We towed it over here and I tied it down in front of the Casper Air, and then I got permission to get it in. Actually, we put the wings on it right there outside.

JUNGE: How did you tow the fuselage?

ROBINSON: You just tie the tail wheel to your bumper and you tow it over there. It's pretty common. Pretty common. You know, I don't have a trailer, so [01:21:00] I just -- I just hooked it -- we just sat the wheel up in the back of a pickup and tied it down, and we just towed it over here. And then carried the wings over and assembled this thing and got it all rigged up and running.

JUNGE: Yeah?

ROBINSON: And then I -- then, me being afraid to fly, I had to fly in it. So, I got this very super pilot by the name of Jim Good, and he was my first flight instructor. And if anybody should have feathers, it should be Jim Good.

JUNGE: Feathers?

ROBINSON: Yeah. If anybody was ever meant to fly, it was Jim Good.

JUNGE: Really?

ROBINSON: You know, he understood these airplanes. He was good. But he started teaching me to fly and he got tired of me, so we were kind of friends. He [01:22:00] wanted to teach people aerobatics. He didn't want primary students. He didn't really want -- but we flew for a few hours and then he give up on me, and I got another flight -- actually, I went through four flight instructors. I had -- Jim found one that the guy actually -- this is not very funny. He was a pilot here at True, and before we ever got to fly -- he didn't want to fly with me, so he went out and killed himself in an airplane (laughs), in Denver. But I never did -- he was going to be a flight instructor and I never did fly with him.

But anyway, and then I went to the third one and then he -- we flew quite a bit. He was a pretty good pilot. And then he moved. These guys were afraid of my flying. I mean, Jim told m his license expired, this guy [01:23:00] went out and killed himself, and then this guy, he had to move clear to Kansas to get away from me. And then my fourth guy, [Dean McLean?], another super -- he's the spray -- he's the spray pilot in Torrington now. He's got a spray business. He finished my private license up. He must -- he had more guts than all of them, I guess. And so, he finished me up.

But I had four instructors that had thousands of hours and I was very fortunate. These guys knew how to fly airplanes. Most of your flight instructors can't -- they don't know nothing about flying airplanes. They don't have any experience.

JUNGE: What's a flight instructor for if he doesn't --

ROBINSON: Well, you know, aviation is backwards. Aviation -- they've got the youngest troops teaching to fly, and most -- most organizations would have people with experience. By the time these instructors get enough time, then they go get a job flying somewhere, then [01:24:00] they get another instructor that comes in

that's -- you know, they know how to fly. They're certified and they teach the maneuvers, but they don't have -- this Jim Good, he had experience, and Dean McLean, and all these guys. I was very fortunate to have these people.

JUNGE: You know, Marvin, I don't understand. If you were afraid of flying, why you bought a plane and started flying.

ROBINSON: Well, it's -- you know, it's kind of like riding in the car. If you're driving the thing you're not so -- you're not so --

JUNGE: Worried.

ROBINSON: -- worried about it. But I did. I rode in that thing and I learned to fly it, and then I flew it actually by myself. I even -- Anne Marie rode in it twice.

JUNGE: Who?

ROBINSON: My wife, Anne rode in it.

JUNGE: Oh, yeah. Anne.

ROBINSON: But then I ended up selling it. I got working so hard at Casper Air, they were so busy, I was working six or seven days a week [01:25:00] and I have this little plane, and gas was getting way up over a dollar a gallon.

JUNGE: Imagine that. Imagine that.

ROBINSON: Yeah. (laughs) You know, I started flying, it was 86 cents a gallon. My little plane burned about eight gallons an hour. And so, then it got -- then we got so busy and other things were going on, and so I just wasn't flying it. So, this guy come by and said, my uncle needs an airplane. He -- actually, this kid worked at Casper. So, I ended up selling this airplane.

JUNGE: For how much?

ROBINSON: I sold the plane for \$10,500.

JUNGE: I would say what was a pretty good investment over the years.

ROBINSON: Yeah. We did -- we did pretty good. That plane today would probably still only be maybe around 20,000. You can still get into the little Tri-Pacers and Pacers and their little four [01:26:00] seat planes with not too much avionics, you can get them for 20 or 30,000 bucks yet.

JUNGE: Would you, when you retire, go back to flying?

ROBINSON: No, I probably wouldn't get one. I keep thinking about it, but they've got -- now it's \$7. It's (\$)6 to \$7 a gallon for fuel, and I keep thinking about maybe I -- my idea of flying was just to go out Sunday

morning. I'm considered a Sunday flyer. I'd get up at six and go out and fly for an hour or so and come back. I didn't never really have any desire to go cross-country, to take my little plane and fly to Flagstaff.

JUNGE: But really, were you really afraid of flying?

ROBINSON: No, not when I was out. I flew it every day for two years. I'd come to work, so I don't think I was afraid of flying it, no. No, because I flew it all the time. I only ended up having about -- I think I only had about 280 hours in it.

JUNGE: Does [01:27:00] your interest then in flying come from the fact that you worked on the machines that put them in the air, or because you just are fascinated by the flying aspect of flying?

ROBINSON: Well, I thought that if you was -- if you was working on these things, that you ought to know how they fly. There's a couple of operators around the country that won't hire a mechanic unless they are a pilot or want to be a pilot and will learn to fly. Not professionally, but at least just get to your private rating. You know, you can relate -- that's one reason why I relate to some of these pilots, because they knew -- what I flew was a tricky little

plane. When it's on the ground it was quick. It was really short-coupled. And these guys got -- they thought that was pretty cool that they were talking to a mechanic that could [01:28:00] actually understand the basics of flying.

JUNGE: Now, what do you mean by short-coupled?

ROBINSON: This was the wheel base from the main gear to the tail wheel was really short.

JUNGE: Oh.

ROBINSON: So when -- these tail draggers, if you -- you can get into a situation and do what they call a ground loop where that tail will come around and it will spin around, and they call it a ground loop, and sometimes you can get in trouble and get the plane over on its back or get a wing bent, and they get really -- well, this little Pacer is really quick. Some of the Citabrias and Cubs are a lot longer and they're more docile on the ground.

JUNGE: What was that first one? Some of these, you've said --

ROBINSON: The Citabrias?

JUNGE: Citabria?

ROBINSON: Yeah, they made -- Citabria makes a little plane similar to -- it's a small -- Bill Chaney owns a Citabria.

JUNGE: He still [01:29:00] owns three planes.

ROBINSON: Yeah. He's got -- he's got planes yet, and he had some Scouts and he had a Cub and he's got Citabrias, and this newer one he got, which is fairly old now, is an Explorer, but it was a Citabria make. Citabria supposedly is aerobatic spelled backward. I've never really thought, but some -- this girl that wanted to do aerobatics that we knew from the (inaudible) world, she said, "My friend's got a Citabria and it's actually aerobatic spelled backwards," and I never have -- I never to this day tried to spell it backwards.

JUNGE: How do you spell Citabria?

ROBINSON: I don't know. Citabria, it's C-I-B-R -- I don't know.

JUNGE: OK. Well, it doesn't quite spell aerobatics backward, but maybe there's more to the word than I --

ROBINSON: I think it's spelled different, [01:30:00] but she said it's aerobatics spelled backward.

JUNGE: What's the -- what's the best engine, or the one that you enjoy working on the most?

ROBINSON: You know, I don't really have any favorites. I worked on -- as far as a turbine engine -- was the Garrett engine. I know more about that than any engine. I've had them things tore clear apart and put together.

JUNGE: Now, with problems with aircraft, the frame, you had accidents up at Hawkins and Powers because their old military planes got stressed. The steel got stressed, there were cracks developing and wings flew off. How in Heaven's name can you tell if there's any serious flaw in the frame without using an x-ray or something?

ROBINSON: You don't. That's why they're starting to do more x-ray, ultrasound and eddy current.

JUNGE: Eddy current?

ROBINSON: Yeah. [01:31:00] We just had a section of this 210 out here, and there's -- and I can't really tell you how it works. The guy's got a little box and it's a probe and it sends out a signal, some kind of -- and I think it's like whatever eddy current is. I'm not a very technical person because I don't do that.

JUNGE: Wait a minute. You're a mechanic for Heaven's sake.

ROBINSON: That's where I -- I just tell him where it's at.

We have a service bulletin, and I know that he runs his probe across our wing spar, and as long as the line on his graph goes straight, we're OK. But if it goes -- if he's got a sharp thing the oscilloscope --

JUNGE: A little blip?

ROBINSON: -- there's a crack there. And I haven't -- I never worked to a place that has had any x-ray equipment, ultrasound or eddy current, and we hire that done. There's [01:32:00] a place in Denver that does a lot of it; NDE. It's non-destructive testing, and I don't know what the E stands for. So, we hire that stuff done. We've had to do --

JUNGE: Maybe it's non-destructive examination or something.

ROBINSON: Yeah. That's probably their company name. The -- the word we get in the service bulletin, just we can use non-destructive testing, and they just -- their company name is NDE. And non-destructive testing that means that we don't have to destroy our airplane, like bend the spars and break them. They can look through with x-ray. Ultrasound is another device they use. We used to have to have them ultrasound. The wing spar on the Twin Commanders. We would just prepare

the airplane and they come in with this ultrasound, and they had a test point and [01:33:00] they would check thickness, and they were checking for corrosion with ultrasound. And they go through, and once again, I'm -- I know it's ultrasound and they shoot a wave through that -- through the --

JUNGE: Sure. They do it through bodies, too.

ROBINSON: And that's what they're doing.

JUNGE: Now, we missed -- we missed a little section here, and boy, we've spent a lot of time here.

ROBINSON: Oh, I gab too much.

JUNGE: No, you don't. This is what it's all about. We had you at Casper Air Service for 27 years.

ROBINSON: I was -- yeah. I was in that building. I was with Casper Air for 21, and then the other five or six years, it was under them different names, yeah. I was in that building for 27 years, yeah.

JUNGE: So, where did you go from there?

ROBINSON: True Drilling.

JUNGE: I thought it said -- your wife said you worked for Spence and Moriarty and Wyoming Machinery.

ROBINSON: I worked on their airplanes. I worked on their airplanes.

JUNGE: Where? When you were at --

ROBINSON: At Casper Air.

JUNGE: [01:34:00] Oh, OK.

ROBINSON: Yeah. I worked on -- I worked on Jerry Spence's Commander for 18 years. They brought it -- he was out of Jackson. You've probably heard of the famous Jerry Spence. And then they bought it. They actually bought the plane from Casper Air, Commander, and their pilot [Glendy Broder?] was their first pilot. He flew it for 19 years, and I was probably -- and I worked on it for 19 years at Casper Air Service. Me and Glen got to know each other really well, but that's where -- and then the -- then the Wyoming Machinery airplane was the Caterpillar dealer, and I got to know Dan Grace when he had Cessnas, because I'm one of the guys that understood him. I'm a very patient person with these mechanics. [01:35:00] And --

JUNGE: Well, you're a mechanic.

ROBINSON: I am a -- I meant pilots.

JUNGE: OK.

ROBINSON: But Dan Grace and we just got going, and then I was caught in the turbine world at Casper Air, and then Wyoming Machinery bought a Beechcraft. They moved from Cessna up to Beechcraft. And so, then I

started -- I was pretty much their main mechanic, but I did work at Casper Air Service.

JUNGE: So, looking at quality or size of airplane, do you go from Piper to Cessna to Beechcraft?

ROBINSON: Well, some of the -- Piper actually has some turboprops too that would be the equivalent to the King Airs out here. Yeah.

JUNGE: Do you service any of these planes that are made over in Afton? Aviat?

ROBINSON: We worked on -- Casper Air owned two what they called the Huskies, and they had -- and we maintained some for the wildlife that hunted coyotes with them, [01:36:00] and then Casper Air got into the contract business, and he bought two Huskies -- they called them Aviats and then they called them Huskies, and so, we did quite a bit of work on them. We repaired them when the pilots drove them into the bushes and stuff. (laughter) And so yeah, we did work on them.

JUNGE: Did you ever have to repair a prop that got shot off by a guy killing coyotes?

ROBINSON: Yeah. Yeah, we took a few props off from being hit with the buckshot, and then -- most of that, you take the prop off and you put another one on. You

usually don't -- when they got shot with the buckshot, they're not repairable.

JUNGE: Because they're not true?

ROBINSON: Yeah. They just will blow a section out of them.

JUNGE: OK. So, why did you come from Casper Air to True?

ROBINSON: I waited to come to True for probably 20 years.

As the turbine [01:37:00] mechanic down at Casper Air, and then True bought into some turbine aircraft that I was very familiar with -- the Cessna 441 and the Cessna 425 -- and so, Gary [Prew?], which was the mechanic here. Their first and -- their first mechanic --

JUNGE: Prew?

ROBINSON: Gary Prew.

JUNGE: Prew. OK.

ROBINSON: Yeah. He worked here for 28 years. He worked at Casper Air. Then when Mr. True stated this building, he needed a mechanic, so Gary Prew come down here and he worked for 28 years, and I came down and helped Gary so much when he needed help. He didn't want to know much about the turbine engines, and he needed -- he always liked somebody to help him, and I came down here so much that when he finally retired, I just

automatically was in. I just came down here and went to work, but I kind of tailored myself [01:38:00] for 20 years or so.

JUNGE: Why?

ROBINSON: Well, it worked out really well. This is really a good place to work. Being a corporate mechanic is a lot different than being a general aviation mechanic. You know, I had customers down at Casper Air when we (inaudible), I had customers all over the United States. I had them in California, in Florida, and then all the time during the weekend I'd do -- you'd just get called. I'm broke down. And so I knew the Commander and the Mits pretty well, so I could explain to them, and if they could get somebody to look at something, I was -- but I get calls quite a bit. Then you had a lot of customers.

But being a corporate mechanic is a different world. You've just got your same little airplanes, and you get to know them, and it's just -- it's really [01:39:00] nice, especially after -- right now -- right now there's no mechanics at Atlantic. They shut the shop down (laughs), so that's another reason why I'm here. You can see this happening. Right now there's a young man by the name of Travis that has the

lease -- the maintenance from Atlantic is Travis Peters, and he just did this -- in fact, they're still working out the deal this week -- but right now they shut the shop down. They were down to two mechanics. Casper Air at the peak had like 110 employees. They had 29 mechanics, 16 charter pilots, six flight instructors. They always had 20 to 24 of their own aircraft, plus all the other stuff [01:40:00] coming in; the prop shop and the avionics shop, and the accessory shop. They had all this and then it come down to there was two mechanics down there, and then they -- they shut the shop down. So, it's just went away.

JUNGE: Now, you mentioned prop shop, avionics and accessories. What's the difference?

ROBINSON: Well, the accessories works on like magnetos, carburetors. Accessories -- fuel pumps. Then the avionics shop is the radios -- would be the radios. They still have the avionics shop is now owned by -- they got Leroy [Dunn?] down there, it's the Natrona County Avionics, and he's had that for -- it's still going and they do really well.

JUNGE: And the accessories shop?

ROBINSON: Yeah, the accessories shop is actually owned now by Steve [Mulholland?] and it's off -- it's downtown now, because [01:41:00] he -- most of his business is mail-order. So, he don't have to have the expensive rent on the airport.

JUNGE: What are accessories?

ROBINSON: Accessories would be magnetos, carburetors, starters, generators.

JUNGE: Can you work on all those?

ROBINSON: No. No, I don't have any equipment to work on them. I take them off and take them down to the accessory shop. I would have to have a lot of tools to overhaul even a carburetor. You'd have to have a little flow bench to check it. I used to do starter generators on the Garrett engines -- starter generators, and that was just about it, as far as the accessories. You have to have so much -- now, today, to do a starter generator, we used to be allowed to put it on the airplane and we could test it on the airplane. [01:42:00] Now they won't let you do it. You have to have a test bench that's fairly expensive to check all the outputs and all the torque for the starter system and stuff. So, when you get in that -- but I -- I don't do any of the accessory overhauls.

JUNGE: So this isn't a duct tape and bailing wire operation. I mean, you're a specialist. There are certain things you can't work on?

ROBINSON: Correct. Yeah.

JUNGE: So you're a specialist then?

ROBINSON: And then sometimes -- some of that stuff you don't want to work on because you want to put the liability on somebody else, (laughs) you know, we just -- that's kind of a way to put it.

JUNGE: Well how -- you like working for a corporation because you don't get called at all hours of the night. The schedule is one thing. And then, is it also because you're looking at the same planes all the time?

ROBINSON: Well, it's in -- the benefit -- the [01:43:00] benefits and the money is a lot better.

JUNGE: I wonder why.

ROBINSON: You know, I don't know what it is. I'm probably double my money than I am down there. It's just kind of different, corporate -- I don't know. And then, you know, I am on call 24/7, and in nine years -- we watch these planes really close and we do a lot of stuff to them. I've been called out twice in nine years, out for a broke airplane.

JUNGE: That's great.

ROBINSON: We're just not -- we just -- the planes, of course -- so we have two King Airs. We should go show them to you, but --

JUNGE: Yeah, we'll take a picture. I want to get a picture of you anyway.

ROBINSON: One just turned five and one's just coming up four years, so they're fairly new. The little Cessna 340 is an '81 model. [01:44:00] They bought it brand new, and it's kind of -- and then the Cessna 210 is the '79 model. And then that helicopter over there is a -- the 210 is a '79 model, the helicopter is a '71 vintage.

JUNGE: What kind is it?

ROBINSON: It's a Bell 206.

JUNGE: Oh, OK. What kind of boss makes the best boss? I mean, you've worked for Spence and Moriarty. You've worked for this Dutch -- the guy that --

ROBINSON: Dutch and Fred.

JUNGE: Yeah. And you worked for True. What makes for a good outfit to work for?

ROBINSON: You know, I just -- to have a nice, clean place and somebody that wants -- Casper Air was like a hospital. Casper Air down there, Fred Werner was --

if you ruined a \$50 thousand engine, he said be careful. [01:45:00] Be more careful. Leave dirt on the floor? You're probably going to get fired. The place was like this one out here. It's a hospital. It's not anymore like that down there.

JUNGE: This is clean.

ROBINSON: Yeah, this -- well, Ruthanne comes in at eight o'clock in the morning, and she's cleaning something. She never stops. She goes and then she wonders at four o'clock why she's so tired, but she starts and when she hits that door in the morning, she's always cleaning the floor. Her first thing is the airplanes, and she works on these planes, and you know, she's into that stuff.

JUNGE: What's her last name?

ROBINSON: It's Bowers.

JUNGE: And she's in her sixties?

ROBINSON: Yeah. I think she might have just turned 65, yeah.

JUNGE: And she does all this physical labor?

ROBINSON: Yeah. She's tough. And it's starting to -- you know, she's kind of wondering now it's -- you know, how long she's going to go.

JUNGE: I was down at [01:46:00] Wings of Wyoming, which is a flight school down in Cheyenne.

ROBINSON: OK.

JUNGE: Don [Feltner?] runs that, and his hanger was like this. I mean, at first glance, everything is immaculate. I mean, does it have to be? Car garages aren't immaculate.

ROBINSON: No. There are some shops that aren't very clean. I've been into some pretty big, well known shops that aren't clean. You know, we -- like at Casper, and this is part of my thing. I don't leave my toolbox setting -- I've got a corner over here. When I get done, I put my ladders up and put everything -- roll my toolbox over in the corner. All of my tools are put in so I know that they're there and stuff, but some shops -- some shops are not tidy. Right now I've got some cowling laying under that 340 which shouldn't be there. It should be in a cowling rack somewhere but I just laid it there the other day to use another workbench. But I've got three pieces of cowling [01:47:00] laying on the floor and I usually don't do that.

JUNGE: Why is it necessary to be tidy?

ROBINSON: Just so you don't get stuff -- keep it organized,  
and then put it where nobody will step on it.

JUNGE: Does it have anything to do with dirt and stuff  
getting into the engine? Or part --

ROBINSON: No.

JUNGE: Is it just a mentality, that you need to --

ROBINSON: Yeah, just -- yeah, it just looks nicer to keep  
it organized. If you like stuff -- like, I've got  
something out there on the floor and somebody comes  
through at night and they could step on it. One  
little piece of airplane part can cost a lot of money.

JUNGE: Yeah. I'm not a mechanic. I have no mechanical  
inclinations, but I would think that your attitude  
about cleanliness goes right along with your attention  
to detail. Is that right?

ROBINSON: Yeah, I would think so.

JUNGE: And doesn't that make for a better mechanic?  
Attention to detail?

ROBINSON: Oh, yeah. Yeah, you want to watch that.

JUNGE: [01:48:00] OK.

ROBINSON: You asked me earlier about what makes a good  
mechanic, and I don't -- I don't know. Details is a  
big thing, and then just being clean. Being cautious,  
and of course, there's the part of being mechanical,

too. I know some people that they can't put two screws together. They can't do it, and they don't want to. They aren't interested. And so, and not everybody wants to do this. You know, you get your hands all beat up and you get this and you get -- we handle some greases down there with cancer warning signs on them, and wear rubber gloves for fuel -- greasing a shaft in the fuel pump on the Garrett engine, it's a little tube. Of course, Wyoming Machinery, they've got these greases down her that are bad [01:49:00] for you too.

JUNGE: Do you ever have a chance of losing a digit on your fingers?

ROBINSON: No.

JUNGE: You've got all your digits?

ROBINSON: And I wear this ring, which is basically a no, no.

JUNGE: That's a no, no.

ROBINSON: But I've had this on for a long time. In fact, when I was in tech school in the Air Force, I usually wore this around my neck. They'd allow you if you had to to put it on a -- when you were out on the flight line during school. One day I forgot -- and it sparkles, you know -- Robinson! He come down here.

Well, I had to write this 500-word thing on safety. And you know, I can -- I'm not too much of an author. I don't know how these people -- my wife can really let the words flow, and I can't do that. I had a terrible time writing a couple of pages on safety and it was supposed to be around [01:50:00] wearing this ring, but you know, they show you the pictures in tech school of people getting rings caught and their nerves are hanging on. They've got this finger with the nerves pulled out of your arm and stuff. Pulling your finger off, jumping off of trucks or something, getting them caught.

JUNGE: Well, I can see how a rancher would have the same problem with barbed wire fence.

ROBINSON: Oh, yeah. That's why some -- a lot of people won't wear rings, watches.

JUNGE: Have you ever propped a plane?

ROBINSON: I've hand-propped quite a few planes. Most places won't let them do it. It's a safety thing, but I'd hand-prop my own if the battery was dead, and then a few people down here that come in with the older planes. They'd ask, do you want a hand-prop, and I was -- I hand-propped airplanes, yeah.

JUNGE: Did you ever have a -- get hit with a prop?

ROBINSON: No.

JUNGE: I did. I worked for Big Horn Airways in 1969, and this guy [01:51:00] that had a -- I think it was a Piper Cub -- he wanted to fly out to a place called Bill, Wyoming, up near Gillette?

ROBINSON: Yep. Mm-hm.

JUNGE: And help this lady with her lambing -- docking operation or something. Anyway, he asked me to prop the plane. And he said, "Now, just do it this way. Pull away from the prop. Pull away from the prop so you don't get hit." I thought, you know, this thing is going around. When you flip that propeller it goes around so slow, I'll be able to get out of the way. I wasn't and it clipped my finger, and I thought I lost a digit off my little finger. But there is a trick to it.

ROBINSON: Yeah. You know, some people hand-prop from behind.

JUNGE: Really?

ROBINSON: Yeah, they'll stand behind. And part of that, it came from the old Super Cubs, because these guys could actually hold the throttle, and then they could prop from behind, and then they could -- if something happened, [01:52:00] they could get in the cockpit to

control their airplane. I never propped from behind. I did a few aerobatic planes that come through. There was this jet team, and I went out and they hand-propped each other. Well, there's one guy there and I was standing there, and he says, "You want to prop me?" and I said yeah, and they've got -- this guy's got gloves on, he's hand-propping his highly polished -- my hands were clean, but here I go over here and I grab a hold of this prop, and I know when he landed he's got these hand prints on his -- and you know, it was a little (inaudible) but it started right up and I lucked out, but they're big airplanes, you know -- the little four cylinders and under the 200 horse aren't too bad to prop.

JUNGE: That plane that you had was a what? A Piper?

ROBINSON: Yeah, it was a Piper Pacer.

JUNGE: How big an engine?

ROBINSON: It had 160 horse in it.

JUNGE: So how fast would that fly?

ROBINSON: It'd do around 130 miles an hour. It was pretty fast. [01:53:00] I had it -- I had it slicked up pretty good. Had a -- really a wild, a cruise prop on it, and then the 160 horse made it -- most of them were 150 horse, the Tri-Pacers, but the 160, they put

high-compression pistons in it, and it made it work a lot better up here at altitude.

JUNGE: Probably burned up a little more gas?

ROBINSON: Yeah, it'd burn just a little. It'd burn eight gallons an hour.

JUNGE: What did the tank hold?

ROBINSON: I could carry 36 gallons of fuel.

JUNGE: So, let's see, four, eight, 36. You could fly for four hours?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: But you'd never chance four hours?

ROBINSON: No. The most I ever flew it was about two hours. That's about as --

JUNGE: Out of the state?

ROBINSON: No. My biggest trip was, I went to -- my biggest trip was from Casper to Sheridan to Gillette to New Castle to Douglas [01:54:00] to Casper.

JUNGE: Landing at all those airports?

ROBINSON: Yeah, did a little solo cross country.

JUNGE: (laughs)

ROBINSON: And then my other trip, I had the plane from Thermopolis and back, and we had it to Lander. We used to have -- this ramp used to be full of planes out here, and we used to get together and there was

about from 12 to 20 Sunday flyers. Some out -- there's a dirt strip out north here, that it's too bad [John Erwin?] wasn't here. I don't know if you would have known John. He died a couple of years ago. He's got Hartford Airfield out here. His son lives out there, [Robby?], but this guy, he would have been very interesting for you. But he's gone now. But anyway, we had planes out there. I kept my plane on the dirt strip. You didn't have to have a radio out there. You're this far from the control center, see?

JUNGE: What, four or five inches?

ROBINSON: Yeah. [01:55:00] You're just -- if you stayed outside of the interstate, you didn't need a radio. It was interesting. But anyway, so every Sunday -- first Sunday of the month, we'd go for a breakfast run, and people would take off with their planes over at Hartford, and some would take off here, and then we'd try to rendezvous to head up to Sheridan for Thermopolis. And here these people are flying out -- you know, we're Sunday flyers. We have no sense in what do you turn in. I don't know.

In fact, I almost got knocked out of the air going into Sheridan. I was a student pilot and Bob Palmer was with me. He was an instructor so he could

fly an airplane. So, we're just on a short file going into Sheridan and this gal flew right over the top of us. She bumped us. She almost -- she almost hit the top of us. She was landing and she went right over the top and never seen us. Didn't know we was there. And so, I [01:56:00] asked her, Judy -- she died last year -- but anyway, I said, "Did you see us?" I mean, she bounced us. She was really close. Really close. She just went right -- see, you can't see when you're coming down, and especially if you're doing a real sharp -- you just can't see anything. She went right over the top of us and in front of us, and I said, "Did you see us there?" She said, "No." And that's what really scared me. Anyway, we had these little things flying around, and I don't know how we ever --

JUNGE: Kept from smashing into one another?

ROBINSON: But we did about -- only about four or five of them breakfast runs, and then people started leaving and the airplanes went away. You know, when I first came here in '77, from that ramp by the Fed-Ex building down there, [01:57:00] it'd be next to the Atlantic, but this whole ramp had tie-downs on it and it was full of little airplanes and all the hangers were full of planes.

JUNGE: What happened?

ROBINSON: You know, I think it got too expensive. The fuel -- Casper is known to have the highest fuel in the country, but it's self-serve over here is like \$6.75 a gallon, and so, if you get a plane that burns eight, it's expensive. And then some of these -- a couple of the guys moved, and then they just sold planes and it just got expensive, I guess.

JUNGE: Well, you have to keep current on your license, which means you have to go through a certain amount of rigmarole.

ROBINSON: Yeah, you have to go every two years and have a biennial flight review. You'll go to a flight instructor. You've got to have a physical.

[01:58:00] Physicals every two years. Biennial is every two years?

JUNGE: Mm-hmm.

ROBINSON: And then you can go and some of them -- some of them actually really give you a flight review, and some of them you pay your buddy a cup of coffee and he'll sign you off, but some people really give you -- and that's the idea. It's not to flunk you, it's to go through some new regs. It's a review. It's not necessarily to flunk you, and it's to --

JUNGE: Update you.

ROBINSON: Work on this a little bit, and it's a biennial flight review.

JUNGE: Well, was it -- so you think it was then the price of gas mainly that got rid of all these little planes out here?

ROBINSON: You know, they just disappeared. Our economy there in the early '80s went down and people moved. We used -- there was just so many people that had little airplanes. There's still a lot of them setting around, and people still -- this Dan [01:59:00] Grace that -- he flew Wyoming Machinery's, he's got his little -- he's got a Cessna 185 and he flies it around quite a bit yet, and he burns about 20 gallons an hour, so it gets real rough. (laughs)

JUNGE: Twenty gallons an hour?

ROBINSON: Yeah. He's got a 185. It's got a 300 horsepower engine in it, and it takes a lot of fuel, but it's a nice airplane.

JUNGE: Do you intend to fly again?

ROBINSON: No, probably not. I don't know if I'll ever go. You can't rent an airplane. You'd have to buy one. The flight school is over here. They've got three or four 172s and they're so tied up that you can't hardly

rent an airplane on the field. And my problem with being a mechanic is, you've got a lot of friends -- hey, come and fly my airplane for me -- and then you can do [02:00:00] the maintenance on it, see? Yeah.

JUNGE: And that's not fair?

ROBINSON: Well, then they've always got you out there on your weekends working on the airplane.

JUNGE: Ah. Well, if it was understood that you would give so much for so -- you know.

ROBINSON: You could do something like that.

JUNGE: Quid pro quo; I'll do that if you let me, you know.

ROBINSON: It would work out, something like that.

JUNGE: Yeah.

ROBINSON: No, I just got so busy doing other stuff. I have a couple of little cars at home that I've been trying to work on, and I never seem to get to them anyway.

JUNGE: What are they?

ROBINSON: Well, the wife has a '57 Ford Ranchero, and then I have a '35 International pickup that I've been working on since 1968.

JUNGE: Wait a minute. If my math is correct, that's 46 years.

ROBINSON: Could be. Yeah. I'm still working on it.

JUNGE: Well, it's a long-term project.

ROBINSON: It is. It's been a long term. I [02:01:00] got it out in Spokane from a friend of mine, and then we went through the service, and the thing set out here, and then I pulled it to California and started working on it, and found some more parts. Then we -- actually we moved from Spokane. This thing would run. It had a Buick engine in it, this '35 International had an old '56 Buick engine in it, so we actually moved to California in this thing, pulling trailers twice with this old, rusty '35 International pickup. We must have been cool. We must have been a sight.

But it worked, and then I got it back and I've done some changes, and now I'm -- and then with the -- and I just don't work on it too much. And then the wife got this Ranchero from her brother that died, and it's kind of her car. And now we've got it painted, and it -- but I worked on [02:02:00] it for five or six years, and now I'm --

JUNGE: The mechanical part of it.

ROBINSON: Yeah, and now I'm trying to get back to my little pickup. And I better hurry up here. I'm kind of running out of time.

JUNGE: Let's see. You're 66 going on 67?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: And when are you going to retire?

ROBINSON: You know, I don't know. I wanted to be -- my goal is to be the oldest living, actively engaged, A&P mechanic. And I know I have to go to at least about 89 because [C.V. Jackson?] up in Worland, I think he was 89 or so when they found him on the hanger floor. He worked for Big Sky. He hung around up there, and he was -- I think his mechanic's license might have been like four or five.

JUNGE: Number four or number five?

ROBINSON: Yeah, really, really an old number. I never did get the -- [02:03:00] I got some of his tools. His son, Mickey flew for Marathon -- Mickey Jackson -- when they were out of Cody and here? Marathon Oil? But C.V., he worked -- he hung around the Worland Airport. But he was like about -- but I --

JUNGE: And they found him on the floor?

ROBINSON: He died. I'm not sure where, but that's what I kind of tease about that. So, I don't know if I'll get that far. I'm thinking about maybe about four more years. My wife says, you know, when you're in aviation, you don't have much of a retirement fund. I worked for Casper Air for -- down there 27 years. My

-- I got \$18,000 out of that place, and that was from an ESOP program. Casper Air, employee stock owner [02:04:00] plan, that was an ESOP. I don't know if you hear too much, but it's where the employees buy from the bosses, and then the boss gets some loan that's interest-free or something, and then you get some kind of a percentage of the take of the company. But Fred, he -- and through a five-year period, that was the only retirement program I had out of them years, and I got \$18,000 after all them years, but when you're in general aviation, you're not known to have benefits. Any type of a retirement program or anything.

JUNGE: True Oil doesn't have one?

ROBINSON: True. If I would have went to work for True 30 years ago, I'd really be able to retire today. They have -- they have a real nice profit sharing thing. Of course, my wages is way up. And then they have a year-end bonus [02:05:00] that's very good.

JUNGE: And health care?

ROBINSON: They've got the next -- they've got insurance, and in 10 years -- next year they'll buy all of mine. The first year they pay -- the first five years they

pay half, and then they start paying three-quarters of it, and then at 10 years they pay all of it.

JUNGE: And you've worked for them for how long? Nine?

ROBINSON: Yeah, it'll be -- in December it'll be -- I start my tenth year.

JUNGE: They a good boss?

ROBINSON: Really nice people. Of course, I never see them.

They're downtown and we've got John Campbell is our chief pilot, and he might be kind of an interesting one. I'll have to get your name and number. I've got it back there. You might want to get involved with -- John will be (inaudible).

JUNGE: Really?

ROBINSON: Wade, you don't want to believe about half of what he [02:06:00] says, but he has flown -- he has flown in the jungles and it was carrying in cargo to villages. That he actually wasn't out there hunting for the drug runners. He was carrying in cargo for villages for food and stuff, around the world. He's been -- he flew and you know, and he's done some of this.

JUNGE: Who was this guy that was in --

ROBINSON: That's Wade [Berksman?].

JUNGE: Wade -- how do you spell his last name?

ROBINSON: Oh, Wade --

JUNGE: Oh, no. It's OK. It's around here somewhere.

Anyway, you think he'd be interesting to talk to?

ROBINSON: Oh, yeah. You would -- yeah, he would be -- you know, he's done some stuff on this. Just how much he's really done, we don't know, but he has flown freighters around the world. Big airplanes. The Lockheed 10s, freight around the world, Alaska to Japan, and he has flown some [02:07:00] of this stuff down into South America, and they -- I think they hauled cargo into some of the villages down in some of the -- you know, some of the freight stuff. And he's been around. He's flown.

JUNGE: Marvin, tell me, before we quit here, I'd like to know some of the pioneer aviators that you met. You've been in this business now for how many years?

ROBINSON: Well, technically I -- when I'm in airplane school, the guys says I can start counting my actual aviation career in 1966. In school, we worked on live airplanes, so they said we can count them two years to say we were in aviation. So, we'll say 1966.

JUNGE: Almost -- that's 48 years.

ROBINSON: And I'm going to -- I'll go at least -- I'm going to make at least 50. Probably around 70, [02:08:00] I

might. But you know, if I'm doing OK and the company is -- you know this is a good place to work, and I'll probably -- I don't really have anything else to do.

JUNGE: What does Anne think about it?

ROBINSON: I tell her I want to be the oldest living, actively engaged mechanic and she says, "Why?"  
(laughs)

JUNGE: Good question. Good question. Why?

ROBINSON: But you know, and so I -- but you know, we don't -- we'd have to really change our lifestyle a little bit. I told her, if we were saving half of my paycheck -- we save a little bit, but if we were saving half of that paycheck -- I could consider retiring. But if we lost this paycheck and I know about what we're saving, and I don't think we're going to live on Social Security and the little bit of savings we've got. Life's getting expensive.  
(laughs)

JUNGE: Tell me about it. Yeah. Absolutely.

ROBINSON: And [02:09:00] so -- and we do a lot of stuff.

I'm going to go May 1<sup>st</sup>, I'm going to Reno to the National Bowling thing. I meet my son-in-law and so, we're going to go out there and back and we'll buy airline tickets, and it's going to be a \$2,000 trip

just to hop out to Reno for a couple of days and back.  
And so, if I was retired, losing half of my pay, I'd probably have to think about doing that.

JUNGE: Does she like flying? Does Anne like flying?

ROBINSON: She -- yeah, we don't mind the airlines. She just -- in fact, she's going to fly back out to Reno in June and bowl in the women's thing, but yeah.

ROBINSON: Is it the National Bowling Congress thing?

JUNGE: Where did you guys meet?

ROBINSON: We met at the skating pond at Empire Oil Company in Thermopolis when we was, I'll [02:10:00] say 14. We went to -- my folks lived in Riverton and we had a lot of friends and Thermopolis, and so we'd go over there and was into ice skating, and me and my little sister went down to the Empire Oil Company -- which isn't there anymore -- Empire Oil. They had a pond and they'd clean it off for the kids to come and ice skate. And, my little sister met this girl ice skating down there and invited her in the summer that next year to come and visit, and it happened to be Anne [Gram?], and so then we caught on.

JUNGE: When you were 14.

ROBINSON: Fourteen, yeah. We've actually known each other since we was 14. We lived -- when I was first in

Thermopolis, we lived about two blocks from each other. We had the same friends, but we don't remember each other. We had the same -- you know, a little [02:11:00] town up there, but we've known each other for real since we was 14.

JUNGE: When -- what year were you married?

ROBINSON: We was married in 1965.

JUNGE: You're going to be married 50 years coming what date?

ROBINSON: Yeah, we're going on our 49<sup>th</sup>. It'll be October 8<sup>th</sup>.

JUNGE: What's it like to be married that long?

ROBINSON: You know, I don't know. It's went by really quick, and you know, we've just worked hard and we get along well. She gets her own way. We've got it all worked out, and she gets her own way, and what's hers is hers and what's mine is hers, and -- like she said, she wanted to get young and so she raised me the way she wanted. And I'm a very obedient husband, and I'm very patient, because my wife, she [02:12:00] -- she likes to have it her way, but she don't ask anything of me. I've got lists of honey-dos a mile long, and she knows maybe one day I might do one of them, and if

I do something for her, she's really happy. But we get along really well.

She's kind of very busy in her office. That 10 years she was in the legislature we lost it. You know, we used to hunt and camp -- or camp and stuff. She liked the camping and fishing. She wasn't too much into hunting stuff. But then she got into that legislature, and when she does something, it's 110%, and she just buried herself in it. And so we -- we lost a lot of our -- 10 years of our camping.

JUNGE: Yeah.

ROBINSON: But you know, it was a very, very interesting [02:13:00] time. I couldn't do it, but it was interesting for me to go. I went to a lot of meetings with her and a lot of suppers, and see how the process works. Actually, more people should -- maybe get a little involved. They would understand the process. But no, we got out of that, and she got -- but no. It's been really good.

JUNGE: Did you -- were you friends? Is that how you decided to -- I mean, was it love at first sight, or were you just -- did you just grow this friendship?

ROBINSON: Yeah, it must have -- it must have been love at first sight, I guess. She came over there to Riverton and then we just started hanging out together.

JUNGE: Why did you get married in high school? Why didn't you wait?

ROBINSON: You know, there was no reason to get married in high school, we were just bored. You know, everybody -- everybody in high school that was to attempt get married was pregnant. Well, she wasn't. We wasn't ever to that. She [02:14:00] wasn't, so you know, when we -- just one day we decided to get married. We go over to Idaho. You can get married at 18 over there.

JUNGE: What about your folks? What about her folks?

ROBINSON: Well, they -- we weren't supposed to tell anybody until we got out of high school. This is really weird. I don't know what we were thinking. You know, she's really an intelligent person. I'm not so. She's really sharp. But anyway, for some reason, it was I think kind of her idea to get married. So, we went over and got married in Idaho. We came back home. She's supposed to be to Casper to a CYO convention. We did come to Casper and she did got to

some of the meetings. We stayed at my mother's house. Another long story.

But anyway, we weren't supposed to tell anybody. So, I went back to Riverton, she went back to Thermopolis, [02:15:00] and then a few days later, somebody got out that worked at school, you know, them days you had to take blood tests to get married. So, somebody mentioned to her, "Anne, did you get married?" There was somebody who was down getting a blood test or something. So anyway, she went home and told her folks. Her dad wasn't really very happy, because I really wasn't really wanted before this deal. I was actually kind of asked to stay out of town, actually, and I can't blame. I'm five foot, 95 pounds, and had no -- nothing going for me. Anyway, and her mother thought about the same.

But we got married. Well, I wasn't allowed in the house for a year. After we was married -- after she went home and told her folks, and then I got -- we didn't have a phone out at [02:16:00] my dad's house and my older sister lived in Riverton, she come and said, "Marvin, you've got to tell your dad. Anne Marie is on the way over and you've got to tell him you guys got married." Oh boy.

My dad was a little hard to get along with, you could say. And so, he's sleeping. He has to go to work. He works shift work at (inaudible). So, I went in and I said, "Dad, remember when I went to Casper, or whatever? I didn't really go to Casper. Me and Anne went over to Idaho and got married and she's coming over here and she's got to live with us." And he said, "You what?" I said, "We went and got married." And he said, "Well, why didn't you invite me?" That's all he said. So, Anne Marie moved over to Riverton and we finished high school in Riverton, and everybody was wondering why we got married, you know, because you're supposed to be pregnant or something.

JUNGE: Right, right.

ROBINSON: And so, they kept looking and stuff. [02:17:00]

JUNGE: But your dad, you say, wasn't easy to get along with.

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: And that was his only reaction?

ROBINSON: Yeah. He took that very well. Yeah, he did very well.

JUNGE: Did he know her?

ROBINSON: Yeah. Oh, yeah. She came and stayed the two or three summers, 14 -- she'd come over every summer and stay with my little sister, and then -- and of course, so he knew her folks too, from living in Thermopolis, see. But, her dad was going to -- he called -- he was in the legislature at that time from Hot Springs County. He was calling over and trying to get this annulled and this guy's in -- we got married in a little town called Paris, Idaho, and so -- and Anne Marie said he was hollering at the people over there he was talking to about it, and he says, "I make the laws in Wyoming," and stuff.

And then, I wasn't really welcome in the house, and then we lived [02:18:00] at Riverton, and then we did the summer job getting ready to go to Spokane to go to school. You know, we had an -- we had an agenda. We was going to go to school, and I'm going to be this mechanic for some reason, anyway. So, her dad wanted her to go to college and be either a teacher or an attorney. He always wanted to be that, see, he wanted to be.

But anyway, it was about a year and I -- her one brother got me in the house, it was visited, and so

then we -- I was slowly accepted into the family, and we did really well after that.

JUNGE: It took a while though.

ROBINSON: Yeah, it took a while. And you can't blame the guy. I mean, he wanted his daughter to go to college, and then she marries this kid in high school.

JUNGE: Five foot, 95-pound [02:19:00] mechanic.

ROBINSON: Yeah. (laughs) And you know, we went and we did really well, and they got to where they let me in the house.

JUNGE: Yeah. Has it been a great marriage?

ROBINSON: Oh, yeah. Yeah, we've had no problems. Just as long as she gets her own way.

JUNGE: I think we better quit with that. You were going to tell me about any of the pioneer -- have you met any pioneer aviators?

ROBINSON: You know, no. As far as pioneer aviators, no. You know, just the local guys; the Jim Goods, the John Erwins. I have -- not anybody that's famous like Chuck Yeager or anything, no.

JUNGE: And he was out here, in this Casper base.

ROBINSON: Yeah, he was based here.

JUNGE: Yeah.

ROBINSON: Yeah, he was based here, and I know a guy in Cody, not many years, when [02:20:00] Chuck Yeager was up to an air show, autographed his plane for him. The guy had a Super Cub and Chuck Yeager autographed the door for him and stuff. But I haven't -- as far as -- to me, Jim Good is famous. John Erwin out here, he was into this --

JUNGE: Is he -- is he alive?

ROBINSON: No. John Erwin is dead. Yeah.

JUNGE: OK. E-R-W-I-N?

ROBINSON: Yeah.

JUNGE: OK.

ROBINSON: He had Hartford Field out here, and he was just - - he flew airplanes and -- but I've never been really involved with -- we never had any famous -- and I know there's some B25 pilot here today in Casper. And I don't know his name. Dan Grace would know his name, I think, but he -- when the war birds come in here, that guy had his original crew here. A few years ago, he had [02:21:00] his whole crew to tour this plane here, and I don't know -- I think that guy is still alive, but he was --

JUNGE: Dan Grace --

ROBINSON: -- and he would be famous, but --

JUNGE: Dan Grace works for who?

ROBINSON: Dan Grace is retired now. He doesn't do anything.

JUNGE: OK. Well, if you have any memories of any of these guys after we're done talking and you want to tell Anne about it, she's got my email. You can just email me.

ROBINSON: Yeah. If I can get their names and -- and then we can -- they can get in touch with you. But I'm fairly actually fairly new in the aviation, and then, you know, all the pilots that came into Casper Air were just, you know, ranchers out here and the people that flew -- worked on their airplanes.

JUNGE: You're making light of all this. What is your legacy? [02:22:00] When your kids look back and we're both departed planet Earth -- which could be very soon for me, I don't know. But what -- what are they going to see as your legacy?

ROBINSON: Probably --

JUNGE: That '35 International?

ROBINSON: Yeah, probably. You know, I was going to -- my little grandson really picks out hotrods and cars, and I thought if ever I can get this done, I'll give it to him. But, he's going to be more into hunting and

fishing I think. But he's -- through his life, he's liked cars. His dad is a hunting and fisherman, but this little guy, he'll pick out the muscle cars and hotrods going down here, and then he'll -- he'll stand in line at the gro- when he was like two and three, this kid had a vocabulary that was incredible, but he's two or three, he'd be standing in the line at Cabella's this kid, and he'd look up at a guy and says, "My [02:23:00] grandpa rebuilds old rusty cars," (laughs) and stuff, so I'll probably be known for just being a very loyal husband, and probably a mechanic.

You know, my son-in-law, he -- (inaudible) works for a Cargill. I have two son-in-laws, but he can't figure out why I'm not retired and fishing. He says, "I know my son's not going to be a mechanic if you've got to work until you're 80," and stuff, which I don't -- the little grandson, Luke, he wants -- he's going to be an engineer. He's nine years old. He's going to be an engineer. He might be -- the kid's -- the kid's way, way ahead of a nine-year-old. These kids were really something, these two kids down here.

JUNGE: They almost have to be these days.

ROBINSON: But yeah, they were. He's really smart. That's probably -- the guys will -- a really loyal, patient

husband, and probably [02:24:00] through that I've been in aviation, and that would probably be my legacy.

JUNGE: If you had it to do all over again, would you do it the same way?

ROBINSON: Probably. I say, I probably should have went to drafting school, but you know, I've hit all my aptitude tests in high school, and I always figured that you meant you were rated really low, was mechanical. Whenever they'd come out, they'd -- whenever you did them aptitude tests. I don't know how they can score you, because I never took them tests very serious, but any of that stuff you'd fill out, it always come that I was mechanical. So, I don't know what that means.

But so -- but I probably would probably follow the [02:25:00] same place, if I knew -- if I knew any different, I don't know if I would have made any changes, and if I'd do it over again, if I went and made my dad happy. You know, after a while he got -- he got -- it was pretty cool being the son with the airplane business and stuff.

JUNGE: There must be a streak of this running through the family, did you ever think about that? I mean, this grandkid of yours, he's interested in cars?

ROBINSON: Yeah, and my oldest granddaughter, she's interested in -- she's 20 -- she'll be 20 in August, our oldest granddaughter in Flagstaff, and then we'll see what the grandson does. And our littlest granddaughter is sick. Anne Marie just took her back to Whelan. She is -- she is funny.

JUNGE: Yeah, she told me. She likes being with her, Anne does.

ROBINSON: Yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: And my wife being with her grandkids, and she [02:26:00] is going to be with them before I get back home. Well, we'd better cut this off. Now, one of the things I'd like to do before we leave is -- and I know you're probably starved and I'm getting kind of hungry -- can I get your picture out here?

ROBINSON: Mm-hm.

JUNGE: OK. What -- do you have any ideas about what would make a good picture?

ROBINSON: Hm-mm.

JUNGE: No?

ROBINSON: Me.

JUNGE: I mean with one of these airplanes.

ROBINSON: I'll show you. I'll turn the lights on.

JUNGE: Wait a minute. Let me take this off of you here.

OK, we're done.

ROBINSON: We'll come out here and I can show you the True Air Force for a second.

JUNGE: The True Air Force?

ROBINSON: That's what I call them. This is True -- True Drilling, and so this is the True Air Force out here. When people come -- when the passengers come through, I tell them, thank you for flying True Air. Your flying mileage will be in the mail. These are mainly flew -- these airplanes are company.

[02:27:00] They very seldom, the owners take them on a few pleasure trips, but these are usually to transport the company (inaudible) up through the Montana and North Dakota.

JUNGE: On business?

ROBINSON: On business, yeah.

END OF AUDIO FILE