

OH-3023, Robert Cheney, 4-1-2014, WY In Flight

JUNGE: [00:00:00] OK, why isn't that -- ALC. Oh, OK. Just keeps flashing ALC. I think that's automatic line control. Maybe that's over here. Yeah, I think we're OK. OK, anyway, today is the first of April, April Fool's.

CHENEY: April Fool's.

JUNGE: I'm here along Highway -- what is this, Bob?

CHENEY: Highway 47.

JUNGE: Highway 47, OK, and I'm talking to Bob Cheney, and this is April Fool's Day. He made me try to go down to his house. I couldn't get there, even in my four wheel drive truck. But anyway, let me get this attached the right way. We're sitting here in my truck, my pickup truck along the highway to Casper in Bates Hole. This is Bates Hole.

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: [00:01:00] And we're about how many miles from your ranch?

CHENEY: Probably about three miles.

JUNGE: About three?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: And I went two and a half.

CHENEY: There you go.

JUNGE: And got bogged down. Bob told me that I probably should have gone a little bit further, because I would have

easy pickings on that road, but I didn't want to take a chance. Anyway, Bob, I usually ask people where and when they were born, their full names. Could you give me your full name and where and when you were born?

CHENEY: You bet. My name is Robert Gene Cheney, and I was born in Casper, Wyoming, been here all my life.

JUNGE: What date?

CHENEY: January 1, 1959.

JUNGE: You're 60-- so you're 54?

CHENEY: 55.

JUNGE: 55. Just turned 55.

CHENEY: Just turned 55, yep.

JUNGE: And your parents were who?

CHENEY: My parents were Bill and Pat Cheney.

JUNGE: OK. Now Bill is pretty famous as an aviator.

[00:02:00] He's in the Wyoming Aviation Hall of Fame, is that correct?

CHENEY: Correct. That's correct.

JUNGE: OK, so, did he bring you to this country? Has he always been in this country?

CHENEY: He was -- this ranch here in Bates Hole is -- I'm the fifth generation on this ranch. And so, yeah, we've been here a long time.

JUNGE: Well, who was the first one to come in, then? His grandfather?

CHENEY: His grandfather was the first one to come, and then he wrote back to his father how good this country was, and so his dad came out afterwards. But they both homesteaded in Bates Hole here.

JUNGE: Where were they from?

CHENEY: From Missouri.

JUNGE: Why did they come out here? Did he ever tell you?

CHENEY: Why did anybody come to this country? I mean, they came here to homestead, you know, to get a better term, a free piece of land, you know.

JUNGE: So you wound up with 160, a quarter-acre?

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: Or a quarter of a section?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: OK. What was he [00:03:00] -- what was the -- what were they doing back in Missouri? Were they farmers?

CHENEY: I can't answer that. I don't know. I honestly don't know.

JUNGE: (Laughing). Your dad never told you, huh?

CHENEY: No, never did.

JUNGE: Did he ever meet his grandfather?

CHENEY: No.

JUNGE: He didn't know him, huh?

CHENEY: No.

JUNGE: OK. So your mom, where was she from?

CHENEY: She was from Casper, also.

JUNGE: And then, is that where she met your dad?

CHENEY: Uh-huh, in high school, yeah.

JUNGE: They both went to, I assume --

CHENEY: Natrona County High School.

JUNGE: Natrona Co-- your dad is what, 78 or 79?

CHENEY: 79.

JUNGE: Just turned 79.

CHENEY: Just -- yeah, in January.

JUNGE: OK, and your mom?

CHENEY: She will be 75 in just a couple of days.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yeah, uh-huh.

JUNGE: I'm going to go talk to them today, if I can. It's going to be a lot of fun. So what was it like, growing up here in Bates Hole?

CHENEY: I guess if you're born and raised here, you don't know anything any different, right? You know, now that I'm older and can look back, I guess that I get to place a lot of value on [00:04:00] family, on how deep our roots are here, you know. And as a kid, you don't -- you have no

relationship to that, you know. But now that I'm older and can -- and reflect on that with experience. One time, my dad asked me -- I'll never forget this. My dad, very seldom real serious with me, and one time he asked me, he says, "What is the best thing we raise on this ranch?" And we pride ourselves in the quality of cattle that we raise here, and we've raised good quarter horses through the years, and etc. And I thought on that quite a little bit. I didn't just, you know, give it the dumb kid answer, "Oh, I don't know." You know, I thought about it quite a little bit, and I come back, and I says, "Well, I don't know, Dad. I guess we raise the best feeder cattle in the state of Wyoming," I said. He said, "No, the best thing we raise here is kids."

JUNGE: Is that right?

CHENEY: Yeah, yeah, and [00:05:00] he's absolutely true.

Absolutely true about that.

JUNGE: How many kids?

CHENEY: There's just me and my brother.

JUNGE: Is he older or younger?

CHENEY: He's younger. He's seven years younger than I am, and he went on to get an education. He went to Casper College, and then down at the University of Wyoming. And then, years later, went back and got an MBA at Memphis State.

JUNGE: In what? In master's of business.

CHENEY: A master of business, yes, sir.

JUNGE: OK, and where is he at, now?

CHENEY: He runs Cheyenne Frontier Days.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yes, sir. Mm-hmm. He's the CEO for Cheyenne Frontier
Days.

JUNGE: Oh, I've heard of him.

CHENEY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: OK. There are so many Cheneyes. You guys aren't
related to Dick Cheney, are you?

CHENEY: No, we're not.

JUNGE: (Laughter). Horse trailer and a pickup. So you're
not at all related to Dick Cheney?

CHENEY: That's correct.

JUNGE: Do people confuse you or members of your family with
them?

CHENEY: No, I don't think so. We get asked it a lot, just
like yourself. You know, being the same last name, we get
asked a lot.

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: [00:06:00] But I usually respond with the fact that
we're not related, but I hope that they'll screw up and

send me one of them Halliburton checks someday, but I haven't seen it in that mailbox yet.

JUNGE: (Laughter). OK. So your brother runs Cheyenne Frontier Days.

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: He lives in Cheyenne?

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: Is he a pilot?

CHENEY: That's a whole different story. I guess you got nothing but time, so I'll just tell it to you.

JUNGE: I got plenty of time.

CHENEY: My -- of course, we grew up on this ranch fly-- our dad being a pilot. And he owned -- the first airplane he owned -- well, I wouldn't say the first one. The first one while we were on this ranch was a Super Cub. And the Super Cub that he had, we hunted coyotes with it in the wintertime. And then in the springtime, he would put a spray -- mounted a spray rig on it, and he sprayed thousands and thousands of acres of mostly sagebrush. He would spray anything, but mainly sagebrush.

JUNGE: With 2, 4-D, I suppose.

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: And so we'd grown up in -- flying all of our lives. It's just in our [00:07:00] blood, I guess you would say. And my brother and I used to gun for my dad, and when we hunted coyotes out of the airplane, and we traded off. What we would do is I would go today, and I would go, you know, kill as many coyotes as we could. And in my memory, in my mind, I had to mentally mark where I killed those coyotes. And then tomorrow, it was my turn to feed the cows while my brother got in the airplane, and after I got done feeding, then I went back, either on snow machine, horseback, snowshoes, whatever it took to pick up -- to go pick up all them coyotes that I'd shot the day before. And so, every other day, one of us gunned for him. You know, we'd sit in the back seat. Well, my brother and I have thousands and thousands of hours in a Super Cub, but they're all [00:08:00] in the back seat.

JUNGE: (Laughs.)

CHENEY: And we watched our dad do things with a Super Cub that is just unbelievable that could be done.

JUNGE: OK, somebody -- people want to --

CHENEY: I'm sure he can get by here.

JUNGE: Do you know who it is?

CHENEY: No, I don't. County Fire.

[unrelated dialogue; not transcribed]

END OF AUDIO PART 1

JUNGE: [00:00:00] OK, we're back on. There was a little interruption there. A fellow in a pickup truck who was turkey hunting needed some help or advice, and Bob gave it to him. OK, so you said you spent thousands of hours in the back of a Super Cub.

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: You and your brother?

CHENEY: Correct, and I went ahead and, of course, my dad's an instructor, also, and so he actually taught me to fly in that particular airplane, in that Super Cub. I soloed in that Super Cub. And my brother was younger at the time. I'm not real sure why my dad didn't teach him to fly, because he's always had the ambition to fly. But schooling and jobs and etc. had kept him from it. And when he graduated from college, from the University of Wyoming, he got a job in Memphis, Tennessee. And I should say 00:01:00] there was a job or two in between, but he wound up in Memphis, Tennessee, and he managed an equine facility there, much like what our Casper Event Center is here, only it was an -- equine based, and he managed it. And not far

from where he lived right there, they had a Ultralight airport where they flew Ultralights in and out of. And like I said, he's always been interested in aviation, and so he starts going down to this airport and watching the planes, and visiting with the pilots, and so forth. And the guy owned and operated the business there, my brother, Dan, got to asking him, he said well he'd like to, you know, take a ride. And so they did. They went up and flew, and this guy was an instructor. It was a two-seater Ultralight, and they went up, and so he let Dan fly it around a little bit. And [00:02:00] so Dan come back another time and took another hour instruction, if you call the first hour of in-- was instruction. And he took another hour or two of instruction from this guy, and in the meantime, he gets to looking and -- online, and finds him a guy that has one for sale, but it's a single-seater. It's only a one seat Ultralight. And so he dickers with the guy, and my brother takes his horse trailer and drives over to -- it was in Georgia. He drives over there, and they disassemble it, take the wings off, and he puts it in his horse trailer and drives it back to Memphis, Tennessee and bolts the wings back on it. And it's sitting there; now he owns an airplane that he really can't fly, so to speak. But it's just burning a hole in his pocket, and of

course, there's no way to have somebody teach you because it's a one seater, right? And so he gets in it and decides he going to taxi it around, and he does. He taxis it up and down there, and [00:03:00] next time's a little faster, and the next time was a little faster. Matter of fact, it was starting to get -- come off the ground on him, he was going so much. And finally he decided, well, the only way a man's ever going to fly this aircraft is put it in the air. And so he did. He got her out there on the runway, and lined her up, and put the power in, and flew her off the ground. And pretty proud of himself. He got up and flew around, you know, and that's pretty close to where the Mississippi River dumps into the bay there, you know.

JUNGE: Ohio.

CHENEY: And so he --

JUNGE: Oh yeah, yeah.

CHENEY: -- so he flies around there a little bit and just admired what a good pilot he was. And finally it dawns him he's got to get that thing back on the ground, you know, without killing himself. And so he makes him a plan that he's going to come around there, and he's going to fly just about a foot off of the ground, all the way down the runway, and just get the feel of it down close to the ground, and [00:04:00] make sure he can handle it all and

everything seems right, you know. And then he was going to go around, come round again, and then if everything felt right, well he was going to come in and land it. Well, he come round the first time, and lined her up, and got her down close, right about a foot off the ground. And he said it seemed like it flew -- it was taking him forever to get the full length of the runway. Said it felt good; everything was safe, so he just reached up and pulled the power back, and he was on the ground, and he had successfully flew her off the ground and returned it with no injury to him or the aircraft. So that's about as close to a self-made pilot as you can get, in my opinion, you know.

JUNGE: (Laughter).

CHENEY: I realize he has lots of experience in the back seat, but never actually flying the airplane. I mean, it was all just riding, you know.

JUNGE: I've got to tell you, Bob, I did an interview about 20 years ago with a guy named Clyde Ice. Have you ever heard of Clyde?

CHENEY: I have, yes, sir. I have.

JUNGE: The Spearfish airport's named Clyde Ice Field.

CHENEY: Yes, sir. I know that.

JUNGE: And I asked him how he got into it, and he said, "Well, there was a barnstormer who took people on flights [00:05:00], and he was a coffee hound I guess, and had to go into coffee -- into town and get coffee every once in a while. And these people were lined up; they wanted to fly. And they -- one guy was really insistent. He was going to pay to fly, and he wanted to fly, by God. So Clyde said, "Well, I'll taxi him down to the end of the runway and back," and he did. And this guy said, "I -- you know, don't mistake me. I want to fly." So Clyde gets back in, thinks he's going to taxi again. He figures oh, what the heck, and he pulls back on the stick or whatever they do, and he's off, and he's in the air. (Laughter). And he goes to the next town and flies about 10 miles. He goes to the town, flies around the town, and comes back. And I said, "Well, how did you land?" He said, "Well," he said, "I didn't know quite what to do, but I saw a stubble field down there, a cornfield, and I figured I might as well land there." So he says, "I just brought it down low," like your brother, "Brought it down low and turned the key off." (Laughter).

JUNGE: And he said, "Everything was OK." He said, "You know," he said, "years later," [00:06:00] he said, "this guy came up to me, he says, 'Do you realize that you gave

me my first airplane ride?" And he says, "I didn't have the heart to tell the guy that was my first flight (laughter).

CHENEY: OK.

JUNGE: So this is kind of a modern version of Clyde Ice's story.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Well, OK, so when was your first -- do you remember your first plane ride?

CHENEY: No, I can honestly say I don't. My dad, of course, lived on this ranch, and a neighbor boy just down the road right here from where we're sitting was about the same age as my dad, and he wanted to learn to fly, too. They both had the bug to learn how to fly. And so, they went together and bought a Cessna 180. And the best place to land was down here at his place, so they built an airstrip and a hangar there, and went together and bought a Cessna 180. And then they took it to town and hired them a [00:07:00] man to teach them to fly, both of them. And I was very young. I guess I could probably do the math. I was probably five, six, seven years old, or in that department, and so that would have been my first airplane ride was in my dad's airplane. That was the first time I

ever rode in an airplane was then, but it would have been when I was about six or seven, I guess.

JUNGE: And you took off from the Casper Airport?

CHENEY: You know, like I said, I can't remember. You know, I can remember taking my dad -- riding with my parents, of course -- taking my dad to the Casper Airport and dropping him off to learn how to fly until they got proficient enough that they could bring it out here, and then land here.

JUNGE: Well what made you want to fly so bad? I mean, did you get that bug early, too?

CHENEY: I guess so. I'm convinced it's bred into you.

JUNGE: Do you?

CHENEY: No, I really do. It's just something I've always wanted to do. I enjoy flying. I enjoyed flying with my dad [00:08:00], and I enjoy more being a pilot, being able to be at the controls and do what I want to. It's kind of like driving this pickup. It's a lot more fun to drive it than it is sit in the passenger seat, because you get to go where you want to go, you know. It's about the same thing.

JUNGE: (Laughing). How long did it take you to learn how to fly?

CHENEY: That's a good question. Where we had our airplane -- we lived right over the hill right there. That's where we

lived, was just over the hill right there, and we had an airstrip there. And of course, I grew up there, so it didn't -- I didn't know any better, right? My dad landed there. Pert near every physical day that the weather would allow he landed there and took off from out of there. I just took it for granted it was no big deal. And when my dad taught me to fly, course we took off from here, flew into the Casper Airport, and I learned how to land and take off there. And I don't know, it wasn't long. I'm [00:09:00] assuming maybe a couple, like on the third or fourth day, and I had pretty well mastered getting the plane to the ground without crashing, you know. I wouldn't call it a good landing, by any means, just like any other student, I guess. And so finally, next trip home, my dad said, "Well, why don't you plan on landing her here at the ranch today?" And so I knew how. I mean, I'd been -- I'd seen it a thousands [sic] times, so I knew what it should look like. Even though I'd never done it, I had a pretty good idea. And so I set it up there, and by golly, I got her on the ground the first day. It's -- and now that I'm an experienced pilot and been elsewhere in the world, that's a darn short runway with a terrible, terrible, bad hill at the other -- at one end. And only experienced pilots would land somewhere like that, you know, and here I

was a student pilot with very, very, very few landings under my belt, and I was landing and taking off there at home.

JUNGE: Did you have a pilot's license (inaudible) [00:10:00]?

CHENEY: No, I was a student pilot. I mean --

JUNGE: Oh, were you?

CHENEY: -- I didn't have a pilot's license. How old was I? I could do the math and tell you I was about 28.

JUNGE: Oh, it was that long? You didn't fly when you were a teenager?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm, didn't fly when I was a teenager, no sir.

JUNGE: Why?

CHENEY: Several reasons. One is it's cost prohibitive. You either got to, you know, be born with a silver spoon in your mouth, or have it as a career. I mean, you know, and it wasn't a career for me. It was -- I was a rancher. I mean, you know, that's what I liked to do was raise cattle, and it was going to be strictly recreation for me.

JUNGE: But, on the other hand, Bob, if you're in the ranching business and your dad says, "I'd like to go -- I can't go out today, but I'd like you to go out and check the north 40," or, you know, the such-and-such part of the herd that's over on such-and-such a creek, it seems to be natural enough that you would have just learned early and

said, "OK, I'll take the plane, Dad, and I'll go in there."

I mean, you were 28 before you flew.

CHENEY: Yeah, yeah, I was that old [00:11:00], and it didn't take -- to answer your question, I'm guessing that it -- I guess I could look at my log books, because that's all recorded in my log books. But it -- you know, I'm going -- it was a fall. I can remember we started in September. That's when our work slows down on the ranch. And, you know, I'll never forget, I got my pilot's license on the 17th day of March. I'll never forget that as long as I live.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: And I make it a point to fly on the 17th day of March. I go up and fly. I've only missed like three years in however many that is, 30 or 31, something like that.

JUNGE: Did you do it this year, this last year?

CHENEY: Yes, sir, sure did.

JUNGE: Wow, March 17th.

CHENEY: March 17th.

JUNGE: Why couldn't you remember your anniversary?

CHENEY: (Laughs).

JUNGE: Well... Oh, God, well OK, so you learned to fly, and then what did you do after that? You [00:12:00] just occasionally flew to do ranch work?

CHENEY: I didn't fly at all. Once I got my pilot's license, I didn't fly at all. Absolutely none. I can remember the only flying I did. My dad eventually bought another airplane to replace the Super Cub. He bought a Bellanca Scout, and -- which is basically a souped-up version of a Super Cub. And -- but he -- after he bought the Scout to replace the Super Cub, there were certain things that the Scout wouldn't quite do, that the Super Cub would. And so there was a -- I don't know, a three, four, maybe five year period there that he owned both airplanes. Well, I don't know how much you know about airplanes, but they have to have an annual inspection on them every year, and had to have some maintenance done on one of the airplanes. I can't remember which one right now, which is immaterial. But his mechanic was in Rawlins, [00:13:00] and so he needed to get one airplane over to Rawlins. Well, the best way was he fly one and I fly one, and we go over there and drop one off, and we both bring the other one home. And so I got to do maybe once-a-year flying there, you know. Not enough to stay current. I mean, I really wasn't. I wasn't a good pilot, by any means. And there was about a 20-year gap, there, believe it or not, that I didn't fly but just very, very rare. Maybe a dozen times in 20 years.

JUNGE: You didn't have occasion to shoot more coyotes or --

CHENEY: Did lots of flying. I did a lot of flying in the back seat, yes sir.

JUNGE: Oh, OK.

CHENEY: But as far as me as -- at the controls, what they -- they refer to it as pilot in command, is what they call it, and I wasn't. I wasn't the pilot.

JUNGE: Your dad was.

CHENEY: My dad was, yep.

JUNGE: What kind of pilot was he?

CHENEY: I can't even describe it. You know, you just have to -- [00:14:00] you have to fly with my dad. I think my dad always had the dreams of becoming an Alaskan bush pilot. And matter of fact, he had a dream enough that he went to Alaska to become Alaska bush pilot. We lived up there for about a year, I guess.

JUNGE: Oh, whereabouts?

CHENEY: Well we -- I guess we lived right in Anchorage, and he flew for a man there that did some bush flying. I mean, they, you know, they flew out to the bush. But my dad is pretty modest. You'll find that when you meet him. He'll be hard to pry words out of, you know. But -- and he's real modest. But my dad is -- was, I guess I should say -- was the best bush pilot in the state of Wyoming, you know. And I don't think it's -- anybody will dispute it. He had

so many landings that were off strip. I mean, we used to shoot them coyotes, and we'd land and pick them up. And when you start -- if you just pick a spot out there and [00:15:00] you got to land on that ridge, you know, there's no runway. There's rocks, there's brush, there's everything, and you got to pick a way to get in there, you know. That's my dad's expertise, you know.

JUNGE: How -- he could land a plane, then, in a pretty short distance.

CHENEY: Short distance, short, short, short landing, short takeoff. I've seen my dad land a plane where it was too short. I mean, you -- it physically couldn't be done, and I've seen my dad literally do that. And you're saying, "Well, how can that be done?" And we used to land them -- this one time comes to mind to me. We were up here in Shirley Basin, and we had landed, and at that particular time we had the Super Cub on skis. And it was a little earlier than this; it was in February, and we had landed on the snow, there, in a spot. And I had got out and walked and picked up two coyotes, and we put them in the plane and got ready for takeoff. And there wasn't enough -- physically wasn't enough room there to take off. And my [00:16:00] dad literally drove that Super Cub, if you want to call it runway, he drove her down there, and it wasn't

ready to fly, yet. I mean, we didn't have enough airspeed to fly. And he literally jumped a ravine similar to the one here in front of us. I mean, it was probably as wide as this pavement is, or more, and literally jumped it. Got enough air speed that he -- and pulled the flaps on, he could get it up enough, and then put her back on the ground and drove her some more until he got enough air speed to get out.

JUNGE: (Laughing). You were with him.

CHENEY: Oh yeah.

JUNGE: You must've been scared to death.

CHENEY: Not really. I had more confidence in my dad. I mean, you know, he was just -- it wasn't like he was on a death wish or anything. He just knew that airplane that well. That Super Cub was like a second skin to him.

JUNGE: Yeah, yeah.

CHENEY: I mean, you know, he -- like I said, he made it do thing that it wasn't supposed to do. And I don't know how -- [00:17:00] I don't even know how to put that in words. I mean, you just had to experience those kind of things, you know.

JUNGE: What does it take -- if your dad was that good, and I don't doubt you one bit because he's in the Hall of Fame, and I know that what you say is true anyway. But what does

it take? What kind of personality does it take to be that good a pilot?

CHENEY: Well I've often said, and I guess I've never discussed it with my dad, but my brother and I have discussed it a lot, our dad would have been an unbelievable good military training pilot. My dad has -- it's literally ice flows through his blood, through his veins. He has -- nothing rattles him. Nothing, ever. My dad crashed a plane. I guess you don't know this. He flew commercially. He -- that's the way he made his living for several years. And in that period of time, he was flying a twin engine Lockheed, and somewhere [00:18:00] in the process, they had left the control locks on the airplane. And he was flying crews. They were flying work crews, seismographic crews back into the bush, and landing, and letting these guys out. And they were swapping crews. What he'd do, he'd let six or eight guys out, and six or eight more would get in, and he'd bring them home. And he took off at the Casper Airport with the control locks on it, and so he had no control over the airplane.

JUNGE: What does a control lock do?

CHENEY: Well, they put control locks on them so if the airplane is just sitting out here on the ramp, the wind don't get to -- don't beat it to death, right?

JUNGE: Oh, OK.

CHENEY: Because as you know, the controls move, and wind will get them and just snap them so hard --

JUNGE: Oh, I got it.

CHENEY: -- it can damage them, right?

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: So they just put a lock on them so that they can't move. To this day, my dad cannot figure out how come he didn't catch that. He don't know why he didn't. He don't know why -- they had a service boy, a line boy [00:19:00]. They don't know -- what really took place is my dad thought that they had taken them off, and consequently, they thought Dad had taken them off. An anyway, my dad gets the airplane off of the ground. It comes off of the ground, and the con-- obviously, the controls are in a position where it's right for takeoff, right? Well he takes off, and about the time he gets to the end of the runway, it's at too steep of climb, and the airplane is going to stall. And of course, what would have happened was the airplane would have stalled, and the nose would have fell, and they would have went straight in, just like that. And they would have killed them all. I mean, you know, it's that simple of there's no way around that. But my dad, nothing -- like I said, nothing rattles him. I mean, he just kept

thinking, you know. He never panicked, and he just reached up and pulled the throttles back, and when it did, that airplane just [00:20:00] settled in, just like this. Well that particular airplane has a retractable gear, and he had already retracted the gear. They were at the end of the runway when all this took place. And he pulled the power back so it wouldn't go up and stall, and the airplane just settled back in like this, and they were out of runway. Oh, I don't know how much of the runway they settled on, and it slid down the runway, and they all walked away from it pretty well unhurt. There were some back injuries, you know, from hitting the pavement that hard.

JUNGE: Without hit-- the wheels were up.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: They didn't have enough time to put the wheels back?

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: That soon?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Oh, man.

CHENEY: Yeah, it all happened that fast, and literally saved nine men's life. I mean, you know, there's no way about it. My dad's real modest about that, you know, but the fact is, is that, you know, his cool head prevailed and saved all their lives.

JUNGE: Is he willing to talk about things like that, do you think?

CHENEY: Yeah, but you'll have to squeeze it out of him. I'm serious. You know, you can say, "Well, Bob said," you know, and then you'll get something out of him, [00:21:00] you know.

JUNGE: What -- he wasn't -- was he in the military?

CHENEY: No, never in the military.

JUNGE: But you say he would have been a good military trainer.

CHENEY: He would have been a good military trainer.

JUNGE: He's a good teacher.

CHENEY: He's a outstanding teacher. And the -- probably what makes him such a good teacher is, now that I'm a little older and have taught my own daughter and so forth, you know, what makes him such a good teacher is, is that he's, in his mind, if he was teaching you to drive this pickup, and he had you over there in the driver's seat like we are here now, and he said, "OK, put it in gear, and we need to, you know, turn right here." And of course, if you recall, when you first learned to drive, it was like this, right?

JUNGE: Oh yeah, back and forth.

CHENEY: Flying's no different. I mean, we just -- we over correct.

JUNGE: Over correct.

CHENEY: I mean, we do the same thing, right? And you know, if you were just about to hit that stop sign, you know, well, the norm-- if I was teaching you, the normal guy would go, "Here, I better get this so we don't hit the stop sign."

JUNGE: And grab the wheel, yeah [00:22:00].

CHENEY: My dad would just sit there, and he would judge. I mean, if you were actually, physically going to hit the stop sign, maybe he would do something about it. But if -- as long as we were going to miss by that far, all he'd do is tell you, "Boy, you're getting awful close to that stop sign." You know, short of you physically wrecking that airplane is the only time he's going to take it over. Because in his mind, the only way you learn is by your mistakes and how to correct your own mistakes. If I keep taking it over all the time, the next time you get started toward that stop sign, you're just going to go like that, because you're waiting for him to take it over, right?

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: And in his mind, you can't teach anybody that way. They need to be correcting and not hitting that stop sign themselves, you know.

JUNGE: Do you work the same -- do the same thing with your daughter? You say you have a daughter?

CHENEY: I like to think so. Yeah, I like to think so. She's full grown now, you know, and you know, I guess that's probably the best example I can give you is learning to [00:23:00] drive, you know. But life is that way, too. I mean, you got to let them make their own mistakes a spot or two, you know?

JUNGE: Oh yeah, absolutely.

CHENEY: And --

JUNGE: I totally agree. Well, let's see --

CHENEY: But that's what made my dad such a great instructor, is the fact that short of you physically dying in the airplane, he was going to -- you know, he wasn't taking it over. You had to learn to fly it, you know.

JUNGE: That takes a lot of patience, a lot of, like you say, a lot of ice water.

CHENEY: It does, you know.

JUNGE: Jeez.

CHENEY: An example I can give you is a guy here in town had a pilot's license, had thousands of hours as a pilot, a private pilot. And -- but it was all in a nose wheel a nose wheel aircraft. And they're relatively easy to learn to fly, compared to what we call a tail dragger, you know. And this guy bought a Super Cub, and so he wanted my dad to give him an endorsement. You have to have instruction in

that type of aircraft before you can take passengers, [00:24:00] and he needed an endorsement. And Dad said well sure, he'd be glad to, you know, fly with him. He had lots of hours in a tail dra-- all of his hours were in a tail dragger, so he'd be glad to teach him to fly. Now, keep in mind, the man knows how to fly already. I mean, he has thousands of hours as a pilot, you know. And so they go out to the Casper Airport, and this guy fires up his new Super Cub, and they get out there, and he can't even drive it up and down the runway. I mean, you know, it's so much different, and he's having hell with it. And my dad won't take it over. I mean, he lets him -- they're driving it down there, and next thing you know, they're going the other way, you know. And my dad won't take it over. I mean, you know, he's got to learn to correct that for himself. So they'd get around there, and line out, and try to go again, you know. Well, he finally got to where he could drive it in a straight line, so they get out on the runway, and away they go. Well, takeoff is not much different. Once you put the power in, well, it's not much different. But they get up, and they go [00:25:00] around, come in to land, and my dad's under -- the way he teaches everybody, not just me but everybody, is he takes the controls and says, "Now this is how it should look like.

This is how I want you to do it. Watch how I'm doing it here." And he sets it up, makes a really good landing, and then gives it to you and say, "I want you to do the same thing."

So they do. He comes back around, and this guy, he -- they would have crashed. I mean, he couldn't keep her on the runway. So my dad gathered it up and got him pointed back around. They come around. He eventually got a little better. And they finally come around this one particular time, and they get down there, and he lines her up, and he drives her off of the runway. Of course, our -- you can only imagine how wide the runways are at the Casper Airport, right?

JUNGE: (Laughing).

CHENEY: They're about three times as wide as that road, you know.

JUNGE: That was a military airport.

CHENEY: Yeah, and he literally drives it off, and my dad just lets him, you know. He said, "Well if I take it over all the time, how's he ever going to learn to keep from it [00:26:00]?" And they're bouncing out there in the median, you know. And of course, the tower comes back and wants to

know what in the world they're doing driving her out there, you know.

JUNGE: Was he a commercial pilot? Then you say --

CHENEY: Yes, uh-huh.

JUNGE: -- that was his way of making a living?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm, correct.

JUNGE: So he left the ranching business?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm, correct, yeah.

JUNGE: OK, he left it to his boys, right?

CHENEY: No. No, you got a little -- you're kind of a jump ahead. What -- him and his dad couldn't get along, as most ranch families are, I might add, OK?

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yeah, and so my dad left the ranch, and he decided that he wanted to be a pilot to make his living. And he'd already had his private pilot's license at that time, and he went ahead and got his instrument rating and his commercial license, and his instructors -- instrument instructor. My dad has every license that a man can hold, except for an airline transport pilot. That's the [00:27:00] only thing he don't have. He has all these multi engine ratings.

JUNGE: Can he do every-- he can do everything.

CHENEY: Everything.

JUNGE: Helicopters, too?

CHENEY: Helicopters is the only thing he's never -- and he always had the desire to, but he never become a helicopter pilot.

JUNGE: Why not?

CHENEY: Money.

JUNGE: Oh, OK. I heard some-- I used to work for Big Horn Airways in '69. I was a flagger on the ground. And I talked to a guy who said helicopters were not meant to fly.

CHENEY: Yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: He did not trust them. He was a fixed wing pilot, and he wouldn't step foot in one. And they used to spray sage with not only these Snow Commanders, but they had the helicopters, too. But it was just a matter of your dad didn't have the opportunity?

CHENEY: That's correct.

JUNGE: But he would have been a probably a good helicopter pilot.

CHENEY: I think he would have, yeah.

JUNGE: So anyway, he becomes a pilot because of a feud with his dad.

CHENEY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: He leaves the ranch, or he leaves Casper [00:28:00], or what?

CHENEY: Leaves the ranch, went to Casper, and that's where he got his commercial license. And then went to work for a man by the name of Tom [Seeley?], who owned a flying business here in Casper. And he had a pretty good sized operation, Tom did. He had some slurry bombers that they used for fighting fire. He had, I don't know, Dad will be able to tell you, but I suppose they had maybe half a dozen airplanes around there that they used for charter. They had a freight run that went from Casper to Gillette, at that time, that my dad flew quite a little bit. They were flying these survey crews and seismographic crews and so forth, back and forth --

JUNGE: This was during the oil boom?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: The '70s maybe?

CHENEY: Yeah, mm-hmm. And then Tom had a couple of Pawnees that they sprayed with. That's what they were using to spray with, was Pawnees. And my dad got in the -- he -- that's [00:29:00] where he learned to spray was in them Pawnees. And actually, what brought my dad back to the ranch, his dad died not too long after he had left, and my dad had a younger brother, so my younger brother -- or his younger brother, my uncle, and my grandmother run the ranch. They kept the ranch going. And I can't tell you

how many years -- my dad will be able to tell you; I was awful young at the time, right?

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: I'm less than 14, you know, and my dad had flown enough. He had flown for a guy by the name of Tom Seeley, and he had flown for a guy by the name of John [Teeland?], who was up at Gillette at the time. Dad worked up there, too. And he'd gained a lot of hours, a lot of experience, a lot of good experience. John had the same deal. They were flying -- at that time, John was using a 206, and they were flying [00:30:00], cruising to Belle Creek, Montana, was what they were doing there. Short strip. Had to go every day. Weather was like this, you still had to go get that crew.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah, well it's overcast now, but up on the summit, Shirley Summit there, it was not like this. Pretty tough.

CHENEY: Yeah, if they had a mile visibility, they were going. That's about what it boiled down to.

JUNGE: So they did line of sight?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm, yeah.

JUNGE: Did he -- well, he had instrument rating, so he could fly instruments.

CHENEY: Mm-hmm, yeah, but there's no control tower or any outer markers, or anything like that where they were landing. As long as they could visually see, they were landing, you know.

JUNGE: (Laughter). Did he have any stories to tell you about maybe low clouds and having to land on highways or something?

CHENEY: Oh, yeah. Oh, my dad has story after story after story. I mean, you'd be there a week, Mark, if you could ever get him to open up and tell about them. A good question for him when you get there is as him how many times he's wrecked an airplane, [00:31:00] and he'll make you define what you call a wreck, you know. I have physically, myself, been with him five times when we wrecked the Super Cub.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Oh yeah.

JUNGE: OK, what do you mean by a wreck?

CHENEY: If it won't fly.

(Laughter).

JUNGE: OK, that pretty much runs the gamut, doesn't it?
Anything from getting a scratch to dying.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Well, tell me about some of these little incidents.

CHENEY: Most of mine with him were hunting coyotes, and when you start landing anywhere and everywhere, you're going to bend your airplane up. That's just a given, you know. Most of them were landing gear incidents. You know, it was just too rough a terrain, and you'd knock the landing gear out. If you do it on takeoff, you're airborne, but now how do you get back down, right?

JUNGE: Yeah, exactly.

CHENEY: If you do it on landing, [00:32:00] I was trying to think -- I did the math a while back, but I can't tell you the results. I've already forgot already. But I've been up like that, literally straight up and down, sitting on its nose twice. And I've been all the way over three times. Yeah, up-side --

JUNGE: Total loop, up-side-down?

CHENEY: land -- you know, wind up and knock the gear out, and she winds up like that, you know. Never been through an engine failure. I have never been with Dad when he run it out of gas, but he's run out of gas a couple three times.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Is that because he had to go too far? I mean, he obviously -- you're going to check your gas gauge.

CHENEY: He'll tell you the story. Probably the best one, here, and it's a -- I use it as a learning tool. His mistakes might save my life. What happened was he -- my dad did year -- matter of fact, they gave hi-- the Game and Fish gave my dad [00:33:00] an award for 40 years of flying for them. He flew for the Game and Fish for 40 years on contract. And he did almost all the survey wo-- aerial survey work on the eastern half of Wyoming. And this particular story, they were up in the Big Horn Basin. They were up above Greybull there, somewhere. And they had been flying three or four days in a row. Of course, as you know, the weather's best in the morning; less wind. So they get up real early in the morning, and they go out, and they fly until 9:00, 10:00. Wind comes up, starts getting hot, the air ain't good; they come back and land, and they take the rest of the day off, right? Well, they're fixing -- they need to -- he likes to have the airplane inside, especially in the spring, right, when we could get hail. And this particular story is in June. And of course, the help don't want to show up down there at 4:00 in the morning, help you push your airplane out, right, you know. Anyway, [00:34:00] they -- he had the line boy. They left. They come in and landed 9:00, 10:00. He leaves instructions with the help there on the ground to fuel the

airplane, put it in the hangar overnight, and then he'll get it out himself in the morning, right? And in the meantime, they're going to go get something to eat. They've been flying; they're hungry. They -- 9:00, 10:00 in the morning, they want to go get a bite of breakfast. So they do; they run downtown. And so, they get there first thing in the morning, and Dad checked the fuel tanks. The gauges are in the wings, and he checks and makes sure it's full of fuel, right? He pre-flights the airplane and, you know, we've got procedures we go through, of course. Check the oil, and etc., etc. And he pre-flights the airplane, and it's still in the dark, I might add. And so they crawl in it and taxi out the end of the runway and take off, and they go out. And what they do, they call it transect. They do line transects, is what they call it. [00:35:00] And they were actually counting antelope, is what they were doing. And they have a -- he flies a line. At that time it was with LORAN. Now they use GPSs, of course, you know, a little more accurate. But anyway, they fly this line for, say, 30 miles, then they move over a given point, usually two miles, and they fly it back, and they go -- fly back and forth like that.

JUNGE: Transect.

CHENEY: Yeah. And they had been out there flying for I don't know how long, and hour or so. And they're flying along, and she coughs and spits and sputters like she's about to die. And course, as pilots, our whole training is we go through emergency procedures, which are fine if you're flying up there at about 3 or 4,000 feet off the ground. You've got time. You -- or the first thing is you put the airplane in a safe glide, right? And then you -- we got things we start checking. Almost all engine failures are fuel related, so we've [00:36:00] either got carburetor ice, so it's not getting any air, or we forgot to switch a tank sometimes, right? Or there's a possibility we bumped the mixture and shut the fuel off to the airplane, you know. So we start going -- we go -- we do the fuel things first. And then the next thing is is electrical, right? We might have bumped -- might have hit the key and shut it off, you know, so we got to do -- make sure the mags are on. Well, when he started, he looked up, and both tanks were completely dry. There was no fuel. Keep in mind, he had six hours of fuel on board when they left back there an hour ago. And course, the first thing that runs through your mind as a pilot is, "I know I checked that. I know I did. That gauge can't be right, because I know I checked it," you know. And that's what's going through his mind.

In the meantime, they're only about 100 feet off the ground. I mean, it's just a matter of minutes. It ain't like you get to, "Well, we'll try to glide over there." We got to put it down here. There's no options, right, you know.

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: And [00:37:00] luckily, where it was, he found a spot, and they got the airplane to the ground. And when he gets it to the ground and gets out, course he's in total disbelief that it's out of fuel. I mean, he just can't -- I know that those fuel tanks were full. Well what had happened was is that the -- I don't mean to pick on next generation, but the kid that had fueled the airplane didn't put the fuel caps on tight. He had put them on, but he hadn't put them on tight, and they had backed off to the point -- and as you can imagine, I don't know if you know -- how much you know about airplanes, but the air is coming over the top of the wing. It just sucked all the fuel right out of the top of the tank.

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: And it just took her all, and so they were out of fuel, and he had to land, you know.

JUNGE: So when he did, was he anywhere near a highway where he could get some help?

CHENEY: Yeah, they -- he'll better tell you the story, but yes, they radioed for help. You got to keep in mind, when he flies for the Game and Fish, he's within [00:38:00] -- radio contact with their dispatch every 20 minutes. He has to report in every 20 minutes.

JUNGE: OK.

CHENEY: And they had radio contact, and one of the other game wardens brought them out some gas, and they poured it in, got back in, and flew off. And he went to the airport, refueled it, and they went about flying, looking for their antelope for the rest of the day.

JUNGE: Did he give those kids hell?

CHENEY: Yeah, yeah. Like -- and he said, you know, it wasn't their fault. He says you can't blame them kids. That's the way my dad is. That's the way he'll tell the story. He says, "You can't blame them kids." He said, "They fuel 50 different kinds of aircraft with -- and every one of them has a little different fuel cap on them, right, you know." Dad says, "It's my own fault. I should have checked them myself." He says, "I never, ever get in an airplane that I don't check them fuel caps, now." And consequently, his mistake is my benefit, right? It'll never happen to me, because I check them every time when I get in there.

JUNGE: (Laughing). Do you?

CHENEY: Yes sir, yeah. Matter of fact, there's been several times when I had -- one thing comes to mind is my brother and I had been out coyote hunting, [00:39:00] and we went over to Rawlins here, about a year ago. And we had landed there, and got fuel, and ate lunch. And we got ready to go home, and we crawled in the airplane, and I paid the man for the fuel. And we get in the airplane and taxi out to the end of the runway and start -- I started to take off. I already put the power in, that's how close we are. And I'm going, "You know what? I didn't check them fuel caps. We ain't going." I pulled the power back, and we let her settle in. I physic-- we're sitting right on the runway at Rawlins, Wyoming, and I shut the engine off. I get out there and check, and it so happened they were tight; they were fine, you know. Crawled back in, we took off. But...

JUNGE: Yeah, you know, some-- do you ever get that feeling that you're -- like you're in the air, and all of a sudden, you've -- you wonder, did I forget the -- did I forget this?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: And you really don't know.

CHENEY: That's right, yeah. Well that's the -- that's the exact feeling my dad got when he looked up there and them

tanks were dry, you know. He just couldn't believe it, you know. "Did I -- I'm sure I checked them." That's the first thing that goes through your mind. "Gof, I'm sure I did," you know. But [00:40:00] there's always that little doubt.

JUNGE: Is he still flying?

CHENEY: He can't, now. My dad had a stroke here about -- he's almost three years into the stroke, now, and he's within that far of physically being able to fly. And he'll never have a medical again. He'll never fly for hire, and he'll never have -- he'll never even have a private pilot's license again.

JUNGE: Well what about you? You could take him up.

CHENEY: I do. He came out a year ago. It was Easter Sunday. It was a beautiful day. My folks came out for Easter Sunday dinner, and I asked Dad, I said, "Dad, would you like to go for a plane ride?" And yeah, he would; he'd like to go. And so we got ready to get in the airplane. I own an airplane, and he owns three airplanes, OK?

JUNGE: Still has three airplanes?

CHENEY: Yeah, mm-hmm. So I get -- we push my airplane out, and we got ready to get in it, and I asked him, I says, "Well, do you want to sit in the front seat or the back seat?" I said, "Don't make any difference [00:41:00] to

me." And he never even answered me; he just went and got in the back seat.

JUNGE: Oh, he did?

CHENEY: Yeah, and --

JUNGE: Oh, OK. Is it because he's so conscious about the law, or because he didn't trust his reactions.

CHENEY: No, don't think the law has a thing to do with it.

Don't think that, OK? He -- I can't tell you why. Well, I can tell you why. After the stroke, my dad has some trip-- had triple vision, and they've got it corrected to double vision. And we just come from a specialist in Denver less than a month ago. We were down there the 13th of March, and they think there's a chance that they can operate on his eye and get it down to where he'll only have one vision. But I guess you understand how your vision works. This eye sends a message to the brain. This eye sends a message to the brain. And if your brain's not able to use all that information, you wind up with a double image. And when you have a double ima-- the reason we have depth perception is because of what the difference between [00:42:00] these two eyes, is the reason we have depth perception. And my dad has none. He don't have any depth perception.

JUNGE: Yeah, so he couldn't -- he wouldn't trust himself flying?

CHENEY: He wouldn't trust himself, correct, yeah.

JUNGE: OK.

CHENEY: He's driving. He's driving -- you know, it's -- he's got it under control enough that he can drive a vehicle, but he don't feel good enough to fly, yet.

JUNGE: Is he going to get that corrected, you say?

CHENEY: If he can. They haven't give him yay or nay that they can.

JUNGE: Well, he's ol-- he's young enough yet he could still fly, if he actually got it corrected.

CHENEY: Oh yeah, you know, like I said, he'll never fly legally again. You need to understand that. His flying days are over, legally. But we own our own airport; we own our own airplanes; we buy our own gas; we service everything here. Ain't a thing they can do if he wants to come out here and get in his own airplane and take it off and fly it to wherever, long as he comes back and lands here, right, you know. And that's --

JUNGE: (Laughing). And he doesn't file a flight plan here.

CHENEY: Neither one of us do. And that ain't true to say, because we file our own flight plan with each other, is what we do. [00:43:00] I don't know how much you understand about flight plans, but they're designed that if you and I are going to crawl in the airplane and fly from here to

Lander, well that's what they're designed for, right, is to leave from the Cheney Airport, and we will be in Lander at a certain time, with the corrections of the wind, right, you know. And then, they allow us a small margin. If we don't show up in about 30 minutes there, then they're on the phone. They call the guy on the ground at Lander and say, "Hey," you know, "Hey, have the -- has Cheney showed up there, yet, you know?" "No, I didn't know he was even coming," which he may not, right? I mean, you know, we may not have notified him. We don't have to notify that guy on the ground that we're coming. And so then, they call back here at the ranch and say, "Has he left, yet? What time did he get off the ground? Did they have a flat tire they had to fix first, before they got in the air, or how come?" You know, and they'll start with phone communication first. And if all of them fail, then they put somebody in the air to go look for you. That's what it's designed for; you need to understand that.

JUNGE: Do you have a black box? [00:44:00]Does every plane?

CHENEY: No, but they have what we call -- we have a transmitter in there that, should we crash, it sends an emergency signal out. It's explodes here and sends a transmission out.

JUNGE: So what you're saying, Bob, is that if you take off here from Cheney Airport and go to Lander, there'd be absolutely no real reason for you not to make it within a given time space.

CHENEY: That's correct.

JUNGE: Unless you said, "Well, let's run over to Red Mountain and take a look at that."

CHENEY: Which you can do that, but you file that in your plan. You say, "Now, we're taking off from Cheney Airport, but we're swinging over there to Red Rim to, you know, to look there." And I allow that. I got to figure all that in. that's my job as a pilot, to figure out how long is it going to take us to fly over to Red Rim and look around a bit, and then there. And then I give an estimate time of arrival in Lander.

JUNGE: OK. Now when you say Cheney Airport, you mean the one west of us here, south and west of us?

CHENEY: No, it's right here. It's right at the foot of them [00:45:00] red hills. You can -- you know how -- you were -- when you walked down the hill, you were literally standing on the end of the runway. I mean, it's --

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yeah, mm-hmm.

JUNGE: That's just a road there. There's two ro-- the road splits.

CHENEY: Well, it's just over the hill. I'm exaggerating just a little. It's less than --

JUNGE: I looked at it, and I said to myself, "Oh, this couldn't be an -- how could they land in this broken country? How could they take off? Nah, there's no airport here."

CHENEY: (Laughing). We do. We have a really good airstrip there, actually. It's plenty long enough. It's really good. The only downfall to it is, as you know, the prevailing wind in Wyoming comes out of the southwest. Well, the way that it's designed is almost straight north and south, so we've always got a crosswind. And just like you said, there's a big hill on this side, and then it drops off, and we're right in the valley, and there's a hill over here. And then there's a mountain over here, and there's a mountain on the end. And consequently, you can imagine the air turbulence there when we get wind, and --

JUNGE: Not the best place for an airport.

CHENEY: Not the best place for an airport, [00:46:00] but it's the only place we got. I mean, we -- you got to do what you can.

JUNGE: Maybe that adversity teaches you how to handle situations like that.

CHENEY: It does. That's my dad's theory, that if you learn to fly in Casper, Wyoming, you can go anywhere else in the world and won't have any problem.

JUNGE: In Casper?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm. Because we have the -- we have wind all the time. I mean, you know, you -- if you're going to learn to fly in Casper, Wyoming, you're going to learn to fly in the wind, or else you'll never -- you'll die an old man, because it blows all the time, you know.

JUNGE: I wonder if that's one of the reasons why they trained the guys in World War II there at the airbase.

CHENEY: Sure, it is, yeah. That's the reason that they fly them C130s out of Cheyenne up here to land at the Casper Airport, because we've always got wind here. They have to come up and train in the wind.

JUNGE: Man. So now, if you're -- are you flying, generally, when you're out flying, do you fly line of sight or instruments?

CHENEY: Strictly line of sight.

JUNGE: Are you instrument rated?

CHENEY: I'm not. I'm not. My dad is, but I'm not, no.

JUNGE: Could you, if you had to? [00:47:00]

CHENEY: Your training to get your private pilot's license makes you learn how to fly the airplane under instruments, just enough that if you get into the clouds, you can make a 180 degree turn and get out of the on the -- by using the instruments. That's my training.

JUNGE: I don't see how you could make a 180 degree turn in this country (laughter). You know, you'd have to be up a ways.

CHENEY: Yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: This thing is -- you know, from the air, that airport back there at your place, and I haven't seen it, but it must be sort of like postage stamp, compared to some other places. Like I was just at the Medicine Bow Airport. Unless there was a cloud problem, you got forever.

CHENEY: Oh yeah, you're out there on that big flat, you know. That's a good place for an airport, I might add. You know, there's no mountains on either end. There's no power lines on either end. Got lots of runway. You know, if you completely screwed up and drove it off over there in the brush, you're really not -- it would be a bad deal, but you wouldn't bend up your airplane, and you darn sure wouldn't die in the process.

JUNGE: No, no. [00:48:00] So, OK, when you first started flying, let's talk -- because I want to talk about your dad

-- I mean I want to talk with your dad about some of these stories, but these are great, because you tell a good story. But let me turn -- let me roll this window down because it's --

CHENEY: That sounds great.

JUNGE: -- it's getting a little hot in here.

CHENEY: Yes, sir.

JUNGE: OK, you want to turn yours?

CHENEY: Yeah, let her down just a little.

JUNGE: How's that?

CHENEY: Perfect. Yes, sir. Thank you.

JUNGE: All right. Yeah, it was getting kind of warm. So when you first started flying, what was the reason why you were flying? Because you just enjoyed it, or because you had a job that did it?

CHENEY: Strictly recreation. To this day, my flying is strictly recreational.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: I just love to fly. I do. It's so expensive, you know, to own a darn airplane and everything that goes with it. The maintenance of the airplane, and you've got to have a spot big enough to build your runway, and you've got to build a hangar. I mean, after you have that kind of \$100,000 investment, you want it inside, you know, so you

got to have a building to put it in, which has to have a 60-foot door, [00:49:00] I might add, you know, a free span door. They're not cheap, you know. And in my case, you got to own a dozer so you can keep the snow pushed off the runway, so we can use it more than three months out of the year, you know. And the expense is just unreal. I use the term that you've either got to be able to tie it to your business, like my dad did. I mean, my dad actually made a living with, you know, with the airplane. Or you just got to be independently wealthy, one or the other, you know.

And --

JUNGE: Well how has flying changed since when he first started? It wasn't -- a lot of guys flew. I mean, a lot of guys got into it, right? I mean, I read an article about the international flyer flying farmers, and at the peak, their peak membership was like, in '77, about 11,000 people. After that, agriculture kind of went to hell, and they had a lot fewer people. And now, they have like 500 families, or something; a little over 500 families. And I'm wondering [00:50:00] where the changes were. Because when your dad first started flying, which was about, what year?

CHENEY: We'll say '64 or '65, somewhere along in there.

JUNGE: I would assume that people could have gotten into it easier. I mean, because there wasn't as much (inaudible).

CHENEY: You know, I don't think it was ever easy to get into. Maybe it was. I won't argue that, you know.

JUNGE: I'm just guessing.

CHENEY: It's just always been expensive. An airplane's expensive, you know. There's just no two ways about it. The only good thing about an airplane, my dad has owned eight airplanes in his life. I should say he has sold eight airplanes in his life, and he sold all eight of them for more money than he gave for him, and used the hell out of them, I might add. I mean, you know, made money with every one, and then sold them for more money than he gave. An airplane is the only piece of machinery I know that you can buy, and it appreciates instead of depreciates, you know, assuming that you maintain it. Maintenance is high on them, of course, you know. But as long as you maintain that airplane, it'll always hold [00:51:00] its value.

JUNGE: Well, I would imagine, too, with your dad's reputation, that people knew what they were getting. They were getting something he wasn't going to let out of his hands that was a piece of junk, maybe.

CHENEY: Yeah, I think you're right. I have to agree with that, yes.

JUNGE: I mean, it wasn't a bucket of bolts, right?

CHENEY: No, that's true, yeah. Yeah, you know, it definitely was a safe flying machine, or he wouldn't have it. You're correct.

JUNGE: So what you're telling me, Bob, is that this flying, for you, is like a hobby more than anything else.

CHENEY: That's exactly it, yeah. I use it on my ranch, but my ranch would operate without that airplane. I wouldn't let the IRS know that, but yeah, it would operate just fine. It did for lots of years without it.

JUNGE: Did you get that? (Laughter). Yeah, well, you know it's -- what is it about flying that is in your -- gets in your blood? What is it?

CHENEY: I wish I could answer that, I can't. It's just something I love to do. And as a pilot, I have the [00:52:00] certification to go crawl in that airplane and fly from here to Vegas, right? You know, I mean, I can do that, legally. And I have the knowledge and the capability, I might add. But that's not my kind of flying. My kind of flying is I -- what I like to do is I like to take off from this little old tiny dirt strip over here, and take you up. We'll never be more than about between 50 and 100 feet off of the ground at any given time, and I will show you some of the -- I'll show you the best elk

herds you've ever seen in your life. I can show you mule deer that hunters would just drool over. I can show you my whole ranch in about 45 minutes, maybe an hour's worth of flying -- all incorporated in one hour of flying, I guess I should say, you know. And in the meantime, I can go over here and buzz my neighbor, and have a little fun with him, and maybe find a cow for him that he didn't know about, right, you know. That's my kind of flying, never getting more than 100 feet off of the ground, you know, and [00:53:00] looking at the wildlife, looking at my own ranch, maybe helping the neighbors out. But that's my kind of flying. And then, of course, we do quite a little coyote hunting, yet, but now it's under a whole different deal. It's strictly recreation. My brother and I still do quite a little coyote hunting. Every chance I can get him up here, we go coyote hunting. But it's strictly for recreation, and recreation only.

JUNGE: You don't need to do it.

CHENEY: No, and there's a lot of difference the way my brother and I do it than the way we used to do it as -- when we flew with our dad. At that time, we were doing it, we landed, picked up that coyote, put him in the back, and we brought him home. And we spent the rest of the night skinning him, and washing him, and fleshing him, and

preparing him. And we sold the pelt, and it was actually a business. I mean, you know, we were making money with the thing. Now, I guess I'm proud to say I'm successful enough I don't have to take the chance of landing down there and bending up my airplane to get that coyote to make 70 bucks, you know.

JUNGE: Yeah, is that what it is?

CHENEY: I've -- you hear [00:54:00] all kinds of rumors, you know. Back in the early '80s when we were doing it -- the whole '80s, I guess we were doing it -- if our coyotes averaged \$70, we did really good. They went down after that. That's the reason we quit doing it. They went down to \$10, \$15 average, you know.

JUNGE: Wonder why.

CHENEY: And now I've heard that they're back up in that \$70, \$80 average. You know, you sell some for \$100, you sell some for \$35.

JUNGE: But you wouldn't get into it now for the -- like you say, the money?

CHENEY: I wouldn't, you know. I -- my dad, he went ahead and pursued it. Of course, keep in mind, he was making his -- he had already sold me the ranch, all right, so I had full control of the ranch. I'd bought it from my parents. And my dad pursued coyote hunting with -- under contract to the

predator control boards of each individual county. And my dad did a lot of flying for the feds. They have their own program [00:55:00], the feds do. And then each individual county, he did a lot of flying for Natrona County, here in our own county. And then he did quite a little work down in Niobrara County, down at Lusk. He's flown a lot for them two counties.

JUNGE: Now, apart from the recreation, what other kinds of jobs have you done in an airplane? I mean, besides hunting for coyotes and doing it for recreation, have you done any charter work or any --

CHENEY: I can't legally --

JUNGE: -- spray?

CHENEY: -- because I don't have a commercial license.

JUNGE: Oh, OK, that's right.

CHENEY: I don't have a commercial license.

JUNGE: Can you spray?

CHENEY: No. I'd had to look into that. That's a good question for my dad. My dad is so -- his knowledge of flying is just unbelievable. Like that, if I have a question, I don't have to go look it up. All I got to do is to get on this cell phone and ask Dad, because he knows, you know. His knowledge of the rules and regulations are just unreal. (Phone rings). Excuse me.

JUNGE: Go ahead.

CHENEY: Oh, I don't -- I don't need to answer it [00:56:00].

It --

JUNGE: Well, so you -- I thought maybe you were -- had worked for the Game and Fish a little bit, or for some of the feds, but you haven't done that.

CHENEY: I haven't, no sir, because I don't have a commercial license. And you'll have an appreciation for this: Of course, my dad can teach me everything. He's got an instrument instructor's license, which means that he can teach you to fly instruments. He can teach you to fly multi engine. He can teach you to be an instructor. I mean, his credential -- the only thing he don't have is an airline transport pilot. That's the only thing he don't have. And he took the written part of the test for that and passed it. He just didn't do -- it was just a never practical thing for him to become an airline transport pilot.

JUNGE: So this is interesting. This is in your blood.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: I mean, he loves it.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Does he ever -- does he read much about it?

CHENEY: All the time.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: All the time. He takes [00:57:00] all the flying magazines. And that's one thing my dad can still do is read, right, you know. And so he does; he reads a lot. And he's up on prices of airplanes. He knows what his is worth. Course, mine and his are identical. They're only like six serial numbers apart, even. They're the same -- the exact same airplane.

JUNGE: What model?

CHENEY: They're made by American Champion, which is like saying this was made by Dodge. And then they are called an Explorer, is the model. And that'd be like this is a three-quarter ton, you know. That gives you some idea. And they're designed for -- well they're a Super Cub. They're a souped-up Super Cub is what they are. You know, in the industry, if I put a 100-horsepower engine in a Super Cub today, there'll be some guy put a 110-horse in tomorrow, right? And course, he'll be the high dog on the [00:58:00] block tomorrow. The next day, there will be a guy put a 150-horse one in. You see what I'm saying? And so --

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: -- that's just the way it is.

JUNGE: What's your favorite plane?

CHENEY: If I had unlimited funds and could buy anything I want, I'd probably buy one of them Huskies that they make up in Afton, Wyoming.

JUNGE: Oh yeah, brush hoppers, aren't they --

CHENEY: And they're -- yeah.

JUNGE: -- little planes that can land on a dime and take off?

CHENEY: Yeah, that's what I'd have. That's my kind of flying, and that's what I'd have.

JUNGE: What would they cost?

CHENEY: I just test drove one, so I know; they're a quarter of a million dollars, \$270,000.

JUNGE: What? This is a prop airplane?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: Now wonder you -- nobody can get into this thing.

CHENEY: Right.

JUNGE: God. So which one do you take out normally, when you're flying? Because your dad's got three parked here.

CHENEY: Well he's got one. He's trying to sell one right now, and so he's got it in town.

JUNGE: Oh, OK. He's got a couple out here.

CHENEY: But he's got two out here, and I got one here, yeah.

JUNGE: How much is gas, flight -- av fuel [00:59:00]?

CHENEY: I just had it delivered in October and it was \$6.30 a gallon, and I -- our -- I guess that's probably the reason

both of us fly the airplane we do. It -- these airplanes, flying them like we do, which is not at full throttle, because we don't push to try to get from here to Thermopolis, or something. You know, we're throttled back a lot, the kind of flying we do. They burn about five gallon an hour, so you're looking at about \$30 an hour, just for the fuel.

JUNGE: And what do they hold? How much will the tanks hold?

CHENEY: Got two 18-gallon tanks; 36-gallon.

JUNGE: So you could go quite a while.

CHENEY: Oh yeah.

JUNGE: You could just about go from here to Vegas.

CHENEY: Yeah. Not quite. Not quite.

JUNGE: Not quite?

CHENEY: Not quite.

JUNGE: Have you done it?

CHENEY: I haven't, no. I really don't have any -- like I said, that's not my kind of flying. I have no desire to get in that airplane and fly from here to -- I have a daughter who lives in Big Spring, Texas, and I'm always threatening I'm going to fly down there and see her. That's just not my kind of flying. I would rather get in the car and fly down there [01:00:00] -- or drive down there than I would get in my airplane and fly that.

JUNGE: Have you crossed state lines? Are you pretty much --
have you restricted yourself to one?

CHENEY: I don't res-- I have no restrictions, right? I mean,
legally I can --

JUNGE: Right.

CHENEY: -- go anywhere. I just have no desire. I do like
going somewhere new. I know the -- I know this Laramie
range just about as well as any man alive because I fly it
a lot, you know, especially between here and Laramie Peak.
I know this -- I know all this country between here and
Lar-- the mountain part between here and Laramie Peak as
well as any man alive.

JUNGE: There was a Game and Fish -- when I worked for the
Recreation Commission, there was a former Game and Fish
employee who worked maintenance for monuments and markers,
or historical monuments and markers, and Pete Lange was his
name. Anyway, he said he could take me in an airplane
through a pass in the Laramie Range that was lower than
what the interstate goes over [01:01:00].

CHENEY: I don't doubt that.

JUNGE: Is that right (laughing)?

CHENEY: I don't doubt that at all.

JUNGE: Is that true?

CHENEY: Yes, sir. I don't doubt that. I can tell you a little story about my own flying. I guess that's what you're asking here.

JUNGE: Yeah, yeah.

CHENEY: I have a boy that I fly around a little bit. He gives me some money for gas, and I can do that legally. And I'm flying him out. He's a very, very avid deer hunter, and I have flown that boy all over the state of Wyoming, looking for mule deer, trophy mule deer. And we hadn't -- this was the first time we'd been down to the snowy range. And actually, we were in the Sierra Madres is where we were at in the time of the story. We had flown down there, and I don't know, I guess you know that's like the second high-- Medicine Bow Peak is the second highest point in the state of Wyoming, so it's high down there.

JUNGE: Yeah, over 12,000.

CHENEY: Yeah. And so we're at a very high elevation. The service ceiling on my airplane is only 14,000 feet, so I can't -- it'll -- it physically won't go any higher, which is untrue, but [01:02:00] -- you adjust for air temperature and air density, right?

JUNGE: Right.

CHENEY: If it happened to be a really cool day and the air is dense, we can go higher than -- I physically have had it

higher than that. That's the reason I say that. But we were -- you just got to be really careful. I mean, the airplane is right against stall all the time, and the air's so thin up there that it's right against stall all the time.

JUNGE: But you know how to pull out of a stall.

CHENEY: Don't mean (inaudible) she can pull out of one. If the air's so thin that she won't hold the wings up there, you still fall out of the sky.

JUNGE: Oh, OK.

CHENEY: You see what I'm saying?

JUNGE: I thought there was a technique you used.

CHENEY: We do to recover from a maneuver stall, from an induced stall, right, you know.

JUNGE: Right.

CHENEY: But when the air's so thin, it won't hold you, right?

JUNGE: Oh, OK. So anyway, you're flying over 12,000.

CHENEY: Anyway, we were up there, and we had flown -- and what I do is I go out here. This is my experience, both in the front seat and back seat, I might add. Back seat first. You climb [01:03:00] up out here, where it's safe. Then we go over to the mountain and get close to the mountain, and then we can fly down the canyons, right, you know. We can get down low enough that we can spot deer and tell a good

one from a bad one, you know, as long as you're going downhill. But you never fly up -- you don't ever fly up it. You go out here and you circle around to build your altitude, and then you can come over here and fly down, you know.

JUNGE: Why not? Why wouldn't you go up?

CHENEY: Because the train will come up faster than what you can climb.

JUNGE: Oh, OK.

CHENEY: It's steeper than what you can climb, and you'll wind up dead, right in the side of that mountain.

JUNGE: That's where those pilots who leave from Denver to get over west of the Rockies, the Front Range, they're way up before they --

CHENEY: That's right. It's the reason that almost all of them are averted either past Fort Collins or past Colorado Springs before they ever start over the mountain range.

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: You can understand why, now.

JUNGE: Oh yeah, yeah. So anyway --

CHENEY: But anyway, I was flying this boy, and we were over there, and we were coming down the Encampment River. I don't know how familiar you are with the Encampment River. We're [01:04:00] flying right down, and we're in the --

we're down in the lower part. I mean, the mountain's higher than we are, definitely.

JUNGE: Are you in the canyon, like the North Fort Canyon or something?

CHENEY: Yeah, exactly. And you probably know, I can't remember the name of that ranch over there. There's a famous guest ranch.

JUNGE: Oh, A Bar A?

CHENEY: No, that ain't the one. That's actually on the North Platte. I'm thinking over on the Encampment.

JUNGE: Oh, on the Encampment. I --

CHENEY: They call it like --

JUNGE: Well, I don't know.

CHENEY: I can't think of the name of it.

JUNGE: There's an Elk's camp there. Is it up around there?

CHENEY: Yeah. It's right -- it's the furthest one up the river. It's the last camp up the river is where it's at. I can't think of the name of it. It's immaterial, the name of it.

JUNGE: I know the -- I'm picturing the canyon.

CHENEY: Yeah, well, that's it. We were coming up -- we were on the up side of it. We were east over there, and we were flying west. We were westbound, and we were down low enough that we could see deer, and we had. We had seen

several here and there. And we got to that part of the canyon, and I was down low enough that -- and this was in July, I might add, so it was a fairly warm day. It was early [01:05:00] in the morning, but it was still a warm day. And you're already at 8,000 feet, maybe 9,000. I can't tell you exact amount, but we're down low. We're down within probably 50 feet of the ground, flying down this -- you know, looking at deer. I'm pretty well following the --

JUNGE: Contours?

CHENEY: -- the contour of the river, you know. And we come up there, and we kind of come around a corner, and here it is the -- the canyon walls are steep, and they've gone up a little. I mean, it's a high spot. And looking back, I probably could have just -- I think that it would have physically climbed out, and we could have went out, you know, like out of the canyon. But instead I chose, because I've seen my dad do it I guess, I knew it could be done. We get down to the canyon, and it's too narrow to get through. We can't get through that canyon. We're not going to fit. I mean, it's come down, you know. And I didn't tr-- I climbed just a little, but not much, to give ourselves just a little, and then I just turned the wings

of the plane [01:06:00] like this, and we went through the canyon like this.

JUNGE: Really? Angled it through with the plane's -- one up, one down?

CHENEY: Yeah, and flew through it. Of course, it's not very far. It'd be about like from here to that house, I guess, is all the further it was. But we flew through the canyon, and I leveled it out, and when we leveled out, that's where that camp is that we're talking about. I can't remember the name of that lodge, and the guy that owns it is my brother's boss. He sits on the -- he's the head of the committee down there at Cheyenne, but I can't think of his name right now. Anyway, we level it out, and course, you're almost right at the town of Encampment when you do that, you know. And so we pull up and went somewhere else, and this boy in the back seat, he's flown with me quite a little bit. He hadn't at the time. It was relatively new. He'd flown with me a little, but not a lot, and he never questions my judgment. Never. I mean he never says, "Hey, I don't think we can get in there," or, "That mountain is too steep [01:07:00]," --

JUNGE: Well, he wouldn't know.

CHENEY: -- or "But why can't we go over there and look?" I mean, he never put -- if I say, "It's getting too warm; we

got to go land," he never said, "Well can't we go do one more?" You know, he never does that. We pulled her back like that, levelled the wings, and pulled up just a little bit, and he says, "I'd just as soon we didn't do that again." (Laughing) I said, "Me, too."

JUNGE: That's funny. Oh, God. Have you ever had any near accidents?

CHENEY: No, I guess not. I guess not. That might be the closest, I guess. How do you know how close you were, I guess? My dad uses a comment, and he teaches this to students, and his comment is is that -- and you can come in and have a rough landing, I mean not do it perfect, you know, get it on the ground. And my dad's saying is, "Well, any one you walk away from is a good one." That's his comment [01:08:00]. And one day, of course keep in mind he flew for the Game and Fish a lot, and he had a new kid with him that had never flown with him before, and they were counting -- they were actually counting fishermen over here on the North Platte River is what they were doing. They'd fly up and down the North Platte River --

JUNGE: Oh yeah?

CHENEY: -- and count how many fish there were. And they'd been over there, and they come back to the ranch to land, and unknown -- we don't know why, but the axle broke on the

landing gear. Well, when it broke and stuck in the ground, well you can imagine how bad that was. She rolled up like that, you know. And I happened to be at the ranch, sitting there watching them when it happened. And -- which -- because he was in and out all the time. I mean it was -- I didn't even pay any attention. So like, if cars been going by here, we don't pay them any attention, right? It's the same thing with Dad. So why I was watching this particular time, I don't know, but he stuck her in the ground. I mean, they never went all the way over. It wasn't that bad of a deal, you know. It bent the airplane up a little, [01:09:00] but they were far from hurt. So I rush over there in the pickup, and they're just getting out of the airplane. They get out, and they get out, and this kid, he's pretty shook, you know. And they get out, and I tell my dad, "Oh," I said, "Any one you walk away from is a good one, Dad." (Laughter).

JUNGE: Yeah, wise guy.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah, right.

CHENEY: That kid, he didn't see near the humor in it that I did, but...

JUNGE: What's the best experience you've had in plane? Have you ever thought about that?

CHENEY: I guess I never have. The things I get to see out of the airplane are just so remarkable, it's unreal, you know. The thing I enjoy the most, if I had to pick one thing that I like the very best about all my flying experiences, I love being at the controls, and I love hunting coyotes. That -- I love doing that. The variables there are just unbelievable that you have to calculate for as a pilot, you know.

JUNGE: It's almost a game, you mean? I mean, it's --

CHENEY: Yeah, I don't --

JUNGE: But like --

CHENEY: Yeah, yeah [01:10:00]. I don't know if that's quite the way to compare it to, but it will test your skills above and beyond, every time, you know. And you have to adjust for everything from the terrain to the wind to the way the coyote's running; uphill, downhill. There's just so many variables, you know. And then, amongst all that, it's my job as the pilot to get in as low and slow as we can, give my brother the best shot I can, you know. And --

JUNGE: Has he ever shot off the prop or (inaudible)?

CHENEY: He hasn't; I have. When I flew for my dad, I got the prop one time.

JUNGE: You did?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: What happened?

CHENEY: We were up here in the Shirley Basin area when it happened, and just like I told you, anytime you're going to kill a coyote out of an airplane, the best way is, is when you and I first see him, usually he'll take off running. And the best way is come in behind him, because he's naturally wanting to go to that mountain range, right? He thinks that's his sanctuary, and so he's [01:11:00] going to go that way. And he's pretty well lined out for it, you know. He'll do a little of this, but he's pretty well headed for that. Well, if we come in from that way coming at him, you can understand, he's going to be -- he's like -
-

JUNGE: Skittering back and forth.

CHENEY: Yeah, you know. But if we go the same way he's wanting to go, he thinks he can outrun that airplane. That's the first thing to cross his mind. He's outrun every other thing, right? He can outrun any rabbit or anything that chases him. He's always out running, so he thinks he can outrun the airplane, and so he just runs as hard as he can, pretty much in a straight line most of the time. And so that's our best chance, is to make the pass on him on the way he naturally wants to run. And that's what we had done this particular time, and I'd missed this

coyote a couple of times. Just about the time we'd get into him, he'd duck under the airplane, or stop, or I mean, there's so many variables, you know. I guess that's what makes it so enticing to me. But we had -- we were going uphill. He was going up a -- it was a fairly gradual hill, but it was still [01:12:00] uphill, and relatively steep. But with the performance of a Super Cub, and on that particular given day, we were OK making a pass uphill, you know. And we had already made two passes going uphill, because that was his natural way to run, and I'd missed him twice, and -- which wasn't like me. And the last time, we barely cleared the top of the hill, you know. It was -- the terrain was coming steeper than my dad had anticipated on, and we just barely cleared the hill when we went over. And so Dad says, "Nah," he said, "next pass is going to have to be downhill." Which means that the coyote's wanting to run this way, we're going to have to come at him like this. That's not a good combination, but that's our only safe way if we want to live through this thing. And so we do; we start down there. And I don't know if you've ever been in a Super Cub, but when I'm sitting in the back seat, on this side, the door splits. One goes up against the wing, and the other one folds down, and that's what we did. We'd fold this one up against the wing and [01:13:00]

drop this one down. Well it left quite a -- there's quite a gap, enough you can crawl in and out of it, right? And course, that allows me to get out here and have quite a little -- and course, I'd take my seatbelt off and get up on my right foot, and actually literally lean out of the airplane, right, you know, so I had more maneuverability. And this particular time, we come in on this coyote, and we're coming downhill at him, all right? He's coming at us, and just about the time we get there, he runs this way instead of that way. My best shot is if he runs here, because that gives me from here all the way to the wing strut. It gives me that much to maneuver the gun to try to get a shot. But when he goes under is a bad deal, right? I don't have much room, and that's all I get to follow him. Well, I was on him, of course. We were out there quite a ways, and I'm on him, and as he gets in here to shooting range, he starts under. Well I happen to follow him under. That's your natural deal. And I follow him under and boom, pulled the trigger [01:14:00], and I killed him. And boy, I was proud of myself, and course instantly, when I pulled the trigger like that, that airplane, the vibration in it was just -- it was so bad that you could not see out of the windshield.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: The -- yeah, it was vibrating so bad that it was just a blur. You couldn't see out of it. Keep in mind, we're about, what, three feet off the ground when this takes place, I shoot the prop off. And this is how cool my dad is. I -- this is one of many stories, but he just -- he never panics, and the terrain ahead of us would be just about like what we're looking at right here ahead of us. Big old steep [draws?], and there was rocks there as big as a dining room table, and I mean, we physically could not land there, you know. And so my dad just brings it back the -- to an idle, to where it will just -- just enough RPM to keep it running and keep us airborne, and we just fly along about, I don't know, we couldn't have been more than about 10 feet off the ground, I suppose. We just fly along there and -- hoping that well [01:15:00], that maybe if we can just make it over that hill, there's a decent place la- - a better place to land, you know, there. In the meantime, the vibration is just horrific in this plane. And, you know, he never panics. He turns -- he turns around. Course, the guy's directly behind you. My dad turned around, he says, "You better put your seatbelt on, Son." And that was all he said. That was it. You know, there was no panic. He wasn't worried, nothing. And course, I did. I get in and put on my seatbelt, and he

went ahead and closed the door. He run the door from where he was sitting. That was normal procedure. He could run the door, so he unlatches it and brings it down, closes the door. And we go over a little hill, and when we get over the hill, well he turned around and said to me, he said, "There's a really good chance it's going to shake the engine plumb off of this airplane." And I'm going, "What the hell's that going to do to us?" I mean, that's going - - I've got things going through my mind that are just out of this world, you know. And course, you're going along about 60 miles and hour, it ain't very long and you're over [01:16:00] the top of that hill, right? We come over the top of the hill, and here's a little piece of county road, a road just like this one behind us, that's not long enough to land on. I mean, there's, you know, the straight part of it. There's not enough to land on, but it looked damn good from where I was sitting, and it looked damn good from where he was sitting, too. And he says, "Well, we're going to -- we're going to land right there." And I said, "That sounds good to me." And what happened is the road come down here and made a bend, a real sharp bend like this; went just a little ways, and went over a hill, so you can't see what's over the hill. Maybe it just goes over the hill and makes another bend. We don't know, because you can't

see it. And so he goes ahead and lands on this part of it, gets us on the ground, which we're both [proud?] that the engine stayed on long enough to get us to the ground. And we land, and when we come over the top of the hill, here's a cattle guard, just like the one we're sitting in right here. And my dad gets on the brakes, and Super Cub don't have good brakes [01:17:00]. You need to understand that; it don't have good brakes. And my dad gets on the bra-- he'd already been on the brakes, but when we come over that hill, he gets on them even harder. And I'll never forget this: He stood on them brakes so hard that the tail came up like that, right, you know. And it came up like that, and we come to a stop, and it falls to the ground, just like that. We just went [errnt?], bam! And I look out, and the wing strut's about 18 inches from hitting the post on the cattle guard.

JUNGE: God!

CHENEY: We better --

JUNGE: Oh, man.

CHENEY: Yep.

JUNGE: That is amazing.

CHENEY: The more amazing part's yet to come. We get out.

Course, we're glad to be alive, right? And we get out, and we look at the prop, and what it -- it had probably about a

foot, I would say of that prop -- you can imagine what it looked like when the shotgun hit it, right? It left -- it left one bla-- bent both blades ahead, and the oth-- and then one blade of it had blowed a piece out of it, we figure about six inches [01:18:00] long. And course, it was just jagged, right, where it had -- you know, you can kind of imagine that, what it looked like. And so one blade was six inches longer than the others. That's how come the vibration was so bad, as you can understand. And we get out; we look at it and go, "Whew, boy, we're just really lucky to be alive. This is a good day," you know. And we'd been hunting for a local rancher up there, who we knew quite well. We'd been doing a lot of work with and for him, and we were shooting them, and he'd go pick them up for us. That was our deal, and then we would -- we would land on a good county road over there somewhere, and he'd bring them over, and we'd load them up and bring them home. That was our normal procedure. But we'd already sent him to go get -- he was, you know, 15, 20 miles away, going over here getting a coyote when this happened. We get out, and it's about -- it's in December, and it's about the shortest day of the year, right? I mean, the days are short. We get out, it's about 4:00 in the afternoon. We got at best an hour of daylight left, [01:19:00] and we're

probably about 45 minutes away from the ranch. That's how far it is out there in an airplane, and we're running out of daylight. And my dad's a survivalist. I mean, he, you know, he says, "You know, the first thing we got to do here is get a fire built. That's how we're going to survive the night." But he says, "You know, I remember," and his -- he has a memory like you cannot believe, like an elephant. And he says, "You know, I'm almost sure that there's an old ranch where nobody's at." He said -- you know, course it's the middle of the winter, and they've left there. That's summer country, and they've left there for the winter. But he says, "I remember there being a set of buildings there," and so forth. He says, "Why don't you set out and walk over there," and she said, "Maybe in one of them old sheds is a tractor or a pickup, or they've left something there to feed or something." He said, "Why don't you walk over there?" And I said, "Well, I'm not much in favor of leaving you, us splitting up, you know." And he says, "No," he said, "I'll be all right." And he says, "It's only about a mile over there." He said, "Maybe two at the most [01:20:00]." He said, "You -- you know, it won't take you long if you get right after it." And I said, "OK." He said, "I'm going to start gathering sagebrush." That's all we had to work with was sagebrush. He said, "I'm going to

start building -- gathering sagebrush to build a fire here for the night." I said, "OK." So I take off a-hoofing it, and I'm -- I was in good shape. I was young at the time, and I could really walk, and I set out a-hoofing it right along. And I got out there about a half a mile, and here come the rancher that we'd been working with and for. See, he showed up, so I just turned around and walked back. Keep in mind, we're running out of daylight, right? So we digs around in the toolbox he's got in his pickup. I mean, you know, just stuff we carry, and he digs out a hacksaw and a couple of hammers, a crescent wrench, and a measuring tape. And so we take the hammers and bend the -- bend the prop back as straight as we can, all right? And then we take the shortest one, and we go ahead and saw -- take the hacksaw and saw it off the jagged [01:21:00] part of it, saw it off so it's smooth, see? We get it sawed off, then we take and we measure from the hub off of this one, how long this one is. We spin it around and cut the same off the other. Of course, real scientific, right? Who can read the tape the best, right? And then we -- he had a file, and we kind of filed them smooth, you know. And legally, you can cut an inch off of a prop and it loses its performance, but it's still legal to fly that way. Well we'd just cut six inches off of one blade -- well, off of

both of them now, right? So there's no guarantees that there's enough of the prop to pull enough air to get the airplane off the ground. And so, we let the [As?] down on the cattle guard. We let them down and pushed the plane on through, and then that left him a pretty good airstrip, all right. And he says, "Well," he says, "it's best we only try it with one." We took everything out of the airplane. Course, we carry shotgun and shells, and garbage bags and Raid, [01:22:00], and all this paraphernalia we carry with us, see. So we take it all out, plus I'd killed 12 coyotes that day. It was the best day I ever had, where I'd killed 12 that day. We take out all the coyotes, all the paraphernalia, all me out of there, and he gets in it and he says, "Well," he said, "I'm going to try her." And it's starting to get dark by this time. I mean, the sun has set, but we can still see. And keep in mind, he's still got 45 minutes to the ranch yet. And he says, "Well," he says, "if you'll ride with our buddy here," he says, "he'll give you a ride back to the ranch." And he said, "I'm going to give her a shot here." And he says, "If it'll come off the ground," he said, "I'm going to fly it right straight to the ranch." But he said, "There's a chance it won't come off the ground." He says, "You guys need to get going to get that other coyote," the one I'd -- because I'd

killed that one, see, but he was still up there on the hill. And he says, "You guys go get that coyote," and he said, "you go on to the ranch." And he says, "If I'm there when you get there," he says, "I'll see you there. If I'm not," he says, "you're going to have to come back here and get me, because it didn't come off the ground [01:23:00]." I said, "OK." So away we go, and he pushed it through, and course, we're quite a ways down the road, and sure enough, he flies by us, so we know it come off the ground, you know. And he flies her home.

JUNGE: God dang.

CHENEY: Flies her home and lands it in the dark, I might add, right? It's dark when he gets home, and --

JUNGE: How can he see to land?

CHENEY: Oh, I -- you know, he's landed there so many times, he can feel it, I mean, you know.

JUNGE: Yeah. Well you know, shoot, it's 11:30 almost. This has been a lot of fun, Bob. Sometime, I'd like to do a little bit more with you.

CHENEY: OK.

JUNGE: Because, rather than take up all your time now, let's see how much batter I got. Oh, I got plenty of battery. Oh, let me see if there was anything on here I wanted to -- oh, you -- how have things changed in flying for you? Is

it now -- is it more regulated? Is it more expensive? I mean, what -- from the time you learned 'til now, how has this aviation industry, [01:24:00] as far as you're concerned, changed?

CHENEY: Well, in my personal opinion, probably the things that have changed the most are communications and instruments. You know, GPS completely turned the industry around, as far as I'm concerned, you know. Used to be the only thing we had to work with was --

JUNGE: Compass?

CHENEY: -- dead reckoning, we call it, all right? We get out a map. We draw a line on the map from my ranch to Rawlins. We would make the mark on the map; physically took a straight edge and made that mark, you know. And then we would -- we would note that along that mark, we're going to have to be up to at least 12,000 feet, if we're going to go over the Ferris Mountains, right, you know, because it shows that on the map. And we can read on there that, you know, we should be -- [01:25:00] you know, we won't be in the center of the Ferris Mountains, but we should be kind of on the -- between the -- between the east end and the -- and the center somewhere is about where we should go across it, OK? We got that in our mind. We also know that we're

going to go over, just about over Pathfinder Lake, you know.

JUNGE: Yeah, I was going to say.

CHENEY: You see what I'm saying, here?

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: And we kind of had that in our mind, maybe even make some notes if you're not familiar with the country, you know, if we were going from here to Texas or something where I don't know the country. I know this like the back of my head, so I can, you know, say this. But you just make you a few notes, and then as we flew along, well I'd kind of double do -- like you said, we'd do it with a compass, right? We would -- we already have a heading figured out before we leave the ground here. We climb up to a safe cruising altitude, which we know is going to have to be 12,000 feet if we're going over the Ferris Mountains. And I'd climb up to 12,000 feet, and then I would know that we're supposed to fly at about 100 and -- about 210 degrees, right? And so I hold that, you know, on my compass, and keep checking it as we go along [01:26:00] the ground. Well, you know, we're a little too far west here, I can tell, because we should have went almost dead over Pathfinder, and instead, we're over here on the west side. So we need to bring it back to the left here a little bit,

probably because we got a little east wind here maybe, see? And that's the way we would fly from here to Rawlins. That's the -- that's the way we'd do it. Nowadays, we're required to still do this as pilots, right, but the bottom line is we get in there, we turn on the GPS, and we poke in Rawlins, Wyoming, and it brings up a heading here. It tells us what heading to fly. It tells us how fast we're flying, what our ground speed is, what our air speed is. It adjusts it for wind, tells you your estimated time of arrival. It does all the work for you, right, and all you got to do, it's got a little mark in there, it has a thing that looks like that. A little -- we call it a teepee, and then -- and it's the heading, and you're the line down here. And all you got to do is just, if you start getting off, the line starts going over here, right? All we got to do is just put the line back under here. That's [01:27:00] all you got to do. You don't have to pay any attention.

JUNGE: What happens if -- but don't you suspect someday you're -- that little device is not going to work for you?

CHENEY: That's the -- course, I'm old school. You talk to a new pilot, he strictly relies on that. And relies on it so much that they put two in his airplane. He's got a backup in case one goes wrong, all right? I'm old school. I still do her this way, too.

JUNGE: What's the problem with going, instead of over the 12,000 feet over the middle of the Ferris Mountains, going through Muddy Gap at a low altitude?

CHENEY: You can sure do that. Sure can do. You just got to be aware of it, right. You don't want to make that decision after we've already went past Pathfinder Reservoir, because we may not be able to climb fast enough if -- you understand what I'm saying?

JUNGE: Well I'm just saying, the highway looks like this through Muddy Gap.

CHENEY: Right.

JUNGE: So you could drop down in altitude --

CHENEY: Right.

JUNGE: -- and you wouldn't have to be (inaudible).

CHENEY: As long as you go around it. Yeah, that's correct.

Yup.

JUNGE: Yeah, but you'd have to know -- I mean, Gap isn't that wide. You'd have to know it was coming up.

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: Right? Because it takes a while to turn that [01:28:00] plane around, right?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: Have you ever done that?

CHENEY: Well about the best example I can give you is this one I just did down here in the Encampment River. (Laughter). You know, I don't like to go over the Wind River Mountains. As you know, the Wind River Mountains are very high, and the way they're positioned on the face of the earth where we get south -- prevailing southwest wind, you get a tremendous amount of turbulence on this -- on this downwind side. On the west side of the -- of the Wind River Mountains, you get a tremendous --

JUNGE: On the east side, you mean?

CHENEY: No, on the west si-- or on the east side. Excuse me, yeah, on the east side.

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: It's pulling down there. It's lifting on the west side and pulling down on the east. However, you don't get much lift out of the east, because we have the Wyoming Range over there that keeps it a-tumbling before it gets to the Wind Rivers, right? But my point is I hardly ever fly over the Wind River Mountains. I almost always go around them. You go out South Pass --

JUNGE: South Pass.

CHENEY: -- and go -- and go that way. If I'm flying from here to Afton, Wyoming, I will -- I will [01:29:00] vector over

there. It's only -- it ain't very far out of your way, you know.

JUNGE: Would you, if you were going to Jackson or Cody, would you go through -- would just follow Sweetwater River?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: And just go over via Lander or Riverton?

CHENEY: Yep.

JUNGE: And then eventually over the -- no -- yeah, the Absarokas, I guess it would be. The top of the Wind River Range.

CHENEY: Yeah. My flying's so much different, because I could care less about climbing to 12,000 feet and looking down there going, "That looks like a tractor to me, but I'm not sure." You know? I like flying down there about 100 feet off the ground. I can read that it says John Deere on it. You know, that's my kind of flying. That's what I like to do.

JUNGE: (Laughing). Yeah, this -- this air -- this spray pilot that I knew, Robbie -- I can't think of his last name, but he worked for Bob [Isley?] up at Bighorn Airways. He could fly low altitudes, and he'd buzz us, and you know, you could hear the -- you could hear the eek of the wheels when they hit the top [01:30:00] line of the barbed wire fence, you know, top wire. But he said he just -- he would

not fly those big transport planes, like up in Alaska. He says they're just way too high. He didn't like it. I couldn't quite figure that out.

CHENEY: I'm the same way. I'm -- I have no -- I have no desire to fly at high altitudes, you know. I feel way more comfortable down to the -- close to the ground. And that's just the way spray pilots are, you know. I feel comfortable down there. It's where our flying's done. And if I was to take another career, which keep in mind, I'm a rancher and I'm 55 years old, I ain't changing careers. But if I was, it would become a spray pilot. That's what I -- that's what I like, you know, flying close to the ground. But...

JUNGE: And then making those passes under wires, and over fences?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm. I fly under power lines quite a little bit when we're coyote hunting. If we're coyote hunting and I -- and one kind of surprises me, I usually go under it. You're way more likely to live going under it than you are [01:31:00] trying to climb, and it's there sooner than you think, and you hit it. All you got to do is just get -- the ground don't scare me, which it does most pilots. You know, most pilots, they're -- altitude is their friend,

they think, and I'm just the opposite. I like being close to the ground, and I just feel safer down there.

JUNGE: Bob Isley recalls -- I mean, you can get used to this, to the point where you forget. He was flying, making regular passes under a power line to spray, but he had forgotten that that power line takes an S curve. And so, when pulling up and going down, and pulling up and going down, he just misjudged, and he -- his wing tip caught one of those power lines and threw him right into the dirt. I don't know how he came out of it. He's still alive. As far as I know, he's still alive.

CHENEY: Yeah, he's still alive. I know Bob Isley.

JUNGE: Do you?

CHENEY: Yeah, he did some spraying for me just a couple years ago. Course, my dad don't have the equipment anymore, you know, and so I had Bob do some spraying here for me. And he himself come and [01:32:00] flew it on.

JUNGE: He's a good pilot.

CHENEY: He is. Yeah, Bob's a good pilot.

JUNGE: But he's got -- you see the scar on his face? He's got a big scar --

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: -- from that wreck. Well, anyway, let's see, I think we're about done here. What's your favorite airport in this state?

CHENEY: (Laughs). Well, there's a rancher friend of mine that lives over here, and you don't consider that an airport. I don't like airports. I really don't. I'd just as soon not land -- I try to stay off of pavement. My brother makes fun of me that I can't land on pavement. And so I really don't -- really don't like airports. Probably out of all of them I've been do, I like Afton the best, I guess. And the reason being is because you can land on the grass up at Afton. You don't have to land on the airport. They got a grass strip right beside, because most of the -- they build those Huskies up at Afton, and now most of them, they put them big tundra tires on. You got to understand, them are \$3,800 apiece for them tires. And so every time you land on the pavement, it probably [01:33:00] costs you \$100 in rubber every time you land on the pavement there.

JUNGE: Oh my gosh.

CHENEY: So they built a grass strip right beside the other one so you can land -- bush pilots can land over there.

JUNGE: So you wouldn't call this Cheney Airport an airport?

CHENEY: No, it's not an airport. It's my airstrip, but -- and I like it the best because I'm so used to it. I've been in

there in some really adverse conditions, you know.

Probably the best thing I ever learned from my dad was is that don't ever be afraid to admit defeat and go somewhere else. You get in there and it's so bad you can't get her on the ground, you admit defeat and go somewhere else.

JUNGE: You mean too windy, too what?

CHENEY: Cro-- you got to understand, we're a crosswind almost all the time, because the wind comes out of the southwest, and we're directly north and south, so there's always going to be a crosswind. And then, like I -- it's too bad you didn't get to see it, but that hill creates such a turbulence there that it's bad. And it's downhill. My runway is -- it's not flat. It's uphill and downhill.

JUNGE: Which way do you land coming back [01:34:00].

CHENEY: It depends. I land into the wind is what I do.

JUNGE: So north to south.

CHENEY: Yeah. If it's dead calm and I -- and I can land any way I want, I come in from the north going south and land that way. And I take off that way, too. I take off the same way.

JUNGE: Now, are you married?

CHENEY: No. Married and divorced.

JUNGE: OK, so -- and your -- how many kids?

CHENEY: One. One daughter.

JUNGE: OK, so there's nobody here but you.

CHENEY: That's correct.

JUNGE: OK, so you can come and go as you please.

CHENEY: I do, yeah. And that's the reason -- I started to tell you, one thing you asked me is how has it changed? We have -- you're probably familiar with these one spot, or spot on. I can't remember. Are you familiar with them at all? They're a device. They're built for hunters; any back country people carry them. And what they do is they will send this -- well, you can do more with them than what I do. But mine is designed that I push a -- I turn it on, and I push a button on it, and it sends a signal, goes to a satellite signal, and that satellite signal [01:35:00] sends it to -- back to the ground, and it can do it either via email or text message to a phone. And if you get it -- I don't think I have one saved or I'd show you -- it just says -- I design the words for it, OK, pre, before we go. And it just says Bob o-- Bob checks in, OK. And so that's what I do. When I get ready to take off, that's one of my takeoff procedures. When I'm up there turning around at the end of the runway, I reach over and I push the button, and that sends a signal to three guys, one of them being my brother. Which a lot of times he's in the back seat, so I really count on the other two guys, right? But it sends a

message. It gives the time when it comes up on the text message. It gives the words, "Bob's OK, checking in." And then below it will give the -- give you GPS coordinates, right, in longitude and latitude, and the time -- the date [01:36:00] and the time. So if when I punch that button it comes up on my brother's phone, "Bob checks in, OK at 11:46," OK? Well, he knows that I took off at 11:46, and I can go out and fly. If by some rare chance we get out there and it sucked all the gas out of the top of the wing and we got to land on the county road out there, it's got a button that I can push that, "Bob needs help," all right? And it sends him the coordinates, gives him the coordinates, and the time one more time. And he's going, "Well, shit, all I got to do is take my GPS, type in them coordinates, and punch go to, and go ri-- I can go right to him," you know. And course, he's smart enough to know he's going to bring -- he's going to bring a new oil filter, and some oil, and some gas, and a crescent wrench, and I mean, he's going to bring some things like that, all right? Now, it's also got a different button on there that I can push that says that we've crashed, I need 9-1-1. I need emergency help. And it does, it goes directly to 9-1-1 and gives you those coordinates, and it says in there that you've had an airplane crash and need help at these

coordinates. Now, you got to be physically be able -- live through the crash to push the button, right, you know.

JUNGE: (Laughing). I would imagine.

CHENEY: But if you're not, you're probably dead, and it don't make any difference anyway, right?

JUNGE: No.

CHENEY: But anyway, that particular thing is what I -- you're asking me what's changed, that's one thing. And I use it instead of filing a flight plan. You can understand why. How could I file a flight plan if I took off and flew up here, and around Muddy Mountain, and over Casper Mountain, and out to Shirley Basin, and around Laramie Peak and back? You can't file a flight plan like that, right, you know.

JUNGE: Right.

CHENEY: But I essentially have done the same thing, here.

JUNGE: By hitting [01:38:00] the button.

CHENEY: Yeah, right.

JUNGE: And you do that at critical spots along the route?

CHENEY: No, I only -- I punch in, and as long as everything goes fine, I wait until I'm on the ground again, and I punch it again. Well my brother know-- first of all, I got -- he knows I got six hours' worth of fuel on board, all right? So if he didn't -- if we punched out at 11:45, it could be as late as 5:00 this afternoon before we punch

back, and he wouldn't be concerned, right? I mean, he would be, because he knows my normal flights are only about two hours at most, you know, so he would -- he would be concerned if we weren't back in about two hours. Matter of fact, what he would do is he'd get on the cell phone, and he'd call me. He'd call me just to make sure, "Hey, is everything all right?" And I'd just says, "Hey, yeah, we got busy. We were flying over here looking for coyotes over here by Rawlins, and it's going to be a while before we get home." No big deal. No harm, no fuss. If I didn't answer the cell phone, which you don't always have cell phone coverage, right?

JUNGE: Right.

CHENEY: If I didn't answer it, he'd be going, "Ah, give a couple more hours. But boy, if I don't hear from him pretty quick," you know. And then as soon as I get back on the ground, I punch it [01:39:00], and it goes back, "Bob's OK, checking in," and -- at 2:14, see? Now he's got -- and course, if he gets busy, which he does, right? I mean, he don't sit there and look at this every second. So, you know, if he's in a meeting or something, he comes out of the meeting and goes, "Oh, I got a text message." He open up and he goes, "Oh, Bob left at 11:45. I'll expect him back about 3:00 or something." He closes is up, goes on

about his day. And he gets to the end of the day and goes, "Woo, I don't think I've heard from Bob, yet. I'd better double check." And he opens it up, and if there's already a text message, yeah, sure enough, I'm already on the ground and checked in. If I'm not there, he's coming and looking for me.

JUNGE: Boy, you can really appreciate what those early, like airmail pilots had to go through. They didn't have that. They probably had a compass, maybe, I suppose. And a fuel gauge, and I don't know what. Maybe a --

CHENEY: Bare minimum.

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: I'm going to tell you one more quick story here that you'll have great appreciation. My dad won't tell you. That's the reason I got to tell you about my dad.

JUNGE: Yeah, well I want to hear about these, [01:40:00] yeah.

CHENEY: My dad bought a brand new airplane, the one he's flying now, and they're made in Wisconsin, I think.

JUNGE: What are they?

CHENEY: American Champion --

JUNGE: Oh, OK.

CHENEY: -- is the manufacturer of it. Well, my dad has got it in his head he wants to take the instruments out of his

existing airplane and put it in his new airplane. So he buys it with no instruments in it, back there in -- at the factory. That's the way he orders it. He orders this one, a special -- couple special things done. The main thing he had done was he has "Wildlife" written under the wing on this side, and "Survey" written under this one. So when he flies over you, you look up, and it says, "Wildlife Survey," see. And that saves a lot of phone calls, "Hey, what's this low flying guy doing?" See, you already know.

JUNGE: (Laughing). Even if he's not doing a wildlife s--

CHENEY: Even if he's not doing a wildlife survey.

JUNGE: That's pretty cool.

CHENEY: Anyway, he orders the airplane a certain way, and -- but with no instruments in it. No radio. No instruments. All [01:41:00] it's got in it is a com-- it didn't have a compass in it. It didn't have anything in it. It had a engine, like a heat temperature gauge, an oil pressure gauge, and tachometer, you know, but that was about it. There was -- there was no --

JUNGE: No frills.

CHENEY: Yeah, you know. And so he cons a buddy of his into going with him to go back there and pick this airplane up when it's done. They call him, tell him, "Yeah, it's done." So they crawl in the car, them and their wives, my

mom and my dad and this other couple, and they drive all the way back there. And he gets out, and he admires his new airplane, writes the guy a check for \$100,000 grand, or whatever it was at the time. And so they get in it. He's got -- he's got some maps, and he has a hand-held radio, OK, like a walkie-talkie that he can talk to the tower with, see, that gets him out of there. And so he gets in that thing and flies it, I want to say it was like 1,800 miles home, [01:42:00] with zero instruments, you know. Nobody even believes me that I -- when I tell them that story, that he flew that thing. And course, a lot of his survey work was from here, up and down the North Platte River. And they went all the way to Minatare, Nebraska, where -- in the Minatare, where the lake is down there.

JUNGE: You mean --

CHENEY: McConaughy.

JUNGE: McConaughy, yeah.

CHENEY: And so he knows like the back of his hand between this ranch and to North Platte, Nebraska, see. But from there on, it's all new. I mean, I don't know, I don't have anything to go by. And so -- and he's got the old school, right? He's got a map out, and he's drawn a line on this map. Well he's going along, but there's no -- there's no landmarks in that flat country, as you know. Like, we use

Laramie Peak or the Farris Mountains or the Rattlesnakes or something, see. There's nothing (inaudible).

JUNGE: Unless there's a river.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: A huge river.

CHENEY: Exactly. And so they're flying along, and they get in an argument. And he says -- tells Jim, he says [01:43:00], "Well I'm pretty, I'm pretty sure we're right here, don't you, Jim?" And Jim says, "No, I don't think so, Bill." He said, "I think we're over here," you know. And they get to arguing back and forth of where they're at, and meantime, they're flying along, you know. And so they're totally safe yet, but they're about to need gas. They've been flying for about five hours. They need to start thinking about a gas stop. And Dad said, "Well I'm pretty sure we can get gas over here at -- " whatever town, you know. And Jim says, "Well, by golly, Bill, I do-- you're going to have to go quite a ways that way to get over there, if you're going to land at Fort Dodge," or wherever it was at, you know. And they argue back and forth quite a little bit, and so finally Dad says, "Well, by golly, I guess what we're going to have to do -- " he said, "Well, do you know where we're at, for sure, Jim?" And Jim says, "No," but he says, "I can see that water tower over there at one of them

towns." He said, "If you'll get down low enough, we can read that water tower." Usually the name is written on them water towers, see. So they fly over there, and they get down low enough and look, and it just so happens this one here, the name wasn't wrote on it, you know [01:44:00]. And so they keep on a-going in a direction they think they're going. Finally, they decide the only way they're going to know where they're at for absolutely sure is get down on the road and see if they can't see a road sign. Get down low enough, they can read the road sign, so they can tell how far it is to the next town.

JUNGE: (Laughing). And they did, finally.

CHENEY: That's what they did. But they did, and sure enough, Jim was right. Dad was wrong, and Jim was right, and that very seldom happens, I might add. But just so happens Jim was right, and so --

JUNGE: Well, your dad probably has a sixth sense about all this.

CHENEY: He does.

JUNGE: You know, I mean, you've got -- when you're in the mountains hunting, generally, if you do a lot of hunting, you kind of know which direction is which.

CHENEY: That's right.

JUNGE: Not always. Sometimes you can follow the contours and wind up going back to where you were.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: I don't know if you've ever done that.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: But --

CHENEY: But anyway, they finally get -- they get down, read the road signs, and figure out where they're at. And they fly along, stop and get fuel, and sure enough, they were -- they got back on track. And of course, once they got to North Platte, Nebraska, he knew which way to go. He didn't need no maps or anything. Threw them all in the back seat and flew on [01:45:00], you know. You tell somebody you went and bought a brand new airplane 1,800 miles away from home and flew it here, basically in a direct line. I mean, they got off just a little bit in that one spot, but other than that, he flew it in a straight line with no instruments.

JUNGE: (Laughing). Well, lucky thing the weather was decent, you know?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: So what stories should I be asking your dad when I get there? Is there anything else that I should -- any-- anything else. What, in particular, is he --

CHENEY: Ask him about his Alaska flying. He has quite a few experiences while he -- when he was a bush pilot in Alaska.

JUNGE: OK.

CHENEY: You'll have to squeak a few out of him out of -- you know, about coyote hunting. But you've already got it. Ask him, "Well, have you ever wrecked the airplane coyote hunting?" And he'll tell you a story or two about it, you know. Ask him if he's ever wrecked spraying, you know. He's had an accident or two spraying. He's tipped her upside-down, so forth, spraying.

JUNGE: How many hours does he have?

CHENEY: Over 10,000.

JUNGE: What do you have?

CHENEY: I ju-- I'm almost [01:46:00] to the 1,000 mark. I'm almost to the 1,000-hour mark. I looked the other day.

JUNGE: Seriously?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: That doesn't seem like much.

CHENEY: I know it don't, but I -- and I'm really good at -- I'm terrible at paperwork. You need to understand, the worst guy in the world. I just hate it, period, you know. But I -- the only thing I'm really good about is recording my time. My time's as accurate in an airplane as anybody's, you know, my actually physical time.

JUNGE: So you've got a log that dates back to what, what year?

CHENEY: Nine-- I was just looking at it, 1983. Well, it's before that. That's when I become a private pilot, was in '83. So my first -- my first flying at the controls would have been in about '82, I guess, something like that.

JUNGE: Thirty-two years.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: That's a long time. But your dad flew for how many years?

CHENEY: I can't tell you. He'll tell you. He'll have all that. The man has like four or five log books plumb full of his recorded time. And the irony of it is he went -- he won't tell you this, but I know this. He went a long period [01:47:00]. Course, when you're a new pilot, you're wanting them hours, right? You know, and so he kept really good track up to a certain point, and then he just quit recording them. I mean, it was like what for, you know? and then it dawned on him one day, "You know, some day I'm going to be an old man and want to look back on that," so he started keeping them again. So he's got a lull in there --

JUNGE: A big gap.

CHENEY: Yeah, you know. He won't admit that to you, but I know it's a fact. And he's got more hours than what he has recorded.

JUNGE: Were you there -- so what do you think, maybe guessing about five years, 10 years maybe? He could have maybe twice as much, right?

CHENEY: Nah, I wouldn't say twice.

JUNGE: No?

CHENEY: But I would say -- I'd say he's way closer to a 17,000-hour pilot than he is a 10,000. That's what I'll say.

JUNGE: OK.

CHENEY: That's -- if I was guessing, that's what I'd say.

JUNGE: Were you in Casper when they inducted him into the Hall of Fame?

CHENEY: Well, I'll give you a little story. You'll appreciate this. His best friend, all right, is a guy by the name of Earl Barto. And my dad, my dad taught him to fly [01:48:00], he taught his wife to fly.

JUNGE: How do you spell that last name?

CHENEY: B-A-R-T-O. Barto.

JUNGE: OK, there used to be a Barto out in Rock Springs.

CHENEY: I'll be darned.

JUNGE: Yeah. Anyway, go ahead.

CHENEY: Anyway, they're the best of friends, have been ever -- you can imagine living out here in this coun-- in the country. When it come time to go to school in town, course they teach the elementary school right here, right? But then when you had to go to town to high school, well, it was pretty common in those days you boarded in town. Well, my dad did. He boarded in town with these people, these Bartos. Well, just so happens, they had a boy the same age as my dad, and so they grew up like brothers, and they've been as close or closer than brothers all their life. They're -- they started out hunting buddies, and it's went from there. But they're really close, and he -- Dad taught Earl to fly, and Dad taught Earl's wife to fly, both. And matter of fact, Earl went on and bought an airplane, bought a Super Cub, and that's his own story, right? But anyway, Earl felt that [01:49:00] -- he thought it was just unbelievable that Dad had that much experience in different -- almost all of my dad's flying time is in a tail dragger aircraft and less than 200 feet off the ground. It's all in hunting coyotes and spraying, and these kind of things. There's just -- there's not another pilot like him, you know. And if anybody was to go into the Wyoming Aviation Hall of Fame, it should be my dad. I mean, he was born and bred and raised and flew here all of his live, except for

just a small period that he flew in Alaska as a bush pilot, you know. And so Earl did the research. Him and his wife did the research to find out how to induct him into the hall of fame. They did all the footwork. And they did, they got all the applications, and it was quite a process, and they had to do a bio, and etc., etc., you know. And they submitted it and got turned down. Well me, if I got turned down [01:50:00], I'd go, "Well, so what?" and throw it in the garbage, and go on about life. That's what I would do, all right? But they're pretty persistent. They get up the next year, and they re-apply again. And they get turned down again. And so they re-apply again. You got to realize that there's guys in Wyoming that have maybe twice that many hours. I mean, there's guys that got 20, 30,000 hours, but almost all of them are military pilots, right? You know, that's how they got them. And not that they don't have an unbelievable story, the kind of things that they flew in, and everything from maybe three wars, you know, they've flown in. They've flown all kinds of cargo planes, fighter jets. I mean, they've flown unbelievable amounts of aircraft. Some of them, usually after a military career, a lot of them become airline pilots and even have -- you know. And so their resume is just amazing. But hardly any of the flying was done here

in Wyoming, you know, with the exception of landing one at -- down at Cheyenne to refuel or something [01:51:00], you know. And all my dad's flying is done in the state of w-- in the state of Wyoming, you know.

JUNGE: Is there anybody else like him in the state?

CHENEY: Not to my knowledge. My dad has a cohort, I like to call him, that is dead now, but he hunted coyotes out of the airplane, and owned a helicopter, and flew a helicopter. His name was John Irwin and my -- one of my dad's best friends. They were close friends. They were actually competitors, when it actually come for the dollar, but they were the best of friends, you know. And John's the only guy I know of, but there could be a guy up in the northwest part of the state that I don't know about. I mean, you know, there could be somebody else around.

JUNGE: Do you know any pioneer aviators, besides your dad, in this part of the country, or that you've run into?

CHENEY: I don't. I really don't. I know the -- I mean, I know some ranchers. You know, [Gene Hardy?] down there, he's flown for years.

JUNGE: Where is that at?

CHENEY: He's north of Douglas.

JUNGE: Oh, OK. Gene Hardy.

CHENEY: Yeah, and Gene's about my dad's age, you know. I'm
[1:52:00] trying to think somebody else.

JUNGE: Is this -- well if you do, let me know.

CHENEY: I'll -- there's another rancher right up the road.
You drove by him, you didn't -- you asked me about
airstrips. This guy up here by the name of Dale Robinson,
is his name, and they're real remote. They've used their
airplane because of their remoteness to, you know, commute.
And my dad taught his wife to fly. Her name is Sondra,
Sondra Robertson -- Robinson.

JUNGE: Robinson.

CHENEY: And my dad taught her to fly. And they fly out of
Laramie. They call Laramie home base, but their ranch is
over at the foot of Laramie Peak, is where it's at.

JUNGE: But that's -- they're so remote, and their ranch, that
they really need a plane.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Here, for you, it's more recreation, right?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: You don't need -- you don't need to fly.

CHENEY: You got to realize, I have about approximately a
20,000-acre ranch, and I'm a one-man show. I don't have
any help. I don't hire any help.

JUNGE: What?

CHENEY: I run it all by myself.

JUNGE: How in -- how do you do that?

CHENEY: I couldn't without [01:53:00] the airplane. You need to understand I couldn't. When we were growing up, my dad had two sons, and a wife, and etc. that all worked on the ranch hard, you know. And usually we had a hired man. And now I've got -- it's just me. I'm a one-man show, you know, and I couldn't do it without the airplane. That's, you know.

JUNGE: Well, in what respect? What would you -- what do you use it for?

CHENEY: I use it like -- the main thing I use it for is I can check the whole ranch, right? I can go out and check gates; I can check water holes; make sure that the gates have been closed so my cattle aren't getting out. If one got left open by somebody and the cattle are out, I can get them spotted from the air, and it saves me riding all of the neighbors' pasture. I only have to ride a certain amount of it, because I know where the cattle are. See, I just saw them, saw them an hour ago, and I'm back here now, and I can get them back in and get the gate closed, see?

JUNGE: What about getting supplies, stuff like that? Do you go and fly into Casper?

CHENEY: No, I don't. I don't.

JUNGE: So what happens if something goes wrong with your plane, here [01:54:00]?

CHENEY: I fix it myself. I --

JUNGE: (Laughing). Now don't tell me that you use bailing wire and chewing gum.

CHENEY: (Laughing). I don't. I'm very particular. I want that airplane at its peak performance, because I trust my life to it, and it is first class. I have a buddy, has his own story. He went to work for us as a kid on the ranch, summer help irrigating, and he was enlisted in the military when he went to work for us, and then went into boot camp straight out of -- one summer out of working on our ranch. Well, while he was in the military, he become a helicopter pilot, a helicopter mechanic, and an airplane mechanic. And we've stayed -- we've stayed close through 30, 40 years, right?

JUNGE: What's his name?

CHENEY: Name is Gary Wood. And he's done everything. Course, he spent 23 years in the military, right [01:55:00]? Then he got out of there and he owned -- or owned -- he operated -- he was the FBO at [Guernsey?] for several years. And then he took a job with Falcon. He went down and built Falcon jets for Falcon in Arkansas. And he's on his way here as we speak. He's on his way from Boston,

Massachusetts to here, because he just took a job in Casper with Corporate Air in Casper. He's going to start working on FedEx airplanes here.

JUNGE: As a mechanic?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm, yeah. But he's the one that does my mechanic work for me. I actually do the work, if the truth was known, and we use his signature to sign it off. I mean, he -- keep in mind, he's very meticulous, which I like. And if I do something and it ain't quite right, he'll call me on it. He'll say, "Hey, you know, we need to redo this, you know."

JUNGE: Well, you must be a mech-- quite a mechanic yourself.

CHENEY: I -- well, I grew up on a ranch. You learn to be mechanically inclined, and I -- the reciprocating engine is the same in this pickup as it is [01:56:00] in an airplane. Trust me, they're basically the same, you know. If you've got that concept, you don't have much problem.

JUNGE: Did you ever have to fabricate a part or use wire?

CHENEY: Oh yeah.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Oh yeah.

JUNGE: Come on, seriously? Tell me about that. Do you -- you had a problem you had to use wire or bolts or something?

CHENEY: This guy my dad taught to fly, this Earl Barto, he went to land. I would say probably 20% of our landings are off of an airstrip, and I would say 99% of them are off of an airport, right? Well, he landed in a spot up there that he shouldn't have, all right? And on the landing, he hit a ditch and wiped the landing gear out from underneath it. Well really, that's the only thing that's wrong. It bends the prop when that happens, and the landing gear is crunched. And so, from a previous wreck that we had had in Dad's airplane, I'd saved [01:57:00] what I thought were the good parts, right? And I re-welded them myself. I re-welded them and rebuilt the landing gear so we'd have a spare, so to speak. Even though it's not kosher, it would least get you home, right? And so, I take it. I -- Earl wrecked his plane, calls me on the phone, and I take all the stuff and go up there. We jack the airplane up and put this makeshift landing gear under it. And we used the prop that I'd cut the six inches off of, all right. Because his was all bent, so we took his prop off and put this one on, and he flew it home, you know. So yeah --

JUNGE: Couldn't you bend the prop? There's no way to bend the prop.

CHENEY: You can. I was telling you that Dad snapped one off up here, a spindle, you know, and bent the prop on it. And

I took it and straightened it the best I could, you know. You got to keep in mind, they are [01:58:00] very, very meticulous, as you can imagine.

JUNGE: The tolerance is probably just real small.

CHENEY: Yeah, exactly.

JUNGE: Real low.

CHENEY: And so I know that mine ain't that accurate, you know.

And so consequently, I tried to -- Dad bought a new prop. Well, where he bought the new prop, they rebuild old props, and so I took that one, and this one was out of tolerance. They couldn't -- they -- if so much of it's been bent, they can't -- they're not supposed to straighten it.

JUNGE: They'd just pitch it.

CHENEY: I asked them to go ahead and bring it within tolerances anyway, and I'd take it home and throw it away, you know. And they wouldn't do that for me, so mine's just strictly done with two two-by-fours, a vice, and a crescent wrench, you know. But I wouldn't be afraid to use it, I can tell you that right now. I'd put it on my plane to fly out of there.

JUNGE: (Laughing). Well now, you were talking about your dad getting refused two times for the Hall of Fame?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: And he finally hit it on the third try?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm, on the third try, yeah.

JUNGE: And this Barto was the fellow [01:59:00] that was largely responsible.

CHENEY: Right.

JUNGE: Of course, he probably got stuff from you, too.

CHENEY: Yeah. Yeah, I helped him do the bio, you know, on it. I don't -- have you read the info on the plaque and so forth at the Hall of Fame?

JUNGE: I've been up there at the airport, which is where the plaque is, right?

CHENEY: Right, correct.

JUNGE: And I've read that, but I can't remember what all it said. But I've got a little piece of paper in here somewhere that tells, you know, why he was inducted. What was -- your dad's a pretty cool, level headed guy, as you explained. How did he take this all? Did he just sort of dismiss the whole thing, or was he proud?

CHENEY: Oh, he was proud. My dad shows zero emotion, has ever since I was a little bitty kid. I mean he just -- he just -- my dad's just one of them kind. Don't -- he just don't show emotion. And then, course he had this stroke, and so it's left him -- if I wouldn't have told you, you wouldn't know. You'd think maybe he's just aged before his time, you know, when you meet him. But now that you know, you'll

go, "I can see where, you know, [02:00:00] he, you know, he's just a little slower. They -- like I said, he's having some vision problems. They've got -- he wears glasses. Has ever since I can remember. In all his whole flying career, he's wore glasses. And they've got one eye with -- that's taped. It's not -- it's got -- what do they call the tape you can see through?

JUNGE: Oh yeah.

CHENEY: I can't think of the name of it. You know what I'm talking about.

JUNGE: It's transparent, yeah, I know.

CHENEY: Yeah, and it got one lens of his glasses taped. It looks goofier than hell. I look at him and think, "Gee, he looks half retarded with that thing," you know. But it's supposed to help his vision. Whether it does or not, I don't know. I'm -- he don't wear them all the time, so I'm convinced it isn't that big a deal, but...

JUNGE: Well now, your brother Dan, you say he's where, now?

CHENEY: In Cheyenne.

JUNGE: In Cheyenne, yeah.

CHENEY: Uh-huh.

JUNGE: OK, he's the head of Frontier Days.

CHENEY: Right.

JUNGE: And you got your best friend coming here to work in Casper, so it's going to be like old home week for you for a while.

CHENEY: Yeah, basically. Yeah [02:01:00] yeah.

JUNGE: That's pretty cool.

CHENEY: Yeah. Yeah, I'm glad to have Gary back. I have a lot of respect for his mechanic work. You know, obviously I do. He's the one that twists the wrench on my plane. But -- and he does on Dad's now, too. He does all of Dad's work, too.

JUNGE: Oh, does he?

CHENEY: Yeah. Hasn't -- there's a big gap that he hasn't. Guy by the name of Gary Lewis who's up at -- runs the airport at Lander does all of Dad -- has done my dad's maintenance work on all of his airplanes for a 40-year period there, you know.

JUNGE: I should be talking to him if I talk to a mechanic, maybe?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: He an interesting guy?

CHENEY: Yeah, he's been in the business. He's a real interesting guy. Super nice guy. He's a lot like my dad. You got to kind of pry words out of him, you know, but...

JUNGE: Oh yeah, that's all right. Laconic, they call it.

Laconic.

CHENEY: Well I don't know what you call it, but (laughs).

JUNGE: Yeah, well, you know, I was wondering how your dad felt about this induction because -- and you say he doesn't show emotion -- because I'm thinking here's a guy that's faced some pretty frightening things in his life, right? He's been -- and [02:02:00] God knows what he's been through besides what you've told me. And I just wonder if he just would dismiss this whole thing about the honor, or whether he really appreciated being honored by his peers and by people who knew what he had done?

CHENEY: He do-- he really appreciates being honored. He really does. I -- and we had a ceremony for him, you know, when went and inducted him. And without the ceremony, it really don't amount to much. You have a plaque hanging down there in the Cheyenne terminal.

JUNGE: Airport, yeah.

CHENEY: That's about what it boils down to, right?

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: And if some guy is waiting on an airplane, he goes over there and reads it. It's about the only -- the only way you even know it exists, right, you know, in reality.

But we had a ceremony for him, and I am seated, I put it together, I conducted it, I invited all of his friends.

JUNGE: Oh, OK.

CHENEY: What we did, it just so ha-- it was the 11th day of November when we had the --

JUNGE: Two thousand and twelve.

CHENEY: Yeah. And just so happened we had a terrible snow [02:03:00] storm right then, you know, and so a lot of people couldn't make it. But we invited all of his -- you got to realize, his list of Game and Fish personnel that he flew for --

JUNGE: Endless.

CHENEY: -- fit in a folder like that, you know. Most of them are retired, right, because they started while my dad was in his peak. My dad's retired, and so are they, you know. And almost all of those guys drove through the storm that night to be there to speak. I asked them all to -- I asked everybody that came, everybody that got an invitation was invited to -- we wanted them to bring their best story about Bill Cheney, you know, and flying. And there was everything there from a local rancher that said, "Well, I remember that time Bill flew out there and landed at my -- right there on the meadow in front of the house and picked me up, and we flew for hours and finally found a Herford

bull that I'd been riding for for six months," you know. I mean, there was everything from that to there was a lot of those Game and Fish guys were very [02:04:00] professional, I'll call it, and say, "You know, gol, I flew with Bill, never felt more safe in my life." All of them will tell you -- every one of them will tell you the most unique thing about my dad was landing on county roads to take a leak. You know, they'd sit in that airplane so long they needed to get out and stretch, you know, and he'd always find a spot to land, you know. That -- all of them, almost all, had that.

JUNGE: Did you record all this?

CHENEY: I did, yeah.

JUNGE: You got the tape?

CHENEY: Yeah. I'll have to find it.

JUNGE: You know what? Is it on -- is it an analog tape, or a CD?

CHENEY: My brother's got it. I'll have to -- I'll have to ask Dan what took place with it.

JUNGE: Here's what to do: See if you can find it. I've got a tape-to-tape copier, and I'll put that tape in my Ion, it's called, and I'll digitize it.

CHENEY: OK.

JUNGE: And then I'll make you a copy, or two or three,
whatever you need, and it'll be all on there [02:05:00].

Is it good recording?

CHENEY: Probably not. I got a --

JUNGE: Well, we can play with it.

CHENEY: -- I know we recorded that.

JUNGE: Well I think Sue could probably play with it. If you
do have the recording and it's -- the volume's not pumped
up, she can play with it and get it so it sounds decent.

CHENEY: OK.

JUNGE: And then if you find it, like I say, my standing offer
is I'll go ahead and copy it for you if you let me put a
copy a copy in the archives --

CHENEY: OK.

JUNGE: -- down in Cheyenne.

CHENEY: OK.

JUNGE: And if you don't, that's OK, too. So I'll still make
it for you.

CHENEY: We -- I put together -- [Sharlee?] did, actually, Earl
Barto's wife. Sharlee gathered up a whole bunch of
pictures. And they weren't necessarily flying pictures.
They were my dad's life pictures, everything from, you
know, when my brother was born or I was born, or a picture
of their wedding day, or you know, these kind of things.

Most of them are flying pictures, or flying related, and she tried to get as many pictures as she could of people that my dad had taught to fly, you know [02:06:00], and we got them on a disk, those still pictures. But I'll have to make sure -- I know my brother recorded that. I know he did.

JUNGE: Well, whatever you have on disk, if you want me to make some copies for you, I'd be happy to do it. I'd be happy to do it.

CHENEY: OK.

JUNGE: Now, he didn't fly the Vietnam War, did he?

CHENEY: No, didn't fly military. None. Zero. All of his --

JUNGE: It's after Vietnam, pretty much? Post-Vietnam?

CHENEY: My dad would have been pre-Vietnam. See, assuming my dad would have been in the military, he would have been, oh, mid-fifties to what, early sixties, I guess, you know.

JUNGE: Yeah, and when I think about -- I'm reading a book on the Korean War. It's called *The Longest -- The Coldest Winter*. It's an amazing book about the Korean War, and I'm thinking, you know, it's a good think he didn't go in the military. You might not be here --

CHENEY: That's right.

JUNGE: -- you know?

CHENEY: That's exactly right. Yeah, that's what my -- my dad brought that up not too long ago, that it's unbelievable [02:07:00] that our family -- there's my brother, and course, now I've got a daughter, and my dad had an -- two brothers, and every one of them missed the war. None -- the only -- he only had one brother that served. That was the only one that's ever served, just one brother, and he served in the Navy and missed the war.

JUNGE: I listen to stuff like that, and I say to myself, "It's really funny how time and space work together to do what they do." And some people fall through the cracks. You know what I mean by that?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: You know, they don't make it. And people die in airplane crashes, and people, you know, maybe weren't raised on a ranch where they had an airstrip and had a father who knew how to fly. I mean, all these things just sort of worked themselves into place. You ever reflect back on that?

CHENEY: I'll tell you, it's kind of funny you mention that. I was just thinking the other day about I know several rancher -- when somebody finds out you fly, almost everybody has a flying story [02:08:00] they want to tell you, you know.

JUNGE: Oh, is that right?

CHENEY: "My dad used to do this," or, "I had an uncle that was a crop duster," you know, and so forth. And it's kind of ironic, the fact that on almost every ranch, you'll find that if they didn't fly in the military, you know, go off to learn to fly, they want to fly. And people who had to go into the military and do flying, 90% of them come home, and that's put behind them. They never want to fly. They don't want to -- you know, that's behind them. They -- they're not recreational pilots, now, you know, like I am.

JUNGE: So if you'd have been in the military, it might have spoiled it for you.

CHENEY: Maybe. That's the main reason that I'd op-- right now I could pick up my dad -- my dad had a good flying business, you know. He made his living at it and had a good flying business. And I could pick that up in a heartbeat, because anybody that flew with my dad, just because I had the same [02:09:00] name and I was trained by him, fly the same airplane as him, and feel just as comfortable in the back seat with me as they did with him, you know.

JUNGE: Why don't you?

CHENEY: Because I don't ever want flying to become a job for me. Right now, I get up and I love to fly. It's too bad

we're mudded out, because if you'd have showed up today, I'd have insisted I take you flying. Would have went out and -- and you would have enjoyed it. I mean, we would have -- you know, you need to come back. Because I'd have -- all I need is for somebody to show up. I love to fly that much, you know.

JUNGE: I'll come back.

CHENEY: Do.

JUNGE: How long is it going to take for this road to dry out?

CHENEY: (Laughing). Well, if -- it's ironic, this red dirt literally, over -- in a couple hours, it can be, you know.

JUNGE: Crusty?

CHENEY: But come back anytime, really.

JUNGE: I will; thank you.

CHENEY: You know, just come by.

JUNGE: Thank you. I appreciate it.

CHENEY: I do, I love to fly. You bet. I love to fly.

JUNGE: OK, I'll do it. And I appreciate the time you've spent. We've been on, now, for over two hours.

CHENEY: I'll be darned.

JUNGE: Didn't you -- did you realize that?

CHENEY: No, I did not.

JUNGE: Is your stomach rolling?

CHENEY: No, not really, no [02:10:00] (laughing).

JUNGE: OK, now, whereabouts does your dad live in Casper?

He's in Paradise Valley, right?

CHENEY: Correct.

JUNGE: So you know where the bowling alley is? I think I mentioned this to you. You know where the bowling alley is on CY?

CHENEY: Right.

JUNGE: El Marco Lanes, or something.

CHENEY: Right, uh-huh.

JUNGE: I keep going past that.

CHENEY: Yeah, OK.

JUNGE: And then what?

CHENEY: Well, if you're -- on your way in is the best way I can give you directions, all right? Course, you go down this road here until you hit 220. You take 220 in, 220 becomes CY Avenue, all right? Well, on your way in, the very first stop light you come to --

JUNGE: I know where that is.

CHENEY: -- that will be Robertson Road.

JUNGE: OK.

CHENEY: All right, because it goes down and across the river right there. You know what I'm talking -- if you turn le--

JUNGE: Is that the one that goes to the interstate, too?

CHENEY: Yeah, correct.

JUNGE: I think you can go left and go to the interstate,
yeah.

CHENEY: Well the next stoplight you come to is the one you
need to stop and turn to my folks's place.

JUNGE: Right or left?

CHENEY: Left.

JUNGE: North, OK.

CHENEY: Yeah, you go north. And you'll go down, and there's a
fire station right there, and you'll go just [02:11:00]
like another, I think it's two more blocks, and you can
only turn right on Dalia.

JUNGE: OK.

CHENEY: And then they're down there. All you got to do is
watch for 150, then. It's 150 Dalia. And -- but it's real
simple to get to. That stoplight's where you turn north,
and it's only -- from where you turn, it's only about less
than a quarter of a mile, and then you turn to the right,
and they're --

JUNGE: There you go.

CHENEY: -- down there just a little bit, too, and they're on
the left.

JUNGE: Cool. Well what I'd like to do is come back and do
some -- you know, I don't know much about videotape, but I
think you'd be great on video. I think you'd be great, and

we could do stuff in the plane, and stuff on the airport. We'll walk around and do stuff like that. I think it'd be neat for somebody to be able to, you know, take the cursor and just go dink, and all of sudden, you see the -- I mean, unless you don't want it. They could see the ranch. They could see the -- a typical airstrip for a -- that a rancher has.

CHENEY: I do have some really good video of that. My brother bought one of these -- what are they -- GoPros. Is that what they call them?

JUNGE: Oh yeah. Yeah, GoPro.

CHENEY: My brother bought one of them, because we wanted to [02:12:00] record our coyote hunting. That was our -- a big deal. We both know that in the near future, we're going to be too old to go do that. We're going to be in our dad's shoes, right, so we want -- so we can have that memory. So my brother bought one of these GoPros. We've moved it all over that airplane to where we can get what we want, and we finally found a spot -- took us quite a little bit. We finally found a spot.

JUNGE: On a strut?

CHENEY: No, actually the strut would work good, and the new GoPros it would really work good because --

JUNGE: Because they're wider.

CHENEY: Well, you can remote control them. We could mount it out there on the strut, see, and you can start it out here. We don't have -- they're only good for about two hours. I guess you know the battery is only good for about two hours of recording. Well we take off here, there are a lot of times we fly two hours before we ever see a coyote, right? Well, you'd be out of batter before we ever even made a pass on the coyote.

JUNGE: Well, you -- well, of course you'd have to land, and then somehow or another retrieve it, put a new batter in.

CHENEY: Yeah. But these new ones where you got remote control, so we could mount it out there and then just, before we get ready to, you know, make a pass at a coyote, I could click it on.

JUNGE: You're going to do that?

CHENEY: That's what I do now [02:13:00], only it's mounted right there. It's mounted just about where that sticker is, right where your finger, about right there.

JUNGE: Oh, the left-hand part of the windshield.

CHENEY: Yeah, that's where it's mounted right now. And I leave it off, right, and we go flying around. We see a coyote, that's -- there's a regimen you've got to go through, as you can imagine. We fly over a coyote in the (seam), Dan's got to -- his deal is he's got to get the

shotgun out, and he's got to get it pu-- I got to open the window for him. He's got to get the shotgun out the window, and then he loads the gun after it's out the window. Geese, huh?

JUNGE: Yeah, I thought I heard them.

CHENEY: Yep. And then, part of my regimen is, course I pull on two notches of flap so we get just a little more performance out of the -- out of the wing. And then, and then I reach up and start the GoPro. I just, you know, you got to hold the button for just a second or two, and then let it go. And it's started, and then we go ahead and make a pass at the coyote like that. And then, if we come in and kill him, let's say we kill him on the first pass, well then we come around and we verify that kill. We make sure [02:14:00] that we fly over and make sure that he's dead, you know. Nothing I hate worse than leaving an animal crippled. I just will not do that, under any circumstances. And we make sure he's dead, and then -- and then after we're sure of that, I reach up and shut it off, all right? And then we fly around, if you see another one, go through the same procedure. Well, when you get home and you put that on the screen, all you're doing is just making dives at coyotes all the time, because it's always shut off and on to the next one, right? It's a pretty cool film.

JUNGE: You know what you ought to do, sometimes, turn it remotely, if it would go all the way around, and train it on yourselves, just so you can see --

CHENEY: (Laughs).

JUNGE: -- you know what I'm saying?

CHENEY: My brother thinks that's incriminating. You don't want to do that.

JUNGE: Well, it's le-- isn't it legal to hunt from the air?

CHENEY: We -- we're fully carded. We've got to be licensed through the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, both the airplane, me as a pilot, and my brother in the back seat as the gunner. I hold both a pilot permit and a gunner's permit, both, plus --

JUNGE: Plus he has one.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: So he -- OK, so there's no problem. What's the limit? Is there any limit [02:15:00]?

CHENEY: No limit. Well, we only -- you can request any amount you want on your application, and I request 500 coyotes, 200 fox, and five wolves.

JUNGE: Per year?

CHENEY: I was the first man to ever be carded to kill a wolf out of an airplane legally in the state of Wyoming.

JUNGE: Seriously?

CHENEY: Yeah. I haven't done it yet, but I had the permit to do it. I could have.

JUNGE: Oh, are you going to do it?

CHENEY: First chance I see one.

JUNGE: You think they'll get down this far?

CHENEY: They have. We've -- they've been reported here.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yeah, pretty rare, but we have.

JUNGE: In the Shirley Mountains?

CHENEY: Mm-hmm.

JUNGE: Are they after the elk? Is that what they go after?

CHENEY: I think so. Yeah, I think that's their main
(inaudible).

JUNGE: How do they get here?

CHENEY: They claim that their range is unbelievable, you know, especially a pair. They claim a mated pair will travel 300 miles, you know.

JUNGE: You know, I was going to -- I talked to a GoPro guy, a representative, because I wanted him to give me one on my next bike ride. I ride a bike using this oxygen. And I run into some real characters right along the [02:16:00] road, as you can imagine. Some of them -- and I ran into one last year who was a born again Christian, but I mean rabid, rabid born again Christian. And a preacher, really.

A preacher. And I wish I -- on my helmet I would have had a GoPro, because the guy could talk. I mean, he could preach and talk. He was smart. A little crazy, but you know what? He was good, and I wish to God I would have had a GoPro. And he was still preaching at me -- I kept looking at my watch saying, "Well, I got to go." "And don't forget, in Jesus Christ this and this." And I said, "Well, I got to go." He says -- I'm down the road about 20 yards away, and he's still yacking at me and shaking his fists, and repent now, and what have you. I mean, it was -- damn, it was amazing. What is -- by the way, what is your ranch? Is that cattle or sheep?

CHENEY: Cattle, yeah.

JUNGE: OK, so Charlie Scott, where does he live?

CHENEY: Just down the road. Just not too far.

JUNGE: And he's got a -- are you friends with him?

CHENEY: Uh-huh.

JUNGE: OK.

CHENEY: His daughter that got killed and [02:17:00] my daughter were the best of friends. They were -- they were really close.

JUNGE: I didn't know his daughter was killed.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: How old was she?

CHENEY: Twenty-one at the time. Twenty -- yeah, 21 or 22, yeah. She -- these two -- his daughter and my daughter grew up together. She was adopted. They didn't have children. The adopted two children. But they grew up together. They were -- if you saw one, you saw the other. They were always together, them two girls. Her name was Abby, and they spent most time at our house. That girl was just horse crazy, like my daughter was, so they were always horseback. Always. Always, you know. And they grew up together. Abby was a year older? Yeah, just a year older than Peggy. And when she graduated from high school, she got accepted to CSU for vet school as a freshman, which is never done, which maybe you know or don't know. And I don't know how well you know Charlie, but they're all -- Charlie, Pete, Cliffy, all of them are Harvard graduates. They're all Ivy League, you know, and Abby was expected to go to Ivy League [02:18:00]. I mean, that was -- she had the capability. I mean, she was an extremely smart girl. And, course, getting accepted to vet school as a freshman is unheard of. It just don't happen, you know.

JUNGE: Yeah, you have to have a degree before you go to vet school.

CHENEY: Well as a rule you do, so how she ever got accepted, we still don't know, right? I mean, you know...

JUNGE: Was her mom's name Abby, too?

CHENEY: No.

JUNGE: What's Charlie's wife --?

CHENEY: She's dead now, but --

JUNGE: Charlie's wife is?

CHENEY: Yeah, Elaine.

JUNGE: Elaine.

CHENEY: Elaine was her name.

JUNGE: Yeah, I did an interview with him about 20, 23 years ago, something like that. It was about -- I was doing a book on Wyoming -- you know, it was supposed to be a centennial book. And I went around the state and interviewed people, and Charlie was one of them.

CHENEY: Well I'll be darned, yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah, and he went to Harvard and they went to Harvard because their dad went to Harvard. It was a tradition.

CHENEY: Went to Harvard, right. Yeah, and Abby was expected to go. I'll never forget, that girl got accepted to vet school down at CSU, which in my opinion, was a huge deal, and they were disappointed because she went to CSU, you know. But...

JUNGE: What -- she would have been --

CHENEY: But anyway, she went down there and got killed in a car wreck [02:19:00] down there.

JUNGE: In Colorado?

CHENEY: In Colorado, yeah.

JUNGE: So how many -- does he have another kid?

CHENEY: Yeah, they had -- they had -- they adopted both of them, had a boy and a girl, and Daniel is his son.

Daniel's a pilot --

JUNGE: Is he?

CHENEY: -- and he's a commercial pilot. He flies for -- well, he's jumped around a little, but right now he's down in Vail, Colorado, flying these -- they call them -- oh, these personal corporate jet thing, rent-a-jet or something like that. I can't give you -- my brother is up on all that, but I'm not. But anyway, that's what Daniel is doing now.

JUNGE: He flies.

CHENEY: He flies.

JUNGE: Your dad didn't teach him?

CHENEY: No, didn't teach him.

JUNGE: He taught everybody --

CHENEY: Taught everybody else.

JUNGE: I wonder how many people your dad taught, you know/

CHENEY: You know, not all that many. I mean, he can probably tell you. He's kept track of all of them. He'll give you a number, you know. But --

JUNGE: Could he still teach me to fly?

CHENEY: Not legally, but yeah, he could teach you to fly,
yeah.

JUNGE: Are you sure he could teach me?

CHENEY: Yeah. He can teach anybody [02:20:00] to fly.

JUNGE: I have no common sense.

CHENEY: Don't make any difference. Don't make any -- my dad
teach you to fly, yeah. I'm serious as a heart attack.
Man can teach anybody to fly.

JUNGE: (Laughing). He must be God, because if anybody could
teach me to fly, that guy deserves the title of God.

CHENEY: There's no doubt in my mind. Absolutely none in my
mind that he could teach you to fly. And teach you the
kind of flying that you want to do, whether that be the
kind that I do, or whether it be the kind to fly from here
to Colorado Springs and have lunch and fly home, or -- I
mean, you know, he can --

JUNGE: No, I like what you're doing. You're -- I don't think
I'd want to -- if I need to go to Colorado Springs, I'll
get a flight. But it costs too much, you know?

CHENEY: It's cheaper than owning your own airplane and taking
it, I can tell you that (laughs).

JUNGE: Is it really?

CHENEY: Yes, sir. Yeah.

JUNGE: It'd be cheaper to fly out of Casper to go to Colorado Springs than to fly your own airplane?

CHENEY: Yeah. Flying's terrible. I figured that every time I reach over and hit the starter button costs me \$100 an hour, just -- and keep in mind, I've already got \$100,000 grand [02:21:00] invested in the airplane, right? But just what it cost to fly that airplane off the ground is \$100 bucks an hour.

JUNGE: Because you've got to work in maintenance?

CHENEY: Maintenance, fuel, yeah. Fuel and maintenance are just terrible. Just terrible.

JUNGE: Yeah. What do you think is going to be the future for you and flying?

CHENEY: Just what it is right now. I don't want any less or any more. And I'll -- and if they came here tomorrow and took my license away from me, I'd still be flying.

JUNGE: (Laughing). Did we catch that?

CHENEY: (Laughing). Yeah, I'll tell anybody. If the FAA man was sitting in that seat, I'd tell him the same thing. Don't bother me at all, you know. I plan on flying; something I like to do. You know, I'll be like my dad. I may -- I probably wouldn't take any passengers if I thought there was any risk of their injury. If I go kill myself, I don't care. I mean, you know, I'm -- I'd be willing to die

in that airplane. Don't bother me a bit, you know. Just like you, you take a risk every time you get behind that wheel. But you -- you take that as a [02:22:00] calculated risk, right? Don't bother you a bit. And you'll still be driving this pickup until we put you in the ground, you know?

JUNGE: How's your health?

CHENEY: Good.

JUNGE: You got a good heart?

CHENEY: I do.

JUNGE: Good lungs?

CHENEY: And I don't have a good heart by hereditary. My dad has terrible high cholesterol. All Cheney's have high cholesterol.

JUNGE: You do?

CHENEY: I have high cholesterol, but I don't -- all I do is with diet and exercise. I don't take any pills. I don't take a pill, one. Never have.

JUNGE: I know this sounds like a stupid question, but what kind of exercise can you get at the ranch, especially this time of year?

CHENEY: Not only -- I'm really physically active. I mean, you know, my day-to-day work requires quite a little. And I'm not real updated. We still feed all these cows by hand,

which most ranchers don't. They're modernized enough that they, you know, have equipment for that.

JUNGE: Use a tractor.

CHENEY: And we -- I still pitch a lot of hay. You know, just my day-to-day activities keep me real good. And then I work out on top of that.

JUNGE: You do?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: What do you do [02:23:00]?

CHENEY: I walk, mainly. I like -- and my walk wouldn't even compare to the normal guy's walk. I mean, it's just short of a jog. I'd still run. I used to run competitively, but I -- my knees won't take it anymore. I can't, because of my knees.

JUNGE: Yeah, me too. How many -- I know this is the wrong thing to ask -- you said you had 20,000 acres.

CHENEY: That's how much we run on, yeah.

JUNGE: Leased and deeded. About how many cattle are you talking about taking care of?

CHENEY: Well, that's a really good question, because it varies from day to day in my program. But we run -- I used to own that -- this was part of my ranch. See where they built that mansion over there on the hill?

JUNGE: Wait a minute.

CHENEY: Right on top of the hill. If you look right over the top of your mirror, there's quite a mansion over there. Do you see it?

JUNGE: Oh, yeah.

CHENEY: I used to own all that. We used -- we owned another 1,200 acres, besides what we own now, and I sold it just a couple of years ago. And [02:24:00] -- where was I going? What did you ask me? I got off track.

JUNGE: Oh, about the number of cattle.

CHENEY: Oh, about the number of cattle. Well when we sold that part of it, that was our winter ground. That's how we wintered our cows was over there, and all we're left with is the summer ground. And so what I did was, when I sold the ranch, I made it part of the sale that they have to winter 150 head of cows for me. And in return, I summer 150 for them.

JUNGE: Oh, OK.

CHENEY: OK? So right there, I got 300.

JUNGE: That's right.

CHENEY: Well I had an additional 250 cows that I had to do something with. If I would have sold them, the government would have got more than I do. They would have got 51%, the way my corporation was set up, and that kind of income, and so forth, they would have got more than I did. I just

couldn't make myself do that. I just couldn't give them away, you know. And so I found a place that I run them on shares. I own the cattle; they own the ranch. I get 30% of the calf crop [02:25:00]; they get 70% of the calf crop.

JUNGE: That sounds like a good deal.

CHENEY: It is. It's a good deal for me. It sounds really good, and it's not quite as good as it sounds, because it requires way more of my time than I was planning on. I was thinking, just like you were, well, that'd be nice. Just write the back of the check for 30, you know, 30%, and it's not that simple, OK. But that gives you a good idea. Anyway, I have those additional 250 head, all right, besides the 150. I've got a 400-cow ranch is what I've got, but now, in the wintertime, I don't have any. The only thing I got is the bulls and the saddle horses, and then I've got -- like up here now, I got a few oddball things. I had three cows that calved in the fall. I've got three yearlings, so we gathered late. I got just a little handful up here.

JUNGE: How many horses?

CHENEY: Five. I've got five head of saddle horses. I claim for them to be the best.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Good mountain horses?

CHENEY: They're -- yeah, yeah. Oh, you can see what my terrain looks like. You're looking at it right there.

JUNGE: Your what [02:26:00]?

CHENEY: The terrain.

JUNGE: Oh, the terrain. Oh yeah.

CHENEY: That's my whole -- my whole thing looks like that.

JUNGE: Is that partly Forest Service land?

CHENEY: No.

JUNGE: BLM land, right?

CHENEY: BLM and state and deeded, yeah.

JUNGE: OK, well -- well hell.

CHENEY: But to answer your question, I run -- I got 400 of my own cows. I take 150 that I get back on shares, and then all my replacement heifers, which are usually about 100 head a year. So that'd be five, four, 550, 650, plus the bulls, we're right up near 700 is how many I summer. And then I don't winter hardly anything, see.

JUNGE: And they take care of themselves pretty much in the summer, right?

CHENEY: Yeah, OK, yeah.

JUNGE: Do they? But still, I don't know how you do it. I don't know how you do it without a hired hand.

CHENEY: I work hard. I work really hard. I really do. I mean, I work harder than I want to. When I sold that part of the ranch, I was going to downs-- my original deal was to downsize to 150 that somebody else took care of [02:27:00] six months out of the year. That was my goal. That was my goal, and I haven't achieved that goal yet. I'm working on it, but I am not there, yet.

JUNGE: You're 55.

CHENEY: Fifty-five.

JUNGE: How many more years do you think you can do this?

CHENEY: I -- not very long. I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it anymore. You know, I want to get down to that 150. But there's lots of complications. It sounds way simpler than what it is. My daughter, who's 30, has -- she grew up, went to Casper College, on to the University of Wyoming, and got a bachelor's degree in molecular biology, and then on to the UNT, University of Northern Texas, and has a master's degree out of UNT.

JUNGE: This is your daughter?

CHENEY: Yeah, in molecular biology.

JUNGE: Oh my gosh.

CHENEY: And now she teaches. She's a college professor in a west Texas town, Big Spring, Texas. And she teaches

biology there. She teaches molecular, micro, and physiology anatomy [02:28:00].

JUNGE: Does she like to come back here? This is where she was raised, right?

CHENEY: Yeah. Yeah, she just announced last night she's getting married, and she likes teaching. She really likes teaching. She loves biology. She's just unbelievably smart in that field. And course, when you get to the molecular level, she's up here and I'm down here, and she's trying to communicate with me, and it don't work, you know. But she does. She misses the ranch. She loves the lifestyle, and she had real problems with administration, you know. She liked teaching, but she don't -- she has political problems. And she decided that she was going to do something different. She wanted to quit the -- quit the college and come back home and be a rancher.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: And so we tried to -- we -- I've been working to set that up, you know, to where [02:29:00] we can both make a living off of this ranch, which it's big enough to. We can make that work. And I want to do less, and she wants to do more, this thing is going to work good, right? Well, we just about got it set up. Matter of fact, she quit. She handed in her resignation. May 13 is her last day. Put

her place up for sale. She's got a -- excuse me -- about 10 acres, and two houses, and a barn, and so forth down there. Put it up for sale, and has had it up for sale, and finally it sold the other day. She's got to be out of there May 1. It was all kind of coming together here. And in the meantime, she got another job offer as a catastrophic insurance adjuster in --

JUNGE: Like Hurricane Katrina, or something like that.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: So did she take it?

CHENEY: She took it. Yeah, pays like \$120,000 a year, you know, and I told her, I says, "Peggy, you got to take it." I says, "You'll die an old woman here before you make \$120,000 in a year [02:30:00]," you know? I says, "You're foolish not to take that." And she felt kind of bad because I had kept all these cattle and found a new way to farm them out to get them through the winter, and, you know, I went quite a ways out of my way to make sure that we kept this cow herd so that we could both make a living. So now, I need to disperse of 250 head of cows, which I don't have to tell you, they are unbelievable commodity right now. Luckily, by all of this, they've almost doubled in price, you know.

JUNGE: I know if you buy a steak at the store, you know.

You're paying \$10 to \$20 for a decent size steak, yeah.

CHENEY: Yep.

JUNGE: Well, she's going to get married, so maybe that figured into the equation. Maybe this guy doesn't want to spend the rest of his life on a Wyoming ranch?

CHENEY: Actually, if it was left up to him, he'd be here.

JUNGE: Really?

CHENEY: Yeah. Yeah, it's pretty much her decision. Yep.

JUNGE: What does he do?

CHENEY: Well, I'll do the best to explain it as I can. Texas [02:31:00] is so much different than Wyoming when it comes to agriculture and the cattle industry, period. Down there, them ranches are huge. I guess you know it takes a lot of acreage to run a cow. And so them ranches are big, and they don't hire any help like I do. If I hire help, I have a man here that lives here full-time, and I've either got him helping me with the cows, or irrigating, or putting up hay, or fixing a fence for me. I have a full-time job for him, right? There, they contract help, and if they've got calves -- cows together out of this pasture, and move to that pasture, and in the meantime, we're going to brand the calves, OK, well I need you for three days. I pay you so much a day, right, you know, for the three days.

JUNGE: Well they probably get -- they probably get Mexicans down there, right?

CHENEY: Not -- not where Peggy's at, and they're fairly close. You know, that's southwest Texas where she's at. They're fairly close to the border, there. Fairly close [02:32:00]. I guess you know it takes a long to drive from here to Texas as it does to drive from the edge of Texas to my daughter's house, gollie. But anyway, he -- that's what he does. He's on a contract crew, and they just -- they contract at this ranch for three or four or five, six, seven days until this guy's work is done, and then he might be home for two or three days, and then he's off to this guy's ranch, and then --

JUNGE: He's doing the physical labor?

CHENEY: He's doing the physical labor, yeah.

JUNGE: I'll bet he tried to talk your daughter into coming back here (laughter).

CHENEY: He's a boy that was born and raised there in Howard County, and until he met my daughter, he'd never been out of that county.

JUNGE: Is that southwest Texas?

CHENEY: Thirty years old and never been out of that county.

JUNGE: That's amazing.

CHENEY: I take that back. He had, too, been out of the county, but he'd never been out of the state of Texas in 30 years.

JUNGE: Oh man, talk about a true Texan.

CHENEY: Yeah, and he is. In his opinion, why do you need to go anywhere else? We got -- this is the best here. Why do we -- we don't need to go anywhere.

JUNGE: Is that southwest [02:33:00] Texas?

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Southeast, southwest?

CHENEY: Pretty well straight west. They're in west Texas. Do you know where Lubbock is?

JUNGE: Yeah.

CHENEY: They're just south of Lubbock.

JUNGE: Oh, OK.

CHENEY: Just east of Midland, a little ways. They're only 30 miles east of Midland.

JUNGE: Oil area.

CHENEY: Oil area, and it is booming right now like you cannot believe.

JUNGE: No, I heard that. I read that on -- in the paper, as a matter of fact. Midland's -- they were in the news for some other reason, some atrocity. But no, there's -- I

assumed that things were booming down there. Is there oil out here?

CHENEY: If there is, we haven't found it yet. But my dad said the best thing you -- our genetic program and our -- we take a lot of pride in our cattle, the quality of our cows. And we study genetics all the time to -- in my opinion, you're either moving ahead, or the industry is rolling over the top of you in our industry. And we study genetics. Matter of fact, we just made a huge change in our genetic [02:34:00] program, just on Saturday. We bought -- went in a completely different direction, and I hope it works. I've done a lot of research, and I think it's going to. But my dad always said the best thing you can breed one of these cows to is one of them oil pumps, you know. We haven't got that done yet, but...

JUNGE: (Laughs). Is anybody else in this Bates Hole country?

CHENEY: No. You know, I have a neighbor, this just recently changed hands, this place across the street right here. And a guy by the name of Jim Price, he happens to be a cousin of mine, he owns it. And they're pretty much in the same genetic program we are. You know, the -- I call --

JUNGE: The new one?

CHENEY: -- them cutting edge. Yeah.

JUNGE: Oh, OK, good for you.

CHENEY: But we have a lot of nei-- everybody else in this whole neighborhood is still way behind the times, in my personal opinion, you know. And the only reason they're still in business is because they've been there so long, their ranches are established and paid for, and so forth.

JUNGE: Like the Scotts, for example?

CHENEY: Scotts, for example, yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah, well, their dad [02:35:00] had money, too, because he was a doctor.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah, Dr. Scott.

CHENEY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Well, listen, we've spent a lot of time here. As a matter of fact, the second -- well, we were on for nine or 10 minutes before -- two hours and 45 minutes?

CHENEY: (Laughing). Gol.

JUNGE: Now don't tell me you're not getting a little hungry.

CHENEY: I usually don't eat lunch.

JUNGE: Don't you?

CHENEY: No, I've -- once you wean yourself -- the thing of it is, I'm only home around lunchtime about a third of the time.

JUNGE: Oh, OK, so you're not used to it.

CHENEY: And so I -- yeah. If you just -- if you just never eat lunch, you get used to it, and it don't bother me anymore.

JUNGE: Someday, we'll talk about your schedule. I wonder what life is like.

CHENEY: (Laughing). You need to just show up and spend a day, a full day with me.

JUNGE: Yeah, I'd love to do it. I really would. I -- we'll see how things go here. I've got -- I'm just getting started on this project, and I would have to pick a snowstorm in Medicine Bow this morning. It was unbelievable, I mean, I'm glad I have four wheel drive [02:36:00]. But that greasy -- that's gumbo, right? That greasy red gumbo, you can have it. I don't like it. I've been hunting in stuff like that. Oh here, let me turn this off. I forgot totally we were on the last half hour, I guess.

CHENEY: I guess you can erase it, anyway.

JUNGE: Well, she won't use near what I'd like to use. But, all right, let's turn this baby off. Come on. Come on. What's going on? Oh.

END OF AUDIO PART 2