

OH-3035, Ray Bishop, 4-21-2014, WY In Flight

Q: [00:00:00] OK, today is the 21st of April 2014. My name is Mark Junge and I'm speaking with Ray Bishop. And Ray, where are we?

BISHOP: Well, we're in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. It's a beautiful day in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. So anyway --

Q: We're at -- where?

BISHOP: We're at the Jackson Hole Airport.

Q: And where are we in the airport?

BISHOP: We're in the executive director's office of the Jackson Hole Airport, which is the largest airport in the state of Wyoming. We do about 330,000 enplanements a year, which is about 70% of the total of all the airports added together in the state of Wyoming. And a lot of people don't realize this airport's as big as it is. We have direct service to 12 destinations. We have direct service to JFK, La Guardia, direct service to Chicago with both American and United. Minneapolis, Atlanta, Houston, [00:01:00] six a day to Denver, six a day to Salt Lake City. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle. I think that's all of them. But those are just the direct services. So, in the summertime, we'll do as many as 4,000 travelers a day. So we're a big airport.

Q: That's -- 4,000 enplanements a day is like a city -- a small town in Wyoming.

BISHOP: Well, and if you compare that -- if you did that 365 days a year, you'd be a Sacramento or a San Jose. You'd be a big -- you know, it'd be well over a million people. Yeah. We have quiet times of the year, like now, where we only have four flights a day and they're smaller airplanes. But if you had August 12 months a year, we'd be well over a million. We're considered a very large airport.

Q: You mean in terms of the state? Or in terms of the region?

BISHOP: The region. And the state. By far we're the largest -- if you took all the other airports [00:02:00] -- the Caspers and Cheyennes and Gillette and add them together, they're about 40%. We're about 65%. So we're a big airport.

Q: That's just amazing. And you are -- what do you call yourself?

BISHOP: We're the Jackson Hole Airport.

Q: No, no, no, yourself. As...

BISHOP: I'm the executive director.

Q: OK, but not the airport manager.

BISHOP: You could -- well, director is more typical. The legal description is executive director. I like to think

people manage tables and chairs and they lead people. So

I'd rather not be a manager, I'd rather be a director.

Q: I see you have a picture of yourself with [John Rosell?].

You have probably met some famous people.

BISHOP: Yeah, they come through here, sure. One of the interesting things that is fun in this job is that a lot of the secret service, VIP people -- if they don't have their own private airplanes, they come through my office. And the Secret Service walks them out. So I've sat in that same chair with Condoleezza Rice, and [00:03:00] [Reneke?], and all of -- you know, whoever you might want to imagine that comes to Jackson Hole.

Q: Presidents? Vice presidents?

BISHOP: Dick Cheney, of course, but that's all.

Q: Because he has a home up here, right?

BISHOP: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, OK. But your conversations with these people -- these are casual contacts, right?

BISHOP: Yes, they're typically very busy people and they don't want to talk about "What's the policy in Iraq?" They want to talk about "How is the fishing?" So I'm glad to have that conversation. Here's a fun one that I thought was really interesting. Condoleezza Rice came in, this was just last year. And she's a big golfer, if you don't know.

And so she played Shooting Star, which is across the river, brand new, very, very nice course. And 3 Creek, which is down south, which is where Harrison Ford and all those people -- (cough). And I said, "Condoleezza Rice, I'm really curious that I haven't played [00:04:00] Shooting Star. Of the two courses, which did you like the best?" And she looked at me and gave me a big wink. She said, "I'm a politician. You know better than to ask me that question." And I thought it was a lot of fun. She's a delightful person. She's a lot of fun. Very nice human being.

Q: Now, have you met and talked with Harrison Ford?

BISHOP: I've talked to him on the phone several times. And here's a vignette for you that's interesting. Dick Cheney was here, and the C-17 is the supporter craft that flies [his?] vehicles and all that stuff in. And Harrison Ford was taxiing out -- he's a pilot, as you know. He's a really accomplished pilot. And he was [tacking out?] just right here. And he didn't realize that the C-17 was backing up. And so he had his jets full thrust. And it caught his wing and almost put it over. And my guys ran out there and told them to shut the engines down on the C-17. And his wing came back down and almost flipped him over.

Q: Man. [00:05:00] Yeah.

BISHOP: So about 30 minutes later I got a phone call. And said "Is this the airport director?" And I said, "This is he," and he said, "Well this is Harrison Ford. I just want to tell you thank you very much, because I screwed up and that guy saved my ass and I appreciate it." So that was nice, that he took the time to call and thank people.

Q: You saved an academy award winner.

BISHOP: Yeah, there you go. Well, I didn't, but my guys did.

Q: (laughs) But you made the decision. That's fun. Anything else like that, that you can remember?

BISHOP: Oh, that stuff goes on consistently. Scalia's one of my favorites. The Supreme Court justice.

Q: He's very conservative.

BISHOP: Well, he fits in in Wyoming, very well. We tend to be a very conservative state. And he's very vibrant. He's got, just, so much energy. So anyway, that's Jackson Hole.

Q: OK. You talked -- before we went on tape here, you talked a little bit about your past, and your historic past too. First [00:06:00] of all, where were you born?

BISHOP: I was born in Denver. (pause; cell phone rings) Excuse me. I was born in Denver, Colorado. Let me go back even further, because to me it's interesting, but maybe nobody else here -- my great grandfather came to Wyoming after the

Civil War and homesteaded on [La Prele Creek?]. And my grandfather was born in Fort Fetterman. And my father was born on the ranch at [La Prele Creek?]. My mother was a [Corbett?], if you know the Corbett name. And --

Q: John Corbett?

BISHOP: Well, he's my cousin from Casper. John Corbett -- like, the athletic center that's named after my granddad. So my mom was a Corbett. So I'm pretty Wyoming. You don't get more Wyoming than me.

Q: No, you don't get more tight in than that.

BISHOP: So I'm pretty Wyoming. So anyway, my dad was -- in the Depression -- went to school at UW. And didn't have any [00:07:00] money at all because it was Depression. But he was an engineering student, got through. But was in the ROTC, so -- and he graduated, like, in '36. And went and served his two years as a lieutenant in the army, and got out in '39. And then went back in with [George Sims?] and all those guys from Douglas, if you know any of those people from Wyoming. [Rhodie Esme?]. They all went into the military for World War II. And then my dad got out in '46 and went back to Douglas and was an engineer. And so he was an engineer in Douglas. And then the Korean War came along and he got recalled for the third time. So after three times, he just decided to stay as a career. So

I grew up in the military, moving around, but always thinking that Douglas, Wyoming was home and Laramie, Wyoming was home. So we moved all over the world.

Q: All over the world?

BISHOP: Yeah, [00:08:00] Japan, places like that, yeah. You know, growing up I was -- we'd always come back, and come back to Wyoming between moves. And rent horses with my uncles and aunts, and we'd go up in the Pinedale area and -- go up and (inaudible) the [winds?], and all that sort of thing, growing up.

Q: Because your dad was in the service, your mom and the kids followed him?

BISHOP: Oh yeah, we'd go all over.

Q: Who was your mom?

BISHOP: Eleanor Corbett. Billy Corbett, from Laramie.

Q: OK. And then John Corbett was your dad? Or was that your granddad?

BISHOP: That's my granddad.

Q: OK. And that's the name that was applied to -- it was because of him that he -- that the swimming pool was named after, or the athletic [kind of thing?].

BISHOP: That's right. Yeah. It used to be, if you're an old timer, that the football field was Corbett Field.

Q: That's right.

BISHOP: It was back in the '40s, it was Corbett Field. He was the -- my grandfather on my mom's side was from Boston. And he was an all-American [00:09:00] football player. And went to -- and this was another thing that's very -- you should write this -- so, his first job out of college at Harvard -- or second job, I guess -- was the football coach at Oklahoma State. OK. But my grandmother had really bad allergies, and they had to get out of Oklahoma. It was too bad for her. So he came to Laramie. You ever look at Pistol Pete for Oklahoma State? Same as Wyoming, isn't it? I wonder why. Because John Corbett was at both schools.

Q: Ah. He didn't even think about the fact that people would be fighting over that --

BISHOP: I don't know. I can't say for sure that he did that. I can just say, well, he was at Oklahoma State as the football coach, and then he came to Laramie as the football coach, and they have the same symbol.

Q: And he graduated from Harvard.

BISHOP: He was, he was a Harvard alumni.

Q: And what was his name?

BISHOP: John Corbett.

Q: OK. Your mom's maiden name?

BISHOP: Corbett. Maiden name, yeah. [00:10:00]

Q: OK. And then, your dad is who?

BISHOP: [Lorne?] Bishop.

Q: Lorne Bishop. Now how does [L. C. Bishop?] relate to you?

BISHOP: He's my granddad.

Q: OK, then how are you and Dave Bishop related?

BISHOP: L. C. Bishop, which they call Clark. And my son's name, by the way, is Clark Bishop. Spencer Delbert came to La Prele Creek, had ten kids, whatever. And L. C. Bishop, or Clark Bishop, Lorne Clark Bishop, was my granddad. And then he had two daughters and two sons. And so my dad was the oldest, Lorne Clark. And then Floyd -- you know Floyd, who stayed in (inaudible) and all that. And then the [Hallsies?] out of Newcastle, and the [Fraggits?] out of Douglas.

Q: So Dave would be your cousin.

BISHOP: Dave is my first cousin. He's Floyd's son.

Q: OK. And Rick Bishop? [00:11:00]

BISHOP: You know Rick?

Q: Yeah, oh yeah. He's a runner. Runs [foot?] of the Rockies.

BISHOP: You know what? I got my shoes from Rick -- cousin Rick. He gives me the Bishop discount.

Q: (laughs) That's pretty good. He's a hell of a runner.

BISHOP: You know, here's what I didn't realize. Because I do a lot of triathlons and stuff. And I've always known he

was a good runner. When he was in high school he ran a 4:09 mile. That's world class. He could have been an Olympian. He went to the University of Alabama with a full ride scholarship. He was one of the best runners in America at that time. So he is not just a good runner. He is a world class runner. Very, very good runner.

Q: OK. And I'd assume a pretty good teacher.

BISHOP: You know, if you don't know, this is the [most?] thing, he's going to come up and visit in June. And he has been selected as the national coach of the year.

Q: Track coach of the year?

BISHOP: Yep. Nationally. They're having the --

Q: By the track association? [00:12:00]

BISHOP: Yep. And he's the -- they're having their annual convention here in Jackson Hole, and I told him I want to make sure I can get him and invitation to come so he can get his award.

Q: That's pretty cool

__: Who is it?

Q: We're talking about Rick Bishop. His cousin.

__: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

BISHOP: Yeah. He's going to get the national award as the best track coach of the year.

Q: You know, he wanted -- he had a baseball team in Cheyenne. And he wanted me -- because I was a pitcher, and had played recreationally down there, he wanted me to pitch batting practice to his teammates. And this is when I was in my sixties.

BISHOP: Really.

Q: Yeah. I could have done it, too. Not now, I don't think so. Had a hell of a curveball. Did you want to talk to the boss here?

__: I just put a couple things on your keyboard...

BISHOP: I'm being taped, go ahead and (inaudible).

Q: What is your name?

__: [Jeane?].

BISHOP: This is [Jeane Kirkpatrick?].

Q: OK. So anyway, yeah, we're doing a tape for the archives, it's for the Wyoming State Archives.

__: Oh, that's right. That's right. [00:13:00] Well, good.

Q: Yeah.

BISHOP: So, anyway, Floyd had two boys. Rick and Dave.

Q: And Floyd, of course, was [a state engineer?].

BISHOP: Yes. He's still alive. Saw him just the other day. He's not doing very well.

Q: You know, I was going to ask you about that. Is he compos mentis? I mean, can a person even talk to him?

BISHOP: Sure. But he won't remember it an hour later.

Q: Will he remember his experiences in World War II?

BISHOP: I would talk to him. I think he would. One of the things I thought was really interesting, that both my dad, who was in World War II, and Floyd -- Floyd was a B-29 pilot in World War II. My dad was an infantry officer in World War II. Looking back, they didn't talk much about the -- it's an interesting generation. They didn't really share much of it. Even with me and -- my older brother was John Bishop, I don't know if you ever knew him in Cheyenne. We spent time in Vietnam, [Olive and Dave] Bishop, that time in [00:14:00] Vietnam, my brother -- it was kind of funny. We'd sit around and talk, "So, you know, Dad and Uncle Floyd, (inaudible) in World War II, and we don't know much about it?" I know that Floyd would go to his B-29 reunion every once in a while. But they didn't talk about it much.

Q: Your grandfather, L. C., and Paul Henderson, mapped out the stage stations along the Oregon Trail.

BISHOP: And here's what you don't know, is that Ray Bishop, me, when I was in Ogden, Utah, [L. C. Bishop Clark?] came to my house to visit. And he had a big roll of these Oregon Trail maps. And I had to go around door to door and

sold them for 50 cents apiece. And I still have three or four of those, and I framed them up and kept them.

Q: (laughs) I'll be darned.

BISHOP: But I well remember him mapping out the Oregon -- and I remember we'd go out -- he was with the Pioneer Association. And I remember going out with Granddad and -- (coughs). Excuse me. I've got a bad cold. But I remember going to see [00:15:00] the ruts in some farmer's place, and he had to look at the Oregon Trail, and...

Q: Tell me -- you know, this is a rare privilege for me to talk to somebody who is related to L. C. Bishop, because he's a legend when it comes to mapping out -- he and Paul Henderson.

BISHOP: Yes, Paul Henderson --

Q: Legends when it comes to mapping the Oregon Trail. And they probably physically knew the trail more than anybody else.

BISHOP: That was his passion. (inaudible) If you haven't had a chance to look at La Prele Creek, you know the dam?

Q: Yeah.

BISHOP: He mapped the dam. Go look at that map. All the topo- and cartography of the La Prele Dam, and everything, he did all that too.

Q: He was an engineer.

BISHOP: He was. Interesting engineer in the fact that, in my view, he had an eighth grade education. Was really good at math. And when the Bishop ranch there, which is now owned by the (pause). [00:16:00] Rick Cross. Richard Cross owns it, if you know Richard Cross. Roy and Richard Cross had the ranch -- what was our homesteader ranch. That's 11 [sections, here?]. But all the canals were still called the Bishop Canals. So he went out with an eighth grade education and learned how to make canals, and did all this stuff. And then when he was a young man, he challenged the professional engineering exam with an eighth grade education and passed it. And he got his PE license challenging it. With not any formal education, you know.

Q: Now, wait a minute. Was this, like, Abraham Lincoln reading by candlelight the law books of Illinois?

BISHOP: Yep. He did that. He went out and studied on his own. Took all the trigonometry classes on his own. Had an eighth grade education -- no formal education. Went and took the professional engineering exam and passed.

Q: What kind of a guy was he?

BISHOP: He was my granddad. (laughs)

Q: But do you remember much about his personality, and that...

BISHOP: He was kind of quiet. Very focused. [00:17:00] Very much a Bishop. Kind of -- I can tell you more about my dad

and my uncle, and if you know either one of them, they're kind of hardheaded and stubborn once in a while, but very smart. My father just passed away a couple -- three or four years ago -- at 96. And as I got older, I started appreciating -- he's really smart. I didn't realize how smart my father was. Very well read. So.

Q: His name was Lorne too.

BISHOP: Yeah. My father's name was Lorne Emerson. And you know Frank Emerson, who was the governor? And L. C. Bishop, or Clark Bishop, and Frank Emerson were best friends. And so that's how my dad got the name Lorne Emerson.

Q: Wait a minute. Emerson was a Democrat, wasn't he?

BISHOP: Oh shit, I don't remember. Don't burst that bubble on me. Oh no. I'll have to go check that.

Q: I think he was, by God. And you guys are all Republicans, right?

BISHOP: Oh my gosh. [00:18:00] You have tarnished family.

Q: (laughs)

BISHOP: I think he was from Evanston, wasn't he. Because I remember when I was a little kid we went and visited Frank Emerson.

Q: What date were you born?

BISHOP: I was born the fifth of September in 1946.

Q: So I was born the fifth of June, '43, so we're just about three years apart. And you're doing triathlons?

BISHOP: I do.

Q: So you're 67? And you're doing triathlons?

BISHOP: I just went down to Phoenix and won my age, first place, thank you very much.

Q: Congratulations.

BISHOP: Yeah.

Q: That's great.

BISHOP: I worked my ass off, too, I'll tell you that. And here's what it's done for me. In 2004, I was 230 pounds.

Q: You were 230 pounds? What are you now?

BISHOP: A hundred and eighty-two. So it's changed my life. That's one of the things [00:19:00] that -- you know, you don't -- I didn't really realize that you can actually change who you are; your body. You can. I love to look at my legs now. You see all these little blood vessels and stuff that didn't use to be there. I've changed.

Q: What made you change?

BISHOP: You know -- no epiphanies. My son went to UCLA, Clark Bishop. And he's an engineer as well, in Denver. And he was on the UCLA triathlon team. And he said, "Hey Dad, this would be fun, you ought to do it." And so I did a couple, and I said, "This is a lot of fun." But you have

to work really hard -- you can't just put it on the shelf. It's a seven day a week thing. So I quit my diet, and I don't drink anymore at all. I've completely -- and it's not because of religion, it's just -- I want to be a better triathlete. And I feel -- I feel better today than I did ten years ago. Enormously better. You look good too, for...

Q: Well, I try to stay in shape. [00:20:00] What else can you do when you've got blood clots in your lungs? You know, my claim to fame is, I've gone across the country on a bicycle on oxygen. From San Francisco to New York. But that's --

BISHOP: On oxygen.

Q: On oxygen, yeah. And also from Newfoundland to Key West, and from Tijuana to Homer, except for two little segments I have to do --

BISHOP: On a bicycle?

Q: On a bicycle. Yeah, to let people know that portability is the key to reclaiming your life. And in other words, if you --

BISHOP: Aren't you a good role model.

Q: Well, that's the whole point.

BISHOP: Yeah, that's a whole lot.

Q: That's the whole point, is to say, "OK, here's a guy that's doing all this bicycling." And you don't have to go across

country, but if you get portable, like you saw me with this portable unit, you can do the things you used to do. And I think there's like 11 million people with COPD, another 11 million undiagnosed.

BISHOP: Is that what you have?

Q: Yeah. [00:21:00] So -- well, they call it COPD, but it's an umbrella term that includes emphysema, chronic bronchitis, blood clots, asthma, you name it. If you have a lung problem, you'll be classified, probably, as COPD. So, you know, all these people -- and a lot of them you don't even see because they're tucked away, secluded away.

BISHOP: Yeah, they sit and watch TV all day. Waiting to die.

Q: Waiting to die. Exactly. With the cannula hanging out their noses, a 100-foot cannula, or a 75-foot cannula. They don't have to live that way. Now, some may. Some may be basket cases, and they have to. But there's a lot of people out there who don't even understand that you can be portable. And if they understood, look, with a little bit of pressure on my doctor to write me a prescription for portable oxygen, I could be going down to Denver or Salt Lake or Billings and I could be playing bridge, and I could be maybe even golfing, you know, with my friends. Or go down to McDonalds and [00:22:00] join the coffee clash at ten o'clock in the morning. You know. And this is the

purpose of the rides. Now, would I tell you that that's the only purpose? No. I'd be lying. I love to ride a bike. And I wanted to ride a bike across the country before it was too late. Because after my lung problem, I decided, life's short.

BISHOP: So, next time you come here, you have got to ride the -- up to Jenny Lake. It's fantastic. It's the most beautiful bike ride in the world.

Q: Is that the one that goes along the highway?

BISHOP: It does. It goes along this highway, it crosses underneath, and it goes all the way up to Jenny Lake and the foot of the Grand Teton. On a separate bike path.

Q: How far is that bike path?

BISHOP: From here it's about 12 miles to Jenny Lake.

Q: But you can start in Jackson.

BISHOP: You can start in Hoback. So you can go about 30 miles each way.

Q: Oh my gosh. Is that where you do your triathlons?

BISHOP: No, no. They don't have triathlons here. [00:23:00]
I have to travel for those.

Q: Why don't you organize a triathlon?

BISHOP: There's no water here. And the park won't let you go in the park.

Q: Is there a pool?

BISHOP: There is a pool. You could do a pool triathlon.

Q: What -- (pause; background noise). What is that? It's blue and it looks like a military plane.

BISHOP: Yeah, that's a Hungarian L-39. It's a former Cold War trainer jet. Guy from Driggs owns it.

Q: Man. Oh, this is fascinating. I'm really glad I got the chance to meet you and talk about --

BISHOP: Yeah, next time you come over I want to take you for a bike ride. You'll love this bike ride.

Q: I'd love to go. My wife and I did a little bike ride together from Wilson up to -- well, as far as that trail went, five years ago. I don't know what it is, but... Have they extended that?

BISHOP: The Wilson? No. Well, I don't know where you went, from Wilson. But if you went north --

Q: North.

BISHOP: Yeah. North, it just goes up to about five miles...

[00:24:00] What they have, and this is Jackson Hole, is that we have the special assessments [PED?] taxes. They all get defeated except for the bike path. And no matter what the bike path wants -- we're building a bridge now, over the Snake River, that'll go to Wilson. So you can be on the bike path from Hoback, come up to Jackson and Split. You can go back over the bridge over this -- all separate

bike path, all the way up to -- it goes all the way up to the park entrance. And then if you go this way, then it goes all the way up to Jenny Lake and actually String Lake. So you can go up to String Lake on a bike path. And then, it's funded that it's going to go straight north and not turn into Moose. And go up over that -- it's called Ditch Creek. You know where Antelope Flats Road is? And then the bike path will go out. And then you get on Antelope Flat and you make that 18-mile loop around. [00:25:00] I did that yesterday on my bike, actually.

Q: Down past Mormon Row?

BISHOP: Yeah. I did that yesterday. That was a beautiful bike ride.

Q: So what sort of triathlons are you doing? What's the mileage? What's the swimming distance? What's the...

BISHOP: I normally do sprints. But I'll do an Olympic, and I've done a couple halves. So a sprint would be a half a mile swim, a twelve mile bike, and a 5K run. And an Olympic would be a -- about a mile swim, a 26-mile bike, and a 10K run.

Q: Are you going to eventually do the Iron Man?

BISHOP: You know, at my age... The hard part for me is the knees in the run. I've done one half, and that's -- a mile [and a half?]. I mean, I have a swimming background, so

swimming's easy. That's a 56-mile bike and a 13 mile run. Half a marathon. And that's plenty. You know. I like to do it, [00:26:00] but I don't like to be sore for a week afterwards.

Q: You haven't done it yet.

BISHOP: I've done one.

Q: An Iron Man?

BISHOP: No, half, half. Which is the 13 mile run, the 56 mile bike ride--

Q: [Graham?]. I'm proud of you, man. That's great.

BISHOP: But my -- if you look at people who are more competitive. Little skinny people. Ethiopians are better long distance runners. People with a little more body mass are better sprinters and shorter distances. Plus, if you go look at my age group, there's nobody there that -- if you want to have competitions, it's all in the sprints and the Olympic distance.

Q: How did we get onto this? So you were born -- you gave me your date.

BISHOP: I was born -- actually, my dad was an engineer in Douglas, but he had a project in Grand Lake, Colorado. And he was the construction engineer for Grand Lake, if you know where that is. And he built a dam there. So I was actually physically born in Denver.

Q: What hospital? [00:27:00] Children's?

BISHOP: I think so.

Q: Or General? Or Rose?

BISHOP: No, I think it was Children's Hospital.

Q: So then they dragged you right back to Grand Lake.

BISHOP: Yeah. And then they went back to Douglas, where he lived. But then got recalled to go back to the Korean War. And so, back into that military.

Q: He didn't ever tell you anything about the Korean War, did he?

BISHOP: Sure, a little.

Q: How did he -- what was his duty? What sort of experiences did he have?

BISHOP: Korean War was -- I'll back up. World War II was -- he was an infantry officer. And he served with General Simpson. Ninth army. So he did the Battle of the Bulge, where the [Ninth went] up and around all that. And of course, you know, I will get to it, I don't know if it's important. But I spent some time as the strategic chair at the Air War College. [00:28:00] So I spent some time studying that kind of stuff. It's always interesting to put my dad's name on it. When he got recalled, they did not recall him as an infantry officer because of his engineering background. They recalled him for Corps of

Engineers. So in the Korean War he was in the Corps of Engineers. So he'd build airfields and that kind of stuff.

Q: So, did he ever recall any of his incidents to you?

BISHOP: A few, yeah. They got -- airplanes got almost run out of gas, or lost an engine. You know. Most of my experience was -- because I was in the air force, most of his war stories that he relayed to me were aviation related. He got strafed in World War II by German spitfire -- [took a dive bomber?] when they were in foxholes. Yeah, he talked about that (inaudible; overlapping dialogue).

Q: He wasn't afraid to talk about that?

BISHOP: No. [00:29:00] He wasn't afraid to talk about it at all. Put it behind him. Like, I have two tours of Vietnam and I don't talk about it with my kids, much. There's not much interest there.

Q: Were you in combat?

BISHOP: Oh yeah.

Q: Well -- let's go back a step. When -- there seems to be this aviation thread throughout the Bishop family, whether it's Dave, your cousin, you, Floyd, and your dad. What is the reason for that? Do you see any -- Do you see that common thread? Or--

BISHOP: I do, and I don't know that it's a passion. It's just the way it worked out, I guess. I do remember the first

time I ever flew. My Uncle Floyd had a little Cessna 172. And I was probably 12 years old. And he put me in the [00:30:00] copilot's seat and put my sister in the back seat. And he let me fly. And I did this and I scared -- she screamed -- I thought it was the funnest thing I ever did because I scared my sister. And she just screamed and hollered "Aah!" So I thought it was a lot of fun. So I do remember flying with Uncle Floyd when I was young.

Interestingly, though, my father -- my grandfather, Clark, if you don't know this, L. C. Bishop, he was in the National Guard and served in World War I. And he was -- back then, he was the sergeant in the Douglas National Guard. And they deployed. And they elected officers back then, and he got elected the captain. So he became a captain by election, which I thought -- today, you just wouldn't even think about it, getting elected as the captain in the guard. I think for me, when I was in college, I had an anti-military bias. [00:31:00]And it wasn't that I didn't like the military, I just felt that my grandfather, my father -- my brother John was a career, Corps of Engineers, army -- and I just thought, enough's enough. So when I was in high school, I decided to go to the University of Wyoming instead of the Air Force Academy and I wanted to be a physician. And so I started out as a

pre-med student. Then -- this is interesting, how you get to where you are. I took the Minnesota multiphasic. And it's about three days, and your aptitude. It came back and it said I should be an Air Force pilot. So I thought, well, OK, resistance is futile. This is probably where I have the best placement. So for me that was kind of my life changing -- I'd tell people, as I was in my military career, [00:32:00] that my parents put me in a reed basket and I floated down the river and the Air Force plucked me out. (inaudible) And there's some truth to that. I have wonderful parents, but the military defined who I was, very much. So...

Q: OK. So you joined... did you join?

BISHOP: I did -- well, I was in the ROTC during the war, the Vietnam War. I was at that point in time when they had the lottery, if you remember that. My lottery number was like 340. I was not going to get drafted. So I joined. I was in the ROTC and went into the military at that time.

Q: You were in the ROTC where at?

BISHOP: Laramie.

Q: So did you get your degree?

BISHOP: I did.

Q: In what?

BISHOP: Biology.

Q: So you wanted to maybe be a physician, but you were in ROTC by fate --

BISHOP: By fate -- well, and the [Minnesotaphs?] told me, well, you're in the wrong place, go this way.

Q: But you would have -- you could have [00:33:00] been a biologist, too.

BISHOP: And there's still a passion there. And I still enjoy some of that.

Q: So you must love Jackson Hole.

BISHOP: I do. And I sit on the Wyoming Sage Grouse Committee, and ecology, and all that kind of stuff. It's very interesting for me, still.

Q: Yeah. Are you unique in your family, in that respect?

BISHOP: Yes. We'd be engineers. Everybody in my family is an engineer. My kids are engineers, my brother is an engineer, my other brother is an engineer. My dad is an engineer, my Uncle Floyd's an engineer. Dave Bishop's an engineer.

Q: That's pretty amazing. Your kids are engineers?

BISHOP: So, when I go to the family reunions and stuff, I have to go sit by myself and talk. Because I don't want to talk about slide rules, and pi r squared.

Q: Slide rules? Boy, that takes you back.

BISHOP: That takes you way back right there. But that's kind of a joke, isn't it. They -- we tend to be very mathematical, engineer folk. Just...

Q: OK, so you were in ROTC. Graduated with a degree in biology. [00:34:00] And then you automatically -- you signed up right after college?

BISHOP: Well, in ROTC you don't have that. I mean, you've always signed up in ROTC. You're committed to four years in the military.

Q: OK. So ROTC facilitated your immediate entrance into -- where did you go to boot camp?

BISHOP: I went to -- well, I went to flight school in Phoenix, Arizona. Williams Air Force Base. And earned my wings there. And my very first assignment was a little twin engine propeller plane called a C7. And I went to Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. And our job there was twofold. We were to transport -- a very small airplane, we could only carry fifteen people -- but we would do a lot of behind the scenes air drops, and stuff like that, with people or supplies.

Q: Were you a pilot?

BISHOP: Oh yeah.

Q: OK. That's a lot of responsibility.

BISHOP: You know, that's one of the reasons I took that assignment. [00:35:00] I could've had other assignments, but I was a first lieutenant aircraft commander with a crew of three. When the Tet Offensive of '72 broke out, my squadron commander called me up, and he said, "Bishop, you've been here longer than anybody else. I want you to take 90 people, six airplanes, and go up to Da Nang, and you're the (inaudible) commander. I'm 23 years old. That's pretty cool. You know, that's a lot of responsibility.

Q: You looked at that as an honor.

BISHOP: Absolutely. And it was a lot of responsibility. And people were shooting at you every day.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about that? I mean -- I don't know whether you want to recall it, or --

BISHOP: Sure, there's no -- if there's interest, it's fun to talk about. Most people -- I mean, that's far enough away that most people don't have an interest, but... So, yeah, I was the copilot and then became aircraft commander in the [00:36:00] C7. And I had a crew. I was the detachment commander for a while. We did another function there, that was the -- called Ramrod Alpha. It was our call sign. Or Yankee was our call sign. But we actually put -- we had secure radios in our airplane, that we talked to the army. We talked to the -- so we would -- over some of the hot

contested areas and coordinate airstrikes and ground operations and special operations. So if we're going to infiltrate a special team wherever, we'd be the airborne coordinator for the... And then we did a lot of, just, routine flying, where you'd take (inaudible) of this place, and we had kind of like a scheduled [airline?] that would go to these six bases every day. And you know, it's -- it's like anything that anybody -- if you've ever talked to anybody that's had any combat, it's that -- the [00:37:00] idea of aviation is that it's hours of boredom interspersed with seconds of pure panic. You know, it doesn't happen very often, but yeah, I got hosed a bunch of times.

Q: When you say hosed, what do you mean?

BISHOP: Shot. [Brilled?]. Oh yeah.

Q: Did you get hit?

BISHOP: Not physically, but my airplane, yeah. Would come back with lots of bullet holes and shit.

Q: Do you ever wonder how you survived it, to this day?

BISHOP: Yeah, I always wondered. Because I always saw those bullets, and I don't know why, I always felt like it was going to get me right in the butt.

Q: Like Forrest Gump.

BISHOP: Yeah. It's like, you know, "Shoot me. Just don't shoot me there."

Q: Did you ever have any plane accidents?

BISHOP: No, I didn't. I flew well. I always -- you know, got shot a few times... And it's always interesting. When they shoot at you, typically, [00:38:00] every seventh round is a tracer, so they can kind of -- it looks like almost squirting a hose. You know that there's six bullets in between that tracer, but they're close enough together, like in a machine gunners, you shoot 23, you know, the 23mm, when they shoot, so it's like being squirted with a hose. And the [time of flight?] of the bullet is such that, if you see it, you can maneuver your plane around. So...

Q: You have that much time?

BISHOP: Yeah, it takes about three or four seconds for the bullets to get to your altitude. If you're 4,000 feet, let's say 5,000 feet...

Q: So how's your -- what's your evasive pattern? What do you do?

BISHOP: You ever play dodge ball when you were a kid? You see the ball coming. You move. Duck! Go up, go down, go left, go right.

Q: This is in my dreams, I think, someone shoots at me and I duck. Yeah, right.

BISHOP: Yeah, in aviation you certainly can see the bullets coming, and you have a chance to avoid them.

Q: Because you're seeing the pattern.

BISHOP: Yeah, well, it's like this hose. [00:39:00] It looks like a hose, for the -- you know, the [all?] these tracers are coming up. Now you know there's bullets in between, but you can see that hose coming up. And it's like, oh, I did do this one time with An Loc, if you remember that battle, we were supporting that. And they were heavily -- we lost a couple of our planes out of the squadron on that one too. But I was going in at night for a night drop, to take supplies to An Loc when it was under attack. And there was the C-130, you know, the specters? The gun ships? And so, we're talking to each other, and I can't see him, he can't -- because I'm flying lights out, he's flying lights out. And I see him (makes noises), and then I see him overhead. "Shit, where is he?" So we couldn't see each other. And he said, "Why don't you turn on your lights for just a second?" And I did that, and the classic that they do in Vietnam at that time was -- this guy is over here on the ground, [00:40:00] and he's going to shoot you. Because you turned your light on, now he can see you. He's far enough away that he's really not a threat. But he knows that you're going to turn this way. Then this guy

shoots at you. And he knows that now you're losing
airspeed, and as you turn around, this guy's underneath of
you, and he hoses you. I fell into that trap one night,
where the Specter C-130 guy told me to turn my lights on.
I won't do that again, you know? Shit, don't ever do that.
But yeah, I got my 102 missions in Vietnam. DFC and all
that kind of stuff.

Q: What's DFC?

BISHOP: Distinguished Flying Cross.

Q: Oh, you did? 102 missions? Isn't that a little above
average?

BISHOP: Yeah.

Q: And what was the average?

BISHOP: Well, in some weapons systems if you got 100 you went
home. So I guess it was slightly above average, but --
just, you did what you had to do. I didn't count much.

[00:41:00]

Q: What was your mentality? Did you enjoy doing this? Or was
this something where you said, "I'm going to get through
this?" Or you were just determined to live? Or what?

BISHOP: It's hard to put your fingers on. Combat is very
complex. The American military effort is well, well
orchestrated. A lot of really smart, good people. So I
was kind of like, this is really pretty cool. Everybody's

got their stuff together. This is the A team. This is like being on a football team with the A players, not the B players. They're very good, they're very competent. Very capable. So for me it was kind of, eh, gets old after a while, but there were times where it's like, I was really proud to be an American. You know. Never lost sight of that.

Q: Did you see -- you knew that a lot of helicopters were going down. [00:42:00] You knew a lot of guys were getting killed.

BISHOP: A couple of my fellow squadrons did. And I had the displeasure of, at times, carrying body bags. Had to see body bags, have to wash the back of the plane out because blood was all over the back of the plane.

Q: Did you lose any good friends?

BISHOP: Yeah. A bunch.

Q: Out of your unit?

BISHOP: Flight school. One of my friends in flight school took an F-111, got shot down in Laos. And -- they captured him. And they stuck him on a stick and disemboweled him. Hung him there for three days before he died.

Q: Oh my God. So, when you look back, Ray, and you think about the Vietnam War, [00:43:00] and -- I'm sure you've read about it, right?

BISHOP: I'm a professor of aerospace at the Air College. I know a lot about the Vietnam -- and all wars.

Q: Where is the Air College?

BISHOP: Montgomery, Alabama. That's where we send our senior, senior diplomats and [officers?]. I went there as a student and then I stayed on for [the year?] as the strategy chair. I taught there for a year.

Q: OK. So what's your overall point of view, or your opinion of the war?

BISHOP: Of Vietnam? A lot of -- and I'll be the contrarian. Did you lose Vietnam? And you have to say, well, why were we there? From a global strategy point of view. We were there to stop the spread of Communism through southeast Asia. Did you stop the Communism through southeast Asia? Yes, you did. So I like to tell, particularly when I talk to veterans groups, we didn't lose the war, we won the war. You think, tactically, that we lost Vietnam, but you won the theater. And so the [00:44:00] people that died were not in vain. And you were part of -- and this is where -- one of my great heroes is Ronald Reagan. You are part of the strategy that said that our arsenal of democracy can outstrip that way of life. And if they try to meet us militarily, it will bankrupt their country. And it will be the demise of communism over time. Lot of people forget

that when you and I were younger, the communism was a pretty real threat and nuclear war was a pretty real threat. And we kind of lost sight of that. It was a strategic survival for our way of life and our country. And Vietnam was a piece of that fabric that led to the demise of the Soviet Union.

Q: Let me be the devil's advocate. Now, have you ever read David Halberstam's *Best and Brightest*?

BISHOP: No.

Q: Or [00:45:00] *Bright, Shining Lie*? I can't think of the author of that. They talk about the nationalism -- and we're way off the subject here, I know, and I promise I'll get back to the -- what we're supposed to be doing. But -- Halberstam and this other author of *Bright, Shining Lie* explain that the Vietnamese -- it was a nationalistic movement. They had actually fought the Chinese -- and they didn't like the Chinese. They had fought the Chinese. They had beaten the French. And now they had the Americans. In order to unite their country. And so the north Vietnamese, to me, it seems that they were saying, "We're not Chinese communist, Russian communist lovers." These people were an independent group of people who had fought others to gain their independence and were not going to stop at the Americans. They were going to get what they

wanted to do, which was reunification of their country.

And so it [00:46:00] was a nationalistic movement.

BISHOP: I don't know that I would disagree with that. I would say that -- it's kind of like Cuba and Russia in that -- it may have been their intent to unify, but the Chinese communists were so infiltrated in with the Vietnamese that it would be hard for them to disentangle. One of the things I did as a C-7 pilot was -- we'd carry prisoners, sometimes, to [An Toi?] island, which is where their POW camp was. We'd occasionally have to bring Chinese interpreters, because they didn't speak Vietnamese. So, you know. The Chinese were heavily in Vietnam.

Q: The same way in Korea.

BISHOP: Heavily in Vietnam. You weren't fighting, necessarily, the Vietnamese. You weren't necessarily fighting the Chinese. You were fighting the Russians -- surrogate. The surrogate. Proxy. [00:47:00]

Q: Weren't we supplying them with arms, basically, by letting them -- I mean, the strategy was to get in and fight them the way Americans wanted to fight them, and they would just simply -- appropriate our arms and use them against us.

BISHOP: I haven't heard that at all. I'm not aware of that. But I do know that we -- because of presidential policies, we were -- we had a lot of options, that we could have won

the war very easily. But we were always politically -- not allowed to. One of which was the rice paddies, if you heard about that. Where you -- or -- busting dam. All their dike system up around Hanoi is this multi-tiered irrigation system. And if you just broke all the dams up, they would flood out and they wouldn't have a rice crop for a year. And the president of the United States at that time said, "You can't do that. [00:48:00] You can't bomb here. You can't do this." (coughs)

Q: Was that Lyndon Johnson?

BISHOP: Most of it was Lyndon Johnson. You know, the White House was calling targets, there, so -- if you had a target out in the open, you had to call on an HF radio and get (inaudible) from Washington DC to bomb a target. That's a ridiculous way to fight a war. (coughs) Excuse me.

Q: You must have a little bit of a cold or flu, bug.

BISHOP: I do. I'm glad you're [on the side?], it's just a bad cold.

Q: Wow, that's interesting. Well, I think too, don't you, that there was -- public pressure turned that around, and turned that president -- I mean, he was being pushed by the public, wasn't he?

BISHOP: I think so. You know, and the question becomes -- at some point in time you have to fight the right war, not the

war that -- you know, you're president. You're supposed to take leadership and not have a focus group on how to do things. [00:49:00]

Q: You know, I interviewed a guy (inaudible). The other day I interviewed a fellow in New Orleans. His name was John [Shaw?]. And he also has the Distinguished Flying Cross. He's got two of them. And then an Air Medal.

BISHOP: Yeah, I've got [several?] of those.

Q: What are they called?

BISHOP: Air Medal.

Q: Air Medal, OK. And -- I asked him about his opinion of the Vietnam War, and he says, "Well, you know" -- and he had a ramrod down his spine. This guy was -- he loves this country, he loves the air force, he loved what he was doing. He felt he was -- you know, he was a true patriot. And I said, "Well, what did you think of Vietnam?" And he said, "You know, the purpose of the military is to defend this country from attack. Were the Vietnamese attacking us? Were we in danger of their -- no! No!" And he was -- I mean, he was vehement about this. And I thought, this guy was a lieutenant colonel. He retired as a lieutenant colonel. That's pretty high, [00:50:00] isn't it? And he thinks that we shouldn't have -- actually, I think he also thought that -- and I have to go back to the interview. But

I think he felt that Korea was nonsense, and that Vietnam was -- you know. A war that we didn't have to be involved in. But what you're telling me is that we -- in the larger scheme of things, strategically, we sort of blocked the door to Communism.

BISHOP: What I would tell you is that -- and that may be my -- what I taught at the War College -- grand strategy, is that... The question becomes -- put this in Afghanistan today, although I personally don't think we belong in Afghanistan. We tend to think militarily of -- the world is this place and we have a part in it. Do we have [00:51:00] the moral authority to shape the world the way we want it to be? Or are we just another participant in the world stage? We are the largest, most successful economic and the largest military. So you can have over here isolationism. But over time you've found isolationism doesn't work very well. Or you can say, "I want to shape the world to my benefit. And I've earned that right to do that." And guess what: Americans are really good people. We're not bad people. If you look, militarily, over the centuries, nations go to war to take slaves, to take property. You know. What did we do in World War II? What did we do in World War I? You know. The Japanese are our best allies now. So we're really a very good people. And

people kind of forget the fact that we have contributed our blood and [treasure?] [00:52:00] for very noble purposes. And we have the right to shape the world the way we want to. So when you come to Vietnam and you say that the Communists want to dominate the whole Asian peninsula, and you say, "Morally, I don't like that -- A. And B, I want to shape the world the way I want to." Then you say, "My investment is better where I have a proxy war someplace not on my own soil." And I take the fight -- theological fight -- to (inaudible) foreign shores. Because it's the least invasive, and it protects me and my way of life.

Q: Should we have been -- what about Syria? What about... I mean, you said -- just now you said Afghanistan, we shouldn't --

BISHOP: So I would come back to Vietnam, and I would say, "Yes, we belonged there." At that time, you had a monolithic Soviet Union that was going to dominate the world. I don't think people understand how close we came to speaking German. [00:53:00] You know? The world is a really nasty place, and for us to sit there and say, "Well, it'll work itself out" -- no! It's bad. And you've got to -- at times, you've got to be appropriately... So, you look at your survival interests, and your strategic interests, and you have [peripheral?] interest. So in your

[peripheral?] interest, let's take Somalia. What are your interests in Somalia? Nothing. OK. We don't normally invest America's blood and treasure on moral, ethical principals. If there's one race of people in Somalia killing another race of people, I'm not willing to send my son to have him die for them. So we tend to look selfishly, and say, how do I protect America. What's in it for me. Before I invest blood and treasure. So from that perspective, I would say Somalia, Sub-Sahara Africa is probably not a [00:54:00] strategic interest for us.

Q: But if you see Africa as an emerging set of countries -- you know, emerging from colonialism and neocolonialism -- don't you -- aren't your principles at odds with one another here? Because you're saying we have a responsibility to shape the world in our own image, or our own viewpoint, because we're noble. But on the other hands, we can't involve ourselves in Somalia, for heaven's sakes. I mean, it seems like there's a direct conflict there.

BISHOP: And, you know, you got it. And that's the debate. That's the focus that you should have. Do I really want to be in Afghanistan? What's in it for me? Do I really want to be in Syria? What's the relationship with Syria? Here's a better example? What's the relationship between

the Soviet Union and Ukraine? OK? You really want to go there? [00:55:00] No. You know. Because it doesn't have anything to do with the [self interest?] of the American people. Can you change the outcome of that? And, you know, that's where, I guess, situationally, I become kind of an isolationist too. It's that, no, you can't be everywhere and do everything. You've got to be smart about it. But when we do do, we should do it well. So back to Vietnam, I don't disagree that there was a lot of things wrong. But the underlying concept of why we were there, I think, was good. The domino theory and all that -- we've forgotten about all that. We lost the tactical part of it, but we didn't lose the strategic part of it.

Q: Oh yeah, the domino theory's been attacked, and --

BISHOP: Yeah, but the outcome was -- that we have -- there's only one Vietnam, and it's really not an aggressive Vietnam, and China hasn't spread and taken over the whole peninsula. [00:56:00] And communism is not a preferred way of life anymore in the world.

Q: Have you been to China?

BISHOP: No.

Q: My wife and I went there this fall.

BISHOP: Did you?

Q: Yeah. Very interesting. They're becoming more and more like America. Think about America during the depression, maybe more like the '20s or '30s. Maybe even the '40s and '50s. But think of America as a booming economy, people who maybe came off the farm who now have a home in the suburbs, a car, maybe two cars, a TV. They're struggling to rise up. This huge middle class. That's the way China is right now. And I don't think China -- I don't see how possibly they could be our enemy unless their autocratic system were so unbearable that we said, OK, enough is enough.

BISHOP: The War College solution that I taught [00:57:00] 15 years ago, it's been a while, was that China is very continental based. They have big armies, they don't have the mobility to get them anywhere. And they're not a threat.

Q: You teach at the Army War College.

BISHOP: Air War College. I did.

Q: Air War College. Excuse me. OK, and that's in Alabama? Whereabouts?

BISHOP: Montgomery. Maxwell Air Force Base.

Q: When do you teach?

BISHOP: Well, I did.

Q: Do you still?

BISHOP: No. No, I taught there for a tour. You know, in the military you move every couple of years. So I was there at the War College -- War College is a top 1% of all [colonels?]. Normally for flag officers. A few State Department people. They would be highly placed. And it's very competitive, hard to get to. So I was selected to go to War College, and then I was selected to stay on for a year. And I taught strategy, that's what I taught.

Q: How'd you like that?

BISHOP: [00:58:00] It was fun. I'm more of an operations -- I left there and became a Wing Commander, if you're familiar with the Wing Commander. It'd be like -- well, a Wing Commander would be like -- how do I say it. (inaudible) as a wing. It'd be like, the Wing Commander of the [FE-1]. Yeah. So I'd have six or seven Colonels below me, and -- normally a BG squad.

Q: We went way off the point. Can we get back? Because this is --

BISHOP: It's always fun.

Q: Yeah, fascinating, fascinating. So, how long were you in the service?

BISHOP: Twenty-five years.

Q: You were a career man?

BISHOP: I was.

Q: When id you get out?

BISHOP: January, 1996.

Q: Was that because you didn't see any more -- any future? Or that was the end of your term, and that was -- I mean, was it normal just to get out after that?

BISHOP: No. You know, people get out at 10 years, and 20 years you make retirement, [00:59:00] and 30 years you can stay. When I joined the Air Force I had some goals I wanted to do. I wanted to be a Wing Commander. I was the Wing Commander at Castle Air Force Base, which was -- under my command I had 23 B-52s, 33 KC-135s, and about 5,000 people. So it was [a big one?]. The Air Force offered me some very nice assignments to go to staff in Hawaii and staff in Washington D.C., and... I wanted to go try some other things. I'm more of an infield, hands-on kind of commander. I don't necessarily want to be at the headquarters level. So I thought it was a good time to get out. Plus, you know, after the demise of the Soviet Union, and after Desert Storm, the military started having dramatic cuts. And I just -- I just saw cut, cut, cut, and I didn't want to be part of them. [01:00:00] So I got out and I applied for multiple jobs, but the director of aviation for Kern County came open. Which is Bakersfield, California. And so, I became the airport director there.

And -- I had seven airports that I was the -- so I had the system of airports in the county. And Meadows Field, which is the big commercial airport there in Bakersfield. And I did that for 10 years, until I turned 60. And then the job in Jackson Hole, Wyoming came available, and guess what? I'm from Wyoming, I'm a Wyoming (inaudible). I'm a cowboy. And so I thought it would be a lot of fun to come back to the state, and -- that's where all my family and relatives and everybody is.

Q: So you've been here since --

BISHOP: Two thousand and six.

Q: Two thousand and six. OK. And you are actually involved in operations.

BISHOP: Yeah, well, my -- I have my -- I'm [01:01:00] involved with everything. Let's put it that way. I'm head of operations.

Q: When you say "everything" -- what does that comprise? What do those duties comprise?

BISHOP: We own the airfield. We own the terminal. We don't fly the airplanes. As an airport director, we make it available for them to fly. We do something here that is really unusual, too, is that -- the TSA screening, when 9/11 occurred and George Bush federalized the screening process, they allowed five airports in the country to opt

out. And they bid that out. So San Francisco, Kansas City, Missouri, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and I can't remember the other one, all opted out. And then under the federal contract program, the federal government came in and said, well, we're going to privatize this. And we'll bid it out in a competitive bid. And Raytheon, and Boeing, and all the [01:02:00] big companies -- except for Jackson Hole. And we bid on our own contract and we got it.

Q: "We" meaning...

BISHOP: This airport.

Q: The airport bid on its own contract?

BISHOP: Yes. So when you see the people out here that wear a TSA federal patch? They actually work for me. They're my employees. And I'm the only one in the country where they actually work for the airport. And it's a wonderful model, because they're accountable, and they're good, and we can reward good behavior and good customer service.

Q: What's the problem with the other system?

BISHOP: There's -- in my view, anytime you have federal employees, it's unionized, and it's inertia. Let me give you a good example. Be careful how you repeat this, but -- when I was in Bakersfield, I had an employee that was accused of molesting his daughter. And he was a good guy.

And he got convicted. And I went back through the court documents [01:03:00] because I just couldn't believe this really good guy, good worker guy, conviction (inaudible). And he said in court, "I never touched my daughter. All the times that my wife and I did methamphetamine together and tweaked up together on drugs, I never did touch her." Oh, what? He's an airport employee. In California, they're part of the state employees union. He went to prison. I paid his salary. I could not terminate him. He is a felon. He came out and I had to give him his job back.

Q: Why? That was the law?

BISHOP: That's the union. That's what the union does.

California. OK? So he came back. I said, "Nice to have you back. Sorry to hear about all these problems you had." See you Monday morning. Monday morning, I gave him a drug test, he failed it, and I fired him. But I paid his salary for seven months while he was in jail. And I had to take him back. [01:04:00] Wyoming's a right to work state. I have a federal screener that works for me, and -- these are true cases, but be careful how you repeat this. He had a fight with his girlfriend while he was screening. He called her a four letter word in public. In seven minutes, he was fired and gone. Which of those two systems has the

better workforce? When I have good workers here, I pay them more money. I give them bonuses. And if they don't perform, they're gone. God bless America. That's the way it all should be.

Q: You give bonuses?

BISHOP: Absolutely. On performance.

Q: Now wait a minute. Not every airport manager can afford to give bonuses. This must be a rich airport.

BISHOP: We do well. But we don't have longevity pay, so if you're here five years you don't make any more money than if you're here four years. We don't have, you know, that kind of indexing and progressive -- but if you come in and [01:05:00] you take care of a mother and three kids that are getting in trouble through screening, and you take care of them, and you walk them through, and you get them to the airplane, we notice that. That's what we're looking for in our employees.

Q: What's the -- How -- This is probably the wrong question to ask you, Ray, but I wonder what the TSA's responsibility is in these small Wyoming airports, generally.

BISHOP: They're federal employees. You and Casper have a state and federal security director. He's like our contract administrator, but he also owns the Casper and the Cheyennes and the Gillette airports, and they'll have five,

or six, or 10, or 15 employees. I've got 65 screeners here that work for me.

Q: Screeners? Wait a minute, these are people who screen people -- I mean, yeah, obviously.

BISHOP: You would think of them as federal employees, but they're actually, in this case they're my employees.

Q: Why do you need that many?

BISHOP: Because I do 4,000 people [01:06:00] a day. We're a big airport.

Q: When are your peaks?

BISHOP: The busiest time is about the 4th of July to the 5th of September. And then there's some busy times in January, February. But mostly it's summertime.

Q: So January, February would be the ski months?

BISHOP: Yep. All skiers coming.

Q: Where are we now? In kind of an interlude?

BISHOP: Yeah. We've gone from 4,000 people a day to about 300 a day.

Q: So this is the reason I'm able to talk to you right now. Otherwise you'd be so busy you couldn't talk.

BISHOP: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. So right now is a nice time to sit and talk war stories.

Q: I appreciate this, though. You don't know how much I appreciate this. You're very frank.

BISHOP: But in another couple of months I'll be very busy.

And this is when we encourage all of our screeners to take leave. You know, you want to take a month off, take a month off. We love to -- you know, you want to take a month without pay? Great, we'll see you.

Q: What about yourself?

BISHOP: I just got back from Phoenix. Did a triathlon.

Q: [01:07:00] Did you fly yourself?

BISHOP: No, no. I do fly occasionally, but -- it's expensive.

I mean, you fly your own airplane.

Q: Well, what's the gas now?

BISHOP: We're at \$7.20 a gallon.

Q: In Jackson Hole?

BISHOP: Yeah.

Q: In other parts of the state it's not that high.

BISHOP: It is in Jackson Hole.

Q: Yeah, but it's a bit airport. There should be some competition. (laughs)

BISHOP: Yeah. It's -- we're very expensive. I flew with a friend of mine that has a nice airplane, a CJ4. We went to Washington D.C. and I sat in the right seat and helped him fly. And I wanted to go to Washington anyway. The fuel bill was \$3,900.

Q: What kind of plane was it?

BISHOP: A little, small jet. You know -- a cool, a nice airplane. A cool airplane. We were up at 45,000 feet, going 500 miles an hour. Took not long to get to Washington.

Q: Other than that, do you fly much?

BISHOP: I fly about twice a month. [01:08:00]

Q: What -- a small plane?

BISHOP: Just a --

Q: Little tail draggers?

BISHOP: No, [normally?] jets. My background's mostly jets, so I'm more comfortable in turbine.

Q: OK. And -- the status -- I wanted to ask you about the status of the airport. I'm following my outline here.

BISHOP: Not very well. (laughs)

Q: No. Well that isn't a very nice thing to say on tape, Ray! I'm going to catch hell for this.

BISHOP: We've had a nice conversation. It's been a lot of fun.

Q: This has been fun. What's the status of the airport right now? I came in here and -- I couldn't get right into the -
- your office.

BISHOP: Sure. And if you'd like, after a while, I can walk you around. When I got here, we had an old terminal that was multiple years old. The first winter I was here, we

had an American Airlines 757-200 that goes to Dallas. We had about 40 people that were outside that couldn't even get in the building to get their ticket to get in. It was 11 below. I thought -- you know, that's [01:09:00] not very good customer focus. And so, I went to the board at that time and said, "You know, we should solve the problem that we have." And so, phase one, we've already finished. We're in phase two. When we're finished it will be about a \$52 million project.

Q: What does it involve? What are you building?

BISHOP: We built -- essentially, a new terminal. We put in about 280,000 square feet. I'll walk you through. You'll be interested with the [bag claim?] area. When 9/11 occurred, they just took these screening devices, plopped them in the middle of the lobby. There wasn't room for anything. And so we've increased our terminal size by a factor of about five, 500% bigger. And then this last bag claim area that you can see up here, that we're building, it's going to be finished in October. And I've announced my retirement, and I'm going to retire [01:10:00] in September.

Q: This September?

BISHOP: Yes, I am.

Q: Why?

BISHOP: I'm going fishing. (cough) Find some friends and talk war stories.

Q: (laughs) That's very interesting. So, OK. What do you see as the future of the airport? You've got this project you're talking about that's going to be completed. But you'll probably be gone. What do you see as the future of this airport?

BISHOP: Well, we'll continue to grow. The -- airports don't attract people. They don't turn people away. They just accommodate people who want to come. We are, at the end of the day, the access to Grand Teton and Yellowstone Park. That's why we are as busy as we are. And we are blessed to have a winter season with a nice ski area. World class -- number one ski area in North America. It was voted this year. So we have two seasons, whereas some of the other ski resort areas have one. They don't have a summer [this much?]. So we're a [01:11:00] very robust enterprise.

Q: You sound like the manager of the Casper International. Or Natrona County International Airport. Very optimistic. Very upbeat.

BISHOP: Glen, yeah.

Q: Januska.

BISHOP: But --

Q: And Dave Haring's the same way in Cheyenne.

BISHOP: But they do -- I think they did 10,000 people last year, and I did 300,000. In Cheyenne. So there's a relative difference.

Q: Yeah. And in Cheyenne they're in danger of losing their million dollar a year subsidy from the government.

BISHOP: That's because they're so small.

Q: Yeah. And Great Plains Aviation is -- you know about the rule that's come up about, what, pilots needing 1,500 hours?

BISHOP: Yeah.

Q: You don't have that problem here.

BISHOP: Well, American Airlines has that problem, yeah. Delta. No, but we're a big enough and mature enough airport that -- that's more the smaller airports.

Q: How many [fixed?] space operators do you have here?

BISHOP: We have only one. And the reason [01:12:00] we only have one is because we don't have any space. This is important. We are the only airport in the nation that's wholly within a national park. We're a lessee from Grand Teton National Park. When Rockefeller formed the park back in the '30s and '40s and '50s, he made a conscious decision to put the airport within the park so that the park would have control of the airport. Which is very difficult, but it gives the park a lot of control. So in the airport we

have 500 acres of airport. The park lease from 1983, when Secretary Watt approved it -- from Wyoming, who lives here now, I don't know if you know that --

Q: No, I didn't.

BISHOP: He's got a house over across the river.

Q: James Watt.

BISHOP: Yeah. When Watt approved the airport [01:13:00] -- and Dick Cheney was a congressman who signed that, that original lease -- they allowed 27 acres to be developed. So of all the airport property, we only have this very small little place that we can develop. We cannot be higher than 16 feet tall. We can only do certain things. So the park has a lot of dynamic control over the growth and the direction of this airport.

Q: Do you see that as a problem?

BISHOP: No. You know, those (inaudible) visits -- not a problem. How many people can come on a single runway. Burbank has 10 million a year on one runway. So I don't know that -- you know, you have to spread your flights out. But you can continue to have people come here. People don't come or not come because of an airport. They come because they want to see the park, and that's put the economy -- and the hotel rooms downtown are the limiting factor, how many hotel beds do [01:14:00] you have.

Q: What about the other limitations -- you say you can't have anything more than 15 feet high?

BISHOP: 16, yeah.

Q: What about the tower?

BISHOP: That's an exception. Safety exception. That's the only exception we have.

Q: OK. Are there any other restrictions the park service has -- you know --

BISHOP: Free ANCA, which is the airport noise capacity act. Where it's interstate commerce. If you try to limit aviation. We have a noise decibel threshold here, that we cannot exceed 6.55 daily departures of a 737-200 noise equivalent. So if I take all my noise and add it up, I can't go over this threshold.

Q: That means you have to cancel a flight?

BISHOP: It might. But because the 737 way back then was a very noisy, high-decibel airplane, I'm not even close to those thresholds now. I do have limits, and we're aware of those limits.

Q: Now, how long are your runways?

BISHOP: It's an extremely short runway. It's [01:15:00] 6,300 feet long.

Q: One runway?

BISHOP: One runway.

Q: What's the elevation?

BISHOP: Six thousand-four hundred feet.

Q: Which is -- is that the highest big airport in the state?

BISHOP: It's the highest big airport. It's the highest airport that has 757s. If you look at the density altitude, we're the shortest runway in the United States... that has large, big aircraft.

Q: Has that led to problems?

BISHOP: Well, if you've watched the news, and I can give you a lot of background on this, we've slid a lot of airplanes off here. When I first got here, we slid the American Airlines one, it went off 750 feet. We took the Airbus 320, United Airlines, and put it off, 550 off into the snow. Had to have its slides down, engines caught on fire. Millions of dollars of damage. Then we -- when I first got here, it was [01:16:00] -- and this is an important part. I think they were numb from having so many excursions, they just happened all the time. Because, you know, the density altitude here is just, very thin air, so you're landing much faster than pilots are used to. And so they're getting themselves in trouble. Oh, yeah, we just fished another airplane out of the snow bank. No, no, airplanes are fragile and they break apart. We're lucky we haven't killed 100 or 200 people. A 757 200 series carries 188

souls. So we've been very fortunate. So we commissioned a safety study, a safety study that said, "What can we do?" When the American guy went off, almost 900 feet off the end of the runway, if you -- it made national news. They even -- you may not have seen that. That was a 757-200. I asked the superintendent of the park to come out and take a look. And she helped people get off the airplane. And she said, "What do you need?" And I said, "I need a thousand feet of paved [01:17:00] safety area. Don't want to make a longer runway because I understand the environmental people, but I want to have a safety zone, so that when pilots do make mistakes, it doesn't cost people their lives. And they allowed us to do that. And that was a huge success for this airport, for aviation safety.

Q: When did this take place?

BISHOP: 2010. And so we added 950 feet of paved safety area that we keep plowed. And so if you make a mistake there's a place for you to go --

Q: Which end?

BISHOP: The south. And we almost always land to the south.

Q: But if the wind's in the wrong direction and you have to land the other way, what happens at this end?

BISHOP: You don't have that. But 95% of the time, you're landing south. And when the runway's icy, in snowstorms and stuff, you always land in the south.

Q: North to south.

BISHOP: Yeah. So we were doing -- we did -- I kept track -- that's one of the things my predecessor did not do -- of how many excursions we've had. We had 27 excursions --

Q: What is an excursion?

BISHOP: When [01:18:00] an airplane goes off the runway.

Q: OK.

BISHOP: It's serious stuff. So we had a highest incidence of excursions of any commercial airport in the United States. We were getting an excursion, on average, about 13 a year. And since we built this new 950-foot safety area -- and we did some other things -- and you as a non-pilot may not understand, but -- you can look into it later. We added [center line] lights, because when you come in and land, particularly in a snowstorm, it's hard to find the runway. Center line lights, it's this row of lights that goes down the middle. You land right on top of them. Helps you find the runway. And then we added runway visual range indicators, a couple hundred thousand dollars. But they're these light meters that go along the runway that tell the actual visibility, rather than (inaudible) looking out the

window and say, "Well, that looks maybe a half mile, I don't know." So we did those three safety upgrades. And since then we haven't had an excursion [01:19:06]. And we were getting 13, 14 a year before.

Q: This is in the past four years, you haven't had an excursion?

BISHOP: We have not had anybody leave the pavement in four years.

Q: Well, good for you!

BISHOP: That's probably -- when I leave here, that's the thing I'll be the most proud of, that I've done. Because we have saved 100, 200 people's lives.

Q: What about the lives of people who -- that have been lost -- I mean, lives that have been lost crashing against the Tetons? This is a unique airport in that respect. And I think there was -- the biggest one that ever affected Cheyenne was the Reed family. You remember the Reeds? Well, he forgot to set something on his plane, and instead of going to the east he went to the west and smashed into the Tetons. Do you have many of those incidents?

BISHOP: We [killed?] two people [last] summer -- an RV8 [in a final turn?]. The one that I guess is the most striking to me was, maybe [01:20:00] two years ago in the wintertime, we had a guy from Minneapolis in a Mooney -- that's a small

little single engine plane. And he came out to take off and -- he had filed for 9,000 feet. And the tower asked him to go back and check his flight plan. You know, we can't tell people they can't take off, we don't have that legal authority. So he went back and he decided not to fly that day -- it was a horrible, horrible snowstorm. But his kid had to get to school, and he came out the next day and filed for 13,000 feet. Didn't have oxygen. In a horrible snowstorm. And took off, and crashed and killed all four people. Now, they didn't crash here, they crashed out over [Gant Peak?]. But -- that was one of those where you could just sit there and say -- that isn't going to work. I mean, those of us who have a lifetime of experience of flying airplanes, you have to say, this is -- I mean, you can [01:21:00] -- with a few exceptions, you can always look at an airplane fatality, an accident, and say, "That was a pretty bad mistake." Serious errors of judgment.

Q: Fewer mistakes made by the plane, mechanical mistakes.

BISHOP: Yeah. The accident -- from the military background, it's -- if you're flying along and a meteor strikes your plane, that's an act of God. And everything else is pilot error. OK?

Q: Maybe that's --

BISHOP: It's pilot error. I don't care. You know, it's your responsibility, for the maintenance, you're -- it's the pilot's decisions to make.

Q: Have you had any close calls?

BISHOP: Sure. Yeah, I've been flying for a lot of years.

Q: Can you give me an example or two?

BISHOP: (pause) I've lost -- in a T-38 -- I guess they don't have a little twin engine [01:22:00], supersonic airplane -- I lost an engine on the final turn, one time. Came in to land single engine, and there was -- the tower didn't see it, but there was another plane on the runway. I almost hit that guy -- I mean, we barely missed. In Vietnam I got shot up pretty bad a couple of times. I didn't tell you, in Vietnam, I flew that little single engine -- or, that little twin engine cargo plane. I did come back for a second tour in B-52s. So I've got B-52 time up over North Vietnam as well.

Q: You did not tell me about that. That's fascinating.

BISHOP: Yeah, just -- I was stationed as a B-52 pilot flying out of Guam. And we did -- you know. It was towards the end of the war. In fact, I dropped the -- I was in the last [cell?] of the last day of the last -- I dropped the last bombs up over Laos. Yeah, I guess -- they shoot at you once in a while, but not very effectively. When you're

down low it's a lot more striking to get shot at.

[01:23:00] When you're up high, you can see the -- when they shoot a SAM missile, there's a -- when it blasts off the thing, it makes, like, a donut. And so you can see this big flash of a donut, and you can see this spark that would come up.

Q: How do you avoid it?

BISHOP: In the bomber world, you had very effective jamming -- you jammed their frequencies. And so, like when they shot down all those airplanes over Christmas, they were launching those without any guidance. They were just sending proximity fuses. Because they couldn't guide it, because we can jam their downlinks. We can -- you know, any signal that they're trying to guide the missile to you, jam that link. So it's very effective.

Q: Is that like hitting a -- you know, a trap shooter hitting a duck in flight or something like that?

BISHOP: I don't know if you know this: In World War II, they used to take a lot of the fighter pilots, and take them out to the trap range and have them shoot [skeet?] to teach them how to lead. How to lead your target.

Q: Geez. [01:24:00] Well, in this case, you had these guys trained -- I mean, these SAMs trained on your airplane and

somehow or other you were able to interfere with their signal.

BISHOP: OK, not -- you know, occasionally, sometimes, there were just so many -- like in that December timeframe. I was not there in December, I was there after that, but -- there's just so many missiles you can't avoid them all. The thing that they would often do with us is, they would send up the [MiGs?] that would not try to shoot you down. But they would follow six, seven miles behind and then call off your altitudes. So, they were talking to their ground control. And if we'd change altitudes, they'd be changing, trying to (inaudible).

Q: What was it like to fly one of those B-52s?

BISHOP: I had a lot of time. I was the squadron commander in a B-52 squadron and a Wing Commander in a B-52 wing, so... They're a lot of fun.

Q: Really?

BISHOP: Yeah. Big airplane. Nothing like going to target with 102,000-pound [01:25:00] weapons. That's a whole lot of bombs. That's like 50 B-17s.

Q: How many bombs?

BISHOP: A hundred and two.

Q: These are 500-pound bombs?

BISHOP: Or a thousand. It depends. I guess we carry, what, [60 or 1,000 pounders?], 102 500-pounders.

Q: I'm curious -- how did you know what to drop -- either one of them -- and when to drop? Were you getting constant communication from the ground saying, "OK, you're over such-and-such an area?"

BISHOP: In Vietnam they did some of that. What's called [hotel?], it's a call sign. There was a ground base [rider?] that would tell you. The B-52 has an internal radar navigator that map reads off the [trained to?] the earth. And so the computer says there's a [bridge?] and there's your target. And you drop your bomb.

Q: But you knew ahead of time where you were headed for.

BISHOP: Yeah, before you took off you knew your target. Intel would come in, say, [01:26:00] OK, there's a truck park over here, there's 100 trucks or whatever on the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Q: Did you know at the time you were dropping bombs that -- the Cong, the Viet Cong were underground and you were not able to touch them? Or were you able to touch them?

BISHOP: Those bombs would dig them right up. On a bomb -- it'd depend on your target. There's a little fuse extender on the thing. So I can set the bomb to explode or with a

four-second delay. And 1001 it's going to go down 20 feet in the earth.

Q: Really? That far? Is that one of those bunker blasters, or --

BISHOP: Yeah, similar to that. You could have that. And then, of course, in Iraq and Iran we had that too. I was the operating group commander for Desert Storm before I went to the War College. And so we -- we did some pretty cool stuff in Desert Storm [01:27:00]. For some of those [hardened?] bunkers -- when it was first there -- we didn't know how to get down. We had a British bomb, a 2,000 pound bomb, that would go pretty good, but it would not go deep enough. So they had some army guy that thought of taking the tank barrel and cutting it off, because it was so hard [steel?]. Making a bomb out of it. And putting a rocket motor on the back of it with a three-second delay. And that stuff was going down 100 feet.

Q: A hundred feet? Into anything?

BISHOP: Yeah. Through 18 inches of concrete, reinforced. It was (makes noise). So in Desert Storm, we were very creative and did some good stuff there.

Q: You were the chief operations officer?

BISHOP: I was for the deployment and then I had to go to War College. So I missed the actual bomb dropping. But my

unit went and did very well. I was very proud of my guys.

I left just before the first bombs dropped.

Q: How -- What size crew did you [01:28:00] have? On a B-52?

BISHOP: Well, there were six people on a B-52. But at that time I was the commander, so I had 2,000 people. So...

Q: Over -- how many B-52s would that be? Is this a wing?

BISHOP: Sixteen. No -- well, it is a wing. You have a Wing Commander, that's the general or senior colonel like I was. At that time, you have a head of operations. Over here, you've got the maintenance guys, the hospital, the comms. The operations guy over here is in charge of flying the units. Normally in a bomb wing there's only one bomb squadron. So as a squadron commander, I'm in charge of this. I did that at [Fairchild] -- which is now the B-2s that (inaudible) same score. And then I was the 43rd operations group commander in Guam. So I was in charge of all the bombers and tankers and all the fliers.

Q: On a plane, though, you had six people?

BISHOP: Yeah.

Q: You were the pilot. How did you set the fuses -- I mean, you had to [01:29:00] make adjustments according to what the assignment was, right?

BISHOP: We did all that beforehand, yeah.

Q: Oh. So you knew which bombs -- you could trigger or release certain bombs -- oh. See, I am just so ignorant when it comes to stuff like this. Now, you mentioned Fairchild? You went through that so quick I don't even know what --

BISHOP: I was the squad commander at Fairchild, which is the base in Spokane, Washington. It's the 325th Bomb Squadron. And after I left we converted it to B-2. So they're now the B-2 Squadron. So if you see a B-2 flying around, you'll see an Alley Oop on the back. Which is -- the history of the squadron is pretty cool, it's -- Andy Capp, the cartoonist, was in the bomb squadron with [Tennessee Ernie Ford?], if you remember that. And he designed all the patches. And the patch for the wing was Alley Oop on a saber tooth tiger, Alley Oop on a pterodactyl. And our squadron was Alley Oop on a saber tooth tiger. [01:30:00]

Q: Could one of those B-52s land here?

BISHOP: No. Way too short.

Q: What do they require?

BISHOP: Eight thousand, minimum.

Q: And this is...

BISHOP: Six.

Q: Plus a little extra.

BISHOP: Yeah.

Q: There's just no way.

BISHOP: Yeah, you couldn't land a bomber here.

Q: Not even if you set the wheels down right at the end.

BISHOP: Oh, you could, but you wouldn't want to. I mean, yes, could you do it? Yes. As a Wing Commander, I had the authority to [waive?] from 10,000 feet down to 8,000 feet. We never went below 8,000 feet. Runway length.

Q: So you were flying out of Guam. That was the closest to the war zone?

BISHOP: Yes. Well, we had some in Thailand, but we didn't have any bombers stationed in Vietnam.

Q: How far was Guam away from the scene of the battle?

BISHOP: About three hours.

Q: Which means how many miles?

BISHOP: Fifteen hundred. So it's three hours over there, three hours back, and you'd [get a box?], and you dropped some bombs, and you came home. Hit a tanker, refuel, and come home. [01:31:00]

Q: It just boggles my mind, that here you are taking off from Guam, which is like a tropical island, right? Palm trees waving in the wind. Wonderful air -- and in 1500 miles, you're flying over a battle zone where people are losing their lives. And what you do is a matter of life and death. It's just --

BISHOP: The things that hopefully historians will notice, is who dropped the first bombs in Desert Storm. It was a B-52 that flew out of Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. So we flew a bomber to Baghdad and back to Barksdale that day. And that was the very first [weapon?] that was dropped.

Q: You flew back to Barksdale?

BISHOP: To demonstrate the intercontinental capability of a bomber. Now, we had bombers in [Diego Garcia?], but the [01:32:00] first bomb -- the first weapon, the first bomb -- actually, it was a cruise missile -- the first time over target was dropped by a Barksdale Air Force Base B-52.

Q: In Desert Storm?

BISHOP: Desert Storm. That flew out of the United States continental. Point being is that we have global capability. We can go anywhere in the world.

Q: How much fuel does it take --

BISHOP: (laughs) Think about it. We did another thing that was interesting while I was in Guam. You remember the Somali problem? We put a B-52 over Mogadishu the next day. Nobody knows that. And that was -- eight tanker refuelings per bomber.

Q: Eight what?

BISHOP: Refuelings.

Q: In midair?

BISHOP: Uh huh. So it took eight tankers to get one bomber to Mogadishu and back. And these were KC-10s, [01:33:00] not KC-135s.

Q: What's the difference?

BISHOP: Oh, another 100,000 pounds [again?].

Q: So you were flying a -- Were you flying the B-52?

BISHOP: No, I was the commander.

Q: OK. So when they fuel midair -- you've been involved in that operation?

BISHOP: It's my tanker and my bomber. It's my guys.

Q: Yeah, but, I mean, have you ever, actually, yourself, been involved in that midair refueling?

BISHOP: Thousands of times. It's what I did for twenty years. So you tuck up underneath the tanker, and he sticks the probe down, and you take anywhere from 20 to 100,000 pounds of fuel, which is anywhere from an hour to six or seven hours of gas.

Q: And to go to Mogadishu it took eight of those?

BISHOP: Yeah, it took a bunch. You know. And the idea is that -- it depends on where you're going. The bomber has the capability of carrying external (inaudible). So I can [01:34:00] carry -- on these heavy [storage adapter?] (inaudible), cruise missiles, these kinds of things. It really creates a lot of drag, so I'm going to consume a lot

more gas. So if I can, if I don't have a big enough target, I'd like to carry all those internal, inside the bomb bay. Now, inside the bomb bay is much fewer weapons. But I can go a lot further because of the gas. So...

Q: John Shaw -- the guy I was telling you about who was the lieutenant colonel in New Orleans -- said that he was flying B-47s when they first started doing this. And he said they would have trouble refueling because the B-47 flying the fuel plane would encounter turmoil, I guess, air turmoil, and he suggested they drop down a little bit, and they got out of the turmoil. And he said that he was so proud of that. That got written in the rules. Are you familiar with that?

BISHOP: [01:35:00] Refueling's always difficult. We do what's called a (inaudible) -- I don't know if he's a B-47 guy he's probably a little older than I am --

Q: Oh yeah, very much.

BISHOP: -- but, you know, the air gets thin [high?], so you want to drop down lower. The more thrust you have available to get -- when you come in behind a tanker like that, there's a lot of turbulence. And so to break into that and get underneath the tanker is really... In a bomber, you [take your throttle?] (inaudible) [max?] -- you know, sit there, and you sit there, and you sit there, and

then you have to pull everything back, because now you slipped into that (inaudible). And a lot of times if you're carrying ordinance -- like cruise missiles -- when you carry those cruise missiles, normally what I'd ask the tanker to do is start a 500-foot-per-minute rate of descent. So we'd be descending. That's why you have enough energy to get in, because you've got so much drag out there. You know, you carry a lot of [01:36:00] ordinance in a B-52.

Q: How close were you to the plane -- the fuel supply train -- or plane?

BISHOP: Well, you're sticking that probe in. You're looking up -- you're right underneath them, ten feet, maybe.

Q: Ten feet?

BISHOP: Fifteen feet, maybe. You're [just right there?] --

Q: Weren't there a lot of accidents?

BISHOP: There's been a few, but not a lot. It's interesting that -- the wind forces around the wings actually kind of push you away. They don't suck you in, they push you away. It's like when I flew my Supersonic 238, (makes noises) you're in formation like this, your wings overlap, OK. So as I get too close, the wind pushes me back. It's trying to push me [away?].

Q: Well, you got your -- don't forget your --

BISHOP: That's fine. I was just going to share this [one thing?].

Q: OK. You can just pull this off.

BISHOP: But -- and this is a picture I took. This is a fun picture. [01:37:00] (pause)

Q: Oh here, let me pull this over and we'll get back on, you can explain this to me.

BISHOP: Yeah. I took that picture. That was when I was the squadron commander at Fairchild. That's the first ever B-52 H, which is still flying today, refueling with cruise missiles. And I'm up over Camp [Czecha?], I'm looking right into Russia right there. I'm about 25 miles away from Russia.

Q: What is the plane that's fueling you?

BISHOP: That's a KC-135.

Q: Looks like a 747, or 737 --

BISHOP: It's like a 730 -- yeah, 73, 720.

Q: And this is the --

BISHOP: B-52 H. Which is the same airplane that's flying to the -- so I took that picture. That was -- I was the lead, and my wingman came up to get his turn on the tanker and get, you know, three or four hours more of gas. And [01:38:00] we're well north of [Namalask?].

Q: Is that the sun setting on the horizon?

BISHOP: That's actually about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Q: Hi. Did you want to talk to your boss?

___: No. (inaudible)

Q: It's amazing, isn't it?

BISHOP: So anyway, you're looking down at the Kamchatka Peninsula -- the piece of land there is the Kamchatka Peninsula over Russia. We're just off the coast of Russia.

Q: Are the -- are they still flying B-52s?

BISHOP: Yeah. All the H's we're still flying, down on (inaudible). They're over in Afghanistan today.

Q: Nothing has superseded that plane?

BISHOP: Well, you know, they have things like the B-2. But they only built, like, what, 16 of those, because they're so damn expensive. And the B-2 is a really good penetrating bomber. But sometimes you don't need all that stuff. You just need ordinance delivered. So this is more [01:39:00] of the general purpose delivery that carries a lot of stuff.

Q: Did you fly one? A B-2?

BISHOP: No, I have not flown. I had a chance to, but I was busy and I couldn't.

Q: Would you like to?

BISHOP: Not necessarily. It's like -- you know. They're all the same. I've flown a lot of -- you know, I've flown S-18s and F-5s and 238s. They're all fun airplanes to fly.

Q: Is the B-52 very maneuverable?

BISHOP: It's not particularly maneuverable. It doesn't have [airlons?], it has air brakes that come up and down and slow -- kind of (inaudible) the airplane. What the B-52 did back in those days that was a lot of fun is, we were a penetrating bomber. So we had a very sophisticated thing, even back then, it's still state of the art today. But we flew a lot of 200 feet at night. So we had radar, infrared, optical, visual, (inaudible), radar, autopilot, where [01:40:00] we'd fly (inaudible) down at 200 feet.

Q: Does that get you out of radar range when you're flying at 200 feet?

BISHOP: That's the idea. One of the things we learned in Desert Storm was that you drop bombs better at about 6,000 feet. You can see the target better, so you're more accurate up a little higher. So if the radar is a threat, you go on down, but if there's not a threat of radar -- plus all these guys with the little AK-47s at 200 feet might get lucky and hose you. So if you get up around 6,000 feet, you get [all?] of that small arms fire. So

there's the debate in the military now, whether you should be down at 200 feet or up at 10,000, 15,000 feet.

Q: What do you think?

BISHOP: Depends on what the threat is. If you're in Iraq, be at 10,000, 15,000 feet. Don't be low.

Q: Oh, OK.

BISHOP: Be up above that small arms fire.

Q: Did you -- now, when you say "wing man," a wing man is what? The guy that protects your flank?

BISHOP: Well, normally in bomber world [01:41:00] -- in the [fire world?] we'd go in as groups of four. So you've got a lead, and a two, and a three, and a four, and two elements [so?] we break apart. And we do this kind of stuff. In the bomber world, we typically go in in groups of threes. So we'll have a one, two, and a three. And so if I'm the leader, I'm the commander of that particular flight, I'm one, and my wingman's a two, and my other wingman's a three.

Q: Even though you're in a line.

BISHOP: Yeah. And I'm still a boss -- I'm saying, "OK, two, I want you over here. Three, I want you over here." Just like in the fighter, if I'm over here I'm going to give a wing flash to my three and four, and I'm going to cross

them over to this side, and they can protect my back as we go in to [fight?].

Q: Have you ever flown those jets that, like, the Blue Angels fly, and the Thunderbirds fly?

BISHOP: Well, the Thunderbirds flew 238s for many years. And so, yeah, I've got eight years of flying 238 as an instructor. I used to train Iranian [and?] Saudi fighter pilots, transition. So we had a special program, an undergraduate program [01:42:00], undergraduate pilot training where I flew the 238. I used to have -- I do have a picture of it right over here. I'll let you get that picture right there -- you see it? See the one on the right?

Q: Oh, OK. Yes.

BISHOP: And that's when they converted the F-16 when the Blue Angels -- they actually came to my -- I knew one of the pilots, that used to work for me. When they flew the F-16. Yeah, so I've got a lot of smaller 238-type --

Q: What's the most fun plane to fly?

BISHOP: It depends on what you're doing. There's nothing like dropping a hundred bombs. That's pretty fun. So I can't say that -- as an aviator, a small fighter-type airplane is more maneuverable, it's fun, and you go upside down, and you pull Gs. But there's [nothing?] about coming in -- you

know, we do this at Red Flag, or [01:43:00] some of the exercises. Or in Desert Storm. When you're coming in as a bomber and you've got four F-16s here and four F-16s here, and two F-15s here and two F-15s here, and everybody's job is to do one thing to get you to your target, drop your bomb. And that's just -- you know, when you're in what we call a [guerilla?] -- when you're in a big package like that, that's really complicated.

Q: What kind of feeling is that?

BISHOP: It's like, king of the world, man. Me and my buds, we're doing this. You know? And as you can imagine, the camaraderie of the military is second to none.

Q: Still?

BISHOP: Ah, yeah. And that's why I like to use these movies like *Black Hawk Down* and some of those, where it captures a little of that spirit. You know.

Q: *Top Gun*?

BISHOP: *Top Gun*. Been there a lot. I've got more Red Flag time than probably any bomber [01:44:00] pilot in the Air Force. I was the first squadron commander to go to Red Flag in the second, and then I went to Guam and -- they had never been before, so I went back to Red Flag and took my -
-

Q: What's Red Flag?

BISHOP: Red Flag is the big training exercise in the desert (inaudible). It's where you go out and you have these big packages, and you have 50 versus 50, and (makes noises).

Q: Oh, it's a mock war.

BISHOP: And -- yeah. And it was really interesting that -- you know, just before Desert Storm -- and this is well known, but you may not know it -- is that Red Flag changed to a desert scenario for Iraq in 1990. And we had practice Iraq for two years before Saddam Hussein (inaudible). It was like, "We've been practicing this! This is just a --" And we've gone through all the training, and all the -- let's do this different. We had practiced that, and practiced that, and practiced that.

Q: Says something about your intelligence.

BISHOP: It does. And it says a lot about American training, too. [01:45:00]

Q: Yeah.

BISHOP: We trained very well for that.

Q: How many hours total do you have in the air?

BISHOP: Less than 5,000.

Q: With all the flying you've done?

BISHOP: Well, you've got to remember, military flying is not - - we didn't just go from here to New York and put it on autopilot. We'd go up and train for an hour or two, and --

I mean, that's a full day. I'll never forget, one of my 238 flights when I was -- I was the only -- because they discontinued the program -- I was the only flight commander that had all Iranian flights. I had all Iranian flights. I trained all Iranians.

Q: How did you do that? I mean, there's a language barrier, obviously.

BISHOP: Well, they had to go to special school and they came to us and --

Q: Oh, they had to speak English. They had to adapt to you.

BISHOP: Yeah, they did. And they came to [American?], we trained them. And then the shah fell and we discontinued the program. But I was the only flight commander of all Iranians. And there were some pretty good pilots. I felt really sorry for them. [01:45:00] Here's the vignette that I saw, play it forward. What was Saddam Hussein's last words before they hung him?

Q: "You can all go to hell"?

BISHOP: "Death to the Persians." Lot of people don't understand that. It wasn't about America, it was about those damn Iranians. And the Saudis and the Iranians -- and I had some Saudis in my training program -- I wouldn't let them fly together. Even back then, I wouldn't let them -- I was afraid they would suicide. That a Saudi would try

to take out an Iranian and an Iranian would try to take out a Saudi. They hated each other for thousands of years. They'd got the -- you know, the Sunnis and the Shiites and all that complexity. And we Americans tend to just think of Middle East people, and -- no. You know. You've got the sons and daughters of Hussein, and [Naba?] Hussein, all of the [01:47:00] Muhammad prophet and all of that.

Q: So you wouldn't train -- which ones? You wouldn't train the Saudis?

BISHOP: I would not let the Saudis fly in the same formation as an Iranian.

Q: OK.

BISHOP: Because of the cultural hate for each other.

Q: Let me ask you this. This is going to sound real sophomoric, but -- when I was a kid I used to read war comics, and they always made it sound like the MiGs were -- you know, the Communists and the Russians were always the stooges and the Americans were braver and smarter and better pilots, and the reason why we came out on top is because we were better trained. Is that true? We were better trained, and were smarter? More intelligent in an airplane?

BISHOP: There's no doubt in my mind that American airpower, one for one, eclipses Soviet or client state Soviet, one

for one. The reason is, we train better, but more [01:48:00] importantly, the Soviets are very authoritative control. Their ground controller is going to tell their pilot, "Turn left, do (inaudible), climb to 17,000 feet, blah, blah, blah, blah." Our system is very autonomous. You're innovative, creative, and smart. We've trained you [good, fly out?] and you do it the best way for you. And innovation and novelty eclipses a monolithic control system anytime. It's kind of like the economy. You know? Would you rather have free enterprise or this government-controlled economy? Government-controlled economy can't make those kinds of decisions. It's not flexible enough. And air power is the same way. You've got to give independence to the guy out there.

Q: (laughs) I was just going to make an aside on that, because you tripped a little buzzer in my brain. If the Chinese want to get something done, the government can say, "You move." And this is the -- I don't know [01:49:00] if you'd call this great, but this is the advantage of their system, is that they say, "We need a dam here at Three Gorges. It's going to displace a million and a half people. Tough. We're going to get it done." They get it done. I saw a turnaround -- one of these traffic turnarounds in Cheyenne -- they're just now finishing it up. It's been about a

year. The Chinese would have had that done, in my estimation, in two weeks. The problem is, is that it's an autocratic system and it doesn't give leeway to the individual.

BISHOP: So at the War College, I had a professor that I think highly of named Grant Hammond. He was on loan from Harvard. And he was kind of like my professor emeritus in strategy. And he wrote a book -- if you ever get the chance to read it -- about John Boyd -- that's another story.

Q: What's it called?

BISHOP: *Patterns of War*. Go look up John Boyd. John Boyd was [the cover?] Time Magazine for *Time Magazine*. [01:50:00] For Desert Storm. When I was a young major at the Pentagon, they said, "Hey, you might want to come listen to this guy." And I come -- me and three other four star generals were the only guys that went. Oh, shit. But this guy was innovative, and creative, and very novel. So when I got to the War College, I said, "Do you know, your classes kind of suck. You teach (inaudible) and all these dead -- you know, Jesus. You ought to have some new people. And they said, "You know what? You're staying for another year as a professor. You do anything you want." And so I brought John Boyd in. And so -- and John Boyd was

Patterns of Conflict, OODA loops, if you're ever -- observation decision, orientation, how you get inside other people's thinking. And he was on the cover of Time Magazine as the creator of the strategic patterns of conflict for how we employed force in the Desert Storm. Which was classic (inaudible). Beautifully done.

[01:51:00] Anyway, Grant Hammond used to tell me. He said, "Autocracy is like this beautiful steamliner. Everybody's dipping their oars. They're going in the same direction. There's -- and it hits the iceberg and sinks. And democracy is like this stupid little bathtub. And it's floating around, and it's bumping around. But it never sinks." (pause) So let me tell you one other story I think was really interesting. My father being in the military, when I was a little boy, I lived in Nagoya, Japan. And I don't remember much about it. I remember this nursery rhyme song, (speaks Japanese). And so when I was the commander in Guam, we had an exchange wing which was the F-16 wing out of Misawa, Japan. And the Wing Commander there was [Haso?]. Can't remember his first name, his last name, General Haso. And so we're sitting one night [01:52:00] and we're talking, and I said, "You know, when I was a little boy I remember this song. What's it mean?" And he said, "Oh, yeah, that's like 'Mary had a Little Lamb.'" He

said, "What it is," he said, "It's an important cultural definition of our society. [Chi chi pa pa?] are the little chickadees, and the schoolmarm gets all the little chickadees to line up in rows and columns behind each other to side. And you all sing with one voice." He said, "That's Japanese." He said, "Thank God for American creativity." He said, "You Americans break all the rules. You invent, you create. We take it and perfect it, but we don't have the innovation and novelty that you Americans have." And I thought that's very profound. And to me the Chinese are the same way. They look to America for the innovation. We're the innovators and creators of the world.

Q: You feel very strongly about this.

BISHOP: [01:53:00] Absolutely. Don't you?

Q: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

BISHOP: I mean, Microsoft. Facebook. Everything. Anything. We do. They'll take it and refine it, but they don't have a culture that rewards innovation. The Chinese, the Japanese, have cultures that reward [conventionality?]. Conformity.

Q: I was listening to NPR this morning, as a matter of fact, and on -- the broadcaster was interviewing somebody that said, "You have to understand this point of view.

Confucianism says, 'I will protect you if you obey me.' And it worked."

BISHOP: Yeah. And so that's kind of our market place in the world. That's what we bring to the table.

Q: Geez, Ray, thank you. Thank you so much.

BISHOP: Yeah, this is fun.

Q: Very good. I mean, you're so articulate, and [01:54:00] -- your mind is amazing. What's your IQ?

BISHOP: Oh. (pause) Thirty-three.

Q: Oh, bullshit.

BISHOP: One thirty-three, I think.

Q: Oh, 133. I was going to say, "33?"

BISHOP: Yeah, 133, I think. I know my brother was -- my other brother that died, he was like Mensa -- if you know Mensa.

Q: Was he really? Now, this was your brother?

BISHOP: I had two brothers. One died at 42, with a heart attack. And my other brother John just died in Cheyenne last year.

Q: So you just have the two.

BISHOP: And my sister.

Q: And where is she?

BISHOP: She's in Ogden, Utah. She's a delightful, wonderful sister.

Q: But your brother was in Mensa?

BISHOP: I guess. Whatever that means, I don't know what that means --

Q: So did this come from your mother's side, or your father's side, or both?

BISHOP: My mother was very creative and innovative. My father was [01:55:00] very mathematically oriented. So I'm blessed to have, I think, pretty good genes. We'll see.

Q: We'll see. You act as if you're going to live another hundred years.

BISHOP: Well, my dad lived to 96. My mother lived to 96. Floyd's 93. My brother -- one brother died of a heart attack at 42 and the other died of cancer at 71.

Q: You've got a good chance. Or you have a pretty fair chance.

BISHOP: I have no idea. Every day's a blessing.

Q: So you are going to do more triathlons and go fishing, ay?

BISHOP: I am. I might do some consulting and stuff. I don't know. I haven't thought about it yet.

Q: Well, you'll have a military pension. You'll have a pension from -- I assume you have some sort of a pension or a plan, at least, with this airport. Who will take over after you?

BISHOP: They're in the executive search for it right now.

[01:56:00] So...

Q: Will you sit on the committee that decides?

BISHOP: No, I don't want to have anything to do with that.

They have to work for the board. The board should be happy with whoever they hire, and I don't want to be associated with that. You know, the needs of the airport have changed. So, I've done certain things, and capital projects, and safety. I don't know what the future holds. They need to have somebody that they're comfortable with.

Q: You know, Jackson Hole Airport is always in the news. Constantly.

BISHOP: I know, yeah.

Q: Well, that's a hyperbole, obviously, but --

BISHOP: We're in the news a lot.

Q: Yeah. It's because of the special situation being in the park.

BISHOP: It's very difficult, yeah.

Q: Yeah. Who is responsible, ultimately? Is it the board? The airport board?

BISHOP: Mm-hmm.

Q: OK. And they are hired by...

BISHOP: They're appointed by the city and the county.

Q: By the commissioners and by the --

BISHOP: And the city council. They come together and they find consensus and they put the board members on the board.

Q: Are these board members [01:57:00] knowledgeable about airports and air -- the air industry?

BISHOP: Sometimes they are and sometimes they don't have a clue.

Q: So they're like political appointments.

BISHOP: Absolutely.

Q: Cronyism, maybe? You could say that, can't you? I mean, you're about to retire.

BISHOP: I have no idea why they pick certain board members over other applicants. I know that it's a very sought after position. Do you remember Grant [Larson?] who was our state senator -- he was an airport board member that found his way into the legislature from here. So I think a lot of people see this as a stepping -- but I don't know. I'm fortunate that we have people that step forward. And some have -- when I got here, we had five board members. We had three that were commercial airline pilots. And now we have none. So there's no aviation background on the board at this time.

Q: How do you relate to the Aeronautics Commission?
(inaudible)

BISHOP: Wonderfully.

Q: Do they -- they are not in a position [01:58:00] to help you financially, right? Because you can take care of yourselves.

BISHOP: We've asked for some help, and they have given us some money.

Q: So, what else do they do for you?

BISHOP: Give us money. And support. And I sit on -- you know, I help them too. I [sit on?] the prioritization model of how they distribute money to the other airports. I think with my background in Bakersfield, running seven airports -- understand that everybody thinks that the big airports have got all this money, and these little airports are starving to death, and -- you know. There's a lot of, how do you -- It's kind of like consolidation. You've got to make some difficult choices. And so I sit on that prioritization model for Aeronautics and help them with that.

Q: OK, it's lunchtime, but I -- I'm interested to know how you -- if this airport is not wealthy, at least it makes money. How do you make money? Is it from -- obviously you don't have fixed base operators. You have one. So, when a plane lands here in the busy season, he pays a little fee, and then you throw all this into a coffer [01:59:00], and build buildings? New terminals?

BISHOP: Let's talk about that. This -- and I'm not pressed by lunchtime if you're not, so --

Q: No, I'm not.

BISHOP: We generate cost centers, profit centers. When you land your airplane here, we'll -- you'll pay about \$2.70 per thousand pounds of weight. So when a 757 comes in, he's going to pay me about \$300 or \$400. When he buys gas, he's going to pay about five to eleven cents, depending on the type of airplane. The price of gas goes to me. So I get 11 cents when you land your jet --

Q: Per gallon?

BISHOP: Per gallon. We sell six million gallons of fuel. So 11 cents is a whole lot of money. The airlines pay space rent in the terminal. And so we get our money that comes in from multiple sources. The cash cow of why [02:00:00] we're a more affluent airport than I've ever seen -- clearly the most affluent of any airport in the state of Wyoming -- is our rental cars. We -- in the -- we get 10% of the gross of a rental car transaction. In the last year, we did \$31 million in rental cars.

Q: That's unbelievable. It's like people say, "Well, movies don't make any money for the movie theater operators. It's the popcorn sales."

BISHOP: Yeah. And for us, it's rental cars. Rental cars are amazingly profitable for us. We're getting over \$3 million a year from rental cars.

Q: Is it Hertz? Avis? Rent-A-Car? National? So forth and so on? They have to pay you...

BISHOP: Ten percent. So if they did \$32 million worth of sales, I've got \$3.2 million dollars last year just off of rental cars.

Q: I'll be darned. I didn't know that.

BISHOP: So that allows us to build all of these wonderful things that we have here. World class airport -- but oh, one of the things, that [02:01:00] -- vignette is that we think this is a very beautifully architected airport. And I will go to Chicago on the 26th of June and get the national American Institute of Architecture award. This is the most beautiful airport in the United States.

Q: No kidding. Who designed it?

BISHOP: Gensler. From out of Denver.

Q: Very famous.

BISHOP: So we are very proud of the facility we've built. But our total budget revenue is pretty close to \$8 million a year. So... and then if you put grants, and things like that, that (inaudible) stuff -- we're about a \$12 million a

year facility. We're like any other \$12 million a year business.

Q: Do you get any help from the National Park Service?

BISHOP: No. I pay them rent.

Q: You pay them rent? What do you have to pay?

BISHOP: I think it's about \$350,000 a year.

Q: OK. [02:02:00] But that comes out at -- I mean, that's not a difficult thing to handle.

BISHOP: No.

Q: You know, it seems like Rockefeller would have taken care of that too, so you wouldn't have to do that.

BISHOP: Rockefeller didn't want an airport in the park.

Q: He didn't? I thought he wanted...

BISHOP: Well, he'd rather have this airport -- and there was this movement years ago, to move this airport to Pinedale. [Daniel?].

Q: Why?

BISHOP: Because they don't like -- the environmental community does not like having an airport in the park. If you took -- and this is just -- I don't know. You know, here's the difference between when I was the director of aviation for Kern County. I'd get a call from elected officials. "Airport's important; How can I help you?" I don't get that call in Jackson Hole. If you took a vote here, it

would be a very close vote to whether to close this airport or keep it open.

Q: From the citizens [02:03:00] of Teton County?

BISHOP: Mm-hmm. As you know, we're a very liberal county.

Q: Well, yeah.

BISHOP: When the vote comes up, it's 22 counties and Teton County. You know. We're always the outlier.

Q: Yeah, you guys are a foreign country compared to us.

BISHOP: We are. It is very noticeable here. And the airport -- the environmental, the Friends of the Wilderness, the Friends of the Pathways, the Sierra Club are very strong advocacy groups in this [area?].

Q: Well, wouldn't they be cutting -- environmentalists or no environmentalists, anybody that lives here would be cutting their own throat if they didn't have an airport.

BISHOP: No, they'd love that. They don't like four million people here, coming here to see the park. There's a strong group -- and some people that used to be in the legislature -- they want to make Grand Teton Park carbon-free.

[02:04:00] Close all the routes. Now, to me that's off the table. That's unrealistic.

Q: This is a group here in the county?

BISHOP: A very strong group.

Q: What's it called?

BISHOP: Well, there are some legislators that used to be in the Wyoming legislature that have since retired that have advocated a carbon free park.

Q: I don't know that anything can be carbon free. But you can have a -- carbon alleviated, perhaps.

BISHOP: It's the people's park, it's not their park.

Q: Yeah.

BISHOP: It's the people's park. It's here to show the people. It's the person that lives in Miami, Florida to come out here and experience the beautiful wilderness. And they're not going to walk.

Q: And that brings me to my -- the last thing I want --

BISHOP: But politically, it's a very difficult airport to run. Very difficult. And very little support for anything that you do.

Q: So you are [02:05:00] -- you're sort of a lightning rod for a lot of things.

BISHOP: Mm-hmm.

Q: And you individually are a lightning rod.

BISHOP: Absolutely.

Q: How do you put up with it?

BISHOP: Oh, I've got -- I've been shot at with real bullets. Doesn't bother me a bit.

Q: One last thing, Ray. What is this -- I'm looking through the picture window of your office. I'm looking at the Tetons. What sort of effect does this have on you?

BISHOP: Oh, I love it here. I love Wyoming. There are some thing -- well, the culture here is a little bit conservation oriented. The Wyoming culture percolates here. We're friendly people, and we're welcoming. You know, we're cowboy Joe and -- you know, we're steamboat. We're that spirit of independence. And then you look out here and see this beautiful -- I live -- if you see that tower just over the hill -- (coughs)

Q: Which -- oh, yeah. This one? [02:06:00] The airport tower?

BISHOP: Yeah. It goes down, drops down [steep?]. I live in a house about a mile up that river. And I got in the hot tub last night because I have a bad cold, and as the sun was just -- it had already gone down, and just that pale light -- the wolves came out. (makes noise) And I'm sitting there listening to the wolves howl. Yeah, no, this is cool.

Q: So you -- that's interesting. You're an environmentalist yourself.

BISHOP: Kind of, in a way. I'm appreciative of the beauty that we have here, absolutely. I've got a moose that hangs

out in my backyard all the time. I call him Henry. Henry and I kind of bond. Because everybody else in that part of the world -- they're all -- they have four homes, one in Switzerland and two in the south of France. They're very wealthy people. I'm the only guy that works for a living. But as it is, I'm the only guy there this time of the year. So in my little neighborhood, [02:07:00] there's probably 20 homes and I'm the only person that's occupying there 12 months a year. And I love it.

Q: Sure, I would too.

BISHOP: I've got wolves, I've got -- I've got two six point bulls that fight every year for their girlfriends, and they come down -- I mean, they're right in my backyard. You could reach out and touch them. They don't pay any attention to you when they're in rut. I've got buffalo. And of course, it's really special when the wolves come down.

Q: Bears?

BISHOP: A lot of bears.

Q: Grizzlies and black, both?

BISHOP: Mostly grizzlies. The black -- I think the grizzlies are territorial enough that I don't see many blacks anymore.

Q: So if I were hanging out at your place, I could see all those animals.

BISHOP: Coyotes?

Q: I have -- here's a cool story. I was coming to work last year, driving up this Meadow Road, which is the first road past the airport. And I saw a coyote run across the highway. And I was -- it was just twilight [02:08:00]. It was probably 5:30, 6:00 in the morning. And I looked up and there was six wolves. And the six wolves saw the coyote before the coyote saw the six wolves. And it was beautiful tactical aviation. One and two, three and four, five and six. Circle like [that?]. The killed that coyote in about 20 seconds. It was just amazing how they could communicate, and know everything that everybody else was doing.

BISHOP: Are you glad they're in the park?

Q: The wolves? You know... I was the Wing Commander at Castle Air Force Base. And... Mike Finley was the superintendent of Yellowstone -- or, of Yosemite. And we had to go to something [about?] the Secretary of the Interior, and so we're sitting (inaudible). He had just got his assignment to go to Yellowstone. If you remember Mike Finley, he was the superintendent of Yellowstone. So I'm going and I said, "You know, I'm from Wyoming." And he

said, "Oh, really?" And we talked. I said, "You know, there's an ecological part of me that says it's really great [02:09:00] that you're going to reintroduce the wolf. But from a ranch family, I think you guys are sons of bitches. Good luck with your assignment to Yellowstone." So, to me, that's a dual edged sword. But here's what I would say, that I heard Secretary Salazar say last year that -- I hope we're on that path.

BISHOP: You reintroduced the wolf. You have x amount. You've met that target. And now it's time to manage -- just like you do. You can't let them explode the population. It'll decimate all the other wildlife. There is a balance between how many wolves and how many not-wolves. And you're at the point now where you've got to start controlling the population of wolves.

Q: Yeah. You get a lot of flack from hunters, and -- people who like to hunt elk. Saying the wolves are the reason why these elk are disappearing. I don't know. I'm not [02:10:00] a biologist.

BISHOP: Yeah. They eat -- wolves eat elk. So you have to be careful. You can't let them -- you know, a thousand years ago you'd have a big population of wolves, and then the elk would go down, and then the wolves. You know. You're in a park, and you've got to have some [range?] management

policies come in. And I heard Secretary Salazar say that last year. That now we have reached our stated goals of the number of wolves in Wyoming and it's time to manage the -- harvest the wolves.

Q: It's interesting, when you talk -- you sort of -- it's like two sides of you colliding. One side has got to overcome the other, because everybody has to have an opinion, right? So your opinion has either got to be for those wolves or against them.

BISHOP: Yeah, I don't know. I'm in the middle. You've got to balance them. But there's nothing more beautiful than to see a wolf pack taking an animal. It's just a magnificent sight to see. It makes you very appreciative [02:11:00] of the balance. But you can't have that many wolves.

Q: Are you going to stay here?

BISHOP: Yeah.

Q: You're going to live in that house over there along the Snake. Until the Snake floods and wipes out your house.

BISHOP: No, the earthquake's going to come.

Q: What?

BISHOP: The volcano.

Q: Oh, the volcano before that. Well, yeah. Then you won't -
- I mean, you'll just go sky high with everybody else.

BISHOP: Yes, sir.

Q: Not a problem. Thanks, Ray.

BISHOP: Good. (inaudible) I'm going to walk you around, just
for a few minutes.

Q: All right, let me turn this off --

END OF AUDIO FILE