

**Sidney** Do you want me to read the outline, start with chapter one?

**Tom** Yeah, go ahead.

**Sidney** Let's start with a little about your parents and where you were born.

**Tom** Let me just answer the basic questions that I do know. If nothing else, it will be a backup for what my mother can't recall. So, place and time, okay. Sunday morning, September 9, 1945, and nine o'clock in the morning, Rochester, New York, Rochester General Hospital, West Avenue. What would probably be called the ground floor although you had to go up half a flight of stairs to get to it. You go through the front door and a few steps down the hall you turn left and then turn left again. That room right there which viewed from outside the building is the first window to the left of the main door. A window of which at the top there was a very large cylindrical fire chute--they used to chuck the patients out the fire chute which went out the wall there, over the ceiling of my mother's room in that short hospital stay. That hospital is no longer there but there are pictures around. My sister Judy Siversen will know about pictures.

*NOTE:  
TO READERS  
IT IS MOST  
UNUSUAL TO  
REMEMBER  
THIS!*

**Sidney** Tom, what is the earliest birthday that you remember?

**Tom** That I remember normally, or one that I recall from my life review?

**Sidney** Normal one that you remember.

**Tom** My normal memory goes back to my ninth birthday. It was a special birthday in that it was an Indian birthday party. In other words, ice cream cones upside down, chocolate covered, were teepees, and such things as that which my mother and my mother's sister, Aunt Gay (or Grace) were so creative and so on, and for minimal money--and everyone was poor in those days--had this very elaborate Indian birthday. That's my normal memory. The first few birthdays were really pretty much like--nothingness, mainly due to lack of money. In other words it was more typical to make a dozen cupcakes as opposed to a birthday cake.

**Sidney** What was the name of the community or town where the family lived during this time?

**Tom** From just prior to my birth all the way to today--Rochester, New York has been the residence. Whereas as a youngster I spent several weeks during the summer months on a dairy farm or at my parents' rented cottage. Then eventually they bought a cottage. But I've always had residence in Rochester, New York, right up until my marriage, bouncing back and forth between five and five and a half Sheridan Street. Which is the property--two houses--that my father bought as soon as he got a full-time job in Rochester, which was, again, right at my birth.

There was a cottage house behind a large double house on Sheridan Street. So 5 1/2 Sheridan Street was the number of that cottage. My parents assisted my Aunt Gay to come from Albany and they in fact gave her the cottage house and we moved to the upstairs of the large double house on the front of the property. The downstairs part of that house became my mother's nursery school.

So I lived there--you wonder why I'm crazy! I lived in the upstairs part of that house for most of my life. When my parents moved to Pittsford, which is a tiny town sort of suburb where most of the people are arrogant, ha! They talk with a Boston arrogant accent! Anyway, they moved to a house in Pittsford right next to Powder Mills Park. It is a beautiful setting; nice great big old house. I hated it the first time I saw it.

*This may be a truth, but is it necessary to put them down?*

I still don't like it to this day. So, I stayed at the house on Sheridan Street. Also, realistically, that was in my--wait a minute, was that my sophomore or junior year? Oh my goodness! I can't recall right now. Either my sophomore or junior year in high school, and of course I didn't want to leave my high school--especially to go to a place like Pittsford High School. So I stayed in that house. So I never really left my parents--they got smart enough to leave me. I would see my mother every day. I think I've only stayed overnight in the house in Pittsford maybe four or five times, which is a little abnormal.

**Sidney** Do you know why you hated it?

**Tom** Well, first of all the house is a little too big in size; we didn't need it. It was very impersonal, but understand as opposed to most people we

lived in the same domicile, the same house, all my life. So any change at all would have been foreign. You see, you can't just dwell on that one part that--oh maybe I had a hangup with making a move. No it was, wait a minute, I've got to leave all my high school friends, my establishment, my kingdom if you will, everything that was familiar for something that was not only unfamiliar but who wants to move way out there? I would have preferred moving way out to a dairy farm, cause there's something to do there. But a house in Pittsford where the lawn is twice as big--what do you do with a lawn but mow it?

**Sidney** Where did your father work?

**Tom** Ritter Equipment Company. Dental chairs, operating tables; he worked there for thirty-six years, I believe. And never retired from there. With his terminal illness he went on a medical retirement and two weeks before his sixty-fifth birthday, normal retirement age, he passed on.

**Sidney** Wasn't your father an officer or something in the military or something like that for awhile?

**Tom** Yes, he was a non-commissioned officer; he was a sergeant, a tech sergeant or a master sergeant, something like that. That was 1943 I believe. He was blown up on a mine sweeper, severely injured, refused an operation that would have killed him, and because he refused an operation in the army he got discharged, an honorable discharge, a medical discharge, from the army. He then went back to Albany where they had been living when my second sister, Sue, was born. From there they moved to Rochester.

**Sidney** You say he would have died if he'd had the operation. Is that knowledge you have now or--

**Tom** That's documented. It ended up becoming documented years and years after he refused the operation. The military in reviewing the record came to him eventually and apologized and offered him all of his back pay and so on. And he told them to go pee up a rope!

**Sidney** Was he a radiologist or a radiation technician by trade?

**Tom** He graduated from Walter Reed Army Medical School and was actually designated to be a sterile nurse in those days in the military. With that educational background in medicine in general he could then easily adapt himself to x-ray techniques--not to be confused with radiology. In order to sell x-ray equipment you have to know how to use it. If you sell it to a doctor just starting out, you have to teach him. With no educational background at all he could never become a doctor or a dentist, so instead he taught them x-ray techniques.

Another little brag thing about my father: From fifteen years old when he had to run away from his father he was never a day out of work. He used to brag about that, never arrogantly, but it was very important to him. I am proud of that. That's not just genealogical, that's cultural background that was fed into me--the importance of having employment.

From the time of the depression to World War II the have-nots eventually, in 1945 and after, become the materialistic gainers. The importance of all of that and also self-worth coming from absolutely nothing at the age of 15 to a self-made, very successful man, by his scale.

**Sidney** Why did he have to run away from home--from his father?

**Tom** Very bluntly, because his father, George Sawyer, my grandfather whom I never met of course, by today's standards would have been insane, and did physically actually try to kill my father on four occasions. It was through hatred and jealousy on George Sawyer's part. My father's birth killed his wife. My father represented the killing of his wife. There was hatred there; I don't think he was ever his son in my grandfather's eyes. In addition to that, my grandfather in two or three years remarried--to a very hateful, malicious type woman, who had a son by a previous marriage. There was favoritism and outright hatred on her part and she coaxed his father to get rid of him.

And he tried. For instance, the ten-gauge shotgun that was discharged up through my father's bed. You understand these are all hillbilly like people. (I'm saying that with love in my heart.) By that I mean they're born with a gun in their hands; they're skillful. Guns don't go off unless you pull the trigger. It was not an accident by any means. Another time he was

locked in the barn with a killer stallion loose. It was common to use dynamite to blow the stumps out. My grandfather was very skillful; he was hired in the area where they lived--north eastern New York State--to do this professionally. My father was ordered to go retrieve some sticks of dynamite when it was wired. My father had to refuse because he knew if he went over there he'd be blown up.

It was shortly thereafter that my father had to take a hay fork and jam it into my grandfather's stomach and run away. It didn't kill him. About six months later the state police found my father working in the lumber woods and, in effect arrested him. Not to take him back to his father--after pleading with them he said that, "If you'll take me to the judge, I can prove that my father tried to kill me." And he did.

So at age 15 he won his freedom from his own father. He therefore went back to the lumber woods and then eventually joined the military. I'm not sure what year but it must have been something like 1936, maybe as early as 1934. Anyway, if he was discharged in 1943--well he had sixteen years in the military. Anyway, that's his background. A very hard background. What was missing with my father--and this is judgmental me talking with the knowledge that I have today--he was missing the love of a mother. Any love at all had to be perverted, in other words my father's image of the love of a father had to be perverted, warped, or none at all.

So with that it qualifies my father for the uniqueness or the abnormalities that he had in his relationships with his children. I'm talking about me and especially my two older sisters. When my older sister became teenage and went through puberty, my father had a very difficult time because he had nothing to measure that against, and was lost. From inadequacies sometimes you turn to rage and so on. As far as outright physical abuse, no, although when there was reason for corporal punishment it was five to ten hard slaps with an open hand on your rear end and you would be propelled up in the air as opposed to a finger shaking or a single slap. By today's standards that was rather harsh, but by those standards it was not harsh. Irrespective of that, there was an overriding or an underlying love that my father had in his heart. All of us children were able to see, to have that communication. I've already given you an example of the smirk on my father's face--the tight-lipped smile and the twinkle in the eye said it more than anything else.

He would say to me when I had done something adorable or cute of which he was proud or embarrassed from the pride, he would say: "Why, you goddamned fool!" And of course that was, "Gee, Tom, I love you!" And I knew that in my childhood. So much credit to us children. You see we have two families because there are two older sisters and myself, basically two years apart, then 12 years later another sister was born and then seven years after that my youngest sister was born. The two younger sisters are like a separate family. To the three of us, my mother was able to know and explain psychologically some of the situations regarding my father and his mode of communication. I'm not making a federal case, it's just that I'm very proud of that part of my life.

**Sidney** What year of school or level of degree did your mother have?

**Tom** She did graduate from high school only. They didn't have IQ tests in those days but I'm sure that she would be 125 or 130--something like that. She got straight A's in all of her schooling. She was extremely poor and one of nine children, very poor socioeconomically. But she is and always has been a poet. You can appreciate that. In grammar school and high school she would write a poem and the teacher would insist that she had not written it.

Years later one of the teachers published one of my mother's poems, not giving credit. My mother's the kind of person that says, "Well that's okay, because *I know!*

My appreciation for the psychological intelligence that I had prior to my near-death experience would have to be attributed not only to my father as a role model and as a model to judge against, but through my mother and her profound understanding and love and teaching selflessly.

Even though I have been stereotyped as the rough, tough, Tom Sawyer, and that certainly is true, but I had a degree of compassion that was superior to whatever the average is. Culturally speaking, I knew it was incorrect to call a Negro a nigger, that it would hurt their feelings and that black person, that Negro person is a human being. My mother mostly taught me things of that nature.

I'm not saying that my father was prejudiced at all to that degree, that is racially prejudiced. He would give anybody a fair shake, just don't ever cross him! Typical of the Sawyer genealogical trait was if you say

something like "I will never" that meant you will *never*. If you say that I will always, that meant *always* to the ridiculous degree, to the abnormal degree. In other words if I say, "I will never speak to you," that meant it was a matter of life or death. To get a message to you I would have to talk through a third person. Many people do that, you know.

**Sidney** What was your father's name?

**Tom** Technically it was Arthur in French. His background was French, being basically like French Canadian--the genealogical tree is traced back to 1620 in the northeast corner of New York state, which in those days spoke French. I believe he spoke French until he was nine years old when he went to public school. In other words he would often pronounce his name *Arture*, with the proper accent and so on. He always hung on to many French phrases and he used to be able to pronounce properly our family motto. I can't do it properly but if you pronounced it phonetically it would be something like: shur say et trov raus, which means literally, "Seek and Ye Shall Find."

I thought of that many times when I was bicycle racing. When I was seeking the Olympic trials--well then, just do it. I had an interest in that. In seventh grade I actually did some paper work--part of a science. . . got into the little bit they knew in those days about genealogical traits, family traits, etc.

**Sidney** Tell me a little about some of your earliest memories of going to school, what the name of the school was.

**Tom** Okay. Just around the time that I started kindergarten, which would be 1950 or 1951, I went to Henry Laumb School No. 20. Now Henry Laumb was the Laumb of Bausch and Laumb. A thousand feet from our residence was the Bausch and Laumb place. During WWII they made the bomb sights, did government work, secret work, so a large part of our neighborhood was employed by Bausch and Laumb. Laumb School No. 20 was roughly kindergarten to grade seven.

But when I reached the fifth or sixth grade they took all the seventh graders and moved them to another school. I had a few discipline problems--by today's standards very normal problems--but since I was

headstrong, and very self-sufficient, very independent, I didn't fit the mold of an introverted and by my standards wimpish child. In other words, if the teacher says to do something that the child doesn't understand I, Tom Sawyer, says: "I don't understand that. Why?" And expect an answer as opposed to the other kids who do whatever they're told to do. So that created problems with--oh, I can't recall my kindergarten teacher's name right now.

One of the first events that took place in kindergarten to start out my career was that there was this little rather fat girl--obnoxious girl--just a spoiled brat at five years old. Rosalie! And Rosalie was just this obnoxious overweight, snotty girl. She would stick her tongue out at me. She was an irritant. I devised a plan to get even with her. I rode the tricycle as fast as I could when she was playing with building blocks. She had made a little house there and I drove the tricycle right into those building blocks and gave her a bloody nose. I was so glad--it was premeditated and I was glad for she deserved it, and that was my way of becoming the king. In other words, don't mess with me! If you mess with me, you get a bloody nose. I was, of course blamed for that, I was guilty. The teacher said, "Did you do that on purpose?" This starts out a very abnormal degree of honesty. Regardless of what I had done, if the teacher said, "Did you?" I would say yes or no depending on the truth. "Did you do that on purpose?" "Yes, I did." "That's terrible." So I was put to sit on a long deacon-like bench. In my kindergarten career, I spent a lot of time on that bench! The teacher liked me. I was not the bad boy but the naughty boy in that teacher's eyes. She liked me. I was a little superior in general intelligence compared to the other kids.

**Sidney** Were there any other incidents or events in kindergarten you'd like to talk about?

**Tom** One thing I remember my father telling me before I was in kindergarten. He said, "If you want somebody to push you around you have that right. But if somebody touches you, or hits you, you have the right to defend yourself. And that includes the idea that if you just push me I then have the right to double up my fist and retaliate with a bloody nose." In other words even if it be tenfold, the reaction is self-defense and its

also self-preservation. Therefore, as in any kindergarten class, one at a time there would be a confrontation with each child.

What I'm trying to say is, I never felt superior, never decided to be the toughest kid in the class, I never thought of myself as that, but I always knew that nobody was to push me around. Therefore, again from the teacher's standpoint, I was the toughest kid in the class. But I never, never in my life, picked a fight. The closest I came was in the teenage years and early twenties antagonizing to the degree that the person would lash out and hit me with a fist. I then had license to fight back. So there was manipulation but to actually pick a fight for the purposes of fighting or to pick a fight for the purpose of hurting somebody, I've never picked a fight. Except with Elaine, of course, and thank God that wasn't a fist fight!

Other than that when it came time for painting, the fine motor control arts, again I was either average or superior, providing I wasn't showing off and having a good time.

Applying myself to what the teacher had planned might not be what I had in mind. And if I had something else in my mind, that was a priority. As opposed again to realizing that the teacher was my boss and that I should just simply be quiet and do what she said.

Well, having survived kindergarten with a teacher who liked me, that presents the main problem with the first grade teacher. God bless Miss DeRitter who was my first grade teacher. She's certainly in the light now. Miss DeRitter had some horrendous psychosocial problems. She was extremely biased and prejudiced against Italians.

I would not give a full synopsis of how and why and so on, so we'll just skip over that part and just accept the truth that she was. Now how did that affect me since I have no Italian blood in either side of my parents' family tree?

Again, my mother had the nursery school. And by this time she would have had children in her nursery school that became kindergarten and first grade age. She had the legal ability to be the guardian over those children while their parents would be working at Bausch and Lomb and other places. And she would send them to the local grammar school.

She had had a couple of Italian children to come out of her nursery school being superior in reading ability and self assuredness and the things that you can teach so well in the nursery school setting. Some of them skipped kindergarten because of their adaptability and prowess (where's

all these words coming from? Is prowess a good word?) I think maybe my mother used that word once.

So with the Italian children, suddenly they were doing very poorly in first grade. Mother being an intelligent person, knowing that they had the ability, confronted the teacher. This was in turn covered up.

The teacher was very old; she was at least 65 years old then. She certainly had tenure and that was very meaningful in the school system in those days. The principal of the school, Mister Nash, always backed the teacher up, even if he knew it was not the truth. He would simply back the teacher up at the point of condemning the child or the parents. Even verbally, forcibly, saying, "Well it doesn't matter, the teacher's right." My mother, being extremely assertive all her life, had many confrontations regarding this, finally demanding that her children, meaning the Italian children, be sent to another first grade. And of course upon entering that class, they quickly became A students, which proves the scenario's wrong. Then I come along within a year or two of these incidents and, because I'm my mother's child, I represent a threat to Miss DeRitter. What she did was psychotic but cunning, she gave me straight A's and refused to teach me anything at all. She placed me under her desk as a punishment. I'd sit there with my legs folded and not be part of the class at all. I would peek from under the desk and show off for the kids to get attention. Then I made a friend with a string that was hanging off the backside of her drawer. Whenever she would open the drawer to get something I would wave goodbye to it and then wave hello as it would come back close to my face.

Now as ridiculous as this might sound, my mother regularly, practically weekly, would come to the school and question the teacher. She had wondered if, among other things, when she was aware that I was going into this teacher's class, she should demand that I be given another first grade teacher or should she give this a chance? Well the first marking period came along and I got an A, so she let it go.

Did I have any reading ability? Well given time, and the fact that this is Tom Sawyer who's never been interested in reading and such things, give the system a chance. One thing led to another. My mother recognized that I was not reading properly. This actually took up this whole school year. It was plowed over by the principal and the teacher and so on. I never learned

to read. That started my school career.

In the second grade, my mother insisted that, "No, he does not know how to read, he is memorizing the stories. I had a very good memory in those days. The teacher would read aloud--this was common practice to read the story aloud. Then she'd say, "Now we're going to take turns reading!" In other words, repeat this after me, that's what it was. The few times I did participate I would remember and follow along and just say the words. Then she would usually ridicule me because she knew I wasn't reading. She'd use this to put me down in the class.

I remember one of the most horrendous times. I was feeling inferior to all the class, not so much inferior but left out. I knew I was as good as any of the other kids but was left out in the group situation. So we would have a spelling bee. The teacher would have everybody stand up and would go around the perimeter of the room. You would spell the word correctly and get to sit down. I was always the last one standing because I couldn't spell the words correctly. I remember telling my friends that I was so proud that the first word I could spell correctly was baby. I would think that was important and my friend, Jered and my cousin, my Aunt Gay's son, Bobby, who was close to my age-- we were all together and I said, "I can, too, spell. I can spell baby--babby. I couldn't understand why they laughed! That one went right over my head. I can remember feeling proud that I memorized how to spell baby--babby. My turn came in class and I knew ahead of time that baby was off the list of words. The teacher was taking them in order. The word I would have gotten--from about, say, eight students prior to me I counted the words down,-- my word was to be train. Which is a difficult word to spell when you're just learning. I also knew there was a picture of a train up above me and off to my left shoulder.

I was standing up against the wall, so I would have had to lean forward and turn my head to look up above me like that at about a 30 degree angle in order to see the word. One thing that Tom Sawyer did not do, ever, was cheat. I didn't cheat at games, I didn't cheat at anything in my life--with a few very rare exceptions. Here was the situation: I was going to be the only one standing again and that pressure got to me so much that I was frustrated. I was thinking, "Oh, God, do I have to cheat to do this? She's just not going to do this to me again." Ever so cleverly and carefully, when the teacher was sidetracked a little bit, I got one glimpse which was not

enough because I had trouble reading the letters. I had another chance and I got it!

I got it. I waited, and kept getting a little more excited, saying the word over and over again, spelling it correctly. It was finally my turn and I purposely hesitated a little bit--you know, talk about acting?--I had thought about this so intently so I purposefully hesitated, then I spelled it! I was waiting for her to say I could sit down. Then she said, "Tom, did you cheat? Did you look at that word?" I had to say, "Yes Miss DeRitter, I looked up on the board and saw the word train," and I pointed to the word on the board. She said, "Well, you'll have to stand." So that created a situation. But I'm building a scenario that, wow, psychologically, I could have had devastation in my life. I never experienced degradation or devastation. Her punishments were justifiable in my mind. I spoke out of turn, I was turning around in my seat, I did do those things. The fact that she over punished me--remember I've got a father who over punished me--and if you did something wrong, you were liable for practically any punishment. So I never experienced psychologically what so many other children might have.

**Sidney** When she'd put you under the desk, how long would she keep you there?

**Tom** All day! Now I know that I would come into the room and she would pick on me and say, "You're sassing me back, come and sit under the desk." My mother found out in a rather clever way.

My father was quite ignorant regarding sexual matters and things of an intimate and personal nature. He never wished to talk about sexual matters and what have you. He couldn't talk about love, verbally. He could hug and show by demonstration those kinds of love but in usual ways of verbalizing he couldn't. But to over compensate for that, my mother taught us all from the earliest ages that "this is a penis" and "this is a vagina," very openly and very methodically and we were pretty unabashed. If there was a question I had about my sisters when they got older, I would ask my mother or my father, and that was okay in our household. If my father was asked any question, even if it was an uncomfortable question for him, he would very methodically and intelligently answer, and not show us that he was in any way uncomfortable. If it was something he didn't understand he

wouldn't just say, go ask your mother. He would admit that, I know a little about that or I don't know much about that, but ask your mother because I know she knows.

In those days women wore whale bone corsets. I went home and said, "Mom, what are those things that women wear, they have like bars in them?" I'm not sure if I used the word bars, but something like that. My mother recognized the possibility of what I was talking about. In her very clever way she said, "Well, I'm not really sure I know what you mean. Is it something that all women wear?" She eventually deduced that what I was talking about was Miss DeRitter's corset. Then she asked, "How did you happen to see or know this?" I replied, "Well, when I sit under the desk that's all I can look at." Then she said, "Well, were you being punished?" Totally honest me said, "Oh yes, I was punished today and I had to sit under there for a long time." Having been punished, it was over with as far as I was concerned. She then went to the teacher and confronted her with the punishment of sitting under the desk; did she think that was suitable? Then she mentioned to the teacher that the only thing I had to look at was her girdle. Whereupon Miss DeRitter said, "Mrs. Sawyer, I want you out of my room!"

Now what I didn't know for years and years -- Well, not until after my near-death experience when Dr. Kenneth Ring was asking for research documentation, did I, synchronistically, talk with the main psychologist for the Rochester School System in 1980. ( He had heard of a near-death experience, was very intrigued by me and my presentation) I had to explain why I was interested in my school records. As luck would have it, they were moving them to be thrown out, and only the grades and the minimal records were to be microfilmed. I caught them in time as they were moving them out, that very day, I might add. I now have them, including the confidential file. In there is a story book in itself of the conspiracy, a soap opera type of conspiracy, in which Miss DeRitter in cahoots with the school psychologist, criticized and condemned in their fancy language that it was their feelings that Mrs Sawyer was-- And her children were-- I mean to the point to where social services, if it was brought to their attention, might consider having her children removed from her. It was terrible.

There came the time when Mother was to renew her license for her nursery. The conspiracy came to light and she had to go to a hearing; she was unaware of any of this. They were so rude to my mother. We were with her, because rather than a babysitter. We walked all the way downtown and were adorable children. Poor but well kept and so they were saying all these things about the children. My mother demanded a chance to defend herself. "I want you to ask those same questions of my children, she said. She came to the door. "Would you children come in here a moment, these people have something to ask you." And they did. Well she certainly got her license renewed for her nursery school. The nursery school, as opposed to day care, was licensed by the state, and she was a teacher instead of a babysitter.

Well, those records were found. I have them and will never show them to my mother. My mother might have a heart attack and die right on the spot.

**Sidney** Where are those records now?

**Tom** I think I have them somewhere; I remember that they were in the old photostatic copies and if you leave them out in the light they would fade. They are still distinguishable and you're welcome to look at them, but know ahead of time that they're light sensitive. Take each one, look at it, and cover it up as quick as you can. They're in an envelope that's suitable, and in a manila envelope also. Not that long ago I looked at them and the paragraphs are faded, and I'm afraid that those are the originals, and not available anymore. I skimmed through them to look for my grades, to kind of document and have a Xerox copy that wouldn't fade of my undistinguished scholastic achievement! Now I had an above average IQ, though as far as my non scholastic achievement, that was because Tom Sawyer was busy being the class clown, the all-American boy, etc. Sometimes I was just outright bored with the simplicity of the school subjects. I remember I did well in a few science classes. So there's implications that as far as IQ and natural ability for the sciences and so on-- How do we learn those things? How do we gain those abilities to be adept at things we haven't been taught yet? There is direct evidence that I was the scientist when I was born.

**Sidney** In the second, third, fourth classes, did you have better teachers?

**Tom** I had remarkable teachers! The pick of the crop and the best in the school system. Coincidentally, the second grade teacher, Miss Tracy, I fell in love with. I really fell in love with her. I was about seven, I guess. I would go home each day and tell my mother everything, that she was like Snow White, etc. I don't remember the sentences-- Miss Tracy got married and became pregnant. This had nothing to do with me, I understood pregnancy, basically, that when women get married and become pregnant-- This had nothing to do with my love for her. She could be married and have a baby and I would still love her. The point was, of course, she had to leave school. I was quite devastated. It wasn't that I was losing my favorite teacher, but that I was losing my love.

My mother did something that I'm not totally sure I agree with. She did it and it worked out fine. She talked to Miss Tracy. I might add that Miss Tracy loved me; she just thought I was really something--obnoxious, hard to handle, annoying to the class, but she loved me as her student--not her favorite grade A student, but the little blond, blue-eyed boy, the all-American boy.

So my mother got in touch with her and then took me on the bus to her apartment. I met her husband. She was just leaving school at that time. It was my mother's way of enabling me to say goodbye to her. Clever; not totally sure I agree with her, though, but it worked. That evening I got over my love affair with Miss Tracy. The substitute was another nice teacher, but I did not fall in love with her.

Now as crazy as this sounds, my reading ability was zero. Miss Tracy had discovered this. Now the way they taught was, again, to have the student stand up and recite. So I was doing okay, but I still could not read a word.

My mother then went to the horrendous expense of hiring the Buffalo, New York, School Board-- Anyway, from Buffalo the person--I don't know if it was a school psychologist--a person who was adept at IQ tests and learning disabilities to come to Rochester. She called them on the phone, she wrote letters to them, and she said, "This may sound chaotic, or psychotic, but I can't deal with the board of education in Rochester. I've been in many confrontations and there is a vendetta -- " In other words she explained to them and she said that, "I have a son who is above average in intelligence, but he is not getting an education. I can't afford to put him in

a private school and I want him tested. But it must be done independently, because all the tests he's been given at the school by the school psychologists at the Board of Education in downtown Rochester, they give him flying colors, but I know he's not passing those tests."

So it was arranged and, wow, did heads roll! Whoever it was came from Buffalo--and I can remember the expressions on the adults' faces of: "Wow, this is Mister Big from Buffalo." I was given the tests and they were fun. This person was very nice to me. "Hi. Tom, how are you today?" and "Well what we're gonna do is give you a test if you'd like (a little assertive management here).

So I took the test and IQ and aptitude--flying colors. Reading ability: zero point zero! This was halfway through the second grade. At great financial expense, I was tutored privately by a professional tutor. I went to the first Rochester Remedial Reading Class; just started that year. I think this was 1952 or 1953. Then I went to a school on the far side of the city. Part of the program was that I was to take the city bus--two different city busses, I'd have to get a transfer, have to hand in my own money. I was given a paper with the No. 1 Park Bus and, even though I couldn't read that, I had it to compare with the buses at the bus stop. There were several choices. I would have to do that alone; they demanded that the parents not follow the child. That was part of the program at the time. I did okay and that was pretty good fun. Well, I was terrible on the bus. I would swing on the leather straps and just be obnoxious to the other riders. I was just showing off and having a good old time. This was then Frances Parker No. 23 School, on Barrington Street off of Park Avenue. (End of Tape I)

(Beginning of Tape Two)

**Tom** I've got to get tuned up here!

I'm out of my body at last  
Seeing my future and my past  
Floating through the tunnel now  
I look round and say, Oh Wow  
It's so peaceful here  
I don't feel no kind of fear

Just drifting and singing my song  
Oh Lord, why's this tunnel so long?  
What's that ahead of me?  
Is that a golden light I see?  
The Lord shines through  
And I'm heading straight for you

My son you have much work to do  
And your family and friends need you too.  
So I'm sending you back  
One more chance to get on track  
You'll come to me later on my cosmic elevator

I'm back in my body again  
Wondering what happened just then  
Was that the Lord above  
Did I just imagine all that love?  
I reckon I'll know one day for sure.  
I reckon I'll know one day for sure.

(Much applause from 10 or so people in room)

**Tom** That's the original version. The edited version goes: Was that the face of God above, as opposed to Lord, because Lord is a cultural conditioning to the Lord Jesus Christ as opposed to God.

**Sidney** When did you compose that?

**Tom** I didn't compose that; we composed that. Ken Ring and company round table discussion and craziness at 3:15 in the morning when you actually take a break from 20 or 30 hours. To keep our sanity we do such things. There is a second verse to it which I don't have memorized; I didn't participate in the composing of that. I'll have to write and get the words to that.

**Sidney** On the last tape you talked about grade school. Could we talk a little more about that, say when you went into the fifth or sixth grade?

**Tom** Well, I did take the accelerated reading class where I finally learned to read. It came at the end of my fifth grade. The way they scored it was by the year and month of your reading ability. At that point it did become, just starting the fifth grade, it was an eighth grade 6 months reading ability. It was very accelerated at that point.

We were given the assignment that before the end of the year we had to deal with four books. We could do them all together, all at once, we could do them one day at a time, we could put them off until the end of the year, but we had the understanding that we had the responsibility to read all the stories and do all the workbooks.

And of course the race was on. Within a week everybody in the class had all the books read and all the work books done. Which was the worst scenario for Tom Sawyer in the school system. And what would Tom Sawyer do with spare time? I became an instant disciplinary problem to the dismay of the principal of the school--and God bless the teachers who put up with me. That kind of set the scene for losing interest in all of the other subjects because it was more fun to show off and fool around than it was to apply myself to any possible learning. I still despised reading. Because of the reading class, private tutoring, home tutoring by my mother at least five days a week. That set the scene for, "I ain't never gonna read--" Correction, I never said ain't--and my whole generation said , "I ain't gonna--" What was that you taught me? "Oh, don't pay me no never no mind!"

From seventh grade in grammar school right through 1978 I didn't read a book cover to cover. Let's see now, the sixth grade. I'm blanking it out for some reason. Oh, that was the year of the teacher whose name I can't recall. It seems like it starts with an R. A good teacher, a good scholastic teacher., the type who demanded respect and results. She didn't put up with much foolishness. I liked her. I didn't like the other teachers because they were pushovers, but I liked her.

**Sidney** Was it in the sixth grade that you were first introduced to geography and the sciences?

**Tom** Which was typical, the fifth grade had a hint of that, the sixth grade much more--that teacher liked geography and history. I liked it also, so I did, at least half the time, pay attention to what was being said. I picked up on it right away. In those years I had a very good understanding of geography; I had all the countries memorized.

I've always had one of those--well, I don't think it's rare though I'm told it's rare--abilities to tell where I am at all times. Had the ability, for instance, to walk across a frozen lake in a straight line. I mean to look back and see the straight line--straight and narrow, shall I call it? I can also be in a woods and decide which way I want to go. In other words I might decide I want to go northeast and then just simply walk northeast.

And a reference point towards that is that always, wherever my home was, and as I mentioned I lived all my childhood at the same address, and regardless where I was-- In other words, if I were to go with my father on a fishing trip a couple of hundred miles away and I would go to sleep in the car and I would wake up in the car, and I'd say, "Well come on, let's go fishing," and I would step out of the car. I could absolutely, positively be able to point directly in a straight line to my house. Well, didn't everybody do that? See, that didn't seem abnormal to me, only normal. And I couldn't imagine anybody that couldn't do that.

So again, if that's psychic or whatever, it certainly wasn't that to me. I've been told that the degree that I was--I had that inadvertently documented. For instance, I would track in the snow on a frozen lake, when the fishing was slow and rather poor, so the planes above could see. I would block out NO FISH in block letters and then in cursive I would walk and write: Damn it! The planes other than the commercial flyers would dip their wings and wiggle like that and the smaller planes would come right down just over the top of our heads. They got quite a kick out of that. Of course, that could be seen from a couple of thousand feet very clearly. And again, to have that depth perception, to have it without measuring it and so forth. I really had those abilities. In other words, I'm tying into hindsight. Back in those days it certainly didn't mean anything to me on a conscious level.

**Tom** Let's see, we are still in the sixth grade. My summers were taken up on the dairy farm, at least three or four weeks in the summer. That's when I became a "pileit," because on the dairy farm one of my jobs was to pile it here and pile it there.

Now, how old would you be in sixth grade--12 years old? Eleven? Let's say I would be half a year older than my peers, because in effect I was held back in the fourth grade.

In second grade it was finally recognized by the demands of my mother that something was wrong. My mother demanded somebody come from Buffalo to test me. It was proved then I couldn't read a word. In what would have been third grade for me I went to the first remedial reading class in the school. It was a very successful program. They had the very best teacher in the school system who was chosen originally to pilot this test remedial program in the school. It worked. It worked for every body in that class. There were 15 kids, some of them with disciplinary problems, some with slight retardation, some with just plain reading disabilities. It was fun, I enjoyed it, and it gave me an accelerated reading ability. That was for two years, so I was never in third grade, never in fourth grade, it was just like one class that ranged from first to seventh grade--one child in each age group. I was given a choice of going into the fifth grade and struggle and get on with things or, as they suggested, go into fourth grade and have that year as sort of a review of going back into a normal setting. I decided that might be a little easier so I went on going to the fourth grade. They explained that I would be a little older than other kids in the class, but being a guy, that's not so bad. So that was done. That brought me through the next few years of school. Unfortunately I was tutored excessively; I got burned out.

So the sixth grade was taken up with just getting the reading out of the way, and doing the minimum of what the teacher demanded, being generally a nice and lovable but obnoxious student. All of my teachers but one really loved me. I was never by any means the teacher's pet, but in spite of being obnoxious, the teachers all liked me, except my first grade teacher.

Let's go to seventh grade to get on with things. Seventh grade I went to a different school. Until now I'd gone to the Henry Laumb No. 20 school.

Because of a baby boom that was coming up, they took the No. 26 School--the Paul Revere Trade School, did away with the trade school part of it and made it seventh grade for at least half the city. I went there; it was a new system, they had at least one class where you would walk to a different classroom to get you ready for junior high school and so on. Mrs. Carr was the teacher in seventh grade. She was very lovable but basically not awfully intelligent. Now she had her teaching degree and so on, but she didn't know very much about very many things. She followed the book; she was a nice teacher because she had fun with the kids, and the kids had fun with her, although most of the kids thought she was a basic borderline jerk. I saw that she was a very easy pushover and I had no problem manipulating her. I could usually talk my way out of disciplinary action. My desk was not only in front of the teacher but at the other side away from the her facing the wall. When the teacher would stand up to talk to the class, I would be facing the class.

Mrs. Carr was bald and she had a wig. This became common knowledge. I don't know if anybody ever saw her hairpiece move or whatever, but it was accepted as the truth. One thing I would do if the kids were not laughing at my jokes and so on, I would role play and have a make-believe fishing pole. I would hold it up and bring it down like this and pick up the hair.

She would then turn around knowing that I was doing some thing. Now to stereotype myself: I would have been mortified if she'd ever caught me doing that because--I was never afraid of being caught being naughty, but that would have hurt her feelings and that would have bothered me very much. I see myself a very, very well-rounded, very independent, very self-sufficient child, right from the first grade.

Credit for that goes to my mother more than my father for being very outgoing. Basically every thing is okay; we make mistakes; you have the ability and the right to be naughty; there's no such thing as a bad boy but good boys can get naughty sometimes. Forgiveness was in order, you learn from your mistakes, things like that, basic philosophy.

**Sidney** You were at that school just one year. In the eight grade where did you go?

**Tom** I went to junior high at Ben Franklin High School, a rather large school with between 3200-3600 kids there. It had four main floors and a

basement that was classrooms, but at that time used for specialized classes, a fifth floor that included the choir loft and was used for band practice, etc. Before my graduation I held many records such as being famous for bicycle riding-- I had the ability to ride my bicycle through every hallway and every floor in the school. I participated in things like water ballet--let's face it, when I was first asked by one of the guys on the swim team, I said, "What's with you, are you some kind of queer or something? Me, water ballet? " He said, "Tom, there are 37 girls and 6 guys." "I'll try it!" I said.

You see, that was a way to get five or six girls to do my homework. That was the only time that I had homework done. They would do the homework and we would fool around--you know, the good clean fun of the early sixties.

But with just the swim suit on and my famous racing bicycle, I would race through the hallways at nine, ten, eleven o'clock at night, and be chased by gendarmes, but they could never catch me. I would slow down just enough to open the fire doors.

Also I held the record that I claimed and never really proved, but trust me I could do it: blindfolded, from any point in the school, I could walk without bumping into anything., to the Dean of Boy's office. It wasn't really precognitive, you could figure it out.

This man was so two-faced, so political, I told him, I said, "Mr. Cohen, you're going to be principal of this school. You know me and I know you, so there's no sense fooling around with each other. You know that I'm honest, and I know that you're two-faced, so why don't we stop playing games with each other. When you have to punish me, just do it, and then leave me alone. He didn't like me for that.

It was tough for him to have a youngster hold a mirror up in front of him like that. Among the things he said was, "Tom, some day a job application is going to cross my desk, and I'm going to bury you. I thought, "Well, yeah, I might have difficulty there." He would constantly try to either trip me up or prove that I was lying somehow. It really bothered him that, regardless of the circumstances, I would always tell the truth. (That's been a burden that I've had all my life.) Very bluntly, I've always told the truth. I got into a lot of trouble because I told the truth. A question might be, "Were you there?" and I would answer,"Yeah, I was there and I did it."

**Sidney** This was just something you were born with.

**Tom** Yeah, it was just naturally me. You know, I'm sure that my mother enhanced that realization that the truth is okay. Nowadays by grammar school, certainly by high school, you're a fink or a jerk if you tell the truth. Come on now, it's okay to do a rip-off, it's okay to hoodwink somebody.

**Sidney** Was it in the first grade that you met Elaine?

**Tom** Actually, it was the eighth grade where she met me. She didn't really meet me. Soon as school started of course I'm cruising through the hallways, with no books and so on. As soon as the first school team and the first gym class, the coaches would ask, "Is there anybody going to take football or basketball?" So I said, "Well, I'd like to run track and I'm a pretty good swimmer."

So there was cross-country, track and swimming. So right away in the eighth grade it became known that I had a chance of becoming an outstanding athlete. It was fun and I enjoyed it, but I did it mostly for myself, not selfish but just for my own personal enjoyment. In other words, I was out there having fun, not winning for the team, not winning for myself.

With great natural ability I became the best in almost everything I went out for. I was second best and I would score a point or two in swimming but that's all because I swam pretty exclusively the breast stroke and individual medley relay. We had other members on our team who were the best in the county, best in the state. So with their record breaking attempts, that put me second place or third or fourth place. It didn't matter, they were better than I was, that was acceptable. Everything that I participated in was fun, there was no sense doing something just to be good or the fastest or something like that.

Walking down the hallway one day, this extremely shy, unbelievably shy, third generation Italian-American, perfect student, absolutely clean clothed, modeled so--you know, just the teacher's desire for a student. This little girl was walking with her girl friend, and she notices this rather nice looking guy go by. She tells her girl friend, "I'm going to marry that boy." Whereupon she then goes home that day--within a few weeks of the first of school, this took place--and she told her younger sister, "Guess what, Rosemary? Today in school I saw the boy I'm going to marry!" This was very emphatic; she somehow intuitively knew this.

I didn't meet her for quite awhile. God forbid and who knows why in the hell Tom Sawyer ever got stuck with a book keeping class! I don't mean to say because I met Elaine there is why I said that! Bookkeeping and debits and credits-- I don't think so. So I used that class to get caught up on my sleep.

The teacher by then knew me well enough to know there was no sense in saying, "Tom put your head up and stay awake," because that would mean I would disrupt the class. It was better to allow me to sleep, and just teach the rest of the class. You know, one failure is better than lower grades for everybody else.

The classroom was row after row, then anywhere from four to six empty seats towards the back of the class in each row. I sat in the second row from the window in the very last seat with four empty seats in front of me. That was fine; I didn't disturb the class and the class didn't disturb me. It worked out good for a couple of weeks.

But then the old boredom set in and I moved up one seat, then I moved up the next seat, moved up the fourth seat. I was now sitting behind the next student, I don't even recall his name. Across from me to my right, in the third row from the window and up one more seat--the seat across me was empty--was this girl. I mean this girl was weird. She had this stack of books, at least a book for every class, she carried that stuff around with her, sometimes there were more books than the number of classes. She always arranged her homework at a slight angle, no teeth marks on her pencil, she had a ballpoint pen--it was sickening!

So the teacher eventually called on her and I found out her name was Elaine. Now the teacher's got his back to the class, doing all this debits and credits stuff, writing stuff on the board. Quiet enough so the teacher couldn't hear me, I said, "Elaine, hey Elaine, Elaine." Not wanting to meet her or anything like that I was just picking on her.

In all her desperation she finally, with her hands still folded on the desk, whispered, "What?" She had a frown on her face. Whereupon the teacher turned around and caught her turning and saying something. "Miss Powers, come right up here in front of the class if you can't pay attention. Bring your books!" Having to raise her chin like this holding all those books she had to walk up in front of the class and stand for the last ten or fifteen minutes of the class.

"No, turn around and face the class," the teacher ordered. This is at the end of the aisle, so there she is, all utter-- Oh, My God! The color of red; she was so embarrassed. A few of the people in the class were snickering,

etc. I'm back there leaning into the aisle, pointing my finger and simulating laughter every time the teacher turned around. This girl hated me! I mean she hated me so much she eventually had to marry me! Well, she did really despise me but she never gave up, she always knew that whoever this jerk was now, this was the boy she was going to marry. I never felt that way at all. I did eventually kind of apologize, but I didn't really mean it; I mainly did it just to get her goat or something.

Time came when the teacher finally demanded of me--he said, "Tom, I want you to hand in a paper every day. I know that you're not going to do the homework, but I want you to put your name on the top of the paper, and when I ask for the papers to be passed up, I want you to participate in that." So, he was cool, he was a good teacher. So I had no intention of ever offending him. Nowadays, I'm sorry that I didn't pass the course because that kind of is a reflection on him. If any students at all fail that reflects on the teacher. So, Mr. Mosow (sp.?), good guy, great teacher; we see him periodically to this day. I always tell him it was his fault I married her!

Now here's this girl, always with homework--she would really have her homework done before the class! Ridiculous. So I would get there a few minutes early before the bell and I'd say, "Hey, Elaine, I'm going to get in big trouble with the teacher; could I copy just some of your homework so I'll have something to hand in?" "Well, okay, but don't let the teacher see you." Eventually it got to the point where she would help me and write some of the homework out. Now there's no way in the world that the teacher didn't recognize her handwriting. So that's how I got to meet Elaine. After I'd copy her homework I'd at least walk out into the hallway with her, perhaps to the next room, etc. Then I would walk her to her next class and be late for mine.

I had a very platonic relationship with Elaine all during high school, up to and including my senior year. Suddenly I realized I was going to graduate, I was going to go to work. I'd turned down two sports scholarships because I knew I'd flunk out in less than six months. I checked to see if those scholarships could be given to somebody else more deserving and in need. There was, so I turned them down.

By that time I knew that Elaine was--I hesitate to say this--more than halfway in love with me. She was serious. I hinted: "Well Elaine, it's been a lot of fun being friends in school but when I graduate I'm not going to be seeing you." By her reaction I could tell that she was very serious. By that time we had our first car, so I would drive to her house, four miles

away--the school was about three and a half miles away. Her house was in the opposite direction on the other side of town. I'd met her parents, especially Elaine's grandmother--I say especially because Elaine's grandmother was really her mother. Her biological mother was the figurehead and so on, but she had a full-time job. (The relationship that Elaine and her mother regained about three or four years after our marriage--Elaine's mother had become her mother again. It's beautiful that they'd made that full transition, irrespective of whatever the relationship was or wasn't in her younger years.) I carried books home for Elaine, being a nice boy. It was fun.

Elaine was proud that I had more school letters than anybody, and all that sort of macho jock stuff. I never experienced that, I never felt that way. It was not arrogance by any means. I would go to the awards assembly, get another school letter, take one step off the stage and sell it for five dollars to one of the kids that played--ping pong, or something! I'd sell the letter, pocket the money, buy pastries!

I finally decided it would be better for me to be nasty to her, to say something like, "Hey look, I've liked you during high school, I'm not in love with you, I don't like the attention, hit the road, don't bother me any more."

I did have to do something like that. When I did I was aware that I was doing it for her benefit. I did it in a matter of fact way; she knew I was serious in my intent but not really being malicious. She was kind of heart broken; she was in love with me as a seventeen-year-old girl can be. She was heart broken but I wasn't aware of it because when I did leave school I stayed away. I found out years later that she went through withdrawals, big heartbroken thing.

She also had a part-time job; as soon as she turned sixteen it was expected of her that she had a job. I'm not saying that maliciously, it was just suggested and expected so she had her time filled up with working and saving money, things like that.

I became a carpenter, went through a carpenter apprenticeship. About a year later, while she was still in her senior year--Elaine expected me to ask her to my senior ball, and take her to her junior prom. To emphasize that I wanted the relationship to end, I went to her junior prom with one of the most beautiful girls in the school. Now wait a moment, it was not on purpose! It just ended up that this girl was very pretty, I think she still is, you know model-type pretty; I'm not talking about inner beauty or anything else. I'm talking about facial beauty.

That girl had overly-protective parents--God bless them wherever they are. I guess it was recognizable that I was a credible person in spite of sometimes being obnoxious and so on.

She could not go with her actual boyfriend, her parents wouldn't allow that. But they did allow her to go with me. At any rate I did agree to go and it was not with the intentions of seeing Elaine there but it worked that way. Actually, for my purposes, it helped Elaine though it was hard for her to take. I just had a good time at the dance and made sure as soon as the dance part was over we got right home to her parents' house. We checked in with them and then they took us to a restaurant.

Then I made the mistake of, several months later, buying a new pickup truck. You need to buy a pickup truck when you're a carpenter. What do you do when you get a new truck? Of course, you drive it around the first night. And didn't I, honestly not on purpose, end up on Elaine's street! Coincidentally. I thought, "Gee, I wonder if Elaine's still living here? I'd like to say hello to her parents and show them my new truck." So I stopped in. I said, "Mr. and Mrs. Powers, I was just in the neighborhood, and I've just bought a new truck. I'm now working as a carpenter; is Elaine home? They said yes, she was downstairs doing her homework or something like that. Maybe it was folding clothes.

We went out and looked at my truck, it was in the evening around eight-thirty or so, starting to get dark. One thing led to another, just small talk for awhile. And then the horrible sentence--and I'm smiling as I say this--of, "Gee, Elaine, what are you doing Friday night? How about a hamburger and an order of fries? I'll pick you up about five o'clock. She said okay. Then the next thing was I said, "Well gee, not for nothing, but you know now I'm making pretty good money, would you be interested in going out to dinner Saturday night?" And so on and so on. Poor me, I got stuck with it!

I'll tell you what, and you've heard me brag about Elaine, but she has put up with from the very-- Well, what you've already heard about in high school. The changes and so on that I forced on her, not manipulatively or with any kind of meaning at all in my life, or intentions I should say, but inadvertently forced on her. So we kind of went out with each other for that first year. She never fell out of love with me, never. I know that now. I remember thinking when we first started going together, "Gee, she's still in love with me, so I should really be careful. That way if I change my mind, or don't like her, or want to go out with other girls or find someone more interesting, I don't want to hurt her again."

There was a lot of discussion--I talked a lot even then! Rather intellectually, too, I might add. Then in the summertime of 1966, maybe two or three weeks before the middle of the summer, I gradually fell in love with her. I wasn't even sure, and kept asking myself, "Gee, am I in love with this girl or not?" I was very comfortable with her. We got to the point where we would kiss each other rather quickly and casually. I was by no means a prude, but I was not sexually active nor was she. With my upbringing and having older sisters made me have the utmost respect for anybody else.

Then what I did was I bought a ring and took her up into the south of the city up on this grassy knoll which overlooked the whole city skyline ( and you could see out into Lake Ontario, cumulus clouds-- I kind of manipulated her right arm so it was slightly behind her and snugged my hip up against her hip so that her arm was behind us. Then I said, "Oh Wow, you see that tank over there? " She said, "Where, over there?" "I don't think so," I said, "which one are you pointing at?" This forced her to raise her left hand." She pointed and said, "that one?" I said , "no, this one," and I put the ring on her finger. Then there were actually violins in the background, harps up above. . . That was nice. I planned things like that.

I don't want to romanticize who I was either, but I'd written some poetry--my mother's a poet, so genealogically I got my knack from her. So I'd written some poems to Elaine--as a matter of fact, if you see Alice Crocker, ask her if she has Elaine and Tom's poem. It's been so long in time that I'm actually embarrassed to ask her for it. I'm quite sure that it's lost. Typical of me, there's a sentence or two in it that I don't have memorized.

Elaine gave it to Alice to have it written in calligraphy. Anyway it was very symbolic of our actual love for each other. So the ring on top of the hill was the romantic part of Tom Sawyer.

But also to stereotype myself, I coincided with criminal law, most moral judgmental law, by most church groups, what's right-what's-wrong kind of thing. However, if you or anybody around me broke Tom Sawyer's rules, if you went beyond those boundaries I felt as though I could be judge, jury, and executioner. To the point of threatening you with physical harm and being ready, willing, and able to implement that. If you cut me off in a traffic jam I was worthy of exceeding the speed limit, cutting you off, stopping you, calling you an asshole, pounding on the side of the window-- I mean one of those very fearful and obnoxious characters of which there were too many around. Also, about my worst vice was speeding. I loved

any kind of speed at all. Selfishly (I know that now, didn't think of it at the time) I would go an excess of 100 miles an hour on the city streets. This was Northland Avenue and Godman Street.

There was the crown in the road of Goodman Street. It was one of the major thoroughfares; a two-lane road with two parking lanes, so four lanes wide. The crown of the road is like-- Have you ever seen *Dukes of Hazzard*? Where they use something like that as a launch pad? Well, Goodman Street was blind in both directions by buildings. But at nothing less than eighty-five miles an hour, and depending on conditions, you could jump a pickup truck more than four car lengths through the air--if you timed the light perfectly. In other words, was God watching, or what? I did that dozens of times. You could usually get about ninety or ninety-five miles an hour. A couple of times I tried it at a hundred, but at a hundred miles an hour the front of the truck would go so far through the air that it would tip down a little bit and I would touch the front bumpers as I bottomed out. That's the kind of driver I was. So, a really terrible, dangerous driver.

I was never in an accident, in the first part of my life! I had one person slide into me when I had a 1970 Mercury Markee,(sp.?) but I'm not really counting that as an accident.

Thank God I never killed anybody, I never created a major accident because if I had there would have been at least for sure some deaths, certainly a lot of destruction.

Then by 1966 they had the three-point system for speeding tickets. If you had anything more than six points it was suggested that you have a hearing to see if you needed to be chastised or have your license revoked. At one time I had twenty-one New York State points against my license. And coincidentally I never had a hearing.

Just the number of points on my license alone dictated that my license be revoked. But I never was called up on it. I eventually hired a lawyer for my speeding tickets. It was real casual in those days; you just gave them fifty bucks and they ripped the ticket up. Eventually that lawyer had enough compassion for me he said, "Tom, I don't want your money. You have one of two choices, you can either slow down or stop driving. This has nothing to do with my ability to get you off the tickets, or to take your money. I don't want to see you dead or anybody else dead."

That helped a little bit, I was a little more choosy as to when and where I would speed but it certainly did not slow me down. Even to this day I am guilty of having to watch the speedometer. In the last two years

though I've slowed down quite a bit. Even though we were going a little over 65 miles an hour coming here on the expressway, that's not like the way I used to drive. It was pedal- to- the- medal and I would usually do extra work on the motors to make sure that they would put out the maximum. So much for that. You know, I really should drop back--did I skip over part of the schooling? Should we go back to that?

**Sidney**

Only if you think so; we don't have to detail every year unless--

**Tom**

Yeah, I do get carried away when I get on cars and motors I could just talk on that for days. It's not just brag, it's interesting things, and I like talking about it. I like rationalizing who I was and who I am, and if I talk about it out loud it's very easy to do that. I can see it from who I was back in those days and where I am now.

Well, for instance, since I had a little above average IQ, which was tested way back in the grammar school days of not being able to read. In the ninth grade, I believe, I was given a first year Latin class. I thought that was cool to begin with but you know you have to do a little homework and so on and try to remember a new vocabulary. That took about three days-- because the teacher was kind of cute, too, I paid attention for about three days, then it was just boring, too. To make a long story short, I took four years of Latin --one!

Your next question? No, I didn't pass the fourth year of Latin one! I flunked all the years of Latin. I can't understand why they kept giving it to me. In addition to four years, nine through twelve, I took it in the summer also--so actually I've taken six years of Latin one. In a group last night, we went off on a tangent and joked about the fact that I know an appreciable amount of Latin now, not from my high school career but from my life review. Last night I conjugated a verb which I was never able to do in high school.

I took an interest in science and took a couple of ninth grade science classes. I didn't know about genealogy at the time, the teacher never told us. I learned about it a few years late. Around 1973, I decided to see if I could somehow document the fact that while both my parents-- knowing as best I can that they are my biological parents--have brown eyes, mine are blue and I have blond hair. My mother has sandyish hair with a trace

of blond but not outright blond, and my father's hair was French black and curley.

I had already been told by my mother that when she was nine years old, she was talking to a friend as friends do when they are nine years old. What are you going to be when you grow up? My mother's answer to that was, "I'm going to get married [Tom, in tears: "I've got to stop remembering my life review]. I'm going to get married some day and I'm going to have three children. I'm going to have two girls and-- [Again there's tears] I'm going to have two girls and a blond, blue eyed boy named Tom." Then she proceeded to name the girls. The first girl would be named Judy, the second girl's name would be Susan, and the boy's name would be Tom--not Thomas. My mother disliked the name Thomas, she liked the name Tom.

So again, as I joked on one TV show, the problem with that was the guy she married whose last name was Sawyer. When it came time for her third pregnancy, if it was a boy did they dare? I mean they really mulled it over in their minds. My mother was telling my father, this third child is going to be a boy and he said, oh right have some more wine!

For your understanding, my life review did not go back to the time my mother was nine years old. An aspect of knowledge that can take place is if you need to understand something that takes place in your life that requires hearing or seeing prior to your time, you will know it. Clairvoyantly, I was standing off to the side of that small group of children in Watertown, New York, when thy were saying this. Also there were other parts of my total near-death experience that would allow me to know such things. There's an ambiguous qualification which I always make on public television--but not to a close knit group like this who would be very accepting of that fretful word "reincarnation" and "karma"-- I will say, "Well the life review basically covered the period from the first breath of life to the accident.

That's not really the truth. [Tom emotional] It still amazes me, I mean the system or whatever, my life review included more-- [tears again at this point] more than just the first breath of life.

I don't want to disappoint the people who say, "Well, the near-death experience is just your memory of the birth process. Ah gee, give me a break! Trust me, the near-death experience is delightful and fun, but the birth process is not very much fun. I mean I'm speaking from a first-hand experience if you will. I'm one of the very few people that can remember the horrendous terror of that type of movement.

See it was always movement, like up and down and all around, getting jostled around, but this was being forced-- But the contractions, I mean, wow, wait a minute, stop! As a matter of fact, the fetus to become the infant, does experience contractions in getting squashed through the bottle neck.

God bless every mother; but think for a moment that a baby might not be having the greatest of times. There was the horrendous temperature change, the air, and not only that, you've got to think how that little body is all wet besides. The transitional state is like-- Wow!

You know our cultural conditioning is so screwed up that we fear death--oh death is scary and the unknown, etc. No! that's okay, that happens and that's not so bad. We don't fear birth, and that's a terror. And so, well let's see-- Back to school or something?

**Sidney** Somewhere in this outline I said when did you first get interested in sports. Specifically, when did you have your first bicycle?

**Tom** Yeah, the only other love of Tom Sawyer-- I said before somewhere that Elaine is my only love. Well, Elaine has been my only sexual experience. But guess what? Tom Sawyer fell in love one time. Really genuinely, romantically, in love and I was fifteen years old. So this coincided with having met Elaine, and having Elaine as a platonic friendship.

In one of my classes there showed up--after school had started she moved into the neighborhood, and not knowing where she lived but, hey, it's in the school system-- this rather attractive girl, not gorgeous, not a *Playboy* magazine type foldout. But as a matter of fact, her measurements were thirty -four, twenty-two, thirty four!

I can remember when we got really quite friendly, joking around and taking my hands like this and that and being able to touch my fingers, like squeezing real hard and squeezing her in like that! Very delightful girl, named Claudia Cavenaugh.

I filled two spiral notebooks with her name. What did you do to prove your love? Why, you write her name! Her name was rather long so I just had room for two names per line, filled every page back and forth and, of course, didn't the teacher catch me.

"Well, how about filling another notebook saying I will pay attention in class."

So, I chatted with Claudia, and there was kind of a casual getting acquainted with each other at first. Actually, I met Claudia through her sister, Gloria, who was very pretty and nice and I liked. It was pretty typical of me that way, you know, many girls as well as buddy-type guy friends.

No intentions at all of a romantic incarnation. Although there is always that biological attraction, the first sometimes is the pretty face. I walked Claudia home and met her mother, her father wasn't home then, etc.

Well, now understand I'm fifteen years old (and God bless all the fifteen-year-old's--). Now we mature adults say, "You can't be in love when you're fifteen years old!" Guess what? You can be, you can be romantically in love. Further than that, by my standards today, it was a very pure form of romantic love. There was high respect for each other, etc.

It was a very long time before we dared to kiss on the lips, not really prudishness. Well, a problem arose because we got close enough and friendly enough that my parents checked with her parents and she came to the cottage for a weekend, and that was terrific, that was a great weekend.

It was great just having fun, footloose and fancy free, running and frolicking and things like that. Then, Claudia Cavanaugh moved from the house kitty-cornered to the back of ours--you know, one block behind us. She moved to what was actually in Fairport but more properly in Penfield. I don't know the exact mileage, but let's say twenty-five miles from my house. So, I saved up enough money for a five [End of tape 2] [something lost here]

*Speed Bile*

{Beginning of Tape 3]

**Sidney** Tom, I'd like to know more about your apprenticing to a carpenter. Would you tell me some more about that?

**Tom** Yeah. **My teacher was Joseph--** (Laughter in the room; a voice said: "That's real interesting!)

**Elaine** Yeah, he was! He was Joe.

**Tom** Joseph Carroll.

**Sidney** Why did you do that particular kind of work, as opposed to other things you might have done?

**Tom** Well, okay, the last first. As opposed to something else that I could have done, I didn't really have too many options. In other words, with a high school education, there were limited job offers available to me, although in 1964 the job market was as perfect as it could be in Rochester, New York. I certainly could have moved into Kodak, or Xerox, places like that, but Tom Sawyer of American could never work indoors. I think now, some twenty-five years later, I could work indoors now, but could not have until two, perhaps three years ago. That eliminated all indoor jobs--desk jobs, assembly lines and that type of work.

One thing I did think of, having assisted my father rebuild a couple of houses, including remodeling on the inside, and having a general physical ability to do any kind of rough, tough work I considered and thought of becoming a carpenter. Now, I really didn't give it that much thought. There were no definite thoughts where it's a deciding factor at all, it's like I stalled around for a couple of weeks.

Then my mother, ever so lovingly, suggested, "Do you have any plans at all, Tom?" I said, "Well, you know it is summer and I'd like to stall before I get hooked up with full-time employment." "Well, I can understand." She didn't push at all. I thought, "Gee, I wonder what I could do? Well, I could work in constructions, say carpentry." So it was very casual. If we all consider it synchronistic, that might very well be. Or it might be there was nothing standing in its way. It wasn't a hard or deliberate decision.

Now, the funny part is, in all my ignorance, I simply went to a general contractor's office and said, "I'm here, I want to be a carpenter, would you hire me as an apprentice?" He said well, okay, sure, fine. That was the first one I went to. A.W. Hogan & Sons. I knew that they were a reputable company, but I didn't know anybody there. They said, "Fine. Go to St. Mary's Hospital and see Joseph Carroll there, and start working." So I went to the job site and he said, "Yeah, yeah, the office called. Are you Tom Sawyer? Is that really your name? Ha, Ha. Okay, you can start working over here. Do you have any tools?" I had a poor man's box, for I'd borrowed several tools from my father. I went to work.

A week and a half later the steward came up to me and said, "Tom, you don't have your Union Card yet?" Then it came to light that I'd never even

applied for a Union apprenticeship, and that I'd actually worked for a week and a half, not being a union member, etc. etc. And also not having applied to the Builder's Trade--it's not a union but it's an association to handle all the apprentices in the building trade. So they're kind of in an embarrassing, dilemma situation, so a card was immediately procured for me. This was through ignorance on my part. But I'm curious now if I wouldn't have certainly been turned down by way of the proper channels of going to the union first and then being accepted by the Building Trade. That was kind of a curiosity.

My four year apprenticeship was quite prosperous and delightful as far as I am concerned. It was rough and tough, I did some very exciting jobs, the higher the better, walking out on steel beams, that sort of stuff. I had probably the best carpenter apprenticeship in modern times because when I went to St. Mary's Hospital, what they call the service wing, the emergency department, the education building, and a few others like machine shops, tunnels, and so on, were all at the ground stage. In other words they were digging the holes, putting in the concrete footers and foundation.

That allowed me to stay on that job, with that big building construction, heavy construction, and stay with that job from the roughing, the concrete work, down to digging the ditches, all the way up through the trim work as the building was completed. Actually a rare circumstance in the building trades all together that a single carpenter stays on the job through all the different stages. Generally you have a roughing carpenter, you have a trim carpenter, there's guys that do certain kinds of work and they kind of stick to that work in all the different jobs throughout the city, the county, and the area. During the first and second year of my apprentice I got some of everything, in fact a lot of everything. It was eight hours a day in all the aspects of the work; I stayed right with it.

There were a couple of foremen because it was such a big job. The second foreman came the second day and said, "How are you making out? By the way, why don't you wear your hard hat?" You know I never wore a hard hat! They would yell at me, I'd put it on and soon as they walked away I'd take it off. I never wore hats of any kind, couldn't stand hats. Even now rarely do I wear a hat.

The foreman said, "By the way, I don't want to pry into your personal business, but if you're interested I'd like to offer some help. If you're planning on making this a career, I'd like to know how much can you afford

from your first paycheck for tools?" And I said, "Well, as a matter of fact I'd planned--and I talked with my mother--since I'm living at home and don't have any real expenses, so I'd planned to use my entire paycheck." He said, "Okay, that's good. If you can afford to do that, if you have to push a bill or two off to the following week, what I'll do is give you a list of the immediate tools you'll need.

I want you to spend every cent of your paycheck--if you need lunch money, I'll even loan you lunch money. Also, just to check up on you, I want to see the receipts, too. Be sure to tell them you are a carpenter apprentice for most every place gives you at least a 15% discount, especially if you're buying a couple hundred dollars worth of tools. Now, every week thereafter, I want you to spend 50% of your paycheck on tools. I'll give you a list of the tools to have, all the way down to the if and but tools."

Within a month or two I had a very decent set of tools, the very best brands--he told me what brands to buy, what not to buy. He really went way out of his way to assist me and help me out. He also purposefully had me jockey around because usually a carpenter's apprentice teams up with a mechanic carpenter and sticks with him for that job, at least on that job site. He purposely jockeyed me around to different job mechanics. I found out later that he even purposefully put me with someone he knew I wouldn't get along with. Well, I did get along with him because later on he told me, "By the way, Bob, who you worked with for the last several weeks, well nobody's been able to work with him." So it was kind of a compliment. I said, "Well, he's kind of a jerk," see I talked like that in those days; I usually said my piece in so many words.

Another thing, I mentioned Joseph Carroll. Joseph Carroll, within a year or two, he was with that same group for about three years, we got to be buddies and so on. When he felt comfortable enough he came up to me and said, "Tom, I don't mean to be personal but I'd really like to ask a question. Are you by any chance extremely religious? Or have you been in the seminary or something?"

I said, "Well, no, why?" He said, "Well, I don't know how to say this, but it's really great the way you don't swear." Now I thought that was funny. But as a matter of fact when it came to the harsh words, the four-letter words, my general conversation-- You see I talk much more vile today than I did when I was a carpenter's apprentice, all the way through the seven years carpentership when I was working as a carpenter.

So I said, "Well, no, I never found it necessary to swear that much." "Well, that's okay, that's great," he said, "but I guess I've been working construction too long," and sort of passed it off at that.

I happened to think of that just now; did I ever tell you about that?

Also, Joseph Carroll sort of fell in love with Elaine--you know, dry humor kidding, that he wanted to steal her, stuff like that. But Joseph Carroll was sort of a playboy, too. I talked very openly about Elaine and our relationship, and there's no doubt that all the guys knew that she was my steady girlfriend, and that we were in love, or falling in love.

To brag about those guys now, it did have a gratifying effect on me and it comes down to peer pressure of other people. Generally everybody experienced the other thing; I was given the opportunity by some of the laborers on that crew-- Now some laborers are the rough, tough, troglodyte guys and that's not necessarily fair because they're real people and they have their job talk and their "in front of their wife" talk. That seemed deceitful to me, to have a dual language.

A funny thing: you meet guys on the job site with nicknames like "baggy drawers"; so there was a group of guys who for twenty years all worked together. They would go on the job site as a crew, they all lived either in Mt. Morris or Kyleville, small communities of villages, roughly twenty miles south of Rochester. They would all carpool coming together and they would all stay on the same job sites.

They also worked mostly for this A.W. Hogan Company, sometimes Hogan Lumber, same company but different branch. They also , the majority of that group, happened to be in --I don't recall the phrase, but in WWII they were the famous marauders--something marauders. And they were like the Rambo-type guys that would literally grab a thirty- caliber machine gun up in their hands and run and do their thing and they were genuine war heroes. It's funny but being genuine war heroes, they never talked about it.

A lot of the guys had many tattoos on them, because they were marines, they all had marine tattoos and several other tattoos. Once we got friendly and so on, I said, "Hey by the way, it's none of my business but I understand you were marines but what's this tattoo over here?"

"Ah, gee, if I ever find you put on a tattoo I'll box your ears!"

Another guy who was not part of that group, another laborer, started razzing me about the probability of my virginity. You understand I'm saying it that way because I don't want to use the terminology that they would

use, like: your next will be your first, wet behind the ears, very degrading things but I'm sorry to say it's common practice.

Well, that's neither here nor there, that's because the guys liked me a little bit and I wasn't a wise guy, I wasn't anything but a good worker and they could always count on me.

So these Marauders came over. The biggest, toughest one of all, to whom nobody gave the lip, came over and so that everybody could hear said, "Tom, you ever heard of the Marauders? " I said, "Well, I think so, that was a special group in WWII I think. Excuse my ignorance, but my father was in the army for 13 years. I wanted to say something that would be in common, that commonality.

He said, "Yeah, well, the name of the group isn't right. You know, we're all macho guys. We do a lot of hard work and you can always count on us. If you ever cross us or give us lip, well we're going to blankety-blank your ears back. But there is something I want to tell you. I've been married to my wife 25 years and I want to tell you something. I went steady with her six years before we got married. And you want to know something else? " He looked right at the guy who was razzing me. "I was a virgin on my wedding night, and all these years I'm glad that I was. And if you are or aren't is none of our blankety-blank business. I wanted to share that with you, and it's really okay." Now this is 1965, and it really is an event to be shared with people because that was a little extraordinary. I'm not blaming that on me, I'm giving him the full credit of volunteering that to someone who was just a normal guy. That was just an additional little thing with this group of guys.

One time I went to Mt. Morris to deliver a saw that was procured where they tore down buildings. They got legal permission to take this bandsaw, that was originally for meat, and bring it home. So I had a pickup truck--remember that new pickup truck I got stuck on Crossville Road? [This to Elaine] So I drove it down to Mt. Morris just as a friendly gesture--hey, no problem. You guys need a pickup truck, I got one, I'll bring it down after work.

I drove it down to Mt. Morris and there's like one main road that goes into Mt. Morris--Remember that valley that I showed you on the way here? [this to Sidney] You go along and the hill gets quite steep, you go down the hill and across that flat valley. Mt. Morris sits on the other side of the valley kind of on the slope of that hill. So it's a long straightaway.

Well it's famous for Mt. Morris police to park on that straightaway and guard the town and watch for speeders and so forth. Again, I was famous for driving fast but with the bandsaw in the back of the truck I was driving normally and carefully. What I didn't know was that one of the Mt. Morris police was the brother or brother-in-law of Frankie Kochanata (sp.?) another one of these construction guys.

Since he was his brother-in-law he told him that I was on my way down there and to stop me and give me--as they said-- a ration of shit. So he pulled me over and he said, "Driver's license and registration, please." "Gee, Officer, what's the problem?"

"Never mind that," he said kind of rough and tough. He said, "That's what I thought. You're Tom Sawyer; aren't you from the city?"

"Yeah, Rochester."

"What'd you think, you're just going to come across this bridge?" Holy smoke! This isn't in Georgia.! And the policeman was saying "boy" like that.

"You've got to get permission before you come into our town."

"Well look, I'm bringing this to Frankie Kochanata's house." What I started to say was "baggy drawer's."

"What are you, a wise guy?" When he said that I kind of got a feeling of I'll bet they've set me up for this. So I'm being real polite and nice. "Well, gee, I'll be glad to turn around and go back and I'm sorry if I've offended you. Gee, do you happen to know any of these people?"

Then he hands me my license and sort of gives me a shot in the shoulder and says, "Yeah, that's my brother-in-law. By the way, you tell those people in Rochester that they don't cross this bridge without--" That was kind of cute.

Got up to the house--now I get up there and typical of me, I don't have any idea of where I'm going. What house is his? I knew the area of the neighborhood. I thought, "Well now, I've got to figure out where 'baggy drawer's' house is." So I drive halfway up the street, thinking it should be right around here somewhere.

Knock on the door, the guy opens it, and as he opens the door, I realize I'm about to ask where "baggy drawers" lives . Now I'm embarrassed and I say, "Oh brother, look, I'm a carpenter and I'm trying to deliver a bandsaw to somebody, and I hope you'll understand that in construction we have nicknames and I just realized what this guy's name might mean. You don't

by chance know somebody whose nickname is--I made sure his wife wasn't in the back--"baggy drawers"?

He said, "Well, now let's see," in a loud voice, Baggy lives right next door. By the way, his name is Dominique." So I go next door to deliver the saw. Another little side story.

As I said, that ran through a total of seven years. I interrupted that after 1967 through the end of 1968, and that one year interruption was to work in a hardware store for Alhart Hardware and Appliances. A very large hardware store and, by hardware standards one of the largest stores.

Well, I fit right in because what carpenter does not know dopey plumbing.? A plumber can't do carpentry but a carpenter can be a plumber. With all due respect to plumbers, they won't want to hear that. Because of the number of pieces of material and the actual knowledge that you need to know.

So I fit right in perfectly. I was always an outgoing person so I was a good salesperson and did really well and actually enjoyed it. But it was inside! Now the deal was, my oldest sister's husband, was Dave Alhart of Alhart Appliances.

There were four of the original brothers and Dave's father was was the president and had the most control. So Dave was next in line. It was also getting around the time that the brothers should have retired which made the option of Dave Alhart taking over the family store. In California he had been doing the same type of work.

So he was now coming back to take over the store and the deal was that I would work for a year. He would then take over the store and I would become manager of the hardware store and have a very lucrative job. And with my expertise and so on, it would enhance the store.

It was a very good possibility and I'm really sorry that it didn't work out. But at the end of that year it was obvious to me that he was not going to be able to buy out the brothers. It was obvious that they were not going to sell out, at least not right away. I was working for minimum wage, which was something like \$2.25 an hour. I'd come off a \$7.00 an hour job at that time.

Of course we're in our apartment, and the only additional major expenses were several speeding tickets, which amounted to about \$3,000 total package for my speeding tickets.

**Sidney** Really that much?!

**Tom** Well, yeah, I mean the fines and each time I'd get one they'd double the fine and then the lawyer's fee was one to three hundred dollars each time. There was that times seven speeding tickets around that year.

We also had no insurance because, while carpenters make decent wages, they have to buy everything else. We didn't have proper hospitalization, or anything like that. Also, being in the hardware store, they had next to nothing available for benefits.

If I had become manager of the store, I could have pretty much written my own ticket. So it was kind of a gamble and I went ahead for it, and enjoyed it quite a bit. I mostly enjoyed getting out and making a lot of deliveries in the delivery truck, mainly to get outside. That fizzled out and I told Dave that it's obvious that it's not going to work out in a short enough period of time that unless I can double my wages I'm going to have to leave and go back to work as a carpenter or something.

Now after that, and this is leading up to 1968, I had frequented and worked evenings at a gas station, and I'd been interested in cars and by rights I was a mechanic already, an automotive mechanic. So I would help out just for the fun of it at the local gas station which was right next to the apartments on Ridge Road. I would work there evenings, and I did as much or more than the mechanics that worked there.

It was a father and two sons type gas station but the two sons--one was close to my age, maybe a little bit younger, the other was ten years younger than that, so he was pretty young. And Dick Harris--Dick Harris was like a second father to me. He was really one of those great guys. You'd want to do anything for him.

So I'd put in a lot of hours and of course he actually said, "Gee, Tom, if you have to pump gas for me you ought to at least get paid for it. So I worked evenings in a certain schedule and weekends and so on. Even if I wasn't working I'd hang out there anyway.

Again, so much for the loneliness of Elaine, that's important to add in here. Because of the rare times I wasn't on my bicycle I was at the gas station.

Eventually the apartments added a swimming pool and at least we'd be in yelling distance. But I guess the point that I'm trying to establish is that as far as the apartment--which I loved because there's not much you

have to do in an apartment. And here she is inside this apartment for a total of nine years. And I loved it because I was getting everything I needed. So I worked in this gas station. They had two garbage trucks that parked there. It was a friendship type of deal and they would work together, help each other out, and mainly have a place to park the garbage trucks and have gas station facilities to maintain the trucks, etc. Eventually I started working on them, helping out, kind of learning the ropes. Then every once in a while a guy would say, "I got to go deliver a dumpster, want to go?" Yeah, that was something new. I said, "Gee, what's it like driving a truck like this, is it the same as driving a car?" Learned that, then he said, "Look, why don't you come to work for me." "Well, gee, I don't-- Well fine." I tried it the next day, just to try it. It was the same as minimum wage. I got \$155.00 a week, gross wages. Taxes taken out of that and so on. He also eventually gave me a \$5.00 gas allowance. Couldn't give me a raise in pay, so he gave be a \$5.00 gas allowance which he could sort of hide in his taxes, you know, write it off to the trucks.

I became his foreman. I was physically strong. One of the reasons that I took the job was that I could start out between 6:30 and 7:00 in the morning. I could line up the three trucks, get them going, warm them up, make sure there was enough crew--if I needed it I could go up the street and get some temporary help.

Of course you carefully drive fast around the corner where they crowd and watch for the arms going into their pockets to hide the bottles of booze; whoever didn't move to hide their arms, you had a tendency to hire them. As soon as you did that several times, you had regular guys up there to hire. Even if you had a planned vacation or something, you'd go uptown and say, "By the way, be sober tomorrow morning, I'll be up here to pick you up." Worked out good, I got good at it too. In other words ran the company pretty well.

The beautiful part was, I could start out at roughly seven o'clock in the morning and by nine-thirty I would have made two hundred house stops and picked up usually one full super packed garbage truck load. I'd go to the land fill, dump it, bring the truck back, wash it down and be in the swimming pool at the apartment at nine-thirty. See you got paid by the day, when the job was done you were done.

Thursdays was the quickest route. Many times I was done at nine-thirty. We were not allowed to move the trucks-- See I would go up there and have breakfast and so on. Tom Hefferty (sp.?) would buy me

breakfast in the morning and we'd check the trucks out and let 'em warm up, but we couldn't start work until seven, which meant you cheated and you got out by quarter to seven. So even though I'd leave the apartment that early, I wasn't working. Also in order to do that, it would be on an absolute dead sprint run, in and out. But neat--you always had to put covers on.

Again, not to brag, but I was stronger than any two normal people I'd met. Extraordinary strength. I'd get my pickup truck stuck in the snow when we went necking or somewhere like that. It'd be all buried and I'd get bad and upset, the phrase is pissed off. I'd scream and yell at Elaine, "Get over here! Don't spin 'em too fast! Slow down! " Anyway the truck would get stuck and I'd let her steer, and yell how much above idle, and let the wheels just turn. Then I would go to the back of the truck, turn around and grab hold of the bumper and pick the back of the truck up, take like two steps over, set it down, then do it again. That's a lot of weight. That's just an example of some of the crazy things I did. Having done this kind of heavy work and so on-- [to Sidney: did you want to interrupt?]

**Sidney** I think I missed something-- Why did you leave the carpenter business in the first place since it was a reduction in salary?

**Tom** If you recall the timing of my bicycle racing career with the introduction to Claudia Cavanaugh. The introduction of bicycle riding and therefore the bicycle racing, which was the huge downfall of our marriage-- I mean if you have to point the finger at something, it was obsession with bicycle racing. In other words, at the expense of the well-being of my family, at the expense of Elaine's loneliness, so with all due credit to her surviving that as best she could.

Took the job as garbage man so that being done anywhere from nine-thirty in the morning to certainly no later than noon on most days, with the exception of like the day after Christmas, I took that job because then that would give me all the rest of the daylight hours to--go home and make love to my wife? No, no, go ride bicycles, and race all these places right around. Ride certainly a hundred miles a day just for the enjoyment. In other words, I had one of the roughest or physically exhausting jobs but that was just like aerobics, that was just a warmup for me to jump on my bike and start pedaling. That's why I took the job as garbage man.

The quitting of carpentry work was initiated by: "Yeah, I should do this if I'm going to bike race, and then also the deal with the hardware store. Well, that worked out really good for me. You can understand it worked out worse and worse for Elaine. Also, Elaine had to experience the no money.

Well that didn't bother me. Let's be honest here, I was getting enough food to survive, half the time I was eating at restaurants because they would buy my breakfast in the morning. Invariably we would go to the Circle Spot Restaurant, the local bar but they had good food in there too, for lunches, and Elaine certainly had enough money to have food for decent dinners. Little did I ever know that she'd have to scrimp and save on the breakfasts and lunches for she and Todd, with only \$155.00 a week in gross wages coming in.

That pretty well describes that scene; we can never do that justice as far as bragging about Elaine's copeability, or suitability degrading my inability to comprehend what was really going on with the better half of my life. It worked good for bicycle racing; I got very good, got of national caliber. You know. won some trophies, things like that, state championships which led up to the 1968 Olympic Trials. Now I went to the state championships and as part of the state championships-- If you win the New York State Road Racing Champion, that guaranteed you a berth at the final trials at the 1968 Olympic trials. In the final trials you would then be chosen through another elimination race for the actual team that goes into Mexico City for the gold run. Unlike the track trials, where you have to go through a whole series of elimination races, from all the sprinters down to the one sprinter in the thousand meters. Then I was more interested in sprinting than road racing so I qualified for the four events and the track trials through the state championships.

Now simultaneous with the 1968 Olympic trials, since it was all the same people, they also held the national championships there. So the national championships-- One major problem was they were in Encino, California. Well, as luck would have it, by this time my sister, Judy, lived in Los Angeles or Huntington Beach. So we made arrangements at great expense, half of our savings account, which was one hundred percent Elaine's, was used for this trip to the 1968 Olympic trials. Again, great for me, very poor for Elaine. Elaine said, yes, your bike racing, I know it's important to you and yes you can do this and I agree with this, verbally she said it but mentally I know she never did. She never participated with me or for me at all.

It's very important in bike racing, for instance, when a bike racer has a leg cramp it's not just like a leg cramp. Maybe he will not be able to get back on the bike. Often you can do so much for yourself. But that kind of national athlete really requires a massage. Hopefully that that would be one of Elaine's jobs, because the girlfriends and spouses of bike racers usually did that, but she wasn't interested in that at all. And of course I knew that she wasn't interested at all, so I made do with what I had, ignoring her needs and so on.

The only thing in defense of all that, and I really do want to be fair, is that prior to our marriage there was a famous statement: Elaine, you give me the next four years, and I will give you the rest of my life. So it was actually a contractual marriage. This wasn't just said one time, I talked and talked for hours, I did describe to Elaine day by day what life would be like. We would be stone broke, we would get to the next bike race, but if I made it to the Olympic trials, and if luck would have it that I would be able to go to Mexico City in 1968, and then four more years to the 1972 Olympics, with that under my belt, I will get a medal and I will really go for the gold medal in 1972.

In 1963-64, still in high school, I signed all my yearbooks for friends. I'd say whatever I was going to say and sign "Tom" and then I'd draw a little, tiny bicycle and a little in quote 72 after it. I'd already planned and decided almost day by day this desire and plan to go for the gold in 1972. Try for the games in 1968 and go for the gold in 1972. A very realistic plan, too. Right.

It worked out pretty good and we did go to California. Stayed with my sister which was convenient and so on. I went up to the trials and Elaine came up once, I believe. I actually only went to the Veladrome two separate days. The one day she came up, as coincidences will have it, on the flight there, I had escort service for my bikes. I had two bikes and six wheels in a bike bag, which escort service means I take them and put them on the plane, they are strapped, whatever I need, and assisted, but nobody is allowed to touch them except me unless I wish to be helped with the lifting or whatever.

They landed in Chicago at O'Hare Field and some ignorant--honest ignorance--grabbed hold of the bikes and threw them out of the plane. In throwing them out of the planes, the fork ends of my track bike towed the fork ends in just a fraction. They were hand-made bicycles and by today's standards they would cost anywhere from one to three thousand dollars.

Back then though they would only have been worth three or four hundred dollars. Also basically irreplaceable. Schwinn Company made the Schwinn Paramount, that was handmade by one man and he was very old. Otherwise you would have to send them to ----- or somewhere in Europe: Italy, France, Holland, were the best bike makers. You'd have to order it, give them all the dimensions and so on. So you can't go to the store and buy one of these bikes. You have to have it fitted to you, and so on. Got there, found the fork ends towed in, all big apologies from American Airlines who said we'll be glad to replace anything. I said, "You don't seem to understand. Tomorrow I'm going to be at the Veladrome and you're going to run to Italy and get me one?"

So with great trepidation--whatever that word means--I went off to the trials, found a bike shop in Rosemont, California to try to use special wing nuts to tighten the wheels on sufficiently. Thought it would work. To make a long story short, in the thousand meter sprint which I was the best at--there were two people there that were the best, Jackie Symes and Tom Sawyer. I had two ways of racing, tactical which means--if you've seen it on television--to argue back and forth as to who's to take the lead, hoping your opponent will take the lead and you draft off his back wheel and with three quarters of a lap to go, you slingshot him, You will win if you slingshot him. He can't break his own wind and slingshotting in that draft, you definitely will win unless something happens. It was very rare when that setup is done, for the person in first place to win.

I was the fastest sprinter but I was also stronger than any of the sprinters. So one of the things I was counting on, and one of the things I had a tendency to do, which is never done in sprinting is, upon the gun going off, I would just plain go! Because no matter how many laps, I could immediately get up to speed, which the average sprinter couldn't, so I would have two bike lengths lead right there, and I'd just keep going at full speed which most sprinters couldn't do in those days. So I decided to do that and I kind of stalled at the first three quarters of the first lap. Then I deduced, this is foolishness, and I looked at my opponent--now this was like the first round, they were like little kids to me--and I said, "I'm not going to waste my time, they might scrape a pedal, they might knock me down, I'm not going to fool around with these kids, I'm out of here! I took off like a shot. It was like, Oh my God, he's got it, there he goes. He can take his foot off the pedals and coast around the next two laps and win.

And I rolled a tire. I rolled a tire because those tires have to be glued on several days before. . . the fork ends. . . excuses, excuses, and so on. It was utterly devastating. I rolled a tire and crashed. Most of the other bikes scraped me but nobody else fell. Usually that's kind of tragic when that happens and everybody goes down.

On my hands and knees, it was one of the few times in my life that I cried. In those days grown men don't cry. Even if you're emotional or compassionate or whatever, or if you watch a Bambi movie, you can have those feelings inside, but don't let them out because somebody might think you're a sissy. But that was a little too much and I went right down on my hands and knees and cried.

Now as crazy as the rules and regulations are for the Olympic games, or the Olympic trials, its completely idiotic and always was, if you have reason to leave the track during the day's competition The rationale behind it is if you break your equipment, you cannot go to your car or to a bike shop, get it repaired, and come back into the Veladrome.

Oh, I was just saying that the officials knew me, because also by that time, Vince Maxwell, whom I mentioned before, my protegee, an elderly gentleman--that's funny--Vince Maxwell and Mike Carnahan, mostly Vince Maxwell and I, really just the two of us, with all due respect to Mike who was off doing his thing of racing most of the time and also promoting bike racing. The Widdmer (sp.?) Winery gave us a call--Peter Cobb who is the promotional manager, gave us a call and said, "I'm from Holland and I'd like nothing better than to have, through the Naples Valley, the wine country around Canadiever (sp.?) Lake a 56 mile bicycle race. Vince Maxwell and I for years had ridden that course and said, "Some day we've got to get enough money to have a bike race around Canadiever Lake, through Italy Valley, through Potter--oh, wow, perfect hill, two and a half mile climb, an official road race." Even though when you have a race start to finish in the same location it is called a criterion. But since it was one lap of 56 miles it couldn't be considered a road race. If we could ever have that and ever somehow get a bike trail built, we were verbally guaranteed the Olympic trials. Never quite made it, that never fell into place. Though one of our real dreams came very, very close. Verbal commitments and all of that.

Anyway with that, what's called a VAR race, that's like a classic, it's like the Indianapolis 50. If you get the world championship in driving, also the word "classic" if you have it two or three years in a row and it's

designated a classic. That means the prize list is good enough and there's a probability of having it the following year. [I don't understand what he means here]

It usually requires around 50 people to put a bike race on. You must have coordination with the state police, the county police--it's really a major event because you're illegally using highways. You're racing on highways; that's a no-no, you have to break through all the political red tape, stuff like that. Of course you have to have the money backing, the Chamber of Commerce backing-- it's not a small event. Well, Vince Maxwell and I were the Geneseo Cycling Club. We did cheat a bit and say Elaine Sawyer is a member, Laurie T.P. Sawyer is a member, in fact, a member of the racing team was George Rennie's mother who is a paraplegic. It was really funny because the Olympic Committee knew that we were the best race in the country, other than possibly the classic in California. They'd say, "You know, really Tom, you guys are so good you've gotta have other races." We'd say, "Well, gee, our guys are pretty busy with a lot of racing," and we just hoodwinked them for the longest time. They would come to meetings there'd be Vince Maxwell and me, the Chamber of Commerce, the Police Chief, and so on. " Well, gee, you know the race's on in Canada--" Now you see we never lied. They'd say, "well, gee, there's not too many people here," and we'd say, "Well, you know there's the race in Waterdown, Canada." We didn't say that anybody there was from our club.

So we were putting the bicycle race on and we met all their legal requirements. We also rounded up old olympates (sp.?) to help us officiate for the game, and judges were always thrilled to do it. Now we made out really, really good and we were a classic for many, many years. I'm saddened that in the last few years--well since my near-death experience that's one of the priorities that I've had to give up, but it's still going on every year and it is a classic race and it's one of my few claims to fame. I was never able to ride that race. They said to me, "Tom, this race is too important, too much money involved, for the Chamber of Commerce and the Police Chief, we don't have the expertise. You do a good job and we will not back you if you're on the starting line. You have to be in the police car or in that official's car. So I took it as a job, and I was glad to do it. So I never raced that race although I rode the course several times.

Meanwhile back at the Olympic trials and being well-known, not just for being a good bicycle racer, but also for being one of the greatest

promoters of bike racing and coordinator of the classic race at Lake Canadida for the Widdman Cup-- One official whose name I won't mention said, "Gee, Tom, what happened? "

I said, "well, I rolled a tire. They dumped my bikes in the plane." He said, "Wow, do you have anything in the car? Can Elaine hand you something over the fence?" I said, "No, this is the only track bike I have. I have a spare set of wheels, but the problem is the fork ends." So he went around and checked with the other guys to see if they had a fork-end they would let me borrow, that would fit. And he said, "Tom, do you know where the Montrose Bike Shop is?" I told him I was there earlier. He said, "Well, look at me. You know, you don't look very good. In fact, you look real sick. Now, we don't have toilet facilities on this track, but if you feel as though you are going to throw up or something we can't afford to have that kind of a mess. I'm going to give you permission to leave the track." In other words, whatever chance you have, if you leave the track you can't come back on to race. But if I left the track for sanitary reasons, he was going to allow me to come back on. We took off and went, but it couldn't be facilitated. That's the way things go, too, that's competition.

So I celebrated in California for the next couple of weeks. What's the sense of rushing home when I can spend all of Elaine's money in California and get over my bereavement at the Olympic trials. That was part real and part that we'd just-- It was a major chance to be in California, see Big Sur, and we did, we saw a lot of California because we had my sister's car. We went to dinner--spent a hundred dollars at a dinner back in those days. Lawrey's prime rib. Jack Benny came in and sat at the table next to us, that sort of thing is a once-in-a lifetime chance, even though we couldn't afford any of it.

We came back home and now my bicycle racing took a turn. In 1969 I heard of, in Canada 200 miles straight west of us in Rochester, halfway between Buffalo and Detroit, there was a little town called Dalehi (sp.?), Canada. They all have arenas, skating rinks, hockey rinks, and somebody decided to design and build an indoor board track. Wow! Unheard of in the modern western hemisphere.

The last time was in the 1920s in Madison Square Gardens when the United States was the best in bicycle racing, then it just faded out with flabby Americans and their cars, etc. So, we went to see it. Well, I walked in the door, and finally a guy had to nudge me hard and say, "Hey come on, you're blocking the way." This track, the Veladrome! I really loved the

sport. If I could rent the place, I'd just get on it and ride and ride and ride. I just stood there with my jaw down. Here was this track!

Well one thing led to another. I started talking with people; they were so friendly and nice. The Bromfields--we stayed at their house for week after week after week. They said, "Well Tom, you won't be able to ride this track. In order to get on this track you'll have to go to track school for a year." I'm thinking, "Wait a minute now, I just made the final Olympic trials and you tell me I don't know how to ride a bike?"

Boy I'll tell you what, the first day at that track school I got on--they give you a push on the straightaway which is banked about 35 degrees, then you go into a 57 degree banking. (Once you're a hotshot macho, if you're really good, your left elbow will always be scabbed because only the best riders scrape their elbow on the flat floor because one is over so far. And of course it's pretty hard to do, you have to reach down and scrape round that curve.) Well, I took off on the straightaway, went into the banking and it was just like it was a wall, just folded right into the banking! It was one of the things that's so tricky, and I won't dwell too much on any of the track aspect, but I do want to tell you that as opposed to riding a bike, you turn as you lean. And track riding, indoor board track not so much outdoor board track, you have to totally against every instinct keep your bike perfectly straight on the straightaway and fall over in time with the banking with the turn. If you don't fall over far enough, when you go into the banking you'll just fall over, sometimes go right up off the track into the stands. If you fall over too far, you'll fall all the way over and slide three-quarters of the way around the track, all brush burned and bruises. So, of course, I fell once, but never had to fall again. I took to it right away, rode.

To give you an example, if you can picture from the edge of a hockey rink out into the stands, certainly wider than this floor, and stuck up at an angle like that, this Veladrome type thing around, okay. When I rode it, after I got good, I would do a lap in seven seconds. You know, I'm bragging, but I want you to understand how great it was. Very fast, getting up towards 40 miles an hour indoors.

The air was so dry. I'd take a drop of peppermint on my tongue, and teaspoon of plain glycerine to coat my throat, because when riding in that dry air one could lose his voice. Entirely different from any racing I'd ever done. Fell in love with it.

Now, here is the problem. With minimum wages, I'm driving from Rochester 200 miles to Dalehi, Canada, every Friday evening, staying there with minimal expenses. They would pay for your hotel there, they had a motel, the Maple Leaf Motel, and--hey, you know, 20 more people won't hurt. One time I did sleep on the dresser--wall to wall people. That didn't matter, it was sports. But then as we befriended other people involved there we stayed at the Bromfield's house and that was much more comfortable. Elaine befriended them, had a really good time. I kind of got a personalized coach who had been in the Olympic trials, been a national champion, for Canada of course. Understand, I'm the gringo racing in Canada. But that didn't matter, I mean there was a little bit of bias and prejudice but because I was good, I was wanted on all their teams. I eventually raced for the international team out of Canada and then decided to turn professional. We went there for the full year every single weekend. That was the priority. It was very strenuous on Elaine, she didn't like going there but she put up with it.

Also, one of the problems that we dealt with intelligently was, at the time of the Olympic trials, Elaine was pregnant with Todd, and if I were to qualify to go to Mexico to go for the gold run, I would have to leave her in the middle of July and then I wouldn't be back until October. No way could I afford to bring her with me, we had no money at all. She was feeling, "Oh, gee, I'm pregnant; are you going to be gone so long?" "Well, it was decided I should do this, and you're not due until December or the end of December." So that actually worked out itself. So that means Todd was born while we were doing this bicycle career still, become more so obsessive about it. In other words, never mind fixing the car, I need this bike part. Okay. Two weeks before Christmas that year, Elaine came to me-- Todd was born December 28, 1968, income tax special! We actually got money at the end of the-- In fact, on December 27 I took her for a ride in my pickup truck on the railroad track. We'd got to get this kid here before the end of the year! And I had a bicycle race to go to.

Anyway, with Todd born now, we were trucking him all around. Elaine came to me two weeks before Christmas and said, "Tom, you've got one of two choices. You can be a professional bike racer, or a husband and a father. This wasn't a big shock, it just came to a head then. Two weeks before Christmas, picked up the phone: "Hi, guys, you know I've got a lot of stuff and everything I'm selling out. I'm quitting bike racing."

Oh, to her I said, will you give me awhile to decide? I meant that. All kidding aside, I was going to spend a couple of days seriously deciding because I had to finally make the decision. Should I have her leave me, or I leave her, and be a professional bike racer? No problem. Even if it meant leaving her, because my thoughts were, could I leave her and then when I was done, get her back? I could then say, "Okay, I'm ready to be a husband and a father." There was a probability that she would take me back. That was a consideration. So I asked her to give me a couple of days to decide. She said yes, but it's gotta be done, one or the other. I said okay.

It did take fifteen minutes, but that's been very typical of me all of my life. I can make a lifelong change in just a minute or so of time. Some people say, oh well, let me sleep on it or this or that or they'll go check with all their friends and everything like that. I was always in control, I thought.

I called all the guys. I asked for an offer on all the equipment I had. One guy accepted the offer. Well, he got about \$12,000 worth of equipment for about \$500 by today's standards. Of course it was about \$125.00 that I got. Well, that was okay. Again, that's typical of me, I made a decision. Now that was my life, it was bordering on more important than Elaine and my whole relationship with her. At times it was more important. Obviously. Made the decision; he came over. He got so embarrassed because we filled his car and then he had to come back again for another load.

[One side of tape 3 begins in middle of sentence]

**Tom** . . . time the light. He was limited by laws that you couldn't go through the light. I have to admit that most red lights didn't exist as far as I was concerned. I'd look both ways for traffic and if it was clear, vroom! away I would go. So we'd speed ahead of him and then pull right over to the curb and he'd blast the horn! Well, after about the fifteenth red light, and that poor guy had to put up with us, each time we'd catch up and and say, "Hey! Look who it is!" I'd yell back to Mike, "Mike, guess what? It's him!"

**Sidney** And he was getting madder and madder each time!

**Tom** Oh I guess so. He tried to drive so fast, fifty miles an hour, then he'd get stuck in a red light and we'd catch right up to him. Wow, the poor guy! He must have lost ten pounds that day. That was a little arrogant and

sarcastic on our part, but it was fun too. You know, it might have even taught him a lesson.

**Woman in Room** What kind of response would one have in a life review of this kind of thing? Would you still come away thinking that was just good fun?

**Tom** There's such a vast majority of things that were genuinely okay, even the judgmental aspect of it was okay. Because really I followed a set of rules that usually were within the law--except speeding--as well as -- With a kind of Catholic Christian background (again, I made my communion confirmation, didn't have any idea of what was going on, then a dude smeared some stuff on my forehead, whacked me on the side of the head, and I got a Timex watch! I mean the church, God forbid they should lose their donations every year), I'm a great Catholic. I've made my confirmation already, I'm their number one man. They still hold this to be true.

A couple of the Bishops that have heard about me are a little bit afraid of me. God forbid I should ever turn out to be a normal person (or a Joshua) [aside to Sidney] and they are in utter fear--and this is sort of off the record--utter fear of who in the hell I am, or who in the heaven I am. I'm ready, willing, and able to talk to them. I'm off on a tangent, I know. Bishops have met behind my back, met privately, they've never called me on the phone or stopped over, or written a letter. [Here the recorder got turned off. I checked it and part of the next sentence is not there] Yeah, we were just talking about J. Chrisner Murtey and he's one of the few people that I've championed for one reason or another. . . . walked by the hallway and heard his voice on a video tape saying, "images, images, images," that's how much I heard. That did several things to me, for me, or whatever. It reminded me of what I subconsciously knew, or already knew, so much of the biochemical functions of the brain--other words, medically and scientifically. Beta endorphins are green and yellow, a thing that I'm not sure I know how to pronounce--encaflins. (sp.?) What does this mean to the near-death experience? What does this mean to research?

And oh, my God, I wonder who Dr. Daniel Carr is? I've got to get a message [Tom in tears again] I've got to get a message to him, his research group is stuck and I know the answer to their problem [tears again]. This vast, vast, whole core of information, mostly evolving around the human brain, and images, images, images. Also the kind of laughable stupidity of what we do with the images.

We get an image, and get another image, and we get a third image, and then with those three we could get ten more images, and we have such brain clutter that amounts to a bunch of images. What of reality do we really know? Is that a red coat over there? Or is that a coat and it is absorbing the six basic colors, allowing us to perceive the one remaining color that is not being absorbed by the pigment of the coat and it looks red to us. Most people would say, what did you just say? That's a simplistic example.

But again, images. Who is this dude, Jesus Christ? Right away you've got this thin type bearded dude with the sandals and all of this stuff. Wait a minute, wait a minute! If you should by chance ever pray to and toward or do I dare say worship anything else, of this thing called Jesus the Christ. Is it he the man or the Christ in him? We are so far removed from the Christ, we're stuck with Jesus of Nazareth. I mean come on, the dude didn't wash as much as I do! I'm saying that to destroy your images.

I once said at the University of Connecticut--there was a round table discussion there of doctors and physicists and the question was asked of me, very seriously: "Tom, if there's one thing that you could do to everybody, what would that thing be?" And I answered right away with no hesitation because I think they were thinking I'd say, "Oh, to give everybody a near-death experience like mine." And I said, "To destroy all their images." Wow! Because I said the word "destroy" did--it destroyed his images for the moment! Yeah, if I could like abra kadabar get rid of your images, what are you left with? **Love and Light.** You're not going to be stuck with darkness and evil, no way Jose. You'll have to gain a lot of images before you can beget again evil and darkness. The absence of images is not dark, it is light. Well, shall we back track to school, or what? [to Sidney]

**Sidney** No, you're doing fine. When I transcribe this I can fit it in where it belongs.

**Tom** Better you than me! I don't think a word processor could handle this stuff.

**Sidney** I have one. I'll have to see what it can do with this.

[Question from woman in room is not audible enough to transcribe.]

**Tom** Your inability to either hear and answer--there is no one answer, there can be many answers--your inability to hear that is therefore a

problem. Your problem is justification. There's a statement also that has become quite famous, especially in nature programs like the lion and tiger and so on. There is no justice in nature, there is only nature, It is not justifiable for a lion to kill a buffalo.

**Woman** So you are saying that God created and I should accept that as God's nature?

**Tom** That's an answer. That's the answer.

**Woman** I know it's the answer. Maybe I'm having trouble accepting the answer.

**Tom** Well, let me hit you with a bind-blower. Guess what? You've also just answered why you're here.

**Woman** I know why, I know.

**Tom** Because you have to come up with and deal with and eventually come to know the true reality, the true nature.

**Woman** So on the other hand I can't stop asking.

**Tom** Also, that which you claim and say to know--and I'm basically agreeing that you know--you know it intellectually, but *you may not know it spiritually!* Or, you may not know it physically, or you also may not know it psychologically and emotionally. At the time that you can know it in all of those ways simultaneously, then you will *know*. But you cannot know, underline, capital letters KNOW. You cannot know if you only know it intellectually, or psychologically, or emotionally, or any one of the above, or any two or three of the above. And you can only know it when you can know it simultaneously with all those ways. I'm not even denying that I left one out, you know, emotional, psychological, spiritual, physical.

**Woman** What is it you're talking about knowing?

**Tom** God. The nature of God.

**Sidney** How can one experience all of those?

**Tom** Wheeee! How can you experience those? Let me count the ways! You can experience that knowledge, that knowing, in many different ways, regarding any one or several of-- psychologically, emotionally, physically, spiritually, any one of, or three of--you're not limited to four either. I may be leaving one or two out. The many ways that you will have had to come to know, you can experience one or more of those or several in many different ways each. But ultimately the only way you can KNOW, capital letters underlined, is to know all those things simultaneously. I'm repeating myself on purpose. Sometimes it's helpful. It's like a good poem you should read two or three times in a row, then leave it alone, then come back the next day and read it again.

**Woman** The only way I know God, or feel I know God, is through Christ.

**Tom** By predestination, that has been allowed for us. That degree of knowing, I'm calling it a degree, has not been denied to anyone prior to Jesus of Nazareth. Please also accept that because again the narrow-minded born-again Christian eliminates that possibility. They have their image of their Christ, and since logically, he cannot be available to anybody prior to the time of Jesus of Nazareth. That makes them narrow minded, that's their limit. That's also their horrendous handicap. Of which they'll have to over come--I mean they will overcome. It may be tough doing it.

**Woman** It's probably just the simple image for me of being a little girl and crawling up and an image of Christ, you know as a little girl in a big rocking chair--almost an Edith Ann thing--and being rocked. That's very imaging.

**Tom** Several near-death experiencers used that very description to try to say, "It was like-- It was like-- The same imagery. Of course what they're experiencing is psychological, at least to a degree, certainly emotional, the compassion of those type of emotions, and not necessarily intellectually. But they use that as a measurement.

I think one of the first measurements I used was, "If you take all the ecstatic memories of your life--and of course I said of me. The Olympic trials, seeing Elaine in her wedding dress on our wedding day, the most satisfying momentary sexual experience, sexual orgasm, assisting and

participating in the birth of our two children, put them all together and multiply them by a million and it won't be a drop in the bucket compared to the ocean of love. Wow! All of those words! You know, I've gotta talk a lot, I've gotta say a lot [laughing]. I can't say "it's the rose" to a poet--you know just a two-word thing. And all of that stuff. You know who used to say that after every third sentence? He had so much to say and so much on his mind, and he was such a great person. He would be like in a hurry and he would say, "And all of that stuff." And when he'd say it he meant come on please so we can get on to the real sentence.

**He was Thomas Merton.** You ever heard of him? Another crazy man, you know, he did some weird stuff. But an extraordinary being too. He knew a lot--he didn't know it all, but he knew a lot. He has become a great teacher, he is now a great teacher. How dare we say that Adolph Hitler, the memory of Adolph Hitler--or he, the deceased entity, Adolph Hitler, is not a great teacher? He might not be your favorite teacher, but how dare you be biased or prejudiced to a God-given teacher. Oh wow, is there a message in there somewhere? Was that a little jab? Interesting stuff.

[A skip here in the tape--blank space. Resumes with Tom in mid-sentence]

. . . two sides of the coin, two stories, one side and then the other. See you can justify intellectually, you can justify psychologically: I have a psychological need for this. Wait a minute, you have a psychological need to satisfy yourself at the expense or the detriment of another person? That's God? That's not God, that's self, and selfish. But you may very well have that psychological need and decide to fulfill it. And have you been fair? Yes, you have, you've satisfied a need. To not satisfy that need is to have denied yourself and you may have a long duration of repercussions and so on from that.

But what fails you is any form of justification. It works on a minute to minute basis. It works on most mundane things, it works in criminal justice systems, it works in systems--**God is not a system. Any measurable degree of justification will fail you when it comes to God.**

Elaine yelled at me one time. She said, "But why did you do that?" And believe it or not, I calmly and quietly said, "Is it important to you to hear the answer why, or are you still dealing with the fact that I am that?" It went right over her head. So she demanded an answer to "why did you do that?" And then I looked at her and I said, "Because I am that. It's only

history. She stopped a little bit and made an attempt but then blocked it right away, she's still wrapped up in her justice system. She needed an excuse, an explanation, righteousness, a justification, who was right who was wrong. And I said, "Elaine, if you're asking for an apology for me doing that, I will lovingly apologize, but that will not change *that I am that and that is history*. [Tom said to the woman: "Do you mind if I laugh at you instead of with you at this time?"]

**Woman** I'm still sitting there seeing God as -- I'm still thinking about justification. I know what you're saying, but I have to keep honoring my question. I have no problem-- I can see the justification thing-- It's just like: "Everything's fine, I have no need for justification, or any of the love, except you've got this concept of the one. I have no problem with God needing to be many, I have no problem with that, it's just that I'm locked into my concept of one. It's my belief system that's blocking me but the concept of oneness to me says that God is all and needs nothing. And that's where I'm blocked. It's just a belief system that's blocking me.

**Tom** Probably because-- Hey, are you ready for this? Let me start by going like this: probably because your God is a he.

**Woman** I think of it as he/she. I may say he, but spiritually I believe it's he/she. So maybe I don't.

**Tom** That was just a little thing-- In other words--

**Woman** You mean one with the women? [A lot of laughter and garbled speech from several people in the room]

**Woman** If we are moving back--just please hear me out. If we're moving back to-- if all I'm working at my apartment--is to move back into the state of the all, and to perceive and be in a state of oneness, then I don't understand why this scenario took place in the first place. That all I'm trying to say, and if we're seeing all this differentiation, and all these multi-faceted things going on as illusions, then if our souls desire is to become one I don't understand why there was the creation of the many in the first place, if the one thing we're wanting is to get back to the oneness. I don't see myself-- I don't want to see myself as separate from God, I want to see myself as one.

**Man** Okay. Without seeing yourself as separate from God. When you become or understand unconditional love, you become unconditional love, then you would no longer here, you would spontaneously combust.

**Woman** I understand that.

**Man** The problem or what's the matter is that we are all physical beings here, that's part of physical conditioning.

**Woman** But I don't understand how the thing got separated in the first place. Nobody seems to really hear and so this is an illusion? I just can't see anything more than one. If there's just one, there's one.

**Man** I heard something--maybe this will help--that for God to see his own beauty and to be loved He had to create like a mirror for Him to see himself. That's what divine experience is, that's what we are, a reflection of God.

**Woman** I'm sorry, I'm trying to honest, I'm not being--

**Tom** Also the truth is that in fact your perception of God--it is not necessary. In other words, your thinking right is true. It is not necessary.

**Woman** I feel that when I have moments where I just felt at one-- I mean you wake up in the middle of the night and you hear a bird sing or you're loving your husband intensely and it's just like you are all coming together-- I know the feeling of the all. It feels so perfectly wonderful that you'd wonder why God would want to differentiate. You know it's sort of thinking my human concept of everything that's going on with that sense of oneness when I have just a glimmer, just a flash, and I'm thinking this is so wonderful-- I can't even imagine my God--it would only be less than God that would want to differentiate out and make everything separate. It's like this God's too small or something. [There's several comments from various people that is not audible enough to transcribe. The woman again.]  
**I guess I'm trying to justify staying here when I really want--**  
[dissolves in tears]

**Tom** Yeah, I know. Welcome to the club. [More sounds of weeping from the woman and a broken statement, not audible to transcribe] Yeah, welcome to the club. Do you know how many hours I've spent justifying my existence? The same identical words and the same arguments, and so on.

### Woman

I'm sure my friends are sick of it; I feel like not hanging out with them anymore because I can't shut up.

**Tom** In fact you may have to shut up to a degree to maintain that friendship as an outlet on that level. The social friendship level, the rather low level of comraderie friendship that you experience in this room and so on. But also in this room we're making a horrendous quantum leap talking about God. Wow. Come on, I'm sitting here fifty pounds overweight, in a degree of physical pain, none of that's necessary. Trust me. I was a national caliber athlete. I not only know what it was like to feel good but I know what it was like to feel great.

So what am I doing here leaning forward to alleviate a certain degree of physical pain None of it's necessary. It's not that kind of illusion, it's real. I am here and I'm loving every minute of it; I'm not loving the pain, I'm loving the opportunity. You've bounced back and forth between intensities and levels. The problem with all those measurements is you think of up and down: up is better, down is worse, and we're functioning at a very low level. We're striving for and having a degree of awareness of a very much higher level.

And since higher is thinner and more subtle and more beautiful and lighter, the natural desire is to get rid of those emotions, to get rid of the psychology, get rid of the physical, and only be the spiritual. Again, there we're stuck because we are not that. And we have emotions that dictate, "I don't need any of this crap, I don't want any of this crap, I wish perfect, I wish to be like God or with God, I wish to be God. And we should recognize that we don't have to know why, and furthermore we don't have to agree why, there may not be a why. And that's the beauty of God. That's one of the beauties of God, that God is that much greater. If we

could figure it out, if we could justify it (God forbid!), we might mass produce it, let alone sell it to the Japanese. [Laughter and comments from 8 or 9 people in the room by this time. A woman said something not audible and Tom replied:] Well, actually if you got a large amount of hydrogen in here-- [Loud laughter again and comments from several people. Tom again replies:] Oh, and what was so funny, and I actually now wish I had interrupted Dan--I'm trying to remember the sentence that he said--Amelius, am I saying it right? Amelius was the quantum physicist that took the Omega project and said, "Huh! Watch this!" [More inaudible comments]

**Woman** [to Steve] I'd like to ask you a question, you said earlier that if we were to achieve unconditional love we would just spontaneously combust; did you mean that literally?

**Tom** Yes he did.

**Steve** I mean that we would turn into spontaneous balls of fire, our matter would turn into ashes.

**Another Woman** All right, what about enlightenment?

**Tom** Enlightenment is not the all. [I think that's what he said]

**Woman** The Eastern religious traditions speak of it, and the Western religious traditions speak of it, and they strive towards that and many of them achieve it, and they haven't combusted yet. Are we talking about the same thing?

**Tom** No, we are talking about the same idea, just not the same intensity or purity. In other words, the phrase "enlightenment" as it is used in your vocabulary is a reality and it is a very high degree of achievement, but it is still a ment. There have been extremely few (I won't give the number), there have been extremely few spontaneous combustions.

There's a national or international group that investigates spontaneous combustions. In modern history they have black light photography, they have all the different methods that they can have, and since that time frame alone there have been none that I'm aware of. In all of the history of man there have been extremely few. Like Steve said, when that happens, when you become unconditional love--

If a person wishes to continue to love another human being that is conditional love. The condition is very divine, very selfless, but it is a conditional love. And if you haven't heard this before, the love of a mother for the child is one of the most *conditional* loves that there is. I mean to put yourself in harm's way for the safety of the child is conditional. We're talking about a degree of love that is only light, and your physical properties, your biochemical, your molecular make up within the nucleus, where there is enlightenment--I'm equating that to the physical--is still not light.

When you combust a droplet of hydrogen suspended on a spider string at the university of Rochester, and it gives off the slightest amount of ammonia gas and residual radiation in a horrendous burst of light, that's getting close to what happens with unconditional love. But what's left of the helium droplet? Like nothing. It follows those perimeters, it follows the basic scenario, and when that takes place there'll be practically nothing left, there'll be some gamma rays, unseen, untouchable, but measurable by our technology.

**Woman** Well then we know that Jesus combusted after his death and rose again. Was he not, did he not have unconditional love--obviously he didn't have unconditional love while he was living or he would have combusted while he was alive.

**Tom** That was a paradoxical and a unique situation that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, on occasion, was aware of unconditional love, but as a matter of fact--to answer your question--no, he was not. Now, the way in which that is used, the English translated version of Jesus was unconditional love, the total package of the life and times of Jesus Christ equated to unconditional love. But any second of his incarnation was not that. Not the

real, true degree of the state or thing called unconditional love that is only light. And it cannot be contained in anything of the illusionary world of what we call reality.

**Woman** When you reach the degree which you are speaking of that automatically puts you --

**Tom** This is a suggestion, if you want to take it as a suggestion, that the only spiritual way out of life, reality, physically, is by way of suicide. In other words, if you want to equate the word suicide to cessation of your life, well sit down, lie down, and spontaneously combust, because you will have achieved unconditional love, you will be unconditional love, you will spontaneously combust, you will be light. That's the only justifiable suicide.

**Woman** So what we call the enlightened experience on this level is people moving toward that unconditional love. It's just like you've graduated from that into this--

**Tom** An unattainable human goal. For the moment being, an unattainable human goal.

**Woman** That is part of the going forward isn't it, the going home? So that's why we can't resist from striving all the time.

**Tom** I guess I had weird circumstances in my near-death experience but would never even begin to entertain the idea, or to claim any part of that degree of purity. Even though by description-- I don't even want to say it but in the most intensive stage of my near-death experience where I became totally homogeneous with the light-- It would just be too much for me to use the same terminology, to use the same dialogue-- That light, that unconditional love, that Godly state-- you see I could equate that to that Godly state which I attained or was allowed to experience, but to equate that to --I almost said total enlightenment. You see when I use the word "enlightenment" I have to qualify it as purely or total. I just

couldn't begin to comprehend a similar or the same equation to spontaneous combustion or that degree of purity. Did I decompose, did me Tom Sawyer, the soul in Tom Sawyer start to decompose like, "Beam me up Scotty" and then start to go to little photons and light? Did I attain that? Yes, I did. I became homogeneous, shall I qualify and say toward the light at the last conceivable stage or stages. Did I absolutely, positively, attain only light? There's no way that I would ever claim that. The most I could say is that there is the slightest possibility. But my God, you're talking about the preordained Jesus Christ.

**Woman** So what we think of as enlightenment on this planet--is that the highest that mortals can--?

**Tom** No. The highest is the event of spontaneous combustion.

**Woman** But then you'd no longer be alive. In other words, to be in the body and alive, living, breathing, functioning, doing the dishes, on the planet--

**Tom** Yes. For the moment. For the now as we speak. Yes to that. Well, having had somebody in history or someone you know, or yourself being enlightened, or reaching that qualified state of enlightenment, wow, who measures that?

**Woman** But I'm speaking of, as you described it before, when you have all of those, when you K-N-O-W everything mentally, physically, spiritually, the whole thing in spiritual terms--

**Tom** That is enlightenment and that can follow through to whatever degree you're qualifying. Yeah. Yeah, that's good.

**Young Man** If somebody like Jesus was suddenly unconditional love and had the ability of spontaneous combustion for his time to leave it wouldn't have to be unconditional love but it could be through compassion he would be conditioned to stay. How do you answer that?

**Tom** Well, you just did. Is it possible that you misconstrued what I said? I said that Jesus Christ, while incarnate, but that any time up to and including his death, his clinical death--

**Young Man** I understand what you said before about that. For any being, any sentient being, to reach that [inaudible] through compassion, I have a hard time-- [End of Tape 3]

[Tape 4, Side A]

**Tom** Could you please restate that?

**Young Man** Well, I just wondered about spontaneous combustion and what it would do to unconditional love. I see it as one of my jobs, because of the planet and all of the people on the plane, is that we will all move along and leave the planet at the same time. So for me to have unconditional love, at this one point and leave, with all the compassion that I have for everything on this planet, how could that ever occur without us all leaving? Spontaneously?

**Tom** I understand what you're saying. Both can be had. The spontaneous combustion takes all matter and theoretically, or hypothetically, the essence of the soul in spontaneous combustion, not energy, pure energy, which is light. That light is therefore dispersed. The law of conservation is not negated. It's not an exception to the law of conservation, even regarding spiritual energy. Nothing has really left. That name, that body, that soul is not lost. When that has taken place, that entity, that soul has not been lost in the numbers.

**Young Man** Well then, that concentration of energy. Energy has been created by what has been destroyed. From the fact that it has combusted into another form, it's not being destroyed, it's being created as another form. But it's leaving behind the condition. Through compassion it would stay for that condition, yet it's going to an unconditional form. Where's the transformation coming from? That's where I'm lost.

**Woman** (his mother, I think] In other words, if you have the advancement or whatever, to combust, you would also have the compassion to stay and help your brothers along. So how do you resolve that?

**Tom** You would not and could not also have the compassion to stay. Because the compassion is a condition. I know your idea of the thing called compassion is like unconditional love. That is the love of God. Compassion is used as the love of God. But in the human condition, regardless of how advanced, that is a condition.

**Young Man** The more compassionate leave, the more compassionate combust and go back to the one. How does this go along the path of reincarnation?

**Tom** To have accomplished that, and I don't know, like for yourself, or in terms of self, but to have accomplished that, *that is the glory of God*. And that is the ultimate compassion to facilitate that which was nature, that which was physical, that which was life, to light. And again, in that ultimate glory of the existence of God, you have not diminished the numbers of souls, or the amount of material. It hasn't happened. In spite of the law of conservation. Both are true. You could say yes to both of them. There is a paradox right there, that in spite of the law of conservation, both can be had.

**Young Man** Maybe because of the earlier conversation we had, to me it's--

**Tom** Wait, hold on. I've got an idea right here. Because the missing mass in the universe--you've heard about it, the magazines talk about it-- There is no such thing. That is no missing mass equals  $mc^2$  What's missing? Mass is missing by our measurements. Where is that mass? Back it up. In other words, do it in reverse.  $mc^2$  is energy. The spiritual energy of the light of God is the missing mass. The spirituality, the divinity, in you, you are a physical being, you are a soul. For lack of a better word, I say bleams of light, to give a measurement. The number of bleams of light in you--say

fifty, it doesn't matter, numbers don't matter. Those fifty bleams of light are the divine light that is in you, that is you. And that is the divine quantity and quality of your human condition.

In addition to that, you have physical mass. When that physical mass spontaneously combusts, you can only have a countless number of bleams of light. To erase that from what we think in terms of the universe, or the earth plane, or the soul bank--- To have a quantity or quality missing from that is an impossibility. Because anything that can leave that, is light. So it exists in that duality--

**Young Man** So you're saying that the only thing that can leave the mass is my light and then the mass will go back to where it's missing. Am I mistaken-- So then the missing mass will be transformed to light?

**Tom** The phrase "the missing mass in the universe"-- In fact the whole thing is wrong. It's mathematically and physically incorrect that there is missing mass in the universe. But as we speak of it today with our measurements of today, I'll agree for the moment for the sake of argument that there is a missing mass in the universe. Where is it?

Well, I've found it! It's not really missing. It's only in the form of light. The universe is so big that if you take light from it, paradoxically you have not diminished the universe at all. To have fifty-five bleams of light leave the universe, the way we are speaking, you have not diminished the universe at all. Because the universe simultaneously is all of the light of God. It's impermeable, it's simultaneously in the same place. Since the light, by scientific measurements, and divine measurements, has no mass at all, it is the glue if you will, it is the magnetic force if you will.

**Young Man** But due to unconditional love, you will have spontaneous combustion back to the light, then illusion of mass will dissipate and be no more. Then we will not shroud our own light. We will become part of it. We have freedom of will, freedom of choice,. But I will have to make that choice to have spontaneous combustion. I would still have what I had here before it happened.

**Tom** Yeah, I can agree with you to a degree with what you just said. If this section of the universe, or the whole universe, goes to super nova, that is in fact a spontaneous combustion of that larger amount, and if you can perceive it as a larger entity-- I mean here we are in the human condition with the divine thing of free will. does the big blue marble have free will? Maybe not free will as you perceive it, but it has the ability in time or out of time, to--

**Young Man** Let's say I'm driving a car. You are in the passenger seat and I'm driving. And I'm going to run into the school bus, and I will wipe out fifty kids. I made that decision; you may not have. If the star kills everybody, the star might have had that in mind for this galaxy or something, but I might not have agreed with that. How does that work?

**Tom** Because Divine Will supersedes your free will. Your free will is in fact the strongest thing in the universe, as far as you are concerned. But Divine Will, or a preplanned scenario, can supersede that. At the time at which such a thing would occur, you will automatically agree with the scenario. In other words, in your immediate clinical death state, you will see the light at the end of the tunnel, and you will not be able to come up with compassion for anything behind you. You will only be able to fall in love with that light. You will be basked in that light and you will only be attracted to that light. You will not be able to have compassion at that point in time in a reversal manner.

Not to be confused with near-death experiencers, who get through the tunnel and have a confrontation with the light, and decide through their own free will to return because they have to raise their children, etc., other excuses, rationales, and reasoning. At that point in time that is an additional divine gift from God. And it is allowed from God.

Through an act of their own free will, it is agreed upon more or less. But in a killing, in other words a supernova, you are killed. So you are not spontaneously combusting by desire, or you are not manipulating your death in any way, or you are not necessarily desiring at that moment in time of

the event of your death, that through compassion or whatever other excuse, you wish to stay and be. So in effect you are killed.

Now your death doesn't mean anything. I mean it doesn't mean anything as far as what are you the instant it takes place. You are clinically dead, you are zipping through the tunnel, now you are at the end of the tunnel and the confrontation with the light, and all the other scenarios take place simultaneously, instantaneously outside of time. You can only progress to that light.

**Young Man** Well what I take with me, my blueprint of who I am now, the images that I have-- So that keeps me limited from spontaneous combustion. But if I spontaneously combust, will I then carry that blueprint with me?

**Tom** No. No. You will not be able to spontaneously combust as long as you even think of what you've just described.

**Young Man** But if a supernova were to hit this planet, we would all go somewhere. But we would not all go spontaneously?

**Tom** Right. If this area went supernova, assumedly none of us would spontaneously combust, individually or even collectively. We would simply be killed. And then your soul, forget your physical absence. With you in that condition, you have not destroyed your soul. And there will be the split second in time to be clinically dead. Some form of blankness or darkness, a focusing called a tunnel, the confrontation at the end of the tunnel, or the confrontation with the ultimate light--never mind the tunnel, never mind all of that because these are kind of rushed circumstances!

Your soul confronted by the light with no conceivable plan or anything to go back to--let's really talk like the whole universe goes supernova. Because again if you just say that this medium star goes supernova, then you could say there has to be another planet-- So let's take the whole universe. Make it easy so that there is no physical place for you to be physical. At your clinical death state there's only progress. Now the

difference between that and the near-death experience is that the clinical death state in its preliminary stages or first stages is not the light. It is an approach to the perception of that light.

In fact the extension of that is a horrendous problem that with all due respect to all of you, you can't begin to know what I've had to deal with regarding the true circumstances of my near-death experience. Because of the details of the last stage or stages. I can't differentiate between singular and plural. Because I, Tom Sawyer started, at least, to cease to exist. I went in to little bleams of light. I made that ultimate forward motion. I was qualified, by that I mean with the circumstances that were being facilitated, were being done.

I was becoming--I don't want to quite go over the edge yet--I was becoming light. Now if it was caught just in the nick of time, or for whatever excuse or reason, which I have none to tell, I got stuck back here. I got sent back, I got kicked out, I wasn't really qualified, there was one more stage that was imperceptible by me, if it be ridiculous or some super profound thing that can't be perceived--

**Young Man** Well partly what Patricia was talking about earlier, very much wanting to become part of the divine light, and yet knowing that there are things blocking that process. If I were to die, I would probably have to come back and be born into another life, do something to further my grade because I haven't had time yet to answer the question. For me to go to the light would be something that I don't know what it's like, but I know there would be a temporary thing that I would have to come back--

**Tom** The problem with that theory is you're thinking in linear terms of progress. You're thinking that you are inadequate to be God, as you are this instant. Not just physically, but intellectually, and mainly spiritually that you are inadequate. That for you to die right now you are so disqualified to be God that you will almost assuredly have to come back and be better. That's one of the most horrendously incorrect things about the true aspect of reincarnation that is such a stumbling block. It's not one, two, three, four!

You might have been so saintly prior--this is assuming you can even agree with the aspect of an entire physical live entity prior--and even by saying that we are stuck in time, stuck in linear measurements. Prior and now. So if you were more saintly prior, and you are only you now, that by no means disqualifies you of an express trip!

Boy, don't ever misunderstand who or what I may be or might be. I ain't-a no saint! And I got pretty damn close last time. As a matter of fact there certainly is no guarantee--I've said this in many different ways--my natural death does not give me an express card.

**Young Man** I'm not using your for an example, I'm saying, from what I have seen and heard, the practical framement of how the equation would look. In the three-dimensional plane, how it is that we are going to progress, what it is that we need to do. I don't understand it exactly but I do question that, if a spontaneous combustion should happen, I will have to leave all of this behind. But if I'm not ready to leave it behind, or if I don't work through the things that I need to work through, when my times comes to physically die, then I will have to come back. But you're saying that is not necessarily so.

**Tom** No, that is not necessarily so. The very fact that you have a perception of less than perfection, you cannot spontaneously combust! The qualification of spontaneous combustion is perfection. So to even entertain the idea of an additional measurement of compassion, or the greatest measure of real, true, beautiful compassion-- Well, there you go, forget the spontaneous combustion. It cannot happen by its very nature. For you to perceive or wish or think or any aspect at all of any of that including that very divine essence of that which is called compassion.

For you to accomplish spontaneous combustion you will yes, perceptually, leave everything behind you. But you will be functioning and creating the ultimate goal of God. And you will not have diminished anything!

**Woman** To be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. If you achieve that then you are doing God's stuff.

[At this point Elaine came into the room. she was to meet Tom and us for dinner. Tom excused himself but asked her to talk with me while he went to his room for a moment.]

**Sidney** So we will just. . .start with chapter five! In the outline that I sent him I had the wife's name and background. I know your name! Why don't you just go ahead and tell me about your background.

**Elaine** I am of Italian background. We met in high school when I was 15 years old. The day that I met Tom I didn't know who he was and I sat in class and looked over at him. I came home from school and I said to my sister, Rosemary, "I met this guy that I'm going to marry." She said, "Oh Elaine, I don't know what you're talking about you're so full of shit!" And I said, "No, really, I'm going to marry him. I think his name is Tom Sawyer, and I know I'm going to marry him some day." She started laughing. I said, "Okay, go ahead and laugh all you want but I'm going to."

Tom and I were really good friends off and on. We were not friends when I was 15 to 19. Then when I was 19 we got engaged. He went to my senior ball. That's when we got a little serious. We got married when I was 20. He was 22.

**Sidney** Did you have a big church wedding?

**Elaine** Yeah. It was nice.

**Sidney** Do you have other brothers and sisters?

**Elaine** I have one sister and one brother. They are both younger. My brother's name is David. We all got along really well.

**Sidney** Did you have an extended family?

**Elaine** Oh yes with grandparents and all. I used to live at my grandmother's practically every weekend. She lived not to far from my parents and I used to ride my bike there. I'm very close to my mother, but I

was always closer to my grandmother. She was like a saint. She's never said an unkind word to me my whole life. She's my mother's mom. I was close to my other grandmother, too.

**Sidney** Basically you had a real happy childhood. Tom has been talking about school life. Did you have a--

**Elaine** I was very quiet in high school. very, very quiet. I just started getting, you know, going maybe when I was 25. Now I'm outgoing with everybody. And I'm open with everybody. Thank God, that's one good thing.

**Sidney** Where did you and Tom go on your honeymoon?

**Elaine** We went to Niagara Falls for one or two days, then we drove to Cape Cod for I think two weeks--two or three weeks. It was very pretty. We got married in August! If I had it to do over, it would be in October. The water was too hot! It was pretty.

**Sidney** In your marriage, which one was the dominant partner--if either one was?

**Elaine** Tom, definitely. He probably still is! He is sort of. He gives me more freedom now but he's more bossy than I am. By his nature.

**Sidney** Did he make most of the decisions about where you would be--

**Elaine** Years ago, or now?

**Sidney** Years ago after you were married.

**Elaine** Tom made mostly all of the decisions. But now we compromise.

**Sidney** I know he was disillusioned-- perhaps that's not quite the right word--with the Church. Did you go to church?

**Elaine** Mostly every Sunday I did. Now I'm starting to go again. I've been going every week but I used to go maybe twice a month. I don't believe that you have to go every week. Just as long as you're a good person, and you do as well as you can every day. I don't expect to be perfect, but just be good, as good as you can be. Sometimes I feel better when I go, more peaceful. I can handle things better.

**Sidney** When I did this outline I was just kind of pulling things from the air. I was just trying to imagine, when I actually start writing, what am I going to need? Nine times out of ten, it'll be something I didn't ask. But I knew I had to have something to start with. So it was this outline. We've been working through it. Did you go watch Tom race?

**Elaine** Not all of the time, because he wasn't really my boy friend then. We dated occasionally. I dated a lot of guys. So he was just one of my boyfriends. I watched him like at track meets, swimming--he did some kind of ballet, swim ballet. I went to that. I watched him maybe half the time. Because I didn't have anything else to do. Tom was very, very good. He was excellent.

**Sidney** When he tried out for the Olympics and had his bad accident, were you married then?

**Elaine** Yes, I was pregnant with Todd at that time. It was hard for him because he'd practiced all those years, and all of our income went to that. I think when Todd was born we had \$4200 between us for a year and we really had a hard time for maybe the first ten years we were married. In just seeing him struggle, and then having his bike fall on him was really hard. He did his best when he tried.

**Sidney** Where were the Trials that year?

**Elaine** It was in California. I'm not really sure of the city right now. I can't remember. I will ask him. Where do they have all of the smog? I

keep thinking about that--Los Angeles? It was in 1968 but I can't remember the city. I don't know.

**Sidney** Well, that-- I can find that out. What caused his accident; did they know?

**Elaine** His tire started shimmying. I think it was the front tire. And then it made the whole bike fall and he fell with the bike. That was hard.

**Sidney** How was he hurt?

**Elaine** His feelings were hurt more than anything. He scraped his leg and his arm. He wasn't really hurt that bad. His pride was hurt that he fell, but you can't do anything about something like that when the bike-- See, once you fall, once something happens, it's too bad. What ever, you're out. That's the rule.

When we were first married he'd work part-time and then he'd be gone every weekend practicing. He worked hard ten years of his life.

**Sidney** Then he couldn't have tried again four years later? And I'm showing my ignorance here, I don't know much about the Olympics.

**Elaine** He could have tried again four years later. He didn't really give up that easy. He went on to Canada and did board track racing for awhile. But then Todd was born and it was really too difficult to live on that income. He did it for maybe-- until Todd was about two. Then he quit. Because I asked him too. That was about three years after the Olympics, 1971 I think it was when he quit, totally quit.

**Sidney** Did you establish any religious traditions or customs at the house. Anything that became the family tradition?

**Elaine** Well, going to church and Christmas and holidays. We made special foods for Christmas Eve, like that. Christmas Day was when we

opened presents. I always make this big breakfast and Tom will take twice as long eating, and the boys cannot open anything. He has to hand the presents out. He'll do it really slowly, make it long! I always make this huge gingerbread man for Christmas, and Christmas cookies. I always make homemade big cookies because my grandmother always made them . I used to make a lot. Now I just make maybe three kinds.

**Sidney** Did you fix the same thing for breakfast each Christmas. I mean were there traditional foods--

**Elaine** No, no, just what I felt like. Maybe French toast, bacon, maybe sweet rolls. We don't eat a lot, especially for breakfast.

It's six, was Tom coming back at six o'clock?

**Sidney** That's what he said. Then we will go to dinner. I'll just open the door a tiny bit so he can get back in.

**Elaine** It's hard to figure out what you really want me to say.

**Sidney** I know it is. My questions are not-- It's been a long day and my questions are not as precise as they might be.

**Elaine** No, they're good. I just don't know what kind of answer you want though. I'm just being myself.

**Sidney** That's what I want. I'm just filling in the picture so that when I start to write about Tom, describe his home life, or do something to make it all come alive for the reader. I hope to do it simply and just tell the truth. Who is the man, where did he come from, and why? What is his family like? I hope to talk with his mother, and maybe his sisters. I don't know how I'm going to do that, even if by the telephone if I can-- Just so that I will have a picture of him and can write a book that will sound true and be true. I don't want to write about something that I only half know, and just suppose it was that way.

When Tom gave up on the racing part, did he continue to ride his bicycle? Or did he just stop all together?

**Elaine** Gee, that's been so long, that was 20 years ago. I think he still rode, maybe for a couple of weeks he didn't, but then he got back on. Todd was born maybe nine months later. . . yeah he rode his bike all the time. He rode until Todd was two. So for three years he kept riding, every weekend he rode. He rode all the time. I had no life with him then.

I got so attached to Todd, because I was with Todd all the time. I took care of Tom when I saw him! It was like hi and goodbye.

**Sidney** At the end of those two years though, when you asked him to stop, he did. Would he still ride for recreation?

**Elaine** No he quit. He quit completely. Because I said he had a choice. He could be a husband and father or he could ride his bike. He couldn't do that because we had no money. We had food and clothes, but Todd had no undershirts, he had no boots or seat to sit on. I could never buy even a cookie at a store. It was very, very hard.

And I thought Tom should get a regular job so we could start saving for a house. We lived in an apartment for nine years. When Todd was three we started saving.. It took us a lot longer than most people.

**Sidney** What replaced the bicycle in Tom's life? I know he spent more time with the family and all--

**Elaine** I don't really know--I don't think anything replaced it. He said he had to just cut it right then, cut the strings right then. It seemed like it didn't bother him at all. He didn't talk much about it.

**Sidney** I simply wondered. Sometimes no matter what the circumstances, when one partner asks the other one to give up something they love--

**Elaine** I don't think there was anything to replace it. I think he just watched television a lot, slept a lot--I don't think anything ever replaced it. But he never said-- He said it was the best thing that ever happened that he quit the bike.

**Sidney** You never felt that he was using that, even in a subconscious way, to get back at you in any way? In any fights, things like that, you never felt--?

**Elaine** He has forgiven me. He talk's a lot about unconditional love but certain things-- I don't know, he's just normal like everybody else.

**Sidney** How did you get along with his father and mother? Do you get along well with your in-laws?

**Elaine** I always got along very good with my mother-in-law. And my father-in-law. I've had a pretty good rapport with them.

**Sidney** How long has his father been dead?

**Elaine** I don't really-- Maybe five years. He had heart trouble. He adored Todd and Timmie, both of the kids. He loved these kids. Especially since they were boys too. See Tom was the only boy in the family. My kids were maybe a little more special, but he treated all the grandchildren good.

**Sidney** He sounds like a really good, loving man. Tom talked about him last night on tape.

**Elaine** I don't really think he was a very good, loving man. I don't want this in the book! He was very unkind to his wife. He treated his dog better than his wife. I felt that maybe he had problems and that's the way he was. I accepted him because he was my father-in-law but his mother always treated me well. I still get along good with her.

[It was time to go to the dinner. We chatted a minute longer waiting for Tome to come back. Then the tape came to an end. After dinner we came straight back to my room and started again. Elaine was still with us; so were several other people.]

**Tom** So ended the bicycle racing career. Now we have the situation of what to do, how to act, and how to react. Well, I don't think I did a really good job. By 1974, Elaine was dissatisfied, Elaine was lonely, Elaine was a materialist.

A long-standing frustration of Elaine's was if I have an above average IQ, that equals so much income. And to have a lesser income than that IQ represented, that was offensive to Elaine. In other words, as opposed to a more unconditional type of love relationship, it was a relationship that, yes, she married me because I was a nice looking guy and a good lover and all of that, plus I equaled a carpenter who was going to build her a house, then buy her a bigger and better house.

I was always able to deal with change all of my life. And you [to Elaine] were never able to deal with any kind of change. You had certain expectations of the marriage that I was never able to fulfill. It wasn't said that way as a prerequisite, in other words you didn't say, "I'm expecting you to give me a house in such and such a time period," and such things like that. I'm not defending myself, here, I want to bring out the full information on both sides.

It doesn't matter who is worse, because if this is going to be documented at all, that should be left to whoever should read this, because shouldn't they draw whatever information and help they can get from us? Because here we are right now, and we're both lovely. That may sound a little queer, but you're a lovely person, and I'm a lovely person and we love each other. And we have survived all of this shit! The both of us, we have survived unsurvival disappointments on both sides. [Elaine became rather angry and emotional about some of the things Tom was saying, and made her position known. She was too far away from the mike]

These are things that won't necessarily be described. Like in this taping, this sitting, in a printed book, minor and major details that will never be told. But when people read the book they'll be able to draw

enough from that or associate at least somewhat with your dilemma. In other words, when a housewife who is married to a gear jockey who does stock car racing all day long and spends all the money, she'll say, "Yeah, here I am" and then maybe ultimately draw something else from whatever is printed; whatever comes of it even if it's just, here we are, these people, or you and me. Is it ever good to discuss old matters? I think so. Sometimes it irritates you and it doesn't irritate me--and that irritates you more because things like this never irritate me. [laughter] I'm sorry that you have that reaction but can you see value in it for right now? Shall we continue? Well, so anyway that's information. It came to a head in, I believe, 1974. You know, if anybody's been through a separation or a divorce, they have some association with what I'm about to say. Anybody who hasn't, will only laugh at what I say.

Elaine and I had tough times and I finally gave in and agreed that I would leave the house on a voluntary separation for a short term like a week, or two weeks, or whatever. I did leave the house and I went to the central YMCA and I had a ball! The track, the swimming pool, Eddie's Chop House across the street where I had at least two dinners.

And again it wasn't really fear. It may have been immature but anyway, there I was, I might as well entertain myself. Right? So that was for one night. The next afternoon, did I call and ask to come over? I was real cautious and fair about it. Anyway, I came back to see her that next night, to check on everything. I don't recall if I needed something from the house. I can understand it. And also having compassion for Elaine for having gone through this.

[To Elaine] You love me. Look at me. You love me. Well, because for one thing it's the truth, Elaine. I've forgiven myself and I am now that in history. And you know our lives have pretty much been an open book. Mine has always been a 100% open book. And it has very, very great value. I mean the mistakes we made have great value. [Elaine was in tears] Elaine, how many times have you helped somebody by making references to your dilemma situation in those days? Our dilemma situations and our "dilammic" history. I just made that word up!

**Sidney** Elaine, what has come through to these people, what I've felt as you and Tom talked is, "How much she loved him; she really loved him."

**Tom** There was a time where Elaine, psychologically, decided that she couldn't love me any more. I didn't know it at the time; that went right over the top of my head as it developed.

I certainly knew of it when it was almost too late. I also made a decision, "Wow, is this salvageable? Certainly. Here I am, Tom Sawyer. Hey, this is bullshit! I'm out of here. I can't stand it anymore, bla bla bla." I was yelling and screaming my attitudes, all the stuff that goes with that sort of thing which a lot of people are so familiar with.

But you know, irrespective of that, and thank God--and now I'm bragging--roughly three and a half years, (I'm accurate on this one, Elaine, don't challenge me on this amount of time), from the time we separated that one night (and smile and laugh about it now, thank God), then came back together, it was three and a half years before we could sit, like we're sitting right now, look at each other, and smile and laugh with or at each other. What I mean is, let the shoulders hang down and just giggle at each other.

Three and a half years and by today's standards-- I'm sorry to say (now I'm sort of bragging, kind of doing a one-upsmanship for a lot of people who have been through a separation and divorce), that, hey, we fought and fought and fought, and struggled and struggled and struggled for three and a half years and even at the end of three years-- Yeah, we smiled and giggled.

I still remember the day we were sitting on opposite sides of the room and our eyes met and it was just communication and, "oh you stupid ass" or "I love you"--it doesn't matter the words that were in the mind, but there it was and we could laugh with and at each other.

I'm proud of that. I worked hard and you worked hard, you know? Elaine, you suffered a lot more than I suffered through that. I mean, if you want a pity party (I'm not being sarcastic), but if you want a pity party, you certainly suffered many, many more hours and with a horrendously greater intensity than I ever did.

But that also does not diminish my disappointments, my sadness, my, "Gee, what now?" situations. It was very real. That helps people. Elaine, how many people have you helped in the last three months? One on one and personally by using yourself as an example?

I am going to pursue it again, Elaine. In your job site? A couple. Okay. Do you think it had any bearing on your sister and my sister's lives? If nothing else, as a role model? Things are survivable, even if you have a

difficult time--as you always did--forgiving anything? Do you have the ability to forgive? Forget never, forgive always--remember that discussion? Really, stop and think and boost your own ego right now.

You have helped dozens of people, firsthand, one on one, just by being you. You are that, that is your history. By you being that, your presence on the job site, your presence with your younger sister, your presence with my sisters, neighbors--ever hugged Jeannie Shile? Vickie Loder? I'm not even supposed to know these scenarios, these situations. Make up your own list and come up with another dozen. Gee, when you really think about it, wow, you couldn't have done that if you hadn't suffered as hard as you did.

I'm not sitting here trying to convince you, I'm prompting you to get you to talk for the tape, and for what we're sharing here. Yeah, tough times; 1974 and three is 1977-78, getting pretty close. It kind of fills in the gaps.

There were a lot of good times and we did some wild and crazy things. I had my pickup truck--remember the snow party? I had never been in an accident; an accident to me is when you crash the truck up. I had to make a very fast decision of going off the road, or hitting a car head-on that was going very fast and taking up the entire road sideways.

I decided to go into the snowbank. I had sixteen teenage kids on my truck, the pickup truck, and it rolled over. All the kids climbed off giggling and laughing. I was in the cab with you and Jean Revele (sp.?) Scared to death! As luck would have it, or coincidence, or whatever you want to call it, the snowbank that I drove into on purpose was about a 12-foot-deep ditch and there was all white, clean, fluffy snow. It took two tow trucks to get my truck out. And we all got back into the truck and went on our way.

You know, those are good times, Elaine, lots and lots of fun, and dry humor. Lots of good sex. Important! [Laughter] What do you think? I'm glad, I really am. When you're not around I brag about you differently than I used to do.

Well, there again, there's a lacking on my part; I take full responsibility for that. Let me give you an example. I came back from the 1968 Olympic trials, and I was invited to go to a combination Girl Scout, Brownies, and Boy Scout meeting at this local church together for the purposes of having me bring a track bike and a road bike and rollers and demonstration, wear the red, white, and blue jersey, and all of that stuff.

So I put on a quick demonstration: this is a road bike, track bike doesn't have any brakes, and how do you slow down? Well, you just pedal slower because, see? you just can't coast with this bike, and so forth, razzle-dazzle.

Are there any questions? The first question from a little boy, and it was a technical question about football! Well, at first I was a little shocked and then I was really glad. I said, "Well, I'm not really going to be able to answer your question on football." "Wow, I thought you were in the Olympics."

And I said, Well, you are about to learn something very profound--I didn't say profound, I forgot the word--very extraordinary. But now, I want you to stop and think--I even flexed my legs. How long do you think it would take you to get muscular legs like this? To be strong enough to climb the steepest mountain without getting up off the seat? How many hours do you think you'd have to ride a bicycle to qualify for the final Olympic trials?

Then I said, well, anywhere from four to sixteen hours a day you would have to ride a bike. Now if you spent that much time riding bikes how much football do you think you'd be able to play. Can you possibly understand that I don't know how to play football. And I said, I kind of know how to play baseball, but I would never be any good at all on the team, but if you take any of those football players, or any of those baseball players, and put them on a bike alongside me, boy, will I ever be able to beat them! They really comprehended that; that was pretty cool.

**Sidney** But you didn't socialize much with other people, that's what you started--

**Tom** Yeah, all right. We had friends. If we ever took the time, or needed the time, there were friends that we could go to. I know what you're asking; we were by no means antisocial. We were never antisocial, it was--well you know, if you're riding a bike sixteen hours a day.

Another aspect, and I'll just say one or two sentences, another aspect around the time of our marriage, Elaine's mother had a difficult time giving up her first-born child, which is so common.

But in that, there were difficult feelings, intolerable situations that couldn't be coped with, normally or regularly, to the degree that the first

three years of our marriage, were additionally difficult for Elaine because it did come to pass that she finally agreed with me, that we would have to tell her mother to leave us alone.

That Elaine and I would have to struggle and try to make do with what we have to make do. That was very tough; Italian-American family, wow, regardless of how well or unwell they communicate, there's still that very culture thing of the family. To the point where I ran in front of her mother's car and pounded it with my fist on the hood of the car and screamed. [Elaine comes in loud and clear here]

**Elaine** She did it because you didn't treat me well, you didn't half treat me well then. That is the reason why. There were a lot of other things that you did. That's why she did it. She was right. With Todd and Tena's situation now, I can understand why she did it. I wouldn't do it to Tina, but I can understand why she did it. I think she was right. When you did that, you weren't right. Why do you want to bring all this stuff up? You weren't right.

**Tom** You want an explanation why or are you just saying that?

**Elaine** I can't understand why you're talking about all of this, why you bring all this stuff up? That's not near-death stuff at all.

**Tom** Well, it's like a historical background to me.

**Elaine** Yeah, but I don't want the time with the car brought up in this book. I don't want that. It would hurt my mother; my mother had a right to do that. You didn't half treat me right then at all. You physically abused me then too. I was ready to leave you. I would have met my parents ready to leave and then you wouldn't let me, so we got in a big argument.

**Tom** My perception of those times was that you were not 'all ready or willing to leave me, and that your mother came--

**Elaine** No I wanted to then, but your mother came to my mother's and begged me to go back to you. I shouldn't have done, until you grew up a little bit. If I had been more assertive then, we should have separated then.

We should have until you got control and figured out what you were going to do, too. But at 20 years old I wasn't the same person I am now. If you did that now, I would say, "goodbye" until you get some control of yourself. If that were now, and you started treating me good I'd let you come back, but if you didn't you'd be out of my life. But you don't act like that now, so that's good. We compromise more now.

**Tom** Your point of view is more understandable by today's standards because types of abuse such as verbal abuse and psychological abuse-- But 20 years ago you stuck it out regardless. Today there's not the need, either. In horrendous cases, there's shelters, backup things, etc. But there was also, 20 years ago, a commitment to a marriage much greater than there is today.

**Elaine** Yeah, but there should be more of a commitment today. I work with people all the time who are living together. It's okay unless they have children. If they have two children and they're living together, I don't think it's right. Because if they have two children between them they should be married. It's their morals that stink. With fifty percent of their morals, I don't know what the heck they're doing. . .

**Tom** But you also can appreciate from your cultural background that makes it even more difficult for you to try to comprehend people's personal understandings and situations. I'm not trying to take sides.

**Elaine** I understand, I think of them and try not to be judgmental because I've been brought up one way and they were brought up-- I can't really understand.

**Tom** Everything is a tradeoff. Good. That's good because in the last year or two, Elaine, you've been able to perceive, been able to have an idea of an experience without actually doing it. And you've never been able to do that. You had your way--boom, that's it, I don't want to hear about it. Right up until just a couple of years ago you had your expectations and if you didn't get them then everybody else was wrong. [Elaine replied here, but had moved too far away from the microphone.] But in a marriage you should have made toward a fifty-fifty commitment. Lots of people have great,

great difficulty in that, a lot of people. Worst scenarios, worse conditions than ours.

**Elaine** Well, some of the people at work [inaudible] will compromise. Everything you do is a compromise. You might get sick and want him to help but he's on the phone talking to someone and you say, well, he's helping someone else. [Turned to Sidney] We had arguments about this near-death stuff. Not as much now, because I'm compromising more now.

**Tom** You're perceiving more, too. You are having opportunities that you're accepting. I'm playing a psychologist's role right now, I'd like to have you understand that these things which you are sort of complaining about--I have to, have to, have to. You don't have to do any of those things.

Another thing that shocked Elaine was as a result of my near-death experience, I accepted that Elaine is responsible for herself and I don't have the authority to tell her no, to tell her yes you will or no you won't. To go through a sudden change like--see to gradually compromise is beautiful, but to go through a sudden change like that, Elaine wasn't prepared for it. Guess what, honey? You can do anything you want. Scared the hell out of her. [Elaine said several sentences here, not clearly audible] What are you saying? Are you really saying if I walked out of this house right now and called you from California, and said, "Great! You're going to visit your sister?"

**Elaine** You say that because you know I won't do it, too.

**Tom** All right, now wait a minute. Here we are, you were talking about history. No Elaine, you don't really feel that way. You know that I mean what I say right now. You can go anywhere you want to go and you can do anything you decide you either need or want to do. It's gone so full-circle, so far, that I now can happily say I love you enough to even let you go.

Now it wouldn't be comfortable unless I was sure in my mind that you could not be happy with me, and then it would be comfortable to me to let you go. I've never been like that. The old Tom Sawyer would never have said anything like that, I mean, "You'll love me whether you like it or not! " It's scary, thoughts like that are still scary to me.

I certainly wouldn't enjoy on a daily basis that you would decide to leave forever, or something, but as far as less than that, cause that's like the big deal, the ultimate thing. But as far as, "what the hell do you mean to decide you're going to go to California alone."

The other thing, I tried to even push, in other words gone a little overboard, to push you to do, to be, to learn.

**Elaine** You know, I was even afraid to start a full-time job. I didn't really like it. The first day I went there a guy asked me out, the first five minutes I was there.

**Tom** I know that I sounded even then like a psychologist because when she told that to me I said, "well there you had sudden mixed feelings, I imagine, like gee this is really great because it's like--hey, an ego boost, and yet it's scary, God, you know I've had the security of Tom being so dominant--" There is security in that. [Exchange here between Elaine and others in the room] Since you have taken your new full-time job, by your perceptions have I done anything at all differently, more or less?

**Elaine** Well, you do dishes every now and then.

**Tom** That's it? [Exchange here between Elaine and Steve. Could not hear clearly them clearly. Then exchange between Tom and Elaine about putting gas in the car.] Let me ask a question here. Did I apologize for that gas deal? Did I apologize for not doing that? Seven years or ten years before would I have apologized? The near-death was the big change, but realistically seven years would be more accurate, because don't think that I was all apologetic and compromising Tom Sawyer.

That third day, I didn't say, if you're in the mood turn the radio on. I said, I'm feeling a little better and I think I want some music, will you turn the radio on? I didn't say it nastily, but the difference between how I would ask you to turn the radio on for me now, if my arms were full of something or I was hurt and couldn't get up off the sofa.

Would I ask you differently now than I asked you that third day after my near-death experience? Very much different. Seven years ago I still had a lot of the characteristics of before, the dominant, demanding, righteous person that I was. [Man's voice asked Elaine, "Did you like classical music?"]

She said yes. Tom replies.] BEHIND MY BACK? IT COMES OUT FINALLY! You mean to tell me in my apartment and in my house you put classical music on without my permission?

**Sidney** Would you really have disapproved, Tom? Would you not have wanted her to play classical music?

**Tom** Here's a scenario. If say, before my near-death experience, I would have found out that she was typically playing classical music when I wasn't home, I can't imagine how I would break into that without having a fit.

Let's say your mother was over visiting and she casually mentioned something like, "Gee, we had such a good time, Elaine was playing her usual classical music when you're not home. " All right, so that would be broken gently enough so that I would initially not have a reaction.

Then on the ride home I might say, "Oh I found out through your mother that you were playing WEZO crap. Let me put it this way, I suppose I don't care if you play that when I'm not home, but you god-damned well better have it on the channel by the time I get home.

And by the way, don't forget, because when I turn the thing on I don't want to hear any of that crap. Now I am role playing but that was very accurate. How does that sound? And you know what, the next several days I'd walk into the house and look right at it, almost eagerly anticipating a slip--that she would forget once.

Hey, Elaine, whenever I ask you to participate or to do anything, when was the last time I did not say the word "please"? Take a guess? Can you comprehend when? When in time was the last time I did not say, Elaine, would you please--? [ She does not know how long.] Tom says: NDE.

She goes on to talk about how he never talked to the boys when they were little.] Yeah, and in the last ten years I've talked to both the kids extremely openly like adults.

Both of those kids have seen me cry. I'll say, you know Tim and Todd, do you have a second? I'd like to tell you something. You know, like the other night you heard Mom and I arguing. I don't want to bore you with the details like who was right and who was wrong, but disregarding that your mother and I do love each other. [To Elaine] Look, I'm looking at you, saying that. For instance when I'm talking with them it's just as though you'd be in the

room. I was telling them (but it was like I was talking directly to you), and I would apologize to them for their disruption.

Never mind that we have the right to have an escalated type of verbal argument, and never mind that, well, if you don't like it, we're your parents regardless, but an apology for the disruption in their lives. Because they may not understand, at whatever age they are, but I want them to know I'm thinking of them, things like that.

Holy smokes! You'd have never heard something like that from me ten years ago. You see that was just-- Whatever I do might not be a hundred percent correct, but if you don't like it, you can go take a flying jump. It wasn't just arrogance, I was correct, I was right in my mind. Look, you don't have to like me, get out of my house! See I'm not demanding you to stay here. I was fair about that. "You're welcome to stay but don't try to change me. I am what I am and that's who I am. I don't push my philosophy onto you."

That was ten years ago. There were degrees of righteousness there. I was polite to people, I didn't push my philosophies onto them, but for instance, when I was in my own apartment or my own house, well, if you don't like the way I am then just go away. I don't want to bother you, but don't bother me. Elaine, how many times did I tell you, if you don't like it that's tough?

[To Sidney: What does it look like on the outline?]

**Sidney** We're doing real well. There are a couple more things I wanted you to talk about. When you moved from the apartment to the house and how that came about.

**Tom** Yeah. Things were really starting to straighten out and iron out. In other words judgmentally saying, boy, those were the tough times in your marriage. Then a few gradual changes and so on. With the selling of the bicycles, plus three years, plus-- getting up toward 1976-77. Major realizations that were forced on Elaine and forced on me.

Oh for instance, I would tell Elaine--this was in 1977 before my near-death experience--you have to be made responsible for your actions. I'd say things like that, then follow it up with a long discussion. You are not perfect and I'm not perfect, but don't think that you, your mother, or drugs, or pity parties or anything else is going to make your life any better.

You've got to make your life better. So as a general philosophy that I really advocate nowadays, I had the same general philosophy prior to my near-death experience. I didn't verbalize it quite as well in all probability.

But there was that awareness and I preached that to Elaine on occasion. I pointed out some of her faults, maybe too many, maybe too often, some of her faults as examples.

Well, you say that I never sit on the other side of the room and just be calm without wanting to jump your bones or have sex with you. But what do you do for me? Do you avail yourself to that. Do you come to me and say, "I would like to be with you for one-half hour, but I want you to sit on the other side of the room and just be with me." And again, I'm not pointing my finger at only you, I'm saying that was the situation.

It was difficult for me to not see your particular needs, but also you never told me what your needs were. I mean, you're guilty of never asking for what you desire and need. I'm guilty of being familiar enough with you and loving you and still be blinded with that which just being your husband I should have been able to see more of those type of needs. So again, there's fault on my record and fault on your part that--how much did you put into necessary changes on my part by telling me what to change or do. Telling me, say, "There, that's an example--"

**Elaine** You could tell; you were just never looking. You had your bikes and things--

**Tom** Well, I'm talking after the bikes. Because the big decision was to say, that's it; I'm gonna try to be a husband and father. Now from then the degrees of change--and see every day is a change. Whether you wanted to or not, there were changes going on.

I mean I got a full-time job like I promised, I worked every single day--and it wasn't typical of me because I'd taken a lot of time off and went to bike races were excuses but there were also additional days where I really wanted to just loosen up and relax today, I don't think I'll go to work.

And one of the deals was I upgraded the contract, so to speak. "I will give you the rest of my life. I will get a full-time job and work every day. I will try to make money." I upgraded that. I did a lot on my own, not

wanting to do any of it. Now I'm kind of tooting my own horn here but that was going on.

Finally just coincidentally (and that's one of my favorite words), I was going back to work as a carpenter and Dick Harris' the gas station attendant's son that was around my age had been bothering me for several weeks to go to work for the DPW.

I said, "Are you out of your mind? I don't want to work for the DPW." He said, "Look, Tom, we'll have a ball and you'll like it. It's good money, great benefits." I said, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute! I'm making \$12.50 an hour as a carpenter. What would I want to come to work for--what? Seven dollars and change? It's not feasible at all."

He said, "Well, I thought that, too, but really if you work there's a lot of overtime. You never were bothered by overtime. In the winter when you're not doing anything, you plow snow and you make a thousand dollars a week sometimes." I said, "well, yeah, maybe." He said, "Well, look at the end of the year," (I forgot the numbers!), but he said "My wages this last year were--" I was kind of surprised at what he had to say; I had no reason to doubt him.

To make a long story short, he shanghaied me, literally, physically. He said, "Tom, hurry up and get in the car." He had a [I couldn't understand words here]. So I thought something was up, or going on, or a race or something.

I jumped in the car and he's speeding down Ridge Road and he pulls right into Town Hall. I said, "Where are you going, what's going on?" He said, "Never mind, just come on." He brought me to the door. We walked into an office.

There was the town supervisor, the commissioner of public works, and a third person I'm not remembering right now. And he said to Bill Kines (sp.?) the commissioner of public works. "Bill, this is the guy I was telling you about; he's a family man, he's a good worker, he's reliable, he's honest. And Bill ----- turned to me and said, "Oh Tom!" He knew me because I would take the paper work from Tom Everley's garbage truck up to his office to get them signed for permits.

So he recognized me from there. He said, "Oh Tom, by the way have you ever had any experience, ever driven a bulldozer?" And then I realized, Oh my God! He's set me up for this job to run the bulldozer at the landfill. I said, "Well I," and I was about to tell him about the one time I left Elaine in

the pickup truck on a government job, a moonlighting job as a carpenter when we built Jay's Diner. I parked the pickup truck, got in a little Case 450 bulldozer and slammed into the pickup truck with it.

In other words I drove it from there to about like from here to the television. That was my experience on any bulldozer. I was about to tell the commissioner that in all honesty. "Well, I--" and he said, "That's good, that's good enough.

That was on a Thursday or a Friday. So on Monday morning I went traipsing down to the landfill to see where I was gonna go to work. And that's Fred Easton who's to be my foreman, and that was fifteen years ago.

So I got the full-time employment actually being a little concerned because again the hourly wage-- And when I got hired, it was demanded that I work twelve, twelve-hour days for straight time. That was the deal. It was demanded to work every other Saturday for twelve hours. And then when called in for overtime I wasn't expected to refuse. It was stated just like that.

And he said, "Your job will be a little different than highway personnel because they will be responsible for snow removal. But when they're hauling heavy snow, like from Ridge Road where they have to remove the snow, you'll be called in to open and run the landfill to handle all the snow that they bring to the landfill, stockpile it and let it melt, and so on. For special occasions, because the landfill equipment is the biggest and the heaviest, when there's a major disaster, the big landfill loader goes out and builds break walls, things like that. So he was explaining and I thought, "Well gee, that sounds cool, who doesn't ever want to run a bulldozer?"

So I went down and introduced myself to Freddie, and said, "Fred look, I want to tell you right off the bat I've never been on a bulldozer." "That's okay," he says, "don't worry about it. Come on up to the tractor shed and I'll show you the D-5. We got in there and there was about that much room. The sides of the big Balderson blade five and a half feet tall and nine and a half feet wide. He said, "Well look, these are the clutches, there's the brake, here's the key, -- [I could not make out the rest of the sentence. Tom talked too fast.] Then he got in his pickup truck and drove away. Wow, it took me about eight hours to get that bulldozer out of the garage!

Anyway, that's the way I started the job. You know, having fine motor control and--" [Elaine said something here which I could not understand.] Well I've got news for you, Elaine. One-half of the landfill operation was

done by Todd Sawyer. I would work up to seven o'clock at night for half of the year and that would be in the dark.

Now a couple of things, I would like to have my personal vehicle way out back almost half a mile from the tractor shed where there weren't any running lights or anything. My own personal vehicle to scoot around, scoot off for coffee and various other things I won't mention right now. Things such as salvaging brass, aluminum, and car batteries.

We made our vacation money by scrapping the precious metals out of the landfill. It's illegal to do that, by state law and town ordinance, by the demand of the commissioner, you can't do this. He had to say that; he knew we did it anyway. And I was even told, "You're told that you can't do it, but if there's any trouble or problem like a load of aluminum falls off on the road and such things.

Well, typically, Todd would come down after school--he'd either ride his bike down or I'd sneak home and pick him up and sneak him into the landfill so he could run the bulldozer, or run the loader or drive the car. Todd was a great car driver before he ever got his license. It was a great place to learn. You lock the front gate, no traffic, you've got a paved part of a road, a dirt road, wide open spaces to do spin-arounds, and what have you. A great place to learn. It made a real skillful driver out of him, plus running heavy equipment. He's sufficient, he can get a job, he could get a job like that if it's a heavy equipment job.

I'd often prefer to have two pieces of equipment out back and he would drive the other one back into the tractor shed. It saved me a lot of time, more than twenty minutes. We had a lot of fun down there. Plus down in the landfill which is basically a half-square mile of garbage mounded up eighty-five feet high. So there's an eighty-five foot high hill made from garbage. Course all you see is dirt and stone.

Once in a while it might wash out and an appliance might poke through then your job is to cover it and go ahead and grade it and seed it. As I mentioned earlier before, there's beavers-- It's the worst place for a landfill. A year around creek runs right alongside and the water rushes right up against parts of the garbage. So we maintain it as best we can.

Beavers are in the creek; they've never been able to hunt them out although they've tried year after year. A lot of pheasant, a lot of fox, and an average of five deer stay in a little woods right on the landfill property, so they're our deer. I feed them and play with them. So it makes it more fun;

when things are slow at the landfill, take a walk in the woods. Go look at the flowers, go watch the beaver, and things like that. So it's really a great place for me to be.

Now I've got a full-time job, making steady income, and for the first time in my life we're making a profit that I can count on. You see, even as a carpenter I made decent wages but you could never count on a job from week to week and that pink slip was there any time. There was never any security, which was another big thing in Elaine's life.

But now for the first time I say the word, "This job has security and longevity, and I'm thinking in terms of working every day. I got in the habit and it became fun. It was always fun for me to go to work anyway. So that became usual.

One year after I started this new job at the highway, we saved enough money to consider getting a down payment on a small house. And around that time, again I have to emphasize, not maliciously because of my background but half-jokingly and half-serious but not maliciously, I took the checkbook because I paid the bills in those days. I would pay the bills, then I would get paid, and never a profit. Just enough get by.

I took the checkbook. Elaine mentioned something (I don't remember your exact words), but she mentioned something about "maybe I should pay the bills." I said, "What? What?" and the attitude there was, "Wait a minute, stupid, you're gonna pay the bills?" Bear with me if I say it that way, Elaine; it certainly is offensive to this day. Maybe more so to this day.

But anyway then, not with a malicious attitude, I took the checkbook and said, "If you think you can do as good a job or better in paying the bills, here take the checkbook. You pay the bills.

That one over there is *numero uno*. She's not without coupons. The ultimate gesture! You've got a coupon with you. Coupon queen! She gets a dollar twenty-five out of every dollar I bring home. She's perfect in that, took to it right away. I was serious about it. Elaine, what kind of change was that? [Elaine replies] Hey, but wait a minute. It used to be "hey you old fetch, you're gonna be given the checkbook?" Wow! You know I'm learning this as I say it.

So that took place and thank God it was all good stuff. A year after I got the job at the highway we-- You want to mention like actual dollars? In round figures?

**Elaine** Well, I don't think we're doing too great today, I don't think our earnings are that great.

**Tom** You always felt that way, honey.

**Elaine** But still if I weren't working you would not be able to save a dollar on your pay. I've not saved any money out of your pay in nine months.

**Tom** Okay. Okay.

**Elaine** So I have to help out. Which is saying I don't care, I don't mind but-- For a man of your age--

**Tom** Yeah, I was in the process of talking about the purchase of the house. With all due respect to what you've just said, apparently we were doing well enough to save for a down payment on a house in one year.

**Elaine** But I worked, too, I babysat, I sold cakes--

**Tom** You decorated cakes. Fantastic job and perfect as a cake decorator and so on. You understand your total income didn't get the down payment on the house. We made a profit.

**Elaine** See, we saved more at the apartment than we can save now for some reason. Our apartment rent wasn't very much.

**Tom** But can I get to the point? See you're drifting off the subject. We're talking about the purchase of the house. One year, God bless your kind contribution towards the couple of hundred dollars or whatever it is that you do. But we had enough money for a down payment on the house. Was it over a thousand dollars? Okay, let's just stick with something simple to get the idea.

**Elaine** I think we saved something like three thousand dollars. We borrowed two thousand from my parents--

**Tom** Which I disagreed with--

**Elaine** Which you disagreed with!

**Tom** No way, no way. I'd rather go without a house for five more years than too--

**Elaine** We paid hers back within a year. Two thousand dollars. I'll tell you if I borrow money, I want to pay it back. That first year, we had a hard time.

**Tom** Yeah, you had a hard time because you had in your mind that you'd pay it back in one year. So, the decision was rather than to have it easy and pay it back in two years, which was expected of you. You wanted to double it and be a hero. [Elaine speaks] You are so perfect at handling finances of that nature.

**Elaine** If you pay back your debts, you can borrow again if you need to.

**Tom** Good rationale.

**Steve** By the way, Elaine, how much did you get on the accounting exam?

**Sidney** Did you get an A in the class?

**Elaine** No, I got an 89 on the final exam. That was pretty good. That was good for me because I was not a very good student.

**Tom** What did I get?

**Elaine** You didn't. you didn't even take the exam. He was showing up out the window on his bike. He said, "I'm not going to show up today for finals." And I said, "Sure you are." He said, "No, I'm not." Looked out the window when I was taking the exam--there he was! So he lost a whole credit to prove a point.

**Tom** No, it wasn't to prove a point. You challenged me and said, "You will not, you wouldn't dare." I said, "Not only will I not take the final exam but I'll wave to you through the window when you're taking it."

**Elaine** I didn't think you'd do something that foolish.

**Tom** And you married that?

**Elaine** Yeah, but I didn't know what you were planning to do. Yeah, I didn't know--love is blind you know.

**Tom** All right, to get on with this story. This is our house we had--

**Elaine** You were so cute, Tom, I couldn't resist you.

**Tom** When did we buy the house? January or February? Was this 1977? Yeah okay. So January 30, 1977. It was snowy and icy and cold outside. Moved in from the apartment and Elaine was in her glory. Oh this house is nice and this is the only thing I'll ever want in my life. I will never want another thing, I don't care if we have a shiny car or anything else.

That lasted a couple of weeks! And then it was, "I can't stand this house any longer. I have to have a new rug. [Here there was quite a bit of talk between Steve and Elaine, much laughing.] I know we have the house and it's the thing I've always wanted--but! She said, someday I'm going to have a big shiny car that we can wax! The point of that was the kind of trucks and cars that we had you could never wax because they were so rusted--

**Elaine** The truck we had had two hundred and sixty miles on it!

**Tom** Excuse me! You do not laugh at my truck.

**Elaine** It was so bad we had to take a boot to pour the water in. And we'd say, how many miles to the boot!

**Tom** So if Elaine then-- Elaine, we got twelve miles to the boot. Yellow highway construction boots. I planned that trip to go by the Mohawk River -- [much laughter] Wait a minute, I had to go out of my way to go by the

canal ditch that always has water in it. I think it's Route 26-- anyway, we planned the whole trip so that within that twelve miles [End of Tape 4]

{Tape 5]

**Elaine** I saved for 8 years for that car! I baby sat, I decorated cakes, what else did I do? I cleaned houses, I saved all of my money for 8 years. I worked in the doughnut shop from five o'clock in the morning until eleven-thirty, for two years I worked there. Timmie walked ---[inaudible]

**Tom** And during that time from the end of May of 1978, I constantly said, "I'm the richest man in the world." [Talk here about Elaine's car being a Cadillac from one or two in the room. Not audible enough to transcribe]

You know, running all the heavy equipment and so on, I've got three disks that are touching each other. You know that automobile, Elaine's automobile, we can go to Connecticut, over four hundred miles, get out of that car with those six way seats--it's just like you went around the block. You know, there is value to that car. And furthermore, in round figures, \$12,000 .

**Elaine** I paid \$1,380 on that car. It's a 1981. I've had that car, what? Maybe five years?

**Tom** Say six years, Elaine. Okay, five years. And again the point being-- All right, let's-- You've got a \$14,000 investment and you've had it for five years. Now, we have never bought a new car, and I never want to buy a new car. With all due respect to anybody that's bought a new car. Now, you've had a fifty-four hundred pound car, a Fleetwood Cadillac balloon with everything. The leather seats and all. I sit and drive like this! And you can throw seven or eight people in, no problem at all. Room for the suitcase and everything else. And something we never knew, it has the potential to get over 30 miles to the gallon. 5400 pound car. \$14,000 for five years and it's right out there, it's sufficient. It's rusted out on the bottom a little bit.

Would you agree with me if I said we've been out maybe 3,000 dollars for repairs on that car? One big repair. In other words, 17,000 dollars for five years of the biggest, most comfortable car available. I think most people we know have spent more money than that on cars.

Elaine, just the business part of it, you couldn't have bought a new Oldsmobile, or a new half-way decent car like a better Chevrolet, for that much money. And also at the end of five years, still have the most comfortable, the biggest car on the road. I don't mean biggest by arrogance, I mean safety, comfort-- You know, when the roads get slippery, that car goes straight. And when you hit the brake it keeps going straight! My preference is for the little Chevy Nova, but it sure is nice to ride in a Cadillac when you go on a trip.

So Elaine got her big, shiny four-door, her ego-mobile. Very important for her. It was a necessity. She was surprising. Every once in a while she'd say, "You know I'm saving for a car." I'd say, "Yeah, yeah, I know." Then again she'd say, "You know, I'm saving for a car." "I'd say, "Yeah Elaine, you tell me that about once a month." I said, "I don't care, let me know when you have enough saved."

Since 1978 I can say with love in my heart, everything , every piece of equity as far as I know is in your name--except my handguns! Anyone wanna buy a handgun? [Elaine talks about the guns and the government. Not audible enough to transcribe] Elaine, if somebody finds out about possessing those handguns-- If I died tomorrow possessing those handguns, okay? You run down to any one of the Greece police officers who know me and just say, "My husband just died; he's got these two handguns, will you take them? They'll take them and hold them until you can legally gain possession. In other words, you can own them, you just can't possess them. Then you have a choice of selling them or keeping them. I'll really disappoint Todd, I guess, because I want to sell both of them. I've been paying for a bank safe deposit box just to hold them. [Talk here about using a gun for protection]

Elaine, I'm telling you if you had that handgun and a guy was going to rob you, he will take that gun away from you. You will not kill him but he will probably kill you with it. When it comes to something like that, especially robbery, let 'em rob you!

I've always had a fear that if a guy ever drawed a gun on me, even today after my near-death experience, I'm probably either going to be dead or I'm going to take the gun away from him and not use it on him but beat the living hell out of him! Because I do have the potential to be the old Tom Sawyer. I never really lost that. I've never had a chance to test it, really,

but when it comes to something like that, if somebody pulls a gun on me--  
The problem with that is if he pulls a gun on me from here to that door I'm  
going to walk in a straight line, saying, "Oh wow," or "Gee, you might even  
kill me. But I'll tell you what, if I get the chance, I'm going to get the best  
of you. And then, of course, he'll shoot me."

[There were general comments for a moment, not audible to the tape.  
Then Elaine said she had to go home. Tom said he'd find her a bed.

**Elaine** No, I want to go home. I want to sleep in my own bed. Besides, I  
know you, you'll still be up at three o'clock; I can't stay up that long."

**Tom** Who me? Oh, I'll never stay up that long! [At this point there was  
uproarious laughing in the room. Various comments about times when he  
stayed up all night or more. Tom said when he sleeps he never moves.  
Elaine said that was true. Elaine made preparations to leave. Said goodbye.  
Tom offered to walk her to the car. She said okay. They left the room and I  
turned the tape recorder off.

**Sidney** I wanted to ask because I've heard you tell about before your  
near-death experience, about drinking. When and where did you drink?

**Tom** I never did drink very much. Once I had eight Singapore slings in less  
than an hour and fifteen minutes. I walked from the place to the gas  
station, collected everybody's car keys and hid them. Whereupon they were  
rather furious. I then proceeded to get drunk enough to where I knew I was  
going to fall down. I knew I'd never be able to walk home, which was less  
than a thousand feet from this gas station. So I got on this small bicycle  
and I rode home and I remember feeling so proud that, yes I was drunk and  
couldn't walk properly, *but I could still ride my bike!*

**Sidney** Was this unusual, I mean like the first time for you to get drunk?

**Tom** Well, I think that's the most I've drunk in less than two hours. Once  
in a great while, only three or four times for a duration of five or six years  
when I really would consume any alcohol.

I actually enjoy and prefer some sipping whiskey just straight up or  
--I like Singapore Slings because I like the fruit juice and sugar. It's a

drink more like candy than alcohol. I rode down to the apartment on the bicycle and knew that I absolutely, positively, could not stop the bike. If I stopped I'd fall down and never be able to get up. So I'm riding this large circle in front of the apartment yelling "E-l-a-i-n-e! " Elaine and Todd--Tod was just four or five years old. "I can stop the bike wherever you want me to but when I do, be ready to catch me! Oh, I'm so drunk!"

I stopped the bike and poor little Todd almost got crushed. Elaine helped me in and it was real funny. Talk about a split personality. Elaine really wishes and likes me to get drunk. because I get very quiet and very meek. And she's trying to get me undressed and sacked out in the bed. And I said, "Oh no, no, no, I've got to fold my shirt." I've never in my life folded a shirt!

And I was so serious. I said, "Honey, here, do you want me to do anything, want me to do the dishes?" It was really funny. I can also remember being proud that I was completely inebriated and not only that, I was drunk!

I remember thinking, "I've got to get all the keys to all the cars and hide them. The problem was they were customers keys, all the keys to the gas station. I hid them in the wood and then proceeded to get on the bike and go home.

The phone rang: "Well, could you ask Tom where the keys are?" To the customers' cars." "Well, he's in bed right now and I think he's asleep." I guess there were several attempts to wake me up. I slept for more than an hour in those days.

I've never really drunk much. But also saying that about eight Singapore slings, I would never recommend that to anybody. And also I was good friends with the bartender so the last few drinks were super--

**Sidney** What got you started, was it any one thing?

**Tom** This was Christmas and New Year's. If you worked for a garbage company, if you're a garbage man, the day after Christmas is the main day! I mean truckload after truckload. So whenever that's accomplished, that Circle Spot restaurant does a great business. The owner brings everybody down gets them drunk. Isn't that the thing to do?

**Sidney** I have a question. You left being a carpenter when you started the current job. Did you go back to carpentry and work awhile before you started for the highway?

**Tom** For the better part of the year, or was it one full year? I guess I had two jobs. One just to get me back working, in other words that would send me on a job right away.

I went down to the Union Hall and made arrangements to get my Union card back because I'd been too poor to maintain it during the bicycle racing days. I made arrangements for that. He said, "Tom, look, it's not a very great job but it'll get you back to work." And he had me build the canal bridge over-- By the way you might want to avoid the canal bridge. Let's see, I never did get those route signs out. MCC East Ten River Road. I did a good job on that bridge. I was a good concrete pourer. That's good stuff. A dog of a job though. The guys that can't afford to buy tools, that's the kind of jobs they go on.

Those were good times but not great. It was right in the middle of the summer and hot! More than a hundred degrees. Some days you'd lean on the rail and --God!

One day I took the nail apron and let it drop on the plywood and it dropped off the bridge into the canal. Wow! Boy did I make a mistake. They came down, the sheriff's department came down. Because that's by the County Home and I guess they have a lot of people jump off the bridge to the canal. They said, "Tom, you really can't do that. I know you weren't on the job when we first started, but--" Oh boy, oh Wow.

He said, "If you've got to go in the canal at all, go down and walk in off the shore. A couple of times I swam in the canal until I bumped into material that wasn't supposed to be in the canal. Ugh!

Then I was asked as a personal favor to the main Union steward--he's not the president of the Carpenter's Union--and he said, "Tom, I'm going to ask you for a favor. Look if you'll do this favor for me, when you come back I'll give you a decent job, I'll line one up for you.

"We're having a lot of Union trouble at the Big M Plaza out at Brockport on Route 19 and 31. The wall's already fallen over on the mason." ( I don't know if anybody'd got killed or hurt there, but I think so.)

He said, "Nobody'll work on the job, it's a bad job. The contractor's a real jerk from out of town or from White Plains, New York. What I want you

to do--it'll only be a couple of days-- just go in there and hang the fire doors. Do whatever you have to do.

"When you get down there, report to this guy, and make sure you demand (and tell him ahead of time) that you're gonna be paid in cash. You want cash. Don't take a check from this company, they're not reliable and we're having a lot of trouble with them. And it turned out to be the best job I've ever been on --in the world, anyway. (I can't quiet recall his name). He would have me start work at eight o'clock and by no later than ten-thirty or eleven o'clock he'd say, "Well put your tools away, Tom, we're going to go for a little ride. "

I thought this was okay; I was getting paid by the hour. I'd put my tools away and we'd go across the street to the Robin Hood Room. He'd offer a couple of drinks all the time. I had one or two drinks on occasion, but as a rule I didn't drink. They had real good food there. We'd have a big lunch, he'd buy the lunch, and then that was it for the day. And he would always pay.

And the job that was supposed to last a week or two lasted over six months, just to hang those fire doors. It was kind of fun, including the one particular day when I was requested to get in the state body (?) truck and go for a little ride. I asked, "Where're we going now?" "Shut up and get in." So I shut up and got in and forty-five minutes later I'm out in the middle of a cabbage field loading cabbage! You know, at \$12.50 an hour you do what you have to do!

[Carol Chesbro came to the door here and there was some conversation between her and Steve.]

**Tom** Well, how far did we get?

**Sidney** We are moving right along to the accident and I want you to talk about the day it happened. What day of the week was it, and if it was in the middle of the week when nobody was home or--

**Tom** I have it in the records, but there's a discrepancy in my memory of the day it happened. This was the onset of the Memorial Day Weekend. It was May 23, 1978, a gorgeous spring day. Seventy-five degrees; it was just perfect. Colorado blue sky, everybody was in a good mood. Elaine was busy counting her coupons and cleaning and-- [people laughed] Well, that's what she was doing and I was busy working on my truck--my trusty truck, it was

just before it had 260 thousand miles on it. And what I was going to accomplish was put tie rods in, some shocks, and repair or rebuild the transmission linkage. Todd was home from school-- [to Sidney] Do I have to tell what happened? Oh my God. I wasn't geared up for telling the No. 1 Story.

**Sidney** That's okay, we can get it another time.

**Tom** No that's okay. Here we go. Anyway I had the truck jacked up-- You want me to tell it quickly, see how fast I can tell it? I had the truck jacked up safely with blocks and timbers and jack stands. Eight-ton hydraulic jack, 220-ton jack stands, four six-by-six oak timbers underneath the frame in the center of the truck. Wheel chucks, front and rear of both rear wheels, had the front wheels off. I had it jacked up and I was lying on my back on a mechanic's creeper.

I rolled underneath and proceeded to ask Todd to hand me some tools and so on. Started working on the transmission linkage and suddenly the truck started to move. As it fell, I made an attempt to yell out, "Todd, get help." But the truck came down on my chest and it was Tooooddd! and it went like that. Squeezed all the air out. The frame of the truck came across the center of my chest, you know, between the bottom rib and my breast. Straight across the whole thing.

Squeezed my heart down flat but there was still-- In other words with the weight of the truck on my heart, my heart was still beating, the last few. . .several beats. Then progressively slower and slower on the last few beats. It was very curious, I guess that's the best word, very curious and intriguing to experience the last three heartbeats. Thought patterns were. . . Everything was rather joyous because Todd was helping me and he was doing a good job. I wasn't yelling for a change.

My experience of the truck coming down on me was in extreme slow motion. I argued the first couple of times that, no, the truck came down on me very slowly and it was very heavy, the pressure was there. But it wasn't like a slam or a bump or anything like that. The neighbors said, "No, no, you're wrong, Tom, The only reason we came across the street was we head the truck crash down. We came running to see what it was all about."

I then learned about the biochemical--some people call it dysfunctions of the brain. Or in traumatic conditions that you're experiencing, your

memory of the event is in extreme slow motion. The least movement of the truck and I knew something was terribly wrong, it couldn't have possibly moved because of the way I had it jacked up. Something was wrong when it started moving.

Now with the truck on my chest, not able to breathe at all, one of the things I concentrated on doing was putting my hands over my head like this, not to protect my head but to get my arms and my head near the tail section of the transmission where there is the most room. Knowing that I didn't have enough time to scoot out from under the truck. In other words, I would be able to survive with my ribs and my stomach crushed down, but certainly not my head and my arms. Then if it's going to fall on me, big deal, I'll have my hands free to get the stupid truck off me.

Also, attitude wise, it was very typical of me to deal with pain and suffering and things like that. I was a professional bicycle racer for about two weeks. An additional two weeks before my six-day bicycle race I said, I quit. But anyway, having been a bike racer, many, many accidents, several broken bones, and so on. It was typical of me to be twenty or thirty miles away from home.

For example, one time I broke my foot, the top of my foot, it started swelling up and it did hurt quite a bit, and it was crooked, out of shape. So I gritted my teeth a little and set it myself, let my foot dangle and just pedaled twenty-three or twenty-six miles with just one foot. So it was typical of me to deal with things in a very methodical manner, the macho stuff. Even though I've got a dime in my pocket: bike racers don't call and get a ride home. What have you got, a broken foot? Well you've got another one to use--get going. That wasn't an attitude, it was a learned experience. Along with a certain degree of macho attitude.

Extreme thought patterns, since I couldn't utter any sound was, "Oh brother, if I should happen to die under this stupid truck in my own driveway, that's going to be so embarrassing and degrading. Because a couple of weeks from now the guys at the Highway Department are going to be saying, "Oh yeah, didn't you hear? Sawyer died in his own driveway, or he died under his own pickup truck. With a certain degree of macho attitude, but a realization that I was a very worthy mechanic.

And that this just isn't fair, it isn't right. And I did more than what is expected to crawl underneath a pickup truck safely. For some reason which

I didn't know at the time--I didn't know for better than, I think a week after the incident as just to how or why the truck could possibly fall down.

Other intensive thoughts were, "Gee now, let's see, I've had CPR, and if I black out and go unconscious or if the heart stops, and how long is it, six or seven minutes before you start experiencing brain damage. And wow, I certainly hope the paramedics get here in a hurry. Because even if I do go unconscious, the probability is that I can be revived within that period of time. And let's see now, Bernard Ambulances were not that far away; will they be able--" In other words, would they be able to revive me in time if I went unconscious.

So with that time running out--for comparison purposes I had the ability to hold my breath for over three minutes voluntarily, you know, hyperventilate, take a deep breath or submerge yourself in a pool timed with a stopwatch. So on a couple of occasions three minutes and nine seconds, three minutes and twelve seconds. A really good cardiovascular system.

However having the air suddenly squished out with only half a breath in me, the probability is that I would not have been able to hold my breath for three minutes. To give that just as an estimate, and I would guess that I would have been able to hold my breath for one full minute, maybe not much more. Anyway, somewhere between estimating a minute to three minutes, I did run out of air and went unconscious. On two occasions I shook my head and tried to fight off the unconscious state, you know, with a fervent desire to survive this stupid accident and get on with things.

Prior to this I heard Todd run in the house, run to the phone, dial the paramedics from memory: it was 663-1111. I hadn't told him to memorize and I was very proud of that. He dialed that and then--and I'm quoting him exactly: "Hello, my name is Todd Sawyer, I live at 150 Woodcroft Drive. My dad is under the truck and I need help right away."

The answer, I learned later, from their recording was Captain Park said, "Okay, Todd, the ambulance is on the way. Hang up." He hung the phone up and very hysterically ran back outside. I didn't tell you that on the way in he'd called, "Mom, Mom, Dad's under the truck." She was watering a plant downstairs and came rushing upstairs, partially because she heard the truck crash and then rather instantaneously heard Todd shriek and scream as he came running into the house to make the phone call.

So now Todd's running back out of the house. We live on a T-type corner, we are a corner house, so basically across the street are seven or eight houses that you could yell to. He ran toward the corner of the house attracting attention, calling frantically. In his mind, I learned later, he was thinking of Jim who lives next door, a big burley guy who should be able to jack a truck up. If you have to jack a truck up, who would be the best person? With that image in his mind that he's got to get Jim to help get the truck off, he made eye contact with Jim and then raced back to the truck.

By then three women had hold of the front bumper of the truck and were desperately trying to lift it. Elaine was in the center, a neighbor from either direction across the street had run over and one neighbor was starting to get a little hysterical when she saw just my feet dangling out from under the truck and how low the truck was.

So she started screaming and Elaine swore at her and demanded, "Don't get hysterical now, help lift the truck." She then took control of herself and helped lift the truck, three women lifting the bumper. They weren't able to lift the truck or move it at all.

The latest report I've had, actually most recently, in fact during the filming of *Unsolved Mysteries*, there were some gurgling type sounds that I was able to make. I don't recall them at all.

[End of Tape 5-A. Beginning of Tape 6-A]

Then, with that, there was just kind of a blankness, and now either as I went unconscious in this time frame or immediately after, I experienced seeing, just like seeing with my eyes, although it was probably not with any kind of eyesight at all, blotches or flashes of colors. They were opalescence, phosphorescence, fluorescences, and that you can't describe accurately. They were intensities and hues in the billions and billions of colors. I would like to claim, hesitantly, that it was the entire spectrum. In other words not the seven colors times all the hues you might find in the paint shop.

But that theoretically they were all the way into infrared and all the way in to ultraviolet and all of the millions and millions of hues of any particular color that you might be able to mention or describe. It was certainly like that, it was very glorious and beautiful. I don't know what it

is to this day, I don't know why I experienced it at all, and as far as I know, out of several hundred near-death experiencers, it's not a totally unique experience that I had, but when and the way it happened to me, and with the intensity that it happened to me, is rather unique.

I don't know what it is, and I really don't care that much. I have a curiosity cause I want to know all there is to know about my near-death experience, whether that was part of it or not, and so on. Was that a figment of my imagination or was it a biochemical dysfunction in my brain, was it some kind of spiritual reality? I don't know. The curiosity is there but I really don't know.

As a matter of fact, and that's a curiosity because when I experience an aspect of total knowledge (even drawing on that in hindsight of this experience,) thinking backwards in time and drawing on many aspects of total knowledge and aspects of my life review-- even degrees of flash forward and flash backwards in time--I still don't have an explanation for that.

The paramedics are starting to arrive; the duration of time was a little over fifteen minutes. From 6:41 in the evening to roughly 7:00, that was logged in electronically from Todd's phone call to the paramedics to the time that they arrived at the scene at the end of the driveway, they called code nine and got out of the ambulance. They gathered up the bags, and rushed up the driveway.

Meanwhile, I'm having an experience of some sort. Didn't know what it was called immediately afterwards, eventually I came up with some phrase to try to describe it and I called it a parapsychological apparition, after looking each of those words up in the dictionary, to call it something fancy smancy. Basically it was in this chronological order.

There was a darkness, a tunnel, there was a light at the end of the tunnel, there was a confrontation with that light at the end of the tunnel, and then there was something more that is very, very difficult to describe. It was basically a blending into and becoming homogeneous with that light. Now, to back up and separate some of that--don't you think I'm doing a pretty good job methodically racing along here in a monotone way? [Comments from those in the room]

During my whole operation of revival and extrication, Bob from across the street one direction came over. He ran to the passenger's side of the truck and put his head down against the driveway to look under it. He tried

a couple of times to fit his arm underneath the truck and it would just fit but he couldn't do very much. One time he did pat me on top of the head and say, "Hang on, Tom, look we're doing all we can, we'll get you out of there. Hang in there. Just hang on!" Words of encouragement and things like that. Three or four times he went back up, moved around, see what he could do, got back down to encourage me.

Now at this time I was busy grabbing onto the eight-ton hydraulic jack. Now, safety-conscious me, explaining to Todd when we jacked this truck up, "No, over tightly, Todd, it may leak very slowly, you can't see it, you might pinch your finger or something. Make sure you over tighten it..

Now that it's over tightened and it's in my hands in this position of the truck I can't release it, or collapse it to reestablish it and I could have jacked the truck off of myself. So still fumbling with that and trying desperately, Bob reached under and decided he should take that jack out of my hands. For some reason, obviously psychically, I knew Bob didn't know how to operate that jack. And it was a little frustrating for me to have him take that out of my hands and take it out of my reach! It was not a feeling of, "Oh, my God, I've gotta hang on to something." It was very intelligent and very methodical for me to figure out and be concerned that he's gonna take the one thing that might work away from me when he doesn't know what to do with it.

So he did that, he pulled out from underneath the truck and fumbled with it and so on, he then bobbed back down --get it? Bob bobbed back down? [Groans and laughter here] It's not my fault!

In this duration of time, my heart had stopped, I had experienced a degree of clinical death, the situation I had was, what I had experienced was having everything absolutely go blank. I then had a feeling of absolutely, positively waking up, very quickly and sufficiently. I had the sensation of normalcy, I had all my five senses, those five senses were extremely acute. I could mostly see clearly, in other words what could I do? I couldn't do much of anything.

So I had the experience of seeing very clearly, but the problem was I saw nothing but absolute, total blackness. I've been in a salt mine where there's no light of any kind, they turned the incandescent lights off and let you experience the straining of your eyes in what they claim is absolute darkness. I've got news for them, there's something darker than that. In this capacity though I was looking at absolute nothingness or darkness but

my eyes were not straining, I had the desire to look around inquisitively, not really with a frown. More like what in the world is this? Where am I? That thought pattern was there; I couldn't utter any sound. I didn't absolutely think of those sentences but they represent like: What in the hell is this?

Immediately thereafter, in other words no time frame necessary, but that darkness eventually took the shape of a tunnel. The tunnel was very vast as opposed to small or confining. I could not have reach out and touched the perimeters of it. The outside edge of it appeared like the inside of a tornado, fuzzy, ambiguous, cloud-like. If it was any color at all it was drab browns and blacks, no color to really enjoy. Theoretically we can't see anything without the reflection of light, but in this case we are not really looking with our physical eyes anyway without a doubt. So I could see enough of a shape and a form to describe it like the inside of a tunnel and dark. And straight ahead before me as opposed to up or down, no curves in it and absolutely, positively, it extended to infinity.

It was the first empiracial knowledge I had that was a mathematical type measurement. I wasn't mathematically aware of what infinity meant other than abosolutely and positively, forever and ever. It was certainly all of that, but like a given distance , I knew I was looking to infinity.

Paradoxically there was nothingness to that infinite end of the tunnel before me. I then simultaneously with the awarness of this tunnel had a feeling of forward motion, it was very comfortable, it was very usual, it didn't feel unusual, there was no motion sickness or anything like that. It was a floating or say possibly some sort of magnetism within a vacuum. I visually saw that I was increasing speed, although there was no wind, there was no vibration, there were no G forces of any kind like you would naturally experience in accelerating movement. The tunnel went faster and faster.

The next empiracial knowledge I had was that I, whatever I was, attained at least the speed of light and conceivable faster. (Please forgive me for stuttering, but believe it or not, I'm actually getting a little tired. Ah! Something new! I promised myself that I would go to sleep the other day but it didn't work.) whisking through the tunnel at the speed of light or conceivably faster, I had the depth perception, the visual perception of the tunnel whisking past me or in fact I through the extent of the tunnel.

The next thing that I will describe to you is that way, way off in the distance, again paradoxically, because we'd gone past vast distances, to infinity there appeared this little speck of light. That light was very special; it was the first identifiable object that I was able to focus on, or realize that it was nothing like what I'd seen before. It was extremely bright, it was brighter than something that would immediately blind you. It was brighter than a million billion carbon arcs, welders torches, anything you can possible compare it to. It was the brightest thing I'd ever seen in my life. It was also equally beautiful. It was utter beauty. It was the most beautiful thing that I'd experienced during the 32 years of my life. I had the kind of depth perception that from way off in the distance it got larger as I got closer to it.

There was a type of deacceleration, but it would not do justice for me to try to describe it. It was something that was necessary and I don't think a description at this point is necessary. More importantly I was then in an upright position, comfortably well-balanced and motionless at the end of this tunnel. Behind me would have been the tunnel; if I'd have turned around and looked I'm sure that I would have been able to see and verify the tunnel in reverse. I did not do that, it was an awareness I was sure of without having to verify it.

Much more importantly, what I want to tell you is that before me was that light at the end of the tunnel. As part of that deacceleration I realized that the light was emanating from outside the tunnel. Now, being at the end of the tunnel and standing before the light, it can be described as -- It covered the entire vista before me, absolutely everything. It was more beautiful than I've tried to describe on the first awareness of the light, which is a paradox in itself because you can use all the apex of Venus, the paramount, then you say but it was more. It is an impossibility, one of those paradoxical greatness or greater.

It was certainly divine in nature; I had never experienced anything that divine for the first thirty-two years of my life. It was white, possibly blue-white, sometimes we say that to try to purify white, but it was certainly white. It was paradoxically absolutely everything. It included Tom Sawyer. It included the tunnel that was behind me. It included the entire universe that I was ever aware of. It was absolutely, positively, everything. But paradoxically, I was myself, I was still Tom Sawyer, with all of my character and characteristics and I was separate from it by just a

spatial measurement of visual connotation. And it was before me. Instantaneously it emanated to me, thought pattern to thought pattern. And to describe what that was I coined a phrase: superluminal telepathic communication. Fancy smancy little Latin thrown in there for a telepathic thought pattern to thought pattern rapport that functioned fast as, or conceivably faster than the speed of light. (After ten years it still-- What? Wow! Let's see, I got to the rapport--) [Tom was in tears here and trying to laugh through them]

To describe to you easily, I've done a little role playing. I'm the Light speaking to Tom Sawyer: "Tom, you have to be where you are and in the condition that you are. Before you is the light. You have the opportunity to ask any question, any series of questions, any question that you can conceive of will be absolutely, unequivocally answered. If it's a series of questions, something that you would require some kind of knowledgeable background to intelligently formulate your questions, you will instantly have that background to intelligently ask a question.

Now we think in terms of ask a question but your thought pattern is not in sentence form, a desire is not in sentence form. How do you act or simulate a desire? Well an example of that in one of the questions which I did ask was, "What about----" [Tom in tears] "What about the Jesus stuff?" Now that was my rather clever way of saying, that's not a singular question. What about the Jesus stuff is saying, "Okay. All kidding aside, was there this dude, Jesus of Nazareth, was he real, was he a live person, around the time frame in regards to all of that? And was it a historical truth? Was he the son of God? Is he divine? Is he at the right hand of the father? What about the Jesus stuff?" So you could go on with no less than ten thousand separate questions which equals more the thought process or desire for, simply put, "What about the Jesus stuff?"

I can break off here and tell you that was basically answered thumbs-up in the affirmative. Now there wasn't a big thumb sticking up there! Just basically in the affirmative. Also mixed in there was I had theories, I had cultural background, I had a religious type background, but as ambiguous as it was, as unrealistic as it was, I had certain preconceived ideas and should they be verified or should they not be verified, whatever the truth is that's what I wish to know. So in that singular thought pattern, a desire of that type of knowledge, that's one question.

I've been badgered by researchers who say, "Tom, come on, if you say questions that means more than one. How many were there? " "No, I'm sorry, it doesn't work that way. Okay, yes there were more than 14, more than fifteen." At one time I sat down and tried to formulate the "What about the Jesus stuff" as one question, and I was able to write down up to 14 of those questions. I don't know what happened to that paper; I know that I shared it with Dr. Kenneth Ring, and I'm reasonably sure he has possession of that.

That isn't too awfully important but a vast, vast majority of those questions, in this question and answer period that I'm trying to describe to you, was mostly of those things which instantaneously of being connected to total knowledge and a divine entity that some of us call God. It was a priority for me to know and to ask. A majority of them were of a personal and private nature regarding myself and private circumstances around me. Regarding that time in my life, as well as future scenarios.

Something that I haven't told you from the onset of the rather super-conscious state of the darkness of the tunnel, there's something that is totally missing, totally lacking, called time. There's no such thing as time. The chronology is as I told you: the darkness, the tunnel, the light at the end of the tunnel. There would then be a confrontation with the light at the end of the tunnel and whatever more. That's the only chronology in that order.

There are such things, which I also experienced, as a complete total life review, which I have never been able to fit properly in between any of that basic chronology. It did have to have happened from the center of the tunnel or the movement within the tunnel and it will have had to have taken place prior to what I call my decision-making. In other words I was given a choice, and in order to make that choice intelligently, fairly, I would have had to have the complete life review.

The question and answer period went on, and then the next thing that I can describe to you is that there were rules and regulations emanated to me. It was not a bargaining chip of any sort, to describe to you what was instantaneously given to me was in this form: "Tom, you have a choice. You have the opportunity to choose on your own decision to return to normal life. If you have that desire, that will be facilitated instantaneously and no problems, no strings attached. If you chose to do that, that's okay. If on the

other hand you chose to stay and become part of this life, that-- [Tom emotional]--that also will be facilitated.

If you chose to stay and become part of this light, totally homogenous with it, that's okay. But, if you choose that, then you will never again be able to chose, on your own decision, to return to normal life. And that's okay." Now, in order to have that choice available and to make that decision, it's a prerequisite that I would have had to have a complete life review. I certainly did that.

For most, first-time, conversations, it was from the first breath of life right through the accident, but not including the clinical death state. In other words, right up to the clinical death stage. The slowing of my heartbeat. As far as the flashes of color, no that was not in my life review. So if that was an instant afterwards, the break-off point was right there with the stopping of my heartbeat. [Here Tom broke off for a moment. When he resumed it was to interject a lighter note] "Baby, baby, can't you hear my heart beat?" [Laughter in the room] Am I leaving anything out? Maybe, possibly.

Well, okay, I'll go into an aspect, a classical example of an aspect of the total life review. The best way to describe what the life review is like is to give you examples. One of the examples, which was the most devastating to me to have experienced, is the way that a life review functions.

One particular time my father told me to mow the lawn and cut the weeds in the yard. We had a double-house type property, a cottage in the back a double house in the front. My Aunt Gay, my mother's sister, was brought from Albany because she was in need and was allowed to live in the cottage house out back. She's a very delightful person, she's a friend of mine as well as my aunt. She has two sons, Bobby and Larry. Bobby is close to my age; I think I'm slightly older than he. And then about five years younger, another son named Larry. So we were kind of an instant addition to the family. She was very clever, as was my mother, I'm sure its a genealogical trait. She was the type of person that did the Girl Scout cookies as well as the little figurines, the fine little things where you take four cents worth of paper and have a big party, everything from confetti and so on, and being of a poor background, did everything herself. Everybody liked her. I'm sure that she had, and still has, some of her old faults, but she was one of those favorite people in the neighborhood. Certainly all the

kids thought she was just the cat's meow. A cool person to know, she was always fun. She was the sort of person that would offer her food to satisfy the young children company, rather than to tell them, "Well, you have to go home for lunch."

She had described to me her desire, her need, about the weed type flowers that were on little vines in the back yard. Leave them alone now, and as soon as they blossom she'd make tiaras for all the girls. And flowers and necklaces for some of the guys. And then everybody could pitch in and she'd teach them how to weave such things. That was typical of her and that was being looked forward to by myself and a few other people.

However, my father told me to mow the lawn and cut the weeds. Now I had several choices. I could explain to my father that Aunt Gay wanted the weeds in this area; did he understand that? Was it okay to leave that? I could have then explained to my aunt, my Father's just told me to mow the lawn and cut the weeds, should that include your weeds, and should you go to my father? Or, I could very methodically and deliberately, premeditatively, go ahead and mow the yard and cut the weeds. Well, worse than that, at that young age, around eight years old, I even came up with a terminology, a phrase, it was called -- [Tom emotional here] --it was called "Operation Chop-Chop." I decided methodically to be bad, to be malicious. And I went ahead, with the authority, that my father told me to cut the grass and the weeds, and I proceeded to do that. Basically, that's the end of the story. As I experienced it at that young age in my life. I mowed the lawn and cut the weeds, and went ahead, and now and then reminisced, "Wow, I got away with it; I did it." And if anything's ever said, I'll say, "Well gee, my Father told me to do it." Or if my Father asked me I'd say well that's what you told me to do. And I would be vindicated. It would be okay, it would be a perfect rip-off. End of story. My Aunt Gay never said a word to me; nothing was ever mentioned; I got away with it totally.

Guess what? You not only relive it in your life review, but let me describe what it's like. Okay. Now it's life review time, and this event comes up. So I absolutely, positively relive every exact attitude, the air temperature, everything, things that I couldn't have possibly measured when I was eight years old. I wasn't aware of how many mosquitos were in the area. In the life review, I could have counted the mosquitos. Everything was so accurate, more accurate than could possibly be perceived in the reality of the original event.

But there's more. I not only reexperienced my seven or eight year old attitude and kind of excitement and joy of getting away with this thing, but I was also observing this entire event as a thirty-three year old adult. With all of the wisdom, philosophy and so on that I was able to have, or that I was, at age 33. However, the life review was much more than that. {Tom in tears for a moment}

I was able to experience exactly as though I was my Aunt Gay several days later when she walked out the back door. And the series of thoughts that she bounced back and forth between, "Oh my goodness," to "Oh well, he must have forgotten. But he couldn't have forgotten. It was so emphatic; everyone was looking forward to-- Oh no, knock it off. Tommy is-- He's-- He's never done anything like that. I love him so-- Oh, come on, cut it out. But gee, it was so important. And he had to know. No, he couldn't have known." Back and forth, back and forth, between thinking of the possibility, and saying, well it is possible, no, Tommy isn't like that. It doesn't matter anyway, I love him. I'll never bring it up, I'll never mention it. God forbid, if he did forget and I remind him that will hurt his feelings. But I think that he did though. Should I confront him with it and just ask him.-- Thought pattern after thought pattern. I mean use your own imagination. What do you think she went through? What I'm telling you is, I was in my Aunt Gay's body, I was in her eyes, I was in her emotions, I was in her questions, her unanswered questions. I experienced the deflation, the degradation, the humiliation. It wasn't very much fun either. It was very, very devastating.

I experienced things that could be perceived. I watched me mowing the lawn from the perception of straight up above, anywhere from several hundred feet to a couple of thousand feet, as though you put an actual camera and watched the whole thing. I watched all of that. I was able to perceive and feel and know everything about my Aunt Gay regarding the interrelationship with my life and her life in that general time frame and regarding that series of events which was the event of "Operation Chop-Chop." It changed my attitude quite a bit as I experienced it.

In addition to this, and what is probably more important, at least spiritually speaking more important, I was able to observe that, absolutely, positively, unconditionally. In other words, not the horrendous emotional ill-feelings that my Aunt Gay experienced, not knowing for sure. And being afraid to question for fear that she would inflict some kind of dis-ease, or

ill feeling on my part. God forbid, if I did it by accident and her reminder would have hurt my feelings. And yet the hurt that she experienced losing the flowering weeds, not being able to do the things for all the children, and constantly questioning the probability that I could have done it on purpose. I did not experience that in this unconditional way.

With this unconditional love that is only God's eyes, or the eyes of Jesus Christ, or the light of Jesus, or the light of Buddha enlightened. Now bear with that. In other words, I'm talking about Buddha Enlightened, deceased. In other words, the spiritual entity, the light of Buddha Enlightened. It's that combination that is God unconditionally, not, "Boy, Tom, you sure did a good rip-off," or "There, Tom, now do you feel bad enough?" Or, "You sure were bad." None of that, only, as in the eyes of God, simple, pure, scientific observation, complete, total, unattachment. No judgmental aspect whatever. Now this is simultaneous with the total devastation of what I created in my Aunt's life. The arrogance, the snide little, the bad feeling, the excitement, of what I created in my own life at that young age. That was one event.

The Olympic Trials. Woe! The righteousness, the justification, the "Damn that jerk at the airport that broke my bike at O'Hare Field on the way to the Olympic Trials." [Tom, emotional tears] Because of that stupid little mistake, I wasted ten years of training. Over one hundred thousand miles of pedaling a bike in racing conditions. That hurt my feelings. That was kind of hard to lose because of some jerk not doing his job properly! But, remember the life review?

Yes, I experienced that, yes, I was myself in all of my rage and indignation and righteousness and so on and so on. But I was also that young kid that had worked his first day at the airport and didn't know-- [Tom in tears] --didn't know what Escort Service meant. In other words, it was simply a canvas bag in the way. He had no idea there was a bicycle in there. Had no idea of anything about it. It was a mistake through ignorance.

Okay. Did that help me? Of course it did. Did I realize that this was, in his life, almost no interaction at all with me, Tom Sawyer? It was only a moment in his life, trying desperately to do a good job, and do what was right, and hurry up and get the rest of the stuff loaded so that the airplane could go on to Los Angeles.

And he was in fact aware that it was-- {Tom in tears} --that it was carrying several athletes, so he was excited about that, too. I experienced

the actual excitement and joy in him doing a good job, grabbing hold of my bike bag and throwing it down on the runway, bending the fork ends that way. Okay. How was that experience and life review even more absolutely, positively, unconditionally, with a type of love that can't be described only other than with the word divine?

There was, of course, the classic example of where I beat a man up and almost put him to death with my bare hands. I was justified because he hit me first. He slapped me through the window of my car because of a confrontation where I almost hit him in a crosswalk. I never knew the man before, I never knew the man after.

I was concerned that he would have died because I rather indignantly left him on the pavement, blood all over with teeth through his lower lips. My hand was hurting a little bit because when I hit anyone with the right hand Sawyer haymaker, I would always break one or two knuckles or fingers because I would hit harder than what the bone structure could take. I was really pretty good at it. None of you, or any three or four of you, would have wanted to mess with me at age nineteen. At the age of nineteen, I almost killed this man. I was righteous, I was indignant, and so on.

The guys from the local gas station straight across the street were running, "Hey Sawyer, saw him hitting you--" and so on with half sentences and such. I rather emphatically said, "Well, you guys saw him hit me first. If anybody's called the cops, I'll be down at the Mobile Station on the corner of Kleptman (sp.?) and Clifford. And I very methodically got back into my truck and drove away.

Being basically a compassionate person, however, later on that afternoon I called the police to find out if the guy had died. Or showed up at the hospital. Was there a positive report of a John Doe arriving at the hospital. I certainly wanted to give them my story first. I did in fact want to know if the guy was dead or-- I thanked him, hung up the phone and went on about my business. Midnight and a little after midnight that sergeant knew that I was worried about it, called me on his own time. He'd just gotten off the shift. And during that afternoon he had purposely checked in with all the hospitals to see if there was a John Doe, an unidentifiable person brought in. Or if the description and the basic injuries that I'd described fit anyone there. There was no report, so he called to tell me that. He said, "Look, I recommend that you just

forget about it, just drop it, I don't think anything will come of this. And again, try not to get in that situation again." A really nice man. I relived that in the life review, and I wish I could find that sergeant and thank him very much. I did try but I was not able to find him later on.

Okay. However, I never knew that man afterwards, didn't know a thing about him. Right. Now it's life review time. Do you want to know what I know about that man? [Tom very emotional] I know he was forty-six years old. I know that he was in a drunken state--there is no excuse for being in a drunken state; it's very rare that somebody ties you up and takes a funnel and pours alcohol in you. But towards the aspect or the idea of an excuse, the rational behind becoming drunk, he was in a severe state of bereavement for his deceased wife. And therefore he turned to alcohol as a escape mechism for dealing with that.

Okay, can we forgive him, can we understand? It depends on how you want to deal with that idea. I learned the man's proper name, first name and last name, I learned where he lived back at that time on Evergreen Street. I can draw you a picture of what his house looked like. I can draw you a picture of the empty shipping crate on top of the building nearest the incident. Which had nothing to do with nothing. In other words, I could see from above, the camera above, I could see by desire from absolutely any angle. I did write down license plate numbers of the cars that had to screech to a halt and wait in line because of the traffic jam.

Certainly when you are in a fist fight you don't look at license plate numbers of cars that have nothing to do with the fight. Also, wasn't I--? You better believe that I was in that man's eyes. And for the first time in my ignorance, I saw what an enraged Tom Sawyer can not only look like but feel like. I experienced the physical pain, the degradation, the embarrassment, the humiliation, the helplessness, the being knocked back like that, the thirty-two-- [Tom in tears] --the thirty-two hits-- Man I'll tell you don't mess with me, I was really good. From the time I stepped out of the truck, I hit that man thirty-two times.

By that time he was not able to bring his hands up or anything. He went straight back and hit the back of his head on the pavement. And of course following him right down like this-- Including breaking his nose from here to here and doing quite a bit of damage, really made a mess of his face. Okay. I was righteous; he hit me first. Try that in your life

review! I experienced all of that right to the unconscious (Tape 6-A ended here).

(Tape 7-A)

I wish that I could show that, or teach that, or feel that. I'll never be successful at it by my standards, but I'm hoping to give just a slight inkling of what is available to each and everyone of you. Will you be totally devastated by the crap you've brought into other people's lives? Or will you be equally enlightened, up lifted, and so on by the love and joy that you have shared in other people's lives. Well, guess what? It pretty much averages itself out. You will be responsible for yourself, judging and reliving the total package, of what you have done in a negative way to everything and everybody as far reaching as: That day I walked through the woods, and didn't like the looks of that tree, but really adored that other tree. Was I the tree looking back and saying ouch! You know, don't look at me in that sneering way thinking that gee, that dumb tree should be chopped down, and wow what a beautiful tree that was. But something like that.

Now I don't want to give you the idea that it's like a human entity, or a human response where you can be in the eyes of that tree. But there is an inter-reaction with you, that human being, to that plant life form. And it gets as crazy as: You can have an effect and an inter-relationship with that chunk of coal two feet in the ground. Or that inanimate object, this piece of wood. And so on. Things that you can't possibly comprehend, you are constantly being responsible for and creating an inter-relation - ship with every single thing around you.

The little bugs on your eyelids that some of you don't even know exist, and if you do know exist, you forget about them. If you do know exist, you may even try to wash them out. And you may be upset like, Oh God, there's little dust bugs in my eyelids. You may be grossed out. That's an inter-relation-ship you with yourself and these little entities that are living and surviving on your eyelids. Microcosmically, macrocosmically, when you waved your hand lovingly to wave goodbye to a good friend ads they left the other day, did you affect the clouds up above? Did you actually affect them? Does the butterfly wings in China affect the

weather here? You better believe it does! And you can learn all of that in a life review!

That was the life review. That was part of that near-death experience that I had. I could take a tape recording and start now, and as long as I could stay awake (couple of weeks anyway!) I wouldn't be able to talk accurately on a single event in my life. In other words, I could go on and on for hours and hours, different characteristics, different aspects of the eye contact with my mother. Her unconditional like love for me? No, no, no, no.

One of the most divine conditional loves that there is, is the love of a mother for her child. And not only that, her blond, blue-eyed baby boy that fulfilled her prophesy. So much for that. But yeah, all in all, I'm actually proud of my history. Some of you in this room were here when Elaine and I were talking and it got very, very intensive. Elaine had a few tears in her eyes when we were talking about some rather disgusting things that I am.

An abuser. I've abused my wife, Elaine. Most of you have seen her. She's pretty, she's nice, she's lovable, she's likable, and I verbally abused her? For better than ten years? I actually gained her a nickname of stupid? And we are all guilty of that to a degree or another. And I'm responsible for that. I am that person. I'm that person right now. I've slapped my wife, Elaine. I slapped her once in the side of the head with my open hand. I left part of a hand print right here. I also hit her once in the ribs. Didn't punch her but-- You know, arguing degrees of abuse. So I have been very abusive to the woman that loves me.

That--thank God (and we all agree tonight that were in the room)--I'm still married to her. And that we're able to look at each other and laugh hysterically. That we're able to look at each other and argue esclative. Inter-relationships, do you only hug? Sometimes you don't only hug. Do you try to hug more often? You'd better believe it. I mean, is there anybody in this room that I haven't hugged? If so, I'm sorry. Don't leave the room without a hug, I need it! I need it as a score for my macho--

[Loud appreciative laughter in the room]

All right. Enough said for now about the life review. That goes on and on and on. I mean you'll become mind-boggled trying to comprehend, equating it to circumstances in your life. That terrible nasty thing that you don't want anybody to know about. Or that wonderful selfless thing that you did that nobody knows about. You are going to reexperience all of

that. And you will experience it as though you've been to a million billion years of the best colleges in the universe. I mean, why did I hit that man thirty-two times instead of once? I know about that, I know a lot about it. I will never do that again, as far as I know. I have the potential for the historical person that I am. I don't think that I will. I'm certainly going to try not to-- Do you understand what I'm telling you though?

What is perfection? There's nobody perfect in this room, far, far from it. Do we learn with each other and about ourselves? Oh man, you'd better believe it. And if you don't think so, just wait until you experience clinical death some time, or your natural death.

**Woman** Tom, I'd like to share an experience that's almost like yours. You don't have to die to have it. But it does cause a death. It was two or three in the morning, I was sitting in my bed reading, and my husband was out of town. And as quick as you could snap your finger--we had been married 17 years at the time--I received every pain I ever gave him. Whether it was just a thought, or something about his nose, or this or that or whatever. I received every single pain I ever gave him. I felt so dirty, so ugly, I felt, "Oh my God, how can anyone love anything so ugly, so dirty. And I cried uncontrollable tears for at least half an hour.

Then I got upset. Because I'm in pretty good contact with my higher self, I mean I can start to do something wrong and I get corrected right away. I said, "Okay you guys, whoever you are, why didn't you clue me in sooner? I really should have known about this sooner. Then came a very calm, gentle, "If we had told you about this a year ago, how would you have reacted?" " Well, I would have begged and groveled and begged for his forgiveness, I would have given him breakfast in bed, I would have been his slave for the rest of my life."

"Exactly. That's not what forgiveness is about. **God loves you exactly the way you are, because he sees only perfection.** Your husband obviously loves you exactly the way you are because he's still with you and he still loves you. It's now time for you to know what forgiveness is about. Do the best you can, but forgive yourself, the past is over with. You couldn't have handled this a year ago because the guilt would have been too intense.

**Tom** Yeah, your perceptions change. I said to a psychologist, as a matter of fact I'll share with you that this psychologist was acting as a marital

counselor for Elaine and me, not that awfully long ago. Part of my decision was just to say that I went. And it was really good that I went because I really taught him good. All right, now that you've giggled, I also learned a lot about myself that I didn't have the current perception for knowing.

I told the psychologist--I made the terrible mistake of saying the wrong words according to the psychologist's perception. I was talking about Elaine and she had asked a leading question. I said, "Yeah, as a matter of fact, Elaine is my biggest challenge." Well! A psychologist doesn't like to hear that.

"Tom, what in you makes you think that Elaine is a challenge? " He jumped right on all these suppositions and so on. There I was--wow--should I take the time and start at the bottom, build it up to the phraseology that I knew, the terminology. Do I have to tell him about the near-death experience? Should I tell him that I love Elaine, and that my challenge to her, is to love her as a teacher, is to assist her changing, or tell her that she really doesn't have to change at any particular pace, at my thoughts towards rates of change.

Here was the whole thing and I just felt-- Oh brother, I didn't want to take the time. And who is this going to be for? I am actually paying this man and I'm here for me. Do I have to do this more for him than for me? So I went ahead and did a good enough job, and I did it for both of us. It was a lesson he learned, I learned, and it was good for Elaine, too. And it was really like a slip of the tongue, ha ha.

I had used that phrase several times. I said it to Ken Ring after spending three or four days of non-stop conversation, only talking about my relationship with Elaine. So I said, "Yeah, Elaine is my biggest challenge." When I said it, I was equating it to, "Tom, in the near future what are some of your challenges?" This was in, I believe, 1982.

I had just told Ken Ring that, in 1982, my biggest challenge-- [Tom cried at this point] --my biggest challenge was to somehow or other, prevent that nuclear detonation that was going to happen in the warm weather of 1988. So that was a little more important then the next biggest challenge of Elaine. That's how that phrase came out to be that "Elaine was my biggest challenge." But also, if you can have compassion in your heart, that is a proper phrase for me.

With all due respect to each one of you here in this room, if Elaine called on the phone and said, "Tom, I want you to come home now," I

probably wouldn't say goodbye to half of you. I would just go. Elaine is a priority in my life. And she is my biggest challenge. I'll tell you what, that little lady--you've heard me brag about her from time to time--but what she has had to deal with, maybe not as traumatic as some of you people have had to deal with at certain times in your life, but the collective, constant flow of demand changes, and of things she has had to deal with. You know, you sensationalize hearing Tom Sawyer say a precognitive thing. Let's be honest, most of you like to hear about the plane crash before it happens, the air flight that will crash in details and gory numbers and so on.

You know the L1011 crashed in Texas; that became a little overly sensationalized. So famous, and so on. Horrendous volumes of details that mistakenly slipped out of my mouth, purposely slipped out of my mouth for the purposes of bragging, for the purposes of giving an analogy that the person isn't going to forget. Because I'll give it as an analogy, then when it happens next month, wow! Are they going to sit up and take notice. All that sort of stuff. Yeah, it all works out.

Where are we in this near-death experience? I think I've said enough about the life review. I had a life review and, as tired as we are now, listen carefully because this is important. To differentiate my near-death experience with most others-- I'm just being honest in that it is not unique. Naturally even that cannot be normal.

Ready to make the choice, of course, I'm here aren't I? So I chose to stay and become part of that light, totally negating my ability to chose on my own to ever return to normal life. As I mentioned before, it was facilitated. Symbolically, I made a forward motion. I can recall a sensation or a feeling like this, an acknowledgment, the movement or the facilitation of the desire to become that which was before me. Blending into, becoming homogeneous with that light, I can claim and say reasonably comfortable that-- You know that, "Beam me up, Scottie," where they've got guys standing there, a woman standing there, and they sort of dissolve and just become little photons of light? Okay, multiply that times a [sounds like a "googleplex"] a number in my very being. Even though I was in my soul body, not my physical body, when that type of thing took place. That which I was before the light blending into and ceasing to exist, and I simply became little photons or beams of light. That was very glorious. I've callused myself to talking into it that far.

There are characteristics and aspects of that part of my experience that I would really wish to talk into a little deeper. I've not found the words. I tried writing it, I've tried taping it. I've not found phrases or even analogies to deal with that. Some of the things are regarding the aspect of, "What is the Light?" Well, the light is God. And what is God? God is unconditional love, God is total beauty, God is nothing sinister, paradoxically at least.

God is also total knowledge. What does total knowledge mean? It means a type of power that is not the clenched-fist power. It's divine power. That was so extraordinary for the fleetest second out of time that I was able to be total knowledge. I'm not total knowledge now. There've been a few little fancy phrases and helpful hints and so on that have leaked out of my subconscious or supraconscious that certainly did come from that total thing called knowledge. The memory of where I was and what condition I was in; little bombardments of packets of total knowledge that can be described by many analogies such as a machine gun and each bullet being a packet of knowledge just blasted into my being.

An analogy that I heard from another person that I liked the sound of, because it's poetic, it's like a little train, and car after car as they approached the lid lifted up and it was just white light in there. That white light as it shone became me. And each car was filled with packets of knowledge. Beautiful, very poetic and I liked hearing that. And my goodness, did I associate with that. One of the first times I talked (and naturally what would Tom Sawyer talk about?), I talked about a machine gun and bullets!

One of the last things that by memory I can recall is that blending into and becoming homogeneous with that light. Did I become God? No way am I going to claim that. How close did I come? Very, very close. I don't want to argue if I did or didn't. That isn't important. What is important is that one of the most important things that I did, or that I was allowed to do, I don't want to argue as to which. It doesn't really matter that much which. But again, comparing to other near-death experiences, why was I able to have such an intensive near-death experience, when I Tom Sawyer say I was never qualified? Then God about then says, "Who better than you?"

Why was I better able to retain such a degree of actual knowledge from the intense stage or stages? In other words the intensity that I was able to see and experience, and retain so much of it, compared to any other

near-death experiencer that has just described anything at all about the light, about God, or about the act of dying, the reason is, the excuse for that and what I was able to accomplish--either through an attainment that I can brag about or through a facilitation that was given to me, or forced on me--was I broke through imagery. That phrase is very important. That phrase is very profound.

Somebody said, "Tom, what's a profound answer?" Tom asked me that. [Here referring to Tom Williams who lives in Virginia. I was present when Tom asked that question.] Well that is very profound. One of the things that I did was I broke through imagery. When and how did I do that? Forget that; it probably wasn't me. They probably said, "Hey, we've got a good candidate. Look at this dude come along."

What does that mean? Well, please understand that what I'm about to say is not a criticism or a condemnation of any other near-death experiencer, cunndelinia experience, spontaneous spiritual awakening or any other type of reality or experience that anybody has ever had. However, when people describe God, Heaven, or Paradise, as a paradise-type place, with imagery-type things, crystalline cities, crystalline villages, flowers, meadows, beautiful music, babbling brooks, all of the classical examples and the very unique imagery-type, three-dimensional, four-dimensional, water-like gold forms and so on, that is Paradise, it is not by my interpretation Heaven. There's a little bit of differentiation, a little bit greater intensity, or more subtle intensity, that differentiates between that which is a paradise-type scenario, a place, a situation and experience, and that which is only white light, or only is God. Which then can be equated to the absolute or the seventh heaven. Never mind that seventh heaven, because that's again terminology that is measurable.

It is that unmeasurable quantity and quality that I'm trying to describe to you. That doesn't make me greater. That doesn't make me anything but possibly an individual who for some reason, or no reason at all, was able to experience that much, cause we have to think in terms of much, but with that differentiation that even though I had a Christian Catholic background, even though I was an agnostic when this all started, when the accident happened.

Even though I thought when you die you die, the show is over, everything goes black and that's it and so what. Let's get on a bike and go

for a bike race. Let's see how close you can come to death and win. Go near the edge of that cliff, do those sort of things. It was never a give-a-shit attitude. It was always a challenging, competitive, logical situation in my life. Did I have a background--was I aware of phrases like the Virgin Mary? Jesus the Christ, Jesus Christ of Nazareth? Did I know the word Buddha from high school?

What happened when I went through the tunnel? Did I see the face of Jesus Christ? Yes, I did. Did I see it as a certain color hair, a certain form of robe, a certain this or that? Not really. Don't stop yourself with those images. Those are all images. It's all in the confines of images. It is divine, it is beautiful, if you experience that, God bless you. I promise you'll never be the same again in your life. It's all very real and so on. But in our meditations, in our healings, in our loving one another, in our perceptions, please if you can, please if you will, try to stop thinking, try to break through imagery, try to really get as absolutely high as you can.

There's nothing at all wrong with experiencing a meditative state, and having a glorious trip somewhere, doing something. Only perceiving history. Ancient Egyptian culture. Theosophic type wisdom, have it perceived in the proper order of things. Go forward in the future. Do all the things that some of us do. Do all the things that all of us can do. There's nothing wrong; there's very, very few circumstances that I frown at. It's all real. It's all good. If you make it good in your heart, and so on. But don't stop where there is a paradise type scenario, a wonderful, beautiful, paradise. Divine as it may be, there is more. And there will be more until such time that you can, hopefully, and I promise you that you will, be able to break through all imagery.

This table is imagery. The thought that I have right now is imagery. A majority of the degrees of love that I have for each one of you, all of you collectively, and myself, is imagery. The remembrance of my near-death experience is imagery. The reality of my near-death experience at one particular stage or stages, I can't differentiate, broke through imagery. Am I better off for it? I think so. Did it change me? I know so. Is Elaine glad? I'm sure so. How much of a difference did it make? Did the plant that I took care of after my near-death experience grow a little faster, a little more chaotic than it did my near-death experience? The neighbors think so!

Did the tree that I said it's either going to die before it's going to have a decent shape to it, still have leaves on it at the end of the year? Was there two feet of snow, and there were still leaves on it? In driving in the neighborhood I started going in a circular spiral around the neighborhood to find the next nearest tree with leaves on it and there was none!

You know, can we smile a little differently? Can we smile more? Or can I? You'd better believe it. You'll verify that I hope. Can I become emotional with memories of chaotic situations, malicious situations, historical inadequacies, historical greatness, things to brag about? Sure, I've shared a lot of those things with you.

Well, with no explanation at all as to either how or why, or no reason at all, I then, in addition to that, but like separately from that, experienced a reverse trip through the tunnel. I was going exactly backwards. It was paradoxically faster than the forward trip, which is an impossibility, but I experienced that when I-- A phrase that I learned, I didn't coin this phrase, when I came back into my body I said-- I didn't like the sound of that phrase I said when I gained consciousness, or when I stopped coming backwards through the tunnel. Again, I was biased and prejudiced about things such as coming back into your body. Doesn't that sound a little occult? God forbid that's its considered a little mystical, or metaphysical--ever heard that one before?

At any rate, when I came back into my body, it was with a very uncomfortable bang, or slamming. It was like grabbing hold of a 440 line or 220 line of electricity. It was uncomfortable. It was not totally devastating but it was very uncomfortable. It was recognized as something that simply had to be that way. And guess what? The truck was not lifted off me yet! It was in the process of being lifted off me. Basically, simultaneously with that, the truck was lifted with the help of many people. Ad Hittle (sp.?) from directly across the street got a 4-x-4 timber, two 2-x-4's nailed together, and one of the fireplace logs as a fulcrum, pried the truck nearest my hip by the driver's door, up and that raised the truck up enough and it was the first little speck of breath that I was able to get into my lungs. Wow! You talk about the sweetness of breath!

In spite of the [Tom made sounds of gulping] macaroni salad--remember the macaroni salad? Okay just wanted to you know, tie this all together.

[Tom had said several times in describing his experience that before he became unconscious, he was thinking what a mess he'd be for the paramedics to clean up because he'd had macaroni not too long before the accident. It came up when his body was crushed.] The truck was lifted up further, I was pulled and dragged out. They couldn't do it the first try. One guy had to yank the creeper from the other side of the truck out from under me. I then dropped down that extra three-quarter inch, because I had three bolts through my chest. I was nailed to my truck! [Laughter in the room. A voice: "So you were bolted to your truck?"] Yeah, I was bolted to my truck. At any rate they were yanking against those bolts. Dropping down that extra three-quarters of an inch or so plunged them out of my chest and I was able to be dragged or slid out. Toward a theoretical possibility of how I revived and got a heartbeat and got the first breath-- [Tape 7-A ended here.]

[Tape 7-B]

. . . Marge Walls was here earlier. Fantastic secretary, lovely person. I wanted to take all of my boxes and boxes of papers and throw them out. I wanted to do that as I made them. Through thick and thin, dealing with throwing a great deal of paper. Unsolved mysteries--many unsolved mysteries. I'd throw a lot of things out. But with people such as Barbara Foley, Marge Walls, Steve, all saying, "Gee, Tom, don't throw anything away, even if it's just scribbling. Don't throw that out." I said, "Right, I suppose you're going to start sounding like Edgar Cayce."

It was very offensive to me when I heard about Edgar Cayce; I thought that was dopey and so on. In fact he was so dopey he didn't do his own writing. You know, I'm making fun at the whole situation; I'm making fun."

**Steve** You're making fun of me because I told you to cancel your garbage so Marge'll take care of you!

**Tom** Anyway, many times, thank goodness for that. So for back-tracking and research purposes there've been a lot of assistance and a lot of knowledge that probably wouldn't have come any other way if it wasn't for some of those pieces of paper to be able to review.

Well, the truck lifted up, lungs expanded a little bit, and now, remember Bob who was bobbing up and down at the truck and took the jack from me? Minutes later when he could no longer manipulate the jack-- By the way it was proved later on when I asked him and he said, "God, Tom, I took that jack from you and I didn't know how to work it."

That was set out to the side and then he dropped down to stay down close because there were enough people around and talked to me and encouraged me to hang on further. When he did that, this last time, and just a second or two before the truck was lifted, by his description he said--

Well in fact, to tell you how he said it and why, let me tell you that Bob was a Vietnam veteran many years before this incident and, I'm sorry to say, unfortunately he had a rather traumatic experience in 'Nam.. Two of his buddies out in the field were blown up. One was blown to shreds and bits and he was only able to find part of his dog tags. The other was blown apart and he cradled his friend in his arms while that friend bled to death. He listened to the man gurgle out the last request, "Please tell my wife. . . ." The fellow died. Now the fellow died in his arms rather grossly. It was certainly traumatic. Bob never told anybody about it, he didn't tell his commanding officer, he did, anonymously, call the wife of that GI and explained what that last message was, a basic love message and so on. And then he hung the phone up; he had refused to identify himself and he never told anybody about it.

Well what do you think happens? Around ten years later he's running across the street to help another friend and neighbor. He drops down and now, as he describes his experiences, he said, "Tom, when you were all purple and beet red and your tongue was hanging out, and your eyes were bulging out of your head, it didn't bother me that much because we were working to save you. But God damn you when you turned that ashen white-- [Tom in tears] --I hated you for bringing back those memories. I just despised you. And I want to apologize for doubling up my fist and swinging under the truck and hitting you right here in the side of the head just as the truck was lifted off you." Wow! What a coincidence for several people. As he told me this, he was in the process of apologizing.

In fact, I walked across the street a couple of weeks later and he was at his picnic table and he had a box and was looking at something. I went over there and I glanced over and what do you think it was? It was a brand-new hydraulic jack! Like the one I had. He was reading the instructions.

[Laughter]

I said, "Hey, Bob, how're you doing? Here, let me show you how to work that." Then he proceeded to say, "Gee, Tom, you know I've been keeping in touch through Elaine and she's been telling us, 'Make sure you don't come over; Tom's okay. He's lying on the couch and he doesn't want anybody near him when he's hurt.'" Oh, brother. Thank God for Elaine.

He then said, "Tom, I'm so sorry for hitting you." I asked him what he meant? "Well, when you were under the truck I hit you so hard and, gee, I'm sorry. I hope you can forgive me." I asked what he meant, and that prompted him to tell me about the Vietnam experience and why he hit me. I was the first person he'd told in all those years since the incident. I then made him promise: "You know, maybe not now, but when you feel she will be the most receptive and you will, will you do me one favor? Will you promise me that you will tell your wife?" I hesitated then and said, "Or at least, will you tell someone else?" He really didn't answer but had kind of like a "maybe" attitude. Then we chatted for a little while and I walked back home and went to rest.

Towards my revival, what took place? We don't have any scientific or medical documentation as to how my heart started beating, how my lungs were inflated at all. I didn't not receive any collapsed lungs by the time I arrived at the hospital. I was not able to breathe very well at all for quite a long time. It was certainly the most painful experience I've ever had. It was much more painful than broken bones and so on.

In the next few hours and in the next day or two, this portion of my body moved from three and a half inches out to-- Quite a ways, as you can see! [Laughter] Out to quite a reasonable state. I do have some very minor scar tissue as the only permanent type injury--just skin abrasion type thing. Oh, the bolt holes!

I have a couple of handguns. I use them for set shooting, target shooting. In the summer time (the accident was in May), so in the summertime a few weeks later I'm at the Genesee Valley Shooting Range and it's very warm out, it's eighty-five degrees, so I've got a short-sleeve white shirt on which I've been pretty famous for wearing. So I had it unbuttoned for quite a ways so it wouldn't touch this area because it was sensitive. Although I think most of that was psychological. I was very protective; I didn't want anybody to touch that area for quite a long time.

Well, anyway, somebody had misfired a gun, so they said to us, "All right, make your guns safe." So we did and were just standing there when the guy goes out. One guy kind of leaned forward and looked at me. The wind had blown my shirt apart a little bit and he said, "My God, Tom, what happened there, what the hell is that?" I looked down like this and rather arrogantly I said, "Oh, those are my bolt holes." So of course the whole firing line looked. Now you've got to understand these are 3/8 inch bolts, like thirty-eight caliber-- I mean 3/8 inch bolts and there's a hole there, and there, and there, and there. They muttered among themselves a bit. You know, there was a little deception there on purpose. I thought that was pretty clever of me but I didn't bother to explain later on except to one or two people. I said, "No you misunderstood me, I said bolt holes! I had a truck sit on me for awhile.

The truck lifted up, I got scooted out and started to sit up right but got held down by the paramedics. They jumped down, did the arm bandage for the blood pressure. It was-- Well, I want to be careful and not say the wrong thing. I think it was something like 180 over 150, very different but not extremely abnormal for a traumatic experience or someone who was in shock. I refuse to accept the fact or the possibility that I was ever in shock. I was always in control of my thoughts, with the exception of the clinical death state.

As soon as they pulled me from under that truck, right away I wanted to start yelling off directions of what to do with the truck, never mind me, make sure you make the truck safe, don't break the brake drums, you know, be careful with this and that. I couldn't talk very well, I couldn't get quite enough air outwardly. I did not require any cardiopulmonary resuscitation. They did give me some whiffs of oxygen and so on. They asked me a few questions and I responded right away; in other words with acknowledgement.

Andy Seville who knew me prior to this accident (he worked at the water department, I was already at the highway department), Andy came right down over me and was putting gauze pads in the puncture wounds, the holes. They weren't bleeding very severely just enough that they stuck the gauze pads in there and stopped it. I was going to suggest that he hammer corks in there, wouldn't have bothered me. [Laughter]

Andy said, "Tom, we're going to take you to the hospital. You're hurt pretty bad but I think you're going to be okay. Look, you've got to give us

permission to take you to the hospital. Can you hear me, Tom?" I said, "Yeah, I can hear you, Andy, what are you yelling for?" I said, "Well, look, I appreciate what you're doing but I'm not going to go to any hospital. Won't you guys get off me and let me up?" I was talking with shortness of breath, kind of broken, because I could only inhale a little bit. That increased as I talked a little farther.

So now Elaine's screaming and yelling. "Look, take him to the hospital! See how badly he's hurt? Oh, my God." I said, "Look, try to calm her down. All I want to do is get up and be left alone, I want to go in the house and be still and be left alone. I know I'm going to be okay."

I am sure they thought, "Oh, well, he's in shock, he's saying he's going to be okay." Elaine is demanding, "Look, I'm his wife, I'm telling you to take him to the hospital." He said, "Elaine, look, Tom's conscious, he's coherent. If he doesn't give us permission we can't take him, and you don't have the authority to tell us too." Elaine is saying, "Oh my God!"

He then came right down close to my face and he put his fist underneath my chin like this, then he said, "Listen you son of a bitch, either you give me permission to take you to the hospital or I'm going to punch you in the jaw and knock you out then it's a Code 54 and we can take you!"

I cracked half a smile. "I appreciate what you're doing, Andy, thanks a lot. I know I'm going to be okay and all I'm going to do is get up, be left alone and lie still." In other words, go in the house. I said, "Look, let me make a deal. All I want to do is get upright. My head hurts so much."

You talk about a headache. Wow! I've experienced migraine headaches as a child, and God bless anybody who does. You know, that's one of those headaches you can't know unless you've had one? Well, boy, this was worse than a migraine headache. It was such pressure from inwardly to outwardly. That started as soon as the truck fell on me. In other words, oxygen deprivation headache, and that didn't go away when I was breathing again. It didn't go away for quite a long time, the rest of the daylight hours.

I said, "Let me at least get up or sit up in a chair for just a minute and I'll probably agree and go to the hospital with you. I got to get my head upright, it's just killing me." And of course their concern was not to move me and everything else.

So the compromise was made; somebody heard that and ran and got a kitchen chair. I was assisted--I'd like to say I got up by myself--but I was assisted and brought up into a sitting position, and oh, psychologically that

was fantastic! But oh, that was physically so wrong. I will admit that was just-- That was worse than setting a bone for sure. Any movement at all in this whole area, things were boggled up. Anyway, I sat there and it was very satisfying. And then Andy-- I'm sitting basically upright like this, there's a couple of people behind me, kind of supporting my shoulders. Andy's standing right in front of me, like straight onto my legs, and so on, and he's like this in front of me not touching me, but looking right at me. I looked up at him and I go, "You know Andy, I think maybe you're right. I think maybe I'd better--" And then I just slipped right forward and don't remember anything of the ride to the hospital. It seems like I might have heard the siren once or twice. Then they went around this curve at a thousand miles an hour, nine hundred G forces this way. Then they went over railroad tracks, bounce, bounce, bounce. And of course the stretcher there had this big wide belt. Where do you think the big wide belt comes --? Whee!

So I don't really remember that I was normally unconscious for the ride to the hospital. I remember having the first little eyesight in the hospital. Now I'd been hurt many, many times on a bicycle. Dragged into the hospital unconscious, usually from heat stroke, heat exhaustion, things like that. And then one eye, it doesn't matter which one, you'll get a little crack of light and be able to see that little bit. I can remember being so proud always to instantly know what hospital I was in. First of all, because I'd put most of the valances and the cabinets and so on. I'd put them up there so I'd recognize my own cabinets. I mean I'd know the difference between Highland Hospital, Northside Hospital--Park Ridge wasn't built then. Of the hospitals, my favorite was Northside--Rochester General Northside. Of course I did wake up in Northside. I thought, "Well at least that's a comfort. At least I won't have to put up with the gamma rays of Strawn Memorial Hospital.

So I came to and sat there for awhile. Now again in pain and so on, you can't have a proper conception of time. But I was coherent and so on. By and by a nurse came in. She looks at me and says, "Oh Mr. Sawyer, are you awake? Good! She brings this little paper cup. "Here, take these." I said, "Well, what is that?" She says, "Well take them, this is for pain." I said, "Well, excuse me, but I'm not the type of person that takes very much medication. Is that a barbiturate? Is that a downer?" She looked at me. I said, "Do you know exactly what that is?" She said, "Actually, no I don't.

But it was prescribed for you." I said, "Well, would you go and find out exactly what it is and tell me, and then I might consider taking it. I don't usually take aspirins." I'm not sure if in that first sentence I said that I was an athlete or that I was still an athlete at the time.

So she went away, kind of dejectedly, and came back and was very pleasant and professional and said, "This is hydrophodan--" I mean a big fifty cent word, didn't hear any of it at all, in one ear and out the other. I said, "Well, is that a barbiturate, is that a downer?" She said yes. "Well, I don't really think that I should take anything like that. I am in a lot of pain but I'm coping with it. Is there any chance that I could speak to the doctor?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, there's been another accident, and since you're stabilized-- There's bleeding victims and if you know anything about--" I said, "Yeah, I'm in here quite often." She looked at me like, "I thought so!" [Laughter in the room] She went away just looking at those pills as though, "Oh, my God, what'll I do with these now?" I guess this wasn't covered in nursing school. Kind of funny.

Time went on and nurse number two comes in and she's got a paper cup. "Mr. Sawyer, here take this." I say, "What is it?" Same scenario! When I asked if it was a barbiturate, a downer?" "Well, this is a sleeping pill and this will help you with the pain." "I'm coping with the pain just fine and, as a matter of fact, I don't think it's a good idea to force me to go to sleep with these type of injuries. I think it'd be much better for me to stay awake. Is there any chance I could speak to the doctor?" She said, "The doctor's very busy, he'll be over here as soon as possible." I said, "Well, I don't wish to take that."

And I looked at it and it was the most beautiful pill that I've ever seen. Little blue and pink spots all over it. It was real, it was like that. I wanted to take it and say put it in my pocket, and put it in a terrarium or something. It was really pretty--sell it for fifty bucks as a crystal! I could sell it as a Urantia egg! [Laughter in the room] But I didn't know those phrases back then. So anyway, she goes away dejectedly looking at the pill.

Now, a doctor type person came in. He said, "Mr. Sawyer, Tom Sawyer?" "Yes." "Oh, how are you feeling? Would you be able to answer a couple of questions?" "Yes, are you the doctor?" "No, I'm the radiologist. Could you tell me how old you are?" I said, "Yeah, I'm thirty-three." "Well, I guess you

had some kind of an accident. Do you have chest injuries?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Could you tell me what year you were born?" I said, "Yeah, 1945." There was some more small talk and so on.

And then he said something else about my age, and then asked about my birthday or something like that. I said, "Well wait a minute. Excuse me, but is there a problem?" Now I'm thinking that the paper is wrong like it's got some little kid there. And then he said, "Well, as a matter of fact, yes." And then he pulls out this radiograph and he slide it up in the thing that was on the wall there, a fluorescent screen. And he said, "You know, I've been a radiologist for 18 years and I've never seen anybody above the age of three that's able to take his rib cage and fold it down to three and a half inches and have no fractures at all." And he said, "What's with you?" [Appreciative laughter]

I cracked a smile, and even smiling that much kind of hurt a little bit. I smiled and said, "Well, I've got a pretty strong character." Now I want you all to understand that I was not aware of any near-death experience at all. This was just Tom Sawyer, the bicycle racer, hurt again, in the hospital coping with all these jerks, half of whom didn't know what they were supposed to do.

I was always very polite and I appreciated all my hospital visits and so on. Very professional. But again, very often they had made a lot of mistakes.

Like for instance, I still don't think that they should have given me a sleeping pill. Not under the circumstances. Especially the fact that I was refusing pain medication. He asked, "Can I move the sheet and look at the topographic wound." I forgot just exactly what his phrase was. I said, "Well, just a minute. There's something I want to tell you. When I'm hurt like this, I'm usually very, very irritable. I'll let you look at my chest but I'm going to tell you something. If you hurt me, I'm going to come flying off this bed, and I'll knock you right through the other side of this room."

I really meant it. He hesitated and then said, "I'll try to be careful." He just lifted the sheet enough to look and he says, "Well, my goodness, what happened to you?" "Well, I had a pickup sit on me for a little while." He says, "Well, you're a very lucky person." All this while this guy's shaking his head no, no., no. So anyway he walked away.

Now nurse number three comes in. She's got a hypodermic needle. [Again, laughter] She made some kind of dry humor remark like, "Which cheek would

you like this in?" "What is that for? Is that for testing?" I'm thinking for some reason that they're going to inject me with dye. I've never had a lower GI series but there are the injuries. Are they going to shoot me up, have a dye run through to see the internal bleeding or stuff like that? She just said, "Well no, this will put you to sleep and you'll be able to cope with the pain a lot better."

I said, "With all due respect, but I've refused all these pills and all. I've been waiting patiently to speak to the doctor. And another thing, is there any chance at all that you can get word to my wife that I'm okay?" And she says, "Oh, did she--? You mean she came with you in the ambulance?" I said, "I don't really know if she did or not. I was unconscious in the ambulance but I'm okay now and I'd like to make sure she gets the message that I'm okay."

She said, "Oh I'm so sorry! She could have been in here with you all this time." She went right out and came back with Elaine. It was really nice, that eye contact and the half a wink that I gave to Elaine so often.

Elaine stood there and-- I've got to ask Elaine if when she came into the cubbyhole, the emergency section that I was in, if she felt like saying, "Don't worry, your bike's okay." You know, twenty or thirty times before she'd been prepped to walk in and say, "Don't worry, your bike's okay." I'll heal, my bike won't! I mean, if I'm going to be riding the next day, I can't have a broken bike. And also, God forbid, If I'd go unconscious somewhere on the road somebody would steal the bike. It never happened by the way.

So she's got this eye contact with me and I give her a wink. "Hi honey, listen. If I can't get to speak to the doctor in about fifteen minutes, I'm getting ready to leave. I'm going out of here." The nurse starts shaking her head just like this, "Well, that's a really good attitude, Mr. Sawyer, but I think you'd better resign yourself to the fact that you're going to be spending a couple of days with us."

Elaine then says, "Excuse me, but if Tom says he's going to leave in fifteen minutes, he's going to leave in fifteen minutes." She looks at Elaine and says, "That's really nice that you both have this attitude and everything but, Mrs. Sawyer, I think you'd better just resign yourself to the fact that Mr. Sawyer is going to be staying overnight and maybe for the next several days. He's hurt rather severely." Elaine says, "Well, if he says he's going to leave, he's going to leave." Then I say, "Excuse me, ma'am, but what will happen if I do get up and leave?" She thought I meant, can I physically get

up and leave, and she says, "Well, you won't be able to."

"Well, what will happen if I do?" I'm asking her if I get up and start to walk out, is it a Code 54, a guard comes and handcuffs me, stamps obnoxious character, straps me down-- I mean I didn't want to cause a stir. I was very impatient. I wanted to get the hell out of there. I would have stayed for awhile if it would have created a big problem.

She then says, "Well, I might as well tell you. You're hurt very severely. As a matter of fact, you have a crushed liver, you are bleeding internally," and she rattles off this stuff. I didn't think there was that much stuff inside you. This is a last-ditch effort. Her patient is about to attempt to get up and walk out and she's doing her job.

I smiled and said, "I really do appreciate that, but what will happen if I try?" She said, "Furthermore, if you're able to sit up at all, the minute you get upright you'll be very dizzy and extremely nauseous. If you're able to throw up, you will, but you probably will collapse on the floor, go into a coma, and you'll probably die." I smiled at her and said, "Well, when that happens I'll come back and apologize!"

I said those words, but don't misunderstand me. I didn't know about a near-death experience at that time. What I was saying was, "If I sit up and get dizzy I'll lie back down and apologize, and I'll lie there for ever how long it takes." She went storming out; you know, had to dip the needle down like this! [Laughter]

I told Elaine as the nurse was walking out, "Elaine, why don't you go to the phone and give your father a call. Do you know what time it is?" I don't recall what she said. So this was from, roughly, seven o'clock the evening before to close to daylight which, at that time of the year, was like five o'clock or something like that. I said, "Go give your father a call, see if he'll come give us a ride home." She said, "I'm sure he will. Now don't move." And she went and came right back and said he was on his way. "Tom, do you really think that you should leave?" I didn't answer--which was typical of me.

So then very methodically I said, "What I'm going to do is try to sit up. I want you to stand and hold on to this railing right here where my feet will swing down. Hold right on to the railing. If I fall forward at all, or if you even think I'm falling forward, just push right into me, don't worry about hurting me." I repeated that twice, poor thing. "Don't worry about hurting

me. Just make sure I flop back down on this bed. I might be too dizzy." So she did that.

"Now, is there a step stool or anything that I can step down on?" She slid it over. I said, "You don't happen to have a shirt with you, do you?" The one I had on was shredded. I imagine they cut the rest off that wasn't in shreds. Nice yellow shirt, it was. "Now, when I put my foot down, you stay there too. If I'm standing and I fall down, just let me fall down on the floor and call the nurse." She was all nervous, which was to be expected.

I got sideways and sat up. It was all right, never mind the pain. Oh, it was so terrible. I slid down a little bit, got my first foot down. "I think I'm going to be all right." I got my other foot down. "Gee, Elaine, would you help me on with my shoes?" I guess my attitude was, "Oh well, you have to give in to some things."

She helped me on with my shoes and I stood up. It seemed to work pretty good so I stood there and then turned around. I held on to the railing for a full minute or a minute and a half. "Well, okay, let's go. I want to get out of here." So I walked out and the problem was that I had to shuffle my feet. I couldn't pick my foot up and walk normally. I kind of I slid my feet a little bit. Then I'm walking out from behind the curtain and I'm kind of looking at the ceiling like, "Oh, I've got all day, du da da ."

I don't want anybody to see that I'm walking like this. Went right across the hallway to the octagon-shaped desk inside the Emergency Department. A lady was sitting down. I said, "Excuse me ma'am, I am going home, now. Is there anything I need to do?" [End of Tape 7-B]

#### Tape 8-A

[Picks up on leaving hospital]

Tom--cont.

The lady came back and I said is there anything else? She said I don't guess so. I said I thought there might be some papers to sign or something. She said, "No, I guess you can go." So I kind of meandered my way way down the hallway. In spite of Kodak air, it was nice to get outside the hospital and try to take--not a deep breath but some fresh air. I felt really pretty good. Again the pain of movement and so on.

I leaned up against the brick wall, and almost instantaneously, Grandpa Gene showed up in his car. It was a nice four-door car so I was able to get in the back seat. I had told Elaine, "I'm going to get in the back seat. You

sit in the front seat. Leave me alone, don't bother me. I'll be okay. But tell your father to drive s-l-o-w-l-y. Honey, I'm in such pain; just tell him to take it easy."

So she did and off we went. Now almost immediately, according to what Elaine said, as we started driving away from the hospital, I was moaning and groaning. I was really out of it. I don't remember the ride home very well. I can remember the curve on Eastman Avenue. Just off the Expressway and the curve to the right on Eastman Avenue which is closest to Kodak. I remember a little segment there. There was a rather bumpy area down past a row of houses halfway down Lake Avenue toward our house. I remember that because that was so uncomfortable. I purposefully lifted a little bit because I was kind of watching the road.

I was semi-conscious, I guess, moaning and groaning according to Elaine. Then all of a sudden, as she describes it, I said, "Oh, it was so beautiful." She turned around and said, "What was so beautiful? What are you talking about?" I never responded back to her at all. Just went on moaning and groaning.

We got home--we lived in a little ranch house, one step up. I gave Elaine the high sign, meaning get rid of Grandpa Gene. Grandpa Gene's a cool dude, but remember I'm hurt and I want nobody around me when I'm hurt. Grandpa Gene is the type of person, second-generation Italian, that tries to help. "Oh here, let me make you chicken soup, here let me fluff your pillow," all the things you really don't want and really don't need. I said, "Elaine, get rid of your father. I'm going to step up into the house--don't bother to help me. I'm going to lie on the couch. Don't bother me."

Now many times I've been hurt in bike accidents, and this is really pretty terrible, but when I said, don't bother me, she would methodically and instantly round up the kids and say-- [Tom in tears] --"Okay, kids, you know how your father is when he's hurt so go in your room now and don't bother him." That meant, if I stayed there two weeks, you didn't ask me a question, you didn't say good morning, you didn't bother me. There might be something nearby that I would throw at you.

So I laid down on the sofa and, basically, 72 hours later felt well enough to get up for the first time. Now again, not thinking properly, I wanted to do two things. I wanted to go to the toilet and I wanted to call my mother on the telephone. I wanted to call my mother and tell her about the accident for two reasons: it was the onset of the Memorial Day

Weekend and I had planned to drive the 135 miles up to the farm near Booneville and see her for the weekend, and I wanted to tell her that I'd been in a little accident and that I would be up to see her in a couple of weeks. I wanted to tell her about the accident before, God forbid, Aunt Grace told her and exaggerated everything.

**Man in Room** Excuse me, but you had been on the couch 72 hours. Without eating? No bodily functions? None of that going on? No hunger, no evacuation, to put it kind of politely, no bedpans?

**Tom** That's right. Same clothes on. I did slide my shoes off. Yes to all of that. I just laid down on the couch; right on my back, as a matter of fact. And used one pillow that night. Only because the pillow was there.

Laid there 72 hours, got up and went to the bathroom, went to the kitchen and called my mother on the phone. Now again, I'm not aware of anything at all toward any kind of experience.

"Hello, Mom, yeah guess what? I had a little accident. Gee, the stupid truck fell on me. But don't worry I'm okay. I hurt my chest a little bit. I'm not going to make it this weekend but weekend after next, I'll be up to see you.

She asked, "Well how are you doing?" "Oh, I'm okay. I'm hurt, probably going to have to take a couple of days off from work, but I'm going to be okay. Gee, you know, I can't wait to get outside. I've got to find out why the truck fell on me. You know how I am with raising things up on jacks and stuff. I don't have any idea of how or why it fell."

"You know, Mom, the truck fell on me and it seemed like it moved really, really slow. You know what? After awhile when unconscious, I had a feeling of waking up and it was real dark."

Then very methodically I went right through the scenario up to and including the confrontation of the light, but nothing more after that. In other words, the question and answer period, and the choice type situation. I ended it right there--really because I was getting very physically exhausted. "Well, look, Mom, I'm getting kind of tired. I'll call you back in a little while, and I'll see you."

Now my mother is an intelligent person. She typically would have no reaction for your own benefit. In other words, as opposed to an over-reaction, or an under-reaction, never thinking that, of course, Elaine

had already called her from the hospital. I didn't think that, I didn't bother to ask and the information was not given to me. So I then got up and walked around the corner, and as I got up I looked over in the doorway in the kitchen. Elaine is now standing there with her jaw on the floor. She said, "That's what you meant when you said, 'Oh, it's so beautiful.'" "What do you mean? What was so beautiful? What are you talking about?" She said, "What's you've just said. Tom, don't you realize what that is? Don't you realize what's happened to you? I just read a book a short while ago, and the sentences are the same. You said the same thing as so many of these other people. That's called the near-death experience."

"What the hell are you talking about? I don't believe any of that hocus-pocus bullshit, anyway." That was really classical, just classical. Then I'm kind of like looking at her. I've just said what I've said. I never lied to my mother, I never lied anyway, as a rule. I've just said all this stuff. Elaine has accused me of having one of those Om Shanty type of things. Which I don't believe in anyway. Then, Oh my God. And confusion. And wait a minute. I can't have what I don't believe in! Gee, maybe I'm hurt worse than I thought! I was exhausted also, so I walked past her and went and laid down on the sofa again.

I laid there another full day, because it was now daylight hours on the fourth day after the accident. Elaine was just walking into the room. This was the first-- Other than the realization of the near-death experience, this was the first paranormal or psychic thing to happen to me. She walked in the room and I said, "Hi honey. You know I'm feeling a little bit better. I'd like some music. Would you mind turning the stereo on." We had a stereo radio on the coffee table on the far side of the living room. Being the obedient wife that she was, she rushed right over, flipped the stereo on and took a total of four steps at an angle away from me.

She was going to walk through the room anyway. The music came on and what do you think? God forbid, not only was it not the sixties music or soft rock, but it was *elevator music!* I mean what people call classical music. I mean there are like dopes that put neckties on, and pay money, and go to the Eastman Theater to sit down for like more than an hour and listen to--are you ready for this?--a bunch of violins! Give me a break! Now it would have been typical for me to be furious if I heard music like that.

Elaine, taking the four steps and hearing that elevator type music, wheeled around so apologetic. "Oh I'm sorry honey, here let me turn it to

the channel that you like!" What do you think my reaction was? Did I throw something at her, which she was afraid that I would do? No. The words that came out of my mouth were, "No, no, no, wait a minute. Don't you know who that is? Don't you know what he's saying?"

Now, poor Elaine! She turns and she looks at me in total confusion and everything. She doesn't know what to do. She looking at me. And I am star-struck! Oh my God, I'm watching this man's signature. I mean I'm listening to his signature. So she eventually said kind of hesitantly, "Who?" [Tom very emotional] And I said, "That's my friend, that's Vivaldi!"

So that finished in say ten or fifteen minutes, it was already playing when she turned it on. She sort of like stood by not knowing what to do. And the next musical-- You know those guys have that have an arrogant voice? "That was Vivaldi-- And don't you just realize you've listened to the radio and I'm a lot better--" He identified what the previous one was. Then he did not identify what was coming on.

There was sort of a hesitation. I really was a little more excited, like this one was going to be-- By my really close friend. I mean Joe was going to play for me, right. And Joe goes ahead and plays and that lasts about twenty minutes. So I listened to some of Hayden, and on and on. Poor Elaine is by now q-u-i-e-t-l-y sneaking away! "Oh, God, let me out of this room!" Poor Elaine.

We've talked about Vivaldi's *Gloria*. And curiosity of curiosity, I have an explanation. But I'm not sure if I want to give it tonight. I'm not sure I'd remember it right now, I would have to work my way through it. But I've got Vivaldi's *Gloria* memorized. There's only one problem: the second soprano. [Various comments and much laughter]

Within the next couple of days I suddenly found myself--you know how we do in falsetto---singing different segments of Vivaldi's *Gloria*., and really enjoying it, in spite of what I was doing to the universe. You know those nice vibratory tones? Thank God I was inside a square building. It minimizes the escape wave functions. [Much laughter]

I was not sent back. I wouldn't have anything to do with music. I've got the most glorious violin. A friend gave it to me. It was such a symbolic gift. The violin in a case; it's a used one. My friend makes violins. He was also a terrific sprinter in bike racing. Craig Stephley (sp.?) He gave me this violin; I like to just hold it. I liked it especially because I became aware of another close neighbor friend of mine. Most people know him as

Albert Einstein. He got a great deal of enjoyment out of playing on the violin.

Well, that started a whole series of things. Again, I ever so hesitantly, came up with a phrase of psychic phenomena. And that was a direct contradiction to anything that I would be in harmony with or whatever. Again, that's still all under the classification of hocus-pocus bullshit. The word, c-u-l-t and occult was the exact same word, it meant exactly the same thing. In 1978. In other words, something that was a cult or occult was just more of that hocus-pocus bullshit. And I didn't want to hear about any of it. I might say this pleasantly, get out of my face. But in all probability, I might tell you with a little more emphasis.

Well, one of the very next things that happened, and it would probably have been that fourth day or maybe the evening of that fourth day after the accident. I was sitting upright, and the rest of the family were watching television. They were watching some program and I was looking through the program and just, kind of like daydreaming. Which I did a lot anyway because I wasn't about to do much moving around, at least the first several days. I was just sitting there quietly--please understand how I'm saying this, it may be pertinent information. Max Plank. Max Plank. Max Plank.

Elaine turned to me. "Oh, who is that?" "Well, I don't know either but you'll be hearing more about him in the near future." Now what I experienced by doing that, like daydreaming, if I were to close my eyes. But then I didn't close my eyes. But then just see in front of you a block letter type of print of Max Plank. So it was maybe three weeks, not much more than four weeks, that I found out you should more properly pronounce it Max Planc.

I'm trying to think in terms of time--I've got it documented somewhere. I was finally able to get back to work. I took a total of two weeks off. And then I went to see the doctor because we are part of the Wilson Center type credit thing. He wanted to see me when he had a report of the accident. I went in there and lifted my shirt and he said, "Okay. Go ahead. Goodbye." Just like that! He saw the holes and scrape marks and so on. That's all he did. He says, "Are you having any problems?" I said no.

Now from the accident through the next four days, during the day, the hospital called several times. A couple of nurses and one doctor. I think that they wanted to call and ask, "Excuse me, Mrs. Sawyer, do you still have your husband?" They called and they were very concerned. One said to

Elaine, "Well, we're very concerned about the internal bleeding. Your husband really should not have left the hospital."

The first time they called, Elaine called in from the other room--well that meant that it had to be past the third day. Either the first or second call, Elaine said, "It's the nurse from the hospital. Would you be willing to answer a couple of questions?" I said no I was just too exhausted. "But tell them that I'm okay. If they'd like, as soon as I get up, I'll call them back. Or they can call me back in a couple more days."

I finally did talk to them. They asked all the usual questions: "Experienced any--" All kinds of things. I gave them all the answers to satisfy them. I asked, "Why are you calling?" "Well, you did leave the hospital and you were bleeding internally," she said, "and you did have a crushed liver. You may have repercussions from that. You really should go and see your own personal doctor." "Well, in a couple of days when I feel better, I'll stop in and get-- I'll need an excuse to go back to work anyway."

So I did that and went back to work. Went back too early, because my job was running a front-end loader. If you've never bounced up and down on a front-end loader, it's-- And the one that I was running had solid tires on it, too, to make it a little more bouncy. It was just pain, I didn't have any repercussions. I gradually recuperated.

By then I'd started saying weird things and so on. I said the word "quanta" three times. When Elaine said what's that, I said I'm not really sure, I've heard of a thing called the quantum theory, and it's not that. It's just quantum or maybe the word quanta." I sort of went, oh well, it might be something I saw in a movie, or whatever.

By and by Elaine then said--good old Elaine, remember her?--"You know, honey, you've been talking about people's names that you don't know? You ask me if I know and when I say I don't you proceed to tell me all about them? You're saying words and phrases that you claim you don't know and nobody else seems to know. Why don't you start writing some of these things down?"

Well, there comes the spiral notebooks on either side of our bed, on the coffee table, ends of the sofa, sometimes on the kitchen table. We started filling up spiral notebooks with little blurbs and blips and couple of diagrams and a few little mathematical equations. If I would write something down, I would absolutely, positively know what was written was correct. Furthermore the things that I wrote down were spelled

correctly--so I know it didn't come from me. No way from Tom Sawyer.

I realized there must be a pattern to some of this. So I asked around. I have several friends with college degrees and so on. One neighbor across the street who works for a railway signal company and travels all over the world, and he's the type of guy that likes a puzzle. So I showed him a couple of things and he said, "Well, quanta is just a single segmented aspect. Having to do with the quantum theory, it's like a small amount."

I drew the Greek symbol psi, which is like a curve V with little curlicues on the outside and there's kind of a slightly slanted line down through the center. It was very, very important that I draw that exactly correct. What I was doing incorrectly, I was drawing it making a loop this way and then a V, and then a loop this way. And that wasn't correct. So I doodled a bit with two different kinds of pens and I finally drew it correctly.

Wow, it was like-- Did you all see *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*? Everybody enjoyed the movie. We were told and told and told to go see this movie. Elaine and I are sitting in the movie. Elaine and I are looking at each other; everybody else is watching the screen. We are both starting to cry. Everybody else in the movie is laughing, and laughing, and Elaine and I are crying and crying.

The frustration on the part of that guy. I know this, I said those same words so many times. "Gee, Elaine, I know this. How can I know this when I don't know what it is? This is so meaningful in my life." I turned to her and said, "Honey, I promise you I will not throw anything through your kitchen window." The people behind us! It's a funny movie, a good movie. I think maybe now I could watch it, and laugh at the comedy. But that time it was barely fun at all. Elaine and I were both almost sorry that we saw the movie at all. Elaine was sorry. She said, "I don't need any of this--do you think we could go?"

Then a lot of dry humor jokes. It's even typical now of Timmie or Todd to be sitting at the kitchen table and have a nice portion of mashed potatoes and say, "Dad--" Or they'll do something and go, "Quantum ---" And one time Todd put mashed potatoes on his nose. He said, "I know everything." I smile back at him and say, "Excuse me, Todd, I still have the potential--" Well, a lot of that stuff is pretty well documented. You've heard quite a few things.

[Tape 8-A]

Tom-cont.

(You know it offends me to listen to more than a one-hour tape. )

I've got a copy of the original tape that I made. In other words, for you to listen to it and see like the incorrect grammar and stuff. I think it's kind of cute. And I laugh at myself.

I say, "Yeah, and it was like telekinesis-- this thought process to thought process." Well, I'd never heard of this tele- stuff. Elaine said, "I'm not sure that's the right right thing." All the way through this whole tape I kept saying, telekinesis, telekinesis. Looked it up in the dictionary. (Look it up in the dictionary sometime! ) All this fancy stuff. You say, now what does it mean? Okay, but we knew that that was the wrong phrase.

Then we brainstormed a little bit and Elaine said, "It might be telepathy--" and I said, "Yeah, mental telepathy." Yeah. What am I going to do now, erase this whole tape and do it over? I want to do it over." "No, Tom, I don't think you should. This tape is important to you and those are your first utterances. Even if they're the wrong words, that's what first came to your mind, the first you've been able to put down on tape. Why don't you just leave it like that. Make another tape if you want to but don't erase this one." (That was in the process of wishing that first tape to go to Raymond Moody, by Elaine's suggestion.

A year or so later when I had become extremely knowledgeable about such things (ha ha), guess what? I uttered telekinesis and guess what? You could do an analogy and say, "Telepathy is telekinesis on a more subtle level." If you extend the phrase, "the movement of particles" to "movement of non-energy type forces" --same thing. Same thing. It is a rearrangement of particles and waves.

Elaine said, "Tom, you're talking about all this stuff and it's obvious it's not going to go away. You know, a couple of weeks before the accident, I bought a book, and I know we can't afford books, but I just had to buy this one. It's really funny how I got this book off the shelf. I went by it three times and I cheated on the groceries and I bought it." I think it was a dollar and a quarter, maybe a dollar seventy-five. And she didn't have a coupon for it either! [Earlier there had been talk about Elaine and her coupon-saving] She said, "You know, Tom, I think maybe this guy, Raymond Moody--I mean you really ought to tell him. He should hear your story, it's just like all the stories that he's talking about."

And I'm thinking, "Oh yeah right, the real story. Elaine, it's not a story. See you don't understand. Nobody's going to understand. I'm the only one." Dealing with the usual stages of something of that nature. I finally said, "Well, okay, I'll write him a letter."

Well coincidences of coincidences, across the street at an angle to our house, the woman there just happened to be a nurse. When Elaine came over to tell her about some of the experience, the woman happened to have a large book opened up--on her dresser drawer-- and just happened to have Raymond Moody's home address written in there. And it was, uh, Charlottesville, Virginia, where he lived. He has since moved to Georgia. Anyway, she had his home address there. She came back with Elaine and she said, "Gee, guess what? I got the guy's address!"

So okay, I'll write him a letter. I got the typewriter out--you don't want to read my handwriting!--and I typed this little letter. It was like two paragraphs. Basically I said I've had a parapsychological apparition. I went through a tunnel and learned many things. If you are interested in hearing a tape of this experience, let me know. Otherwise, if you're not interested, or if I don't hear from you within a couple of weeks, I will not finish the tape and I'll not talk about it any more. So that letter went off and I told Elaine, "If I don't hear from this guy within three weeks, I'm going to just shut up and not talk about it any more."

It went past the three weeks and it wasn't answered. In fact, it went three months. At the end of that time, Louise and Raymond Moody came back from Europe and they started opening their mail. Louise opened that letter and she says, "Raymond, you've gotta read this letter. You know, it's been so long, we can't write him, we've got to call him on the phone."

That was during the day and I wasn't home. Elaine was home and took the call. Elaine said, "I couldn't understand her, she talked so slow!" [Elaine talks rapid-fire. She thinks I talk awfully slow, too] Louise Moody said she would call back later when I had time to get home. She called back later. I wanted to say, "Come on lady, round it off, come on. Vowel sounds? There you go, uh." [Tom has been teasing me about talking slow] I didn't say that out loud! "Why Tom, it's not a question that we would like to have you finish the tape. You have to finish the tape, and you will."

" When you're done with the tape, if you only make one copy, whereas we would love to receive it, it would probably serve the community best if you send it to someone called Dr. Kenneth Ring, in that he has taken over the

research where my husband has left off. And if you do give it to Dr. Kenneth Ring, we'll be able to get a copy from him, if that's okay with you." I said I'd go ahead and finish it. It took me three full months to make what turned out to be about a twenty-five minute tape.

That basically tells the story. That tape I sent off to Dr. Kenneth Ring, therefore the introduction to him. His friend and so on around that time within just a week or so, Dr. Andrew Silver, a self-proclaimed movie producer, an all around weird guy. I mean he wears a beret and a scarf, and he's just in the movie circle. He has produced a couple of award-winning films. So he proposed making a documentary of near-death experiencers.

Next thing I know, I get a phone call from Dr. Kenneth Ring. He wanted to know if I'd be interested in participating, etc. I thought, "Gee, I've only been on a jet airplane one time and that was to go to California and fail!" He made this proposal for me to come to Boston.

Five of us showed up and we made a documentary film called *Prophetic Voices*. It was a pretty good film. The long version, which I still claim is a very good film, I don't know why he hasn't publicized that. I refuse to believe that it hit the cutting room floor. There were some extremely profound inferences in that one. Gee, I don't remember if it was 1979 or what. It was about a year after my near-death experience before I got involved with that.

During that filming I said very emphatically, with quite a bit of detail but extremely emotional, tears flashing off my face, that everybody should come to know their God and they had better-- [Tom very emotional this point] --and they'd better hurry up too. There were some inferences that Ken Ring kind of manipulated the conversation to the Apocalyptic stuff.

As the film crew was doing audio and additional stuff, I took a walk-- Some of the audio was done in either an earlier or later visit. And that was done at the Near-Death Hotel in Connecticut, where Ken Ring still lives. There was a lull and they said, "Well, we've got to do some stuff, would you like to refresh yourself, take a walk, go for a swim."

I walked up a mountain road. I was about a half mile from the house when he, Andrew Silver, an unidentifiable third person, and Ken Ring, were looking at each other over a coffee table and he said, "Okay, don't worry about that. We'll get Tom on a roll and we'll hit him with--" [Tom very emotional] "--and then we'll hit him with the Apocalyptic stuff."

Well, I was pretty furious because first of all they were talking behind

my back. There was deceit in the tone of their voices and what they were inferring. And they were going to deceive me. Instead of saying to me, "Tom, we want you to talk about this," they were going to deceive and manipulate me that way. And that was very offensive, and I didn't know what the Apocalyptic stuff meant. I had the inference that it was something bad. I knew there was a movie about the Apocalyptic stuff. I was thinking of *Apocalypse Now*, which I did not see. I didn't know the meaning of the word and that kind of offended me, too.

I walked back to the house, walked right in, and said, "Ken, I think I should speak to you privately. And I said, "Look, I don't know what's going on around here, and I volunteered to come here. But there's something you've got to understand. I cannot tolerate any kind of deceit."

And he said, "Well, Tom, I appreciate--" and he had no idea what I was talking about. It never occurred to me that Ken doesn't know what I'm talking about when I'm saying this. So I said, "A little while ago, you and somebody and Andrew Silver said a word that I didn't know. You said something about the Apocalyptic stuff. I can understand my ignorance, but I can't stand the deceit involved. I'll do anything for you. You just tell me what you want me to talk about and I'll talk about it. But I can't and I won't participate if there's going to be any kind of deceit involved."

Well, he was kind of shocked at that. Then he did say, "Tom, when we had that conversation you had walked up the mountain road!" I said, "Look Ken, I don't want to play games. You already understand things like that. I can't help that. Just because I know it or not doesn't matter. But do you understand what I'm trying to tell you?" He apologized. "Yeah, Tom, I really do. Do you want me to speak to Andrew Silver?" "Well, actually, yes. But don't worry about that. But what does that Apocalyptic stuff mean?"

He didn't really want to answer me. "Well, in the Bible there is the Apocalypse and Apocalyptic stuff. It has to do with future scenarios." I just started to-- I just interrupted myself and started to cry. I went out on the balcony and just cried for a little while. That was okay, it was very comfortable to do that there. This was all very new in my life. Tom Sawyer had cried, basically, three times: when my rabbit died, because oh man, I'd had that rabbit so long; I had a couple of crocodile tears when I saw Elaine in her wedding dress, mainly because she looked ever pretty; and when I crashed during the Olympic Trials, I officially cried then (because that was ten years of work) right down on my knees. Okay,. But other than

that, real men don't cry!

The film was edited and Andrew Silver was quite impressed, I know, with the realization that you'd better watch what you're thinking, watch what you say if you're gonna be arrogant or deceitful. My measurement of deceit might not have anything to do with your normal behavior. So it was explained to him, I know. And then Ken came back and said that he'd spoken to Andrew Silver and that he'd extended his apologies, said he certainly didn't mean anything deceitful, and that if I had any questions at all about what was going on and why, feel free to interrupt the filming or anything else. And like what's prearranged, I'll have the ability to erase what I don't like or not wish to keep whatever's done on the film. In other words I could get rid of my part in the film right up to and including the final cutting. I could review the film and deny it's existence.

I didn't have to do that. The total package was a very good film, although it was a little long because there were five interviews. On part of that film I documented the precognition of a nuclear detonation of a malicious nature in the near future. And it-- [Tom very emotional] --in the near future and it has to be-- It has to be in an Olympic year.

So the film went on. The copy of the film which you can rent or see (we have a copy of it--that was stolen and achieved and manipulated and deceived and against the law!).

[Man in audience asked a question] Doesn't have that part of my dialogue in it. Again, I said I don't know if there's a longer version of the film. This version is 20 or 25 minutes long, and it's sufficient. He made the film for a full-length feature movie. Apparently it didn't sell, wasn't feasible-- It had to be cut down to a 25 minute educational film which did sell. He probably made a profit on it, that kind of thing. Also, that film became an award-winning documentary. North American Nurses Education Association Film Festival and so on and so on.

Well I found out later on that that film festival, that post office box and the mailing address, was Andrew Silver. What he did because he's very filthy rich, he had a film festival, and entered his film in it-- I have a feeling that there were not to many other films in the category so that it would receive the designation as the award-winning film of the North American Nurses Association Film Festival, so then therefore he could peddle it and sell it as an award-winning documentary film. [Tom laughs heartily]

So I am part of an award-winning-- Well, through Ken Ring I was introduced to Round-Table discussion--which in effect is what we're having here. Any time a couple of people. . . Any time that we'd get around and start asking questions, share with each other, and so on. Share all kinds of things--that's what I call Round-Table discussions. The oval table in the Near-Death Hotel became the round-table. I got to meet my first real physicist that way. Oh man I was so excited, like a little kid going to Disneyland.

I got another plane ride and that was kind of exciting--it was a 737 instead of those---DC9s. I was very familiar with planes and always had a fascination with them and was excited to get to ride, even though they were commercial jets. I went there and expected to see-- I mean literally I had an image of a top-hat and some kind of a suit--actually a stove pipe hat!

At the end of that lecture, here's this dude with sneakers that are all ripped to hell, cutoff shorts, and a polo shirt or a sweat shirt, hair all mussed up--which was cool because you know a physicist should have mussy hair. His was real short, shorter than this [indicating his own head], just mussed up a little bit. Mark Sullivan. Not only that, this dude was like *my age!* I mean you can't be a physicist until you're sixty-five or better!

Anyway, we had a wild conversation. Henry didn't introduce me, and took a couple of my spiral notebooks, and said, "Look, just take a look at this stuff. Don't worry if they're not in order or something you may not understand, or something that maybe does not belong, just look at some of the stuff. I want your opinion."

So he flipped through a couple of pages and said, "Well, what is all this stuff?" Henry said, "No, just keep on, look through the pages, and I want your overall opinion of what he's done." He then turned the next few pages, and got very, very straight-faced, really serious. And he turned to Ken Ring and he said, "I don't think this is a joke at all. Ken, I don't know what's going on but first of all, how could you know this? You know, this is really pretty serious."

I got emotional because oh, brother, here we go with another chapter! Give me a break. This guy is going to think I'm a total asshole. That's just the way I didn't need any more of this, I needed normalcy in my life-- [Tom is emotional] --normalcy in my life.

Ken Ring then said, "Well, you know that I've been dealing with research into near-death experiences. What you may not know is, many near-death experiencers very often come back and write things and talk about things or do things that are outside their--" He said a fancy phrase like "out of their expertise" or their "field of endeavor," or something like that. He said, "Now, what I'd like to do is introduce you to my friend, Tom, from Rochester, New York. He has a high-school education."

I had warned Ken, "Please, anybody that's around here, tell them I just have a high school education and I flunked most of that." Again, it was humiliating for me to be in a real university. I felt so inadequate and not worthy of even being in there. I hadn't signed up to be there and I certainly wished that I could.

Also in this time frame was realizing that, "Oh my God, I just want to read any physics book there is! I want to verify that which I know. Books are fantastic. Oh my God, *that's* why people actually have shelves of books and stuff in their houses!" I had always thought they were totally out of their minds before. Around that time frame too, I put several shelves in my basement. And boy there are more than twenty-five books there now! I'm pretty proud of that. [People in the room interrupted here with various comments. One asked what was on the page.] It was an equation or a, oh come on, let me see. [Another question]

Oh right, so then he introduced me (this will help answer your question), he introduced me and said, "Well Tom is one of those people and those are Tom's spiral notebooks. He's written what's in there." He kind of like glared at me and I thought, "Oh wow, wait a minute, did I make a mistake? Gee, I hope I didn't misspell something!" Then he looked back at Ken and said, "Ken, this is not a joke; you can't know that this is just what I'm working on right now." What I also didn't know was that he is a part-time professor of the University of Connecticut, and that he has a bigger job at New Haven at the-- I'm not sure what the name of it is. The New Haven Laser Research Lab--something of that nature.

What was on the page might have been something like: Capital letter S equals HP-- No, no, it wasn't that. I wrote a bunch of letters down and it was--are you ready--it was spelled correctly! It was like an equation. In other words, what I wrote down was correct. I couldn't read it but by that time I knew, on a subconscious level, that that was quantum physics. And it had something to do with, at that time--1980, maybe 1982--and it would

have some direct or indirect implications toward laser technology and/or implosion, that type of thing. Very typically the Omega Project at the U of R. [University of Rochester].

Another problem, because very generally, technologically, that whole project is glorious. But as it affects me as an outdoor woodsman, it has always been very offensive to me. I frown on "they" who are in control of that, are not in control of that. And they're pushing the button without knowing ahead of time. They are creating wave functions and microwave type refractions or wave functions.

In other words, if you had the U of R as seen from several thousand feet, many thousand feet above the earth, you could take a tiny pencil and draw from U of R, make little squiggle lines outwardly. And if you could make that two-dimensionally, and have it as the epicenter or center, then make little squiggle lines in every direction and keep going until you just about block out everything else on the page-- When they do that thing, when they press that button and do that thing, that's what it looks like, spiritually speaking. Again, very simplistic theoretical idealism, but that's what was bothering me, and has bothered me pretty much every since.

We have someone else in the Priesthood who was reasonably knowledgeable in that respect Do you have any idea whom I'm referring to by saying just that much? Okay. I'm not sure of his position or anything like that, I'm not sure if it would be a good idea to either acknowledge his name or position because it does have something to do very indirectly with the Omega Project. [Someone in the room seemed to know and made a remark] But he might not want that to be advertised. [Lengthy comment from man in room]

With the technological advances into such things as superconductivity, the telemetry from those facilities, in other words they're trying to make superconductivity material at room temperature-- All that stuff will be tied together and collectively-- And if they get off their dumb fannys and get that super-collider feasible and working-- [Comment] If it's in Texas yet. At this point in time, I don't care if they build it on the moon. In spite of some of the problems and negative aspects--just like the Omega Project and many others, the subtle forms of pollution that we don't have measurements for, that I may or may not be aware of. We are stuck in this technological situation in order to--for instance to negate or have extinct

our nuclear armament, we need the advanced technological telemetry and data from some of these new systems. And--I don't want to say "creations" but that will instantly come from such things.

When the super-collider is working, I've already said publicly and it may sound crazy and fictitious but if they do their job and if it is working at all like it's designed and predicted to work, within a very short period of time--which means-- Gee, should I extend it and say like ten years? Which is a short period of time for any kind of research like that. It will mathematically and unequivocally prove the existence of God! I was genuinely very upset when they had an opportunity to start building and get the thing built within five to seven years--of course in the Rochester area in -- [Comment from man in room] All I know is a couple of years ago they could have been halfway through building that. But they were so concerned about taking the old homestead down--which the people didn't live on any more. You know, I've got great compassion for that but you know-- Gee, don't stand in the way of God! Your house is precious, but so is God.

But unbelievable technological advance will come from having a working model in the area. The super-conductive super-collider. Basically what it is is a huge oversized linear accelerator. So what does it mean? It'll just be a measuring instrument for crashing subatomic particles together to find out what they are, how fast they are, what they'll do in their makeup. That's all it's for, just an instrument. But from the telemetry, the stuff that they'll get from that-- Of course so much of that stuff will be computer enhanced, and computer dealt with. You're not going to stand there and say, "Ah gee, what was that sound again?" It'll all be recorded and--Zeeeeeeeesh!

Have you also by chance heard of a transphaser? (sp.?) Okay. Well again, hand in hand with a prototype model of a computer using transphasers--I don't know what they call it, a transphasometer! That's big stuff. [Long comment from man in audience, not audible enough to transcribe] And I mean not like fifty years later. I mean very, very soon. It's like a, "Oh my God situation." [Tom chuckled]

What I'm afraid to say, what I'm sorry to say, because this is going backwards in time, gee, it must have been in 1987 that I kind of rounded off several things that I had been talking about. And that was, that was the twelfth hour.

In other words it went past my theoretical deadline for-- In other words if we get to this particular season in this particular year-- If we get just prior to a certain place in 1988-- It was like the end of the one season in 1988--which is where we are right now. That will be like the deadline that some of this stuff is starting to come together right now.

The chemical pollutions and mistakes in airborne particles-- I don't want to say "germ warfare" but germ pollution, airborne and so on, and water-carried germ type pollution-- We might not make it. It's getting toward a fifty-fifty proposition right now. We're going into a probability of annihilation before initiation.

And the problem is, I don't mean to dwell on the negative, is that also at the rate we're going red tape is getting thicker and heavier and made of polymers! Harder to cut, and what have you. The sensationalism, the deceit in the market place, in politics, in salesmanship, engineering projects, research centers-- By that I mean the fakers.

"Why yes, I'm head of the laser research lab in Podunk University and yes, we do have a laser." You know, "we're looking for a grant for this next-- " And it represents nothing. I mean total deceit only for the money.

One hundred percent. What is it, is it something like a hundred and ninety elements of particles-- Is it one hundred and ninety? [Comment from man] You're talking about especially two German physicists, scientists.

Their money was running out of their research project, time and money was running out, and they had to re-up the request for their grant. Push came to shove, and it was come up with either something or nothing. They created through their imagination the something. They were all written up and all the-- You know, the *New England Journal of Physicists*. Well, the *Enquirer* magazine at least. In other words, made a big hoopla, went to the place-- [Interruption from man in audience] Anyway, big party there, cutting ribbons and all that stuff.

This was the year of the big push and they'd be able to get a new grant and a new facility bigger and better and lots of material stuff. And it was a one hundred percent fabricated lie. [two people exchange comments with each other and with Tom] I said that because I was immediately going to follow with that which you've very well put! You know, it's your interest in things that you may not know anything about, but gee, this is interesting.

Let me see if I can get this in my little computer. Ditttttttz! [Impossible to reproduce the sound!]

I mean who made a phone call to the Pentagon and said, "Hey 'Yofetch,' you are in this place and if you don't do something now, I will on national television. [Tom meant he did this] Let me be real crazy and arrogant and totally off the wall and crazy. An ex-carpenter happens to go, for some crazy circumstance, on national television, with a threat against the Pentagon and forcing their hand to immediately do something. Which instead of pushing right to my crazy limits of the twelfth hour of a nuclear explosion of a malicious nature, they had to expose it. And therefore prevented a very terrible disaster.

Not even so much the explosion and the devastated area of the explosion, but the moral effect, the spiritual effect, and the psychological effect on everybody else. [End of Tape 8-A]

[Beginning of 8-B] In other words, each person's attitude all the way up. A few attitudes are better than no attitudes at all. That very simplistic attitudinal change. Remember the example I gave you of the power of attitudinal change.

And again, what is the Priesthood? The Priesthood is responsible for disarming and stopping a major bombing in the Middle East. I've forgot the name of the city, the name of the checkpoint.

You have to first appreciate that a Moslem who has agreed is set up and driving a car bomb to a particular spot. If he decides to change his mind, he will be killed by his constituents. There's only one answer to a turncoat or a failure or a change of mind. And that is to annihilate that person. And this was not like, "Well if you come back and you don't blow that place up, we're going to beat you up." This is a contractual annihilation. An individual is not worthy of Allah and he's to be killed.

This man drove up, made it to the site, and pulled over off to one side. He sat in the car for just a second, got out and walked up to the checkpoint and made the announcement that something very lovely had overcome him, and for some reason he can't go through with it and he wishes to just to be peaceful. It sounds like the guy's just cruising along and says, "No, I can't really do this because I'm a peaceful person."

In order to really understand, you've got to appreciate those soldiers in the Middle East, the Moslems-- When they're prepared to carry out something like that in the name of Allah, ain't nothing gonna stop them but

death! They might as well do it because otherwise they're gonna get killed or worse--and it's actually a mental awareness--that they're gonna get killed or worse, if they ever turn back a failure. And to show force or something, their entire family might be killed.

**Woman** Are you saying that the Priesthood just happened to get in touch with it?

**Tom** An awareness came a couple of different directions--so that we don't end up pointing a finger at the source--a couple of different directions. A timely situation. In other words, the location was known and the time frame was known. Can you stop a blasting cap from going off? No you can't. Can you blow up a car before it gets to its destination? No you can't. In other words telepathically. Can you kill the guy telekinetically? No you can't. Can you love-bomb the guy and change his attitude? Yes, you can.

[Woman in the room said to Tom that the Priests at this gathering had been told in the afternoon that Tom was the caretaker of the Order of Melchizedek. She said they were told that part of Tom's contract was to serve the Order of Melchizedek, to work with it, be available to it. But why the Order of Melchizedek? Did he know about it in another lifetime and/or did he have a choice in the matter?]

**Tom** I'm not denying that so far, without jumping for glory or saying they're going to raise my pay! The quick answer is, why not? Yes, I had a choice in the matter but not previously. In other words, as soon as there was any association at all, if it be my first meeting with Dan, or it could be Dan's first acknowledgment of, "Gee, Tom had one of these experiences called a near-death experience." It doesn't matter when, but from that onset on, yes I've had a choice on going, a choice to stay here or not to stay here, or be here tonight and stay after that. Sure, I've had a choice all the way along, and I do now.

And yes, as a matter of fact, I have, without merely a shrug of the shoulders, the choice to lovingly say goodbye to you tonight and never talk to another one of you *weird* people! Or come to another weekend, or anything else. In other words, just to forget about the Order, Dan Chesbro, or Sommerville (sp.?), that'd be even easier yet!

Or to forget about Steve, just--you know. Let me put it this way. When I'm in Rick Vicseal's (sp.?) tunnel boat, with a thousand horsepower, and I go right through the center of your sailboat, then you're gonna be sorry! [Tom laughs] [Steve says something about a flare gun] Oh, no! Not the old flare gun routine again! [Laughter and various comments. The woman asked another question] That developed so much more casually than apparently you have an image for. And it was so comfortable. Anyone here remember how I first met Dan? I don't remember. [Various comments. One about a television show.] Yeah, I was just trying to pinpoint the first instance when I met Dan. Either the first eye contact, or the first awareness.

Was Dan Chesbro told by Jean Eddy, "By the way, have you ever heard of this guy by the name of Tom Sawyer who had one of these near-death experiences? And as opposed to one of your Om Shanty shows, you ought to put him on your show." And that's how it came about. [Another question] No, no. In other words I don't want to give that that much credibility because the jobs that, obviously, have already come of that.

See, I still don't know what my job is. Here's the sentence. I had this near-death experience because I had a job to do and my job is-- Fill in that line, see? Can't fill in that line yet. Don't know what my job is. Ten-year priority was to do whatever could be done to ultimately deter, to postpone, or annihilate or stop that nuclear detonation in Lebanon. And I-we did it! I'm really very ecstatic about it. And I'm not afraid to brag of my participation that was, in some ways, unique. In other words I can and should get credit for accomplishing that.

Then I run right into--oh right into *Enquirer* magazine, give them the whole scoop and they have a big splash, have a party and stuff like that. No, there's other things. Does that mean, "Tom, that wasn't your job?" No, that obviously was one of them. Did I know that it was the job as it developed? No, I never did. I said it was one of my priorities. Was it any less important than helping Dr. Daniel Carr with his research on beta endorphins? As a matter of fact it was more important than that.

But, did I interrupt my total energy and package of time dealing with the Lebanon/Tyre region thing for Dr. Daniel Carr? Yes, I did interrupt it. I dealt with Dr. Daniel Carr's research, directly, indirectly, and that was accomplished. Gee, then therefore, you should put all of your energy into the priority. It doesn't work that way. It just doesn't work that way.

My goodness, is Tom Sawyer the Order of Melchizedek? No, then you've lost the essence of the organization. In fact, I dislike immensely the word organisation--any organization. As soon as any organization is organized or a foundation, or any other kind of -ation, there's bound to be hardship, one upmanship, power struggles, character clashes, criticism, condemnation, often leading to failures. Often leading to the failure of the original plan or design. And of course J. Chrysna Murty [or McMurry] was the champion of that--what I've just said, that paragraphing I've just said.

He outright criticized any and all religions, because it's giving you targets to think about when your better goal is to simply stop thinking. Stop thinking. Wow, we should go around and be stopped thinking.

No, you go around, you work, you get married, you make mistakes, you argue, you make humor, you joke, you have a good time, right. Just be. But in addition to that, and as an ultimate goal, how often should we meditate? Twelve times a day? Doesn't sound bad to me! Again, you know that's abuse. It's a--do we dare say substance abuse? [A woman walked to the window and looked outside]\ Is it light yet? [No, it's snowing] That's impossible!

[Woman asks question. Not audible] Yeah, on that level it's very valid because, first of all, we're so materialistically oriented, then job-oriented, yeah. No sense denying that at all but deal with it casually like-- I was going to say greed and ego, no that's different enough and ambiguous enough. Well, you deal with it like facts, or deal with it like emotions, or deal with it like motivation, in that you should not by any means deal with any one of those things all of the time.

Grab a number. What's the percentage of your day that you should deal with any of those things? Well, Friday! It's Friday! And you ain't got nothing going on the next day! No, but seriously, that's the reality going on right there. Wednesday night the percentages change. Saturday night, ah, all hell breaks loose. And again, to be a little more serious, the percentages are like two, three, four, five, and ten percent. When you start getting up to forty and fifty percent or sixty percent or more. Wow, wait a minute. I don't think there's any one day that should be prioritized with that kind of percentage. Do you understand the way I said that?

You know, to be well balanced, you can eliminate several of the choices, and still be well balanced. You can participate in all of the things and still be well balanced. But you can't have a lopsided percentage like forty percent of one thing and only five percent of each of the other things,

or fifty percent of anything, or more than fifty percent of anything, because it will then just become obsessive.

You know, if you do a graphical thing of that regarding any series of things, like emotions, and separate them into percentages and so on-- In cyclical time like a month, or a year, or five and ten years, and things like that. You know your own cyclical time. A single day, a week, a month. Within any of those cyclical time frames, make enough measurements, and if you do have twenty or more or forty percent priority or time frame, or amount of energy, focus on any one thing such as your emotions or somebody else's emotions-- As opposed to no sex, if you're sexually oriented, what is the percentage of sex--is it five or ten percent? Is it the only thing you're living for--like Elaine claims-- [Laughter] She's correct a lot of the time!

I told Elaine, "I can't wait to see you at your funeral. There you are, getting up from the dead, to straighten the satin pillow!"

[Question from a woman about is there anything we should focus on now like we did on that particular place last summer?]

To jump right into that, most of those focuses are still the same. Now we have loved to death or annihilated the Tyre Lebanon-- It's really Syria-Lebanon nuclear detonation. By the way, just to rattle that off, and I do want to brag about it, the military intervention by my standards, and I was just impatient and scared, I lost track of any information from them as it got toward the eleventh hour. And this whole thing got pretty crazy, at least by my standards.

It got close to the eleventh hour and so on and so on. When it was July of 1988., that's then warm weather-- and again I was only able to focus in on the warm weather in 1988. When it got to be that and I lost track of any measurements, by my measurements I got out of newspapers, the Channel 31 news, the 24-hour news thing, little blips and bleeps of--

In other words, they might say that the son of Senator something something just got a commission in a certain special forces and its first station will be Tyre-Lebanon. are not--they don't mean to give you that kind of information. But if I know something's going on there, and the military forces are there, then I can deduce a lot of information from that.

Also, if I'm to interreact with that at all (I'm not saying that I have a direct connection with the military like that), then I at least know I have a target. To not have that much information then you say, God I wonder if there's anybody or anything there. But what if your target is the middle of the desert in the Utah-Nevada area where there is the least of anything. So what's your target? One grain of sand? In other words, where it's mostly only sand. The minimum amount of plants, the maximum distance from inhabited anything. That took place a few years ago.

And a cruise missile landed there. And about a month later, a second cruise missile landed in the same spot. And about six months later the third cruise missile landed in the same spot. Three strikes you're out. We won.

It's almost like funny, it's almost like a joke. It's like a silly little video game--the hindsight of these things. But how do we measure the Lebanon thing in reality? Well, just go and look back. I've got clippings, most of the clippings and stuff. These are newspaper clippings in a time frame. By the time this newspaper clipping--it was like a week ago--did military personnel find and describe the mechanism for a nuclear bomb in Syria-Tyre-Lebanon, Middle East? Wow. You can't deny that. There's enough documentation. I don't have to prove it to anybody anyway.

In dealing with things, what do we go by? I don't sit here and say, "Well let's see just a second--ommm. Oh by the way, the answer is--Twenty-seven--oh no, that's a number for the lottery.

I did that to a good guy at work who wins very often. And I said, "Peter, if you'll really keep hounding me and you want me to teach you about the numbers, I'll do it. I can't gamble, because if I win, I will have to give them all the money back and tell them that I cheated. And that's just going to blow the lid off. It's going to cause so much trouble."

I say, "Okay, get your pencil and paper. I want you to understand, you've gotta promise me that you'll not spend more than five dollars on this. In other words, you're paying five dollars to learn a lesson. I'm going to teach you the reality of psychic awareness on the numbers. All right. Now write this down. How many do you need?" I think it was like six. So I gave him the numbers. Oh he was all excited and everything. So I give him numbers to write, claiming that I got them psychically.

Next day he come in and said, "Ah gee, Tom, I lost my money. Boy, I don't think any of those numbers came out.." I said, "Did you check carefully?"

"Well yeah, as a matter of fact the only numbers that weren't anywhere on anything were the numbers you gave me." That's hard to do. You know like you get seven numbers. Well, pick seven numbers and guarantee that none of the numbers you picked will appear anywhere in the drawing. I don't know what the odds. They are terrible for the winning numbers. Don't they have to like have one number in the winning numbers? I said, "Did you learn a lesson?" "Well, you know, I did spend a lot more than five dollars."

[There were general comments by the people in the room. Then someone said something about Garfield and they were off in that direction. Finally, Tom said to me, "How far did we get, what time is it?" I said, "Twenty to four." And there were various comments about how they went longer than last year. Several people started yawning, saying good night and leaving the room. The woman who'd asked the question quite some time before about what our priorities should be this year caught Tom's eye.]

You know, I never did answer your question about priorities. The percentage is creeping more toward chemicals. Certain individuals will be able to prioritize suicide. But it really should be only the right individuals, the ones that can either cope or deal with it. Generally, for everybody, I think the priority right now and to the end of this next season will be chemicals. Chemicals that are not considered hazardous and deadly, but the horrendous amount, not qualitatively or quantitatively, the amount alone will be not only useless but detrimental in that there's too much of it.

For instance like chemical fertilizer, okay. Gee, that's not harmful stuff, that's not so bad. Course it kills a few little birds, so what? But you double the dosage and guess what? You've got no lawn at all. So there's a danger in that. It just becomes common practice to double dose.

The spreading of salt in the town of Greece. It's no health hazard, it doesn't even kill the grass on the side of the road. Does it kill any ducks? Maybe one, but it deserved to die anyway. They're double dosing. One three-day weekend, from Friday afternoon to Monday morning, they put down five hundred tons of salt. That's more than five times the amount that should have been used for that type of storm.

Granted it was that freezing rain, granted that is the most difficult to maintain and salt away, because as soon as it starts to thaw, it washes through itself. You know, depending on how hard it rained and so on. If they would have carefully timed that a little better--first of all loaded and have all the salt trucks out on their routes standing by with the demand to stand

by, "Don't go racing through your routes to get done early, and so on." Have four monitors at the four corners of the town--guys in pickup trucks. Give the call if need be--it takes better than two hours to get to a salt mound.

Anywhere from as little as twenty to forty-six ----- [could not hear] so you've got a time lag. Where the need is emergency you're going to have to say the emergency is going to last two and a half hours. Of course what they went ahead and did, before there was ever any ice, they put down a layer of salt. They put the salt down and it rained first, and of course washed the salt away. The first little bit of ice and there was absolutely nothing there. Total waste. Running close to a hundred tons.

You may say, "Well, big deal. One little town and a couple of loads of salt. That's not going to affect Lake Ontario, it's not going to kill any ducks, and it's not going to kill the grass on the side of the road. But it's waste! How many cars and trucks have wasted thousands and thousands of dollars on the premature rusting, in other words just the cost of the material alone.

For one load of salt you've got all the mining equipment, all the hauling equipment-- [A man in the room asked a question.] I don't know. Is it daybreak, you think? [It was obvious to me that Tom was tired. I wished the others would leave. I was exhausted by this time.] Then you've got over the road hauling, the trailer trucks. In other words, you've got 18 wheels, 18 tires, the fumes, oil, trucking all over the salt mines and rest stops. The winds blow some of the salt off--total waste! No matter how it's handled--we handle it quite well but you can count on--excuse me [Tom overtaken by a huge yawn] --about five percent of the total material lost by natural misuse, goes underneath the bulkhead, gets pushed over out of the way off the side. And of course that's put into the salt truck, so that's wasted. When the truck starts up they've gotta test the system. The waste is one section-- Back at the Highway Department the driveway, which is asphalt, is totally disintegrated. That's probably cost, our cost--the town's cost--about \$4,000. This year there hasn't been suitable checkers-- I've been too busy to do that myself. The give-a-damn attitude of the drivers is, "Come on man, put as much as you can down so we won't have to go over it again." In other words they'd much rather do that and get off the road for safety's sake.

But there's two sides to the story. The damn salt trucks throwing sand and salt all over the place. That's one minor little thing. You see I want to

downplay the whole thing. Big deal, what differences does that make in one year? A couple of thousand dollars in the town of Greece, that's pocket change, in cash. But some of the other things--and I don't want to pick on Kodack--but some of the spills there on the perimeter. But when the particles get airborne, where do you think they go? The section along the lake? Up there on Ridge Road? Take a look around!

One of the things I've started doing, physically, is whenever I take off in a plane (and I was on thirty planes just this last year) I don't waste the time. I look out the window at the different color schemes of the ground. You can see some very illegal and horrendous pollutions. Twenty, thirty thousand, fifty-five gallon drums, get a landmark and jot it down. It starts in two miles north of the end of the runway. This was just a couple of years back. What can be done? I've called in somthing like thirty illegal drums of heavy metal on the runway of the Rochester airport just a couple of years ago. I called in the 55- gallon drums that were in the town of---right down by the lake. I drove my pickup truck down there and found that.

Strictly, physically, none of this Om Shanty stuff. There it was. Anyway, there were these drums. I called them in, it's their job to come check them out. I don't know who the owner is. If there's no owner, and they're illegal and toxic, pull them in. What do you want to do, wait until the kids punch holes in them?

And yet I dislike some of the tactics of the Greenpeace Organization. But you've gotta give them credit, they're not doing nothing! They are doing something.

You're going to criticize them? Sure I'm going to criticize them if they go overboard and do something wrong. Look at history. Sometimes you've gotta stir up trouble in order to get things done. [Woman made long comment about Greenpeace, not audible. I turned off the tape recorder at this point. It was near the end of Tape 8-B]

[Tape 9-A]

There was something that in a group I wanted to brag about and share. My son Tim had a nasty accident--how many weeks ago? Well, maybe going on four weeks ago. At fifty miles an hour he slid at impact speed sideways in a blazer type truck. He was sitting on the passenger's side. Directly

into the window of the truck met with a tree sideways. Impact speed was about forty miles an hour. So, in effect, Timmie tried to move the tree with his face. The glass was embedded into the whole upper part of his body, they picked pieces out of his naval, and so on.

He had many, many lacerations all over. This whole area of his forehead was mashed and swelled up and so on. He had a concussion, several spots were very badly damaged. He had deep lacerations, one L-shaped, a couple on the right side of his head. If you'd take my finger right here and two and a half digits down take a razor blade and trace around it and take that flap out, that was out.

Oh you know, the gory details. Forehead on the other side, and so on. He had a large chunk out of his lip, not quite the size of an eraser, that was missing out of the corner of his lip. His teeth were shattered in the back, three shattered teeth. His humorous bone from his elbow to his shoulder on his left arm was broken. He had to wait five days in order to get that into a cast. Partially because of the nature of the fracture, they were considering operating and pinning it, but there's a major nerve that wraps around that, that operates all the hand movements and they didn't want to disturb that. They thought it'd be best to just leave it alone, and then put it in a fiberglass cast. Timmie's fourteen years old, he'll be fifteen. [On St. Patrick's Day] He looks like a little Irish kid, blue eyes, and he's really a sweet-looking kid and he's usually a very nice person. Almost everyone that meets him, likes him a lot. He was born under the sign of Pisces--the sign of the fish.

Anyway, he's a good healthy kid. Of course, you don't have to worry too much about him surviving something like this. The first three days was emergency for the concussion. That was quite severe. His head changed shapes as much as an inch and a half several different times. On a couple of occasions you could stand there and watch the fluid move. It was really pretty bad. The second day of his hospital stay, I took some photographs. He was looking really well, it was the middle of the day, he looked about the best he could for that second day. By then the stitches were in and so on. He had seventeen stitches in the front part of his face.

So Timmie was hurt pretty bad. Real good humor. He never once complained. He grimaced a few times but never complained out loud. I was waiting for him at the hospital. I helped lift him out of the ambulance on a stretcher. Then as the stretcher went I got in the position where, if he

could see at all, he could see me. "Oh, hi Dad. Gee, I guess I look kind of bad, huh?" And I said, "Well, don't worry about the way you look, Tim, how're you doing?" And of course the eye contact, the little touch and so on.

I drove a truck to the hospital. I drove the truck a little while before he got there. So I had time to park the truck and be waiting at the Emergency Department. Ambulance came, they brought him in, went in there and took care of things. Timmie rattled off every single thing that was wrong with him. "Well, Dad, I finally got a broken arm. Yeah, I think my ribs are broken, they're just so sore." And that turned out to be ruptured cartilage or damaged cartilage.

He says, "Well, I was going to tell you that I was going out for pole vaulting this spring in track. I think I may have to wait until next year." And then he immediately began to calculate and so on. So he really did excellent. They were quite concerned about the concussion and if he fell asleep they woke him up every two hours with the usual questions to see if he was coherent and so on.

Elaine and I stayed with him all that day and night, and then we took turns, twelve hours on and twelve hours off. I happened to have a vacation day so it was very convenient for me to be there. I took half of one day without pay just to make it easy on my vacation time. So, that sets the scene.

What I'm really telling you is nobody in my family and certainly not me ten years ago would have ever entertained such a ridiculous, stupid thing as-- You know, "Get your hands off me. Don't stand over me and smile and look up at the ceiling and do your Om Shanty stuff. Just give me some more pain pills and let the doctor take care of it."

Well, Grandpa Gene came to the hospital and he asked me, "Gee Tom, do you think, maybe, if I asked Tim--" I said, "What, do a hands on healing? It has nothing to do with me, that's between you and Tim. Furthermore, it depends on Tim's receptivity. You already know that. Why not? If Tim says not and is not receptive, then I guess you'll have to do it a little secretly, like stand off to the side and put one hand on his shoulder."

"I mean, you can sneak around and do certain things. Yes, it's manipulation, but if there's any receptivity that guarantees that-- If there's a receptive essence here and there's no plug, nothing will happen. If there's a plug and it's plugged in and there's no receptivity, you haven't lost anything." So he went ahead and asked Tim, and I'm sure that Tim would

have agreed anyway but the look on Tim's face was, "Gee, wow, thank's Grandpa Gene."

I vacated myself, went right out of the room and also I was aware that two of my work protegees that were friends of Tim's--in other words they worked with me on the job site. They were coming up in the elevator. I wanted to stall them for a little while. I also wanted to tell them that Tim looked reasonably bad but he was really okay, but that he would want to see them, and they should feel free to joke around.

So I talked to them. Grandpa Gene came out and I went back into the room. Tim's receptivity to that was really extraordinary. He enjoyed it. He has not a very great perception of such things, rituals or whatever. But let's face it, being around my house he's picked up through osmosis quite a bit of knowledge.

But as far as his own personal receptivity, I think that Todd would not entertain such a thing. Todd is too much like the old Tom Sawyer. And would have decided that that's just a little bit too much. No. Thanks but no thanks.

[Tom passed around pictures of Tim. Remarkable recovery in a short time]

At any rate, Tim had to wait five days to get the stitches out. Tim came home around the third day. We went to the doctor's office to get the stitches out. He went to the plastic surgeon. "Well, Tim, come on in here." When Tim came into view the guy said, "Oh well gee, what's going on?" I asked what was the problem.

"He should have been here before this!" Then he looked down at his records. He told me later that he thought Tim had gone beyond the five-day period. He wanted to take them out while there was still a red line and so on. The stitches were still in there and Timmie's face was basically clear white. All the wounds had closed up a little too much. It's best to get the stitches out of there before there's too much healing going on.

I believe it was the ninth day I took photographs again and got them back. Right on the tip of this one cheek there's about the size of a normal blemish or pimple, a raised little scar. Other than that one spot right there, there is zero scarring anywhere on his face. There's no stitches, no signs of anything whatsoever. He does have a broken arm and I explained to him no matter what happened you have to guarantee that that will stay on. The doctor said twelve weeks, and we'll have to leave it on eight weeks. Don't

worry too much after eight weeks, but be realistic, this isn't something you fool around with, better to be safe than sorry. He is very, very lucky. Blame it all on Tim's receptivity, who he is, and so on.

There are many in the Priesthood who have assisted me. Thank you if you know who you are. If you don't know who you are, thank you anyway. I'm really serious about that.

The camaraderie alone--we know a lot about each other. We recognize just by sight, or at a gathering like this, and to have the camaraderie of knowing that there are twenty-five or a hundred, or 550, not like but similar, with common interests--that's a brotherhood or a sisterhood. That alone gives you, maybe just the confidence for more power, but it gives you a little more power than if you'd not had any association at all, and not a gathering such as this weekend, not in a brotherhood or sisterhood, such as the Priesthood provides. Well, you know, I spent a great deal of time with Tim. And we did the very logical thing, by today's standards. Both Elaine and I, and I did coach Elaine a little bit--I gave some suggestions to her that she might not have thought about.

I said, "Elaine, it's most important to do three things: We've got to love-bomb Tim for the next several days. Do you know what I mean by love-bombing? No matter what your attitude is, no matter what your problems are, I don't want you to say, question, or think anything negative at all. Don't bother to discuss the accident, if possible. Don't say, 'Oh gee this, or I'm gonna have to--' or anything else. Say, 'Gee Tim, I get to see you more' and things like that. Don't say anything about an extra work load, or that you want to rush home from work, don't say anything that Tim will construe that he is adversely affecting the household or anything at all. Love-bomb him, keep things of a positive nature, surround him with the stupid jokes that you know, surround him with the greatest jokes that you know, any joke that you can come up with.

"Go to the library and get a humor book, hide it in the kitchen, come up with a joke and say, 'Tim, did you hear the one about--' I want you to spend fifty dollars if you have to, go to the video store, get comedy movies, leave them stacked on the coffee table. Let Tim decide which comedy movies he wants to watch. *The Three Stooges*, slapstick comedy, R-rated comedy--Tim's cool, Tim could write some books!--and all of that.

[Tape ended here. The rest of Tom's statement was to the effect that with the love-bombing and the laughter, Tim's healing took place rapidly,

much more than normally. I saw the whole series of the photographs from the ER entrance to the ninth day when his face showed only a slight blemish on the cheek that had had a chunk cut out an inch or so long.]