

Interviewee: Robert “Bob” Cornelius (BC)

Interviewer: Tom Martin (TM)

Subject: Working as a Park Ranger in the Grand Canyon in the early 1970’s.

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TM: Good morning. This is a Grand Canyon Oral History Interview Part 4 with Robert “Bob” Cornelius. C-O-R-N-E-L-I-U-S. Today is June 4, 2018. It’s Monday. My name is Tom Martin and this is a phone interview. Bob, may I have your permission to record this interview over the phone?

BC: Yes, you do.

TM: Thank you very much. In our last discussion at the end of Part 3 we were talking about some different folks. We talked about Vernon Ruesch and Nick Nicholson and Jim Vukonich. We were just getting to Jack Fields but you had mentioned a story you recalled about the United States Geological Survey employee, Roy Starkey, S-T-A-R-K-E-Y. What was the story about Roy that you wanted to recall?

BC: Well, Roy of course was down at Phantom and every day he went down and gaged the river or at least a few times a week and also got sediment samples. One of the questions you asked me was whether I’d been out in the cable car. You would think that would be an event that you would recall right away, but I sort of had a difficult time remembering it. I do have a slide of Roy somewhere standing next to the cable car. I’m sure I took that on that day and the more I thought about it, I realized I had been out there. It was kind of a roundabout way that I realized this in that when I moved to Curecanti in Black Canyon, there’s a cable car here down just inside the upstream boundary of Black Canyon National Monument at the time, now National Park. The cable car is run by the USGS, very similar to the one they had down at the canyon only much smaller unit and not nearly as long a cable going across the river. Roy used to... When I got to Curecanti, got to Black Canyon, one of the first things I did is I got a key from the USGS to their gaging station and also to unlock the cable car so that we could use it for patrols onto the north shore of the Gunnison River and pick up trash, check fishermen, rescue people, all those different things. I knew how to use the thing. The cable car at the Grand Canyon, Roy had showed me, when we went out obviously, how to do it, because one of the things he liked was to have someone go along with him so they did all the work...

TM: [laughter]

BC: ...pulling the cable car back and forth across the river. It’s a lot of work. It takes a lot of strength because the cable is... There’s a lot of slack in the cable so at one point when you’re either going to the far side or coming back, you’re actually pulling the cable car uphill. So it takes quite a bit of strength. There’s a thing called a puller that is used on the cable. To describe the cable car you had down there, as I recall it had a box on the bottom, probably, I think it was a wooden box set in the metal frame and it had a little, sort of like a baseboard you’d have in your house. It goes all the way around sort of a box. That way you could put tools or if you dropped something it didn’t fall into the river.

TM: Right.

BC: You'd put your tools down and they would stay. Then you had a metal frame and the upper part of the metal frame you had these pieces that went up at an angle and attached to a pulley, two pulleys, one on either side. The pulleys, of course, went across the cable. Then this puller was sort of like a wrench sort of affair. When you attached it to the cable, you attached it parallel to the cable and then you would pull it down 90 degrees and then you would use friction. You'd be able to use friction on this device to pull the cable car. He had a little tagline of like firehouse that he hooked on it. That gave you a little bit more friction if you got that over the cable, also. So you would pull with this with one hand. Then there were some safety things you had to watch out... There was a cross piece, like a large bolt, that went between the portions of the cable car that went up to the pulley. That cross piece, when you wanted to stop the cable car, you would just slam that, let it go, and it would slam in place and it would hold the cable car in place. Then he had different stations out there on the cable where he would stop and do his measurements. They were marked somehow with paint or something. Then when you came back up on the other side, you had to pull really hard. The tendency was to try to grab the cable so you had a little bit more leverage and strength. If you did that you could lose your fingers under those pulleys. That was one of the safety things that he'd mentioned. I took that knowledge on with me and used it when I was at Black Canyon, because nobody ever showed me how to use the cable car down there. I showed other people how to use it. But when I got down there I knew how to use it safely and so it worked out well.

TM: Nice.

BC: But that was basically the story about Roy. If I could, I'll just talk about kind of an interesting story with Nick Nicholson. Nick was very... He was the Assistant District Ranger or District Ranger he became later on. Acting District Ranger, I should say. I don't remember him having much of a sense of humor. He didn't joke around a lot and he communicated to most of the staff through memos that he would post on a bulletin board in the ranger office. You were expected to go down and read those memos. Then you had to initial off... Everybody had to initial off on the memos to be sure that they had been read. He would even do this with schedules. He'd change the schedule and wouldn't tell people. You had to come down on your day off if you didn't want to get in trouble and check the schedule or have someone check it for you. [chuckle] So there wasn't a lot of communications at times with him.

One evening I was working, I think I worked until 11:00, and we had a problem with feral cats in the village there. We'd this one cat that kept coming down to the ranger station and was peeking in the windows. When the guy came on for the midnight-to-8:00 shift, I told him, I said, "Let's try to catch this cat tonight." The plan we came up with was to open the window in the dispatch office and then the cat would come into the building. Then he could slam the window down and he'd have the cat trapped in the building. So the next morning I got to work, I had an earlier shift, like 8:00 or 9:00, I came in and it was just like chaos down at the South Rim district ranger office. What had happened is this dispatcher, seasonal dispatcher, had gotten the cat in the building, slammed the window down and then trapped the cat under a trashcan. Put something heavy on top of the trashcan and kept the cat there overnight. The early shift came on, I think at 6:00, and that was Wes Leashman. He was one of the permanent rangers. He was in charge of fee collection. The [chuckle] young dispatcher tells Wes, "Well, I got this cat." We need to, of course, get it out of the building and dispose of it or whatever we're going to do with it. So Wes gets these big leather, kind of like gauntlet, gloves on and goes over and takes the trashcan off of the cat and tries to grab the cat and the cat bites him. [chuckles] So Wes pulls out a can of mace and tries to mace the cat. When all the rest of the office staff arrived, including Nick, the office just reeked of chemical mace.

TM: Oh, my gosh.

BC: Nick complained that he was particularly allergic to the stuff. [chuckle] The final thing was Nick's memo. Nick put a memo up on the wall, up on his bulletin board. It said "Cats will not be allowed in the district ranger office. Mace will not be used in the district ranger office". So that was kind of the end of that. Everybody chuckled about the memo because it was so funny. So that was...

TM: No cats and no mace.

BC: And the cat, of course, ran out the front door.

TM: [laughter]

BC: As soon as they opened the door to air the building out, the cat was gone. So we never got to trap the cat.

But we were talking... You wanted me to talk a little bit about dispatch. After a year or two there, they came up with a more professional dispatch operation. They set it up in the visitor center, which was the visitor center down by the Shrine of the Ages. I guess it's now park headquarters, I guess. It was on the second floor up there. They staffed it pretty much 24 hours a day because one of the problems in any operation is, if you have people out patrolling or if calls come in afterhours, you really need somebody to talk to, to get information, to get help, all sorts of different things, obviously.

The dispatch operation we had when I was there as a seasonal, there was a midnight-to-8:00 shift and then there was an earlier shift and then the secretaries that worked in the building during the day generally acted as dispatch. It was relatively informal. We were instructed to keep a log, as I recall. You would write down when you called somebody about something or someone phoned in or something. Get as much information as you can, so on and so forth. Very often the patrol person would call and say, "Do we have a record on so-and-so?" We had the files, the law enforcement files, for the park in a file cabinet there. They were in there alphabetically and you could go in and look and to see if Joe Blow had been stopped for something another time. That might influence whether the person was written a ticket or even arrested or something depending on what offenses they'd been at in the past. I remember talking to Lloyd Honer at one point, because we had like... There were several thousand contacts in a year there, probably 1500 or so. Then by the time the rush of visitors started coming to the park, the numbers of incidences, probably ten or twenty thousand now I'm guessing. I don't know. It's much larger. Another thing the dispatcher might help with was... If they did make an arrest of a person, they'd bring them into the South Rim district ranger office. They had an old vault there. It was a big bank vault in one part of the building there. Set up in there was a photographic station where they had a camera and you would... The prisoner would be put up on one end and then he held up a little plaque that said Grand Canyon National Park and the number of his case or his assigned number. Then from there you would take them up to the little jail up by the blacksmith shop. No one was up there at that building. If you had prisoner, one of your jobs was about every hour or two you would lock the building up and you'd drive up and make sure the prisoner was okay and doing fine. It was pretty informal and really not very safe either from that standpoint. We weren't assigned a lot of paperwork to do. Occasionally there'd be a little project for you to kind of help keep you awake at night. Generally when I was there, I didn't have a lot to do at night. I brought books down to read and stuff like that just trying to stay awake.

TM: Hey, Bob?

BC: Yeah.

TM: Wanted to just clarify some things here. So this was 1970-1971, there's the law enforcement offices at the corner of Center and... What's the cross street there that parallels the tracks? Can't remember the name.

BC: I'm not sure what that's called now. That was so long ago.

TM: That's across the street from the parking lot and the Babbitt store.

BC: Right, the old Babbitt store, yes.

TM: You clarified this in a previous interview, but I just want to double check. The Shrine of the Ages and park headquarters, two-story building, which also served as the visitor center with an informational desk in the ground floor. That building had a courtyard, there were historic boats around the walls of that courtyard. Is that correct and dispatch was then moved into that building?

BC: That's correct. Yeah, on the second floor of that building.

TM: And the Superintendent's office and the Deputy Superintendent were there on second floor. Sort of a...

BC: A whole bunch of... All the management people were down there at the visitor center.

TM: Okay.

BC: You know, River Unit, Resource Management, Superintendent, Administrative Officer, all of those different positions were there. I think the Chief of Maintenance was up at the maintenance yard. I'm not positive even on that. I'm not positive on that.

TM: I think that could be right.

BC: Dispatch was on that second floor there.

TM: Was the head of law enforcement there as well? You would think that dispatch would be the ones, certainly dispatch, fire, maintenance, these were the main uses of that radio.

BC: Well, let's see. Like I say, I don't remember the... Prior to having a chief of operations I think is when they started having that setup about the whole...that time. I think everything was kind of reorganized. I know the chief of operations though, Bruce Shaw, was down at the South Rim district ranger office, but I don't remember. Dick McLaren moved down there to the South Rim district ranger office. But I'm not sure if he was chief of operations [chuckle] for the whole park, or just for the district. He must've been for the whole park. McLaren was there for the whole park. So they had those two functions down at the old South Rim district ranger office and everybody was else, I think, was up at the visitor center.

TM: Did you all have personal radio sets at that time? Is that when that started happening? I'm assuming radios would've been in cars. Do you remember when that happened, when you all got your own personal radios?

BC: We always had those at least from '69 on. We had portable handsets and you would put them... They weren't specifically assigned to you necessarily, because there were chargers in the... I guess they were specifically assigned then you had a charger at home and you had a charger at the office. You might leave it in the charger in the office if you were doing paperwork or something like that, then grab it and go out. Yeah, they always had personal radios...

TM: Okay.

BC: ...from the get go.

TM: There were some stories about the radio calls that would come in from John Riffey out at Grand Canyon National Monument by Tuweep, the Tuweep ranger station. Did you hear any of those? Do you remember any of those?

BC: Well, he used to call in, as I recall, every morning and he would give an update. He might get the weather, they might tell him what the weather was expected. He would brief people on what he might need as far as supplies or something or if he was going to leave the South Rim or if he was going to go fly his airplane around and look for boaters or whatever. If they had things for him to look for, they would tell him at that time. So he called in, as I recall, just once a day.

TM: Okay.

BC: Unless something was going on and then he might call in more often and have communications. Course when he was up in his airplane, he had pretty good communications. Other places there on that end of the park, I'm not sure if they had a repeater down there or not. I remember him calling in more for housekeeping type things. [chuckle] Need this or you need that.

TM: What other funny radio calls or radio traffic do you remember? Unusual or...

BC: Well, I don't remember a lot. We were told not to just chatter on the radio...

TM: Right.

BC: ... 'cause you would override somebody else. A lot of parks, you've got maintenance and rangers and everybody's trying to do their job and they're doing it by in part by use of the radio. I do remember one time [chuckle] when I was at Phantom Ranch. I had a base station down there. The management team came down and Bob Lovegren, the Superintendent, took over the ranger station, he and his wife, and spent the night in there. I didn't like that too much. I ended up having to go up to Phantom Ranch and actually slept at the USGS house. A bunch of us slept at the USGS house, then Lovegren had the ranger station. Before I walked out the door, I cranked the radio up as high up as I could get it. In the morning Bob Lovegren came up for breakfast and his eyes looked like two piss-holes in a snowbank. He says to me, he says, "Do you always leave the radio up that high at night?" I said, "Oh yeah, just in case something happens, I want to be able to wake up and go handle the situation." [chuckle] He said, "Well,

I hope you don't mind, but I turned it down a little bit in the middle of the night because we weren't getting any sleep," he said. [laughter]

We used to get these... We did have as part of the dispatch operation you had a park radio, but you also had a Coconino County sheriff's radio there. We would listen to these radio calls from the Williams Police Department and the Coconino County Sheriff. Some of them actually were pretty hysterical. They were always having fights at the Canyon Club, that was one of the bars there in town. The dispatcher was always telling one of the guys to go over, go by and pick up the chief and bring him to the office. Then there was some woman that worked there by the name of Mrs. Karate [laughter]. I always wondered what she did for a living other than that. One night, I know I called them...

TM: Hey, Bob, I'm just going to jump in and say the Canyon Club was a bar in Williams, is that right?

BC: That's right.

TM: Thank you, okay.

BC: Yeah.

TM: Sorry, sorry. One night?

BC: That's okay. I know, one night we had an incident where, and I don't remember what it was all about, but whoever was involved in it was driving a Peugeot, which is a French vehicle. I called down to the Williams sheriff's department and told them that someone was in a Peugeot. They had two or three officers come in and try to talk to me on the radio to figure out what in the world a Peugeot was, they'd never heard of that. [chuckle] That was kind of funny.

Then we would get also on the sheriff's radio, you would get skip. The radio's frequencies would skip and we would hear these guys in New York, like Brooklyn or something.

TM: Wow.

BC: You could hear them talking and they'd say, "Oh, it's just those cowboys out in Arizona, again."

TM & BC: [chuckle]

BC: They were getting interference both ways because of atmospheric conditions. There was a deputy, Bill McMurray I believe was his name, who was assigned up at the South Rim. Since we had... Our jurisdiction was not exclusive up there, it was proprietary jurisdiction, so the sheriff and the state patrol could come into the park and perform law enforcement. He was a pretty important part of our operation. Every once in a while he'd go down and make somebody drive back to the Canyon to pay...

[BEEP]

BC:... their fee or something like that if they had failed to pay or that type of thing. Certainly chased a lot of speeders...

[BEEP]

BC: ...down and those types of things, other kinds of problems. So we heard them on the radio quite a bit.

TM: So McMurray was a deputy sheriff? What was his...?

BC: Bill McMurray, yeah, I believe he was a deputy sheriff up there...

TM: County.

BC: ...at South Rim. He drove this dark green patrol car, I remember, which was... It looked a lot better than our sea mist green vehicles that we had. [laughter]

TM: Did you know Bud Dunagan?

BC: No.

TM: Okay. He would've been before Bill, I believe.

BC: Yeah.

TM: That's all right.

BC: The other person we were going to talk about I guess was Jack Fields?

TM: Yes.

BC: A little bit, yeah. Jack had, I believe he had been a Fred Harvey cowboy. He wasn't a real big guy, but he was just tough as nails. He was pretty much... He was friendly with people but if they started to act up he could be pretty no-nonsense with them. We got to know each other fairly well. I didn't work with him a lot on the South Rim, but I did have a few incidents when I was at Phantom. We had a case where I called him up one day and I said, "Jack," I said, "you're not going to believe this," I said, "but I had to arrest a guy for wood gathering down here at the bottom of the canyon."

TM: Wow.

BC: I told him all the details. I said, "The guy pushed me and then I ended up having to arrest him." Jack says, he says, "Well, they can't do that shit to you!" he says, "I'll be right down there." He flew down in a helicopter and took this guy back up to the South Rim. He called me later, he said, "Did you search this guy thoroughly? Did you search his cigarette pack?" I said, "Well, I took everything away from him and he had a package of cigarettes." I said, "But I didn't really look at them." He said, "The guy kept asking me, 'Can I smoke in jail? Can I smoke in jail?' I said, 'No.'" So Jack said, "Well, he had a couple of roaches in there." I said, "That might explain why he was so belligerent." What had happened is I was down... I learned at Phantom Ranch to never take my uniform off until I went to bed.

TM: Really?

BC: Put it on in the morning and never take it off. If you did, something always happened. This was sort of one of those cases. I was down at the corral and I was watering the horses. I had a park service ball cap on, but I had a white t-shirt and green pants. So I didn't really look like a ranger. I looked more like a maintenance guy. This guy walks by the corral and he has...we didn't allow any wood gathering down there, we had prohibited that...he has driftwood all stacked up on the back of a backpack frame. I said, "Excuse me, sir," I said, "We don't allow wood gathering down here." I said, "Why don't you go ahead and just take the wood back down by the shore there and just dump it off." "No," he said, "I'm not going to do that." I said, "Oh, come on now," I said, "We don't allow any fires down here, so you can't burn the wood. Why don't you just take it back down and scatter it?" I said, "I'll go down there with you. I'll help you scatter it." "No, no. I'm not going to do that," he said. He said, "Why don't you write me a ticket?" I said, "Okay, we can do that." So we walked up to the ranger station and when we got up to the porch, we were continuing, I said, "Let's just go ahead..." one more time, "Let's go ahead and put the wood back," I said. He said, "No, you'll have to come up in the campground and stand there and keep me from having a fire." I said, "Well, that's not going to happen." I opened the front door of the ranger station and I started to help him take his backpack off so he could come in the building. That's when he gave me a big shove and headed for the campground. So I went over and I was able to overpower the guy, put the handcuffs on, then gathered up all his gear. Then of course, Jack Fields took him to the South Rim. Jack said when he was questioning him, the guy's middle initial was "S" and he said, "What does the S stand for?" The guy says, "Well, I guess it stands for stupid." [chuckle] Anyhow, but...

TM: Was that really rare? I mean, was that sort of a rare event where you actually had to cite someone and then eventually fly them out in a helicopter?

BC: Well, arresting someone you really don't want to do that down there because the difficulty of getting in and out of the canyon. I probably arrested a half dozen people down there. Mostly for drug violations. It was difficult to get them out. I would usually put them on my horse, handcuff them in the front, just have a halter on the horse, and just lead them out of the canyon. Once they were up in the saddle, they really weren't going to go anywhere because you had control of the horse and if the horse got out of control, they might go over the edge.

TM: Yeah, yeah.

BC: So people were pretty compliant. But the problem was, you were taken out of the canyon for the whole night, whatever, the whole day, practically. Phantom Ranch was kind of the hub of where, at least, information came in that someone needed help. If not the person that was dehydrated or injured, or you might have someone come off the river, or that type of thing. I arrested a couple of people for possession of marijuana or other drugs, they had some LSD and stuff like that. But with the marijuana, after a while, I realized this is ridiculous. There's a lot of it going on down here. So what I started doing was contacting the people, making them empty their pockets or their backpack, getting their stash from them, and then walking with them over to the creek or the river or wherever and disposing of it. Letting them go with a warning or a ticket or something like that. It just wasn't worth the effort to take them...to fly them out. The only other ones that were flown out were the ones...I told you the guy was cultivating marijuana up Phantom Creek and we did fly them out. That case actually ended up going before the justice of the peace. Was the only case I ever had before the justice of the peace. I can't remember exactly why, except it may have been there was some issue with the CFR or something. This guy that was growing marijuana was actually wanted in Texas. They had a \$150,000 bond on him, so he'd been either dealing or some other something. We ended up dismissing the charges on him and just extraditing him back to Texas. One of the interesting things was he brought a lawyer with him before

this Judge Roberts there. The question became jurisdiction because the way the state jurisdiction was, and I didn't even know this before the trial of sorts, but the jurisdiction of the South Rim justice of the peace ended at the Colorado River.

TM: Oh wow.

BC: So technically we should've gone to Fredonia and seen the justice of the peace there. Just by chance the JP for Fredonia was gone, was on leave, so they decided that the case could be heard before Judge Roberts. Eventually they just went ahead and extradited the guy back to Texas.

TM: It just gets very complicated, very quickly doesn't it?

BC: It can get real complicated. Yeah. Of course, when you get a lawyer involved, he's trying to find ways to get his client off and what better way than [chuckle]...

TM: And he did that.

BC: ...the judge not having jurisdiction. [laughter]

TM: Sort of cleared up Arizona but then had to head up to Texas to take care of that. What else do you remember about Jack?

BC: One thing was that he helped me out a couple of times. As a seasonal, you could have furniture. You could rent furniture from the government in your quarters. But when I became a permanent, you could no longer do that. I didn't have a stick of furniture to my name and all of a sudden I'm living in this little house so I had to start buying things. I had a VW bug. I didn't have a real good way to transport things. Went down to Flagstaff and we bought a really beautiful dresser, an antique dresser, that has a purplish or reddish marble top and stuff on it. Still have it. Bought it in an antique store over in east Flag. I needed a way to transport it up to the canyon so I asked Jack and his wife... Her name was E.C. Fields.

TM: How do you spell that?

BC: Well, I guess it's just initials, I think. E-C Fields. ...if they would help us and bring that up to the canyon. So Jack, I remember, he went down and got it for us. This is a really beautiful piece of furniture [chuckle] with a big beveled edge glass mirror and stuff.

TM: Wow.

BC: He thought we were just getting like an old junky dresser. So it kind of freaked him out. He was afraid of breaking the thing.

TM: Oh yeah. Gosh.

BC: Especially the mirror. [chuckle] But he did get it, did bring it back up to the canyon for us.

TM: When did you go from...

BC: And his wife, E.C., she was actually real instrumental in some of my...when I left the canyon, because she had been looking at job applications and stuff like that in her position. I believe she was secretary for the chief of operations on the South Rim there so she would check those for me. That's how I ended up eventually getting to Dinosaur was with her help at watching the job announcements as they came in because I didn't get them down at Phantom Ranch. I could look at them when I got to the South Rim but since I was on a 10 and 4 schedule it could be likely that the application period would be closed by the time I got up to the South Rim. So she would give me a phone call down at Phantom if something came along that she thought I might be interested in.

TM: Well, that's nice.

BC: So that was a nice thing.

TM: So you mentioned going permanent. When did that happen? When did you get your permanent status?

BC: It was after I went down to Phantom Ranch. I started at Phantom and I was a GS... I think I was a GS-4 on the South Rim and then I went down and became a GS-5 down in the canyon but I was a seasonal ranger. I was a seasonal for about a year down there or so. Then I got a...

TM: Was that 1970?

BC: Yeah, I'd have to go look in all my old records, but I'm going to say '71.

TM: Okay.

BC: I actually became a Park Technician they were called. We used to always have a joke "Come out with your hands up. You're surrounded by Park Technicians."

TM: [Laughter]

BC: And then the guy said, this was a Glade Ross joke, and then he'd say, "Well, what the hell is a Park Technician?" [laughter]. The interesting thing is I went down and the first thing I became was a 37-hour appointment, so I wasn't supposed to work 40 hours. Of course, you always worked more than 40 hours at Phantom Ranch in a week.

TM: Yeah.

BC: That was a way of getting a person on permanent status. You get a permanent status. Then a little later on, I was converted to full-time, 40-hour. One of the interesting things that happened is I got the 37-hour appointment. Dick McLaren was my supervisor at that time, sort of temporary. I had been on vacation, I came back and then I went down into the canyon. Then I came back up and Dick McLaren...I stopped in his office and he says, "You know, you're permanent now don't you?" I said, "Well, I know I'm 37-hour appointment." He said, "Oh no, you were converted to 40 hours." I said, "When did that happen?" He said, "About a month ago." [chuckle] The most important event...

TM: Oh, my gosh.

BC: ...in one's career with the Park Service was to get on permanent. I didn't even know about it 'til a month after it occurred or so. Kind of funny. Yeah, I was a GS-5 down there, Park Technician. Then I moved to Dinosaur in '73, also as a Park Technician, but I was a little higher grade, GS-7, when I went to Dinosaur.

TM: Well, I have a ton of questions for you about your time at Phantom, but we do have a list of these names of people. I wonder if we should move on to Lester Womack. Should we?

BC: Yeah, we can talk about Lester Womack. He was an interesting guy. He was an older park ranger, permanent ranger. I remember he was a gunsmith, he repaired guns. His weapon of choice was a .45 caliber pistol, probably dated from the Spanish-American War or something. He carried the semi-automatic pistol as opposed to everybody else who had .38's and stuff. I guess at that time rangers could have their own personal weapon approved, of course that's what he had done. He was a pretty no-nonsense guy.

I remember him... They got a guy one time who had run away from the campground, from his friends, and was running through the forest. Obviously under drugs or something and real crazy. We were looking for him because he was out in the forest out there without any provisions or bedding or anything else. They finally caught the guy. I remember walking into the ranger office there and Les Womack had duct-taped the guy to a gurney [laughter] and this guy looked like a mummy. They took him on the gurney up to the Grand Canyon hospital. I think he'd probably taken LSD or something. One of the jobs I had as a seasonal was to guard him up at the hospital to keep him... Because after they'd taken him up there, he had gotten out of his room and run up and down the hallways screaming and grabbing nurses and stuff and ran out into the parking lot. Had to capture him a second time. Then they had medicated him down, I guess. He was in the room but he was having delusions. I remember he would set up in bed and say, "What'd you say?" and then he would go over... I finally realized if I stood to one side he wouldn't see me. He would jerk up but he'd look around and he wouldn't see anybody in the room. Then he got out of bed a couple times and he went and he looked out the...pulled the curtains back and looked out the windows. He really was afraid someone was going to kill him. He thought someone was after him like the mob or something and so our presence there actually... We kept telling him we were protecting him from whatever it was that was the problem. I do remember Womack going and duct-taping him to the gurney.

Another thing that Lester did was... He had an arrangement over at the Bright Angel Lodge with the food service manager. He would go over there and they would have... At a certain time in the evening we'd have pie and ice cream at the Bright Angel Lodge, you see [chuckle]. He'd arranged this. I only went over there one time because I knew, having read the seasonal handbook, that you're not supposed to take gratuities from the concession. But they had been doing this for years. It had started out as coffee and then it was coffee and pie and then it was coffee and pie and ice cream. Grand Canyon started a little, I guess it must've been the National Park Service, started this little newspaper. I'm not sure if it was the park or other locals had the thing called the "Grand Canyon Calliope" I think it was called. They would put fun little articles in this. There'd be information on what's going on and everything. The first edition comes out and it says something to the effect...there's a small article: "The rangers help the tourists and every night they help themselves to pie and ice cream at the Bright Angel Lodge."

TM & BC: [Laughter]

BC: The superintendent saw this and that was the end of the... [laughter] Not only the end of that, then Lester went out to the [chuckle] trailer village. It was rumored that a woman had a cat out there, had some cats, and you weren't allowed as a resident to have cats. Apparently what happened was he went to the front door, knocked on the door, the door opened, he said hello to the woman and about that time this cat squirts out and goes running across the yard. Lester says to her, "Is that your cat, lady?" and she said, "No, I don't think that's my cat." So he pulled out his .45 and winged a couple shots at this cat. I don't know if he shot it or not, but that was Lester's ticket to another park.

TM & BC: [Laughter]

BC: I think they sent him down to Saguaro National Monument. Where he wanted to go, down to where it was warmer and retire anyways.

TM: Oh, my gosh.

BC: He was happy.

TM: You know there's a... I was just doing some research on Thomas McKay, Commissioner McKay, and there was a mention that a woman had been cited for having cats at the South Rim. She had come into his court. She admitted guilt, paid her fine and then got to keep her cats.

BC: Oh, okay.

TM: So I'm just like, what? Really?

BC: Yeah. That's the type of thing that he would do.

TM: It didn't mention that the officer had shot the woman's cat with a .45.

BC: It might not have been related. It could've been a different incident.

TM: Okay. [chuckle]

BC: It could've very well been. Maybe they decided to let her keep her cats to keep from getting a major complaint about someone shooting at the cats. [laughter]

TM: I don't know. Huh. [chuckle]

BC: But anyway, I remember he had a school bus, too. He had this big yellow school bus. That was where he did all of his firearms stuff. He took that with him when he left.

TM: His gunsmithing. Yeah, huh.

BC: Another guy, the next one on the list was a guy named Bob Scott, who was at Desert View.

TM: Okay.

BC: I think he was just there my first summer. I remember one funny thing. I went into the district ranger office and people used to put uniform items up if they kind of got a little bit threadbare or if you had something that was kind of worn out. You had seasonals that always needed uniforms. You could go in there and take these old uniform items for free. They just had a rack in there. I walked in there one time and there were a couple of guys and there was a felt Stetson hat on the top shelf. They were trying to put it on. I remember it was Bob Scott's hat and one of them said, "Well, this guy must really be a pinhead." I took that hat and I put it on and it fit perfectly. [chuckle]

TM: Wow.

BC: That's the hat I wore in the Inner Canyon for the next three years or so was Bob Scott's hat.

TM: Nice. Do you still have that hat?

BC: What's that?

TM: Do you still have that hat?

BC: Not that one, no.

TM: Oh, okay.

BC: Gotten rid of it a long time ago. Bob mostly spent his time out at Desert View but then he would come in during the winter and fall when it was slow, really slow, out there and they needed extra help in the village and he'd help around. I remember one time I was there and he came out. I had just come down from my residence and I wasn't in my uniform, I was just in civilian clothes. He said, "Say Bob," he said, "there's a guy over at the Babbitt store and we've been having troubles with him. He keeps trying to buy alcohol. He's a Fred Harvey employee, really that's just arrived." He described him as an older gentleman. So I walk over to the store. He wanted me to check and see what the guy was doing in there, if he was trying to buy alcohol. I got to the front steps and this guy comes staggering out of the store and runs right into me. He's in one of these like in a tweed coat that has been to 2 or 3 different Salvation Army's and he's finally glommed onto it. He says, "Hey, sonny," he says, "would you mind going in, I'll give you some money. Go in and buy me a bottle of Twister." I said, "I'm too young. I can't drink." He said, "Oh, okay." So then I went back across the street and told Bob Scott what had happened. Bob went and arrested this poor guy and they put him up in the little jail. Then late in the evening he started having the DT's so they had to take him up to the Grand Canyon hospital. One of the things that was happening at that time, and the way this guy got up to the Grand Canyon, this particular guy and probably others, is down in Phoenix they would give these people one-way tickets up to the Grand Canyon hoping they would get a job. Then sometimes like this, they would just become a huge problem. So Lloyd Hoener would [chuckle] take them back down. He'd take them down to Flagstaff and dump them off. So there was sort of this revolving door of problem that wouldn't go away.

TM: Yeah. It's interesting that's...

BC: The other fellow now that was also at Desert View was Dave Strobe. I think he came on a little bit, S-T-R-O-P-E, a little bit later. The thing I remember about him is, I kind of made friends with him, he drove me out in their four-wheel drive vehicle out to... Is it Point Sublime that's out at the junction of the Colorado and Little Colorado River?

TM: That would be Solitude, I think.

BC: Is that Cape Solitude?

TM: Cape Solitude, yeah.

BC: Okay, we went out there. And oh, man, what a spectacular view and place that is. Took all day. I mean, it just was a really, really rough, rough road.

TM: Yes.

BC: There were a few places where you thought you were going to roll off into the...not into the canyon, but at least down some big slope.

TM: In a ravine. Yeah it's a...

BC: In a ravine, yeah. It's really a rough road. I remember going out there and seeing Marble gorge and the Little Colorado River. A really spectacular place.

TM: Had he been out there before?

BC: Had I been out there before?

TM: Had Dave Strobe been out there before?

BC: Oh yeah. I guess that was part of his backcountry stuff that he did.

TM: Okay. Nice that's pretty.

BC: Well, I kind of... I need to go. I have an appointment at 11. I got to get ready.

TM: Great. Thank you so much for your time. We'll just wrap this up then with just timing out. This is the end of Part 4 with Bob Cornelius. Today is the 4th of June, 2018. My name is Tom Martin and thank you so much.

BC: You're welcome.

TM: Hold the line here.