



VERDIGRIS PROJECT

KBMF & BUTTE-SILVER BOW ARCHIVES

COLT DIAMOND

The Verdigris Project

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Oral History Transcript of Colt Diamond

Interviewer: Clark Grant

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Location: KBMF Office (Carpenters Union Hall)

Transcribed: January 2022 by Adrian Kien

Clark Grant: Okay. Do you mind saying and spelling your name?

Colt Diamond: My name is Dennis O'Donnell. My friends call me Colt. I go by Colt Diamond. I got a son named Colton, a son named Diamond. So that's how I became Colt Diamond. My name is Dennis and I was raised in Butte. My friends call me Colt, my old friends call me Dennis.

Grant: Well, I've known you a couple of years, but I wouldn't say we're old friends, so I'll call you Colt.

Diamond: Amen.

Grant: So, Colt, we're here today. This is March 1st, 2021 and we're in the KBMF office and we're going to do an oral history recording. So usually when we do these, I just ask people to start out by telling me about your family, your grandparents, your parents. What can you tell me about them?

Diamond: Well, you know, I thought pretty much growing up, my dad's Irish. My mom's a Finlander. So I thought I was half Irish and half Finlander. And my dad found out in like 1984 that he's half Indian. My grandma on his side is native and his dad was O'Donnell. But all this time I thought I was half Irish and half Finlander. And I find out I'm a quarter Irish, quarter Indian and half Finlander. He said in Butte, Montana, it works out good for you. He said on the holidays, you're Irish. You gotta get drunk on St. Patty's day, but because you are a Finlander in Butte, you gotta get drunk on St. Urho's Day. And because you're native, you get drunk the rest of the year. I go. "All right, Dad, I ain't drank since 1992." But Butte's got these little things set aside, just get drunk and then they'll make up a holiday for anything, but yeah, St. Patty's day, St. Urho's Day and the rest of year.

So I'm half Finlander. I never knew my grandma and my grandparents, actually. I was raised with . . . my mom had from her first husband, four kids, and then her second husband, she had two. So she had six kids from her first two marriages. And she adopted all them out. One family adopted all six of them. And she had three with my dad, me and my little sister and my older brother. In 1994 I found out that we have a little sister, she called my little sister up on the phone and said that she was our little sister and my little sister [inaudible]. And I'm the baby. We went to the little sister and said, "Well, is your mother's named Simon and your father is George O'Donnell? She said, "Yes. Those are my biological parents." I got my ex-husband to hire a private investigator to find out who I've been and these are it. I asked my mom. I got put into foster care, like 13 years old. And I ended up in the system at 13 years old doing a lot of stuff, but that's where I learned how to live in reform school. My mom had given up my first six siblings, and then three of us. And at 13 I ended up getting locked up in Pine Hills. It was for nothing. But I had never had brothers and sisters. So, then, when I was nine, I thought come to

find out I got a little sister and an older brother. So I went out at 11 and then I found out I got another brother who was just younger than me. So my mom had 12 siblings. I'm one of 12. I got 11. I thought all my life, I thought I only had nine. That there was nine of us, but my mom never raised none of us. She adopted all six of her first, two husbands out to one family, adopted all of them. And then us, I ended up at six years old, I remember moving into the Silver Bow homes. Low-income housing. And from there, it just went on.

Grant: Tell me, what about your mother? What was her name?

Diamond: Simon A. Mattila. She was full Finlander. I mean, she could speak fluent Finn. I think she came over from Finland and she was born in the United States, but yeah, I'm half Finlander. And then she could speak fluent Finn and, but I never really, you know, my mom, she just adopted all her kids out. 13 years old, I ended up in reform school. And I didn't really have no reason to believe in the Lord. I mean, at 13 I'm sent to reform school. At 18 years old, I got released from Pine Hills on escape. I called them up and I told them, 'I just turned 18 and I got a baby on the way and I just got married and I want to turn myself in.' And he told me, he said, 'You just turned 18. Didn't you?' I said, 'Yeah, my birthday was last week.' He said, 'Well, now you're 18.' He said, 'We don't want you back here.' And then I got really released, you know, while they're on the state. I never had no record. It was just that my mom didn't have time for me because I was kicked out of the public school system for fighting in the classrooms.

Grant: I want to talk about your time in Pine Hills and everything, but I would like to back up and kind of go, you know, up until you were 13. Were you living with your mother? She adopted all of her children out, right when they were born or how did that work?

Diamond: Well, she had four from her first husband and two from her second adopted all. I don't know how they ended up with them all being, you know, at the same people, but as we were being raised me and my brother and my little sister lived with them people too. And it was up in Finntown. I was raised, you know, as a kid until I was about six years old up in Finntown. The Broadway bar, the Helsinki bar and Washington school. And that's where I went to school was Washington school. And it had, um, it was the only school that had special ed. So people would be going to the Washington School [inaudible] but that was all Finntown in that area. And that's where I was raised was from one until six years old was in Finntown. And with my mom, like I said, the same people that raised my mom's first six. We lived with them too, but I thought that I was one out of nine kids growing up. And then at 13 I got put into the system and I learned that I had 11 siblings. I don't know none of them.

Grant: Tell me about that. You had said earlier that you were in three different foster care homes and that you'd been sexually molested. If you can tell me about that.

Diamond: Well, like I said at 13 years old, my mom told me that I got kicked out of the public school system and she couldn't just have me not going to school. So they sent me to Billings. There's a single parent foster care. Okay. And the guy was there, like I said, he was in the Boy Scouts. He was a big Boy Scout person over there. My mom thought, "Well, you'd be better off over there. At least you can go to school." So set me to him and the guy was a child molester. And I ended up hating anything to do with, you know, homosexuals. I've had four women in my whole lifetime. I got kids from all of them, but I never knew how to date or didn't care about it

because of that. But at 13 years old, I ended up getting sent to Pine Hills. And, uh, but I didn't have nobody doing anything to me, but I was already at 13 years old, I was two time golden gloves. Northwest regional junior Olympic champion. And the Archives, over here at the Archives, in 1972, 1973, I was junior Olympic champion. And I brought newspaper clippings into the Archives and it's, "O'Donnell Wins Boxing Crown". And then through the years later, they had the "Glance in the Past" and they remembered that I'd won O'Donovan's boxing match in Hamilton. So, I'm in the Archives. I was, you know, two time golden glove, junior Olympic champion. Then I got locked up. And every bit of my martial arts, mixed martial arts. And I just learned to be real, real tough. Nobody was going to hurt me or molest me.

But I've got five kids and you know, they're all excellent kids got good heads on their shoulders, but you know, now they know what dad is all about. I remember for a long time, you know, I lived without him, but Pastor Dallas. Eight years ago told me and my wife that our ministry wasn't in rescue mission buildings that my ministry was going to be out there in the alleys and under the bridges and in tunnels where the people were.

So I just spent the last eight years, you know, the last two years, we just got a house now up in Centerville. And we've had a house for two years, but for five years before that we was living in tunnels under bridges and people hated me. I know they didn't know, but I couldn't tell nobody that, you know, it's a ministry and we go there and we prayed for all of them.

I haven't drank since 1992, but you would go around and people would drink. There's three people, me and Bonnie, I mean there like, they're family.

Grant: What is it like, Colt, to be homeless.

Diamond: I've been homeless, but I've never been without at home. And it's sad. You know, I'd come into Butte, I would stay at the rescue mission. And this is when pastor told me that that's not my ministry. But people would go, you know, how come you're at the rescue mission? It's your hometown? I said, I got plenty of people out there that I could say. No, I've got plenty of couches to sleep on, but they just don't sleep. So I'm safer. That's where I'm safe is in the rescue mission, because I've got a lot of influence out there. "No sin will come to a man, except that which is coming to him."

[00:09:28]

And I thought I was only gonna be a drug dealer and a tattoo artist. And I started out Talent Tattoos by Colt Diamond, where beauty really is only skin deep. And I can do tattoos anything, but now, you know, that's my history. That's my testimony. But I went from a hopeless, dope dealer to a dopeless hope dealer. And that's, you know, that's what Father has done. And right now we're getting into this Corona virus and Father's got plans to have it hitting crusade. And I'm going to be doing one. I taught Sunday school 25 years ago at the salvation army. [inaudible]

Grant: Let's back up again and tell me more about boxing.

[00:10:11]

Diamond: I went to Vegas two times. First time I went down there, I was fighting in the convention center and in the Las Vegas newspaper, the guy that I fought and won, I beat him, but I was on the front page of the Las Vegas newspaper. Um, Michael Gunthrie was his name. Michael Gunthrie loses a matched him to me. And I was on the front page in Las Vegas. And I've got to get those out of the Archives. You know with pictures of me with O'Donovan's boxing crown.

Grant: What was it you liked about boxing?

Diamond: It was just me in there. I never had a team or anybody. I was good. And then I just, that's all I thought about. Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays, we had boxing up at the old jail, where the old jail is now. And we had boxing. That's where I started is upstairs in the old jail, but my brother got me into it because I was getting chased home from school and we lived in a circle home. Now we got kids jumping around and telling me. My mother ran a couple of the houses here in Butte, the Stockman and the Dumas. And I had hookers. I mean, in my house all the time, getting their hair done. And during the holidays I'd have four or five working girls lived down there to help my mom cook dinners.

And I was a shoeshine boy at nine years old, I was up in all these bars, tugging on shirt tails, asking, "Shoeshine? Shoeshine?" And all these, the working girls out there, they have like 15 of them out in the bars, you know, getting these miners all hot and bothered.

[00:11:46]

And then they come up and go down the street, you know, just spend \$20, but I would be up there and shine shoes and these hookers are out in the bars. And they knew me because of my mom and they had been in my house. And they'd tell these miners, "Shoeshine." And the miner would ask me, "How much?" I said, "Two bits." That's a quarter, and girls will look at it and say, "No, silver, no silver." So they'd pay me with dollar bills. And I would get all my dollar bills together and I'd turn them into like a \$20 bill and stick it in my sock and come home with a pocket full of change to put it into this little jar. And then I'd take the money that I put my sock and go horseback riding. They had a place out there by the reservoir going south, out there nine mile. There was a Columbia riding club and you could rent horses out there for \$2 an hour. Why? I ended up meeting a guy because a friend of mine would go out on Saturdays.

And spending the day out there helping them and spend the night out there and come back on Sunday. And Bob Euslic was his name and I'd started going out there and spending my money that I had in my sock for \$2, out riding horses. And then I ended up working out there. Bob would keep me on during the summertime for a week because my mom was who she was and send me out there to sunshine camp and send them out somewhere. And then they just do the thing. But my mom passed away. I found my mom dead on the couch. A month before that I found my wife, my last wife, she had MS. And a month later, I found my mom, but my mom had all of us kids. We loved her. And at the end of her days, she was loved. And I baptized my mom two years before she passed away. My little sister called me up and told me that, "Bro, if you want me to come and see Mama alive, you better get down here? 'Cause she's probably going to make it through the night." I said, "I'll be right down." We drove from Conrad to Butte. And I said, I got to baptize my mom.

So when I told her that I was going to baptize her. She was on the couch and all she could do was sip out of a little bendy straw and suck a little bit of water and she couldn't lift your head up. So my little sister and my wife walked her into the bathroom. And in the bathroom tub, I baptized her. She walked into the bathroom getting carried. There was 13 people in that front room watching her get carried off the couch, into the bathtub and baptized. And half an hour later, she's coming out of the bathroom on her own, doing dishes in the kitchen sink, half hour after she was baptized and couldn't walk to the bathroom. I said, "There you go, Mom."

So I know she's asleep, but yeah, my wife passed away and a month later I found my mom.

Grant: Damn man.

Diamond: And then I went for a couple of years. And then I got my wife now.

Grant: Yeah, Bonnie seems great.

Diamond: We've been through a lot, man. It's been a ministry and now we get to tell people where we've been.

Grant: Well. So let's talk about another place you've been. I want to hear about how you got into Pine Hills. What was it? Why'd they bring you there?

Diamond: When I got sent to foster care, I called my mom and said, "Mom, you know, this guy. He's queer. He's molesting me." And my mom said, I couldn't come back to Butte. She said, "You need a male authority figure in your life." And said, "Mom, this guy ain't a male authority figure. I don't want to be here. He's queer, Mom." She didn't believe me. I hung up the phone and she said, "You gotta stay there." You need a male authority figure. So I stole a 1976 Delta 88 and ended up in Amarillo, Texas. And I got caught down in Amarillo, Texas, working for a guy in a brick laying company. Working as a brick layer for \$3.50 an hour. We told him we were 18 years old, me and friend of mine. And we can carry bricks. He put me on the wheelbarrow. Wheelbarrow was full of concrete to the bricklayers.

And the first one he put me on, I dumped the whole wheelbarrow, 2 by 10, full barrow of them. The bricklayers, they were upset and now they gotta wait for another one to get set. So I ended up getting to work on mixing the stuff and pouring them up. But we're working and the guy put us into a house he had. He found out I was living in his car that we had stolen and we're eating candy out of the trunk of the car. When I got it stolen, it had like four big boxes of candy. The guy must have been filling up the little nickel vending machines. So we're living on candy and he hires us and puts us into a house that we can stay in right up there where we're working. And we're going back for lunch.

And our girlfriends were left at the house and we're coming home for lunch and I'm watching this white car coming towards us. And I thought that looks like a cop car, he got spotlights on the side. "That's your old lady in the front seat." And it was, and I took off running and ran down this alley and then jumped over some hedges into a yard that had a Doberman pincher, right into a kennel. There's three chain link fences and the big bushes that I jumped over and this Doberman starts growling at me. A friend of mine had two Dobermans and he told me how to swat them

across the bridge of nose with a newspaper and it would shape them right up. And all I could think of was that. So I slapped him across the bridge of his nose, the dog went into his dog house and I reached in there and grabbed him, pulled him out of the dog house, and I crawled in there and I hid.

But they waited for me. I waited about an hour and 45 minutes. Okay. Couldn't hear no gravel in the alley. No cars going up and down. I heard two cops about an hour or two. They were looking for me and one cop said, "He's gotta be here somewhere." And one said, "I'm not going to start knocking on doors. We've looked everywhere." And I'm in the dog house. So I couldn't hear him no more and so I'm getting out of there and bebop somewhere. But I get down the end of this alley, come around the corner and there was a cop sitting there waiting for me. I knew you'd end up somewhere. So they put me back to Billings. And I ended up getting put in Pine Hills.

Grant: Interesting. You were 13?

Diamond: 13 years old. Valentine's Day. February 14th, 1976. And a judge says, "I'm going to commit you to Pine Hills until you're 21 or sooner released." I never did nothing. I just stole a car and was running. But I was happy in Pine Hills. I was a junior Olympic boxer. I mean, I learned how to turn my boxing into street fighting and then mixed martial arts. And that's where I became where I was. And I didn't believe in God, in heaven nor hell, but I was a good person in my heart. And I took care of the underdogs, but then, you know, 13 get locked up and I was happy there.

Grant: Why?

Diamond: Because I wasn't getting beat by my older brother. Or my dad or getting molested by, you know, . . . there I ended up becoming someone that if there were problems with young boys, they'd come and talk to me first. And I got a guy that shows up and he's got a big chip on his shoulder. And a couple of guys from the other lodge told me that, you know, this Butte guy has got a big mouth and told me his name. I don't know him. I'll see, I'll talk to him. So we're walking in, going from one class to another and on the sidewalk, I just stopped him and said, "Hey, Connors." Yeah. I said, yeah. I said, "I don't know, you know, what your problem is. I said, but you know what? You've got some people in that lodge you're staying in. That ain't liking you."

And he said, "Oh, F' them." I said, "Well, maybe you are tough. Maybe you are tough. I'm telling you if it takes two or three of these guys to take care of you, you're going to get taken care of." He said, "Well, you got a problem with me?" I said, "No, you're from Butte and they talked to me before I talked to you now. No. No." And he told me to meet him in the vocational building bathroom. I said, "Really?" I'm in the hallway getting a drink out of the drinking fountain. I look up and he's standing in front of the bathroom, mean mugging me with his arms crossed, nods me into the bathroom.

So I went into the bathroom, he's standing there and I hit him one time. He hit the ground. And I went back out into the hallway, ran to Mr. Pillings our welding teacher to open up the shop. And this kid comes out of the bathroom and slobbering and spitting. I didn't know that Mr. Pilling was behind me. And I told him when he came out the next time it would be worse. I only hit him

one time. And Mr. Pilling heard me say that, but didn't know what I was talking about. But when we get into the welding shop, this kid kept spitting blood into the bird bath. And Mr. Pillings asked what's wrong. And he said, "Oh, I cut my lip." He said, "No. I heard O'Donnell tell you that next time it's going to be worse." He said, "No." Calls me over there. And he said, "I heard you tell him the next time he going to be worse." I said, "No, Mr. Pilling, the next Wells is going to be worse." It didn't work. So I ended up getting a felony assault charge while in institution on my juvenile record. When I was 18 years old and got released on escape, I broke a windshield in the car. It was more than \$150 for the windshield so it was considered a felony. And a felony criminal mischief, when I was 18. Five years later, I was with a friend of mine, he went to pawn two of his pistols for \$70. Because he got paid on Wednesday, but this was Friday and he still owns the guns, but he didn't have his ID to pawn them.

So I just said, here, put them in my name and put my ID on the table. And Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco indictment for felony and possession of firearms. I never even touched the guns. I didn't carry them into the pawnshop, I just signed the pawn slip. And I went to federal court and pled guilty because I signed the pawn slip. And the most they could give you was zero to two years for each gun. And I went to court and asked for probation. He said, "No, sir." He said, "I'm giving you two years for one gun, two years on the second gun and I'm running them consecutive." So I ended up signing the pawn slip, breaking the windshield when I was 18, five years later, signed a pawn slip. And when he sentenced me, he said, "This is a victimless crime. And you've asked for probation." Nope.

And he read my juvenile record doc, and that's supposed to be sealed when you turn 18. I thought, but not so, to this day, my criminal record is zero. I broke a windshield when I was 18. And criminal mischief charge, but it's where I've lived, where I've been and reputations. You never get a second chance to make a first impression. And I've made it a point, before I became a born again Christian and knowing that God was real and I wasn't him, to make things work the way they should in the real life . . . Bad Boys from Butte, that book. One of the guys in there is named Louie Markovich. And when I was 18, the windshield I broke was one of Louie's younger brothers. And the reason I broke his windshield is because I got into a fight with his brother at the Room 71 and hit him three times. And I broke his jaw on both sides and shattered his cheekbones. And they wanted to charge me with felony assault.

And I said, "No." And I called Louis Markovich, who was one of the bad boys from Butte. And told him that he needed to get his younger brother to dropped these charges on me, man. He got his butt kicked, but he knew that he had it coming, but there was no, nobody assaulted him. And Louis Markovich, when I told him I was going to call him, Tom green was the officer there. He said, "You know who you're calling?" I said, "Yeah." He says, "I could have you taken out and nobody would even know you're missing." But I had his phone number because that's . . . [inaudible] Bad Boys from Butte . . . mine is the next generation because all the people I knew and it's Sammy Markovich was Louise's brother and Joe Markovich, which was the windshield I broke. Some tough boys. And then Butte was when Butte was tough, you know, back in the mining days, when Butte had a hundred thousand miners here and Paul Harvey did his commentary one day and said that Butte, Montana is listed in the top 10 cities in the United States, that you would not want to stop with a chip on your shoulder. He said that you could put Butte, Montana in the south side of Chicago, Bronx, wherever the bad guys lived and Butte would take care of itself fine. And I understood that. But that's when there was mining, a lot of

big men in Butte. And they were working out in the mines, getting drunk, fighting all night long and going back to work.

And that's where my dad, he was a miner and I never got to see my dad a lot. But when I was 18 years old, when I was 23, I guess, I went and lived with my dad for a year and got to know him. And his name was Buck. He went by Buck O'Donnell, but his name was George, E-G-O-D. Eee God! But he was a miner and he had two kids from his first wife over in Michigan. I had two sisters, you know, from him from his first wife. And then he had another daughter from his second wife. So that's three sisters I've got from my dad's side and then three with my mom coming from and I got six where's my mom, my dad got and how we went through all the time, not knowing, and then find that yet.

You got a little sister and she found us. And then I got a brother too. And I went, I looked for that guy everywhere. I mean, trying to figure out USA search, you know, the guy could be in the streets needing help and I couldn't find him anywhere. So on New Year's Eve, my little sisters, when they reunited. They camcordered it. And they sent the video down to the Lisa show in Los Angeles. Unbelievable Home Videos, it was this show that they were on and they flew them down there. And I didn't want to be on the Lisa show, but I wanted to find my brother. So I call on New Year's Eve, my little sister, "How did you get on that Lisa show?"

I'm trying to get on Jerry Springer and but I need to find my brother. Here's his phone number? So on New Year's Eve, 1999, I called him up. I told him that if he need any help. He's been in the army for years and probably 30 years in the army. But he told me that he already talked to my oldest brother about all my tattoos and everything.

And he didn't want me showing up on his doorstep. But after I hung up the phone, I wrote this poem. It's called no longer two brothers apart.

So on new year's Eve, I made it call that soon could change my life.

No more wondering, no more worrying, no more anger. Now, no more strife.

I'm not alone, but I had to grow up alone with no one to share my toys

and no one to fight and argue with when boys would just be boys.

But now we're both adults in a relationship we can start

because we are no longer strangers. We're no longer two brothers apart

And I sent that to him in a birthday card. My mom told me his birthday's in January and this was new year's eve. And I told him that this just came out. Four years later.

So it's been four years and I'm still angry.

I worry then wonder why

pick up a pencil and paper.

*And I begin to write and cry
when I'm done crying, my pencil, it goes dull.*

*I find your name in my directory,
and try to make just one more call
and the calls I've made ain't many,
but none have been returned.*

Don't know why I worry or even have concern.

*'Cause the ones I love they're with me
and I know they let me too.*

So I just saved this about inside my heart brother.

I save that one for you too.

And you know, having heard none, but that's annoying thing. How could someone hear that poetry and not be touched, you know? So this is what I'm doing. Whatever Father has got me doing, now, I can tell them guys, you know, this is where I've been. I'm 58 years old and I thought I was one out of nine kids. I'm one out of twelve. Well, Jesus had twelve disciples. And one of them was bad too. So my mom had 12 kids and I guess I would be the black sheep. Well, you know, but I had 11 disciples, err siblings, and not one of them ever said, you need help? You need a hand?

My brother, I was 18 years old in jail and Easter Sunday, my brother showed up with my mom and told me again, you know, I am going to put up a property bond to get you out of here. He said, "I hope you use this rope that I'm going to throw you to climb out of that hole you are in and not hang yourself with it." I said, "Right on, you can put up property bond." So on Sunday, Easter Sunday, he told me, I knew it'd probably take two or three days to get the bond, but on Wednesday, my mom visited me again. "Mom, why are you here?" "I'm here to visit you." I said, "I'm supposed to be out. Jim was going to get me out." "He couldn't do it." His wife wouldn't let him. So that was the only time. After that I've never had . . . on Easter Sunday. He's going to throw me this rope and I sure hope you don't hang yourself with it.

But actually, you know, I've had a great life. I've got friends and I've got relatives and family. I've got relatives. My family's out there. You know, these people I've lived with and. Yeah, I ain't going to, you know, change my, um, my, my friends and family, but things in my life are changing, but people see me going into places that there's stuff going on there that I just, you know, there because I can be, and I'm invited, but they, you know, they think, oh, he's doing this, he's doing that.

And I've been homeless for eight years now on these streets and people think my poor wife. Now I got the house. Out my front door I can see the Highlands, out my back, I can see Walkerville. So I'm on the very tippity top of the hill. And we think about separating Butte, Heathen Hill and the Hypocrite Flats. But Butte is a good town.

When I was growing up, it was a tough, tough town and the kids were tough, but the miners were just starting to go away. When they opened that pit up and the mines stopped, pretty much all the tough guys went with them. There wasn't a lot of miners that were family men. There was like a hundred thousand of them that were all miners. That's where my mom ended up with a couple of houses. There were no fighting in the bar. They were over at girlfriends, miners just worked and drank. There'd be 10 guys who were living in one apartment. Five of them would get out and go to work on one shift and they get out there. And the other five that were sleeping in the apartment, which so you can go to work. So we had 10 people renting one apartment.

Grant: Can we go back to Pine Hills? I just wanted to hear . . . you told me that story the other day, you know, about the fight in the bathroom and everything. How long were you in there and what other things happened? What was it like in there?

[00:29:57]

Diamond: Well, it was, uh, well, I wouldn't go to school. I got there and Mr. Truman, the superintendent of school and everything, and told me I had to go to school. I said, I'm not going to go to school. He said, "What do you mean you're not going to school?" I said, "I never went to school when I was out there. What do you think I'm going to do at school here?" He said, "I'm going to tell you something right now. I'm not going to sign your release form, unless you've got a high school diploma or the equivalent of one with a GED. If you ain't got that . . .". I said, "Man, I just got committed until I was 21." [inaudible] and getting my GED or that . . . Do you know how long it takes a 13 year old kid to figure out how long till you're 21 or sooner released?

[00:30:44]

And that's the part I got, you know, so I got released after few years, once. I was out for four months and that single Pam boss guy [?] came, I told him, I said, "Vern, I ain't got my keys, leave the back door open. You know, if you're going to be somewhere." I get home and the doors locked up and I broke the \$8 window to get into my own house that I live in and I got charged with criminal mischief. The guy said that he's got his car, that wasn't in the driveway and the keys were always hanging on top of a hook on the stove. And I had a girlfriend that had a little MGB sports car and she got into like eight inches of snow and high centered her.

And I walked down to the house and got Vern's car, station wagon, and went down and pulled her out of the ditch and brought it back to the house. And they charged me with like joyriding. I took it down four blocks, so that broke window in my own house and used the car for 20 minutes to go get a girlfriend out of a ditch. And that's why they sent me back back.

Grant: Back to Pine Hills.

Diamond: Back to Pine Hills. And me and him decided, you know, we're going to escape and this is in February. There's this much snow out there. It's freezing cold.

Grant: That's in Miles City?

Diamond: In Pine Hills. Yeah. And coming into the lodge after going to school or whatever, everybody's got to go downstairs and get their shoes and their coat in a locker. And they locked that room up. So I ain't got no shoes, no coat. Well, we're going to run. And it's below zero out. We got counselors. They come around in the evening time checking on their clients and one counselor was Mrs. Quirkens, she was coming to see her clients. And we had four pairs of socks on, each of us has got socks from the other guys, had four pairs of socks each and some extra shirts, but barefoot pretty much and no coat.

And when she opened up the door we hit her, boom, boom. She ended up going down the stairs backwards. We ended up running out into a snow drift that was three feet deep. And we got away from there for about an hour and went to a house, you know, trying to find a phone. Because we knew a kid that lived in Pine Hills, in Miles City, that was in Pine Hills. And now we were going to find his house and go to this house and we went to a house to use the phone. And the people let us use the phone and we're trying to look up this kid's phone number and couldn't find it. And then we left and, but then people called the cops. Two kids here with no coats, barefoot in socks. They just used the phone. And while we were heading out, I seen a state car pull out and stopped. I said, "That's a state car!"

We took off running down the street and I jumped into a Bronco. And in the backseat I got underneath the seat and pulled a sleeping bag in there. The kid that was with me, he jumped in the same Bronco and he was on the floor and people are looking for us and they looked and seen our tracks and I'm hidden back there. And they seen him sitting, hiding on the backseat, but they didn't see me. I was underneath the seat with the sleeping bag. And "Come on!" And he said, "Oh come on, let's go, we're busted." So we ended up getting caught and going back. But yeah, it was below zero. No shoes and socks on and no coat. So that was the extent of my bad guy, good guy. I was safe there. And I was a good guy, but I was a golden glove boxer. So kids that were 15 years old, even they were tough little hoodlums. They don't know how to fight. They're not coordinated. And when you got someone popping in the nose, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. They changed their mind quick. But I never went there. I was always pretty much a good guy.

And when I met Bonnie, I was sleeping on the strip stage. And [inaudible] across from the Subway, down on Montana. They had a strip stage, all kinds of, you know, working girls, hookers and dancers. And I just made sure that they were taken care of. I was kind of a bodyguard, or a bouncer. When Bonnie met me, I said that I was tattooing my hand, my leg and telling her all my poetry. So I dropped a little BS and then got her with some poems, but then we've been together ever since. I was two years after my wife passed away. Then I met Bonnie. And she's got two 18 month old little boys, twin boys, a four year old daughter and eight year old daughter in second grade. And then a couple of months together. And the one in second grade asked if she could take me to school for show and tell. She wanted to show all the kids that she had a daddy now. And you know, all my tattoos and everything, Bonnie's mom heard about, you know, war stories about me and comes, shows up.

And I met Bonnie, I was just kind of filtering out all the idiots she'd had hanging around with her and her mom had this little gun and tells me, the last thing I remember, "You're going down!" And I was just there to try and get them from there. Now. She's excellent. As far as mother-in-

law. Do you know the difference between in-laws and outlaws? Outlaws are wanted. When I met her, we went out to dinner and her sister, one of her sisters was there. I got introduced to Mom and the sister. Bonnie's mom asked Bonnie, "Did you told them about your other sister, the pastor's wife, over in Deer Lodge?"

And I said, "Well, that's cool. Now you got an evangelist in your family." And since then, we go to church now, and the father does some powerful work. But in order for me to be where I've been in, who I am, I'd been a lot of places. People just assume, you know, and Bonnie's mom heard stories. But now we got a good relationship with the mom. And everything is good. We got our own house. Everything's starting to go. Pastor Dallas wanted us to get a house with a shepherds pole. Okay, where I'm living there's a new shepherd's pole. [inaudible] It's going to be a feeding station off our garage and making it a little area where they can come and drink coffee and feed them, you know, just feeding my sheep.

Grant: I'm so glad you guys have a house. The other day, when we were talking, you were talking about the sentence for signing the pawn slip and everything, and the gun charge and that, and that you ended up in a US Penitentiary. I wanted to go over that chapter here a little bit, because it sounded like that was an important chapter. It led to your Christianity.

Diamond: And it was. When I got sentenced, that judge told me, "What we have here is a victimless crime. Nobody lost nothing. [inaudible]. And you've asked her probation. You've got no respect for the law or anything it stands for." And read my juvenile record after me. And he said, "You asked for probation? I'm giving you two years on count number one, two years on count number two and I'm demanding they be ran consecutive. And you asked for time to prepare your family for any altercations that take place in this room? No sir. I'm remanding you to the US attorney's office for the transportation, to the nearest facility that can house you."

And by the time he got done, the US Marshall behind me put handcuffs on me, walked me into a little office that had a cell built in the office. Two weeks before I went to this hearing, my public defender told me that you might be looking at six months in the county jail. I said, "Come on. For what?" I would kill somebody in six months in that county jail, just get me probation something, but six months in county jail. Well, I go into court and I think the downside was six months in county jail. I just got two years on count number one, two years on count number two, and then ran off into a little cage. My public defender coming in and I said, "What just happened in there?" He said, "You just got four years."

So I didn't know where I got was going, but they took me from Helena. I was up for like two weeks and brought me down to Butte. I was in Butte a couple of three weeks. They took me to Pocatello, Idaho. Pocatello, Idaho to Salt Lake City. Salt Lake City, they flew me to Reno, Oklahoma, but before I got to Salt Lake City, everyone of them jails they put me in, I had somebody telling me about the Lord. I didn't believe in God. But these guys were like, What are you doing here if you got it so good? Bars can keep us in, but they can't keep the Lord out, brother. OK, great, well, I'm going to start playing these guys. . . because you see, they smoked cigarettes. And at that time, you could still smoke in jail. And I thought, I'll just play these Christians like a cheap fiddle.. So I said, "Oh, praise God, can I have one of them cigarettes?" And I started watching them for their weakness, you know, and then I started paying attention so I can use them to my advantage. They got family. Can you help me getting my wife and kids

here? You know, I'm trying to get these churches. But I didn't believe in God or heaven and hell. These guys kept telling me about it.

[00:39:48]

So for me, when I get to Tucson, Arizona, and I just, I mean, it's hard. And it's just heartache. I just couldn't get rid of that gut feeling. And I went to a church service finally. This guy tells me that he wanted everybody just to bow their head, close their eyes, and nobody's looking around. And he said, "If you've never accepted the Lord . . . and you'd like to accept him . . ." And I didn't believe him. And he said, "Just lift up your hand."

So I lifted up my hands. "The Lord sees your hand." Eddie Garcia was his name and he came over and he led me through the sinner's prayer. So I just said what he said to say, didn't believe none of it. But I was listening to what he had to say and I said it. I said, "Yeah, I believe that Jesus was born of a Virgin and he was raising and he was crucified, resurrected." And then he said, "Now I'd like to ask him into my heart to be my lord and savior." So when I said that part like the pain in my gut, it went away. I mean, I knew right then that it was real. I said, "If you're real God, show me." I'm about ready to stretch my own neck. And you know, you can show me, I'll believe. And he did.

And here I am 30 some years later. And you know, but when I was in prison reading books about it, it was called "God's Prison Gang." It was by Tex Watson who was one of them Charles Manson people. And he's a powerful man of God. He's got a book. You know, he's in "God's Prison Gang" book, and I'm reading everything I could that had something to do with God. Reading all of all the books I could read. I could read something like that. And we had a guy that was an evangelist for the church that was coming out there to us. And his name was Larry Reed. And this guy was a gangster in the east LA the bad part of Los Angeles. And when he was not a born again Christian, he was a pretty bad character, but now he's a born again Christian.

He used to be in there taking care of people with drugs and whatever. He is in there convincing people read the Bible. He put the laminated Bible down. And at the end of the services, you know, he said that the Lord was speaking to him about somebody in the room. "I don't want nobody raising their hands. But I really got to say this." And he said, "Somebody in this room that thinks they've got to learn how to get more drugs, more of this so they can get out of here and make money." And he said, "That's a lie. [inaudible]" That is in you. He's in the right. That's what I thought I was going to do. I'll find out all these big people and get the money. And when I get out here . . . and he told me . . . Well, by the time I got out of there, they called me Hallelujah Harry. But I had to respect and I wasn't a weak, but father was real and they wanted to take the church service that was coming on Sundays and Saturdays. One of the Catholic preachers didn't want to come out there anymore with Saturdays and Sundays.

And one time, one time, out of 450 inmates in that prison. Out of 400, I got 77 of them to sign that they wanted me to have my church there. And I said 77 out of 450 men, but they respected me and I wanted to keep it there. And, um, and then my son was 11 days old when they arrested me, four months old, when they sentenced me to prison and he took his first steps in the prison visiting room.

Grant: Damn man.

Diamond: And there's one of the guys who was in there, his name was Chico. He was the president of the dirty dozen. And this guy was there for a felony possession of firearm. He got shot in the leg by a guy in the [inaudible] in Tucson. The guy shot him in the leg and he took the guy's gun away from him and shot the guy with his gun and it was self-defense, and none of it stuck. They charged him with felony possession of a firearm, because he shot the guy with the guy's own gun. He should've not did that. He got two years.

And this guy, his mom would come visit him. And my wife could only bring in two bottles for my son to drink, baby bottles and four diapers and a bag full of a change. Chico's mom would come in there with a big old diaper bag full of food. Tamales. Homemade everything. And he'd sit there eating and I said, "Chico, how in the heck does your mom get all that food in here? My wife can only get in with, you know, a couple of diapers, two bottles of milk and some change for the vending machine. How did you do it?" He said, "Oh, you know those guys you see coming in at the front gate. They just work here. They live out there. They don't care about me getting extra food." And that was the Dirty Dozen, I guess. Like the Hell's Angels. They were bad guys. That worked. So yeah, I had all the influence was there, but by the time I left, I was Halleluja Harry, Jesus, please.

Grant: What about the routine in the U S penitentiary, you know, what do you remember of it?

Diamond: Well, everybody ate the same thing and slept in the same kind of environment. And I watched a lot. You know what I mean? They're all eating the same dinner and everything, same cell. But what were they doing with their time? The Christians were actually, I was watching them, they were smiling. They were actually having a good time. And I said, I'm eating the same thing. What am I missing? So I asked God to show me. I want to be like that. And he did.

Chico and a guy come up to me. I had only been there about a year and I'd had a bunch of this Clearasil on my face because I was breaking out with pimples. And this big [inaudible] kid came up to me and he asked me, "Are you this Christian that everybody is telling me about?" I said, "Yeah, I guess that's me." "Praise God, man, I'm coming from Guam."

He said, "I've been from prison to prison, jail to jail and I've had no fellowship." So me and Eddie got together and got close and we'd, one of us would go to the dinner and eat dinner. And then other one would go to the iron pile and get the weights that we're going to use for our workout.

[00:45:56]

And I was just bringing him some lettuce, you could eat all the salads and soup and bread that you wanted. So I would make him two sandwiches out of just lettuce and stuff and he'd get all the weights ready. Well, Chico and his buddies would have to sit there and wait for us to get done with our workout so they could use the weights.

So you know, Chico, Hallelujah Harry. "You guys are going to have to run a little faster. Now miss a meal." But that's all we did and they respected us. We ain't weak, but they say all them

Christians are weak. You know how hard it is to be a Christian in prison? And people think they're weak, but they're not.

And I said, them smiles are real. They're actually real. I'm trying to, you know, pay attention to everything. And I did. And then when I realized that that's real and if that was then I want some. And seeing is believing type of guy. That's my story. But I've never been past a gal that I liked. I smoked cigarettes. I got my [inaudible] so tell them people and witnessing . . . He said when you lead someone to the Lord, he says it would cover a multitude of sin, both theirs and yours.

[00:47:11]

We all do it, but I just go out there. And then people assume, you know, all my tattoos, but I've got no criminal, you know, Adult criminal record, but I've been around a lot of criminals and that's where my gifts came. They know I'm real. Yeah. They watch you and try to figure it out, but me and Bonnie have been out there long enough now that they all respect us and love us out there.

And, now we got a house. And living with them for so long . . . it started out, we're going to have to have them live with us. No, that's not a good idea, but we still feed them. If you can't just take care of them and move on in your house, then your house is enough. Yep. So now we got a house, but we're going to start feeding people.

Um, Roxy, at the Uptown Cafe, the heart of Butte. Well, me and her and Bonnie on Sundays, we go to the Lincoln hotel. Now this Corona stuff is the way it is, we haven't been able to, but last two weeks, now we can go there on Sundays. And have hot dogs and we feed everybody in the Lincoln. And have a little half hour to do a little bit scripture reading, but so now we're going to be going into that with, um, Roxy and me and Bonnie. And I want to turn my shepherd's pole into a feeding up there in my garage. People can just come up there and eat and drink coffee and fellowship.

Grant: I'll have to come by and visit.

Diamond: There you go.

Grant: I wanted to ask, after you got out of the penitentiary, did you come back to Butte right away?

Diamond: Ah man, we were on fire for the Lord. And the church that we were going to had a church in Portland, Oregon. And we went to Portland, Oregon, and came back to Butte. And then went back to Tucson and my wife thought, that's the only place we can go to serve God is in Tucson, Arizona. Boy, it's 120 degrees down there. And I said, my Bible says that God will fulfill the desire of one man's heart and this heart wants to be in Butte. So I came back to Butte with two Rottweilers and a German Shepherd puppy. I was down there, laying some carpet for a lady that owns Shawnsberg Shepherds, Inc. She had German shepherds, Rottweilers, and Chesapeake Bay retrievers. And her German shepherd male was a father of my pup was a police dog in Tempe, Arizona. And I had newspaper clippings of the dog. The cop paid \$6,700 for X when he bought him. Completely trained, it is worth over \$50,000.

[Inaudible] let a guy go into a big warehouse and all these different obstacles, run around, wait 55 minutes and then let this dog in. And that dog went everywhere that that guy went. In the same . . . and the cop that owned him, never signed his half of the newspaper or the AKC registered papers and came back.

And I had the pick of the litter. Katie had three left. And this cop asked her, you know, for pick of the litter and she said, no, you've already got your money. He said, "No, it was the money and pick of the litter." So he didn't sign my half of the paperwork, so I could get my dog registered.

And I ended up up here with two Rottweilers and a German shepherd puppy. And that was the last time I ain't going. There's the cactus in Arizona. But I do know how to lay carpet. And that's where I started laying carpet was down in Tucson. And they paid almost nothing, and it was a right to work state. So it took me all I could do just to make enough money to move back to Butte. I ended up coming back with two Rottweilers, German shepherd and ain't going back.

Grant: So did you do flooring in Butte?

Diamond: Yeah, I learned how to install floors and then I was just a carpet layer and I didn't know how to install vinyls. Now, I'm a mechanic. I can install anything you'd walk on. But some people up in Cut Bank, in East Glacier had me install some carpet for them. And I ended up doing really a good job and everything, but they told me that they have a program, the job service up there, where they, both of them worked and the head honchos in there, and then got some money in this fund. But if they do not spend it, they're going to have reappropriate it. "Do you need any kind of schooling or tools, anything for your carpet laying?" I do. So they sent me to Denver, Colorado to a vinyl installing school, um, to manage it. So I went and now I can install vinyl and they sent me back down to get certified.

[00:51:44]

So, I got certified and now I can install anything, but I was just a carpet layer and I just got blessed. They sent me down there because I did a good job. So now I can install anything, but now I'm getting too old. No jobs are too big or too small, but some are too big. But spend a lot of time on your hands and knees, man, even then I'm praying, even then I'm praying. You mess up someone's floor, that ain't no good. That's their house. And, um, so from floor covering to now, you know, I just waiting to get my SSI back. I had my SSI for five years after I broke my neck, waited 28 months to get it, had it for five years and it was over in Washington and the public defendant never gave two pieces of paper to the county attorneys to prove that I was innocent.

And I ended up getting a warrant put out for me. When I left Washington, my public defender told me that with two pieces of paper, I gave him that he'd be able to get these charges dismissed. Never should've had the charges to begin with, but I gave him a letter from my landlord and my neighbor, to prove that I was not guilty, never had nothing to do with that.

And he told me that with these papers I'll get my charges dismissed. Congratulations on ymy son who was 11 days old, four months later, I went to get my check out of the mail. And you no longer receive SSI. You are a fugitive and wanted for prosecution. So I called this public defender and he tells me I still got those letters sitting in my desk. I said, Buddy, it's been four months. How often do you look in your desk? He said, this is on Monday. He called me, "I'm not

your buddy." "You shook my hand, congratulated me. The last time we separated. I'm not your buddy. And you are supposed to be my lawyer." And this was on Monday. Friday that same week at three, I get a phone call, he calls me up and telling me I got it all taken care of. The warrant's been quashed.

I said, "You mean squashed?" And all the charges have been dismissed. So I called social security. I told them, I never should have the charges. They never should have been there, but they're not there no more. And now what do I do? Reapply. And I'm still reapplying. They got that stuff, you know, they just put it down on paper and someone reads it . . . You never get a second chance to make a first impression. You got federal judges reading that kind of static. But I've made it this long without it, but I'm going to get my SSI back. And I have to take meds and I can't work. I love it. And I told the judge, I'm not saying that I can not work. I just can't be a reliable employee. I got plates from C4 to C6. I broke my neck in a high-speed chase with the cops.

Grant: When was that?

Diamond: 1992, November 18th. I came down here for some charges they had on me that were bogus. And when I came down, I went to the judge, charges all got dropped, but I went out and I got drunk and had someone tell me that this certain person was talking shit about me. And so I went and drove through over his fence, up to his porch, his steps because they wouldn't open the door and he still wouldn't open the door. So I backed out of his yard and started running his Volkswagen into his garage door. And the third time I hit it and I know they're calling 911, I backed off of it. And his bumper came with mine. I better get out here. And this is south Montana, down by the YMCA. There used to be a stock yards down there, one coming that way and I had two cops going out to his house and they flipped a u. And I knew they were after me. I come to the bottom of Montana where that graveyard is there.

Well, I took a left and headed up that road that takes you up to Beef Trail. And my buddy said, "You just took a dead end road." I said, Man, that's probably what the cops are thinking. Now. I know this road, if you take it up there, you can take it to Rocker. If you've got a four wheel drive, not a 78 Plymouth Volare, but I had three cop cars chasing me and I'm doing 80 miles an hour down that road. And the pavement ended and went to dirt and that much snow. And when the car quit flipping, I was like 98 feet from the car with a broken neck and face down. I was in a coma for 10 days. I got a ticket for reckless driving while eluding and DWI and no seatbelt, \$20, no seatbelt. But my federal PO told me that I'm lucky that he didn't feel the feds need to be burdened with all my medical expenses because I was in a halo.

And he said, if it wasn't for that, why the state didn't give you time because they should've gave me for each person in that car, felony criminal endangerment. But I was in a coma for 10 days. And when I got to the hospital with the cops that were out at the wreck came and had them draw blood to tell me what his alcohol level was. And it was like 0.28. So he gave me both the tickets. But after I came out of the coma 10 days later, they couldn't just keep writing tickets. They've only got like three days to keep writing tickets. And I was in a coma. They didn't think I was gonna live.

And Pastor Mark from the Church on the Rock, came and prayed for me one night. And the next morning, and doctor tells my wife to sign these papers, he's ready for surgery. Overnight, the swelling in his brains went down and they did surgery and put me into a halo and six months in the first halo. The surgery didn't take anyways. So I had to have a second surgery on my neck and another halo, and they put plates from C4 to C6 in the front, one in the back has wires. So now I have plates from C4 to C6, and I come out of the second surgery. And I was in pain. I would hit the buzzer for some nurses to give me something for pain and they brought me three little aspirin and told me they couldn't give me anything stronger than until the doctor ordered it.

And I remembered this little nurse gave me a shot in the back of my arm and told me that I was going to be out of pain. [inaudible] overdosed me on morphine. My respiratory system shut down to three breaths a minute and I made it through there and the nurse that gave me that extra shot. And then she comes in. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I said, "Girlfriend, I've got friends who would have paid you good money for that, but I don't do that. Please. Don't do me no more favors." There was a little girl who was eight year old girl getting her halo off at the doctor's office, telling me how you can sleep with these halos on that.

My first one, I never slept for six months. It was like, you're dangling on a thread. And I never slept at all. I was in a recliner. Now, this little girl was telling me to get a beach towel. She said, "It's gotta be a beach towel. Not just a bath towel, a beach towel. And you just got folded this way. And then this way, and then you roll it back up and put it in between them bars and your neck back here. It feels like your head's on a pillow." Oh man. An eight year old girl is telling me and the last year going crazy with my head dangling. This little girl says do that. Praise God. Out of the mouth of babes. So yeah, I made it through both surgeries. And now I'm two millimeters from being a quadriplegic. After that I walk everywhere. I walk down the hill. I take a bus back up the hill. But I walk everywhere I go. My walker ain't broken. Jesus walked everywhere that he went.

[00:59:31]

[Inaudible . . . Sunday School . . .] No cars.

Grant: You had mentioned earlier, you haven't drank since 1992, is it because of that?

Diamond: I was two millimeters from being a quadriplegic. And if I got into an accident in a vehicle and you got whiplash, I would end up paralyzed from the neck down, screws in that plate in my neck would strip out. So I don't drink. I never drank much when I was even drinking. But now people say, oh, I just slipped and fell. You know, I was drunk. I had an accident. I can't have an accident. Slip and fall and I break my neck again and I'm from the neck down. So I walk all the time and watch where I'm walking. That little proverbial banana peel, but I don't ride bikes or motorbikes. You get hit by some little lady that didn't see you on a motorbike. No. So I got no problem walking and the free buses. People told me I wasn't driving my own bus. Well, they're free in Butte. Somebody said something about the elevator wasn't going all the way to the top. I said, that's cool. I can go up two steps. And then they said that my cheese done slipped off its cracker. I said, now I think they're crazy. And I know nothing slips off my Ritz. Yeah, no, he's not the sharpest knife in the drawer, is he?

[01:01:04]

[Inaudible] I had the only black kid in Butte run a butcher knife through my stomach. On opening day of hunting season.

Grant: Why?

Diamond: Well, I was in jail here for a month and I got out of jail. I ain't got nowhere to stay. And a friend of mine tells me that they have an extra bedroom that I can stay in and I'm staying there. And he's telling me about this black kid, making him leave his house party, because he said either fight him or leave. Because I'm on probation. You know, I had to leave. So I thought that was fine. But now I'm upstairs sleeping. And I heard somebody downstairs there, the black kid, he made him leave. It was down there and I went down and thinking if he was here, you're going to end up fighting him. I don't care about your probation, but went down and Billy wasn't nowhere to be seen.

[01:01:50]

I said to the kid, "Hey, do you know who lives here?" "No, I'm just here to party." "I know you're just here for free alcohol, but Billy lives here. And if he was here right now, you wouldn't be welcome. So you're going to have to leave."

I hit him one time. And when he hit the ground, his front three teeth come out of his mouth, I put them in his pocket and sent him out the door. Three nights later, it's opening day of hunting season. And so I went to bed like 10 o'clock that night. And a friend of mine had some medicine that helped me sleep. And he gave me five of these pills and said only take two and don't drink. And I just didn't want to be up waiting for my alarm clock to go hunting. So I took all five of them, drank two beers and I went to sleep. I woke up at one o'clock with that black kid that I fought with telling me the N word. And he's got my girlfriend. And I said, "What?" [inaudible] My girlfriend . . . [inaudible] I'm walking across to the Silver Bow Homes and my legs were like rubber bands with them pills I took to help me sleep. And I told my friend that if he gets on top of me, you better beat him off me with that club.

But I pounded on the door and this girl that Billy said, he won't let Lisa out. She's trying to unlock the door. And he grabbed her, pulled her away. And I said, he does have her. She turned and unlocked the door. He wouldn't let her, I just got woke up and got told that he's got her in there. And now heck with that.

So I knocked the whole door down and by the time we got the door down, the girl went out the back door and now she's at the end of the row with Billy, the boyfriend. I got to go inside this and find out what just happened. I just took your door down. I know the cops are coming. So I went to step into the door and I felt . . . I looked down and he's got his hand on the knife. I walked, pushed him backwards. I watched this blade just keep coming out of my stomach and took off running down the sidewalk. And by the time I got to the end of the sidewalk, blood is just squirting out of me. And two guys dragged me to the apartment I was at when I got woke up. And I'm trying to get the bleeding to stop and there's little teeny cuts wounds all over going tsh! tsh! tsh!

So I get a towel stuck in there and the cop gets there. And I mean, everybody else is freaking out because this cop is screaming now. I thought, there is help. Ambulance got there. And the ambulance station was right there on Main Street, below the John's pork chops, the garage there, that's where they were stationed with. So they were close and lucky they were. But when they got me to the hospital, there was just this little cut and the bleeding was stopped on the outside. And the doctor and everyone said that just looks like a superficial knife wound. I don't know what superficial means but I watched the blade come out of my stomach go that far.

So, yeah, he explored and opened me up. The knife went through my stomach, into my pancreas. And when it came out of my stomach, the two little holes they left was letting that stomach gas and the stomach out. And that's not supposed to be on all your other organs. So yeah, the only black kid in Butte is who I got stabbed by.

And I seen the guy after I got out of prison. I'm born again, Christian now. I'm at John's Pork Chops, in there eating at the buffet and they came in there to eat. And I handed this kid a card. And it had a hearse on the front and it says, "You might tie your shoes this morning, but who is going to untie them tonight?" And on the back it had this salvation deal. And I gave him that card and he tells his buddies, "Man, we've got to go [inaudible]" I stand and show him that card. "Yeah, are you ready to meet your maker?" And he thought it was a threat. Yeah. "Did you read the back of it?" He said, "No, man, no." I said, "Man, you gotta read the back of it. It's got something religious on it. Read that." So, yeah, that was good. But I asked him, "Why didn't you go out the back door like Lisa did? And why did you wake and come through the door and then stabbed me?" He said, "Because my dad was passed out on the couch." And that's all I needed. My dad was passed out on the couch and I just got my teeth knocked out three nights ago by somebody now he's hitting down my door.

I remember my dad laying there. So I forgave him, ended up friends. And um, he named his kid after me. He had a boy. His name was James and his son, he named, Dennis James. So there you go. We ended up friends. I had no clue, you know, black people in there. And then I said, nah. Now he named his kid after me. And we're good friends. But time sees, you know, it's because praise God. But he passed away. He had overdosed or something, quite a few years ago. Yeah. Yeah.

Grant: I wanted to ask you, Colt, um, as we kind of get towards the end of my time, unfortunately here, but you know, folks on this recording, can't see your tattoos, your hands, So can you just tell us about them, you know, for someone who's listening to this down the road, help them see your tattoos. What do they look like?

Diamond: Well, if something really means a lot to somebody then you stick it in your skin, you know. And everything I've got in my skin, I put there for a reason. Something that I wanted to remind myself. If somebody else wants to know about me, there is no mistaking me. And the brother that I've never met, he told me that my older brother told him, "Just so you know, Tim told me about all your tattoos." And he said, he wouldn't spit across the street to save you if you were dying of thirst. And I would probably cross that same street just to avoid you. I said, "Buddy, that's why I got all these tattoos is to keep people like you away from people like me." You know, me going to jail. You going to [inaudible] . . . tattoos. I'd just as soon shake my hand, get to know my own brother. But yeah.

Grant: So tell me about them. Is that a dollar sign on your left palm?

Diamond: [Inaudible] It looks like a dollar sign. [Inaudible] Jail . . . Bars.

Grant: Okay.

Diamond: I got you. I got you. I'm in your head. I go around fixing problems that needed fixing of people. Didn't have to get everybody not to know. And when I stick it in my skin . . . I'm going to be writing a book. And one of the chapters is going to be called "Listening to my tattoos talk."

Grant: Nice.

Diamond: And I've done a lot of tattoos. I can do anything that you got a picture of. And so it's "Talent Tattoos by Colt Diamond, Where Beauty Really is Only Skin Deep." And ugly can be covered with a little black ink.

Grant: What are some of the other ones there that you have?

Diamond: This one here is that shield. That there has a little hood. It says, "Born Free, 100% Honky." I was in Oklahoma. I got sent to prison. I'm in Oklahoma and I got this black guy looking at my tattoos. He says, "What's that?" I said, "It's a tattoo." "Yeah, I mean that "Born Free, 100% Honky." I said it means that I'm pure white. He scratches his chin and tells me, "You know, what, there's black people and then there's niggers. And then there's white people and then you got honkies." I said, "Wow, now we got that straightened out, let's hit the brakes, bud." So there I am. You never had many black people living around when I was growing up. And the only black kid stabbed me, but yeah, I've got friends that are black people and I realized the difference.

The attitude, you know, and there's white ones just like there's black ones. I got all different kinds of people, but you have a choice of talking to them or listening to them. And so I can sit down and listen to people. And they can relate to me like Pastor [inaudible]. Not everybody can just sit down and talk to somebody else about something that, you know, they don't even want to hear. But I'm living with them. So I knew the difference between a hangover and an infirmity. If you believe me, Jesus said that you will put the hands on the sick and they will recover. And you can even cast out demons in my name. Okay.

But I'm going to tell you something about demons. If they weren't real, first of all, Jesus, wouldn't give us power over them. And he wouldn't tell us that this is one of the signs that you're going to have to tell the demons, that you're one of my children. He said, you can cast them out and you can lay hands on the sick. And it's real. People come to me and they're hung over and I ain't going to buy no drinks . . . panhandling . . . one of them hurricanes. But when they're hung over or when they're sick, you know, I lived with him. So I know the difference between the hangover and the flu. Yeah. So I'd pray for them and they'd got better.

[01:10:59]

And now they all remember them days that they were really sick. And I just prayed for them. They don't care. It's just what we do. This is who I am and who you are, but that's not gonna stop Father from moving. And let's just pray and it works. So they remember you. "Remember when you prayed for me?" And then it just opens the door. You don't have to be sick, dying, and you know, going to hell in a hand basket. You just want to believe something that's got, you know, eternal ramifications. The question is eternity. What's the answer? Well, the answer is eternity, where is the question. Where are you going to spend it?

Right now I can take in that cell phone of mine, text messages, boom, hit that, send button, send text messages clear across the country from my hand to somebody else's cell phone. And sudden pop and they read it, right? I mean, hitting the send button, take a picture. Send that picture through the air a thousand miles away into another cell phone. Hitting that send button. Okay. I got a "In Jesus's name, we pray, amen" button. And no other name will answer. We said, "Anything you ask in the name of the Lord, Jesus, it will be done." Two or more won't agree upon anything. Unless we agree upon silliness. You know, I want millions of dollars. Father hears our prayers and it's not about being good and not being as bad as you used to be. It's just about just believing that that's why Jesus died. 'Cause we ain't good.

Grant: Do you think Christianity or, you know, a belief in God has saved your life?

Diamond: Well, it saved me and gave me a whole new life. People don't realize this, I taught Sunday school 20 years ago in the salvation army. Teenage Sunday school and then the adult Sunday school. And how I got to become the adult Sunday school teacher? The Pastor had two teenage boys that were in my teenage class. And one of them was bringing skateboards to class and sit there, spinning the wheel making it distracting. And I tell him, "Go take your skateboard into your dad's office. I'm not going to sit here and argue with you." So he did, and then I told Dwayne, you can't have the skateboard in the class.

So he comes with the skateboard the next week. I said, "Okay, Dwayne." The kid's name was Dwayne too. I said, "Before he gets to this church, he has to leave your house. And from your house to the van, don't let that skateboard come out of the house, leave it there. He gets it out of your van and now he's running it up and down the bannister." So now, I'm not the teenage Sunday school teacher, he moved me up to the adult Sunday school teacher. So I wouldn't have to deal with this kid. And that wasn't a good idea. Just moved me into the adult class because I just said they need to learn something too.

But 20 years later, I mean, when we started, Pastor Dallas told me that that our ministry was out there. On Memorial day we started out in Centralia, Washington, where Dwayne is at now, salvation army, major in the salvation army, not just a captain. And we went over there to start a little ministry and it was a whole different story. I love the guy with all my heart. And I say, just because, you know, you got all that money and all that, you know, people, you know, needing it. That's nice. It ain't for the right reason. I went over there and I ended up getting out of this motel that they put us in. And, um, Memorial day, weekend, Memorial day, he comes says, I'll put you in a motel. On Sunday, I ain't seen him.

So I spent a month in a motel and our month turns out. Now we are out on the streets and this guy leaves us out there. They ain't got nothing to do with us. And I ended up sleeping on

sidewalks and Bonnie ended up in the women's rescue mission because they didn't have for couples. I ended up getting in my stomach where the scar tissue is, the scar tissue wrapped around my intestines and ended up going from bus stop, trying to get to the hospital with my guts, ready to explode. And I was in there 13 days. And when I got released from the hospital, they told me that they were going to let me go to this rescue mission where me and my wife can stay together.

But couples had to be married and have kids. But because of your surgery and everything, we are just going to let you go there. So they took me out of the hospital, had me at this office at 11:30 in the cab and just sitting out there. The guy came, asked me, what are you doing? I said, "Just waiting to get to the mission." He said, "Oh, there ain't no opening in the mission." I said, "Well, we are waiting." He said, "It's all on first come first serve." I said, "I've been out here." I said, "Can I use your phone?" I called the lady at the hospital and I said, "This guy tells me it's first come, first serve." And I said, she said, she talked to you twice. "I don't care. How many times she talked to me. I never said that." So I've got a a hundred pound duffel bag that I'm not supposed to be picking up, nothing more than 10 pounds, a hundred pounds of army duffel bag.

And he tells me wherever that guy out there on the front porch was because he just took the last bed in the men's mission there ain't no opening for you in the men's mission. But your wife can go back to the, you know, the one she was in. I said, "So where do I sleep?" He says, "Ask that guy that took the last bunk and where he was sleeping before he ended up here." I ended up carrying that 100 pound duffel bag 13 blocks to sleep under the I-5 bridge. And I woke up in the morning, the month we was in that motel, I was watching these guys flying signs on the highway . . . green helmets. I woke up in the morning, underneath the bridge with a piece of cardboard that I was sleeping on. I went to the motel where I had been staying at and got a black marker.

"Hungry and Homeless." By the time I went and got my wife that morning. I had enough money to get us lunch and dinner and father took care of us. But I'm sitting there with staples in my gut and Dwayne driving by me every morning, holding the sign. And he drives right by me. Goes to McDonald's with his wife comes right by eating. The third day, I said, that's it. Stop. Driving right in front of me. Stop. That's the third time you drove by me. I got one blanket. Me and Bonnie are sleeping . . . This guy when I was in the motel stole \$10 from me. And he's high. He won't go out there and fly signs no more. Because he thought I was just going to be in the motel for the weekend. I'm going to be there for a month. He just steals \$10 off me and wouldn't see me again. Well, I'm waiting for him. He couldn't come out and fly signs because I'm there every day asking the other ones where he's at.

[01:17:49]

Well, when I got out and I had that stomach surgery. I get back out and down, but I slept under the bridge and there's that guy that owes me the money. So I went over there and the guy's flying his sign. He said, "I ain't got no money." I made pocket checked him. And he had \$2. I said, Now, "You're going to owe me eight." And I showed him the staples in my stomach. I said, "I ain't got nowhere to live." He said, "Come on, brother." He took me to this camp that he had down by the river. It had eight sleeping bags per mattress. And then he gave me his camp. Me and Bonnie are sleeping in this camp. At nighttime, I stuck a rope against this stump. I stuck a knife in the log that we were sleeping against, right above my head. And woke up in the morning

and the knife is gone. So during the knife somebody took the knife there. But we show up at this trailer court and this guy was trying to sell this pistol that had a laser light on it, laser sights. And I looked at, but this guy didn't know if anybody had bought it. Bonnie had a little bullet, one of those laser light deals. She had one of those and I'm sleeping and these guys were about 50 or 75 feet in the trees. Bonnie said you could see like four or five of them. One had a white cap on and she was using her little laser light. Laser lighting them.

So they didn't ever come any closer than that. But the pistol that was just for sale had laser light on it. So they didn't know if we had just bought that pistol. I didn't even know they were there. Bonnie told me in the morning that they were there and there was a guy with a white hat on. He was one of them too. I said, "You know what? I think it's time for us to go." They let us have this camp and everything, but now they're starting and take knives out of the trunk while I'm sleeping. I said, "Naw, we'll just get back to Butte." The only thing we have is a little tiny, two-man tent, another blanket. And tells me we got two bus tickets but we have to wait three days before we can get on the bus. So we have a little blanket. Three days. And I asked the guy at the bus station, how much did he save by making us wait three days? 36 bucks. So I called the head guy in Washington, the major. I told him what was going on with this church down there where Dwayne is at. He told me that it sounds like you guys just had a falling out of friendship. I don't like this kind of Baptist. I asked what was my position.

He said I've been called for crushing and redressing the church. And people just got . . . it's not a works program. It's just about believing one little thing, man. And forgiving people. You can't expect him to say, how can, you know, ask guys to forgive me if I don't forgive you. Sure. You know? So you just forgive him and then I'll forgive you. I'll never forget. And that's understandable. True forgiveness, all that is, is I just rang you to remind you. And I'll never forget, but I just think in the mindset again, you know, never forget because it's a lesson, you know, but don't run around telling people, be careful of him. I forgave him. So that's just true forgiveness. I want people to get that into their heart. Nothing bothers me, but Bonnie.

There certain things that are like little curses we bring on, we're not battling against flesh and blood. Powers and principalities in high places. When you hit the send button on the cell phone shooting powers through the air, pictures through the air. And now, you know, Jesus said he doesn't know when he's going to come back, but he says, he knows for sure that his kingdom will be preached to all nations before he does.

Well, you can Google it, man. Bottom line, you want to know about your salvation, about your eternity and about where you are going to spend it. Google it. Because we've got cell phones that you can Google anything and we got SIM cards. You can keep gigabytes on a little tiny SIM card.

When I first got saved, the reel to reel on the VCR tapes . . . you got a whole big room full of tapes on everybody. Now we got little teeny gigabytes, and we can send messages right straight through the air with a send button. Well, Jesus says, you just hit that, in Jesus's name, amen, button.

And Father is just and he's real. Some people say, there is no god. Well, there is one. And right now the whole world is dealing with the same salvation. This coronavirus is everywhere. So it's a matter of are you ready for this to happen, but some people don't even get sick.

I just say, you know what? The whole world has got this chance right now. Everybody's got the Corona, this, that, and now we've got overnight wars. And rumor of wars. Floods. Earthquakes. All the time. And so I don't worry about it. We just go out there walking around. And people yell at us. And we got that backpack full of sack lunches. Jesus asked Peter, "Peter, do you love me?" And Peter said, "You know, I love you, lord, and please feed my sheep." Do you know how hard it is to tell someone about the lord when they're hungry, cold, rain, ain't got nowhere to stay and you've got three bedrooms and you ain't going to give him one? Well, we do. Everybody needs a place to live.

But you know, some of them just come there and they're real. You put a woman. That's where I quit going to the rescue missions with my wife into a room full of women, 30 women in one room, and you've got alcoholics, drug addicts, all these are coming down and just come on out there. And one little Christian sitting in the middle of the room with her husband in another room. They would eat her up in. And then she comes down and scared to death because they're all doing whatever they're doing all night long in the women's room. And that's acceptable. So that's the reason we lived on the streets. And that's people that weren't there or were there and then got kicked out. That's all right. We are still here.

And now I can tell people what I've been doing, like the pastor told me in 2013, just go out there and that's where your mission is. And I couldn't tell nobody. And people respected me and Bonnie. When we first started out there, the bus drivers, you know, praying with them. Respect. And then two years later, it's like, man, they're just looking down on me.

So then I said, Father, it's 20 degrees out and we're sleeping at below zero and Bonnie is sound asleep in a car, you know. And he looked at me and said, you know what? In order for you to go where you're going, you've gotta be exactly where you're at. And she's asleep. He says, "Don't wake her up." And I looked, she was sleeping. And then I just said, my lord, I'm talking to Jesus now. People hate me. They just hate me. He said, they hated me first. They hated me first, brother, just keep doing Father's will. And right now we're to the point that, you know, we're all part of one body. And some just got ten fingers, don't mean you don't need 10 toes. So right now I'm just going to be a mouth, you know. And I'll get my poetry. Jesus said, you'll know a tree by its fruit. You know, good trees produce good fruit. Well, Father told me to tell them that they will know a tree by my poetry and then let them listen to it.

I will just tell you one poem. When I was looking at the Lady of the Rockies one day and we had plays in the park. I was by my wife, instead of having church on Sunday, we had a big picnic down at Stodden park and we're singing praise and worship. And I'm looking at the Lady of the Rockies and Lord spoke to my heart.

He said, "My mother's on that mountain. And my father is in your heart." And I said, I'll what I can do with that when I get home. And this is what I came up with.

Is my mother on that mountain?

*Is my father in your heart?
It doesn't matter where I've been living.
Today's a brand new start.
I've lived a life of fun and danger.
Hell, even the danger was fun,
But now I'm really living
Because I'm living for her son
And her son came from the father.
Father came with her son
And then he sent the Holy Ghost,
Jesus, all three of God's gift in one
Jesus said that we are the bride
And that he will be our groom,
But now he lives inside my heart
And for pride, there's no more room.
And to be a son of the one called most high
Adopted, I must be
But Jesus said that my name has done been written on his family tree.
That tree is called "Lamb's Book of Life."
It's where your name must be written.
So I'll start roaring like a lion
And I'll start purring like a kitten
Hit that Jesus's name amen button! That's it.*

Grant: Thanks for that Colt.

Diamond: That's how I wrote that too . . . [inaudible] I speak a lot in the third-person, you know? [inaudible]

Grant: I have one more question for you. Because Pastor Dallas has passed away, right? So, how did you meet him? And it sounds like he was really important in your mission in life. He kind of gave you this mission.

Diamond: Yeah. I met him in 1976 when he first started that mission down there.

Grant: So he started the Butte Rescue Mission?

Diamond: Yeah, in 1976. That's when he started it. I met him the back then, but I was wanting to help him do the basement. The basement was all dirt, and then they're going to put it, you know, like now down there on Second Street, it's got concrete floors and the men's dorm was down there, but he was just getting ready to start doing that. And I told him, I'd volunteer all my time for the floors. Now after that's all done, then I'll put down linoleum, whatever but I don't have the tools to do all that, but I just kept going by there.

You know, Father called me and me and Dallas became, you know, related, like he was a dad. And then spiritually and I sit down and say, what about this? Because he showed up in Butte with a stolen guitar and got saved, was sleeping in an alley behind the M&M. And then, you know, so he's been there and done that. Singing songs, man. Me and him were going to do that CD. And two days before he passed away, we were going to meet in four days, just practice a few songs.

But yeah, I said, I used to wish that I could sing, Pastor, but now I wish you could. But he could play guitar. And he's got a [inaudible] but the song that he wrote on the CD. I mean, in my heart. And he gave me permission to just finish that and my poetry. So I that's what I want you to do is get me a CD with everything that we've recorded up until now on one CD

[END OF RECORDING]