



# VERDIGRIS PROJECT

**KBMF & BUTTE-SILVER BOW ARCHIVES**

**MARK SULLIVAN**

**The Verdigris Project**

A partnership between KBMF 102.5FM and The Butte-Silver Bow Archives.

With funding from The National Endowment for the Humanities, the Montana History Foundation, members of the Butte America Foundation, and SARTA.

[www.verdigrisproject.org](http://www.verdigrisproject.org)

## Oral History Transcript of Mark Sullivan

*Interviewer: Clark Grant*

*Interview Date: May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019*

*Location: Sullivan Residence in Butte*

*Transcribed: March 2021 by Adrian Kien*

**Grant:** OK, shall we begin?

**Sullivan:** Sure.

**Grant:** Like I say, thanks for having me down to the house. This project is basically a recording of life histories. And so, like I say, there's for me at least, no topic that's off limits. We can follow any train of thought that you like, any particular stories you want to relate. But normally the way we start out is by asking people about their ancestors, their grandparents or great grandparents. What do you know about your grandparents?

**Sullivan:** What do I know about mine? Very little. My grandparents? Never saw them. They came from Michigan. Somehow they got here. Everybody was getting jobs in Butte. You could always get a job, if you wanted to work hard. Working in the mine somewhere. And a lot of transients came through town. My people came from Michigan. They heard there's a lot of jobs out here. My dad was the oldest of about five or six kids. I hardly knew him. He's quite a bit older than me. We lived in St. Pat's district uptown, the St. Pat's church. The St. Pat's school is up there. The school was on Park Street. The church was on Mercury. Just half a block from where I lived. My whole school year career in Butte. That was called the St. Pat's area. We were just west of the church. So I'd be waking up with the bells when they started ringing for mass. That's how close I lived. I could be to mass before they stopped ringing the bell. I was pretty fast then. It was a great, great school, the St. Pat's. A very prominent Catholic school here. And mostly Irish kids. For some reason, the Irish were more prolific in the job seekers. A lot of people got jobs whether they're looking for whatever. You give me some leads.

**Grant:** Yeah, sure. You said your dad was quite a bit older than you.

**Sullivan:** Yes.

**Grant:** How old was he then when you were born? Like in his 50s, you think?

**Sullivan:** Probably around 50.

**Grant:** But you never met his parents.

**Sullivan:** No. I didn't know his parents. They weren't here. Probably just died before I started recognizing people, you know.

**Grant:** You know, I live at Mercury and Washington, so right across the street from St. Pat's. Was that where you grew up too, then?

**Sullivan:** Oh, yeah.

**Grant:** Right there on Mercury Street?

**Sullivan:** The south side of the street, just west of the church. Across the street. Half a block. A long time ago. I spent all my eight years of grade school and four years of high school living in a flat. I think they call it a slum area now. The flat is different than an apartment because there are no hallways. You went from one room to the side of the room and you got out the door to go the other way. Wasn't very fancy. Most everybody lived in flats. It was a cheaper way to have apartments. So I didn't have any brothers or sisters. Only child. So that's where I grew up. Before grade school and all the way through high school. I graduated from Butte High in 1945. We're just getting started. Long time ago.

**Grant:** So you missed the war?

**Sullivan:** Yeah, I did in the sense. The shooting was really well over. I graduated from high school in 45. That's right. So.

**Grant:** Did your dad work in the mines?

**Sullivan:** He had various jobs, most of the time. He probably did, but I don't remember that specifically. He did odd jobs of sorts for pay. Salaried jobs like pipefitting for the Montana Power Company. And mostly I remember him being a blackjack dealer, really. He worked in bars. But I didn't really see that. In my school days there in that St. Pat's area, my dad was a blackjack dealer uptown at the Board of Trade. Very prominent gambling hall, very active players. [Inaudible] he was a dealer. He was dealing cards. And it was OK, we didn't miss anything. We weren't starving at all. We didn't have a lot of extras either. We didn't have a family car until after I got out of high school. Hard to believe you could go without having a car in the family, but we didn't have one. We weren't unlike a lot of other people. A lot of good memories. You know, this is a good town to grow up in.

One of my best friends was Billy Barry. He was probably close to two years older than me, a year ahead of me in school. Somehow my parents got me started early and so I was always a year younger than my classmates. And Billy was a class ahead of me. His dad was a caretaker at St. Pat's church. And they lived in a house right behind the church. So I ran with Billy all the time. Turned out Billy was a boxer. He was a city boxing champ, so I wanted to get to know him. So he didn't beat me up. All I heard was who is tougher than the other guy. So we all handled that. I came out fine. Troy Evans was our boxing coach, a great guy. And we'd train up at the Knights of Columbus gym. They had a gym there and we'd train there. That was a big part of my life. I played other sports in school. Whatever we could do. We had Sisters of Charity. Very nice ladies. And they had their hands full. We had 50 on the average every year in grade school. We had 50 students. That was a big class for one gal to handle. I don't think they do that anymore. But that worked out fine for us.

I graduated from St. Pat's. So unlike most of my classmates, I went to Butte High. Central wasn't far away and a lot easier to go to Central. But for some reason, I wanted to go to Butte High. It was a bigger school and had better football teams and basketball teams. And so if you could go to Butte high and make the team and you could get a letter. I only lettered in basketball for a couple of years. But had a grand time. We traveled around the state. Went to a lot of towns that I've never been to before without having a car. We didn't travel any on our own.

**Grant:** Where would you have gone around the state then playing basketball?

**Sullivan:** Oh, to all the big cities. Central was a class A school. We were a class AA. So we were a step above. We were the highest level. Butte High. Helena. Bozeman. Great Falls. Missoula. Billings. Yeah, it kept us busy. We had one coach for all the sports. Swede Dahlberger. Butte High. He was an old timer. What a guy. He put up with a lot of bologna with all the kids he had. We all thought we were tough guys from St. Pat's. Because Billy Barry was from St. Pat's, see. We took his aura and wore it well. So we were uptown a lot. And during high school I got to start working at the Fox Theater. I made some money, I guess. I don't know how much. Not a lot. But it was nice to have some money in your pockets. And my dad probably didn't have any. No car. Hard to believe.

**Grant:** You could walk everywhere.

**Sullivan:** Well, we didn't go anywhere. That was the first thing. But we did walk a lot. I had a little girlfriend of mine that lived in an apartment [inaudible]. Pat Halman.

**Grant:** What became of her?

**Sullivan:** She went to Butte High too, but I hardly ever saw her. My buddies, being from St. Pat's, we all went to Butte High for some reason. And so I ran around with the guys. We didn't chase girls much in high school. We didn't catch many. That was our problem.

**Grant:** And your mother?

**Sullivan:** Well, she is a piece of work, or was. She was a musician. She played the drums. But, beyond that she was an organizer. She organized little groups of girl players into little bands. And then she'd go out and get a gig for them in mostly joints. And she was pretty well known. Her nickname became Jolly. Jolly Sullivan. Everybody knew Jolly. She was sort of a vivacious gal. Talked a lot. And wanted to be the center of attention and she was. And so everybody liked my mother. My mother dragged me along with her wherever she went. Only child. She was from a ranch in South Dakota and by the time she met Dad, she had a traveling band that went around the western states. Four, five or six gals and she got jobs and organized the traveling and all. So she came barnstorming through Butte with her girls' band. All girls band.

And my dad hooked up with her. [Inaudible] going on the road or going off the road to stay in Butte with him. So she kept me busy. She was a great horse lady. She rode in the Fourth of July parade. A big thing then. Horse riding. Of course, everybody had a horse. And this one year, early in grade school, she said, "Aren't you going to ride in the parade?" I said, "Why would I do

that?" "Because I want you to." "OK, what am I going to ride? We don't have any horses." "Well, I have to rent a horse." She used to rent a horse at a saddle club. There were a lot of saddle clubs south of town. And ride the horse and get dressed up in old style dresses. Ladies did then. She said, "You'll ride with me." I said, "How do we get the horses?" She forgot to tell me that. "Well, there's this saddle club down on front street. And I'll get you a ride down there and you can bring the horses back up to Mercury." I said, "You don't think I'll get lost?" So I got to trail the two horses. The [inaudible] and another one. We didn't know them. And so Mother had a big old English style gown. I don't know what she dressed me up as. Maybe a cowboy, whatever I had to do. She told me to do it. No question about that. All the craziest things went on in parades, but I don't remember most of them. Probably some good stories that I've forgotten completely.

**Grant:** There was no Harrison Avenue then, was there?

**Sullivan:** Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, there was Harrison Avenue, but . . .

**Grant:** The parade didn't go there.

**Sullivan:** No. We had an up top parade. We went down to Front Street, maybe. Or to Main and Montana. Like they are now.

**Grant:** Well, did your mother ever have a problem with your dad being a blackjack dealer? Did that bother her at all?

**Sullivan:** No.

**Grant:** Him being in gambling houses.

**Sullivan:** It was a way of life around here then. A lot of people worked at the gaming games. She was fine about it. She had a pretty open attitude about things. Traveling around the country. She got all the way back to New York. She got gigs for her five or six girl band on Broadway. Things were a little different then. They had a lot of little vaudeville shows. She sort of fit into that category. She loved it. She was the star of the show. She wanted bigger and better things. And I have some old pictures here, but it wouldn't be of interest to you. We have a picture somewhere of Mother's band.

**Grant:** I'd love to see it. Do you think she ever felt stifled staying in Butte?

**Sullivan:** Mother never felt that way ever. If nothing was going on, she'd make something happen. So she'd always be out late on the weekend nights. She'd be playing in a joint somewhere. We didn't think much about it. It was a job. It brought some money to the family. Dad didn't mind it. He was fine about it.

**Grant:** What was his name?

**Sullivan:** Pat. My middle name is Patrick. So he just went along with the flow. My dad did. A pretty nice guy. Are you taking pictures?

**Grant:** No.

**Sullivan:** Good. All we've got is a voice recorder.

**Grant:** That's it. What did they do later in life? Your parents.

**Sullivan:** Before I knew them. I'm sure like before grade school. Dad had run bars. Managed them. Then things went downhill somehow. And there weren't many jobs around. So he handled it, got some rent money or whatever. And mother did her thing. And we just struggled and survived. It wasn't easy then. But we didn't know enough about the tough days. We didn't realize it. I'm not a storyteller. I don't talk a lot.

**Grant:** OK, I appreciate you doing this. Your willingness. In high school, you played basketball primarily. Did you play other sports?

**Sullivan:** Not letter sports. I didn't play football. Baseball, I was in love with. We played baseball all summer long during the St. Pat's. Down at that baseball field west of the church, not four blocks. That's where we'd hang out all summer. We played a lot of baseball. By the time we got to high school I tried out for the Butte city team. The baseball league in the city. And I made the Miner's Union Team. That was a big thing.

**Grant:** Did you find the photo?

[Inaudible]

**Grant:** Oh my God, look at that. Wow.

**Sullivan:** That is my mother there. She promoted the whole thing. She told them where to go and how to do it, and she was the boss.

**Grant:** Can I take a picture of this picture?

**Sullivan:** Oh, sure.

**Grant:** That's a pretty incredible photograph.

**Sullivan:** She had two boys. They were brothers. I don't know what they did.

**Grant:** Is she in the center in this one too? Which one is she here?

[Looks at photographs.]

**Sullivan:** The big gal in front of her is Jonesie. [inaudible] They were all pretty gals. They were all sisters of some kind. So mother spent a lot of time on the road. NP Railroad down on Front Street and travel back east. Go to Billings and from there. When I was a sophomore in high

school, the war started, 42. She got the idea to get some military experience, training. So she sent me to a military academy in St. Paul, Minnesota.

**Grant:** Really?

**Sullivan:** I was pretty young when she took me down to Front Street and put on a train with a suitcase. Sent me back to St. Paul. I went back there for a year. Very great experience for me. And I failed learning anything about being in the military, but I was under control. They probably needed help with me.

**Grant:** I also went to a military academy, but it was in Missouri. I think it was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Yeah, I thought so. It wasn't easy but gave me discipline.

**Sullivan:** I didn't notice any problems with discipline. I don't think I was out of hand anywhere. But maybe I was and didn't know it.

**Grant:** Did you want to go to the war? Did you have any sense of . . .

**Sullivan:** I had a different feeling. I figured we'd have to go to war. We all planned on it. All the boys did. I didn't think much about it. You didn't see much here in Butte.

**Grant:** Could you tell me a bit more about your job at the theaters? What tasks did you have to perform?

**Sullivan:** Mainly, I was a ticket taker. If somebody tried to rush the gate, I'd have to stop them. Changing the marquee. Did that a couple times a week, maybe three times a week. It was pretty scary. One theater I was thinking about was the Broadway theater, north Montana Street, the first block north of Park Street. I don't think it is still there. I was trying to think of stories that I can tell, but I can't think of them.

**Grant:** Did you get to see a lot of movies?

**Sullivan:** Well, I could see the second movies. There's two shows at night. Early show at 7 o'clock and 9 o'clock. So I'd sit at the door, taking tickets and then watching the show at the other end. It was all fun and games. I liked it.

**Grant:** Sounds like you had a good childhood.

**Sullivan:** Well, I did. Looking back, I must have wanted a lot of things. I don't remember that. I had everything that I needed, that's how it seemed. If my parents could afford a car or anything else, we managed. It was the Depression days. Nobody had money. I can't think of any other stories related to that, I'm sure there's a lot.

**Grant:** After high school, did you continue your education?



**Sullivan:** When I got out of high school, I did well in grades. So my mother figured I should go to college somewhere. It didn't cost much to go, so Mother got the money. Sent me down to Bozeman. I went to Montana State for a year. Played basketball down there. For one year. That was 41, 42. My mother pulled me out of college. I can't recall what I did then. I was at Bozeman for engineering. I just stayed there for at least one year. That was about all.

[Silence]

**Sullivan:** I'll have to think about that. You're not helping much here.

**Kelli Sullivan:** I'm not supposed to talk or anything.

**Grant:** That's fine. If you like.

**Kelli Sullivan:** You went over to Missoula. You were in Engineering and you didn't care for that. And then you decided to go over to Missoula. And that's where you graduated.

**Sullivan:** Yeah, that's right, I didn't like engineering. Somehow, I got to Missoula and I don't know how I did that. Going to college from Butte is kind of tough. You either hitchhiked or you took the train if you had money. It would take you to Missoula or Bozeman. But I made great friends at both schools. Still friends. The ones that are left.

**Grant:** Did you switch your area of study?

**Sullivan:** I got out of engineering and went into business. That's what everybody got into if they didn't know what they wanted to do. Took business. Sounded important, but it really wasn't.

**Grant:** I bet those two cities, Missoula and Bozeman, are unrecognizable now compared to then. They must have been much smaller.

**Sullivan:** Oh, they were. We were the biggest city in the state. And we knew that and acted like that. I have problems getting my thoughts together about what I did. Let's see, senior year in high school, 45.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Weren't you in a fraternity over in Missoula?

**Sullivan:** Yeah, I joined the fraternity, they recruited me. Three story mansion, we lived close to downtown Bozeman. They had a big whole lot for a yard. Big, old mansion is what it was. And a great house compared to what I'd been living in. I was in luxury when I got into a fraternity. They served you meals all the time. It was quite an experience. And I had all that.

**Grant:** Did you drink much?

**Sullivan:** Not much. I drank a little, a little beer with the guys. Didn't have any money or I would have.

**Grant:** And would you come home to visit?

**Sullivan:** Not very often. There was a transportation problem.

**Grant:** No interstate probably at that time.

**Sullivan:** Oh, no interstate. There were these rinky dink roads. There were busses but they cost a few bucks. I didn't have any money to spend on travel. I didn't seem to be hurt in any way by not traveling as much as I wanted to. Sometimes I'd go with my buddies to their hometown. And looked around and found that enjoyable.

**Grant:** When you say that Butte was the biggest city and you acted like it, did you have some bravado or did it make you feel important to be from Butte? Did that matter when you were in Missoula?

**Sullivan:** Missoula and Bozeman. [Mumbles] Acting like 'Oh, he's from Butte?' And I could hear that being said. 'He must be OK,' or, 'He must be tough.' And so nobody pushed me around. That worked out great. And meanwhile, I met some great guys who I ran with in Bozeman and Missoula.

**Grant:** And how many of them are around nowadays?

**Sullivan:** None.

**Grant:** Must be tough.

**Sullivan:** Yeah, I've lost some really good friends. Especially the ones I went to grade school and Butte High with. That was tough losing them. But we had a different attitude back then following the war. There weren't a lot of jobs around. Along the way, I worked at the smelter in Anaconda, summer vacations in college. We got a job down there. One job I had was working at the tank house. They had big vats and you had to dip a sheet of metal and orient it and they'd run electricity through the water and it would energize the metal that was in the water to adhere to the metal plate. And we'd put it in and take it out. So while they were filling up, we'd take them out. Put them back in again after they were clean. An interesting job which I hadn't thought about forever.

**Grant:** Yeah, not much of a summer vacation.

**Sullivan:** We didn't have any vacation. Nowhere to go. There were no complaints. You just had to be there for summer vacation. We didn't think about where we could be or what we wanted to do. We were doing it. Having a good time.

**Grant:** Did you have other jobs at the smelter?

**Sullivan:** I probably did. I worked out there for three summers. Tough jobs. You had to have big, heavy clothes. Wear clothing that wouldn't burn up easy. It was no problem.

**Grant:** When did you come back to Butte to stay?

**Sullivan:** I graduated from Missoula.

**Kelli Sullivan:** When did you go into the Marines? Because you went into the Marines before you went to Georgetown, is that right?

**Sullivan:** Yeah, I went to join the service. They were still drafting. [Inaudible]. Fresh out of Bozeman. I joined the Marines. They shipped me over to China. I was in China for a year and a half. Mostly, I was an MP.

**Grant:** Really?

**Sullivan:** Yeah. In Tensing and Beijing. North China. That was OK.

**Barry Sullivan:** Were you on the rifle team?

**Sullivan:** I was on a big rifle team when I was over in China. I learned how to be a sharpshooter. They were looking for interesting people, I guess, to be sharpshooters. But it didn't last long. I was in the Marine Corps for about two years. I think that is when I went to Missoula. When I got out of the Marine Corps. I didn't like Bozeman. That was a hick town.

**Grant:** A hick town.

**Sullivan:** Cowboy town. As much as my mother wanted me to be a cowboy, I wasn't.

**Grant:** How would you describe China? I mean, do you have memories from there?

**Sullivan:** Very few. Used to take rickshaws around town and wild rides. The fellow who pulled the rickshaw didn't do anything wild. Sometimes you could. It was interesting. Everything was brand new.

**Grant:** Did you say something about Georgetown then?

**Kelli Sullivan:** Well, yes. Mark went to Georgetown University, and I don't know what year that was.

**Barry Sullivan:** That's where he went to law school.

**Kelli Sullivan:** And he worked as a security guard at the Capitol Building.

**Sullivan:** I was a Capitol policeman. For three years. I went to law school at Georgetown.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Because I think you told me that you'd work all night as a security guard and then not sleep and then go to school the next day.

**Sullivan:** I worked the graveyard shift as a Capitol policeman. Patrol duty and foot duty around the Capitol. The Capitol that I see pictures of all the time now, it hasn't changed much. But Georgetown University, which I didn't know when I got the job, I knew all the politicians and Mike Mansfield was one of them. And senator Jim Murray was the other and between the two of them, they got me the job as a Capitol policeman. That's how I put myself through law school. How do I do that? Well, you work your shifts and you go to school. What time are you talking about? Morning shift. You get off in the morning and you walk down the hill to Georgetown. It was about a mile away. So at 8 o'clock, change into my civies, walk down to Georgetown. I did that for three years. And it worked.

**Barry Sullivan:** Law school, wasn't on campus, was it?

**Grant:** It sounds like you had a lot of law enforcement experience between being an MP and then in the Capitol.

**Sullivan:** Yes, I did.

**Grant:** Did you enjoy that work?

**Sullivan:** Well, when I got out of law school, I was working in the county attorney's office here, deputy county attorney, and I was working with law enforcement right off the bat.

**Grant:** Look at that.

**Sullivan:** So after I was there for a while, I ran for the office.

**Grant:** Campaign poster. Wonder what year would this have been?

**Kelli Sullivan:** He was county attorney from 65 to 70. But, you know, there was a lot of illegal gambling going on then, and when Mark was running for a second term, do you remember the story about you shutting down all the gambling and Butte right when you were up for election. [coughing]

**Barry Sullivan:** Friends weren't too happy.

**Sullivan:** That's right. And I knew most of them.

**Kelli Sullivan:** So he won that election only by 41 votes.

**Grant:** Wow. OK.

**Sullivan:** It was not the popular stance.

**Grant:** Not in Butte.

**Kelli Sullivan:** So this is somewhere at that time.

**Grant:** This is an incredible poster. Wow.

**Barry Sullivan:** He'd have us go around and put them on all the telephone poles.

**Grant:** As children. Yeah, OK, I'm going to take pictures of these, if I may.

**Sullivan:** Help yourself to anything. OK.

**Kelli Sullivan:** He was on the cover of Life magazine when he was working as a Capitol Security guard.

**Sullivan:** I was handing a stretcher, taking a senator out of the chambers. He had collapsed.

**Grant:** Did you have much contact then with politicians at the capitol?

**Sullivan:** Not really with the hours I worked. But I got to know, the senator and the congressman, Mike Mansfield was from Butte. So was Murray. And so they were very prominent as politicians went in this state. My dad got in with them. I don't know how he did.

**Barry Sullivan:** Didn't your dad help Mansfield's campaign.

**Sullivan:** Yeah, he helped him a lot.

**Grant:** Was your dad a Democrat?

**Sullivan:** They've always been Democrats.

**Grant:** Even today?

**Sullivan:** Oh yeah. More so today.

**Grant:** And so what made you want to run for office?

**Sullivan:** For county attorney?

**Grant:** Yes.

**Sullivan:** Well, I was down the ladder for the type of work that was available. So I had to go up the hill and find better jobs. They had a district attorney. And then the job itself opened up and I just sort of had to wait my turn. It worked out.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Were you a county attorney when you were appointed to being a judge? You were appointed by which governor was that? Thomas Judge? Was he the one that appointed you for your first term as a judge?

**Sullivan:** I don't remember anything about that.

**Barry Sullivan:** He was a public defender. He was a county attorney.

**Grant:** Are there memorable cases?

**Sullivan:** I don't think about those things.

**Grant:** You don't? Why is that?

**Sullivan:** That's yesterday. I think about tomorrow. Yeah, one step at a time. One job at a time. It all worked out. Not that I really planned it that way, but things opened up and I applied.

**Grant:** Were your parents alive to see you be county attorney here in Butte?

**Sullivan:** Yeah, my mother was. Did you know my mother?

**Kelli Sullivan:** I met her a couple of times, yes, because his mother also had a reducing salon in Uptown Butte. It was way ahead of her time. She could do a little exercise classes and no one would come to pay to go to a reducing Salon. And the first time I met your mother, Pat, my husband, brought me up to meet his grandmother and she had a big, long chain kind of thing hanging from one of the doorways. And then there was like a contraption and she said, like, I put my head in it, it would like stretch it out or something and I didn't want to do it. So it looked scary. She had all this equipment. Remember how she had a reducing salon and women would pay to . . .

**Sullivan:** Oh yeah. Was that the one up on Main Street?

**Barry Sullivan:** Park and Excelsior.

**Kelli Sullivan:** That was the first time meeting her. I met her a couple of times after that.

**Sullivan:** So were you married to Pat then?

**Kelli Sullivan:** No, not when I first met her.

**Barry Sullivan:** His dad passed away when he was in law school.

**Sullivan:** My mother lived quite a while.

**Grant:** Maybe because she was so jolly, kept her young.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Well, you know, a funny story about Jolly is when Mark lost his wife, the mother of the four children. He was remarried and the lady really, really tidy. She was always cleaning,

always cleaning, always cleaning. And at that point, Jolly moved in with you and Charmaine. And I remember one day Jolly said, "Why is the cleaning lady sleeping in your room?"

**Sullivan:** Maybe I forgot that part. More than likely my mother forgot about that situation.

**Grant:** We haven't talked about your wife and your family. How did you meet her?

**Sullivan:** We went to high school together at Butte High.

**Grant:** And what was her name?

**Sullivan:** Beth Hover. She came from an athletic family. She was a speed skater, a good one. They did speed skating down there. They used to have speed skating teams and meets. I never did that, but Beth did. She was pretty good at it. Big strong girl. I've had congestion in my chest for months.

**Grant:** Did you guys get together in high school then?

**Sullivan:** No, I used a double date with my buddy. He took out Beth and I took out Beth's best friend, Lois who was the head majorette (that was a big thing) of the Butte high marching band. Head majorette was a big shot job. And I took her out. My buddy, Joe, he took out Beth, who was second in command of the marching band. And then Joe went into the Merchant Marine Corps and just left town. I never saw Lois again. I don't know what happened to Lois. She was going back to some fancy violin school back in Cleveland, about the time that I went to the Marine Corps. Beth stayed and she ended up working for a congressman also. She worked over in Helena for him.

**Barry Sullivan:** When did you date mom?

**Sullivan:** About that same time. When I got back from the Marine Corps, probably.

**Grant:** Did she ever hold it against you that you used to date her friend?

**Sullivan:** No.

**Grant:** OK.

**Sullivan:** We were all friends.

**Grant:** That's good.

**Sullivan:** We didn't go double dating. Lois left town. I didn't see anymore of Lois.

**Grant:** I think there's a conservatory in Cleveland.

**Sullivan:** The Cleveland Conservatory of Music. That's where you went? Yeah.

**Grant:** I'm curious too, having heard now that you were also a judge. That was in Butte, were you a district judge here?

**Sullivan:** Yeah, I was a district judge. I was appointed. I can't recall who appointed me. The governor appointed me.

**Barry Sullivan:** Tom Judge. Governor Tom Judge.

**Sullivan:** And I, of course, ran for the office as soon as it opened up. I think I ran twice, successfully. That was enough.

**Grant:** That was enough. What's it like to be a judge?

**Sullivan:** You're the boss. You got the last word. I like having the last word. And you help people. Helped a lot of people. I thought I could straighten them out, but I tried. Pretty interesting.

**Grant:** Was it difficult to hand out sentences?

**Sullivan:** Oh, I've been in the system as an assistant county attorney. I probably did that for six or eight years. Before I became county attorney and did more of the same. So I was used to it. I was immersed into the system of sentencing people. It wasn't fun, but you had a position where you can do some good, I thought, to help people out. Most people need some help that are in trouble. So it all turned out fine. I put in 12 years' experience in the county attorney's office. And the judgeship opened up and I ran for it. It just broke right for me. I took advantage. I pushed a little. And then I got to be elected, I knew where I was going to be for a while. And that's about the time that Beth came to work for me. She ended up back in Washington with me. I helped her get a job with Senator Murray on Capitol hill. Put her to work for a senator, more prestige. And so she had a good paying job. I was a capital policeman, I guess. Things just developed. We became a little more independent, and so we got married. We were old enough to want our own stuff.

**Grant:** Did you run your household like a judge?

**Sullivan:** You'd have to ask my kids. He didn't listen to me.

**Barry Sullivan:** He was pretty involved. He coached baseball.

**Sullivan:** And basketball.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Well, right, because you were the little league manager for Barry's team. Won state which hasn't been done since that year. What year would that have been?

**Barry Sullivan:** 1972.

**Kelli Sullivan:** And then you took the trip to California.



**Barry Sullivan:** For the Little League World Series. Do you remember we went to San Bernardino for the Little League All Star and World Series?

**Sullivan:** Little shaky. How long did we stay down there?

**Barry Sullivan:** Remember, they almost kicked us out of camp because you had us on the beach all the time? We were down there to have fun.

**Sullivan:** So was I.

**Barry Sullivan:** You were keeping track of everybody's head in the water.

**Sullivan:** Everybody had a good time, right?

**Barry Sullivan:** Yeah.

**Sullivan:** And we played a lot of baseball. There were good players. He was the star pitcher. I pitched a little bit. He was two years ahead of Barry in the program.

**Grant:** Are all four of the kids still in Butte?

**Sullivan:** No. His brother is an attorney. And his sister is married to a basketball referee. And she's still here.

**Barry Sullivan:** Where's Sandy?

**Sullivan:** And Sandy is my daughter. She's in Denver. She's doing well down there. Don't get to see her as much as we'd like. She's got a couple of kids.

**Kelli Sullivan:** So three of Mark's kids went to college on athletic scholarships. Barry, the football at MSU. Pat played football at U of M. And Sandy in gymnastics at the U of M when they had women's gymnastics there. But do you recall the story when MSU was playing UM? So Pat was two years older than Barry. Pat was playing receiver for U of M. Barry was playing quarterback for MSU. And do you remember, you got interviewed on the article and they were asking you which team you were rooting for? He said the offense.

**Grant:** Oh, that's great.

**Sullivan:** I stayed out of trouble with that one.

**Barry Sullivan:** And Michelle had an academic scholarship.

**Sullivan:** For a couple of years, Barry and Pat were opposing quarterbacks. Pretty nice.

**Grant:** That is. You must be proud. Going back to your legal career, I'm curious if you ever had any involvement with the Anaconda Company, any cases with them or contact with them?

**Sullivan:** Nothing that sticks in my mind that would be worthy of discussion. Now, I was mostly on the criminal end. The county attorney work. Probably anything with the Anaconda Company I wouldn't handle. I had enough on my plate. It all went along well. You'd think that we had some big cases, but we didn't. They've had a lot of cases now and since and before. They are all interesting, but not if you don't know the background of the stories.

**Grant:** Do you think there's some underlying cause to criminality? What usually motivates people?

**Sullivan:** To be criminals? Hunger, mostly. Everybody has problems. They have to work it out and hopefully they don't get in trouble [unintelligible]. Some prosecutors are quick to jump in and punish little people [unintelligible]. And I didn't look at it that way. I liked what I did. I got to help people and solve problems.

**Grant:** I wonder if you could speak to the changes you've seen in Butte over the decades, do you think it's headed in a good direction?

**Sullivan:** It's downhill. It's been going downhill for quite a while. It's not the town it used to be, obviously. Well, a lot of people worked in the Anaconda Smelter that lived in Butte. We had a railroad that went back and forth between the mines and the smelter, that's no longer running. Butte, Anaconda and Pacific, BNP. Uh, that's a big question. Big subject. Well, the mines, of course, underground operations shut down. That's where all the money was paid. The miners got paid the best that worked underground. We don't have that factor anymore.

**Barry Sullivan:** Did you ever work in the smelter?

**Sullivan:** I worked in the smelter.

**Barry Sullivan:** In the summer, or what?

**Sullivan:** In college, in the summer. Summer vacation . . . you could usually find a job in Butte, if you wanted one. And I always got a good paying job at the smelter and took the bus over to Anaconda. Worked out fine.

**Grant:** Never went underground.

**Sullivan:** No. Never been in a cage. Not that I wanted to. Little creaky.

**Grant:** I guess I should ask, have you ever been to jail?

**Sullivan:** Put in jail?

**Grant:** Yeah, even for a night?

**Sullivan:** No.

**Grant:** Never?

**Sullivan:** Not that I can recall. Right now, I have to say.

**Grant:** You worked on the other side of it, you know.

**Sullivan:** Yeah, I know. Put people in. But I didn't get in. Well, that helps being county attorney.

**Grant:** And, you know, one obvious change uptown is so many buildings are missing, burned or otherwise demolished. Did your office prosecute many arsons?

**Sullivan:** Arsons? No. Very little arson. Nobody was arrested for it.

**Grant:** Who did it?

**Sullivan:** All the buildings didn't all burn down at the same time. Most of the buildings closed up because there was no work. Nobody to occupy the offices. I don't think there was any conspiracy to burn anything down as such.

**Grant:** A lot of people we've spoken to have talked about what they call the arson squad at the Anaconda Company.

**Sullivan:** Never heard that. The county attorney is the last one to know in some cases.

**Grant:** That's true.

**Sullivan:** No, there was nothing organized like that. I would have known. A lot of talk. People talk a lot.

**Grant:** Do you have memories of the fires?

**Sullivan:** No. We didn't have a lot of fires. Somebody told you we did?

**Grant:** Well, I just mean like the Sears building and the medical arts building and those big ones.

**Sullivan:** It only happened occasionally. No connection that I knew of. Or heard about.

**Grant:** Do you think Butte decline is over?

**Sullivan:** No. I wish I could say yes, but there's nothing to show that it is over. We don't have any new employer that would hire people. I got a grandson. And he went to Tech, from Butte High, and played football there. And then he graduated, and when he did, he got hired to work for MRI, Montana Resources, which is taking the place of a lot of the Anaconda Company as far as mining and stuff goes. And we got a lot of people working. We don't hear much about what's

the actual fact of the matter, but we know there's a lot of people doing MRI work. And actually, Noel, that's his name. We'll see how things work out there, but that's the one bright spot that I see here in Butte right, that's MRI. Otherwise, there's a lot of empty buildings that you could rent. I was always looking for an office when I was in practice for myself, quite a while. You had to find an office. I just needed one. And there's all kinds of offices. Even more so now.

**Grant:** This house that we're in now. When did you move here?

**Sullivan:** Some 50 years ago.

**Barry Sullivan:** 1965.

**Sullivan:** How many years is that?

**Grant:** Over 50, right? Yeah.

**Sullivan:** Yeah. Nice house. I got it a lot cheaper than what they wanted to pay when they buy this house. Prices are really down for real estate. I was renting, and my brother in law, Beth's brother lived two doors down the street. He was a coach and teacher at Butte High. Athlete.

**Grant:** Is he gone now?

**Sullivan:** Yeah. He was about two years ahead of me in high school. Most people are gone. I hardly have any contemporaries. Nobody is going to be around to hold the casket. That's something you have to think about in Butte if you want to put on a show.

**Grant:** I appreciate your time. I just have a couple more questions. I'm curious about your time at St. Pat's. Did you like church? Did you go to church every week?

**Sullivan:** There was no question. You had to.

**Grant:** You had to.

**Sullivan:** Yeah. I just fit right in. We all did. We liked it. They weren't strict disciplinarians. Nobody was getting their knuckles cracked or anything. This is where the sisters were pretty savvy people. I don't know how they found them, but some were, but almost all of them were quite capable of teaching a class of 50 kids and they all had something to say. I had a good experience. Best school that I could have gone to - St. Pat's and Butte High, both Montana and Montana U, Georgetown. I have had a grand time bouncing around schools.

**Grant:** And what do you hope for, for Butte, especially your family and all the great grandkids? What do you hope for, for them?

**Sullivan:** Well, that all depends on the future of Butte. If Butte could get some more action in here with employers that would hire some more people, that would help a lot. Well, I don't see that on the horizon right now. Maybe somebody else does. I sure hope they do. Takes a long time

to plan to get an operation going in a different city. Who knows? Meanwhile, the kids are kind of stuck here. They like it here. They know everybody that is worth knowing.

**Grant:** Do you think it's things like the Berkeley Pit that hold Butte back? Is it the environmental damage? Is that what's keeping Butte from growing like Bozeman and Missoula are?

**Sullivan:** We grew up in Butte. We had to have the pit for jobs. They didn't realize that open surface mining, not underground mining would be the source of a lot of jobs, the source of a lot of copper. They claim it's a lot cheaper. I can't believe what they've done with the pit over here. I know that started quite a while ago. 40, 50 years ago maybe. And it's been a wonderful concept for Butte for jobs. It still is with Montana Resources. I wonder if Mark knows how many people are working at MRI.

**Grant:** Close to 300 is what I hear.

**Barry Sullivan:** Yeah, it's over 300.

**Sullivan:** Oh. That's not a lot of jobs. But 300 jobs are nice.

**Grant:** Well, and it's profit sharing, so I hear it pays well.

**Sullivan:** I don't know how that's working at all.

**Grant:** Yeah, well, Dennis Washington, though, I think he famously said we're not anti-union, we're union free.

**Sullivan:** Union free. Yeah. Sometimes you need unions to keep companies squared away. We were always anti-company. Unions. [unintelligible]. Some jobs. Union jobs. But it was all necessary, looking back. Apparently, we still got some underground ore that can be developed for many years. So that shouldn't hurt my family. Should be a help for those that are related to the Anaconda Company. It all works together. You get your brother Sam working for the Anaconda Company, you might have a nonaffiliated job that really needs the action that they get from working with the Anaconda Company, with mining. You don't see Anaconda anymore. I don't even know if there is an Anaconda Company.

**Grant:** They were bought out by Arco, which is now bought out by British Petroleum. So BP owns a lot of land here now.

**Sullivan:** British Petroleum does. Have you heard that Barry?

**Barry Sullivan:** Yeah.

**Sullivan:** Well, that doesn't sound exciting for Butte.

**Grant:** No.

**Sullivan:** British Petroleum. You know we don't like the English.

**Grant:** Being Irish you mean?

**Sullivan:** Yes.

**Barry Sullivan:** Mom was half-English, Dad.

**Sullivan:** We don't consider that.

**Grant:** That's not admissible. Were there other notes there that you wanted to cover?

**Barry Sullivan:** You played a lot of handball.

**Sullivan:** Well, that was a big sport. Hardly anybody plays anymore.

**Grant:** I don't know where you would play. I think the ELKs has one.

**Sullivan:** That's where we'd play it.

**Grant:** OK.

**Sullivan:** The Y. The Y has courts. At lunchtime is when we played. Yeah, a lot of years playing handball.

**Grant:** I've never played. I should try it, huh?

**Sullivan:** I don't know if I could even get into it now. Think anybody is playing handball in Butte?

**Barry Sullivan:** Yeah, they still play. Too hard on my shoulders.

**Sullivan:** Usually the best handball players came from Butte at state tournaments. It is a tough game.

**Barry Sullivan:** He had an accident playing ball. Nobody at the time was wearing goggles. Not too many people were. He got hit in the eye. He lost sight in his left eye. After that everybody started wearing eyewear.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Yeah, Grandpa Mark wore a black patch for a while. How intimidating would that be when you go up before the judge.

**Grant:** That would be quite a sight.

**Sullivan:** Well, it wasn't as tough as it sounds now.

**Grant:** Was there anything else there that you had?

**Kelli Sullivan:** But, you know, when you were talking about when your mother wanted you to ride in the parade. So what I remember about that story is Grandma Jol had won best-dressed like every year of the parade, and then she had Mark going to the parade and he won it that year. And she didn't want him to be in the parade after that.

**Sullivan:** I got fired. She had me wear a black derby hat and a cream corduroy sport coat and an ascot scarf. So I looked like an English rider. And I had long boots. I thought it looked pretty good.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Well, you beat her out for first prize, so that's pretty good.

**Sullivan:** That was my only shot at it. If there's competition, my mother is on it. You'd have to appreciate knowing her. She was a charger-outer.

**Barry Sullivan:** She also hunted.

**Sullivan:** Big game hunter.

**Barry Sullivan:** Taught Dad how to hunt.

**Sullivan:** She did a lot of it. I did a little of it.

**Grant:** She sounds like an intrepid woman.

**Sullivan:** Yeah, she was a charger-outer.

**Grant:** I'm so glad you have these pictures too.

**Sullivan:** Well, not enough, but . . . I didn't even know you had the campaign [posters]. That was a big thing and those were all over town. Because I bought a lot of them, along the way.

**Grant:** But it sounds like you barely won, huh? After cracking down on gambling.

**Sullivan:** She remembers that. I don't.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Well, Pat remembered it. I wasn't around then.

**Sullivan:** It was pretty close.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Pretty gutsy call to break down on the gambling right before you're up for reelection.

**Sullivan:** The newspaper was putting heat on me. The idea that I was going to be tough on gambling. Of course, I didn't arrest people. County attorneys don't do that. The sheriff's office does that. The police department. We didn't have people that prosecuted. You weren't in jail. So the fault lay with the arresting officers not doing maybe as much of a job as they can do. But they [unintelligible]. Probably four tables, 21 tables at the Board of Trade. At the time that I was in high school, and that was against the law. But anybody could walk in there and see the gambling.

**Grant:** It was against the law.

**Sullivan:** Oh, yeah. Card games for money. Sure. But it survived. We grew up with card games. Part of our heritage, certainly part of mine. Yeah, it's amazing how that progressed to the point it is now. I don't think there's any 21 tables in town. Barry, have you seen any?

**Barry Sullivan:** A lot of machines.

**Sullivan:** Oh, yeah, machines don't have unions.

**Grant:** Yeah, the machines. Town Pump.

**Sullivan:** [unintelligible]. He went to St. Pat's. Another St. Pat's boy. His young brother is a good friend of mine.

**Grant:** Hmm. That's a big family. I guess I've met people that were running card games all the way up through the 80s in Butte, you know. But never in the open, really.

**Barry Sullivan:** Well, some of the card games are legal, like Texas Hold'em. Most of the illegal games, I think, people play them on electricity. I don't know of any organized illegal games.

**Kelli Sullivan:** You know, one thing you didn't talk about, Mark, you knew Evel Knievel pretty well.

**Sullivan:** Yeah, I don't know if I ever threw him in jail or not.

**Kelli Sullivan:** I remember once when we moved here. We were just really young and all of a sudden Evel Knievel was at our house. And I was like, am I seeing Evel Knievel at our house? But he came over with you to our house on Albany Street.

**Barry Sullivan:** He was a character.

**Grant:** Did you have much exposure to him?

**Barry Sullivan:** Well, his kids are . . . like his oldest is my age, Kelly, he went to Butte Central. Robbie is two years younger. He went to Butte High, I think. Yes, I knew those guys pretty well. He was a good guy until he started drinking.



**Grant:** Right. Yeah.

**Barry Sullivan:** He wanted to be the focus wherever he was. Pretty flamboyant. He liked to golf. So they used to golf together.

**Grant:** We did an interview with Joe Little and Jim Dick. And those guys talked all about Evel.

**Barry Sullivan:** Well, yeah, they're part of this road show.

**Kelli Sullivan:** And Jim was his bodyguard. Jim Dick was Evel's bodyguard for a while.

**Grant:** And he was the one running card games for all that time.

**Barry Sullivan:** Yeah, he ran it out at the Copper King. That was one spot. But, yeah, Jim and Joe, they helped Robbie set up his. I went to one of their deals in Spokane. Those guys would set up a ramp. That was interesting.

**Grant:** Was there anything else you'd like to add?

**Sullivan:** I'll probably think of things just as you go out the door.

**Grant:** I can always come back.

**Sullivan:** No. I can't. I don't think that way.

**Grant:** I appreciate your time today.

**Sullivan:** Well, I don't know what I'm helping out here, but I hope it is worthwhile.

**Grant:** It is. You'll never know the effect of having these recordings. It is kind of impossible to know.

**Sullivan:** Yes, I see that.

**Grant:** I think it's a good thing to do.

**Sullivan:** Well, I've had a grand time growing up here in Butte, spending my lifetime here. So I wouldn't trade that for anything. A lot of fun. A lot of challenges and it's all worked out. I got a nice family. I've known a lot of friends, hardly any left. That hurts. I'm just growing out of my . . . my doctor told me the other day. I said, "Just what are you treating for? What's your prognosis?" He said, "Mark, I can tell you real quickly, you've lived too long." And then he busted out laughing. He thought that was the funniest thing he'd ever said. And after a while I started thinking it was funny too.

**Kelli Sullivan:** I think he said you've outlived your skin. The dermatologist.

**Sullivan:** Yeah, I've got skin cancer. And it's a real nuisance. Nothing they can't handle. It's not life threatening. Well, it's getting close to that. I break out in scabs all over and they don't heal up. But survivable. OK. Well, I wish I could add something I didn't tell you much or say much. But you can analyze that.

**Grant:** You talked for nearly two hours.

**Sullivan:** You didn't talk enough.

**Grant:** It's my job to listen. I would like to take some pictures of these. I'll include this. And I'll mail you a transcript as soon as we get it transcribed. It takes time to transcribe it, so. But I'll send that over. Should I just mail it to this address? OK, I'll do that.

**Sullivan:** I don't have an office anymore.

[01:41:01]

[Looking at photos.]

**Sullivan:** I had a big black and white convertible Mercury.

**Grant:** Wow, that thing is nice.

**Sullivan:** Oh, beautiful. Red and white leather interior.

**Kelli Sullivan:** One of Barry and Pat's friends said when we grew up, we were all riding around in our parents' station wagons. But your dad always had a convertible.

**Grant:** Rode in style. I'll include these with the audio files. And this collection will be available online, too, eventually.

**Kelli Sullivan:** This is kind of a neat one. Her band and you can see it says that it's in New Orleans. And I think maybe one of the sisters has all the sheet music because we can't find that with her band on the front, but there's her band on the beach. And here's one of Jolly, this Bing Crosby show. So that was kind of cool.

**Grant:** "To Jolly"

[01:43:00]

[Looking at photos.]

**Barry Sullivan:** There's Frank Sinatra.

**Grant:** That is a great photo there.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Isn't that neat. It has the name of the band on the drums.

**Grant:** I'd love to be in the bar where they were playing.

**Kelli Sullivan:** I think she was pretty spunky.

**Grant:** This is probably my favorite.

**Kelli Sullivan:** It reminds me of the Irish dancers, because they all wear their little same curly wigs. You know, today they do.

**Grant:** The Tiernan.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Yeah, I think it is.

**Grant:** Different time.

**Kelli Sullivan:** Would that have been in the 20s that your mom was traveling around in the band? when she was when she was traveling around in the all women's band.

**Sullivan:** I don't know how long they went down for, but yes. Well, I appeared in 28. That's when I was born. So that was the end of the trail for her traveling. So she probably traveled ten years. But those days, I don't have anything to reflect.

**Barry Sullivan:** They probably got to Butte and decided there was enough action going on here that they could keep busy.

**Sullivan:** Oh, yeah, I imagine this was a wide open town that we're in. All kinds of requests for talent. Vaudeville time. And I think that's what they would have categorized my mother's music as vaudeville. Yeah. You know, those two guys, the Cabin [?] brothers, they had to be dancers or singers or both.

**Grant:** Yeah, people were talented.

**Sullivan:** I was too young to grasp it all. I didn't understand most of it, but all the fun and games. Well, you had to sit here and listen to me drone on here.

**Kelli Sullivan:** You didn't tell him your juiciest stories, but that's all right.

**Sullivan:** I don't remember them. What do you think I left out?

**Kelli Sullivan:** Oh, just various things. But that's alright. I think you did a really good job. Maybe some things you don't want the whole world to know.

**Sullivan:** I don't regret anything. And along the way, I've done some good. I helped some people. Plus I supported a family.

**Kelli Sullivan:** You sure did.

[END OF RECORDING]