



# VERDIGRIS PROJECT

**KBMF & BUTTE-SILVER BOW ARCHIVES**

**TINO GROSSO**

**The Verdigris Project**

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## Oral History Transcript of Tino Grosso

*Interviewers: Aubrey Jaap & Clark Grant*

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*Transcribed: March 2022 by Clark Grant*

**Tino Grosso:** Ok let's see, I guess we'll start at the beginning. All four of my grandparents were born in northern Italy.

**Aubrey Jaap:** Ok.

**Grosso:** So they all came over. Grandpa Grosso initially - mid 1880s, exact date I'm not sure - we tried to look in the Archives here and couldn't get the exact time that he got here. But 1884-85, somewhere in there. And he sent for his wife. His side of the family - he and his wife had - one in Italy lived. So when he got over here, they had seven more and six of them lived. So those six lived in the family home in Meaderville.

**Jaap:** Did the other kids from Italy come over though?

**Grosso:** No, no. None of them ever made it. So let's see. He came over - he was originally in business with his brother in law. His sister came over a little later. She married D.G. Bertoglio, who had Bertoglio Distributing. Yeah, he was a brother in law. And the two of them actually opened the Meaderville Mercantile. And they were in business together until he and his wife Mary were divorced. And so she moved in with grandpa and grandma, and they opened the AC Grosso Mercantile. So that would have been late 1880s - the exact dates I'm not sure because it was a little prior to my time. [laughter]

Yeah so from there, they had, like I said, six children. All the kids actually basically worked in the grocery store. My uncle Johnny was the oldest and he came down with multiple sclerosis, so. Everybody just lived at home until the oldest daughter Frances - she married Leon Butori. And Leon and my uncle Steve, who was another one of the six siblings, they owned the Arrow Cafe with Fonz Marta originally, and then that was a brief period of time that he was in there and they bought him out. Let's see, my Aunt Marge went over later and started running the kitchen. And Auntie Milley stayed home and took care of all the family. When grandpa died, she took care of her mother, and Johnny that had, you know, MS.

And then my dad was the baby. So he sold Metropolitan Life Insurance for quite a while after he married my mom. And they lived in McQueen. They bought a home up there. Let's see. Where do we go from there?

That's kind of a quick history on them. We can come back to other stuff later. Well, basically, my dad - this store and saloon that was AC Grosso Mercantile - that closed as everybody got older. And my dad, after leaving Metropolitan Life Insurance, decided to open the Pioneer Lounge there. So that was built and they operated it for several years. Uncle Leon passed away from lung cancer. I was probably five, so that was about 1955-56, somewhere in there.

[00:03:17]

And then when my Uncle Steve died, my dad left the Pioneer and went over to the Arrow and he and my Auntie Marge ran it until 1965, I guess. They were the last business in Meaderville and my two aunts were the last two people living in Meaderville, while the Company bought them out but their home was being built, that they built down on Hannibal Street, that I bought from them. That's kind of where I'm living right now actually. So that was in '65 and that was the end of the Meaderville era.

[00:03:50]

Grandpa Ferando came over - let's see, Grandpa Grosso was born in (just little noteworthy stuff here) - he was born in 1863 and Grandpa Grosso born in 1865. So the Ferandos, Edward [inaudible] was his nickname. He came over - I'm not sure exactly - probably early 1890s, somewhere in there. And I never realized it until a few years ago [but] he actually worked in the mines. I never thought anybody in the family ever worked in the mines and as it turns out, he did originally.

**Jaap:** Ok.

**Grosso:** He was an interesting guy, kind of an entrepreneur. They actually didn't live in Meaderville, but they lived in McQueen. His brother was there - well, let me actually get back to a quick Grosso thing. When my grandfather first came over, he had a brother Steve that came over prior to him, so it was probably early 1880s. And he had a saloon on Leatherwood Street, which was actually one of the main streets coming down from McQueen, but it did go into Meaderville briefly. We never had the address exactly, but as far as I know, the saloon as kind of in between Meaderville and McQueen there.

[00:05:03]

Anyway, probably late 1880s, he was robbed. My aunts used to call them highwaymen, but anyway, some guys came in on horseback, robbed him, and shot and killed him. So yeah, so I'm not sure grandpa had anything to do with that bar at all, but he opened the grocery store with D.G. Bertoglio at that time. So anyway, just a little footnote on that stuff, interesting stuff.

So anyway, Grandpa Ferando came over and he started working in the mines. [He] sent for his wife and she came over. They had four children. My mom was the youngest. And then - he had a brother that was here prior to him as well, Frank Ferando. And he worked the mines and then he started building buildings - he was actually one of the first people to start doing, building things in McQueen. They built homes that they would live in, start on the next project. They had a grocery store that was up there that - they didn't operate it as a grocery store. The building - I think they lived in it originally and then they sold it. It was Robert's Grocery Store in McQueen. Just - he did that. He stopped working in the mines.

[00:06:28]

He came from Italy with just - both the families, the Ferandos and the Grossos were all of course - they made wine and salamis and things. And they all took it a little further than that during Prohibition. The Grosso brothers were running whiskey down from Canada during Prohibition. During that same era, my grandpa Ferando didn't ever just do - you know, make wine for himself. He did - he actually learned how to make liqueurs. So he brandys and creme de menthe, all these different things, all these fancy liqueurs.

**Jaap:** Oh really?

**Grosso:** Yeah. I can't think of who they - there was a cowboy movie start - oh shit I can't think of his name right now. Actually my mom said she came home from school one day and these guys, one of the local judges here - were in the front room visiting grandpa and they went downstairs and sampled whiskey and different things. Oh shoot, I can't remember what the heck his name was. I'll have to ask my brother. He would remember. Anyway, someone whose name you would definitely recall. Just slips to me right now.

[00:07:38]

He did that. Their oldest son - Aldo was the oldest son and then Lino and Melo, and then my mother was Eida. She was the baby girl. Uncle Al was the only one who went to college. He graduated Stanford as a paleontologist and then he went to work for Standard Oil. And he was actually Assistant Vice President of Standard Oil at one time. They lived in San Antonio, Texas for quite a while. We used to go down there when I was a kid. It was the first time that I'd ever actually been in anybody's private swimming pool. I was probably four. They had one in the backyard. They had a black maid that wore the black outfit with the white -

**Jaap:** Oh that must have been so different.

**Grosso:** Yeah, so it was interesting, the little things you remember from when you're that young.

**Jaap:** Yeah.

**Grosso:** And then he left there and went to work - they opened actually, he and a couple of partners - he moved to La Hoya, California and they opened up their own oil business there and he did that for - well, until he retired and passed away in the mid 60s. So he was interesting. The other two brothers didn't go to school. They worked and lived here and then the whole family actually, the Ferandos, moved from Butte to San Leandro, California. My mom was - she graduated the 8th grade here and then they went down when she was in high school. So, she was born in [19]15, so, probably 1931 or so and they retired. They all lived down there. The other two brothers lived at home with everybody and they worked in the shipyards in San Francisco. And my mom - I'm not sure exactly how she met my dad, but they ended up coming back up here and raised their family in McQueen.

[00:09:33]

Yeah, so that kind of broadly covers everything. There's lots of little side stories here and there besides, but I'm not sure exactly what - if you have any specific questions.

**Jaap:** Oh gosh, there's so much history in this family!

**Grosso:** [laughs] There really is. It's too bad Ronnie's not here, Petritz. You know Ron?

**Jaap:** Yeah, he's back in town now. He just came in yesterday.

**Grosso:** You know, I was thinking about it this morning. Well, I grew up with him. He was, I think, two years younger than me, or three years. Just a block away from me in McQueen. And he was working on this, you know, the book on McQueen there. And we have a mutual friend Paul Cote, who's a good buddy of mine and his. So I kept asking Paul all summer, where's Yankich? [laughter] We haven't seen him. He always comes up at the beginning of the summer. So I assumed he was just passing this year because he got [up to Butte] so late. I was thinking about him this morning actually.

**Jaap:** Yeah, yesterday he walked in actually. And I said, 'Is that Ron!'

**Grosso:** That sounds like a familiar voice. Huh, interesting. I'll have to - so he's really good. This guy's got a great memory. I mean, he had a paper route in McQueen, so he remembered where everybody lived on each one of the streets - way sharper trap of a mind that I have. I don't know how people do that.

[00:10:47]

Yeah so actually a lot of the dates and things, and family things and business things, etc - he has it down pat, a lot more so than I do.

**Jaap:** Yeah, I was actually asking him yesterday if he'd do one of these and he kind of fluttered around the question, so. You'll have to - if you see him, you'll have to give him a nudge before he goes again.

**Grosso:** Yeah, did you talk to him? Is it a short visit or is he here through the holidays?

**Jaap:** Um, he's here for a month. He's gonna leave at Christmas and be back in March or so, I think he said.

**Grosso:** Oh, well I'll have to catch him while he's here. Yeah I think he's probably still - he stays with his brother, over on Continental, only a couple blocks away from me. I'll have to touch base with him. He's quite a guy, nice guy. All their family - they were real close friends of the family growing up.

**Jaap:** So, your family - they were the last to leave Meaderville.

**Grosso:** Yes, my two aunts were.

**Jaap:** And did you grow up in Meaderville?

**Grosso:** No, I grew up in McQueen.

**Jaap:** Grew up in McQueen.

**Grosso:** I spent a lot of time down there though. I spent a whole bunch of time before I started grade school with my aunts. They were the only two left living in the home when I was - let's see. Uncle Johnny died when I was two months old, or three months old. I was born in December of '51 and he died in February of '52. So I never did know him. But that left just my two aunts in the family home, so they were there. Neither of them ever married.

[00:12:20]

So prior to me starting grade school and spending all of my time at home, or most of it anyway, I spent a lot of time in Meaderville with them in the family home.

**Jaap:** Yeah, did you help around in the restaurant?

**Grosso:** No, never did. Like I said, it closed in '65 so I was 13-14 when it closed.

**Jaap:** Spent a lot of time there though, did you?

**Grosso:** Oh yeah, absolutely. We all did.

**Jaap:** Do you have any fond memories that you were -

**Grosso:** Just always dropping in to see Auntie Marg in the kitchen, mainly. That sticks in the back of my head a lot. Always something to eat. They had great - they were famous for fried chicken and steaks that were unbelievable. And they had a lobster dinner, which was the most expensive thing, biggest lobsters. I remember these things from when I was a little kid. They were about as big as I was. I think they were \$5.50, if I recall, for the lobsters.

**Jaap:** The most expensive thing.

**Grosso:** Yeah. Spaghetti and raviolis of course. Yeah, fried cordonis was part of their fare also, which was similar to celery. It's an Italian celery that they would batter and deep fry, and they were really good. I remember those from way back when.

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But yeah, we did everything there. Right across the alley was my Auntie Fran's house where she and Leon worked or lived. So we'd spend lots of time just riding the neighborhood in Meaderville around Main Street, just amongst the businesses and the houses and everything,

visiting everybody all the time. One big family, you know. I remember fireworks out the back of the arrow there when I was little, all roman candles.

**Jaap:** For the 4th of July?

**Grosso:** Yeah, the fourth. All the things that are not legal now that definitely were then! [laughter] So that was interesting, just had a lot of fun growing up. They always visited people. Everybody knew everybody. And the Italian connection of course. My dad - he had a real outgoing personality, woke up every morning whistling, and just knew everybody in town - just through his personality, but also with Metropolitan Life Insurance, you know, and then family friends and relatives. Friends of, you know, over generations. We would visit constantly. If they weren't working, we'd be visiting somebody. He had good friends in all the ranches in Elk Park and the big dairies up there. You know, we'd go see Skalibreens and Franconis were real close friends of the family. We'd go visit them all the time.

Vern Madock and Helen - he was assistant chief of police in that era - he was my dad's best friend. They were inseparable. They were together every day of their lives. We would go visit them. Ted Beech, that was the manager of the Columbia Gardens, they were real close friends. They were a pair of live wires, really funny people, great personalities. We'd go visit them - the Bartolettis were really close friends of the family. Louis and Katie were the grandmother and grandfather of all the kids now that are, you know, Eddie and Mike and everybody. Their son Ed was a dentist also, he and Patsy. So it's the children that are all here now, and now it's grandchildren also.

We'd always go down there. They lived forever at - Jesus, as long as I can remember - right by the airport there. So Eddy's house was the bi white one and Lewie's and Katie's I don't think is there anymore. They probably tore that down.

**Jaap:** The white house that's still there?

**Grosso:** The white house that's still there. She just passed away last year and I don't think that Patsy ever went to a rest home. I think the kids just, you know, took care of her at home. I know Mike was over there a lot, and one of the daughters, maybe Mary Jo. One of them spent a lot of time with her anyway, so.

[00:16:31]

But they were all real close family friends and then they'd hunt together. And as I got older, I'd start doing that. They had cabins and stuff up on Thunderbolt, up out of Bernice, on the way to Basin. So we'd spend a lot of time up there, the guys anyway. And we had a cabin in Nez Perce, in the middle of Elk Park there, right below the lake. It was - it's kind of funny - back in those days, a lot of the people around here would start a placer claim, a mining claim, as a way to - you wouldn't own the land, but all these guys that started a placer claim - you had to put so much improvement into it and do so much mining every year and you'd file annually. That's Jefferson County, so in Boulder. And we'd go up all the time. Vern Maddock also had one. It was in the lowlands over there kind of by Boy Scout Lake, Maney Lake. And so they'd go up annually up in



Boulder and they'd file the liar sheet, they called it. They'd have one of the ranchers come in with a bulldozer or something and move some dirt or whatever, and pretend it was a mining claim. But yeah, we had a really nice cabin there. It was on the Baby Tino placer claim. So my dad was Tino and I was, you know, junior and Baby Tino, so that's how they differentiated.

But most people, and all my friends growing up, or lots of people near the family all know as Baby Tino actually, or The Baby. [laughter] Which is funny, a 66 year old is called The Baby now, yeah by some.

[00:18:05]

I have a lot of fond memories of the cabin up there. They started that maybe 1954 probably. I think somewhere right in there. And right above it was the lake there, Nez Perce lake. The Murrays and the Correttes and the McDonalds had the three properties there, all that. And we were really good friends of Dub and Lou Murray, so we spent a lot of time up there. They had a neat old place, and I remember - I was probably about eight or nine years old - we were up there one summer in the night and we went up to see them. Saw the smoke as we were pulling up and their home had burned down on the lake. So we sat there with Lou and the judge and watched this thing burn to the ground. And then they built a really, really neat home, which is the one that's still there right now. So we'd visit with them all the time, spent a lot of time up there with them too.

It's kind of the way life was - it was a lot different then. People were - there was no internet and there were no cell phones. It was - people were a lot more sociable, you know, they visited and talked.

**Jaap:** We're more isolated now, I think, aren't we?

**Grosso:** Yeah. We really are, which I don't think necessarily is for the best, to be honest with you. It provides instant communications. I mean, if you have a thought on your mind, you text somebody. If you really need to go over something, you call 'em. And it's really funny - we were talking about that a couple of weeks ago with some friends. We had - we were very close to all our family members and we had relatives in, like I said, Texas, and quite a few in California. Some in Nevada, and we'd do this big tour every summer and just, you know, vacation for a couple weeks, and see everybody then. That was about the one time of year you saw them unless they came up here on vacation.

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But to stay in touch with them, I remember maybe talking to relatives on the phone two or three times a year, long distance. Originally it was on a party line when I was a little guy, real young. You didn't have your own number, you just went on. Yeah, you didn't communicate with anybody besides the people that were your neighbors and in the neighborhood, and you knew everybody there. And you know, friends around town, etc.

**Jaap:** Yeah, lot different now.

**Grosso:** Yeah, it really is. People were a lot more social, more sociable.

**Jaap:** On one hand, we can communicate so much faster, but I feel like -

**Grosso:** You can but it's not close. It's really impersonal, and you don't really get to know people, the way we did when we were growing up. And kids have no idea how to play baseball or whatever, or ride bikes. They just sit there with your electronics, you know. It's just - game on, which is kind of sad really. Such is life. Life evolves, as does the planet.

**Jaap:** So you don't know how your father and mother met, but your mother came -

[00:21:01]

**Grosso:** I do, well originally they met - my Uncle Nillow went to school at the Franklin School with my dad. And they were classmates, graduated the 8th grade together. I don't think they were in high school together - no they didn't graduate high school because the family moved before Nillow was graduating high school so they moved out to California, as I said. So I assume my dad met her through him. And they'd have been in grade school then, probably when he first met her. So how they - because she ended up - when they moved to California, she was - well they were all - the Ferandos were pretty intelligent people. It kinda just, unfortunately didn't pass down to me the way they were. I did not work for Standard Oil! [laughter]

My mom went to Stan - no Uncle Al went to Stanford - my mom went to UCLA. And she graduated in International Banking and business finance basically. And she went to work for, I believe, Bank of America. And she was working with them when my dad must have taken an interest and gone back and forth because they had relatives or whatever in San Francisco I guess. He kind of met her and renewed the relationship and got engaged and then got married. That's, I assume, how it ended up. But I know that when she was in grade school and my dad was in grade school, basically they had - you know Uncle Nillow was probably the conduit that got them together in the first place.

[00:22:47]

**Jaap:** So after they came back and after they were married, so what did your mother do after that?

**Grosso:** Housewife. When they moved up here, she never did work again.

**Jaap:** Was that ever hard for her?

**Grosso:** Not at all. Nobody worked. I don't have any - I recall one friend growing up in McQueen whose mom worked, and she worked at the little local grocery store, Mrs. Rainey's, in McQueen. Other than that, nobody's - women didn't work. They just didn't work.

**Jaap:** Well it seems like, after going to school and having -

**Grosso:** Yeah, there were four of us. I have a brother that was born in 1942, Tony. And then two sisters Jeannie and Marilyn in between and then I was born. Tony is ten years older. Jeannie is eight years older. Marilyn is seven years older. And then I came along later, so it worked out really well for me. Life was good for Tino - I am the baby, definitely.

[00:23:44]

And you know families at that time were, I think, probably more financially stable, you know, they were getting a little older. My grandfather was - dad was the baby of the family of the six and grandpa was 44 when he had my dad. And my dad was 44 when he had me. So most families actually have four generations in the span that our family has three. That's kind of interesting. They were longer in that respect. Yeah, no - she never did work after that. She was a housewife. Stayed really busy with lots of stuff.

**Jaap:** Oh, I'm sure.

**Grosso:** I mean, raising kids for one thing and then PTAs and whatever. They were involved in lots of stuff, as I recall.

**Jaap:** Did your mom cook a lot?

**Grosso:** She did, not like my aunts did. My aunts were - I mean my mom was a good cook as far as family cooks went. And my Aunt Amelia cooked at home mainly, taking care of the family. And she baked bread. We had lots of different Italian dishes that we ate. Dinner was always - even at home on regular nights - was three or four courses anyway. There was always tons of food. Tons and tons of food. And then Auntie Marg worked at the - ran the restaurant - so she had lots of favorite things she'd cook, but she was busy working mostly, so she didn't have a lot of time. She and my dad both took, as I recall, one day a week off. One of them had Wednesday and the other one had Thursday, but other than that, they worked.

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And we'd go do lots of socializing or whatever even on days they were working. I mean, they'd get up and you'd go do things with them and then they'd come home, have dinner, and they'd go to work. [laughter] So it was interesting, different lifestyle.

**Jaap:** Did you have a favorite meal?

**Grosso:** Oh I loved my mother's baked chicken. She had a baked chicken that was great. And there was an Italian dish that she made called *soupa panicoi*. It's actually kind of a soup, but it's a breaded cabbage. It sound skins of disgusting actually, but you'd bake it and then kind of braise the top of it, or kind of hit the broiler on the top of the crust across the top. And that was delicious. It had cheese in it too. That was really good; I remember that one. And then my aunts. I mean, the fried chicken from the Arrow was delicious. We'd always have that at home. They'd bring it.

My aunt made olive or spaghetti sauces. They were called gravies actually. They were not sauces; they're gravy. And it's basically spaghetti sauce. But she'd cook these huge vats of it in the Arrow. She'd start from scratch. I remember chicken gizzards and livers. And this thing would go - it was a process. She'd do it probably once a week and make a huge amount of it. We have the recipes - it doesn't taste anything at all like hers. I mean, it was just. You know, she never looked at anything. She just made it. And it tasted the same way all the time, she did it so often. So that was really - that was a dish that I remember definitely, a spaghetti. She made all the raviolis from scratch, you know, and so we ate those at home also quite a bit.

[00:27:22]

We had lots of friends - we did - we made salami (not salami), but sausage, Italian sausage quite a bit. I recall that. They'd stopped making wine on their own by the time I was around. But we always had homemade wines from all the people in McQueen and Meaderville especially. And a lot of them in Elk Park - Louis Bartoletti - I mean he made wine all the time. There were a lot of stills around, a lot of grappa made everywhere. My dad used to tell me when we were little kids and it'd be so cold back then and everything as coal and wood [heating] - they'd be going to school or whatever and there'd be these big explosions and the roofs blowing off of all these old cabins and sheds. The stills ignite and then blow them up [laughter]. Yeah, there was always a gallon of grappa in the house from whomever. I recall that a lot.

Besides eating well, liquor wasn't looked at then as it is now kinda. I drank from as long as I can remember. There was a little grocery store in Meaderville that was out the back door of the family home. And it was the Guidi Brothers Grocery. Dominic and Fredo were the two brothers and they ran the grocery store there. And I remember when I was a little kid going in and we'd just walk down the street there and visit with Dominic, dad and I. You'd sit around in there and they had a - there was a little table that was on top of like a wine cask, basically in the grocery store. And it was just a little place that Dominic would sit. And they'd bring out a glass of wine and salami and cheeses or whatever. And they'd be BSing and I'd have like a smaller, a little jelly jar. You know, I was four years old and I remember that. I remember drinking at Louis Bartoletti's in the basement. We went down and sampled wine when I was - I wasn't five yet, so those both were four-year-old memories. But that was just growing up, I mean we'd have wine at the dinner table or I'd have beer. When we'd go fishing, they used to have little tiny Olympia cans. They were little dinky things, probably about 6 ounces, maybe 5 ounces. They weren't very big. But you know, I'd have a salami sandwich and open a beer when I was seven or eight years old and it just - genetically, typically I think Italians are not predisposed to alcoholism and it probably has something to do with it, you know?

[00:30:00]

Their parents came over from vineyards in Italy and it just - it was kinda the way life was. It was interesting. Different lifestyle - kids don't - none of my kids drank when they were - it was offered to them but they just didn't. It wasn't the same kind of thing, you know, it really wasn't - the next generation.

**Jaap:** Yeah, a lot has changed.

**Grosso:** And now they'll throw you in jail if you give your kids any booze. [laughter] Child abuse or something, or contributing.

**Jaap:** Something, yeah!

**Grosso:** I guess they can have some glass of champagne or wine or something at Christmas. There is actually some law that says you can - that your kids can drink at home, but basically not - that's kind of frowned on I think basically. People also - as I got older and into my teens and my 20s - I don't remember people getting DUIs. You didn't. You just - the police would bring you home. You never went through all the stuff now. And Minors in Possession was a non-existent thing. You got in big trouble and you got brought home at midnight or whatever if you got caught, you know but there wasn't any - actually I think it worked out a lot better than it does now, to be honest with you.

**Jaap:** Do you think, why so?

**Grosso:** I do. You know, Mariah's Challenge and all this stuff is - that's very good. Don't get me wrong. It definitely is, but I don't know. There weren't that many people that died when - there were. I shouldn't say that; I had a lot of friends that died in car wrecks drinking. You know, three real close friends - Ronnie, Petritiz's brother. Rooster, Gary. Of course I don't know if he was drinking but he may have been. He was run into; it wasn't his fault.

[00:31:56]

We had Bart Mihelich and one of the Murphy kids. They were - Murphy was a little on the wild side. They got in a bad car wreck and died. I had a good friend of mine [inaudible] Tucci that died in a car wreck drinking, coming home, and it wasn't his fault. Somebody crossed the center line and hit him, you know, coming home one night. So yeah I did. I did have a lot of friends that actually - alcohol was involved in all of them. It's hard to say if they would have lived, you know, had they been sober. They might not have been there. They probably wouldn't have been there. But that is life, you know. We all live; we all die. [laughter]

**Jaap:** So your uncles that were running booze from Canada - did they ever get caught?

**Grosso:** No. They had shipments that were caught but they never did. They had 'em coming down in train cars, box cars full of whiskey and stuff. And they never did. I had one uncle, uncle Johnny - he was the oldest Grosso child. It's funny, I came across an old newspaper article and he was making wine at home.

[00:33:11]

I think there was either two or three thousand gallons of wine that were confiscated during Prohibition.

**Jaap:** Two or three thousand?

**Grosso:** Yeah. I think he did 30 days in the county jail or something.

**Jaap:** Oh my gosh.

**Grosso:** It was kind of a slap on the wrist but then they all got to visit him, bring him food. [laughs] It was kind of a - more of a - it wasn't a real punishment but they had to do something because the amounts were so large. [laughs] That was a little more than home consumption I believe!

**Jaap:** [laughter] Yeah I hope so! Yeah I laugh. We found an article about a still that was found during Prohibition and - I can't remember how many gallons it was but ten gallons were taken for evidence. And I thought 'I'm *sure* they went to evidence!' [laughter]

**Grosso:** No doubt. Ha.

**Jaap:** Yeah they were passed around.

**Grosso:** Yeah, definitely. Yeah other than that though, nobody ever - they never got busted for anything.

**Jaap:** And then your mom's side, they made liqueurs. That's so interesting.

**Grosso:** Yeah, it really was. That wasn't too typical I think. Most everybody was doing either grappa out of these stills, which was - it didn't taste good. I remember I tasted it when I was a kid and it was - tasted more like turpentine than anything. It'll blow your socks off, but you know it wasn't for a fine sipping liqueur by any means. And none of that got passed on to the next generations. We never did make wine and the family didn't do stills as far as I know. I mean, they didn't even do that, so.

**Jaap:** So you grew up in McQueen.

**Grosso:** I grew up in McQueen, yeah.

**Jaap:** Where'd you go to school?

**Grosso:** I went to school at - we all - all the kids went to Holy Savior and then we all went to Central [Catholic School]. I did three years at Boys Central and then I graduated in '70 and it was the first co-ed class, at Butte Central my senior year.

[00:35:11]

Yeah I had a brother that graduated in '59 I guess. And he became an orthodontist and moved to Portland. We had an older cousin, Leon and Auntie Fran Butori - their older son was also an orthodontist. He was probably - how old is he? Shoot, he's gotta be 25 years older than we are,

or than I am. He's still alive actually, and lives in Portland. But he had a group practice in Portland. Orthodontists were really all that - they weren't really on every corner back then. They had patients that came down from Anchorage, actually, that flew down, that they took care of because there probably wasn't one in Alaska, to be honest with you. And then my brother joined that group practice and bought into it.

My oldest sister Jeannie went to - let's see Tony went to Gonzaga and then graduated Marquette in dental school and then grad school at NorthWestern in Chicago at Evanston. Jeannie went to - she graduated from St. Mary's in Kansas. And she did a couple different things. She went to - right out of college - she went to Brazil with a group of people called Papal Volunteers. They were similar to the Peace Corps sort of thing. She was down there a brief period of time. My mom got sick so my dad had her come back up and help take care of my mom.

[00:36:50]

But she left here and then moved to Portland and she was a school teacher out there. She was an unbelievable seamstress. She kind of took after my grandma Grosso. Grandma Grosso - she was a tailor and made all the family clothes, all the suits. My sister Jeannie made me a gorgeous suit, one time. She made gowns for my sister. Just - I mean she was very very talented. She and I - at one point, more so her than I, I mean I did the financing and did a little bit of sewing - we had a business called... Well let's see! We're gonna wrack our brain here - I did that briefly. Uh...Hermitage Creations.

Anyway, she made all these - she was very religious and knew every priest in the diocese and had lots of good friends throughout the religious community, catholic community. And she started making vestments. And she made albs and chasubles and stoles. A lot of the things that Father Haffey uses at St. Ann's are still things that she made. And that was, shoot, that was thirty years ago. Real high quality stuff that was - you know she was pretty incredible.

[00:38:09]

My sister Marilyn went to Marquette also and did a - she was a dental hygienist. They used to be two-year programs. And she got her bachelor's and never did live here in Butte. None of them did actually, besides Jeannie for a brief period of time. They all pretty much moved to Portland, migrated out there. Jeannie never got married. My brother married a gal from - she was a hygienist at Marquette. And they moved to Portland. And Marilyn, when she was in Portland, met Jim Novak, who was a physician. He is a physician, actually retired just a couple of years ago. And so they moved to Klamath Falls, which is where his family is from. And so they lived there, and all raised families. Life goes on, the way it does, you know.

Yeah I did - let's see, about a year and a half at Missoula after I graduated. And Thanksgiving of that first semester of my sophomore year, my dad passed away. So my mom was kind of ill at the time and it was right around the time that the [Berkeley] pit was also starting to encroach on McQueen and people were starting to sell, so the natural thing to do was, you know, sell the family home there. So she and I moved out to Portland with everybody else. And I lived there

with her for a brief period of time, not much more than a year. I don't even know if it was quite a year.

[00:39:40]

And it's kind of like a big magnet was turned on on the East Ridge there and just draws you back. I came back in probably '73 I think. I worked for Earl Lynch at Butte Sash & Door. They were good friends of my mom and dad's. I worked there for a brief period of time, until I cut the end of my finger off and it got sewed back on and I thought 'no, this is not for me.' No carpentry for you! I worked for Etna Finance for a brief period of time. They had an office on Park and Montana street. That's where that was. Did that for not quite a year. I did loans and then became a collection officer and I really determined that that was not a life that I wanted. You wake up in the morning arguing with people and, you know, all these people that you know and were good friends with that did business with this company and then you're...you know, repossessing refrigerators.

**Jaap:** And at that time you were doing that, was that very hard because a lot of people were struggling?

**Grosso:** Umm, there were enough people that made it miserable to where it was not a good job. I didn't feel it was very ethical. To be honest with you, it just didn't suit me. It wasn't my lifestyle. So I left that. The next job was - actually it was at the M&M. Freddy Bugni - Charlie was his dad - Freddy and Jonnie were two brothers. They were working for Charlie and gambling had just become legal. So that was about - I wanna say '85, I went to work there. And I went to work in the back room.

[00:41:33]

Working keno, selling pull tabs and doing whatever behind the desk back there. And I did it for four years or so, maybe five years, and then like I said I went into business with my sister for a brief period of time, less than a year. And Charlie had a heart attack so Freddy and Jonnie were basically running it for him and they came and asked me if I'd help run the place with them. You know, basically Charlie needed - he was gonna be laid up for quite a while.

So I did. So at that point I managed the night shift from probably about '88/'89-84 [seems he meant '94 here instead of '84]. That's when I met Mollie [Kirk] and, you know, all the people up here. Paul Cote and all these guys, everybody worked up there. So yeah I ran th bar and cafe and all the gambling. Had poker games going. Panguingue - Pan. I don't know if you've ever heard of that. That was a real popular card game. And then the back room, all the keno and pull tabs and parlay cards at that time which were, you know, not legal. Lots of trouble to bet on. Well, they're still not legal. You can't play parlay card.

**Jaap:** There's a limit, right?

**Grosso:** No, not even. They're not.



**Jaap:** Oh really.

**Grosso:** Pull tabs you can have. You can have boards and pools, but that - yeah parlay cards - it's a split on any kind of game. It's the point split basically. And you can bet three, four, five teams, up to ten. And it just pays you the more you get all right. But it involved a line that came out of Nevada. So actually we got busted one time. I didn't get charged. Freddy didn't get charged. Jonnie did. Danny Delmoe, who owned the M&M and Charlie who ran the back room basically. The gambling was all his. The three of them got charged - the feds were in here. Busted 'em. Felonies. And they plead no contest, paid fines and got out of them and that was the end of that. But it was kind of a big deal. They had a big federal investigation that went on for a while.

[00:43:43]

Interesting stuff. So I was in my early 20s. That was a great time in my life. We had a ball. We had lots and lots of fun.

**Jaap:** We recently interviewed Emily McLeod. Was she there cooking?

**Grosso:** She cooked in the daytime actually. Yeah, Elsie Delmoe. She was a character. She worked nightshift. She came on at 10 and worked till 6 in the morning. So I worked with her probably as much as anybody. She and - ah there were a bunch of people. Shirley, Beverly Tesco the cook. Little Stevie Faulkner was our dishwasher a lot. He worked a lot on shifts that I was on. He was - Danny Delmoe really took a shine to him. He was just kind of his pet. He really really looked out for Stevie. Stevie was a good kid.

Yeah that was a real interesting time. I mean, we did everything. You cut meat. You did - took care of the bar, took care of - it was an interesting business. And there also was not at that time a casino, you know, like there is on every corner in Butte right now. There was nothing, so we had - I mean there was only very few places that had tabs and parlay cards. The Deluxe and The Met and the M&M. The M&M was the only poker game in town that I know of. It was definitely the only Pan game, in my era of course. In the 30s and early 40s, you know, the Board of Trade and all these other places were going. The M&M at that time, in the 70s, it was the only game in town so we were busier actually at two o'clock in the morning to four or five than most places were in their rush hour at [laughs] whatever.

[00:45:23]

The bars would close and everybody came there to eat, or you could gamble. You know, you could play keno or do whatever, drinks in the coffee cup. Who knows? It's...you drank all night long if you wanted to. It was no big deal, poker game going all night. So yeah, that was interesting. It was a vocation as such, for a long time, about a decade of my life. And it was interesting.

**Jaap:** Yeah, everyone who worked at the M&M shares the same feeling that you do.

**Grosso:** It was a big family, you know, and it was just a really warm, social place to be. I mean everybody in town came there. You knew everybody, all the judges, attorneys, pimps, gangsters, priests, one end to the other, priests! Everybody, you know, the county attorneys would come in. You know, one end of the spectrum to the other. You met people in there and they all - elbow to elbow at the bar or at the restaurant on the stools having dinner. It was kind of interesting. It was definitely a true melting pot even then, you know, like it was at the turn of the century when it was the ethnic neighborhoods and a melting pot with the mines and everything. It was interesting - it was a real - it was probably one of the most interesting times in my life. That was good.

[00:46:42]

Met my wife there actually. Jamie Shea was a good friend of mine. We were classmates and graduated high school together. I don't know if you ever heard of Jamie. He had the gas station on Montana Street there. And we were good buddies. He would come up and we'd go play after he got off work, go have a few drinks or do whatever. And he brought Frankie Martin - he would occasionally bartend for us - he was a little older at that time. He had at one time owned the Milwaukee Bar. Anyway, Jamie brought his granddaughter in and introduced her to me, Susie McGrath was her name. And so she became my wife, later, as time went on. We had two daughters and I've got six grandkids and actually have a great granddaughter that's two years old, just turned two.

So yeah, so Suze and I - after maybe a year of being together, I left the M&M. I did a couple of different things. I was looking for a business to buy and get into. Just nothing - there were a couple of things that I had looked at and almost bought and then just passed on for one reason or another. And I ended up finding a business with a good friend of mine that I had grown up with in McQueen, Tony Brakow, and we bought a filter business. It was called Mountain Air Filter. And we basically cleaned all sorts of different air filters, for the mines, for construction outfits. Had MRI and Golden Sunlight [that] were two of the big ones. All the big talc mines - we'd do a route and then bring them in here [and] clean 'em, refurbish 'em, dry 'em, package 'em up and you know. Definitely a cost savings thing, so we found a little niche to do that.

[00:48:34]

I did that for a couple of years and then I sold out to him as a partner and was looking for something else to get into. It just - there was not enough business there for two of us - it didn't get as big as I wanted it to be anyway. So I left that and sold out to Tony and was looking for something to get into and just nothing was clicking right, nothing that I really wanted to do. And my next door neighbor, from the time I was born - she was born three or four months younger, or after I was born. Andrea Chibatari, an Italian family with a couple of generations that went back that were family friends - we went to grade school and high school together.

She ended up marrying Jack McCormick. Jack, let's see, worked for corrections originally. I think that's one of the first jobs he had. We graduated high school together and went to Missoula together. Jack was a good buddy of mine. After Andrea had graduated at St. Mary's - I'm not sure if her degree was in journalism or whatever, but she went to work for the paper, for the [Montana] Standard. And Jack graduated and, as far as I know, as I recall one of his first jobs

was Department of Corrections in Helena. They were commuting. And then he ended up - they moved over there. And then he became the Warden at Deer Lodge, as things evolved. And I still hadn't found the business I wanted to do, or what I wanted to do and I was BSing with him one afternoon and he says, 'Come to work at the prison.'

[00:50:17]

He says 'actually there's an accounting position that's open.' Not as head accountant, but in the accounting department. He says, 'go one out there and apply for it. There's a job open right now.' So I did go and apply for that. And as it turned out, there was some guy that had a [laughs] - he had a master's and wanted to move to Montana. [He] could care less about the money, just wanted the lifestyle and to get out of the bigger cities. So this guy ends up with the job, so there went that job. And McCormick says, 'Go to work as a correctional officer. There's always tons of jobs opening up.' He says, 'Go to work.'

You know, I didn't wanna go through savings and investments. You know, you like to keep building that, especially at that age. And me living and going through it with nothing, looking for something. So ehh, that's not a bad idea. So he basically, actually got me the job out there. They interviewed. I had some good friends that were working out there. So I worked in security actually for about a year, maybe a little longer. But in my training class, one of the guys that was - who actually had hired on as the new head accountant, Wes Estep - we got to be friends in this class.

[00:51:40]

So he says, 'Oh, come on over. You can just come to work in the mornings with me at 8 o'clock. You can work overtime from 8-2 in accounting, and then work your shift 2-10 at nighttime if you want to.' [I said] 'Yeah that's fine.' That was better overtime than working in security anyway. So I did that for a brief period of time and then they had a position open as - they opened a firewood operation in the Industries Program, and Wes transferred from head accountant to Industries, and oversaw the Industries Program. And they do - Industries does license plates, a big furniture factory and upholstery factory. At that time, logging. A big logging operation was part of our set.

And an offshoot of logging was a firewood business. And they said, 'We need somebody. We're just starting to come up with this idea of selling firewood.' And I thought, 'What!' That sounds like something I wanna do. And he said, 'I'm serious. This thing is gonna be huge.' So I went to work there and set up this firewood operation and they would - all the scrap wood that we weren't selling to the mills downtown we would cut up in little - it's probably one cubic foot I guess. Put the little handle on it and the label - Happy Jack was the name of the company. They were actually in Southern California...buying semi loads after semi load, as much as we could make of this stuff. It went on for quite some time.

[00:53:05]

And then about a year later, the Industry Program itself - furniture and upholstery and the shops inside - they were building a warehouse to kind of unify everything. They started growing so

large that they needed somebody to do all their purchasing. They had everybody doing their own little thing and not knowing what they were doing. You know, combining that with shipping and running a warehouse - so I got that position initially and did that for...well I was out there twenty-seven years. So I just retired from that actually - Thanksgiving will be two years, when I retired.

**Jaap:** Oh nice.

**Grosso:** Yeah. So I enjoyed it. I really did. I had a lot of - I enjoyed working at the prison. Security didn't bother me. I was out there not quite a year when we had the riot.

**Jaap:** Oh yeah.

**Grosso:** We had the max incident and I was working security. Actually I was working max at that time a couple days a week, but it was my first vacation so a friend of mine and I took our horses and went archery hunting in the Ruby. And we were down there about five days or so and came back in and my wife said, 'That was unbelievable, what's going on at the prison down there.'

'What's going on at the prison?' Back then you didn't have cell phones or any - we're in the middle of nowhere back there on horseback, you know, and came back and jumped back into just a mega mess. I mean, I missed the riot itself, but I'm there three days later as we - you know, there's a building that's destroyed. There's people that are dead. The investigations are going on, you know, left and right. I mean, you got feds in there. Well, I don't recall if the feds were in there, but we had State, you know. Criminal investigation bureau's coming in, the attorney general's office, justice...trying to figure out all these murders and all the guys in max that they're gonna charge and who's involved in what.

[00:54:53]

And so they placed them back in a building that was originally the max building, the real old one. And they went back in there. But we had about two months of - it was ridiculous. You never went on blocks without two or three guys, officers together. There were fires going. There was stuff - it was crazy. It was out of control for a bit. But McCormick was Warden at the time. He actually saved a bunch of people's lives. He went totally contrary to what the policy of the feds were and other prisons at that time, which was: you don't go in and rush a situation like that. You take your time and negotiate and do all this other stuff.

And they had information that they were going to start killing the officers that were still holed up in the building. So they stormed it, basically, and saved everybody's lives, aside from the - what did they lose...five inmates I think were killed? A bunch of them injured and stuff - so that was interesting. It wasn't pleasant but it was a real learning experience. You know, that was different. And then things settled down there. I worked a little longer in security and then went into purchasing and the Industries Program, like I said. I really enjoyed that. That was good. You kind of notice making a big difference in people's lives, you know? The rate of recidivism for

people who work out there, inmates and then get out, is *way* less than just the average inmate that does his time and gets out and reoffends. You know, new crimes, parole violations, whatever.

I mean you're giving these guys jobs, skills. You're doing lots of things and I'm getting them back on the outside, so. A lot less recidivism. You can notice that you're making a difference in some of these guys' lives and so that was fulfilling. It's nice to be able to do that. And I enjoyed the people I worked with.

[00:56:45]

Actually the inmates, some of them are - most of them are people that you wouldn't know are any different than your next door neighbor. They just did something really stupid that got them into something. Most of them aren't murderers or rapists or whatever. You know, even the guys that are in there for murder, a lot of them are a crime of passion or whatever. They're never gonna reoffend, so they again are just like people that are your neighbor. You know? They really are.

You know, your job out there is not to punish them. Your job is - their punishment is being sentenced out there. Your job is to make sure they're kept - you know, society is kept safe from them and keeping them safe from one another and in my position, teaching them the job skills and doing this kind of stuff. Those were - I enjoyed that. It was a good lifestyle. It really was. So that's that! [laughter]

[00:57:40]

**Jaap:** So your family - did they buy their dairy in Elk Park? Did they buy dairy? You said you'd go out there with the dairies and...

**Grosso:** No, no. Never did. We got - I don't even know who we used. I remember milk was delivered in the bottles with the little cardboard top on it. That was always a treat, whichever of the kids got there first and took the top off and licked the cream off the top of that. Yeah. I remember that a lot. So we had a little - you know they were delivered, whatever, a couple times a week, a couple quart bottles of milk I guess. And other than that, you buy your eggs and butter and whatever else at the grocery store.

**Jaap:** How about the restaurants?

**Grosso:** The restaurant didn't use any dairy. My aunt, well my dad - I'd go with him - we'd pick up...Buttreys was going then. Buttreys was one of the big food stores. We'd go to the meat department and buy loins. My aunt would cut those, you know, on the bandsaws downstairs, big t-bones and things. So we bought that there. Chickens I recall we bought in the big five-sallon tins, these huge things that were iced down.

[00:59:01]

I'm not sure who they bought them from, but everything was kind of local.

**Jaap:** Neat, yeah. Probably why her spaghetti sauce doesn't taste the same.

**Grosso:** [laughs] Probably so. That and we don't know what we're doing compared to what she'd do, so! [laughter] Yeah that's it too, definitely.

**Jaap:** Did your family carry down a lot of Italian traditions?

**Grosso:** Oh yeah. Definitely. There was a lot of stuff that...ohhh! Everything from soup to nuts kind of migrating its way through all of our beings I think. It's - I can't say the generation after me, but it's certainly through my cousins and my siblings and I. Well, when my grandpa Grosso died, his wife - all the girls (and then men too) wore black for quite a while. We were in mourning. I think typically for six months you were supposed to be in mourning. But my grandmother never did wear anything besides black. She mourned her husband till she died.

**Jaap:** Oh wow.

**Grosso:** Yeah. [pause] Just the food traditions and uh, the religious end of things. I mean that was all - you know, we were all Catholic. You know, you just - I was an altar boy and we had, of course, first communion and confession and we were baptized of course. Yeah, confirmations. I mean, that just was a big part of your life. Everything was wrapped up around the Catholic church. I always went to all services. Sunday masses and holidays and, you know, everything was a big deal. And then Catholic schools of course. That's when we were in grade school. All the Christmas pageants and everything else. It was all - everything seemed to be - I kind of forgot about that. That's funny you asked that question. Things I've never thought about for years, but really your life revolved around family and then around religion.

**Jaap:** Yeah.

**Grosso:** Yeah, it was interesting.

[01:01:10]

Yeah just the way you think about things...I think it's - who you are is from who they were basically. And I don't know if you see a lot of that now. Still, a lot of people don't have any idea what their - my ethnic background is extremely important to me and my siblings and I know all sorts of things about families going back to my grandfather. His parents - we don't go a lot further than that because there wasn't record keeping of course - in early Italy [it] wasn't big. [laughs] There are no archives over there, but just tales passed down and things you know and the way you feel. You know, the way you learn to appreciate things. It's just who you are.

I don't see that today. A lot of people have no idea who their - where their grandparents came from. Anything about their genealogy. You know there's just a lot of - Italian was very important to us, as was everybody else. You know, the Croatian of course had a strong feeling. So did the Irish, everything up north. Everybody felt the same way about their backgrounds, but you don't

have that at all now. I don't even know - because I can hear most names and I know who you are and I know what your ethnic background is.

**Jaap:** Sure.

**Grosso:** People now have no clue what that name is. [laughs] It doesn't mean anything to them, which is kind of sad because it's a very important part of my life, still is. It's who I am and you think of life that way. People don't know.

**Jaap:** Yeah, that's true. Did you try to pass on any of your family traditions to your kids?

**Grosso:** Not a bunch. My daughters are stepdaughters. Susie had them before we were married. They were like two and three, so I'm definitely their father, but they didn't relate. And a lot of my - like I said I was the baby and so - well I only knew one of my grandmothers. The other three were dead long before I was born. It's that old. I mean they were here in the 1880s and 90s and I was born in 1951. So my mom's mother lived with us for a brief period of time. And I knew uncles, of course, and aunts, but yeah I didn't know any of the grandparents. And then most of my family's siblings were all in Oregon so I didn't really have a lot of relatives that were around. They didn't have the opportunity to have that passed on to them, no.

[01:04:02]

And it wouldn't have meant anything to them really, as much, simply because it's not their bloodline. I mean, really. I have a grandson that lives with me now and he's spent probably a majority of his life living with my wife and I. Suzie passed away in 2012, but even prior to that - he was born in '97. Is that right? He is 21 now. So his mom was a single parent and she was actually in high school at the time. I think she was - it was her junior year, beginning of her senior year. So they lived with us then. And she moved out. She wanted independence of course, which I didn't blame her for. But then she went to college. She went to [Montana] Tech. She actually got three degrees. She went to Tech and did an accounting degree, just an associate degree.

And let's see. She probably lived with us for a brief period of time again then. But then graduated there and decided that she didn't like accounting and thought that a teaching degree would be good. So she went to Western [in Dillon], moved the kids down there. She had another daughter afterwards. And their niece went down there with them, one of my older daughters' kids, ended up moving down there with them. So the kids were going to grade school there and the kids were going to school. She did her program there and got her teaching degree. And right as she graduated there, UM [in Missoula] started up a speech pathology, speech therapy degree came back. They had it years ago, and that was the first year they had it and she thought, 'This I really think I would find interesting.'

So [laughs] we go to degree number 3! So she was actually able to stay in Dillon though and do it online and do some distance learning that way. And it just got to be - she would come home however every weekend for this entire time. And she worked as a waitress at Fred's at the time.

So, Friday afternoon, in comes the tribe and they would stay at the house with that, which was great, because I couldn't get enough of my grandson anyway, from the time he was really little.

[01:06:32]

And so right before - the last year, maybe not even the whole year, right before she graduated from UM, she says, 'This is - I'm getting run ragged here.' [And I say] Why are you living in Dillon? You're not going to school down there anymore. She had the kids in school and that was kind of easy; she liked their school system. But I said, 'This is goofy. You're here on Fridays and go back Sunday night after your shift and la la la. This is crazy, so come home. Get your degree and do whatever it is you wanna do.' So she did. And so he moved back in there, which was my point, you know, him being with us. [Tino's grandson]

So most of his life he spent there. And let's see - Chrissa bought a house and she was working at the hospital here as a speech pathologist and so Tristan had moved there with her. And she started dating Mike [struggles to remember and then laughs] Nance. Mike was the director of the children's theater, the Orphan Girl. And then they started dating and they actually got really close. They are significant others now. So she ended up selling the house there and decided to move to Colorado. She had better opportunities down there and Mike's family was from there. And they just decided it was time for a move, so Tristan wasn't about to do that because he was in his freshman year at Tech I guess, when she did that.

So he moved back in the house with me and he's been there the last four years. This is his senior year. So that's my buddy. I mean he's been more like a son than actually a grandson, you know. We have a really good existence together. Life is - I really like this guy. He's as responsible as any human I've ever met. He's really really a good kid. He's [taking] computer courses at Tech, so. Actually he just changed his major again to networking I think. Anyway, the computer line. He'll probably do another year. I think since he's changed he's got some other stuff he's gotta do so he's gotta do a fifth year. So he'll be with me probably at least another year and a half, which is good. I have no complaints about that at all.

**Jaap:** That's really nice.

**Grosso:** So yeah. I don't even remember what we started talking about. [laughs] I got sidehilled there. Yeah so in any event - oh - so *he* actually ended up with more of the knowing about and learning about the family traditions and things, than anybody else, even more so than his mother or his aunt, my two daughters. He did research up here [at the Archives] starting in high school and did a lot of things with the Arrow Cafe. Just all sorts of different things, different projects of learning about the family and he was involved in a lot of different things over the years that - you know he has a feel for it.

So in that respect, I guess it did pass on. It almost jumped a generation and went into him, but - and I do - I cook a lot. So he has learned how to [cook] also, so he's gotten some of the stuff but I don't cook a lot of Italian food. There got to be a lot more of me after my wife passed away than I would like, so he actually - he and I started doing some dieting here recently. And I love to - I baked all our breads. We have some favorite breads we made, just high calorie stuff though,



and carbs. All sorts of potatoes and rice and pasta things. So it's been a real trip here about the last two months. We've totally changed our lifestyle, but it's good. The ketotonic diet.

**Jaap:** Oh yeah.

**Grosso:** We're doing that thing, so. Yeah I'm down about 25 pounds, almost 30.

**Jaap:** Good for you.

**Grosso:** So according to my app, I'll be at my desired goal in May. [laughs] I'm not looking forward to doing - well I don't mind this. You're eating well so it's not a bad deal. It's just not my - you know we had our things that we really liked [laughs] and they're not there anymore unfortunately. But yeah, such is life. When you play, you pay. You know? [laughs]

[01:10:58]

**Jaap:** What do you think of changes in Butte as time has gone on?

**Grosso:** You know, it's kind of sad. But it's as the rest of the country and the world goes. Life has changed. Like it or not, it's just gonna step all over you if you don't accept it and go with it. I'd love to have been here initially when my grandfather got here. I'd loved to have been here in the - even the 1870s - pre-real-busy-Butte. And then in the [18]80s and [18]90s and into the turn of the century. I'd love to have gone through the roaring 20s here. That would have been really interesting, but I really liked the era that I grew up in. I can't think of a better life that I would have had, you know family wise. I was treated very well. Just family, friends, whatever. You know, life was good. I really wouldn't change anything in the way I grew up.

So that was good, but that's of course - it's also a previous generation now. You know, we have one more if not two generations since then. It's kind of sad that people don't - you know they don't know their neighbors. There's no closeness. There's no feeling of community I don't think. I mean, there is a Butte pride with people in Butte, but I don't think you find that most places. You don't have that in Bozeman by any means. You don't have that in Missoula. You don't have that in Helena - it's like a hodgepodge of strangers, you know. It really is.

So that's missing. And that's really sad. And the country, I mean, politics and everything is just such a disaster. I don't care if you're democrat or republican or whatever now, whether you like this guy that's in office or whether you despise him. It doesn't make any difference. The country in is a mess. It really is. And consequently, the world is too, you know? Economies are just a disaster. There's no - there was even a comradery with all the European countries at the end of World War II, and during wars, and then, you know, then. You had a close bond with the French and with the English. That kind of even went away here the last year. And those are really sad things. It's gonna take us forever to get back on track with relations with these countries. We're just - we're not headed in a good direction.

[01:13:34]

Now hopefully, things eventually will come around and they're not gonna be as bad as they are now, no doubt. But it's too bad that that's happening. In any event, all of that stuff combined, boy I'm really glad I'm not starting out my life now. I'm glad I'm closer to the other end of it. I really am. It's kind of a sad situation, you know, just what we're doing with the ecology and you know what's going on with the world. Rising tides and...[laughs] everything else, and everything melting and raising temperatures and massive forest fires. Think what you will, but if you don't believe that any of this stuff is man-made caused, you're a fool. You know, you have to see the handwriting on the wall. If you don't, you have some ulterior motives to think that it didn't happen this way.

So this is all bad stuff you know. Hopefully people will change it for the better. Hopefully the next generation does and will do a better job than we did. But they too - well, life has changed so you gotta learn how to deal with it. It's all not doom and gloom, by any means. And I'm sure grandparents through the same thing about my parents, you know. 'What are you people doing?' [laughs] What are you doing to the planet? As did my parents and I. I mean we were, you know, the Vietnam generation and the protests and you know - we were gonna change the world. And lo and behold, look what we've become. That which they were, you know, really. We didn't do a really good job of it, so hopefully my grandson does. They think of things a lot differently. Just life in general - they have a lot less prejudices.

[01:15:22]

With anything, you know, with color, with sexual orientation. They don't think a thing about gay. And it was so foreign to us, you know, when I was in high school and college. It was something really strange. Now, I mean my grandson has gay friends. He's got - it was her and now it's him. Then it was her and now it's him again, you know. This poor person is trying to find himself. But that has nothing to do with nothing. He could care less about it. They all - the group of them go out to Fairmont and swim, do whatever. They have their D&D sessions, do online gaming, you know - everybody's a friend. He's got a friend coming up from California that he's never met. He became a good friend online gaming and this kid's gonna come up for a week in January and stay up here and see what Butte's all about. It's just - I'd have never thought of doing that. [laughs] But I didn't have the opportunity. We didn't play games and didn't know people everywhere on the planet, you know.

Yeah it's just different. They think about things a lot - in a more wholesome manner. So in that respect, I think it's good. I really do. If they can keep Facebook in line and not let computers and games take over their lives, you know, I think it's good for them. It really is. One way or the other, it will be theirs. So they'll figure it out. But in retrospect, I think I would like to have seen all those other previous decades here and on back. Like I said, the mid 1800s - I think that would have really been interesting around here.

**Jaap:** Oh yeah. I can't imagine. Yeah.

[01:17:00]

**Grosso:** Not at all - I mean it's just - there was nobody here. The Battle of the Big Hole happened after my grandfather moved here. This is an Indian War, my god, 80 miles away, you know? It was only - shoot - he was like 12 years old when Custer went through his thing. He was still living in Italy at the time, but I mean - this is my grandfather. This is only two generations back. Lewis and Clark were here not very long ago and there were *no* white people here. And that's what - 200 years ago. That's not very long in the grand scheme of things. And there was nothing on this planet, basically, and look at it now. There's a road every three inches. There are people everywhere. There are billions and billions of people.

So I don't know if it's all for the best or not, but it is what it is. So mankind will either learn to deal with it or mankind will cease to exist.

**Jaap:** Yeah we've definitely had an impact.

**Grosso:** And not necessarily such a good one. [laughs] But it is what it is, I mean, you know that's life. Life goes on. So yeah, there are some good changes I think. But a lot of them I would just as soon roll back the hands on the clock to be honest with you. I think things were a lot better and simpler. It was an easier time, you know, years gone by. But that's ok, that's alright.

**Jaap:** What do you think about Butte's future? Do you think it looks up or stays the same?

**Grosso:** I do. I do. People around here - well they're totally different than anywhere else. This Butte pride thing isn't just a phrase. People are - even people that move here and stay here for any period of time - become Butte. You know, they really do. And it's obvious in anything - the festivals. I mean it's you know - new businesses coming in. I mean poor Anaconda wasn't that much different than Butte and it's pretty much all but blown away. I mean dried up and off into the breeze. People fight around here. You've always got new things going on. I mean you've got bitcoin came in and I mean you have this new malt thing that Ronnie Ueland got going. You have everything that - you know all sorts of different businesses and things.

Besides, you know, MRI, which - it'll be here a while, I'm sure another decade or two that they'll have in mining. And by that time I think technology will have changed to where they'll be able to start extracting minerals out of that water and a lot of the sludge and stuff. They'll be able to get more out of it. I think there will always be, you know, a mining aspect to the community. And new things. People here always get new projects going. They just do. I think Butte is as solid as anywhere to be honest with you. The economy is good. People are happy. You don't have to worry about this turning into Boze-Angeles or Missoula because nobody really wants to look at this pit. [laughs] They really don't!

[01:20:16]

And I grew up with it - you know. Honestly, four blocks away from back door there were haul trucks, you know, going up and down in McQueen.

**Jaap:** Yeah because you were just little when it started.

**Grosso:** Yeah I was five I think when I remember my dad grabbed me - Emmet Murphy was his name and he was a good friend of my dad. He was one of the superintendents for the pit when it opened, when it became the Berkeley Pit. We went down there one night, the first time I ever saw it. Yeah so that's probably - I might have been five I think, five or six, something like that. And it was nothing. It was still all the mines on the hill. I remember all of them, growing up. And I don't know what percentage of them are gone now, but a lot of them are out, you know, in dead space up here as you look off the viewing stand there, and stuff that was gone.

I mean, I remember explosions up on Anaconda Road and compressors going up. I remember when the Bell Diamond blew up and you could see it out our window at our house. So watching all that stuff - that's interesting to watch how the community changed here. I remember lots of Meaderville and all of McQueen, and the people that lived there. And those were great neighborhoods. It was kind of sad to see them go. The Columbia Gardens was a fantastic thing. It was unbelievable. We spent so much time up there, you know, when we were kids, just up at the beaches and then at the Gardens itself just enjoying it.

And that's sad to see that stuff gone. It'd be nice if kids were able to - you know our water park and the carousel don't replace what that was. But that's life. I mean, life goes on. They'll have their own things. They'll have their own memories and hopefully they will keep charging along if they stay here and keep things alive in Butte. I don't see any reason why they wouldn't.

[01:22:11]

If the mine were to close, I mean it certainly would have a big financial impact, just tax-wise, but people would have to tighten their belts like we did the last time. You know, life went on and got better again. It's a big enough community where it's - I think it will honestly always be here. I really do. It's as stable as anything. I've got a lot of good feelings, a lot of hope for Butte, definitely. Were you born here?

**Jaap:** I wasn't born here, no. My family moved here when I was five.

**Grosso:** Well, same thing.

**Jaap:** I grew up here but I wasn't born here.

**Grosso:** Yeah it's a good place to raise a family. It's a good place to live. It really is.

**Jaap:** Yeah, my husband, his family is all here and born here.

**Grosso:** How long you been up here? [at the Archives]

**Jaap:** Oh god, I've been up here for like 10 years or something.

**Grosso:** Have you? Well good for you.

**Jaap:** Yeah, I like it. It's interesting. Yeah it's interesting we were talking about last names, about people not maybe - I was thinking, well I do! But I work here so - I don't know about my husband. He doesn't necessarily think in those terms.

**Grosso:** I don't know - I always do. It's funny. I hear a name and then I try and see if you look like your genetics or whatever. And I always have to ask if it's a name that I'm - 'I wonder what that is. Do you have any idea where your - what the background of your name is? Who was your grandfather?' [laughs] Yeah definitely. Hmm.

**Jaap:** Well is there anything you wanna share before we wrap this up?

**Grosso:** You know, I don't. I think that's pretty much - well it's a tough one. There's all sorts of other stories and things.

**Jaap:** Well if you think of anything, it'd be great to have you back for a second recording, because -

**Grosso:** Certainly. Well thank you!

**Jaap:** Well thank you Tino. Alright.

[END OF RECORDING]