

**ALAN BROWN (ACM)**

**The Verdigris Project**

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**Oral History Transcript of Alan Brown (ACM)**

*Interviewee: Alan Brown*

*Interviewer: Clark Grant*

*Interview Date: August 30th, 2019*

*Location: Missoula Home of Alan’s Friend Maurice Burke*

*Transcribed: February 25th, 2021 by Nora Saks*

**CLARK GRANT**: Okay. Do you mind saying and spelling your name into the mic there?

**ALAN BROWN**: Alan Brown, A L A N, B R O W N.

**GRANT:** Great. It looks good on my end. Like I say, we usually start asking people to recollect about their family. And so, how far back do you know your family history? 

[00:00:21]

**BROWN:**Oh, I know my family history going back many years. I did a little bit of geological studies on my family, and I guess I can trace my family on my father's side, back to the 1600s. And on my mother's side, back to the early 1700s. 

**GRANT:**And where are they from?

**BROWN:**Well, my mom's family all came from Serbia and Yugoslavia. Well, it was Yugoslavia, it's no longer that. Croatia, I guess, is a better way to describe it.

My dad's family came from England, Scotland, Wales, and they came over in 1623. And my mom's family came over in 1912. My dad's family can be divided in two groups - the Rutledges, which my grandmother was a Rutledge, and she married her Brown. And the Browns came over in about 1648, I believe.

[00:01:30] 

**GRANT:** Wow. Where did they first end up?

**BROWN:** Well, the Rutledges, which was my grandmother's maiden name, came to Baltimore, Maryland. And they settled in Baltimore, ultimately going to Missouri. And then they came west from St. Louis in 1850, went to Washington, founded the town of Little Rock and Tumwater and Olympia, which is of course the state capital of Washington.

The Browns went to Missouri. And fought in the civil war. And then my great-grandfather on the Brown side left home when he was 15, went to San Francisco as a market hunter for hotels in San Francisco. And then he decided to go north, after about five, six years. Ended up in Little Rock and married my grandmother.

And then in 1911, they decided that they would go to homestead in Montana. Montana had just been opened for homesteading. And they went to place called Hop, which is south and east of Big Sandy. And they homesteaded on the Missouri river breaks.

And then my mother's side of the family, my grandfather came to Ellis Island in 1910, was processed through that entry port. His name was Pascowitz. They had trouble with the name Pascowitz. So the people at Ellis Island said, 'you're Sam Peck from now on'. Well, that didn't stick. He didn't like being Sam Peck. So when he got to Butte, which is where he went, he went back to Sam Pascowitz.

[00:03:24] 

They didn't like that in Butte, so they put him back to Sam Peck. And my grandfather started to work in the Butte mines in 1912. And he was Sam Peck for his entire working career. He died of silicosis from the mines in about 1953. 

My grandmother, who was pregnant at the time, was 15. And she came the next year and joined, she ended up coming to Ellis Island, ended up on a train to Butte, spoke no English. My grandfather spoke no English. Anyway, they got married when she got to Butte. My mother was their first child. She was born about seven months after they got married. And then the family spoke Croatian at home and gradually they learned to speak English. My mother was one of two children and she had a sister. They both have passed now.

My dad had one sister, she's dead. They had three children that didn't live to adulthood. My mother only had one sister and they had no children other than that. And that's my parents' background. I have two sisters. They're both younger than I am.

**GRANT:** Do you know where in Butte they lived?

**BROWN:** 607 South Montana was the last address. Before that they lived somewhere down on the Flat, when my mother was a girl growing up. The only memory I have of where they lived was on 607 South Montana. The house is no longer there, it's been torn down. It was a fourplex, a typical Butte fourplex. My grandmother lived on a, as you face it, on the bottom right-hand side, my uncle who married my mother's sister, lived on the upper left-hand side. And my earliest memories of Butte was going to visit my grandmother and grandfather. And my grandfather was working in the Kelly mine at the time. I believe he started working in the Orphan Girl, but I'm not certain of that. 

Anyway, my earliest memories is my grandmother started me out to go meet my grandfather as he was walking down Montana Street. I must've been about seven at the time, maybe six. And he would be walking down Montana Street and I'd be walking up a Montana Street, and my grandmother timed it so that I would only have like a half a block to walk. I can remember him dropping his lunch bucket, and I can remember running up to meet him and he would grab me and throw me up in the air and meet me. And then we'd walk on down to their house. That's my earliest memories of Butte.

**GRANT:**What was his name?

**BROWN:** Sam Pascowitz. Or as far as the mine goes, he was Sam Peck. 

**GRANT:** Sam Peck.

[00:06:22] 

**BROWN:**Do you need more information about my family or will that do it?

**GRANT:** I'm curious if he had experience mining before he ever came there?

**BROWN:**No. He had no experience as a miner before he came. He was, I believe 19 when he immigrated from Croatia. He came from a small little town on the Baltic Sea. Nova - I can't remember the name of the town. It was Nova something. Anyway, it was a resort type town. His family owned a hotel, and they weren't wealthy, but they did alright. 

He was the third son of the family and far enough down in the family chain so that he would not inherit the hotel. And so he had to go do something else. I know that one of his brothers went to South Africa and was a foreman at one of the diamond mines. And that's really about all I know about that family. There's really no records that I can access because I can't speak Croatian. 

**GRANT:**Yeah. When were you born Alan?

[00:07:37] 

**BROWN:** I was born in Great Falls in 1942. My parents lived in Great Falls and I lived in Great Ralls all of my life, until I went to school at the University in Missoula, and lived in Missoula all the rest of my life, except for the last two years, which I've lived in Arizona.

I have two sisters. One of them lives in Missoula. The other one lives in Great Falls. They're both younger than I am. 

**GRANT:**And so if Grandpa Sam died in '53, you said...

**BROWN:**Approximately, yeah, I can't remember the months in '53, but he died in '53. I remember going to visit him for the last time in the hospital in Galen. He died of silicosis from the mine. And interestingly enough, when I worked for the mine in Butte, there were no records of him. It seems like, in those days, if somebody died from something could be remotely be attributed to an industrial accident or an industrial disease, the records disappeared. And there was no record of him ever working.

And I looked through all of the information that was available, as far as industrial disease and accident, all the records. Because I worked in the labor relations department. There was nothing available. There was just nothing there. It's like he disappeared off the face of the earth.

[00:09:02] 

**GRANT:**Do you think that's common?

**BROWN:** I have no idea. It could have been that his stuff was misfiled. I don't know. I just thought it was odd that there was no record of him. 

**GRANT:**Could you tell me more about the last time you saw him? What you recall of that? You must have been...

**BROWN:** I was very young. I remember going into the hospital room and talking to him and he could hardly speak. And I remember him saying 'goodbye, be a good boy'. And I remember alongside the bed, there was a basin, very similar to what dentists have. With water swirling around. And all the time he was talking, he would be coughing up spittle and spitting into this thing because his lungs were virtually gone from the silicosis.

And that's really all I remember. I remember my sisters did not go in to see him. Because my parents thought it would be too hard on them, I guess. Or maybe they wouldn't understand, because they were both considerably younger than I was. The older of my two sisters would have been six, and the other one would have been three, and they wouldn't have understood what was going on. And I barely understood. 

[00:10:12] 

**GRANT:** I guess you understood later.

**BROWN:**Yeah, I understood much later. But I have few memories of him, really. My best memory of course, is meeting him on the street. And every time we'd go to Butte, that was the highlight of the day, was going to meet him when he'd come from the mine. He worked day shift, of course. And that was a highlight of the visits. 

In typical Butte fashion, the apartment was dark. You know, they were like tunnels. You walked in the front door and there was a window in the living room. And then you came to the bedroom, and then you walked straight from the living room to the bedroom. And then you came to the kitchen. There's no windows in the bedroom. When you come to the kitchen, there's one window. And then the bathroom is off of the kitchen. And then there's a little hallway that goes out to the backyard. And that's the entire structure, there aren't very many windows and the scene was pretty dark. And the backyard was small. I remember that.

**GRANT:**Can we talk a bit about your parents then? You know, these are your grandparents.

**BROWN:** Okay. My parents - my mother of course grew up in Butte. She couldn't wait till when she could leave home. She was a wonderful woman, very independent. When she was 18, she packed up and went to Spokane, went to Kinman Business College. When  she graduated from Kinman Business College, she went to work for the Social Security Administration, worked for them for a number of years. And then she married my father. Met him, of course, and then married him. 

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My dad grew up on the homestead at Hop. When my grandfather - I never knew my grandfather on my dad's side. He died in 1928. My father was born in 1902. And when my grandfather died, my dad and my grandmother stayed on the homestead until probably around 1926 or 1927, maybe even 1928, somewhere there. And then they sold the homestead to a cousin. My dad went to work for the Farmers Union. And subsequently went to work for the Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association, better known as GTA.

And he worked for them for probably 35 years. He ended up being in charge of all of the elevators for them in the golden triangle, which is bounded by Great Falls, Shelby, Malta. And I can't recall the number of elevators he supervised, but he had a sizable number of elevators that he supervised in that area.

And my mother lived to be 97 and a half. And about the time she was 95 or 94, perhaps, she changed her philosophy as to how old she was. She added nine months to her age. And I asked her about that. I said, 'well, no, mom, you're not that old'. She says, 'yes I am, because I think we should measure age from conception'.

And I said, 'well, why did you say that mom'? She says, 'well, I want to be a hundred. And I think that's the only way I'm going to make it'. So from that point on, she had added nine months to her age. And even with the nine months, she didn't quite make it. She lived to be 97 and a half to the day. And my dad died when he was 85 from a heart attack. And so he lived a good, long life. They were wonderful parents. 

[00:14:03] 

**GRANT:**Could you tell me a bit about the elevators, how that works?

**BROWN:** You know, farmers need a place to get rid of, to dispose of their wheat. And the elevators provided that function. They would haul their wheat to the to the grain elevators in trucks. The wheat would be weighed in the truck and then dumped, and then the truck would be waived, so, you know, how much wheat came into the elevator. And then they could either store the wheat in the elevator and pay storage on it, or the elevator would buy the wheat. And of course the elevator preferred to buy the wheat.

Wheat would be purchased, when the elevator was full, or as it filled up, it would be loaded into box cars and then shipped back east, where the grain mills were, to be milled into flour or used for other purposes, depending on what type of wheat it was. 

**GRANT:** And is GTA still around?

**BROWN:** No, GTA is long gone.

**GRANT:**But he retired from there.

**BROWN:** Yeah. Dad retired from GTA in '62, a long time ago.

**GRANT:** Mmm hmm.

**BROWN**: Yeah my dad's been dead since 1985.

**GRANT:**That's the year before I was born.

**BROWN:** Like I said, a long time ago. 

**GRANT:** Hm. And so, let's talk a bit about your childhood.

[00:15:36] 

**BROWN:**Well, we had a really good childhood. We lived in Great Falls for my entire childhood. And my mom did not work. So she was a home wife, or a housewife. We lived on the north side of Great Falls in a very nice ranch style home.

We owned 1200 and - 1,280 acres of wheat land. And we didn't farm it. We leased the land out. But we spent a lot of weekends out of the ranch. I had a horse from when I was five years old. I spent a lot of time riding my horse. Hunted deer from when I was 10 years old, loved to hunt.

We did things as a family. We went on family vacations - I don't know what else there is to say. It was a very nice childhood. I grew up and enjoyed every minute of it. 

**GRANT:** When you'd go out, riding the horses as a little kid, how far would you go from the house? 

**BROWN:** Oh, I don't know. We'd go out to the ranch to ride and I'd go anywhere from 10 to 20 miles.

**GRANT:** Wow. 

**BROWN:** I think the longest distance I ever rode was from the ranch house to Tiger Butte, which was probably 22 or 23 miles. 

**GRANT:**And how old would you have been then?

**BROWN:** Oh, 12, 13, something like that.

**GRANT:**Do you feel like kids nowadays are done a disservice because they're so sheltered?

[00:17:18] 

**BROWN:**Oh yeah. Our children were the last generation, I think, where kids really got to do things. You know, we didn't have to worry about our children getting in trouble, or worry about somebody kidnapping them, or drugs. Our kids - well, first of all, we lived out in the country, here in Missoula. And our kids had motorcycles and horses, and we didn't worry about them.

They'd get on their horses and ride up into the mountains. And they'd leave in the morning and they'd be back when they got back. Same thing with their motorcycles. They'd go to what they called the purple hills, which was, I don't know, probably seven or eight miles away from our house. And they'd get on their motorcycles and ride off into the, I can't say into the sunset, but it was into the west. 'Cause the sun was still up, you know, when they'd ride off. And they'd have fun. And today's kids don't get to do that kind of stuff. I look at my grandchildren, and what a sheltered life that they lead, because they're afraid to - you know, it's not safe for kids to do those kinds of things anymore.  And it's sad. It's sad what's happened to our country. 

[00:18:32] 

**GRANT:** Hm. And so what about your schooling? I'm curious where you went to school.

**BROWN:** I went to school and when I was in grade school, I went to Lowell School, which is kitty corner to our house. And it was nice in the winter time because I could run home. And as soon as I touched my lawn, then I could run back out and throw snowballs at people. Because you had to go home, it was a school rule that you had to go home before he could throw snowballs. 

So I'd run out the door and run and touch my front lawn. And then I throw snowballs at people. So anyway, grades one through six, I went to Lowell School. And then I went to Great Falls High School, or excuse me, Paris Gibson Junior High, and then Great Falls High School. And I went to the university here in Missoula and got a degree from there.

**GRANT:**Was coming to Missoula like going to the big city then?

**BROWN:** No. Great Falls at the time was much larger than Missoula.

**GRANT:** I see.

**BROWN:** And then when I finished school at the university, I went to work for Anaconda Forest Products, which was located at Bonner, about seven miles from Missoula.

I worked for them from 1967, till 1972, when Anaconda Forest Products was sold to US Plywood, which subsequently became Champion International. I worked for them from 1972 to 1980, and then 1980, I went back to work for Anaconda Minerals. And I worked for them from 1980 to 1985, when I went to work for myself. And that's a quick summary of my work history.

[00:20:14] 

**GRANT:**Yeah, really. So your first professional job was with Anaconda -

**BROWN:**Yes, with Anaconda Forest Products. 

**GRANT:** Can you tell us about the work there? What...

**BROWN:**Sure. When I graduated from the university, I had an opportunity to go to work for NASA. And June and I went down and looked at NASA, and NASA looked good. June had a teaching job in Houston. We liked everything about Houston, except Houston itself. We didn't like Houston at all. And I think what convinced us not to live there was the bugs. We looked at a house to rent, to buy, and it was a nice house. It had been empty for exactly two days. And there were lizards in between the sliding glass doors going out to the backyard. And the crickets were so loud you could hardly think. And you'd step on them when you walk on the sidewalk, and you wouldn't dare walk in the grass because the grass was full of them. So we didn't think we wanted to live in Houston very bad. We had a 65 GTO Pontiac that we had just purchased and we averaged 85 miles an hour leaving Houston, Texas on the way back home to come back here.

June had a teaching job in Missoula and I had an opportunity to go to work for Anaconda Forest Products, which I did. I started out doing personnel work and I ended up doing labor relations work for Anaconda Forest Products. And so I did some hiring, but the majority of my time was spent doing labor relations with the union for Anaconda Forest Products. I would negotiate contracts and handle grievances. 

[00:21:57] 

**GRANT:**What was your degree in?

**BROWN:**History and political science.

**GRANT:** Okay.

**BROWN:** Totally not related, but that didn't seem to matter. 

**GRANT:** Was it just, you had some knack for negotiating? Or why'd you go into labor relations?

**BROWN:** I just - did. I don't really know how that happened. It just happened. I think that often happens with college degrees. You know, you get a degree in A and you end up doing B or D or something else.

**GRANT:**I have a French degree.

**BROWN:** Yeah, good example.

**GRANT:** Now I'm doing drywall. 

**BROWN:** Yeah. Yeah. Good example. Anyway, I worked for them and then Anaconda Forest Products was sold to, I'm going to just call it Champion, because US Plywood ended up being merged with Champion. Anyway, I went to work for them, when Anaconda Forest Product was sold. I had an opportunity to stay with Anaconda, but I didn't want to come to Butte. And I certainly did not want to go to the other places that they wanted me to go. And I had an opportunity to stay with Champion, which I did. 

And when I stayed with Champion, I became labor relations manager for Rocky Mountain Manufacturing. And Rocky Mountain Manufacturing was 11 different locations, with three different unions. So it was a lot bigger job than the Anaconda Forest Products had been.

And I enjoyed it. It was a good job, and a lot more responsibility. And then I stayed with them until I got an opportunity - well, my old boss called me from Butte. He stayed with the Anaconda Company, and he called and said, 'would you come back to work for us'? And I said, 'I don't think so'. And he said, well, and he talked about salary and I said, 'oh maybe'. You know, it was a substantial increase in pay. And it was a lot more responsibility, 'cause it was Anaconda Minerals that I was going to go back to work for. And Anaconda Minerals had 13 unions at the mine itself, and then there were 13 unions with the railroad. And I would do all the negotiations for the 26 unions.

And they were in the middle of negotiations at the time, this was in 1980, and things were not going particularly well. And they didn't quite tell me the truth as to why they wanted me to come, but it sounded pretty good and it was a lot more money. And so June and I went over, we looked at buying a house in Butte. And there weren't any houses available at the time that were really what we wanted to buy. Because the Anaconda Company was really expanding and growing at the time, as was Montana Power.

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And I think we looked at four houses and that was the houses we had to choose from. So we were thinking about building a house. And then one of the realtors, one of the people in the realty company that we were dealing with, decided that they wanted to sell their house. And we ended up buying their house, which was a nice house out on Continental Drive.

So anyway, bottom line is we decided to go to work for the Anaconda Minerals division of ARCO. And we did. And June did not go back to teaching. She had been teaching in Missoula and she substituted a little bit in Butte, but she mainly, she stayed home and raised the children, which was something I think she wanted to do. And so she was able to, because we were making more money. And we stayed in Butte until 1984 and I stayed a little longer closing down the railroad. And then we were back in Missoula again.

**GRANT:** That first time you had an opportunity to go work in Butte, why did you turn it down? You didn't want to go there then?

**BROWN:**It was not a good time in our children's lives or our lives, I think, to pack up and go to Butte. You know, we had just bought our place out in the country in Missoula. We wanted to ride horses and we didn't have any children at the time. Although I believe June may have been pregnant -  let's see, no, she wasn't pregnant then. But we were enjoying our lives being single, riding our horses in the mountains. And we just didn't want to go to Butte. And I had the opportunity to go stay and go to work for Champion. And it was a bigger job. And the job of coming to Butte was nebulous. I didn't know exactly what I'd be doing. I knew exactly what I would be doing with Champion and we decided we'd stay. 

[00:26:49]

**GRANT:** For Anaconda Forest Products, can you give me an idea of their holdings and the atmosphere there? 

**BROWN:** Oh sure. Anaconda Forest Products was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Anaconda Company. We owned 670,000 acres of timberland. It had been acquired by Marcus Daly, back - way back when. And he had acquired it for the purpose of creating stoles and caps for the mine, for the underground mines. Because in the underground mines, you had to put timbers to hold the rock up. And originally, Anaconda Forest Product did nothing but create timbers for the mines. And so we had what was called the small log mill, and its sole function was to make mine timbers.

And that's what Daly had acquired the timberlands for. I'm not certain as to how he got those, whether he purchased them from the federal government or whether he - well, I'm not sure how he got them. I'm pretty sure he purchased them, but I'm not positive of that. They may have been granted to him for, through some kind of a process, I just don't know.

In any event, the Anaconda Forest Products grew, and we had a saw mill. We had a planer of course, to plane the lumber, so it wasn't all rough lumber. And then we had a house plant where we built prefabricated homes, a laminated beam plant, and a molding plant where we built - or machine, I guess is a better word - moldings for door trims and ceiling trims and anything that moldings were used for. And we had about 125 salaried employees, including the people in the forestry department, and 600 or so hourly employees. So it was a large operation.

We had one union, which was the lumber production and industrial workers. And my job evolved into dealing with the union. I dealt with all of the grievances that we had from the union and all the negotiations with the union. And that was a full-time job. And that's basically what I did. 

[00:29:19] 

**GRANT:**Can you help me understand how those negotiations go? Would you guys, were you cordial? Would you go have a beer? Would it be contentious?

**BROWN:**We would sit down at a table. And when you walked into the room, the far side of the table was my side of the table, and I had a committee. The grievances had three steps. The first step was between the man and the shop steward and the man's supervisor. If they couldn't resolve the grievance, then it went to the second step. And at the second step, we had the supervisor's boss, the superintendent of the particular operation, whatever it might've been, myself and dometimes we would have a third person on our side. And then we'd have the union's business agent and their grievance committee. And the grievance committee was a representative from the saw mill and from the planer and from the houseplant molding department. And probably - well, no, just houseplant molding department. And that would have been it. So it would be four or five people from the union sitting on their own, the other side of the table, and probably three of us, sometimes four of us on our side. And the union would present their grievance and I'd listen to what they had to say. And then we'd tell them what we thought and then we'd go caucus. And then we'd resolve the grievance if we could.

If we couldn't resolve the grievance, then we would go to the next step of the grievance procedure. And in that step, I would have a different committee. I'd have superintendent of the department and I'd have the plant manager and myself for our side of the committee.

And they would have the business agent and his boss, which would be the - I forget the guy's title, but anyway, he came from Kalispell. And they would sit down with us and we tried to resolve the grievance. And if we couldn't resolve the grievance, then we'd make a last and final offer. And then if the union didn't like that offer, they could either do what we said or go on strike. You know, there was no arbitration clause in our contract with Anaconda Forest Products.

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So anyway, they never did go on strike. And so basically, we'd resolve the grievance at the third step. We'd try to come up with some kind of an equitable solution. And we didn't always do, you know, we weren't always able to reach an equitable solution from both perspectives. But anyway, that's how the grievance procedure worked for Anaconda Forest Products. And we knew that if we didn't resolve the grievance, we'd hear about it in negotiation. So you know, we tried to resolve the issues. Because if you don't resolve them, you end up with a long string of issues you have to dispose of at negotiations, and that just complicates negotiations. So it was always better to try to figure out some resolution where you could get rid of grievances. And we did get rid of everything, except maybe some grievances over principles. You know, if we had a grievance over somebody being fired or a grievance over whether somebody should get paid a different wage, we could resolve those kinds of grievances.

But if we had a principle issue, then usually that we couldn't agree on them, usually that carried over into negotiations. And oftentimes, those kinds of issues would cause issues and problems in negotiation. So we tried very hard to resolve those kinds of issues.

**GRANT:**Could you give me an example of one of the principles that might be an issue?

[00:33:09] 

BROWN: Work for millwrights is a good example. Millwrights are people that fix things. And we have three classes of millwrights. We had millwright one, millwright two and millwright three. Millwright three gets paid the most money and they could do anything. By definition, anything that needed to be fixed, they could do. Millwright two could do most things, but not all things. Millwright one was kind of a learning position.

And the lines between those positions are blurry. You know, it's very hard to say, okay, you're a millwright one, and these are your duties. You're a millwright two, and these are your duties. Millwright three, these are your duties. The lines are, you know it's blurry as to how each position is defined. And we would get into arguments over - okay, we're going to fix a broken head rig. It's a saw that reduces the log into lumber in a saw mill. And let's say that it's got a broken, they were steam operated, so let's say it's got a broken piston in the head rig.

Normally that would be a millwright three's job. That's a complex job to fix that drive piston. And there's no millwright three available. And so you put - millwright two's working on it. And the millwright twos are working on it and they fix it. They say, 'okay, we want to get paid mill millwright three wages for the time we spent working on fixing that piston'.

And we say 'No, no. We're not going to pay you millwright three for that time, because you're expected to be able, first of all, you're learning how to do it. Secondly, you're expected to be able to do, there's no clear definition of what a millwright two and a millwright three does. And occasionally, yes, you're going to be doing millwright two work. Occasionally going to be doing millwright three work. Occasionally you're going to be doing millwright one work. Do you want us to cut your wages back when you do millwright one work? Of course, not. Just as we're not going to increase your wages when you occasionally do millwright three work'. That's a principal issue for us. It's a principal issue for them, because' by God, I did millwright three work and I want to be paid millwright three for the six hours I worked on that piston that was broken'. That's a principle issue. 

[00:35:49] 

**GRANT:**Do you have any sense of how profitable the company was, say, at that time?

**BROWN:**Yeah. At that time, the Anaconda Company was in serious, serious financial trouble because of the issue of the appropriation of the mines in Chile.

And we would have big wigs, for lack of a better term, from the mine here in Butte or from New York, come and see us every month. And they would take the management team out to dinner, to the Club Chateau, which no longer exists. And they would say, 'you guys are doing a great job. You're keeping the company afloat. And you contributed $1,300,000 to keeping the company afloat this month. Or a million dollars, whatever it was. Anyway, it was never less than a million dollars -

**GRANT:** - a month. 

**BROWN:** A month. And that money went directly to Butte, and keeps the company floating. So we were making a million dollars a month in round numbers.

**GRANT:** Wow. Is that net?

**BROWN:** Yeah. That's net, that's dollars to Butte. That's what we called it. DOB - dollars to Butte.

So, yeah. You know, I saw the financial statements every month, but that gives you a rough number. Yeah. Just say a million dollars a month.

**GRANT**: And Champion, was it comparable? 

[00:37:16] 

**BROWN:** Oh, we did much better with Champion. The situation isn't comparable though. You know, we had -  it's just not comparable. It wasn't the same operation. With Champion, we had the world's largest plywood mill.

**GRANT:** Where's that located?

**BROWN:**It was in Bonner. 

**GRANT:** In Bonner?

**BROWN:** Yeah. We built the plywood plant. It was the world's largest plywood mill for a year. And then somebody built one larger in Brazil. But for a whole year, we were the biggest plywood plant in the world. And we made considerably more money than that. But.

**GRANT:** Was it difficult for you at all in these negotiations, with guys talking about maybe a dollar here, a dollar there, on their hourly wage, knowing that you're making a million a month?

**BROWN:** No. No, not really. We had, we knew what what we were going to give for maximum increases. We knew what we thought we could afford to do. And we started out where we thought we could start, and we ended hopefully less than we had authority to spend. And I think we did every time. I was very good at crying poor.

**GRANT:**Were you close at all with any of the union leadership?

[00:38:52] 

**BROWN:** What do you mean by close? Were we friends? 

**GRANT:**Yeah.

**BROWN:**Maybe with a few of them. Not too many of them. We'd go out occasionally and have a drink and talk about things. But no, I wouldn't say I was very close or good friends with any of them.

**GRANT:** Was it adversarial? 

**BROWN:**No. We just, people had differing views that had to work together to resolve issues.

**GRANT:** Did you enjoy that kind of work?

**BROWN:** Yes, I did.

**GRANT:**Never having been in a negotiating table like that, is there banging on the tables or cussing?

**BROWN:** Sometimes. You have to do it when it's effective, though. If it's not going to be an effective situation, you don't do it. What would you like an example? 

**GRANT:** Definitely. 

[00:39:54] 

**BROWN:** Okay. Well, we got to skip ahead chronologically now to 1983, and we're in the negotiations in Butte. And we were at a hard spot with the negotiations, with the Teamsters and the operating engineers. And I told the committee - we were in caucus, I told the committee, now this is what we're going to do. We got two reasons for doing this. Number one is All My Children is going to be on in 20 minutes. And we were watching All My Children, my whole committee watched - we took an hour caucus every morning at 10 o'clock, so that we could watch All My Children. And secondly, we wanted to shake the operating engineers up. We wanted to really make 375 start listening to what we were trying to tell them. So I said, 'okay, at five minutes to 10, I'm going to say, that's it. We're not going to listen to this bullshit anymore. And I'm going to slam my books together and we're going to get up and walk out'. So at five minutes to 10, I said, 'I'm not going to listen to this bullshit anymore from you guys'. Slammed my books together and we got up and we walked out. And we went and watched All My Children. At about 10:35 - bang, bang, bang on our door.

We're in Spokane doing these negotiations. And I get up and I go to the door, and I don't open it, I just let it open a little bit. And here are the two people from the operating engineers - the business agent and the president. I said, 'what can I do for you fellas'? He said, 'you can't walk out on us like this'. And I said, 'well, we already did. You won't listen to us. You won't give us anything we need to do here. And quite frankly, we're not interested in anything you have to say'. And the president of the union says, 'we can't let the negotiations break down over this. We have to give you something. Come on back and we'll talk about it some more'.

And I said, 'well, we'll be back. We need to caucus some more then, consider what we want to hear from you'. Because we hadn't finished All My Children for the day. So anyway, they went back and after All My Children were over, then we came back and they gave us whatever point it was that we were arguing about. So that's an example.

[00:42:04] 

And another example, Barney Rask, who was a steelworker who did most of the talking for the union, he was pretending to be dying through all of the negotiations in '83. But if you saw him downtown, he was doing just fine. But in negotiations, he was pretending to be dying. And he would limp around and he had a cane and he would cough and cough.

And he'd say, 'I hope I can make through negotiations before I pass'. And I said something that he didn't like, and he took his cane and he came around, with it over his shoulder, and smashed it on the table so hard he broke the cane. And he said, 'no, goddammit! No, no no no'! And they all got up and walked out.

But since that was my technique, I didn't get too excited about it. And I said, 'well, when you want to talk some more, come on back'. But anyway, yeah, sometimes you do things like that.

**GRANT:**Only when it's effective.

**BROWN:**Only when it's effective. You can't do it very often. I only did it once in all of the '83 negotiations and it worked. Barney tried it once with his cane and it didn't work, so. It's something you don't do very often.

**GRANT:** So the political changes in Chile is what precipitated the sale to Champion?

[00:43:24] 

**BROWN:**Yes.

**GRANT:** So the nationalization of Chuquicamata affected every aspect of Anaconda?

**BROWN:** Oh yeah. When Allende nationalized mines in Chile, it changed everything for the Anaconda Company. Anaconda was a very large company before that. Probably fourth or fifth, maybe sixth in the US in size. It was a huge conglomerate, very profitable. And we poured all of our resources into Chile because we had the army backing us up. And if the miners wanted to go on strike, the army came in and said, 'work or die'. You know, no problems with Chile at all.

They just, you know, they just mined. And the ore was incredibly rich. We got all we wanted. We smelted it there. It was tremendous. Good quality ore, lots of copper. It was a great thing. And we thought, we're doing really good. The chairman of the board was good, personal friends with Allende. And thought, nothing to worry about here! Yeah, I speak Spanish. I speak his language. We're going to be expand Chile some more. And  we neglected Butte, we neglected the mines in Mexico. We neglected the mines in Arizona, because things were going so well in Chile. There's no need to spend money in Butte. Butte has got good ore, but it's also got problems. It's got arsenic in it and there's other problems with mining in Butte. We've got horrible unions. In Chile, we've got the army, you know, we don't have problems. We're going to mine, mine, mine down there.

And then bang  - Allende nationalized all the mines. And all of a sudden we don't have Chile anymore. And to make matters worse, we had insurance with Lloyd's of London. We had a billion dollars worth of insurance on Chile, against nationalization. Problem was the premium was huge. Several million dollars a month in premium to keep this insurance. And since we were such good friends with Chile, our chairman of the board, he said, 'there's no reason to pay that premium anymore. Cancel the policy'. Which he did. And of course the policy was dead and gone and didn't pay.

So all of a sudden we didn't have that huge insurance check coming in. We saved several million dollars, I think it was six months or maybe it was less than that, but it was not more than six months that the policy was canceled before Chile was nationalized.

[00:46:09] 

So all of a sudden we went from this giant rich company, down to this pauper company that lost two thirds of their income or more. Boom just like that. And so all of a sudden forest products became extremely important instead of a poor sister, like we'd been before. Nobody really paid much attention to us prior to the nationalization in Chile. We were just a profitable little sideline that was over there in Bonner, that Largie McDonald, who was our Butte boss, occasionally came over to Bonner to go out and party with. Other than that, nobody in Butte paid any attention to us. And then all of a sudden we became very important, because we made the Butte payroll. Paid for the Hennessy building people. So, yeah, it made a huge difference.

Additionally, during this period, almost as soon as Chile, was gone, Crane tried to take over the Anaconda Company in a hostile takeover. And it was only the money coming from forest products and maybe from American brass that saved the Anaconda company from Crane.

**GRANT:**And they were plumbing?

**BROWN:** Yeah. But, you know, you used an awful lot of copper in the plumbing business. They wanted to control their natural resource, which was copper. 

**GRANT:** I see. They wanted to vertically integrate themselves.

**BROWN:** Yeah. They wanted full vertical integration.

**GRANT:** Yeah. And so what was talk around the office like when you first heard the news?

**BROWN:** Of what?

**GRANT:** Nationalization? 

[00:47:44]

**BROWN:** We didn't talk about it. We didn't think it affected us. You know, we were pretty autonomous. You know, we had our forest plan. We were going to cut trees forever. We planted more trees than we cut. We knew that in, I think it was in 2030, we'd have four years where we'd have to buy Forest Service timber to supplement, because we'd have a little short period of five, maybe eight years where we would be short on timber, to keep it running perpetually off of our own land. And we'd have to supplement with Forest Service timber, you know, but that was so far in the future. That was 50 years down the trail. Nobody worried about it. 

And nobody in Butte seem to care about us. Like I said, Largie McDonald came over once or twice a month. And the top management would go out, you know, far above my level, would go out and they'd have a big party at the Chateau. And then he'd go back and we were making money and nobody cared about us. So we didn't, I don't think anybody really thought it affected us that much. You know, that's Butte's problem. That's not our problem.

But it quickly became our problem, because all of a sudden there was a lot of pressure on us to make every penny we could.

**GRANT:**And so it probably says here in the notes, when - was it 72, the sale to Champion?

**BROWN:** Yes, it was in '72.

**GRANT:** And then in '76, the whole thing sold to ARCO.

**BROWN:** Yeah. 

**GRANT:** And so, can you tell me about - let's revisit that transition there, when you went...

[00:49:35] 

**BROWN:**Well, we couldn't keep the Anaconda Company floating. You know, we were only generating a million bucks a month, and that wasn't enough to do it.

And Chase Van Hadden had a note for a hundred million dollars from the Anaconda Company that was due. And the Anaconda Company had no money to pay it. And all of a sudden we had plane loads of people flying into Missoula. We had Weyerhaeuser, we had Georgia Pacific. We had Champion. I don't know, there were several other people that flew in. And there was only a week's time before the note was due.

And the only people that could come up with money to buy - and forest products was for sale for 117 million bucks. Which was the face value of the note. And the only people that had enough money to pay for it was Champion - US Plywood at the time. But anyway, Champion, for purposes of discussion. And they flew around and looked at our timber out of a corporate jet. And I still remember Bob Sheridan, who was our leader, saying he was flying, saying 'that's our timber, that's our timber, that's our timber'. And Bob had no idea what he's pointing at. He was just playing at uncut stands of timber. And Champion people didn't have an opportunity to look at, really, except there's a lot of uncut timber there. It looks very good. Anyway.

Champion says, 'okay, we'll buy it'. And so Champion wrote out a check for $117M to the Anaconda Company, and signed a note for $117M to Chase Van Hadden. And that was the end of it all. It was all done in a week. And that saved the Anaconda Company from going bankrupt.

[00:51:38] 

And we became property of Champion. Boom! All in a week. But they're the only people that had the credit, I guess, with Chase, to do it. Because Anaconda Company had no other options, they had to do it that fast. 

**GRANT:**Wow.

**BROWN:** So that's how that happened.

**GRANT:**Was there really much change on the ground? 

**BROWN:**Oh yeah. Champion said, 'we're going to shut this thing down. We're going to build the world's biggest plywood plant. It's gonna be down for two years while we build the plywood plant'. Of course, that meant that all of us were going to be without a job. And I was offered once again a chance to stay with the Anaconda Company. And I thought, 'Oh gee, maybe I'd better do that. Because I don't know how we're going to survive for two years without work'. But the Champion people that came in said to me, 'we're going to run the place, but we're not going to announce that yet. We're going to run the sawmill. And if you want a job, you can have a job with us, but don't talk about it'.

So anyway, I said, 'no, I'm not going to go to Butte'. And some of my cronies from Butte came over and said, 'you really need to come with us'. And I said, 'where are you going to send me'? And they said, 'Tonopah, Nevada'. And I said, 'what'? And they said, 'Tonopah, Nevada'. And I said, 'what's in Tonopah?' And they said, 'well, there's some double-wides you can rent. There's a good mine'. And I said, 'I don't think so'. June said, 'Tonopah, Nevada'? We looked on a map to see where Tonopah was. We said, 'no, we're not going to do that. We're going to stay here'. So anyway, I went to work for Champion and we stayed. And didn't regret it a bit.

[00:53:34] 

Anyway, after they bought it - we sat there - we, Champion - sat there for two months without doing anything. And then they made the announcement that in another month, they're going to start it back up. Because they wanted to shut it down for three months, just to make it very clear that we were going to break the union, and we're not going to have the same union that Anaconda had. Which only made good sense.

And so we were shut down for three months. Then we started the sawmill backup with what we called the thin line of production. We started up one head rig, and started very slow - as far as coming back online. And as we did that, we started up with an understanding that we wouldn't oppose reunionization, by a union. 

**GRANT:**Was there a picket?

**BROWN:** No, and I don't want to talk about any of that. So anyway, we ended up with the same union, and we didn't oppose the unionization of the operation. So we started back up and after we'd been running, once we had established a full line of production, then we voluntarily entered into negotiations with the union and reached a contract. And then I had that contract to administer. Then Champion created a new division called Rocky Mountain Manufacturing. And I was the labor relations manager for Rocky Mountain Manufacturing, which had nine sawmills and two plywood plants.

**GRANT:**Wow.

**BROWN:** And all this time we were building the plywood plant. We started building it almost immediately, the plywood plant in Bonner. And we did build the largest plywood plant in the world. And we had the dubious honor of owning that title for one year.

**GRANT:**The dubious honor. 

[00:55:26] 

**BROWN:**Well, it was too big a plant. It should never have been built. The purpose was to take some mature timber and liquidate it into lumber and plywood as rapidly as possible.

For as much profit as could be, rather than try to set up something that would run perpetually. Which I didn't think was a good idea when we did it. And it would still be running today if they had built a two lathes instead of a four lathe plywood plant, but that's neither here nor there. That was a decision, it was made in New York.

**GRANT:**Were you ever frustrated by that hierarchy? 

**BROWN:** Oh, many times. The plywood plant was supposed to produce 300 million square feet of plywood per year. Three eights bases. What that meant was that the plywood plant was supposed to produce 300 million square feet of plywood. Three-eighths inch thick, per year. That's a lot of plywood.

**GRANT:** Yeah, it is.

**BROWN:**We never made that goal, but that was the goal they set when they decided to build a four lathe plywood plant. Closest we ever came was 275 million. And every month we'd turn in the figures, and we're always 25 to 30,000, or 25, which produced 275, 260 275, 230. Anyway, we were always short. We could never make it. 

People from New York would come out and scream at us about the fact that we couldn't meet our goals, and they're going to replace all of us because we're all worthless and couldn't do the job. So we finally came up with a solution to it. We lowered the goal. We changed it from 300 million square feet, three eighth's bases, to 250 million square feet bases. God, we were heroes. We beat our goal every month. As an example of frustration from up above. All you have to do is know the right thing to do. And we did, we changed our goal.

**GRANT:** Just changed the number!

**BROWN:** Changed the number down to 250 million square feet, three eighths basis. And boy, we met it every month. We were over it every month. We were heroes.

[00:57:50] 

**GRANT:** Were you traveling at this time?

**BROWN:** Very little. 

**GRANT:**Oh, so when you were saying these 11 sawmills...

**BROWN:** Yeah. but most of it could be done from Bonner.

**GRANT:**Okay. And how long did this arrangement last?

**BROWN:** Until I left and went back to work for ARCO.

**GRANT**: Yeah. And was that shortly after they purchased Anaconda then?

**BROWN:** No, I worked for Champion from 1980, or excuse me, I worked for them from '72 to 80. And I went to work for ARCO in '80. Anaconda Minerals - ARCO. 

**GRANT:** Right. So can you tell me a bit about Anaconda Minerals and what specifically they did? 

[00:58:40] 

**BROWN:**Well, they were in the negotiations in 1980. And I got a call, 'do you want to come to work for us'? And I said, 'I don't think so. I'm happy here'. And then they talked to me about salary and June and I thought, well, we'd better go look at this. That's a lot, a lot, a lot of money. And so we did, and we decided that we would do it. And so anyway, we decided that we would. And I accepted a job to go to work in May of 1980.

And we moved the day Mount St. Helen exploded. And I remember driving over, with June following me in a car, and I was driving our pickup. And I had the camper on the back of the pickup. And it's a good thing because in the ash cloud, all she could see was the back of the camper. 

Anyway, we got over there and they were in the middle of the negotiations in 1980 for the new contract. And the negotiations in 1980 were two tiered. Part of the negotiation for what they called the international issues was being done in Tucson. And local issues were being done in Butte. And so I get there and I got a quick course on what's going on for local negotiations. And they say, 'here you're in charge of them'.

So anyway, I was astounded by what we were in negotiating, 'cause we were negotiating very important stuff. And here I was just thrown into the midst of it. And the important things were just really hard. You know, one of the things, for instance, for the pipe fitter, was how many cans of hand cleaner you get for a month?

And then the Teamsters is a big issue for them. Was do we get cool cushions in our trucks coming out of the Berkeley Pit so that we don't sweat and stick to our seats? I thought, 'this is just stupid. This is utter nonsense'. But anyway, I wade through the local negotiations and then I suggest that you know, nothing was going on in Tucson. We need to take over the industry issues as well. Well, we talk about that, and we finally do. And so we break away from the big five negotiations and decided we're going to do our industry negotiations on our own. You have to understand a little bit about how negotiations were structured. Industry issues were money, cola, insurance and pension. And one of my goals was, we need to get out of Cola. 'Cause Cola was killing us. At the time, Cola was running  at four and a half or 5% a year. And coupled with that, we were given another two or 3% on top of Cola, and our insurance costs were pretty stable. They were going up moderately, but not very bad.

And so, insurance costs weren't like they are today. So that wasn't a much of an issue, but pensions was an issue because we were in Taft-Hartley trusts for all of the unions. And unfortunately being in those kinds of trusts, we didn't really control what happened to trust- controlled, and the trust would kind of dictate to us.

[01:02:17] 

And we didn't have much of a problem with our groups, but our groups were only part of the trust. And we were being controlled by other entities. And our Teamsters might've been doing really well, and we weren't causing problems for the trust, but other people that were in that teamster trust were tending to retire really early and causing problems, retire on disability, and so on, causing liquidity problems for the trust.

So anyway, being part of the Taft-Hartley trust for the Teamsters, I'm just using them as an example, because I don't recall where we had problems. I just remember there were problems with the trust. We had problems with the trust.

So anyway, we get into the negotiations in 1980. And we settled the local issues. And eventually we take away the industry issues and bow out of the big five negotiations. And then it's us doing those. And we got rid of Cola. That was the only thing we accomplished. And then we settled our negotiations. And I thought we were done with negotiations, but I couldn't get the union to sign off on it. Even though they agreed that we reached an agreement on all of the issues. And the reason that they wouldn't sign off is because they said that their bosses back in wherever their headquarters were, somewhere in New York, somewhere in Washington, DC, it didn't matter, would not allow them to do it until there was a settlement in the industry.

So that was fine because our people were all working and we didn't have a strike and we're floating right along. Well, get a visit from the secretary treasurer who runs the Teamsters. Teamsters are run by the secretary treasurer, rather than the president. 

And he comes in to see me and he says, 'we're going on strike day after tomorrow'. And I said, 'what? You can't do that, Jim, we got an agreement'. And he said, 'well, I know that, but I'm just telling you what my bosses have told me and there's trouble in Tucson'. I said, 'yeah, I know I'm aware of that'. He says, 'well, we're going on strike and I have to go on strike. All of us do. So there's going to be a strike'. I says, 'well you can't do that, Jim'. He says, 'well. I have to do it'. I said, 'well, you can't. We've got an agreement'. He says, 'day after tomorrow. There'll be pickets at the main gate'. And I said, 'well, do your best'. He says, 'I'm giving you a notice. That's better than anybody else is getting'.  Anyway, their picket gate strike lasted for, I don't remember anymore, like 30 days or something like that, until they had reached a settlement. And then we went back to work. Which was an example of why we did not want to be part of the group. So we're back to work and we're floating along. Anyway that's basically when I started to work in 1980.

[01:05:23] 

**GRANT:**And this wasn't the time where they picked up your truck?

**BROWN:** No, we're not, we're not doing that...

**GRANT:**Okay, because Maurice had mentioned that.

**BROWN:** Yeah, the next major thing that we had happen is a wildcat strike by the miner's union, the 1A group.

And the reason they're called 1A is, I don't know if you know, but all unions have numbers like operating engineers, 375. Teamsters, number two. Miners, 1A. Well, the reason they have 1A is - steelworkers back, way back when they used to be - sorry, I'm drawing a mental blank -

**GRANT:** Boilermakers?

**BROWN:** No, no. The United Mine Workers of America. 

**GRANT:**Oh, sure. Sure.

**BROWN:** They were United Mine Workers of America, and number, Local 1.

**GRANT:** Right.

**BROWN:** Anyway, back in the fifties, they had a big internal fight and they became steelworkers. And there was already a steel workers union number 1. And the miners wanted to be steelworkers number 1. And the steelworkers who are number 1 said, 'no way! We were number 1'. So anyway, they became 1A, because everybody's very proud of their numbers. And so well, they became 1A. That was the only way that they could resolve that issue, because they were the first United Mine Workers. They wanted to be the first steelworkers. First steel workers didn't want to give up that number one position, so they became 1A. 

[01:07:06] 

Anyway, the miners local union 1A decided to have a wildcat strike. And it was over some trumped up issues where we had made a mistake and terminated some people over some kind of a safety issue that was bogus. And I don't want to go into it. It's just too long and too complicated.

Anyway, we had terminated them. The miners went on strike and it was a wildcat strike. They didn't file a grievance. They just went on strike. They started picketing the main gate. I got a call like at six, maybe five 30 in the morning from the gate, saying that the miners were picketing. I said, 'I'll be right up'. And I got a call before I could get dressed and get out of the house from, I think it was from Charlie Palagi, but I don't remember for sure. Anyway, I said I was on my way and whoever it was said, 'don't stop in your truck'. And I said, 'well, why'? He says, 'just come up to the office and get your company truck'.

So I did. I drove by the main gate and there was about, I don't know, 20 or 30 miners out there in front. And I look at them as I go by and it makes me angry, 'cause I've got a, you know, I've got a contract. I have no idea what this is all about. I don't even know that we fired anybody at this point of the game.

So anyway, I get in my company truck and I come roarin' back down there, drive up to the gate, and 'what in the hell's going on here? What do you want'? 'We're striking. You guys fired two of our people for safety violations that didn't occur'. And I get in a big argument. He told me to shut the fuck up, and I get mad then, and they pick up my truck, with me in it, and set me in the ditch.

[01:08:55] 

And I thought, 'oh, well, that's a new experience'. And I'm sitting there in the ditch in the truck, and then they start to rock the truck back and forth, back and forth. There's about 20 guys hanging onto the sides of the truck, and they were rocking it as hard as it can go on the springs. And I didn't know a truck could bounce that much, but it can.

Anyway, I was afraid it was going to roll over. And they got tired of it all of a sudden and let go and went back up and started picketing. Drove out of the ditch and drove back up to the office, went in the Kelly gate, which they hadn't got pickets to yet, and drove it back into the plant. 

So anyway, they were on strike. Tried to talk to the 1A people about it, they didn't want to talk about it. They just said that they wanted to be out here supporting their folk. Got ahold of Barney Rask and talked to him about it and finally I understood what had happened. Went and talked to the people up at the Kelly, found out what it was about. We investigated the thing, found out what we had done. Went down and told the people go back to work, file a grievance  and we'll take care of it. They wouldn't. I ended up firing about 20 people over this thing. Ultimately, we took them all back, paid 'em back pay, because we were wrong.

And that was the wildcat strike. It was not a good thing at all. It marked the end, I think, of the underground. Because people, you know, ARCO people didn't really understand Butte.

[01:10:28] 

They were used to oil, the oil business, and they were used to problems of a different kind, I guess. They didn't have people like steelworkers to deal with. They had craft unions, but they didn't have plant type employees. And they didn't understand, you know, what kind of people they were and what their viewpoints were.

And the unions didn't really understand ARCO, ever. They never understood ARCO. They  still thought of us as the old Anaconda Company. And I was never able to convince them that it wasn't the old Anaconda Company. And maybe a little later, I'll talk about some examples of that, but in any event, the ARCO people couldn't believe this. We had a contract, we're running, we're working. These people are having a wildcat strike. Why didn't they file grievances? You have binding arbitration in your contract. That's a civilized way to resolve these kinds of issues. We don't allow this kind of behavior at an ARCO facility. Why did you allow this to happen? 

Well, I didn't allow it to happen because I didn't know about it, you know what I mean? That doesn't count for anything. Anyway, bottom line is, it was very destructive to our management relationships with ARCO. And it was extremely disruptive with ARCO's relationships with the unions.

I think ARCO lost a lot of faith in our management over the strike. And I know they lost a lot of faith in the unions. But in any event, we got it settled. We got the people back to work. We got the operation back going. But we had to have salaried people down in the mine, running the pumps to make sure we didn't flood the thing. We made a big announcement that if we didn't get this issue resolved, we were going to quit risking our salaried people down in the underground, because we would risk our property rather than risk human lives. And these people that we had down running the pumps didn't really know what they were doing, which really pissed off the salary people. 'Cause they knew what they were doing. But you know, it was what we said, that kind of helped shrink down the wildcat strike.

[01:13:13] 

And all of a sudden, 1A people got calmed down a little bit and Barney Rask, I got to give him a little credit here, went and talked to the two people that we fired originally and said, 'look, you're going back to work. You're getting your back pay. All the people that were on strike', - I had already talked to Barney - 'and all the people that were out on the picket line, they're all getting their jobs back. They're all getting back pay. Everybody's getting back pay that honored the damn strike. Now quit, go back to work'. And between what I did, what Barney said, everybody went back to work. Everybody got back pay. All it did was cost us a huge amount of money, because nobody crossed the picket lines, but everybody got paid. It was a bad deal. 

And it was very bad as far as their faith, and their being ARCO's faith, in our ability to control the workforce. Something which ARCO always had been able to do with their oil business, largely because it's non-union. 

**GRANT:**I see.

**BROWN:**When you build an oil well, you have construction people. But once things are running, you don't have unions. You have non-union people running your oil field. And you tell them what to do and they do it. It's not like mining at all. 

So anyway, that gets us through the wildcat strike. And now we're to trying to figure out what we're going to do in the 1983 negotiations.

**GRANT:** It's every three years?

**BROWN:**Yeah. Every three years, three-year contracts. We knew that we had to do something about jurisdictional issues. 

[01:15:06] 

We had a horrible situation there in Butte. Now we weren't unique. All of the copper companies have similar issues, but we perhaps were the worst of the bunch because for years and years, the philosophy in Butte had been: don't give them anything, but don't let them strike. That was management's philosophy, as far as union goes.

Now, every three years we had a strike, but that didn't change the philosophy. The direction was always: don't give them any more than you have to, but don't let them strike. So anyway, as a result of that, and a hundred years' worth of mining, and almost a hundred years worth of unionization, we had horrible jurisdiction issues.

I'll give you an example, for instance. In the underground mine, you have to have fresh air. Otherwise people fall over dead. That's why they used to take canaries in little cages down in the mine. And when the canary fell over dead, you knew the air was bad. So you'd better get the hell out of there.

So anyway, we have what's called a fan bag. And you know, like your clothes dryers have air that exhausts out of them. Fan bag is the same kind of material, except it's much larger. It's about two feet in diameter. But it looks just like a clothesline or a clothes dryer exhaust holes. And there's periodic booster stations along the way in the mine.

And you pump fresh air down in it, or vents that let the air out of the, let's just call it the fan bag, because that's what we called it. And suppose that you lose a motor that's running the booster station for the fan bag. So now all of a sudden they're not getting the air down to where the people are actually mining, or not enough air.

So obviously, you have to fix that and you need to fix it in a hurry because you're not getting enough air down there. And there's dust from the drilling. And the people are coughing and they're uncomfortable and they want fresh air now, and we have to get air to them. 

[01:17:29] 

So the supervisor down there in the mine calls up to the surface and says, 'hey, we lost the fan bag motor at such and such a location'. The mine supervisor gets on the phone and calls and says, 'hey, maintenance people. We need to get the fan bag fixed. The motor's down. So what do you think it takes to fix that? 

**GRANT:**An electrician?

**BROWN:** That's what it should take, but it doesn't. To fix that, now the motors are all one horsepower motors that drive these fan bags, so to fix that, the first thing you got to do is get a proper crew together. So you get what's called a combination crew. A combination crew would consist of a boiler maker. 

Why do you have to have a boiler maker? Well let's suppose that the four bolts that hold the motor in place are damaged. So you can't unscrew the motor. So you have to have a boilermaker there to cut the bolts, because heaven forbid you can't let anybody else touch the cutting torch. That's boilermaker jurisdiction. 

You send a machinist down, because nobody else can use a wrench to unbolt the motor that drives the fan bag. Or take the clamp off that holds the fan bag to the motor. So you have to have a machinist to do that. 

Then you have to have an iron worker to rig the motor, so you can take the motor out. Now the motor has an eye bolt in the top of it, so anybody can pick the damn motor up. It weighs about 80 pounds. But you got to have an iron worker there to rig that motor, so it can be picked up. And then you have to have a hoisting engineer to pick the damn motor up and put it on a flat car, so you can take it down to the shaft, so you can take it out. And you got to bring the new motor in to replace it. So that's very important to have that hoisting engineer to do that.

And then finally you have to have an electrician to disconnect the three wires to the motor and lock the motor out and then unlock the motor. And you have your choice then -  you can have a teamster drive the truck, or you can have a steelworker drive the truck. 'Cause the steelworker has jurisdiction since it's underground. Now, if it wasn't an underground, a steelworker couldn't drive it. So you've got a six man crew to change out the motor.

[01:19:57] 

Now let's suppose this happens at the middle of the first half of the shift. Well, those people get their coffee break, except that the truck driver and the craft people don't have their breaks at the same time, 'cause their shifts don't overlap. So instead of having a 10 minute coffee break, you have a 20 minute coffee break, because you have to let each group have their coffee break at their set time because it's provided in their contracts.

So you have a 20 minute coffee break instead of a 10 minute coffee break. Same would apply to the lunches except you have a 40 minute lunch period instead of a 20 minute lunch period. So bottom line is it takes at least half a day to change out that motor. Or half a shift, I should say. 'Cause it runs 24 hours a day. So that's an example of jurisdictional issues. So it's a disaster for us. You got six men doing the work of one person. Maybe two at the very most. 

**GRANT:** So ARCO was hostile to this kind of environment?

**BROWN:**They couldn't understand it. It was beyond their comprehension. 

You know, down here on our oil rigs, we got one person that does all that shit. Why do you have six people to do a one person, or maybe two people's jobs? You need to get rid of that. This is craziness. You don't need it. You don't want it. It's a one or two people job. Get that under control, get rid of these jurisdictional lines.

I still remember Jimmy Lewis, who was Vice President of labor relations down in Denver, talking to me, we're sitting in my office and he says, 'you know, Alan, you only have one assignment between now and 1983'.

And I said, 'what's that Jim'? He says, 'get some flexibility into this place so I can go back and talk to the people that I got to talk to and tell them that you got some of these damn jurisdictional lines done away with'. And I said, 'well, I'll do my best'. He says, 'no, you will do it. None of this best talk. You'll get it done'. I said, 'okay, Jim, I understand you loud and clear'. And he says, 'well, you better'. And then he leaves. 

[01:22:13] 

So anyway, we start flexibility talks, because that's what we called it. And so, you know, we're, I don't know, three months after the wildcat strike now, I suppose. And I have a meeting with all of the unions. I say, 'you know, guys, we need to become more competitive. You've heard Frank Gardner talk about a low cost. And how we have to become a low cost competitor. And one of the ways we can do that is to become more flexible on jurisdictional lines. And if we can do that, we can survive. You know, all of you know, that copper is up and copper is down. Copper is up and copper is down. And when copper is up, we make tons of money. Everybody knows that. When copper is down, we want to be in a position where we might not make money, but we don't lose money. So we need to be able to break even, or make a little bit of money in the valleys. And make lots of money on the peaks. And we need to get to that position, so if we can get to that position, then we're going to ensure the future of Butte. If we can't get to that position, we can't survive the peaks and valleys of our industry. So we have to get to that position. And the only way we can get to that position is through you people. I can't do it. You have to do it for me'.

You know, I make this big speech. And I get all done with this speech and they say, 'yeah, right'. So I said, 'okay, we're going to start next week. We're going to meet three times a week'. They said, 'no, we're not'. And I said, 'yeah, we are'. We settled on twice a week. We met not on Tuesdays and Thursdays. And we agreed that we would meet for four hours every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. And we'd talk about flexibility.

So I write up all these proposals. And I said, 'on Tuesdays, we're going to talk about operations. And on Thursdays, we're going to talk about crafts'. 

And we started out that way. And I would make a proposal on things that we needed to do to fix some of the issues that we had. And we'd sit down and we'd talk about it, and we'd talk about it, and we'd talk about it. And they'd listen to what I had to say. And sometimes they'd stay awake. Sometimes they'd go to sleep. They just didn't believe me. And I'd tell them, 'look, you know, guys, we need to face these issues and it's better to face them now before the '83 negotiations. Because if we don't have these things resolved by the '83 negotiations, they're going to be all we talk about in '83, we're not going to talk about money. We're not going to talk about pensions. We're not going to talk about insurance. We're not going to talk about any of this stuff. We're going to talk about flexibility. And that's all we're going to talk about because that's all ARCO cares about. And if you want to see this place running in '84, we're going to have to talk about these issues. And we're going to have some kind of revenue resolution'. 

And they looked at me like I was crazy. And we talked about it and we talked about it. We talked about it. We didn't seem to get too far. You know, when I talked to the craftspeople, one of the most important things with the craft people, from our perspective, was the cutting torch. There were so many things you had to cut apart. And the boilermakers knew that they were not going to give up the cutting torch. They were gonna die on that Hill. And they were not going to give it up for any circumstances.

I met separately with the boilermakers several times. And I tried to explain to them that I wasn't trying to do away with them. I would guarantee them jobs. You just wouldn't have any new boiler makers. And we were at the point where we had boilermakers to do welding, I wasn't going to take away welding from them. I wanted to take away the torch and give the machinists a torch, so that they could cut the damn nuts off of the dubbed over bolts. That would be a giant step forward. And we'd still need boilermakers to weld things.

[01:26:46] 

And we'd lose about a third of our boiler makers this way, but it will be through attrition. I you know I had charts that showed how old the boiler makers were. It would take us three years to get there, but we could attrit boilermakers without laying anybody off. And they would all go out with full pensions that way, and we just wouldn't hire replacements. And pretty soon we'd have boilermakers working in the shop, welding things for us. And then going out in the field and welding things for us. And we'd have machinists using the torch and it would eliminate one person out of the combination crew. And it would be a giant step forward.

The boilermaker president and business agent, he was one person, just would not see it. He just - no way. He just said, 'I will not allow it, period'. And I said, 'Mel, if you don't the places going down. This is a key thing to us. And I can't convince ARCO that this isn't important'. And he told me I was fucked in the head. And I said, 'well, maybe I am Mel, but you gotta think about it. We have to do this'.

Anyway, I - total dead end, for a long time. So I gave up on him for a while. And I decided, well, let's try some other group. So I talked to the ironworkers and I said, to the ironworker guy, I said, 'Ron, you don't really have to come down and rig a motor to pick it up. They only weigh 80, 90 pounds. Something like that'. He says, 'yeah, I know'. I says, 'well Ron, why don't you just give that to me so I can have some progress from this stuff'. And we talked and we talked. And finally Ron said, 'all right, I'll give it to you'. And I didn't know what to say. You know, this was progress. And I said, 'Ron, thank you'. And he says, 'well, I'll expect something for it sometime. I don't know what, or I don't know when'. I said, 'you got it, you've earned one, Ron'. 

So anyway, I announced that I no longer needed to have an ironworker rig the motor. They took an immediate caucus. Boom, just like that. And they went and caucused for two hours. And after the caucus was over, they came back and said they wanted to adjourn for the day.

[01:29:12] 

And I said, 'fine'. We adjourned for the day. I got a call from Ron that night and he said, 'I'm sticking by what I told you, but don't think I'm under a lot of pressure. Cause I am'. I says, 'thanks, Ron. I appreciate it'. Well, he was a man of his words, he stuck with it. And no longer do we need to have an ironworker rig a  fan bag motor. 

But the rest of the crafts just came down really hard on him, because he'd cracked. He'd gone over to the enemy. What can I say? Excuse me. It was hard. So, those are a couple of examples of the craft unions.

I'll give you one example of the operation unions. We had in the Berkeley Pit, shovels, which unless you've seen them, you can't imagine how big they are. They're huge. For instance, if the ore is wet, which it frequently was, you ran a D-8 into the shovel itself and then you back drug out of the shovel with the blade, to clean the muck out of it. Which shows how big the shovel is. And the shovel can fill 170 ton truck with three dumps. So that's a lot of stuff in one time. 

Anyway, when the shovel dumps into the 170 ton truck, occasionally a boulder, the size of half of a pickup, will fall off on the side of the truck. Well, the truck driver can't see that boulder, depending on where it lands. So the truck that's backing in may not see it at all. If he backs over it, you may ruin a $5,000 tire. So you picture a shovel in the middle, a truck that's 23 feet tall at the cab, on either side of the shovel. And then on the - further away from the shovel, a D-8 Cat on each side, sitting. To push the roughage that fell off of the side of the truck, out of the way. So that we don't back over it with a truck. And you have a picture of how a shovel is set up. 

[01:31:50] 

Well, you don't really need two D-8 Cats to do that. If you parked that D-8 Cat right in front of the shovel, facing the shovel, he can see when things fall off, this truck pulls out. So when the truck pulls out, if there's garbage there, if there's big bunches of rock, he can drive his Cat over there and push it out of the way, and then go back to the front ,while the other truck pulls out, and pushes out anything that's fallen there. So you can eliminate one Cat for each shovel. So that eliminates one Cat, and it's expensive running the Cat, and one operating engineer.

Well, I worked on the Teamsters, because the Teamsters have to be a little more responsible, in that before he backs underneath the shovel, he has to make sure that the operating engineer is out of the way with the Cat, so he doesn't try to drive over the D-8. And the operating engineer, instead of reading the book, you know, because he's sitting alongside, so he can see out of the corner of his eye, if something falls. He actually has to watch what's going on. And finally, I convinced them that they can do that. At least we'll try it on a trial basis for six months. And if it works, then we'll make it permanent.

So anyway, I convinced him and we were trying that, and it did in fact work. And so we did get that much flexibility out of the Teamsters in the operating engineers. That was my total success on negotiating flexibility during the three-year period. But it was progress. But not enough progress.

[01:33:34] 

**GRANT:**Why did ARCO buy Anaconda?

**BROWN:**The oil business is a lot like the mining business in that it's cyclical. The price of oil is up. The price of oil is down. It's controlled by the world market, and it's controlled by OPEC. OPEC says, 'okay, we're going to pay, we're going to sell oil at $15 a barrel today. And next week, we're going to sell it for a hundred dollars a barrel'.

ARCO couldn't control their income, because they can't control the price of oil. Well, OPEC controls the price of oil. So it becomes a cyclical, market-based product, just as copper is a cyclical, market-based product. And historically when oil prices are up, mineral prices are down. And vice versa.

And ARCO bought Anaconda for income leveling. Because it leveled off ARCO's income. That was the theory. They felt that when oil prices were soft, mineral prices generally speaking were strong, and it would have a leveling effect on their income and thus on their stock. And that's why they bought Anaconda.

Same was true, coal also followed the same pattern as did copper. And that's why they bought the coal mines and why they bought Anaconda. 

**GRANT:**They intended to run the mines....

[01:35:16]

**BROWN:**Absolutely. They envisioned running the mine, without question. They were going to run the mine. They had giant plans for expanding the mine. The mine was running. The Berkeley Pit was running on A pushback. As you, mine, you have to have mine at the angle of repose. So the deeper you go, you can't mine straight down because the sides would fall in.

**GRANT:** Right.

**BROWN:**So the deeper you mine, the narrower the Pit becomes. And we were almost at the very bottom of A pushback, which was the start of the mine. We had started B pushback, and were down, I don't recall how many feet, but maybe let's say 500 feet, on B pushback. And that would in effect double the size of the bottom of the Pit, when B got to there. We were ready to start C pushback, and we had removed a little bit of the overburden.There was about 200 feet of overburden before you got into ore. nd we were ready to start on more overburden removal on C push back, when ARCO decided just to slow things down just a little bit, until we get, we - ARCO, gets a little more organized. But we were ready to start to C pushback.

And we had started the Continental Pit, and they wanted to get the Continental Pit fully developed and going before they started C Pushback. But C pushback would have allowed us to go down, perhaps another 700 feet, in the bottom of the pit. 

**GRANT:** How far west would the Pit have gone then? 

**BROWN:** The pit would've gone...

**GRANT:** Through the Uptown?

[01:37:12] 

**BROWN:**No, we were not going to take Uptown Butte. We could have, there was ore there. I think they would have gone south, south was the general direction. They would have taken the concentrator. 

**GRANT:**Oh.

**BROWN:** That was the direction that we were probably going to go. And it was all part of a grand scheme. You know, the smelter in Anaconda was obsolete. The refinery in Great Falls was obsolete. And Arco had intended on investing a billion dollars in a smelter and refinery in Montana. And it was going to be in the Deer Lodge Valley. They had been involved in the early 1900s, in some kind of a land warrant. I'm not clear exactly what it was about, so I can't really address it.

But in any event, they had ended up buying a bunch of farmland in the Deer Lodge Valley. And that I believe was going to be the location for the new smelter and refinery. And ARCO was prepared to spend all that money, close down the smelter in Anaconda and the refinery in Great Falls, and build a state of the art smelting and refinery in the Deer Lodge Valley. There was sufficient water and of course it would have been a lot shorter haul.

And as a part of that, the concentrator would have been closed down in Butte, and the mine would have been expanded in that direction. I do know that there's extremely rich ore underneath the concentrator. I know that from test holes that we had drilled.

[01:38:48] 

And that plan was thwarted by the fact that ARCO could not get an answer from the state of Montana regarding air pollution. We had federal standards that we had to meet, from the Clean Air Act. And we knew that we could meet those standards with the smelter and refinery that we proposed. The state of Montana would not give us an answer as to what standards we had to meet. And ARCO tried and tried to get an answer on that issue from the state of Montana. And Montana would not tell him what standards they had to meet. Just, they wouldn't tell them whether the federal standards were adequate or not. And ARCO said, 'well, we can't build a smelter and refinery until we know what standards we have to meet', which I think is very understandable. You know, you don't go build something, spend a billion dollars and build something and find out you don't meet the standards that are required by the state you're building it in.

**GRANT:** Sure. 

**BROWN:** And finally ARCO gave up. 

**GRANT:**Was this in '80 to '83, in that period?

**BROWN:**It was, yeah, it was somewhere in that area.

**GRANT:** Okay.

**BROWN:**I was working for them at the time that this was going on, but I think it was right at the end of those discussions. And I believe that Missoula, and the Girls Against Air Pollution, the GASP girls here, are responsible for the lack of response from the state. Because here in Missoula, the air was so bad from the saw mills that the state was on the run as far as air pollution standards go.

And I think that's probably the reason why they didn't get an answer from the state, but that's just a guess on my part. I don't know that as a fact.

[01:40:39] 

**GRANT:**Just silence from the state.

**BROWN:**Well, the state said, 'well, we don't know what the standards are going to be. We know they're going to be at least as good as a federal standards'. But that was the only answer we could get out of them.

And it was only after trying for a long time, and I don't know what a long time means, to get answers that they gave up on building a smelter and refinery and went instead to Japan. They didn't have to worry about standards.

And at the time ARCO was running on variances, or the Anaconda Company was running on variances in both Great Falls and Anaconda. And I think that they had assurances that they could continue to run on variances as far as air pollution, until a new smelter was operational. And there was no way that, you know, you have to do something with that ore.

You know, you have to shut down the mines in Butte until the new facility is built, unless you have variances to run on. So you either had to ship the ore to Japan or someplace to smelt it. Or you had to have variances for the two existing facilities, Butte, excuse me, Anaconda and Great Falls.

And we had variances that allowed us to run, but that was shaky. And that was on a year by year basis. And we had a sure thing going to Japan, and no answer as far as building some kind of a new facility. I think ARCO finally just gave up. And I think that perhaps the wildcat strike contributed to that too, because all of a sudden, we - Butte management - weren't able to do what we said we were going to do, which was to run the mine without any labor problems and get increased flexibility in the areas we needed to have. We were not being successful in accomplishing that. And you know, the unions weren't giving us what we needed, coupled with the fact that the state wasn't giving them what they needed, that they had to go to plan B.

**GRANT:**Japan.

**BROWN:** Japan, which is unfortunate.

[01:43:01] 

**GRANT:**You had said earlier that the rank and file union guys didn't understand the difference between the new management, ARCO, and the old Anaconda Company. Can you talk about the differentiation there, how the companies were run?

**BROWN:**Yeah, I think I can talk a little bit about that. I can give you an example, I guess, maybe it'll help understand that.

Davey Powers was the pipe fitters business agent and he was a working pipe fitter. And he and I were writing up, oh, I don't know those names, it's Woodburrow or something like that, it's the Hill behind the mine that goes up to the Continental Divide. Goes up to Green Lake.

And he was riding up there with me, I wanted to talk to him so I took him for a ride. We're going up there to Green Lake, and I was harassing him a little bit because the only tools -  you have two tools to be a pipe fitter. One is a Makita drill with a half inch bit. And the other is an open-ended wrench with a punch on the end of it, about 18 inches long.

And I said, 'so you're telling me Davey, that the only thing you need to own to be a pipe fitter is a half inch Makita drill with a half inch bit in it, and this funny looking wrench that you have that's got a point on one end and an open end three quarter inch on the other'? And he didn't like that very much.

But in any event, I said,' that's all the tools you have'. He said, 'that's all I need'. Cause I can open up a Vick's coupler with that, with the wrench -  a Vick's coupler allows you to put two pieces of pipe together to have flanges that meet. And that drill allows him to drill holes in plastic pipe that lets water out for the leach dump. And those are the only tools that pipe fitter needed.

And we're driving alongside this pipe that's probably four feet in diameter. There's two of them going up there to Green Lake. And I said, 'you know, Davey, if you guys don't start giving me some of this stuff that I need in jurisdiction, this place is going to close'.

And he looked at me and he said, 'it's not going to close. We don't have to give you a thing. Don't you know, that this place is too big? It'll never close'. And I said, 'Davey it's going to close. I know it's going to close. My leaders down in Denver have told me it's going to close. And if you don't start giving me the stuff that we need, it's going down, Davey. I can't make it any clearer than that. That's why I took you for this ride. Because I think that you've got some sense and maybe you can help me with this damn jurisdictional stuff, particularly the boilermakers'. That's who I was having most of the trouble with right then. I said, 'but you know, Davey, we've got to do something because I'm running out of time. They're running out of patience with me because I'm getting nowhere with you guys. You just won't plain listen to me. And it's going to close, Davey'. He said, 'look out the window, look at this pipe. This pipe is five miles long. It's full of water. That water is blue in color because it's got so much copper in it. That goes up here. And from here, it's going to run down through the leach pads. You're going to get copper, silver, and gold out of it. You're gonna get more gold than you, you're gonna get enough gold out of it to run the place without any other money coming in'. And that was true by the way. 'And this is too big. It's never going to close. It's going to run forever. And we don't have to change, because you've run it this way for a hundred years, it's going to run this way for another hundred years. And there's nothing that's going to require us to give you anything. And it's just the way it is. And so quit wasting your breath on me because I'm not hearing you’.

And I said, 'Davey, mark my words, this place will be gone in a year. I don't care how big it is. If you don't give me the things I'm asking for in jurisdiction. And I'm not asking much, I'm asking just enough to keep the people in Denver off of my back. And if you don't give me some of this stuff, it will close'.

[01:47:13] 

He said, 'if we give you anything, that's the start of the end for us. If we give you anything, pretty soon, you'll have nothing but millwrights here. And the rest of us will be out of work'. I said, 'no, Davey, it won't be that way. We'll still preserve your unions and yeah, gradually, maybe there'll be fewer of you, but we'll do it with due attrition. And if you let us do it, we'll do it so it's not painful'.

He says, 'it'll be painful to me and it'll be painful to my brothers. And that's the way it's going to be and we're not going to give you a fucking thing'. I said, 'Davey, in less than a year, you'll be out looking for a job. And what talents do you have? A drill and a funny looking punch and an open-ended wrench. Where do you think you're going to get work'? That was the end of the conversation.

The philosophies just didn't meet. You know, ARCO's philosophy was, we got millwrights. They can do anything. They don't do electrical, but they do everything else. Anaconda's philosophy was, we've got all these unions. We've had them forever. We have to let them do their own jurisdictional things. We may not like it, but that's what we've got. And the people that work here, that's what they're used to, and that's what they're going to do. And I don't know how we can do anything about it. 

**GRANT:**Was there a mutual respect at Anaconda, that you didn't get with a multinational oil company?

**BROWN:**No, I don't think so.

**GRANT:**No.

**BROWN:** I really don't. You know, on an individual basis there was respect, but we Anaconda people, we were upset about that. I liked a lot of the union people really well. We respected each other and we got along, but our philosophies were different. And I think even the management people, we all felt the same way. We felt that - look we respect these people. We like these people, but we need to change and they don't know how to change.

And the ARCO people couldn't understand any of us. The ARCO people would say, 'we don't understand this. Why? Why'? 

Well, we had a vice-president from ARCO come through Butte once, and he spent two days in Butte. And he said, it was us in a meeting in the Hennessy building on the sixth floor. He says, 'I can't imagine why you folks located a mine here in Butte. This is the worst town I've ever been in'. And Frank Gardner looks at him and says, 'maybe we located the mine here because it's where the goddamn ore body is'.

**GRANT:**No sense.

[01:50:11] 

**BROWN:**No sense. They couldn't relate to us. And I guess we couldn't relate to them. You know what I mean? What an outrageous thing to say, this guy's a vice-president, granted it was in finance, but that doesn't change the fact. And he was serious when he said that.

**GRANT:** Wow.

**BROWN:** There was no - we talked different language. And I'm sure what he was thinking is, we've got the North slope. I don't work at the North slope. I work in Denver. You know, why can't these people mine, they can stay here? Why don't we all move to Denver where it's nice? I'm sure that's what he meant. But, you know, we didn't talk the same language.

**GRANT:**As time went on, did the threat of closure become more of a negotiating point?

**BROWN:** No.

**GRANT:**People didn't believe it was - 

**BROWN:** Nobody believed it until it happened.

**GRANT:**Let's talk about when it happened. 

[01:51:16] 

**BROWN:**Well, it was in stages. I guess, we can talk about underground - that was the first thing that really closed. That was, I guess a surprise to everybody. Everybody in Butte. We, the management, were operating under this theory that we're not going to close the underground. We were taking it out ore that was probably five to seven percent copper. Good ore. And it was bouncing up out of the basement, Jesus, out of the bottom of the Pit. Or bottom of the mine. And you'd watch those skips go by - it was like that. Just fast as could be. And of course, nobody rode in those skips, they were fast. Really fast. I was astounded how fast they could pull up several tons of ore. It just went zoom! Just like that. 

And I still remember the first time I went down in the mine, I wanted to go down in the worst way. And I heckled Bob Miller, who was a mine manager. I said, 'Bob, I want to go down. I want to see what's underground'. He says, 'no, you don't. It's dirty. It's hot. It's wet. It's smelly. You don't want to go down there'. I said Bob, 'I do. I want to. My grandfather had worked in the mine all his life. I want to see what's down there'. He says, 'you really don't'.

Anyway, we argued back and forth. And finally, I had been there for about seven or eight days, and he said, 'all right, I'll take you down tomorrow. Wear a pair of jeans and a pair of boots'. And I said, 'okay'. And I did. And so we get up there to the mine. And well, actually Bob came and got me out of the office and I ride up in his truck. We get up there and he gives me this tin disc that's got a number stamped on it. It's about as big as a lid off of a soup can. And it's about, oh, I suppose an eighth of an inch thick. And it's got a four digit number stamped in it. He says, 'put that in your pocket'. And I said, 'boy, what's it for'? He says, 'so that when the mine caves inm and they find your body, they'll know who you are'.

**GRANT:** Tag in. Tag out.

**BROWN:** Yep, that was my introduction to the underground. So anyway, we get on the cage. And I'm riding down with Bob and one of the supervisors, I don't recall who it was for sure. Anyway, I noticed that Bob and the supervisor get on, but Bob got on last. And I noticed he talks to the hoisting engineer. First of all, he introduces me to the hoisting engineer and the guy that runs the cage going up and down.

And then Bob talks to the hoisting engineer and then he gets on. I didn't even give it a thought as to what he was saying to the guy, but I noticed. And the cage has got sides on it. All four sides are enclosed, and it's out of expanded metal. And I noticed that Bob and the supervisor, they take their fingers and they laced them into the expanded metal.

I thought, well, I don't know, maybe it's jerky, so I'll do the same thing. So I do that and we're sitting there for a couple, maybe a minute or two while Bob explained to me out of cage works. And he says, 'one good thing about these cages, they've got a wonderful brake system on the sides, all the way up and down. They've got mahogany runners and great big dogs so that if the cable breaks or anything, these dogs grab into the mahogany and it stops the cage instantly. So they're really safe things'. And he just said that in passing and he goes on and talks about something else about the cages.

[01:55:11] 

And then we hear this ding, ding, ding, some number of bells. I don't remember how many. And Bob pushes the button, and then laces his fingers back in, and a button means we're okay, and ready to go. So anyway, we start down and we're going like this, you know, just normal speed, and I'm looking at the sides. And all of a sudden, boom! We just drop. 

We free fell a thousand feet and while we were free falling, Bob is screaming, saying 'Oh my God, the cable broke. The cable broke. We're alright, the dogs will grab us. The dogs will grab us. My God, the dogs aren't working. What's the matter we're going to die! We're going to fall all the way down!' Trying to get me scared. Any he did, he got me really scared. But anyway, we'd get down there, a thousand feet of falling. And then the operating engineer slams on the brakes. The cage is all like -woooahahah - like a ping pong ball at the end of the string. And it stops. Bob says, 'how'd you like that for a ride'? And I said, 'beats the hell out of the fair'. That was my introduction to the mine.

[01:56:17] 

But he was right. It's dirty. It's smelly, it's wet. And I went down a couple more times after that, and I don't know, I did not want to work as an underground miner. There were a few interesting things in the mine. For instance, we had a tree farm down there, where we raised trees for Anaconda Forest Products. And it was a room probably as big as two, maybe three high school basketball gyms. They had nothing but seedling trees growing in it.

**GRANT:**That was at the Kelly?

**BROWN:** Yeah. And then at the very bottom of the Kelly, at the 3000 foot level, all of the water from all of the mines, including the Berkeley Pit, all came together in this giant room where there were six pumps with six foot diameter stainless steel pipes that went all the way to the surface. And the pumps were as big as this room. The pump itself was as big as this room and they were big vein pumps and they would lift all the way up there to the top of the mountain.

**GRANT:**To surface?

**BROWN:**Yeah, and the water would flow in. And it was probably half as big as the Clark's Fork here in town, and the water would just flow in and disappear. It would just suck up. And only half of the pumps were running, so three pumps were running at any given time. And the water just pumped up and dumped into Green Lake. 

**GRANT:** Were you ever surprised at the volume of groundwater? 

**BROWN:**Oh, really surprised. Huge amount of water, huge amount.

Well, anyway, getting back to when we closed it. But I thought I'd tell you the story about my first - 

**GRANT:**For sure, you went for a ride.

**BROWN:** Yeah, first ride. Okay. Anyway, back to the closing deal. We learned three days before the Kelly was supposed to close, from the people in Denver, that we were going to close Kelly. The way they went about, it was utter secrecy. We didn't want to alarm anybody or tell anybody we were going to close it.

And we had a brand new motor, which was really a locomotive, small locomotive, we called them motors, that pulled - you know, we'd gotten rid of the mules that pulled the ore cars, we weren't quite that primitive anymore. Anyway, we had this motor that we were going to send down to the mine, and it was quite a job. You rigged it on the bottom of a cage. And sent it down. It was hanging below the cage. Something the iron workers knew how to do quite well.

**GRANT:**Rope gang?

[01:58:51] 

**BROWN:** Yeah. Anyway, we were going to send it down. It's brand new, and we sent it down, I believe it was six days before the mine closed. No. 'Cause we knew about it. It was three days before the mine closed. We sent it down anyway. The motor arrived six days before the mine closed. We sent it down three days before the mine closed.

And we knew the mine was going to close. We sent it down anyway, because we didn't want to cause any disruption with the crew having this thing sitting there, everybody knew it was coming. And we sent it down just so that nobody would say, 'well, why didn't you send that down? You knew what was happening and you didn't tell us'. So anyway, we sent it down. 

I guess that was the only tax write off that I saw through the whole closure. You know, a lot of people have said that, I've heard a lot of people say, 'ARCO closed the place for a big tax write off'. That wasn't true. We wanted to run the place. From start to finish, we wanted to run the place. We didn't close it for a tax write off.

That never entered ARCO's mind. That motor was the only thing that I ever saw that was a clear tax write off. 

Anyway, the motor goes down. And now the decision's been made to close the thing. So I go up there to meet a graveyard shift coming off shift. And we don't let the day shift go down, so they know something's going on. We put the day shift in one room in the dry. The dry is a shower place where they take a shower, change clothes, and so on. Anyway, we put them in one room. And we take the graveyard people into another room and we tell them that we've made the decision to close the underground. And nobody is going to go down and nobody from their shift will go down again in the mine.

[02:00:46] 

And they said, 'well, what about our stuff'? And I said, 'we want you to make a list'. And I had somebody there helping me and they gave each person a yellow tablet, you know, like a legal tablet. Said we want you to make a list of any of your personal possessions that you have down there, and we will purchase them from you, at replacement value.

So if you have a half inch drive socket set down there, we'll buy you a new one. Whatever you've got, we'll buy. We'll give you enough money to replace it brand new.  So all of you just take some time and list what you had down there. 

And then I left that room and went over and talked to the day shift people, told them essentially the same thing. 'Give me a list of everything. You know, we're closing the underground. Nobody is going down into the mine again. And we want you to list everything that you have down in the mine itself. Any tools, any personal possessions, anything that's down there. And we'll give you money to replace it, whether you do or

not is your choice. But we'll buy whatever you have down there'. So the day shift people then listed everything that they had down there.

[02:02:00] 

And then we collected the lists from everybody. A lot of people wanted to go down there - well, I want to get such and such. Or I left such and such. We didn't let anybody go down there. We had made sure that everybody was out of the mine. We had several supervisors, extra supervisors down there on the graveyard shift at the end. And they made sure that nobody was left down there. We double-checked that all the tags, you know, I told you about my tag. All the tags were back on the board. And so nobody was in the mine before we did any of this.

And then, I went over -  and there's a knife switch on the wall. And I pulled the switch and I said, 'that shuts off the pumps. Nobody's going down in the mine again'.

And that was in the room where the day shift people were. And then I just pulled the switch and said, 'okay, why don't you folks go on home? The mine is done'. 

And several of the people were really upset, and a couple of them were crying. They had worked there all their lives. I remember one guy who was 54 years old. He said, 'what am I going to do now? What am I going to do with my life? I only know the mine. I've been here since I was 16. I lied to go down to the mine'. 

It was so upsetting. Nobody was happy. Our supervisors were terribly upset. Everybody was upset. It was a horrible, horrible, horrible day. 

And I stayed up there for the whole day. And then the swing shift people started to come. They came early, they were probably an hour early. And we told them the same thing. And they had a tremendous amount of stuff they'd left down in the mine. It was unbelievable. They had all snap-on tools. They all had three quarter or inch drive socket sets. They had - I don't think anybody had less than a thousand dollars worth of tools down there.

Anyway, we bought everything. And we made a conscious decision, never to let anybody down again, once we made the decision. And the reason we did that, and I'm sure there were some people that had some personal stuff they would have really liked to have gotten out of there. But we felt the risk was too great.

[02:04:25] 

Number one. They might genuinely fall and become injured. And we didn't want to workers' comp claim. Worse yet, they might fake a workers' comp claim. We didn't want that, you know, back injuries are very difficult to resolve.

Number two, we might have people that refuse to come out. There were just too many liability issues. We didn't let anybody go down. Nobody ever went down again, after the graveyard supervisors came out.

And after three days, the pump room was flooded completely. And we had a camera down there, and it finally quit after three days. The video type camera. Because it was underwater. And then it was really over.

So the underground continued to flood and eventually that water started to come up in the bottom of the Berkeley Pit.

[02:05:21] 

**GRANT:** Can you tell me more about the switch? 

**BROWN:**It was just a knife switch on the wall. I'm not even sure it shut the pumps off. I was told it shut the pumps off, and we did it for the drama. You know, I was told it shut off the pumps. I don't know whether it did or not. It was a big knife switch. It seems to me that you would not have the pumps go off with a knife switch. I don't know, but Bob Miller said, well, we talked about how to make it a final thing before we did.

And Bob said, 'I've got this knife switch in this room, in the ready room here. That knife switch controls the pumps'. I said, 'why don't you throw it, Bob? That'll be very dramatic'. 

He said, 'why don't you throw it'? I said, 'I think you should do it'. Bob said, 'I won't do it. You do it'. So I did. 

And it was very dramatic. It was about, I don't know, I suppose the handle was about a foot long. It didn't spark or anything when I pulled it apart, it just pulled apart. But it wasn't labeled as anything. It was just, Bob Miller told me it was the main switch. It was the main switch for the power to the pumps, is what I was told. 

**GRANT:**Was there, were you privy to much conversation about the decision to turn them off? You know, you can close the mines, but you could keep the pumps running, you know, even if the mines aren't working, right?

[02:07:07] 

**BROWN:**No, we couldn't really do that.

**GRANT:**I know it would come at a cost, but to think of the costs through CERCLA all these years later, you know...

**BROWN:** We couldn't, you can't keep the pumps running without somebody watching the pumps. You would've had to have somebody down in the mine all the time. 

For instance, going back to the wildcat strike, we had nobody down there. ARCO had made a decision that we would harm our property before we would risk injury to any person. So we went for four days after we had pulled the people. We started out with people down there. And after four days, we took the people out. No, I don't remember how many days. Anyway, bottom line, after four days of nobody down there, we sent people down there. And one of the pumps was down. So we only had two pumps working and they were down there just in time to turn on another pump. Otherwise it was going to start to flood. We had two supervisors and Bob Miller went down there. And the pumps would not run without somebody down there. The air would go bad, without somebody manning the fan bags. You could not do that.

**GRANT:**Sure. And so, that moment...

**BROWN:**Yeah, it was a dramatic moment.

**GRANT:**Did you feel like the future of Butte was at stake?

**BROWN:** No, but I felt like the future of the underground was certainly at stake.

You have to understand that at that time, the Continental Pit was turning out moly and copper and gold. And it was turning out a lot of moly. And moly was selling for $26 a pound.

**GRANT:**Wow. It's not even half that now. 

[02:09:19] 

**BROWN:**Yeah. And we were making a lot of money out of the pit. Out of the Continental Pit. The Berkeley Pit was still running, and it was turning out a lot of gold and silver and copper. And the underground was making money, but the price of copper was falling off radically. And it was getting close to the point where the underground would not make money because of the cyclical nature of copper.

And it was approaching the point where we would have kept running, you know, we would not have shut down the Kelly, but it was approaching the point where the pit would have to carry the Kelly until copper went back up in value.

**GRANT:**Do you ever think about - you know, you see so many pictures of all the workings under there and the pump room and how much work went into creating those underground mines. And now to think that they're submerged forever, all that work is...

**BROWN:**Oh sure, I've got pictures of all that. I've got pictures that go back to early days of mining and I've got pictures of the pump room and I've got pictures, got a lot of pictures of all of that.

**GRANT:**It's almost like a whole city underground...

**BROWN:** It was a city underground.

**GRANT:**But now it's gone. 

**BROWN:** It's gone forever. It's full of water. And it could be pumped out at great cost, but it could be pumped out and be operational again.

[02:10:57] 

**GRANT:**Is that what ARCO was saying at the time immediately following this?

**BROWN:** ARCO wasn't saying anything.

**GRANT:** So in the days following this decision and the closure and the pumps being submerged, that's like you say, the point of no return. Then what was the response from Butte, from unions, from the government? 

**BROWN:**We didn't get any response from the government that I recall. The unions were upset. The miner, 1A, was really upset because they were the underground miners and they were upset about what we had done.

The rest of the unions thought, well, the pits, plural, are still here, they're running. We've got our jobs. You have to remember that the Kelly had been shut down for a period and then had been started up again. And I guess from their standpoint, they thought, well, maybe the company will do it again. You know?

The only people who were really, really upset were the 1A miners I think.

It's kind of hard to remember because all of our focus was, all of my focus was on getting more flexibility. And we didn't talk much about the fact that the Kelly was down. We just - well, it's down. Let's try to fix what we can fix so that the pits will stay operational. It gave me a little bit of a sledgehammer, not much. Instead of an eight pound hammer, I probably had a two pound hammer, you know? 

[02:12:47] 

**GRANT:**How long did the open-pit mining continue then, until they finally...

**BROWN:**Well, open pit mining never quit. It continued until the place was sold. 

**GRANT:**And Washington bought it from ARCO?

**BROWN:**And Washington bought it from ARCO. 

**GRANT:**I thought there was a period there where there was no mining in Butte, briefly. And that's why Don Peoples is so celebrated because he got Washington to come in.

**BROWN:**If there was, it was after I left. I don't really remember there being a time when there wasn't mining. It may have been, but if it was, it was after I left because we were still mining when I left.

**GRANT:**What precipitated your departure?

**BROWN:**I didn't like what I was doing. I didn't have enough to do. June got a job teaching in Missoula. I wanted to go into business for myself. I was tired of working for big companies that seemed to fold up on me. I was tired of closing things down. I wanted a change. I thought that I could do well working for myself, which I did. I wanted to move back to Missoula. Butte had become an unfriendly place for me. You know, if you're the instrument that closes something down, and everybody knows you did it, it's not much fun to live there.

**GRANT:**Did you have incidents?

**BROWN:**No, not really. You know, if you went into a bar, for instance, sometimes the talk would stop and then people would turn and look the other direction. And you just didn't, you know, you're kind of an outcast. 

[02:14:55] 

Which is sad because, you know, I look back on the people that I worked with, and our management team, we didn't want to close Butte. None of us did. We were all Butte people. I consider myself a Butte person. My grandparents were Butte people. My mother was a Butte person. I look back on all the people I worked with, you know, Charlie Palaggi, Rick Ramsier, or Frank Gardner. All of us, Rick Sherwood, all of us were Butte people. All of us wanted to keep the mine going. None of us wanted to see it shutdown. We were all Butte people and we all worked hard to save the mine, but we had those philosophical problems where we were butting heads.

You know, the unions honestly believed that they could maintain the old way, and they would have the old way forever. And ARCO believed that the old way had to die. And they gave us clear direction. You know, fix it or we'll close. And you could see that attitude change after the wildcat strike. And you could see us moving, us meaning ARCO, moving away from - well, we're going to make this place work. To - well, what should we do with this place? Because it isn't working. They were irreconcilable situations. Because the unions had all grown up with that philosophy, their philosophy and their way of life. And they didn't believe that something as large as the Butte operations could die. And they'd watch the operation in Anaconda die. And they'd watch the operation in Great Falls die, but they were small potatoes compared to the operation in Butte.

[02:16:56] 

And they just couldn't conceive of the fact that Butte wouldn't continue to operate. And ARCO looked at it like, well, you know, we had a grand idea. We were going to average out our income and balance it, but this hasn't worked for shit. You know, it isn't doing what we expected it to do. And yeah, there were years where we made a ton of money here in Butte, but right now it isn't happening. We're losing money. And it's not good. And we need to think about divesting ourselves of this operation and moving on. Isn't a good idea. Somebody made a mistake, but nobody in ARCO ever makes a mistake. We just make another vice presidency. That's the way it is.

**GRANT:**Well, we've been talking for over two hours. I really appreciate your time today.  I wanted to ask where Superfund fits in to all this. And if you have much, many thoughts on that.

**BROWN:**I don't, I wasn't really involved in the Superfund issues at all.

**GRANT: '**Cause ARCO is still paying...

**BROWN:** Yeah, that came after I had left. And when I was here, nobody talked about Superfund. It wasn't an issue at all. There's one more story I'd like to tell you that it just kind of flavors the whole thing.

**GRANT:**Okay.

[02:18:27] 

**BROWN:** And it goes back to the strike that we had that we didn't expect after the 1980 negotiations. You know, normally in Butte history, there was a strike after every negotiations, it was just part of the negotiations.

But in '80, we didn't expect to have the strike, just didn't think it was going to occur. So we didn't prepare for it. Because we had a settlement, you know, and it shouldn't have occurred. But anyway, we have the pickets out there in front, and we should have been working and we weren't. And we weren't prepared for it.

And we had some people that were, you know, when they gave us a notice, we got salaried people in so that we could keep the concentrator running, because if you shut the concentrator down, all that stuff turns to concrete and the mills won't run again. You know, you have to then go in and chop all of the ore that's now frozen around the balls and the rods out, and clean that all out. You got the problems with the pumps, you got all kinds of problems. So you got to have people in there. So we get about 60 people in there to, all salaried people, to keep the place operating on two day grace notice. And so we think we're in pretty good shape. And I guess we'd been assured that it wouldn't last very long.

And we make arrangements with a couple of places here in Butte to bring food in to the people in the mill, or in the mine, you know, and not through the main gate, of course. But through this secret gate that we've got up on top of the Hill. And this works for three or four days. And then one of the delivery guys gets the crap beat out of him by some 1A miners and all of a sudden, that's the end. We're not going to bring any food in. It's just not going to do that anymore. So we've got this problem. How do we get food into the people?

So we, Charlie Pelaggi, as a matter of fact, sneaks out through the culvert, just down from the main gate. 'Cause there's a great big culvert at the start of Silver Bow Creek.

[02:20:49] 

And he goes down to the two pizza places and gets, I don't know, probably 30 pizzas. And sneaks back into the culvert and gets the pizzas in. And that takes care of one day's food.

Well, while he's doing that, we're frantically making arrangements to give something a little better than that into the people. And so I've got a brother-in-law, who's going to school here at the university and I call him up and say, 'hey, I've got this problem. And here's what I want you to do. I want you to go to Sears. Well, I want you to go rent a U haul truck, get a big one, and go to Sears and buy five of the largest deep freezes you can. And plug them in at your house overnight. And he was renting a house over here on Lolo Creek, as a matter of fact - and plug them in overnight and get them cold. And then you and your girlfriend go to all the grocery stores in Missoula and buy every TV dinner they have. Or until you run out of space in the deep freezes.

And then I want you to bring them all over to Butte. I want you to park on the Continental Drive exit. And raise up the hood, like you're having trouble with the car. And we've got somebody hiding over here. And when you do that, they'll use their radio in the wagoneer and call for Rick Ramsier to come over and guide you over, across the divide to where we've got a helicopter waiting to fly this stuff into the mine.

And so my brother-in-law does what I've asked him to do. And he goes and he rents the truck, buys the five deep freezes, buys every TV dinner at Rosauer’s, at two Safeways, at Albertsons, at Buttery's, every store. Anyway, all five deep freezes are completely full of TV dinners, and they pull over to the Continental Drive exit, raise up the hood. In the meantime, our spy, who's sitting there with a wagoneer calls on the radio and Rick Ramsier launches from the pit. He comes - well, actually he launches from the Hennessy building. It doesn't matter. Anyway, he launches, he comes over to where they're parked.

[02:23:14]

There's one problem, however. The highway cop is coming by and he sees the rental truck sitting there with the hood up. So he stops and says, 'what's your problem'? And my brother-in-law says, 'oh, we got a little bit of problem with the engine, it's overheating and it's not running well. So we've called for help'. He says, 'oh, you shouldn't have done that. I know the guy that rents U-hauls here in town, and I'll get ahold of him and he'll come over here and fix it for you'. So my brother-in-law says, 'no, that's not necessary. We've already got help on the way'. 'Oh, that's no problem'. Anyway, they argue for about 10 minutes and finally my brother-in-law convinces him to go away.

And so the highway cop goes on down. So Ramsier pulls up, slams down the hood, and a way they go off to Whitehall. And they get over to Whitehall, and we've got a helicopter sitting there with this great big cargo net. Now, this guy that flies the helicopter is named Crash. We don't know what his name is, he just goes by Crash. And his job is - does a lot of work for the Forest Service, and US Fish and Wildlife, relocating grizzly bears. And he hauls grizzly bears in his cargo net after they've been tranquilized and puts them wherever they want to move them to. So, anyway, we load up one of these deep freezes, dump all of the TV dinners out, load the deep freeze in the cargo net, put all the TV dinners back in. And the helicopter can't lift it. It's too heavy. So we unload the TV dinners out of the cargo net, or at least about half of them, out of the deep freeze, and then he can lift it. So then he takes off and flies up around, cross the Hill, and comes right down over top of Green Lake and swoops down to the machine shop, where nobody could see him flying at all.

And he unloads and goes back and makes five trips and gets all the deep freezes in. And then he comes back and he picks up all of these hundreds of TV dinners we've got laying all over the ground, and flies back in, leaving a trail of TV dinners as he flies. And then comes back to where all of us are gathered there, at the place where we loaded 'em.

It was one of our salaried people's ranch. Anyway, Ramsier takes off his money belt and starts handing out money to pay. And we paid my brother-in-law a couple thousand dollars for his troubles and his expenses. So it worked out very good for a kid going to college, he made a thousand bucks out of the trip, as well as all of the expenses. And Crash, we paid 3000 bucks for the use of his helicopter, and then we paid him another couple thousand for his time. Anyway, Ramsier has got about 20,000 bucks in his money belt. He's handing out a hundred dollars bills like crazy. And so anyway, we got all these TV dinners that we've hauled in and the people are pretty happy for about, oh, I don't know, two weeks of eating TV dinners, and then they can't stand it anymore. So they want real food. And so we're sitting at some restaurant. I don't remember which restaurant it is anymore. But anyway, GW Thompson, who's the manager at the time, is sitting alongside of me and he says, 'we're not going to feed those people TV dinners anymore'. And I said, 'well, what are we going to do GW'? He says, 'I want them to have steaks, just like the one you're eating'. And I said, 'well, there are people that do that kind of stuff'. Anyway, I said, 'do you want me to hire them? It's pretty expensive'. And he says, 'do it now'. And so anyway, the next day I get on the phone and I hire this outfit out of Canada who will crash through the gate. And they have three semis that they bring in.

[02:27:01] 

One with the people that are with them to sleep in. One that's full of food. And one that they cook in. And they make arrangements to hire them. And they're going to arrive in four days, come out of Calgary, and we've got it fixed so that they'll come through the gate at three in the morning, and the guards at the gate will invite picketers at the gate to come in and warm up in the guard shack. And they'll fix them something to eat. And they've been doing this kind of stuff cause they're friendly, you know, and at three in the morning. It's not going to be much of a problem.  And all of a sudden, bam - they'll drive right through the bar at the gate. And the three semis will crash through before these guys can get back out with their pickets. And if necessary, our guards will detain them. So they can't get in the way. And then once we've got the three semis in, we're in fat city. 

So anyway, they're on their way down to here, to Butte. And the strike ends. So I had to cancel it, and it cost five grand to cancel it. But nonetheless, it was an interesting experience.

**GRANT:**Was all of that cheaper than giving the union whatever they wanted?

**BROWN:**Principle. Remember, we're not involved in it. This is our sympathy strike for the people in Tucson. There's nothing we can give. There's nothing we can do to settle this. This is a strike called by the international folks, because of the problems in Tucson.

**GRANT:**The negotiations you got out of...

**BROWN:** Yeah, the negotiations we got out of, because we've already settled things. Sure. It would have been a lot cheaper to have done anything. I bet we spent, well, I don't know how much we spent. We spent a ton of money on that. We didn't have any alternatives. Really. 

**GRANT:**It kind of sounds fun too.

**BROWN:** Oh, there was things that were a lot of fun. Anyway. I just thought I'd throw that story in. It's a good story. 

**GRANT:**Is there anything else you'd like to share? 

**BROWN:** No, I think that pretty well covers everything I wanted to say. 

**GRANT:**Thank you, Alan, for your time. I really appreciate it. 

**BROWN:** Are we turned off?

**GRANT:**Yeah. That was one of the better recordings we've done. So.

[END OF RECORDING]