

I've looked at this Aug 1 98, it has stuff abt George, Jergan, the dead man in the shock, bloat. Usable.

Craig D./Irv: Tape 1, side 1: Craig, RAD, JJ, and Irv (also Olive) 3/4/79

(Talking about the goat that chewed (has to be fell) through the leather and canvas convertible top of Lester's car.)

RAD: He walked down the drive and decided it was too deep to drive. I took my truck and pulled him to the dairy. He never missed one day that I remember. When we got the CAT, it was great. We'd drop the blade and it would give us about 6 inches clearance. I'd drive through and the trucks would follow me out. We never missed any time.

CR/ra?: When we had horses and wagons, Colley Road was flooded and the ice blocks were floating over the road. This was about 1917. A couple of the guys got some hip boots and led the horses, kicked the ice away, and the water was up to the bottom of the wagons. Was it Dave Collins who lost his shoe and overshoe when the front end of his car went into the culvert? When it was all washed out. Gilbert and I went down and hooked on to it, pulled it back out, then we turned around and pulled it right straight across. We got it out of the hole. He never did find that shoe. Didn't you and Louie pull a kid out from under the culvert?

JJ: I have that story but I don't think I have it on tape.

IRV: We won't talk about that now.

JJ: Here's Irv commenting on the Ed Path(?) garbage story.

**Irv: I just came back from a fire, I had my red light, my siren, and everything on my car. I saw a woman just beyond my house. She had a nice brand new car. She got out, she threw a big sack of garbage out into the ditch. I swung in behind her and threw my red light on. She didn't know who I was! I told her, You either pick that up and you clean the rest of the ditch or I'm turning you in. I've got your license number. It was the cleanest ditch I've seen from here to the dairy and back. She cleaned both sides. When she left for town, she had her trunk lid up, she couldn't even shut it, it was so full of beer cans and bottles.

JJ: That's great! That gets in the book!

Irv: That upset me so bad! Right out in front of my house. It shook her up too!
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Irv: I came to the farm in Feb. of 1948. (Son's name) was the first boy to be born on the farm, wasn't he?

RAD: There were others before that.

Mrs. Irv: I remember Daddy coming up to see him every morning in the Big House where we lived.

Irv: I remember how loud Grampa would yell, he didn't know it, of course! He'd want to go up and see Irvie, but he'd wake him up! Because he'd yell at him. He was just playing with him.

Mrs: He'd just come up and say good morning.

Irv: I was the first guy that smoked there. He said, As long as you smoke in the garage, that's okay. But not around the yard or anywhere around the barns. He said that if it bothered her (Mrs.), to let him know.

Olive (Mrs): He was my buddy.

Irv: He was a dear old guy. When I first came there, I was doing some welding. He said, Irv, I want to give you \$20 a month raise. You go tell Ron. I went up and told him. A couple of weeks later, I was doing something in the garage, and he said, I want to give you another raise. You deserve it. He told me to go see Ron and tell him. The second or third time I went to see Ron, he said, Who you working for anyhow? I said, I'd just as soon work for Grampa! He pays more! I'll never forget that as long as I live!... When he hired me, Ron was working in the seed house. He had an old farm hat on and an old leather jacket. I thought, Who in the hell is that bum? This was Ron--he looked worse than the employees. He grabbed anything and put it on. I asked him about a job and he said, Wait a minute, I've got to go down to the office, but I've got to go and change clothes. Give me a ride down. I waited for him to change, and gee, he came out all nice and dressed up. I took him down to the office. On the way down he says, I don't know for sure if I need a guy or not. I told him that I had to get my house trailer off a street it was parked on in town. He said you can drag out the house trailer and park it here. If you like it, or if you don't you can pull out. The next day it snowed. I took an old spare route truck, and went out after Johnny Sapp, he was hauling milk. I think it was George Palmer's is where he was stuck. I got him out of the snow bank and back on the road. I came back to the dairy and put the truck away. I didn't know whether I was hired or not yet. Anyway, we stayed there 21 years.

JJ: Must have been hired! How did you know who Dad was?

Irv: The other guys putting up seed corn pointed him out. I just went over and started talking to him.

RAD: So, if you came in 48, Daddy only lived a year after that. He died April 30th, 49.

Irv: I remember he bought a Dodge. I had to put a governor on it. He'd step on the footfeed and throw all the rods out of it. I had to overhaul the whole motor. Then he was pretty good. But one day, he and Grama had gone to Janesville. He said, I don't know what's wrong with this car. It's heating up terrible. I checked it and couldn't find anything wrong with it. Come to find out, he drove all the way to Janesville and back in low gear. He couldn't hear how hard the motor was racing, so he didn't know it. Grama didn't know how to drive, so she didn't know, either. I asked him how he shifted it. He hadn't pushed it up into fluid drive. He was a great old guy, though.

RAD: Gramma decided she was going to learn to drive. This was before your time, Irv. Grampa took her out to teach her. That lasted a while. Then

Gramma quit, wouldn't drive anymore. It was months and months before I learned the story of why she quit. She hit a cow, it couldn't have been a very big cow because the car went right up on top of the cow and came to rest on it. It killed the cow and Grampa paid for the cow. Got the car home and nobody said anything about it. But Gramma decided she didn't want to drive anymore.

Irv: Everytime he'd want something welded, he used to ask me if he could get this soldered in a hurry. Soldered, everything was soldered.

Craig: All of us younger guys on the farm: Johnny Sapp, me, and some of the guys that were a little older. It was right after the war and hard to get equipment. We saw a picture of an elevator in a magazine. It was 1000 or \$1400. Way too expensive. Especially when you have a bunch of high school clowns tossing hay into it....It was a magnificent machine!

Irv: Haven't you still got that?

RAD: Still have.

Irv: That was my pride and joy. I remember I took I don't know how many reduction gears I used to get it the right speed, so it wouldn't go to pieces. I had to slow it down so we could put at least six bags on it, to get them up in the truck and it wouldn't be too hard for a guy to pick them off. I had to slow it down still more so we could run it continuously and no one would have to stand beside it. We'd just dump them on there and the guy would grab them and put them in the truck. We had about five or six bag space in between them. It worked really good. We loaded trucks, and stacked with it and everything.

RAD: Still using it.

Craig: For the baled hay, particularly for the first ones in the morning and the last ones in the evening, they picked up moisture and got so heavy we could hardly lift them. It was a godsend.

Irv: The highest-priced thing on there was the belt. Remember I had to go up to Northern Belt Co. in Janesville before I found one long and wide enough in one piece. That was about 60 bucks for that belt alone.

RAD: The rest you made out of angle iron and anything you could find around the farm.

Irv: I bought an electric motor for it, didn't I?...Then I made a casewasher too. It was hard to find one, so Ron took me down. Where did we go that day? You spotted it right away and you said, I'd sure like to have one of these. We bought another bottle washer. I said, Well, we've got it all made. I'll use the old bottle washer pump. I said I'd have to make up some sprays and some jets. I made one of those for spraying corn, a boom. Remember? The first one we had? I took the same jets out of there and used them in the casewasher, only I had to drill the holes bigger so I could get more water out of it. So we put caustic and lye and hot water. I even had a hot water steam valve in there so we could heat the tank of water, and it circulated all the time.

Craig: Do you remember the time that you, Bill, Steve Ferguson, and I

shingled the roof of the big barn? We fried the eggs up there. I've got a movie about that.

Irv: The ladies' lounge or the other one?

Craig: The barn up on the hill.

Irv: Way up, by Chez Nous. We could've have done that on the ladies lounge that I built last. That was a nice deal. A good barn. Remember I drew the whole plans out for it? You and I drove to Madison to see Mr. Wetzel at the university. The only thing wrong with the whole plan, I had two 3 by 8s to go across the doorways. He says, You take those out and put two 2 by 12s in. There's nothing else wrong with the whole building. I thought he was off, taking three out and putting two in there. The only difference was that it was four inches deeper. He explained it to us. When the snow got on the roof, the two 2 by 12s would carry more than three 3 by 8s if it was the same circumference.

Craig: This was the lounge that was figured for square footage per cow. The ladies would be comfortable and sheltered.

Irv: Actually, all we built it for was to get them out of the weather. So they could live outdoors all winter. Somebody told us it was healthier for the cow to stay outside than to have them put in at night and then out again in the morning. They'd catch cold. So this was all open on the east side. We didn't have room in the barn, anyway. It was 44 feet across inside. A hundred and sixty feet long. I remember we had more concrete below ground than we did above ground. We put all the boards on it vertically and I put girts across to carry the boards. If the wind tore them off, it wouldn't be too expensive to change them. As the manure built up in there, that building was really warm. It was never really cold in there. I don't remember it ever freezing on the manure there, did it?

RAD: No. The only difficulty was that we had too many cows in there. When we'd bring down a fresh heifer, into the herd, the older cows would crowd around and she'd be shoved out into the 20-degree or below weather. It only happened two or three times. She'd freeze a teat or something. The older cows wouldn't give her space inside.

Craig: I remember the seed processing building being built. I have a picture of you, and Gil, and Ferguson, and Dad, just as you'd dug the very deep part. Where the elevator was going to go. How much of that was done by the farm staff? Did you make your own cement?

RAD: No, we hired Lutie to bring the cement to us. We put up our own forms. We did the rest.

Irv: We had a carpenter from Janesville.

RAD: Right! Mr. Young.

Irv: We got a carload of big lumber from the west coast, Douglas firs, 2 by 8s, and...

Craig(Irv?): We got some thirty-some footers. That's 45 feet right to the peak. The roof is a quadrangle. The pitch is 45 degrees. When we put the shingles on the that, we had to tie a rope around us, then throw the rope over the building and tie it to a truck on the other side so you wouldn't slide down. You could have fallen. You couldn't walk it. Remember that old belt truck....RA? The story from last night, Red Richardson was cranking a jerrybuilt jeep that Ed Path had made. This was 43, just before I went to Arizona. It was getting cold. He cranked it and broke his arm. All the way down to the hospital, he'd say, That damn son-of-a-bitch! That was the worst I ever heard from Red--he never swore!

Irv: I saw him last Sunday for the first time in 10 years. He looks good.

JJ: I bet he has some good stories. What about Dad?

Craig: didn't he bend the frame on his Buick one time? I told Daddy that Irv stood there with tears in his eyes as Dad went across the contours. It twisted it.

Irv: I remember his red Buick. He said he didn't know what happened, but all of a sudden he was going backwards through a barbedwire fence.

RAD: I know what happened then. I was coming back from a breeder's meeting. Late at night. I was coming down that road, sleepy, that runs parallel to J. I was driving south. I came to a dead end on the county road. It was slippery. I didn't realize how slippery. I put on my brakes, I slid and turned around. I slid backwards and went off the road. There's a big ditch there with one crossing on it. I slid there. As soon as I knew I was a goner, I shut my eyes. I heard some scraping and the car came to a standstill. I opened my eyes and looked around. I didn't know if I was looking north, south, east, or west. I finally oriented myself and found that I was heading north, I was in the field, I slid under the barbwire. It was elevated over the car, it was an old fence. I had wire right across my windshield. I had missed the road sign by a foot or two. I got into the pocket of the car. I had a pair of wire snippers in there. I got out and drove home. For a year I'd see stories about people getting hurt or killed going through a fence, here all I had were a few scratches on the roof of the car.

JJ: Did you tell the farmer whose fence you cut?

RAD: No.

Irv: I had to repaint that whole car. I couldn't match that color.

RAD: I couldn't have timed it better for space. I only had a narrow piece to get across, there was the fence and a signpost on each side. I slid between them and drove the car home.

Irv: There was a 58 Buick, grayish-blue. Somebody just ran into your trunk, you had to stop in front of them, or whatever. I straightened that one up.

RAD: Was that the one I shot the muffler off?

Irv: You did that quite often, going over those contours.

RAD: No, I shot it with my shotgun.

Irv: Oh! That was the time that you were cleaning your gun and shot the hole right through the transmission. Cover and muffler. You had the guy look at it and all he did was fix the muffler. You came home and I looked up there. We had to pull the whole motor. How you got it home, I don't know how the transmission did not fall out.

JJ: It's good that you didn't shoot somebody.

IRV: It wasn't where the liquid was, it was up by the bell(?) housing.

RAD: We knocked the pipes to pieces and I had to go all over the neighboring towns to get the pieces. I finally found someone to weld it up for me. I didn't know that I had damaged anything besides the exhaust pipe.

Irv: We pulled the motor on that. You went to Chicago with that same car one time. You came in and said there's something smoking real bad under the hood. You had to go back to Chicago again the day after. I lifted up the hood and here there was a great big hole in the side of the motor where you'd knocked a connecting rod right out through the side. I went down to the junkyard and got another motor, had it in the car that night, I had it in an hour before you had to go. You couldn't believe it was ready to run. ////

Side 2

Talk about some gorgeous Buick that had an incredible amount of chrome on it.

JJ: That's the one that Craig says you bent the frame on.

IRV: It had a switch on the dash that would raise the car 18 inches off the ground. He thought that was great, he'd drive through ditches and across fields. That car went anywhere he put it. They don't have that device anymore.

JJ: Tell me about the volunteer fire department being in the building and what went on. They were in the other end of the garage.

IRV: You folks built the bldgs.

JJ: You built the garage, too, didn't you?

IRV: No, that was built the year before I came. We extended the north end of the bldg. for the fire dept. We had it in a screened in area first. Then we were going to get another truck and we needed more room. Ron says, no way can you cheat me out of any more space. So we built the bldg. There were more beer cans in that wall than cement blocks. We'd have a party there every night, sitting there laying blocks and filling the holes with beer cans. If you ever tear it down, it'll be a beercan collector's paradise.

JJ: You used to blow off the whistle, how often? at noon?

IRV: That's when we tested the siren. Then at six o'clock we do the radio test. There were seven phones on the network. You had one in the office and we had one, Roy, Paul, Bob, Gilbert couldn't be on it because he wasn't a citizen. It would have been perfect, too. He was always right there, and real enthusiastic. But there were rules that you couldn't have a member that wasn't a US citizen.

RAD: It was exciting in the office, up over the milkhouse. When the call would come in, the siren would start blowing and the truck would pull out.

IRV: Helen Tapp could tell you just when it went off and when you got back.

RAD: Then we'd all pile out onto the back porch. Oh yeah, we used to have some good times on that truck.

IRV: We had a lot of colorful characters down in the barn. Dick Kirkpatrick, he works at Warners, now. He was a sweet old guy. He drank a lot, didn't he? I remember we'd play cards at noon. We'd keep watch for Grampa, so he wouldn't catch us. We'd play on the sunporch, off the Big House. The men's lounge. Nobody smoked or drank, or used bad language. Who I really liked, Gilbert's brother--what was his name? I bought his car. A great, big, square-jawed guy. Six foot. We used to sneak down and get a beer once in awhile. He was going back to Norway, and he waited till the last minute to sell his car. I had \$60 in my pocket. He took the money and threw me the title to it. Then took off in a taxi to the train to get to the airport.

RAD: Do you remember Siboda(?). He lived at the Big House. He got married and we threw a wedding for him in the church, he didn't have any money. Who did he marry?

IRV: I saw them not too long ago. He was asking how you were.

RAD: I got a letter from him not too long after he was fired, telling me I was a disaster.

JJ: Is he the one who flushed the corn down the toilet?

RAD: Do you remember having to clean out those pipes? He was going to sell the corn up north, then he chickened out and flushed bushels of it down the toilet. It swelled up in the discharge pipe. We had to break that all out.

IRV: Then Gilbert's brother flushed a grapefruit! Remember that? Out in the back room? He just loved grapefruit. He would cut it in half and when he was finished, he'd throw the rest into the toilet and flush it down. It would stop the toilet and it would run over onto the floor. You'd think Gilbert could've taught him about indoor plumbing. We had to take the toilet off, turn it upside down and get that stuff out. Then he used to build those fires with corn cobs, in the saigon(?) **(second?)** heater, off the water heater. He'd build a fire there and get the chimney red-hot, all the way through the kitchen, all the way back to the main chimney....We used to have a lot of excitement there, for awhile....Old George, he came home drunk one night. He was living upstairs at the time. I sold him the trailer after I moved to the Big House. I had just come back from town with a whole bushel of tomatoes. George fell into them. He smashed all the ones on top. Here he goes, up the stairs with his hands

covered in tomato....Who was that guy from Denmark? He didn't know where the register went. He would empty all the corn and oats from his pants' cuff down the heat register. Here it was dropping right on top of the refrigerator in the kitchen.

Olive: I didn't know what was happening. Here was this corn and oats falling all over things all the time.

RAD: I remember when you two were running the Big House for a little while.

Olive: At first I really enjoyed it. Those men were so nice. One would be watching little Irvie, and one would help me with the dishes that night so I could get my work down and get him to bed. It was like having two families.

IRV: We had seven at one time, remember? We have a picture of Irvie hanging on the cupboards. And there was someone's arms ready to catch him if he fell while the other took the picture.

Olive: We didn't know about the picture. We went to have the film developed and there was this picture, he was hanging by the drop seat of his coveralls off the knob of the cupboard!

Irv: They'd toss him one to the other. They had a ball with him.

More talk about Gilbert's brother--was his name Gerke? Jergen

Irv: Gilbert's written me several times saying, come on over, Irv. We'll dump the vat, sit in it and get drunk as hell...Does he run a farm or a brewery? The way he explains it to me, it's like potato schnapps-alcohol. He distills right there.

RAD: He has a contract with the government to buy all the alcohol he produces.

IRV: He's got a big home there, and one in the mountains, and a summer home.

Talk of G's kids.

Irv: This is changing the subject, but were you the one who found the body in the corn shocks at Obecks?

RAD: What's Oscar's last name? The half-witted guy who worked for Ruby? Then he went to work at a farm out east of town.

Irv: We were getting ready to take the corn shocks, getting ready to shred. He tipped over this one shock and here was a dead man. No, he didn't tip it. We were coming down the row and he says, Hey there's a guy's foot sticking out of this. I thought maybe there was someone sleeping. I went up there with him. He was scared, so was I. We just pushed it back far enough to see the guy's head half covered with dirt. We came back down and called the sheriff. That's when you were home from medical school, Craig. You said, Well give him to me, I'll take him back up to the lab! I'll take him apart! I'll never forget that as long as I live....That incident shook me up so bad--I started thinking

about my army career and all those guys...I just couldn't take it anymore....They came to get the guy out. They even took dirt to look for bullets. They found some bullets in him. I followed it up--it was some guy in Iowa that had shot him.

RAD: You guys used to tease Oscar, about being dim in the head. When I look back now, I think you were pretty cruel to him.

Irv: I think so, too, Ron.

RAD: You were saying, Did you put him in there, Oscar?

Irv: Do think that's the reason he quit?

RAD: No. But I think we were a little harsh on him, teasing.

IRV: (This has to be RAD) I saw Mrs. Dick Walsh the other day and she said, I remember when you bought the Obeck farm. We wanted that but got in on it too late. I said, I know you did, I got in on it just as quick as I knew it was available!

JJ: Tell me about the time the silo split.

Irv: That was 2 o'clock in the morning, wasn't it? How did we find it out?

RAD: When we went down to milk.

Irv: It was before they were milking, but we hindered their trying to milk, trying to put bands around it.

RAD: It took us a while to get the bands, because somebody knew where there was a silo being torn down. We were able to get the bands.

Irv: I remember taking the bands down and Stanley Zoots, down at Neilson engineering, cut me some long threaded bolts to put in there. When we first started, we needed extra long bolts to pull it up. We kept taking them up, taking them up. When we got it purt near closed up, we had to change the bolts because we ran out of thread. The whole thing would have split and pushed the whole barn apart.

RAD: It wasn't really split, there was a crack there. Some liquid had come out of there. That was the last year we put silage in it.

Irv: That was full all the way to the top, Ron. She would have split the whole damn way if that crack had finished opening...We worked the rest of that night and the next day on it to get it closed up to the point where it just seeped.

RAD: The cows were just having a ball licking up that alcohol. It had already been fermenting.

Irv: That's why we were so worried. It was full to the top. If it had cracked it would have gone right straight through both floors. It would have split the barn wide open.

RAD: What really kept it together were the three-quarter-inch reinforcing rods that were up every two feet, all the way around.

Irv: That was inside the cement, though. We didn't know exactly where they were, up and down.

RAD: There weren't any up and down ones. But you could see the ridges of the around ones.

IRV: Then we thought later that they didn't go in all the way over the doorways. We tried to put a hacksaw blade down the crack to see if we could find a rod and never found one...What year was that?

RAD: It was before Bob George came, in '56. Were you there when the cows got the bloat so bad? We had to put hoses in their throats?

IRV: Yeah, that was bad.

RAD: They were bloating because they got turned out in the pasture too quick. They got into the wet alfalfa.

IRV: We could hear them out in the pasture.

Craig: Is that how it was discovered? Weren't they crying so loud?

IRV: It was the pasture down in the back of the dairy. You could hear them trying to belch, but they couldn't. We got a hold of Doc Knilans right away. He came down. He said the only thing we could do was shove hoses down their throats. We went out and got all the garden hoses we could find. We shoved it right down through to their stomachs. Then we'd pull it back out. You could see that it was relieving them. Then you got the idea to put the hose down and suck on it. Remember that? You got a whole mouthful of it!

Craig: I did it, too.

JJ: You saved the cow, though.

IRV: We still used troll cars. (trocars) They are big wide needles filled. You jam it in and pull out the center and then, wwheww! That's what I mean by punching holes in the sides of them. It looked like a funnel.

RAD: They're sharp, triangular. That would get into their stomach and relieve the pressure. The air would rush out.

JJ: So bloat can kill the cow.

IRV: Sure. But I don't think we lost but three out of the whole bunch.

RAD: We had ten, fifteen, or more. We were worried about all of them. We got them into the barn.

IRV: That was after Grampa died. Oh boy, I've been gone 14 years, going on 15.

RAD: I remember when you had to take this job downtown, decided to make a change. This fat guy, who drove the milktruck--what was his name? He lives over at Sharon. He filled in for me after you moved. Leroy Devoy. I got a telephone call from Maine saying you and Devoy would be leaving in a few days. Vera and I got in the car and drove a 1000 miles in less than 24 hours.

IRV: I didn't leave right away. I stayed three weeks.

RAD: I thought you'd outlive me there on the farm.

IRV: I don't even know the reason I went down there to tell you the truth. I started at the same amount of money.

RAD: Probably asked for a raise and I didn't give it to you, or something.

IRV: That was one of the reasons probably.

Olive: Grampa.

Irv: If Grampa had been there, I would have gotten it!...They were paying fifty cents an hour for....///
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JJ: So bloat can kill the cow.

IRV: Sure. But I don't think we lost but three out of the whole bunch.

RAD: We had ten, fifteen, or more. We were worried about all of them. We got them into the barn.