
PRG 1569/1/3 Interview by Alan Stewart with Ray Whitrod on Monday 18 November 1996.

[TAPE 1 SIDE A]

So we're here talking first of all about our joint experience of Chris Bell, and I was saying that he came down from Biology in about 1978/'79 and he said he wanted to do a PhD with me and so we did. A long story in itself, but at least part of it is that we got on to this notion, Ray, of trying to understand how is it that people make particular food choices. One of the sparks for this question was that we saw all these fast food chains being developed – McDonald's and Hungry Jack's - and we discovered that there were some people who enjoyed those foods very much and others wouldn't set foot. So that was part of the trigger, I think, that set up this query, why is it? It can't be the food itself. There must be some other - now I'm using the term in hindsight - but connotative meanings, and we stumbled on the notion of personal construct psychology and that took us off on a track because - - -. We saw a quote in the American science journal called Science that in the early stages of a research and development project, "On a clear day you can see absolutely nothing", and that was our experience. We had no idea where this was going because we'd come across some of the original writings of George Kelly and then Don Bannister and Fay Franselum. Nobody had ever applied this as far as we saw to food choice so we were really creating something new. So it was a devious path and by the time we'd finished, or by the time Chris finished his PhD, I sensed he was exhausted because it was tough.

He got a PhD in what?

Well you see this is the essence of it. It's partly nutrition but it wasn't an orthodox nutrition by any means.

But he wouldn't have been accepted by the psychologists.

No.

So was he in no-man's land?

Well he was. We didn't recognise that at the time. Possibly others did and tried to warn us, who knows.

But in some ways I'm nearly as ignorant as Chris. Chris was ignorant of psychology and to some extent you were, but he was – he'd come from biology. I've come from criminology with a very thin veiling of psychology and I find my ignorance of the basic principles and developments appalling - something which I don't know. Did Chris ever have this feeling that there was a big lot of knowledge out there that he wasn't tapping into or did he restrict himself purely to the Kelly stuff?

I think that's basically what we did. It was very much a sort of meta-psychology that we looked at and to focus specifically on processes of decision making without going back into the depths of the whole process of - what would you call it? - developmental psychology. No, we didn't ever try and study in any formal sense, neither of us, some of the traditional psychology.

But the techniques of biology investigation are different to those of psychology. We're into the questionnaires, the surveys, a whole stack of material there about how you

explore from the psychologist's point of view, and yet you weren't trained in this area.

Not at all, but you see this is what happened, is that one of our first ventures, when we decided to look at this issue of food choice, was to design questionnaires and to do them to the best of our ability. But what we discovered is that there was very little correspondence between how people responded to our questionnaires and their reported practices, very little indeed. So we recognised something was wrong and that's when we stumbled metaphorically over personal construct psychology and we saw immediately the richness of it as an explanatory power. And yet you're quite right, it took us very far afield from the orthodox psychology and there was nobody really to talk to.

How did you find somebody willing to act as examiners?

That's a good story in itself. What I did is I searched the world.

You must have.

I did, and eventually I found three. One was a woman called Magda Crondel from the University of Toronto who is trying to do something similar, again using orthodox quantitative approaches. It had come to a brick wall and I had met her at a conference of nutrition education in San Diego and she recognised that there was some value to this survey. She was a well-respected nutritionist so she was acceptable to the Higher Degrees Committee. At least she knew what we were on about. A second person was Don Bannister.

Oh yes! [Laughs]

Yes, because he was right in the personal construct psychology. He'd been to Ohio, I think it was, where George Kelly was at the time, and so he'd studied with Kelly, the first English person to do that. So I met him at an international PCP conference at Niagara Falls and spoke to him about this problem of finding suitable PhD external examiners, so he was quite happy to do that. And then Stewart Trusswell, who is Professor of Nutrition at Sydney Uni. This wasn't his field. Nonetheless we'd had good conversations, both Chris and me. We'd both talked with Stewart Trusswell and he knew again that this was a bona fide approach, that there was a great deal of rigour to it, it was novel, and he was happy again. So in the event I searched out and found three people who were acceptable to the Higher Degrees Committee and all of them said, "Yes, this is magnificent work". So that's how in effect I got in to qualitative approaches, although at the time, when Chris and I started, the word qualitative research was not in my consciousness. It was lying around but I picked it up much later.

Your experience isn't unique Alan, according to my reading and the qualitative research, because the material I read about qualitative research - research is - is they tend to come to it from another discipline, teachers particularly and nurses. Now it's coming from a sort of another discipline because they're unhappy with the way they're approach this experience.

Yes. Yes, I think there'll probably be at least two reasons, and maybe many more, but at least two of them is that the orthodox approaches, both in psychology and sociology, do not get near the world of lived experience. They can't handle the lived experience of individual people and so
- - -

No, no they don't - - . Why?

They're not focused on it as far as I know. The very notion of recognising the potential value of the reported lived experience, the subjective experience of individuals, you would know as well as any, doesn't really come under the domain of standard psychology.

You've described it as not focused. I think it's stronger than that. I think the gaze is averted deliberately from it. There are oppositions to it, barriers to it it seems to me, partly because of this need to keep your distance from your subject, to be objective, because they think that researchers can be objective and that's a grey area for me.

To me there's no possibility, no possibility. It's a pure illusion that in any sense you can be distanced from your observations, that your observations are independent of you. Not the slightest possibility. I heard that expressed as well as I ever had by a good friend of mine. His wife – she's a good friend too - was working as an electronmicroscopist and her role was to cut the sections that somebody else could look down and make the various distinctions, and what she said, the quality of the slides that she produced were a function of what kind of night she'd had the night before.

Can you go over that one again?

The quality of the slides were a function of her performance. There was nothing independent of her mood, whether she'd a few drinks the night before or whatever. Her personality was in those slides in effect, and I believe that. Plus the fact of course that whatever you decide to look at when you look down a microscope, is a function of your political ends. There's a certain advantage to seeing things that other people wouldn't see, so that's part of it.

That's very strong, but I can follow it even in a less specialised way. I can imagine making those slices would be a very highly skilled job, but even allow more cruder endeavours would still be affected.

Everything, absolutely everything. The choices you make as to what you're going to look at, the particular methods in your approach, how you do the observations, the counting, whatever you do, is all a function of what's already in your nervous system.

Yes, the only little sort of niggling worry I have about that is that it's possible to be carried away in the current of the all-powerful milieu influence because there is a basic personality gene problem there that you need to look at. I think temperament probably is one of the inherited genes we've got. I don't think we're completely when we're born.

Oh no, not remotely. I think there is most certainly a genetic component at the same time, and obviously there are these genetic disorders, but I think part of our personality is very much a function of how we've interpreted the world around us.

Oh I think completely so. I think the raw material's there. The way in which we shape it comes from our perceptions. I'm quite clear about that.

Yes, and I think there is the possibility increasingly to be able to reflect on the patterns of our behaviour and do something about them.

You're now going a bit further. We're talking about reflections now. I wouldn't go that far.

I think we're very blessed in this late twentieth century to recognise that we have patterns to our behaviour, but they're not cast in stone, that if with perhaps some skilled assistance, or some meditation, practices of reflection on our own behavioural patterns that we can make a decision to break out and not be totally, what George Kelly used to be called, "the prisoner of our biography".

I like that phrase, yes.

It's a good phrase.

You're saying this was a fairly recent development are you, in our history?

I think as available to everybody potentially.

Yes, the general availability. It probably was there in the old monasteries or some esoteric group

Yes. I heard it expressed nicely by Dale Spender when I went to a conference. Do you know of Dale Spender, feminist writer?

Yes.

That in this late twentieth century our Western society is doubly blessed in that we've got the material comforts that nobody's ever had before - for the common person, I mean generally - and also we have the opportunity to reflect on our experience in a systematic way so that we don't have to be locked into our habitual patterns, that we can get access. Basically, as you said, we're remarkably fortunate to have the possibility of being curious about our own behaviour and to make some change if we wish.

You know, I think what you're saying is probably true, but it hasn't been given any prominence - one of the sorts of outcomes. Well not outcomes. One of the resources now available to us is there and we haven't had it before. It's not been commented on has it?

No, not really. No, we tend to get swept along in our day-to-day exigencies and our survival approaches and the economic rationalists have held sway for quite some while. Maybe Dean Brown just at this very moment has recognised there's got to be much more attention paid to how we connect with each other, and perhaps as an extension of that there's the possibility to take a bit of a breather and say, "Let's work out what our values are". I believe that personal construct approaches are very liberating because they bring us, at least in my experience, to the recognition that each one of us has a particular way of seeing the world that is as valid as the next person's, that there are no experts in living. I heard that expressed nicely at one of John Kay's conferences that he's had at the Grosvenor - no, in North Terrace - a couple of years ago, the first one on knowledge as a social construction. That's the essence of it. And one of the

people there made the point - he was from Wollongong - that because he had been trained in how to listen very carefully to classical music, that he also had some sort of, oh, what's the word, privileged access to truth. That's the way it came over. The point I'm coming to I think is that each one of us has particular experiences and it's lovely to be able to interpret a Beethoven or a Mozart concerto in considerable depth, but that doesn't mean that you've got a privileged access to any other form of human experience. Each of us has our own. The street urchins, you know the people, the homeless children that we see, particularly from South America, have got very rich skills as to how to survive and each one of us develops our own particular way of interpreting experience. What I was saying earlier is that without this opportunity to reflect - to recognise that there are patterns first of all and then to reflect on those patterns in a systematic way - we tend to get locked in to whatever strategies that we've set up.

But it's not a procedure, it's not a mechanism that's taught at schools.

No, not remotely, not remotely.

It's only recently of course we've started into problem-solving, I suppose, and that's a step forward in the sense that it requires you to deal with that, and that's only recently, over the last twenty years or so. I mean I was never - - -. Problem-solving was a new concept to me I admitted to twenty years ago for the first time Alan, so I imagine we are being progressed, but slowly. Why aren't there some messiahs out there saying - - -. Perhaps there are messiahs and we're not listening.

Well maybe that's it, and it's certainly a question of persistence as I've come to understand, Ray, that the people who've got good ideas - - -. History is littered with those who've got good ideas, are very creative and original, brilliant people. You've got to also know how to market them.

Yes. Yes, that's a communication skill isn't it?

Yes, very much so, yes. To have some streetwise-type nous about, to know that your ideas are not sufficient in themselves. They need to be put over in such a way that people recognise an advantage.

Yes. I'm taking street nous to be sort of hard realism in the sense that - - -. Yes.

Yes. Nonetheless there are people - - -. I've been party to something called a cybernetics group over the years. This has been I suppose one way of bringing these ideas forward periodically. They just keep bubbling along. Some people pick them up. I enjoy this kind of activity because to me, once I got on with Chris to personal construct psychology, I found it intellectually wonderful. It had a very rich theoretical framework and then very direct application, highly practical applications. And I've always been a person - - -. I love the idea of having a theoretical underpinning to whatever I do, so this to me was marvellous.

We've come to talk about you and I got from Anne Sutcliff the item that Tony Winefield - - -.

I couldn't find mine. I don't know what's happened to it.

Well I've got a copy, and he wrote it beautifully.

Yes, I was impressed. Very flattering.

I wouldn't say it's flattering, but it's a good synopsis of what you've achieved.

Yes.

I sense that what we've talked about so far - - -. Well let me say a couple of things before we continue the conversation. I can see, Ray, that this is a very rich project.

You're getting worse than Tony Winefield.

No I'm not.

I thought you were a different character. I thought you were in the honest, impartial - - -.

I'm being honest. I'm reflecting my lived experience, Ray. The very opportunity to come down and have this conversation, I enjoy it enormously.

Yes, I enjoy the conversations, when it gets to others sure, but I get - - -. [Laughs] I get value out of it, don't worry.

So do I and I think a lot of other people are going to get value as well because both the particular events that we've touched on - and they're still very much in the early part of your life as I understand it - and also the nature of your story that's coming out, I believe people will like it. I think they'll find their own - - -. Like any good story, well told, it resonates with our own lived experience. You've been part of South Australian history, in a sense for so long, you've been a seminal influence on a number of key events that's happened, not only in this State. But because of the choices that you've made and the particular journey that you took you've seen things, you've done things that I believe are very well worthwhile recording, and I've mention this to several people, Geraldine being one.

Oh yes! And others, and they say, "Good on you Alan for doing it". So it's an affirmation, not that I needed it Ray - I didn't need any affirmation.

Yes. Yes, you've started me on I think up till now we've been talking very much as though the individual is there learning and experiencing and so forth and the social support is there incidentally, but I am convinced it's essential to have that social support. You said you didn't need convincing. OK, but a long time ago, before you got into psychology, there was an experiment carried out by a man named Ash on the value of confirmation of one's judgment. I don't know whether you remember this or not, but there was a group of students and it's an experiment, as usual, with students at the university. One man speaks up the rest howl him down and after a while he gives up. The second time, the second occasion, a different group. A man speaks up and he's supported by one other and he lasts five times as long as the man on his own. Not double. Just that one supporting voice was enough to give him some degree of validity and reaffirm his own judgement. Because I don't know about you, but I sometimes feel I'm making mistakes, or could make mistakes. I need somebody else's judgment Alan and you can't get it just from yourself. You need an external gauge somewhere, don't you?

Yes.

What do you do about an external gauge?

I have a network of friends that, when I need some affirmation, I go to them. Tell me, when did you read Ash and when did you learn this particular notion that you need some validation?

I started psychology when I was seventeen here at Adelaide, but it was a very dismal performance. One went along and sat in the back row and listened to an elderly lady reading out from a thick textbook. That's all she did. And I'd come straight from high school, unused to that sort of teaching.

High school teaching was quite enlightened by comparison?

Yes it was in some respects, Alan. I was fortunate in getting an unorthodox teacher of economics in my final year at high school and he sold economics. It was one subject I did well at the matriculation exam, was economics. I'd learned a lot from the way he taught compared to the run of the mill stuff and I thought that's what happened at university, but it did not - not in psychology in the early years. I've got a little note here. But later on, when I started doing psychology more earnestly at the ANU, I came across a - - -.

[Break in recording - finds document] Just read the first page of that. You've probably seen it. I'm sure you have. I was going to send it to Chris Cooper.

Let me read it out. This is to the Commissioner of Police, City Watch House, Adelaide, dated 20 May 1947. "Dear Sir, Yesterday evening at the weekly debate over Station 5KA, 'Adelaide Speaks' one of the four contributors was Detective Whitrod, the other three being Dr Constance Davy (psychologist), Mrs Anne Wheaton (university lecturer in Social Sciences) and myself. I consider that Detective Whitrod's contribution was outstanding and was an excellent illustration of the ability, perspicacity and wisdom of the young police officer of today as compared with his predecessor of a generation ago. The purpose of my writing this letter is to suggest that Detective Whitrod should be asked to hand his script to you for the purpose of its being published in the Police Journal. Yours faithfully, Frances Gibson Hicks, Barrister and Solicitor.

Now why I brought that to your attention was, following upon our talk about streetwise knowledge, the subject for discussion was juvenile delinquency and we had two university lecturers, one in psychology, one in social work, and a barrister. The barrister was fairly succinct and talked - was legal jargon. The other two talked in academic terms and I talked about catching young lads breaking into houses and stealing motorcars - oh no, there weren't motorcars in those days - were stealing bicycles, doing all sorts of naughty things, how we might handle that situation. It was the street knowledge not the academic knowledge. Apparently it convinced Hicks he should do something about it and I wrote the article. It was published in the Australian Police Journal and later on, some years later, I entered an version in the English competition by the Home Office, which was run for all British police forces throughout the world, and I got a gold medal for it. But it came from your observation that you need to have academic knowledge tempered by contact with reality, and I think that's what inspired that letter

from Hicks.

So that's what sparked off the notion - - -. Were you persuaded by that letter to write up what you'd contributed in that radio broadcast?

Oh yes, yes, I wrote the two articles and I got them published and that was my first publication of course. I was aged twenty-two or something at the time, twenty-three at the time. It also helped me get on in the police force. Here's a leading Adelaide barrister writing to the Commissioner of Police saying, "One of your young constables was outstanding in a public debate over the air". It's a nice little pat on the back and the Commissioner was suitably impressed.

Did the Commissioner take an interest in that? Did he follow it up?

Oh yes, yes.

He asked to see you about it at all?

No, no, he didn't.

What makes you think that he was interested?

Well because he - - -. That Commissioner was a man called Johns at that time and he'd been in charge of the Police Training Academy when I'd gone through as one of the first cadets and he'd been sold on the idea of having young cadets, so that's why I knew he was interested.

I sense from Tony Winefield's letter, his nomination, that you were influential in the notion that the police force, people within the police force, should get themselves qualifications. We've touched on this when you came back from the UK, from your war years and you were interested - - -. You recognised that you had to get some qualifications. But I think it goes more than your own personal interest, that you saw the value of people within the police force being recognised as those - - -. [Interruption] Yes, does that ring a bell?

Yes.

Yes, of getting qualifications.

I think the article in the Australian Encyclopaedia brings that out perhaps more than Tony's does.

Yes, maybe I'm getting confused.

Yes, this is the man in charge of Police Studies at the University of Wagga. What's Wagga called these days? Anyway. He's writing from a - - -. He was formerly Director of the Police Research and Planning Institute, so he's seeing this from a perspective national. Tony wouldn't have had that.

Right, OK, fair comment.

So it's Gerry McGrar stuff, and Gerry McGrar would have known about this for some time, how I tried to get a qualification, not necessarily as being education so much as having a capacity to undertake some learning skills.

How did you try to implement that?

Well I suppose the crux, my whole approach, was the Academy was set up in Queensland. When I got there in '70 I persuaded the Minister for Police that we needed to recruit young police constables with a proven capacity to study as distinct from the intake we were getting which, in Queensland at the time, were ex-railway settlers, ex-linesmen. We were even getting tradesmen and artisans in the force. They were cattle drovers, they were typical Queensland lads brought up on cattle stations and they were the ones coming into the police force. And they were very good in regards to being stationed in small country police stations, but as regards coping with the demands of a modern police force in the city, it was beyond them. So I managed to persuade the Minister to allow me to recruit cadets from the high schools of Queensland who'd completed what we used to call the Intermediate, and then there was two years to matriculation. We gave them two years of residential training at \$5,000 a year at this college to get their matriculation without being tied to the police force, and then we offered them a year's further training to become police officers. And so in 1971, '72, '73 and '74, those first four years - oh, '75 - we managed to cream off the tops of mainly the high schools of Queensland, some private schools but not many. So we brought a lot of intelligence and we got them to matriculation level. And we got them into science, social sciences. None into law, but they became, you know, well qualified and with a mind which was capable of challenging the old pro formas, sort of working out new ones.

Were there any precedents in other States?

No, this was unique in Australia or anywhere that I knew of where there had been a deliberate attempt to recruit potentially intellectually capable police officers at an early age. They went on to become the pick of the police force and most - not most - a number of them left after I resigned. A number of them left because their promotional avenues were shut off and the police force reverted to seniority promotion so their qualifications didn't help them. And of course they had a Premier who was opposed to the whole concept of education. Joe Bjielke Peterson had left primary school and made a fortune as a grader of roads and other pastoral interests and he said it wasn't necessary for policemen to be Rhode scholars, and he frowned down upon my endeavours and soon after I left that procedure of seeking out intelligent young recruits was abandoned.

The other thing was that when I did that, we made no differentiation on the basis of gender and we got in nearly half females into the intake as well as males and on the whole the women were more intelligent than the men. Because in Queensland there were fewer opportunities for them elsewhere anyway, and we were paying equal salaries which was an advance, and so we got a lot of very capable young women in the force, and we got some at the adult stage who'd been teachers and nurses. So the general level of the intelligent quota of the Queensland police force rose sharply.

How did you manage to persuade Joe to take this on? I mean you said you had the support of the Police Minister, but nonetheless I sense there'd have been a lot of resentment from within the established - the people already in the police force - because as I hear you say, promotion no longer was purely according to years of service. It was not on merit and there would have been a huge shift in the whole police culture.

Yes. I think it got through, my ideas, because the Minister gave them strong support and he only referred to Cabinet those things he had to, and I don't think the people in Cabinet - - -. There was, I think, one other person in Cabinet with a degree. The rest were all in that Queensland mould of having left school at Intermediate or before, and so they didn't see the potential of what I was doing. And the Police Union hadn't picked it up either very much - they were strong opponents - but eventually they did and their resistance was I think sufficient to largely destroy what I'd done.

Who else supported you? We talked early this afternoon about having a mentor, or at least somebody with whom you could spell out what was important. So you had the Police Minister. Did you have colleagues, senior colleagues?

I managed to - - -. I went into a 4,000-strong police force knowing nobody at all well. I'd met a few at conferences and so forth. And so it took me twelve months to identify those of similar mind, at least twelve months. I got some offers of support from two junior members, two senior constables, who were my driver and a personal assistant, very early in the peace. That took me twelve months. And then it took another twelve months in order to identify those members in the force who were prepared to fight against corruption and there were very few of those. It takes a long time to come in to virgin territory, potentially hostile virgin territory, and work out the individuals who will support a change, particularly amongst policemen. Policemen are taught the rule of precedence. Judgments, legal judgments, are made on what's done before. They're taught to think that way and so it's very difficult to introduce change into a police force, very difficult.

Did you have a suspicion that it would be all this difficult? Let's go back. You're in Papua New Guinea and you'd spent a year there, and I think you had a thought that you would continue for a while, and then you got the offer to go to Queensland.

Yes.

What prompted you to accept that invitation?

There were three things I guess in reflection. One is that I think I mentioned my wife's health and my health wasn't all that well - we'd picked up malaria. Secondly there was independence around the corner when there would be a big push for an indigenous police commissioner and so my time was limited in any case. And thirdly I'd found there was some resistance to my ideas about equality of opportunity vis a vis Papuans against the white Australians, in the administration, that for a long time the administration had done an excellent job but were very much in the role in a paternalistic supervisory role rather than on the basis of being colleagues and equals. I understand that Alan because the Papuans had a long way to go to catch up but the time was rapidly approaching when we had to give them equal rights, and there was that reluctance to my ideas to giving greater opportunities to the Papuans. And so when Max Hodges, the Police

Minister, flew up from Queensland to see me - - -. Initially I'd said no because I felt I had a moral commitment to stay where I was, but then it seemed to me that with a strong minister who was in favour of reform, I might achieve more in Queensland, so that's why we went down to Queensland.

Did you go and have a look first?

No, I didn't. I went down and was interviewed by Cabinet. I hadn't understood there was some - - -. I hadn't understood the Queensland political situation. There was a strong conservative government in power, but even so this was split a little bit between the Liberal and the National parties, so you had a division there. And I hadn't understood the authoritarian approach of the National Party that, "What we say goes and we'll carry it out". I got through that interview, not unscathed because I'd been asked about my understanding of the independence of the Police Commissioner and that was subject to a bit of criticism because it seemed to me the Commissioner needed to have some independence in his day-to-day operations and even that was queried in Queensland, and I hadn't sensed how strong that opposition was, that it was there.

Had you experienced this kind of opposition before, for example in Canberra?

No, no, not at all. In Canberra the Federal governments - and I'd only had a little experience of the Labor Party - - -. Because there was a switch from Labor to Liberal in 1953. Under Menzies I hadn't experienced any sort of interference at all. Mind you the role of the Commonwealth police was very limited in the day-to-day affairs of the community. The things that we were actively responsible for were Federal crimes which didn't impinge on the ordinary citizen - counterfeit coins, customs avoidance, a large scale fraud on the Commonwealth, immigration offences and so forth. On the main this didn't impinge on the average person like the role of the policeman in Queensland. So I hadn't - - -. And here in South Australia in my own early upbringing there hadn't been any interference at all.

Yes, so this was a remarkable learning experience for you.

Yes it was, and to revert back to that need for companionship, social support, it was very thin on the ground in Queensland, very thin. I couldn't understand why some of my approaches didn't receive support in public circles. For instance, my move towards education was strongly supported by the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, Solomon Cowen, Professor Solomon Cowen as he was then, and I had expected him to come out and support what I was saying and doing, but he didn't. And then later on I understood that was not the Jewish approach. You don't have public confrontation. You did it through other circuitous routes, and maybe he was doing that but it didn't seem to have any effect. And then secondly my attack on corruption in the police force. This was almost a full time commitment for me. I received minimum support in the media from church leaders and I would have expected that to come out as a paramount supporter of mine, but they didn't, and this was partly I think because they had a Premier who was said to be a prominent Lutheran and that must have affected their judgment, and secondly I think because the Queensland clergy had sort of been conditioned to accept brothels and SPD - - -.

[TAPE 1 SIDE B]

It was never detected or observed in my time. So it was a new concept where you go to a State which is almost totally corrupt. Now I smelled it in New South Wales but it wasn't until I became Commissioner of Police in Queensland and spent some time as a colleague with the Commissioner in New South Wales Police that I realised how far down the track New South Wales had gone, where you had a Premier, Ask..... - - -. He was as corrupt as the Police Commissioner, and he was corrupt. Now I don't know where you go. Where do you start? Now as far as I knew in Queensland Joe was not corrupt, I don't think, except for a few charges which were laid against him by the Prosecutor which seemed to me he was fortunate to be found not guilty because of a jury disagreement.

I didn't expect it to be in Queensland, but it was, it was there. I should have been warned because Brigadier McKinna had gone off from Adelaide to do a survey which led to my appointment in which he said, "Queensland's an open city". He said, "You can get girls or grog or betting any hour of the day or night anywhere in Queensland". He said, "The police are not doing their duty". Now he said that in his report so I should have suspected, but I didn't realise how much it was tolerated up the line, but it was endemic to the society. Those peccadilloes as it were, "Prostitution doesn't hurt anybody really I suppose. SB bookmaking has now been legalised. Selling grog after six o'clock's been legalised". These were minor behaviour indiscretions, but unfortunately it's a step down, down the path. You tolerate a brothel and then you start get free sex yourself and then you get payments from the brothel-keepers because they want you to exclude the opposition and so you arrest the opposition because they're not paying enough, the others are paying you more. You look the other way when the brothels are burnt down and arson is committed. There's a growing crescendo down that line once you start, and that's what was happening in Queensland. I mean Joe was getting some free servicing of his tractors and his various properties were being assisted by people who were tendering for government contracts.

How did you hear about this?

I didn't. I didn't understand how widespread it was until the Fitzgerald Commission came along. I knew what was happening in the police force because I could see it. I had reports coming in and I had a little team I'd set up called my Crime Intelligence Unit, which was basically to monitor the level of crime in the community and to identify the areas which needed strengthening, and they kept reporting to me that gambling, illegal gambling, and prostitution and sly grog selling and so forth was running almost unchecked. So when I would call in my divisional superintendents to point this out to them, they all denied it was happening - denied it to my face, said "The information's wrong". And when I tried to get some action going down the line it said, "Oh you can't restrict brothels because you can't get evidence. The patrons won't give evidence because of embarrassment and you can't send a policeman in there to be a patron because it'll offend his wife". And so I met a wall of resistance within the police force itself.

It was interesting, Alan, looking back now over the years, I can see they tolerated me as

a new boy on the block who didn't know they score, and they were right. Because the moment I got shifted it reverted back to what it was and they thought, "These new people come along for a little while and they'll go and we'll be back to where we were", and they were right. It needed a Fitzgerald Commission with unheard of powers of access to bank accounts, telephone tapping, things which weren't available to me. Unlimited resources Tony had to make his investigation. I never had those - modern equipment, modern microphones and so forth. It was only through that sort of money trails that they got down to what the politicians were getting on the side.

Why did you feel the need then to try and hunt it out and ferret it out and do something about it? In some sense you could have kept yourself aloof, in a sense again tolerating it and knowing that this was the culture?

It was I have a choice Alan. I didn't give it enough consideration. I should have thought about that more than I did. I just brushed it aside and said, "It's wrong. A policeman swears an oath to enforce the laws of the State and if the culture wants to allow drinking after six o'clock or ten o'clock, whatever it is, if it wants to allow more gambling, then they change the law. If it wants to allow prostitution then they'll change the laws". It seemed to me that was the democratic approach and that required action by Parliament and by the community. It seemed to me that was a path I must go down. I could sit there in isolation, a well paid job, not worry myself, and be isolated and let the status quo go on, and Joe would have been happy and everybody would have been happy. Certainly the moralists in society, the clergy, weren't concerned and the lawyers who were the real gatekeepers of the legal system weren't making any noises. I could have sat there. But it seemed to me I'd been conditioned from early youth that what one did was to do one's duty and I'd sworn to do it and that's why I set about doing it, and I don't think there were many in Queensland who understood that and there was no support for it at the time. It was stupid. I think they were right now. I think it was a wasted effort.

Oh, not necessarily Ray, not necessarily, because I think a lot of people both within Queensland and more particularly outside of Queensland looked to see what you were doing with great admiration.

Yes, that's true. I've had some very nice letters saying, "Thank you for what you've done" in Queensland itself, but they were individuals. They needed to get organised in some way. It's not the role of the Commissioner to organise a community movement for law and order.

Did you connect with community leaders at all? Did you make any attempt to say, "This is how I see the situation. I've been brought up in a particular way that says a police officer is recruited to carry out the letter of the law"? Did you go to any community and church leaders and say that?

[Break in recording] ... different churches on Sunday evenings, not in uniform but as the Commissioner of Police wife. And I spoke to the minister, only briefly, and explained what I was doing, what I was about. I didn't solicit his support but I let him know where I stood and where I hoped he stood in those days or I only got invited back again the second time to one church and none of the others invited me back the second time. Soon after I got there I received a call from Tom Burns. Tom Burns had been a Federal

Labor Member of Parliament when I'd been in Canberra. When I was Commissioner of the Commonwealth police force I attended lots of social functions and talked to people there regardless of their political beliefs and I listened to what they said and Tom Burns was one I'd met. He'd then resigned from Federal Parliament and stood as a Queensland Labor man and became Deputy Premier in Queensland. He asked me if I would come and meet the President of the Labor Party and the Leader of the Opposition and himself at lunch. I was a new boy and the others didn't know me - it would be nice to say hallo.

So I went and had lunch with him at the Brisbane Club, an open club, lots of people there. Tom Burns introduced me to the other two and I said, "Look, I'm here in Queensland to enforce the law and I'll do that regardless of politics. My view is that the Commissioner is above politics. He's not a Liberal, Labor nor Conservative, and you can rely upon me that my judgment will not be politically based". So they said, "Thank you very much".

Within half an hour of my getting back to my office I received a call to come and see my Minister. I went and saw him and he said, "I've received a call from the Premier's office. You had lunch today with the Leader of the Opposition", and I said, "Yes". He said, "Why did you do that?" I said I thought it was appropriate that the new Commissioner of Police should be seen to be bipartisan in these matters of politics and I said, "We discussed a few things myself and I assured them that my judgments would be not based on politics". He said, "Well the Premier said you're not to do it again", and so I didn't.

My contact with the outside world was very limited. I regularly appeared on television. There was at the time in Queensland an investigative journalist called Ollie and he had time on the ABC at the seven o'clock regional news in Queensland.

Is that Andrew?

Andrew. I saw Andrew Ollie on the way home from work at least twice a week at television. I had ten minutes on television twice a week when I talked to the Queensland public directly. Although I couldn't give specific details of corruption and so forth, I did my best to tell them what my policies were and where we were going. Eventually, when things hotted up and so forth, Andrew Ollie's broadcasts became more I suppose aggressive in a word, and led to the Fitzgerald Enquiry.

Tell me about your relationship with Andrew Ollie.

[Break in recording] ... had a good relationship with journalists in my Canberra days. When the royal tours recommenced in Australia in 1954 it was a responsibility of the Commonwealth Police Commissioner that he ensure the safety of the Queen, the Queen Mother, the royal party. It was an overall national responsibility, perhaps even overriding a State responsibility for the Commissioner of Police. So I always chaired the security national committees for royal visits and I took this role fairly seriously and devised a number of techniques which we might use. We had a mixed travelling squad of two detectives from each State police force to provide a personal bodyguard for royal parties. I went with the royal party as a liaison officer and one of the things I did was to

ensure that the press got access at appropriate times to meetings and to royal personages. The royal party was very keen on this - part of their visit was to get publicity. But there was a reluctance on the part of State officials to expose the royals to any sense of danger and I had to tread a thin line between that and ensuring their complete safety. So I worked very closely with the press, particularly the overseas press, and got to know them very well. When they'd leave they'd present me with a little tankard - I'll show you one - "From the overseas press with thanks for your cooperation". I don't think they did any and the royal got a very wide favourable coverage.

I got to know the press very well in Canberra. In Canberra there was no restriction on my access to the press And so when I went to Queensland I already knew some of the press, and I knew the ABC pretty well and Andrew Ollie was one I'd known. Andrew Ollie asked me if I'd call in on my way home. I lived at St Lucia, which was past Toowong on the way to St Lucia, and I would drop in there and have a cup of tea and have a chat with Andrew, and Andrew would say, "Are there any matters you'd like to raise?" and we would talk. Andrew was very good. He wasn't namby pamby, he was not aggressive, but he pressed and probed and so forth. I developed a strong admiration for him and like some of this colleagues, one or two of his colleagues - - -. There's one now who runs the 7.30 Report who was I thought over-aggressive, but otherwise Andrew and I got on very well and I think the little I achieved in Queensland was greatly added by the ABC. And by the other stations by the way.

The Queensland television media were not owned by local interest, unlike the Courier Mail. The Courier Mail was a local paper whose proprietor was beholden to Joe for government advertising and the Courier Mail was a very muted commentary on Joe. But the television media wasn't and so it gave me much freer rein than I could achieve through the press.

So both Andrew and some of the commercial stations recognised what you were trying to achieve?

Yes.

And gave you a voice?

The television reporters, like the press reporters, knew what was going on in the city. They knew there was corruption, they knew it, because they were out there day in, day out, and reports places that the politicians can't and the policemen can't. They knew what was there and they knew the policemen were getting paid money to not take action and so forth. So they supported my actions. They didn't come out and say it was station policy, but they gave me access through their channels to talk to the public.

How did the public respond? Did you get any direct - - -. Did you get any mail or anybody calling you or coming to see you to say, "I like what you're doing"?

Very little, very little. [Break in recording] The social culture is still, or was in my day, largely a frontier culture. The Queensland pastoral interests were dominant interests. The early squatters and then the pastoralists and the cattlemen were the elite in Queensland and they controlled lots and lots of organisations - were very powerful,

politically powerful - and they had this modus operandi of making good in hostile territory. Queensland bush is dry, harsh, difficult and they have survived and prospered against harsh climates, on their own. They'd learnt to live with their mates, they'd learnt to be tolerant, they'd learnt not to stick to the letter of the law. When you're a thousand kilometres away from Brisbane you make your own rules. So they were very easy-going as regards minor breaches of the law, and that covered things like selling grog after the pubs were open after hours and although the Police Commissioner would get a back-hander they didn't think it was too bad. If there were a couple of prostitutes in town, that kept their station hands happy. If there was a little cattle stealing going on, that was fair enough. They all did a little bit of body-snatching each year with the young yearlings and, "What I lost this year, I'll make up next year from my neighbour". It was a very easy-going atmosphere and this got through to the Queensland public as a whole I think, Alan. The idea that there could be a black and white morality, a legal morality, was something that they didn't accept. I think it's still there.

And so by and large - - -. And the clergy didn't preach. The bush padres that had been a great source of comfort were tolerant men. They let the minor discretions go by without comment in favour of doing more important things, like giving emotional support to a wife who'd lost her husband or kiddies that were sick and so forth. It was a very tolerant Alan.

Yes. Did you see there was something more than just these minor indiscretions, as you say the sly grog and the prostitution? Where else did it go?

Well, I'd looked at Scotland Yard. In those days Scotland Yard was supposed to be squeaky clean. As you know, that was wrong. And then there was a man named Orlando Wilson in the United States, in California, a professor of criminology who'd taken on the job of trying to eradicate corruption, first of all from some small police forces and then from Chicago. He was a man I'd much admired and when I'd been Commissioner of the Commonwealth police force I'd invited him to come to Australia and take part in a senior officers' course I'd conducted nationally and he'd been my prime speaker there. I remember him saying very clearly, "Police corruption starts with the first cup of free coffee" and he said, "In Chicago I can tell the corrupt policeman from the incorrupt because the incorrupt policeman brings his lunch from home in a paper bag". And he said, "It's the first free cup of coffee".

Now this was a very harsh rule in Queensland where visitors were welcomed and given open hospitality and when a policeman arrived in a small town he went along to the local publican and said, "I'm your new policeman. My name's Joe Bloggs. I'll look after you and make sure that the place doesn't get disorderly. You keep an orderly pub, we'll get on fine" and the publicans say, "Let's have a drink to that" and then the first free drink will take place. And then at Christmas time there would be a couple of dozen of beer from the local publican to his friend - a Christmas present. And then it would develop more and more and more until there'd be a bookmaker in the pub and that would be because the locals wanted it, and the bookmaker would be paying money to the copper to go away, and so you went down the track.

So it seemed to me one had to start with that first cup of coffee and that was a principle that has never been accepted in Queensland. In fact I got into hot water because the

first Queensland Christmas I was there I got swags and swags of and swags of stuff to my home. I mean I had a dozen cases of - not cases, two cases - of the best Scotch whisky from a hotel keeper saying, "We're delighted you've come. Feel free. This is Queensland". And I got groceries and a whole stack of stuff - "It's Christmas time". Now I sent it back. I switched labels and changed them round and sent them back to them - "Look, it's difficult for me but I don't know, I can't tell who are my friends and who aren't" - and Alan I lost a lot of friends doing that, a lot of friends. A stuck up, ignorant southern bastard, that's what I was. I don't know how you draw the line.

Well my sense, Ray, is that you were on to something because that first free cup of coffee that's not paid back. There's an inevitable obligation established and built up.

Exactly. The publican was never invited back to the police house for a meal. There was never any reciprocal - - -.

Reciprocity, exactly. How did it come to a head in Queensland? You've been going along for, what, four or five years training - - -?

Six years.

Six years. What happened that brought created the crisis.

There were a couple. There had been some situations where Joe and I had not clicked. One is that I'd welcomed females into the police force. Only if they were better than males did I take them in. They had to be at least as good as a male recruit before they were welcome, which meant they had to have good education, be physically strong and so forth.

Where did your thinking come from about that, having women into the police force?

Joe and his wife were very much in league to the strict Lutheran concept that women's role was in the kitchen and in the kindergarten. What's the other K they have? Three Ks. Certainly not working and certainly not in the police force. I fell foul of Joe on that.

What made you feel so strongly that you should do this, take this initiative, bringing women in?

[Break in recording] And I must admit the first was not completely unselfish. The first was that the calibre of the male recruit was so poor. I think I mentioned to you that they were people who were not making the grade as linesmen on the telephone, on telephone wires, or graders out in the bush and so forth. They'd left school aged fourteen, they'd knocked around the various jobs, hadn't found any job which they were capable of or liked or wanted to do. They were misfits. Now there were women out there who were in jobs - school teachers and nurses particularly - who's pay was less than that of a policewoman. It seemed to me that we needed brains in the police force, in lots of areas. We were expanding on our scientific side particularly. We were scenes of crime officers which we hadn't had before. We were expanding our radio networks so we needed people on radios. And so here was a source of intelligence that was needed, and secondly the other one was that it seemed to me that women were 50% of the population any rate and there were lots of jobs for which women were better than men in

the police force. One was in fingerprint work. They tend to be more meticulous than men So that was two reasons why I took them on.

There were other things that Joe and I were falling foul of. I can't recall them all now but one traumatic event was when the students at the university were complaining about some student fees that were going up at the university and so forth and they marched from the university into the city along the road. They didn't have a permit and they'd come to me and I'd so no, they didn't qualify for permits under Joe's rule. As far as I was concerned they could march as a body on the road. But that didn't mean, as far as I could see, they couldn't walk on the footpaths. They were pedestrians But in the end they - - -.

Did you tell them that?

I mentioned it seemed to me that they needn't feel downhearted. If they wanted to move from the university to the centre of the city, why not go on the footpaths. Anyway in the event they did turn out, they did march along the road and they were met by police officers, not at my request but by the inspector in charge, and he was carrying out his job. He said, "You haven't got a permit to march". And so they stood there, faced each other, and then the inspector grabbed hold of a banner that a seventeen year-old first year girl student was carrying and when she resisted he hit her very heavily over the head with his batten, very forcibly, and this was well covered by the media who were there and that night on television there was on all stations coverage of this assault by the police officer with his batten on a young girl because she'd refused to surrender her banner. She wasn't in any way attacking him. She just hung on to her banner and because she wouldn't give it up he hit her on the head very forcibly.

So there was a great outcry about this by the students, and by some other people, and the next day the - - -. I was not there at the time. I did see it on TV. The next day the Vice-Chancellor of the university, Solomon Cowen, came to see me with the President of the Student Union and asked me what I was going to do about it, and I said, "Well, I need to know what the facts are. I wasn't there. I've seen it on television but I need a report. I'll get a report from the police and then I'll decide". Any rate on the way out the Student Union leader couldn't resist talking to the waiting media and said, "Mr Whitrod's going to have an enquiry into it". All I'd said was, "I'm going to get a report". And so the media came in the paper saying, The Commissioner is going to an enquiry into this activity" and within a short time I got a call from my Minister saying, "The Premier says there'll be no enquiry. You're to do nothing" and that was that. So I said, "Look, it's purely an internal police activity that I really need to know what's going on", and my Minister said, "You are to do nothing". So I said, "Well, as far as I'm concerned it's my responsibility". He said to me, "Ray look, take my advice and be quiet on this one. You're not going to win'. Well like a coward I decided to do nothing about it. Luckily the media did report that it had been resolved, or the Premier's intervention - there was no police enquiry. And nothing was done about it, nobody complained, except the university staff. But the general population said, "Oh well, the students were behaving illegally. It was their fault", and so there was nothing done about it. So my Minister in a sense from the community's was right. Nobody was concerned, but I was.

Anyway that was one start. The next one was there was a raid by the police who'd

organised a raid on some hippies on the north coast. There'd been a little hippy commune up round Port Douglas was for some time and there were reports there that they were smoking marijuana in the bush by themselves and there were some young girls up there who weren't married living with men and so forth. And a local regional police inspector had put on a raid in which he got hold of the navy to put a boat on and customs - not customs - - -. Yes, it was customs and they did a big raid and they went along to this hippy resort where there were some home-made little huts and so forth. Burnt the huts and burnt what was in them because it was on Crown Land - they had no right to be there - and there was an outcry about that and I said, "Look, I'd like to know, I wasn't there, what really went on. What was the purpose of the raid and what was the authority to burn things?"

Joe told me not to do it. I was not to send any men, any of my officers, north to Queensland. But this time it seemed to me I'd had enough of this intervention and I sent two officers to Queensland, two inspectors that I could trust. One reason why I hadn't gone on with the student march was that I didn't have at that time an officer I could trust who would carry out my enquiry, because the Police Union would have been against it and they would have gone on strike. But in north Queensland I got inspectors to go up and do the enquiry and some police officers were charged with wilful damage but there was a local jury and they found not guilty. So Joe and I were starting to face clear opposition.

And then a vacancy occurred for an Assistant Commissioner and the program had been in the past, the procedure had been, that the Commissioner of Police would put up his nomination for that vacancy with two other names of possibilities that Cabinet could consider and if they wanted to disagree with the Commissioner they could look at two others that he would put up, but invariably the Commissioner's choice had been accepted. I put my name up, but I had taken the liberty of checking with the Police Officers' Union as to who they would select and they happened to select the same three as I'd done. So I mentioned this in the report, that I'd nominated Superintendent X to be the next Commissioner of Police and two other superintendents as possibilities and this had the support of the Police Union.

I then was told the next day - - -. Incidentally my Police Minister had been sacked by now - the new Police Minister. I was told [by] the new Police Minister that Cabinet had decided to appoint an inspector, junior inspector, called Terry Lewis to the rank of Assistant Commissioner and I said, "Can I come and see you?" So he said, "Yes", and I went to see him. I said, "Look two things. One is that Terry Lewis's name was never mentioned by me, nor by the Police Union, as being the most suitable, and secondly Terry Lewis has got a history of being corrupt. He's well known as being a receiver of money from prostitutes". The Police Minister said, "Oh well, the Premier's decided that Lewis shall have the job". He said, "We know he did accept money from prostitutes, but he was then a sergeant and now he's an Assistant Commissioner he won't accept any and it's our choice not yours or the Police Commissioner's [Union's?]" So I said, "But I've spent seven years fighting corruption. If he's now appointed it will completely demolish what I've done to improve the quality of the force and it will be thought that I was one who'd nominated Lewis". So he said, "I'm sorry. The Minister has decided, Cabinet has decided and Joe has decided".

So I said, "Can you arrange for me to talk to the Premier? I'd like to explain the background of Lewis's corruption". He rang me back in an hour's time and said, "The Premier will not see you. He said Lewis is to be the next Assistant Commissioner of Police". I said, "Well it seems to me I've got to make a stand on this. I've fought for seven years for a corruption-free police force. The youngsters will think I supported Lewis. Tomorrow morning you'll have my resignation'. So I sent it up to Cabinet and they said, "Let's accept the bastard's resignation before he changes his mind", and they did it first thing. Took it straight down to the Governor and got it done that morning - unusual precedent. So that's what happened. [Break in recording] Yes, I can imagine that Ray. [Break in recording]

So that's where we finish the conversation this afternoon. That's on Monday 18 November 1996. Ray was tired at that stage. He hadn't been well during the week. I took a couple of photographs of him and arranged to go back about the middle of December once I returned from Bali and from Malaysia, and I did speak with him about the possibility of bringing somebody down to record a short video. So Mike Warrell-Davis, all being well, will come with me before Christmas and we'll set it up in Ray's study and record an interview on the film.