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Cliff Chetwin
October 23, 2014

Interview conducted by Lilli Tichinin
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen
Digitized by Marissa Lindsey

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ANPR Oral History Project

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Cliff Chetwin has reviewed and corrected this transcript. Significant additions to material shared in the original interview are included in brackets.

Audiofile: CHETWIN Cliff 23 Oct 2014

[START OF TRACK 1]

- Lilli Tichinin: Okay, so this is Lilli Tichinin. This is October 23 and the Association of National Park Rangers Ranger Rendezvous here in Estes Park. And if you could just introduce yourself.
- Cliff Chetwin: Cliff Chetwin. I'm a retired national park ranger.
- Lilli Tichinin: So, Cliff, where were you born? And where did you grow up?
- Cliff Chetwin: I started in upstate New York, a little town that actually doesn't exist anymore, outside Syracuse. The closest mailing address anymore is Liverpool. My folks were truck farmers. Right after the war they saw that wasn't going to go anywhere with the changes in the American economy and society. They were gradually selling the farm off and building on it. So, I grew up in my earliest memories were still with farming. But then by the time I was seven or eight years old, they were building the three-bedroom saltbox houses that popped up all over the Northeast after World War Two. And did that through my teenage years. So, a little mix of farming and construction.
- Lilli Tichinin: Mm hmm. Nice. And I know that you were a seasonal. (laughs) At Crater of the Moon, right?
- Cliff Chetwin: My wife tells all the stories.
- Lilli Tichinin: I know! That's the thing about doing an interview with her right before—
- Cliff Chetwin: I shouldn't follow my wife. We don't have to have that in the transcript. Yeah, I—
- Lilli Tichinin: So, what was sort of your, had you visited national parks as a kid?
- Cliff Chetwin: I'd never been to one in my life. I originally thought I'd want to be a veterinarian.
- Lilli Tichinin: All right.
- Cliff Chetwin: I thought that was actually pretty cool. And by about, I don't know, 12, 13 years old, somewhere in there when I started thinking more seriously about advanced education and so forth, I got more interested in forestry. I'd already had the interest in Boy Scouts and those kinds of things. That part of New York was still rural in those days, so there was some background of that. Plus, the beginnings, the farming. I'd finally got focused towards being a forest ranger, which of course was the US Forest Service. I watched; they had all their TV shows as I was growing up. And you know, *Lassie* was Forest Service. Decided I wanted to work for the Forest Service.
- Cliff Chetwin: I got a seasonal job for them as a sophomore in college – I was going to the State University of New York College of Forestry at Syracuse – as a recreational aide for the Allegheny National Forest. And did one season

and decided it was absolutely impossible for any agency to be as screwed up as I thought the Forest Service was. Which is certainly an unfair, very shallow view. But from the point of view of a 19-year-old, idealistic forestry student. And with all the environmental idealism of the mid and late - '60s, which was sweeping the country, I just decided I couldn't possibly work for the Forest Service.

Cliff Chetwin: And I cast about. Well, what's the next best thing? Well, a park ranger! Which I had never been to, literally, had never been to a national park in my life. And growing up, of course, there weren't any in upstate New York. My dad's passion was boating. So, if you could boat and get there from central New York, I'd been there. Well, there weren't any national parks that fit in that bill.

Cliff Chetwin: So, I spent Christmas of 1970 filling out the old SF171 forms. Which in those days all had to be original. You couldn't copy them. You had to submit an original. That was it. It was the old one. It was about six pages long. But it was front and back and it folded out like an accordion. I think it was about two and a half foot long. It was actually a horrible thing. Part of it was just to see if you were serious enough to apply. And everybody understood that's why the form was so obnoxious. I think I filled out 35 of them over Christmas. I had carpal tunnel syndrome before that was even a known term from that. (Lilli Tichinin laughs) I spent the whole Christmas vacation filling those bloody things out and mailing them off.

Cliff Chetwin: Actually, I'd gone back to school and I was back working on an intermittent appointment for the Allegheny as a recreation aide doing user research data analysis. They were doing a lot of questionnaires on trailheads and so forth. I was doing that while I was still at school. I got a call from Bob Ferris, who was the Chief Ranger at Craters of the Moon and offered me a job. Well, yahoo! All right! I had to stop and think for a minute, where the heck is Craters of the Moon? (Lilli Tichinin laughs) It obviously was not one of the well-known crown jewels of the national park system, from my perspective. But I was also smart enough to apply to a lot of what in those days you called backwater parks – just increasing my odds. I accepted the job, and never went back to the Forest Service.

Cliff Chetwin: [On the other hand I was so new to the Park Service I didn't even know what their uniform looked like. I ordered I think three uniforms from Gregory's. They had one of the uniform contracts in those days, and when I opened the box and saw those gray shirts I got real concerned since "everyone" knew that rangers wore green. Okay, so I send the shirts back with a note asking for the green ranger shirts. I can't imagine how much laughter the Gregory folks got out of that one, but I got the gray shirts back with a pretty curt note about the NPS uniform standards. Several years later when I went to the ranger training at Albright one of the Gregory folks who was talking about the uniform program tells the story of this idiot who sent the gray shirts back. I probably should have kept

quiet, but I fessed up and became a legend in my Albright class for stupidity.]

Lilli Tichinin: So how long were you there? You were there for just one season at Craters of the Moon?

Cliff Chetwin: [Just one season, they offered me a job the next season, but I had gotten a permanent appointment with the Park Police by then, so I turned them down.] And ended up, there were four of us that were seasonals. And there was one nice thing. I avoided the dreaded 026 technician issue, which became a big issue early in my career with a lot of people, and a real stumbling block for a lot of people. It was a barrier. But I actually got hired as an 025, GS-4 025, which was pretty cool [since it was the professional series, not the technician series.] Gave me a leg up, actually, when I finally became permanent.

Cliff Chetwin: Four of us showed up at the park. The Chief Ranger had four seasonal jobs, that he hadn't assigned to us yet. One was the interpreter, one was a fee collector, and one was back country. I don't remember what the fourth one was anymore, but front country something. And he said, "Who knows how to ride?" I was the only one that put my hand up. He said, "You're the back-country ranger." Whoo! This might be good. (laughter) This is good.

Cliff Chetwin: I ended up with a string of mules and some horses. [The park didn't have a full-time horse program as I recall. I think they had borrowed the stock from another park or from a local rancher for this project, but I don't really remember anymore.] Craters of the Moon was the first Park Service unit to have congressionally approved wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act. So, my primary job that summer was to mark the boundary of the park as designated wilderness area. This is really getting cool!

Cliff Chetwin: The Chief Ranger said, "I don't care how often you come in here, but it better not be more than once every two weeks. Other than that, you stay in the back country and get the wilderness marked. You've got enough pack mules. You can pack enough stuff to be out there for two weeks. If you just have to come back on payday, you can come back on payday. Won't be anything to do with your paycheck, but you can come back on payday." [He was right; there really wasn't anyplace to spend your salary. Arco was 24 miles away and really didn't have much social activity or other spending opportunities. Arco was a nice little town but very strict Mormon in those days. If you weren't of the faith you really weren't very well accepted, and the social rules were a bit different than I was used to. One of the other seasonals and I occasionally made runs to Salt Lake City and we'd fill his truck with cases of Coca Cola. We became to local bootleggers for illicit caffeinated soda. We could double our NPS salary with every load.]

- Cliff Chetwin: [Typical of NPS law enforcement in those days, the Chief also gave each of us a pad of citations and the combination to his office safe which is where the park gun was stored. He told us he'd really prefer that we didn't use it, but it was there if we needed it...instant law enforcement authority for all of us!]
- Cliff Chetwin: [It actually ended that I'd come back into the front country more frequently than that, but I was still have a great time.] I later found out, I think about the second time I came back, that also meant that I'd be giving relief breaks to the front country guys and pulling entrance station duty. (Lilli Tichinin laughs) So I caught on pretty quick, I didn't want to be in the front country.
- Cliff Chetwin: I spent a lot of the summer in the back country, hiking, riding, generating wildlife observation reports, other than when I came out on relief days and periods when the Chief Ranger wanted all of us there which happened occasionally. And I just had an absolute ball and I really came to appreciate the lesser known parks like the Craters. I had died and gone to heaven. Probably the only thing that kept me in a Park Service career was I stayed in the back country and stayed more or less out of trouble.
- Cliff Chetwin: I really enjoyed the park. I fell in love with the place. And never saw the Superintendent, which is kind of interesting. Most people in their early careers have awe of the magic Superintendent which I certainly did, too. Which in those days, the Superintendent was still a pretty fearsome position. It's lost a lot of that over the years. But he was off, out of the park. He was on a study team. They were looking at the Salmon Sawtooth Wilderness for inclusion, taking it from the Forest Service and giving it to the Park Service. And he was a planner by trade, so he was leading that team. The only time I ever saw him I was working at the entrance station on relief one day and this guy came zooming through, slammed on the brakes on a really fancy sports car. Top down. I can still remember. He had a mustache and a bald head. And I was wondering, who would ride around in the Idaho sunshine with the top down and a bald head?
- Cliff Chetwin: I started to ask him for his entrance fee, which was a dollar. And he said, "You don't know who I am, do you?" Which, I'd heard that line before. "Well, no, sir. And to be honest with you, I don't care. You still owe me a dollar." "I'm your boss. I'm the Superintendent." Oh. Okay. You want me to just go pack now? Or wait until the end of the shift? (laughter)
- Cliff Chetwin: So primarily I dealt with the Chief Ranger. He was pretty much the guy. He actually, his name is in *Desert Solitaire*, at the end of the book.
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah?
- Cliff Chetwin: Where Ed Abbey, who had a fledgling Park Service career, goes to the bus station to get picked up by a new ranger. That new ranger is now my Chief Ranger, Bob Ferris. So, he had a little notoriety, to the name. [He also made bathtub beer, which was important since we were in a dry county

and hosted a poker game every Tuesday night. I was the only seasonal to be invited to play which I was pretty proud of at the time. I don't recall the beer being very good, but the games were fun.]

Cliff Chetwin: The only other thing I tried real hard to get fired about, we faked a volcanic eruption.

Lilli Tichinin: (laughs) How did you go about doing that?

Cliff Chetwin: The interpreters got real bored. Which I can understand. That's one reason I was glad I had the horses and I got out of there. But they had a, I think it was a 76-site campground, which I thought was surprising for a little park. It had a real big campground. And it was right at the base of a cinder cone. And every night, the interpreters, back in those days we all showed movies in the campground. So, they had a Harpers Ferry movie of the eruption of Kilauea Iki. It got a little boring, at least for them. Of course, for the campers, most of them are only there a night or two. It wasn't a big deal, I guess.

Cliff Chetwin: But when I came to the front country, the guy that I shared the BOQ with, he had the interpreter's slot. He was just whining about how boring it was. He said, "If we could only simulate something with our volcanoes here, it would just be so cool. And we could play off that." I said, "Well, we could do that. That's easy."

Cliff Chetwin: The cinder cone, the opening into it, was around the corner from the campground. You couldn't see into the opening. So, all the public could see was this cone. So, I've got the pack stock. We had 55-gallon drums of used motor oil over in the maintenance yard. Which was long before it was environmental, what you did with this motor oil. But they collected it and then we had it hauled out of there. "So, I get one of those drums that is almost empty and haul it over with the stock, you call me on the radio." And there's a scene in the movie where the lava this the ocean. And it gets this big, billowing, black plume. And I knew that. "So, you hit that, you call me on the radio, I'll light the drum off. And as they see it in the movie, there will be this big black plume coming out of the volcano cone."

Cliff Chetwin: So, we did that. And a couple minutes later he calls me in a real panic on the radio. "Put it out! Put it out!" And of course, I couldn't see the campground. I had no idea what was happening, and I really hadn't thought about how to put it. Well, the campground evacuated. Self-evacuated. Everybody panicked. (makes whistling noise) They're gone. So, by the time I get the thing out and I get it all picked up and I'm hauling it out and I look around, there's nobody here except my buddy. I was young but I wasn't too stupid. I figured this may not play out too well.

Cliff Chetwin: So about four a.m. the AO [administrative officer], a fellow by the name of Nicky [Gattis?], who's a really wonderful guy, comes over and knocks on the BOQ. And he says, "You know? If I was both of you guys, I'd be gone by seven a.m., because that's when the Chief Ranger's coming in.

And he's going to be looking for both of you." So, I can handle that. Me and my horse, we're out of here.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: You know, you're on your own now. It's every man for himself. So, I hauled off into the back country. And we didn't have portable radios in the backcountry. So, he couldn't call me back in. I mean, he can find me if he wants to come out and scour the backcountry for me, but he couldn't call me back in. And the only reason he didn't fire my buddy, was he couldn't get me to fire me. And he calmed down a little. About two weeks later I came back, he was still mad. Oh, he was mad! But not so mad to fire us at that point of the season. And we survived. (laughter)

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. So, you survived Craters of the Moon.

Cliff Chetwin: Survived Craters of the Moon.

Lilli Tichinin: And then you went back to school, right?

Cliff Chetwin: Went back my senior year. Ironically, he offered me a job to come back! So, I called, I said, "You're sure you remember me?" But I was scheduled to come back. Of course, Vietnam was going full bore in those days. I had a college deferment from the draft. But when I graduated, of course, that went away. And old Henry [Kissinger], he hadn't talked us out of the war yet. And I was in the first lottery. And I had a pretty high lottery number, 299, but it looked like it wasn't quite high enough.

Cliff Chetwin: My best buddy in high school, his dad was the chairman of the draft board. And he called me. Because usually oh, about two weeks out of graduation, you got notice that your classification was changing. And he called and said, "You realize you're 1A in about 10 days." I said, "Yeah, I know it's coming." "What you don't know is the draft letter's right here."

Cliff Chetwin: Because in those days, they had to go through the draft board. But the chairman of the draft board signed off on the letters. They'd always call up more than they needed at any one time and my number was probably still going to be safe, but it was way too close to tell. And he says, "It's going in the mail Monday morning. So, here's what I want you to do. Unless you really like rice and the opportunity to travel" – that didn't really appeal to me – "get yourself a law enforcement job." Because at that time, law enforcement was an excepted occupation because they were having so much with the urban riots. So, police officers were frequently excepted from the draft. There was still a chance you'd get called but it was pretty low especially if you were on a big city department. And I thought, geez, how do you get a law enforcement job here in about 10 days? Well, I had taken [the test for the local County Sheriff's Office but hadn't heard from them yet, and also the US Park Police] civil service test on a lark while I was [at Craters of the Moon]. Same day I'd met the Superintendent at the entrance station and almost got terminated, four Park Police, I'd never heard of that agency, came in and tried to badge their way through the

gate. Not pay the buck. And they were on detail, TDY detail to Yellowstone. They had some days off, so they were out looking at parks. We got talking. One thing led to another, and a couple of beers later that night, and they talked me into taking the civil service test. Which when I get back east, I did. And I was the only guy in a 400-seat auditorium taking the test. There's me and the proctor taking the civil service test back in the days when you had to take them. They were worthless tests. But you know, the rite of passage. So, I took that, and I got 100. I have no idea how, but I got 100. So, I'm thinking how I'm going to get out of this draft letter. And it dawned on me, I took that civil service test. Sure, hope I still have the paperwork. (laughs)

Cliff Chetwin: And I did. I found the paperwork. I called Washington and got the recruiting sergeant. This is 3:30 on a Friday afternoon. And I hear all this rustling of papers. And he says, "This is your lucky day. I'm putting a rookie class together, and I've still got one slot I haven't filled. Can you be in Washington tomorrow morning?" "Yeah, I can do that." Without even thinking. Sure, I can do that!

Cliff Chetwin: Now as I'm saying that, Hurricane Agnes is wiping out the entire eastern seaboard of the United States. Worst hurricane since 1956 to hit the east coast. So, I'll be there. Saturday morning I've got to be in Park Police, 1100 Ohio Drive, Southwest Washington, DC. At seven a.m. Saturday morning. And I'm up in Syracuse, New York.

Cliff Chetwin: So, all right. I hang up. Told my mom, "I'm going. I'll be back, I hope." Had no idea. I'd never been to Washington in my life. No idea where I was going to stay. And headed south. I had a 1953 Chevy. Which went downhill real well. Uphill wasn't so good since one cylinder had no rings left. But headed down interstate 81. I got to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and the interstate was closed because of the hurricane.

Cliff Chetwin: A couple of troopers were getting everybody off the interstate. I pulled up and, "Sir, you know, you've got to go off—" "I'm on the way to DC to become a cop. You've got to let me through."

Cliff Chetwin: Well, those fools actually did. I was the only car on about 100 miles of interstate going south. I mean, who could ever do that? Nobody gets to be the only car on the interstate. But I'm the only one going south.

Cliff Chetwin: And got to DC. Got in about three in the morning, something like that. And I had no clue what to do. What am I going to do now? And I stopped a DC cop and told him my tale. He got me a room at the YMCA for five bucks, which was all I could afford. So, I went over there, got to sleep for a couple of hours.

Cliff Chetwin: Went on to the Park Police. Did all their stuff. We had to take another written test and oral interview. We had to write an essay. It was like applying for grad school, only less pleasant. And spent the whole day. Had to go through the medical. Flunked the medical because I didn't weigh

enough. You had to weigh 146 pounds. And I weighed 144 1/2. Another guy with me, he was thin as a rail, and you'd never know that I was thin one time, too. But he was a couple of pounds even lighter than me. The doctor says, "You guys fail. I'm not going to pass you on this." He says, "Geez, you know, it's lunchtime. Tell you what. Why don't you come back in an hour? I don't know what you guys have in mind for lunch. But there's a store, it's right on the corner here in DC. I hear they've got a special on bananas."

Cliff Chetwin: I saw where that was going. (Lilli Tichinin laughs) So this guy and I were only gone for an hour. And I never was so sick of bananas in my life! We stuffed bananas. Came back. I weighed 146 3/4. And he weighed 146 1/8, I think, or something like that. The doctor just laughed. "You're in."

Cliff Chetwin: So, go through all that. Went through the final oral interview with a bunch of senior officers and asked a lot of really dumb questions. It was typical, "Don't call us, we'll call you."

Cliff Chetwin: So, I turn around, drive back to Syracuse. And the whole way back, about a 6 1/2 hour drive, 7-hour drive, why did I waste my time? I'm not going to look good in OD green. I can see where this is going. Just kind of feeling miserable about it.

Cliff Chetwin: And got home about midnight. My mom says, "Hey, there's a guy in DC. He says whatever time you get here, call him." By now, it's a little after midnight, going on to Sunday morning. All right. So, I call him. It's the recruiting sergeant. He says, "Hey. Be here Monday morning. We're swearing you in at six a.m." (Lilli Tichinin laughs) As a permanent, fulltime employee of the United States government. (laughs)

Cliff Chetwin: So, I went to sleep for a little while. Turn around. Back I go. Got a room at the YMCA again. Got sworn in. And that kept me from being drafted.

Cliff Chetwin: Of course, in the meantime now, Judy probably mentioned this, we were supposed to be getting married. I didn't have a job. I said, I'm not calling it off, I'm just delaying it, but I'm not going to take on a wife when I've got \$236 to my name, \$234 of which she was wearing on her finger. I had, actually, it was probably \$231, because I had five bucks left for the YMCA. So, we just postponed it. I've got to have a job. Which did not go over real well. So, I called her. I said, "It's back on. We'll get the plans going. We'll get another date. I'm off to Washington. I'll see you. I'll call you." Gone. (laughter)

Cliff Chetwin: So back to DC I go, and I become a permanent employee of the United States government and of the National Park Service. I only peripherally made the connection of Park Police and the rest of the Park Service.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: Of course, the Park Police, to this day, don't always claim they work for the National Park Service.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: And sometimes that's good, sometimes that's not so good. Ended up going to the academy. The academy in those days was still in Washington. FLETC [Federal Law Enforcement Training Center] hadn't come online yet. [The academy was in an office building around 13th and L Street as I recall. The Service was experimenting with a less military oriented academy, including no uniforms, no saluting, not a great deal of marching, etc. and we had to be bused to field locations for firearms, riot tactics, and pursuit driving. Traffic was a real pain getting to and from class each day and parking was real difficult. The only real close lunch place was a strip bar around the corner which we were told the IRS had seized for taxes and was operating which presented an ethical issue for some of us, but we ate there sometimes anyway. The whole experiment only lasted a few years and the Service moved into the new FLETC facility in Georgia and returned to a more traditional police training format.] We had the first four rangers who had ever gone through the Park Police academy were there as a test. One was Mike Finley [who became a legendary Superintendent at Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Everglades national parks]. The other three were less notable. But Michael was one. Then there were two of us, Bob Ammon and me, who had been seasonal rangers. So, we could kind of play both sides of the aisle, and kind of be accepted by both, [or maybe not fully accepted by either? It was hard to tell sometimes.]

Cliff Chetwin: Went through that and graduated. I never planned on being a cop. I was never opposed, it just never struck me. I ended up, the first week, I had four other job offers that I'd put out to a lot of the DNRs around the country, and the county sheriff's office also called. None of them were as well-paying as the feds. I caught onto that real quick even though the Park Police starting salary was only about \$4,200 and that wasn't going to go very far in DC. Uh, no, I think I'll stay here in DC, thank you very much. Which wasn't high on Judy's list. The marriage was good. DC, not so good. But going through the academy and trying to find a place took about all the time I had. I had a German shepherd. I had a 90-pound German shepherd. Gentlest creature on the face of the planet. Scared the hell out of everybody. Of course, trying to find an apartment. First of all, age. New in town. No credit whatsoever in town. Of course, my dad's philosophy, you pay for it or you don't need it. The only credit I'd ever had in my life was just a 30-day credit card on gasoline. So, there's no credit record. I'd only been on the job at that point four days and had no cash. And then with the dog, trying to get an apartment, that was an interesting challenge. Trying to do it after the academy, because the academy in those days was like 10 hours a day, including travel. So, there wasn't a whole lot of time. And there's homework. And still trying to figure out how we're going to get married and then get Judy to DC where she didn't want to go.

Cliff Chetwin: That was kind of a challenging period. Made a little more interesting by the National Park Service sort of declined to pay me for the first three pay

periods. They got tied up with paper processing. They agreed they owed it to me. But I wasn't getting paid.

Cliff Chetwin: So, my dad loaned me 150 bucks. I could put a down payment, I had to pay the one-month advance rent on the apartment. And got that. Typical first apartment, one step above unemployment. A one-bedroom, and that was fairly generous in calling it that. (Lilli Tichinin laughs) And everything was avocado green, which was very popular in those days, or pink. We had both. We got that. And they're willing to take pets. So, I don't care what color this thing is. If you want to take a pet, this is good. They were willing to take it without a bunch of deposits. They said, "Yeah, you're a cop!" What I later found out was they wanted cops living there. [They had some problems with some of the neighbors and they figured I was live-in security.] One issue for me at a time.

Cliff Chetwin: So, we got that, and got the wedding rescheduled. And that was back still Eastern Airlines was still flying in those days. And we scheduled the wedding for a weekend, because you couldn't get any leave. No leave was granted to rookies. Even if you were accruing it. But don't even think about it.

Cliff Chetwin: So, I got a flight up to Syracuse Friday after class. The plan was to get married. Turn around. Drive Saturday night back to DC. Because at 7 a.m. Monday morning, I better be back in my seat or don't come back at all. So, after class I rushed out from the academy. And we were in soft clothes. We didn't wear police uniforms. That was another little noble experiment for the Park Service. Rushed over to what's now Reagan [National Airport]. And of course, I'm late for the flight. But in those days, that's when they'd still hold the flight for you.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: So, they're rushing me through that kind of light security we used to have. And of course, I've come right from class, I still have my briefcase. The whole week had been on terrorism, bombs, explosives. So, I've got a briefcase full of stuff that's confidential. It's all stamped confidential, secret, all kinds of stuff on how to blow things up and bad guys. The guy at the gate, he looks at that. "You'd better have a pretty good explanation for this." "No problem. I am a rookie police officer for the Park Police. I've just come from the academy. I've got to rush home. I'm getting married." I'm playing the whole heart-tugging thing here. And you know, "I didn't have time, my apartment's up in Maryland, which is the other way. And it was the topics this week." And I've got the agenda for the academy. I'm showing him. "See this date here. This is what we did." And I'm good to go.

Cliff Chetwin: He says, "Let me see some ID." We didn't have ID. We didn't get issued ID till we graduated. "Well, I don't have any ID." "Well, you may not be flying anywhere today, partner." He says, "Well, can anybody vouch for you?"

Cliff Chetwin: Friday night in Washington? So, I had the number of the sergeant for the academy. We call that. No answer. Of course, I mean, nobody had cell phones or anything in those days.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: And I had the number for the lieutenant for the academy. Called it. Nothing. And this guy, he's more and more sure I'm going to jail. And finally, he says, "Well, tell you what. You get one more call, and then..." and by now, the guys, the airport security, they've showed up, too, and they're getting engaged. The only other number I can think of is the chief. And God bless, Chief Grant Wright, who had never met me, had no clue – and I know the chief did not know the rookies – had no clue who the rookies were. Called and he was home. And, "Chief, I am Officer So and So from rookie class # one. And I'm on the way home to get married. We had all the bomb stuff this week in class. They've got my briefcase. These guys won't let me through. Can you vouch for me, Chief, so I can get on the airplane and go get married?"

Cliff Chetwin: And there was this long pause. I know he's going through all kinds of permutations in his mind. You know, who but a guy telling the truth would ever concoct this story? And really would call the chief of police? He says, "Let me talk to the guys." Whatever he said, they let me on the plane.

Cliff Chetwin: So, I get in the plane. Of course, now the whole plane's been sitting there waiting for me. And a DC guy, jacket and tie, briefcase gets on board, they all think now I'm some super spook for the CIA or somebody. They sit me in front, up in first class, which in those days, that was still really cool stuff. I'd never been in first class in my life. I'd only been on a commercial airliner maybe four or five times. I did find out you can really get snookered between Washington and Syracuse on free booze. Got home to Syracuse. And of course, now everybody wants to go to my bachelor party. And I'm wiped out. I was up for the academy—

[END TRACK 1]

[START TRACK 2]

Cliff Chetwin: —at five a.m. Plus drinking the whole flight up. So, I'm told they had a good time at my bachelor party. I didn't make it. I was asleep.

Cliff Chetwin: In the middle of all that, my mom's refrigerator breaks down. They've got all the stuff for the reception in the refrigerator. Which is now like nine o'clock Friday night. Fortunately, a very good friend of the family also ran an appliance store.

Lilli Tichinin: Oh my gosh.

Cliff Chetwin: So, we call him. My dad wakes me up. He says, "We have to go get a refrigerator." I never thought to ask why. That would have been the obvious thing. Oh, okay, I mean, everybody does that. So, we run about 20

miles up the road. Get another refrigerator. Bring it home. Put it in. I go back to sleep. I think I made it to the service the following day. Which hasn't got a lot to do with the Park Service here, but it's all part of the tale, I guess.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: We got married at Hendricks Chapel on Syracuse University. Judy went to SU and the College of Forestry is State University of New York but co-located with the campus. Originally were going to get married by the Dean of the chapel, who we both got to know through my fraternity. He was a real nice guy. Well, middle of the summer, he's off on some retreat, whatever ministers do. Couldn't get a minister. Couldn't find anybody. My mother-in-law to-be is just going frantic. So, Thursday, two days now before we're getting married, she finally tracks this guy down that had married Judy's third or fourth cousin. Or somebody peripheral in her family. And called this guy. And he's been retired for about 180 years. But he still has a license. So, he's legal. And he gets lined up. He asked, he called me David in the ceremony. He said, "Do you, David, take this woman?" I figured I'd have a legal out of the marriage, if I ever needed it. (laughter) But we got married. Stayed for the reception. And I think it was about five or six p.m., we finally load Judy's car. She had a '64 Chevy Bel Air which was in worse shape than my '53. And load it up, all the wedding gifts, her luggage, the dog. And we had a living room rug tied down across the top. And 10 gallons of motor oil, because it sort of burned a lot of oil. It probably had rings when it left the Chevy factory. It didn't have rings anymore. We looked like a World War One destroyer going down the interstate.

Cliff Chetwin: This big hill as you climb out of Syracuse on the interstate, we almost didn't make it up that hill. But we finally chugged over it. And spent the night sleeping in the car in a truck stop in Scranton, Pennsylvania. It wasn't an overnight truck stop, just a pullout on the interstate. That was our honeymoon. And pulled into Baltimore at five a.m. Sunday morning. And needed gas. But we also needed another five gallons of oil to make it to Washington. We'd used all the oil we had.

Lilli Tichinin: Oh my gosh.

Cliff Chetwin: And had to wait for an hour for a gas station to open up. Finally got to DC. Got the car unloaded. I went to sleep for about four hours. Got up and went back to the academy.

Lilli Tichinin: Oh my gosh. And that was the beginning.

Cliff Chetwin: Well, it was just setting us up for understanding the nomadic life of the Park Service.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: So off we went to Park Police in DC. [Park Police was a great organization and I found that I really liked law enforcement. This was

strictly big city law enforcement with murders, robberies, rape, drugs, prostitution, everything. The first day on the street I worked a homicide, and this definitely was not my vision of the Park Service, but it was a permanent job and I wanted to get my status. I walked a foot beat most of the time which I usually thought was better since you could talk to people. Of course, it was colder than heck in the winter and our cold weather uniform wasn't very good. The only warm spots on the foot beats were the NPS information kiosks which were locked at night. We weren't supposed to be in them, but I managed to obtain a key and I could get warmed up.

Cliff Chetwin: [Probably the biggest thing I was mentally unprepared for in an NPS job was riot duty. This was the height of the Vietnam War riots and the Park Service had a policy of being very low key even though folks were rioting throughout Washington pretty much on a weekly basis. The Park Service thought it would be a bad image to be very aggressive, so we often weren't allowed to have riot gear, or to forcefully intervene, and we took our lumps sometimes as a result. We weren't supposed to make many arrests since the Service thought that would look bad too. The NPS also liked to leave lumber and other construction material lying around and the rioters always used that stuff as weapons against us. Another example was the Service, along with the City, sponsored an annual event called "Human Kindness Day." I forget which park it was held in, but it was basically an excuse for the criminal element to run wild with drugs, assaults, rapes, etc. We had orders to look the other way and not intervene unless it absolutely couldn't be avoided because the Service thought it wouldn't look good. I'm not sure how much worse arrests would have looked versus Washington getting trashed but that was the NPS mentality. Understand we weren't the only department with these kinds of orders, given all the generational and racial tensions in the country at that time, but it often left us feeling pretty angry. The Service's policies were really pretty naïve in those days and I believe resulted in more riots and more damage than if we had been allowed to take more aggressive action.]

Lilli Tichinin: Mm hmm. And then Judy got a position at Lincoln Memorial. Is that right?

Cliff Chetwin: Yeah. I think she worked first at retail sales, she got a job at a needle and thread kind of store. And finally got picked up, I think she got picked up, I think it was a park aide. I don't remember now, at [MMK, Monuments, Memorials, and Kiosks, which was the Park Service's central district in National Capital Region]. And worked a lot at Jefferson [Memorial which she really enjoyed]. And a little bit on the Mall at Washington Monument. She stayed with that until I transferred [to Golden Gate NRA.]

Cliff Chetwin: The Park Police expanded. They went to San Francisco and to Gateway. And what they didn't tell us, this was all volunteer, of course, but if you volunteered to go to San Francisco, that meant you also volunteered to go to New York. They didn't tell us that when we applied.

- Cliff Chetwin: So, we're in a big meeting with a couple of captains, I think a major was there. They're going to decide who goes to which one. Which is the first we're now told, if you volunteered for California, that's nice. But you know, nobody volunteered for New York. So, some of you guys are going to New York. Which made a little bit of a tense meeting. But it turned out I stayed with the San Francisco group.
- Cliff Chetwin: So off we went to Golden Gate. We were setting that new park up. And there were no rangers there. The Park Service didn't think rangers could afford to live there [and I think that was a good decision given the low ranger paygrade structure at the time]. That was really the only reason they took Park Police out there, because of the salary structure. Other than that, they'd have put rangers out there (which they eventually did).
- Cliff Chetwin: In hindsight, it may not have been the wisest idea for the Park Service. Because Park Police are good at law enforcement. They're not real good at rangering. But off we went. And I'd been to California once. A buddy of mine and I drove out there on a dare in college. But that was all I knew about western United States. Judy had never been west of Seneca Lake, in New York.
- Cliff Chetwin: So, we hit San Francisco. She initially started volunteering at Fort Point. She couldn't get on in a paid position. Of course, there weren't really any Park Service jobs there yet, except for Park Police. Park Police was really open to dual careering, but they just didn't have any civilian slots for her. And on the gray and green side, Park Service was absolutely hostile to dual careering in those days. So even if there'd been jobs, it would have been fatal for her employment since I was already on the rolls. She signed up as a volunteer at Fort Point. And we were commuting across the Golden Gate Bridge. And that worked out well for her, because she could get off there at the bridge and just go down to the fort. She would have much rather been paid, but she had a lot of fun with it. And it eventually led to getting seasonal and paid out at Alcatraz for her, which worked out pretty well.
- Cliff Chetwin: We stayed there for two years [and the first few months for Park Police were spent basically setting up a whole new visitor protection program for a new park. In hindsight it was great experience for things I would later do as a District Ranger and Chief Ranger but at the time most of us just wanted to get on the street and start doing "real police work."] I was third junior guy on the detail. And Park Police is big on seniority, like most police departments are. They wanted three guys to work the Marin County side. And it wasn't just, "Who would like to go?" It was, "All right. You three guys, you're going to work out in the boonies. You three junior guys."
- Lilli Tichinin: Right. Out in the Marin Headlands. Yeah.
- Cliff Chetwin: Which I'd died and gone to heaven which of course I never let the sergeants know. This is a park over here! And the city side, this is urban

PD, which is okay, but I didn't need to leave Washington for that. I had that. So, I had everything from the Golden Gate Channel to Point Reyes was my beat. Of course, I made good buds with the Point Reyes rangers [and even got a joint SAR program going with them, mostly technical cliff rescue and surf rescue kinds of things, which was a first for the Park Police.] And I was in hog heaven. This is outstanding!

Cliff Chetwin: Golden Gate was where the Park Police got their first light motorcycles and decided to use them on the Marin Headlands side. [This was probably because of me taking our cruisers all over the dirt roads in the unit and spending most of my shifts digging them out; I got pretty good with a shovel and a come-along but the sergeants and the captain usually did not appreciate my "initiative" with brand new cruisers.] The first things they got us, they actually got us those little Vespa scooters, and they just buried themselves. We'd just go dig pits and you might as well just cover it up now, you couldn't use them over in the headlands [except on the paved roads. We had to ride them from Fort Mason across the bridge to the Marin unit. The Vespas had 3-inch-wide tires and the expansion grate gaps on the bridge were about 4" wide so you really to be careful and cross them just right or you were going to go down, plus we were a traffic hazard since they were so slow. The Golden Gate Bridge officers and the CHP patrols loved watching us try to cross the bridge on these.] But we finally got some dirt bikes, Honda Hawks, now we're talking. It was one of the best times I've had in the Park Service.

Cliff Chetwin: So, did that for a couple of years. And biggest thing, a lot of low-level drugs and a lot of poachers.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. I was going to ask what sort of stuff were you doing over there?

Cliff Chetwin: A lot of minor infraction stuff. It usually wasn't all that serious. It was mostly people learning there was a new sheriff in town, and new uses and allowable activities on the land.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: A lot of juvenile drinking. It was a big party area for the Marin County kids. They were used to coming down there and just kind of doing their own thing and getting away with it. We didn't think that was such a good idea. We also shared much of the area with the army and they had a lot of their housing there.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: Except it was all enlisted housing. We didn't have any officers. It was all enlisted, [and we'd get the domestic disturbance calls if the MPs weren't around.] A lot of the soldiers were reservists and Guardsmen just there doing their two-week Guard activities. Letting their hair down a little bit. But all that coming back usually to drinking and some moderate drugs. There was also a fair amount of deer poaching and those guys weren't averse to taking occasional shots at us on foggy nights. It was frustrating

since we usually couldn't see them even though we knew where the shots were coming from and we were only able to make one or two arrests while I was there. Overall, it] was more like working in what you call a larger, more traditional park. Not a lot of traditional resource violations, but the same level of infractions. Occasionally some felony level would come over from the city. [We did get bodies dumped occasionally along with stolen cars, and a fair number of suicides but the real serious crime mostly stayed in the city. I did make one great case busting up an insurance fraud ring that specialized in stealing very high-end luxury cars and then driving them over the cliffs.]

Cliff Chetwin:

[The suicides were a constant problem. The Golden Gate Bridge was a magnet for folks who wanted to jump but then the bodies would drift back onto the park shoreline, or the jumper would simply miss a mile and a half of open water and land in the park. Either way we'd have to work the case. A lot of the recoveries involved exposure to poison oak which was everywhere. I found out the hard way I was very sensitive to it and I ended up in the hospital for a week after one recovery. I also got in trouble on another one when I spent about six hours talking a jumper down off the bridge which I was pretty proud of but the relief sergeant accused me of simply prolonging the incident to get overtime and wrote me up. I never put in for the O/T and the Captain eventually tore the beef up, but I did some serious soul searching about staying in NPS law enforcement and what my role was supposed to be. Judy got so mad when she heard she went in and raised hell with the Major which definitely was not the right thing to do in the police culture and I ended up getting dumped on with crappy assignments for a while. Overall, though Golden Gate] was much closer to what I thought parks and park protection was about. Most of the people that came in there were looking to have a good time and were good people. Whereas on the city side, there were a lot of bad people. So, I thought it was a real luxury to be on the Marin side. You can start your contacts with most people nice. And if they wanted to be bad, I could up the ante to bad. No problem. I know how to do bad. But you can start nice. Whereas on the city side, you couldn't. You had to start with everybody's bad until they prove they're good. And it's a whole different kind of law enforcement when you have to do that. [Remember this was the '70's with Patty Hearst, Symbionese Liberation Army, lots of racial tension, flower power, etc. in a very, very liberal area. Most of the city folks in the area didn't like police of any kind so positive contacts were pretty tough to come by. I think the thing that disturbed me the most was the hatred many blacks openly expressed towards the police. It wasn't unusual to have a black male point his finger at you and pretend to fire a gun as you went by and I found that pretty disturbing.]

Lilli Tichinin:

Did many of the other guys have a similar park background?

Cliff Chetwin:

No.

- Lilli Tichinin: Like any of the guys who went out to San Francisco? I know you said there were a couple with ranger backgrounds.
- Cliff Chetwin: No. I was the only one, no, there were two of us with what could be termed traditional ranger backgrounds. There was one guy, one of the guys who had been in my rookie class had been a seasonal ranger, although I forget where. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed with MS right after we got to San Francisco, and it took him down real fast. He only lasted about six months, and it killed him.
- Lilli Tichinin: Oh, gosh.
- Cliff Chetwin: We picked his wife up as a dispatcher. Which, the Park Police try very hard to take care of their own. The ranger side, sometimes yes, sometimes no. I don't know if we'd been in a ranger setting, whether the Park Service would have taken care of his wife. I always wondered about that, but I doubt it. But he was the only other one. The rest all were straight, urban law enforcement oriented. Could have worked for any PD. This just happened to be the PD they were working for. All good guys. But not the resource-oriented approach that the Park Service looks for in the ranger types. And they didn't do as well on the Marin side.
- Lilli Tichinin: Right. Yeah. I mean, that was, that's the thing.
- Cliff Chetwin: The other two guys had a period of adjustment. For me, it was easy. Oh, yeah. I've died and gone to heaven here, [getting paid pretty well and was doing mostly what I thought ranger work was all about in a pretty nice setting, although not as much resource management as rangers used to get involved in.]
- Cliff Chetwin: We worked a lot with the military. They were our backup, so we interfaced with them a lot. And that's a curious group of guys, and a little different from the Park Service. [We worked quite a bit with the military in Washington but the force] had never worked with military police on a day to day basis in a field park setting so there was some learning curve there, particularly for the sergeants. Our sergeants, the sergeants for the MPs [had to find ways to merge different policies, enforcement techniques, rules of engagement, etc.] For the troops, it's like troops in any job. The guys on the ground get together usually. We got along fine. Helped each other out and did some good urban law enforcement. So, it was a good job. Some things Judy doesn't know about from those operations, she doesn't need to know about. And part of it, too, just there's a lot of law enforcement you don't tell your family. Particularly city law enforcement.
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.
- Cliff Chetwin: And there's just no need for my family to know some of the stuff I saw. But, yeah. Guano happens [in law enforcement and sometimes it's not pretty.]
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. (laughs)

Cliff Chetwin: A couple of years of that. Neither of us signed on to be in the cities.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: And for her, the career opportunities just weren't there, and that was very frustrating. Understandably so. So, trying to decide, we put a date, the end of '76, I think. Either get a transfer to a gray and green job or just get out, give up on the government. I got fortunate and got picked up in the park intake program. I guess it was fortunate. The Park Service made a fatal error trying to make an interpreter out of me. (Lilli Tichinin laughs) And I got shipped back to Morristown, New Jersey. I [didn't even know it was in New Jersey when I accepted the offer, but it got me into the gray and green which is where we decided we wanted to be.] In those days, the intake program, whatever your background was, they deliberately put you on the other side. It didn't take the Park Service long to find out that most of the interpreters really enjoyed coming over and doing the protection stuff. All the protection guys were dying! I mean, [unclear]. They didn't want to do that. So that program didn't last a whole long time. But it was the one I was in and one real advantage, I got sent to a bicentennial park.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: In the bicentennial. So, they had lots of money. One of the few times in my career. And lots of really cool stuff happening. All the demonstrations and the reenactments and so forth. That was a lot of fun [and I had always been interested in this era of history.] It was all costumed interpretation [and I portrayed a captain who commanded Washington's Lifeguard (bodyguard). On occasion they also had me on horseback portraying General Washington. It's a little known historical fact that Washington was only 5'9" and had brown hair and a mustache... but folks accepted me in that role anyway] and that was okay. I didn't like that every day was exactly the same. That's what I didn't enjoy in interpretation. The story was cool. And trying to share and educate people, that was good. But, let's see. Tuesday, say, the same thing you said Monday. And then Wednesday, it will be the same thing as Tuesday. [I found I particularly disliked school groups filled with smart aleck kids who really had no interest in their own history or anything that vaguely might be education. A real plus, however, was getting to work with George Price. He was probably the finest field interpreter I ever worked with. He eventually went on and became a Superintendent, but he had a passion and creativity that I thought was unmatched and I learned a lot about effective interpretation from watching and listening to him. I set a personal goal to become maybe half as good as George was, but I don't know that I made it. I occasionally get loaned to Thomas Edison NHS which we also managed and that was a nice change of pace and an interesting story but basically, I needed] the adrenaline rush that the protection side of the house gets. The longer I was there, the Chief Ranger kept grabbing me [which I enjoyed but it was tough on my boss who had an interpretive program to run.] The guys the Chief Ranger had, his protection rangers were almost all teachers, or interpreters being cross

trained as intakes. And they tried real hard. They were good guys, [just inexperienced in law enforcement.]

Lilli Tichinin: Mm hmm. But they didn't have the background.

Cliff Chetwin: But they didn't have the background. So, the Chief Ranger would rip me off from the Chief of Interpretation every chance he got [and I'd get to do horse patrol or road patrols.] Of course, I loved that—~~it~~ but it made it kind of tense between me and my boss, the Chief of Interpretation. First of all, the first day in the park, he told me he didn't hire me, the Superintendent had. I was not who he wanted. Oh, this is going to be a good assignment.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. (laughs)

Cliff Chetwin: Then he demanded my law enforcement commission. Which in those days, only the Regional Director could pull your commission. So, I told him that unless you are the Regional Director of North Atlantic Region, you can't have it. That didn't help my relationship with my supervisor, either.

Cliff Chetwin: Two weeks after I got there, North Atlantic Region called and said, "By the way, he gets a two-grade pay raise to GS-9." (Lilli Tichinin laughs) And the deal when I'd been picked up with region was, they would save my Park Police pay. Which was far more than rangers were getting paid. Park Police, right after I transferred, got a retroactive pay raise. Big one.

Cliff Chetwin: I figured, well, so I called region. I said, "If you guys say no, I'm okay with it. But you did say you'd save my pay, and this was, in fact, the pay at the time. We just didn't know it. What do you think?" They said, "Well, certainly! We said we'd save it." So, at the park, nobody, at least that I knew, that meant it came out of my boss' budget, [which was probably why the Regional Office agreed so readily.] Part of the deal in the program originally, we were supposed to be paid by Washington. Right after they got our class on, Washington reneged, and told, particularly the parks that had bicentennial money, you've got more money than we have. You've got to pay for these guys.

Cliff Chetwin: So, my poor boss. He's got this cop that he didn't want who's keeping his commission and is getting ripped off to the Chief Ranger all the time, and who's now getting paid more than his chief was getting paid. I was getting GS-9, step five, as an intake ranger. It was a stressful 18 months.

Cliff Chetwin: And then North Atlantic Region put me in charge of a SET team. So, I was always gone. Which was very unfair to my boss. Without question. If it had been turned around and I'd have been the chief, I'd have been screaming bloody murder. The poor guy. We did not get along. And both of us finally, after about 16 months, agreed it was both of our faults. And it was. We both took shots at each other. We declared a truce. So, for two months, it wasn't too bad. (Lilli Tichinin laughs) But it was very difficult for him, and very unfair of the Park Service to do that to him.

Lilli Tichinin: To keep pulling you away.

Cliff Chetwin: Yeah. Well, just the whole thing. It wasn't what he wanted. And what he needed. He had a lot of bicentennial programs, very high visibility. And a high visibility Revolutionary War park.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: And he's got this cop to deal with [who isn't all that fond of being an interpreter.] And then the cop is always gone anyways on law enforcement assignments. And my training supervisor was the Superintendent, not my boss. So, I could end run. And I took advantage of it probably more than I should have. So, it was tough for everybody. And 18 months there was probably about the max. I'd have committed homicide if I'd had to stay much longer. I probably should have been terminated during this assignment, because I rented a 727 one time. (laughs) We got sent on a fire crew out to California. They picked up four crews of east coast rangers, and sent us out to Sequoia, which was the first big project fire I ever went to in my career. And we were there 21 days. And they demoted some of the NPS crews down to Porterville, California. And the system lost us, which it very rarely does. But it did in this case. So, there were five crews. There were two Indian crews, two Mescalero Apache crews. And the three of us from the east coast, three remaining Park Service crews. Porterville had; it was serviced by American Airline. They just came in a couple of times a week with a commuter was all it had. And there was a little mom and pop sandwich shop there that was only open on the day that American Airlines came in.

Cliff Chetwin: So, we get there, now we don't, we haven't got real chow with us, just some rations. We're bedding down on the infield grass, which we found out the only reason its grass is because the sprinklers come on at two o'clock every morning. After three days of it, and I was just a firefighter. Our guy looking out for us, the Crew Representative, he'd left the second day of the assignment. He'd only gone out to get recurrent. He was from the Atlanta regional office (Southeast Regional Office). I could never remember his name. If I'd ever found him again, I was going to kill him. But he'd abandoned us.

Cliff Chetwin: So, I had a book of government travel requests, because of the SET team responsibilities. And I got a hold of the American agent. I said, "Will you take a government travel request?" "Yep." Let's see. Five crews. That's a 727. "Can you get a 727 in here?" "Yeah." "You got one?" "Hear we've got them in L.A." "Well, if he's here in an hour, I've got these GTRs. Whatever it's going to cost. Here you go. Get them here."

Cliff Chetwin: So, he did. He brought a 727 over. I gave him a GTR for several hundred thousand dollars. And they flew us to L.A. And now I've got to get another one to get us to the east coast for the three NPS crews that are left. And I did. [I don't recall what happened to the Mescalero crews at this point, but they got back to New Mexico on their own somehow, I guess.]

Cliff Chetwin: Of course, now it's dawning on me that perhaps this involves Leavenworth. And I got back to the park. I went right to the Superintendent. I said, "Boss, have you heard from the inspector general?" Which is probably not the thing a Superintendent wants to hear.

Lilli Tichinin: (laughs) Wants to hear.

Cliff Chetwin: He said, "No. Why?" And he knew me well enough now to also include a, "What did you do?"

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: I said, "So let me tell you my side of the story first." So, I told him the whole story. I said, "You know, I think I'm going to jail for this." He paused a long time. Then he said, "Yup. You're right. I think you're going to jail for this one." (laughter) Bill Binnewies. He's a good Superintendent. A good, good guy. He said, "Well, tell you what. Let's not rock the boat. They haven't called yet. Let us not go looking for trouble."

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: Sage advice. I always remembered that advice. He said, "Well, let's just, if they call, we'll just go with the flow, where it takes us. But let's wait." Next couple of days, and I didn't sleep. I just knew I was going to Kansas and getting a cell. And what I really learned was if you're going to do something, be audacious. Because if it's audacious, they think you know what you're doing, and you ought to be doing it. And I remembered that the whole rest of my career. And we never heard a thing.

Lilli Tichinin: (laughs) Wow.

Cliff Chetwin: The airline bill got paid. Nobody ever questioned it. The day I retired; I still had that book of GTRs. Of course, we'd gone to credit cards by that time.

Lilli Tichinin: Right. Right. Still.

Cliff Chetwin: Actually, a book and a half. They'd given me two books as a SET team leader. I took them down to property when I closed out at retirement, and tried to turn them in. They wouldn't take them. They'd never seen them.

Lilli Tichinin: Because they weren't still, they were not used at all anymore.

Cliff Chetwin: No. They hadn't used them in 20, 25 years. I had to explain to the property gal what they were. She said, "No kidding!" I said yes, that's how we did business before credit cards. She said, "Just give them to me and we'll figure out what to do." I said, "No, I want a property receipt. These have got serial numbers, and they're still valid. Airlines still take them. They're still good." She didn't want to give me a property receipt. And I said, "Well I'm not going to give them to you. So, property receipt? You've got them. No property receipt? I'll put them in my safe till the day I die." So, she reluctantly gave me a property receipt and I know she thought I was

being a horse's patoot. But I knew what those things were. And I wanted my name cleared from responsibility.

Lilli Tichinin: Right. As not being responsible.

Cliff Chetwin: For a book and a half. I think there were still 33 of them left in there.

Lilli Tichinin: Wow.

Cliff Chetwin: But I got out of Morristown. [Overall, the assignment probably made me more effective later on when I had interpretive or education programs under my wing, but I really didn't enjoy the assignment a great deal. Judy really wanted to work for the NPS by this time and could only volunteer which made this a stressful time for her too. Although she really enjoyed the volunteer program at the park.]

Lilli Tichinin: You survived Morristown. (laughs)

Cliff Chetwin: Survived Morristown, still with a career. My goal was, I wanted to go west. I did not want to be an eastern ranger. [In those days you didn't apply for jobs. There was a unit in WASO personnel that would forward your name to a park with a vacancy if they thought you might have the skills the park was looking for. Sometimes they were better at matching than others, but you would simply get a call out of the blue. You could turn them down twice without much penalty but if you turned them down again, you'd better be real happy where you were. The problem was you never knew if the first offer was maybe the best one you were going to get so the whole process was really a huge gamble for you. As part of the intake program deal the region was required to offer you one lateral that wasn't supposed to count against your three-offer limit but somehow these seemed to end up counting against you. They offered me a resource management specialist position at Sandy Hook with the primary duty of managing the tern population. I wanted no part of the location or the position, so I turned that down.]

Cliff Chetwin: And I got a call from the Superintendent of Pinnacles National Monument. Before that, I'd gotten a call by Lake Mead. I'd forgotten about that. Mead had four law enforcement ranger positions open, and they offered me one of them. And I accepted. Yeah. Get me out of northern New Jersey and an interpreter job. We'd gotten as far as the moving van was in my driveway, loading my stuff up, when I got a call from the AO of Lake Mead saying, "Everything's on hold." "What do you mean, on hold? This is not the time to tell me on hold. I've got a house that is empty now and a moving van that's full."

Cliff Chetwin: She said, well, new Superintendent was Jerry Wagers, had just come in while all four of us were in transit. He did not like law enforcement. He was well known for that in the Park Service. He said he ain't hiring any law enforcement rangers. He would take generalists, but no law enforcement rangers. So those four, including me, [got rescinded offers which also counted against my three-offer limit and now I'm down two.

So that went off. So now you've got to tell these guys on the Allied moving van, "Guys, put it back in the house."

Cliff Chetwin: Which they looked kind of funny. "You sure?" I said, "Yeah. All of this back in the house." So, while they're doing that, then I've got to go see the Superintendent. "Boss, I'm still here." Which I got along fine with him. He said, "Hey, that's great!" My chief interpreter, "What do you mean, you're still here? No! I thought I was rid of you."

Cliff Chetwin: We ended up there for another six weeks. I got the offer from Pinnacles District Ranger. I had no idea even where it was. Only thing I knew was it was west, somewhere in California. That I knew. And it was a GS-9. And it was out of interpretation. It was a District Ranger. I said, wow, this is pretty cool [and I didn't know where I really stood on getting any more offers.] So, I took that, much to Judy's chagrin. Because she didn't know exactly where it was either. She was volunteering and she didn't have a job, but she was really having fun with the volunteering she was doing at Morristown.

Lilli Tichinin: With the bicentennial stuff, yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: She had some really good friends there, but I couldn't stay there too much longer. It wasn't working out well for me.

Cliff Chetwin: So, I took that one, which was the last job I took on my own volition. After that, she laid the law down. It's going to be a dual decision on future transfers. And we ended up at Pinnacles, which is in central California. I still remember the first day I walked in the office. I was waiting to see the Superintendent. And it suddenly dawned on me I knew nothing at all about being a District Ranger. Which I didn't. Oh, geez, am I in over my head or what? And I didn't tell anybody, but I was real worried whether I could do the job or not.

Cliff Chetwin: Ended up there for six years. Had a lot of fun. But it was a nice little park. "Little" being the operative part of that. Beautiful little park in the spring, when the California poppies would be out, and the wildflowers. It was as pretty as any park in the system.

Cliff Chetwin: I had the Headquarters district. So, I had a lot of opportunities to get into park management that the other District Ranger didn't, because he was remote. I got a lot into budgeting and planning and things that a GS-9 DR in those days didn't do. But because I was right there, the Superintendent was a big believer in developing the people. And that, I really appreciated. He was also sort of tyrannical. But I guess the good with the bad [and I was pretty good at barking back and not backing down when he'd launch off and he respected that, so we got along well.] So that really was a good park, career-wise, for me. [We were organized under an I&RM concept which meant I had responsibility for visitor protection, resource management, and interpretation, making it a really good job.] I was also

acting Chief Ranger a couple of extended times when there were vacancies and I learned from that as well.

Cliff Chetwin: [We were a very active rock-climbing park, especially in the winter when Yosemite was snowed in. We had over 200 mapped routes and lots of vertical rescue work and a lot of EMS. I was lucky and had a great climbing ranger, Pete Armington, who eventually got me to where I could do 5.9 routes. We didn't have too many multi-pitch routes but a few that were around 400' seemed to be real accident magnets. Most of our routes couldn't be accessed for a rescue from some trail on the backside, they had to be climbed. At the time no one had a real good system for helicopter insertion or evacuation greater than 250 feet. At the time the longest helicopter rappel lines were 250 feet and the longest winch cable lines were only 250 feet, so it made some of these rescues pretty risky for us. Pete and I got with the Navy helicopter folks at Lemoore NAS and after a fair amount of wild ideas we finally came up with a combined winch and Sky Genie rappel system that gave us 500 feet. Of course, someone had to test it and the Navy guys figured it was a better idea to let a ranger try it first. Pete was a smart guy too, so I got to be first. About halfway down I was well past the second thoughts about the lack of brilliance in my idea, but the technique worked, and it solved our problem. We weren't all that much smarter than anyone else but as far as any of us knew no one had thought of it yet and it represented a pretty good advance in SAR technique for us and the Navy. I was told that Yosemite adopted the technique as well.]

Cliff Chetwin: Got a lot into local planning with the local community. And land use issues. [We had a lot of problems with feral pigs which we shot on sight. As rapidly as they reproduce, we had a difficult time denting the population much, but we did eventually knock them back far enough to minimize the vegetative and soil damage. We never asked permission and we'd be in serious trouble in today's NPS but at the time it was what needed to be done so we did it. The ranchers had the same problem although a fair amount of it was that their lands were loaded with feed. They were glad to see us trying to cooperate on a serious joint problem.]

Cliff Chetwin: [Keeping with my knack for emptying campgrounds we closed the campground in my district. It was in the middle of a canyon riparian area and a hotbed for invasive vegetation brought in by the campers, along with all the normal people headaches associated with a campground. We worked out a deal with an adjacent rancher who built a very nice facility, about triple the size of what we had and with better services, and we were able to reclaim the canyon. This was an era when the NPS was building more facilities, not closing them, and we caught a lot of flak from the San Jose/San Francisco area folks but the local county folks were glad to see the economic opportunity and it was the right thing to do for the resource.]

Cliff Chetwin: [There were also inter-divisional coordination issues,] and things that normally a lower level DR would never get into. And that really made me

more marketable when I left there. So that really was a plus. [I made a point of getting to know the adjacent ranchers who I viewed as equals. They weren't used to this from a park ranger, but it sure made my life much easier when it came to working out park issues. About the second week there I took Judy to a box social which she thought was a myth from the musical Oklahoma and the ranchers had never seen a ranger at one of these. It confused Judy but it sure got me off on the right foot with these folks.]

Cliff Chetwin: Being a big fish in a little pond, you get better visibility. And you get more opportunities. And I think a lot of us get hung up on going to the big parks. And I was one. I wanted to go to the big parks, too. But career-wise, it was probably much better, the opportunities in the small parks. Because you get such a broader opportunity. The bigger parks, you just don't get those opportunities. [I was fortunate to have great folks working for me too. Rangers like Pete, Tessa Shirakawa, and Cheto Olais made me look good and went on to good careers of their own.]

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: [One of the real opportunities was that we developed an aggressive prescribed burn program and we treated more acres than even some of the big parks that got all the notoriety. We hired Dean Clark, one of the best fire managers I ever worked with. I learned a great deal about fuels management and wildfire from him. This was when I really started building my fire management qualifications and it eventually contributed to my regional office assignment several years later. This also turned out to be the only time in wildfire that I came close to getting hurt. I had several USFS and CDF engines on the Highway 25 fire and we were holding a flank in a wide dry wash right at the park boundary. To this day I have no idea why, but something told me that we had to move even though the fire wasn't very large yet and it was pretty quiet at that point. I moved everyone out of that wash and up against a 20' cut bank a few hundred yards away. Less than a minute later the fire blew up and a huge wall of fire blasted over the top of the cut bank, landed right where we had been positioned, and set the entire wash on fire. I don't think it would have been survivable if we had still been out there.]

Cliff Chetwin: [This was also when I got involved with what is now known as the Association of National Park Rangers. The first get together was at Grand Teton in 1977 and it was just intended to be a social gathering of rangers, patterned after the old mountain men who held an annual rendezvous. I had planned on going but the Superintendent thought it was a bunch of rabble rousers and that by associating with them it would harm my career, so he denied my leave request. I know he thought he was doing me a favor at the time, but he did finally give in and I made the second rendezvous in Estes Park and helped to form the Association. ANPR quickly grew into a very positive force that advanced rangers and I'm proud to have been part of it; the Superintendent even eventually joined.]

- Cliff Chetwin: And did six years there at Pinnacles and Judy lasted about two and a half of it. [It was a good assignment for me professionally but the] living conditions were pretty bad [especially for her. Just living in the country was a new experience for Judy so that made it stressful all by itself. She had never lived this far from town before. It was typical “country.” We had a two-room schoolhouse, party line crank telephones, ranchers for neighbors, a dead-end road into the park that got closed during wildfires, campers with inane problems at 0200 hours, no TV, etc. I was good with this stuff, but it was pretty hard for her. The government housing was really the problem and that’s where things moved into the “bad” category.]
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. She was telling me about the trailer with the rats and the no furnace.
- Cliff Chetwin: And the rattlesnakes. [The trailer wasn’t sealed and in the first year we ended up with a couple of smaller ones inside; of course, the park was loaded with bigger ones outside too. I thought the rats were a far worse issue since they carried various diseases and they chewed the heck out of everything. Several of the drawers were so full of rat droppings that they were unusable and sometimes they’d be so active in the walls and ceilings at night we couldn’t sleep. I think when they nibbled on Judy’s wedding dress that was pretty close to the breaking point. Scorpions were real common as well. You just learned to watch where you put your hands and feet, and you opened drawers and cabinets a bit slowly and it wasn’t that big of a deal as long as you were careful. I thought the biggest problem was that the furnace was broken and so obsolete that it couldn’t be repaired, so we had no heat. I suppose the tip off should have been when there was a band new wood burning stove sitting in a box in the living room when we moved in. The trailer sat in the bottom of a deep canyon which didn’t get direct sunlight in the winter plus being real short on insulation, I think “none,” so it tended to get pretty cold much of the year. Of course, the Service then felt obligated to charge us extra on the rent since we now had “an alternate heat source.” The fact that it wasn’t installed made no difference. That led to some interesting conversations with the Administrative Officer before we finally got it removed from the rent charge.]
- Lilli Tichinin: Oh, yeah. Gosh. Yeah.
- Cliff Chetwin: That was typical park housing. It wasn’t like I was being treated unusual for the Park Service. But it was bad [as was much of the NPS housing throughout the Service in those days. If you ask around there are some real horror stories that folks can tell.] And finally, I don’t know if she told you, I finally got the state of California to condemn it. Which I think was one of my crowning career achievements.
- Cliff Chetwin: So, when the public health inspector came out from the state, and of course I was the one that talked him into coming out, which didn’t set well with some folks in the Park Service. But he wouldn’t even go all the way in. He got to the bathroom door and said, “I don’t need to see any more.”

He put a big condemned sticker, “unfit for human habitation,” on the door. I said, “Well, wait a minute. I need at least a little time.” He said, “Nobody’s living in this from right now.” I said, wait a minute. Maybe my plan has been a little too good here. Fortunately, there was another trailer in that canyon that was vacant and [I was able to get enough time to move into it. The single wide sat vacant until we could engineer its demise.]

[END TRACK 2]

[START TRACK 3]

Cliff Chetwin: Oh, it was a nice—

Lilli Tichinin: It was a newer one.

Cliff Chetwin: Relatively new, doublewide. It was a very nice trailer. So, went back to the Superintendent. I said, “Boss, I was a little overachieving here in my plan. Can I move to the other trailer?” He very graciously said yeah. We weren’t going to have a facility manager slot filled for probably three or four months because of budget, so we could buy some time. As it turned out, the new manager we eventually hired was a local, lived out of park anyways. So that worked out, but in the meantime, Judy had had more than enough, and she moved to San Francisco [leaving us with the first of the freeway romances the Park Service would give us]. Where she got back on seasonal as a mailroom clerk, which eventually did lead her to status. So that was—

Lilli Tichinin: That was at Alcatraz, right?

Cliff Chetwin: [No, that was as a mail and files clerk at Golden Gate NRA headquarters, but she was able to move over to Alcatraz later and she really enjoyed the prison island assignment.] And that clearly was not our plan, nor was the freeway romance part of the plan.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: But in hindsight, it worked out [and we were able to keep our marriage although it wasn’t easy. She had been doing horse patrols and interpretive programs as a volunteer in my district and she had applied for seasonal jobs at Pinnacles,] but the other District Ranger refused to even consider her even though she was top of the list. And from his point of view – and I stayed out of it, I didn’t even talk to him about it –I didn’t want to get involved in that. If things were turned around, I’d expect [he would have done the same] too. But if I were in his shoes, you know, here it’s the wife of my peer District Ranger. And he’s the headquarters ranger, so he’s got the ear of management more than I do. I would have been very uncomfortable with that, too. So, I always understood his position on it. But Judy did not, [which of course is understandable.]

Cliff Chetwin: So up she went to Golden Gate. Which led me to getting my pilot’s license, which actually—

Lilli Tichinin: Oh, wow!

- Cliff Chetwin: —helped in the second half of my career. Well, I'd always wanted to fly. It was just another bucket list item for park rangers. I'd always figured too much time and too much money, and just couldn't afford to do it. And I had a GS-5 climbing ranger working for me who had just started taking flying lessons. I figured well geez, he's a five, I'm a nine. Of course, he's single, I'm married, but still. If he can do it, I can do it.
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.
- Cliff Chetwin: So, I started. And I got three or four lessons down the road and I found out his grandmother was paying for it for him. He didn't tell me that part! But I got my pilot's license. And the whole goal then was to be able to fly up to see Judy.
- Lilli Tichinin: Right.
- Cliff Chetwin: It was before the interstate in those days. Driving through San Jose and San Francisco was just brutal!
- Lilli Tichinin: And she was up on the Marin side, she was up in Novato, right?
- Cliff Chetwin: Novato. And a 40-minute flight, Hollister to Novato. Or four or five hours driving. So that was really, just beside the desire to do it, but that was the plan. That's what we in fact did till I left Pinnacles. I commuted with the airplane on weekends up to see her. I still remember the Superintendent's wife telling Judy she would never leave; I would never let her leave. Which of course as you now know from her interview, that didn't set so well [with Judy and she did leave.]
- Lilli Tichinin: (laughs) I'm sure.
- Cliff Chetwin: Yeah. So that is the last three years, three and a half years, I think, of my time there, I played bachelor. Amazingly enough, my daughter was conceived during that time. [I guess the extra time saved by flying may have been handy.]
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. (laughs) And then, so Judy was telling me that then you went to Carlsbad right after that, right? And that was—
- Cliff Chetwin: Yeah. Actually, I'd been offered and accepted the Mather District Ranger job at Yosemite.
- Lilli Tichinin: Oh, wow! Okay.
- Cliff Chetwin: And I was looking forward to that.
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.
- Cliff Chetwin: In retrospect, I'm glad it didn't work out. But I was crushed at the time when it fell apart. I was all ready to go. And it was a good opportunity, and I'd competed, I'd been selected off the cert. The Chief Ranger wanted me, but they'd gotten a disciplinary issue going over in Yosemite with the previous District Ranger [and they were moving him out.] The guy that blew the whistle on him, fellow by the name of Johnson, Bob Johnson, for

whatever reason the Park Service felt they needed to reward him for blowing the whistle on the District Ranger. What he told them he wanted was the District Ranger job. So, they gave him the DR job instead of me.

Cliff Chetwin: I still remember being called into my Superintendent's office. He was very apologetic. He said, "Look, I just had an hour talk with the Superintendent over there. Tried to talk him out of this. But the region made the decision. It's out of his hands. He doesn't want to do it, either. But they've got to withdraw the offer. You're staying here." Which absolutely devastated me. A District Ranger in Yosemite! Hit the big time!

Cliff Chetwin: About three months later, I got offered the Chief Ranger job at Carlsbad. And well, okay. It ain't Yosemite, but a Chief Ranger slot is pretty good. And I had flown over the country just south of Carlsbad once several years earlier. And I still remember Charlie Hart, the guy I was flying with, just looking at that, and saying, "Who in their right mind would live in this? This is horrible country!" (laughter)

Cliff Chetwin: Well, here we go. And Judy was, when I accepted, she was about 8 ½ months pregnant, or maybe eight months. By the time we got everything going and so forth, she was actually just over nine months. The unit manager, a fellow by the name of Henderson, Larry Henderson, had agreed I could stay in California until the baby was delivered. And that just keeps going and going, and nothing was happening. And nothing appeared to even be imminent.

Cliff Chetwin: He finally called me. He said, "Look. I understand the dilemma you have but I just had one employee assault another one, tried to knife him. I have got to have my chief law enforcement officer here. If you can't get here, I've got to hire somebody else. So, you tell me what you're going to do."

Cliff Chetwin: We'd already gone down to the park and looked at it. That was the deal Judy had agreed to [after I took the Pinnacles assignment without really consulting her.] And as we drove into the park the first time, she turned to me, said, "It better get better than it looks right here." So, she wasn't all that excited. Of course, she wasn't happy at this stage. She was pretty uncomfortable with the pregnancy, needless to say.

Cliff Chetwin: So, I told Larry, "Look. Let us go to the doctor. See what the doctor says. If he says, get thee on the road, we'll be on the road tomorrow morning. If he says something different, I'll call you back and the cards will fall where they fall." [I was fortunate that Larry agreed. It actually was a hint about how good he was going to be as my boss.]

Cliff Chetwin: So, we went into town. Doctor said hey, nothing happening, you might just as well go. Which I just figured my daughter was smart enough, she didn't want to be a Californian. She'd much rather be a New Mexican. (Lilli Tichinin laughs) And my mom had come out from Syracuse. We flew my mom out because she was going to help in the post-delivery

phase when I had to work. And she was loving it. My mom loved to travel. But still, my dad now is getting tired of my mom being on the west coast.

Lilli Tichinin: Being gone, yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: And my dad didn't suffer being alone very well. So, my mom's getting the calls, "When are you coming home?" [This didn't help the overall stress level for any of us.]

Cliff Chetwin: So, we load up. We looked like the Okies in the Dust Bowl going the other direction. I had the number of every emergency room, and I had the name of the charge nurse in every hospital along the whole route, from Pinnacles to Carlsbad. I mapped out a Triptik from AAA with all that marked out, just in case. So off we go. Judy's pretty much in the back of the pickup truck laying down because she was so uncomfortable, driving cross-country.

Cliff Chetwin: We got to Carlsbad. Got in at 4:30 on Friday afternoon. Those Friday afternoons keep coming back up in my career. And I had called ahead. There were three OB/GYNs in Carlsbad. The one that was recommended as being the best in town, I'd called. We had an appointment. They said, "We'll see you. We understand the situation."

Cliff Chetwin: Got to town and of course we looked pretty raggedy after being on the road for three days. Walked in, and the nurse said, "We ain't going to see white trash like you." Oh. White trash is a term that's gone out, trust me on this, [but it was just like a movie scene and she was serious. What a great way to start our life in Carlsbad.] She wouldn't let us in. Refused to see us. So, she says, "There's an Indian across the road. He'll see you." An East Indian. Geez. we go across the road. And the guy let us in. He was a pretty nice guy other than he starts explaining to us how you get pregnant. Pardner, you can fast forward this one. Trust me. We got that part figured out. Okay? What we need now, if you'll fast forward to chapter nine, like the ninth month, we want to un-pregnant now. He made us sit there. Go through the whole thing. How you get pregnant and how pregnancy goes. Okay. And what he was doing, he billed Blue Cross for full term. That was a scam. Which I later had to call Blue Cross. We fought that. That was a little abuse of the federal insurance policy, I thought.

Cliff Chetwin: So, we ended up, they said, "All right. If nothing's happening tomorrow, we'll induce. This has got to be solved here now or you're going to have problems." So, went to the hospital the next day and induced. She got a couple of centimeters, but this is it. Nothing happening. And I'd already talked to the charge nurse. I was pretty certain; we'd already planned it was going to probably be a C-section because my daughter had been breach most of the pregnancy. And I knew my grandmother had been a charge nurse, so I knew how the nurses' game worked in a hospital. Nurses run them, not doctors. And I'd gone to her that Friday night and introduced myself. And I said, "You know, I want to be in that delivery

room.” “You do?” “Yeah.” “You sure?” “Yeah, I’m an EMT. I’ve seen a lot more blood than you guys ever see. I want to be there.” We’d done the classes and all that stuff. She said, “Well, by God, you’re going to be in there, then.” So, they take Judy in, and the doctor that’s going to make the delivery says, “Now you can’t come in here. You’re out.” She says, “I run the theater. He’s in or you’re out.” I loved that. [I don’t know how serious her threat was but what a wonderful nurse.]

Lilli Tichinin: (laughs) Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: And he kind of got taken aback. I still remember the look on his face. Now I’m thinking we pissed him off and he’s going to be doing the operation here. But he went on with it. I was the first father in the history of Carlsbad to be in on a delivery. My daughter’s first crib was the top drawer of the dresser in the Stevens Best Western Hotel in Carlsbad, because our furniture hadn’t made it yet.

Lilli Tichinin: Oh, gosh.

Cliff Chetwin: That was still behind us somewhere. Furniture never caught up with us, any of our moves. It was always behind. One move to Pinnacles, the driver abandoned it somewhere in the Midwest, he just walked away from the rig. After he hit a bridge and sheered the trailer roof off.

Lilli Tichinin: Oh my gosh!

Cliff Chetwin: Middle of winter. And so, everything, the driver meets us in California, he says, “Before you say anything, I had nothing to do with the load.” This is not good! And fortunately, only a couple of our things got damaged. But a lot of the load that belonged to other folks was pretty bad. But at any rate, it hadn’t shown up in Carlsbad yet.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. Were you in park—?

Cliff Chetwin: We had park housing. We were Mission 66, very nice Mission 66 house, [other than it flooded anytime it rained very hard.] In fact, when we rolled into the park, the staff was having a party there. It was the party house, because it was empty, and it had the biggest yard. So, I figured this is the first thing we’re going to have to teach them, they ain’t partying in the Chief Ranger’s house.

Lilli Tichinin: With a brand-new baby.

Cliff Chetwin: That stops. So, we were in the hotel for a few days. Then the furniture showed up. Actually, we moved first into the Unit Manager’s house. He was going on vacation for a couple of weeks. So, he offered us his house. Very graciously. Found out I don’t like waterbeds. He had a waterbed. I didn’t know you had to heat the things. We froze to death on it! And he’d never told us, he’d never left it in the notes. So, I was sleeping on the floor.

Cliff Chetwin: Finally, he came back, and he asked, “Well how was it?” You know, you’re trying to be nice. He’s your new boss. Said, “Oh, the bed was a

little bit cold, froze to death.” “Oh. You’ve got to turn the heat on, you know?” No, I don’t know that! I didn’t know that. (laughter)

Cliff Chetwin: So that was the beginning of my relationship with him. And we had a good relationship. He was a good boss to work for.

Cliff Chetwin: We ended up, the first few weeks we had a lot of internal law enforcement, there was a lot of friction with the staff. It was a very difficult park, staff-wise, to work. It had a history of that, which I didn’t know about. A lot of history of labor problems there. In fact, had a hostile union, which my rangers were the only staff members not in the union. They didn’t want to be in the union. And told the shop steward, “We’ve got the guns. You don’t. So, leave us alone.” I said, I’m going to like you guys a lot!

Cliff Chetwin: But all the rest of the staff was unionized [and this was a real new experience for me.] It was to the point we, the senior management team, we had to soundproof some of our offices. The union guys would be there at the door listening to management discussions. [I’d find cryptic notes from the shop steward accusing my rangers of various things along with spent pistol cartridges outside my office door all the time.] We’d even have to leave the park for management discussions. I think I spent more time with the Fair Labor Relations Board the first few years than I spent as Chief Ranger.

Lilli Tichinin: Wow.

Cliff Chetwin: This is not what I thought rangering was all about! But we ended up, I hate to say we busted the union, but we did. And the right way. It was all legal. We changed most of the things that caused the employee unrest. Some of the practices the previous management engaged in, I would have been unhappy too. I would have joined the union, and I don’t like unions.

Cliff Chetwin: So, we fixed that. And then we had to go through all the decertification [process, which is heavily loaded in favor of the union, the Fair Labor Relations Board is not a neutral agency and is very pro-labor.] That was a real tough time. It was tough being a manager in that environment. I don’t know how people in the private sector do it, where they deal with unions. It was not a fun time. But I’m proud of the fact we did it. We fired six fulltime permanent non-performing employees, which I think’s a Service record, and we were sustained in every one of them, to bust that union. And they were the ones throwing the hand grenades and keeping things boiling. And we had to do it to recover the park and make it a good place to work.

Cliff Chetwin: [The real shame perhaps was that the situation made us focus so much on the bad employees that it was difficult to do right by the good employees; everybody was pretty much lumped together. I had one ranger who had been severely injured in an on-duty horse accident. He almost died from his injuries and he was never able to come back to full duty although he

really tried hard. At the time we finally had to retire him on disability; he was two or three months short of 20 years' service. You got a very nice retirement plaque once you had your twenty in and I felt given the circumstances the guy deserved one. The Superintendent felt the ranger had been too forceful in seeking his medical treatment rights after he was injured, and that he was likely in the pro-union camp, neither of which was true, so the Superintendent refused to support an exception. Dan Scholly was Chief Ranger of the NPS at the time and I knew him pretty well, so I called him, explained the situation, and got my guy the plaque. I got in serious trouble with the Superintendent for going outside the chain of command and it negatively impacted my relationship with him for the rest of the time we were both there. I still think it was the right thing for me to have done for my ranger but it's an example of how difficult the personnel situation was.]

Cliff Chetwin: There is a union still there I think, but I've heard it's a very pro-management union today, because of what we went through and the changes we made. But it sure wasn't fun. I'd have given anything to go back to being that seasonal ranger in the back country.

Cliff Chetwin: Good park, though. I had a lot of fun with the park. And I liked geology. I liked caves. And I had a good staff. Just super people working with me [in the ranger division. The Superintendent, Bill Dunmire, wasn't all that fond of me. He was a decent manager with a strong interpretive background and was a world-class mountain climber. But he didn't like protection rangers a great deal and thought they should be more like interpreters. He loved to play "Let's stump and embarrass the Chief Ranger," and he got me several times in the first couple of months with questions about a particular plant, area geography, or some local geology issue. It did force me to bone up on the park's resources quickly and after a few months he wasn't able to trip me any longer. Fortunately, I worked directly for Larry and he was usually happy with my work.] And we had good ranchers as neighbors. Because I had that background --and the previous Chief Rangers hadn't gotten along with the ranchers; a lot of hostility with the adjacent landowners— [we needed to invest a lot of time in repairing those relationships.] Besides the mountain lion issues we had a lot of issues with trespass grazing, illegal hunting, and with water rights. One of the first things I did was go out to see them. Brought the coffee. I knew how that game worked with ranchers, but they definitely weren't used to rangers coming to visit [unless the rangers were mad about something.] By the end of the first year, I was on pretty good terms with those ranchers [and the local commercial operators. Many of the interpreters thought it was unethical for the locals to make money off the park's presence and they would openly bad mouth these folks to visitors and other locals. This seems to be a common problem NPS employees create with the locals in many park areas, and needless to say I spent a lot of time on damage control.]

- Cliff Chetwin: We had a lot of positive things toward our resource management program that weren't there when I got there. Still had a lot of hostility over mountain lions. That was the park that had the mountain lion issue in the national park system, which had gone all the way to the Supreme Court. They'd been there before. The first court case ever established, who owns the wildlife in a state, came out of Carlsbad Caverns: Kleppe vs. New Mexico. And the Department of the Interior lost. The Supreme Court said, "Wildlife belongs to the state. Not to the federal government."
- Cliff Chetwin: And of course, New Mexico, they love federal money. It's a big federal property state, but they hate the feds [when it comes to land management issues.] And especially down in ranching country down there. So, they just glorified that every chance they got. And the mountain lions, it was a pretty good mountain lion population. The mountain lions sometimes ate sheep [although sheep seem to die from a lot of causes besides lions.] And if you happened to be raising sheep, it's sort of the cost of doing business. Which the ranchers didn't like that. The state had a depredation program. They'd pay the ranchers for the losses. State got hard financial times, so they cut back on that. At which time the pot boiled over and the ranchers started going into the park shooting the lions. Needless to say, the Park Service didn't think much of that. So, I inherited that one, too.
- Cliff Chetwin: And we ended up, we collared a lot of lions. We were trying to find out what the population was. Nobody knew. Everybody had anecdotal stories, it was the he said, she said kind of thing. Nobody wins with that. So, we started a big lion study. I started flying for the park, flying the researcher. Which was a lot of fun for me, [and for the first time we were getting great lion population data.]
- Cliff Chetwin: Besides, the flying, it also kept my hand in the resource management game, because I had resource management. I was chief of RMVP [resource management and visitor protection]. [We did not get the Office of Aircraft Services to sanction the flying since I had never heard of them, so we were in direct violation of DOI policy. If they had ever found out, I would have been in a good deal of trouble, but they never did. It's ironic that 10 years later I would be the one responsible for ensuring compliance with DOI aviation policy for the entire region.] The previous Chief Ranger really kind of focused only on the law enforcement side of the program. Hadn't done much with the resources. I decided I was going to reclaim that. That's what rangers did.
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.
- Cliff Chetwin: So, it kept more than my hand, it kept my whole body in what was a key natural resource issue at the time. It was a lot of fun, and I liked the contractor. And I got to know the population for the lions a lot better and could refute a lot of the stuff we were getting from the state, which was largely bogus.

Cliff Chetwin: The other thing we had a lot of illegal aliens. We were a main pathway for the illegals coming across, [and besides being illegal they were causing a lot of resource damage, so we put a halt to that, too.] Said if we're going to be a park, we're going to be a park, not a migration conduit. So, the rangers were so used to not getting any support, they went to heaven for the first year. They said, "We get support to do our job?" Well, yeah! This is our park. So, we're going to be good neighbor with the ranchers, but it's our park. So, I expect to be treated by neighbors and users like they want to be treated by us. And we got rid of the illegals and established good relations with the ranchers. We could focus on resource work instead of law enforcement. And I'm very pro-law enforcement, obviously. I wasn't averse to that. But I wanted that other part of the portfolio. That's what we did.

Cliff Chetwin: [After the first year or so we really had the law enforcement issues pretty well in hand and we were able to focus a lot more on resource management. We really got into vegetative management programs, managing T&E's, trail maintenance, reducing exotic ungulate populations, and managing water resources.

Cliff Chetwin: [The main emphasis of course was the geology. I had one of the foremost karst experts in the world working with me. Ron Kerbo was brilliant, although largely unappreciated by the NPS, and we were able to do some really good things towards protection of cave resources. We did a lot of cave exploration and came up with several new techniques for non-destructive exploration of relatively remote portions of caves. We also made the decision to try to open Lechuguilla Cave which ended up providing major advances in our knowledge of karst geology. It was a big gamble to allow the Lech project to go forward and there was a lot of NPS resistance since no one knew if we'd accomplish anything other than damaging what was commonly thought to be a minor cave but I'm sure glad we made the decision we did.

Cliff Chetwin: [My one big resource disappointment was that most of the caves were closed to visitation in order to protect them and I came up with the idea of videotaping them and showing the tapes on a monitor in the visitor center, allowing the public to experience the caves without actually going into them. It not only would protect the caves, but we'd have a visual baseline record for future resource management decision. This was in the days when Beta and VHS were just coming available and it was pretty expensive technology. Most folks thought it was a pretty far out idea so I could never get the funding to do it. With today's technology I think it's even a better idea, but I don't know that anyone has done anything with it.

Cliff Chetwin: [My other big disappointment was that I wasn't able to increase the ranger budget. Interpretation got the bulk of the park budget increases and maintenance was able to score some, but we were always in the "next year is your year" mode and next year never seemed to come. I had the guys track their hours one year and we were averaging about 3,500 hours of

donated time, which of course was absolutely illegal, but it was necessary to get the job done. It did force me to become real creative in coming up with help and equipment that didn't cost much. I ended up building a pretty aggressive volunteer program and we got into the Student Conservation Association, Scouts, and other youth/job programs in a big way. We religiously scanned the General Services Administration and military surplus lists and two of my guys even built a dune buggy that we could use to supplement our horses for our backcountry patrols. It's a testimony to the quality of the rangers that worked with me and I was extremely grateful that my guys believed in the mission enough to do it, but it wasn't right, and I never did get it fixed.

Cliff Chetwin: [I oversaw the park concessions, one of which was a restaurant, and Carlsbad sent me to the strangest training of my career. I ended up at the Culinary Institute of America on the theory that if I understood kitchen operations, I would be more effective in overseeing the concession. It was somewhat interesting but certainly not what I ever envisioned as part of rangering. All of our meals were things students cooked in the various kitchens and I found it pretty bland. They definitely didn't appreciate me asking for green chili or tabasco, but I did finally graduate and got my chef's hat. I think they were happy to see me leave.]

Cliff Chetwin: Carlsbad overall was a great time. I loved it. And my daughter got to grow up in a national park. [She was three weeks old the first time I took her into the Cavern, and she loves caves and bats to this day.]

Cliff Chetwin: Judy got picked up, they kept her appointment in San Francisco open for her until Carlsbad could pick her up. Carlsbad graciously picked her up. A good-sized staff there. So turnover was fairly frequent, a slot came open pretty quick. And she was able to get on with interp. [Frank Walker was the Chief and he was very supportive of dual careers which really helped us out and I appreciated a great deal.]

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. That's good.

Cliff Chetwin: So that worked out well. All of the dual career, anybody that you've interviewed, I'm sure, has talked about that. It makes it tough. You've got to be careful of the line you walk. It can be very difficult both for the couple, but also for the park [since it can be easily abused. Being Chief Ranger I had to be especially careful to avoid any appearance of trying to influence things on Judy's behalf and there were times that made it tougher for her than it was for other employees.] I always was thankful to Larry Henderson that he supported the dual career. Even today, I believe the Park Service pays more lip service than reality to it. But in those days, it was pretty hostile. Dual careers, we said the right things, but the Park Service didn't believe in it. And we knew that. That's just the way it was. But it didn't make it any easier.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: [About this time I became party to a class action suit against the Service for the enhanced law enforcement/firefighter retirement benefits. Some of us had been pushing through various channels for coverage under this retirement but the Service claimed rangers didn't qualify and they found it easy to pick us off individually. After figuring this out several of us banded together and engaged a law firm in Boise that specialized in these cases. We ultimately lost in Federal court, but the Service saw the tide was turning and very reluctantly started to accept some claims. The Service continued to fight a rearguard action for several more years but ultimately our efforts ended up in the law enforcement and firefighting ranger positions being covered. Given my role as management in dealing with the union it's ironic that I ended up opposing management on a personnel issue. I'm glad we fought for the benefit, but I always felt each of us had a little black checkmark by our name from this point on.]

Cliff Chetwin: So, did that. And I got more into fire management. The FIREPRO program was just coming on. I saw the future for a park that had fire activity and wanted to get some funding and positions. That's where it was. The future wasn't in the other traditional programs. So, we started really documenting what was going on there, and started doing a lot of burning. And got Carlsbad into the FIREPRO program, which really helped that park on the resource side, grow. Because we'd get some money. We did get some staffing. We became a FIREPRO park. [It was also a great time for several of us to acquire higher red card qualifications, and along with BLM and the USFS we also developed the area's first interagency fire crew.] And I was very proud that we were able to do that.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: And I never thought I'd go into wildland fire as my primary job responsibility, the focus of my career, I was a law enforcement guy. In fact, I was scheduled to go to the FBI academy. The NPS was only sending Park Police at that time but the local Sheriff had sponsored my application. Before I could go, I got an offer to come to the regional office in the natural resources shop. So that's really where my career moved out of law enforcement and moved over to fire. In retrospect, at the time, I wasn't sure that was a good idea. I mean, I was comfortable there. Park Service sort of was new to fire in many ways. Particularly as a national program. Obviously, the Park Service now knew what it was doing in law enforcement, and I was pretty comfortable there. But it was a good promotion. It was a three-grade promotion to come to region. I was going to get a 12 out of it. And I'm as mercenary as anybody. So, I could be induced. And I was ready for that. I'd kind of outgrown, maybe, the challenges that Carlsbad offered. We'd solved the problems they'd brought me there to deal with. After six years anywhere, most of us in the Park Service get wanderlust. Judy and I wanted my daughter to not be solely focused on that more rural lifestyle, because that was not what her

life would be, in all likelihood. So, we thought it was time to move to a city and at least expose her to that part of the real world, if you will.

Lilli Tichinin: Right. Outside of the national parks.

Cliff Chetwin: Outside of the national parks. And I had applied for the job, it was operationally titled the regional forester, I was the last regional forester in the National Park Service as far as I know.

Lilli Tichinin: Really?

Cliff Chetwin: In the old Southwest region. And it was a resource management specialist job [but I was classified in the 460 professional forester series.] I had forestry and hazard trees and the wildfire program. Vegetative management, invasive species, all that kind of forestry stuff. Yeah, when I went up there, I was the regional forester, which made it fun talking to the Forest Service guys [since that's a very high organizational title in their agency.]

Lilli Tichinin: I was going to say, you'd come full circle from the Forest Service.

Cliff Chetwin: I loved that. Yeah. And we, when the next stage of FIREPRO came online at the regional level, we realigned the PD to what Boise wanted, because we were going to get money for it. And moved it to the title, I became now the Regional Fire Management Officer and eventually aviation was added as well.

Lilli Tichinin: Oh, okay.

Cliff Chetwin: But really didn't change a thing. Just fancy new title.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: But that was the end of the regional forester title.

Lilli Tichinin: Got it.

Cliff Chetwin: The only reason, ironically, that I went up there, a fellow by the name of, the Regional Chief Scientist, Fletcher. [Fletcher had a reputation that he could be hard to work for, but I knew him through the cave programs, and I knew it would be a good relationship.] Milford Fletcher hired me because I knew more about computers than anybody else that was on the cert, and I really knew nothing about computers at the time. The only computer I'd ever seen in my life showed up at Carlsbad in two boxes. Each box about half the size of this table. And no bill of lading, no return address, no idea. It just said, "Carlsbad Caverns, Attention: Chief Ranger." They sat on the floor in my office for six months. I didn't even open them. I had no clue. And I got a call from the Washington Office wanting to know why we weren't sending in our radon reports via the computer they'd sent us.

Cliff Chetwin: I said, "What computer are you guys talking about?" "Yeah, we sent it to you six months ago. We got a signature. You guys got it in two boxes." Whoa, connect the dots! Connect the dots!

- Cliff Chetwin: So, the cave specialist and I, we open this thing up. And sure enough, there's computer stuff! No instructions how to hook them up. Zero instructions. There's no software. Of course, we didn't know it at the time that you need software. But we started looking at different places you could plug stuff in, and finally we got a guy from town, a vendor, who was an Apple dealer, Apple computer dealer, to come out. And he made up some cables for us. And we didn't even have a clue about that.
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.
- Cliff Chetwin: So finally, we had wires plugged into every place it looks like you can plug a wire in. Turn the sucker on. And didn't do a thing. It booted up. It just, blank screen and cursor.
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. Nothing happened. Yeah.
- Cliff Chetwin: Well, this is sure wonderful! So, I called the Washington Office back. Said, "Well, we got the computer set up." "Well, good. Starting Monday, we want your radon reports." We did the radon reporting for all the western cave parks, and Mammoth Cave did it for all the eastern cave parks. I said, "We'll send it to you."
- Cliff Chetwin: So, I hung up. Immediately called the Chief Ranger of Mammoth Cave. I said, "Hey. Do you guys have two big boxes that have computers in him?" He said, "Well, we've got two boxes." "Let me give you a hint what you're going to find, and what Washington now expects. Because I just got off the phone with these guys."
- Cliff Chetwin: So, the two of us worked down, we finally found out the computers had UCSD Pascal for the operating system. Which of course was absolutely meaningless to us. Other than, okay, UCSD. University of California, San Diego. So, I call out to the University of California, San Diego, and I track down this graduate student who had written the program. He walked us through what it could do. It could do some word processing; it was sort of like an early version of Word. We also found out that it had Brick Out, the game, on it. That's all that was on the thing. [We got pretty good at the game and a little bit of word processing but nothing else.]
- Cliff Chetwin: All right. Well, so we can type up this Word document with radon data now. Okay. Got that. How do we get it out of the box from here to the Harpers Ferry? No clue. So, I called the manufacturer of the computer. The company's name was TERAk, which I thought was probably short for pterodactyl. And they're down in Tucson. And I get talking to one of the engineers. He's just wowing me with this thing is, I mean, it's better than what NASA has. This is the top end desktop CAD/CAM design computer in the world and cost about \$10,000. And he starts reading me all the export limitations and security we had to have on this thing. Wow.
- Cliff Chetwin: "Well, can you just tell me how I send this form we just typed up, how do I get it out of the box to Harpers Ferry?" He says, "You can't. You've got

to have telecommunications, and nobody's written telecommunications software for this frame yet. Doesn't exist." Hmm.

Cliff Chetwin: So next Monday morning, we mail – U.S. mail – our radon sheets off to Washington. I think it's Thursday, we get the call. "Hey! Why don't you send them electronically?" "Here's my tale, guys—"

Lilli Tichinin: Let me tell you.

Cliff Chetwin: Let me tell you. And it was typical Washington. "Well, you guys just figure it out. Get whatever you need and attach it." They had no clue either. None, whatsoever. Well, none of us did in those days.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. So that was your computer experience.

Cliff Chetwin: But I had that, and then, well actually, I had one more bit of experience. I decided we're going to get good at this. Because the Forest Service, they're doing computer stuff. They had Data General. And they were getting out of the Data General business and going to IBM. I think they went to IBM. Maybe they went to HPs. But they were getting out of the DG business. And they surpluses them.

Cliff Chetwin: Well, my boss found out about that, and he cuts a deal with the forest supervisor on the Lincoln National Forest there to give us all of their Data General equipment. This is good, except it didn't come with an instruction manual. It's a network system, to boot. It's not a stand-alone system. It had what were called PIDs. You had to go through 24 PIDs to get the thing to boot up. I still to this day have no clue what a PID is. But each one's a step in the boot process. I finally, tinkering and hammering and, I mean, punching buttons and stuff, I get up to PID 8, in a year.

Cliff Chetwin: Even the Forest Service said, "We had trouble with that, too." Geez. Thanks. No wonder you guys are getting rid of these things.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: But never did, not once, get that machine to boot up. Never once. And had the guy from town come out, the Apple guy. Of course, no clue. He knew less than I knew. But anyway, now I've got my computer experience.

Lilli Tichinin: Right. Exactly.

Cliff Chetwin: And one of the KSAs for going to region was knowledge of computers. Well, let me tell you, I can tell you what I can't do. And the regional scientist he told me, lots of guys had more fire than you, you were pretty much top end of the game on the computers and—

[END TRACK 3]

[START TRACK 4]

Cliff Chetwin: —you've got some good business management stuff in the background. Nobody else could spell "computer." You at least answered the KSA. I said, "Boss, you just bought a bill of goods." (Lilli Tichinin laughs) Part of

what he wanted, we were trying to develop computer technology to count the bats at Carlsbad.

Lilli Tichinin: Oh, wow!

Cliff Chetwin: Nobody's ever counted them. Everybody has an estimate of how many bats there are. And that's a big thing. I mean, it's a key part of the resource.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: And key part of the interpretive exercise. People come to watch the bats flying. "Well, how many bats are there?"

Cliff Chetwin: "Oh, 1,283,342." Nobody knew. And so, what we were trying to do is come up with the computer. I mean, there's no way a man could count. So, we knew it was going to take computer technology. Some kind of stop frame technique was going to be needed. Nobody had the technology. It hadn't been developed yet. And one of the things Fletcher was trying to do was develop that. And that was part of my job.

Lilli Tichinin: Wow.

Cliff Chetwin: So, he and I, we spent countless hours tinkering around, finding out what didn't work. We never did get to what did work. But we sure found a long list of what didn't work. They finally, I mean, in today's world, they have the technology. Can do it. And nowhere near the bats we've been inadvertently lying to people all these years about.

Cliff Chetwin: Part of what we wanted was we thought the population was declining due to pesticides and other events. But we couldn't prove it.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: So, the project was, we wanted to be able to get those counts and monitor them over years and see if our hypothesis was right. And it is true that the population has been declining severely although we have never nailed down all the causes.

Cliff Chetwin: So, I ended up in region. And of course, it's a lot easier in region for dual careers.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: Originally, Judy didn't have a slot. So, we went back to the freeway romance game again. She stayed in Carlsbad, and I was up in Santa Fe. [However, John Cook had a strong reputation for supporting dual careers so we were pretty certain we could get a transfer for Judy too, which we did after a few months. She moved into the regional public affairs office which was reasonably consistent with her interpretation background and we were able to hold her grade.] And the only other reason I was willing to even go to Santa Fe, besides the GS-11/12 grade was attractive, but it was such a laidback regional office. Nobody wore ties. It wasn't a formal office building. [The building was massive adobe, the largest publicly

owned territorial architecture building in the New World.] You weren't in downtown Omaha. I mean, I just couldn't see a park ranger in that environment. I still can't. And that was real attractive. And I had known Fletcher because of his interest in the caves. He was a big caver, and I thought he'd be good to work for. He turned out to be a very good boss.

Cliff Chetwin: But ended up there. And the first time in my Park Service I was told, "Spend money and do the right thing." I was so used to doing everything on the cheap, frugally, on the free, if you can, I'd gotten up to Santa Fe. And first day in the office, I was trying to clear off the desk I was going to have. Which, the position had been vacant for four months, so stacks went up to about the ceiling.

Cliff Chetwin: And Fletcher said, "What are you doing here?" I said "Well, Boss, you're paying me to work. There's stuff here, obviously." He said, "Have you got your temporary quarters yet?" "No." "I don't want to see you back here until you've got them. Get out there." So, I went out and found very cheap, it was one of those rent by the hour kind of hotels, way over in the bad side of Santa Fe. And came back. And he said, "Well, that was fast. Where are you staying?" "Well, over at the Warren Inn." "Don't you follow instructions very well? It's going to be the Residence Inn or better. That's where you start your search." I said, "Boss," it was like \$150 a night or something, government rate. He said, "I can't afford to have you coming in here every morning not having slept, fighting off the wins, being pissed off. It's worth \$200 a night for me to treat you right and have you coming to work wanting to come to work." Which was a good lesson which I tried to apply to the parks the rest of my time in region.

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: Not the normal Park Service lesson.

Lilli Tichinin: And a big change from the rat-infested trailer.

Cliff Chetwin: Oh, yeah. Yeah. A completely alien thought process. And he wasn't profligate. It was still, there had to be value received. But he was the first boss I ever worked for who said, "Look, it costs money to do the job right. It costs more money to do it wrong." And he was right!

Cliff Chetwin: I didn't have many supervisory responsibilities after that point in my career. But the few times I did, it made a difference how I worked with my people. It was a whole different philosophy. I wish more people in the Park Service had had it then, or even today.

Cliff Chetwin: But good time there. John Cook was Regional Director. A lot of people hated John Cook. John had an ability, which he relished, to piss people off. He kind of liked it a lot I think. But he liked fire and he liked rangers. He liked rangers a lot. Of course, he was an old ranger. I never once took a proposal to him in the program that, he sometimes would ask for changes or modifications, but he never turned me down on a proposal in all the time I worked for him. We had that kind of support from the Regional

Director. And boy, that makes or breaks you. If the RD's buying it, you can get away with an awful lot. And you can do a lot of good stuff for the parks.

Cliff Chetwin: As a result, I think we did a lot of good stuff, helping a lot of our parks. [A great deal of our success was attributable to the first two program assistants that I had, Hallie Locklear and then Ben Espinoza. Both were top dollar folks who really cared about the parks and bent over backwards to make our programs a success. Both went on to great careers and I was proud to have worked with both of them.] And the Southwest was tough, because most of the parks were small postage stamps. Washington often ignored them. They weren't the so-called "crown jewels". They generally weren't the first-string Superintendents yet. They were really good Superintendent folks, but they were still coming up. They were learning to be Superintendents. They didn't always fare well in fighting with the other big park Superintendents for resources. You get down to the practical view, you try to match a Pecos against a Grand Canyon, Pecos is going to lose every time.

Cliff Chetwin: That made it very difficult for a lot of programs at Southwest. But with an RD like John, who was the most senior executive within the entire Department of Interior, and a very powerful Regional Director. He was from the old-line of RDs. He was from another era in the Park Service. Having that kind of support let us do some things we couldn't have otherwise done for our parks. And I really appreciate that opportunity.

Cliff Chetwin: [It was good to work for him although I did get in his doghouse and it was a very unpleasant place to be. The forestry programs were still in natural resources management, but the fire program and I had been transferred from resources management to the ranger activities division where I was also back doing some law enforcement, mostly ARPA-related. I was acting Regional Chief Ranger while Bill Tanner was recovering from a heart attack, when I got in trouble with John. Steve Botti, on the national fire staff, and the DOI fire budget guru, Jim Douglas, had told us FMOs numerous times that the fire accounts were separate appropriations and could not be diverted to non-wildfire activities. The NPS had a pretty long history of diverting accounts so everyone from Congress on down was supposedly trying hard to maintain the integrity of the fire program accounts. There were supposedly similar safeguards on some of the ARPA and other special accounts we had in the ranger program. I certainly should have known better but I naively believed all this. When John decided to take some of the money from these accounts for other activities, I told the regional budget officer that, based on my direction from Washington, this was illegal and couldn't be done. Bad choice of words and very bad move on my part. A day or two later on a very unpleasant journey through the Associate Regional Director, the Deputy Regional Director, and finally John, it was explained to me in no uncertain terms that any programs and funds that came into the region were the

Regional Director's to do with as he deemed appropriate. I was also told that my continued service was at his pleasure and it would be in my best interests to understand this. I had called Botti and Douglas to ask for support, which they claimed they would give, and neither lifted a finger. I think the only thing that saved me was that my mentor, Rick Smith, who was Associate Regional Director for cultural resources, had called me at home the night before to tip me off and he explained exactly what I had better say at each stop. I think he also went to bat for me and calmed things down a bit with John before I got my head handed to me the following day. I guess I did say the right things, but it wasn't a day I would care to repeat. I never forgave Botti or Douglas for throwing me to the wolves and I was far less protective of the fire program's integrity after that. When the word came down that there would be assessments, I just asked how much was going to be taken and then reprogrammed what was left. An interesting upside was that Tanner was surprised I had tried to defend the ranger accounts as well and my stock went way up in his eyes when he returned to duty. Bill retired a year or so later and I missed him.]

Cliff Chetwin: A couple of RDs that came in after John, I thought some were good, some weren't so good, and the program had its up and downs. But John really set a nice tone, I thought, for us. And I enjoyed working for him a great deal.

Cliff Chetwin: [I tried hard to get support for the little parks and I think we made some progress in getting the entire regional fire program some traction with the Boise office although there always seemed to be an unstated undertone that somehow none of our parks were deserving and that I shouldn't be pushing so hard. When I first came to region the national office simply placed us regional FMOs in a room and told us how much program money was available. It was then up to each of us to grab as much of the pie as we could. There was no objective criteria, just a lot of horse trading between us RFMOs. I'd only been on the job a few weeks and I got hammered the first year, but I learned quickly after that. As FIREPRO developed, the funding process became a much more objective system and I figured out pretty quickly how to present the data to our advantage which ended up with the region getting a larger share, although never as much as I felt we deserved. I never fudged anything, but I made sure we had every possible bit of evidence that the program weighed and used to calculate budgets. We were doing a good job of getting FMO positions on line in the parks, getting solid fire management plans written, expanding the prescribed fire program, establishing a lot of interagency efforts for helicopters and crews, and doing a lot of manual fuels treatment in the smaller parks where burning wasn't real practical. Mike Warren had made good inroads in getting the NPS to be considered an interagency player in the Southwest and I really accelerated that but of course that also required money. No money, no seat at the table. Nothing was ever said out loud by the Boise staff, but I always got the sense that they felt I was gaming the system and that we were getting more than our fair share. They were

probably right about the gaming but that's how they set the process up and I thought it was my job to get all that I could for our parks using the rules Boise had established.

Cliff Chetwin: [My one regret in trying to use the rules was in not getting Big Bend an FMO early on. The rules required an approved fire management plan to gain access to FIREPRO and I used this argument in favor of several of our parks. However, Big Bend did not have a plan even though they had enough fire activity to otherwise qualify for the position. I felt I couldn't very well use the rule when it suited us and then ignore it when it was to our advantage so Big Bend didn't get their FMO for several years. In hindsight I was wrong on this and I should have ignored the rule and approved the position for them.

Cliff Chetwin: [Around 1990 or so we were directed to establish a regional aviation manager position. We didn't think we had much aviation in the region, but Washington orders are orders I suppose so John Cook added aviation to my portfolio. At the time the money and support for aviation was coming through the FIREPRO program, and along with my aviation background, the assignment made sense even though I was already fully committed with managing the wildfire and structural fire programs. I got a new title, Branch Director, Fire & Aviation, but of course no increase in salary. The entire aviation program was being pushed by Rick Gale and resulted from his force of personality rather than any big commitment from the Service. It caused quite a bit of resistance in the Boise office which rightfully noted that the majority of NPS aviation was not in the fire program, yet fire was being directed to fund the program. This was to create serious friction in my next assignment.

Cliff Chetwin: [We knew that we had government aircraft at Grand Canyon and Glen Canyon but when we started digging, we discovered that we had quite a bit more flying going on, somewhere around 3,000 hours per year as I recall. Most of it was resource management project-based activity with contractors which meant program control was largely through the DOI Office of Aircraft Services. They surcharged everything and this increased our operating costs significantly along with complicating our efforts to understand and gain NPS control of our own program. Over the next few years, we were able to increase the region's use of aircraft by about 50 percent and get an NPS aircraft for Big Bend. We also got a couple of rental aircraft for the regional office and an interagency helicopter and Helitack crew at Bandelier. I even tried to get DOI and the NPS interested in drones which was a nascent technology in those days. The Israelis were doing some really good work with them and had a deal through the Los Alamos Lab to come to the US and demonstrate. I thought they had great potential to reduce operating costs and improve safety in a lot of NPS applications including fire and law enforcement but I couldn't interest anyone higher up in the NPS or the Department, just 30 years too early I guess.

Cliff Chetwin: [One aviation project I am very proud of is the interpretive outreach program we initiated with the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA). The Service was in a major controversy regarding air tours and specifically overflights of the Grand Canyon. Washington was doing a really poor job of explaining our position which was valid and based mostly on demonstrated resource protection needs. The major aviation groups were absolutely hammering the Service and we were losing the public relations battle. EAA was one of the leading opponents and along with the other aviation groups, was putting out quite a bit of misinformation. They sponsor an annual weeklong aviation gathering which attracts over 700,000 folks every year and includes hundreds of exhibits and forums. I figured if we could exhibit there and tell our side of the story, we could counter much of the misinformation and we should be able to at least have reasoned discussions with the aviation community. At the time there was a ten-year waiting list for exhibit space but the President of EAA was so amazed that we would be willing to come and take their best shots he gave us space immediately. I put a team of ranger-pilots together with some interpreters from Grand Canyon and off we went. The first year was a bit rough but by the second-year discussions got more tempered and pilots started actually thinking our position had at least some merit. In the first four years we made over 250,000 one-on-one contacts and I believe we were largely responsible for much of the controversy dissolving away. Once I saw how effective the project was in selling the NPS as an aviation agency that wanted to work with general aviation to resolve issues, as well as the tremendous opportunity to tell the story of powered flight, which is a significant part of several park stories, I resolved to try to keep the project going with a mix of park pilots, interpreters, resource managers, some Superintendents, a and even a couple of Regional Directors. The project continues today under the umbrella of Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP and it remains the Service's largest and single most cost-effective interpretive outreach program, reaching well over 100,000 visitors every year. I doubt my old boss at Morristown would ever believe I had this level of interpretive creativity in me.]

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. That's great. So then, how long were you there before the regions were consolidated?

Cliff Chetwin: It was about 6 ½ years before that started. That was a couple-year process. The last two years that I was in Santa Fe, we were Intermountain Region. The old Southwest and Rocky Mountain regions had actually gone away. And then for a lot of reasons, but mostly from a programmatic perspective and more supervisory control, Linda Stoll wanted fire to be consolidated in one place. And most of the fire staff at that point were in Denver. And the expansion we'd had those couple of years, while it was inter-mountain but with two offices, all those new positions had been recruited and filled in in Denver. So, I was the only one left in Santa Fe doing fire. Fire and all the new combined region aviation.

Cliff Chetwin: They finally said, “You’re coming to Denver.” Which didn’t sit well. Santa Fe was the city experience for our daughter, not Denver. [Judy and I had never desired another big city assignment. Stoll, the IMR Chief of Operations] said, “Well, we’ll give you a choice”. I had gotten a full-time regional aviation manager position approved, which was one of the very first in the Park Service, but I hadn’t recruited it yet. She said, “Well, you can come to Denver and be the Deputy Regional FMO. Or stay in Santa Fe and you can run the aviation program.” I believe she made the offer largely because she didn’t know what the aviation position was [and she was assuming that neither choice would be accepted, and that I would quit instead.]

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: I said, well, you know, “I’ve been Chief of Fire & Aviation for 12 years. I’m not about to be the executive officer on the boat anymore. I won’t do that. So, I’ll stay down here and run the aviation program.” She said, “Fine. Now you’re coming to Denver anyways.”

Cliff Chetwin: [I knew my reputation was someone who pushed the envelope pretty hard and that’s not a plus in the Park Service. My relationship with the current Regional Chief Ranger and with Stoll wasn’t all that good so I certainly wasn’t surprised at the dishonesty in dealing with us, or that there really wasn’t a choice for me if I wanted to stay with the agency. I did have to work for both of them the first year or so in Denver and they both made sure that I knew I was being watched very closely. I had talked to some personnel folks and determined what was going on legally qualified as a RIF although management was real careful not to use that word. This entitled me to some interesting rights, and I could have made a pretty ugly scene, but the bottom line was neither the Service nor we would really win if we got into that kind of a fight. I still was gray and green to some extent, and Judy was very much so, and we decided not to go that route although in hindsight maybe I should have. Stoll let it slip that part of her plan was to get Judy moved to Denver as well but on fire’s dime. That didn’t set well with either of us and ultimately, we ended up with two separate moves which cost the region a fortune. The good news is that at least we didn’t have to do the freeway romance thing again and Judy was able to continue her career uninterrupted. The other great thing is John Cook, although he wouldn’t stop the transfer, he told them they would have to wait until the school year was out and they didn’t dare challenge him. We bought five months and made it a pretty orderly move.]

Cliff Chetwin: That set a tone the last 10 years of my career. My attitude toward the agency was not a positive one. I really felt we were treated pretty poorly in that whole deal. Whether or not I could have found a way to, I don’t want to say gloss it over, but to make things better again and get back the love I had for the agency, I don’t know. So, the best thing I’ll say is probably I could have, but I didn’t. Probably some of that has to be my fault as well [and maybe I could have handled the whole situation better.] I still had a

passion for the parks and the mission. But I really lost the passion I had for the National Park Service as a result of that. And I was bitter about that till the day I retired. And that was unfortunate. I'm sure at times that didn't help the parks. It certainly didn't help me sometimes. [I literally had filled out my retirement papers and signed them, just leaving the date blank, and I carried them in a sealed envelope in my briefcase the entire time I was in Denver.] And it made it tough for Judy, too. Because it was a lot of bitterness. And she had some too. But then she had to put up with mine as well.

Cliff Chetwin: So off we went to Denver. And we made do. If you're going to be in a big city, Denver's a good city. A lot of open space, a lot of good opportunities. Housing, relatively affordable after Santa Fe. And we'd gotten our first house in Santa Fe, first non-government house. So now we were kind of, we wanted to stay in our own house, and we didn't want to ever go back to government housing or an apartment. And we were able to work out my daughter's education. Our daughter was in a LaSallian school in Santa Fe, which we thought was a better education. And certainly discipline. [She was in her sophomore going to junior year of high school and that's a tough time for your kids to have to move.] We were able to continue that in Denver. Which if we hadn't, I'd have resigned. If we couldn't have done that, I'd have pulled the pin and refused to go to Denver. But we were able to work that out.

Cliff Chetwin: I went to Denver as the Regional Aviation Officer. I lost the fire side. Working for the regional FMO, [Dan O'Brien. I was pretty unhappy that I hadn't even been asked regarding the RFMO job when the regions combined, even though I was senior, but Dan was very good and deserving as well. Someone had to lose in this situation, and it was me. Dan, and later Bryan Swift who came in as RFMO after about a year. Both understood aviation and were supportive which was a big help in making the situation tolerable.] And in some ways, it was good. I was able to focus only on aviation, which is a real weak area for the Park Service but a passion for me. And fire is not a weak area. Obviously, we've grown up in that and we're very professional. And a lot of the changes going on in fire, it was becoming very more bureaucratic, like any program does. The job of the Regional FMO was becoming very, very bureaucratic, very paper driven. A lot of the fun in the job that I had in the first 10 years, in FIREPRO, was disappearing. So, in some ways, the aviation opportunity was good. And the job, I enjoyed. That it ended up in the forced move, I didn't enjoy.

Cliff Chetwin: But it ended up there were only two of us that were fulltime aviation professionals in the whole Park Service. That was the national program manager, and he was in Washington. Bill Spruill, and myself in Denver. There were a couple others that were part-time. They generally shared it with fire. Although one up in the Pacific Northwest Region shared it with fee collection duties.

Cliff Chetwin: We got to do some really fun things. We started developing a fledging program. It's still got a lot of growth to go [even today but we put it on the right track, I think.] The Park Service will never view itself as an aviation agency, and that's okay, as long as there's someone that when they need them, they can turn to them, have the expertise.

Lilli Tichinin: Right.

Cliff Chetwin: That was sort of like tilting at a windmill. You're going to lose at that one most of the time. They'll never view it like they view any other program we do. And to fight it was a waste of time, so we didn't waste that time.

Cliff Chetwin: [The other real issue was that fire had been directed to continue to fully support my position FTE and funding even though fire was one of the smaller users of aviation services. This created constant friction with the Boise office who rightfully thought the other users of aviation should be funding my operation. I agreed with Boise fully and tried every year to build support for the program to be funded from NPS operational sources, but as long as FIREPRO was picking up the tab there was zero chance of anyone else funding the program. The regional fire program assistant was really not happy with me being there. She was a good lady, but she would come to me each year at budget time and ask if I knew how much I was costing the fire program. The only answer I could give was "yes" which of course didn't help matters. I wasn't the one who created the situation but there was hostility in both the Denver and Boise offices, and I essentially was the unwanted child of the wildfire program.]

Cliff Chetwin: The first couple of Regional Directors I worked for up in Denver were very supportive of our approach to improving aviation. And supportive. We needed it, we're going to do it, we'll do it safely and we'll do it right. Or we won't do it. [I needed their support too since I locked horns with the DOI Office of Aircraft Services fairly frequently. OAS was used to essentially running the NPS aviation program since we didn't have any aviation professionals. Now that I was in a professional aviation position I felt to the extent possible we should run our own program, especially since I knew land management based aviation better than most of the OAS folks who were almost all retired military. Besides being used to running the Service's program OAS was funded via agency assessments for service, so everything that we now did internally reduced their operating funds and they obviously opposed that. I wasn't bashful about putting the Service's interests first and I was able to convince the NPS folks above me that this was the right thing to do, but it became a pretty steady source of conflict between us and the Department. There weren't any tears shed in OAS when I retired, although they had allowed me to keep my DOI pilot status even though I wasn't flying the monthly minimum hours required by policy. Policy required that I fly ten hours per month to keep my pilot status and I occasionally got in trouble with one Regional Chief Ranger trying to get the flight hours in, but OAS always allowed me to keep my pilot status and I was very thankful to them for that courtesy.]

- Cliff Chetwin: So, I get all the backing from senior management to put a program in place and do it the right way, as long as fire is paying for it of course. And to expand the program we bought some new airframes. We got some pilot positions. Which gave the parks greater latitude. It was good.
- Cliff Chetwin: [I think we did some other really great things that moved the Service's aviation forward. We were flying around 6,000 hours per year which is a pretty fair amount of risk exposure, but we were able to get everyone to buy into "safety first." We had a really good overall safety record, which was our Number 1 priority. We were able to get Grand Canyon DOI's first NOTAR helicopter; it was exceptionally quiet and equally expensive, but the noise issue was very important for GRCA. We made several advancements in the short haul program and Grand Teton remained the world leader in this technique. Short haul is a very high-risk activity with high rewards, and we maintained one hundred percent safety record thanks to Renny Jackson's leadership and professionalism, and great support from Tom Monterastelli in the national office. We were the only region that had one hundred percent compliance with the Department's aviation safety training requirements of users and managers, and we were the only region to develop comprehensive written aviation management plans for every park with any kind of aviation use. We did a lot of work with the military moving some of their training routes and reducing park overflights and we worked a lot with air tour operators to establish positive dialogs between them, the FAA, and us. We established a new helitack program at Mesa Verde and upgraded those at Bandelier and Grand Canyon. In conjunction with the Western Region we developed the first ICS position task books for "all hazard" aviation activities, and we kept the interpretive outreach program going with EAA. We also made great inroads into the interagency aviation community and got the Service to be considered an equal partner. I guess not bad overall for an agency that really thought it didn't have much aviation.]
- Cliff Chetwin: [I think my second biggest regret was that Yellowstone turned down an aircraft and a pretty good program. I had done the required GSA study and had lined up an aircraft and a pilot position, at no cost to the park. I thought it would have been a significant tool for them, but the Superintendent disagreed, so I lost the aircraft and the money that was with it for flight operations and the pilot position.]
- Cliff Chetwin: [My biggest regret was that I failed to convince the agency that professional aviation program managers were needed. When I retired my boss decided fire wasn't going to support aviation any longer and my position was given to BLM who agreed to look out for NPS interests. Unfortunately, those interests don't mesh all that well and I think the parks lost on that deal.]
- Cliff Chetwin: And to the day that I walked out, I still loved that job. I was loving every minute of it. The day I walked out, I loved the job, I loved the parks, loved the field people, still do. But I'll never get that passion back for the

agency. The agency changed from what I had joined. You either got to change with it or you should leave. Because you're taking their paycheck. I wasn't willing to change [so I finally broke out the retirement papers I had been carrying around in that blue envelope and submitted them. I officially left on April 1st, April Fool's Day.]

Lilli Tichinin: What do you think some of those changes have been? Is there anything sort of identifiable? Yeah, what do you think? Or what do you think maybe that is sort of in the future in terms of changes? Like what direction do you think it's going?

Cliff Chetwin: I think the biggest problem the Park Service will face, and faces, is the changing demographics of the workforce. We were the last of that generation, we'll just broadly call it the World War Two baby generation, even though most of us were generally born right in the few years right after the end of the war. But still, we viewed it as that old Park Service that was the pre-World War Two/World War Two/1950's Park Service. We approached it as a personal commitment and career. It was a lifestyle. We were willing to put up with an awful lot of bad things. The bad housing, low pay. You bought your own equipment. The government didn't provide it. All those things that were the ethos, if you will, of rangers in that era. We are the end of that.

Cliff Chetwin: The generation, I'll even include a few of the late baby boomers, but I'm an early baby boomer. But from the late baby boomers on into all those other generation titles we have now, you know, they look at the world completely differently. Their expectations are different. They don't buy into rangers as a life as much as a job. And that's not bad at all. That has led them to say, we want to be appropriately paid for what we're doing. Which I think is very right. We want livable housing. We don't want to live in rat-infested things that are going to be condemned. We want a reasonable career track that has predictable upward mobility in it. We don't want to be a GS-5, backpacking ranger, for 30 years. That's not what we want. We don't want to live in park housing. We want to live in a community, be part of the greater society, and to have a life that is not defined by the Park Service.

Cliff Chetwin: And I think the Park Service has been very slow to adapt to that change. A lot of Park Service management still looks at the rangers of my generation and the older ones and think they can still recruit and have a labor force with those values, and that's not the labor force anymore. [I first experienced it in the mid-'80s when I was recruiting for a horse patrol ranger and not a single applicant knew how to ride. In the interviews several said they didn't even want to learn how to ride. This was beyond my comprehension and it caused me to realize that the world was changing. The Service is still in the throes of this, only in a much bigger way.] I think they're very challenged in how to deal with that [and develop a satisfied workforce for the 21st century.] They don't know how

to deal with it [and they've got major morale problems now.] They're struggling very hard.

Lilli Tichinin: How to make the transition.

Cliff Chetwin: Yeah. They've got to solve that problem. And I don't know how to do it. But clearly management's view has got to change. And some of it will be out of their hands. Some of it's tied to civil service requirements and GSA and statutes [and the ongoing changes in our society.] But that's all doable over a period of time if management wants to do it. I really think they pay more lip service to it. This generation of rangers sees that. Our generation, yeah, we heard it, we took it and blew it off because we knew they were shining us on. Okay, that's it. Today's rangers, no. Now wait a minute. That's not what we asked for, and we're not dumb. We understand what's going on. We understand government. We understand how politics works. [Our needs are different.] And a lot of generation of rangers, they understood internal politics of the agency and if you were a Superintendent, clearly you were a political creature. But the external politics we always thought was somewhat dirty. We didn't get into that.

Lilli Tichinin: Interesting.

Cliff Chetwin: The folks today, they'll play [the political game. They're pretty good at it actually and] they have no problem camping out on their congressman's front porch, or even running for office themselves! And the Park Service hasn't adapted to that, either. I think the other land agencies are ahead of them in that. Forest Service is way ahead in the changes they've made in their workforce, and adapting to it, [although they are having serious morale problems, too.] And I think we could learn something from them, [at least in some workforce management practices.]

Cliff Chetwin: I think the politics of resources are clearly different, and will be different in the future. The Park Service often still thinks resource management is tied to the environmental politics of the '60s. And that was a very good time for resource consciousness, lots of changes in how we viewed the assets we have as a people and what we want to do with them. But that's now changed. That's not the view of the new millennia here. I don't think the Park Service has adapted to that. They're still cherry-picking certain things for short term political gain, like climate change, for instance. But not taking that in a holistic manner. They're taking it solely as a stove pipe activity, trying to address it without the context of the bigger issues and the societal issues that come with that. They're having real trouble adjusting to the urbanization of the country. And it's not the urbanization – it is now an urban country. My generation was the last that started out still somewhat rural and we, and our children and grandchildren have ended up the [urbanizing the country. This changes what Americans want their parks to be, even what kinds of parks we should have. I think the Service is struggling to determine exactly what this means for the system.]

- Cliff Chetwin: And we made some adaption. We got the national recreation areas [a long time ago and we're seeing a lot of new parks reflecting specific social issues or recent events. I think Flight 93 National Memorial is an example of what the Service can still do if it puts its heart in it.] And it's a far more complex problem now [to decide which issue to address and how.]
- Cliff Chetwin: The dynamics of the politics have changed. The old day of rural Americana winning in politics, it's over in this country. That will never come back. And the Park Service hasn't really adapted or adopted that yet. They've made some steps forward. They have further to go. Some of that, too, will be a reflection, I think, when the last of my generation moves out. There's still some of my generation in the senior managerial jobs. Folks from the newer generation now who come up with those new societal values, that's the world they've lived with, they understand these changes better, and as they move into senior management, I think that conversion for the Park Service will finally happen. In the next, I think, five to eight years, we'll see. It will be a troubled time for the Park Service. It's going to be painful. But when us old dinosaurs are gone [it may become a bit easier?
- Cliff Chetwin: [I think one real caution is for the Service to remain neutral regarding the social issues of today. Telling a story through the objective presentation of facts is one thing but I see the Service increasingly emphasizing political correctness over competence and science, and openly taking partisan stances on an increasing number of contentious social issues. Resolving these issues is the role of the American people, not the NPS. I believe the Service will see its credibility and effectiveness as a champion for the cultural and natural resources in its care diminished once it is viewed as a partisan entity.]
- Cliff Chetwin: I'm sure the first generation of rangers thought the exact same thing about those of us, the World War Two babies, early baby boomers. It was as probably traumatic for the Park Service to adjust to us in what was the new environment issues focused world. Especially the new world of the United States being a world power which changed a lot of dynamics. As this changes now for the Park Service with this new generation of rangers. So, it will happen. But it's going to be painful.
- Cliff Chetwin: I hope that the young rangers who have that passion, that fire in their belly, will stay and see it through. In my generation, you stayed, and you did the job because you had a job for life. It was a career. For them, that's not the case. And I have a real fear of, because of that, that mobility issue that their generation has, not a negative issue for society, but that we didn't face, looking at perhaps only five, six years in the Service and then moving [to another employer, that they don't think] "I don't need to fight. I can go get another job". And they can of course. And I just hope we find a way to keep those until they can move high enough to make the changes [the Service and the system need to be relevant in the future.] So, we'll see. I don't know.

- Cliff Chetwin: [The issue of stove piping is also going to make protecting the parks more difficult. The nature of managing park resources has become so complex that it really requires a wide range of highly trained specialists rather than the large force of generalists that we rangers used to be. Increasingly these specialists have little or no experience outside of their specific field. The upside is that the Service can be far more professional on any one narrow issue and possibly make a better specific decision. The downside is these professionals too frequently only see their own area of responsibility and fail to consider the broader needs and limitations of overall park management. Decision making is often not holistic now. More and more they appear to see no need to consider the broader issues faced by any park, and the surrounding communities, and to integrate their activities with those of the rest of the park team. I saw this in the wildfire program as it came of age and the law enforcement program has gone down the same path. It's an extremely complex problem complicated by real staffing, budget, and legal limitations but I think it is hampering the Service's effectiveness. I wish I knew the answer for the Service, but I know eliminating the broad-based generalist ranger is not the answer and the resources will ultimately suffer.]
- Lilli Tichinin: Yeah. Well, as we're wrapping up, I'm curious if there's any part of your career, or anything that you worked on that really stands out to you as something you're particularly proud of, or something that you particularly enjoyed. Or that you see as sort of your biggest contribution during your career.
- Cliff Chetwin: [As for what I'm proud of, it's having been part of what I believe was the greatest generation of rangers the Service will ever have. There are some towering names from the earlier two generations, but I believe our era was the renaissance of rangers. We certainly made mistakes, but we were "masters of all" rather than "jacks of all," we could do anything that was needed. We implemented the major changes in how Americans viewed their parks and what they expected from them. I believe we are the last generation that saw rangers from the perspective of all facets of park management and I don't believe there ever will be rangers like that again. I also am proud of the many outstanding rangers that I worked with. Their dedication and professionalism made me a better ranger and whatever impact I had over my career wouldn't have been possible without them.]
- Cliff Chetwin: As far as biggest contribution, it's got to be what we did with FIREPRO. And obviously there were people that did a lot more with it than I did. [Rick Gale, Paul Broyles, Mike Warren, Steve Botti and others, for instance, were] some of the real visionaries. But I was fortunate enough to be in a position, I was in the regional position, I was Regional FMO, in a region that had some reasonable fire activity. We weren't like the Northern Rockies, but the Southwest gets a lot of fire. We changed an entire culture and perspective of the agency, for the better and for the better of the resources, I think. And I don't know that every generation

gets a chance to do that. So, I was really fortunate. [To most of the wildfire folks I was an outsider from the law enforcement community but right place, right time as far as my career went.] But FIREPRO, that's probably the biggest thing. We'll look back and see that we made a culture change.

Cliff Chetwin: The stuff we did in aviation, we made a lot of changes. There's been some backsliding. Some of the positions have gone away. But at least for that program, we did some really good stuff, and professionalized it and ran a very safe program. That was more like most Park Service programs in that they're very personality-driven, and when the personalities leave, the programs tend to diminish. The difference between what I did in aviation and what I did in fire is that fire has now become a culture, and it's beyond the personalities. Aviation, and it will always be a personality-driven entity for the Park Service.

Cliff Chetwin: So probably the most fun? Seasonal ranger. Take your horses. You go out in the back country, and you do what rangers do. And I get paid for this? And you talk to, at least any of my generation, you can ask anybody that's here at Ranger Rendezvous, what job would you go back to? Everyone will say, "Seasonal ranger." That's what rangers was about. And with a lot of responsibility for the resources, but not the managerial headaches. I think this is especially true now. A District Ranger, my first District Ranger job, I was the field ranger [as well. I was in the field a lot as Chief Ranger.] Today, a District Ranger or Chief Ranger, very, very difficult, to also be a field ranger. The bureaucracy takes so much of their time. So that part's changed. And [I think the bottom line of protecting and managing the parks,] it still gets back to that buck ranger, that field ranger, that did everything. As I mentioned before part of this problem is the increasing stove piping. I think the stove-piping of law enforcement [and other functions is in the long run a very bad thing and pulls rangers away from what rangers are meant to be.] And we're going to look back someday and say, "That was really stupid." Hopefully we can repair the damage we've done, [but still protect the resources in the meantime.]

Lilli Tichinin: Yeah.

Cliff Chetwin: [These stovepipe folks, they] wear the title of ranger, but they're not [rangers and many of them resent even being called a ranger.] Rangers do everything. And I feel very fortunate, I'm the last generation that has gotten to do that. The generation of folks here will not be given that opportunity. And that's sad, I think. I never had two days the same in 37 years. And I loved it.

Lilli Tichinin: Wonderful. Well, thank you so much.

Cliff Chetwin: Thank you.

[END OF TRACK 4]

[END OF INTERVIEW]