

National Park Service (NPS) History Collection

NPS Oral History Collection (HFCA 1817)
Harpers Ferry Center's 50th Anniversary Oral History Project



Richard Schlecht
December 19, 2019

Interview conducted by Angie Faulkner and Melinda Schmidt
Transcribed by Rev.com

This digital transcript has been edited for accessibility and compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Interview content has not been altered.

The release form for this interview is on file at the NPS History Collection.

NPS History Collection
Harpers Ferry Center
P.O. Box 50
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
HFC_Archivist@nps.gov

START OF RECORDING

Angie Faulkner: 00:00:01 Hi. This is Angie Faulkner, and today is December 19th, 2019. Melinda Schmidt and I are interviewing Richard Schlecht, an artist here in Frederick, Maryland, at his home with Harriet, and we're ready to start. How about you?

R. Schlecht: 00:00:18 I'm ready to start when you are.

Angie Faulkner: 00:00:20 Okay. Well, we'd like to know you. Tell us a little bit about yourself. Where were you born and where did you grow up, and what schools did you go to?

R. Schlecht: 00:00:29 Oh. Wow, you want to go way--I'm not sure I remember that. Dallas, Texas is where I was born. Yeah, and I grew up in Denver though. This was during the war.

Angie Faulkner: 00:00:41 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:00:41 So, we ended up in Denver.

Angie Faulkner: 00:00:44 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:00:44 Yeah. And I went to school there.

Angie Faulkner: 00:00:46 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:00:47 Yeah. And then when I got into the army, I got stationed out here, and I've been out in this area ever since.

Angie Faulkner: 00:00:53 And when was that?

R. Schlecht: 00:00:57 That would have been 1963.

Angie Faulkner: 00:01:00 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:01:01 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:01:01 And so the army sent you out east--

R. Schlecht: 00:01:04 To Fort Belvoir.

Angie Faulkner: 00:01:05 And where is that?

R. Schlecht: 00:01:06 In Virginia, Northern Virginia.

Angie Faulkner: 00:01:08 Okay--

R. Schlecht: 00:01:08 Down south of Alexandria. Yeah, yeah--

Angie Faulkner: 00:01:11 And what did you do in the army?

R. Schlecht: 00:01:12 Oh, as little as possible.

Angie Faulkner: 00:01:17 It's going to be a hoot.

R. Schlecht: 00:01:17 I was supposed to be a photographer, but they didn't have any photography things open, so I got, naturally, seconded off as a word person; an editor and everything, and went to work for a virtually illiterate sergeant who was running a base newspaper.

Angie Faulkner: 00:01:41 Oh, my goodness. Wow--

R. Schlecht: 00:01:44 And a friend of mine and I, who also worked there, kept this guy out of trouble with the English language and things. [crosstalk] and everything.

Angie Faulkner: 00:01:53 So you moved up fast in the army then, I guess, after that.

R. Schlecht: 00:01:56 Well, not really. One doesn't move up fast in the army.

Angie Faulkner: 00:02:01 Did you go to school for your artwork, for--

R. Schlecht: 00:02:03 No, I didn't. Totally self-taught.

Angie Faulkner: 00:02:06 Oh, really?

R. Schlecht: 00:02:07 Yeah. Yeah, my major was journalism.

Angie Faulkner: 00:02:10 Really?

R. Schlecht: 00:02:10 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:02:12 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:02:12 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:02:13 Well, when did you--Jane told me that she heard you learned to draw in the army. Is that true?

R. Schlecht: 00:02:18 Yeah, I did. It's a long story, it's a very long and involved story--

Angie Faulkner: 00:02:22 We've got 20-something hours on here.

R. Schlecht: 00:02:24 Okay. Well, I'll take up 19 of those.

Angie Faulkner: 00:02:27 Okay. You tell me.

R. Schlecht: 00:02:31 The thing with the illiterate sergeant on the base newspaper wasn't really working out very well, but next door to us, there was a unit that was attached to one of the regiments there, and they had a graphics department. And I was always kind of interested in things like that, and I knew a couple of the guys who worked over there.

R. Schlecht: 00:02:56 So, I would start filling in over there in my spare time, and everything, and getting acquainted with stuff like that, and I got well enough acquainted so that when the guy in charge of that unit quit, he was being discharged, I volunteered for it and we pulled a few strings in the base personnel department, and got me switched over there, and to the graphics department.

R. Schlecht: 00:03:26 And then they learned that I could draw a little bit and stuff, so one thing led to another, and da-da-da-dum, and that's how that ended up.

Angie Faulkner: 00:03:35 Yeah. What kinds of things did you make for that department?

R. Schlecht: 00:03:38 I don't even remember. Mostly it was just graphics, what they called view graphs. They had you paste up a bunch of stuff and you photograph it, and it's very crude.

Angie Faulkner: 00:03:48 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:03:51 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:03:51 Interesting.

R. Schlecht: 00:03:51 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:03:52 So is that when you knew you were going to be an artist, or make your living as an artist?

- R. Schlecht: 00:03:59 Well, I was moonlighting and I had moonlighted during that period of time for some graphics shops down in DC. A guy named Johnny Leese had a place down there.
- R. Schlecht: 00:04:12 Every night, a whole bunch of freelancers would come in there, and it was a mill. Just a factory, and he'd get in there, and they've got an order for 800 slides for the Department of Defense or something like that, showing how all of our modern equipment is going to whip the hell out of the Vietnamese.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:04:32 Really? Wow, so like propaganda?
- R. Schlecht: 00:04:34 Yeah.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:04:35 Okay.
- R. Schlecht: 00:04:35 Yeah--
- Angie Faulkner: 00:04:35 Wow.
- R. Schlecht: 00:04:36 For the Department of Defense and everything, which was heavily engaged in propaganda of that sort.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:04:42 Did you enjoy it?
- R. Schlecht: 00:04:44 Well, yeah, I learned a lot.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:04:44 Okay--
- R. Schlecht: 00:04:46 Yeah, and I learned some stuff from guys who had been doing it longer than I had and everything, and that's where I got my start, doing that sort of thing.
- R. Schlecht: 00:04:56 When I got out of the army, then I went to work for a graphics shop in D.C., and worked for a couple of people in D.C. for a while.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:05:05 Okay--
- R. Schlecht: 00:05:05 And then went on my own eventually.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:05:07 So what was your first paid commercial job? Out of the army.

- R. Schlecht: 00:05:14 Oh, I don't remember. I went to work for an outfit called Creative Arts, who was down on--they were down on 7th and 8th Street, I think in D.C., and it was a big operation; probably 50 or 60 people that worked there, and they did all kinds of graphics.
- R. Schlecht: 00:05:35 They did movies, they did--the guy in the movie shop was a crazy eastern European guy named Bela Orbon, who was mad as a hatter, and really good.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:05:46 He--
- R. Schlecht: 00:05:49 And so--and there were all kinds of people down there, making graphics, again, for the Department of Defense. I mean, it's Washington, D.C. It's the only game in town.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:06:00 Yeah.
- R. Schlecht: 00:06:01 You know, so we got to [crosstalk]--
- M. Schmidt: 00:06:03 I'm sorry to interrupt you. It's amazing that the Department of Defense would be so into the whole publication graphic/image art thing.
- R. Schlecht: 00:06:12 I don't know if they still are or not. Probably not. Yeah. I mean, it's all Twitter now, isn't it?
- Angie Faulkner: 00:06:20 I guess. I'm not on that.
- R. Schlecht: 00:06:22 Me either.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:06:24 I think of them now as not very creative. Like would you say it was creative art that was being done at that point for them?
- R. Schlecht: 00:06:32 That was the name of the company that did, but I would put creative in quotes.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:06:36 Right. Yeah. So you didn't really consider it creative? It was just propaganda.
- R. Schlecht: 00:06:43 It was propaganda, yeah.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:06:45 Did you have any artistic influences? Did anybody out there really--

R. Schlecht: 00:06:50 Well, just a minute, let me go back to the propaganda thing and correct myself a little bit.

R. Schlecht: 00:06:55 Because most of the stuff that we did was for a procurement agency in the Department of Defense, and what they were doing, they were buying hardware and systems, and stuff like that. They needed to convince Congress to pony-up the money for these systems that they wanted to buy, so what we were doing was propaganda aimed at Congress.

Angie Faulkner: 00:07:25 Wow.

R. Schlecht: 00:07:25 Okay? So you wow all the Congress guys on the Appropriations Committee and the Armed Services Committee with all these slides that we produce. You know, little Vietnamese running around helplessly being chased by all of our very sophisticated M1 tanks and things like that, and Vietnam was going to be a cake-walk.

Angie Faulkner: 00:07:47 Oh, wow. [Crosstalk].

R. Schlecht: 00:07:50 Vietnam wasn't a cake-walk.

Angie Faulkner: 00:07:54 No, it wasn't. It was a quagmire--

R. Schlecht: 00:07:55 In spite of our efforts.

Angie Faulkner: 00:07:57 Right. Wow, that's an interesting view. I had no idea. So were there any artists out there that influenced your work?

R. Schlecht: 00:08:08 All the guys that I worked with. I mean, I can't really say how, but it's osmosis, you know, one thing just--things rub off on other people and da-dum, but, no, not really.

Angie Faulkner: 00:08:20 Okay. Well, you've always been able to just draw on-the-fly, which is one of your biggest selling points, and I always used to sell a justification for using Richard Schlecht.

R. Schlecht: 00:08:32 And thereby hangs a tale, because we get into Vince Gleason.

Angie Faulkner: 00:08:35 Oh, okay--

R. Schlecht: 00:08:37 Which was one of the great marathon things that we did there. I don't know if you're ready for that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:08:43 Well, I do have a question about that from Wade [Myers].

R. Schlecht: 00:08:47 Okay--

Angie Faulkner: 00:08:47 He said how are you able to produce such an incredible body of finished work for the Columbus Quincentennial wall chart in such a short period of time?

R. Schlecht: 00:08:55 That was Vince Gleason.

Angie Faulkner: 00:08:58 So he was the driver--

R. Schlecht: 00:08:58 --who was a total institution there. Yeah, and everybody had their own opinions about Vince. Vince and I always worked together very well and everything, but he was a character.

Angie Faulkner: 00:09:08 Yes.

R. Schlecht: 00:09:10 And everything. But he got things done. You know? "Heath! Heath! Get in here and do this!" Heath Pemberton, his sidekick.

Angie Faulkner: 00:09:17 Yeah I remember him--

R. Schlecht: 00:09:17 Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, and Nick Kirilloff who's there at that time, and we all collaborated on stuff like this, but Vince would lock us in one of the conference rooms there, and put up a whiteboard, and then I would sit there and he'd start spouting stuff, and drawing me some stuff, and we'd just sit there and scribble.

R. Schlecht: 00:09:39 I mean, these--I don't have any of that stuff left and everything, but it was just total scribbles, but it would go up on the wall and become a storyboard for this thing, and we did a lot of work on that, that big poster and everything, which turned out to be a non-starter, because that was right about the time that Columbus was sort of a persona non grata in the world of history in the United States.

Angie Faulkner: 00:10:05 That's right--

R. Schlecht: 00:10:05 And still is.

Angie Faulkner: 00:10:07 We're calling it Indigenous People's Day now, right?

R. Schlecht: 00:10:09 Yeah, something like that, exactly.

Angie Faulkner: 00:10:12 Oh, that's interesting. I had no idea he would just put you on lockdown--

R. Schlecht: 00:10:15 Oh, yeah, we'd go four or five hours in there. And everybody's tongues were hanging out by the time we were finished, but Vince was a driver.

Angie Faulkner: 00:10:26 Yes, he was.

R. Schlecht: 00:10:27 He really was, but he got a lot of stuff done and that place ran--from an outsider's standpoint, it seemed to run very well and everything in those days.

Angie Faulkner: 00:10:38 Because if you were an insider, you were terrified.

Angie Faulkner: 00:10:42 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:10:42 Well, and therefore, you did what you were supposed to do out of total terror. Exactly.

Angie Faulkner: 00:10:47 Yep. He was a character, wasn't he?

R. Schlecht: 00:10:48 He was a total character, and he was all in or all out of things. You know, after he had a heart attack and everything, we went out to lunch--Heath and Vince and I would go out to lunch now and again and everything, at some of the great gourmet places around Harpers Ferry.

Angie Faulkner: 00:11:07 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:11:09 But Heath--Vince would not touch anything with fat in it. He wouldn't touch any fat. If it had fat in it, in the ingredients, he wouldn't touch it and everything, and I think when Vince died, he probably died from the lack of amino acids.

Angie Faulkner: 00:11:30 Maybe. But you worked a lot with him and--

R. Schlecht: 00:11:34 Oh, yeah. [Crosstalk]--

Angie Faulkner: 00:11:34 I remember a trip that you guys took to San Juan and you guys basically produced--

R. Schlecht: 00:11:39 Oh, the San Juan trip was incredible. Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:11:42 [Crosstalk] Tell us about that.

R. Schlecht: 00:11:42 And we stayed--Oh, I don't know that I remember that much about it, but Heath Pemberton was there, and Vince and I, and we did the whole tour of San Juan because we were doing the Fortaleza and a couple of other things down there, but mainly it was the city of San Juan.

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:00 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

R. Schlecht: 00:12:03 And we were staying in an old convent, that I think is still there, the convent--

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:06 Wow--

R. Schlecht: 00:12:06 --that had been converted into a hotel-like arrangement and everything. And we were down there for four or five days--

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:18 Okay--

R. Schlecht: 00:12:19 I think. Those were the days when you could do things like that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:21 Right--

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:21 Well, he really trusted you then, and he knew you were going to be able to produce. What was your first job with the Park Service?

R. Schlecht: 00:12:28 My first job at the Park Service was with--it was working on Fort Clatsop with Dave McLean.

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:35 Oh.

R. Schlecht: 00:12:37 Who lives just a few blocks up here in Frederick--

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:39 Oh, really?

R. Schlecht: 00:12:40 Yeah, I see him now and again.

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:41 Oh, good--

R. Schlecht: 00:12:42 Yeah. And he was my first contact there.

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:45 I had no idea. Was he in Historic Furnishings then? No, he was Exhibits, sorry--

Angie Faulkner: 00:12:52 Exhibits, yeah--

R. Schlecht: 00:12:53 Yeah, he was Exhibits, and I can remember driving back-and-forth on Route 340 with him, which is fairly new in those days.

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:02 Right--

R. Schlecht: 00:13:02 His little silver Porsche.

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:04 Wow--

R. Schlecht: 00:13:05 Back-and-forth to Frederick.

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:06 Amazing.

R. Schlecht: 00:13:06 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:07 So that was your first job, Fort Clatsop with Dave--

R. Schlecht: 00:13:12 Yeah, Fort Clatsop, and that was a big mural; we did a painting that became a big mural.

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:16 And what was the subject of it?

R. Schlecht: 00:13:16 Fort Clatsop.

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:16 But I mean, their characters are people, right?

R. Schlecht: 00:13:26 Well, it was one of those things that I do, the semi-aerial view, looking down at a 30 degree angle at it, just to show the surrounding area.

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:35 You had that amazing ability to think like a drone.

R. Schlecht: 00:13:40 Yeah. Well, yeah. Yeah. Before drones ever--

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:43 Before drones existed.

R. Schlecht: 00:13:45 Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:13:46 Yeah, that's--I know that's why we always try to use you, is because you can just--you can come up with--you're

educated in the uniforms, or the hair styles, or the clothing or--

- R. Schlecht: 00:13:56 Yeah.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:13:57 All kinds of other things that are all involved in making a piece look like it's authentic and historic, and accurate, and you have all that going on. How did you learn all that? Or did you just pick up--
- R. Schlecht: 00:14:07 Well, we used to, of course, have researchers that would come up with material. Now, we've got Google, and Google Images and things like that, which takes a lot of that, the heat off of stuff like that, and makes it a lot easier.
- R. Schlecht: 00:14:23 And if I'm doing a job, I do a lot of searching on Google, and collect a whole folder full of images and stuff that I can work with them, and if I can't find them, then I'll go to somebody like Maryland Historical Society, or somebody like that, to find out more details about stuff, but the image gathering is much more streamlined today than it used to be.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:14:48 So you used to enlist a researcher for you to find out about certain areas?
- R. Schlecht: 00:14:52 I wouldn't. Usually one would be provided by whatever client.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:14:56 Okay.
- R. Schlecht: 00:14:56 Yeah. But I have done it on my own too.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:15:00 Okay. Well, you retained a lot, it sounds like. I mean, you always seem to have the knowledge that we're looking for.
- R. Schlecht: 00:15:07 Yeah. Or convince you that I do.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:15:13 Yes, and you're very convincing. So do you have a lot of outside jobs these days? Do you take on a lot of work?
- R. Schlecht: 00:15:22 Yeah, I'm working--well, you remember David Guiney?
- Angie Faulkner: 00:15:27 I do.

R. Schlecht: 00:15:28 Yeah. Well, he lives not far away, and he and I have collaborated on a bunch of things since he retired.

Angie Faulkner: 00:15:37 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:15:38 And mostly local history.

Angie Faulkner: 00:15:39 Okay--

R. Schlecht: 00:15:39 Things like that. Some stuff about the Mason–Dixon line, some stuff on the historical Route 40, the national road, which is ongoing and everything, so he and I--

R. Schlecht: 00:15:54 He was one of the first guys, the really early people that I worked with at the Park Service, that we did the White Bird thing out in Oregon.

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:02 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

R. Schlecht: 00:16:03 And Washington State, the Nez Perce thing, and White Bird Battlefield.

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:10 Right, right--

R. Schlecht: 00:16:11 Yeah. And we worked very well together on that, and we always have worked really well, so I'm glad he's still around.

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:18 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:16:19 And we collaborate on a number of things.

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:21 Is he still working for Park Service institutions? No? He's--

R. Schlecht: 00:16:25 No, he's moved on.

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:27 Okay--

R. Schlecht: 00:16:27 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:29 He did have an office there in Harpers Ferry for a while, where he would--

R. Schlecht: 00:16:32 He did, and I think he's--that's kind of changed now, but I'm not really quite sure; I haven't been in touch with him recently.

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:38 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:16:39 But I think he's living down in Frederick now.

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:43 Oh, okay. Well, I met his son at the vet--

R. Schlecht: 00:16:46 Oh, really?

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:47 In the summertime, yeah, this year.

R. Schlecht: 00:16:48 Really?

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:49 Yeah, he said his name was such-and-such Guiney, and I sat there for a while; I wasn't sure if I was going to say anything, and then I finally asked him, he said, "Yeah, that's my dad."

R. Schlecht: 00:16:55 Yeah, that's not a common name, so--

Angie Faulkner: 00:16:58 No.

R. Schlecht: 00:16:59 That's great.

Angie Faulkner: 00:17:00 So Fort Clatsop, and that was--

R. Schlecht: 00:17:03 He was one of these guys that you always knew exactly where you were with him. He could snow you with detail, and stuff, and to the point where I don't want to know all of this and everything.

R. Schlecht: 00:17:16 However, it's all there, it's all in black and white, it's all recorded, it's organized, and you might get a little bored with it, but it's a great resource.

Angie Faulkner: 00:17:26 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:17:27 And everything, so he was really good at things like--is really good at things like that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:17:33 Do you want to tell us who else you worked with in the Park service, or would you like to talk about other entities before we get into that? Like National Geographic and other--

R. Schlecht: 00:17:42 Oh, I did tons of work for National Geographic. [Crosstalk] while they were still using illustrators.

Angie Faulkner: 00:17:50 Yeah. Right. Well, what do you remember--

R. Schlecht: 00:17:51 Before they became a corporation.

Angie Faulkner: 00:17:51 And that's how you see them today?

R. Schlecht: 00:17:52 Yeah, it's a corporation. Yeah. It's going the direction of Disney, I think.

Angie Faulkner: 00:18:02 They're not about education and--

R. Schlecht: 00:18:04 Oh, they are kind of, but it's just--there's nothing personal about it anymore. That it used to be personal.

Angie Faulkner: 00:18:10 Well, how do you mean?

R. Schlecht: 00:18:12 Well, you used to actually work with people. And be friends with people, and drink with people and stuff like that and everything, and it's not like that anymore. You have to go through the personnel department and all kinds of stuff like that, and of course I don't know a soul there anymore.

Angie Faulkner: 00:18:30 Yeah--

Angie Faulkner: 00:18:30 Okay. I was going to say, do you remember anybody? Because I think I remember Michael Hampshire telling me about a woman named Charlotte who worked there. Doesn't ring a bell--

R. Schlecht: 00:18:40 Don't remember anybody like that. I knew Howard Payne who ran the illustrations thing.

Angie Faulkner: 00:18:45 [Crosstalk].

R. Schlecht: 00:18:47 And he knew everybody.

Angie Faulkner: 00:18:48 Jane Delilio's husband.

R. Schlecht: 00:18:50 Yeah. Right.

Angie Faulkner: 00:18:51 Who's this? They--

R. Schlecht: 00:18:52 Jane Delilio, yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:18:54 She owned Ice House Graphics in Upperville, Virginia.

R. Schlecht: 00:18:58 No, it was in--

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:01 Delaplane.

R. Schlecht: 00:19:02 Delaplane, right.

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:03 Delaplane. Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:19:04 Yeah--

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:05 They lectured at Shepherd when I was a student there.

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:07 Okay.

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:08 Howard Payne and Jane Delilio and Ice House Graphics.

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:12 And they--okay, so they did a lot of work with the Park Service, or just National Geographic?

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:18 I think Geographic.

R. Schlecht: 00:19:19 Yeah, they didn't work with Park Service, that I know of anyway.

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:23 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:19:24 But Howard ran the illustrations thing there, and I go way back with Harry, with him at National Geographic.

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:31 Okay. What were some of the projects you worked on for them?

R. Schlecht: 00:19:36 Gee. Red Bay in Labrador.

Angie Faulkner: 00:19:44 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:19:44 And it used to be that Geographic was interested in things that had an archeological thing and the history aspect of it, the people, the history of it, rather than just doing it with documents or artifacts or things, let's have a scene of people doing things and everything, and I got involved in stuff like that and everything, and Red Bay was one of those.

- R. Schlecht: 00:20:07 And we went up there. Not Howard and I, but my art director at the time, whose name I can't remember at the moment, but we were diving on shipwrecks up there.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:20:20 Oh, wow, neat--
- R. Schlecht: 00:20:21 Yeah, in arctic water in wetsuits.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:20:24 Oh, my.
- R. Schlecht: 00:20:24 Oh, God--
- Angie Faulkner: 00:20:25 That's awesome. Wow, but that's what your specialty is, is making these historic places look like they're populated and alive.
- R. Schlecht: 00:20:33 Yeah, and that was one of the good ones, that we got to do a lot of stuff like that and everything, and in those days, they just--they sort of let us have a fresh, free hand at it, and not too many pre-conceived notions; "let's just see what you do" and everything, and that was kind of fun.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:20:54 That's cool--
- R. Schlecht: 00:20:54 Any other job was--another Columbus era thing, where in 1991, 1992 was coming up the next year, and that was going to be the anniversary of--one of the anniversaries of Columbus discovery, in quotes, America and everything, so Geographic wanted to do a--devoted a whole issue to that.
- R. Schlecht: 00:21:23 And so the guy I was working with then, that wasn't Howard Payne, that would have been Allan Carroll, who was fairly hands-off. He just said, "Do it. Here are the general outlines, just do it."
- R. Schlecht: 00:21:42 And this researcher and I, a good friend of mine, Karen Gibbs and I made three or four trips out to the West Coast and various other places, to put things together, and we just sort of made it up, and he said, "Fine", and it was one of the best things I ever did. One of the best things I ever, ever, ever accomplished.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:22:03 Now I really want to see it.
- R. Schlecht: 00:22:04 What's that?

Angie Faulkner: 00:22:04 I really want to see it.

R. Schlecht: 00:22:07 I've got a copy of it somewhere.

Angie Faulkner: 00:22:09 Maybe you could share it with me some time.

R. Schlecht: 00:22:11 Yeah, yeah, yeah. And--

Angie Faulkner: 00:22:12 Hey, baby. [Addressed to Schlecht's dog Sadie.]

R. Schlecht: 00:22:17 Those were the good old days. Now it's just--it's different.

Angie Faulkner: 00:22:21 How is it different?

R. Schlecht: 00:22:25 Oh, I don't even know anymore, because I don't work--I haven't worked there for years now.

Angie Faulkner: 00:22:29 Oh, I see. You mean National Geographic--

R. Schlecht: 00:22:30 Yeah, National Geographic.

Angie Faulkner: 00:22:30 I see--

R. Schlecht: 00:22:31 Yeah, yeah--

Angie Faulkner: 00:22:33 But your artwork has allowed you to have some experiences, and travel to some really crazy places--

R. Schlecht: 00:22:39 Oh, yeah, and get in all kinds of trouble, and get back out again.

Angie Faulkner: 00:22:43 What an amazing way to let your life flow though.

R. Schlecht: 00:22:46 Yeah. It was great. Like a whole month in Mexico in the back woods, up in the mountains of the Sierra Madre, eastern Sierra Madre, there in Veracruz State.

Angie Faulkner: 00:23:02 Doing what?

R. Schlecht: 00:23:04 Background. Just background. They would send you—
“Here, just go do some background, do some sketches and everything.” I've got a whole book of sketches that I did of
-

R. Schlecht: 00:23:14 I mean, these people, they didn't even speak Spanish, they spoke Nahuatl and everything. We had our Spanish guys

that were with us, had to have interpreters to speak to the Indian guys, and this was--we were doing Indian culture before--you know, Columbus again, this sort of thing, the Mayan culture down there.

R. Schlecht: 00:23:39 And we were sleeping in--there were like 15 people along with us, plus our Mexican guys who helped rig up the expedition and carry stuff, and do things like that. We had mules, we were on mule trails.

Angie Faulkner: 00:23:57 How neat.

R. Schlecht: 00:23:58 And you'd go in, you'd get all set up. It was being guided by this guy from the University of Florida, Jeffrey Wilkinson, who came up with this idea of stitching all this stuff together.

R. Schlecht: 00:24:16 And he would arrange for things, it was all pre-arranged. We'd drop into a village and there was a place in the presidencia, the town hall, and they would park all of us in there for three/two days, or whatever, or overnight, or whenever and everything. We'd set up our cooking stuff and everything, and--

Angie Faulkner: 00:24:41 So good memories?

R. Schlecht: 00:24:48 Oh, yeah. I'm just remembering all kinds of stuff. Like the village women, and there was one village we stayed in, and we stayed--there was a well where you got water, that you dipped water in the well and brought it up to eat, use it and everything.

R. Schlecht: 00:25:08 And there was--we were down near the well and there was all kinds of activity down there, because all the women were curious as hell, and they were coming down to get water, even if they didn't need it, to look at the Yankees.

Angie Faulkner: 00:25:21 The Yankees.

R. Schlecht: 00:25:24 They're--

Angie Faulkner: 00:25:24 And what were they like? How did they dress?

R. Schlecht: 00:25:28 Oh, very traditional stuff, in just little shawls and sashes--

Angie Faulkner: 00:25:34 Were they colorful?

R. Schlecht: 00:25:36 Some of it was, yeah, and they were all about this high.

Angie Faulkner: 00:25:39 Oh--

R. Schlecht: 00:25:39 You know--

Angie Faulkner: 00:25:40 That's your Mayan culture, I guess, the shortness--

R. Schlecht: 00:25:43 Oh, yeah, very short and very stocky, and very powerful. I mean, they could go up and down hills that we'd stall out on for sure.

Angie Faulkner: 00:25:50 Yeah. That's impressive--

R. Schlecht: 00:25:52 Our Mexican guys that came up with us from down near the coast, we'd be struggling up these trails, in mud and stuff, and huffing and puffing--

Angie Faulkner: 00:26:02 Because of the elevation?

R. Schlecht: 00:26:03 And everything, and our big boots and everything, and everybody was kitted out in these big boots, and they would collect mud like crazy, and each boot would end up weighing 14 pounds.

Angie Faulkner: 00:26:14 Oh, man.

R. Schlecht: 00:26:15 And our guys, our Mexican guys, they just had street shoes on. They weren't bothered a bit by any of the stuff, they're up and down hills just like this--

Angie Faulkner: 00:26:24 Really?

R. Schlecht: 00:26:24 And they used to laugh at us.

Angie Faulkner: 00:26:29 That's an interesting way to exhibit it, a way to experience, I guess, all that and then--

R. Schlecht: 00:26:34 Well, it really put you into it. You know, it's amazing, you come by a place on a trail between two villages, and there's a little shrine in there, and, oh, that's where so-and-so was murdered by the guys from the next village over there, and we murdered some of their people. This xenophobia that existed between villages down there.

Angie Faulkner: 00:26:59 And they welcomed you?

R. Schlecht: 00:27:03 Yeah, because we were extranjeros, you know--

Angie Faulkner: 00:27:06 What does that mean?

R. Schlecht: 00:27:07 Strangers.

Angie Faulkner: 00:27:08 Oh--

R. Schlecht: 00:27:08 Foreigners.

Angie Faulkner: 00:27:09 Oh, okay, so you were sort of exotic to them.

R. Schlecht: 00:27:13 Yeah, we were exotic to them, so they were all very curious, but nevertheless, we were very careful. And one of our guys in there, who was a lawyer from Florida, was packing heat. It wasn't exhibited or anything, but he had it--

Angie Faulkner: 00:27:30 Just in case.

R. Schlecht: 00:27:31 Just in case, yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:27:33 Wow.

R. Schlecht: 00:27:33 Yeah. But nothing ever happened.

Angie Faulkner: 00:27:36 So what was the--what was your role in the end result of this trip? What did you produce as a result--

R. Schlecht: 00:27:46 We produced not really what I wanted to produce because of the editorial requirements, but just showing village structures and things like that, and the odd reconstructed city and et cetera, et cetera.

R. Schlecht: 00:28:04 Nothing--the thing really never developed the way it had been envisioned in the first place, but I still had sketches and everything, in this little sketchbook that I carried like this.

Angie Faulkner: 00:28:16 Oh, my gosh, that tiny?

R. Schlecht: 00:28:17 And everything--yeah, because you were limited in what you could carry.

Angie Faulkner: 00:28:21 Yeah—wow.

- Angie Faulkner: 00:28:23 But what a way to do that though, to send people out to actually experience the whole thing, to record it and then--
- R. Schlecht: 00:28:29 Oh, yeah, those are the good old days [crosstalk] and that never happens now.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:28:32 And it doesn't--didn't have to be fruitful for anything. You know, it didn't have to produce something.
- R. Schlecht: 00:28:38 Right, and we had editors there who were--like Bill Graves, who was a history buff, very much into the day-to-day kind of things that would happen, and adventure and things like that, and he--in fact, he ended up buying one of my paintings that I did for the magazine, but they were hands-on with stuff like that. And that doesn't happen anymore.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:29:14 No, it doesn't. Everything's really micro-managed, isn't it?
- R. Schlecht: 00:29:16 Yeah, it's micro-managed with preconception, preconceived ideas.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:29:23 Why do you think that is?
- R. Schlecht: 00:29:26 Corporate structure, I don't know.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:29:28 Yeah. Funding.
- R. Schlecht: 00:29:30 Well, and Geographic used to be just a private fiefdom. You know, Gilbert Grosvenor, and people like that, and it was very hands-on. They had--
- R. Schlecht: 00:29:44 I mean, Dr. Grosvenor, Melville Grosvenor, Gilbert's son, who I met once or twice, but there were things, like he would ride up on the elevator every day to his office, instead of taking the private elevator, he'd go up with the troops, and talk to the girls.
- R. Schlecht: 00:30:02 And he'd go have lunch in the grunts lunchroom, not the big wood paneling executive suite and everything, he'd be sitting in the other place at a big table with maybe six or seven of the girls around, and various other people too, and everything, but he liked to mix it up, and he was part of the fabric of this.
- R. Schlecht: 00:30:26 And, "Well, boys, what do you think about this?" He'd say to an elevator full of people. "What if we put Louis Martin

on his boat, and went to the Caribbean and retraced some of Columbus's stuff?"

- Angie Faulkner: 00:30:45 Wow--
- R. Schlecht: 00:30:50 You know, things like that would happen.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:30:51 That's thinking big.
- R. Schlecht: 00:30:52 Yeah. Yeah. And things like that would happen, and they had all these people, that there were all kinds of stories about these legendary people. You know, like Louis Martin in the South Pacific.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:31:00 Okay.
- R. Schlecht: 00:31:01 Who was staying way too long and they knew what he was doing. Dr. Grosvenor knew what he was doing, and he was down there having a great time with all the wahines, and stuff like that, and he hadn't come home and he hadn't come home, and the way they solved the problem was that he sent him a telegraph, or a telex down there, saying that we're going to--"I know you're down there, I know you're missing your wife. We're going to send her down." He was back in a week or two.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:31:37 Oh, my god, it's the age of Mad Men.
- R. Schlecht: 00:31:39 Yeah, well, it was individuals. You know, really individuals, not people going along with corporate templates.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:31:47 It was people who had visions and they were making it happen--
- R. Schlecht: 00:31:54 Yeah, and it was human.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:31:54 Okay.
- R. Schlecht: 00:31:54 Yeah.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:31:54 That sounds incredible, like an incredible experience.
- R. Schlecht: 00:31:56 Oh, yeah, it was great. Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:31:59 Did you work for anybody else that you can think of? Besides the Park Service and National Geographic, that was--

R. Schlecht: 00:32:00 That was pretty much it.

Angie Faulkner: 00:32:00 That's a lot--

R. Schlecht: 00:32:07 You know, there was the odd client in there now and again, but not much, not much, because I was pretty busy with all that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:32:13 You sound like you were busy.

R. Schlecht: 00:32:14 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:32:16 Did you ever exhibit your art during that time? Show your work in private galleries--

R. Schlecht: 00:32:20 Geographic had a nice show of Geographic art down at the main building in D.C., and I had a bunch of stuff in that. Yeah, I used to show art down in a couple galleries, one in D.C. And my problem is now that all of my gallery people have died, and I'm sort of the last man standing. I've got one other contemporary who's still around, but he's outgrown the gallery scene, and that's changed too, so nobody does that anymore, I don't--

Angie Faulkner: 00:32:54 How has that changed?

R. Schlecht: 00:32:59 Well, it's too expensive to show in a gallery, for one thing. They take too much.

Angie Faulkner: 00:33:07 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:33:07 50%.

Angie Faulkner: 00:33:09 Oh, my.

R. Schlecht: 00:33:09 You know, no way.

Angie Faulkner: 00:33:11 [Crosstalk].

R. Schlecht: 00:33:12 And then the whole thing is just starting to change, like there's a lot more online stuff now. A lot of people sell

online, I haven't figured that one out and I don't want to mess with it.

- Angie Faulkner: 00:33:23 Not interested?
- R. Schlecht: 00:33:24 No.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:33:24 Not interested in Etsy and Pinterest and all that?
- R. Schlecht: 00:33:27 No.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:33:29 Okay. You keep your tweets, huh?
- R. Schlecht: 00:33:34 Yeah. There you go. Yeah. But it's--yeah, the gallery scene is just--it's really hard to run an art gallery these days too. Harriet's got our gallery here in town, she's a main member of that, and helps found it and everything, and it's a tough slog for these people.
- R. Schlecht: 00:33:54 You know, just to pay the utilities, and get somebody to sit in the gallery, and it used to be that you had a gallery director. I don't know why it was so much easier then, but they would sell your work, and people would come in and they'd talk to people, and promote your work. And everything, that doesn't--less and less does that happen these days.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:34:23 So now it's up to the artist to really promote themselves--
- R. Schlecht: 00:34:25 Yeah, pretty much, and I was never really much good at that.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:34:30 Yeah? Yeah, but your work speaks for itself.
- R. Schlecht: 00:34:34 Yeah, but it's got to be seen, and that's the problem.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:34:37 That's true. I've told you that when I wrote the justification for your contract to do some artwork for Colonial, that I looked at our database, and you had 420 individual pieces--
- R. Schlecht: 00:34:50 I know--
- Angie Faulkner: 00:34:50 Just for the Park Service. [Crosstalk].
- R. Schlecht: 00:34:54 Yeah.

M. Schmidt: 00:34:54 Harpers Ferry Center.

Angie Faulkner: 00:34:55 And that's astronomical.

R. Schlecht: 00:34:57 Well, I feel like--I sort of feel like the 2000-year-old man. You know, because I've been at the Park Service longer than anybody else I know at the Park Service.

Angie Faulkner: 00:35:09 That's true.

R. Schlecht: 00:35:11 So, I'm Mel Brooks, the 2000-year-old man.

Angie Faulkner: 00:35:16 Well, what was your experience when you first started working with Harpers Ferry Center? What was the culture like then?

R. Schlecht: 00:35:27 Well--

Angie Faulkner: 00:35:28 I mean, you just described National Geographic as being sort of big thinkers, and not afraid to spend some money, and not afraid to--

R. Schlecht: 00:35:34 Right--

Angie Faulkner: 00:35:35 Spin your wheels a little bit, if you have to. Was the Park Service like that, or Harpers Ferry Center like that?

R. Schlecht: 00:35:39 No, it really wasn't like that, but it was much more freewheeling in those days, when Vince Gleason was running it. I mean, he was the guy who got them moved up to Harpers Ferry in the first place, because they used to be down in the Interior Department in D.C., and he wasn't buying that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:35:56 Yeah--

R. Schlecht: 00:35:56 That was too close to everything, so I think he, from what I've heard, he was very instrumental--

Angie Faulkner: 00:36:04 Oh, yeah, that's what I heard from Linda Meyers when I did her interview.

R. Schlecht: 00:36:07 Okay. Well, they kind of leave you alone a little bit.

Angie Faulkner: 00:36:14 And let you--

R. Schlecht: 00:36:15 And let you do stuff and everything. Again, working with an individual like David McLean, who just was and is a great guy to work with. And we just did it, and that was fine, they looked at it, "That's fine. Good, let's go with it." And we did the Harpers Ferry, not with him. I forget who was running when we did the Harpers Ferry unigrid. [Crosstalk]--

Angie Faulkner: 00:36:46 Remember the old Harpers Ferry unigrid--all the figures on it--

Angie Faulkner: 00:36:49 Yeah, all the figures--illustration of town.

Angie Faulkner: 00:36:49 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

R. Schlecht: 00:36:53 Yeah, and that was kind of a nice project.

Angie Faulkner: 00:36:55 And who was that with?

R. Schlecht: 00:36:55 I can't remember.

Angie Faulkner: 00:36:58 Well, was it in our office?

R. Schlecht: 00:36:59 Yeah, it was out of the office, yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:01 Bruce Hopkins, or Phil Musselwhite?

R. Schlecht: 00:37:05 Might have been Phil.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:06 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

R. Schlecht: 00:37:07 Might have been Phil. Yeah, I forgot about Phil, that's great. Yeah, nice guy.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:10 Yeah?

R. Schlecht: 00:37:11 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:11 He retired recently.

R. Schlecht: 00:37:12 Yeah, I heard that he had.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:15 Well, he just had another child, right? Well, he had a first child with his second wife.

R. Schlecht: 00:37:28 Oh, okay. Good, good. So he's--he used to live in Shepherdstown, didn't he?

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:28 Yes, that's where his family still lives.

R. Schlecht: 00:37:30 Okay.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:31 Or they're right across the river, actually, I think in Sharpsburg.

R. Schlecht: 00:37:35 Okay.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:35 He has three daughters.

R. Schlecht: 00:37:36 Good.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:37 And then--and now he has a son.

R. Schlecht: 00:37:40 Great.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:41 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:42 Yeah, who else do you remember from Harpers Ferry Center?

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:47 It was a hopping place back then.

Angie Faulkner: 00:37:49 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:37:49 Well, it was a hopping place back then, but I didn't know too many people there, because I was in-and-out, sort of, so I would work with one person like this, and I didn't mix, or I didn't have a chance really to mix with too many people. There's--Exhibits, Waysides.

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:15 Oh, Ray Price?

R. Schlecht: 00:38:17 Oh, God, Ray Price. He was one of the first people I worked with.

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:22 And Phil Myerly?

R. Schlecht: 00:38:23 Don't remember him.

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:25 [Crosstalk]. Bob Johnson was down in Exhibits. Yeah, Ray Price was--

R. Schlecht: 00:38:34 No, this was--who's running Waysides now? Betsy Ehrlich.

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:36 Oh, Betsy--

R. Schlecht: 00:38:37 Yeah, Betsy Ehrlich. I've worked with her a lot--

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:39 Yeah, Betsy was in Pubs [Publications] with us.

R. Schlecht: 00:38:42 Oh, yeah, before she went to Waysides--

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:44 Then she went to Exhibits, and then she went to Waysides--

R. Schlecht: 00:38:46 Oh, that's it, okay, [crosstalk].

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:46 Now she's back in Pubs.

R. Schlecht: 00:38:49 Oh, she is?

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:50 Yeah, and she just got a promotion.

R. Schlecht: 00:38:51 Yay!

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:52 So she's Melissa's right-hand person now.

R. Schlecht: 00:38:54 Oh, that's great. She's good. [Crosstalk], yeah, she's good to work with. Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:38:59 Yep.

R. Schlecht: 00:38:59 Yeah. Tell her "Hi."

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:05 I will, I will.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:05 Yeah, she was happy that we were coming today to--

R. Schlecht: 00:39:06 Oh, that's great. Yeah, I see her--when I was doing Facebook, I used to see her on Facebook now and again, but I don't do Facebook much anymore.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:14 That's out of my league too.

R. Schlecht: 00:39:16 Yeah. [Crosstalk]. [Inaudible] Facebook.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:21 So, we have a lot of your work, as I've said--

R. Schlecht: 00:39:24 Yeah, tons.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:25 Your illustrations have been used in a lot of kinds of media for the Park Service.

R. Schlecht: 00:39:28 Right.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:29 Did you ever have a problem with the way any of your work was used?

R. Schlecht: 00:39:32 Well, I didn't see a lot of the ways that it got used of course.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:37 Because you never got a publication or--

R. Schlecht: 00:39:39 Right.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:39 To visit the waysides, or saw anything.

R. Schlecht: 00:39:39 Yeah, so I didn't know anything about that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:39 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:39:44 So they could be out there printed on toilet paper for all I know, and I wouldn't know it.

Angie Faulkner: 00:39:50 Or clothing your naked Indians.

R. Schlecht: 00:39:52 Yeah, there you go. Yes, oh, God, yes. The perpetual fight with National Geographic and with the Park Service, and with everybody else. Oh, no, no, we can't show any private parts, or we can't even show that there might be private parts, and it's so ridiculous.

Angie Faulkner: 00:40:13 Yeah. It is, really.

R. Schlecht: 00:40:16 Yeah, it's totally--in this day and age.

Angie Faulkner: 00:40:20 I know, I know, and we act like Puritans.

R. Schlecht: 00:40:22 Yeah. You know, and six year olds are on Twitter and doing all this kind of stuff, and we're protecting them.

Angie Faulkner: 00:40:31 Yes.

Angie Faulkner: 00:40:32 Yeah, right.

Angie Faulkner: 00:40:33 That's why we had to clothe the Tlingits in Glacier Bay, because the teacher in the local school couldn't show the illustration in the brochure anymore, with them not clothed, because the children would act up and get giddy and take them home and show their parents, and it just--

Angie Faulkner: 00:40:56 But there was nothing blatant in there.

R. Schlecht: 00:40:58 No, there wasn't anything blatant [crosstalk].

Angie Faulkner: 00:40:58 No. Which you do a very good job at doing. [Crosstalk] not blatant things. [Crosstalk].

Angie Faulkner: 00:41:08 Not being too obvious about it--

M. Schmidt: 00:41:10 Angie took care of that, so we can still use it, because they were considering removing it, and we, Melissa and I, we put our foot down, like, "No, you're not removing this artwork from the brochure. It tells a story, it just was so beautiful—"

Angie Faulkner: 00:41:25 Another one of those pieces that makes the population of people come alive that aren't there anymore.

Angie Faulkner: 00:41:31 Exactly. You're such a great person for doing that.

R. Schlecht: 00:41:35 Thank you.

Angie Faulkner: 00:41:37 Yep, yep. So I remember when you and I went to Colonial to do some sketching and--

R. Schlecht: 00:41:44 That was a nice trip.

Angie Faulkner: 00:41:45 You walked into the archeological dig site at Jamestown and the head honcho there knew you.

R. Schlecht: 00:41:52 Oh, yeah, yeah--

Angie Faulkner: 00:41:52 Can you tell me a little bit about that?

R. Schlecht: 00:41:54 Well, Jamestown and I go back a long way.

Angie Faulkner: 00:41:58 You did work [crosstalk]--

R. Schlecht: 00:42:01 For Geographic and I knew those guys from that point, which is a number of years ago, back in the '80s, I guess, so I've been fairly familiar with that whole operation.

Angie Faulkner: 00:42:19 Well, your status really went up in the eyes of the local park staff. We were like, "Oh, he knows the guy who's doing the archeological dig, and they knew him, and they know each other. Wow, he must be something." And then everybody sort of bowed to Richard after that.

R. Schlecht: 00:42:34 I wasn't aware of that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:42:35 Oh, Paul Carson, I think his name was--

R. Schlecht: 00:42:38 Yeah. [Crosstalk]--

Angie Faulkner: 00:42:38 Paul Carson--yeah, he was selling that every which way he could.

R. Schlecht: 00:42:42 Oh, really? Really? Yeah, that's interesting. Okay.

Angie Faulkner: 00:42:47 It was--he gave us a couple of aces up our sleeves, I think.

R. Schlecht: 00:42:51 That's cool.

Angie Faulkner: 00:42:52 Yeah, it is.

R. Schlecht: 00:42:53 Yeah. Love it.

Angie Faulkner: 00:42:55 So do you remember going anywhere else and sketching on site for the Park Service?

R. Schlecht: 00:42:59 For the Park Service? Well, we did a lot of that out at White Bird, of course. You know, in the early days--

Angie Faulkner: 00:43:04 And that's in Idaho, I think.

R. Schlecht: 00:43:06 It's right on the verge of Idaho and Oregon, I think.

Angie Faulkner: 00:43:12 Yeah--

R. Schlecht: 00:43:12 Up in the Three Rivers area.

Angie Faulkner: 00:43:14 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:43:15 Up there.

Angie Faulkner: 00:43:15 The Nez Perce story.

R. Schlecht: 00:43:16 Yeah, the Nez Perce story, yeah. Which is a very sad story.

Angie Faulkner: 00:43:21 All of the Indian [crosstalk]. I mean, it feels like the Park Service is 75% sad stories.

R. Schlecht: 00:43:27 It's about right. The other thing about the Park Service though, that gets me confused, is that they do a lot of history about Spanish-oriented stuff, whether it's in Florida or whether it's in Southwest or something, and everything is named San Juan.

R. Schlecht: 00:43:49 No imagination whatsoever in naming things. San Juan this, San Juan that, San Juan this, and everything, and it drives me nuts sometimes, trying to keep track of all that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:43:58 Oh, that's a hoot. You're right, you're right. I mean, there's-- When they talked about San Juan Island--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:03 Yeah--

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:04 I was thinking Puerto Rico--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:06 Yeah, and [crosstalk] Pacific Northwest, yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:09 Yeah--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:09 There was a good job.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:11 [Crosstalk] the Forts.

R. Schlecht: 00:44:13 Oh, yeah, that. Boy, I'm still in touch with--oh, what's his name?

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:19 Oh, I can't remember his name--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:20 Really good friend of mine, what's his name, you know?

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:22 Yeah, and oh, you always managed to get your dogs in there.

R. Schlecht: 00:44:25 Yeah, the dog always goes in. Yeah, that's Gracie.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:28 That's Gracie--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:30 Our prior dog.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:31 And that--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:32 Sorry, Sadie. Sadie hasn't earned her chops yet for that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:36 Maybe next time, Sadie.

R. Schlecht: 00:44:38 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:38 And if anybody out there listening to this tape is wondering what all the jingling is, that's Sadie's necklace.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:46 Yes--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:46 That's all your jewelry.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:46 There she goes--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:46 There we go. Jingle bells.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:49 Richard is famous for putting his dogs into some of the artwork for everybody. I remember Chad Beale working with you in--

R. Schlecht: 00:44:56 Oh, yeah, Chad Beale, that's right.

Angie Faulkner: 00:44:56 Same thing.

R. Schlecht: 00:44:59 Yeah. He was Waysides wasn't he?

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:00 Yes, he was, he's an excellent designer.

R. Schlecht: 00:45:03 Yeah, he is good.

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:04 Do you remember working on anything with him? I think that was San Juan, wasn't it?

R. Schlecht: 00:45:07 Not specifically. I can't connect that specifically. We always were very simpatico.

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:15 Oh, good--do you remember what dog you wanted in Glacier Bay? That was like '06, '05/'06.

R. Schlecht: 00:45:22 Glacier Bay, that would have been, say, Gracie.

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:25 Gracie--

R. Schlecht: 00:45:25 Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, Gracie is the one that got me started painting her in things, just as a memoriam.

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:36 Oh, okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:45:36 Kind of thing, and now she populates everything that I do--

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:37 She's in Colonial too then?

R. Schlecht: 00:45:39 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:39 Okay--

R. Schlecht: 00:45:40 Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, she wanders through history.

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:44 That's nice. That's a good life, Sadie. [Crosstalk]. Gracie, I'm sorry—Gracie. I have a question from Ed Zahniser, remember him?

R. Schlecht: 00:45:53 Sure do.

Angie Faulkner: 00:45:53 Do you remember us going to the great state of Illinois to see the Lincoln Boyhood Home?

R. Schlecht: 00:45:59 Oh, God.

Angie Faulkner: 00:46:00 Well, you want to explain that “Oh, God”?

R. Schlecht: 00:46:05 Drowning in detail. Drowning in confusing detail, given to you by eight people, who were not coordinated, and, oh, yeah--

Angie Faulkner: 00:46:18 Yeah, I remember Melissa just seeing my level of frustration, and taking it over from me, and she was like, "They are even counting the slats on the shutters to make sure they're the right number of slats."

Angie Faulkner: 00:46:29 Wow--which we were like, this is getting ridiculous--

R. Schlecht: 00:46:31 And they gave us this--what's the book? The official book of colors that you have to do?

Angie Faulkner: 00:46:40 PMS colors?

R. Schlecht: 00:46:41 No, not PMS, it's something that historians use.

Angie Faulkner: 00:46:44 Oh.

R. Schlecht: 00:46:46 And there's like 20 million colors, everything, I think it started Colonial Williamsburg.

Angie Faulkner: 00:46:53 Oh, okay--

R. Schlecht: 00:46:53 That sort of thing, and I can't think--

Angie Faulkner: 00:46:56 An architectural--

R. Schlecht: 00:46:56 Yeah, it's an architectural reference thing, and they wanted to make sure that the shudders were just this color, and that the roof was just that color and everything. I mean, it's a painting, for god's sake. You know, and please, and it's--

Angie Faulkner: 00:47:09 It's not architectural drawing, it's--

R. Schlecht: 00:47:10 Right. And it's dealing with people who have no visual sense whatsoever, and trying to explain the inexplicable.

Angie Faulkner: 00:47:21 Right.

R. Schlecht: 00:47:23 You know, it's like--

Angie Faulkner: 00:47:25 No artistic license.

R. Schlecht: 00:47:26 Yeah. It's like Gary Cooper said to Grace Kelly in High Noon, which she said, "Why are you doing this?" You know, and everything, he said, "If you don't know, I can't tell you."

Angie Faulkner: 00:47:39 If you have to ask, you'll never know. That's interesting. Yeah, you're expressing our frustration sometimes that we--

R. Schlecht: 00:47:48 I know. That's why we work well together. You've been a very good backup on a lot of this stuff.

Angie Faulkner: 00:47:54 I appreciate that--

R. Schlecht: 00:47:55 And I always feel comfortable there, because I know that you got my back as much as you can do and--

Angie Faulkner: 00:48:01 That's our job, is to make sure that we stick with the scope of work, and don't have a bunch of people coming in, saying, "Well, let's try all these things", because we have to go through that all the time ourselves.

R. Schlecht: 00:48:14 I know. I know, it's a great comfort with that filter there and everything, and I've worked with jobs before, ex-Geographic and ex-Park Service, with people that I'm the only--I have no interlocking door there--I'm the only one, and they want to change things, and change things, and change things.

R. Schlecht: 00:48:37 Yeah, we can change it, it's going to cost you. You know, and they don't understand that, and I've resigned from jobs over stuff like that.

Angie Faulkner: 00:48:44 Really?

R. Schlecht: 00:48:45 Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:48:47 Really? Do you have a particular one you want to share with us?

R. Schlecht: 00:48:53 No.

Angie Faulkner: 00:48:56 Okay. I'm done, that's enough.

R. Schlecht: 00:49:00 It's politic, if I don't share it.

Angie Faulkner: 00:49:02 Okay, I understand.

R. Schlecht: 00:49:03 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:49:05 I do have a question from Ed.

R. Schlecht: 00:49:07 Okay.

Angie Faulkner: 00:49:07 And I'm bringing him up because we had done that Springfield job together, about Lincoln's Boyhood Home. He asks: What is your experience from critiques from NPS staffers? Both the park staff and the Harpers Ferry Center staff. How do you feel about their--

R. Schlecht: 00:49:21 Park staff sometimes get a little out of hand and everything, and they want to do this and they want to do that, and they

want to do this. Well, you can't show this place from the front and the back at the same time and everything.

- Angie Faulkner: 00:49:34 It's not physically possible.
- R. Schlecht: 00:49:34 So that's always a factor, because Park Service staff are not always visually literate in the way that we think of it and everything, so that's where you guys come in. Because you're the interlocking door again, that's going to smooth all those wrinkles.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:49:57 At least we try.
- R. Schlecht: 00:49:58 You try hard, that's good. Yeah. What was the question again?
- Angie Faulkner: 00:50:06 It was how did--what's your experience of the critiques from the parks and from the Harpers Ferry Center?
- R. Schlecht: 00:50:11 Yeah, okay. Harpers Ferry Center, I only had one run-in with somebody who's been gone for years now, and it was somebody in the Historic Furnishings thing, and I got involved in tiny, little detail drawings of micro stuff. That was just, "You've got that wrong on that chair, didn't have that many swirls on it." You know--
- Angie Faulkner: 00:50:43 Wow--
- R. Schlecht: 00:50:44 This sort of thing, and that kind of thing, and I finally just gave up. I just--
- Angie Faulkner: 00:50:50 Do you remember the person's name--
- R. Schlecht: 00:50:51 No, I don't.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:50:52 Was it John Brucksch or--
- R. Schlecht: 00:50:53 No, no, it was a woman, it was a woman--
- Angie Faulkner: 00:50:57 Carol Petravage? That's the only one I know.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:51:01 That's the only one I know too.
- R. Schlecht: 00:51:03 That's the only name I recognize, but I don't think it was her.

Angie Faulkner: 00:51:07 Oh, who was the woman who went to work for a park? She became superintendent, but she was back there in Historic Furnishings. She adopted a girl. None of us are remembering any names these days.

R. Schlecht: 00:51:19 Yeah, tell me about it--

Angie Faulkner: 00:51:19 That's all right--yeah. Let's see, there's another question from Wade, who wants to know if you have any stories about Vince Gleason. What was it like the first time you met that man? Because he is like--he is legend, where we are.

R. Schlecht: 00:51:39 Oh, yeah, absolutely. Yeah, he's the granddaddy of it all, you know. Well, just what I already said about Vince, and he brooked no interference, but he listened to you, he'd talk to you. And I told you about our visit down to San Juan.

Angie Faulkner: 00:51:59 Is that the only trip you went on with him?

R. Schlecht: 00:52:01 I think it is, yeah, I think it is. Him and Heath.

Angie Faulkner: 00:52:06 Yeah. What a party.

R. Schlecht: 00:52:07 What a party. Are we having fun yet?

Angie Faulkner: 00:52:11 I'm sure you had fun.

R. Schlecht: 00:52:14 That was a good trip.

Angie Faulkner: 00:52:15 Oh, I bet.

R. Schlecht: 00:52:15 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:52:18 So looking back over your career, would you have done anything differently?

R. Schlecht: 00:52:29 I would probably have kept better records.

Angie Faulkner: 00:52:32 Artists aren't known for that.

R. Schlecht: 00:52:33 I know. I know. One of the things I did in getting ready for this thing, I had a book that I kept jobs, a job book that I had, up until about 1994, when I started switching over to the computer, and then it's computer records since then, but

the book was a big help in all this, but I didn't always have the year. I would write down March 31st, but not the year.

- Angie Faulkner: 00:53:06 Oh wow. Because you didn't think it mattered then.
- R. Schlecht: 00:53:10 That's right.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:53:11 I have done that myself, I'm a seed saver, as you know, and so I have these envelopes that have the name and the plant on them, but I don't have the year on it. And I'm like, "What year are these seeds?" It matters now.
- R. Schlecht: 00:53:24 Yeah, now it matters. Yeah. Yeah.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:53:27 So you wouldn't change anything about how your career went, or what else you would do? Just record keeping, better record keeping.
- R. Schlecht: 00:53:33 Oh, well, probably would have promoted myself a little bit more in my outside artwork, like the stuff you saw on the wall and everything. I was never very good at that, and I don't know that I would change that, because that's just the way I am and everything.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:53:51 You might be a little bit more dogged about it.
- R. Schlecht: 00:53:53 Might be a little more dogged about it, but I was never a good self-promoter. I would wish that I had been more of a self-promoter.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:54:00 Well, your work speaks for itself.
- R. Schlecht: 00:54:02 Yeah, if it gets seen.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:54:04 And you were pretty sought after there. So--
- R. Schlecht: 00:54:08 In the right way, I hope.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:54:09 In the right way.
- R. Schlecht: 00:54:15 Come here, Sadie. Okay.
- Angie Faulkner: 00:54:17 She didn't hear you.
- R. Schlecht: 00:54:18 No.

Angie Faulkner: 00:54:19 Is there anything that you want to add to this?

R. Schlecht: 00:54:21 I don't think so. I just--I've practically lived at the Park Service and everything, and as I said, I'm one of the oldest Park Service people around now. You know, longest--longevity wise, I mean, from the day in 1974, I don't think there's anybody around--

Angie Faulkner: 00:54:45 Wow.

R. Schlecht: 00:54:45 --much. Correct me if I'm wrong, who's around, that was around in 1974.

Angie Faulkner: 00:54:51 Oh, geez, I have no idea--

R. Schlecht: 00:54:54 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:54:54 I mean, I didn't get there until '89--

R. Schlecht: 00:54:55 I know.

Angie Faulkner: 00:54:58 So that--and that's ancient history there now.

R. Schlecht: 00:54:59 Yeah, it is.

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:00 I know--

R. Schlecht: 00:55:00 Everybody's so much younger--

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:03 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 00:55:03 --you know, than I am, which is why I'm saying the 2000-year-old man.

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:06 Harpers Ferry Center is about to celebrate its 50th.

R. Schlecht: 00:55:10 Well, that's why you're doing this, isn't it? [Crosstalk].

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:12 Anniversary in March, so we didn't even open until '70.

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:16 Right.

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:17 And Melissa, I guess, is still there. Melissa Cronyn--

R. Schlecht: 00:55:21 Is she?

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:22 She moved in.

R. Schlecht: 00:55:23 What's she doing?

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:23 She's the head of Publications--

R. Schlecht: 00:55:24 She's still the head of Pubs. [Crosstalk].

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:27 She started out as a designer.

R. Schlecht: 00:55:29 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:30 Did you do any work with her? Artwork? Like specific--

R. Schlecht: 00:55:34 Not anything specific, she was--

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:36 In the office, yeah--

R. Schlecht: 00:55:39 Running Pubs while I did things, like with you, that one thing on Virgin Islands, that we did, that they changed that piece of artwork right at the last minute, and--

Angie Faulkner: 00:55:56 [Crosstalk]. You and I did Hampton together, we did Hampton.

R. Schlecht: 00:56:00 Yeah. Oh, God, I forgot about Hampton, that's one of my favorite jobs.

Angie Faulkner: 00:56:01 Oh, good.

R. Schlecht: 00:56:02 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 00:56:03 Yeah, I think Johanna's reusing it, and she just rediscovered your sketches, and she realizes that some of those things that are in the background are actually full color images she can use.

R. Schlecht: 00:56:12 Great.

Angie Faulkner: 00:56:12 So that was a great treasure find. And you were talking about the Virgin Islands, I think that was Christiansted, right? That you--

R. Schlecht: 00:56:15 Well, we did Christiansted, but this was--this, seems to me, it was--

Angie Faulkner: 00:56:15 Oh, it was the handbook, I think you're talking about.

R. Schlecht: 00:56:16 It might have been the handbook, but there was an illustration about a slave uprising--

Angie Faulkner: 00:56:32 A slave uprising, exactly--

R. Schlecht: 00:56:34 And they were using as a research guide, some professor at some school down there, or something, and he was totally impossible to work with, and he wanted to change everything.

Angie Faulkner: 00:56:49 Wow--oh, man.

R. Schlecht: 00:56:50 And I had this great drawing of--it was a slave revolt and it happened at night, and they were hacking people to bits and things like that, and of course--

Angie Faulkner: 00:56:59 Sugar cane knives.

R. Schlecht: 00:57:00 Yeah, with those big cane knives, machetes and everything, and I have this thing with a--one of the uprising people, the revolters, with a hat shading his face, and the dark, the shadow of the hat was totally dark, and his eyes coming out of that, looking very threatening and everything--

Angie Faulkner: 00:57:26 I remember that illustration--

R. Schlecht: 00:57:27 And they made me change that right at the last minute, and I think that was Melissa that let that go through.

Angie Faulkner: 00:57:34 And it was because why? Because they were viewing it as racist or something?

R. Schlecht: 00:57:38 I can't remember the reason, but it was just, it just frosted me completely, and I was just--

Angie Faulkner: 00:57:46 Done with it, huh?

R. Schlecht: 00:57:47 Pissed. [Crosstalk].

Angie Faulkner: 00:57:47 It really told a story, told part of the story.

R. Schlecht: 00:57:54 Yeah, it was a very integral part of the story and somebody changed it. I think somebody down there put pressure on or something. Anyway, it was very distasteful.

Angie Faulkner: 00:58:05 Yeah, we're constantly making sort of--you know-- accommodations for--thank you. Yeah, for--and, yeah, backing off [crosstalk]. For parks not getting--

R. Schlecht: 00:58:17 Getting it.

Angie Faulkner: 00:58:17 And they have sensitive partners or something like that, and, I mean, it goes back to not having naked people. You know, that were traditionally not clothed in these illustrations to make--

R. Schlecht: 00:58:29 Let's change history--

Angie Faulkner: 00:58:31 Yes. [Crosstalk]--because it makes us more comfortable. [Crosstalk]. It is crazy.

Angie Faulkner: 00:58:37 So speaking of longevity, can we still expect some artwork coming from Richard Schlecht?

R. Schlecht: 00:58:42 Oh, yeah, I'm still doing some stuff. As I said, I'm working with Dave McLean, David Guiney on a couple of things, having to do with the national road.

Angie Faulkner: 00:58:53 That sounds exciting.

R. Schlecht: 00:58:54 Yeah, and that's sort of gearing up for its anniversary in a couple years.

Angie Faulkner: 00:59:07 Oh, what anniversary?

R. Schlecht: 00:59:08 I can't remember. [Crosstalk] it would have been 18--

Angie Faulkner: 00:59:08 Too many anniversaries--

R. Schlecht: 00:59:09 Early 1800s.

Angie Faulkner: 00:59:09 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 00:59:10 When it started, so--

Angie Faulkner: 00:59:12 Maybe 200 years.

R. Schlecht: 00:59:12 200 years.

Angie Faulkner: 00:59:14 That's amazing.

- R. Schlecht: 00:59:15 Yeah. So we're doing something on New Market, I think, as New Market used to be a staging area, with stables and all kinds of stuff on the people moving west. Everything.
- R. Schlecht: 00:59:30 One of the jobs, one of the outside jobs that we did, this ties into this a little bit, was Harriet and I worked together with a now defunct organization put together by the state of Pennsylvania to do a book about the Forbes Expedition, which was just after the French and Indian War, and latter part of the French and Indian War when we were trying to move out west, and the Brits were moving out west, and they wanted to do a whole thing on this expedition, which went from Virginia all the way out to Pittsburgh, which was then Fort Pitt.
- R. Schlecht: 01:00:18 So Harriet photographed the whole thing, the whole road. She spent months out there photographing stuff on the road, and I did four or five--four illustrations for this thing, and another guy--this is complicated.
- R. Schlecht: 01:00:36 The book was being organized and published and edited by a friend of ours, Burt Kummerow. I don't know if you know him or not--
- Angie Faulkner: 01:00:44 No, I don't.
- R. Schlecht: 01:00:46 But he, up until recently, was the president of the Maryland Historical Society, and he's an ex-reenactor, and he knows all these people. He knew Bill Brown, remember Bill Brown?
- Angie Faulkner: 01:00:56 Oh, yes. Yeah. Yeah--
- R. Schlecht: 01:00:58 God, we miss him.
- Angie Faulkner: 01:00:58 Yeah.
- R. Schlecht: 01:00:59 Yeah. Yeah. And these guys were all crazy reenactors, and stuff like that. So he was working on this book as well, and he had hired a guy, named Jerry [inaudible], who did a lot of close up illustrations of people doing things and British soldiers and carts moving west, and Indians doing stuff and everything, and I did some big overall views then of this kind of stuff that I do and everything, and it was a great, great fun book to work with, and everybody worked together just like that.

Angie Faulkner: 01:01:40 That's good.

R. Schlecht: 01:01:40 And everything. And then they published the book, and that was that. They dissolved the commission, the book never got pushed or anything like that, and it just kind of died, and it was one of these really neat things that everybody had worked their guts out on. I got a copy of that. You want to see a copy of it?

Angie Faulkner: 01:02:02 Sure, we'll see it. If you want to finish this and then we will?

R. Schlecht: 01:02:05 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 01:02:05 Because we can't share it with this audience.

R. Schlecht: 01:02:06 Right, right.

Angie Faulkner: 01:02:08 There's only a couple more things.

R. Schlecht: 01:02:10 Shoot.

Angie Faulkner: 01:02:11 You are famous for having some hidden scenes in some of your illustrations. Do you want to tell us anything about that, or do you want to admit to it?

R. Schlecht: 01:02:23 Yeah, usually what I will do is I'll throw in something outrageous. Like a guy taking a leak over by a tree or something like that, and in the digital era that we're in now, that's easy, because you can strip it into a digital image, and strip it out later when it gets published.

R. Schlecht: 01:02:43 But I like to put things in there just to make sure that people are seeing, are looking closely at things and inspecting what they're supposed to be inspecting and everything. Sadie, I mean Gracie goes into--the dog-- goes into things like that, people go into things like that. We did a--

R. Schlecht: 01:03:01 God, I'd forgotten this. Geographic wanted, and did, publish a thing about Alexander the Great, and his misadventures in Asia.

Angie Faulkner: 01:03:21 Oh my.

- R. Schlecht: 01:03:23 In the 5th century BC, and the battle with Xerxes. Was it Xerxes? I can't think of the name of it now, but one of these big spread out things with things going on everywhere, armies moving, and the people are about a 16th of an inch high, this sort of thing, and--
- R. Schlecht: 01:03:51 Well, bigger than that, maybe an eighth of an inch high, and da-da-da-dum, and this army moving against this army, and which stage of the battle do you show it at and everything, and that got very complicated.
- R. Schlecht: 01:04:06 But down at the bottom with the Persian troops retreating, I had a dice game going on, on a blanket. A guy squatting under a bush, and some stuff like that.
- Angie Faulkner: 01:04:23 Because it was so big you could get away with these--
- R. Schlecht: 01:04:25 Yeah, you could get away with it, and I think it actually went into it--
- Angie Faulkner: 01:04:28 Oh, interesting.
- R. Schlecht: 01:04:29 Yeah.
- Angie Faulkner: 01:04:29 Oh, that must be like a real treat for people to find those things--
- R. Schlecht: 01:04:32 Oh, yeah, it's great--
- Angie Faulkner: 01:04:33 --and realize what's going on.
- R. Schlecht: 01:04:34 Yeah, yeah, I do that now and again. But it's easy, because you can just strip it into the artwork in Photoshop.
- Angie Faulkner: 01:04:42 Right.
- R. Schlecht: 01:04:43 And then take it out for publication--
- Angie Faulkner: 01:04:46 Do you use Photoshop a lot?
- R. Schlecht: 01:04:47 Yeah.
- Angie Faulkner: 01:04:47 Okay.
- R. Schlecht: 01:04:47 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 01:04:48 Okay--

R. Schlecht: 01:04:49 I use Photoshop a lot.

Angie Faulkner: 01:04:50 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 01:04:50 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 01:04:51 That's good to know.

R. Schlecht: 01:04:52 Yeah. It's saved our bacon in a lot of instances.

Angie Faulkner: 01:04:56 Okay.

R. Schlecht: 01:04:56 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 01:04:57 So were you excited when that came along? You probably--

R. Schlecht: 01:05:01 Oh, I eased into it, for years and years. I mean, you just learn how to use stuff and everything, but, yeah, I can take whole things and move it from one picture to another, and do stuff like that, or just clean things up. [Crosstalk].

R. Schlecht: 01:05:16 Mainly, I just use it to clean things up with bad brush strokes and spots of color, where you spilled some paint on something, and it would ruin a painting in the old days, but in these days, you just take it out.

Angie Faulkner: 01:05:36 Remove it.

R. Schlecht: 01:05:37 Yeah. So Photoshop's good. We like Photoshop.

Angie Faulkner: 01:05:39 Good. One good thing that came out of the future, right?

R. Schlecht: 01:05:44 Yeah--

Angie Faulkner: 01:05:44 The technology.

R. Schlecht: 01:05:45 There you go.

Angie Faulkner: 01:05:46 All right. My last question is: What kind of advice would you give to any new artist trying to work for the Park Service, or who is working for the Park Service? What would you tell them?

R. Schlecht: 01:05:57 Don't give up your day job.

Angie Faulkner: 01:06:04 And that's because you feel like it takes forever to get something done and forever to get paid or something?

R. Schlecht: 01:06:07 Well, the Park Service, I think is easier to work with now than it was, say, 10 years ago, or five years ago.

Angie Faulkner: 01:06:16 You think it's easier now?

R. Schlecht: 01:06:17 I think it's somewhat easier now, at least it's been smoother for me, because I understand a lot of reorganization has gone on, and some of the roadblocks down at the bottom of the hill have been taken care of, I think.

Angie Faulkner: 01:06:34 Yes.

R. Schlecht: 01:06:35 That's my sense of it.

Angie Faulkner: 01:06:35 Sense the Florida, is what we call it. Do you keep your SAM.gov registration updated? Your--

R. Schlecht: 01:06:44 Yeah, I have been, and now, suddenly, the thing that they use to pay you with--

Angie Faulkner: 01:06:54 Yeah, IPP.

R. Schlecht: 01:06:55 IPP--

Angie Faulkner: 01:06:56 PPI--

R. Schlecht: 01:06:57 I've kept that up and kept up, and suddenly, I'm out of there and everything, so I've got to jump through all those hoops again. In spite I've done everything I was supposed to do, and the SAM stuff, God, when they want to update, that is so complicated--

Angie Faulkner: 01:07:13 Yeah--

R. Schlecht: 01:07:13 Yeah, that is so complicated.

Angie Faulkner: 01:07:16 And the COR of our in-house design contractor and she is constantly having these issues, but she's gotten good help with IP--PPI? IPP?

R. Schlecht: 01:07:28 Their tech support is very good.

Angie Faulkner: 01:07:29 Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 01:07:30 Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 01:07:31 When she calls, she gets help, so--

R. Schlecht: 01:07:34 Yeah, I've had good experience with that. I shouldn't have to call, but when I do call, the help is there, so that's okay. The SAM stuff I'm not sure about yet, but so far--whoops. Wait a minute. Breathe in, breathe out, it's reminding me, okay.

Angie Faulkner: 01:07:54 Yeah, note to self, exhale, breathe. Yeah.

R. Schlecht: 01:08:02 Breathe in, breathe out. Don't forget to breathe in again, right. Yeah.

Angie Faulkner: 01:08:04 Repeat.

R. Schlecht: 01:08:05 Repeat, yeah, that's right. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, the contracting office used to be dreaded by everybody and everything, and I think that has improved.

Angie Faulkner: 01:08:22 Well, yeah, it's only improved at Harpers Ferry because the CO left a few years ago--

R. Schlecht: 01:08:29 Right.

Angie Faulkner: 01:08:30 We don't really have an official CO--

R. Schlecht: 01:08:33 Joanne.

Angie Faulkner: 01:08:34 Well, no, Joanne left many years ago, and then we had another person--

R. Schlecht: 01:08:38 Okay.

Angie Faulkner: 01:08:38 Who's since gone, and now we're under WASO. We're under the Washington Office.

R. Schlecht: 01:08:44 Okay--

Angie Faulkner: 01:08:44 Contracting office.

R. Schlecht: 01:08:46 Is that good or bad, do you think?

Angie Faulkner: 01:08:49 I think it's okay. I have not done yet, I'm about to do a new art contract under that office, so--I've actually heard good things about it. Yeah--because there was so much dogma that was built into the contracting--

R. Schlecht: 01:09:03 Lots of baggage--

Angie Faulkner: 01:09:04 --culture there, right, and that they--I mean, we would take COR classes, and we would ask questions about what they're telling us, because we're like, "We're not allowed to do that here", and they're like, "Why not? You should be able to do this, this, or this", and they would ask for our contracting officers to come over and talk to them, and that was never happening, so, anyway, I think it's getting ironed out.

R. Schlecht: 01:09:28 Yeah, well, I hope so, because that was--everybody I talked to said, "Oh, my God." You know, live in dread, you know, mortal fear of having to deal with that outfit. We always just called it trolls at the bottom of the hill.

Angie Faulkner: 01:09:47 And that's pretty accurate.

R. Schlecht: 01:09:51 Sadie. Let me let the dog out.

Angie Faulkner: 01:09:53 Here, I can do that. [Crosstalk] I can do it--

R. Schlecht: 01:09:55 Yeah. Come on, sweetheart. Out you go. Out you go--

Angie Faulkner: 01:09:59 She saw something.

R. Schlecht: 01:10:00 Chase those squirrels.

Angie Faulkner: 01:10:01 Yes. Squirrel patrol.

R. Schlecht: 01:10:04 There she goes.

Angie Faulkner: 01:10:05 Look at her.

R. Schlecht: 01:10:06 Yeah. That's no 13-year-old dog.

Angie Faulkner: 01:10:10 That's great.

R. Schlecht: 01:10:11 Now she's looking back at us. Is anybody coming to help me? Oh, okay. So--

Angie Faulkner: 01:10:19 Well, thank you for your time today.

R. Schlecht: 01:10:22 Well, yeah, my pleasure. This is great. [Crosstalk] you guys.

Angie Faulkner: 01:10:24 We would love to see your studio and maybe take a couple pictures of you--

R. Schlecht: 01:10:28 Sure--

Angie Faulkner: 01:10:29 --looking like you're working.

R. Schlecht: 01:10:30 Yeah. Pretending to work.

Angie Faulkner: 01:10:33 So we're going to sign-off now. And anything else that you want to add before we do?

R. Schlecht: 01:10:38 Not at the moment.

Angie Faulkner: 01:10:39 Okay. Well--

R. Schlecht: 01:10:39 Okay.

END OF RECORDING