

Tape # 475
NAVAJO
Ray Yazzie
January 28, 1970
Michael Husband-Interviewer
Side One

Crownpoint Hospital
Treatment for Alcoholics
Torreon Chapter Meetings
Peyote

QH. Tell me about the hospital where were you, over at Crownpoint?

AR. Yeah, it was pretty good over there.....

QH. Is it?

AR. I went over there because I have some trouble with myself.....drink you see, boy they are nice over there.....the doctors.....

QH. Who took you in?

AR. A doctor.

QH. From where? From Cuba?

AR. From here.

QH. From the mission?

AR. Yeah!!

QH. Do they have a doctor at the mission??

AR. No, he came in Thursday and said that I have to go over there, and so he told me, that I had to go over there, I stayed over there about seven days.

QH. He took over in the car to Crownpoint?

AR. Yeah, that place is good, take a shower everyday.

QH. Oh Yeah???

AR. Yeah, good food to eat, three times a day.

QH. What did they do to you??

AR. OH examine all over. All day they give me, you know, paper cup???

QH. Yeah.....

AR. To test me like that. And so I swallow that wine, and it got me right here.....

QH. Oh really???

AR. Oh boy, I used to, but I didn't throw up nothing, like I used to. So I was sick one day there.

QH. But you were there for seven days though.

AR. And then they gave me pills all the time, so I am taking them all the time.

QH. So what did they tell you was wrong with you??

AR. Nothing wrong but I want to get rid of it.

QH. Yeah.

AR. That stuff.

QH. That drinking huh???

Ar. Yeah.

QH. You don't drink anymore?

AR. No more.

QH. Were you drinking too much??

AR. I think so because I have been sick all this time. He said it is no good for you head....

QH. You mean wine??

AR. Yeah and smoking too. Oh boy terrible, lot of guys over there taking that treatment.

QH. For drinking??

AR. Yeah.

QH. How many are over there?

AR. Oh about two. The others went back home.

QH. Is that a big hospital?? How many patients??

AR. I don't know how many there are, there are lady and girls all over...

QH. Just Navajos there???

AR. Anybody....Just like VA, I could go VA, but I didn't want to go you know where.....

QH. Yeah, Veterans Administration.....

AR. They look all over, your blood test and everything, they say if you have high blood pressure, you know when excessive drinking.....

QH. Do you have high blood pressure??

AR. Yeah, ever since I was in the army....oh boy, so he gave me two pills for blood something like that, excess, you know what I mean??

QH. What did they do, they told you to stop drinking huh??

AR. Completely till October they told me you know....

QH. Don't go down to the bar anymore.

AR. No more....you know when they give you that test, the drug and if you start again....boy no good, then that is what they say.

QH. Are you taking medicine now??

AR. Yeah.

QH. What pills??

AR. Yeah, did you ever drink Bob?? You know that wine stuff, there is more disease that what they say.

QH. Are there any people from here at the Crownpoint hospital??

AR. No.

QH. You are the only one huh??

AR. One from that place, Huerfano?

QH. Huerfano??

AR. Yeah, that is close to Nageezi, I know that boy, he was over there. BEcause he wanted to go to take medicine because accident happen every time he drinks, excess drinking, you know what I mean Bob?

QH. Car accident?

AR. Yeah, and he lose one of his brothers too.....Do you think that Henry should go over there?

QH. How did they treat you over at Crownpoint hospital, pretty good?

AR. Yeah, pretty good.

QH. Was that the same hospital that was there when you went to school there long time ago???

AR. Yeah, that is the same hospital but that is a different hospital now.

QH. The new one??

AR. Yeah. New one.

QH. The old hospital is gone??

- AR. No, the old hospital is taken away by workers, they tear it down the workers, did, and they have got nurses, too, Navajo nurses, Hopi's and they have got some white doctors just learning
- QH. No Navajo doctors huh??
- AR. I know it, they just used to have a janitor there a nigger but I don't know what happened to him, he is a Navajo now.
- QH. Did you go to the hospital at Crownpoint when you were little, when you were in school?
- AR. Yeah.
- QH. Well how was the hospital at Crownpoint then, did they treat you very good???
- AR. Oh, it was terrible then.
- QH. What was wrong then, what did they do??
- AR. Just one doctor that is all, he got no, you know, one doctor, don't mean lot, you have to go here and there, oh boy, take a long time.
- QH. Was he a good doctor??
- AR. Yeah, he was a good doctor but he was by himself.
- QH. When was this??
- AR. 1921 I think it was.
- QH. 1921, did they have any nurses then??
- AR. No, just one girl they hire that is all, lot of people there, but..
- QH. Did they treat you good though??
- AR. Yeah, we treat everybody there, they hire me one time there doing stuff like that, carrying those dishes and things like that.
- QH. AT the hospital?
- AR. Yeah, and a girl was there working too a cook, people afraid to go over there where the people die, they bring the body, laboratory, put them in those places..
- QH. You didn't like to do that huh??
- AR. No, I like to do whatever they say, that is what I do.
- QH. It didn't bother you huh?
- AR. No!

- QH. They were mean at the school in Crownpoint?
- AR. No, they were mean, but not the hospital, but the rest of the place, you know the boys place where they keep the boys? They were told not to be wild over there....
- QH. Where over in Crownpoint? In the dormitory?
- AR. It is bad right? Whip them and.....
- QH. They still don't do that do they??
- AR. No, it is pretty good, everything is pretty good....change...
- QH. What happened, why did it change??
- AR. I think that the government don't like it, they want to be straight.
- QH. So where is this doctor from that took you over there? Does he come from Cuba or over there?
- AR. He comes today too, he comes every Thursday...
- QH. From where?
- AR. He stays there, he is the head doctor.
- QH. At Crownpoint??
- AR. Maybe you know him, he has got a mustache, he is a good doctor..
- QH. Whiteman?
- AR. Yeah.
- QH. And he comes and checks people around here?/
- AR. Yeah, if everybody gets sick or a cold he goes to mission maybe and examine them, babies or something, if he is really sick, then he takes them back over there.
- QH. That is what happened to you?
- AR. No, I just want to go.
- QH. You weren't really too sick?
- AR. No, I just want to get rid of that stuff...
- QH. That drinking?
- AR. It is no good that is what I think. I know alot of boys went over there to see, they claim that it was good, don't bother no body.
- QH. Where do they buy their wine around here??

AR. Penistaja.

QH. That is the only place huh??

AR. Cuba too, all over....Albuquerque.

QH. Who owns this bar here at Penistaja?

AR. SHelby, he is a pretty big man isn't he??

QH. Yeah.

AR. Do you know him?

QH. No, but I have seen him.

AR. You have seen his wife haven't you?? TALL Blondie....'

QH. Yeah...

AR. How about you you like one??

QH. I don't know, he owns the Torreon Trading Post doesn't he?

AR. Yeah, big man right?

QH. Yeah, well it is kind of a problem having that bar right there??

AR. Yeah, it takes all the money, yeah it is kind of bad all right.

QH. Do you have alot of fights there?

AR. Yeah, alot of trouble You know they drink too much and then they start yelling, fighting, broke the window and all that.

QH. Do they ever try and rob it?

AR. They tried one time, but I don't know what happened, maybe that man has alot of money, he don't need it huh??

QH. But it would be nice if he would stop selling wine right? What do the missionaries think of him?

AR. You know what they ought to do? They ought to get rid of that wine and put up a big store, right??

QH. Store??

AR. Yeah, Safeway or where they clean clothes, or.....

QH. Laundry???

- AR. A little motel or something on the highway, or maybe he could make a big farm or something like that...
- QH. Yeah, that would be better.
- AR. Yeah, so the people can go over there.
- QH. What do the missionaries say about him??
- AR. They don't like him, you know what they don't do in Cuba.....I don't know when they don't start that Uranium mine.....
- QH. Uranium mine??
- AR. They are going to try and put uranium mine over there. I think they have already got one, Henry is the one that said that he work over there, maybe this summer.
- QH. That sounds pretty good.
- AR. I know in ARizona, one man, one of my grandpa, and a boy he came back from there he is from here, and he once told me that he had a job in Arizona, at a saw mill, boy he is working over there and he is making good money, he is married to an Apache Indian. He went to school in Albuquerque...'
- QH. Would you go out and get a job out at the mine here?
- AR. No, I am not very good at that, this guy told me that one that has that store in Cuba, he told me about this discharge paper, he told me that he going to try and go to the VA, Veterans Administration, he is going to try and do something about it, I am 57 pretty soon and I need some help.
- QH. You mean money?
- AR. No, you have to do what I told you, I ask and he is going to try and get something for me. He was going to have that store, you know Freeloves??
- QH. Yeah, Freelove....
- AR. Yeah, that is why he told me that it is a good that you quit all of this drinking stuff. It is pretty good, you are getting so old with these thing...
- QH. Do they give you some medicine to take, are you taking medicine now??
- AR. Yeah, I have to take some more tomorrow.
- QH. What does that do?

AR. Oh, I think it cleans out the stomach, it works inside....

QH. Cured huh??

AR. Yeah.

QH. What did they do at the hospital, what did they tell you?

AR. Oh, they gave me drugs, pills, they told me not to....

QH. They treated you pretty good there?? Pretty good food?

AR. Yeah, pretty good food yeah, eggs and all that stuff.

QH. Were you in a room by yourself, or alot of other people there?

AR. Alot of other people.

QH. All Navajos??

QH. Trading post ever sell wine here?

AR. NO!!!!!!.

QH. Never did huh?

AR. They are against it.

QH. Can't do it huh, long long time ago did they?

AR. No, it was just when Gib was there.

QH. He sold liquor then? He wasn't suppose to though was he?

AR. No-o-o-o/.....

QH. Wasn't that against the law?

AR. That time it was against the law to the Indians don't give them right?

QH. Yes.

AR. What do you call that? Sell it? This is opened now, but...

QH. This is also off the reservation though, but he sold liquor there huh? That was how long ago?

AR. Oh, I think it was.....

QH. 1950?

QH. Did they have bootleggers here a long time ago??

AR. They were Spanish...

QH. Oh, you remember them huh??

AR. Yeah, some of them pass away...that is against the law isn't it?? There isn't suppose to be any liquor on the reservation.

QH. Not suppose to be....

AR. What about they catch one what do they do?

QH. I don't know??

QH. Do missionaries ever talk about drinking??

AR. No-o-o-o-

QH. They don't ever tell you about it?

AR. Well just one of them tell us about it, just myself. Kind of bad, excess drinking....

QH. Is that all they say, tell you it is bad?

AR. Yeah and you should come over here, there are some Yeibichai dances over here at Sandsprings.

QH. Oh yeah, how far is that?

AR. It was over about a week ago?

QH. How far is Sand Springs from here though?

AR. Oh, a long ways, almost close to Crownpoint.

QH. Do you go?

AR. I didn't go, they say that they are going to have one over here at Cantada too...

QH. When they have chapter meetings, how long do they have chapter meetings once a month??

AR. Every two weeks?

QH. Yeah, ever two weeks, huh, well, twice a month. Do they ever talk about drinking at the chapter meetings??

AR. No-o-o-o-o

QH. Never do huh?

AR. No.

QH. Well why not? It is a problem isn't it?

AR. Yeah, it is, but I don't know, I think those chapter officers they drink.

QH. The chapter officers they drink huh?

AR. Yeah, that is what they do.....It is their business isn't it?

QH. But that never comes up though in this meeting?

QH. AT the chapter meetings do they ever talk about the traders, or the missionaries.

AR. No, DNA they talk about them.

QH. What is the DNA, it is the Lawyers group isn't it??

AR. Yeah, for the Navajos.

QH. I forget what it stands for now, something Navajo, what do they say about that?

AR. OH, they don't say much, they just don't give them, if you have a check come in or even if you have a bill in the store you have to pay a little bit not all at once.

QH. But if something happens you can always call them and you can get a lawyer to help you?

AR. Yeah, and the same way with this welfare, they don't do anything about that, you know they just give money to the poor and then they just get their check, put their thumb right there, that is all that they do, make a profit....

QH. What do they say about the traders at the chapter meetings, do they ever talk about them??

AR. Oh, they are ~~no~~ good,/.....

QH. They don't like the traders?

AR. No, not this Winston.

QH. They don't like Winston, at the Torreon Trading Post??

AR. No.

QH. Why not, does he cheat?

AR. He cheats the people too much there?

QH. He doesn't cheat the people as much as Gib Grand did does he?

AR. Well I don't know, his store is getting bad, and the same way, with I think that Cuba is better

QH. It is??

AR. Freelove, his store is no good.

QH. They say that Gib Grand used to cheat the people, is that right?

AR. I used to work for him.

QH. Oh yeah, what did you used to do?

AR. Herding sheep.

QH. Did he pay you pretty well?

AR. Well not too good, but to get some groceries, and he give money too.

QH. How long ago was this??

AR. OH, 1952, I think, boy he had alot of goods here, alot of sheep. Oh, I know I was over there at his place, we ate over there at noontime, You guys want a drink, he said, you drink about half a gallon, he got it from there, the store, and we had to drink it....

QH. What do they say about the chapter meetins about the missionaries, do they say anything at all?

AR. They say that they are good people.

QH. Do people like the missionaries?

AR. Well these peyote men, they don't like them, I don't know, they don't want to have that... problem with them.

QH. Do they have any peyote here?

AR. Lot of them, that is what I heard.

QH. ARound here, huh?? Where do they get it?

AR. I don't know.

QH. Have you ever seen anyone using peyote around here?

AR. Not personally, I don't know, they told me that they eat some peyote, in the night time, that is what I heard, I don't know where, I never see them.

QH. What do they say, why do they do it for, do you know?

AR. They say it help them to, if a guy is sick it helps them to be a good man again, I don't think so, the doctor said, that if they eat it they just get sick, that's all.

QH. When you were at Crownpoint hospital how many people over there had taken peyote?

AR. No, just some other sick, like coughing or some of that.....

QH. Have you ever heard of Navajo people at the hospital for taking drugs?

AR. Yeah, they did.

QH. What kind, tell me about it.

AR. About the alcohol, quite drink, that is all they do.

QH. There are alot of people over there for drinking huh??

AR. Yeah, sometimes there are enough bed there for them.

QH. How many beds do they have there do you know?

AR. Oh, about two or three that is all that they have got, if there is an opening, they call some more people, fi they want to go over there.

QH. How about the whole hospital, do they have alot of beds??

AR. 200 more...

QH. 200 huh??

AR. Yeah, good hospital too. The good thing about those hospitals is that they have clean beds, oh they have got showers too and towels and soap, and they have got good attendants, good workers. They help the patients.

QH. To take care of you huh?? So you stayed in bed all day and slept.

AR. When I was there, they didn't let us stay in bed all the time, we had to walk around. When I left there was a guy that was sick and he had to stay in bed.....It was so crowded over there too.

QH. You weren't in a private room though?

AR. I was in a room with other patients....

AR. No wonder they make money right??

QH. The man that works at Torreon trading post is a Mormon, but he speaks Navajo?

AR. He is raised among Navajo he said.

QH. Does he speak it pretty well?

AR. Yeah, pretty well...

QH. Do the missionaries speak Navajo at all?

AR. They can't learn???

QH. Did they try to learn it?

AR. They try to learn, it but they are off the way, I don't know why, it is not hard.

QH. Did you have to pay anything for the hospital?

AR. No, maybe the tribe pays all of that.....I don't know how much the doctor gets...

QH. But you don't have to pay anything right?? Do you get any money in the month or just stamps?

AR. Stamps, that is what Freeloves try to tell me, when I was in the army...he said, you are a poor man you ought to get some pension or help from the VA.

QH. Get some money huh??

AR. And then I could buy something for the house, inside and all that, they want to get some electric put in the house, but I have to pay.

QH. What is Freelove going to do then, is he going to talk to them in Albuquerque,..?? How long were you in the army??

AR. OH, I was in the army for 6 years.

QH. Does he have your papers, your discharge papers?

AR. Yeah, I have got two of them, I tell you I don't have anything, I do alot of crying but, I try to do something for you he said.

QH. You don't get on any money in the month? Just Stamps? Does he still work for welfare as an interpreter?

AR. Oh, once in a while, but you....

QH. They don't come by very often??

AR. No.

QH. When you were at Crownpoint school what did you learn??

AR. Oh, about mathematics.....

QH. Mathematics??

AR. Even they teach us how to behave, they took lots of us.....

QH. When you went to school there, did they ever teach us history??

AR. Yeah, but it is only American History that is all.....

QH. American History huh?? What about Navajo history, Indian History, did they talk about the Indian....?

AR. No, not much...

QH. Didn't they talk about the Indian wars?

AR. No.

QH. Whiteman fighting the Indians??

AR. No, they never had that, I was a little guy.....

QH. Don't remember huh??

QH. They taught you how to write and how to read??

AR. Yeah, how to behave and how to put shoes on their feet.....

END OF TAPE

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