

Ray Blanco Yazzie-Navajo-Torreon Mission area, N.M.  
Feb. 4, 1969

Interviewer: M.B. Husband.

Content of Interview:

- I. Continued discussion of the "Hootch" Grand murder case. Grand was the son of the Torreon trader, and Ray Yazzie is well acquainted with the case.
- II. A discussion of the food stamp plan in the Torreon area, and economic problems and conditions in general.
- III. Navajo racial attitudes, particularly attitudes toward Negroes, and toward other Indians. Ray discusses some of his experiences with Negroes during the war years.
- IV. Discussion of area medicine men, with a description of a home curing ceremony.
- V. Miscellaneous personal and area notes.

Tape # 568  
Ray Yazzie  
Navajo-Torreon, New Mexico  
Interviewer - Michael B. Husband  
February 4, 1969

- Q. Did you get your food stamps this week?
- A. Yeah, not yet, Friday.
- Q. You get them once a week?
- A. No, every other month.
- Q. Oh, just every other month?
- A. Now they come in on the 21, I think. Just the other day I say that the welfare come out here.....
- Q. The welfare people come and visit you often don't they?
- A. ( ? ? ? ? ? ? ? )
- Q. You get how much then for food every month?
- A. Oh not very much, just 24.....
- Q. Is that enough?
- A. They say that they are going to raise it for me this time, about the 30.....
- Q1 \$30 for the month?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And if families have a lot of children, they get more don't they, they get more food stamps?
- A. Yeah, the old lady, some boys got, you know he has got a lot of grandchildren and one time boys came in and he said that his house burned down and could we help him with some food. And he took some clothes too and I don't know, I don't see him no more, after that.....
- Q. Where do you get your food stamps, at the Chapter House?

- A. Yeah, we go Friday, early.....
- Q. Everybody has a different day to go?
- A. No, there are a lot in the first group and we stay all day there.....
- Q. Oh it takes all day?
- A. Yeah, and we bring our food stamps over at the Trading Post...
- Q. Over at the Torreon Trading Post?
- A. Oh too high.....
- Q. It is pretty high, is he higher than when Gib Grand when he had it?
- A. Higher than Grand was.
- Q. Was his name Gib, where is he now?
- A. From what we understand it, he is in Colorado someplace. I think he has a big store over there. I don't get to see him, somebody told me that that sometime the--he was over here, at the little place, he has got a lot of friends there. Yeah I think that he buys sheep, some sheep.
- Q. His son was killed here?
- A. Yeah, a while back.
- Q. When was that, do you remember? His name was 'Hootch' wasn't it?
- A. Yeah, Hootch Grand.
- Q. And he was shot, when was that? Right in the stomache
- A. Right over there, by that fence, by that hill. We could see from here.
- Q. Right up by the road then?
- A. No, by the fence.
- Q. Yes, just off the road there.

A. They try to, this boy to make me witness for him and oh I don't want to get involved--

Q. Yes, you don't want to get involved in it. When was that....

A. 1953 I think!

Q. 1953.

A. These guys, I don't know why they, these guys that I was talking, you know Henry Castillo.

Q. Yes.

A. He got in jail right away and he fell and he got scared. One time I say I come up and up the road, I have to water the horse about two or three miles from there and somebody stopped me on the road, big truck, pick up. I think that was Gib, he come out and shake hands and.....

Q. He is still your friend though?

A. And he told me, where is this man? He is home. I told him, he run away.

Q. Henry is your brother isn't he?

A. Half-brother.

Q. He is your half-brother?

A. I got another brother too.

Q. Did they have a trial for Henry?

A. That is what I heard.

Q. Where was that, where was that held?

A. In Albuquerque and then in Santa Fe.

Q. Oh, in Albuquerque and then in Santa Fe. And did he have to go to jail for that?

A. Yes.

- Q. What did they call that murder or self defense or, I wonder if Hootch tried to pull a gun on him or something. Did Hootch have a gun?
- A. Somebody say that he has a gun, I don't know how they know that. And I think he got 45 buy this Henry he got 22.
- Q. Yes, that is what he sot him with. What did they do, just have a fighting up there, or what? They were just mad at each other.
- A. They were fighting from here I think. There was him and one guy named John, and this Peter too, he was running the store for Hootch. Hootch was not there at first, I mean Gib, but Gib's wife was running the store too.....
- Q. Hootch was helping her.
- A. So they took Hootch from here and I think in 7 days that is when he die.
- Q. Oh he died, he didn't die right away he died.....
- A. Died in 7 days, and they took him to Gallup someplace.
- Q. And then he died there.
- A. He was driving, I don't know what you call it, like this kind, I don't know, it was the old times, long time ago.
- Q. Well was Hootch bad to the people around here?
- A. No, he.....
- Q. It was just between him and Henry then?
- A. Cause you know at that time no job and we have to, you know that over there, so he was helping and then he got a lot of sheep there. And then I think he was helping and I don't know, he has got another daughters, I think that he is still got a trading post at Fort Defiance, on the other side.

Q. Is this Gib's daughter? or Hootch's?

A. Gib's

Q. How old was Hootch?

A. 21

Q. Twenty something?

A. Yes.

Q. He didn't have a wife.....?

A. He had a wife but you know.....I don't know just how long he had been married.

Q. So that was 1953? How long did Henry have to go to jail? Years, do you know?

A. About a year I think and then he come out. And his father he was happy you know, that.....I don't know how many they pay over there, so he come out.

Q. Any chapter meetings lately?

A. Where?

Q. Do you have chapter meetings here every month?

A. Yeah, I think on the 2nd they will have one, they said something. They have another job just for those guys and it will be about the 16th.

Q. Do you go to all the chapter meetings?

A. No, I go to church, but I will go this time.

Q. Do they talk about the problems that they have at the chapter meetings and.....?

A. What they need....

Q. What is the biggest problem around here, what is it that they need most, for stamps or what?

- A. More money for, so that they could....buy some stamps. There is supposed to be somebody come up last time, last Sunday, but he didn't come, nobody come, cause I don't know, the guy that lend the money to the people, he didn't come up.....
- Q. He didn't show up?
- A. I don't know what happened....But this spray he come up and from Albuquerque, Jack is his name, Jack or something.
- Q. What is that wire on your hogan? Do you have a radio?
- A. Yeah, I have it there.
- Q. Do you listen to it a lot?
- A. Oh once in a while, I usually listen to KFT.
- Q. From Albuquerque?
- A. From California.
- Q. Oh you get it far away?
- A. Yeah, I don't know what happened to this guy, the one that always plays music.
- Q. You like to listen to it?
- A. He always play good, but I don't know what happened to him, he don't play anymore. Maybe he go to another station no?
- Q. Probably did, probably did.....You have been reading this Indian book, have you met a lot of other different Indians, besides Apaches and Arapahoes.
- Q. When you were in the Army did you meet.....
- A. I just met some Sioux.
- Q. You met some Sioux when you were in the Army, any other kinds that you have met?
- A. A lot of kinds, Apache too.

Q. Yes, Apache.....

A. All over.....

Q. Have you ever met any Ute Indians, Utes from Utah and Colorado?

A. No, I never have.

Q. How about dances, have you ever been to any of the pueblo dances?

A. Pueblo?

Q. How about Jemez?, have you ever been to any of the pueblo dances?

A. No. I know that, I understand that the women in the pueblo Indians, the Indians, the Medicine Man, the Navajo usually hire him, but one day he got killed over on the highway, that is what I heard.....

Q. When was this?

A. Frank was his name, Frank.....

Q. Where was he from?

A. Jemez, he usually come around, but.....

Q. Did you know him?

A. Yeah, I know him, we were old frineds.....

Q. Oh he was?

A. Yeah, he come to go here and go there, he make, he make....he was a Medicine Man. He was telling me one time, if anybody gets sick or somthing that he could make with some medicine over here and you don't have to pay money?

Q. What sheep?

A. Goat or mutton, or money.....He drinks too much.

Q. Does he?

A. Yeah, but one time, he said that he come over and stop, oh it was about many year's ago. He camein and stopped over here, he walked, he don't have no ride, he just walked.....

Q. From Jemez?

A. He said that he went to Cantada, he come that way.....

Q. And he walks?

A. Yes, he carry bag.....

Q. Medicine? Then he cures people along the way?

A. Yes, that is right. I told him, how much you make, I told him. Oh if they are my friend you know sometimes a bracelet or a ring or....and sometimes he say sheep or something, but I have no truck so I just have to.....

Q. Walk.....

A. Walk sometimes, that is the way I heard it.

Q. You know all the Medicine men around here, don't you? Most of them?

A. Yes.

Q. Apache Pinto, he is a Medicine Man, isn't he?

X. Yes, I understand he went to Crownpoint, someplace.

Q. Oh, he isn't there now.

A. I don't know where he is, maybe he.....

Q. Well we will have to talk to him sometimes, you know him don't you?

A. Yeah, I know him.

Q. Is he pretty old?

A. Yes, he is pretty old, and same with this Juanito....he can't hear, I talk to him but he can't hear.

Q. What is his last name?

A. Sandoval, where does he live?

Q. He used to live way down there, but I talk to him, he can't hear.

Q. Can't hear anything.....?

A. He says that he is sick. I don't know about this other guy, Henry Castillo, lives over there....

Q. Emeliano Castillo?

A. Yes, I was over there one time with a missionary.....

Q. Not at home?

A. He was eating Peyote.

Q. Do they do that around here?

A. Yeah some guys.

Q. Where do they get their peyote?

A. Arizona.

Q. Arizona?

A. Yes, bad no?

Q. Is that what they say, it is bad? Are they supposed to use it, isn't it part of the religion?

A. No, that is what I heard but a lot of people don't like it. It can't cure nothing, I don't know. I never took it.....

Q. Does the Tribal Council like it?

A. They are the ones, Raymond Naakai.

Q. Does Raymond Naakai use it?

A. That is what I heard.

Q. Did you hear that.....

A. He is awful.....

Q. You don't like him, huh?

A. Some don't like him, I like him, he don't, he is the chairman and a lot of guys don't like him, they say, peyote, peyote, peyote  
Bad no???????

- Q. Yes, I didn't know that nobody took it around here though?  
They must, somebody must sell it to them from Arizona?
- A. Somebody say that a colored fellow.
- Q. Who?
- A. Colored people.
- Q. Do they?
- A. That is what I heard, I don't think so.
- Q. I don't know, don't know. What do the Navajo people think of the colored people, do you.....?
- A. I think they are all right. I was in Gallup on time and they talked to me, and I said, I think some of them were married to Navajo girls and they answered--my father is a Navajo you know. The way I heard that one colored, he was, I think he was Medicine Man, learned from his father.
- Q. Colored Medicine Man, huh?
- A. Yeah,
- Q. Yeah, from Gallup, huh?
- A. I think his father is a Navajo, so he learned it. I don't know how he learned it, he talks like.....
- Q. HE TALKS Navajo?
- A. Yeah, he said, that he learned it from his Daddy.
- Q. Then his mother was colored and his daddy was Navajo?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. And he was in Gallup then?
- A. Yes, I have seen a lot of them. I know that one time I was at Torreon mission and I see color come in. He said where you from I say where you from and he said that he was from Albuquerque. And he is looking for somebody, him and one white, I don't know

if they were fixing car or pick-up or something. He must know how to...~~si~~...they drink too much.....

Q. Who the colored people?

A. Yeah.

Q. Is that what the people think?

A. No, I know this missionary told me, I don't know I said, he said that a lot of missionary come and you know, they come from California those college, you know. What do they call them, riot or something.....

Q. Riots?

A. Yeah, awful no? Riots.....

Q. You must have been in with a lot of colored people in the service, weren't you?

A. Yeah, there were some. You know ~~let~~ me tell you something, we were coming back from Fort Bliss you know and this we got discharged and ~~one~~ colored got discharged and him and me we went to someplace to drink in a bar, that place in there. He had money to pay for it, he had money and we stopped in there, at the counter you know, like that. We sat down, no we don't get to order, we get out. They don't serve colored!

Q. This was in Texas?

A. Yeah.

Q. Fort Bliss?

A. Around Texas. And so, they gave me some drinks right there, and my buddy was outside. So I told him, he wanted some sandwich, he got another cafe outside, and he got another place, so we went there, they don't let him. I don't know why.....

Q. What did you think of that?

A. He wear uniform and all of that.

Q. It bothered you huh? So you didn't like that, did it bother you?

A. So I had to buy him, he gave me the money and I buy him sandwich.

Q. Take it out to him.....

A. So then we went downtown and I don't think they let me go in there again, so he gave me the money and I buy it.....

Q. Did they ever do that to the Indians, did they ever not let you come in someplace?

A. No

Q. Just colored?

A. I know that, during the, you know the, like the President, they don't press the law at that time, the territory, and I was in Wyoming so I go in there with my uniform. And to buy those Cheyenne's what do you call it, the ones where the Indians living over there?

Q. Where?

A. Cheyenne.....

Q. Cheyenne Indians, yes.....

A. Used to buy and they gave me the money.....

Q. But they weren't supposed to sell liquor to the Indians, were they?

A. No, I don't know what happened to me, cause I was wearing uniform. So I went and come up.

Q. But.....a lot of drinking around here. Henry have a wife?

A. No, no wife.....

Q. Never married huh?

A. No.

Q. Does he work all the time or.....?

A. No.

Q. He had a job once over at the mine, didn't he, the gold mine?

A. Yeah, but it is kind of cold he said. I understand that someone tried to start the, you know, from Torreon, you know where that school is (??????) is, they are going to try to start, they are going to start this year they said, make a highway to Crownpoint.....

Q. From Torreón to Crownpoint?

A. Yes, where that lake, goes to Chaco Canyon, they are going to build that, they are going to build that highway to Crownpoint.

Q. They are going to pave it you mean?

A. Yeah. Somebody told me that.....

Q. The pipeline.....?

A. No, this other one, by the mission.

Q. Oh, the pipeline by the mission?

A. They are going to work on that highway too, you know that highway, they are going to make a big highway too.

Q. Will they have the money--it will be good!

A. They must have a lot of money too, no?

Q. The state does. Well they need a highway. Does most of the people around here have pick-ups or cars?

A. Yeah.

Q. Most of them do?

A. And if they don't pay, they take it away, you know what I mean.

Q. Don't pay for the pick-up?

A. Yeah, they take it away.....

Q. You don't like to drive.....? You.....?

A. No, I tried to learn from my niece one time, I know how to, this one, put it down.....

Q. The gas pedal?

A. Yeah, what do you call it?

Q. This is the brake, to make it stop.....

A. She tried to help me but you know on a corner I was turning around.....

Q. You turned around on a corner?

A. Oh yeah, I went on the dirt and I almost turn over.....

Q. That was it, no more.....

A. No more, I told her. So now I can't drive no more.....

Q. Scare you huh? Better to have horses and wagon, huh?

A. Yeah. I bring my water yesterday too.

Q. Where do you get your water, the lake?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you take your wagon and some barrels?

A. Yeah, and I understand that at the chapter meeting they were talking about, I didn't go, but my niece go, and they said that they told us that they are sometimes the tribe is going to buy a big truck and if anybody needs water, they will go from hogan to hogan.

Q. Well you have to buy the water.....?

A. \$1.

Q. But for how much though?

A. I don't know, all you want and then you pay \$1 for gas, that is all.

Q. For the gas. What do you keep your water in, do you have a big barrel?

A. I don't know, mine I have on the side. You know one time I was working for an oil man, down that way, a couple of year's ago He got me, I was still living here, he got me just this guy I was working for he talked Navajo.....

Q. Did he?

A. Yes, he is the one that, used to marry over here, Navajo. He talked to us, he talked to me in my own language. Oh smart man.

Q. Oil man huh?

A. Yeah, and then I went over and got a blanket and went over there, and he told me all you do is watch, you don't have to work. So I stayed there.

Q. And he paid you too?

A. Yeah, he got a lot of grocery there. He told me that everytime that I work that I come back that he pay, he did pay. After that you know I was living in a tent, a big tent, waterproof tent you know. And I don't know what happened I was watching tools and other place when there.....

Q. The tent burned down?

A. Yeah, burned, burned complete.....

Q. Lost everything huh?

- A. Yeah, over there they used to have store you know where the bar is the Stag Bar, used to have a store and I talked to lady over there. Oh yeah, burned down huh. I am friend, I give you some plates. There was no bar that time just a store. And so I helped him with the plates,....right then.....I told him, can you call in Cuba or someplace, this man he was in Albuquerque, He called, the next day this man come.....
- Q. He brought you some things.
- A. Yeah, he told me to leave it there, trailer, it was a trailer. He told me move it and forget about it.
- Q. How long did you live in this hogan, a long time?
- A. A long time, it belonged to somebody, but we moved in here.
- Q. Then you didn't build it?
- A. No, somebody else.
- Q. Pretty big hogan, isn't it, a lot of room it has?
- A. And we stay over there, for quite some time. And after we got through he gave us a trailer, another guy want that one. So another guy hire me at another place, he was from Aztec, he was a good man. I worked for him there. One night he took me down to his place, down at Aztec, this guy, he took me right into his home, good man.....He said do you want some home made stuff, he said, by golly!
- Q. Pretty nice fellow huh?
- A. Yeah, he don't have to tell me nothing, you know I just do this and that, but he say you are doing all right.....
- Q. Don't work too hard, huh?

- A. Yeah, he gave me some home made dinner, and he came in the room and stayed there, next day we come back to his place. He raise a lot of pumpkin too.
- Q. Is that right?
- A. Oh my!
- Q. Do you like those, what do you do with them?
- A. We eat them.....And then he gave me the bed too.
- Q. The bed?
- A. Yeah, he was a pretty good guy. So we work for him for about another week right there. That was the last time I saw him I don't know what happemed to him, I wonder if he is still living/
- Q. Hewas an oil man, huh?
- A. Maybe he went places, right?
- Q. Could be.....?
- A. And now he has got a good place there, he got a ranch too, got a cow sheep and goats, and milk the goats. He has got a lot of neighbors living there. You know one time I was in Cuba, too, colored man, he come up to me, he came, he was hitting everybody for money, selling some cigarette certain kind. And he said, buy cigarette. And I said, no, I don't use it, I told him.
- Q. They are no good for you.
- A. He was outside you know. He had some money, but I just gave him a quarter. Help him out, He said, thank you.....
- Q. Does anybody make blankets around here anymore, Ray? That you know of, you don't know anyone that makes blankets.....
- A. My niece used to make them, but she don't make them no more... On account of that she has little baby.

Q. Does anybody around here make anymore?

A. No, not yet, maybe pretty soon.

Q. Pretty soon, huh?

A. During the shearing time.....

Q. But you don't know of anybody specially that makes them?

A. No, I don't, woman, but I don't think they make....Old lady used to make too over here, but he gave to missionary.

Q. This lady up here?

A. Yes.

Q. To an old man?

A. Yes.

Q. She is pretty old, isn't she?

A. Yes.

Q. Eighty something, 80 year's old?

A. How long are you going to be at.....

Q. What do you do around here when somebody gets sick?

A. When somebody gets sick? You mean real sick?

Q. Yes, who do you go to, the missionary? Do you take them into the doctor?

A. Crownpoint.....

Q. How about in Cuba where the Health Center is?

A. Somebody said that we have to pay, I don't know.....

Q. At the Health Center?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you ever get sick out here.

A. No.

Q. You are pretty healthy, huh?

A. I think so, I don't know.

Q. But the missionaries will take them, do they have a car or truck or something?

A. They have got a pick-up, they have a big one, and a little one.

Q. They are pretty good up there, and somebody told me that the Medicine men are scarce.....Too old or what?

A. I don't know, those young Navajo, they don't learn nothing.

Q. They don't want to?

A. Just like the other day you know, my mother, she paid \$2 for a medicine man and he is from way down there, just south of Chapter House and he told me to take his bag in the hogan, this side he said, don't go right straight, you know go to hogan like here?

Q. Yeah.

A. Go about one time like here and then take it inside so I went in there.....

Q. Did it make her better?

A. No, they have to sing in there, then he told me to get some arrowhead he told me. So I bought an arrowhead for him and then the woman is sitting right here and this Medicine Man is sitting right there and he told me to get some calico and arrowhead and put it right here. And so he start and she put it into this.....

Q. Just straight up, huh?

A. Yeah, he got that, what do you call that? Oleo--or with the yellow corn meal, what do you call it?

Q. Corn meal?

- A. No, the other kind, it says something, that if you put Oleo over here, over here.....
- Q. It isn't like butter is it?
- A. Like that.....
- Q. Margarine, oleo.....?
- A. No, no from corn...Any Indian they got that kind. They start singing and they talk to the sun.
- Q. Two dollars, huh?
- A. Yeah, that is what he said. Who is that man coming?
- Q. He is coming pretty fast, isn't he?
- A. Finally he told me to get some ashes, from the fire, no. Put it over here, around here. And then we got the, we started singing. Oh we got some arrowhead too, he give me one to use it. Just 3 of us.....
- Q. You and him and.....?
- A. Apache too. He stay in there for, I don't know how many hours we stayed there.....
- Q. Long time, huh?
- A. Yeah, just for \$2.....
- Q. Two dollars, was he pretty good?
- A. Yeah, good no?
- Q. Yeah for \$2 that sounds pretty good. Do you mean that some day there won't be any more Medicine Man. What happens when the old Medicine Men die? Do you have young ones?
- A. The youngs ones are supposed to learn.
- Q. Do you suppose they will, will they want to?
- A. No, I think some of the young men they are doing all right.....

- Q. How do you get to church, do they come and get you?
- A. Yeah, they come and get us and we all go in there.....
- Q. The dog goes too? Every Sunday?
- A. Every Sunday yeah. You know I was talking to this other welfare fellow, and he told me that. When are you going to have a squaw dance? I told him maybe this summer. I would like to see one, I said. I think they are interesting. He said, if those missionaries come, they don't have to make you go to church he said, you just have your own religion he said.....
- Q. Well they don't make you go to church do they?
- A. No.
- Q. You don't have to go if you don't want to?
- A. How about in Albuquerque, do people have to go to church? Regularly or what?
- Q. If they want to, they don't have to, just when they want to go.
- A. If they don't want to go.....
- Q. They just don't go.
- A. What is that over there?
- Q. Sheep.
- A. You mean those Indians with braids?
- Q. Taos?
- A. Do you know any?
- Q. Do you like them?
- A. There used to be one Navajo married there, down there, one time you know what Taos, they like deer.....
- Q. To eat and.....
- A. You know the Taos, they use those hides.....
- Q. Yes, buckskin.

- A. Same way, that is what they wear around here.
- Q. Their hair.....
- A. What do they call that braid, they cover it. That is for the Indian.....
- Q. You like that, huh?
- A. Yeah, they wear it, you know the Arapahoe Indian, they wear this like an earring.....
- Q. Barring, huh?
- A. Yeah, you know in Africa they do, they wear, I don't know....  
I have heard of them around here.....
- Q. Bone through their nose. Did you read about that somewhere?
- A. Yeah, I have a book over there. Oh, I don't know, they are not scared of snakes, you know they hold them.....
- Q. You don't like snake, huh?
- A. No.

END OF TAP