

## Gary Greaves Oral History Interviews Digitization Project

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#### Jean Crosby Interview

Crosby: --Not really riding in the cars. You go out, you would go to [?inaudible?], you know, we would do anything to get drugs. And then I wouldn't--I started with fraud in the bank and writing checks and robbery, and I did a bunch of stuff like that until I was caught up with--And then they sent me to federal drug rehabilitation, it was for--It was a penitentiary but a drug using program. And I stayed in there 18 months.

Greaves: [?inaudible?] so when you were saying you were taking a drop down, but it wasn't a drop down, it was like--What were you saying?

Crosby: It was a whole new level, I mean it wasn't--I mean--When you're drinking, its cheaper and the people are more close necked--

Greaves: Uh huh.

Crosby: You know, so to speak. So when you don't have it, and someone else has it, they share.

Greaves: Uh huh.

Crosby: But there would be drugs and different things, you had to bring your own, you know. And it was more dangerous too. It was totally more dangerous because you did more dangerous things to get the drugs.

Greaves: Because it was more expensive.

Crosby: Yeah.

Greaves: And so that--Then it was after when you started doing the drugs, that's when you started your frauding--

Crosby: Yeah--

Greaves: Because in other others words, doing like the prostitution wasn't enough.

Crosby: No, oh no, no, no way. And then you didn't want to be bothered with that, because--You was enjoying the drugs too much, you know, and you didn't want to take time off of that so you did something that is going to give you a lot more money, and you didn't have to do it constantly.

Greaves: And did that work for very long?

Crosby: Not very long, it didn't. Ya know, because the more you use the [?inaudible?] [sharp wires], the more you have to use, and the more money you have to get. So you get into a more dangerous position. Because you do more things, and the more, the more step up you get, the more money, so that means the more taxes you're taking with your life.

Greaves: Like what were some of the--What made it more dangerous not-- Not you know legally, but what made it more dangerous personally?

Crosby: Well--

Greaves: --Like what would be the things you have to do.

Crosby: Well, I mean, if you got a--If you get into a robbery of a person, you can get killed.

Greaves: Yeah.

Crosby: And if you robbery up a home, they have a right to shoot you because--Ya know, that's why they're dangerous, dangerous of getting killed. It's more of getting killed than the other stuff.

Greaves: So then, that was the first--When you went in--When you were in the penitentiary there, that was really the first program you had ever been on, right?

Crosby: Yeah. Didn't know anything about the program.

Greaves: And--And how did you--How did you respond..well I'll do whatever they want, you know--What were you thinking, you know, when you went on it? Or did you want to get better then or what, I mean--

Crosby: I--I didn't want to get--I didn't want to stop using, but I wanted things to be better, so I could use. See I was just all mentally disabled. Ya know because it turns you all the way around, you know, like the way you're thinking is just, just really screwed up. And--the thing of it was, I had been in so many little towns doing so much illegal stuff, and so when they did catch up with me, they had to take me through all these little towns, and I had to do [?inaudible?] the time, and then when I get back here, they're nice in the big town. Ya know, I was in the county jail downtown, thats in the old one [?inaudible?]. And so, I got state and federal time to do. And what they did was, whoever got there first--The state got there first, I would've had to do the state and then the federal. But being the federal got there first, they combined and I did all federal--

Greaves: So in other words, so you would like go to like--Go to--Or you'd go

Crosby: Even to Portland.

Greaves: Portland--To commit a crime. And why would you go that far?

Crosby: Well if it gets too close here where you feel like you're in more danger than what you would be for the amount of money you were going to get then we'd run out to the outlying areas and different places--Change the geographical area.

Greaves: Yeah. So what happened from that--From that program you were in, in jail.

Crosby: In the--They sent--They flew me from here to Kentucky.

Greaves: That was 19--

Crosby: That was '69. But I was doing--All these other little places, I guess I was there maybe about almost a year doing all the outlying places. Until they brought me back and I had to [?inaudible?] here, because they had been trying to [?inaudible?]. But, they flew me there, I decided that--Ya know, I was [?inaudible?] in my head, because I hadn't had anything for months, you know--A year, and so when I went there I had to get my mind to get into some type of [?inaudible?] or something. So I finished [typing] school, and back to the choir, and we would go out--They would allow us out the penitentiary to different places to sing and then I would be on the program each time we had something like Valentine's Day, New Years, Christmas--

Greaves: Yeah?

Crosby: I was always on the program--But those things, it cuts your time down.

Greaves: You a good singer?

Crosby: Pretty good--

Greaves: Yeah?

Crosby: I still think--Yeah

Greaves: Good.

Crosby: Pretty good singer, you know. And--And, God, I had to mess that up too. [?inaudible?] and he was a total alcoholic. And so they started bringing in a--They had drugs there and stuff--

Greaves: Met a guy in prison?

Crosby: Huh?

Greaves: Met a guy in prison?

Crosby: Yeah. They had drugs and other stuff coming in, but--

Greaves: You couldn't avoid it?

Crosby: I avoided it then. But then when it comes to the alcohol--And then I started drinking in there, you know. And it was so--It was terrible because, you know, we would have dances and dinners and picnics and stuff like that. And the guards would be right there, you know, glance as we would pass a bottle of wine at the table I was sitting at. And I was so nervous, I dropped it. Broke it. I got up and cleaned the stuff up, and nobody was reprimanded or anything. Of course! They were bringing it in! Ya know, to the prisoners. Ya know, and I met all kinds of singers, jazz singers, guys with bands--Played in a band--

Greaves: Yeah?

Crosby: --That got hooked up on the drugs--Lots of all kinds of people there, that's what they send you to. And when you got out of the [drug and alcohol] programs, and you--When you get out there--Happen to find a job and you're there all the week, you have meetings and--You had urine tests every--I think it was three times a week. You had meetings five times a week. And then you had a job. And they check the place of living where you're living, that you're drug and alcohol free. And the fact I got to see my children [?inaudible?]. The parole officer told me that every--Each time I would ask, she'd tell me "no", you know. And then last time, she told me, "Well I don't"--She don't even know if I could do that, and if I did it would be a year or two till I proved myself, before I could even see them, you know. And I'm right here in the same time zone--I got fed up, you know. I just used that excuse, I know now, and now when some guys at--That was going to California, asked me if I wanted to go, you know, and I got--I got in with him and they had drugs, and I went down to California [?inaudible?].

Greaves: So, how long were you in California?

Crosby: Probably 16, 15 years.

Greaves: Oh wow, so that was like early 70's through the 80's--

Crosby: 70's. Right, about a month after I got out of--No, 6 months after I got out of the penitentiary.

Greaves: So then in 1987 you came back here?

Crosby: '86.

Greaves: So how, in that space of time, how have things changed...in Seattle? What'd you notice that changed?

Crosby: Um--

Greaves: Were streets even the same?

Crosby: The streets and the mountains were the same. All the people I knew, most of them, were in the penitentiary or they had died--Or they had changed and gotten into programs, and are doing great--Great jobs and everything. So the whole--Everything had changed. Of course there were still a lot still out there, you know. [?inaudible?] still out there.

Greaves: But like, a lot of the--What, did you notice a lot of the [?inaudible?] were gone and--

Crosby: Yeah, the--The whole--The whole area had changed. They didn't have, you know, the freeways and things that--Ya know they didn't have all those, the buildings, a lot of the buildings had been torn down and new ones put up. The whole--The whole Seattle had changed for me, you know, it was just--I just saw [?inaudible?] landmarks you know. But most of them had been torn down for the better.

Greaves: Why did you come back?

Crosby: I feel now that I was meant to come back here. I thought at that time that I would want to be here. The children, my father, he was really sick. But then, I was still using. Still using. And, he died. And I never got to go to the funeral because I was in jail. They didn't get me out.

So I used that as a resentment when I got out to start using again. And they put me into a--Into an outpatient program, and I lasted there a hot minute.

Greaves: Where was that?

Crosby: That was at THS, Therapeutic Health Services.

Greaves: And what--And what--And so that was in '86?

Crosby: That was in '87 because I used all of '86. The last part of '87.

Greaves: So how were you living there? Did you have enough money to have a place to stay? Were you out on the streets? Did you have jobs?

Crosby: When I came back, I was staying with my father. And then I moved out of there and I moved in with a lady that was selling--They were selling drugs in the house [?inaudible?] and everything. And then moved from there, I moved to Tacoma with my oldest daughter.

Greaves: Uh huh.

Crosby: And then, I got there by [?inaudible?], so I was there with them. You know, doing the same things I was doing before. And then I left there, and came back here and then I started [hitting jails]. I started getting really sick, physically. When--I [failed] the treatment--Outpatient treatment program there, they turned it over to my [?inaudible?]. And so, I was taken off as a [?inaudible?], because I wasn't [performing] and I wasn't in any treatment program or anything like that. And I got so sick, they had to take me to the hospital. And--Even that didn't stop me, you know. Got out of that and started right back, but then they gave me all the ultimatum of going to treatment or no help at all. And so, I decided to go ahead, get cleaned up. I just, oh I knew I was going to be out in 28 days, and be healthy again and start all over again. Little to my knowledge, I didn't know that that's when the change started coming. Because I had been in and out of treatment programs, you know all those years and I was never really changed [stuff]. And, I had [sent] it--I had a great counselor. She's still in my support now. She--

Greaves: And who's that? Was that--

Crosby: Her name is Margarette Johnson. She's a counselor at [?inaudible?]

Greaves: Oh, okay. You went to [?inaudible?].

Crosby: Yeah--

Greaves: '88?

Crosby: That was in '88. They didn't think I was going to make it out of there medically. They gave a 7-day probation. I did 7 days, and I had signed out for an extension, and on the 10th day, they had to come get me in an ambulance. I was just totally sick. And [?inaudible?], my liver and kidney--Everything was just messed up. And it got to where I had to use a wheelchair, I couldn't walk back and forth. They didn't think that I was going to really make it. You know, I was so--Messed up.

Greaves: Was that withdrawal, or...

Crosby: That was withdrawal and how I had been treating my body over the years, you know. Plus due to my age, everything was catching up. And I never took care of myself, whatever happened it didn't happen, I covered over it with either alcohol or drugs. And I just got broken down, I couldn't do anything. But, during that period of time, you know, I--I got familiar with the program. I trusted this one person, you know, because I didn't trust anybody--Man, beast, [woman], nobody. And, I started getting up from under this cloud, you know, with the drugs and everything. I started studying, and I wanted to quit. I wanted to be free of the drugs and alcohol. And the more I started trusting people, the more I did for others, the better I got. You know, and spiritually--I got the spiritual part of the program too. And that's what really turns me--Turned me around.

Greaves: That actually happened pretty quick didn't it? I mean considering--You had been out on the streets for twenty years.

Crosby: More than that, yeah.

Greaves: Yeah.

Crosby: About twenty--About twenty five I would say.

Greaves: And so you think--You think that one of the most important things is just really having a good counselor, because you had other counselors you been through, other programs.

Crosby: Oh yeah

Greaves: So it was just the person--Why--Why do you think that your counselor was so good? Just because the counselor worked for you? Or--

Crosby: No, because I wanted to stop. I really wanted to be free of the drugs and alcohol. I became willing to be helped, you know, to reach out and ask for that. And to trust whoever I was reaching out for which is my counselor. Then she told me about her background because she's--She's a recovering addict. And she told me about her background and you know I didn't feel like that--It--When she told me about her background I felt that I could trust her to talk about what was going on with me then.

Greaves: Yeah.

Crosby: Other than the drugs, you know. I was keeping the drugs and the drinking--I had never left. I [?inaudible?]--I conveyed to her--I had never told anyone. And so, then I trusted my other person and I asked her to be my sponsor but between the two of them--Working with them and doing the program, and getting more in tune with my higher power [?inaudible?] God. Those two things did it for me.

Greaves: So your sponsor--Was your sponsor...just a person out in the community then?

Crosby: She was also a counselor out there--She was the trainee counselor out there, she was also a recovering addict.

Greaves: And so--I mean that's--That's something you could say completely different than you know...you go back and go back. Even if they had [?inaudible?] there was people helping-- People who had had problems are helping people--

Crosby: Mmhmm.

Greaves: --With problems. So really they were--They'd be the best people to understand and...

Crosby: Yeah, when you have--See it has to come from [?inaudible?] that you want to try--That you want to stop, change your life. [?inaudible?] change. You know, you can't hold onto anything in that past, you go back to it and that way you start blaming and distrusting people in it. You have to change your life completely, you have to let go of all the people that you were around, you know. You have to stop the contact with them until you are stable and strong enough, where you can offer your help. And--But you--The spiritual part of the program, you have to get across--The first few steps are the most crucial steps in the 12 step program. And if you don't get those, you're going to keep going back out, you know, it can last maybe about 10 years. And they call you [dried runt] there, because you're just not [?inaudible?]. You're doing the same things but you're just not drinking you know, or drugging. And so if you haven't worked on yourself, which is the hardest thing to do, then you repeat the same thing and expect different results, it don't work that way.

Greaves: So how did you get involved with--At the center?

Crosby: The conference center I had to have my--I didn't have anyone I could trust to be my [payee] from--Because I had gotten back on SSI. So I didn't have anyone that I could depend on to be my [payee] because the [payees] I had in the past had misused me you know. And I end up owing the government because of some money that they had gotten that I didn't know about--

Greaves: So who [?inaudible?]? How did you find out about the center?

Crosby: It was someone out there in the program.

Greaves: Yeah?

Crosby: I think it was one of the directors or something, they--

Greaves: It was just pretty much around that issue with you needing help to take care of your money.

Crosby: Yeah. I did, because I didn't know how to manage it you know.

Greaves: And then, did they help you get to this place then?

Crosby: Yes, they helped me--Before I got out, they helped me get together and go out to the [?inaudible?]. You know, and get all the paperwork done and all of that and I wrote a letter in about my getting out of treatment, and what I couldn't be around because of the drugs and the alcohol and [?inaudible?] people. I needed to be in a quiet place you know, because this was crucial to my just getting out. And so, they had two places that I could've taken and I chose this one. Because it was way away from anything else.

Greaves: It's really working out eh?

Crosby: Oh yeah. When I pulled in here, I didn't--The only thing I had was some [plants] that--Because I used to work [?inaudible?] for a while. All I had was the plants and the clothes on my back when I moved here in my apartment over there...and [?inaudible?] and then I got all the support I had, you know. Each one [told one]--Each one brought something to the place--

Greaves: --The table

Crosby: Yeah the bed, the mattress, just everything, literally everything you know. Covers, and the drapes was already in there and stuff like that, but just literally everything.

Greaves: It would have been really impossible to do it without their help--

Crosby: Couldn't have done it.

Greaves: Couldn't have done it.

Crosby: No, no way.

Greaves: Its like the [?inaudible?] gets to a point and then they have to have had--

Crosby: And see I wasn't used to asking for help you know. I always do it myself, that's how I messed up you know. And I was always--Didn't want to ask anybody for something that--I thought that they didn't want to be bothered, they didn't want to help and I just--I familiar with not helping, doing it on my own. And that's how my life kept getting worse and worse. Because the people I was with [?inaudible?] and we were all messed up. All messed up. They only kind of bond we had then was with use and it wasn't anything close [?inaudible?], you know. It just--You were just out there.

Greaves: So what--What are the kinds of helping and who were the people that helped you--You were all the people who helped you with getting here?

Crosby: Um, there were the director--Of CPC, I went to here and talked to her about finding a place and about getting back on SSI. Well see, you had to go through your accounts with her and then you meet with a panel, and then they ask you what you have in mind to do and if they could help you, and that's how you get help with all of these things. You don't know what you're doing, you don't know how to go about anything or who to see, or what to say or anything. And so that's another problem that helps you reach out to people in authority and not be--Not hate the authority, or not misuse them you know. Go in a--With honesty, you know which I know nothing about being honest, [I thought it was being with a gang]. You had to be [?inaudible?] so that's how when you're getting out--Before you get out, maybe [three] months before, you start working on how you're going to live outside, what you're going to do. And so things have been getting better and better the more I get involved with other people.

Greaves: What kind of setbacks have you had since you came in, have there been some or no? Has it been pretty much--

Crosby: As I say, the setback I had was not knowing how to manage my money even though I had a sponsor. I was getting things and think that I was going to have enough money to pay for them, and I would get in debt and I kept repeating that over and over until I finally got help with--



You know you can't live beyond your means and you have to know how much you have and what you can afford. even though it may be something you need, you may not be able to get that, you know. But you have to be--Accept where you are.

Greaves: That [essential] habit, you never knew how to do that?

Crosby: No! I just went and did it, you know, because it wasn't a matter of not being able to get any money. And I thought that's how things should be even though I started out working--

Greaves: So did you work with Susan then or...? Or who's your [?inaudible?] there?

Crosby: Now it's changed. I'm at CPC now.

Greaves: Oh, you're at CPC.

Crosby: It's a whole different thing I have a case management team.

Greaves: Great.

Crosby: [They've been able to stay]. [?inaudible?] help myself. But I have more of--I'm helping myself more.

Greaves: So you still have some kind of contact with [?inaudible?] at all?

Crosby: No, I don't have any contact with them.

Greaves: Yeah.

Crosby: Unless there was some papers that got sent there instead, like that. That was the only contact I had.

Greaves: It's okay isn't it?

Crosby: Yeah.

Greaves: You like the--You like Cedar Hills? You don't want to you know--

Crosby: You have to grow--That's a form of growing you know. Each step I take is growth [rather than going back]. You know, so now I'm managing more of my life now. With this [change]...than I ever had. And it feels good! You know.

Greaves: Right.

Crosby: I found my oldest daughter...and I found out that I've got three grandchildren, and I spent Christmas out there with them, you know.

Greaves: [?inaudible?].

Crosby: First Christmas. And the only time I [?inaudible?] is Thanksgiving night when I came in, there was a [call] saying that expect a call from [Kim] and I knew right away, you know, but I was--I just--It had been so long, you know. So I just could hardly believe it.

Greaves: [?inaudible?]

Crosby: Yes it is. Problem is though, my oldest daughter, she ran in my footsteps. So there's nothing I can do, that hurts but it was [?inaudible?] for my sobriety. So I had to learn to detach, you know. It's really [?inaudible?]. And I had to get rid of the guilt of not being in there when she was [going up].

Greaves: She's still in the bad [sect] over [?inaudible?].

Crosby: Yeah. She's still [?inaudible?].

Greaves: Well listen, I--I [?inaudible?]. I really appreciate it, that was just terrific.

Crosby: You know I--

Greaves: In a way--In a way I'm always not sure if I'd like to take you through that again.

Crosby: It always helps because it reminds me of the past and the way I am now. You know, how far I've come, you know. And the desire of the drugs and alcohol--It's not there anymore.

Greaves: I think--I think pretty much you take care of yourself now just [talk] to your daughter.

Crosby: I just keep [?inaudible?], but there's nothing else I can do.

Greaves: [?inaudible?]. Anyway, I got to run because my bus transfer is going to [?inaudible?].

Crosby: Uh oh.

Greaves: Got to go back downtown and talk to somebody else.

Crosby: [?inaudible?].