

Liz and Steve Wright (2/5/75)

(How did you meet Bert? How did you come to get acquainted w/him?)

Bert didn't want to come over and talk to Stanovich  
(across the street from them) because he got bad vibrations.  
We met him when he was working out there. He'd drop by oc-  
casionally when he was working nearby. Then Duck showed us  
how to get out there. We started going to see him.  
(Did you learn anything about his childhood?)

He came over here and got a job in the Los Angeles area on a  
dairy farm.

(Do you remember anything about when he worked in Chicago?)  
No, not really. He said he rode the freights a lot. (Know he  
spent time up around Sacramento along the Salinas River).  
Yeah, he said he was on the bum a lot. (What do you think  
he meant by that?) That he was a hobo without a place to  
stay. But after he came here he had a really good life for  
a hobo that didn't want to travel. (In my mind, I really can't  
relate that term to Bert.) But that's how he ~~referred to~~ <sup>considered</sup>  
himself in most of our talks. (Did he ever tell you what made  
him decide to withdraw from community life?) He couldn't  
tolerate the conditions. He didn't have the job here, next  
door for very long -- about a year. He'd say he couldn't  
stand the radio and people drinking wine. But, yes, he'd  
like very much to have a steaming cup of tea. (How long  
have you known him?) Since November '72 (?) (What was it  
abt Bert that made you go seek him out?) I just considered  
him a friend. I liked to talk to him. (Much of this is  
inaudible -- Steve is doing the talking.)b (What did you  
talk about? Did you talk abt politics, religion and all  
those things?) I'll pass. (Did you get a feeling of his  
having any particular commitment?) He enjoyed that lifestyle.  
(Did he play the holy man game w/you?) Yes. He always  
impressed me as doing it tongue in cheek. (That's how he  
impressed me.) (I am convinced though that he was there  
seeking some kind of spiritual growth, because of talks we  
had.) He never voted. (Did you ever find out why?) He  
thought it a waste of time. (He was very well read in philosophers  
and religions, I found.) (Did you ever hear him talk about  
living off the land in the sense that he hunted or fished?)

No. He didn't hunt or fish. He was concerned abt the environment. His way of life was probably better than his childhood. Ten or twelve hour workdays don't leave much time for anything else. He wasn't brought up to have a lot of stuff.

(Liz: I just liked him as a person. I was attracted to him. He was a very likable person. And he was also unique.

He had chosen a lifestyle that was very diffrent and he was sincere about it.) He had everything he needed out there.

He used to say, when I asked him where his toilet was, "A holy man has no need of a toilet." (He said that w/tongue in cheek, undoubtedly.) (What do you think his religious views were?) He was an astrologer. (Inaduable) (It will

be interesting to compare the viewpoints of different people I interview abt bert.) I'm sure he showed different sides of himself to different people. (Liz: He seemed to be very perceptive abt the kind of person he was talking to at the time. He was very opinionated and outspoken about that.)

Hw was cautious about people. (Yes, very.) (He told me many, many times abt how some people bothered him and he wished they'd never come back.) (Did you think he was a gentle man?) Yes. I don't think he was a man of violence in any respect. I once asked him if he had a gun because he was very concerned about security (in the shack). But he didn't. (One person that asked me abt Bert, whenI described him as I knew him, said, Oh, that can't be the same person.

Everyone was afraid of him. I said, That can't be Bert. No body was afraid of him. That's inconceivable to me. She proceeded to tell me abt some man he used to exchange haircuts with. This man clipped his ear and he supposedly went weilding a knife, chasing him all over the dunes, shouting in his great bellowing voice -- and that he did have. So on the basis of that she and people she knew thought he was mentally ill. I told her the Bert I knew, you're not talking abt. (I gave him a haircut once -Steve)( My husband shaved him several times and once he nicked him and Bert cuffed his ears verbally quite soundly.) Bert had a pair of those hand

operated hair clippers. (Gene took his own straight razor & did it.) He used to say the shorter the hair, the less trouble with lice. (Well, if lice were as healthy as mosquitoes out there, he was right. They are swarming arnd the well. Attacked me everytime I went to get water, but I never noticed

when we were sitting in the central area in front of the shack. (Do you remember any anecdotes abt Bert?) (Liz: There were lots of little things, but I don't know that they could be called anecdotes.) (Liz: He was always very aware, was always telling his what was in our hososcope and what to be careful of. He was making references to long haired hippies and things. And here was Steve with long hair. But he always gave all these negative connotations to hippies and I kept telling him, in my own way, that I didn't think he should do that. ) (Do you think he was being straight?) (L: yes, he always lumped them together w/drugs and alcohol. He might just have been jibing Steve because he knew. . . He was always warning us abt our horsoscopes and hippies, booze and pot. (Do you think he had any discriminatory feelings?) (L: I don't know, but he wld talk about people who came out to see him -- if they were hippies, I don't know -- but they were people he didn't particularly care for. They were people who would come out once and not come back again. I don't know if he encountered hippies that way & it left a bad impression or it was just something to do because of the dirty Demoncratic convention in Chicago and hippies were involved. It was either tongue in cheek or he had had some experiences, perhaps.