

*KUED interview with Jan Carlston  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
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*Tell us about your relationship with Bret.*

**Jan Carlston:** Oh, Bret and I grew up together. Our parents were friends and basically we were friends and he was just a little bit younger than I was which was good because otherwise he would've beaten me up or something. But it, really, we were just good friends and did everything. On the weekend, we did a bunch of things together. Going out to his house was always an adventure. And seeing Bret and his train set and things. Because he had stuff that we didn't have and you know, 'cause he was an only child so he was maybe spoiled more than we were but then again, how can you say that, you can't really say that but... he was a good kid. He had to make his own way and that's what he did, so. Growing up with Bret, it was always interesting because we always ran into the same problems. He did things, I did things, we were always "what did you do this week?" And "what kind of trouble did you get into?" And you know, we were both good kids, but not, you know, [Laugh] we were challenges to our parents, we'll put it that way, you know? And he would do what he needed to, but he was just a smart, smart guy.

*Tell us about cars, girls, driving State--get us into that early life.*

**Jan Carlston:** Okay, you know, when we were growing up, we lived in the country. I mean we were out Sandy was long distance from Salt Lake. In fact, to make a phone call from my house to Bret's, it was long distance. So we didn't do that. [Laugh] You couldn't call up Bret on the phone 'cause you had to go through the operator and say, "Number please," and all of that stuff, so it was long distance. And so I would, on occasion, walk from our house, which was seven miles away, over to Bret's house. And this would be like Saturday morning. And then my parents would come out to their house on Saturday night, depending, if we worked it right. And then I could get a ride home. So, I remember one time I walked over there and Bret was over at the stone quarry doing something, a place that cut stone

and did things. And he was, somebody was showing him I mean we were about, maybe 12 or something. And that's when we started doing things. Now girls started about 14, 12, 13, 14, right there. And we both thought girls were pretty neat. But we were both pretty shy at that point. I mean neither one of us talked up, at that point, to girls. Now that changed two, three years later so that Bret was like being pursued by many young ladies. Now I never figured, I was pursued by anybody, but then again, boys never did. You just didn't think, you, you'd... and one, a fellow once told me, he said, "Boys finally start thinking about what girls have been thinking about all year, but that happens in the spring for boys." And he said, so that's, you know, that's just the way it is. Girls go after the boys and boys don't know anything about it until the spring. And then they finally notice some girl that's been sitting next to him and sitting behind him and talking to them, but didn't know it. So junior high, high school. So drag racing. Drag racing. I mean Don Garlits. He was one of our heroes. He was the original guy that held the world record and things like that. He was a drag race driver and if you don't know who he is then you were nobody back in the '60s. And he was the Swamp Rat from Florida and he went all over the country racing. And the old Salt Lake City Raceway, that was just off of North Temple, that was a great place to go. And we'd go there. And there would be regulars. And there would be people from Bret's neighborhood that would race their cars out there and do things. And they would be semi heroes.

*You raced?*

**Jan Carlston:** Oh, we raced, sure. I raced at the Salt Lake Raceway. I blew a clutch up once at the Salt Lake Raceway. And then later, the Bonneville Raceway Park was made, but that was quite a bit later.

*Talk about dragging State.*

**Jan Carlston:** Dragging State Street was all about girls. I mean, what boy didn't want to have the fastest, neatest looking car? Fastest, bestlooking car? And kind of the loudest and this was just getting to the time when you could get car stereos. Mostly it was radios starting then. And the first car stereos weren't out until '63, '64 and they were 4track [Laugh] tape players. I've got some of those. But anyway, 4track tapes. And you'd have

reverberating speakers for your radio in the back. And you'd drive around with the radio tuned up to KNAK and KMUR which were the big radio stations and you'd be listening to Jim Berry and Sandy Gilmore. You know, he went to work for NBC or something later. But anyway, big, big time radio guys. And you knew everybody and Will Lucas and all these people that played the nifty fifty and the top 40. And then KCPX came out and that was the hot station. I mean that just put everybody all the other stations to shame. That was KDYL turned into KCPX Kpix and Sonny and Cher and all those fun things were playing back then. And Bret and I would be playing the radio as loud as we could and he'd be yelling out the window. 'Cause I was older than he was so I could be driving till later, when he got his first really fast car, his '55 Chevy with a 265 and a 3speed on the floor. So, it was a really fast car. But before that, we raced whatever we had and that was really interesting 'cause I had a '57 Ford station wagon that was probably about as fast as the current Volkswagen diesel Jetta. [Laugh] I mean, but we'd race anything and you'd look out the window and you'd see girls and they'd laugh and giggle and you'd try to talk at the stoplights and then you'd cruise next to them and they'd try to say hello. And sometimes you could say hello but sometimes if they were really pretty you could hardly talk to them. And if they knew they were really pretty they wouldn't talk to you anyway. So. And then you'd pull into the driveins and there were four or five driveins on the way. Fred and Kelly's was one and of course the FrostTops and A & W. There was an A & W on 21st South, so, lots of fun. And dragging, you could I mean you're talking Mustangs and things through there. I remember racing a GT 350, that was when I got a I had a fast car and Bret had a fast car and I was in a 427 Ford with a four speed and that was against a GT 350 and don't want to tell you how fast we went, but it was triple digit on State.

*Patrol?*

**Jan Carlston:** Yeah, but you were very careful where you did things. You had to watch and that's not something that you took lightly. No, you knew it was a big problem.

*Talk about skiing and the family.*

**Jan Carlston:** Yeah, Bret and I skied everywhere, and I mean everywhere. In Alta, and Brighton and there was no doubt. We used to ski Majestic. We skied Millicent when it was a single chair. And we skied up to the top of Millicent, then across, there's a peak that looks like the Matterhorn, it's a triangularshaped peak. And you go across and you come down, and you'd come down over to Majestic, clear across it. And sometimes we'd go across the lake. There are lakes up there that would be covered with ice. Sometimes we'd go across the dam itself, figure out how to get across on skis, because they had gates and things you had to worry about. But we would ski all of those. And we had so much fun skiing and we skied every weekend. And a lot of times two days on a weekend. And we grew up skiing. And I've got some of his skis out there. And I've got my old skis, you know? First started out with Cubco bindings and we thought those were slick because they could release in all directions except they kind of didn't. Anyway, I broke my leg early. He didn't break his leg, so he was always kidding me, you know, that I was Long John Silver. [Laugh] But that's the way it was. We skied, Bret, my brother, and all of us skied fast. And I mean, it didn't matter what the snow was like, every good day was we'd always agree every single day in your life was better skiing than any other day. And that was it. And something that Alf Engen said to us once was that, you know, storms are exciting. And when you're skiing and there's a storm, it's even more exciting. So we'd ski in the storms because that was the very best snow. And yeah, this is back when, just in the very beginning of Mount Majestic lodge and the rights and everybody that did the skiing, Kay Smith.

*Talk about Bret's personality. Who was he?*

**Jan Carlston:** [Laugh] Okay, Bret was a guy all the way along. We hunted, we fished, we skied, we got in trouble together. Not a whole bunch, but our parents might not agree, but we did things. He's the kind of guy that you could have at your back and he knew, intuitively things, you know? He was sharp on the uptake and quick. A lot of times quicker than I was. And he wasn't as naive as I was. I thought, "Where did you get this?" But I think he lived in a different neighborhood and he had neighbors, where my neighbors, a lot of people, there were only like two neighbors we had that I

didn't have to walk a ways to, where he had neighbors that were close. And I think he learned a lot from his neighbors where I didn't learn as much 'cause the neighbors were farther away, that kind of thing. And we rode horses together, a lot of horses, a lot of things. I road my horse out to his house and then we'd ride around out there. And then we'd go over to see maybe one of his girlfriends or something on the horse and he'd have me get off so he could go ride up to the girlfriend alone on the horse. And you know, and I'd stand over a ways away and then he'd give the girl, you know, get her up behind him and she'd get to hug him. And you know, that was an exciting thing, you know? Double with a pretty girl was not too bad.

*He was the nicest guy in the whole world, some say.*

**Jan Carlston:** Bret was, Bret was really nice, unless he got really mad. And he got mad sometimes but it took a lot. And his voice would go up a little bit. Because his voice was semideep, you know, medium to deep. But then if he got excited and mad because somebody did something really wrong to him, it would go up. Otherwise, he was just nice and cool. You know, the term at that point was, you know, "Hey, he's a cool dude, he's a cool guy." Didn't use the term "dude" back then, but you know, it was gonna start. And this is before hippies even, so we didn't know what hippies were until later. But they were starting to come in. He wasn't a hippy. He was like Levi's, oxford shoes, suits, and ski clothes. Now, can you believe this, he and my brother and I knit ski caps. And we called them Luigi's. And they were long. Well, basically they had a long tassel and Helen, his mother, would sew the final bits on it for us. But basically you could put it on as a hat, and then you could wrap it around your face to keep the snow away, and to keep you warm. Instead of having to have a scarf and a hat. And so we called those Luigi's and...

*Ha, my Luigi got wrapped up on the rope tow once.*

**Jan Carlston:** Oh, you had to be so careful because you had to keep everything inside your parka. And you have to remember that nylon, when we first started skiing, nylon was expensive. And you would just have a

nylon outer shell. And we would wear multiple sweaters and all kinds of stuff and you would smell like wet wool. I mean that was Snow Pine Lodge, we spent time up there. I mean there was one lift at Alta at that time, and Bret and I skied up, that's the Collins Lift, and then they put in Germana and we were up there like the second weekend Germana was open. With Bret, his father and mother, and all of us together, the whole families, skiing Germana and it was just fantastic. And then we, they'd opened up another trail that came down basically where Sugar Loaf came down and we went back on the second run up, we took it and went back down that way and came down where Albion Basin is now, but there was no Albion Basin lift or anything else, but we came down that way, which was really fun. So we skied everything. And the point was typically, on a race, he was a little lighter than I was, so if we went fast, just tuck down the hill, I would pass him eventually. But he was way more courageous on getting. I'd broken my leg so I was slightly more careful. Not much, but a little. And he was much more adventurous. So sometimes he'd beat me even though I was heavier and could go faster, so.

*No helmet?*

**Jan Carlston:** Oh, no, no, no. Talk about, shoot, no helmets. No helmets, no.

*Give me more of Bret's personality.*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, if you see that ski picture of Bret there and he's smiling. Bret was most always smiling. And we would do things together and we'd always whoop and yell and... you know, it was always fun. That's what we were out to do. I mean it was and that was the thing. And I mean we would always make work fun and that is what it was about. Because you know, we... at that point we couldn't be that serious. I mean, yeah, we got way more serious when Bret got drafted, that was about I don't know whether he got drafted. I never had, you know, I knew that it was happening. And he had a Buick Grand Sport, big nice Buick car that he'd gotten. But then, when he got drafted that all changed. And it was a fast car. It was really quick. And we actually didn't race at that point 'cause [Laugh] we both had cars.



*What was his reaction to being drafted?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, Bret's reaction to being drafted was kind of interesting because he was married by then and that was gonna be a problem. (Bret divorced while serving in Vietnam). And most people didn't realize it, but most of the people that did get drafted in the very beginning, back in the mid60s, '67, '68; they thought it was patriotic to serve their country at that point. And the people who didn't were different, were not, you know, they weren't with the program. And Bret was pretty much okay, I'm gonna get drafted, I'm gonna serve my country, I'm gonna do my duty and I'm gonna do it really well because it's important and it's important to our country. It's the way Bret was, you know, Bret was if he was gonna do it, he was gonna do it really well, and that was the whole point of it. And he was smart enough to keep, you know, to do things. So that was the difference then versus now. I mean we don't have a draft anymore. Then, everybody thought, at that point, that the draft was okay.

*Tell about Helen and Irwin's reaction to Bret going to Vietnam?*

**Jan Carlston:** They were scared. Helen and Ir, going, Helen and Ir's reaction to Bret going to Vietnam was pretty... interesting. They were really proud of him, they were proud that he was going, and they were really proud when he became a... an infantry paratrooper, when he went through that. And then when he became a sniper, they were proud. But they had to be. They had to be proud. And they were scared because people were people they knew were getting killed. It wasn't the same as the wars we're in now, that people were getting killed and they knew people that were killed. And so they were scared but they were proud, extremely proud, and they were always proud of Bret. And since he's the only child, you could pretty much have to figure that you'd take care of things. And they knew Bret would be as good as anybody, possibly better than most at whatever they assigned him. And it was a pretty heartbreaking thing after he was killed, but at the time, it was what he had to do and what they knew he had to do. And Bret was always forward looking. He always was forward looking. What's going to happen next? What's gonna be and they'd always planned that way. When we'd go hunting or places he'd do things

and I'd do things and between the two, he would have a little bit better idea of what some of the game situations were. So he was quick out in the country. He was really good. And a fast pickup on what the surroundings were... really quick. And he had his dog Stubby that was always helping him whenever we'd hunt. That dog would scare up pheasants and ducks and we did pheasant hunting and different things and Stubby the dog would chase I mean that dog would scare up a cow. I mean it wouldn't matter, stubby was fearless. Stubby would go after anything that moved. And Stubby was the nicest dog you'd ever have. And he was just crazy but.

*What breed was the dog?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, beagle cross, I don't know, it was amazing. He was one of the most fun dogs I ever knew.

*What was your feeling for Bret when he was in Vietnam?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well I didn't get Bret going to Vietnam and how I felt about it, I was really afraid for him. But you couldn't afford to be too afraid because that would show in your reactions to him. And I wrote Bret and he wrote back, about how tough it was carrying an 80pound pack in 90-degree heat and 90 percent humidity and slogging through the mud and sleeping out in the open and never taking but one boot off. He'd take one boot off one night and the other boot off the other night. Never take two shoes off at once because you might have to get up in the middle of the night and get going fast. And you couldn't take the time. So that was kind of interesting. And the shooting part, the rifle parts and things like that, we both understood. But getting shot at was something else. And he was good enough at hiding out and doing things like that. I mean we could sneak up on stuff that a lot of people couldn't. So I wasn't worried about that, but things like bombs, boobytraps and that sort of stuff, that scared me to death. Punji stakes, whatever, the sharpened bamboo stakes they'd put in little pits and your foot would drop through and you'd get infections. All of this stuff was we talked about. And, yeah, I was afraid. And it was dangerous. Now a paratrooper, jumping out of an airplane, we used to watch the sky divers out in Cedar Valley and we thought that was pretty cool, but you know, when it's you, I don't know. So yeah, I was a little bit upset about it, but I thought he'd make it.



*Give us a brief snapshot of his parents.*

**Jan Carlston:** Oh, shoot; Helen and Ir were products of the Depression. They both were in high school and maybe started college at the height of the Depression. And that changes you. I mean here, Ir was always; they would always be doing things to earn money because that's what you had to do. And he went to school and went to college and Helen went to college and Helen a female going to college in the '30s was a big deal. It was pretty neat. And she was really smart and quick in business. And she managed businesses. She managed their stores as far as the bookkeeping went. She could do all of that really well. Ir Crandall was a people person, totally. And they both were, because he would manage the general store part of it, she would manage the fountain. They had a fountain with you could get sodas and ice cream and all kinds of things. And he would be the one over there, and maybe with a high school girl or somebody to help. And then they might have one or two other clerks. I mean it was a busy store for a little Sandy confectionary back in those days. And that determined who they were, but they were both athletic and Ir Crandall was a great athlete. He was a student athlete at East High and then in college too. And he knew how to do everything, [Laugh] I mean just a total athletic sort of guy. And that came through to Bret.

*Fun loving people?*

**Jan Carlston:** [Laugh] Yeah, it was hard to ever imagine going over to their house and not hearing lot of laughter. It was really hard. And of course we would have dinner and my brother and my sister and I, we'd be on the little people's table, the young person's table and of course my parents would be over on the other table. And we'd get steak dinners and things and we could just hear them talking and laughing. And then we'd be talking and laughing and we'd be teasing and joking and just doing stuff. It was that kind of an environment. So it was always fun and always something to look forward to because it was always entertaining. As just, you know, as friends, good friends that trusted each other. And that was really, really hard 'cause when Bret died it changed the dynamic a little bit. They were

still funloving and great, but it was there, you could just tell, just a little bit, you know? And Helen... boy, it hit her, I mean that's her only son and he's dead, and that just hit her. And that changed her. And that changed her a lot. But she was still so proud of Bret and what he could do and what he did do. You know, going to see them, we'd almost always well, we always did talk about Bret some and what we did and what fun things happened and you know, what silly things happened and inner tubing down the Colorado Provo River. Inner tubing down the Provo River. We always wore tennis shoes when we did that. Bret, my brother and I, and Bret, Bret had tennis shoes just to tube down the Provo River. And so we had tubes at their place and we'd go talking up the way and go down the Provo River on inner tubes. And we were 10, 12 years old, but we were all real good swimmers, so.

*How did Helen change after Bret's death?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, she... first of all... about the time Bret died she was they had had to move and her whole life had changed because she wasn't running the store as much. But she was actually helping Ir run liquor stores in Arizona. But she wasn't actually employed by them, so it was kind of interesting. She had to do that. And her life changed when Bret died more so because she had time to mull about it and to think about it because she wasn't as busy as she was before. She was busy, but not and that's tough, when you're so used to raising a boy and doing things and you're so proud and then he's taken away and never to return. And you could just see it in her eyes just a little bit and you know, it never... never quite came back the same. She was always fun and she was always she was always good for a quip or a joke or something. And... real quick. Real quick with a, with a quip. But you could feel it. And... Bret being gone I don't know, I got really bitter that Bret got killed. I just got bitter about it all. And it's hard to explain, but... here you've got... you got a guy over there trying to protect people from somebody that wants to make them do everything by the book, everything by the by rote, everything by Ho Chi Minh, you know? He was the guy and everybody all of the north people in the north thought he was wonderful no matter what. He was the crusader against the French. And some of the people in the South. And they were willing to do anything... anything to make that happen. And he said that they that the VC, the Viet Cong and those people would come into villages and kill the leaders just

right off, just bing, bang, you know, they're dead. And then they would capture other people and do things that were just that he didn't even want to talk about. And here they decided to set up a booby trap to kill who knows who, but it had to be somebody and they didn't care who. And I'm just bitter that, that somebody would think that that was a good thing to do. That there are people like that around. And it was it was tough. It was tough. And I'm sure they're still the same way. But that didn't come into our typical thinking as something that was good, you know? And I think Bret even if we were over there, he was certainly there to do good and to help people, not to hurt them, but to help them, and to keep it so that possibly they could do something better. And no matter what the political situation, that's why he was there.

*Did he write you about his only VC kill?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, I talked to him after that. He was back in the States for a little while after he was... after he was... a sniper. It was hard, but it was what he was meant to do and that was one less person that would try to kill him and try to kill his buddies. And if the guy had seen Bret, he would've shot at him. That's Bret could spot moving game. I mean some people have the eye and some people don't. He had a better eye than I did. And he could just see it, and he could snap snap shoot things. I mean he could see deer against a brown background. He could see you know, it was just that... it's what we learned but he was better. I mean he was a good shot. I mean we all [Laugh] we would shoot the bottom out of beer cans at a hundred yards pretty much with .22's. I mean that's just what we did, you know, and no scopes, no you know, scope was expensive, you know? His dad had a scoped rifle but we didn't get to use that.

*Tell me about the very end, hanging out at the cabin and doing puzzles.*

**Jan Carlston:** Well we'd go up to see 'em and we'd cook dinner and have dinner out and they'd have a barbecue right next to a stream and they'd have the barbecue out there and we'd be cooking things and Irk made a great steak he could cook steaks and cook potatoes and you know, add

onions to them and do things. And this is probably... some of the best steak dinners I ever had in my life were there. And we would have chips and dips and salads and just it was a great thing. And they they would put on a good spread and we would bring things too. And Irk, because he was he was on a net tender in World War II, he had to learn to cook. [Laugh] And he'd talk about that once in a while and... it was always fun because we had so many things in common and Irk was... probably more than an uncle to me. He was more like, you know, the father that was there when my father wasn't there. [Laugh] Because he and my father thought pretty much the same way. And there's only one way to do something right, and that was it. And if you don't do it right you're gonna be in trouble. But they weren't Irk and Helen weren't critical people at all. But there was just one way that was right, you know, that was it. You either do it right or you don't do it at all. That's the whole thing. Irk, tough guy, strong. And so is Bret. I mean we tore down a building once. Irk contracted a teardown, Jensen's store, it's now I don't know what it is but it's in Sandy. And we tore that place apart and burned things. But Irk was he was the ramrod behind it.

*In his last years, he and Helen, did they spend them up Provo canyon?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, they would come okay, the winters were in St. George or Washington County I guess. And the summers would be at Vivian Park. Not always because after a while they didn't drive back and forth a lot, you know, later. But they would spend them up in Vivian Park. And Irk was always fixing up the cabin. I mean it was a house. It had a great roof and all the kinds of things, but it was originally a cabin. And I remember the first time I was there, he had straightened it. The first time I was there it was like going in the fun house. [Laugh] There had been a flood, and the foundation and everything had shifted and the whole thing had moved, and it was like going into a fun house. Yeah, it was like the floor was funny. And he redid that and straightened it and jacked it all up and made it all straight and it made it really good and solid and everything like that. And they spent a lot of time up there fishing and just hanging out with the neighbors and these neighbors they had up there, they'd known for many years. And... there were places to walk and things to do that way.

*Good to be in the mountains?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, the air was good, you'd see thousands of hummingbirds. And as I say, there was a stream right in front of cabin. And there were cabins in a row so you had neighbors. And the stream noise at night was so pleasant and good and they eventually had to make it they put real high walls around it because it kept flooding. They put big high walls.

*Bret... It had to be just as difficult for Irk as it was for Helen.*

**Jan Carlston:** Yeah, Bret's death for Irk was... it was tough, but you have to realize that men that were born in the teens, you know, 19... 1913, 19 whatever you weren't taught to show emotions. In fact, you weren't tough if you they'd say, "men don't cry." Well I never saw him cry. I don't know. I'm sure he did but he didn't show it. And you didn't show emotions in public, you know? So he'd get mad. [Laugh] Yeah. And I remember his booming voice, he'd get mad. But... it's his only son and he was so proud of him and proud of what he did. But yeah, he has nobody to share his thoughts and share his knowledge. And that's what you know, I think he missed the most... nobody to show things. Because he was always showing all of us how to do things. And that sort of changed, you know and it stopped. And for a man not to be able to have a place to put his knowledge and to send his knowledge forward. And I could feel that. Because as a man, you want your children to pass your good knowledge and thoughts on if you can. And he lost him. Lost him to something that was tough and hard and not good. And Bret dying had to be one of the hardest things I mean losing a child, I know how that could be, but losing a child has to be about the worst thing that could happen to you in your whole life. Because... it's over. That's it. And you can't go back.

*Was Bret buried in the Salt Lake Cemetery?*

**Jan Carlston:** Oh, yeah. I went to Bret's funeral and I couldn't look in the coffin. They had something around his head but I could see that part, but I couldn't get close. I couldn't stand to get close to Bret's coffin. Here he is dead. He was alive and talking two or three weeks earlier when he was in Texas. And now he's dead and he's gone. And I thought he was gonna

make it through it, but he got bad blood... and died. And going to his funeral with my mother and you know, family and... I couldn't do it. I couldn't get close to the coffin. Couldn't see. And then I went up to the Salt Lake Cemetery when they were putting him into the ground and I had to stay back so I couldn't actually I just couldn't stand to see the coffin go down into the I couldn't do it.

*So he is injured, and then flown directly to a naval hospital, then he goes to Japan... and then he is sent a hospital in El Paso, Texas.*

**Jan Carlston:** Bret was killed by a booby trap but he wasn't killed then. He was actually killed by from what Helen said and from what Irk said, from bad blood because at that time, in the '60s, they couldn't test for all the things they can test for in blood. And he got some bad blood and got... killed from the bad blood. He came back, he first they took him off the battlefield and then they took him to a field hospital and then they took him, I think a naval place first, and then Japan and then they flew him to Texas. And he was able to talk and to do things. I called him on the phone when he was in Texas and Helen was there and Irk was coming down. And he was fine. He was able to talk and he was coherent and everything else. But that changed because he had a head injury and he'd lost blood and they had to give him blood. And then suddenly he got encephalitis, hepatitis, whatever. And it killed him. So the wound wasn't as bad as all that, and I think he would've made it. But... things happen, you know? You can't get everything perfectly squared away, especially you're talking 40 years ago. And the medical technology that came out of the Vietnam War was massive because they had to do things better. And I just hope that his death motivated somebody to do something better. That was the that was hard. You know, he's here one day and coherent and then he's dead. And it's from a little wound in the back of his head, just a little piece of shrapnel, not that big a deal supposedly. And... Helen talked about the calluses on his feet. She'd never seen such big, thick calluses from tromping through all of the things and doing whatever. And you know, the things he had to do. I mean this was living out in the field in Vietnam was not a picnic. Having to be a sniper where you have to hide and you can't move and you can't do anything. So



*Humping.*

**Jan Carlston:** Yeah, humping over the hill. Yeah. You had to hump to the next spot and go to the next one, so.

*Jan, what do you want people to know about the Crandall family?  
Why do you think this story's important?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, this story's important because it's about, first of all, a generation of people and what they had to go through whether you... had a buddy that was killed or not, whether you lived or died, whether you wanted the war or didn't, it still affected every single person at that point. And especially the generation, the Baby Boom generations. It affected us. It affected all of us. And the Crandall family was amazing. I mean every every part of it Bret's cousins, Bret's... uncles, Bret's it's an amazing family and it just... the things that he could've accomplished didn't happen. I mean his cousin's a noted eye doctor, ophthalmologist. You know, lots of things that Bret could've done, and he would've. So to say what happened? What's going to happen? Why did it happen? The Crandall family... great family. And I just wish they'd had more kids myself. [Laugh] I just wish they'd had a couple of sons and that would've been a whole different deal. But they didn't. And we have this kind of a story to tell about a great guy who did his duty and paid the price. And you can't pay a higher price than that. And this was the best duty when he went there; he knew it was something that was going to be tough, but he also knew he was up to it. And he was.

*And it's about the parents back home. They didn't reveal their fear.*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, Helen and Irk, sure they knew it was tough. I mean Irk had been to war. Irk had had friends killed. Irk had seen people, you know, he'd seen things in World War II, he joined up early. Families at home during wars... you know, in most ways, mentally it's easier to be out there, I think, to be out there fighting because you know you're in the line of fire and the things you're doing, what's happening. But people at home don't know what's happening. Well they can see what's happening on TV, they

can see this, they can see that, but that's not the white-knuckle fear that you have out in the field. But it's almost worse because it... isn't something that you can't put your finger on. It isn't tangible, it's like okay, thousands of things can kill my son, my loved one, my friend, my buddy. And I don't even know what they are. And he is doing something about it. And I can't do anything about it. So it's tough for people, home. It's tough because they don't know and they can't do anything about it. Helpless. Helpless to make things better. And so the best thing you can do is encourage, encourage. Lots of letters, lots of tapes, lots of little packages, care. [Laugh] The care package. It's a lot better now than it was in Vietnam, I guarantee you.

*Bret said people made him homemade cookies right and left.*

**Jan Carlston:** Yup, and they got them to him. And I had so many buddies that came back that were so screwed up. So many people that did the Vietnam scene. And those guys, I mean, I worked with two that were totally affected by it. And they called it Summer Camp. Let's go to what did you do during Summer Camp? And if you said that to a guy, he knew. And that's what they called the Vietnam War. That way they could keep what they talked about to themselves and other people wouldn't know. And I told you, I worked with him, he was a helicopter pilot and a commander. I mean he could've picked Bret up, I don't know. And then I worked with another fellow whose father was in the North Vietnamese Army. And they knew that America was better. Here is an officer in the North Vietnamese Army who puts his 10yearold son on a boat and says, "You get to America," and paid people to take him to America. He was out in the gulf 80 days before he got picked up. And he's so little. He's tough, but he's little because he almost died during that time period. They knew. So here we are fighting a war where the other side, lot of the people know America's a better situation and yet what? Weird, weird stuff. That's the it's a war to this day, people don't quite understand it. Why did we do it? What did we do? What did we accomplish? Killed a lot of people. Killed Bret Crandall. So.

*Is there anything else you want to share?*

**Jan Carlston:** It's just hard. This whole, thinking that this is gonna happen is really hard.

*This film? This story?*

**Jan Carlston:** Yeah, just knowing that I'm gonna talk to you on camera about it is hard. Just, it's a difficult... difficult thing. Now Bret would've said, "Oh, shoot, [Laugh] no big deal." And then he would've said, "Hmmm," and his voice would've gone up a little. [Laugh] Probably.

*He was your buddy buddy wasn't he?*

**Jan Carlston:** Well, yeah. I mean... shoot, I bought my second BB gun at the Sandy Confectionary. I still got it downstairs. It doesn't work very well. But I'll bet 50,000 BB's were shot through it, at least. And then other things, you know, things like that. One of my ball gloves I bought there, you know, from Bret's father. And Bret was there with me when we went down to get it. You know, and things like that. And we threw footballs and baseballs together hours, you know?

*Leave it to Beaver?*

**Jan Carlston:** Oh, yeah. [Laugh] It was. And I was the big guy and he wasn't as big. So we both had our specialties, you know? I was the lineman and he was the end. [Laugh] Or the backfield, you know? That sort of thing. So we had our specialties and that was the thing, you know, and then shoot bows, shoot arrows, bows and arrows, and shoot just everything. Name a sport, we did it.

*Boys, boys, boys.*

**Jan Carlston:** Yeah, and skipping rocks on lakes. How far can you go? Which one skips the most, that sort of thing, we could do that for a couple hours, you know? So just a boy, two boys trying to find flat rocks to skip across the water. And I can still hear him saying, "Oh, look at that one!" [Laugh] Just excitement, you know? You had to make your own excitement and that was... we camped out at the north fork of the Duchesne for a couple of days and got inwent we found a little cave up in the hills up above

where the water pipe came and we did all kinds of stuff. So Bret, typical guy, but more than that. You know, a lot more than a typical guy. He was tough and fun. I mean he'd be fun to have right here. He'd you know, it would be hard for him not to say something. That's what would be so funny because he'd just come in and he'd argue with me. [Laugh] He would argue right now.

*That he was right?*

**Jan Carlston:** Yeah, it didn't ever happen quite that way, you know. That's just a story. "You got that wrong."

[END TAPE]