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Question: The fact that you say you are, trying to make sense out of World War II, did I hear that right? I mean you said that to you, being in World War II there was something that didn't...

Answer: Well World War II, you have to remember that I was a combat soldier, and combat is exceedingly myopic. When you're being shot at you see just like this, you're concentrating on the guys that are trying to kill you. The reality is that much of the time I had no idea of what was going on at either side of me. And this let everything stay in a kaleidoscopic prospective. You know, look over there and look over there for a moment and it doesn't make any particular sense. My unit that I was in made a lot of sense, sort of (laughs), but ah, what happened to the outfit next to me on either side, excuse me, really was unknown. You'd hear stories later on, but ah, we had a term for those back then. They called them latrine-o-grams (laughs). What's the latest latrine-o-gram? Some of them were true and some of them weren't true, but that's, but that was the phrase.

Question: So war time rumors?

Answer: Yeah. Ah, heard one I'm not sure of and I should probably not even mention it but there was this anecdote with one of the divisions down the line ah, where the German, retreating Germans in France had booby trapped a whore house -- a house of prostitution -- it was the highest class house in that area because they knew that would be put off limits to anybody except senior officers. And it blew up and wiped out ah, killed a number of senior officers, including at least one brigadier general. And of course they all got purple hearts posthumously but ah (laughs). Whether that actually happened or not, I've never seen it in a book and I'm sure any books would not mention that either. So whether, did it happen or didn't it happen, I don't know.

Question: I'm sure they would have changed the details a little bit to protect the memory of...

Answer: Yes, exactly.

Question: Now so where did you end up? Where did you get stationed for active combat duty?

Answer: I was in Normandy to the Bulge and then I got invalided back at the Bulge. I think it was artillery but I don't know because I got a big gap in my memory there. Shattered right arm, virtually all these ribs broken, metal plate in my head. Uh, I don't even remember what day it happened (laughs). I just know that the Bulge, everything else that happened in the war I can find something positive to say about it. D-Day you had that feeling you were part of something enormous, vast, enormous, you know 10,000 planes overhead and all of 'em yours (laughs), 4,000 ships out in the water (laughs), all of 'em yours. Ah you knew you were part of something stupendous. Didn't make you feel, you were still terrified, but you were, you felt as if you were in a human wave or whatever. But there wasn't one single solitary nice thing about the Bulge, nothing. I don't know about the others because we didn't even, even in the moments, the few moments that we had to ourselves you know ah, nobody even talked about dying because I think we all figured we were going to die. But we just wanted to make it as expensive as we could for the Germans. You know one small little unit, we started, supposed to have been 380 T-O-E strength and we were about 315 or thereabouts, and here are 10,000 Germans coming at us and, and, that ain't nice (laughs).

Answer: And ah, it wasn't until later, much later, ah that I learned through one of the, through several of the books, that the Germans didn't have enough fuel, that they, for their

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tanks, that the tanks just had enough fuel to get up to our fuel depots along the Meuse River and ah, they were supposed to re-fuel from our supplies. And so to us those tanks were coming, we assumed they had fuel in them. But they were coming along a narrow road, a dirt road by the way, ahh they had the infantry with 'em, and you knock some trees down across the road and the German tanks were pretty much under-powered, had very good engines in 'em, they just could not push the trees aside. So they'd have to move to the infantry and the pioneers, or the engineers, out in front to get rid of the trees, so you shoot a few of them and they have to deploy their forces, when they start to deploy you've got troops out, you know your men are strewn along the woods. So when they start to deploy we all back up another couple hundred yards and knock a few more trees down. So just kept on until they ran out of fuel and ah, but ah, we learned a lot of things that weren't in the books. In the books they said when you get under mortar attack, you hit the ground. Sometimes that's a good rule, but not when you're in the woods because the mortars, when they hit the tree branches they blow, and the shrapnel from the mortars goes down like that. If you're flat on the ground you'd give maximum surface area to hit. What you do is you play like you're Green Peacer or you hug a tree (laughs) as close to that tree as you can. You've got a tin pot on your head and with luck any of the shrapnel will come down on the tin pot. But if not you got, it's got a straight line so mostly it'll just graze you. Ah, incidentally in this ah...

Question: Before you, how you, you said you, I mean did Charlie next to you say hey ah, stand straight up or how did they pass that on to you, because the books were saying one thing, or the theory before you got over there, how did they get this new information to you?

Answer: They didn't. You just learned it on your own. You watch a couple of guys out there get shrapnel and you just decide that hey, stand up and get close to a tree (laughs), hug a tree. The men you had out there were not stupid, they really, after this length of time they knew what they were doing, we were professionals at it by now.

Answer: But I might point out on this, I couldn't help noticing here on these photographs, these people were not in combat. Those soldiers there.

Question: Oh.

Answer: You know how I can tell?

Question: No.

Answer: They had their helmets strapped to their the chin. If a round comes in and it has concussion, if a round hits in front of you, might not be hit by shrapnel but that concussion is gonna come up and hit your helmet just like that, if you've got your strap on it just broke your neck.

Question: Wow.

Answer: So, you see somebody dressed like that and you say whoops, he's not being shot at (laughs).

Question: Picture time.

Answer: Picture time, right.

Question: So again, that was knowledge that you gained just being out there or...?

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Answer: Yeah. Uh, we used to, not in our outfit because we were pretty well trained otherwise but you get these infantry outfits and you get some new captain or major from, usually lieutenants that worked their way up -- they were smarter than they seemed -- but you get some captain or major who had just was transferred from the States over there and he'd come out all dressed up and, you know, looking pretty and he'd expect people to salute him. We did, and the next thing you'd know a sniper would gun him down (laughs). Ah, the ones that'd been around for a while said look fella, if you salute me, I'm gonna shoot first (laughs). You know, it's just part of the rules of the thing.

Question: How old were you when you landed in Germany?

Answer: Seventeen.

Question: And ah weren't you...

Answer: I wasn't supposed to be. I wasn't supposed to be there. But they had lots of 17-year-olds that were there. The, you know, the high command orders, reality interferes with the orders. Ah, the rule was that a person could enlist at age 17 but he was not supposed to be sent overseas and in combat until he reached the 18. So, by the end of the war, we were sucking dry. Ah, our national population, in ah, the 1940 census was just right at 130 million. Ah by the end of 1945 we had over 12 million in service. Counting the wounded, over a million wounded and dead, that's 10% of the entire population. You figure that half of the population is women, ah and yes, there were very substantial help from the Wacs and Waves, Spars, Women Marines and so forth, ah, but ah, the fact still remains that by the time you got through you eliminate the children, the elderly, the infirm ah, people that simply couldn't pass any medical, crippled for one reason or another, essential war work such as farmers and their families necessary to run the farms -- we were sucking, we were going dry. The last batches they were taking men, one that I knew of, course they didn't put 'em in combat, but they could put 'em in the quarter mastery, he only had one eye. Ah, they had other men who had had polio and could just limp along, you could stick them in a clerk's job or something, but they were in uniform.

Question: Do you remember um, landing? I mean is that a memory of yours or is that something...

Answer: Oh yeah, landing, D-Day, as I say that was a lot of interest there. But the Bulge was the one people ought to remember. Ah, we had, we were cold, we were freezing, our canteens had frozen so that all we could do was scoop up snow. And ah, try to find a clean spot where you could scoop it up. Ah, our K Rations, K Rations, a person today, even today I still cringe with the idea of K Rations. Came in a little box about the size of Cracker Jack box, camouflage colored. Ah, in it they had a little can of Spam and eggs or ham and eggs or something like that, just a little dinky thing. Ah, two hard tack cookies that probably were left over from the Civil War, little fruit bar or D Ration chocolate bar, a packet of ah, coffee, instant coffee powder, little packet like this with four cigarettes in it -- names like Dominoes, and Wings and Picayunes, every once in a while you'd get a Camel or a Lucky Strike and you'd think oh boy, I'm lucky -- had a little packet, half packet of matches 10 matches in it, ah, had some sugar and powdered cream for the coffee in case you felt like it, had a little roll of camouflage toilet paper -- and I don't know whether I should mention this here or not but ah, the dye kind of came off. Now people don't realize it but toilet paper is the most visible thing imaginable on a battle field. One single sheet of toilet paper, you can spot it for a quarter of a mile, so this little camouflage toilet paper was the solution to that. And every, we'd get new replacements in and the first thing they would ask is you know, they were trying to talk to us and we didn't much want to talk to them because we figured being fresh, why they'd be dead

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in the next day or two. But they'd ask how do you survive up here? And our answer would be just try to stick around long enough to get a green ass. And they had no idea what we meant (laughs), but about every week or so they'd get up a shower tent, a shower fly -- this was four walls of canvas and they had the shower heads up there -- and we would all strip down and go in there and take ah, they timed us, it was three minutes per shower, you know, a minute to soap and two minutes to flush the water and soap off of you and then after that you marched out. But you could look at a person's backside and tell how long he had been in the front (laughs). That ah, may not sound very attractive but it was the way it worked.

Question: That's interesting, because I'm glad you brought that up, no one's ever told me that up. The other one, 'cause I've had a couple of bathroom related ones, the other one was an Iwo Jima guy I interviewed and he said you know I met another guy from Iwo Jima and I was talking to him and I said do you ever remember going to the bathroom in Iwo Jima and he says I remember peeing on my boots but I never remember taking a crap, he says I think we were the most constipated Marines out there because we were too afraid to get out and do it, get out of our fox holes.

Answer: On that same vein, I don't know what the routine was and I don't know why. Ah, now I do know that K Rations were deliberately meant to be constipating, because, but we still had about 20-25% of the men with diarrhea and I never got it, I went the other way, I was constipated. Ah, but the guys with diarrhea they were pitiful because ah, how do you stand and shoot and fire and continue like that when you're constantly dribbling. And believe me it uh, ah, worst of it there was that we didn't have winter uniforms during the Bulge and the temperature got well below zero. And ah, it was just ah, just miserable. There wasn't anything, there was nothing nice about it. Ah, constantly under fire, the Germans kept trying to infiltrate, to try and break us, and ah, when they did we'd back up a few more yards, and eventually they ran out of fuel. Ah they were supposed to reach, this is not something I knew at the time, this is something I found later that they were supposed to reach the Meuse River on the end of day one. And ah, by the end of day nine they were still only about halfway there and the vehicles were completely out of fuel and no fuel was coming up so they had to set fire to them and march out. So any time you look at a map of the German advances at the Bulge you will notice that on the north there is a little section which goes like this and then it stops and then the Bulge goes on down, there's a little notch in that Bulge and I guess that's where we were. Ah, but they just ah, in other words, nothing, anytime you ever hear of something like the Spartans at Thermopylae or so forth, there's always a reason for it. If we had been in open country they would have taken us out in short order -- you know, maybe 15 minutes maybe 20 minutes, they'd have just rolled over us -- but under those particular circumstances we had a chance and we took it, it worked.

Question: So what's a day, 'cause, well two part question, how long was the battle for you, and what was it like, what was it, where did you sleep, where did you, what did you do, I mean how did you...?

Answer: Sleeping ah, I don't know about others but I learned to sleep standing up next to a tree. I would start to sleep and I would sleep for 30-40 seconds and I'd start to fall, I'd wake up and start shooting again. I was carrying a grease gun, that's a 45 caliber submachine gun that looks just like a grease gun, it's just a metal tube, fires 45 caliber ACP, full automatic 50 or 30 round clip. And ah, it ah, had a nice slow, cyclic rate of fire which I dearly loved, because it meant you could keep shooting longer. The German Schmeisser the one they call the burp gun, it went BRRP and it's empty. And the grease gun, if you were really good at it and I wasn't that good, but if you had nine targets out there you could fire it full automatic and put one round at each target because it went boom boom boom boom boom boom boom and if you were fast enough, and it had no recoil, because of the way recoil springs were set

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up -- we had all done it, you could take and cut off the last two coils of the spring and put in shims until you got it just balanced properly and you can fire that thing from your chin and not feel it. But as far as eating was concerned, sleeping, what we would do on the K Rations, they were all frozen anyhow and we didn't have time to make fires, didn't have the, you know, had the little mess tanks, you know little things like that but we didn't have time for it, so what we'd do is hold the can in our chest to try and thaw it out. But most of the time what we'd do is take the powdered coffee, pour it down like that in our mouths and grab a handful of snow to get it down to get the caffeine in us, and then we'd smoke one cigarette after another. And those were the ways we'd kept awake, because it was going 24 hours a day for ah, well my last memory was seven, eight days, I don't know. But it was just a complete nightmare. Ah, I got married ah, in fact, on the 10th of November this year it'll be 43 years ago, which was seven years after ah, the Bulge, and my wife can testify I was still waking up with nightmares. I'd sometimes wake up fighting and so on, and get something, and the worst of it is that I was able to realize and say I know this is a nightmare, I know I'm asleep, change the subject damn it. It wouldn't change. All of a sudden I'd wake up and I'd be yelling or, not so much yelling, but I'd spring out of the bed and so forth. It just ah, ok it, that happened and I'm not trying to make it sound mock heroic, or I'm not, I'm sure not trying to do I've got some syndrome left over, it's just that anytime somebody shoots at you, seriously, something changes. Now in all these years I have never felt completely comfortable back in society. Relieved yes, I raised a couple of really neat kids, they've done very well for themselves and we're still very close, ah even though we're spread out all over the place, it's we're still a family. My grandfather did the same thing, you know, and he was a Civil War vet. But the, somewhere there's a little sense of estrangement. Right after the war, right after I was discharged, after the end of the war, I took a, started to take a job selling stocks and bonds before I went back to college -- I figured well it'd be a way of earning money and so forth -- and they had some fellow there who was a major, Pentagon, chair board type, and he started this spiel about what we were going to be doing now would be the most important thing we would ever do in our lives. That we would be ensuring the financial security of a whole generation etcetera, and I thought to myself this is important? What was I doing back there? I got up and walked out. And ah, I don't think he ever understood, I mean he was purely chair born. And they had no conception. Ah, if you're not shot at, you know you could be quarter master ah, 20 or 30 miles behind the line, if you're not shot at you can do any number of things. We used to laugh at the antics of some of these ah, types, ah, in truth we ended up hating our quarter master far more than we hated the Germans. Ah, you know they had all the pretty uniforms, they got the winter uniforms while we were in the snow freezing our toots off. And ah, anytime you ever seen them they had a chest full of ribbons that they were wearing. Ah, and they would go around and they'd hear a roar and they would duck, you know, if they were with a girl, they would duck, oh my goodness, you know, oh it's just that stress from the combat, you know, take pity on us, invite us into your bedroom. And they'd talk about oh those burp guns, those are terrible, terrible things. Reality is, if you heard them you were safe because they were empty, and you had about 2-3 seconds to try and locate whoever it came from and shoot them. Lot of the time you could and some of the time you couldn't and then you were in trouble. But ah, the, one of the, weapons the Germans had that, wish we would have had it at the time, but they had a little 37 millimeter, they called it a pak P-A-K, I don't know what it stood for, but it fired a high velocity armor piercing round which would go right through our tanks. The M4 tank had no business being on the battlefield with the German tanks. They also had an AG round that was real nasty, ah, didn't see many of them but when you did see one it was something you wanted to watch out for. The 88, that you hear so much about was mainly a long range weapon. If you got close to them yes they would be close range weapons but mostly they were designed to hit in back of you. But the mortars, now those were nasty, because you could be in a hole and they could still come in and say hello. Ah but ah, the Germans were also at about this stage of the war, the ones we, this group anyhow, most of them had automatic assault weapons, but I don't know, this may

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sound strange, ah in view of all the propaganda on assault weapons, in World War II the term assault weapon had a very specific significance, it was underpowered, all of them were. The idea was to get something that could hold as many rounds as possible, which means they had to be little dinky and ah, the AK 47 for instance, was an underpowered nine millimeter, underpowered 38. And those things they could hit you five or six times and it might take ten minutes to realize you were dead. In the meantime you could kill half a dozen of them. So when they talk about assault weapons and the popular parlance today, they're blowing smoke. They're just talking about high capacity, full automatic weapons, and that's not a, those are hardly ever in use.

Question: Did, at one point you talked about um, coming back and I can't remember the words you used at the time, but not being a part of, I think estranged or something, did the idea of war, did it create a moral dilemma with you?

Answer: No, no ah. Some people it did but in my case, in my outfit's case, I don't think it made, ah, it isn't, now I will say this I was a Ranger. And Ranger training, I did not know this at the time but it's obvious I passed, one of the surest ways of getting kicked out of the Rangers was if any of your instructors got the idea that you enjoyed killing. You were out. Even today, I know several who are in the Rangers including one of the captains here, out here at Fort Lewis, he said that's still the rule. That you'll see lots of guys out carrying the Ranger patch but they're not in a Ranger unit. They've taken the course but they weren't assigned a Ranger unit. And I approve whole heartily because, visualize yourself that the idea, the purpose of the Rangers is not to kill. The purpose of the Rangers is to throw your opponent off balance, to surprise him, to catch him where he doesn't expect it, to disorganize his rear, to interfere with his maneuvering, to confuse him. Now you're out with a three man patrol and you're five miles behind the German lines, you just infiltrated, and I've done that. Now you've got some guy with a, when I led, I was, used to be the head of the, one of the three man teams, but wouldn't let anybody carry a firearm. Visualize it, I could listen at the time, in fact I can still do it today, and distinguished between a German weapon and an American weapon, by the sound. Now I'm five miles on the other side of the German lines and I've got some kill crazy idiot sitting next to me that sees, oh quail bang, I've just alerted the entire German Army that we're here. They're not going to stop until they've got us. So you're only hope is to be invisible. Don't let 'em even suspect that there's anybody there. They're perfectly safe, you don't kill 'em, you don't sneak up on a sentry and slit his throat either. Unless you're on a combat mission. If you're on a combat mission then you've got a significant force with you, but if you're out there on a recon, uh uh uh uh uh, because somebody's going to stumble over that man. When they stumble over them they're going to take one look and that's it you're dead. Ah so, no you don't, anybody who enjoys killing has no business in the Rangers.

Question: Who, when you were at war, in your mind then, who or what were you fighting? And do you fight with anger or?

Answer: No, the man who's angry dies. You've got to be very cool on it. You have to fight fear and you have to fight anger. Ah, there was a kind of a gritty feeling that the war had to be won, that what we were fighting was something that, maybe this would sound strange but, in view of the way people reacted but I was never angry at all with the Japanese. I was with the Germans. The reason on the Japanese was part of me said well I guess that's fair, I guess anybody's entitled to make one stab at conquering the world. But the krauts they're trying to make a career out of it. I mean that's what, that sounds kind of strange but it, I remember even then when I heard about them interning the Japanese my attitude, this was when I was a civilian, my attitude was well if they're going to do that they'd better intern all the Germans too. Ah, these were, these were Americans ah, and until they show they are

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disloyal then ah, leave em alone. So this was the attitude I had on this thing. There was a realization, you know, first came Austria then the Sudentanland then Czechoslovakia then Poland then Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway and it was obvious that Hitler was just, and the Germans were just taking anything and everything without any... they were just out to conquer. Ah, it wasn't a case of defending themselves it was just anything anything that was standing in their way, they were going to destroy it. Ah, and after Poland there was no way that I could in my own mind justify what they were doing. Something was evil in the world and it needed to be stopped and I was part of the stopping force.

Question: Did you see that evil as,

Answer: Not theological, just evil (laughs).

Question: But I mean did you see it as people, a country?

Answer: A country. And even then, maybe it was me but I've always had a little bit of a sense of balance. Ah, because I remember in the United States out here, for instance, they had the Silver Shirts, the Swedish Nazi party. It had Fort Hermann Göring out here in Eatonville. And they threatened that if the United States marched against Germany they'd come down and capture ah, Fort Lewis and prevent it from helping the Germans. Ah, no kidding, read your newspapers, you know go back and look through the newspapers and you'll find occasional mention of Fort Hermann Göring. But ah, my feeling was hey they're good Germans, look at Goethe, as a five volumes of Faust and Schopenhauer and Hegel and Beethoven, Mozart, ah, they're not all bad. But the ones that are doing that sure have to be stopped. And whatever it takes to stop them is what I'm going to have to do, or what we're going to have to do. So there was no compunction in the killing but it was never enjoyable. I don't know if that makes sense or not but...

Question: No, no it does. You know it's interesting, you're the first one that has said your dislike was for the German not the Japanese. Most of the people I've talked to said the Japanese even though they were fighting the Germans. But ah, but seeing your full prospective to it is interesting also. I had a thought and it just...

Question: Oh, when you see the American Flag go by or you hear the National Anthem, Star Spangled Banner, what do you feel?

Answer: The flag, I always come to attention and put my hand over my heart. The Star Spangled Banner doesn't much influence me. It's been so prostituted. You know every football game, every baseball game, ah... what was that, fat movie actress, comedian that...

Question: Oh Rosanne Barr.

Answer: Rosanne Barr.

Question: Oh yeah.

Answer: Screeching, and ah, grabbing her crotch, uh uh. As far as making it a law outlawing burning the flag, ah no. I don't favor such a law. We have too many laws as it stands. Ah, if a person does not have patriotism, no law is going to force it on him. And what I'm seeing is a sort of a reaction that yeah you're going to be as American citizens you will have absolute freedom to do precisely what we order. And that ah, that bothers me no end. It raises my hackles and encourages the rebel in me (laughs). Ah, just the other day ah, I was dealing with a problem on tax rules and so forth, that there were a number of Cambodians

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out, who had rented, ah would lease sections of the forest to collect Salal and Bear Grass and ah, State was, I was talking on behalf of one of them and this woman on the other end was saying well that's been unregulated entirely too long. Does everything have to be regulated by the State? And if everything has to be regulated what freedom has any of us got? Why can't we do things occasionally that aren't regulated? And this, as I say raises the hackles. I think I ought to have, as a presumably free individual, certain rights and prerogative, and about the only one that they are prepared to concede anymore is my right to sleep with whomever I choose. And since I'm well and happily married that right doesn't much mean, (laughs) doesn't mean much to me. So, ah, I don't know whether I've answered your question or not.

Question: No you did, you did, very much so, yeah, the full gamut of it. And I like where you said they cannot regulate patriotism. They can't make somebody be a patriot.

Answer: Agreed. And it's the right of people to do things that irritate me. But it's my right to be able to do things that irritate them without having them run to the nearest shyster or run to the police or whatever. You know it's not a one way affair but ah, the old, I grew up in period when people's attitude were far more relaxed. Hey you know, give a little, it's their, it's their right to do it. It might irritate me but I'm not going to go screaming off, but they've gotta give me the right to do some of the things that they don't like. And now everybody's out there to try to compel everyone else to follow their whims. And the country has suffered much for that. Ah, but it's the question of, you know, how do you put the genie back in the bottle? The sense of tolerance, of personal idiosyncrasies has just gone by the wayside. Ah, you know, neighbors don't like the color you paint your house they go to court and sue you for it. Well I'm sorry that, the fact that the courts involve themselves in that says a great deal for the ah, the corruption of the courts. Because, you know, I don't care what you try to do, if you're willing to pay the money you'll get some shyster that'll file a lawsuit on you, your behalf.

Question: And that's not what you were fighting for.

Answer: That is not what I was fighting for.

Answer: Ah a few years back when they had the 50th anniversary of the D-Day, Landings, there was a fellow there he had been a fly boy. Ah, we were out here, I had been invited out, I was one of the few ground pounders that had survived apparently. Ah but he had been a fly boy, and we had been chatting and just out of no where he said tell me are you happy with the way things turned out? And without even, hell no. Me neither. We separated on that note (laughs). It's just the difference between a somewhat relaxed, tolerant, easy going society. Now that tolerance back then was restricted because of the, ah, intolerance towards blacks and the, some very, some other things, but ah, towards orientals etcetera

Answer: And that intolerance has largely, not entirely, but largely evaporated. So that might be a little bit of an improvement there but in return for getting a little tolerance there we've lost all of the peripheral tolerance and everything has to be structured. Ah, you notice when my son was growing up they'd go out, we had a fairly good sized yard and location there, and they'd go out and play ah, baseball, sort of, with their own rules. And I had one of the neighbors come over and say why aren't you teaching them how to play baseball right? I said because they're having fun this way, the other way it ah, I'm just going to be trying to make them be grown up about it. And kids deserve the right to make up their own games, provided, I think if we allowed more of the making up their own games to kids, and gave them the space to make up their own games, we wouldn't have half the trouble we do today.