

## Memoirs of the Vietnam War draft

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One fine morning in early June 1970 my father drove me to Oakland International Airport. I was getting a flight to Seattle, where a Canadian friend would meet me and drive me across the border into Canada.

A bright, sunny day. The flight was on time. As the plane lifted off, San Francisco Bay sparkled with white caps and sail boats. Across the Bay, San Francisco gleamed white, as it does on sunny mornings. I loved San Francisco; I was proud to call the glittering city my own. Goodbye. The plane banked and San Francisco disappeared. When it leveled off, Marin County and Mt. Tamalpais came into view. I had hiked Mt. Tamalpais. Soon, I was watching the coast mountains of Mendocino slide past. We flew north, mountains drifted south. Then Mount Shasta, snow-capped, spread out beneath us. Goodbye.

Goodbye goodbye goodbye.

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The Vietnam War and the draft were a cloud that hung over my life from the time I was in my third and fourth year of high school. Not that it was at the forefront very much. You registered for the draft at age eighteen, and I was still only seventeen upon high school graduation. There was a four year educational deferment for college or university, and at that age four years is a long time. It was I think in my third year of university, which I spent at the University of Freiburg in Germany, that the War became a looming reality. More on that later. First, something about my background and life to that time.

I was born in Oakland, California in 1946. My father was a dental technician who had his own business in Castro Valley, where we also lived. He had served in the Navy during the Second World War, but was not posted overseas. My parents married towards the end of the War but were unable to live together for the first year or two. I, of course, was born just after the end of the War. I also had a sister, Carol, born a couple of years after me.

Our family was Roman Catholic, but in a rather casual, uncommitted way. Mass on Sunday, and for the kids, catechism on Saturday. (For years I resented never having a day for just myself.) Toward the end of my high school years, I briefly became rather enthusiastic over religion and went so far as to consult our parish priest, Father Stack, about studying for the priesthood. For a time I met with him

weekly. He counselled me to go to a Catholic university before taking any further step. He also advised me to learn Latin, of course. (Too bad I never did.) He told me that apart from anything else, Latin afforded an escape: one could read Livy and be transported to a different world. And so in 1964 I applied to the University of San Francisco, which was run by the Jesuits (although most professors were lay). As it happened, between the time that I committed myself to the University and the day I arrived, my religious faith vanished in the space of a weekend. Later, I came to feel that my previous enthusiasm was an unconscious, desperate grasping for the certainties offered by faith. Finding a substitute for faith led me to declare a major in philosophy. (At the time of registration, the head of the philosophy department muttered that, as a high school grad, I knew nothing of the subject and had no business declaring it my major. He was not wrong.)

In retrospect, I could have done worse than USF. I had small classes and some very good teachers. I would have been lost at Berkeley, with enormous, anonymous classes, and which was already seething with radicalism and anti-war demonstrations. In part as an escape from the cloister of USF, I chose to spend my third year at the University of Freiburg in Germany, through the Institute for European Studies, an American non-profit that organised European study for American students. This was a wonderful year, although it left me with a hodge-podge of philosophy studies: mostly neo-Thomistic at USF and German existentialism at Freiburg. Martin Heidegger was professor at Freiburg (and notoriously Provost during the Nazi years). By the time I arrived in 1966, he was retired and living alone in the Black Forest. However, he was conducting a multi-year seminar on the pre-Socratics, open exclusively to Dozenten, the rough equivalent of an assistant professor in North American universities. My philosophy professors were mostly former students of Heidegger. I had a taste of main stream Anglo-American analytic philosophy – a one semester course -- only upon returning for my final year at USF.

Along the way, in my first year of university, I registered for the draft, as required by law. I received the usual educational deferment, as expected.

My last year of university, upon returning from Freiburg, was the critical point where I had to make a decision. There was no question of going into the military, either as volunteer or draftee. (As a volunteer, I might have had options that would have kept me out of combat.) The whole business stank, and I would have nothing to do with it. I made a decision to claim to be a conscientious objector and therefore have some non-military service, working in a hospital for instance. It was a foregone conclusion that my application would be rejected. First, the Catholic Church, with which I was nominally connected, was generally pro-war. (Two exceptions were the Berrigan brothers, Philip and Daniel, both of them Catholic priests, who were active in resistance.) More importantly, I had taken advantage of a four year educational deferment. Moreover, at USF I took (because obliged to) two years of Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). So, I was dripping with hypocrisy, however the power relationship – the Government of the United States versus a kid like me – was asymmetrical in the extreme, to say the least. Furthermore, “conscientious objector” in American law was limited to persons who

objected to *all* military service, under all conditions. Would I have served in World War II? Certainly. There was a bit of crossing my fingers behind my back in all this. My rationale was that I could not imagine any war the US might enter *at that time* that I would support. In April, near the end of the semester, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

The real decision, should I be drafted, was would I flee or go to prison. There was pressure within the anti-war movement to choose the latter. The War would only end when the prisons were filled with objectors, it was said. And in fact, I felt inclined at times in that direction. I recall sharing these thoughts by letter with one of my former tutors in Freiburg. His observation was that American citizens, living in a long-established democracy, were inclined to accept responsibility for the actions of a government over which they in fact have little voice. Germans have a short history of democracy and feel no such responsibility, or so he claimed. I admired Wolf Moeller, and took his views seriously.

USF was a pretty conservative place, and there was not much obvious opposition to the War. I once attended an anti-War demonstration, gathering with some twenty or thirty students on the campus and marching down the hill to the Civic Center, gathering point for a large, city-wide demonstration. A patriotic young man pointedly took photos of us as we crossed the campus, a feeble attempt at intimidation. Demonstrations were mostly pretty boring, and I did not often participate.

In my last year of university, I applied to and was admitted to a PhD programme in philosophy at the Claremont Graduate School. A California state scholarship made it possible.

By the summer after graduation, I had turned twenty-one and could get a summer job in Reno, working in Harrah's Club, a casino. This was a popular and fairly lucrative summer job. One suitcase and a bus to Reno. I found a place to stay in a rooming house near the University of Nevada. My job was "bar boy" in the casino's Virginia Street Bar, stocking and cleaning and supporting the three bartenders, all permanent employees. The bar was in a sea of slot machines and blackjack tables. The better looking young men and women were assigned to dealing blackjack. That was the best job, because a lucky gambler might get generous with tips. Anyway, I got on well with the guys I worked with, and I value what turned out to be my only experience of working with ordinary people, living paycheck to paycheck. There was nothing glamorous about the casino. Customers were ordinary people, mostly from the San Francisco Bay area, who were attracted by the cheap glamour, the hope of winning some money, and entertainers like Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, and the Tijuana Brass. Very working class, in fact. One of my fellow bar boys was an older, Hispanic guy, Jesús his name. He could not rise above bar boy because he had a felony conviction and could not be bonded; he had served in Leavenworth for murdering his wife and her lover. He and I got on ok too. In June, Robert Kennedy was assassinated.

While I was in Reno I wrote a letter to my parents, telling them of my intention to apply for conscientious objector status. Not knowing what to expect, a week or so later, I called them from a pay phone, and found that they were completely supportive.

That summer I read (or misread) *Lord Jim*. I saw in Jim someone whose moral scruples were meaningless to those around him. My reading may have been off, but the lesson I took I think was accurate. Americans who hated people like me were not going to be impressed by my going to prison. If anything they wished us executed. It was the time of "America, love it or leave it", though the people who said that were not encouraging me to leave for Canada. For "draft dodgers" you might say they meant leaving in a coffin. People who were not there do not generally appreciate how ugly were the times.

In September 1968 I started grad school. Let me say at once that the school was fine, but I soon realized that I was not cut out for graduate study in philosophy. It may have been a mistake to commit so much of myself to philosophy in the first place. I did not do particularly well, but more to the point, I eventually saw myself leaving for Canada, and a half-completed PhD in philosophy was not much of a meal ticket. I applied to library school at the University of California at Berkeley, and was accepted.

Meanwhile, an older fellow around Claremont – I don't know whether he was a grad student or some kind of instructor, certainly not a professor – took it upon himself to help guys like me. He knew a lawyer in Santa Monica who would keep me out of the draft for \$300. (The lawyer also did drug cases, which subsidized his draft clients.) An appointment was made, and my friend drove us across the Los Angeles basin – it seemed to take hours, through terrible traffic. The lawyer asked me to open my mouth. My teeth were not perfect. He said, you are going to get braces. The Army won't want you because they will be responsible for any harm to your teeth if they require they be removed. And you cannot go into combat with braces. I paid him a \$100 toward a retainer of \$300, and we drove back to Claremont.

On a visit to my parents, I made appointments to see a couple of orthodontists in San Francisco. I suppose I didn't want my strategy known in my local community. Afterwards, or during this process, my father told me that I would embarrass him, as he knew those dentists and orthodontists, even though they were across the Bay, in San Francisco, something that had not occurred to me. It was not long before I found myself embarrassed by this as well and dropped the plan. I wrote to the lawyer in Santa Monica, who let me off the hook for the rest of the retainer.<sup>1</sup>

At Claremont, I was living in an apartment building for grad students. This was made of two three-story blocks of apartments, a courtyard between them, and exterior walkways between and connecting them. Each apartment had three

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<sup>1</sup> Strategies like this were what kept people like Rush Limbaugh and Donald Trump out of the military. I am relieved that I am not in their company.

bedrooms with desks, a common room with kitchen, and a bath. I shared my place with two other guys, Mike Floyd, known as "Pink", and Arthur Aaronson.

There were times during that year when I got myself distraught over the draft. I recall once brooding in my frustration, then going outside and looking at the night sky; in my state, I could not keep the stars still. They were jumping all over.

I was aware that across the common area, on the same level as my apartment, there was a Canadian fellow. I dropped in one day, introduced myself, and asked Garry Curtis about immigration to Canada. We quickly became quite good friends, and hung out sometimes. Once in a while, after studying we would go for late night walks. He was enrolled in the Government programme at Claremont and would in fact eventually complete his PhD. Years later he told me that on the occasion of that meeting, his thoughts were, "this poor bugger!"

At the end of the academic year, I returned to my parents' home. I had been refused conscientious objector classification, but had the option of requesting an interview to appeal my case. I believe it was about this time that I had my interview. I explained my case; there were two very severe guys and a third, who seemed sympathetic. In the end, their decision, delivered by post, turned me down unanimously.

So, I was to begin library school in the fall. I had made no plans for summer work, but packed my bags and headed to Reno. I dropped in unannounced at the personnel office at Harrah's, and was offered work on the spot. I wanted to return to the bar, because the bartenders would share their tips with me, usually about \$2 a day, which was enough to pay for my meals in the employee canteen. However, initially I was sent to Bill Harrah's Ferrari franchise, also in Reno. I did whatever odd jobs were needed, but mostly I polished Ferraris for the show room. On one occasion, I was asked to drive a Ferrari a block or two to a gas station. "Just drive like it's an old Volkswagon," I was told. After a couple of weeks, I got a job on the graveyard shift in the casino.

At the end of summer, I headed back to the Bay Area. My distress and confusion showed no signs of settling down, and I had conceived the crazy idea of immigrating to Switzerland. I had some brief acquaintance with the country, in particular Basel, which is a little more than an hour from Freiburg. Switzerland appealed because it was neutral, never mind that it had universal military service. Back home in my parent's house, I went to the public library, where I searched the San Francisco phone book for a Swiss consulate. There was no consulate, but there was a travel office on Market Street.

I dressed in my blazer, white shirt and tie, took the commuter bus to San Francisco and walked to the tourist office, not far from the bus station. There, I was informed that in fact a consulate had opened recently, in an office building on Montgomery Street. (Montgomery is the centre of the financial district.)

I crossed Market, walked a block or two to Montgomery, and started up the street. Within a block or so, I suddenly had a very large man in a suit walking next to me. I slowed down, he slowed down. Then he pulled out a badge and said, "Police. Take your hands out of your pockets."

They made me put my hands above my head on the glass wall of the office building next to us. They frisked me, emptied my pockets and looked through my wallet. In the office in front of me, women were typing, then looking up at me, then typing, and looking up.

"What were you doing in the Swiss tourist office?"

"Uh, thinking about a vacation..."

They asked me a series of questions, including where I was on a particular day a week or two before. (I was working in Reno.) As it turned out, someone had robbed the next-door airline office on the day in question, and I evidently fit the suspect's description. The cop and his partner marched me back to the tourist office. The cop entered and consulted the employees, while his partner walked me back and forth in front of the window. I wasn't the guy. I was released, and the officer said to me, "Well, *Andy*, I wouldn't go around asking stupid questions!"

I was shaken and abandoned my visit to the consulate.

I got my draft notice. My induction date, which I remember to be October 9, 1969, was also the first day of classes at Berkeley. Refusing induction, as opposed to simply skipping the country, was perceived as a more principled stand, at least within the anti-war movement. One of my parents drove me to the parking lot in Hayward, where buses were arranged for bringing draftees to the Oakland Induction Center. I ran into one of my high school acquaintances, Steven Frank, who was going into the Army as a conscientious objector; he (presumably) would be a medic and not carry a weapon. (There were two categories of CO, those entering the military and not carrying weapons, typically as medic, and those assigned to non-military service. I had sought the latter.)

The Induction Center stood in downtown Oakland. On entering, we stripped down to underpants and spent the day going from one physical exam to another.

At noon, we dressed and were given coupons for lunch at a cheap restaurant across the street. In the afternoon, we stripped down again and continued exams. Finally, at the end of the afternoon, we were allowed to dress. The next stage was the induction ceremony.

The military places a lot of value on ceremonies, including induction. Here is how it works: the inductees stand before a military officer. The officer tells them to step forward into the United States Army (or other service – they sometimes drafted into the Marines). Upon doing so they are in the military and subject to military justice.

Refusing induction is a felony. It also messes with the solemnity of the occasion. For that reason, during the day we were periodically asked if anyone intended to refuse induction. Anyone who said yes would be taken away and dealt with separately. I kept my mouth shut; like others in the anti-war movement, I wanted to make my refusal a public statement and maybe detract from the solemnity of the occasion.

At the end of the day, we were allowed to dress, and were then taken in groups of forty or fifty into an appointed room, with the American flag at the front, and numbers spaced out on the floor. We were told to pick a number and stand on it. At this point, we were again asked if anyone intended to refuse induction. I had to make a quick decision. I was at the rear of the room, and made a flash judgment that I had better speak up at that point, for fear that they would not see that I stood in place and that we might be in dispute about that.

I was taken away, along with another fellow. After the ceremony for inductees was conducted, we were put through the same process and refused to step forward. We were then separately interviewed by a FBI agent and released. I went home on public transit. I started classes the next day.

Library school was a breeze. I did my assignments at school and read novels in the evening. I lived with my parents and car pooled with a couple of other library students living in Castro Valley.

By this time, my parents understood my intention to go to Canada. Although they were heartsick at this, they fully supported me. Once, my mother and I, going into the garage for something or other, spontaneously fell into a big hug and cry. My sister, who somehow had drifted much further to the right than the rest of us, made a point of telling me that dad broke down in tears at the dinner table one day when I was not there.

My parents suggested I get in touch with a distant cousin, Leland (Lee) Windreich, initially from San Francisco, but for many years a librarian in British Columbia. I had never met him. He was at that time working at Vancouver City College. He replied with a helpful letter. One day, at library school, a stranger came up to me and introduced himself as Lee. He was in California on a visit. He invited me to lunch, along with one of my teachers, an old friend of his. He sized me up, and invited me to stay with him while I got myself settled in Vancouver.

Meanwhile, Garry was back home in Victoria and ready to help out as needed.

The University of California had been on a quarter system, and the Master of Library Science programme was four quarters, or one full year. Then Governor Ronald Reagan directed the University to change to the semester system. In order to adjust to this, the library school asked us to add an extra course for each quarter, getting us through in June instead of August. This would be extremely advantageous to me, as it turned out.

In April 1970, Nixon ordered the invasion of Cambodia, sparking protests at hundreds of colleges and universities across the United States. At Kent State and Jackson State, peaceful student demonstrators were shot and killed by National Guard and police. The protests escalated, and the University of California "went on strike", meaning that students stopped going to classes and all University activities, including classes, were suspended. Student leaders, rather naively, hoped to marshal the university resources to the anti-war movement. Some library school students set up a "campus information clearing-house", which was neither needed nor utilized.

I continued coming to campus and participated in some demonstrations, but I was not an enthusiastic demonstrator, as I said above. I was against American participation in the war. My knowledge and understanding was limited, but I knew that the whole business stank. My inner voice, like Socrates' daemon, said *no*, even if I could not be precise about the reason why. However demonstrations were often dominated by those who sought not only American withdrawal, but communist and North Vietnamese victory. A common chant was, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh. NLF is going to win!" (Ho Chi Minh was President of North Vietnam; NLF was the National Liberation Front, the Viet Cong.) Demonstrations leave no room for nuance.

In the midst of this chaos, I received a felony indictment from the US Justice Department, ordering me to surrender myself to US marshalls at the Justice Building in San Francisco on June 10, 1970. That gave me about a week to plan my flight.

Calling from a pay phone at the University, I made a reservation for a one-way flight to Seattle, using a phoney name, "Eric Coates". (I pulled the name out of the air. Only later did I realise or remember that it was the name of an English composer.) At that time, buying a plane ticket was like buying a bus ticket: you paid for your ticket and went aboard, no questions asked, and no identification required. I did not book a flight to Vancouver on the reasonable grounds that I would have to use my real name on an international flight, and that passenger lists could be checked for persons who were under indictment. I contacted Garry, who agreed to meet me at the SeaTac airport and bring me across the border.

My cousin Shirley phoned me at home to wish me well in my trip to Canada. I cringed for fear that the phone was tapped. We made a trip to Capitola to say good bye to my grandmother, in her late 80s, who hugged me and cried a bit and said that she would never see me again. (This turned out to be true.)

The flight went without a hitch. My father drove me to Oakland Airport before going to work. I arrived in Seattle on time. Waiting at the baggage carrousel, I cringed again when I heard myself being paged with my real name. That was Garry looking for me. Paranoia was a reliable travelling companion. Garry had brought a friend along for the company, and we drove for the border at Blaine. At the border itself, Garry cut across several lanes to get to a gate stationed by a young woman, who



would have been a summer student employee. Garry had worked one summer as a customs officer and did not want us to be questioned by a regular officer, often a grizzled military veteran. The student officer checked our passports and, somewhat flumoxed, sent us on. I told her I was entering as a visitor. (As I will explain below, it was at that time quite legal to enter Canada as a visitor and apply for landed immigrant status from within the country.)

We took the ferry from Tsawwassen to Schwartz Bay on Vancouver Island. Once the ferry was underway, I stepped out on the deck and went as far forward as allowed. The ferry was very fast. A brilliant blue sky, the Canadian flag snapping in the wind. I was exhilarated. An overwhelming sense of relief. At age twenty-three, I was for the first time in six or seven years truly free. I was surprised how cold it was on deck and soon went back inside. We made our way to the cafeteria and had clam chowder.

Garry was house-sitting for the summer for professor friends from the University of Victoria, the names were John and Bonnie, as I recall. Their home was a old, low, single story house near Esquimalt Lagoon, which seemed to be mouldering into the blackberry bushes and deep grass that surrounded it. The owners, who were Scandinavian, had furnished the interior with old-fashioned, painted furniture from the homeland, and Persian carpets. There was a big, square dining table before a large french window that looked out onto deep grass and a very large arbutus tree. In the morning, I picked wild blackberries for breakfast. The location, at the time, was quite rural, even remote. It felt like heaven.

I spent three our four days there. I met his parents, who declared themselves my Canadian parents. They were over the years unfailingly kind to me and very warm. Garry threw a small party at John and Bonnie's house, so I could meet some of his friends, all people from his university days, I believe.

I paid visits to Victoria Public Library and to the University of Victoria, at the latter having a visit with a librarian Lee had put me in touch with. Not much job opportunity there.

My plan was to settle in Vancouver and look for work. With an offer of work, I would apply for landed immigrant status. Lee met me at the bus station and took me back to his house in Kitsilano. This was a dark, Craftsman-style single story house with a large front porch and big, square pillars holding up the roof. I suppose it was built 1910 or 1920. He lived on the main floor, which he rented from the owner, an older woman, who lived in the basement. Lee was hypersensitive, even high-strung. He was rather sickly as a child, and after moving to Victoria he came down with tuberculosis, which put him in a sanitorium for a year. (His move to Vancouver came later, after this illness.) When he was home sick, which was not uncommon, his landlady's accordion drove him nuts.

There was a small guest room attached to the kitchen, where I was installed. This I suppose dated from when a family would have a live-in servant.

I made the rounds of Vancouver libraries, but drew a blank on all sides. I don't remember much about these meetings. The woman running North Vancouver Public said she only hired women, as they had only one staff washroom. I did not fully appreciate that Vancouver was a highly desired place to live, and that finding a library job in the city would be quite a challenge. Had I been open to moving to a place like Lethbridge (I was told some years later), I might have been more successful in finding a library position.

One evening at Lee's I met a friend of his, a woman, he invited for dinner. She threw out the idea that it was "quite respectable" to work for Duthie Books, the leading bookseller in Vancouver in those days. Shortly thereafter, I pulled out my resumé, put on my Harris tweed jacket, white shirt and tie, and presented myself first thing in the morning at the Robson Street store, next to the public library, where Bill Duthie, Mr. Duthie to me, worked every day at the front desk. He looked at my resume, made a little snort that was later to become quite familiar to me, and offered me a job on the spot. He had me come downstairs where, behind the "paperback cellar", there was a small shipping and receiving area. He typed up a job offer, addressed to me in Castro Valley, sealed it in an envelope, and ran it through the postage meter. Then he slit the envelope with a letter opener, and presented it to me. He asked me to start the next day.

When I showed up the next morning at nine, he showed me how to work the cash, then left the store on some errand. I was on my own, aside from whoever was in the paperback cellar. If I needed money, he told me, take it from the cash and write an IOU. This working arrangement was quite illegal. I was a visitor to Canada and I had no work permit. He paid me from petty cash, out of the till. Duthie had a reputation for hiring American draft dodgers, though I cannot remember any others from the time I was there.

Now that I had a job, I set about to find an apartment and obtain landed immigrant status. The first was fairly easy: I found a modern, one room apartment a few blocks from Kitsilano Beach. It was an easy bus connection over the Burrard Street Bridge to work. I also applied for landed immigration at the office at the foot of Burrard Street, a building I believe removed some years later when the harbour was redeveloped. It certainly dated from the early twentieth century, when most immigrants coming through Vancouver arrived by sea. My recollection of the application process is a little vague now. I must have had several appointments, but what I recall in particular was my interview. I was in a waiting room with people from all over the world, mostly from Asia. An immigration officer with a military mustache came by a Sikh family – father and mother and a child or two – snatched the man's papers from his hands without even looking at him and told him to follow. Eventually I had my turn. When asked my reasons for wanting to settle in Canada, I made up a vague story about liking the mountains. "Too many mountains in British Columbia," he said. The Trudeau government forbade inquiring after the draft status of young men.

At that time, one could apply for immigration in three ways: through a Canadian consulate abroad, at the border, or from within Canada. I chose the latter, an

option eliminated some years later. It was nearly a year before I got my landed immigrant papers – a year being paid from petty cash.

I fit in well at Duthie Books. I worked nine to six upstairs at the main store on Robson Street, next to the Vancouver Public Library with Mr. Duthie and Jill McIvor, a young married woman about my age. (There were at least four other branches of the store at the time.) There were three other people in the store who would be important to me: Chuck Brickley, Don McKinnon and Binky Marks. Chuck was a poet, with a special predilection for haiku, and worked in the mail room. Don and Binky were absent when I started.

Chuck and I hit it off and became good friends. Within a year or so, he and his wife moved to Hope, about one hundred miles to the East. We stayed in touch for a number of years, until the late 1970s I think, after I had moved to Saskatoon.

Don was bookkeeper for Duthie Books, and at the time I started he and his wife Nicola were on an extended trip in Europe. They had flown over, bought a VW camper, and spent six months in travel, including (among other places) Italy, Turkey, and the Soviet Union.

Binky was one of the great characters in Vancouver. A commie from way back when, he had recruited for the MacKenzie-Papineau Brigade during the Spanish Civil War, served in the Canadian army in Italy during the second world war, and ran the communist bookstore in Vancouver, until recruited by Bill Duthie when he opened the Robson Street store in 1957. He was also unmarried and a notorious libertine; he was notably ugly and unkempt (his suit was perpetually wrinkled and probably never cleaned), and was very democratic in his tastes: he slept with any woman he could. This was not always a pretty picture, and he was probably predatory, though to my knowledge he never forced himself on anyone. He simply went after every woman available, and he sometimes got lucky. Binky was also a founding member of the Sunny Trails Nudist Camp. Every year on Boxing Day he had an open house party, twelve noon to midnight, in his walk-up apartment on the top floor of an old house. I remember arriving around supper time. The place was crowded. He was wearing nothing but a Speedo, his belly hanging out in front of him, while cooking a duck Chinese style. (He had taken lessons.) The kitchen was full of smoke from the duck and crowded with guests. More guests in the main living room. Other than that, there was his bedroom and a second bedroom full of marijuana plants.

Binky never had much, until a wealthy uncle died without a will, so that he came into a lot of money. Following this windfall, Binky took a leave from the store and flew to Europe to join Don and Nicky. I heard afterwards how they bought hashish in Turkey and then carried it hidden in their camper through the Soviet Union.

All this was jolly, but I must share that it was a deeply unhappy time in my life. I was thoroughly alienated and very lonely. I wanted to be with a lady, and had a couple of girl friends, but at the same time I was incapable of making a commitment. I was simply too lost for that. At the same time, I sometimes enjoyed oceanic waves of relief and pleasure, and gratitude for being in Canada,

when I lived in the moment and did not think too much about my future. Mr. Duthie from time to time encouraged me to look for a library job, as he could only pay me minimum wage. But I had lost interest in being a librarian; I conceived the ambition of becoming a writer, a novelist.

When Don and Nicky returned from Europe, it came about that they had available a basement apartment in their house, also in Kitsilano, which I rented from them. One end opened at ground level, with a private entrance, so it was not unpleasant (though cold in winter). It was cheaper than my first apartment, and I hatched a plan. Having worked fulltime for a year, I asked Mr. Duthie to let me go to part-time, two days a week. This was enough money for me to subsist, barely. I lived on lentil soup and squid and other inexpensive foods. But during the several years I lived so, I accomplished nothing in terms of writing. I just did not know how to go about it, which drew me further into a kind of extended depression. And I further isolated myself. I sometimes spoke to no one for days at a time. I grew a beard and let my hair grow long, though I continued to wear a jacket and tie to work.

Meanwhile, when my sister graduated, my parents bought her a ticket to Vancouver, and she came for a visit of a week or two. We got along fine, and although our politics diverged, we have remained on good relations. My parents drove up once to visit as well, a big commitment of time, as my father never took holidays.

Dreams. I dreamt that I was somehow in the United States. A bad dream, and I struggled to find a way to escape. This dream repeated itself from time to time, eventually with a feeling of oddness, rather than fear. And then the dream stopped, decades ago.

After a year of flaying about with my unsuccessful writing, I started taking a few courses at Simon Fraser University. Initially, I signed up for an introductory course in linguistics, which had become an interest of mine, but for some reason I dropped it. I also took a German literature course, which I enjoyed and which led to my taking several such over a period of two years or so. During this time, my instincts were divided between writing and scholarship; eventually the latter won out, but it was several years in coming.

I reached a point where I knew I was in a rut and that I had to get out, to do anything. About that time I heard that there was a new regional library system starting up in the British Columbia interior that was hiring librarians. I applied and I got a job. I did not have many belongings to move, and I was in Kamloops within a short time.

Harry Newsom, the founding director, was a very strong personality. He had come to Kamloops from the University of Alberta, where he had been head of the library school. Many of the new librarians were former students and recent graduates. This was a wonderful experience in many ways, not least for the opportunity to see some amazing country. With my fellow librarians, we were a "band of brothers" (though my colleagues were mostly women). I was in charge of "book deposits",

small collections that were placed in remote locations and changed every three months, as well as the bookmobile. The book deposits were in such places as logging camps, remote villages, a minimum security prison, and the Douglas Lake Ranch, one of the largest ranches in North America. I drove a jeep.

At a later point, I was responsible for the public libraries in the westernmost part of the region: Ashcroft, Cache Creek, Lillooet.

While I was in Kamloops, I contacted an anti-war organisation in California, to which I gave power of attorney. They got charges against me dropped. I am not entirely sure I understand the grounds, but I believe it was because a case similar to mine went to court and was dismissed because the draft board had failed to give grounds for refusing a claim of conscientious objection. This would have been a failure of administrative procedure. About the same time, I suppose a bit later, newly elected President Carter declared a pardon for deserters and "dodgers". I had no need to take advantage of this offer. Because I could now safely re-enter the United States, I was able to attend my sister's wedding in California in 1975.

Harry was a strong personality, as I said, but there was a downside: he was a tyrant, and when someone fell out of favour, he was unforgiving. On a single day, he fired half of the professional staff (but not me). I began desperately looking for a new job.

The University of Saskatchewan had advertised for a collection development librarian with knowledge of German. I got the job and started in September, 1976. I was in Kamloops about two years. I moved on to Saskatoon, expecting to stay a couple of years then move on. I stayed twenty-seven.

I am very grateful to the University, but my feelings about Saskatoon are ambivalent. Those early years were deeply lonely and I experienced a big disappointment in my emotional life, making me very reluctant to move, and start over again in a new place, knowing no one. It might have been better for me to have moved on. Saskatoon in those days was very much oriented to families and couples, and to church. And I was single and effectively an atheist.

The University, however, treated me very well. My initial responsibilities were collection development in English, Germanic languages, and history, which entailed selecting books for purchase and liaison with the respective academic departments. After four or five years, I became head of Government Publications, Maps and Microforms, and there I got into my stride. Government publications accounted for maybe eighty percent of our work. We assembled materials, organised them, and helped users. I began to publish a bit and made a reputation for myself in this very small specialty. I founded an electronic journal, perhaps the first in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Toward the later years, I was made a kind of adjunct faculty member in the Department of Political Studies.

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<sup>2</sup> *Government Information in Canada/Information gouvernementale au Canada*. (1994-. Ceased publication in 2000.)

On becoming head of Government Publications, I decided it was time to become a Canadian citizen. The process was easy enough, though when I was interviewed, I failed one of the questions on Canadian history: I thought that PEI was one of the original provinces. The ceremony took place in an elementary school a few blocks from campus, at the request of the principal, who made it into a citizenship lesson for the kids. We new citizens were seated in rows at the front, and the school kids in the audience. They played a few numbers on hand bells. On the walls were posters made by the children; I remember a beaver sticking out its "hand", "welcome to Canada!" I was charmed.

While in Saskatoon, I became friends with Marketa Newman, initially in Collection Development, where she was a librarian. Marketa was a Holocaust survivor; she and her husband and young boy were several years in Terezin<sup>3</sup> during the War. I once told her I felt embarrassed before her, that the draft experience had so thrown me, where her own experience was incomparably more desperate. She said there was no comparison to be made. My experience was what it was, a generous sentiment. One of Marketa's best friends was a German woman, born around 1940, who had worked with both of us in the Library. Ursula had no responsibility for the crimes of the Nazis. Still, other people with Marketa's experience wanted nothing to do with Germans. Marketa had a kind of life-force within her which she herself could not explain.

A few years after I started at the University, I took "educational leave" (including a \$5000 grant) to pursue a master's in linguistics at McGill University. (At the time I was still in Collection Development.) There was a one year leave around 1980-81, and a sabbatical in 1985-86. I started this project only a year or so before becoming head of Government Publications, so for a while I was riding two bicycles at once. Not easy. It was not until 1992 that I finished my thesis, a study of some syntactical questions in the Somali language, within the Chomskian framework.

On completing my thesis, I took a five week holiday, travelling in Morocco. By this time Somalia was in civil war and off-limits for travel. However, I thought to maintain linguistics as a hobby, switching to Berber, a related language spoken in Morocco. Travelling solo in this country was hard, but by the time I came home I figured that linguistics as a hobby was not going to work. My training was theory-oriented, and I just could not do that in isolation in Saskatoon. What I should do, I told myself, was learn something diverting and relaxing, like watercolour. (I did not take up watercolour.)

In the course of my work in government information (note the terminological change, coming out of the digital revolution), I was asked to represent the Canadian Library Association on an advisory committee to the Depository Services Programme, which distributed government publications to libraries across the country. In the course of this work, I met Cynthia Hoekstra, who represented the Library of Parliament. And Cynthia became my wife.

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<sup>3</sup> Theresienstadt in German.

I took early retirement when I was fifty-six and moved to Ottawa. Cynthia and I bought a house and got married. First time for me. After a year or so, I was recruited to a term position in the International Development Research Centre, a Crown corporation, where I worked for about three years, a wonderful experience. IDRC sponsors applied research in support of development in developing countries. In the course of my work, I had the experience of working a couple of weeks in Nigeria. But that was the end of my professional career, aside from a brief stint (a few months) at the Canadian Institute for Scientific and Technical Information.

## POSTSCRIPT

Bill Duthie died in 1984. Shortly afterwards, the community of booksellers in British Columbia and the Yukon created the Bill Duthie Booksellers' Prize Award in his honour. The last Duthie bookstore closed in 2010. One of the children in the family told me that the stores were doing fine, but rising rents made the business untenable.

Binky Marks died in 1975, a year after I left Duthie Books. Because he was retiring, the Canadian Booksellers Association, at their annual meeting, honoured him at their banquet. Appropriately, the guest speaker was Xaviera Hollander, the "Happy Hooker". As the evening proceeded, Binky pawed at Hollander, and Hollander pawed at Binky. Articles of clothing came off. That night Binky died in his sleep.

Leland Windreich died in 2012. We had a falling out a few years after I arrived in Canada, for reasons that are irrelevant here, and we never spoke again. Dance was his passion, and he wrote hundreds of articles and reviews, including a book on a number of British Columbia dancers who were in the Ballets Russes. He donated his correspondence with Agnes DeMille to New York Public Library. The Globe and Mail published an article on Lee upon his death. When I knew him, I was aware of his interest in dance, but unaware of his profile in the dance world. I honour his memory and thank him for his generosity at a time when I was in need.

Marketa Newman died in 2000. She was born in Prague, survived Terezin, and escaped communist Czechoslovakia, coming to Saskatoon because her husband found work there. (He was a dentist, but had previously been a professor of surgery at the Charles University in Prague.) At great sacrifice, for a year she left her husband and children in the care of a housekeeper to get a library degree in Toronto. She was a librarian at the University for several decades. Marketa was greatly interested in the visual arts and published a two volume biographical dictionary of Saskatchewan artists, for which she was awarded an honorary PhD by the University of Saskatchewan.

Garry Curtis completed his PhD and had a career in government service, first for the Government of Saskatchewan and then in British Columbia, where he and his wife are now retired. We never lost touch, writing regular letters and (later) emails. Chuck Brickley and I lost contact in the late 1970s, but reconnected a few weeks ago to our mutual pleasure, thanks to the internet. He is a sought after –

and paid – speaker at haiku conferences, a recipient of awards, and recently published his first book, *Earthshine* (Ormskirk, UK: Snapshot Press, 2017).

Since the time I arrived in Canada, back in 1970, I felt *safe*. That changed abruptly in 2011, when I read an article in *The Globe*, about some new US legislation, the Foreign Accounts Tax Compliance Act, or FATCA. This is not the place to explain FATCA, but the effect of it was to empower the US government to seek out and essentially confiscate unreported foreign financial assets held by US citizens, including those living abroad. The penalties were fines many times greater than the assets themselves. An amnesty was offered to citizens whose non-compliance with US law was inadvertent, amounting to turning over fifty-percent of their savings, pensions, businesses and other assets. Renunciation of US citizenship would not help; renunciation was only allowed after settling all tax and other financial obligations to the US government.

I was terrified and furious. The US was asserting its ability and intent to reach out *anywhere in the world* and destroy people like me. I donated some \$5000 to a class action suit against the Government of Canada for cooperating with the US at the expense of citizens.<sup>4</sup> As well, in 2018 I filed a claim at the US consulate in Ottawa, that I had intentionally relinquished my US citizenship in 1981, when I became a citizen of Canada. Eventually, in 2019 I obtained a “certificate of loss of nationality” from the US State Department. This definitively settled the issue for me; I had no outstanding obligations to the US government. The process required an application fee of \$2350 US. I also had legal costs of about \$2500 for a lawyer.

Since 2011, due to FATCA I had not dared enter the US, far longer than my draft-age period. By this time, my parents had died. However, my sister and her husband visited a couple of times. Not long after receiving my papers from State, the pandemic made travel to the US impossible. So, it is some ten years since I have been in the US.

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<sup>4</sup> FATCA requires non-US financial institutions to identify and turn over the records of US citizens, including those living abroad and Canadians having dual citizenship. Failure to comply would result in ruinous penalties to Canadian banks. Canada and other countries passed legislation allowing our financial institutions to comply with the US legislation. The lawsuit claimed that this was a violation of our Charter rights. The suit was lost at the first level; funds are being raised for an appeal.