HOLLYWOOD FILM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Henry Hathaway

Columbia University

Oral History Research Office

1991

PREFACE

The following oral history memoir is the result of one tape recorded interview with Henry Hathaway, which took place on June 18,1971. It was conducted by Time Life, Inc. for the Hollywood Film Industry Oral History Project, which documents the history of the Hollywood fim industry.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

January 24, 1984

Mr. Henry Hathaway
c/o Mrs. Henry Hathaway
888 Sarbonne Road
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Dear Mr. Hathaway:

Time Life, Inc., has generously donated to the Columbia University Oral History Research Office the tape and literary rights to the interview you did for them on June 18, 1971.

We plan to transcribe the tape in the near future and make it a part of our permanent research collection. The enclosed annual report will give you an idea of the breadth of material contained in this body of source material to which yours will be a significant addition. In case you would like to review your transcript before we open it to researchers, please let us know and we will make the necessary arrangements.

Thank you for this contribution to the Oral History Collection.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Grele
Director

EGK

Interviewee: Henry Hathaway Session #1

Interviewer: Charles Higham Universal City, CA

Date: June 18, 1971

Hathaway: The famous kid from the Chaplin picture. It's now on television.

Q: Jackie Coogan.

Hathaway: Jackie Coogan. Jackie Cooper.

Q: So "Shoe Out" was originally Jackie Cooper.

Hathaway: And now instead of a little boy it's a little girl. It's a simply story of a man that's on a manhunt and is left with a little girl to take with him and he does everything on God's green earth to get rid of her and can't. He becomes fond of her. And there's not a rehabilitation at the end, but there's a-- I mean, the man does kill his man. But then there's a happy ending you get with the little kid.

Q: And who are the stars, Mr. Hathaway?

Hathaway: Gregory Peck and Dawn Lynn. Robert F. Lyons played the main heavy. They're the only three people really. And there's no

girl in it.

Q: Where did you shoot it?

Hathaway: In New Mexico.

Q: Which area?

Hathaway: Around Santa Fe, which is really north, clear up to the border.

Q: You used that area before?

Hathaway: No, that was the first time I worked in New Mexico. No, I've worked in Alcomar, Alcomar Rock, before. I used that in a picture called "Sundown," I used it for Africa, for the Serengeti Plains.

Q: With Gene Tierney.

Hathaway: With Gene Tierney. And then I used Shiprock. And years and years and years before in Icana des Sheyes(?) and it was Victor Shirtsinger with Richard Dixson, and we made picture like the "Redskin" thing. I wasn't new to the territory, but that was the first time I'd used it in a long time since it had become popular. As a matter of fact, I read a book, "Death Comes To The

Archbishop." What was that woman's name?

Q: Willa Cather.

Hathaway: Willa Cather. I read that. And the night I finished it I put it down, and I got in my car the next day and I drove to Alcomar. I had to see that place. Have you ever been there?

Q: No.

Hathaway: It was built 1600, and the church that was built there, the materials and the thing, the altars and the cloth and the chalices and all the decorations and paintings were brought from Mexico City on mule back. And this is built up on a promontory that you have to crawl up the side, almost on a rock ladder cut in the side of the hill that they built to get away from the Apaches and the Navajos. I just had to see that place. I never forgot it, and I've worked there twice since. I brought Victor Shirtsinger there when we made the picture called "Redskin," and then I worked there in "Sundown."

Q: And "True Grit," where was that mainly shot?

Hathaway: That was shot in Colorado, around Montrose. Montrose in four directions is-- every kind of, various kind of scenery. There's rivers and ponds and lakes and snow and high hills, you go

up into the Rockies. I'd used that before in "How the West was Won." That was my first time in there, in Montrose, in that same district.

Q: And tell me about Kim Darby. Was she your discovery, or Hal Wallace discovered her?

Hathaway: No, I think it was Paul, his assistant, that saw her in "Run for Your Life" in which she was a pregnant girl that came back to look for the guy who had promised-- who had married her, but then she finds out it was a fictitious marriage that they had gone through in Tijuana. She's a good actress. But Paul was the one that brought the-- to our attention-- [tape recorder turned off] -- who does most of the casting for him, real good boy, real sensitive-- very good at casting. He's the one that found the thing. And when we saw it, we both thought she was right for the part.

Q: How did you enjoy working with John Wayne?

Hathaway: Well, John Wayne's an old friend from way back. He's marvelous, just marvelous. I made the first picture with him in the '30s, "Shepherd of the Hills," with he and Betty Field, Harry Carey. He's quite a character, he's quite a man.

Q: What do you think are his great qualities as an actor?

Hathaway: Well, I think that he's smart enough to know what he can do well and stays with that. I only know one person, really, who was qualified to play as many varied roles as he has, more different kinds of roles than anybody had ever attempted, was Gary Cooper, who played sophisticated roles in "Design for Living," down to admirals to doughboys and comedy and drama, soldiers and peasants. He's just done about everything, and carried them all off well. He played more of a variety of roles than anybody I know, from Sergeant York to generals.

Q: Wayne has a great quality of inner strength, hasn't he, which--

Hathaway: Well, he has it. It's no effort for him to show that, because he's got it, that's him. He was born with it. The hardest thing is to control it, because he come off big all the time and he comes off so strong. Most of the people that are stars in pictures were sort of born with the quality that's called charisma or whatever they want to call it, but it's an inherent thing in them that they were just born with at the time, whether it's sympathy or comedy or strength or humility or any of the other kinds of things, they were born with it and they've got it, and it sort of comes out no matter what kind of role they play. I mean, Paul Newman, whether it's in "Hud" or any of those other things, or even a sophisticated story, he's got that sort of quiet dominating "don't go too far with me, I'll stand for so much, but don't press me" quality, you know, that he can become dangerous. Not as strong as

Wayne, of course, but it's a good quality that comes in a gentler way.

Q: And Wayne, of course, has great integrity.

Hathaway: Oh, integrity to the point that he could destroy himself. Anybody else that comes out with some of the things that he does and some of the things he says, except for his complete honesty, it would destroy anybody else. If there was any sense of deception or anything in it, it could destroy him. It's just that he believes it so thoroughly and it's the truth to him that he can get away with what he does.

Q: And working with him on location, did you find a tremendous rapport between you in terms of the direction?

Hathaway: We're good friends and that makes it easier. The greatest thing that anybody can have between yourself and the star is respect for each other. And he has respect for my position, I have respect for his position. And he's such a pro, I mean he's on there all the time, he's helping all the time, he's suggesting all the time, he's bringing something to you all the time. But not quarrelsome if it's rejected, and not egotistical if it's accepted; it's just a part of the job.

Q: He added some touches, did he, to the performance?

Hathaway: Well, the performance -- in "True Grit" you mean? That was all Wayne, that was all Wayne. My only thing that I had to do was contain him, that's all.

Q: Because his personality's so expansive.

Hathaway: It was an expansion of the Wayne character let loose, and all I had to do with to see that it didn't become exaggerated or unbelievable, and would make it a mockery of himself.

Q: Was Kim Darby ever awed by him, or did she hold--

Hathaway: Not at all, not at all. Kim Darby really, outside of Paul Nathan who she adored, didn't get along with anybody in the company. I mean, she was rude to Wayne. Although he tried to make friends with her, she was rude to him and didn't particularly care for him. And she wasn't rude to me when we were working, but was never friendly.

Q: She was living her part for real perhaps. She was something of a obstreperous tomboy in it.

Hathaway: I don't know much about the girl personally, except I know that she wasn't too successful in her married life, and there was quite a bit of trouble with she and her husband while the picture was going on, and it made her a little unhappy at times.

And maybe out of that came the fact that she wasn't friendly with anybody except Paul, who was sort of a father confessor to her. After the picture was over I was surprised to see that she attacked me in so many ways, but the only trouble I had with her, really, was the fact that she had a tendency to be cute, and her reason was that she thought the material was humorous and she should be humorous. And it was hard for me to knock that out of her to the extent that I must-- the humor was the fact that she didn't think it was humorous, so if she had anything cute about her and thought that she was getting away like Sanford Bee in those kind of things, in which they kind of think they're the darling, "the Flying Nun," you know, that they're awful cute up there. The hardest task with her was to keep out of it any semblance of the fact that she thought it was humorous, to play it-- because it's seriously humorous and if she thinks it's humorous, it's not. So I was very strict with her about that, especially with her walk which she was inclined-- wanted to take on sort of a funny little walk.

Q: Did you find the novel?

Hathaway: Find the what?

Hathaway: The novel.

Hathaway: No, no. As a matter of fact, it was submitted to all Hollywood, which is rare, and John Wayne himself had offered

$300,000 for it. And Mr. [Hal] Wallis and Mr. [Paul Nathan], who bought it, who had Paramount buy it for him, he paid $300,000 for it. But there's a marvelous story about this that would be interesting to you. You can knock it out of that if you want to. But [Charles] Portis wrote the book, and when we finished the script, in which we were smart enough to use the book as a script -- I don't know whether you read the book--

Q: Yes.

Hathaway: But I would say 80 to 90 percent of the completed scenario was taken directly from the book and including the dialogue, because we-- so that's what we bought, and we wanted to keep it, which is rare. In most cases, in the book you usually buy an idea or something, or it's too thick and you have to take a part of it, but this was a scenario. So we were proud of the fact that we had used so much of the book, which, by the way, Mr. Wallis insisted on. When he gave it to the woman he said, "You write this-- put this in the scenario, then we'll find out what we want to do later, but let's get that first." All except the end, which a writer did, because the end in the book was quite different. But when we finished we sent the script to Portis and got back that he had some reservations about it. So we said, well, what. He said he thought that they were serious enough that he should come out and talk about them. So he came out. I got a call from Wallis and I came down. He and Portis are sitting down and he said, "I want

you to hear what Mr. Portis has to say about this script. I don't want to say anything to you to influence you one way or the other. I just want you to hear it straight from him. So he went through a long thing to explain to me that the book was written about a 60-year-old woman telling the story of what happened when she was a child. He said, "I was talking as a 60-year-old woman would talk. And in your script you have this 14-year-old girl using this language. So," he said, "I think that's a serious mistake." So I said to him, "Well, that's why we bought it. It didn't occur to me that this-- I thought you were saying what you said when you were 14, as far as I'm concerned." I said, "As far as I'm concerned, we bought the book. Do you think we ought to have a whole new type of language for it?" And he said yes. I said, "Well, as far as I'm concerned, I think the people expect this-- come to see the picture because they've read the book. So what else?" He said, "Well, John Wayne, I think he'd entirely wrong." So I said, "Well, maybe that's why you didn't sell the book to John Wayne and sold it to Mr. Wallis instead, but I don't know of anybody else that could play it any better, his mere presence in the script, the girl dominating such a man. So what else?" He says, "Well, I understand that you're going to make the picture in Colorado. Everybody in the world knows that that's not Arkansas scenery." So I said, "Well, the people who live in Arkansas, as far as I'm concerned, don't know anything 10 miles beyond their city limits, and they won't even know themselves. And they might be proud to think that that's Arkansas. And this picture's going to be

released in the world as far as that goes, and as far as I'm concerned I don't think the people in Arkansas are going to know the difference." So I said, "Is that all?" I said, The hell with him. I can't say anything to you except that I think it's stupid." So he said okay. I left and we didn't change a word, didn't change John Wayne or put it in Arkansas. I went back to Arkansas, by the way, looked all through the country to see it. And there again, I found it-- in going through that history I found out that the books that were written during the NRA -- you remember when they did-- I don't remember if it was NRA, [WPA] but when they distributed jobs to the people in the United States to keep them going, it wasn't only laborers with picks and shovels. They hired all types. And they hired a lot of writers to go to different parts and write histories of different parts for the record. And the book on that Indian Territory is the most wonderful book, reference book, I ever read in my life, about the hanging judge in the town of the fort and the whole thing. We got everything that we had to do of the building and doing in that picture was taken out of that one reference book. And most of the people don't even know that they're around.

Q: The book was very much a kind of throwback, wasn't it, to an earlier type of writing. It seemed to hark back to an earlier period.

Hathaway: I don't mean Portis got that from that. I mean in doing

the technical work on the picture I read these-- Portis didn't write them.

Q: No, I mean his book itself was a--

Hathaway: Oh, his book itself. A lot the things in his book I read in this history. For instance, one of the marshals of the hanging judge actually was a one-eyed man. He had been shot. He was in on a train robbery that they heard about, and they had the marshals on the train, and when they started the robbery he started to go into the coach where they were, in the baggage car, and they shot through the door and hit him in the eye. So they had a one-eyed man. And another thing, the thing in the end, the pit with the rattlesnake, I read that one there too, because they sent a man down in where-- they heard that a body was dumped into an old pit, and the guy went down in there and thought the body was a rattlesnake. And that was in that book too, in the history book.

Q: So you got a terrificly authentic look in the picture.

Hathaway: Well, that was practically made all on the exterior. I would say that I did the interior down in the bottom of the pit, I did that on the stage. I did the interior of the Chinaman's store, because there was so much work, and I did that on the stage. But a lot of it was done on location.

Q: The best of it.

Hathaway: A good deal of it.

Q: And quite rugged locations as times.

Hathaway: No, no, we weren't at any time too far off either a paved road or a dirt road. Because the country's full of roads. I mean, the guys in these Jeeps make them.

Q: So the problem is to hide the contemporary world, then, from--the--

Hathaway: Well, the only difficult thing is to get into country where there's no telegraph poles. That's the thing we look for. (inaudible) We don't want to see telegraph poles.

Q: Or planes.

Hathaway: Well, you have to wait for that no matter where you are.

Q: Yes, they cross the sky every inch of--

Hathaway: There's no place now that you can hide from them. You just have to wait till they go by.

Q: Sometimes that can interrupt the day's shooting.

Hathaway: Well, how long's it take one to go by?

Q: Yes.

Hathaway: Two or three minutes.

Q: And then you get the trail.

Hathaway: As a matter of fact, a couple of times I've printed takes with them in when I said, "Boys, look, they just gotta think that's a buzz because I'm not going to try to get that over again," when you get a very good take, you know. I remember in "Home in Indiana" we had these little girls who were brand new, little Jean Crain, I had a scene with her, a little emotional scene, it was just marvelous. And emotional scenes are better the first time you do them. Some other scenes that have technical things and comedy and stuff you can rehearse it. But emotional scenes, if they hit that emotional thing once, regardless if it's the first, the second or the third time, you know, if you hit that once it's hard to get it again. And this was just a wonderful thing, and the sound man said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Hathaway, there's a plane." I said, "Well, that plane's going to go down in history, because it's going to be there." And it's still there.

Q: Nobody noticed.

Hathaway: Oh, no.

Q: One of the Westerns I'm very found of is "From Hell to Texas." I like particularly its rather off-beat hero, or anti-hero, the basic idea.

Hathaway: It's a very funny thing about that, because a part of that was forced on us. Because Don Murray at that time was-- I won't call it a cult, because that's not exactly true, but he had an emotional thing with himself that he wouldn't-- as a matter of fact, one time he wouldn't kiss a girl in a picture. But another time-- this thing is that he wouldn't kill a man. So there were one or two times in the picture that he had to shoot somebody, shoot at them, that I had to justify in some way to even convince him to do it, so I had to become inventive in order to satisfy him. He had just come out of that picture with Marilyn Monroe, in which he was quite good--

Q: "Bus Stop."

Hathaway: "Bus Stop." And Daryl [Zanuck] had said, "Use him, I want to use him. I think he's kind of rugged, so put him in this Western." So when I said that he had some things, he said, "Well, get around them, just get around them. It's not going to hurt the

picture that much." So some of the things-- I had a device in order to get him to accept the fact that he was shooting at somebody. The whole idea of the picture that he liked, was that he was running because he wouldn't kill anybody; that was marvelous to him. He was supposed to kill a Mexican, you know, and I had him shoot the Mexican, and the Mexican fell off the wagon and he was down. And then I had that final scene. And he said to me, "The audience is going to assume I killed the Mexican." I said, "Well, we didn't show that he was dead." He said, "Look, Mr. Hathaway, I'm not going to do the final scene until there's justification in there that the Mexican is alive." So I had to send for the Mexican and show him sitting in the saloon in the background while the last scene was going on. Now, nobody's going to know that that was the Mexican they shot, but it satisfied him. He just wouldn't do it, he just wouldn't kill a man.

Q: Was he a pacifist?

Hathaway: He wasn't a pacifist. It was some-- the total overall term was a pacifist, but I don't think he was a pacifist in the line that he didn't want to help us to stay out of France or to not help England or something in that broader sense. I think it was just a religious thing with him personally not killing anybody.

Q: He was ideally cast then.

Hathaway: Pardon?

Q: He was ideally cast.

Hathaway: Yes, he was ideally cast, and he was awfully good in that kind of picture. That, by the way, was rewritten from not too good a script to what was finally on the screen in one week by -- what was his name?

Q: Where was that shot? Texas itself?

Hathaway: Oh, no, no. It was shot up here in the Sierras.

Q: One thing that interests me about Westerns as a whole is how often they're filmed away from the territory they're set in.

Hathaway: Well, some of that is for reasons of economics, and some of the reason-- we like to work in a central point where we can go in four directions and get different kinds of scenery. Now, our favorite place, and it's getting sort of used up, is Bishop. You go up there and you got into the Sierras, it looks like the Rockies, and some of it's so bold you could almost take it for Switzerland, you know. It's got the rivers, it's go water, it's got the desert, it's got rolling hills, and it's in old cow country that actually has some of the old farms left still around that look like old ranch houses. Now, some of the places that they write

about-- now, things made in Oregon, you don't go there just to-- the weather's so bad. I mean, you don't go to Northern California. I've gone up to Eureka and sat there for 27 days and worked five.

Q: South Dakota was the setting of many of the famous Indian stories.

Hathaway: Yes, but South Dakota is more or less all the same kind of country. It's Badlands. In "How the West was Won" we went up to Custer National Park because the buffalo were there and because the railroad runs through there too. And that was done up there, but there's only two places left that had the buffalo. One was down in Texas and the other was up there, but that had a lot of pine trees to it too.

Q: Well, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, of course, is very popular, isn't it, for Westerns?

Hathaway: Yes, it's very popular. "Shane" was made there and a lot of other Westerns, but that has that one chain of mountains there that if you want a mountain story, then you've got that, but it hasn't the variety of scenery that we usually (inaudible), like in "How the West was Won."

Q: You had tremendous variety there.

Hathaway: That's right. Well, it was all around the same place where I made "True Grit," where you get every beautiful scenery, it's a beautiful desert it's beautiful rolling hills. All of those houses in "True Grit," none of them were built, they're all real, even the log cabins and all of that, they're all right there.

Q: I supposed much of the real history of the West took place against rather drab landscape in fact, which would not be very interesting visually.

Hathaway: No, that's not exactly true. Again, if we could work up here, as in the early days, around Bishop and Lone Pine where we made a good deal of our pictures, why go any further? We'd go up there in automobiles and there's no big economic problem, and you can send your rushes back out-- of course, you can send them from any place now by air, but in those days we used to send them by automobile. Now we hire a plane to take them back every night. But getting actors up for one day and back the next day made it more reasonable than to ride them two or three days on a train or something in the early days. It was part economics, and then again we had to find places for the company to live, so you can't get too far away from cities. I love this thing around Montrose, and not too many pictures have been made there, because there's only about two or three months of the year that it's really wise to work there on account of the weather. It gets snowed in. I had to leave there on "How the West was Won" on account of snow, and I had to

leave there on "True Grit" on account of snow, and finished them both in Lone Pine and Bishop.

Q: How much of "How the West was Won" did you direct?

Hathaway: Well, number one, I was brought in there by Sol [C.] Siegal, who took it over from Bing Crosby. I guess you know the history of that.

Q: Yes.

Hathaway: And Sol brought me in to sort of wind it up with him. And at that time Saul had an assistant by the name of Smith -- I'll think of his first name. Later on he usurped the position of producer on the picture, but really Saul was the producer; he was Saul's assistant. And so Saul says, "When you can't talk to me, talk to Smith." But I lined up all the episodes and picked all the locations for the whole picture and had the basic idea of the five episodes. They wanted an episodic picture. But the episodes picked up the fact that the progress out west, and then in the West for the last one, and the West was actually won at the time the war came in, and the war won the West for the People. I was only supposed to make the first one, while Sol was going to package the whole thing, get it together, and cast it with the people we wanted to run through it and things like that. And then I was going to make the first one and different directors were going to make the

others. Well, we got in a bind so I made the second one. And while I was making the second one, they got John Ford for the same location down in Kentucky to make the Civil War one, and then George Marshall went up to Casper National Park to get the Buffalo. And I had the idea for the fifth one, which was a story I stole from another picture I made, but that's beside the point. So I made the fifth episode.

(Machine off) I don't want to use it, because-- but, anyway, we had a hard time, and we didn't have a basic liberal plot and we wanted to get a classic one. I used the last reel of "Kiss of Death," in which a man, to save his family, goes out to get the desperado. I used that whole episode. In other words, the principle was the same, that the guy was going to kill his wife and kids, and to protect them he had to get the heavy, and had to catch the heavy in action in order to have him really prosecuted. So he went on the train himself to get the man in action when he was going to do it. The formula was taken from the last reel of "The Kiss of Death."

Q: Well, the suspense of that train scene was absolutely fantastic.

Hathaway: As "High Noon." "High Noon" is the last reel of "The Virginian." If you look at "The Virginian," you'll see from the time in "The Virginian" and the last, he comes in to-- he brings the wife that he's going to marry and brings her to the hotel, and

goes out and finds out that Trampus is coming to town, goes back and gets Trampus' guns and comes out, and the wife says I won't marry you if you kill a guy. The only added thing to it is he tried to solicit the help of the town and can't get it. In "The Virginian" he didn't try to solicit any help; he just went out gunning for him. But then the body that they used away from that formula was that he tried to solicit help from the church and the law and everything, and everybody said let them alone. And then he went on and got him himself. But the whole basic thing of the last reel of "The Virginian" is the whole picture of "High Noon." That's what I did with "The Kiss of Death" took the basic idea and used it on the last episode of "How the West was Won."

Q: Well, there were some wonderful stunts in train scene.

Hathaway: On the train, yes. It's very strange, because most of those things that look like they're outside-- now, 50 percent of that was made on the stage, over 50 percent. We did the second unit work on the train down in Superior, in a mine that operates there, that takes its ore in that train and takes the cars down and the Southern Pacific picks it up. That's a 17-mile stretch in there that they still use. We took the cars down there. But all of the principals, all of the principal photography, of the principals on the train-- I had one, two, I had four cars on the stage and did it in all by backprojection. As a matter of fact, in the first episode, coming down through the rapids -- do you

remember that, on the raft?

Q: Yes.

Hathaway: Sixty percent of that was shot on the stage. I never had a principal up there when we took the background thing of the raft coming down the river. All that was done on the stage.

Q: I know that the train, and all looked amazingly real in terms of backgrounds--

Hathaway: You never know the difference. But I'll tell you, when you get in closer like that to the people, when it's big you don't notice the people, and when it's small you don't notice the background. It's a dividing of interest.

Q: Well, actually the suspense was so great that you wouldn't have known what was going on, you were in such a state of tension.

Hathaway: Well, just so long as it's not inferior, that all of a sudden it collects their opinions and they say, Jesus, they're not on train, that's fake. But it was good quality behind it.

Q: So that raft then, there was no actual river footage there. It was all studio?

Hathaway: No, we got long shots of the raft coming down.

Q: Where was that?

Hathaway: It was in Oregon, some of it on the Rogue River and some of it on the Smith River.

Q: With Aggie [Agnes] Moorehead and the family--

Hathaway: They never were up there. As a matter of fact, coming down the river we had men on that with women's clothes on. That's too dangerous for women to get on that thing and come down. It's really too dangerous for actors, because the men themselves had to control that raft. They're all lumberjacks on there. And the women, the three women on there, they were men with wigs and women's dresses on. Lumberjacks.

Q: I couldn't see Aggie braving the rapids.

Hathaway: Isn't she wonderful? She's has such a fundamental knowledge, besides acting, of this whole business. She's a great one to talk to. Have you talked to her?

Q: Yes. Did the cinerama, the three images, present a special problem in terms of direction?

Hathaway: You mean lining up the mechanical--

Q: Yes.

Hathaway: --things from behind. Well, you see--

Q: And getting a complete feeling of unison between the three panels.

Hathaway: Well, it's just as hard the other system, because on the one screen, when you work with a bigger screen, they have three machines showing the same image. That's almost as hard to get as the feathered screen with the two images matching. It's no harder to get that than to get the three machines to match, one over the top of the other.

Q: Except that the problem was that some of the figures became unduly narrowed or distorted--

Hathaway: Not true.

Q: --on the edge of the panels when I saw it. Perhaps--

Hathaway: Not true. That's all mechanical in the-- you see, you know this thing that you get like that in cinerama? Well, the camera is an absolute perfect thing, and the projection is a

perfect thing. Where you get this is, after the film has run for a little while it's the expansion and the contraction, and the sprocket holes will get a little worn. Because that is the film, it's not the photographing or the projection, it's the goddamn piece of destructible film, that the sprocket holes get out a little, they get worn, you know, and they get a little larger instead of fitting just exactly-- you pull them down. This one and this one together, one will lag a little on account of the sprocket hole, or from the heat after-- the first running of a new print is absolutely perfect, you never see a line. It's when the prints get a little old and worn and run through that they swell or bulge or shrink or stretch. They do all of those things.

Q: "The Bottom of the Bottle" was kind of a Western in a modern setting, wasn't it?

Hathaway: I'd rather not talk about it. I considered it-- it was one of the rare times in motion pictures -- and this shouldn't be ever used, because it's derogatory towards the thing. But Buddy Adler, who was the producer and was new at the company, had taken over and he was a great friend of my agent. My agent came to me and said he's got so many of these old commitments that you'll make a picture with him that will use three or four of those commitments all in one picture. We don't care whether it's good or bad or goes off, it'll get rid of the commitments. We'll make a movie, at least we'll be our money back, and he'd get rid of them and be

forever grateful to you. It's one of the mistakes I've made in my life. So I used up the three commitments. You know who was in the picture: Ruth Roman and Joseph Cotton and Van Johnson, who weren't really suited to it, not that they of themselves are bad in what they're good at, but putting those three people-- Cotton and Van as brothers didn't go very well. And even Van playing that kind of a hard bitten guy that should have been a John Garfield, you know, or a Humphrey Bogart who was in jail and came out. But, anyway, I made the picture with these three. It was a good story and could have been a lot better, but you just didn't believe the people. I lived to see the day that Mr. Adler shook his finger at me and said, "You're one of the few men that ever made a picture for me that didn't make money." I said, "Charlie Feldman, where are you? Where are you Charlie? Come here and talk to this man that was going to be forever grateful."

Q: "The Garden of Evil."

Hathaway: "The Garden of Evil" was made in Mexico. I thought it was a good picture.

Q: It had a strong, a very strong dramatic quality and very striking.

Hathaway: I thought it was very good.

Q: Did you like working with Susan Hayward?

Hathaway: She's strong, domineering, and a good actress, good actress, very strong. When she dances with you, she leads you in her personal life. Hard to convince of anything, but a good actress, hell of a good actress.

Q: Difficult to control, from a director's point of view?

Hathaway: No, no, worked like a dog and everything. It's just that what she don't think is right, you have to be pretty strong to convince her.

Q: She has an obstinate quality.

Hathaway: I mean, she's a strong woman, like she comes off so great in the picture she made with Bob Wise. I mean particularly she has to be hard because she plays some challenging parts, but it's domineering.

Q: (inaudible)

Hathaway: Yes, it's strong. And when she played [Lillian] Roth, you know, strong. I know she goes to drink and that seems weak, but it wasn't. She was strong.

Q: Whereas Gary Cooper was a very different personality, I imagine.

Hathaway: Gary is a-- he was the best actor of all of them, I think, all around. Jimmy Stewart's a good actor and James Cagney's a good actor in those things, but Cooper was never really in life given credit for being as good an actor as he really was. He had great integrity. There was a man like you that was interviewing me one time I was making a picture for Sam Goldwyn, and he was having an interview, and Coop was sort of stretched out on the thing and he said, "I always heard about this, you know, this guy just sleeps and he'll get up and you'll tell him what to do, then he goes back to sleep, and he comes off such a strong actor." I said, "Well, that's not the truth. I mean, because the guy sits around in the idle time doesn't mean in his job when he's awake he hasn't got any integrity." The guys say, "Well--" I said, "Look, let me show you something. Maybe I'll fall on my face with this, but I don't believe it because I believe in the man's integrity." So I set the camera up by a place where there was a palm tree and stuff and there's a white lawn (?) and, there was a nice shadow on it and so on and so forth. I set up and the camera's all ready, and I went over and I say, "Hey, Coop, come on over, I've got a beautiful shot here and the sun's going fast and I've got a close up of you. And there's a lot you have to do, and you're standing right here. You just turn around look and you see a guy. Just get up here and you stand here." And I step back to the camera. And I said to the guy

all right. And Coop says, "Well, who is it?" And I said, "What the hell difference is it. I can't sit here and explain it to you, the light's going on the thing. For Christ's sake, all you have to do is turn around and look." And Coop says, "Well, do I like him?" At least he hadn't already liked him or he'd make me. He said, "I can't look-- don't tell me who it is, but do I like him?" But that's an integrity, you know. He couldn't be photographed unless the man he was looking at he knew whether he didn't like him. Maybe his face would have been the same, but he had an emotion in him that worked for him. And he wouldn't do it. So the guy looked in disbelief and said, "Well, I've got to say he's got integrity," out of what he thought was a sound sleep. That's a marvelous story about the credibility of his acting.

Q: It is.

Hathaway: He never really did anything-- you know, he sort of seemed like he fumbled through a lot of things, but he never really sort of did anything that he thought that he couldn't do a good job at.

Q: He had many of the great qualities of Wayne.

Hathaway: No, he hasn't the strength of Wayne, except for the very quiet, determined sort of boyish way, you know, sort of "jesus, don't make me do this, please don't force me-- don't make me do

something I don't want to do," that he wouldn't back away from anything, but he wouldn't to do what he had to do. He's a wonderful man.

Q: I think we'll turn the tape over here.

[END SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE]

Q: And now I'd like to talk about another Western star, Randolph Scott. I know that your first few credited Westerns were with Scott.

Hathaway: Yes, well, we started together. It was his first picture and my first picture. I think it was his first picture, I'm not so sure.

Q: "Wild Horse Mesa" and--

Hathaway: No, the first one was "Heritage of the Desert."

Q: And "Under the Tonto Rim," with John March and Stewart Irwin.

Hathaway: Stu Irwin, yes, that was a story of a man that ran a hog ranch who wanted to be Western. It was a comedy, supposed to be a comedy. Randy Scott was a gentleman, you know, but a strong face and strong features, and a fine man, still a fine man. He's the

only actor that ever succeeded in getting into the L.A. Country Club. They didn't accept him as an actor, they accepted him as a gentleman. Because no other actor who was taken in, nobody belonging to the-- Did you know that?

Q: Very exclusive.

Hathaway: It's a very exclusive club, and no actors and no people connected with the motion picture industry can get in there at all, no Jews. It's just like an actor was talking about not being able to join the country club, and he was raving on how can they be so goddamned stupid that they won't accept actors, what could they possibly-- and after he was ranting for a long time, [Jack] Benny said to him, "Well, how would you like to be an actor and a Jew too."

Q: So how did he break the barrier there?

Hathaway: Just he's such a gentleman.

Q: I supposed the others, some of the-- Gary Cooper could be described as such.

Hathaway: I don't think Gary would have ever tried. He wouldn't be humiliated if they turned him down.

Q: Were most of these Zane Gray Westerns shot on location?

Hathaway: They were the backbone, what I told you before, which you have on tape, of my-- of being easy for me to do the documentary route, of the working solely on the streets to make these pictures.

Q: Almost entirely or in fact entirely shot on location.

Hathaway: Yes. "The House on 92nd Street," "The Kiss of Death," "Northside 777," "13 Rue Madelaine."

Q: With these early Westerns, did you use local interiors, or were the interiors studio?

Hathaway: I built them on the streets. We had to build them on the streets or find out what we could on the ranch or work in a store or work in a barn. We had to twist it around so that we could-- we weren't allowed in the studio.

Q: In those days, then, there were still areas where you could shoot this type of subject without changing the--

Hathaway: Well, we did it on our ranch, mostly on the ranch. They had that big ranch--

Q: The Paramount Ranch.

Hathaway: The Paramount Ranch, yes, and they had Western streets. The grips would board up the interiors of stores and stuff, the prop men would bring out props, and everything would-- but we used to-- and then I was allowed to go to Lone Pine, because it was easier in Lone Pine. They had houses there that were abandoned, some of the old houses, because a new thing started -- the automobile. And instead of them having to have homes out on their ranches, because it was so far they couldn't come in on wagons all the time, but when they got cars, all the wives insisted on living in town. They said to their husbands get in your cars and get in your pick-up and your trucks and live here and go on out to your ranches, you know, where you've got your cows and things. So they all lived in town, so there was a lot of abandoned houses around that we could work in.

Q: And you used actual interiors.

Hathaway: Used actual interiors, yes.

Q: Was that a problem in those days?

Hathaway: No, no. Good cameramen, good cameramen. They'd have a few lights and little generators and a few lights. We managed very well.

Q: When you shoot in actual huts or small houses, is there a problem of matching the actual daylight with the interior light in a daytime scene?

Hathaway: Well, they filter the windows. They take the windows down, they put filters on the windows to take the outside down maybe two or three, four stops. In the old days before we had filters we used to scrim them, put up scrim, and it sort of diffused it a little more. You never got a clear picture out the window.

Q: How about when you were moving from interior of a hut or whatever into an exterior, or a cabin into an exterior, is it difficult to adjust to the change of light?

Hathaway: Well, no, no, it isn't. Because, see, you have to be a little inventive. I mean, if at that time of day when you open the door the sun was shining right at you, what you do is they took the handle, you'd go outside and show them opening the door and coming out. You just had to vary it to how it was. It all depends on what time of the day. In the morning, you know, the sun was behind you shining on the hill, or a crosslight in which it was raking the side of a hill and not the front door, you open the door anytime.

Q: You'd prefer, would you, to shoot this type of subject entirely on location and avoid the studio?

Hathaway: Well, no. In what you have difficulty-- if there's a lot of action, like there was out in "Shoot Out" in the end, in which they have a shoot out in the room, where you have that much in the script it would be very difficult to do all the things in that kind of a room, because otherwise we'd have to take that house on the location and build it so that we could remove some walls. You see, I had one, two, three, four, five, six, seven people in this room. Well, to get around and photograph those people, you'd have to get around and take some walls out either for lights or the camera or for the thing where you wanted to switch from one to the other. Now what we'd have to do with that old house, we'd have to take down the walls and make them wild, a few of the walls. You'd leave the one towards the main door and the windows, you'd leave one side open, because you'd only photograph from one direction.

Q: Is it more expensive on location than use a studio?

Hathaway: Well, the only difference actually is that while you have the people out, you have to feed and board them. In the studio you just say be here tomorrow morning at a certain time. But, strangely enough, work doesn't quite go as fast as in the studio as it does outside, outside of being held up for weather. It's not as real, it's harder to get what looks good out the windows and what looks good out-- of course, you're way ahead if it's night.

Q: Yes. Does the audience notice things like backdrops, do you think, back projections?

Hathaway: Oh, I think they stick right out, I think they're awfully hard to get away with. Except they have these new ones for the cities and things like that, which they have sort of transparent drapes and they light them from behind now. Instead of shining on the front, they light it from behind, and this sort of gives them a little depth, a little feeling of depth.

Q: Front projection?

Hathaway: No, no, no. They just take a still picture and it's printed on sort of a transparent cloth.

Q: Works well?

Hathaway: Works very well.

Q: "Life of a Bengal Lancer" was a kind of Indian Western in a way. It was shot, I think, on sort of Westernish location mountain scenery.

Hathaway: Well, it was shot in exactly the same place that I made all the Westerns, which is Lone Pine. I made all the Westerns there. When we finally graduated from the back ranch, we'd go up

there. And we used to shoot them back to back. We'd go up there, and as long as we were there we'd shoot the picture, and then change the cast, and then start again with the other one, and then come home. So that we'd make two pictures while we were there and it would save some fare, because most of the same people were in both. Randy Scott would be in both of them. I had been in India, I'd been up in that country and I knew it, and it wasn't unlike the country that we were in. When we talked about where we'd do it, I said, "I'll do one thing, I'll make it exactly where I made all the Westerns." But they had to promise me one thing, that the first day I went to work there that an elephant would come up over the hill, you know, so I'd have a feeling, my God, this isn't a place I've been, here's an elephant. And a very funny thing happened about that. I got up there, and the night before I said to the fellow when everything was around and we were going to start in the morning, I said, "I didn't see the elephant come in." And he said, "I hate to tell you this, Mr. Hathaway, they ain't gonna send the elephant." They said that they think that's a whim a yours and they don't want to spend the money. So I'd just come out of these cheap pictures and it was my first really important movie. So I went to my telephone, I called the office and I said, "I understand you're not sending me the elephant," and they said "No." I said, "Well, I'll tell you one thing. You start him out right now in a truck, start him or start another director, you've got your choice." I said, "You're doing this thing and not telling me, so it goes beyond the fact that it's just an elephant. I mean, it's

your choice, it's your own volition to do what you promised to do. So do two things, send an elephant or send another director." So they said, "Okay, we'll start another director. We'll send him over tomorrow morning." I said, "You better send him up tonight, because I have some things he ought to talk about, what he's going to do tomorrow, etc. Send him tonight." So they said, "Well, that's a good idea." So about an hour later the assistant director came around me and said the elephant's on the way. So I got up from the location the next morning and there's no elephant there, and he said, "It's on the way, I promise you, Mr. Hathaway." I said, "Fine, we'll just stay here till the elephant comes." And we found out that down in the Mohave, coming through there, they pulled in the truck to get some gasoline, and the elephant put his trunk around Standard sign and twisted it all over the station and got hold of-- and they had to take it apart and they beat the hell out of him, and the more they did, the more he yanked on the sign, and the more Bill-- And then in the old days coming up the road -- they finally got him to Lone Pine -- and coming up the road into the flats, the rock flats up there, going up the road he had to stop to change the gas. He stopped under a tree and the elephant reached up and grabbed a branch of a tree over the road and he hung on to that and screamed and hollered and the truck almost tipped over and everything. So I finally sent them some grips down with a saw and sawed the limb off, so when he went into camp he still had the limb of a tree in his trunk. Then we went to work. But it was a more a matter of principle. But there was a great shot with

that-- the first thing I had was the parade that the emir gave for them, that guy with the hawk on his arm and the elephant and the little jaguar and the stuff. But it gave me some sort of feeling that it wasn't where I made the Westerns. Then I made "Rawhide" in that same spot with those same rocks.

Q: Yes. "Rawhide" I remember as being a very gripping thriller.

Hathaway: That was with Susan [Hayward] too.

Q: Tyrone Power.

Hathaway: Tyrone Power.

Q: What was he like to work with?

Hathaway: Wonderful, wonderful. Very cooperative. A good boy, personally a good friend of mine. Well, you know, I made, what, four or five pictures with Gary, I made four or five pictures with Wayne, I made five or six, maybe seven, pictures with Tyrone, so when they're friends-- you get to be friends with them doing that much.

Q: He died so young.

Hathaway: Yes, and he wouldn't have needed to die either, but they

didn't have a doctor or a car on the location.

Q: What happened?

Hathaway: He had a heart attack. And when they took him in the thing, if they'd have had a doctor on the set with anything, they could have given him some adrenaline or strychnine or any damn thing, or if they had a car they could have taken him to the hospital. By the time they sent for a car and got it there, he was dead.

Q: This was "Solomon and Sheeba."

Hathaway: Yes.

Q: The interesting thing about "Rawhide is that that's one of those stories where you have a limited number of characters and a very limited setting and all the drama springs out of that.

Hathaway: Well, that's in "Desperate Hour," that is the sort of kind of situation that creates itself out of being that cramped.

Q: Was that a studio house or a on-location house?

Hathaway: It was both places? I had them built both places. I did a good deal of it up there, but the studio was anxious to get

us in the closed room stuff where he was just digging at the wall and stuff like that, to get back down to the studio on account of keeping that whole company up there and feeding and boarding them.

Q: "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine" I remember as being one of the earliest of the three color pictures.

Hathaway: That was the first one. I think the first outdoor one, anyway. I think "Becky Sharp" had been made on the stage and "La Cucaracha" had been made on the stage. But this was the first three color that was made outside.

Q: Was it difficult to control color in exteriors at that time?

Hathaway: Out of that picture, Mr. __?__, who was vice president of the company, sent me a wonderful letter later and said that I had done more for technicolor in that one picture than all of the history up to that date, because they had, at that time, a system by which they got separation by color. In other words, if they wanted to separate that wall from that one, they'd do exactly the same thing that's done there, they'd paint one color and one another color. And when I got into the log cabins and stuff, I said, "Look, we'll print our own color. I don't want you to do it." And at that time they'd only shot mostly in flat light, flat on, and would get the exposure over the whole thing, and they never really had any good cameramen up to that time. The good cameramen

were tied up in the studios, and the studios were still a little a backward about color because it costs so much. But anyway, I reduced all the color out of all the clothes. Mrs. Calmas(?) herself was the color consultant on the picture and I was convinced she was color blind, because I never saw such goddamned things in my life. So I picked out all the clothes myself. And again when I got up there they came out in different clothes, and I said, "Well, where are the ones that I picked?" They said, "Well, these are the one Mrs. Calmas(?) picked." So I said, "Where are the others? Get the others out, put them on." And they said, "They're back at the studio." I said, "Well, we'll go to work when they come from the studio." So I had trouble with her there, and we laid off and there was a lot of dissention. And then when it came to lighting scenes, in which they wanted all flat light and I wanted just light from one source, we got in trouble. They said, Well, they have to do special laboratory work and they couldn't run it all through together. They were doing it all on one candle power, you know. And the clothes and the lighting and the painting of the sets until finally I said, "Well, hell with that, I'm going to close it down. I'm going to show you some tests. And so I got a set and I made them-- [Ball], who was the head of the laboratory, and all the guys come over and I said, "Now, here's the set. Underneath there-- I mean, that's black. I photograph it as black, because there's no light on it. And over there I can turn-- the same color, I can wipe out as deep a color as red and I can make it white by flooding it with light. It's easy, I get its natural

color. So I don't want them painted that color, and I don't want any hard surface materials because they reflect light off of them, and when they reflect light they reflect colors in those lights on a hard surface. All hard surfaces do. And then I went out in the back lot out to a pond and showed them that it wasn't their system, it wasn't us, and if I photographed the water, photographing this one where I and had a reflection of the blue sky, the water was blue. If I turned around and shot this way, where the reflection in the water was a cloud in the sky, it was white or gray. So the things that they were fighting all the time that they said it was the print, it wasn't print, it was light. And then I put a person with no make up, with it shiny, and put them by a curtain, and I hit the hot light into the curtain, a red curtain, and their face reflected red. So I said the reflected light is what your danger is, it isn't the color itself, it's your reflected light, and you have to start a whole new system of photography and make up, in which I only let them put-- no shiny surfaces, no greasy faces, no anything. We made them natural most of the time, with no make up, and then just powdered them where they got shiny, because shiny surfaces reflect color. And then we went back to work again. It was a marvelous thing, because Walter Wanger(?), who was the producer of the thing when we first had our meeting, he called them all in and he said, "Well, there's only two people in this room who have anything to do with color, and what comes out of this meeting is it." He said, "One's me, and I don't know anything about it." So I thought he was going to say Mr. Ball or Mr. Calmas. He said,

"The other's Henry Hathaway. Now, if you want to go that way, go with it. If you don't want to, we'll make it pathe color, or we'll make it black and white, because I don't want to be held up anymore and I want him to get what he wants to get."

Q: Where was that shot?

Hathaway: In Big Bear.

Q: The pine forests.

Hathaway: Yes, that's where I had made some Westerns, so I knew that pretty well too. I made most of "Brigham Young" up there. I made "Shepherd of the Hills" up there. I made that John Wayne picture with Betty Field, which is a pretty good movie. Did you ever see that?

Q: Yes. "Brigham Young" interests me a great deal. What I'd like to talk to you particularly about there is, you had this tremendous trek, and then some extraordinary scenes in which they encountered these crickets, and the sea gulls come and take the crickets-- Now, that must have been very harrowing to shoot, wasn't it, with all those crickets. How was that staged?

Hathaway: They had it fixed at the studio and they had a lot of rubber things, you know, and the rubber things and the green. And

then they said the special effects department could show things, you know, going in and coming out and flying in the air. I refused to do it. This business is a lot of luck in a lot of goddamned things, because Daryl said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "Well, this cricket thing's all the time, for christ's sake. You read in the paper, for christ's sake, all the time about them, you know, being knee deep in places and they have to build trenches and they fall in and they burn them with oil and stuff." A couple of hours before an assistant had showed me in the paper where they were having a hell of time with them and a little town called El Elko, Nevada. I said, "There's a cricket thing on in Elko right now. For Christ's sake, the roads are so covered with them that they don't allow the cars to run on them, because they slide on them and slide off the road and there have been accidents and everything." I said, "They're up there. Let me fly up tomorrow and I'll shoot that episode for you in a couple of days." By god, we went up and it was still on. They were crawling up the sides of the walls, and the women actually had to tie their-- they wore those long pants and they tied strings and ropes around them to keep the crickets from crawling up to the top of their legs. Well, we actually were in a real cricket invasion.

Q: Mary Astor in her memoirs says that the stench from the crickets in the atmosphere was something, it was unbearable.

Hathaway: It was, because off stage that we didn't see they were

burning them. It wasn't what we had on stage, it was what was going on off stage. Our trucks and our cars that were coming in were running them over, they were three and four inches deep, and the stink from that was bad. I mean, where they'd be in the sun for another-- when we'd come in in the morning, and by the time in the afternoon they'd start to rot. And then the farmers were off to the side building trenches, and they'd go and drop into the trenches and then they'd burn them.

Q: How did the ladies stand up to this ordeal?

Hathaway: I think it made them better in the picture, because it wasn't some little rubber things that they all would be laughing about. It was something they were afraid of. Reality's always better for a scene.

Q: How did you stage the sea gulls that came in a snatched up a lot of these crickets?

Hathaway: Well, there was a certain place -- jeez, I forget where we went to -- where the sea gulls come when there's bad weather, and they come out there. And then when some sea gulls started to come, we started to throw fish out there every day.

Q: You just cut them in with the rest.

Hathaway: And then we got a lot of them. We threw fish and they came down and they were eating fish instead of crickets. They weren't eating crickets, they're eating fish.

Q: That's fairly easy to cut together, I imagine.

Hathaway: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, on some of the closeups that we showed of them, they really ate the crickets, but they would rather have fish. Because birds will almost eat any kind of insect.

Q: What a harrowing picture. I'd like to ask you about Marilyn Monroe in "Niagara." Is it true that she was very difficult in the sense that she was unpunctual and it was very hard to get her to hit the right point in the scene and so on, she was difficult?

Hathaway: Well, that wasn't true with me. I never met anybody really-- I'm not a Pollyanna, I'd gladly tell you I had trouble with Kim Darby, so I'm not being-- saying that-- but she was marvelous to work with. The only difficulty with Marilyn was that she didn't know that she was as good as she was. So that when it came to getting her out to do a scene that was difficult, it wasn't that she was late or it wasn't that she wasn't ready or it wasn't that she wasn't on time, it was the fact that she would almost do anything to keep from facing that thing. You understand what I mean?

Q: Yes, she had an inferiority complex.

Hathaway: Terrible. She could never live up to the kind of thing, and it would be sort of humiliating to her in front of the other people, that she would be inadequate. So it was hard for her to face the fact at the gong, all right, now you go, ringing the bell like being with some champions that you were racing with and you could only limp. It was always not the fact that she was tardy and not the fact that she was late, but she didn't want to come up to the time that they rang the bell and she'd have to perform. I got her confidence very much in the fact that I kept most people off the set and kept only the people that were concerned around, kept the press away from her as much as I possibly could, which she was terrified of, and got her assurance that I would never print anything, that she could go full and I would never print anything. As a matter of fact, that's the first time she ever sang, and she wouldn't go to the recording room to record that song, and monitored back. She wouldn't do it. But I got her to sing it there on the set by just having her and box her in, in which she was marvelous. She had a style all her own. They ran a thing the other night, a two-hour Marilyn Monroe documentary. Did you see that? In which they said that that started the Marilyn Monroe walk, which it did, with the wiggly type of walk, and the Marilyn Monroe look. Well, the scene that they showed for the look was when she was feeling so good after she sang the song. She sort of looked around like that as if to say how was that?

Q: I remember that scene in the kind of party or picnic. The picture interests me very much, because it was very, very intricately designed, in the sense that color was used very dramatically.

Hathaway: You know, here's another thing. When I tell you that really and truly great pictures sometimes -- I don't mean the great, great movies, the "Gone with the Winds" or the things--although in that case choosing the director was quite a thing. But there's so much luck. Now, that picture as I planned it, I had [James] Jim Mason was going to play that part, and Jim Mason was crazy about Monroe anyway, he more than liked her. And he would have been so much better, because he's more morose and you could understand that she'd get under his skin and he'd do anything--he'd kill her rather than let somebody else have her. He's such a wonderful actor. And you wouldn't believe what happened. It's all set, and I'm over to Jim's house one night and little Portie [Portland Mason], who was then about four years old, and she came home and she said hello and I said hello, so on and so forth, and I put my arm around her, and he said, "Isn't it nice that I'm going to work with Mr. Hathaway again?" And she said, "Yes. What are you going to do in this picture?" "Well, I've got a good part." And she said, "Well, I suppose it's one of these pictures where you're going to die in the end again." And he says, "What's wrong with that, Portie?" And she says, "Well, you die in every picture, every picture I see you in you die. I'm getting sick and tired of

seeing you dying on the screen." She walked away. The next morning we got a call from Zanuck that he wouldn't make the picture.

Q: Portland Mason had influenced him.

Hathaway: Well, out of the mouth of babes. Evidently he then went and had a talk with Pamela [Mason] and said, "What do you think, Pam? I mean, after all, the kid's right. I do nothing but die in every picture I make." And Pam said, "Well, gee, I hadn't thought about it. That's probably right." Anyway by the next morning he was out of the movie.

Q: That's very funny.

Hathaway: It wasn't funny to me.

Q: Not at the time.

Hathaway: Oh, it was such a shock, because I had so many things planned. Yes, we used-- we had a good use of color in that picture, but it would have been so much better if James Mason was in it.

Q: I remember one scene when Marilyn Monroe comes to the--

Hathaway: Tower?

Q: The mortuary chamber. Everything's black, in color, just one spot of light. Was it shot mainly in and around Niagara Falls?

Hathaway: All of it. That whole auto court that they lived in, you know, that they all lived in, I built that in a park. It was right on the edge of the Falls, that was a park there. Nothing is built up to edge that you look over into the Falls all the time. We built something for that picture, extraordinary in its use, water coming-- when you're working down in the place where the-- in the bottom of the Fwhere we worked, down in the caves and stuff, there's so much water that the lens would be clouded over with water all the time, the glass. When we work about water now, the first thing the cameraman does is go out and see if there's any glass, because you'd have a distortion spot on your glass. So I said, "I know that they have an automatic thing in an airplane, it's synchronized so that they shoot bullets through the propeller, you know, in the early days when they had propeller planes and the machine gun was right where the pilot was, but he used to shoot through the propeller and there was a synchronization. Did you know that?

Q: Yes, I remember hearing about that.

Hathaway: So I said, "Why can't we get a synchronization between

a fan that right's square in front of the lens and the aperture, so that when the blade goes by it's going to blow the water away from the camera, so that that can be synched with the aperture opening." So they said, "Jesus, that's so much faster." I said, "Faster than a machine gun? It's only principle, that's all." So, by golly, they put it in the shop and we got us a fan synchronized with the aperture, that the fan was in front of the lens and blew the water that came into us away from the lens. So we were able to work down there without-- otherwise we would have had to fake the whole thing, we wouldn't have been able to work down there.

Q: I remember the scene where they're on tour in yellow raincoats, and you shoot-- you're directly under a fan of water there and it's actually splashing all around the camera.

Hathaway: That's right, that's at the bottom of the Falls, that's where you go down and look up at them.

Q: Was that-- is there actually a chiming tune-playing clarion in the Falls?

Hathaway: Yes. Well, it's just exactly where it was. I've photographed the bells there and everything. Couldn't build that in the studio.

Q: There is an actual place where you shot in the bell tower then.

Hathaway: Yes. We shot the one there.

Q: Of course, you must have presumably shoot the whole thing off for those shots, did you? Did you actually have that clock going while you were shooting, the bells and everything?

Hathaway: Yes, but it only goes off at-- I mean, it's played like an organ, you know, it only plays when you want it to. They do it every hour. So what is it, it's only sort of-- while we working we got them to cut it off, then we had a man play it for us. It drove the town crazy, because we were playing off the hour. They were wondering what the hell was the matter.

[Machine off]

Q: Earlier this whole series of durational or other people's semi-documentaries made at twentieth [Century Fox] just after the war reflected this technique you had of shooting everything on location in the Westerns -- because I know you shot most of those, in the actual street scenes and-- with which the episodes took place.

Hathaway: It was so new that at that time to see a camera on the street was such a nuisance that we had to do all those things like putting a board in front of a building that looked like it was going to be remodeled or something, or put those little canvas things around the manhole where guys used to record it, the

workers, or we had a station wagon that had ex-ray mirrors on them and we had them like the haberdashery company and that was the excuse why there were mirrors on the side. We shot through those all the time. We'd just pull that up to the side of the sidewalk and have the actors come along and stand in front of it played the scenes.

Q: In "Call Northside 777," where you had James Stewart going through--

Hathaway: Saloons.

Q: --sleezy back streets and the bars.

Hathaway: Those were the real ones, inside and out, where he looked for the thing, and then along the train track where he visited that old dame in a room.

Q: Is that an actual room?

Hathaway: Yes, the train went by out the window, don't you remember?

Q: Yes. I wondered if that had been matted in or cut in.

Hathaway: No. That would be pretty hard to do, wouldn't it.

Q: You used an actual rooming house.

Hathaway: Yes.

Q: It's horribly real. It was real.

Hathaway: Yes, that whole picture. The only thing that we built back at the studio that they wouldn't allow us to disrupt was inside the newsroom, the office-- well, Jimmy's office and the editor -- what the hell was his name? -- playing in "The Young Lawyers" now.

Q: Cobb.

Hathaway: Yes, Lee Jay Cobb's office and his office, and then part of the-- the big long shots were of the actual room, but I had so much work in those smaller offices that they couldn't let us tie them up long enough to do it, so I had to build those smaller pieces in the studio.

Q: Was this shot mainly in Chicago?

Hathaway: All in Chicago.

Q: With the mother scrubbing the steps, was that an actual-- it seemed to be an actual building.

Hathaway: Oh, you could never build a set like that. That was the furniture mart, Joe Kennedy's building, the one he gave to one of his daughters. No, Jack owned half of it and his sister owned half of it.

Q: You must like working with Jimmy Stewart.

Hathaway: I do.

Q: He's a very relaxed, very natural player, isn't he.

Hathaway: Well, I'll tell you, all the fellows that I've know, I've been very lucky, they're so dedicated to their jobs. You know, some of these kids don't give a damn. Well, back then, that picture we were talking about, that was Hopper's first movie, "Hell to Texas."

Q: Dennis Hopper.

Hathaway: Dennis Hopper. Do you remember him in it?

Q: Yes, I do.

Hathaway: You know, it's very funny. Around we're the best of friends and everything, and every time he's had an interview, he goes back to one episode in there in which he-- it's now distorted

so many times that he's made a villain out of me for it. He had a scene where they rode up to some lava, and he'd gone across it on foot, they couldn't take the horses in. Now, the audience may not understand this, so I have to have one of these stupid remarks where they drive up and they look out and they say, "We can't take the horse in there, they'd get cut to pieces, can't get the horse in the lava." So they go around. So I said-- it was in the script for Dennis to do it. And Dennis came in and he-- and it just went on too long, and I said "cut." I said, "Dennis, you've got to say that faster." He said, "Jeez, I have to look around, I have to look at it, don't I." I said, "Christ, you don't have to look at it -- you were born here. I mean, this is the ranch, this is your father's ranch, you were born here, for Christ's sake, you know the country, you've been out after sheep. It isn't a question that this is the first time you were very here. It's just an informative line -- "we can't take the horses out into that lava. They'd get cut up." So I said, "All right, let's do it again." So we come up and he stood there and looked up, he stood up in the saddle and he looked, and I said, "Okay, cut it." I said to the fellow who played Carmody -- what's his name? -- anyway, I said to him, "Say the line, will you." So I said, "All right, let's do it again." They drove up and Carmody says, "We can't through this," he turns to the boss, he said-- "We'll circle it. You go that way and I'll go this way." Well, about 12 o'clock that night I get a call from the man that runs the motel, and he says, "You're going to have to come over here and do something, because the guy's

tearing up the room and he's drunk and everything." So I went over there, and it was Dennis. Dennis said, "You no good son of a bitch, you humiliated me." I said, "Look, let's not get into it, for Christ's sake, Dennis." He says, "You black ball me in the industry and it never gets out." I said, "There's only one way for you to get black balled in the industry, and that is for you to tear up a room. I'd send you home, for Christ's sake, for tearing up a room here in the goddamned place and being drunk." So he even said in some of the interviews I had him black balled in the industry because he didn't get a job for about five or six years. As a matter of fact, he was such a bad boy he couldn't get a job. And I was one of the first ones to hire him back again when I brought him back in "The Sons of Katie Elder." It was the first job he'd had, and he got down on his hands and knees and blessed me for it. So, anyway, but just because of-- so I quieted him down. Diane Varsi was the dame who played in the picture, she had been going out with him, so I got her and I said, "For Christ's sake will you put him to bed?" And I never knew anything about it or remembered anything about it until the interviews that he had 10 years later after-- or 15 years later, and I found out I was the heavy about it, that I black balled him in the industry, which wasn't true.

Q: And then he made "Easy Rider" and became a millionaire.

Hathaway: Well, I don't know whether he became a millionaire in

that, but whatever money-- he's a talented young kid, but he's irresponsible, you know, when he starts to get hopped up, which he admits that he does and dooesn't think quite clear. I think that he was very fortunate with "Easy Rider," and most fortunate that he had Jack Nicholson in the picture, because that was a pretty good, strong part in that movie.

Q: Yes. We've just got time to mention "Fourteen Hours," which was one of your best pictures. It was based, I think, on an actual incident.

Hathaway: It was an actual incident, of the boy jumping off of the Gotham Hotel. As a matter of fact, we couldn't get any hotel in the city of New York to let us make the picture there. We used a bank building and turned it into a hotel, the Guarantee Trust Bank.

Q: I suppose it would be considered worse than bad publicity for a hotel.

Hathaway: No, as a matter of fact, the people from the Guarantee Trust after it gave us a lunch in their private dining room, and the president was there and the whole thing, and they said that they were delighted and that they'd heard bad things about movie companies, and they complimented the whole industry on how hard the boys actually worked at their job. They said they had no idea, they'd always heard that actors and people don't work hard, that

it's an easy job. He said, "I never saw people work that hard."

Q: Presumably [Richard] Basehart was never actually on a ledge, was he.

Hathaway: Oh, yes.

Q: Really?

Hathaway: Oh, sure, sure, he got out there.

Q: How high up?

Hathaway: But most of it, all of the acting, we did that at the studio with background on it, but he was out on that ledge.

Q: How high up was he?

Hathaway: Eleven floors. But it was a wide part of it, and we had him wired so that even if he got dizzy and fell, he couldn't fall. We had him wired there.

Q: Was there a net?

Hathaway: No, there's no net, but he's wired from the inside. It was impossible to-- he had a harness on him and we had him wired,

so we were holding him back against-- he couldn't even fall out there if he wanted to.

Q: Thank you very much.

[END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE]

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