

Transcript of Oral History Tape 99 Transcribed by Patty Rivera 01/03/04.

Interview with Sidney Rice August 9, 1978.

Interviewer: Paul F. St. Arnaud.

St. Arnaud: Sid, when did you first come to Michigan City?

Rice: Well, I started coming to Michigan City back in twenty-nine. 1929...way out from Gary. A bunch of the guys would come over on Saturday night to the Oasis. Dance and uh...that went on for a while and we...around about 1930 at a dance at the Masonic Temple at 6th and Pine I spotted a girl. Things flashed and that was it. I started going steady with her and we were married in March of thirty-one. The thing I remember...that sticks in my mind about coming over to City in those days...they were rebuilding the new Franklin Street bridge and they had a ferry across the harbor and uh...you had to pull it back and forth by cable. And all the guys would get together and heave ho and you'd get across the harbor so you could go into the park and walk over to the...the Oasis. Coming home it was the same thing in reverse.

St. Arnaud: Well...what were some of the...what was some of the entertainment at the Oasis in those days?

Rice: Uh the big...the big thing then was Gene Cook's band. Had a beautiful band...they...now but...they put on quite a few novelty numbers and it was a wonderful band to dance to. Of course the dancing in those days was a lot different than it is today. Music was different. Uh...but times change the same as people change I guess.

St. Arnaud: Uhm-hmm. What did it cost to go out on...to go to the Oasis for a full night's entertainment for you and your date?

Rice: It seems to me that the admission was fifty cents for gentlemen, as we were called. And I think twenty-five cents for the ladies. That's what it seems like it was to me.

St. Arnaud: Didn't you have to pay for the dances?

Rice: Well that...certain times they would have uh...dime dance. What they called ten cents a dance. Uh you would buy a dollar's worth of tickets and the band would play. You would get about two choruses of the...of the...of the song and off the floor you'd go and they'd start again you'd get another two choruses and that was the end of that dance and first thing you knew it you were broke that night. Cause back in those days money wasn't as plentiful as it was today. But we had a lot of fun. It was great.

St. Arnaud: What other things did you do besides go to the Oasis?

Rice: Well generally uh...on a Saturday night after the Oasis closed down we'd all highball for uh...for the lighthouse up the other side of New Buffalo. Where Dick Cook's band generally played. Dick Cook and his form...uh foot warmers. He had a...he had a Dixie type band.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh.

Rice: And we...I think they went till about two o'clock in the morning.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh. So uh...well how did you get back and forth? You said you came from Gary. How...how did you get back and forth in those days?

Rice: One guy had a car.

St. Arnaud: What kind of car was that?

Rice: I think it was a twenty-six Cheverolet.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: And the thing I remember about it...the uh...the speedometer instead of the type we have today was more like a...looked more like a auto compass that you see today. And you would on long about thirty miles an hour and you'd hit the gas pedal and it would jump to thirty-five. But you were still doing about thirty miles an hour. You can make that thing go to seventy mile an hour and you were still only doing thirty. That's how the automotive industry has progressed over the years just as...as an example.

St. Arnaud: Well then when you...when did you first come to Michigan City to take...take up residence?

Rice: Oh uh...another...my partner and I we uh...started promoting dances and we ended up operating the KC Ballroom in Gary in the winter and the Gay Mill Ballroom at Miller, Indiana in the summertime. I was married at the time and uh...of course we were quite young. We didn't Depression was here and we just kept going and going till we finally went broke. We went broke and had to have a place to sleep and eat. So I...instead of being on the road I came back and settled down in Michigan City. And...

St. Arnaud: Now what year was that?

Rice: That was 1932.

St. Arnaud: It was...it was just about the height of the Depression.

Rice: Oh yeah. That was right in it. In fact uh...speaking of the Depression you could buy hamburger for four cents a pound. Uh...bread was a nickel a loaf. I don't remember what milk was.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. But uh...it was even...it was even tough coming up with a four cents a pound hamburger.

Rice: Oh...we had eight people living in three rooms. I think the rental was eight dollars a month. And you had meat...

St. Arnaud: Where did you live?

Rice: 1515 ½ Elston. The property was owned by John Konully (?sp). We lived upstairs in the back uh...eight people living in three rooms and we had...we'd buy two pounds of hamburger for Sunday. That's the only meat you had all week.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh.

Rice: You lived on soup.

St. Arnaud: Right.

Rice: But...we survived. Then I finally went to work on WPA. I was on WPA for two weeks. I paid...I think it was sixteen dollars a week for doing practically nothing. At the time we were building the uh...the tower in Washington Park. And a fella by the name of Louie Joers (?sp) had a string of independent service...uh...they weren't service stations those days. They were gas stations. Offered me a job in the gas station for ten dollars a week working one...one hundred hours a week. It was fourteen hours a day. Fifteen on Saturday and Sunday. I'd carry my lunch and my wife would bring down my supper.

St. Arnaud: Where was the gas station located?

Rice: Uh...the station was on...there were two pumps on the curb at...on 8th Street between Buffalo and Manhattan. It was right behind the property owned by Bill Nasr.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh. How...how much were...were uh motorists paying for gas at that time?

Rice: Oh...gasoline at that time was eight gallons for a dollar and for every dollars worth you received a dish or cup or a saucer also. Course you had to be a little careful if you put hot coffee in the cup the ears would fall off. But it was...it was a gimmick.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: And I think oil was...oil was what...fifteen cents a quart. Course if you wanted the good oil that was twenty-five cents a quart.

St. Arnaud: ...[indecipherable]...fifteen a quart.

Rice: Yeah...it all came out of a barrel. Then in uh...1936 that company was called the Sandburn Oil Company. They uh...they bought the property at 8th and Chicago on the point and remodeled

that and opened up the service station. It was two bays enclosed. No lift. You worked out of a pit.

St. Arnaud: Well how long...how long did you work there?

Rice: Well, from thirty-six to thirty-nine and then I uh...went out on my own at least to stay...the Texaco Station at Warren and Franklin and mortgage my furnitures through Household Finance to get enough money to open the thing up and I stayed there till February of forty-three when I went into the service. I come out of service in October 23rd of forty-five. Before going into service I was operating the Texaco Station at Warren and Franklin and Jimmy Lyons was operating the ...[indecipherable]...Station at Greenwood and Franklin. I come back from service Jimmy was up at Warren and Franklin and I was at Greenwood and Franklin. It's just one of those things.

St. Arnaud: Well now what about rationing after the war?

Rice: Well rationing was just about gone when I opened up but I do remember one incident uh...before I went into service when they...the night before they put on the gas rationing people were coming in filling up their cars and cans and buckets. Anything you get a hold of. One guy come in with a...with a washtub in his trunk and wanted me to fill that up. And that was the wierdest I ever did was uh...fill a gas...fill a washtub with gasoline. That was crazy.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: But uh...rationing had no effect after the...as far as I was concerned...

St. Arnaud: Okay...in other words...when...when...when you re-opened your business you had...the government did not ration anything...

Rice: No...no.

St. Arnaud: ...and you didn't have to go around that.

Rice: No.

St. Arnaud: Well how...how many uh...how many gallons a week did you pump in those days?

Rice: Hmm...God I don't remember Paul. It's uh...too far back. Uh...

St. Arnaud: Well uh...okay...what type of...okay how bout uh...where did you first get your uh...your motto "If you can't stop, smile as you drive by"?

Rice: On a trip back to Philadelphia one year I was driving through Pennsylvania...I don't remember the...the exact town but I drove past a furniture store and I saw the sign "If you can't stop, smile as you go by" and it kinda stuck in my...in the back of my head. And when I opened up my own service station in thirty-nine I started using that slogan and used it all the rest of the

time I was in the business. In fact one time uh...on a Sunday afternoon after we were closed they tell me that...that Don Ameche drove by and drove up a block or two and turned around and came back to...to inquire as to...about it but we were closed and the people that talked to him...they...he was quite impressed with it...but he...he and Johnny took off in their little car and what happened after that I don't know. That was...

St. Arnaud: Uhm-hmm. Wh...wh...where did you live during those days?

Rice: Well after uh...after Elston Street we moved on west Ripley between Ohio and Tennessee. Then in forty-one uh...the gas business was doing quite well. We...the wife and I decided to build a house and we started building the house that we know live in.

St. Arnaud: And this is at...this is 139 Superior Street.

Rice: Right.

St. Arnaud: Well was it...was this more or less a booming area?

Rice: Oh no...no...no they...they were only...in the neighborhood there were only about four empty lots in the entire neighborhood.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh.

Rice: And I purchased the two that...one I'm living on and the other one I sold to Bob Shebel my next door neighbor.

St. Arnaud: Well how...how much did you pay for these lots?

Rice: It seems to me for both lots I paid uh...it was around nine hundred dollars for both lots. We built the house uh...the mortgage was...the entire mortgage was forty-eight hundred dollars. Only when the plans were laid out for the house it called for steel beams in the basement, brass knobs on the doors. Of course there was no war on. The average person had no idea that there would be a war. When they started to build the house they told us we couldn't get uh the steel beams for some reason or other and the brass knobs were all plastic knobs. So there after the war then you start to think about it you realize there was a war coming on. The...the government knew about but the people didn't know. So the house has plastic knobs and wooden beams.

St. Arnaud: How many hours a...a...a week did you have to put in at the station?

Rice: When you your own boss time is immaterial. You work from seven in the morning till nine...ten...eleven o'clock at night.

St. Arnaud: Whatever it took.

Rice: Whatever it took.

St. Arnaud: How many people did you have working for you?

Rice: Oh we've had as high as seven.

St. Arnaud: Uhm-hmm.

Rice: Uh...we always tried to work together. One thing I happen to remember when the...the year before the Korean War started...instead of a full license plate...they give you a license plate that was as wide as our own license plate but they were only about an inch and a half thick. Same old story as when I started to build my house. They were conserving on steel. Again the people didn't know that war was coming on. But the government knew it. And that went on until the year before the war ended. Then all of a sudden the war in Korea is still on but they came back out with a...with a full license plate again proving to me that...that the government knew the war was coming to an end but the people didn't know.

St. Arnaud: What...what kind of things did you do when you weren't working? In those days?

Rice: Drink.

St. Arnaud: Okay...well uh...what...what was your favorite hang out?

Rice: Uh let's see...they opened up...after it opened up it was either the Cedar Tap or the Rosebowl or the Pub. The Eagles.

St. Arnaud: Yeah...uh...after the war...would you say that you were optimistic as far as your future?

Rice: Oh surely.

St. Arnaud: Things were starting to boom and you just went along with it huh?

Rice: Every young fella's optimistic. I believe if you...if you work hard and deal honestly with people...things will work out successfully.

St. Arnaud: Well I think that's one of the reasons behind your uh success as a service station owner/operator is the fact that you...you always dealt fairly with your customers.

Rice: That...that's the secret to any small business.

St. Arnaud: Where...where nowadays they do nothing more than try to pull the wool over your eyes and get ya for everything they can. Okay well in other words then uh...all you did is work and work?

Rice: Well when you work from seven o'clock in the morning to eight...nine...ten o'clock at night there isn't much time for anything else. You...you stop over for a drink or two to relax. Of

course I bowl. I get into bowling. And that's about the only sport you can do after the lights are out all over.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh.

Rice: You can't golf. You can't play tennis. You...but bowling was...I was very interested in bowling.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh.

Rice: It was a lot of fun.

St. Arnaud: How much did you...how much did it cost to bowl in those days?

Rice: When I first started back in the thirties at the old Palace Rack upstairs between 7th and 8th...well it's where the First Federal Savings and Loan is now uh in the afternoon it was fifteen cents...two lines for a quarter. What is it now? Seventy-five...eighty cents a line?

St. Arnaud: I have no idea.

Rice: It's in...it's in comparison with everything else. Hamburger was four cents a pound.

St. Arnaud: It's all relative huh?

Rice: Yeah, what is it now...a dollar a pound?

St. Arnaud: Over the years. Uh...okay...during...during the Korean war did...did your business suffer at all? Did you have any ill effects from the war?

Rice: No...no the war had no effect on it whatsoever as...

St. Arnaud: It uh...it didn't depress business conditions at all?

Rice: No.

St. Arnaud: It wasn't that...of any major significance?

Rice: No...no...remember the war had no...no effect on business whatsoever.

St. Arnaud: Okay...well...then more or less uh...what...what was there to do in Michigan City besides uh work and go bowling and uh your other recreational activity?

Rice: Well on Sundays quite a few people would go out...would go up to New Buffalo to uh the Rio. That was a ballroom on the lake at New Buffalo. And any Sunday...any given Sunday night you could find uh practically everyone you knew in Michigan City up at the Rio.

St. Arnaud: Hmm-hmm and uh...well...did you do much traveling in those days?

Rice: No...didn't have the time.

St. Arnaud: Besides just up to New Buffalo huh for a night's entertainment.

Rice: Yeah...yeah.

St. Arnaud: Well...how did...how did the business cycle change in that period?

Rice: Hmm.

St. Arnaud: What kind of cars did you service in those days? What cars were the most popular?

Rice: Oh...

St. Arnaud: In the early fifties?

Rice: Cheverolet and Ford...Plymouth. Of course Cheverolet has led the field for years. People would consider 'em classics today but they weren't to us. They were...but the uh...the engineering on the cars have progressed. Back in the old days for example a tire. You got five thousand miles out of a tire boy that was a good tire. Now if you get less than twenty thousand it's a bad tire. There's a perfect example. Your uh...in those days you had to...it was a must to have your car lubricated and oil changed every thousand miles. Today they go three...four...five...six thousand miles without service. You can travel farther faster. Uh...more economical if you put it in perspective is the miles per gallon and upkeep on the car.

St. Arnaud: As far as what had to be done but not how much it cost huh?

Rice: That's right.

St. Arnaud: But it's all relative as we said before.

Rice: Yeah.

St. Arnaud: Uh...okay...do you remember uh...who were your best customers? People in the neighborhood?

Rice: Well it started out that way but then it expanded where you had people coming in from all over town.

St. Arnaud: Did you do a lot of advertising?

Rice: Always. I remember my...the first person that bought gas from me when I was on 8th Street was Bill Beach's dad. Bill come in with a model...he was drive...his dad couldn't drive and Bill drove for him and he had a Model T. I think he bought a half a dollar's worth of gas.

St. Arnaud: Four gallons.

Rice: He got four gallons. Of course the Model T only held ten gallons of gas.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh. Well were repairs on cars simpler in those days.

Rice: Oh yes.

St. Arnaud: Less complicated?

Rice: Oh yeah they were less complicated cause there wasn't...there was no air conditioning. There were no...no hydraulic brakes. The steering system was so simple. The transmission was simple. The rear end was simple compared to today.

St. Arnaud: For it to go faster it requires a greater amount of technology.

Rice: Oh sure they uh...the auto...I...the automobile built today is much superior to what it was in those days. People complain about uh...rust mostly. I think is the biggest complaint they have about the automobile today. Of course back in those days they didn't spread salt on the...on the roads in the winter time.

St. Arnaud: Uh..okay after the Korean War was there a big change after the Korean War as there was after World War II?

Rice: Oh no...no...no.

St. Arnaud: Things more or less went on as...[indecipherable]...

Rice: Yeah...it was just a steady progression uh...

St. Arnaud: Did you suffer any decline in your business after it?

Rice: Oh no...no...no.

St. Arnaud: Business remained pretty steady.

Rice: Yeah it...it uh...it kept increasing from year to year. Going back to what I said a while back uh...you treat people honestly and give 'em a dollar for...give 'em a dollar's value for a dollar spent and uh...it will pay off in the long run.

St. Arnaud: And uh...okay...what about...what about some of your friends? What did they do?

Rice: Anything and everything.

St. Arnaud: Yeah?

Rice: Yeah. Worked in factories. Salesmen. Uh...small businesses.

St. Arnaud: How much did you spend a week in groceries? You went to the store...

Rice: Oh God.

St. Arnaud: ...and bought groceries. How much did you spend?

Rice: That I don't remember.

St. Arnaud: You didn't...you didn't spend anything in comparison to today.

Rice: Oh no.

St. Arnaud: It was uh...well did you live comfortably would you say?

Rice: Well that's relative. I was...just as comfortable living in three rooms with eight people as I am living in my home today with two people.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh.

Rice: It all depends what you want from life. People think if you have air conditioning uh...automatic heat. A car with automatic transmission. A beer when you want it. Uh...to me just being alive and meeting people...helping people when you can is just as important as having so-called finer things of life.

St. Arnaud: Okay what were some of the...what were some of the improvements made in Michigan City during this time? Over uh...so things went on more or less uh in the same vein through the years up until you...you retired huh?

Rice: I would say so uh...

St. Arnaud: Eat, work, and sleep.

Rice: Yeah.

St. Arnaud: Basically. Uh...okay...okay now...now that you retired...you retired in seventy-three. What...what type of things do you do now that you have uh...you don't have to worry about a business to run and people to manage and things of that nature? What are your hobbies?

Rice: Well I'm involved with the Skwiat American Legion. A member of the honorary squad. We come out for all military funerals for our members. Uh...involved with the Michigan City Council on National Relations which is a travel group. We uh...we go into Chicago four or five times a year bus loads of us. Take quite a few trips. In fact we have one coming up uh...a three day cruise on the Delta Queen on the Ohio River. We go to Vegas once a year. We've been to

uh...we're in Accupulco this spring. They've been to Germany and they've been to Sweden. Been to San Francisco.

St. Arnaud: In other words now...

Rice: Hawaii.

St. Arnaud: ...in other words now you can afford to do things that uh in the days that you were out working for a living you couldn't...you couldn't afford to do huh?

Rice: That's right and you also have the time.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. Well you...you can more or less appreciate the fruits of your labor.

Rice: Absolutely.

St. Arnaud: Well now...if you can look back on your experiences what would you say was uh the biggest turning point in the way things happened? Or what do you think had the biggest influence on you?

Rice: I would say quitting WPA where I was getting sixteen dollars a week and going to work for ten dollars a week working...actually working. There's this thing called personal pride.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh.

Rice: And from that time on my...monetary side of my life just progressed.

St. Arnaud: You...you...okay in other words your personal pride motivated you.

Rice: I would say yes.

St. Arnaud: More so than accepting the hand out from WPA.

Rice: Oh absolutely...absolutely.

St. Arnaud: Do you...do you feel that uh...your uh...your own...your own personal uh outlook on things changed a great deal from then?

Rice: No...no. No. I still believe that uh...if you're working for someone and they're paying you a dollar...you should produce for them a dollar and ten cents worth of labor. That's what this country is founded on. As far as work is concerned.

St. Arnaud: Uh-huh.

Rice: So many times today you see uh...people...people are paid so many dollars for...for their labor and they produce maybe one third or one half of the labor that that dollar should earn. I believe that's where the country is in trouble.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. Uh...well in other words...everyone's out to make a buck. And they don't care how they do it.

Rice: That's right.

St. Arnaud: And if they were honest with themselves...

Rice: Honest with themselves they would....

St. Arnaud: It'd be a totally different situation.

Rice: Right. The way it was back...what we called the old days. Course the reason for it was...and the reason for it in the old days is uh...if you were working for someone and you didn't produce there were fifty guys that would take that job. Today it's a different story. You uh...if they don't like the job today they tell the boss I quit. And they'll...there's generally another job waiting for 'em somewhere.

St. Arnaud: Well uh...

[Side one of tape ends]

[Side two of tape begins]

St. Arnaud: What...what were some of the main things you remember from during the Depression?

Rice: One thing sticks out in my mind after I went to work for the Sandburn Oil Company on 8th Street that little station across from the car shop...they'd uh...over at the car shop a man would come out and get up on a soap box and he'd wanna hire maybe two or three guys for one day's work and there'd be anywhere from three to four hundred guys out there all looking for that one day's work. And uh...when he'd pick out his two or three men the rest of 'em would walk on home. But the people coming out of the car shop what sticks in my mind...on the corner of 8th and Manhattan was uh...Becky's Saloon. And there were three windows in the basement and a little ledge there. And these older men would come out of the car shop so dog gone tired they would actually shuffle over to those windows to the basement and sit down there for maybe an hour until they got their strength back and could shuffle on home for the...for the rest of the day. They had worked. They had worked hard.

St. Arnaud: Okay when you talk about the car shop you...you...you mean Pullman Standard, isn't that correct?

Rice: Yeah...that was there...Pullman Standard Car and Manufacturing Company but everyone in town just called it the car shop.

St. Arnaud: It was more or less accepted because everybody worked there practically.

Rice: Oh yeah. That's right.

St. Arnaud: And the uh...the...the...the City...the economy of the...the area more or less went with production schedule at Pullman Standard.

Rice: Depended on Pullman. Or the car shop. Everything depended on them. When the car shop was down Michigan City was down. When the car shop was up Michigan City boomed.

St. Arnaud: Uh getting back to your first experiences here in Michigan City uhm what did you do besides just go to the Oasis for an evening's entertainment? I mean you came here you didn't go to the Oasis every time you came.

Rice: Oh yeah, that's uh...that was the center of activity for us young people. One thing I happened to think of uh...after the...the dance at the Oasis you'd walk your girl home and you generally stopped at Frankie Ferrell's diner on 10th and Franklin. And uh...hamburgers were a dime and coke was a nickel so for thirty cents you could have an evening meal and treat your girl to a meal. And Frankie was a great guy. His uh...famous expression was "Ah you're a fine Irish lad." Or "Gimme five." And he'd shake hands with ya. And Frankie uh...he'd...he'd...they'd line up down half way down 10th Street towards Pine or we would and you get up through the line and get your hamburgers and you'd say "Frankie I'm not holding today." He says "oh that's fine me buy that's fine." I don't know of anyone that ever jipped Frankie out of his thirty...forty cents that he had coming. He was one fine man.

St. Arnaud: He extended you the credit if you didn't have the bucks huh?

Rice: Oh sure.

St. Arnaud: Or the change?

Rice: Yeah...well uh...

St. Arnaud: ...[indecipherable]...something else.

Rice: Change in those days were...were....were like the buck today.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. It didn't go as far. Or did go a lot farther in those days than it does now.

Rice: Squabs Hensel was working for Billy Miller Meat Market across the street and Squab told me one that uh...he would take over between four hundred and four hundred and fifty pounds of hamburger a weekend over to Frankie for...for us kids. That's how much hamburger Frankie sold

over the weekend. ...[tape skips]...couldn't do. What the hell you couldn't. Well look at the Oakies they picked up and went to California.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. Well okay...

Rice: There...there you were looking just for survival.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: You know it was just a case of...

St. Arnaud: Well and after you got a little bit ahead why didn't you take off then?

Rice: Well you were...well then you could see the light then.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: It was like everybody's out after the buck. Then...then you could see in...into the future where you would maybe...

St. Arnaud: Be able to make ends meet.

Rice: Yeah sure.

St. Arnaud: Do you uh...do you...how do you think things would have been different if you would've just said hey okay I'm gonna cash my chips in and go?

Rice: I'd a gone somewhere.

St. Arnaud: Yeah?

Rice: Oh sure.

St. Arnaud: Why didn't you?

Rice: I got the job in the gas station for ten dollars a week.

St. Arnaud: Hmm-hmm.

Rice: It was feeding us anyway.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. Paying the rent...keeping a roof over your head.

Rice: Sure. And from there it was this progressing on through as time went by.

St. Arnaud: Well do...do you think uh...okay you said that you...you don't think that a small business man can do it today.

Rice: Today no. No way. No because you...you're competing with chains. Franchises who have the backing of uh...the knowledge and uh...[tape skips]...I would say a small business man opening up a independent business it would take him five years before he gets his feet on the ground. Whereas if he...if he goes into the franchise he has the knowledge, the background of the...of the franchiser to...to help you along.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. Yeah. Well plus he...he's got a...you know...spend an arm and a leg to get the franchise.

Rice: Well that's alright.

St. Arnaud: But it'll pay off in the long run.

Rice: In the long run ordinarily if he takes care of it and goes according to their rules.

St. Arnaud: Nurtures it.

Rice: How...how many franchises go broke a year?

St. Arnaud: Not too many.

Rice: Oh.

St. Arnaud: Well that's why...that's why they got a franchise. It's been proven.

Rice: Yeah but...I remember reading an article. I don't remember what the uh...what the percentage was but it's...it's quite good. It's quite high. The...the franchises...the franchisees that go broke.

St. Arnaud: Where a small business is a gamble?

Rice: Oh yeah. After the...

St. Arnaud: A franchise you're not really gambling.

Rice: No. No. It isn't that much of a gamble. No. They just say you have the knowledge and the backing of the...

St. Arnaud: The organization.

Rice: Sure. Sure.

St. Arnaud: And that's...apparently that's you know where it is.

Rice: And...and on a...on a franchise rental...the people that will lease you the property...they don't lease it to you. They lease it to the franchiser. Sure. Oh like take...take this Dunkin Donuts. That's owned by uh...the property is owned by Burdette Wendt. Look how many times that's been closed.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: But he gets his rental right straight through.

St. Arnaud: No matter if it's operating or not.

Rice: Sure...operating or not.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. I guess that's the way to do it.

Rice: Well sure.

St. Arnaud: That's a leveling of experience in America.

Rice: Yeah...yeah. There's a self made man. The biggest job the guy ever had was...was a guard at the penitentiary.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: He was just one of these guys who could see property. And he bought property. Every time he'd get a buck he'd buy property.

St. Arnaud: I guess that's...that's about the only thing to buy that's worth anything.

Rice: Well that's a...course that's a long haul.

St. Arnaud: Hmm-hmm.

Rice: And people don't want a long haul today. ...[indecipherable]...fast buck...[indecipherable]

St. Arnaud: Fast buck and out.

Rice: Right.

St. Arnaud: Fast buck and out. Well you know...it takes...it takes so much of your self to uh...to do it...if you're gonna do it all by yourself rather than...

Rice: Uh-huh.

St. Arnaud: Blood, sweat, and tears is what it takes. And uh...

Rice: It's a lot of fun.

St. Arnaud: Well...too many people aren't uh...aren't into putting in their blood, sweat, and tears.

Rice: No. No. No.

St. Arnaud: In order to do it. Like you said the fast buck...

Rice: Well that's why the...that's why the station where I was is closed now.

St. Arnaud: Wow. There's been three people in there.

Rice: Six.

St. Arnaud: Six? I thought it was only three. And the...

Rice: ...[indecipherable]...

St. Arnaud: ...for the location. Look at the location they've got.

Rice: For the...the first guy that went in there was a perfect example of the younger people. I says why don't you come in about a month before you take over and just hang around. A couple hours in the morning. In the afternoon maybe an hour in the evening. We'll introduce you to the people that come in. That way you just walk in...boom...we walk out you walk in and you got a going business.

St. Arnaud: Hmm-hmm.

Rice: You aren't going to get rich but you gonna make a good living. He says yeah that's a good idea but I'm going fishing. So he walked in the morning we checked out and everything's gone then.

St. Arnaud: Who's the guy...I forget his name.

Rice: Tracy. Norm Tracy.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: He had no idea how we operated. All he had to do was see how we operated and walk right in the same way.

St. Arnaud: Well who was the guy after that? There was another guy...

Rice: Oh Christ there was...

St. Arnaud: ...dealing with.

Rice: Uh...well the guy that had it coming was Stratner. He had it coming. He had the business coming but he...when he closed up he'd go out to Tomenko's and play cards till three...four o'clock in the morning.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: And his wife says...

St. Arnaud: And where did that get him?

Rice: Well...and his wife says uh...you either...but he was there for work every morning. His wife says you either quit the business or get your ass outta here.

St. Arnaud: Hmm-hmm.

Rice: Yeah he was the only one that had it coming back.

St. Arnaud: No...there...there was some guy. I...I...I can't remember his name. But he worked...he worked on my car. And uh...he screwed me around and screwed me around for months on that car. Trying to rebuild...rebuild that spitfire. I can't remember his name. I can remember him. I can remember him making all sorts of promises saying it'll be done...it'll be done...it'll be done. And it never happened.

Rice: Yeah. See that's...in that business that's...that's one mistake these guys make. They make a promise...well in any business. You make a promise you can't fulfill.

St. Arnaud: Yeah.

Rice: If it's gonna be three months...you say Charlie I'll try to have it ready for you by September the fifteenth. If it looks like you're not gonna have it by the fifteenth you call him up on the tenth and say Charlie uh...we got a few problems...it'll be November the fifteenth....

St. Arnaud: Hmm-hmm.

Rice: ...if we can make it. But you never make a firm commitment.

St. Arnaud: Yeah. Yeah well you know that...it's dealing with people.

Rice: Oh sure.

St. Arnaud: It's...it's how far can you stretch the truth.

Rice: Right.

St. Arnaud: Some of these...some of these uh...

Rice: Be...

St. Arnaud: ...[indecipherable]...get away with it.

Rice: Be truthful with 'em at all times. You aren't gonna make the fast buck but you'll make it over a longer period of time.

St. Arnaud: If you can't be honest with yourself who can you be...

Rice: That's right. That's right.

St. Arnaud: ...who can you be honest with. And uh...you know...you can only...you know your capabilities.

Rice: Like I told people...I've told hundreds...the only person I ever lied to in my life was my wife.

St. Arnaud: And uh we won't go into that.

Rice: That's self preservation.

St. Arnaud: Self preservation? Okay. But you know.

Rice: I'm gonna pee now.

St. Arnaud: Okay.

[Side two of tape ends]