

Wayne Ewing Interview Transcript
From the mountains of Colorado to The Desk
July 21, 2010

james campion: Hello Wayne, finally we speak.

Wayne Ewing: Yeah, you're busy. That's good.

It is.

Thanks for sending the transcript of our last discussion. It was a real blast from the past and a real eye opener to the genesis of the project in many ways.

Yeah, I thought about that while watching the film, and once again, bravo. It's a friggin' gift for anyone who loves Hunter, who loves writing, to be able to have these glimpses you've been able to capture and save. It's a treasure, man.

Well, thank you so much. It's interesting, because it's how we got off on that riff in the previous interview; you were saying; "Too bad you don't have more of Hunter writing." And I was saying how I intended one day to film the writing of a whole column. Do you happen to know the date of that interview, when we did that?

It was probably around May of 2004 when the DVD came out? (Date of first interview was March 25, 2004)

Yes, the film actually first premiered in 2003, *Breakfast with Hunter*, and I shot that scene in November of 2003. (Opening sequence of the film in which Hunter S. Thompson is attempting to complete a "Hey Rube" column for ESPN.com) That's kind of the home base for *Animals, Whores & Dialogue*.

Right.

So I think I actually shot that at that point. The reason I was talking to you about still doing it was I put that away after I did it, because I didn't really think it was that successful. (laughs) He'd only gotten that lead done, which

was fairly typical for the progress of the columns that I would work on with him.

Yeah, when leading up to speaking with you again, I re-read the interview from early 2004 and thought it was funny how you described watching Hunter write was like watching paint dry. But the way it's cut up in the film, how arduous it was, how he procrastinates throughout, the endless interruptions, his changing the subject every two minutes to avoid the task at hand, it's hard for any other writer to envision working that way.

My immediate reaction to the scene was maybe Hunter, being in his mid-sixties, was just going through the motions or having a hard time putting so much importance on the craft anymore, and of course he's performing for a camera right in front of him. But then I remembered from earlier biographies and even his own depiction of how his best work was completed, there was always chaos and interruptions, and people in and out of hotel rooms and offices bugging him to finish. So, I thought; could he have been doing this from his twenties until the very end? It's crazy.

Yup, I think it was that way. As you say, there's another scene in *Animals, Whores & Dialogue* where he's talking about the genesis of Gonzo with the Kentucky Derby piece ("The Kentucky Derby is Decadent & Depraved" – Scanlans Monthly 1970) where he's holed up in the Royaltan Hotel with a copy boy who comes and goes, and he sends out for scotch. It's typical. He told me a similar story for the finishing of *Fear & Loathing on the Campaign Trail*, holed up in the Steel Point Inn in San Francisco and I forget the editor of Rolling Stone then, it may have been Alan Rinzler who worked on that book. I'm not sure. But, in any case, in the end, they had to do what I had to do to get things finished; tape record stuff and then transcribe it. Let him go at it, and he'd spruce it up, and that would be it. It's fairly typical. (laughs) It's how he did it.

That's your duality there, because as you mentioned in our last discussion, and it comes across in the new film; that you were very much part of the process. You were there; you helped him compile the stuff for Hey Rube, the letters books, (The Proud Highway: Saga of a Desperate Southern Gentleman 1955 – 1967 and Fear and Loathing in America: The Brutal Odyssey of an Outlaw Journalist) and the manuscript for The Rum Diary.

Right.

So you were not only a documentarian, but a collaborator. It's quite literally Gonzo; you're covering the subject, but also interacting in how the subject performs. You were helping Hunter produce.

Yeah, (laughs) he draws you right into it. He sure does. It's interesting, I was just reading a review of a forthcoming autobiography of Mark Twain, which he purposely had held for a hundred years, and evidently he wrote a lot of his stuff in the very same manner. He would dictate it. He would just talk, and he had transcribers; people that just took down what he said in shorthand. And I'm sure he interacted with them too. But he thought it was fresher that way than if he just crafted it with his pen.

But I also heard Hunter talk before about his painstaking re-writes of Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas, even though it comes across as tumbling madness, much like the Kentucky Derby piece. So much so that when it comes to the end of the book, he handed in the tapes of he and (Oscar) Acosta on the outskirts of Vegas rambling on and on. It's much like the apocryphal stories surrounding the crafting of (Jack) Kerouac's On The Road, which for years was thought to be the culmination of two long weekends of wild, speed-frenzied writing jags, but was actually years of long edits and re-writes. It seems the stories, although interesting, give short shrift to the artists.

Certainly. Hunter carefully crafted every word in the end. He was a real wordsmith.

Let's talk about how you went about this project. Whenever I'm asked about Hunter, I always say, "You want to know about a Hunter Thompson beyond the books, watch Breakfast with Hunter.

(laughs) That's nice of you to say. Thank you.

You deserve it. Now, you went through the whole shooting and release of the first film, then a few years later he dies, and a couple of years go by, you do two other documentaries about Hunter, the Lisl Aumen thing (Fear & Loathing in Denver) and Before I Die about his funeral, and I assume there is still leftover material on the cutting room floor. How did you go about choosing the scenes you did from the myriad of material you shot, and why did you choose to place it out the way you did. It's really edited beautifully to tell a true story of Hunter.

Well, I always thought there would be a sequel to *Breakfast with Hunter*. There was so much material left behind, so many good scenes; the problem was I could never figure out how to put it together. And there are many scenes or a couple at least that I edited back in 2005, 2006, the Avid dates of the edits are kind of depressing, to see how far back it goes. (laughs) But it wasn't until late winter this year that I just got motivated to finally do something about it. So many people kept asking me. I was just about to throw up my hands and make it a series of chapters, just as you would do with a DVD, because I couldn't think of how to thread it together.

Then I came upon that scene I shot in November of 2003 when Hunter was writing a "Hey Rube" column, which at the time I thought really went nowhere, because it's the quest. He's just writing and never gets it done. But he does get a couple of sentences done at the beginning. And I suddenly came up with the idea of using that as home base – that he would continually throughout the film be trying to write this column, and that would be the glue that held the whole thing together.

I think it works in the end. It allows me to go a lot of different places, from the Lotus Club in NYC at the 20th anniversary of *Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas*, back into the kitchen again. And to use a lot of scenes just from the kitchen, it's very unusual to have a film where the main character sits in the same place over a period of about ten years in different scenes. I don't think you'll ever see that again. And to have it work, I think, is truly a piece of alchemy that only Hunter could be responsible for.

It absolutely does, and you as the artist with this pallet really work in that sense. Again, for me as a fan, it was truly great to hear your friend and colleague, co-producer of the film, (Jennifer Erskine), reading aloud the Reuben Salazar piece from Rolling Stone, ("Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan"), which I think is one of the underrated Hunter Thompson pieces of journalism, and of course the impetus for Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas, which Hunter explains in your film, but also the real rarity of Hunter reading The Edge segment from Hell's Angels. It's so often quoted, but rarely read aloud, and to hear him read it, which he almost never read his stuff aloud, and then to realize how impactful it is in the history of Gonzo Journalism, is right up there with The Wave speech from Fear & Loathing that everyone lauds, and rightfully so, but it was wonderful that you were there holding a camera for it. It's a once in a lifetime deal. I mean, you must have been shaking in your boots to not blow it, or run out of tape or something. (laughs) This is living history here.

Oh, exactly, Hunter rarely if ever read his work.

No, never.

But we would read to him. And he was right, in the sense that he was terrible at it, generally. (laughs) He wouldn't give it the right rhythm, even though he was very much into the poetry and the rhyme of the words, and it just wouldn't work out for him. But for some reason that one night he was ready to go. Fortunately I was shooting with two cameras, as I often did. I had one on a tripod by the television set and that would be where I would collect the primary audio and I'd always have that one stationary shot of Hunter, and I'd move around with another camera. And I was just beside myself; he was doing such a great job in reading *The Edge* speech, and I never really thought about it much until I was going through my incredible ten-inch thick notebook of all my material with Hunter and looking at this motorcycle scene that I shot back in 1996. I followed him in the red convertible with this girl driving and me standing up in the Red Shark, while he and his friend Oliver went to lunch on their motorcycles. And to put that together with him reading *The Edge*, it truly was magic in the end. And that's Herbie Mann's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" that threads through it at the same time. Did you like the music?

*Yes, and it harkened back, connecting the two films for me. You used Mann's piece in the first one, I believe. It really works in tandem with the other film. I also like how some of the locations for scenes from the first film are reprised here; the evening they celebrated the 25th anniversary of *Fear & Loathing* in Las Vegas in New York, the *Hunter Thompson Day* in Kentucky. Oh, and that reminds me, talking about music and the *Kentucky Day* bit, thanks for putting more Warren Zevon stuff in the film. He is as much a deity around here as Hunter, so we really appreciated seeing and hearing from him, especially when he reads Hunter's excoriation of Bush over the speakerphone. Just wonderful. And those close-ups of Hunter's facial expressions when Zevon is reading or when he's reading *The Edge*; I keep coming back to it, the word "intimate". It's an intimate portrait. It makes you wish someone had a camera to shoot the last years of Hemmingway or Vonnegut, or god forbid somebody got close to Salinger for ten minutes. (laughs)*

(laughs) I always said at the time when I was doing it, it'd be like hanging

out with Faulkner or Twain for ten years. I was incredibly fortunate to do it. And for that reason I had to do more with that footage in the end. I couldn't just let it go with *Breakfast with Hunter*.

Um, just getting back to "Battle Hymn of the Republic", that is, more or less, Hunter's theme song, and we used that with *Breakfast with Hunter*, but that goes back to Hunter's 1970 sheriff's race when he used another version of "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in his radio commercials. And he picked that version by Herbie Mann for this great album that was only released in England called "Where Were You When The Fun Stopped" by EMI.

Right.

We used that in *Breakfast with Hunter*, but I also used it in *When I Die*, which is the second film I did, but not in the Lisl one. I went back to it for this one. It's kind of our "Law & Order" theme. (laughs)

When I Die was wonderfully done, especially since Hunter isn't in it. He hovers over the film. He's only in that one BBC piece where he's convincing the funeral director in Los Angeles with Ralph Steadman in tow, of how he wants his funeral to go, with his ashes being blown out of a canon on his property in Colorado.

Yeah, I licensed that BBC clip for the film.

*There were two segments of Animals, Whores & Dialogue that really moved me. When Hunter says, "Anything else I did I was punished for. When I worked at writing I was praised." And then he says that he finally realized what he had to do, become a writer; he calls it having a rocket in his socks. He has this smile on his face; that's the Hunter I knew. That is the Hunter that you and I spoke of when you came out with your first film, the Hunter that is hinted at there, but is centered in this one. This man who'd become completely lost in the Doctor Gonzo thing, the Raoul Duke persona. And also how you capture this facial expression of pure joy when he's reading *The Edge* piece; he even says at the end, it was "a miracle" he could recount what was in his head that way. He actually uses the word "miracle". That moment is almost beatific. It's weird. It was as if you got inside his soul for a couple of seconds with your camera.*

Well, thank you. You know, the camera is only a couple of feet away from him most of the time, so it really is intimate. And I think the film, more so

than *Breakfast with Hunter, Animals, Whores & Dialogue* truly gives you a sense of why we all felt so lucky to be able to hang out in the kitchen with Hunter, what was so important about it. Not just the art and the writing, but the magnificence of his personality. He was an incredibly endearing human being, and you felt fortunate to be his friend. You understand completely why his mother describes when he was four or five years old all the kids in the neighborhood would wait for an hour or two on the front porch for Hunter to come out to play. (laughs) So we were really lucky to be able to play with Hunter. That's for sure.

The last shot of Hunter in the kitchen with the pistol, right before he speaks about being aware not to be...

“...taken into the system”, yes.

Was that the last thing you shot, or did it just work perfectly for the final shot of Hunter speaking in the film? And if not, what was the last thing you shot? Do you have of the last piece of video you ever shot of Hunter alive?

You know, the last thing I shot with Hunter was just a couple of months before he died, and I didn't use it in the end. It was an interview he did with, or a conversation he had, with somebody from Playboy, and it didn't have anything in it that would make it rise to the top of the cut for *Animals, Whores & Dialogue*. The scene you're referring to where he's sitting there talking with Sheriff Bob Braudis, we actually shot primarily for the purpose...(laughs) we were working of *Kingdom of Fear* with him, which, of all his books is perhaps the clearest attempt to make a biography out of it. But he was really struggling with the writing, so I suggested we have Sheriff Bob interview him, I'd record the whole thing, make a transcript and see what we could do with that. That's where that comes from. It was really meant to be part of *Kingdom of Fear* and I think maybe a little bit of it did actually work its way in *Kingdom of Fear* in a slightly edited version. But I was just incredibly lucky. I didn't even realize, for example, that he was sitting there playing with that gun right where he sat and killed himself in the end until years later. I had the one camera looking over Sherriff Bob's shoulder, as we were trying to find a reference in his clippings there, and the “A” camera, just by itself in the tripod, caught Hunter just sitting there playing with that gun. I couldn't believe it. It was so eerie, a couple of years after he shot himself to find that. But it had a real importance to it, as you know, which is he really sums up his whole life, which is that dictum

of “politics as the art of controlling your environment”.

There are two main themes in this film for me, and you did a great job juxtaposing them or at least paralleling them: The elements of the Gonzo Style; his writing, the origins of it. And you go to all the main things, as we talked about – the Kentucky Derby piece, the Salazar piece, Fear & Loathing, the political writing – but always back to Hunter trying to write this column, get it done, and how chaotic it all is, and also his passion for infusing himself into causes, whether it’s Lisl Aumen, the situations surrounding Aspen, he elaborates on the run for sheriff thing, and about national politics too; he takes Bush to task, the piece Warren reads, and when those gentlemen are trying to take photographs of him and he’s excoriating Clinton. So you could see he’s got his guns pointed everywhere. Both of his passions, the writing and the causes, are always there throughout the film. Was that something you were going for, or did it show itself as you went along?

It showed itself.

You know, Hunter really came through as a bright and shining spirit through the whole project. I was an instrument just chosen by him, (laughs) I hate to say it, but I really was. There wasn’t any particular genius on my part to think it was a good idea to hang out with Hunter Thompson and film everything I possibly could, but for whatever reasons Hunter trusted me and that’s why I was able to get the kind of footage that I did, and the whole project took on a life of its own, especially after Hunter’s death. It was as if he were manipulating it from the grave. I mean, even the very end of the film, after the scene we were just talking about, where he sits with the gun, I more or less resurrect him at the end. Suddenly the camera, after ninety minutes of pretty much non-stop observing him at one point or another in that chair in the kitchen, the camera suddenly takes on his point of view – six months after he’s died at a birthday party for him. And that wasn’t something I planned to do. I just had the camera with me and Ed Bastian, one of his friends right before we were going to light the candles on the cake, said, “Wait, you should get in the chair! You should be Hunter with the camera”. I was like, what? I thought that was presumptuous, but because Ed Bastian, longtime friend and former campaign manager from the sheriff’s race in 1970, said, “No, no, get in the chair; you become Hunter with the camera!” I did it just for a lark, and as you can see from the footage there’s not a dry eye in the house. When Anita kisses that camera...(pauses)

I can hear the emotion in your voice, recounting it. To me, that is not only a wonderful way to end the film, but it speaks of what you talked about, and its mentioned at the end there, that Hunter always thought his great art was being a camera's eye constantly capturing everything; the wants to the wonderful moments. That moment is happening in a true reality inside that camera.

In a way, you've answered my next question; what you may have felt then, being Hunter as the camera, the way he would be otherwise. But maybe you can tell me what you felt as the objective viewer, seeing the footage for the first time on screen, outside the interior of the lens and behind the camera, to see the actual footage of that poignant moment among his closest friends on his birthday.

Well, it's chilling. I can't watch the film, especially at the end of it, without a box of Kleenex. (chuckles) I hate to say it, but I'm a real wus. I loved him deeply. And you can feel the emotion in that scene. I mean, Ed Bradley starts to speak. You know, in all the years when Ed Bradley was hanging out with us, I never filmed him, out of respect for his privacy. But that one time he wanted me too. I could tell. When he did that toast... And then Ed takes the camera from me and filmed that last shot of me at the very end. It's a film by Ed Bradley! (laughs) So there's a lot of emotion in that for me. But we all knew that Hunter was going to go one day, that he wasn't going to, you know, hang around and linger, but I just figured it wasn't going to be *that* day. So we just have to accept it.

It's been four films now, working around the Hunter theme; so you've become the quintessential Hunter documentarian. I'm not sure how much more footage you have, but you've been entrusted by the family and friends, the inner circle, as the official documentarian. Is that how you feel, that you've had this title bestowed upon you?

Oh, sure. There's a writer, William Mckeen, who wrote the Hunter biography, *Outlaw Journalist*, who refers to me as Hunter's Boswell.

Right. (laughs)

As Boswell was to Samuel Johnson, I think I am, and was, to Hunter Thompson. There is no doubt about that. Having done four films now, I'm not sure I've got another whole feature film in me on Hunter. There's a lot of other interesting material there yet to go. For example, I held back

anything about *The Rum Diary*, and I'll probably do something...I've got a lot of material about the making of *The Rum Diary*. I worked on the editing of that, and followed the progress as Hunter tried really hard to get it made. Did you ever see the fax that Hunter wrote, that the Screenwriter's Guild reproduced? It's been around. It's this screed to this woman named Holly, who was the production executive. It's hysterical.

I must admit, I have not.

Oh, gosh. I'll find a copy of it someplace online and send to you. It's really funny. He was trying to get the original writer paid \$50 thousand for the script, and he writes this fax where he accuses this production executive of paying more attention to her tits than getting the film made. (laughs) It's hysterical. I have a scene where Warren Zevon reads it for Hunter in the kitchen.

So there are things like that about *The Rum Diary*, and when that film comes out next year, I'll start releasing some of those scenes.

Yeah, when the hell is that coming out? I mean, they must have shot the thing already. You have any info on that?

Yeah, they shot it last year and I think they're going to release it next year, 2011. You know, the pipeline for future releases are getting pretty well jammed up, especially a film involving Johnny Depp, who is really the only reason the film got made. It was his dedication to it, with Bruce Robinson directing, with Neil and I. It was his project. It's just not easy, the economics of the film business these days. They don't release as many films on a yearly basis as they used to. So that's where that stands.

Yeah, it's an honor to be Hunter's documentarian, that's for sure.

*Is there a moment you can share, with Hunter's passing, and this one being the last feature film you do on him, anything that didn't make it onto film that you remember fondly that you can share; a moment between you and your friend Hunter? Those are the moments that really count – much of which you have in the film ignores that caricature of *The Duke*, which walked sixty feet in front of him, much to his chagrin, I know, so was there a time when the camera may have not been running, that sticks with you that you can share?*

Oh, let me think for a second. I've just got to fan through my cards for a

second, like we did with Hunter for every college student for decades with papers to write, (chuckles) we'd work with index cards and there was a lot of good stuff. Oh, gosh, let's see... (thumbing through the cards) Did you like the stuff with George Plimpton? Those were scenes that were never in *Breakfast with Hunter*.

Yes, that was fantastic. Once again, it was just great to have that, because we lost George too. I recently read the essay biography they released last year or the year before on Plimpton, and he comes across in those anecdotes as a guy who really let things fly by the seat of his pants. It was amazing, with the kind of background and New England type of education and the primed up pressures he had on him since he was a young man. Turns out, he had a lot of Hunter in him, and of course his rash of Gonzo-styled sports pieces, and the Paper Lion book. So that one scene is a rare glimpse into Plimpton's psyche too. I really enjoyed that, yes.

Ah, I guess one of the things I thought was interesting – not an emotional thing – but as I was looking through my cards for funny things, one theme I thought about putting in *Animals, Whores & Dialogue*, but didn't have room for in the end, was Hunter and Don Johnson; the “Nash Bridges”, “Miami Vice”, Don Johnson, who was a neighbor of Hunter's.

Yes, there was an outtake on the DVD of Breakfast with Hunter of him reading.

He reads *Screwjack*.

Right.

It's intercut between him and P.J. O'Rourke. But I have a fair number of disparate scenes about “Nash Bridges. (laughs) That's a great story that one day I'll have to bring out, which is the creation of the “Nash Bridges” television series. Hunter got a pretty sizable check for every episode they ever produced of “Nash Bridges”, as one of the quote/unquote creators of the series, because Don was handed this gift by I forget what network – NBC, CBS, whatever – and gave him a firm commitment for 20 episode or 23 episodes, a whole series, which is extraordinary without a pilot to do anything he wanted. This was after “Miami Vice”. And so one night he was hanging out with Hunter and he was like, “What are we gonna do? What can I do?” And Hunter came up with this idea that was called “Off Duty Cops”.

Have you ever heard of this?

(chuckles) No.

(laughs) The idea when you have trouble, you don't call 911, which, as you know, you never call 911 from Hunter's place, you call 611 instead. And you get "Off Duty Cops" on a mercenary basis, that you pay to come take care of whatever your problem is, and Don Johnson's character was this guy who organized this group of off-duty cops, who was pressed for money, because his wife had turrets syndrome.

(laughs)

(laughs) This was Hunter who made up all this.

This woman swears uncontrollably and therefore her husband has to become a mercenary cop. (still laughing) Anyway, they tried desperately to get a couple of scripts together based on that. They delayed production I think for six months or a year as they went off on this "Off Duty Cops" theme. But it never worked out, and it evolved into "Nash Bridges". But Hunter still got the credit.

So there's a lot of fun stuff left behind.

Hey, you got a book in ya? You ever think of it, since you spent all that time writing with him. You've got yourself a book in there.

Uh, well, you know, actually I'm sort of working on a piece, not with a book in mind, but it probably will be in the end. I bet. I have a podcast I do at hunterthompsonfilms.com, and oh, I've probably done twenty stories at this point, maybe fifteen. It's hunterthompsonfilms.com/podcast, and I put up pieces of video to go with it. I think that's going to get more and more involved, and I think it's a nice way to get a lot of these little things out there, some pieces published, some pieces unpublished. I write these stories about life with Hunter and support it with funny stuff, so I think maybe we'll do "Off Duty Cops" one of these days.

(laughs) You could do something akin to radio. I'll plug the podcast in the piece. I saw something on your site regarding a podcast, but I'm not really a follower of that kind of stuff, but I'm sure it's something a lot of fans would dig.

Yeah, check it out. I did a happy birthday story, you know, it's like 600 words. You know, with Hunter's birthday coming up, how he never wanted his birthday celebrated. I told the story how when he was turning 50, I thought, well, it's his fiftieth birthday, he's going to want to have it acknowledged, because he would always adhere to this convention that he was born on the first of January, just like his mother said she was born on the first of January, like all thoroughbred horses are registered on the first of January, and that's just for the convenience of racing, so they can determine the ages of horse qualifications for a race. But it was his way of being Peter Pan-like, never admitting he was getting old. So we had this surprise fiftieth birthday party planned for him at the Woody Creek Tavern, and we were all gathered under the buffalo head in the corner, and we got Sheriff Bob to bring him down for a drink, and he came down with Bob, and we all stood up and screamed, "Happy birthday!" and he screamed back, "Fuck you!", turned on his heel and left.

(laughs)

He never came back. *(laughs)* Sat out in the car for a half hour with Bob and then left. But as he got older, he really did get into having his birthday celebrated.

I'm glad you mentioned Hunter's birthday. I know you wanted to have the release of the film coincide with the anniversary of his birthday this past week.

Right.

Was that a plan, especially with the way your film ends, with the posthumous birthday celebration in the kitchen.

I thought it would be great, just a hook the launch and all. But it was also fun. I think a lot of people did what I suggested, which is they had parties on his birthday, and they showed *Animals, Whores & Dialogue*.

It can end up being like Bloomsday; they'll show your film every year on July 18. I had a party here years ago with Breakfast with Hunter just playing the whole time with the sound off.

Oh, thanks. When we had the first funeral for Hunter, you know we had

two; the first event was at the Jerome Hotel, and I set up video monitors all the way around the ballroom, and these little video viewing areas, and we had *Breakfast with Hunter* going on nonstop and the Gonzo Tour, this little ten-minute piece I did back in the middle eighties about him. And people really enjoyed it, and generally there wasn't any sound up. I remember Jann Wenner would walk by and go, "Here's my scene! Here's my scene where he gets me with a fire extinguisher!" (laughs)

Have you been back to Owl Farm since shooting the birthday thing?

Yeah, uh-huh, more than once. In fact, I was just out there for a really nice party at Anita's Owl Farm a couple of weeks ago. It was really pleasant. You know, it's like Hunter never left, and yet he's not here. So it's kind of bittersweet.

So they kept everything the way it was? The peacocks are still roaming around and all the stuff remains on the walls, almost like a homage, a museum of sorts?

Yeah, Anita's kept it just like it was, pretty much. There's been very little change. The typewriter's just sitting right there. She actually wrote about in her Owl Farm blog. She wrote about watching the film last Friday night and how emotional it was for her, to be sitting there with the same typewriter, with *Animals, Whores & Dialogue* written right across it, right in front of her.

And she was sitting watching the film there?

Yeah, uh-huh. In his seat, in front of the typewriter.

That's a great tribute. They should make the place a salon or a shrine to him. I would love to go someday. I always meant to make a pilgrimage up there while Hunter was still living, but you keep putting it off until it's too late. He's gone now, but obviously, it would be a great honor to see the place. Are they thinking of one day opening it to the public or perhaps allow journalists to come by and pay tribute?

Once in awhile they have public affairs, like the NORML has a yearly picnic there, and I went to that one back in June, last month, this year. Every once in awhile someone posts videos of it on youtube. It's funny that you mention

that, I don't know if you remember in *Breakfast with Hunter* towards the very end, in the Viper Room scene, somebody asks, "What'll happen to Owl Farm when you die?" And off the top of his head, Hunter goes, "Well, they're gonna fill it with this clear plastic from the chimney on down. And it will fill up with this clear resin and solidify us inside. People can pay 20 or 25 dollars to look inside the windows and we'll all be sitting there. (laughs)

(laughs)

Amazingly prescient, Hunter was.

He really was. That whole thing with the funeral from the BBC special that so many people took to heart, but it appeared at the time to be a larf of some kind, to explode his ashes in the air. It comes off the top of this head for a laugh, and the next thing you know, it's happening.

Well, if you listen to the film, in the sequel, for instance, on the day George Bush is inaugurated, and he's talking about how Nixon, "Nixon brought out the best in me.", etc, etc., and now George Bush. "And we don't yet see him like we do Nixon as pure evil, and we will!"

(laughs) Not yet.

Not yet! When we were working on *Hey Rube* and reading those columns he wrote back in 2000, when he predicts anthrax attacks. It's chilling. Walter Isasacson reads the column from 9/11 in the film, where within two hours of the planes hitting the World Trade Center Hunter is laying out the next six years of American history.

I know.

(laughs) There will be a war without end against an indefinable enemy; bin laden will be a figurehead. He's probably dead, but we don't know. On and on. He was a seer.

And that's exactly what these films offer me. I always enjoy my conversations with you. But I want to thank you again and offer sincere congratulations for a rare glimpse into the artistic craftwork of a true American original, the man beyond the icon. You had access to it, of course, but you put it to its best use. It's lucky to be in the right place, as any

photographer of historically significant shots will tell you, "I was fortunate to be in that spot, at that angle." But you took advantage of your spot and angle.

(chuckles)

It's an art form, and for that I applaud you once again. It's fantastic work.

Thanks so much, James. Keep in mind, for every one night I filmed, there were probably ten where I didn't. (laughs) I just hung out. And that's one of the reasons why it worked too. Hey, sometime you've got to get out here, I'll buy you a drink at the tavern and show you what Owl Farm looks like, at least from the outside.

Well, thank you. You know, before I do get out there. I know the guys from Flying Dog, I love those guys. I have to contact Anita and let her know I'm coming out to see Wayne, and see if she'll allow me to take a look around and pay my respects.

I'd be happy to interface with you on that. I'd talk to her about that.

Thanks so much. Hey man, what are you working on now?

Well, I'm just coming up for air. What I would actually like to do next, which wouldn't be a documentary at all, more of a mini-series on the story of Ludlow, Colorado. Not sure if you're familiar with it, but in 1914, the only time U.S. troops, other than Ken State, have killed American civilians. It was in the middle of the Colorado Mine wars, the Colorado militia killed 13 women and children, after they set fire and machine guns to a minor striking camp in Ludlow Colorado. It's just an amazing black page in American history that so few people know about, but really represents the primacy of corporate America and what can happen. Anyway, so I'm working on that. I have a background in drama, I created the visual styles for the TV series, "Homicide: Life on the Street" for NBC, and directed that. So documentaries are a tough road. It's almost easier to do something dramatic. (chuckles)

Well, keep up the good work, because you definitely have the eye. You don't

need to hear from me about that, but you damn well do. And the invite goes both ways. Any time you're in the NYC area, we'll go down to the White Horse Tavern and I'll buy you a drink.

Sounds great. And Thanks James for all your help and your interest and enthusiasm. It's wonderful. And I love your writing. Keep it up.

Well coming from you, it's a great compliment.

Hunter would be proud. That's for sure.

Thanks, man.