

CONFESSIONS
OF THE
NIGHT RANGER

BY
DANIEL C. FRIEND



PORTLAND • OREGON
INKWATERPRESS.COM

Copyright © 2012 by Daniel C. Friend

Cover and interior design by Masha Shubin
Photos © Daniel C. Friend

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means whatsoever, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher and/or author. Contact Inkwater Press at 6750 SW Franklin Street, Suite A, Portland, OR 97223-2542. 503.968.6777

Publisher: Inkwater Press | www.inkwaterpress.com

Paperback
ISBN-13 978-1-59299-714-5 | ISBN-10 1-59299-714-7

Kindle
ISBN-13 978-1-59299-715-2 | ISBN-10 1-59299-715-5

Printed in the U.S.A.
All paper is acid free and meets all ANSI standards for archival quality paper.

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

I dedicate this book to
Don Barnes and Pat Scully
and all the other Rangers who died
doing what they loved the most.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
INTRODUCTION	xi
CHAPTER 1: IN THE BEGINNING	1
UCLA	3
<i>The World of Rangering</i>	13
CHAPTER 2: 1973, FOLSM LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA	18
<i>Asilomar</i>	30
<i>Jack's Shack</i>	38
<i>Death in the Afternoon</i>	45
<i>Feud in the Campground</i>	48
BPOP	55
CHAPTER 3: THE DARK SIDE OF THE FOREST	63
<i>My Introduction to Big Basin</i>	80
CHAPTER 4: BIG BASIN REDWOODS STATE PARK	86
<i>Historical Background</i>	100
<i>Into the Swing of Things</i>	107
<i>Joe the Torch</i>	109
CHAPTER 5: FIRE AND ICE, THE SNOW STORM OF THE CENTURY	117
<i>Cat Trouble</i>	138
<i>Redwood Ecology Seminar</i>	141
<i>Happy Easter</i>	144
<i>On the Road in the VW Van: We Visit Other Parks</i>	149
<i>Send in the Marines</i>	154
<i>The Diver</i>	160
<i>Dog Days in the Park</i>	164
<i>Fire Hazard</i>	166
<i>Summer Days</i>	171
<i>Loose Cannon on Board</i>	175

<i>Summer Stories</i>	180
<i>An August to Remember, 1974</i>	195
<i>The Flying Car</i>	195
<i>Girl Scouts and Hells Angles</i>	199
<i>Marbled Murrelet</i>	204
<i>Showdown in 'F' Camp</i>	213
<i>The Season Winds Down</i>	218
<i>The Time Machine</i>	221
<i>1974 Fire</i>	230
<i>Dogs Again</i>	243
<i>Crash</i>	245
<i>Are You Calling Me Dumb?</i>	247
PHOTOS	252
CHAPTER 6: 1975, THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES	258
<i>Audubon Camp of the West</i>	283
<i>VW Blues</i>	298
<i>Dog Days Again</i>	302
<i>The Cat Jumps Out of the Bag</i>	303
<i>Tiny Things</i>	306
<i>Get Lost, You're Not a Cop</i>	309
<i>Bootlegged Training</i>	313
<i>WOAH!</i>	320
<i>Night Visitors</i>	325
CHAPTER 7: 1976	329
<i>Meet the Technicians</i>	331
<i>Follow That Car!</i>	334
<i>Training Again</i>	337
<i>Summer Stories</i>	349
<i>MBO and the New Training Coordinator</i>	356
<i>The Power of Two</i>	358
<i>Dissatisfied Trainees</i>	363
<i>The Trouble With Herschel</i>	369
<i>More Summer Stories</i>	372
<i>Dogs Again</i>	381
<i>Big Basin Resort</i>	392
<i>Emergency Response</i>	393
CHAPTER 8: 1977	397
<i>Off to a Flying Start</i>	400
<i>Night Caller</i>	401
<i>CHP Training Day</i>	408
<i>Power Shift</i>	414
<i>A Death in the Campground</i>	416
<i>Oiling the Hinge</i>	422

CHAPTER 9: HENRY COWELL STATE PARK, 1978 - 1979	435
<i>Cowell's Unique Campground</i>	437
<i>The Campground Thief</i>	440
<i>Back to 'Normal'</i>	456
<i>The Campground's Unique Clientele</i>	461
<i>The Walking Wounded</i>	470
<i>Murphy's Law</i>	474
<i>Bearer of Bad News</i>	479
<i>Lucky Day</i>	484
<i>Crossing the River, The Agony and the Extasy</i>	485
<i>Back to Nature</i>	497
<i>The Bozo Factor</i>	504
<i>May I See Your ID Please</i>	508
<i>Free Showers</i>	514
<i>Sing Me a Song</i>	519
<i>Wet and Wild</i>	523
<i>Slow Down!</i>	525
<i>More Bad News</i>	531
<i>Go Ahead, Make My Day</i>	533
<i>Moving On</i>	538

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EVEN THOUGH MY NAME APPEARS ON THE COVER OF THIS BOOK, IT WOULD not have been possible, or be in the form that it is today without the help and inspiration of many people. I would particularly like to thank the following people by name.

Former Big Basin Park Supervisor Ken Morris and current Park Supervisor Kevin Williams were both very helpful in many ways, especially in allowing me to have access to the Big Basin State Park archive and the Daily Logs from my time as a Ranger there. The head Interpreter at Big Basin, Susan Blake, convinced me to return to the park and share my stories with the public. Without her encouragement, this book would still be nothing more than a loose collection of verbally related stories. Jim and Margie Behring became like family to me and allowed me to stay at their house whenever I came up to the park to volunteer. Park Aid Kristi Kelly always kept a smile on my face and made me feel young enough to do the work that needed to be done. Denzil Verardo, who I will forever think of as Mr. Big Basin, demonstrated by his actions what a huge impact one person can have on the world, beginning with Big Basin State Park park. Kim Baker got me involved in the Big Basin Oral History Project and was the first person who led me to believe that my stories were of wider interest than just to my two sons. Jeff Price got me reconnected with all of my old Ranger friends, long after I had lost contact with them, and has been very helpful in giving me feedback in my various writing projects. Fellow Big Basin Docents

Scott Peden and Bill Rhoades were both extremely helpful, not only for their companionship, but also for their knowledge of the park.

Finally, and as always, I would like to thank the team at Inkwater Press, Particularly Sean Jones for encouraging me to submit my work for publication, Masha Shubin who does such a terrific job of design and interior layout, not to mention the fabulous covers she creates and Steve Thieme who has worked so hard marketing my writing.

Dan Friend
Los Osos, 2011

INTRODUCTION

I WAS ONE OF THE VERY FEW PEOPLE WHO FELL INTO BECOMING A STATE Park Ranger without having any previous park experience or specialized training. In fact, prior to applying for the job, I had never even visited a state or national park. I didn't like the desk job I was in at the time, so I began looking around for something different. One of my friends at work suggested applying for the Ranger job, because he knew that I liked the outdoors. It turned out that I was extremely lucky in getting hired, because during the eco conscious 1970s, only one out of every 250 Ranger applicants got hired by the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Being a Ranger in the 1970s was a very special job. We were right in the middle of the Environmental movement, and it seemed as though absolutely everyone wanted to have a job that put them outdoors, preferably in Nature. Even though Rangers were terribly underpaid, the competition for the few available jobs was very intense. In fact, it wasn't uncommon for people trying to land a coveted position as a Ranger to invest many hours volunteering, just to make contacts within the park system.

The California State Park System was the largest in the nation, and next to the National Park Service, being a California State Park Ranger was the most prestigious job in the world of Rangering. Nevertheless, despite the prestige and the exclusivity of the job, it wasn't always a bed of roses. In this, the second of my memoir series, I chronicle the danger, excitement, frustration and rewards of being

a California State Park Ranger during the volatile 1970s, when bears, mountain lions and rattlesnakes weren't the only dangers to be found in California's parks. Murderers and even serial killers roamed the forests as well.

CONFESSIONS OF THE NIGHT RANGER involves three separate themes: what it was like to be a California State Park Ranger during the turbulent 1970s, what was going on with crime in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and finally, the challenges I was facing in my personal, as well as professional lives. As a Ranger, I had truly found my bliss, and probably would have spent my entire working career as a Ranger if fate hadn't intervened in the form of a new Chief Ranger who was assigned to our park. I suppose that I was either militantly idealistic, or naive, or both, because I had somehow survived four years in the military without having learned how to protect myself from the collateral damage of political infighting and personal vendettas. That deficit would come back to have devastating consequences for my career as a Ranger.

As this memoir unfolds, it will be part drama, part adventure, part expose and part soap opera. I don't know how to tell the story any other way. That was the way I experienced it, so that is the way I relate it to the reader. As you will discover, I may not have demonstrated a great sense of self preservation, in dealing with the challenges I faced, but at least I was honest. In relating these events, I have attempted to carry on that tradition of honesty, that's why I chose the title, CONFESSIONS OF THE NIGHT RANGER. Despite all of the challenges, frustrations and dangers, Rangering was a great life, and I feel privileged to be able to share the adventure with the reader who wants to discover what it was like in the California Redwoods during that era of change and challenge. In order to tell this story, yet protect the privacy of the individuals involved, I have changed the names of a few of the key players. All of the other names remain unchanged.

CONFESSIONS OF THE NIGHT RANGER

IN THE BEGINNING

SHE REMINDED ME OF SLEEPING BEAUTY: THE EXPRESSION ON HER FACE was so relaxed and so serene that it appeared as though she didn't have a care in the world. It started to rain, lightly and gently at first, but then the drops became larger and more frequent. The rain pattered on her face, soaked into her clothes and ran down her cheeks like silent tears. I wished that I had an umbrella, because we were both starting to get wet. As the temperature dropped, clouds of steam began to rise from her body into the cold night air and were captured and illuminated by the flashing red lights of the deputy's patrol car. It created an eerie scene, accompanied by the subtle soundtrack of the radio as it crackled in the background: "That is affirmative, the Ranger is on the scene." I looked down at the footprint on the ground. It was perfect in every detail and was well defined by the shadows created by my truck's headlights. It, along with a few others, was the only piece of evidence we had been able to find at the crime scene.

Where was the coroner anyway? We had been on the scene, watching over the body, for over an hour already and the rain was washing away all of the evidence, especially the footprints, which were starting to melt into fluid mud as tiny rivulets of rain water cut through them, crumbling the well defined edges, like ocean waves erasing a child's sand castle.

The deputy called his dispatcher again, asking for the coroner to respond ASAP. He left me to watch over the girl while he retrieved

a plastic evidence blanket from the trunk of his patrol car. To the small circle of rain-soaked onlookers it must have appeared odd that he would walk toward the body with a blanket, only to pass by the dead girl and lay it on the ground. He covered the footprints as well as he could. Our efforts to save this critical evidence were frustrated by the increasing amount of water flowing down the embankment from the highway, cutting a path under the girl's motionless body and through the footprints.

Finally, two hours after we initially arrived on the scene, the coroner showed up, too late now to harvest any of the evidence that had been so plain when the deputy and I had first arrived at the scene.

"We've been standing in the rain for two hours waiting for you to show up. What kept you?" he asked the coroner, with a hint of anger tinting the usually emotionless delivery of the professional law enforcement officer.

"It's Thanksgiving. I wasn't going to interrupt my dinner to come out here just to bag a stiff."

Two hours and fifteen minutes earlier, as I sat down to my own Thanksgiving dinner, the first fork of turkey on the way to my mouth, the red emergency phone in the bedroom began ringing. My wife and I exchanged knowing glances. Her parents said: "It's Thanksgiving, can't you ignore it?" As I got up to answer the phone, I heard Frankie explain that I was the Night Duty Ranger and was responsible for all emergencies in the park, holiday or not. I picked up the receiver and answered the call,

"Henry Cowell State Park emergency line."

"Ranger Friend?"

"Yes."

"The body of a white female adult has been found in your park across Graham Hill Road from Graham Hill Plaza. Meet the deputy there. What is your ETA?"

"Fifteen minutes."

"I'll advise."

"Thank you. Happy Thanksgiving."

"Happy Thanksgiving to you."

THE ENTIRE CHAIN OF EVENTS WHICH LED UP TO THAT LEAD UP TO THAT moment had begun seven years earlier, in 1972, with a simple phone call. Frankie and I were already late for dinner at her parent's

house. It was 7:30 PM. We should have been there at 7:00. Rushing around, we were just about out the door when the phone began ringing. Assuming it was Frankie's parents calling to see why we were late, I told her to answer it by saying: "There's nobody here but us chickens." It was a family joke, referring to the rubber chicken we kept hanging over the kitchen sink. I knew that I had miscalculated when I heard her say,

"Yes", followed by a pause, then: "Yes, he's here, would you like to speak to him?"

I took the receiver and was surprised to hear a young woman's voice ask me if I was still interested in a Ranger Trainee position with the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

A year earlier, unemployed and with our meager savings almost exhausted, I wouldn't have hesitated to reply in the affirmative. But now that I was securely employed and had a career position with The U.S. Air Force Air Material Command at McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, I paused to consider my options. It had been months since I had submitted my application to the state for the Ranger position and up until this moment, I had completely forgotten about it. My lips were just forming a negative response, when I came to my senses and told her, "Yes, I am still very much interested in a position as a Ranger."

UCLA

I REMEMBER MAY 5TH, 1970 AS IF IT WERE ONLY YESTERDAY. VIET Nam, Laos, Cambodia and now the Kent State Massacre completely dominated all conversation on campus. Following the killing of four students by National Guard troops at Kent State on the fourth, the next couple of days on our campus were absolute chaos. It was too much to bear. Where was this country going? Everyone I knew asked themselves the same question, but we all had different opinions. Some of us were looking for the answers, others thought that they already had them. As a veteran, I was on campus trying to grind through my classes on the GI Bill and part-time jobs. My old friend from high school days, Ned Covert, was there on campus too, but he was wearing LAPD blue.

I knew it was going to be a bad day when I arrived early for my morning class and saw the policeman standing atop of one of the buildings overlooking the quad. He was holding a shotgun. It didn't take long for the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society), huddled together in a tight knot of 15 or so, to begin chanting: "Jump pig, jump pig, Jump pig!" A crowd gathered, as I knew it would. I had seen this happen before. By then the SDS had it down to a science. Their goal was to create a media event and radicalize the student body. Their plan was to create a demonstration which would pit the police against the students. Clearly, we were going to be in for a major event on campus, I just didn't know how it was going to turn out. I thought it might begin, like so many other demonstrations had, after the SDS were satisfied that the crowd had reached critical mass.

Earlier that year, I had been en route to class and was crossing the quad when I became aware of the "whump, whump, whump" of the LAPD helicopter circling overhead. I was used to it by then. UCLA was of high enough concern to the mayor and the police chief that the chopper circled over the campus every day. What drew my attention to the helicopter on that particular day was that it was lower than usual and was getting even lower. Why were the coming down, I wondered. I looked over to see what was below the descending chopper. It hovered over the Career Counseling Center, an old World War II era bungalow. I remembered hearing that Navy and DuPont recruiters had ignored SDS threats and planned to appear on campus that day to conduct recruiting anyway.

The usual small group of SDS was grouped together in front of the building. They weren't doing anything significant yet. They were just working their way through their list of taunting chants and waiting for the crowd to get bigger. They didn't have to wait long. It was the interval between classes and students were streaming all over campus. Over the next few minutes, curious onlookers swelled the group to several hundred. The large numbers made the crowd look much more menacing than it actually was.

Suddenly, as they sprang into action, their plan became clear. The SDS cadre tried to enter the building through the front door. Their plan was to create a media event by handcuffing the two recruiters who were inside, but they were foiled when the staff inside locked the door.

Having failed to anticipate this response, the SDS cadre improvised

their next move and the entire group scurried around to the back of the building, leaving the front completely unguarded. By the time I changed my position and caught sight of them again, they were throwing a couple of heavy metal trash cans through the closed rear windows, shattering the glass. Intent on accomplishing their goal, some of the SDS climbed into the Center over the broken glass. Meanwhile, the quick thinking recruiters fled the scene through the now unguarded front door.

Foiled in their attempt to capture and handcuff the recruiters, the SDS shifted to their fall-back plan. Their goal apparently was to create an event which would draw maximum attention to their cause. In an obviously well rehearsed move, the SDS pushed the crowd back, creating a large open circle. Once they had created a canvas, so to speak, they began painting their picture, only this time they were using their bodies instead of paint. They all began laying down on the ground. What is this, a lay-down demonstration, I wondered. I moved in closer, pushing my way into the crowd, trying to see what was going on.

The LAPD chopper, which had been hovering over the scene this entire time, dropped down until it was just a few feet above the crowd. It was creating a terrific blast of wind with its rotor, blowing leaves and papers through the air and whipping long hair around as if a tornado had suddenly touched down. People squinted into the wind, covering their faces with their hands and turning their backs to the rotor blast. The voice from chopper's loudspeaker, sounding positively unearthly, like the voice of the computer in the contemporary movie *COLOSSUS THE FORBIN PROJECT*, boomed out above the noise created by the hovering helicopter and echoed off the building walls: "Disperse! This is an unlawful assembly. Disperse now!"

I moved back, away from the center of the crowd, to where I had a better view. The SDS were laying in an odd pattern on the ground. It looked as if they were forming a word. Yes, they were definitely spelling out a word with their bodies. What were they trying to say, I wondered. I moved around until I gained an adequate perspective. The message they were sending to the helicopter was: "FUCK." Ha, Ha very creative: truly worthy of the SDS, I thought. They were organized though, and they did know what they were doing, I'll have to grant them that.

The SDS had a well practiced four step system which had worked again and again. Once they had created enough of an attraction

to gather a good-sized crowd of curious onlookers, step one; they started getting really outrageous in an effort to prompt some sort of police response, step two; the police invariably walked into this trap and did something predictably provocative, like ordering the crowd to disperse, then throwing tear gas or charging in with their batons, step three; the student reaction was equally predictable, resistance, step four. The process was referred to by the SDS as “radicalization” (of the masses). It worked too. It didn’t seem like the police ever caught on to it though, because they invariable responded in the same predictable way.

The student thought-process usually went something like this: “This is my campus, why should I leave; I’m not doing anything wrong.” Masters of this Kabuki like guerilla theater, the radicals knew just when to drive an emotionally laden propaganda message into the crowd. A little bit of slogan chanting at the appropriate moment and the SDS could create a riot. Once the police reacted, the product was instantly radicalized students and another victory for the SDS. I saw this drama play out many times while I was on campus between 1967 and 1972. It was simple, it was effective and best of all, from the SDS perspective, the police never figured out how to deal with it effectively. The police were a one trick pony: repression through massive response. That, at least, was how these things had unfolded in the past, before the Kent State Massacre. What did this day hold in store I wondered? I didn’t have to wait long to find out.

The longer you live, the more you learn. May fifth, 1970 sure proved that to me. US troops killing South Vietnamese civilians was one thing, US National Guard troops killing American college kids on their own campus, right here at home, was something else altogether. Up until that day, I thought that I had seen some pretty hairy antiwar demonstrations. But they were nothing to compare with what was about to happen on that beautiful Southern California day. LAPD obviously had received a tip-off of what the SDS had planned, because 15 bus loads of riot-equipped police were pre positioned near the campus.

More and more students began flowing into the quad where the SDS cadre harangued the crowd over their bullhorn. Most of the students in the crowd were not yet radicalized, but were merely spectators. They just wanted to see what all the commotion was about.

Once the crowd reached gigantic proportions, the police, apparently afraid of what might happen should the students be left to their own devices, began positioning a large force of riot equipped officers to disperse the students. I don't know where they intended to move the students with this display of force, and I don't believe they did either. Their planning seemed strictly reactive and not well thought out. The entire maneuver appeared destined to provoke an unnecessary confrontation, which could only generate further problems.

It was bizarre and paradoxical. Most of the rest of the campus was quiet, much like a Saturday afternoon. The crowd had been drawn to the quad like iron filings to a magnet. Virtually all of the students had abandoned their classes to gather in the quad. For all practical educational purposes, the campus was entirely shut down. Feeling that the police were intruders on their campus, the students naturally had no intention of obeying any order to disperse. This was a volatile mix, like a science experiment in which the two ingredients, when mixed together with a catalyst, produced an explosion. Today the two ingredients were already present: a big crowd of students and armed police. The only question was: what would provide the spark to ignite the mixture?

The 1970s was an era of causes. And on that day, at that moment, all of those causes were intensely focused on the quad, with the police on one side and the students on the other. This was the generation gap and the credibility gap all rolled into one. On one side, the police represented the establishment and everything that the students of the late 1960s and early 1970s hated: the war, poverty, racism, sexism, repression and exploitation. On the other side stood the students, who at this time had no voice whatsoever in the debate which had divided the country and was on the verge of tearing it apart. The 26th Amendment, which would lower the voting age from 21 to 18 would not be enacted until the next year. Young people were disenfranchised and angry. They had no other way to make their voice heard than to demonstrate. I didn't have any intention of being caught up in the middle of a riot, so I moved around on the outskirts of the activity, where I had a better perspective on what was happening.

Suddenly, and without warning, the police launched a preemptive attack. With nightsticks drawn, the police charged and crashed into the tightly packed mass of students, causing them to stampede

through the campus like a herd of terrified horses. The radicals had already established prearranged escape routes for themselves. The other students, basically innocent bystanders, simply fled in panic. The police had apparently zeroed in on the organizers, that small group of activists, slogan chanters, and police baiters who keep any demonstration alive. They chased one small group of them around buildings, across lawns and up the stairs toward the Research Library. Frankie, my future wife, was working behind the counter in the library when the demonstrators ran in through the double glass front doors, with the police hot on their heels. The police closed the gap, grabbed the boxed in demonstrators and began beating them, tackling one who continued to resist, taking him down to the floor.

At that very moment, the Library President, an academic, typically out of touch with the seriousness of the situation around him, entered the foyer. He was a small man looking very much the part of the bookish intellectual. He raised both hands in a supplicating motion, which you might expect from a minister in front of his congregation, and said to the police, “Stop! No violence in the library. No police in the library. The library is a sanctuary.”

If it hadn't been so pathetic, it would have been funny. Could he possibly have believed that he could really create a sanctuary for fugitive guerrilla fighters in the war against the establishment? His illusion was shattered like the arm of the resisting student when the police baton came down once, twice, three times. The crack of the breaking arm was heard throughout the foyer. So much for sanctuary.

After witnessing that display of police brutality, Frankie was well on her way to becoming radicalized herself. While she was watching the police break the kid's arm in the Research Library, I was across campus, watching the police reinforcements get out of their buses, form up in military fashion and march in platoon size groups to the points where they were needed around the campus. I had stationed myself where I had a good view of the action, yet was safely out of harm's way. One large group of police officers had just disembarked from a bus and was crossing the street in front of the Administration Building. They were marching in a very orderly fashion, all in step across a marked crosswalk. Just at that moment, I saw a professor, with his wife and child with him in a Volvo, drive out of the parking lot into the street. I observed the transformation of this typically academic, slight and bespectacled man right before my eyes. As he

spotted the police in the crosswalk, he hunched over the wheel, his eyes locked straight ahead like the targeting circuit of a heat seeking missile. He stepped on the gas and charged straight at the police. There is no doubt in my mind that there would have been several policemen laying dead in the street had they not seen him coming. I stood there transfixed, watching this whole drama unfold in what must have been less than two or three seconds. The police scrambled for the curb in a very unmilitary fashion, but succeeded in avoiding being run down by the onrushing car.

“Off the pigs!” I heard kids yelling in support of the kamikaze professor. I was shocked, but not surprised. I had been on campus long enough to realize that the revolution which was sweeping the nation’s campuses could not have succeeded as well as it had without the sympathy and support of many, if not most, of the faculty members. The police were less than creative in the way they responded to those incidents though, and their tactics often created self-fulfilling prophecies of radicalized students run amok.

LIKE MANY OF THE OTHER STUDENTS ON CAMPUS, FRANKIE WAS IN A PURPLE rage at the police for what appeared to her to be their unrestrained and arbitrary brutality. To a large extent, I felt that I was on the opposite side of the generation gap from my fellow students. Over lunch, I explained to her that if the student in the library hadn’t been resisting, he wouldn’t have been hurt. Then again, I was older than the other students and already had four years of military experience, so I was pretty well conditioned to following orders. At any rate, I thought that I had made some progress getting Frankie straightened out, when the police intervened to destroy all of my progress.

Due to the magnitude of the demonstration on campus and the fear of bloodshed (one officer had already fired his gun), the University President, Charles Hitch, called a meeting for five PM that afternoon in the Field House, the only place large enough to hold all of the students. Hitch’s message was basically that he sympathized with the students, but that he urged them to avoid violence and refrain from further demonstrations, which only provoked the police. Frankie asked me to go, but I thought that the whole thing was a temper tantrum by a self-indulgent student body of relatively wealthy upper middle-class kids who were used to having their own way. I was on campus to get an education, not fool around and

protest against anything. Since I had to sweat out every dime of tuition not covered by my GI Bill, I took a very dim view of these kids trying to disrupt my classes with talk of their “Moratorium.” But then again, I had already done my time in the military and didn’t have the draft hanging over my head.

Someone really dropped the ball. It’s not clear whether the University failed to notify the police of the assembly, or the police failed to notify the helicopter crew. In any event, when the meeting ended and 2,500 students swarmed out of the Field House and headed back toward campus, the LAPD helicopter crew must have thought that it was the “Big One” and that they were the only ones who could stop it. The helicopter dropped down just above the students heads, blasting them with its rotor wash. The eerie voice over the loudspeaker boomed out: “This is an unlawful assembly. Disperse immediately. If you do not disperse now we will use tear gas.”

Where did they expect the kids to disperse to? That was so typical of the way the police handled large groups back then, no plan, just, “Do what you are told, and be quick about it.” There was no carrot, just the stick: do it now or suffer the consequences. Fortunately, the helicopter crew got the word that it was an official function, just before they actually dropped the gas, but the damage had already been done. What the SDS had been trying to achieve all year, the police accomplished in five short minutes. Just like instant mashed potatoes, this was instant radicalization, just add one police over-reaction and presto, instant radicalized student body.

The police didn’t have a plan worthy of the name and the University was even less well organized. In fact, there was no plan. There wasn’t even a concept of a plan. Some instructors canceled their classes in support of the protest, others threatened to drop students who failed to show up for class. Frankie’s job at the Research Library kept her on campus. As for myself, I intended to get my money’s worth, so I was there too.

Since the students had no power, they had no effective means of registering their concern over the war in Viet Nam or of the tragedy which had occurred at Kent State, except by protesting. The most effective way they could think of to protest was to go on strike and shut down the school. They called their effort the “Moratorium” and their slogan was “On strike, shut it down!”

Frankie had assured me that her side of campus, where all of the

math and science buildings were located, was nice and quiet. It was only on my side of campus, where the liberal arts buildings were located, that things were crazy. I was concerned about the police charging around and didn't want to get caught up in any violence, so I decided to go meet Frankie for lunch on her side of the campus. Frankie and I always tried to have lunch together, so we sat down with our brown bags on the grass, under a tree at the quiet end of campus, away from the slogan chanting and the crowds.

Three students, two guys and a girl, walked by. The girl stopped, looked at us incredulously and began screaming and gesturing with her hands in an almost hysterical way: "Why don't you get off your asses and get involved!"

It wasn't a question, it was a statement and a plea, a cry of frustration and concern. She must have been completely overwrought that kids, right here in the United States, were being killed by our own National Guard simply for being at the scene of an anti war protest, while we sat there calmly eating our lunch. After that incident, I thought that things were crazy all over, especially after it was announced that the remainder of the quarter was being canceled in observance of the "Moratorium" and that instructors would arrange their own methods for grading.

THE GRADING SYSTEM FOR THAT QUARTER ENDED UP BEING A COMPLETE farce as well. Most professors worked out some system where students would have to complete the assigned reading and show up for the final exam, the sort of thing you might expect from a mail order correspondence outfit, not a major university. The final exam in one of my history classes was an oral one, administered by a long-haired teaching assistant who gave what former Vice President Spiro Agnew would have termed a "pseudo-intellectual" lead-in to the final question with the following soliloquy: "As you know, history, the job of the historian, is to analyze events of the past and fit them into a coherent and meaningful pattern. In this light, what do you think of the strike?" By strike he was referring to the "Moratorium."

I had heard enough intellectual discussions by this time to know how to BS for thirty minutes without saying anything, so I decided that that would be my safest course, since this appeared to be a value laden question presented in expectation of receiving the pre approved "politically correct" answer. I talked for a few minutes

about the interpretation of history being relative to the perspective of the analysis. I have a pretty good memory, so I quoted and paraphrased from our texts for the quarter and concluded with a statement that the strike could be viewed as either a positive or negative event, depending upon whether you viewed the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War in a positive or a negative light. I got an "A" in the class.

A friend of mine, who was a brilliant student and had maintained a 4.0 grade point average throughout three and a half years of work, had the same teaching assistant and exactly the same question. Unfortunately she did not see the value of a relativist interpretation of current events. She told him exactly what she thought about the strike, and I'm sure that she was as eloquent as I was evasive. She got a "C" for the quarter.

Speaking of girls, I found that I had a much better rapport with the girls on campus than I did with the guys. Most of the guys were still into adolescent pranks and general fooling around. Many of the girls on the other hand, were more mature for their age. It was 1970, still fairly early in the Women's Liberation Movement, so I expect that many were there to get their MRS degree, to find a husband. That's why Frankie was there.

As a girl from one of my classes and I were walking across campus, she looked up at me and said, "Dan, are you a cop or something?" I asked her why she thought I was a cop. She said, "Well, you know, you have short hair and everything, and you, you know, you just look like a cop." I laughed and told her that many veterans, especially the conservative ones, looked like cops. The generation gap again: It seemed as though the world was changing all around me and I just didn't blend in anymore.

I was getting close to finishing up my studies and was beginning to have a serious internal crisis about finding a job after graduation. My goal in going to college and studying for four years had been to become a history teacher, but by 1970 there wasn't exactly a shortage of history majors in the pipeline for teaching jobs. For several years the draft dodgers had been flooding the ranks of teachers in pursuit of the attendant and coveted draft deferment. Now that I was ready to graduate, there wasn't a teaching job to be found anywhere. In fact, for the first time ever, there was a waiting list and it was two years long.

Realizing that once we found jobs and got settled into a routine, it would be much more difficult to pull up stakes and get out of the big city, Frankie and I decided to get out of LA. We felt that if we were ever going to get out of LA, it was “now or never.”

After we graduated, we moved to Sacramento, where I found a job working for the US Air Force as a Quality Assurance Analyst at McClellan Air Force Base. Coincidentally enough, I had been stationed there in 1967, my last year of active duty with the Air Force.

The World of Rangering

THE YOUNG WOMAN ON THE PHONE, THE ONE FROM THE STATE PERSONNEL Board, told me to be at a specific doctor’s office at nine in the morning two days hence for my physical examination. Once the results were in, she said that she would call me back to set up an appointment for the oral interview. When I told Dave Thompson, a colleague of mine at McClellan, that I was interviewing for the Ranger position, he mentioned that he had also applied for the Ranger job, a few months previously, and had taken the oral examination, but had not passed it. He told me the questions the interviewer had asked him. It didn’t take me long to figure out that if these people were trying to choose the best qualified candidates for a very limited number of positions, they would expect serious and well-thought-out answers. They would also expect candidates to know something about California State Parks and what it was like to be a Ranger.

I suddenly realized that I had never even set foot in a State Park and had absolutely no idea of what was involved in being a Ranger, except what I had seen on TV as a kid. That weekend I went to Sutter’s Fort, which was a unit of the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Dave told me that there were Rangers there. Frankie and I paid our fee to the young girl at the window. We looked around the extensively restored fort, which had played such an important role in California’s early history. After spending an hour there we still hadn’t seen a Ranger. I went back to the entrance station and asked the girl working there where she kept all the Rangers. She laughed and went into an interior office and came back with a fellow

about 55 years old, dressed in a green cotton work uniform much like I thought a janitor would wear.

I told him that I had applied for the Ranger Training Program, but that I didn't have any real experience with State Parks. He was very friendly and most helpful. He spent about half an hour telling me all about what was involved in being a Ranger and gave me several handouts including a large map of California with all 214 state parks shown on color. His name was Joe McCall. He said that he had come to the park service after retiring from the Navy as a Chief Petty Officer. Even with this small bit of newly found information about the parks, I felt better prepared the upcoming interview.

When I showed up at the State Building for my interview, I was directed to the eye test station. The man behind the eye machine was about 55 or 60 years old, looked like the scholarly type and was very friendly. As he tested my eyes, he asked me all about why I wanted to be a Ranger and what I thought it meant to be a Ranger. We chatted back and forth throughout the test. I thought that my vision was about 20-100 and was very apprehensive about the vision test, since 20-70 was the minimum acceptable.

In fact, I had been so worried about the test that I had been doing eye exercises and eating lots of carrots. I didn't feel that I was doing very well with the distance portion of the test, and thought that he might disqualify me right then, but he ran me through the whole thing, including the color vision portion. When he finished, I asked him how I did.

"Oh, you did fine. We're more interested in attitude and motivation than whether you have exactly 20-70 vision. You can take a seat by the door." To this day, I still wonder whether he was a real optometrist, or whether he was a part of the interview team trying to find out what candidates would say outside of a formal interview situation.

My interview panel consisted of three members: Dale Buschke from the Department of Parks and Recreation, a woman from the State Personnel Board and a black minister from "the Community." Dale asked most of the questions. Even though the position statement announced that college graduates in any major could apply, all of the members of the panel appeared to be very concerned that with a degree in History, I would not be able to "interpret" the natural environment to the park visitors. I quickly pointed out that because of the University of California's "breadth" requirements, I

had taken classes in geography, geology, botany and microbiology, as well as chemistry and physics.

Most of the rest of the interview was routine, but one of Dale's questions sticks in my mind to this day: "How do you think you would react to a group of young people, whom you have told to leave the park, telling you to 'Get lost tree fuzz?'"

Even though Dale snuck it in with the rest of the questions, I perceived that this was the pivotal question of the entire interview. It was 1972 and the protest movement was in full swing. Disrespect for traditional institutions and established authority of every kind had become the rule rather than the exception. In addition, urban crime was beginning to spill over into the parks, which had traditionally been free from crime. He prompted,

"Wouldn't you get a little uptight about these kids calling you to "tree-fuzz" and failing to do what you told them to?" Sure I would, anybody would, but that wasn't the answer he was looking for. He wasn't looking for a candidate who would lose his cool at every provocation. "No, I would just consider the source and go ahead with whatever I needed to do to get them to comply" I answered.

About a week later, I got a second phone call, this one telling me that I had been accepted into the Ranger Trainee Class beginning in January, 1973, and that I should report to headquarters, Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, Folsom, California for an assignment interview. On the day of the interview, I called in to work sick, because I obviously didn't want to imperil my job at the base by telling them that I was looking around for something else. I drove out to Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, found the headquarters building, parked and went inside. I again met Dale Buschke along with about 10 other prospective Ranger Trainees. I was already 27, but was nevertheless excited at the prospect of becoming a Ranger. Just think, I told myself, this is what everybody has always wanted to be.

Dale gave us an introduction: "Congratulations on passing the interview. The State Personnel Board has processed over 2,500 qualified applicants for the 60 positions that will be open during 1973. Of the 10 of you at this interview, only six will be hired for the January class, the others will have to wait for the next class, later in the year."

There were nine training areas in the state at that time: Dyer-ville, Lake Oroville, Golden Gate, Folsom Lake, Santa Cruz Moun-tains, Pajaro Coast, San Luis Obispo Coast, San Diego Coast, and

the Montane Area. If we were hired for the January class, we would be expected to pay for our own move to one of these “intake” areas and to report to work at eight in the morning on January 28th, 1973 at our respective assignments. He then handed each of us a list of the required uniforms and the address of the only supplier in that part of California, Alvord and Ferguson in Merced. We would be expected to have one dress uniform and one work uniform when we reported to work and the remainder not more than 30 days later. The cost of the uniforms came to over \$500. That was a tidy sum, especially in 1973 dollars. In addition to the cost of the move, we would have to bear the entire cost of all the uniforms ourselves, but after one year on the job, once we had successfully completed probation, we could expect a uniform maintenance allowance of four dollars per month.

He stressed the importance of getting the Smokey Bear style Stetson hat to fit correctly, because the flat brim prevented the hat from ever “breaking in.” He then polled us for our assignments of preference. Only three of us chose Folsom Lake. Dale said that we were in luck: the Chief Ranger was available that day and would decide which one of us he would accept as a trainee in his Area.

I was getting depressed fast. How was I ever going to afford \$500 worth of uniforms, let alone moving who knows where? I was beginning to wonder whether I really wanted to see this thing through or not. My downward spiral into depression was cut short when I was called in to the Chief Ranger’s office. Behind the desk sat a man about 55 years old, in the green and khaki Ranger wool dress uniform. He looked so familiar that I asked myself where I had seen him before? I quickly glanced at his name tag. “McCall.” Bingo! When he introduced himself, I quickly reminded him that we had met at Sutter’s Fort a few weeks earlier. What an icebreaker that was! I felt as though I was in like Flynn. We had an interesting chat and I reminded myself that you should be careful to never judge people by first impressions alone. I hadn’t expected much from Joe when I first met him at Sutter’s Fort, dressed in his rumpled work uniform, but now I would be working for him.

Not only was he the new Chief Ranger at Folsom, but he also taught night classes at Sacramento State University and had even written the textbook for the course. Joe quickly assured me that the opening at Folsom was mine if I wanted it and that the fellow who had come in before me hadn’t had a chance. “We’d never have a

Ranger here with hair that long.” That was a clue as to the overall orientation of management in parks at that time. The kid’s hair was just over his ears and just barely touched his collar, not exactly what I would call long, but apparently not up to Navy, or Park standards. Once I passed all of the interviews, and knew that I had a firm reporting date, I gave my notice at work. I don’t think that anyone except Dave was sad to see me go though. I didn’t fit in very well to the paper shuffling desk job. I was particularly relieved to get away from the oppressive bureaucratic atmosphere and out from under the domineering boss.