

WC-- Hello there.

BW-- Mr. Cronkite, It's Bob Ward in Hsv.

WC-- Yeah, how're you doing?

BW-- I'm doing great. Hope you are.

WC--Yeah, I'm doing fine. I'm not going to be much help to you. I cant think of a single v.B anecdote for you.

BW-- Well, I hav a couple of questions tht might prompt some memories there.

WC-- All right.

BW-- I know how busy you are, & it's so great of you to do this, or try to do this, anyway. Thanks.

WC-- Right.

BW-- I mentioned (in recent folo note to WC office/staff) that John Glenn has very graciously contrib. a preface or foreword to this (book), which I'm ~~xxxx~~ grateful for.

WC-- Yeah, I would think you would be.

BW-- In a letter you wrote Dr. v.Braun on his 60th b'day, in 1972, you referred to 'Ed Link & his magic submarine' --

WC-- Right.

BW-- --it suggested that maybe you took a ride undersea with ~~Ed~~ Link & Dr. v.Braun on some occasion, and I'm familiar w/ the background on that submersible tht Ed Link developed...

WC--Right, yeah.

BW--Does that prompt any recollection?

WC-- Well, only that we had a mutual interest and a mutual friend in Ed Link, but we didnt dive together. I dived w/ Ed on several occasions, but not together w/ Wernher. But we (he & v.B) talked more abt that than we did abt space, I think. Everything abt space had been said, practically. But the ocean exploration was so new -- it was new to Wernher, too, so he had a fascination w/ it.

(TAPE GOES BLANK FOR A MINUTE OR SO. I HAD ASKED HIM ABOUT HIS & V.B'S SHARED INTEREST IN SAILING/YACHTING, & WHETHER THAT WAS SOMETHING THEY TALKED ABT. & WHETHER THEY HAD GONE SAILING TOGETHER. CRONKITE SAID YES, HE WAS AWARE OF V.B.'s INTEREST BUT NO, THEY HAD NEVER SAILED TOGETHER...)

BW-- ...OK, I have a no. of stories abt him & sailing... I read w/ great interest your autobiography. I picked up a copy at Gannett's "Newseum" in Arlington. I noted in there where you had noted

(TAPE GOES BLANK AGAIN FOR MIN. OR SO! [APPARENTLY FAULTY CONNECTION WITH TAPING WIRE!!] I POINTED OUT TO ~~CR~~ CRONKITE THAT HE'D WRITTEN IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY THAT HE HAD ASKED ALL OR MOST OF THE V.B. GERMAN V-2 TEAM MEMBERS HE MET OVER THE YEARS WHAT HAD BEEN THEIR IMPRESSION OF HITLER BACK THEN? THAT HE QUOTED DR. KRAFFT EHRICKE, FOR ONE. CRONKITE

2 -- CRONKITE on V. Braun

SAID HE NEVER ASKED VON BRAUN ABOUT HITLER.)

BW-- I noticed in 'USA Today' recently where you said or suggested tht you considered von B. as 'the New Columbus' & that you thought he would be regarded more as such as th yrs. & centuries went on.

WC-- Yeah.

BW-- Can you elaborate on that just a bit?

WC-- Well, only that, as future generations look back on this pioneering effort in this first trip to the Moon...

(TAPE GOES BLANK FOR A MINUTE AGAIN!!)

WC -- ... on Columbus' trip, going into the unknown, where every ^{one} ~~body~~ else thought he would fall off the edge of the Earth--but he had a concept that this was not so, of course. But you can't compare that with the knowledge with which von Braun & the Peenemuende boys were looking into space at all -- they had a lot more to go ~~on~~ on than Columbus did. But on th other hand, as people later look ^{back for} ~~at~~ those heroes that made it possible, and while they will fixate undoubtedly on th astronauts who did it -- Armstrong & the rest -- they will also look at th engineers. They will recognize it as an engineering feat. And when they do that they will fix on von Braun as certainly one of (the greatest space engineers). pioneers?)

(ANOTHER, VERY BRIEF GAP IN TAPE!!)

BW-- ... maybe it was the first ~~Saturn V~~ Saturn V launching, un-manned in '67, & it almost shook your broadcasting booth apart--

WC-- Right. Yeah.

BW-- Did you -- that suggested to me -- and I know we were both down there (at Cape) for the Apollo 11 launching -- did you have a chance to speak w/ Wernher, either immed. before or after that launching? And if there were any personal, memorable,

WC-- No, I'm afraid I can't offer you anything comments made? there. I just ~~can't~~ dont recall anything (Betw th 2 of you?) of that nature happening.

BW-- OK. Do you recall any instance where you might have sat down w/ Wernher for a drink or a meal or something, & anything that may have transpired? I didnt know if you had opp's to do that w/ him.

WC-- Oh. gosh. I really didnt have, as much as I'd like to claim it, I really cant claim I had that ~~kind~~ kind of intimate relationship with Wernher. I dont think we had very many -- I dont recall ever sitting down ~~with him~~ for a drink w/ him, for instance. We had many chats from time to time on various aspects of th space program, obviously, on things coming up, but not in that kind of social environment.

BW-- I understand. Did he (v.B) ever express to you, or explain, his extreme interest in undersea activities? I know he was an avid scuba diver, and Arthur C. Clarke turned him on to that & it became a favorite pursuit of many years.

WC-- Oh, yeah.

BW-- Were you interested in scuba diving as well?

WC-- I was interested in deep-sea exploration, & that involved some scuba work, of course. That was a necessity, of course, to pursue that interest. I was just interested in all aspects of it (deep-sea).

BW-- And you don't really recall v. Braun's getting into that appeal--?

WC-- well, that was a deep interest that we shared. I've told you abt sea exploration & that he was terribly int. in it. As a new frontier. I think he saw it as a (the?) new frontier.

BW-- One other thing: I was a little astonished--and appalled--to see in a special edition of Time mag of several months back, where -- it profiled the 100 greatest scientists & thinkers of th 20th century, in Time's judgment, that stood out. They gave Robt Goddard, appropriately, a big spread, but they dismissed v.B with not much more than a footnote that, Goddard was the real trailblazer & that th Germans even borrowed heavily from Goddard's inventions & advances -- and Ernst & th other Germans tell me that was not th case, that they had 1 Goddard paper only. But, any reaction to Time's dismissing v.B as worthy of inclusion of their 100?

WC-- Well, it does seem to me that if you're getting down that far, on a list of a hundred, there can be no doubt abt it (that v.B shd be includ.). I cant imagine ignoring him at that stage.

BW-- Right. Did you have an opportunity to see or meet ~~him~~ w/ v.B during his Washington, ^{2 years,} or when he was up at Fairchild Industries?

WC-- No, no.

BW-- And during his lingering, fatal illness, did you hav any contact then?

WC-- No.

BW-- I'm trying to give you enough time maybe to think of (anecdotes)... I appreciate so much your comments here -- But one or so humorous anecdotes from y'all's relationship--but nothing really comes to mind??

WC-- No, as I said in the opening, anecdotal mat'l just doesnt come to me, with Wernher. Our conversations were usually all of a serious nature.

(TAPE GOES BLANK FOR FINAL TIME, BUT NOTHING MUCH WAS SAID HERE EXCEPT GOODBYES.) (P.S.: HERE I HAD NOTED V.B.'S LOVE OF PILOTING PLANES & HIS FRIENDSHIP/RAPPORT W/ NO. ~~OF~~ ASTRONAUTS, & THEY HAD FLYING IN COMMON & HIS OBVIOUS DESIRE TO FLY IN SPACE HIMSELF. ASKED ~~CRONKITE~~ CRONKITE IF V.B. HAD EVER SAID ANYTHING MEMORABLE ABT. ALL THE ABOVE, OR IF CRONKITE HAD EVER WITNESSED ANY V.B.-ASTRONAUT INTERACTION?? NOPE, HE SAID.)

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