

interview 8-19-98 with: JIM DANIELS re; v.B

JD: "He was always thoughtful of all people. You were not just a cog, not a little gear in the big process -- you were somebody. He talked to everybody that way."

(future missions planning by v.B in D.C. -- Paine, like many in post-Apollo -- was asking, well, what are we going to do now? v.B wanted to push the Mars manned landing idea.) He kinda got shunted on that (Mars). His other great emphasis was the application of working satellites. He was the first person I ever heard who said, "Put a transponder on there & you can track every railroad car in the U.S. by satellite."

See, he looked at problems. He said that 1 of the major problems in transportation back then in the U.S. was keeping track of all the rail lines' rolling stock -- where is it at any given time, and where was it headed?

Anyway, the working-application satellites were 1 of the things he was int. in, since the Mars mission was on the low key. And the space station -- he never lost interest in that, in promoting that. Those were th 3 things that, in his plan he wanted to see.

(so x the NASA Planning Office was estab. at th highest level & v.B put in charge for all future planning for all the space program, not just NASA. And v.B was given 30 spaces (personnel slots) to build his office.)

(Jim's main value to v.B in this was that Jim "knew the players" in NASA HQs, and he knew what was going on ~~ix~~ there & in NASA.) v.B Brought in Ray Kline (sp?) then, other key staff)

(Jim Hamill episode. He nearby at Ft. McNair (ret. from Army. Kept calling & bothering v.B & "using" him w/others. v.B finally told secy to not put his calls thru anymore. Told Julie "not to lie," but dont put him thru. In end, after Hamill would even come to th office uninvited, etc., v.B went out to lunch w/ him -- strictly out of compassion for an old associate, who had become a sot.

(Jim on ~~von~~ "von Braun the father":

One day he came in and said, "Well, Peter's in trouble. They got into the Civil War in his studies in school. And Peter said he's a Confederate! And so he held forth for the Confederate cause!" (v.B told the story laughingly; was noted that after all Peter was an Alabamian)

more

\* Family??

"Wash. Years"

"Wash. Yrs. Compassion"

"Family Story (Good ol' Boy?)"

Family "??"

JD: Several times (in D.C.) I'd go get Maria, in v.B's Mercedes, and take her places. You know, she didnt make a lot of friends there, and she didnt in Hsv. I'll tell you something she said abt Hsv. (Jim told story of dau Margrit being arrested at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta on pot-smoking ~~xx~~ charge, & helping Maria meet her at Wash airport w/o notice or attracting attn. ~~xx~~ v.B showed only concern & caring for his child. ~~xx~~ Charge was later dropped.)

(Maria happier in Wash.??)

My impression was that she felt a little more comfortable there than she had in Hsv. There, she basically was unknown. There was no notoriety, there was no public reputation to uphold.

Let me tell you what she told me abt Hsv. For one thing, she said, "th problem w/ Hsv. women is, they're too social-conscious. I don't have many real friends. They don't have me and Wernher over as friends, just as people. They have us over to show us off. That's the relationship. So I dont socialize. I dont like that kind of thing."

She said, "Sometimes I just get in the car, & I go (or: "I'd go"?) driving in th country. I'd like to go to the horse shows in Shelbyville (Tenn.). I've gone there several times. I'd go in, nobody would know me, & I'd enjoy it. I like to be by myself. I didn't find things in common w/ Hsv. (women?)."

I think I once asked her the question, "What about the other German wives in ~~Hxxx~~ town (hsv.)?" She said, "Oh, they're too hausfrau," "or have their own special interests."

most of them are

Musician (Cafe club/dancers)  
Maria & Hsv.  
(Hsv.)

JD: We (w/v.B) took a tour of all the NASA centers. One of our trips was to JPL & to Ames (Res. Ctr.) In Pasadena, before we went up to Ames, he left us & spent 2 days on the yacht w/ Hans Mark, who at that time was th Director of Ames. Von Braun loved boats. On several occasions he went out on people's yachts or other boats -- up in Wash. Of course, his other thing was, he loved flying. By the way, on this trip, on 2 or 3 occasions, he would ask first and then he'd fly the Gulfstream. Of course, when bad weather cropped up, he'd get out of the (pilot's) seat & not take any risks.

Boating

Piloting

Musician "??"  
(in club)  
\*

This is 1 of th great memories I have of him. As we came into Pasadena -- when were going to go the next day, or whenever, to Jpl & to Edwards (AFB), what later became Dryden <sup>Flight</sup> Research Ctr. One night we had dinner w/ Pickering on his mountain-top home. But as we ~~gax~~ got settled in, v.Braun called me and Frank Williams & somebody else that was w/ us, and said "Fellows, I'd like to go out a bit. Maybe we could go out &

find some entertainment, have dinner and so forth."

So I got on th phone to people I knew out there, went downstairs & talked to th hotel people, and asked them about places (nightspots) to go -- you ~~no~~ know, not too raunchy -- they've got this strip out in Pasadena -- place where we could go & have dinner. So they told us of some place.

So we went & had a good dinner. Then ~~Wx~~ Wernher said, "Well. Now, shall we hav some entertainment? Aren't there some places we can go?"

So, I had some names. Frank Williams & I had even talked abt. it. So, He (v.Braun) wanted to go to a strip club. He said, "I'd like to go to an entertainment place."

So we went down to this bar and went in, and there were these naked women dancing on the bar. There were a lot of men sitting around in the dark, drunks, watching the women dancing. So we -- abt 4 of us -- went over into the ~~x~~ corner, out of the way, and as we sat down in th dark -- von Braun had said, "Now, let's dont make too big a deal of this." --

abt th time we sat down, some loud voice said, "Hey, Wernher! Wermher von Braun!" from over across the way. It was John Naugle ~~(over)~~, the Space & Science Applications (chief?) & his crowd (from NASA HQs). They were out there at JPL for something. He was an older fellow, kind of a straitlaced fellow; it was kind of surprising to see him there. (A friendly & helpful man at HQs to v.Braun) We were still standing, and everybody in th place looked around. And Wernher said, "My God..." So he & we sat down in th booth,

and Naugle & his crowd ~~xxxxxxx~~ got up & came over to visit w/ us. Anyway, we partied around for awhile, we had a few drinks, and it had got pretty late. Meanwhile,

Naugle's crowd had left. Frank Williams & th others decided to -- they said "We've got to go home. Let's go." Von Braun said, "Well, I'd kinda like to stay awhile ~~xx~~ longer, I'm not ready yet to leave. Jim, stay w/ me." And so everybody else left. They place was then only abt half-full, <sup>but</sup> the gals were still dancing, and the piano bar was still playing, & th background music. So, he said, "Come on, Jim, let's go over by the bar." So we went over and found a couple of stools right at th bar, right under th women. (Light talk betw. th 2) we sat there, & th girls flirted w/ him. He didnt make much response, other than to comment to me a little bit. That went on for awhile. And I'm not sure yet how this happened, but v. Braun ended up playing the piano while those gals danced. He wasn't drunk. You know he was a pianist? I dont remember what he played. People even gathered around. He was playing some jazzy stuff for the girls to dance to.

Q.-- Do you think anybody there knew who he was?

Jim: We never heard. By that time of night, these were just th bar hanger-on'ers. But here's what did happen. They were

"Musician" (Calif. Club/dancers)

"Pilots" (Calif. Club/dancers)

One more...

I had a... crash the simulator... I didnt go

(cont'd)



*Edgum (cont'd.)*

*"PILOTING" (cont'd.)*

up with 'em. But he went up & he flew that counterbalanced Gulfstream. And I think he shot landings in it, not just flew it. That Gulfstream weigh<sup>ed</sup> abt twice its normal weight, with all the instrumentation and everything.

He was 1 of th early fliers of the shuttle simulator on th ground & the simulated shuttle in th air. And he actually did fly it. But he did, he crashed the simulator 3 times. I dont recall how many times he succeeded. And it was like really crashing, too, in that shuttle (simulator), because right before (crashing), the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ screen, the visuals, was real nifty. But he didnt crash th Gulfstream.

The only other story I'll tell you is th day I left for Syracuse. They had a little party there for me, in the Administrator's office, my last day there. But before that, v. Braun ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ called me in & ~~xxx~~ sat down and he brought me to tears, because he was so grateful for th help I'd given him, not that I'd been such a great thing for him. But for abt 20 or 30 minutes he talked to me abt that, abt things. And then he talked a little bit abt what he hoped to do in th future. He gave me a picture of himself, which he signed w/ an inscription that said, "To Jim Daniels, with regards, who helped me find my way thru th Washington jungle." I'll ~~xxx~~ always treasure that. He brought me to tears. And he was sincere; he wasn't just flattering me. (v.B also pleased Jim was going to be involved in the educational theory aspect of management in gov't, which Jim Webb had ~~px~~ pushed the ~~xxxxxx~~ spreading of which at or w/ universities, and which Daniels would be doing at Syracuse for 6 mos (or 1 year ?)

*Wash. (?)*

*↳ that's what Jim said he was told*

~~xxxxxx~~  
Q.: did v.Braun contract stomach or colon cancer -- what was it?

Jim: (dont know for sure; Jim was back in ~~Sx~~ Hsv by time of v.B death). He did not know he had cancer when I left to go to Syracuse. And I dont know he had it. In fact, I don't think he knew it when he went to Fairchild. But after he went to Fairchild, that's when it occurred.

*Cancer*

(Jim's summation of v.B's religious beliefs:) "All life is unified, all a part of Creation; all life, therefore, is a part of God, or the Creator." I never heard him say the word 'soul' or anything like that. But whatever survives, you continue-- something continues--as a part of Creation ... whether it be the molecules that dissipate & become part of the air, or part of th Earth where you're buried, or whether it be a sould, I never heard him identify that, but I think he ~~xxxx~~ meant, some of all of it, whatever it is. Now, I'm summing many allusions & discussions over a 6-mo period.

*Religion*

Religion (cont'd.)

Q.: Not that he believed in golden heavenly gates or ...

Jim: ... or an anthropomorphic God, of course. I think he thought Creation was One and All. And that's how he came to this 'evolving Creation' sense -- that whatever it is, it's a continuing thing. In other words, that's his Eternity and Forever. The belief that nothing ends. And he did believe in the possibility of life throughout th universe. He definitely believed that. He was a great believer in that, if only mathematically, we are not alone.