

5-12-1975

Dave Kouba (with Jack Knotts), May 12-14, 1975

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Dave Kouba (with Jack Knotts on May 14)

May 12-14, 1975

Transcribed by Paul Hillmer

Edited by Dave Kouba

All time markings indicate where a new section of recording begins.

Text marked in yellow is deemed unclear. All areas marked (***) indicate comments that were indecipherable.



Dave Kouba, right, with four of his fellow CASI pilots: (from left) Les Strouse, Jim Koenne, Dick Douglas, and Gene Isiac. The men are standing in front of a row of Pilatus Porters. A Beechcraft Baron is at far right.

Dave Kouba

For the record, May 12, 1975. [Papers shuffling] This is for the panic of Vientiane. Went to work at 7:30. Downing was there. He had just been evacuated from Pakse by the Air Force that launched out of Tango Zero Eight on 30 minutes' notice by Rex Wilson's radio in Pakse. Rex had smashed all the crypto equipment and asked Downing to assist him in burning some files on employees that were involved in pay-offs of sorts that would be immediately [Pauses] taken care of upon a discovery of files of this sort. All came out except Zimmerman. Barney Chessen had already been up here in Vientiane previously, because of the broadcasting over the local radio station naming Barney Chessen as being associated with all the big wheel rich Laos down there and making it hard for the lower echelon group of people. Downing tried to get Zimmerman to go, but he calmly sat behind his desk, as they say, smoking his pipe, and did not go on the evacuation flight to Udorn. Three Filipinos plus all of the Americans did go. They came right away, and they were directed not to wait over 30 minutes. Downing had two suitcases and one box. Everything else was left behind at Pakse. It remains to be seen if he gets that out or not, along with everybody else.

(2:20) Terry Peterson was at the airport also at a quarter of eight, waiting to go to Luang Prabang in a Beechcraft to take new crypto gear up there to install, because two days previously there had been a message sent out by—it had to be Ambassador Chapman—to destroy everything—equipment plus the files. And Foster's assistant, whoever he is, did so immediately. And three hours later they called back from Vientiane and said, 'Disregard that.' And then he said, 'Sorry old fellow, but we've already done it.' So this is about a \$10,000 piece of gear that we've taken back up there to re-install. I evacuated the Lao-American Association after I dropped off the people at Zing Nun, because we were expecting demonstrations there at the school, and it's full of people.

(3:32) Terry Peterson also said that as soon as all of this mess started, that three-quarters of a million dollars worth of their satellite gear that they had just put in Vientiane had already been removed back to Udorn. And this is similar to the type of gear that they left behind in Saigon, I guess. So they got it out.

39

40 (4:05) The APO was a fiasco today. Jerry Campbell got there at seven o'clock, and he was number
41 six on the list. He finished at about ten o'clock. There was—when I went there at 12:30, after I
42 finished my flight from Luang Prabang, there was—they were working on number 24, and there was
43 42 numbers in all. I went to take some pictures of all the people in the parking lot. By this time
44 everybody had retreated to the [Pauses, yawns] shade trees over in the ACA, and I did go into the
45 ACA and have a chat with Eric Nissen. And he said, 'Oh, never mind. All is well.' He's been
46 reassured by the Ambassador and everybody that 'ops normal and don't panic' like all the other
47 Americans are at this time, including myself, 'cause I don't have my personal things out yet.
48 Chapman's going to give a speech in the movie room at five o'clock. I didn't get to the speech
49 because I was called out on a flight later on to take [Pauses] What's his name?

50

51 (5:27) Pat McEwen to Long Cheng to talk to Jerry Daniels. We got back at 6:30. I also have
52 another 6:30 take-off to take Pat McEwen back to Long Cheng. He had already been back to Long
53 Cheng once today, and they tried to get Stan. I couldn't find him, so Isiac took him about twelve
54 o'clock—or ten o'clock. I was there for 45 minutes to talk to the three Meo cooks. They said that
55 VP will be relieved tomorrow by one of his assistants, a two-star general. The people that are
56 evacuating Long Cheng are going to Site 353, and likewise from 272. They all expect a communist
57 take-over. Many tears, and they all expect to die rather than work under communism. The [Pauses]
58 Joe Hammer did not get launched out of Vientiane for his tour in Luang Prabang today until about
59 ten o'clock because of meetings with Ramsey and USAID. Koenne was called out on a nine
60 o'clock flight to Tango Zero Eight. Four out of five of the friendly PL—or friendly ministers have
61 resigned, so in other words, there's 11 out of 12 now that are [Yawns] PL. It's 10:45 at night now.
62 Larry Joseph just left here giving me the news that I had my 6:30 flight. The C-46s that launched for
63 [Pauses] to try to do the spook deal to shuttle goods out of Long Cheng to Udorn turned out to be a
64 fiasco. They were called into a briefing at Udorn. Two crews—Stan Pelzynski took Larry Joseph
65 down there yesterday for a briefing. They were all called into the briefing room and Larry Joseph
66 said, 'No, this is only for the C-46 crews,' so Stan didn't go in. Moberg was standing there beside
67 him and had a big chuckle and laugh, you know, because he knew it was about, and he told Stan.
68 Anyway, it was all about this code stuff and clearances and all this to take out of Vientiane and go to
69 Long Cheng and pick up people and go to Udorn. Strouse gave me the word tonight that
70 consequently two crews and two airplanes are *persona non grata* in Laos now because of this. Al Rich
71 took off, and he came back some time later with another engine out. Strouse continued on, hauled
72 out 46 people to Udorn. Came back in, landed, somebody came up to him and said, 'You've already
73 been in Long Cheng hauling out people and it's already in the *Bangkok Post*.' A little bit of double-
74 checking, why it revealed this was not true, but the Lao already knew about it. So it had been told
75 when they take off tomorrow morning, 'If you crash with both engines out, you'd better make sure
76 you're on the Thai side of the border. So that's the end of four pilots for Continental. Rich and—
77 or Rainville and another co-pilot were the other two. So one trip of shuttling out of Alternate did it
78 up.

79

80 (9:29) **Weird Neal** came out this morning as we're all conversing on the ramp talking very seriously,
81 and he says, 'Well, here we are, guys, you know?,' and between him and Terry Peterson, why they
82 really put on a good liar's contest.

83

84 (9:50) Went to the stereo shop this morning at 7:30, tried to drop off my machine to get it changed
85 back to 60 cycle [Yawns] so I could send it back. He was closed, of course. I caught him at 11
86 o'clock, [Pauses] and he said he'd send his wife across the river and he'd stay, because he had too

87 much gear in the shop to sell. The kip dropped from 2600 to 2000. The reason it did, because they
88 definitely stopped all Vietnamese, all Indians, all [Pauses] Cambodians, and all [Pauses. Ripping
89 sound.] somebody else—four nationalities—from crossing the river—period. LaVonne has run into
90 trouble, and looks like she may have a lot of difficulty getting out. As for Phoxay, we'll wait and see.
91 She still thinks she can make it.

92
93 (11:03) When it comes to VP, why Terry Peterson says, 'Well, only God knows that, because one
94 message you read that he sends to Udorn says, 'I'll never leave my people.' The next message you
95 read is, 'Well, I'd better go to Tango Zero Eight.' So there you are. What is VP really going to do?
96

97 (11:27) In Vietnam, Gene Rainville tells me that he saw one fellow talk to one fellow, along with
98 four other strangers appointed, probably by the embassy, spooks, burn ten million dollars worth of
99 green in Vietnam before they left: six million dollars for the embassy, and four million dollars for
100 the DAO. All four participated, all strangers, burned ten million dollars. Are you shitting me?
101

102 (12:11) Les Strouse says that the Lao pilot and Mircea took the C-46 to Bangkok on a scheduled
103 cargo run. Said they broke down for maintenance in Bangkok, sent telegrams up to their wives, said
104 'Evacuate across the river.' So Neal is trying to get permission from Panhia to trust him to go to
105 Bangkok and try and bring the C-46 back. We'll wait and see how this turns out. Eldon Walker was
106 denied permission to go in the DZ club now and participate. Very good crowd tonight. All went
107 down to Café Rene and ate. I can get ready for my 6:30 take-off tomorrow for Long Cheng with
108 Pat McEwen. Tune in tomorrow for another change. The headlines tonight say, 'Everybody cool it
109 in Laos. All Americans, don't panic.' Until I get my household effects out, I'm gonna be very
110 uneasy. After I do, then I can sit back and laugh—and everybody else.
111

112 (13:37) One more thing: Les Strouse told me last night what a sad affair it was taking Pop Buell
113 with him on the last Porter ferry flight from Vientiane to Bangkok. Took off at seven o'clock.
114 Larry Joseph, Bill Leonard, a couple of others went out to shake his hand. He had three suitcases—
115 small ones (said that's all he owned). He was just about to break down in tears, I guess. Really—
116 really didn't want to go, but he knew he had to. He'd been told by somebody it'd be better if he left
117 town. All the way to Bangkok just sat there, stared straight ahead, and Les said he didn't dare say
118 anything to him, 'cause he knew he'd break down if he did. So Pop Buell left Laos for good on this
119 day, Monday the—or no, that was last Saturday when he took him to Bangkok. (14:51)
120
121

122

123 **Dave Kouba**

124 (14:53) Next day, Tuesday, May 13, 1975. Departed Vientiane at 6:40 with Pat McEwen to go to
125 Long Cheng to talk to Hog. I've never seen so many people on the ramp around Gate One as I did
126 today. I took 15 shots, climbed up on the back of the barrels there, the barricade, took several
127 sweeps—it should turn out real well. Beautiful morning. You could see the big rectangular karst
128 down there by Site 14 in the background. Everybody wants out, of course. On the way back Pat
129 McEwen asked me about the weather for C-46s and 130s, and I told him it was beautiful. We'll see
130 if they get any 130s up there. One Lao DC-3, Lao Air Force DC-3 took a load out while I was shut
131 down there on the ground. A bad sign is when old Hog puts two cases of Oly[m]pia beer] on the
132 airplane to bring back to Vientiane, plus four more boxes of his personal effects. [He] also brought
133 four or five other locals that worked for him. Two little Meo cooks were still up there, and they

134 were asking me if USAID's gonna come back today. I said I didn't know. I said, 'I'll see you this
135 afternoon,' which I probably will. We're almost all out of food up there now, but they're still open.
136 Hanging right in there. The vehicles of all these colonels that live up there were all parked on that
137 ramp this morning, all full of household effects. Everything they own. All looking for that ride out.
138 They didn't mob the DC-3. They did gather around it quite a bit, though, but it was pretty orderly.
139 VP's Baron took off at the same—just before I did. I don't know who was in it. VP is still there.
140 McEwen and Jerry went down to talk to him for about ten minutes. But the situation looks like
141 today or tomorrow might be the last time that we are going into Long Cheng. Very, very sad.

142
143 (17:40) Stan's flight in 1-5-6 to 2-7-2, regularly scheduled flight was cancelled. It never did launch.
144 No choppers went up there, either. So [Pauses] yesterday might have been the last day for any
145 aircraft to go to 272. I flew over it coming back and didn't see a soul around.

146
147 (18:15) It's now seven minutes past four on May 13, same day. I just got a call from Gene Isiac.
148 I'm on a six o'clock take-off tomorrow, overhead Long Cheng, land and pick up Jerry Daniels and
149 take him to Udorn—plus whoever else wants to go. They are [Pauses] fighting now at Ban Soun—
150 came up the road, going right through it, so they'll be headed to Long Cheng. I hope they aren't up
151 there by the time I get up there tomorrow morning.

152
153 (19:00) They had me scheduled on a 1-5-6, which is not a tanker, so I had 'em change it, 'cause I
154 might have to orbit overhead for a while, or else the weather might be bad. There's going to be a
155 mob on the ground, too, when they find out that they went through 272 already. And they can
156 make Long Cheng by tomorrow morning. Nothing's being done about any other evacuation at
157 Long Cheng, so it looks like she's all over.

158
159 (19:30) I mailed ten more packages at the APO. Got all my important stuff out now—the tapes to
160 John Lear, plus the album, elephants, and the last of the important things out. I'm up to package
161 number 33. So I'll—hopefully I'll get some more out tomorrow. I'll be going to Udorn and I can
162 mail that registered package—that is if I get Hog out, and everybody else in one piece—and myself.

163
164 (20:14) Later, nine o'clock the same night. After another briefing with Isiac and Larry Joseph and
165 also Jim Koenne, it seems as though five airplanes are shuttling out of Long Cheng tonight into
166 Udorn or Namphong dam, I'm not sure. The Continental's two C-46s, two Royal Air Lao C-47s,
167 and one Air Force-type C-47. They evidently have lights up there, landing and taking off, and
168 there's a solid overcast tonight, so it should be nice and dark up there. I'm sure Rich enjoys this—
169 Rainville, too. They're supposed to continue up until 11 o'clock tonight. I wish them luck.
170 Evidently there was a turn-about face on the security part of flying from Long Cheng to Udorn, and
171 they've got to clear it again to do it. They say that I'm going to have some company up there
172 tomorrow with me at 6:45 for my pick-up. Air Force-types, I assume—or maybe it's BR-46s. I'll
173 have to wait and see.

174
175 (21:45) The takeover of 272 took place this afternoon very fast. It was a hundred PL, I guess, and
176 they didn't necessarily come in tanks—vehicles of some kind. And there was a little bit of rifle fire,
177 but not very much. And they were talking to the telephone operator at 272 and he kept telling
178 Vientiane, 'They are here. They're here now, and they're looting the warehouse.' And that's about
179 all I gathered.

180

181 (22:21) Stan got in from Udorn at eight o'clock. He had taken McEwen down there after he
182 departed Long Cheng, and then back to Vientiane. I'm the only one on a scheduled flight
183 tomorrow. Everybody else is stand-by.

184
185

186
187

188 **May 14 – Dave Kouba and Jack Knotts on the runway at Long Cheng**

189

190 (22:42)

191 DK: Well Jack, what do you think about the imminent fall of Long Cheng? You're on NBC now.
192 Go ahead, speak up.

193

194 JK: Well, it's a crying shame.

195

196 DK: You hold the tape recorder.

197

198 JK: PK. We've got a C-130 here on final, landing lights just came on. Dave's going to—got his
199 telephoto on his Nikon and he's going to get a shot of it coming in. This could be the last bird
200 coming in. We've had two C-46s this morning, plus this 130 was in here bright and early. Now he's
201 back. We—

202

203 DK: We got here at what? Six thirty, Jack?

204

205 JK: About 6:30, Dave. [Sound of 130's engines becomes prominent] We've timed the 130. He
206 took one hour and 20 minutes to make the trip. We're not sure [Voice on a radio, perhaps Matt
207 Hoff, is audible. Seems to say "Jerry, do you want us to stop at the ramp again?"] if he's going to
208 Udorn or Namphong.

209

210 Voice on radio [Jerry Daniels?]: Negative. Pull up like you did on your first trip yesterday. (***)
211 short, (***) there's big crowd]

212

213 [Roar of C-130's engines]

214

215 More radio voices, though hard to distinguish.

216 JD: (***)?

217 MH: (***) right up at the end now.

218 JD: (***) little bit short now.

219 MH: (***) Roger has to take a look, and then we'll be back in an hour and 38 minutes, hour and 40
220 minutes, or we'll be taking (***) to 25, or we're going to be close when we get back (***)

221 JD: OK, copy that.

222

223 JK: There you heard Matt talking to Hog, saying it would take him an hour 25 to an hour 35 to
224 come back. It's really a mess—mob scene up on the main ramp. There's estimate—I don't know,
225 five, six, seven thousand up people there, all streaming toward the 130. Trucks, jeeps, and walking,
226 carrying all their personal possessions. The back doors have now come open, and the mob is

227 surging up around the aircraft. Mat Hoff is pilot, and he gave us a big thumbs up as he came by.
228 He's doing a real great job.
229
230 DK: He said he was going to come back in an hour and a half. Is that right?
231
232 JK: Said he was going t come back in an hour and a half, Dave. [Sound of vehicle passing by] And
233 I hope by that time we'll have our CR together.
234
235 DK: Yeah, I hope we're out of here.
236
237 JK: And get the—get out of here, too.
238
239 DK: We're standing by for the two VIPs to bring out, huh Jack?
240
241 JK: Yes, we—
242
243 DK: Are you my cover, or am I your cover? [Laughs]
244
245 JK: Well, I was your cover coming up, and—I don't know, it's switching back and forth there.
246
247 [Sounds of airplane engines]
248
249 JK: Looks like they're not going to fly the T-28s out, huh? Is there four of them sitting up there, or
250 three?
251
252 DK: They got 'em spaced out on the main ramp, but it really looks like they're going to leave them.
253
254 JK: Yep.
255
256 DK: Got to go easy on the film here, Jack.
257
258 (25:50) DK: They can't hardly mob that airplane, Jack. I think we ought to try and get out between
259 this flight and the next one, huh?
260
261 JK: Well—
262
263 DK: He'll—maybe he can land after VP already goes.
264
265 JK: Yeah. I think our—
266
267 DK: and get another load.
268
269 JK: —our plan is good to try and get our birds cranked up while there is a big bird in here so we
270 won't get mobbed. They all left the chopper now.
271
272 DK: Yeah. Porter's vacant.
273

274 JK: Dave's got his Porter parked here on what we call the commercial ramp and I've got the
275 chopper parked over right next to the tower across the runway.
276

277 DK: The tower is not working, of course, today. They moved through 272 yesterday about two
278 o'clock. Is that right?
279

280 JK: Yes, and I guess there was some fighting there. There was—everyone bugged out of 272.
281

282 DK: About a hundred people—a hundred PL, and they didn't necessarily come in tanks. [Sound of
283 radio static] And they—the radio operator stayed right there and told Vientiane that "They're here
284 looting the warehouse."
285

286 [Distorted voice of Matt Hoff, unintelligible]
287

288 JK: The weather this morning was not real great, sort of typical Xieng Khouang area weather for
289 this time of year. We've got maybe a 4,000-foot ceiling, ragged clouds, but it's fairly decent.
290

291 [Distant auto horn sounds over plane noise.]
292

293 (27:22) JK: OK, the aircraft is filled now, but the people won't leave the rear of it. Matt has revved
294 up the engines and pulled ahead a little bit, and the blast has sort of discouraged some of them.
295 They're starting to move away a little bit.
296

297 (27:45) DK: Hey Matt, you got Moon with you?
298

299 MH: [On radio] – Say again?
300

301 DK: You got Moon with you?
302

303 MH: Say again?
304

305 DK: Kicker Moon. Do you have Kicker Moon on board?
306

307 MH: Negative. He got off.
308

309 DK: OK.
310

311 DK: Going home already. Shit, I figured—there, he's closing the door. Crank up that—yeah.
312

313 JK: All right. The doors have finally closed, and the C-130 is slowly taxiing forward right near the
314 end of the runway and starting to turning around to line up.
315

316 (28:31) [Sound of C-130 engines very loud]
317 JK: All right, he's moving down the runway, and here we go.
318

319 (28:38) [Sound of C-130 taking off, burst of air audible]
320 JK: That's really beautiful, all that prop wash going off the front, huh?
321

322 DK: It didn't light up, though, with the start over there. It lit up good now, though.

323

324 JK: Yeah.

325

326 (28:57)

327 DK: There goes the 130. I hope we're out of here by the next time he comes back.

328

329 JK: Yeah, in fact let's set our watches and sort of work on it. [Pause] You had your case inside,
330 didn't you?

331

332

333

334

335 **May 14 – Dave Kouba and Jack Knotts having their last meal (breakfast) at Long Cheng**

336 (29:12)

337 DK: Well, Jack, here we are having dinner, breakfast—I mean breakfast, dinner—shit. I'm a little
338 bit excited myself, you know?

339

340 JK: This is the last meal at Long Cheng.

341

342 DK: One last meal at Long Cheng.

343

344 JK: Hey, not too bad!

345

346 DK: Fred just served us some Spam and eggs. The bug-out plan is in process. Should be executed
347 within the next 45 minutes.

348

349 [Sound of a door slamming]

350

351 DK: Have eight people going out.

352

353 JK: Freddy asked me about—you take his picture so he'd get it in the paper.

354

355 DK: Oh.

356

357 JK: In the *Bangkok Post*. [Chuckles] He says maybe he'd get his picture in the *Bangkok Post*.

358

359 DK: He wants me to take it now, does he?

360

361 JK: Yeah, out in front.

362

363 DK: OK. [Sound of drinking, glass being placed on table or counter] VP is edgy. He's ready. Old
364 Hog, I've never seen that guy get excited yet. Have you?

365

366 JK: No, not really.

367

368 [Sounds of eating, utensils scraping on plates]

369
370 DK: He assured me that there wouldn't be any shooting or anything from the friendlies. But you
371 never can tell if they see him driving up that road.
372
373 JK: And they've already planned their passenger load.
374
375 DK: Yeah.
376
377 JK: They're going to have four on you and four on me, and then when you switch you'll have eight.
378
379 DK: No, he's going to take one bodyguard with him.
380
381 JK: He's going to take...?
382
383 DK: Mm-Hmm.
384
385 JK: I already asked him. We can't land at 113, and you'll head straight at Udorn with me.
386
387 [Pause as they continue to eat]
388
389 JK: Well, I worked it out on the fuel. Probably make it, but if we can't, why we'll transfer from
390 your—
391
392 (31:00)
393 DK: Easy. At Udorn.
394
395 JK: Porter. Yeah, at Udorn.
396
397 DK: Now you included your stop at 113 in there and everything?
398
399 JK: If I stop there I don't; have to go.
400
401 DK: Oh, OK. Damn. I ain't too smart today, am I?
402
403 JK: Well, they got us up before breakfast.
404
405 DK: [Chuckles] They're leading us up here with the idea that old Hog and VP are gonna be the
406 only two here.
407
408 JK: Yeah!
409
410 DK: And we land, and my god, there's seven thousand.
411
412 JK: And I got out to Wattay this morning and looked at that storm out there.
413
414 DK: Mm-Hmm.
415
416 JK: You see that thunderstorm?

417
418 DK: Yeah.
419
420 JK: Holy smokes!
421
422 DK: I thought, 'What's this shit?'
423
424 JK: Well, Freddy...
425
426 Freddy: Yes, Sir?
427
428 JK: That was perfect.
429
430 DK: Very good, Fred.
431
432 Freddy: Thank you.
433
434 JK: Yeah. I think we'll fire the other cook and just let you cook.
435
436 Freddy: Yeah!
437
438 JK: [Laughs]
439
440 (32:16) JK: Very good breakfast. Come on outside and I'll take your picture.
441
442 Freddy: OK! [Sound of door opening and then closing.]
443
444 DK: I wonder if Jerry knows when the next airplane's coming—or if there is one.
445
446 JK: I don't think there's any rush for 20 minutes or so.
447
448 DK: Well...
449
450 JK: The C-130 will be back at 10, or maybe a little after if he has to re-fuel.
451
452 DK: He'll have to re-fuel this time. We don't want to wait that late.
453
454 JK: Hell, I don't—especially.
455
456 DK: But if there's not another airplane in between now and then, what [Pauses] We'll have to go
457 out by ourselves. We don't want to do that, though.
458
459 JK: Well, the one C-46 sounded bad—the right engine.
460
461 DK: You're not going to see them back here until—that 130 has a better chance of getting back
462 here before they do.
463
464 JK: Really?

465
466 DK: Yes. So the only thing we can hope for now is one of them C-47s.
467
468 JK: And I think that's doubtful.
469
470 DK: Well, let's go and ask Jerry and—
471
472 JK: Yeah.
473
474 DK: —see if that C-47's going to come tonight. We'd better—
475
476 JK: Yeah, let's hang right with him now, so when—
477
478 DK: Yeah, (***)
479
480 JK: We don't have to go looking for one another.
481
482 DK: Yeah. [Sound of movement]
483
484 JK: I'm not used to carting this thing around with me, believe me. [Sounds of footsteps, door
485 squeaks, engine of passing vehicle is audible.]
486
487 DK: Well, the ridge cleared up again. [Engine noises] That was the best breakfast I had in ages.
488 [Vehicle noises] [To Knotts:] You stand up here.
489
490 JK: Yeah.
491
492 DK: Up on top. [Sounds of vehicle engine, someone climbing steps or a ladder] Right up here. [To
493 Freddie:] You go up there, too. I want your picture. You, too. Up there. [More sounds of
494 climbing, engines]
495
496 JK: Send it to (***)
497
498 (34:36)
499 DK: That's a handy little thing, isn't it?
500
501 JK: Yeah.
502
503 DK: Well here we are in the Hog's office. VP has just left, and I won't—the plan has been changed
504 a little bit, hasn't it, Jack?
505
506 JK: Yeah. I'm going to take him right now—pick him up at the dam behind the King's house at the
507 little water hole—
508
509 DK: He's going to drive up there.
510
511 JK: He's going to drive up there. I'm going to land there, and pick him up, and move him to
512 another spot across the river.

513
514 DK: Close to 337, isn't it?
515
516 JK: Around there somewhere.
517
518 DK: Mm-Hmm.
519
520 JK: And then he will—
521
522 DK: Wait there.
523
524 JK: Wait there. I come back here and land, and wait to take Jerry out, 'cause he cannot leave.
525
526 DK: He can't. And we're gonna have to wait for the 130 to come back here a second time.
527
528 JK: Come up here. And maybe, what, 45 minutes or an hour yet.
529
530 DK: Yeah.
531
532 [Long silence]
533
534 JK: So... I don't know—
535
536 DK: The big thing is getting VP up to that dam there before—with all these people here... And
537 Jerry, let's see...
538
539 JK: Well, and one other thing. You know, people are going to wonder why the chopper leaves, and
540 then ten minutes later comes back. But...
541
542 DK: I'll bet you the word will get around that he took him somewhere. I'll bet it will.
543
544 JK: Well, I'm—I'll go behind the hill. They won't see me land over there.
545
546 DK: Yeah, I know it.
547
548 JK: I can keep hidden behind the hill, but [Pauses] they can hear the noise, maybe.
549
550 DK: Yeah. They're having trouble out—open the door, see if they're still arguing out there.
551 [Sound of door opening, voices]
552
553 JD? – Walking straight out.
554
555 [??]
556
557 VP? – You can go here?
558
559 JD? – Yeah.
560

561 VP? – Then go over here?
562
563 JD? – No way out back here, no.
564
565 VP? – No good. (***) this side.
566
567 JD? Yeah. And if you go out like that, so nobody sees—
568
569 VP? Yeah.
570
571 JD? – Better you just get in the car and...
572
573 JK? – Yeah, I'm waiting for you to go, VP.
574
575 DK: You got too many people out there?
576
577 JD? – No, (***)
578
579 VP? – [In Hmong?]
580
581 JD? – Well, let's walk down, Dave.
582
583 [Screching noise, sounds of moving or dropping parts]
584
585 (36:39)
586 DK: Famous last words, Jack. Hog says, 'Oh, there's not going to be any mob, no problem.'
587
588 JK: Yeah. [Chuckling]
589
590 DK: Guard standing right there in the garden.
591
592 [Inaudible. Other background voices throughout this section]
593
594 JK: I just asked him, I said, 'What's the thing? Are some of his own people liable to cut down on
595 him?' Hog says, 'You betcha.' He said, 'There are a couple of huckleberries around here.'
596
597 DK: Yeah.
598
599 [Sounds of walking through a group of people]
600
601 (37:05) JK: Now Dave, what did VP say again?
602
603 DK: He says when I was trying to get a place to switch, like at 53 and 44 and an ammo dump, he
604 said, 'No.' He says, 'There's no place. After today, why it's all the other side. All communist.' So
605 this finishes our flying—unless we're going to work for the other side.
606
607 JK: And that's very doubtful. I don't think that's [Pauses] so... I guess we're making the last flight
608 out of here.

609
610 DK: Yeah. Those fucking USAIDers down there in Vientiane, sitting out there happy-go-lucky in
611 KM 6. They think everything's all right.
612
613 JK: If they'd see this place right now they'd [Chuckling] have second thoughts!
614
615 DK: Yeah.
616
617 JK: God, I'd like to hear a—the sound of the C-46 coming in! [Chuckling]
618
619 DK: Oh, boy!
620
621 JK: Old Al Rich and—
622
623 DK: Well, shit, VP is not ready to go up there, anyhow.
624
625 JK: Yeah. Yeah, we just had a note delivered down to hold off for a while. Gonna pick him up...
626 [Both looking at watches]
627
628 DK: It's 9:04
629
630 JK: Back from the hill here, behind the King's house, at a little dam site area.
631
632 DK: And then you're going to transfer him from there over to a place by 337.
633
634 JK: Yeah.
635
636 DK: And come back here.
637
638 JK: To wait 'til Hog can get out of here. And when Hog's ready to go, he'll load you up, and then
639 come over and get on the chopper himself, and we'll go.
640
641 DK: That'll be the sticker right there, maybe him getting on the chopper by himself with you.
642
643 JK: Yeah.
644
645 [Auto horn honks]
646
647 JK: Well, I won't blast out of the area, Dave. I'll stay until you're off the ground safe.
648
649 DK: Yeah. Well, I'll probably be taking off first, won't I?
650
651 JK: Yeah. Well, we're both going to be going about the same time.
652
653 DK: Yeah.
654
655 JK: Yeah, you'll probably be going first.
656

657 DK: 'Cause Hog's gonna load me up, and then he's gonna probably drive up there, maybe to that
658 pad where you can go pick him up!
659
660 [Sound of what sounds like a motorcycle]
661
662 JK: Well, he said he'd get on the chopper with me.
663
664 DK: Here?
665
666 JK: Here.
667
668 DK: Well, you better watch it.
669
670 [Motorcycle speeds away]
671
672 JK: Well, there's just too many loaded weapons around here to—everywhere you look.
673
674 39:46 – 40:11 [Loud “buzzing” sound (plane engine?) drowns everything else out]
675
676 DK: —7 so far today.
677
678 JK: Well, a C-47 is supposed to be (***) over us.
679
680 DK: 9:06. (***)
681
682 JK: You know, I wonder if the crowd sits around like this. [Wind noise] The more restless they get
683 (***) You look around the ramp, there are abandoned suitcases over there.
684
685 DK: Yeah.
686
687 JK: —laying over there and clothes all over, shoes, trash of all kinds.
688
689 (40:55)
690 [Noise much further in the background]
691
692 JK: Offices there yesterday, they radioed in—
693
694 DK: The radio operator was telling Vientiane—telephone operator
695
696 [Long pause]
697
698 (41:11) – **Jack Knotts returns from his trip evacuating Vang Pao from Long Cheng.**
699 [Sounds like chopper rotors are running]
700 JK: I started south, and I was going to try and come back, [Pauses] go down an ways and then
701 come back. I didn't want to land until I saw the signal. He saw me way out there and he flashed it
702 like this twice.
703
704 DK: Yeah.

705
706 JK: Had a white panel. Man, I saw that, dove down in, I came back in low. There were just three
707 of 'em there.
708
709 DK: Yeah.
710
711 JK: He and two bodyguards.
712
713 [Rotors are slowing down]
714
715 DK: Two, huh?
716
717 JK: And he had—he made sure when he got out that he could bring four people—four in the
718 chopper.
719
720 DK: Yeah.
721
722 JK: And, you know, the 337 ridge.
723
724 DK: Three-three-seven ridge.
725
726 JK: Three-three-seven ridge. He's on the [Pauses] east end of it. You know that little—
727
728 DK: East end.
729
730 JK: Was that little pad there like—about straight out from here.
731
732 DK: OK. How far from strip?
733
734 JK: On the other edge of the ridge from the strip—all the way on the other end.
735
736 DK: Oh! Is anybody else around?
737
738 JK: Well there's a village near there, and they came running up and they recognized him and wai'ed
739 to him and he said he'd be waiting there when we came in, in about a half an hour or so.
740
741 DK: Mm-Hmm....
742
743 [Rotors continue to decelerate]
744
745 DK: Well, there was a...
746
747 JK: Well, he knew if he just laid that panel flat on the ground that I couldn't see it 'til I was near
748 overhead, so he sort of stood up and flashed it at me.
749
750 DK: Yeah.
751
752 JK: That was really great.

753
754 DK: Well, it's getting a little bit hotter here. They hit—Jerry was talking to me over there at the
755 airplane when [Pauses] One other guy come up there and said, 'This guy's pretty upset, 'cause he
756 wants to get his family out, and he's mad about the 46s not parking up here or down here, one or
757 the other. And he says if he don't get 'em out, well he's gonna kill somebody. And ol' Hog, cool
758 Hog, he says, 'Oh, no biggie, no biggie.' Then he come back a second time, he said the same thing.
759
760 [Rotors still slowing down]
761
762 (43:22) DK: I told Hog we need to make the big move when that 130 comes in. Forget about
763 them 46s, if they get here first or after, they'll—
764
765 JK: That's right, the next one—
766
767 DK: The next one to land—
768
769 JK: The next one, 'cause it's—
770
771 DK: The one—46s are not dependable anyhow, and they're liable not to show up again. So...
772
773 [Rotors down to a low rumble]
774
775 JK: I wanted to save this note from Hog, but I didn't think it—it's good to have it on me.
776
777 DK: Why not? By god, Ill save it.
778
779 JK: Well, I, I—I want it, but I [Pauses]
780
781 DK: Damn right, keep it.
782
783 JK: Worse gets to worst, and you know.
784
785 DK: Keep it.
786
787 JK: I'll just tear it up if worse gets to worst.
788
789 (44:14) **In the apartment of Ken and Brigita Wilson, Vientiane – May 14, 1975**
790 DK: —is it [Pauses to look at watch] 9:45 when we took off, right?
791
792 [A child's voice in the background]
793
794 JK: Well, you sort of sauntered across the runway there, and Jerry came down with the people,
795 right? In the jeep—
796
797 DK: I started up to the office to get him.
798
799 JK: Is that it? Because the 130 was on the ground at this time, right?
800

801 JK: It had just landed, and I wasn't going to get out of my chopper. I was going to be ready to go,
802 you know?

803
804 DK: And I—when I ran across the runway, I reminded Jerry again, I said, 'Let's make it now, when
805 the 130's on the ground.' And then he—he came right down. And you saw me get in the airplane.

806
807 JK: Yeah.

808
809 DK: I started up and I took off, while Matt Hoff was—

810
811 JK: No, I saw you start to crank, and Jerry then drove over in front of my chopper and he got out,
812 and I started to crank, but he got out and came to the window and he says, 'No, I can't go with you
813 from here. It'd be too obvious,' He says, 'Meet me behind the King's house in the little saddle back
814 there.' Well, I know that place, 'cause we used it a few years ago when things were tight. So I said,
815 'OK, Jerry,' and he said, 'Well, in about ten minutes.' 'OK.' So then he got back in the jeep and
816 drove away.

817
818 DK: And he come back over to my airplane, and got everybody on, I believe, didn't he? So then I
819 took off ahead of the 130, and then you took off ahead of it also.

820
821 JK: I was right behind you, Dave.

822
823 DK: Right behind me.

824
825 JK: When you pulled out, you had just broken ground, and I was already lifted. I was right on your
826 tail.

827
828 DK: Well, and old Hog got up to that hill behind the house pretty fast, didn't he?

829
830 JK: Well, [Yelling noise] but then we both drove out, and like we were going down south. You
831 circled back over the field,

832
833 DK: To take a picture.

834
835 JK: Is that what you were up to?

836
837 DK: Of the 130, yeah.

838
839 JK: Yeah, beautiful.

840
841 DK: That's what I was doing, yeah.

842
843 JK: Well, I sort of hung out a little ways, waiting for the 130, 'cause I didn't think he'd leave the
844 main ramp until the thing took off! But it—remember? It hung and hung—it just stayed there on
845 the ground for so long.

846
847 DK: I know! He lined up, and I don't know why he stayed—

848

849 JK: He just stayed—I thought he blasted, too, and he just stayed there!

850

851 DK: And it helped Jerry that much more get up the hill.

852

853 JK: Well, maybe so. ‘Cause I didn’t wait. I finally ziggied in very low and came around just a corner
854 of the hill, and landed right there in that saddle behind the King’s house, and there wasn’t anybody
855 around. I just sat there for a couple minutes waiting for him to come out. Finally, a white jeep came
856 around the corner. I thought [Chuckles] if a local jeep came around there with a bunch of soldiers
857 on it, I’d been about to shit in my pants, but I didn’t! He came around the corner.

858

859 KW: (***) in your pants. [Making fun of JK’s last comment]

860

861 [Child’s voice in background]

862

863 JK: And then—and then he wouldn’t get in the chopper. He made—he didn’t want to leave yet!

864

865 DK: (***)?

866

867 JK: Yeah, he got his suitcase out,

868

869 DK: Mr. Cool, huh?

870

871 JK: Yeah—of the back, and then he started talking on the radio, and he messed around, messed
872 ar—finally—and this was, this was a very bad thing to Jerry, he’d been there so long. He saluted.

873

874 DK: Did he?

875

876 JK: Yes, he came to attention, and just like he was saluting the jeep. But he was really saluting 10 or
877 15 years of hard work that turned into nothing and the whole thing, you know? He saluted the jeep,
878 and turned around and walked over and got in the chopper. He didn’t even put in the back, he
879 just—his little suitcase. He just held it right on his lap. It was a small one. And we took off—I
880 edged off—

881

882 DK: I was right behind you then.

883

884 JK: Yes. You were up circling, edged off of there, and there were a whole gaggle of soldiers
885 walking out that road that went back from the King’s house up around the hill, and just as we lifted
886 off and we were just sort of hanging there in the air, hadn’t really started flying yet. Two of these
887 soldiers dropped their M-16s off their shoulders, and took ahold of the lever and threw a round into
888 the chamber. And my heart jumped in my mouth. I thought they were going to let us have it. And
889 we just edged off and sort of went around a corner of the hill, and they never fired. And then I saw
890 you, picked you up, and we followed you on out. Or—well no, I went over to get VP.

891

892 DK: (***) VP, yeah.

893

894 JK: Went over to get him.

895

896 DK: He got right on, didn’t he?

897
898 JK: Oh, he—the whole village was out there.
899
900 DK: Yeah.
901
902 JK: They **all went**—everything was so happy, and they were wai-ing, and VP and his two bodyguards
903 came up with their **burn** guns and jumped in the back seat, and we were off—we weren't on the
904 ground more than a minute.
905
906 DK: So then we headed out and overheaded Checkpoint Peter. Just past Peter, I wanted to fly over
907 that karst north of 218, 'cause I didn't know who was on the road down there, you know? They
908 were going to start shooting at me!
909
910 JK: I noticed you changed direction. That was very good.
911
912 DK: And got a little altitude, because—
913
914 JK: Yeah.
915
916 DK: What did we know? I didn't know where the w—
917
918 JK: I was thinking the same thing.
919
920 DK: Did you raise up, too?
921
922 JK: Yeah, I thought—I said, 'Dave's OK. He's thinking about that road and that karst, and he's
923 gonna keep it just **perfect there**. [Both laugh]
924
925 DK: (***)
926
927 JK: And then you noticed the C-46!
928
929 DK: Yeah, and the C-46 overheaded us and he called in, 'Hey Dave, hey Dave, You read?' We
930 never did get ahold of this 46 to tell him to abort. (***)
931
932 KW: Let me ask you a question, Dave. Was the original plan that when—that you and Jack would
933 be the last out and nobody else go in after you left? Based on communication (***)
934
935 JK: Yeah.
936
937 DK: They weren't supposed to go in. They weren't supposed to land unless they had contact with
938 Hog. So later on, things got screwed up—strictly because of radio communications, we couldn't call
939 either one of those guys! And we heard them calling us and calling Hog, but they didn't hear us.
940 And we said to abort a couple times.
941
942 JK: Oh, there was a most hellacious squeal on that radio, you couldn't stand it.
943
944 DK: Yeah, in your—

945
946 JK: Someone was breaking up the communications.
947
948 KW: So—
949
950 JK: Did you hear the fellows on the ground, Dave?
951
952 DK: That 113?
953
954 JK: No, that 353 that came up and they said, 'Hey, Porter in the air. The customer on the ground?'
955
956 DK: No, I didn't hear that.
957
958 JK: Oh.
959
960 DK: I missed that.
961
962 JK: And you never answered him, and you flew on. Then he said, 'Jet Ranger, Jet Ranger. This is
963 customer on the ground.' It was a local, but somebody along the road down there.
964
965 DK: Well somebody called us at 113—
966
967 JK: That's right.
968
969 DK: —when we got over there, too, and I says, 'Go ahead, go ahead,' but he never did answer.
970
971 JK: I never answered.
972
973 KW: Did anybody watch one of the 46s go in?
974
975 DK: No, but the pilots have got a good story to tell about that.
976
977 KW: Pretty well mobbed, huh?
978
979 DK: Yeah, they were. Very bad.
980
981 KW: Well—
982
983 DK: Yeah, so we landed at 113 and made the switch, and I headed straight for Udorn and Jack
984 came to Vientiane and everything worked out OK then.
985
986 KW: You didn't go to Namphong, then?
987
988 DK: What?
989
990 KW: You didn't go to Namphong?
991
992 DK: I went to Udorn with Niedo—Niedinger, and—

993
994 KW: With he and, uh Jerry—
995
996 JK: Yeah, I thought they went to Namphong.
997
998 BW: Are there still many people there?
999
1000 JK: They didn't.
1001
1002 DK: At Long Cheng? Thousands. Very few got out. Very few. But the 46s went back in—both
1003 of 'em, and they both got mobbed pretty bad. And the guy that threatened to kill this one other guy
1004 if he didn't get his family and 14 people on, he was one of them that got on the 46. Hog told me.
1005
1006 KW: Who was he threatening to kill? Another (***)—
1007
1008 DK: Another guy if—
1009
1010 KW: (***)?
1011
1012 DK: No—
1013
1014 BW: Neil.
1015
1016 DK: — another of the guys who—good English-speakers on the ground there. I got into the
1017 middle of this argument, and then Hog was trying to calm him down. And then he walked away
1018 saying, 'Oh, no biggie, no biggie.' You know, calm old Jerry, and I thought it was terrible myself.
1019 And—anyway, they made it out.
1020
1021 KW: So—
1022
1023 DK: So then,
1024
1025 (52:07)
1026 DK: Before VP went to leave up there, we were trying to get him where we—Jack eventually picked
1027 him up, why he had a little bit of trouble getting out up there.
1028
1029 JK: It didn't—
1030
1031 DK: Guys coming in and seeing him and seeing—he was starting to yell at 'em a little bit, and
1032 [Pauses] I didn't know—I didn't think he was going to get out as quick as he did. He sent one note
1033 down to Jack saying he'd been delayed a little bit, 'cause we didn't want him to take off and go up
1034 there before VP got there. That would have been bad.
1035
1036 JK: We were trying to time it a little.
1037
1038 KW: Especially with those soldiers that eventually you [Jack] saw there.
1039
1040 JK: Yeah. Well, they were walking up along that same road!

1041
1042 DK: yeah.
1043
1044 BW: What soldiers were they?
1045
1046 JK: Well, just some soldiers of his that were leaving the area, walking south.
1047
1048 (52:49)
1049 DK: Oh, I took everybody—when I got to Udorn everybody was—the tower asked me my point of
1050 departure. I said, ‘That’s classified.’ And I said, ‘I’ll tell you on the ground.’ He says, ‘OK.’ He was
1051 American [someone coughs] (***)
1052
1053 JK: Oh! Beautiful.
1054
1055 BW: [Laughs]
1056
1057 DK: So he gets down there, gets out of the airplane—oh, on the way to Udorn, I told—old VP was
1058 in the back seat. And Hog was behind me, and I told him to, ‘Get clear in the back there with VP.’
1059 And so he got there and I unstrapped my belt and I took a real good shot of them in the airplane.
1060
1061 JK: Oh, beautiful.
1062
1063 DK: So then when we go shut down at Udorn, why all of us gathered up next to the airplane, and I
1064 got another good shot there that should be good.
1065
1066 JK: Who met you on the ground down there?
1067
1068 DK: Nobody! Not a—well, they had their transport vehicles, but none of his officers at all! I don’t
1069 think they—they didn’t know we were coming!
1070
1071 KW: Did you taxi on the back 40?
1072
1073 DK: No. Not at the back 40, hell no. Right at the regular AB-1 ramp. Parked right beside the
1074 Matt Hoff 130, and I went over there and talked to Matt for quite a while, and we went out and took
1075 our pictures, and he gave me some money—
1076
1077 JK: Hey, tell—
1078
1079 DK: —for his pictures that—
1080
1081 JK: Tell Ken who was co-pilot on the 130!
1082
1083 DK: Yeah—oh boy, good old—none but old Joe Burch.
1084
1085 KW: Bird Shit.
1086
1087 DK: Jesus Christ.
1088

1089 BW: [Laughs] On the 130?
1090
1091 KW: Co-pilot.
1092
1093 BW: (***)
1094
1095 DK: So then—so then I'm only there about 30 minutes, and I think, 'OK, go to Vientiane, huh?'
1096 So they filed my flight plan, and we don't have to go through this tower stuff, 'cause we got a guy
1097 down there or something.
1098
1099 [Woman is trying to quiet child]
1100
1101 DK: I get downwind at Vientiane, and they say, 'Go back to Udorn.' And I come up empty, and
1102 say... And what it was, is I said, 'God damn it, Phil, why don't you get your crap together?' you
1103 know, and I was really mad, you know? So I wrote that (***)
1104
1105 KW: Who you talking about?
1106
1107 DK: Phil—or no, somebody—no, it wasn't Phil, it was somebody else. So I go back down there,
1108 and what it was, is, when I took off, I went to talk to Stan—no, was it Stan, or who was it?
1109
1110 JK: Oh, you mean Big Three or s—
1111
1112 DK: I was talking to Stan or—Joe Hammer. I was off the frequency and they'd been trying to call
1113 me to come back to Udorn to bring Hog to Vientiane. And I didn't come back on frequency 'til we
1114 got up here at Vientiane and I was getting ready to land! And then they told me!
1115
1116 KW: You didn't have both radios on?
1117
1118 DK: I had 'em both on, but I've been having radio trouble so I had 'em both on the frequency.
1119 Normally I monitor .1 all the time, you know, where I can hear them calling, one on the cabin
1120 speaker and vice versa, but I didn't this time, so that was my fault. But boy, I was mad when I got
1121 back down there.
1122
1123 JK: Dave, tell—I think this is good. Tell about how they got Matt Hoff back to be the pilot on this
1124 thing.
1125
1126 DK: Oh, yeah. They caught Matt Hoff in Hong Kong yesterday. His bags were already checked in,
1127 and they caught him before he was getting ready to board the flight.
1128
1129 BW: Who was that?
1130
1131 JK: Back to the States!
1132
1133 KW: The captain on the C-130.
1134

1135 DK: On the 130. He got back to U Taphao, flew non-stop from U Taphao to Long Cheng on his
1136 first trip, then he got a second trip in. And there was no night flights made like Larry Joseph told us
1137 there was last night—
1138
1139 KW: Yeah, he said they were going all night long or something like that.
1140
1141 DK: And when we got there, Jack and I got there at five minutes to s—no, about 6:35 we got
1142 there—
1143
1144 JK: Yeah.
1145
1146 DW: —he was—the 130 was taking off with his first load.
1147
1148 KW: Taking off?
1149
1150 DK: Taking off. He was already there.
1151
1152 Jack: Yeah.
1153
1154 DK: Sure was.
1155
1156 (56:28)
1157 DK: All right. When I got back to Vientiane here there was already two airplanes launched ahead
1158 of me to go to 354 to pull the Americans out. The students had the bridge blocked so they—they
1159 could not get to the airport. And they had the USAID compound surrounded, and they'd already—
1160 they've already taken it over, and they're already distributing the r—USAID rice to other people.
1161
1162 KW: This—this was—?
1163
1164 DK: This is LP.
1165
1166 JK: At the warehouse at the airport?
1167
1168 DK: No, I think it's the one in town.
1169
1170 JK: Oh.
1171
1172 DK: And somehow **Huxtable** and **Rubello** and all those Americans drove out to 354. And we
1173 brought three airplane loads of 'em out today, and old Hollis Glass thinks everything's all—
1174
1175 KW: (***)
1176
1177 DK: —peaches and cream up there, and he's up there now, along with Frank, the one from—
1178
1179 KW: 354.
1180
1181 DK: Mm-Hmm. They're there tonight, and all the other customers are back in Vientiane. So as far
1182 as I'm concerned, why Luang Prabang's gone, too, and Savannakhet. There's—

1183
1184 KW: Pakse.
1185
1186 DK: —two [Pauses] What's the spook's name in Savannakhet?
1187
1188 KW: Stone?
1189
1190 DK: No, not the spook.
1191
1192 KW: JC. I don't know.
1193
1194 DK: Anyway, they're under house arrest in the USAID compound in Savannakhet.
1195 [Another voice as he speaks, inaudible]
1196
1197 KW: The red-headed guy's a spook?
1198
1199 DK: No, it's a new guy. No, he came out. He came out.
1200
1201 JK: Yeah, I know who you mean. Wears glasses and he's got curly hair.
1202
1203 DK: He's the same thing as Rex Wilson in Pakse. Anyway, that place is finished, too.
1204
1205 KW: Wilson? Damn—I know (***)—
1206
1207 DK: Rex Wilson.
1208
1209 KW: —around the other day, and he's a—
1210
1211 DK: He's a spook, yeah. He's in Udorn now. Their evacuation was by—out of Udorn. Rex, all he
1212 had to do was call on the radio to Udorn, and in 30 minutes that DC-3 launched out of Udorn to go
1213 direct to Pakse and they picked him up.
1214
1215 JK: Well, it was only a few days ago I was down there and Wilson and I went down to Kong Island
1216 to get the Dooley girls out of the hospital there and bring them back, because after it had been
1217 finished and (***), the whole thing's been pretty close, actually.
1218
1219 KW: Well, Jack, I was down there I guess a week or two weeks before, and they'd already had
1220 rounds being fired in at Kong Island from the west.
1221
1222 JK: Is that right?
1223
1224 KW: There's been a couple of soldiers wounded.
1225
1226 JK: No one told me that!
1227
1228 KW: Wounded. Oh, yeah.
1229
1230 (59:12)

1231 DK: All right. That—that was—that’s already went down yesterday, though. They moved in there
1232 yesterday. And when I was coming back—
1233
1234 KW: When you say ‘they’, did they send a column up?
1235
1236 DK: A hundred and—a hundred people, supposedly, not necessarily in tanks, but some kind of
1237 vehicles, moved in there yesterday.
1238
1239 JK: Yeah, but they were PL in uniform, Brigitte.
1240
1241 BW: Oh.
1242
1243 JK: And they were in stripping the USAID offices and the radio man’s still in his radio office—
1244
1245 DK: Telephone operator—
1246
1247 JK: Or telephone—
1248
1249 DK: —was telling Vientiane this: ‘Yeah, they’re here. They’re doing it now.’
1250
1251 JK: They’re right there! He’s talking to ‘em!
1252
1253 BW: [Laughs]
1254
1255 DK: And there was a little bit of shooting going on.
1256
1257 BW: What about him?
1258
1259 KW: They **rush at** him?
1260
1261 DK: Yeah, a little bit.
1262
1263 JK: Well—
1264
1265 BW: He was a local, hmm?
1266
1267 JK: Yes!
1268
1269 DK: Yes.
1270
1271 BW: He get out or what?
1272
1273 JK: Who knows what happens to him?
1274
1275 DK: Tonight when I was coming back on the flight from 354, why I heard probably 10 times, ‘Ban
1276 Soun, Ban Soun, Lao chopper. Ban Soun, Ban Soun, Lao chopper.’
1277
1278 JK: Well, I—

1279
1280 DK: He never got an acknowledgement, 'cause that's all he ever said.
1281
1282 JK: I talked to Al Roman this morning at the—after I left you. I went down to cash a check at the
1283 ACA compound, and Al said that the PL came around this morning some time and wanted to
1284 'borrow'—in [quotes] borrow—two jeeps. So what could they say? They gave him two of the
1285 scouts.
1286
1287 DK: Yeah.
1288
1289 JK: So they'll probably arrive at Long Cheng in USAID Scouts.
1290
1291 DK: Yeah. This is the message that was sent down, huh?
1292
1293 JK: Yeah.
1294
1295 KW: Yeah, they had (***)
1296
1297 DK: Poor old **Her Tou**. He's still there, I bet, isn't he?
1298
1299 (1:00:56)
1300 DK: —back from there now, that you're... Seven Charlie Alpha came in from where? Singapore?
1301
1302 JK: Yeah, and—
1303
1304 DK: Carried all your stuff out, huh?
1305
1306 JK: Bird Air, November 2 -7 -Charlie-Alpha came in—
1307
1308 DK: Well, Charlie Pennington was on it.
1309
1310 JK: Charlie Pennington was on board, co-pilot came in from Singapore to pick up some of our
1311 things—took three choppers out. My god, the 1-4 Gulf and the 9-0-3, and the Bubble, 5-2
1312 November.
1313
1314 DK: Put it on there about the chop out the Chinese.
1315
1316 JK: Oh, yes.
1317
1318 KW: The what?
1319
1320 JK: We had the Chinese sheet metal man that wanted to go home with his family, and [Pauses] he
1321 spent a day in Vientiane too long, because the rate of the kip went so high he had to stay around to
1322 make extra money! [Laughter] The next day when he tried to get across the border at Nong Khai,
1323 they wouldn't let the Chinese out. So he was stuck here. So today, I mean, he's been up in the
1324 office two—that's about three or four days ago. For two or three days he's been up in the office
1325 every day just trying to work something out, which was impossible. We don't have any control over

1326 those things. And today, John Melton took his passports for he and his family over to the tower to
1327 the airport, Wattay, and charged \$200 per chop—

1328
1329 BW: [Sound of surprise, laughter]

1330
1331 JK: —for he and his wife and children, and [Pauses] the DC-6 is not to carry any passengers, but
1332 they had them hidden back in the back.

1333
1334 BW: Who's paying for it?

1335
1336 JK: And the company paid. The company paid, and when he gets in Bangkok he's OK. He's got a
1337 chop out of here, so he's all—which was very nice. That was a good.... And he was all smiles.
1338 Dave and I saw him when he was—they were—no, you didn't see him. You weren't down there.

1339
1340 BW: Is he the one?

1341
1342 JK: Yeah, right. So Sue and I saw him, they were putting the door down in the back of the DC-6.
1343 Man, he was just beaming from ear to ear, waving his hand.

1344
1345 BW: We did they take off? Or just when you went over? [Laughs]

1346
1347 KW: This is the guy who wanted to fight Al Rich over at the DZ Club when I was there for your
1348 party.

1349
1350 DK: Oh, that guy, huh? [Laughter] Gee!

1351
1352 JK: Why, did he—

1353
1354 DK: I don't know if I'm happy about that or not!

1355
1356 (1:03:20)

1357 JK: —in the bottleneck area. And I didn't know where Dave was! I'm chugging along there, pretty
1358 good power, and I kept thinking he was going to go ahead of me, you know? And finally I called
1359 him. We decided to talk on 119.3. And I said, well, 'Hey, where are you? I'm out on the lake at
1360 2800 feet,' And he says, 'Well, you know, Space, I'm right behind you!' 'OK.' So we chugged along
1361 a little farther, and I said, 'Well, what do you think?' He says, 'Yeah, I think it's OK,' so [makes a
1362 "pssht" noise] we just turned and went over there, and by that time he had caught up with me and
1363 was sort of surging ahead.

1364
1365 DK: We went up the bottleneck, in other words.

1366
1367 JK: Yeah.

1368
1369 DK: Didn't go up 157.

1370
1371 JK: Yeah, we went around there.

1372
1373 DK: 'Cause it looked like it was bad.

1374

1375 [Pause]

1376

1377 DK: Hello! [Kouba's girlfriend Phoxay walks in. Kouba turns tape recorder off. Recording over.]