

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Brackett, Leigh - Sci Fi.

Personal Experience

O H 1036

RICHARD C JONES

Interviewed

by

Donna DeBlasio

on

October 31, 1983

D: This is an interview with Richard Jones for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project on Leigh Brackett Hamilton, on October 31, 1983, at Mahoning National Bank.

Mr Jones, I will just start off by asking something about yourself Can you tell me when and where you were born?

J I was born in Niles, Ohio, on October 25, 1930

D Where did you go to school?

J: I attended public school in the Warren City school system I graduated from Harding High School and I attended Ohio Northern University where I received a degree in Education I am also a graduate of Cleveland Marshal Law School of Cleveland State University and I have a Doctor of Laws degree

D Where have you worked professionally?

J: I was a teacher at Warren G Harding High School in Social Studies from 1954 to 1960. I was employed by the Internal Revenue Service from May of 1960 to May 1, 1966 as a placement officer of personnel, and as a federal state tax examiner in the audit division I am currently a vice-president and trust officer at the Mahoning Bank in Youngstown, Ohio.

D Are you married?

J: Yes

D Do you have any children?

J No children

D: What I am interested in, of course, is Leigh Brackett. Could you tell me how you met her

J. I cannot recall the circumstances when I actually met her As I mentioned to you in discussing this earlier, she resided in Kinsman, Ohio, six months out of the year and also had a home in Lancaster, California Somewhere, at some time, I would say it would go back to about 1965, 1966, was when I first met her The first encounter that I actually recall was when she had written a book called *Follow the Free Wind* It was her first effort in writing a western I heard about it and so I had attempted to obtain a book on it As I understand, from what she said, there were only about 600 or 700 actually printed before the rights were

brought up to make a movie I do not recall which studio it was that had supposedly bought the rights to make a movie. Are you familiar with the book, *Follow the Free Wind*?

D Yes, I am.

J Alright, because the star for the lead character was to be either Harry Belafonte or Sidney Poitier as the main character Well, I was attempting to obtain the book, and it took about six weeks. After I received it, I asked her if she would autograph it Her inscription in there was, "To Dick Jones, who went through almost as much effort to obtain this book as old Jim Beckworth did to live it " And then, "Most gratefully, Leigh Brackett " That was, as I recall, my first introduction I heard my wife, I heard other people talk about her So then, from there on, it would be just on a casual basis

D Your wife knew Leigh Brackett?

J Yes

D How did she get to meet her?

J My wife is presently Loan Secretary of the Kinsman office of Mahoning National Bank and at the time when she first met Leigh she was a loan teller and Leigh would come in and transact business there at our Kinsman office of Mahoning National

D That is interesting Going back to *Follow the Free Wind*, was the movie ever made?

J No

D. I was just, in TV Guide as a matter of fact, an interview with Lou Gosset and he was talking about playing the Jim Beckworth character, that he would like to play it. Do you think it might be based on the book? Would they have to go through you if they were going to make this movie?

J No I do not know about the status now Whether it is still being required by the movie industry or what Anything dealing with contracts or things like this involving the state of her trust, we retain the services of Mr Ned Brown, who had his office on North Maple Drive in Beverly Hills, California He was Leigh's agent for about 25 years prior to her death and the representation for all the books, movies and TV residuals. You see, when she made the screen play for a number of these books, there was also a contract for TV residuals So that every

time you see the movie "El Dorado," "Rio Lobo," "Rio Bravo", these were all movies that the screen play was written by Leigh Brackett. As you know they were starred in by John Wayne.

I understand that she had written another screen play with Rock Hudson, and that was "Pillow Talk". I think it was Rock Hudson and Doris Day who were in "Pillow Talk". But I am not sure. She had done one with Rock Hudson. Then she had also written some of the TV shows for "Alfred Hitchcock Presents", "The Rockford Files", "Boris Karloff" and "Kraft Presents".

D She did that too? I knew about the "Alfred Hitchcock" and "Nancy Drew", if I am not mistaken, and the "Rockford Files". Going back to *Follow the Free Wind*, is that the only thing you have ever read by her?

J No. I read the books *An Eye for an Eye*, and *A Tiger Amongst Us*. Now, if you have read these books, they have their setting right here in the Youngstown area. She also wrote *The Long Tomorrow* and, I believe there was another, *The Long Goodbye*, in addition to her science fiction books. One of the things that we had done when we started in to the estate, not only was Ned Brown representing her in movie, TV, contractual rights, but also she had the agency of Blassingame, McCauley and Wood in New York City, who handled all her book publications for foreign countries. These would also include some with her late husband Ed Hamilton, Ester Hamilton's brother. Ed had written a number of books that were primarily science fiction, where as Leigh's ran the whole gamut. Some of these books and publications that she made, some of them were not completed. They were in the script form and they might have, maybe a couple pages or maybe 35 or 40 pages, but they were not completed. Under the terms of her will, these pages along with all of her books and so forth, were passed to Eastern Mexico University to their science fiction section in New Mexico.

D What did you think of her writing? Things that you have read.

J Very easy to read. Very easy to follow. And informative. Of course each writer has their own style or writing. Kenneth Roberts, who wrote *Drums Along the Mohawk*. He has a style. Leigh had a style. Very informative reading, easy reading.

D One thing I was interested in, I have been talking with other people, they said that she ghost wrote a book for George Sanders. I got the impression that it was Sanders' autobiography, but now it has come out that it was not his autobiography, that it was a novel called *Stranger at Home*. Do you know anything about that? Or have you come across anything about that novel in the estate?

- J Which was this?
- D The one she wrote for George Sanders. It was called *Stranger at Home*.
- J I am not familiar with that. I know nothing. It was in a novel form? It was supposed to have been an autobiography.
- D He had written an autobiography and this novel. I mean his name is on it. She supposedly ghost wrote the novel. It is a novel. It is a mystery novel, in fact.
- J Does this take place in the Middle East?
- D No, that is *Silent Partner*. This one takes place in Los Angeles.
- J No, I am not familiar with this one. You say the *Silent Partner* was a spy, a mystery?
- D: Right. It took place in Iran.
- J. I was just wondering because I was never aware whether or not she had ever completed it. I had talked with her just prior to she and Ed's leaving for the Middle East. This would be back about 1974 or 1975 when they took a trip to the Middle East to obtain the setting for this. She said she was going to write a mystery, a spy mystery from the Middle East. I knew she went over but never knew whether or not she had ever written the book.
- D What did they think of Iran? Did you talk to them when they came back? What were their impressions of the Middle East?
- J No. I did not talk with her about the Middle East when she came back. I had a serious illness at that time and then she had an illness, of which it was the same type, cancer. The same location. This, I am just going back from recollection. So when she came back, she had gone to California and I had not seen her. Then Ed passed away in February of 1977. So there was possibly, maybe a year or two years when I did not see her at all, even when she was in Kinsman. Or, if it was, just a very "Hello" and that was it. Normally what we would do if we would meet, in the prior years and just prior to the last time she went to California, we would talk, maybe fifteen or twenty minutes in just conversation. Like I said, at the drug store, the bank, the post office, the super market, things like that. Where we would meet we would talk about ten or fifteen minutes. Just general conversation.
- D The bank was named executor?

J. The bank. Mahoning National Bank, yes

D Did you know before she died that the bank was going to be?

J. No. We knew that she had been ill. When I say we, I am talking personally, my wife and I. Because she had left Kinsman in October of 1977. This was about eight months after Ed's death, because he passed away out in California. She stayed out there for a couple of months to get things straightened out. Then she came back east. Then she obtained the contract with George Lucas to write the sequel to "The Empire Strikes Back." So she had to leave Kinsman to go back to California and work on the script. So she went out there. And they knew she was taking various treatments and so forth and they knew she had undergone surgery. On Sunday, March 18, it was announced in church in Kinsman, that Leigh had died the previous day. Then, on Monday, the following day, I received a call from her attorney in Warren, who informed me that Mahoning National Bank was named executor of her estate.

D What do you do for her estate as executor? What exactly is your job for her estate now that she is not longer with us?

J How do we go about it?

D Yes. Well I am not a lawyer so I do not really know exactly what an executor does.

J Basically, you go by the wills, and you go by, naturally, the law that governs wills. She had set up her will so that she would be considered domiciled in the state of Ohio and not in the state of California. Our duties, as executor of the estate are one, to collect the assets, two, to pay the debts and taxes that are due, three, to pay the specific bequests as set forth in the will, four, upon the completion and acceptance of all the tax returns, to terminate the estate and transfer the assets over into the trust under item two of her will, which she established for the benefit of Mrs. Sherwood, her sister-in-law. The things which I am telling you right now, Donna, are a matter of record and can be found in the Trumbull County Courthouse in the probate division as a State file. Her original will is on file there.

There was another situation that became involved. This was because she owned a home in California, had personal property out there, namely household goods and an automobile, books and things like that in her home. After she had left Ohio she had made up a Codicil to her will, where she named Bank America in California as the ancillary administrator of her estate to handle all aspects of property that would be involved under California inheritance law because of its location. Shortly after her death the attorney who represents us in the estate,

Mr Bruce Birrell, and I flew to California, this would be about six weeks after her death, to meet with the officials from Bank of America, to meet Mr Ned Brown, to meet the attorney out there who would be representing Bank of America who prepared the Codicil, and things like this. We also needed to lay the groundwork as to what would be assets in her Ohio estate and what would be assets in her California estate, because we would be involved with the Internal Revenue Service on federal state tax returns, also on Ohio Estate Tax and California inheritance taxes. So, we went there. We got everything situated there.

The next point is, she did not own any real estate in Ohio so we did not have to have an inventory of her residence. She had already sold that the previous year following her husband's death. So she had moved in and had an apartment adjoining where her sister-in-law, Adeline Sherwood, lived. The California Bank of America made arrangements to have the appraisal of the household goods, appraisal of books, things like this. Then we located the bank accounts, things like this, had them turned over to us and closed the accounts, certain accounts. We opened up the estate and then filed the inventory, paid the bills, filed a claim for Medicare. No, I am sorry. We did not file a claim for Medicare because she was not old enough. Under her hospitalization plan would be a writer's guild. We filed claims for medical expenses. Then we paid the specific bequests and then transferred assets over to the trust.

D: Who was her primary beneficiary?

J: The primary beneficiary? Well, you could say the life income beneficiary is Adeline Hamilton Sherwood, whom we have the responsibility of financially caring for her during her natural life. Then upon her death the trust terminates and the assets pass to two first cousins: John H. Douglass and Benjamin H. Douglass in California. Then we are out of the picture at that time.

D: Why did she decide to be resident in Ohio?

J: Tax laws. Definitely. California inheritance tax, there would be no marital deduction because Edmund Hamilton had pre-deceased her, and the same would apply for Ohio, but the Ohio tax rate is lower than California's.

D: Somehow, that figures, knowing California.

J: You are right.

D: Do you also handle Ed's estate? Mr. Hamilton's estate?

J: No. She was executrix of his estate. There were certain things that came up since then. His estate has been closed, and been closed quite a while ago, but

anything that comes up, we consider ourselves as the successor executor of Edmund Hamilton's estate, just for the matter of a formality on this. For example, I received a letter from West Germany in the mail today from a publisher, that the West German finance ministry wishes to tax royalties that would be coming to us on books that are published in German, at a rate of 25 percent, if our beneficiaries are not residents of the United States. So the publisher wrote and asked for verification that these beneficiaries under the will are, indeed, citizens of the United States, due to the reciprocal tax laws on royalties and so forth on books between Germans and Americans, then there would be this procession. Otherwise, since it is going to U S citizens, and the reciprocity, then there would be no tax. So I had dictated a letter, in fact I just signed it this afternoon, had dictated a letter, I just signed it to send it back to Rhinehart I believe it was in Germany, just outside of Hamburg, Germany

D Do you do all that for any foreign things that come up? You have to handle that I came across your name in a book. There was a book that Isaac Asimov recently did that are the greatest science fiction stories of the year. It had your name as the trust officer on the estate. Do you have to handle all things that are reprinted?

J How did you find my name?

D It was listed as "Reprinted by permission of," with your name as the trust officer of the estate. It was a paperback copy, if you look in the one section in the front of the book they list all the stories and where they got them from, where they got permission from.

J You see, each year, what I have to do is, there are certain copyrights that expire. This is among other things that we do in the estate trust. As these copyrights expire on books and publications, some of them are taken care of by, like Ace Books, Bantam Books, some of them by our agency in New York, because we have another one, Scott Meredith, literary agent. He was the agent for Ed, whereas Blassingame, McCauley and Wood were the agents for Leigh, both of them in New York. I had asked my sister, who is a librarian in reference, if she would verify at the Library of Congress when these copyrights are expiring, because we had an agent from Blassingame McCauley go to Washington and check out the expirations and who was responsible for the renewal. My sister had taken a day's leave and went over to the Library of Congress and checked out everything. She made 3X5" cards, to the year something like were about 2013, of all the books that are expiring copyrights. Of course, with the new copyrights, they go for 75 years. But his deals with not only books, it deals with articles, publications, well, you know. I am sure you are familiar with copyright laws. So, each year, in the last two weeks in December, I have to take the cards

and apply for copyright renewals for both Ed Hamilton and Leigh that might be expiring that year, to protect her heirs. These copyrights will continue to come in possibly for generations, as long as they republish, and also on TV residuals because we are constantly receiving checks. When I say constantly, at least once a month from studios, movie studios, television companies, and things like this for the replays of these movies, of which we are entitled to the royalties.

D I realize they are always changing the laws on copyrights, especially in film. Does that include the television things? Like the Alfred Hitchcock things. I realize that a few years ago the actors and people involved only got it for X number of years and then they stopped getting residuals. Does this apply, or is she still getting the residuals, or her estate, rather, getting residuals from the Alfred Hitchcocks or the Rockford Files and the rest of it?

J Yes, this would apply. This is what, in fact, I believe the case is still before the Supreme Court of the United States about home video or home filming of the programs that come on television, and then they are turned around and reproduced in the home, in violation of copyright laws and contracts. As a member of companies produce these machines for video recording what is actually shown on the screen, without paying any royalties or anything like this. Everything that we do regarding any contracts, any writings and so forth, definitely goes through our agent. Our agent negotiates them with Western Writers' Guild, Paramount, Twentieth Century Fox, television cable companies.

For example, I was thinking of one, TSI out of Chicago is a cable. Then about once every three months I receive a check that goes from Chicago to Beverly Hills, our agent, and then it comes from our agent back to us. This is true, also, with "The Empire Strikes Back." He was the one that, upon Leigh's death, she completed manuscript and she had turned it over to the producer and another gentleman and as I understand, the completed manuscript was turned over days before her death. Neither Mr. Lucas nor anyone in his office was aware of how critically ill that she was at that time. But she had completed the work and the work was of such a nature that under contract, one of the writers has to agree to do is to be on location when the filming is actually being made. When you are writing a dialogue. I never occurred to me until when the attorney and I were at her home in Lancaster when we saw the handwritten script for "The Empire Strikes Back." It was on IBM or computer printout, the sheets. What she had done, she had three columns. One column was the scene, another column was the action, and then the third column was the dialogue. You know, when you turn on the television set you give no thought to someone has to write the dialogue. Where is the setting? What is background music? Is there background music? Doors slam. Person enters from left. Dialogue. Donna says so and so, Dick replies. And you write all this out. It is really quite a fascinating thing that here is a whole script that she had handwritten.

Now, when you are actually filming a situation for a certain scene, the script, the dialogue, might not fit that actual scene. In other words, you could be in a space-ship and the dialogue says that the Luke Skywalker says such and such and Carrie Fisher replies. But actually the dialogue will not fit. So the writer is supposed to be there to change the script at that time. Well, naturally, when Leigh had passed away she was unable to be there. The first filing of it was in Norway in January for the ice scene, and the snow scene. The person who was there, who took over, was George Kasdon, and I believe that he was the screen writer for "Return of the Jedi." I am not sure, but I believe he was

- D. Yes, he was, and also he did "The Big Chill" and he did "Body Heat," too.
- J. The determination for who had the screen rights credits was made by the Western Writers Guild. They made the determination whether Leigh's work was sufficiently done so that she would be entitled, her estate would be entitled, to part of the royalties, the writer's royalty, or whether it would be George Kasden. So, the decision was that the work was sufficiently polished, this is what they call it polished, so that, when the changes were done that the credits were "co" Leigh Brackett and George Kasden. As a result, our agent had entered into a contract with George Lucas and Lucas Films whereby we would receive a percentage of the royalties, or a percentage of the gross office receipts after paying expenses. The original expenses oh, I do not know, it seems to me like 23 or 24 million.
- One thing, even though this is on tape, one of the most fair and honorable gentlemen is George Lucas. He has seen that everyone got his share, percentagewise, from the profits. Whether it is the actors and actresses, the producers, the filming, the effects, everything, have received the profits from "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Star Wars" and I just heard he will probably do the same thing with "Return of the Jedi."
- D. That is what I heard. I heard that the secretaries and the clean-up people even got royalties from "Star Wars." I am interested, too, does she get any royalties from the things that are connected with "The Empire Strikes Back?" The toys and the costumes and all that movie connected paraphernalia? Does she receive any royalties from that at all?
- J. Oh, yes. It is 45/100 of one percent. Less than one-half of one percent. This, again, is a matter of public record because we file our accounts in court, which we are required by law to do. Her earnings have been in excess of \$500,000.
- D. From "Empire" alone?
- J. From "Empire" solely. But 45/100 of one percent.

- D Is that just the royalties on the goods?
- J. It is supposed to be the royalties from the entire as far as anything that is involved with "The Empire Strikes Back," which Lucas Films entered into contract with other individuals that make the dolls, Darth Vader dolls, bubble gum, balloons, or what have you. Anything that Lucas Films is involved with it is supposed to be involved in a contract. We do not receive a breakdown. All we receive here, are the reports, which are monthly. Monthly, from the time that they start we are a quarter behind. Our last report was for May 31. It was here while I was on vacation. It would have come in the first of October. So June, July, August would have come in the first of September. But our agent was on vacation, Mr. Brown. So when he came back he forwarded the check and so forth to us.
- D I think this is interesting about "The Empire Strikes Back." Did you read her original script?
- J: Unfortunately, no, because we were not there in California long enough. I have seen the book, that is, the sketches and so forth that she had made. I do have a copy of her sketch book and some of her handwriting for certain scenes. But, no. In fact I do not know what happened to the original thing, because, you see, this was in California and this was California property that was supposed to have gone to Mexico University by Bank America. What Bank of America did, they had an appraiser, from Twentieth Century Fox, as I recall, go up to the home, catalogue and list this was a librarian, as I said, from one of the studios, list the books and value them. I believe that the script was to go from the home to the University of Eastern New Mexico. While we were there viewing the home, the attorney and I, along with the attorney from California, we just looked at it. And this is what completely fascinated me.
- D It would be interesting, I would like to know how much of her original stayed in the movie, or exactly how much of her script was part of that movie. I understand that right after she died, several well known authors called Lucas and offered to finish the script with no screen credit. Like Ray Bradbury and Michael Moorehouse and Harlon Ellison all called Lucas or Jerry Kertz, the associate producer, or whatever he is, that they would finish the script. Did you hear anything about that? I was just wondering if you knew why they picked Kasden instead.
- J. You say there had been a number of authors had called Lucas?
- D Yes, it happened the day after Leigh died.

J Yes, they cased him the day after Leigh died to say, "Look, we will finish it I will finish it for nothing, well without screen credit, so that she can have it all by herself " Apparently it did not work out. I was just rather surprised

D I think if I were Lucas I would have jumped at the chance

J I really do not know Of course, the only thing that would be just conjecture on this would be because the individuals who had called, that they knew that Leigh was writing it. They might not have known whether she had actually completed it And this is what they might have been doing This is only conjecture on my part I do not know, because our agent had first hand knowledge of this and he never said anything about it to us about any contract

Over the years we received letters from aspiring writers, different organizations, that were not aware of Leigh's death. Even today, we still receive correspondence addressed to her home in Kinsman, and naturally, there in Kinsman, with the postal regulations, they know that it is supposed to go back to the sender But Kinsman being local, they know that I am the account officer And really this is my designation, account officer for the trust I am a vice president and trust officer So I always write to everybody that has written Even advertisements that respond, and ask them to remove her name from the mailing list While we were on vacation here a two weeks ago there were two items of mail that came in. One of them was an advertisement and the other was an announcement Both of them should have been known because I recall I had contacted them before, but they never took the name off the mailing list And so again I emphasized, please remove her name from the mailing list

D You know how those are You get on one of those lists and your name is never off it after that

J Once you are on, you are on for centuries

D It does not matter if you die or what They are just like that I lived in Indiana for two years and I still get mail from there even though mail from organizations that know I do not live there any more I still get mail from them that comes here They are like that, though

J Did you talk with attorney Bruce Birrell?

D No.

J In Warren He is located in the Union Savings and Trust building

D Is that B-E-R-Y-L?

- J· B-I-R-R-E-L-L That is attorney Bruce Birrell He is at the Union Savings and Trust building I was telling Friday evening that you and I had talked and that you were coming in today to do an interview Of course, he had represented her and Ed in legal matters, but there is another person that I feel would be able to tell you a considerable amount about her This is Mr and Mrs Milton Artman. And the wife's name is Ruby Milton and Ruby Because they lived two doors up the road and they looked after the house and so forth during the winter months while they were out in California They were fine neighbors and they were good people They would know more about them personally I think this is what you really need, because you are coming in to talk to me I can give you limited background on her personally and on the estate, this would strictly have to be from the date of her death As far as works and so forth that she had done during her lifetime and things like this But these people, they could tell you about going back, well to the time that she and Ed were first married in the 1940's, right after the war, all through Because I do not know how long ago it was that they bought the home there in Kinsman
- D Back in the 1950's That I know
- J That was it? You know, just as an aside, she had Ed were the first and only ones in Kinsman to have a fallout shelter
- D Somehow that figures
- J This was based on *The Long Tomorrow* and *The Long Goodbye* that they had a fallout shelter and they had it stacked, as I understand it. You could verify this with Mrs Artman And Mrs Sherwood, too, would know.
- D That is great. That is interesting Somehow that figures, though I know that she became fascinated with the Amish culture which is why she wrote *The Long Tomorrow*
- J We have quite a community now More so than when they were living here There have been a number of families that have come into Kinsman area They only lived about two miles from the Pennsylvania border right west of Greenville, coming toward the Ohio line there was a number of Amish families And also down in New Wilmington, where Ed came from
- D I know he went to school there too
- J. Pardon me?
- D I know he went to school at Westminster College too, book a long time ago Do

you happen to know where she was buried? Is she buried in Ohio?

- J Yes She was cremated and her ashes were returned to Ohio and she was buried in Kinsman cemetery in Kinsman, Ohio That is the cemetery immediately to the east of the presbyterian church, Kinsman Presbyterian Church. So was Ed Ed was cremated and his ashes are interred there also
- D That is interesting I did not know that, where they had been buried Was that stipulated in her will, that she was to be cremated?
- J I do not recall The funeral arrangements had been made, no it was not in her will I will have to say no, but to verify it I would have to take a look at her will, because we actually did not know where her will was located right at first Normally a person will keep their will in a safety deposit box or someplace designated at home But we found out that she had taken it to California with her And it was from that will that the codicil was made, naming Bank of America as ancillary in Lancaster, California had her original will
- D We were talking about her will and the California estate and the ancillary and her burial plans And where she kept it Where she had left her will You could not find it at first
- J The funeral arrangements?
- D Right And you were talking about how at first you could not find the will when she dies. You were telling that story
- J Right You see we thought at first her will might have been located in the safety deposit box of the Kinsman office of Mahoning National Bank, and it was not there It was not in her apartment After she had sold her home, at Ed's death, a part of Mrs Sherwood's home was made into an apartment for Leigh So we went to the apartment to see if it might have been in her desk or anything like that It was not there Then the attorney, Mr Birrell, had received a call from the attorney in California and it was then that we learned that the original will and codicil were in California He sent them back to us, to Mr Birrell, and we took and filed the application to admit the will to probate and the codicil in Warren at the Trumbull County Courthouse We sent out certified copies of both documents to Bank of America in Glendale, at their Glendale, California office Then they were able to start the administration action out there
- D How much of her estate is left to be sent to Eastern New Mexico, approximately? What do you have left?

J As I mentioned, the estate is completed. The books, scripts, manuscripts, and so forth from California have been sent to Eastern New Mexico. Mahoning National Bank has sent certain scripts to Eastern New Mexico, but most of the books and so forth that were at her apartment in Kinsman have remained intact, along with the furniture and so forth, for and during the natural life of Mrs Sherwood. Upon Mrs Sherwood's death, then the property would be disposed of. Now, again, whatever books are in the apartment will go to Eastern New Mexico. Furniture, etcetera, are to go to the two remainder, the remainder of it, to the two cousins, if they so wish. If they do not wish to receive them, then we would have to dispose of them by sale or according to their instructions. Although it is an apartment, as you know, it is a two bedroom apartment and one room is a living room and then, with a little divider, a kitchen. Very cute, for want of a better word or cliché, it is a compact little apartment. And then a bedroom and a bath on the second floor. In fact, the downstairs of the apartment would be, maybe a little bit bigger than this office. With a stairway on one wall going up, and then the second floor the same size.

What they had done, Mrs Hamilton had the roof raised. She was talking about raising the north roof was raised, and a studio, skylight, window was put in so that she could do writing upstairs on the second floor. She could not get much furniture in an area like this. We are still holding the furniture in trust, and the books, here in Ohio.

D What about the personal papers? The letters, things like that? Do you have them?

J No. There was not much correspondence in there. Mrs Dorothy Story, she is another person that could give you some background information. Mrs Ted Story in Burghill at Storyland. Have you heard of Storyland Christmas Trees?

D I have been past it.

J Mrs Ted Story. Because she has been a friend of Mrs Sherwood, the beneficiary, and has helped us in a tremendous way to take care of it. We are responsible, financially, as trustees, and it is Mrs Story who is looking out after her personal well-being, at no charge as a friend. We provide the funds. Well, they are like housekeepers and some of them are LPN's that are around the clock with Mrs Sherwood. But Mrs Story, like I say, she knew Leigh and knew Ed, so she could give you some background too.

D If somebody were, as I am doing, writing a biography, does one have to get permission to cite from her books, even with footnotes and all the rest of it, from the estate? Or is it just cited instead as a formal historical document, being that her copyrights are so active on her estate?

J I do not follow you

D Well, for instance, say in writing this book I cited from one of her stories or novels, with a footnote and everything, does permission have to be granted from the estate for that? Or is that not considered "extensive" use of the originals?

J This is a question, because I do know there have been other stories and so forth been written about Leigh which we were not even aware of until after they were published. I would say, and this is just speaking unofficially, anybody who writes about Leigh, you know, can write about her. It does not require our permission or anything like this.

Now, there is certainly nothing I would say about anyone that would be derogatory, you know, involved. Anything I would tell you, if I felt it was privileged or confidential I would feel that it would be best left unsaid. If it would be detrimental to the next of kin living.

But, like yourself, writing a biography, there is nothing that I know of that could preclude you from writing. You are not beholden or obligated to the estate or to the trust in writing of this.

D I am just talking about citing extensively from her, or, you know, the direct quotes from her works, seeing examples of what she has done. Does that have to be taken from her estate or permission granted to actually use that?

J Yes. We do have a situation where an individual has stated that there had been an agreement to continue a series of books. When I first learned about it I immediately passed it on to our agent, because our agent is the one that is responsible for these matters. This is a continuation of which part of the credit would go. One book was one portion. Just like the trilogy of "Star Wars." This is a series of books, the main hero, the main villain, and so forth. Now, this individual said that there was an agreement back prior to the death of both Mr and Mrs. Hamilton, that he was to sort of ghost write a sequel, so to speak. We entered into a written agreement in which we were to receive, if he goes ahead and publishes it, we are to receive certain royalties from it.

D That will be interesting. I know that she and Ed had written a story for Harlon Ellison for his anthology that had not yet been published. No doubt it is in short story form but he has never gotten the book published. I know he has it.

J On situations like that the scripts, none of the manuscripts were ever completed to the point where there should be a copyright on them. Our agent has looked them over as to whether what has been completed of them should be copyrighted. But he said these have not been to the place where there is a formal beginning, a formal ending. Or, if there is a beginning, there is no ending.

He had talked with certain people about finishing, or putting them over into television. But a number of these things have become dated, whether they are short stories or whether they are books, or what they are, they are dated. Human interest is more current, unless it goes back to a historical time. People are not necessarily interested in five years ago, ten years ago, unless it has a popular setting. Some of these settings go into the 1800's, some of them go into the 1600's. It was his feeling that, being her agent for 25 years and our agent for five years, that he should know on this.

D. What was your general impression of Leigh? What did you think of her?

J. If she walked in this door right now, you would not think that she was a writer. She was an attractive woman. In Kinsman she used no make-up. Her hair, she had it back in a pony tail. Very clean. Any time I ever saw her, Saturday mornings, she would have on a light gray suede jacket with fringe on the sleeves. She would wear jeans or slacks. She would be about 5'7" or 5'8". Slender, well, she was not thin, but she was, you would say, a slender woman for that age. Very infectious smile. She could be carrying on a general conversation and she would walk away and people did not know who she was. They did not know, they would never realize that she was a writer. But, you can see, if you checked into the books and so forth, the wide range. From science fiction to mystery to Westerns and so forth. For want of a better expression, I like to think that she had a mind that would not stop. It is just incomprehensible. As a matter of fact, that is really the best way I can describe her. She would walk in, she would sit down, and before you knew it you would be telling her your whole life story and you would not even realize it. And telling her about your college work and your doctoral and, you know, what you are doing. She would be just as interested in that as if you were talking about whether the Cleveland Browns won yesterday or not. She could talk about either the Browns or the Pittsburgh Steelers.

D. Was she a sports fan?

J. Not that I know of, really. We never really got in to that. She just had a general interest in everything. I suppose, certain writers that I have met, they are in a certain field. And I have never met, really, that many writers. It seems that their conversation is limited and narrowed to one field or things like that.

When she passed away, the correspondence that we received, the write ups and so forth, it just verifies my personal opinion of her, everybody in Kinsman that knew her, she was incomparable. It was like the incomparable Hildegard, the incomparable Leigh.

D. That seems to be the general impression I have received from talking to people.

Some of them say you would never hear a bad word about her because there was not one to say. Everybody liked her. It is nice to know the person you are doing a biography on was so well appreciated.

J I guess the only time that she ever dressed up, one time my wife said she saw her, she was living to catch a plane down here at Youngstown to go back to California when she dressed. She had jewelry on, earrings, necklace, and a dress, whether she had a light coat on or what, and a hat. She dressed for California, and when she left she dressed the way they dress out there. But come back to Kinsman and it was just the opposite.

D She fit in anywhere that she went.

J Oh, yes. And when she was dressed to return to California she did not look out of place. She could dress and wear her clothes well. She could wear jeans or a pair of slacks and the suede jacket and she would look neat in them. So I say, either dressed up or relaxed, she was a neat looking person. Very nice looking.

D Are there any other comments you would like to make about her or her estate?

J No, not that I can think of. As I mentioned we were really close when we had the same type of surgery. She had a colon resection and I have one also. Mine was, I think, two or three months before her. So we compared notes about treatments and so forth afterwards. We were both taking chemotherapy and things of that nature. Unfortunately, hers had spread further than what mine had. Mine had spread, but the treatment with chemotherapy was able, evidently, to kill the cells, and during the surgery any cancer cells outside the colon had been taken care of. I do not know how far hers had spread, except she had to take treatment and we would discuss it. I know very distinctly, the last time that I talked with her was when they had the memorial service during the summer of 1977 for Ed at the funeral home in Kinsman. It was quite a while after his death before the ashes were sent back from California. Then they had the interment and then they had the memorial service in July. Part of that being the fact that he had been sick and also she had been negotiating and I think she went back to California once or twice, talking with George Lucas about the script.

I definitely recall, it was on a Friday afternoon, Saturday afternoon, during the summer of 1977. It was in July. Leigh and I talked after the service. There were maybe five or ten minutes. She was anticipating getting this contract and she was looking forward to going to California. She was feeling pretty good. She was not feeling that good, but she was feeling pretty good. She was taking oral chemotherapy. She was not taking the injection at that time. And she was taking other medication. She went back to California and then she had to go for further surgery. I do not remember whether she came out of the hospital, or if

she did it was only a short period of time and then returned I know she was quite excited about doing the screenplay for "Empire Strikes Back" She was elated

D I cannot say I blame her Was she treated here in Youngstown for her cancer?

J Yes

D Where was she treated for her cancer?

J At North Side Hospital. That is where the initial surgery was, at North Side Hospital She might have been a patient of Dr Pass I am not sure, but it was through North Side, so I would assume that with the oncology group up there

Then when she was out of California she was taking treatments out there at one of the hospitals Then a former physician from Kinsman who was a friend of hers, a surgeon, performed the surgery, the last time This was in the liver, when there had been some malignancy spread to the liver and they attempted to remove it Evidently it spread other places in her system other than just the liver

D. Unfortunately that does happen with cancer Is there anything else you would like to add?

J No, I cannot think of anything further This has been a very unusual estate to administer Because, like I say, you are dealing with royalties, you are dealing with copyrights, you are dealing with television, movie studios, writer's guilds I did not know at the beginning, I certainly know now, on this I have learned a lot more about Leigh personally, which unfortunately I wish I had known during her lifetime Because people that did not know her cannot appreciate

I do want to say one thing I do not know if they have it over at the library at Youngstown State, but my sister, as I mentioned, is a librarian They came out with a bibliography of writers, and she told me about one bibliography of three women writers whose last names begin with "B"

D The woman who did that is my collaborator on the book, so I have it, I took it out of the library

J There is a copy of that up at the Kinsman Free Public Library

D We have it here, too, at Y S U It is convenient for me

J. We have been trying to obtain any books in Kinsman for our library A section on Leigh Brackett, of her writings and so forth We are committed by the will to send manuscripts and books and so forth that she had in her possession to

Eastern New Mexico In addition to this, following her death we had certain complimentary copies of books As each royalty, or contract, is signed with the publisher, there is, in the contract, to provide complimentary copies to the author, original author This had followed through for a year or so after her death and we have not received any for a period of time But the question came up, what could we do most beneficially to individuals to perpetuate Leigh's name and still have it used according to the intent of her will Those copies of her books went to Eastern New Mexico University, but there is not need to send six of the same book. If it is published in Swedish, or if it is published in German, Italian, or something like this, to send them all out there As long as we follow the books, a copy of it is sent to them

What we did, we had distributed certain books, because these would be coming in paperback, to Youngstown State University, Kent State University Trumbull Branch, and to the Free Public Library in Trumbull County Youngstown State has received a complete set of what we had Some of them were in French, German, Dutch, Italian, Swedish The same thing is true with Kent Branch and the others There were certain requests for certain languages so we just supplied what we had to perpetuate

D So there is going to be the Leigh Brackett area in Kinsman Public Library That will be nice I think she would like that, from what I have read about her, she loved books so much It will be perfect

Well, I would like to thank you for taking time today to talk with me about Leigh

J You are welcome

End of Interview