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Mary Murphy [00:00:01] This is Mary Murphy. It's June 27th, 2024. I'm here in the home of Lois Welch with Lois in Missoula, Montana, and we're about to do an interview about her and her husband Jim Welch's relationship with Ivan and Carol Doig. So before we get to Ivan and Carol, can you do just a little brief biography of yourself and how you came to Montana?

Lois Welch [00:00:30] Well, I'm going to start beforehand. Or you wouldn't understand why I came to Montana. I want first to say I'm eighty-eight years old. Jim died twenty years, almost twenty-one years ago. And so I've had a long time to think about all of this. I was born in Salem, Oregon, and I've been an academic my entire life because my father taught biology at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. So I've never not been an academic until I retired. And so it seemed natural to me, as much as it seemed unnatural to Jim, who hated school. And so I did very well in school like a good girl. I was slightly upended a bit, and it was good for me. When I was twelve, we went to Venezuela for two years, where my father was asked to found the biology school for the Central University. And they plunked me down in a Spanish speaking school without knowing a word of Spanish. And in the process, in the painful process of learning Spanish, I also learned the joys of language in ways I hadn't thought before. And I think my interest in language dates just from that time. But at any rate, I graduated from Willamette University in philosophy, because I wanted to know the meaning of life. And I didn't, and I loved literature, but I couldn't, I didn't want to have to read Arthur Hugh Clough.[Laughter] And I didn't much like that the teachers, who seemed sort of fusty and old ladies, whether male or female. But I was a whiz at French, and that is, I learned French well enough in a year because we spoke it all the time. It was the oral method which I already knew how to do. And so within a year, I'd gone to Middlebury College summer school in French for the summer. And then after graduation, I had won a Fulbright travel scholarship and a French government assistantship in the French schools to be a conversation assistant. And I just loved it. It was clear to my family I wouldn't come home if I could help it. And I also took to camping. The European campgrounds were remarkable, with their own stores and showers, and they were just wonderful. And this Canadian assistant in town and I started camping. And the first place I camped was a just a little campground on a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean, just walking distance from Cannes. Not a bad start, right?

Mary Murphy [00:04:19] Not a bad start at all.

Lois Welch [00:04:22] Anyhow, I loved it. And then I don't know what I would have done the second year. The first year I was in Agen, which is really between Toulouse and Bordeaux, and was a town about the size of Salem. And then Bordeaux is a big town. And I applied for another year to be, I wanted to be in Paris. Everybody wants to be in Paris. But why not? But I also applied to graduate school. That's A-g-e-n.

Mary Murphy [00:05:01] Thank you.

Lois Welch [00:05:01] I applied to graduate school in comparative literature because there was a new NDEA, Intercollegiate graduate--intercollegiate IPGS, intercollegiate program of graduate studies through the NEA. The NDEA, the National Department of Defense, because they thought it would be good if Americans were more bilingual. It counteracted Sputnik in principle. And so I applied to both those things. And then when my Canadian friend and I arrived in Athens, there were two letters waiting for us. One of them said, yes, you have an assistantship in France, but it's in Châlons-sur-Marne, which is two-a-half

hours from Paris by train. And you also have a three-year fellowship at Occidental College, which is in a consortium with Pomona, Harvey Mudd, and Claremont, for three years in comparative literature. Congratulations! Which did I want to do? I did not want to be in Châlons-sur-Marne. So I, at the end of that summer, even though our plans were to camp from Paris to Haifa and we did, I left a month late for school. But then I went to LA to graduate school and did nothing but read for three years, and I loved it. But then I got a job at Portland State, teaching in the English department and taught there for four years. And I didn't see it coming, but the way they always [are] with assistant professors--give you ignominious tasks in the department that none of the senior people want. I found myself helping out with a lecture committee, and two of the first writers I helped arrange were, what's his name? Amiri Baraka, who used to be--what's his name--[LeRoi] Jones. I just blanked it out. And also Stephen Spender, who is the opposite kind of person, Sir Stephen Spender, who was very tall and very sir-spendery.

Lois Welch [00:08:07] I didn't think of how this was portending anything, but also I seemed to have arranged a poetry reading for one Richard Hugo, in 1964, when his first book came out, *A Run of Jacks*. That just happened; it didn't portend anything. And then, I was offered a job here at Montana. I had a friend who moved here and often said I should apply here. And I interviewed, and Portland State at that time was four city blocks with 6,000 students. And if you wanted to cross a hall, you had to sort of make a safari out of it. And so when I came here and there's all this space and this beautiful campus, I must admit I liked it. And I found the people interesting. And, you know, it's different. It's away from Methodism and Salem. I didn't. . .

Mary Murphy [00:09:30] I'm just going to move your [microphone]. This is flipping. Excuse me. There we go. I think that would be better. Okay.

Lois Welch [00:09:39] Sorry about that. No, no. I hope it didn't fade.

Mary Murphy [00:09:42] I don't think it did.

Lois Welch [00:09:43] It's not that far. I haven't mentioned the degree to which I was raised in the bosom of Methodism. My parents were pillars of the Methodist Church, which was the main church in Salem. And furthermore, Willamette is a Methodist university, and so I was just Methodist to the core. And what's odd is I think my family wasn't actually very religious, but that's a whole other issue.

Mary Murphy [00:10:23] Well. Did you ever talk about that with Carol? Because Carol grew up in a town that had been a Methodist camp meeting place in New Jersey.

Lois Welch [00:10:33] No. I think one of the problems that we, Carol and I, faced was actually that our husbands--they were like magnets. They took up all the space. And then when we got together with "the usual suspects," it was all about writing. Do you know when I learned what Carol used to teach at Shoreline? This morning, an hour before you came. I hadn't thought until today that probably there would be--because if I'm sending my Jim's archives to Yale, there's Lois in there. Well, if Ivan's are over at MSU there's probably something about Carol. So this morning I looked and I thought I never knew what. . . I never knew the courses that she taught. She would say once in a while, I taught such and such a thing. But it was never more than a single sentence or two, because it's like we weren't allowed, most of the time, to talk together, because in the conversation there were four of us. And this was a literary conversation.

Mary Murphy [00:12:06] Yeah. Yeah.

Lois Welch [00:12:07] It's so funny. Well. So anyhow, here I am coming to Montana. And the day I arrive. Till the day after I arrive. I land, I looked at a few apartments in town, and then I notice there's a guest house up the Rattlesnake. This is the Rattlesnake. There's a guest house, an eight-room guest house. I go and look at it. It's still available. It was on Rosacker Farm, which is where Mike Mansfield lived when he taught here. Taught history. And the guy that owned it had run a dress shop in town and stuff, but I think he was mostly retired. He liked to run his tractor around. There was a big apple farm and there was a big apple packing barn. But there was like, I don't know, 40 acres, 140, I don't know, huge. And when I moved there, there was nothing on Lincoln Hills except brown and white cows. Now there are no brown and white cows, all houses. But there was a lot . . . that was '66. And so I started teaching. Because I guess . . . I don't know how people knew it. Maybe Hugo knew it. I don't know, but there I was on the lecture committee again. So there's Hugo in residence, and I just started arranging, you know, calling, arranging the visits of all the visiting writers. And that's how I became an impresario. I made a list, finally, of, I don't know, the 120 writers I brought in before I retired. Like, if you'd heard of them, I think I brought them. I think Allen Ginsberg came here three times.

Mary Murphy [00:14:36] Oh my gosh.

Lois Welch [00:14:38] But at any rate. The creative writing program was brand new. Warren Carrier founded it and got it through the Senate in 1964. And hired Hugo, who had been in Italy. But he'd visited some people who taught here but were on sabbatical in Trieste, of all places. But they said, why don't you apply? And he did, and he got the job, and he was across the hall from me. And it is all imbricated with Jim's and my life. Sometime that first winter, Hugo marched, he marched right up to my doorway and said, listen to this and read this poem called In My First Hard Springtime by James Welch. And having finished reading it in his loud Hugo style, he said, Albert Heavy Runner was never civic. I can't teach this guy anything and went barreling down the hallway to read it to somebody else. As you probably know, nobody ever does that. You never read of your students' stuff for your colleagues. It just is. But Hugo had worked at Boeing for 30 years. He didn't know any better. And so that's how I first heard of my husband-to-be. Hadn't even met him. And then that spring, Annick Smith and Dave had an opening-day-of-fishing-season party. When I drove up, Hugo and Jim were sitting on the front stoop, which was this big. As you know, it was, what, three-feet by two or something? Just this little. There was a bench, and I got out of my sweet little Sunbeam Alpine convertible and walked up the steps, and Hugo kissed my hand. So Jim kissed his way all the way up my arm. [Laughter]

Mary Murphy [00:17:21] How could you not fall in love?

Lois Welch [00:17:23] Yes. How could you avoid that? And he swears we didn't go for a walk right then. There was dinner and other people arriving and all that stuff. But all I remember is pretty soon we were walking in the back yard, which was along Rock Creek at Valley of the Moon Ranch on Rock Creek, beside the creek, on a night with a full moon. And the ground was rough, so he had to hold my hand.

Lois Welch [00:17:55] And basically that was it. I won't elaborate. [Laughter] And we got married the next summer. So he had been, he was working on poetry. But after that first year we were married, he sold his book to World Publishing and his editor, Stanley Moss, in New York. And so he was looking for something else to do. He wanted a bigger canvas,

he said. And so he was trying to figure out how to write a novel, which dovetails then with how we finally met Ivan and Carol, because in the spring of 1979, Bill Kittredge had come here in, I think, '75. And, you know, Kittredge and [James] Crumley and Jim Burke all came at the same . . . No, Jim Burke came the same year I did. Kittredge came later. But he got this party, this conference together with NEA funding. And there was a "Who Owns the West Conference." Norman Maclean and [A.B.] Guthrie and Jim and Ivan and Madeline Defrees. And one other person. Perhaps Nelson, I'm not sure. One other person read. And there were, of course, parties every night. There were always parties every night. And I remember, it was after . . . the sun was still shining. At a party at Kittredge's, where everybody in Missoula was packed into that rather small house. And I remember being in the living room with people in front of me, in back of me, all around. And over here was Bud Guthrie and his wife Carol, next to him. And Jim and I—I was sort of tailing behind Jim's body. He was breaking the wave. And we met them over somebody else's shoulder and talked a bit. And over another set of shoulders were Ivan and Carol. So we met them just like this, up close in this crowd. It was so crowded; you couldn't actually go to the kitchen and get a drink. But then, it was a four-day conference. I think Jim and McLean read together. But at any rate, that's when we first met Ivan and bought his book then. You saw how he signed it for us on the very front page instead of the title page, as you're supposed to. But it became—as soon as we could talk—it became clear that we had done identical things because both of us were older than our husbands. I was four years older than Jim. And I think Carol was maybe 3 or 4.

Mary Murphy [00:22:07] Six, I think.

Lois Welch [00:22:07] Well, a real baby. She had agreed, as I had agreed. And it wasn't a contract precisely. But it was just sort of a life plan. You want to be a writer? I've got a job. I don't want to give up my job. You want to write? You don't want my job. You mentioned somebody-- a proposal?

Mary Murphy [00:22:46] Oh, yes. I asked Carol how or if Ivan proposed to her, or if they just sort of came to a mutual understanding.

Lois Welch [00:22:56] And that's how it was with us. It's sort of like, we just were going to get married. There wasn't that magical sort of down-on-your-knees moment. It was just we couldn't live without each other. Let's figure out a time to get married. And that was very hard to do because my family's professional people, Methodist professional people, who have an officially humble but quite elevated notion of their superiority. And his parents, his father was actually not a rancher at that time, but rancher Indians. He was a hospital administrator at the moment. His mother had always been a stenographer. And so you had that kind of professional disparity. We were white. They were Indian. My parents are in Oregon. They're here. You know, how are you even going to get married? It was tricky to figure out how there could ever be a place to get them all together. Did I say my brother was a minister, by the way?

Mary Murphy [00:24:16] No, you didn't.

Lois Welch [00:24:17] Did I say my sister married a minister, by the way?

Mary Murphy [00:24:21] No.

Lois Welch [00:24:22] Did I say I managed to avoid by twenty-four hours marrying a minister?

Mary Murphy [00:24:29] No. [Laughter]

Lois Welch [00:24:33] The last week of college, on a Friday morning, a letter arrived at my house. It said, I had my assistantship to France. Whoopee! That evening, I got a phone call from a former classmate--he was a year ahead of me--who was at the Union Theological Seminary in Chicago and wanted to go out the next night. Okay. I'd never been out to a dinner date. So, of course. And we went to dinner. We did sort of the usual thing. And went up and parked on this promontory overlooking the town. After making out a bit, he announced to me, I've made a list of the most eligible women I know, and you're at the top of the list. Would you marry me? Which I think takes the cake for lack of romance.

Mary Murphy [00:25:41] I agree.

Lois Welch [00:25:42] And furthermore, I said, but oh, Ray, I'm so sorry. I'm going to France next year. And that's how I didn't become a Methodist minister's wife. And I'm so glad.

Mary Murphy [00:25:58] I'm glad, too.

Lois Welch [00:26:02] So anyhow, there we are. Back to us meeting Ivan and Carol. And it's just we had such a good time talking about how, you know, how you live your life if your husband's a writer. How you don't disturb him at certain times. Though they had contiguous desks. Were you ever in their house in Seattle?

Mary Murphy [00:26:31] Yes. I have sat at those desks.

Lois Welch [00:26:36] Did you notice the clothespin? I gave a whole memorial talk about Ivan based on that clothespin beside his computer to hold his note cards. It's so Ivan. But Jim and I, when he moved into Rose acres, he got his desk; I had my desk. And once, just once, this happened. He was typing away. I went in, started typing. He turned around after a bit and he said, this isn't going to work. You type like you're playing the piano, and I can't stand it. [Laughter] He had taken typing. If you look at his manuscripts, they're perfect. He would just sit there and go bu-bu, bu-bu, bu-bu, bu-bu, bu-bu, bu-bu.

Lois Welch [00:27:38] I would go plup, pleu. It just put him off. So we never again typed in the same place. But journalists have to.

Mary Murphy [00:27:52] Yeah, I think that's a good observation because I hadn't thought of it that way. But you're right. I was struck by that proximity, which I couldn't do.

Lois Welch [00:28:03] No, me neither.

Mary Murphy [00:28:05] But you're right. Journalists have their little desks. They're assigned their desks, and they're all in one room, and they have to work together.

Lois Welch [00:28:12] And if they don't, they aren't [indecipherable word]. Right? So they knew how to do it. I never saw them working together. But I know they did.

Lois Welch [00:28:24] And so that was really. . . I remember a professor, a Japanese American professor at Portland State taking me to lunch once. And mind you, he was five'

eight" or so. Not a bitty guy, but his wife was six' one", and we called her behind her back-- what was it? the Jolly Green Giant? She was very nice. But anyhow, he took me to lunch once to tell me that basically I should stop making such fashionable clothes and wearing them to teach. He said, no one will take you seriously until you wear navy blue. That went down in my record books. Of course, I'm not sure they would take you seriously then, but that's something else. At the time, I listened to that and thought about it and didn't take up wearing navy blue.

Mary Murphy [00:29:36] Well, I know that Carol always--we talked about this a little bit-- that she took great pride in being seen as a professional. And so when she was working for newspapers, dressing professionally was part of that. And then she carried that through to the community college, which I think because she was working with the students on newspapers, and she wanted them to sort of aspire to that level of professionalism, which isn't the same as us humanities teachers who were, you know . . .

Lois Welch [00:30:18] Well, I wanted to say it wasn't that I didn't dress professionally, it's that I didn't wear navy blue suits.

Mary Murphy [00:30:29] Yes.

Lois Welch [00:30:31] I would wear a suit with a sprightly blouse or once I made an orange velvet jumper suit.

Mary Murphy [00:30:43] Ooh, lovely.

Lois Welch [00:30:45] But that was a long time ago. I sewed because I had my legs. I have never bought a pair of pants in this town because my legs are this much. They're a full three inches longer than any pair they sell. And so I always sewed. I wasn't stuck with navy blue suits, but black is easier.

Mary Murphy [00:31:16] Black is easier. Exactly.

Lois Welch [00:31:19] And we're going to have to give it up for summertime. Well, so back to Ivan and Carol. We had a lovely time when we were first getting to know each other, sort of doing data because, you know, how did you meet? What did you do? How do you get/adjust this and that, the other? And it was so similar. And I didn't know--I didn't have any friends, actually, who supported their husbands. And that's what it really was, even though three years later, Jim was out-earning me with readings. Mind you, remember how badly we were paid. But still.

Mary Murphy [00:32:16] But still.

Lois Welch [00:32:17] Right, because I don't think you could do that now.

Mary Murphy [00:32:20] No, I don't think so either.

Lois Welch [00:32:22] But they would just keep calling him up and asking him to give readings, and he'd go and they'd pay him, and on it went.

Mary Murphy [00:32:33] Did you or did Jim and Ivan ever talk about that? What they, how they felt about going out to do these readings, you know.

Lois Welch [00:32:45] Oh, yeah.

Mary Murphy [00:32:47] And important it was to their sense of, being professional writers, helping to sell books.

Lois Welch [00:32:55] It's so interesting, see, how Ivan and Carol started as journalists, and Jim started as an Indian kid who'd flunked out of the University of Minnesota and Northern Montana College when he arrived at UM. That's something I never told my father, because he wouldn't understand how you could be a proper human being, having have flunked out of school. So I never bothered to tell him that. And Ivan was . . . Ivan was really part of a white world. Do you remember that . . . well, of course, you remember that documentary that they made about Ivan, that Nick Davis, I think is his name. Were you involved with that at all?

Mary Murphy [00:33:59] I saw, they asked me to review the first draft of it, maybe even the second draft, but otherwise I wasn't.

Lois Welch [00:34:08] At least you were in the thick of it, right? Because, well, I know what they cut out for me. Because when they finally decided they wanted to do the shoot up in Jim's study, which we can go look at, by the way. When they settled on that and got me set down and everything, the first thing, and I think it was Nick himself asked me, Jim and Ivan grew up near one another. What are the differences in their early childhood? And I couldn't believe he would, could ask that question. You know, the Blackfeet Reservation and Dupuyer are--there's a chasm in between them. And I'm sure I gasped a bit or paused a long time, and I finally said, when Jim and his father went down this street and passed signs on bars that said no dogs or Indians allowed, they didn't go in. When Ivan and his father passed those signs, they walked right in the door. They cut that from this movie, of course, but I was like, that's just what occurred to me as the gulf in the culture right there, neighbor/ neighbor, nose to nose, really. So, you know, their growing up was not at all similar. Jim's family moved ten times before he was twenty. But he did end up going to high school and graduating from high school in Minneapolis, which was good. And it's just he liked pool better than studying it turns out.

Mary Murphy [00:36:26] Well, did Jim and Ivan ever talk about their childhoods that you know of?

Lois Welch [00:36:31] Oh, I'm sure they did, but I'm sure it was more weather-related than otherwise. Because, you know, Jim had . . . Ivan's family was sort of his father--well, after his mother died--his father, his grandmother. And, you know, it was a tenuous family. And Jim had his father, his mother, an older brother, and then his younger brother was born when he was eight, like my sister was. So our families were arranged the same, Jim's and mine, but I don't think they ever talked about that, partly because Jim never wrote about his. And the first thing we knew about Ivan was that, and it told you how different their lives were. Not that one was good and one was bad, but just miles apart. But they shared weather. [Chuckle]

Mary Murphy [00:37:45] Well, and in one of the letters in Ivan's archive from Jim--which is perfectly typed--it was after he had read English Creek, which is, of course, set up in the Dupuyer area. And Jim wrote this really lovely passage about how he had "met" all of the characters that Ivan wrote about and how much he appreciated the language that Ivan basically put in their mouths. And he said, Jim said something like, I can't imagine them talking and acting in any other way. It was such a well-- Ivan wrote back that it was the

highest compliment that he was paid because he paid so much attention to getting that voice.

Lois Welch [00:38:41] He sure did.

Mary Murphy [00:38:42] Right. And so I was, curious how they read each other's work, you know, knowing the same weather in the same place, but absolutely being divided by that chasm of race. No matter--to me, having lived some in the South and then coming up here, no matter how poor you are, if you're white, you're a world away from Native American life.

Lois Welch [00:39:12] You really are. And I think ultimately that's why Jim wanted to live here rather than closer to the rez, just because he could write about that without them dropping in for coffee all the time, which they did. The first time we went to meet his parents, he said, because they lived in Harlem at the time. He said, though, you have to understand something. Okay. My people don't talk the way your people do. I said, of course. He said, the way my people talk is somebody will tell a story, and then you pause. And then somebody said, huh, good old Smith. Pause. She won't be long now. Pause. Yep, yep. Where in my crowd, you know, the movie's over. What did you think of that scene where so-and-so did, and doesn't that remind you of that other movie? You know, two daffodils where something else happened, and just the analysis and intellectual conversation starts immediately. And it was so funny that "yep" became no longer an actual northern Montana word, but a kind of code for us. I'm doing my think pause now. Yep. Yep.

Mary Murphy [00:41:22] Well, this doesn't relate specifically to Ivan or Carol, but I'm just intensely curious. Eventually, how did your respective families see your marriage?

Lois Welch [00:41:36] Well, my mother initially had said, honey, you can't marry him. He's culturally deprived, which was a wonderful gift to Jim because thereafter--because you have to understand, as a good Methodist girl, I had never seen anybody drink until I went to France. I listened only to classical music, though I was aware that Elvis was out there somewhere. We didn't dance on the campus. What else? That will do. Oh, we didn't watch TV. And so, for example, we're watching television after dinner, and somebody refers to the Brady Bunch. And I say to Jim, what's the Brady Bunch? And he said, honey, you're so culturally deprived. And he said that over and over and over again.

Lois Welch [00:42:53] Because his family was way more American mainstream than mine. It was hilarious. And so, nobody ever argued that we shouldn't get married. Jim's agent once said, well, be interesting to see how people treated you. You should write about it. But nobody, nobody in my circle. I never met anybody who said we shouldn't be married. I never heard anybody say anything anti-Indian about us or to us, because we only circulate in certain kinds of, you know, certain milieus. I won't make any nasty aspersions.

Mary Murphy [00:43:56] That's fine.

Lois Welch [00:43:58] But whereas, I felt that Ivan and Carol were almost a matched set. Like she always wore a blue denim skirt and a white shirt. He always worked khakis and a nice dress shirt, not necessarily buttoned down. And that's what they did. And they were like a matched set, just Jack and Jill. And I didn't feel we were quite as matched as that. So Jim taught me how to pack.

Mary Murphy [00:44:38] Oh.

Lois Welch [00:44:39] He said, you're gone three days. You need two pairs of pants, one jacket and three shirts and underwear and socks. That's it.

Mary Murphy [00:44:50] Good advice.

Lois Welch [00:44:51] Well, he would be gone about a hundred days a year traveling. At first he was . . . he hated flying, but he had to. So he got less afraid of it. He never grew to like it but got used to it. But to go back to the professionalism, he became professional. Whereas Ivan, by the time Jim and I met them, they were already quite thoroughly white professionals. And what was unique about Ivan was that he wasn't a journalist anymore. He was a historian, and you know the notebooks in his pocket and the green felt tip pen and the green on the ink on the finger. Yeah. And Jim almost never took notes on anything. It shocked me sometimes.

[00:46:06] I started taking notes because he didn't and his idea . . . I remember once we were going, when he was writing Indian Lawyer, when he was on the parole board, that was towards the end of that, he was starting Indian Lawyer. And he wanted to think what a lawyer's office looked like. So we were up by the lake one summer day and he said, let's go find Cal Christian's office. He was the head of the parole board, and a lawyer. He had his office up there in Polson. So we drove around, and Jim said, could be there. Yeah, or there. And I said, we could go to a service station, look in the telephone directory, and find out exactly where it was. And he said that would spoil the fun. In other words, he wanted to know his idea of research was the plausible, not the actual.

Mary Murphy [00:47:21] That's such a great way to describe the difference.

Mary Murphy [00:47:26] Actually, Marcella was telling me that Ivan wanted to know absolutely certain things, the dimensions of a radio or, you know, if it could fit in the room that he had imagined. But what was also interesting was if he didn't have in mind a use for it in the story, he wasn't interested in it at all. So she might say, well, here's the answer to this question, but are you interested in these other things that relate to it? He said, no. So the context was his imagination, but the objects needed to be accurate.

Lois Welch [00:48:07] And he was all about . . . And Jim and I often talk about him as the historian that way. And Ivan was much more like my scientist father. And it used to annoy me that facts didn't interest Jim in the way I thought they should. He wasn't opposed to them. [Laughter] We did, I remember, for Indian Lawyer, went over and I took pictures of the cathedral in the Helena so he could describe it. He didn't care how tall it was, but he wanted to have a visual sense of what it was, and that was good enough for him. And I knew it wouldn't be. . . I know that if Ivan and Carol had gone, she would take the pictures, but he would take a bunch of notes. And Jim didn't. It drove me crazy. How could you not be taking notes on this? When we were in France doing research for Charging Elk, which was a lot more research. He actually, he acquired xeroxes and stuff. So he was accumulating data. But he never, ever did notes. And I have become the Boswell in this group because the IRS made me. That is, the first year we were married, I had always done my taxes, just did them. And when we married, I did the taxes. And then we were audited, and I was wrong. There was a guy named Mike Brown in the business school. He was doing other people's taxes. And he liked us as a test case because all this stuff that Jim does, you know, the space is deductible, the books are deductible, the supplies, you

know, all that stuff and entertainment. That's really tricky. And Mike, Mike Brown, the economics guy, the business guy, would never let Jim go with him to an audit, because Jim could never get it through his head that if he's having fun, it might also be deductible. But Mike told me, what you did wrong here-- you just deducted the expenses without explaining them. In order to deduct them, you have to say who and when and where and why. So I started writing that down. And 50 years later, I have 50 account books that are luckily all the same size. But every day, every expense, everything. You want to know when we first met Sherman Alexie? I can tell you where and when. I didn't write down what they say. Sherman did that.

Mary Murphy [00:51:56] And that's a historian's dream, to have those kind of records.

Lois Welch [00:52:01] Well, and I realize that they probably will have to go to Yale. It's funny how, you know, I wouldn't dream of telling you how much my income is if I could figure it out to share it. It wouldn't be polite, and I wouldn't ask you yours. But somehow, with old accounts, it doesn't matter anyway.

Mary Murphy [00:52:27] I remember the first time I came across an income tax statement in the archive, and my first reaction was, why would someone ever reveal their income tax? But you know, by the time I looked at it, it was more than fifty years old and it had probably just got stuck in a file. And it was very helpful to me. You know, in terms of ideas about what that period of time was like. Right. Not necessarily that anything about that person. So yeah, it is, it's the grist of history, all of those.

Lois Welch [00:53:04] So I became this sort of accidental historian. [Laughter]

Mary Murphy [00:53:10] Well, when you described Jim and Ivan as magnets drawn together. I'm sure that's not the case for all writers.

Lois Welch [00:53:21] No.

Mary Murphy [00:53:21] So what do you think it was that drew them together so much?

Lois Welch [00:53:24] Well, I think, first of all, being from nowhere. Not that Montana in general is nowhere. But the Hi-Line is especially nowhere. And I think there was that, I think. Ivan was gregarious. Jim was very social. If, you know, if you put him in a room full of Indians, he was really, you know, vibrant. If you put him in the same room of white folks, he was rather more reserved. And that's just how it is. But also, I think. Ivan had a very special idea of what he wanted to do. And say, when they came to town, we knew they were coming, we would invite Annick Smith, Bill Kittredge, Bill Bevis, Juliette [Crump]. I think just those four, actually, and that makes a table of eight and was just fine. And we would talk a lot, make loud noises, drink a lot, and then they go to bed, and he'd sneak out of the house at 6:30 in the morning to go to the archive. But Kittredge didn't talk, didn't converse so much as he told stories. He was a wonderful reader, a really great reader of anything. You know, you say what you think of this? And he would say something so sharp. He was just great that way. But he was not a conversationalist. And I'm sure he would say things to Ivan like, you know, what have you been doing the last year or something? Some big general question. Just because he-- that's what you do. But I doubt that they ever had that sort of "I did this, you did that sort of thing" whereas Ivan and Jim could do it like that, you know, a bit apart over the gulf, but nearby one another. And also, I think that Jim was kind of fascinated by Ivan's punctilious historicism. Because he liked to see Ivan write things down. He, we stayed with them often enough, we saw in his closets

the arrangement of notebooks. Those books came from here and were dated and put over there. Ivan had a sense of himself as part of a process. You know, "I count," he said to himself. He knew he mattered. And I think Jim was stunned, just knocked off his pins when and of course, elated, delighted, when on November 10th, 1974, he was on the front page of the New York Times Book Review. I'd asked him earlier, before the book was published. I'd said, why do you drink so much? It's a Methodist question. Even though I like to drink at parties myself, I didn't know the answer to that question. And he said, "I used to be 'un,' that is unremarkable, an un-person. Nobody noticed me. They'd like me when I was there. But if I wasn't it, it didn't make any difference. I wasn't important to anyone, anywhere." And that was just before, of course, he became famous, more famous than any writer in Missoula. But still, I feel with Ivan, I don't know what turned a switch when he was a little boy, but something must have. Ivan turned a switch and said, I'm going to make a difference, and this is how I'm going to do it. And did it. I think Jim came by it quite differently. It was by accident that he started copying poems and then imitating poems. I published actually in the Cut Bank, last spring-- a year ago spring. I published an article. After the festival, the Jim Welch Festival, I realized I knew that the Hugo story about Hugo telling Jim to write Indian poems, and he did. You don't write poems like that if that's your first Indian poem. You've been writing poems. You know, there's so little, what you call it, autobiographical stuff. I found two essays, and he tells you outright, "I liked poems. I copied them. I imitated them. I never showed them to anybody." He'd been doing that for ten years when he met Hugo. You know, Hugo liked the story about how important he was. So Jim never argued with that because it meant Jim didn't have to mess with all that other stuff. When he found himself appreciated, he would just, you know, hand you another one. He would bring me a poem every day. But it wasn't as though he engaged the cosmos. And I think Ivan really had a sense of, it was his duty to the cosmos to show the stories of these people who were unknown, doing things that were unremarkable, and how important they were and how interesting. And I think I don't know where Ivan took that up, but I know it rather snuck up on Jim, rather than it's been part of his life plan. Which is why, of course, he [Ivan] has an archive that is big, big, big, big and already documented and available online and all of that stuff. And Jim's archive is up there being packed together and sent to Yale that asked for it.

Mary Murphy [01:01:57] I have wondered that too. In fact, it was one of the things I had down for us to discuss- what you just talked about--these two young men coming of age in different parts of Montana, and at some point, is there an element of surprise that they got to where they were? You know, to me that it seems a remarkable thing because it takes more than talent.

Lois Welch [01:02:26] Oh, yeah.

Mary Murphy [01:02:27] Lots of talented people never get recognized for their talents.

Lois Welch [01:02:31] Right.

Mary Murphy [01:02:32] Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I thought about that when I first visited Carol at her house, that beautiful house, which is totally Puget Sound and the Northwest and not at all Montana.

Lois Welch [01:02:50] Right.

Mary Murphy [01:02:51] And, you know, people have talked a lot about that. Why he chose to write in Seattle about Montana. And he and Carol have talked about that, too. But

I looked at that and I thought the difference from a house in Ringling with no, with an outhouse and then getting to live in that beautiful house looking over Puget Sound. You know, how much he had thought himself about that life. And it could be that there's something in the archive that I haven't come across yet that's self-reflective about that. But I also, but I wonder if you have any idea.

Lois Welch [01:03:33] Well, I know an interim house that you haven't been to, the, the one on the other side of that hill.

Mary Murphy [01:03:42] Right. Right. The first one in Shoreline.

Lois Welch [01:03:44] And it's literally on the other side. And it was more buried in trees than, than I am with my spruce trees and my cedar. That may be the biggest cedar in Missoula. But still, their house was more buried still. It was almost dark all the time, because I remember looking out the kitchen window and realizing the sun didn't quite hit it in the morning, and it was a nice enough house. It was. He always was, they always were the kind of people who had bare surfaces. You'll notice I don't have any. And when I do, I put something in it I want to look at. And that's just how I am. And it amazes me then that other people are different. And my mother was a hoarder, and I fight it, but I'm not a hoarder. They have, the two of them had this agreement on openness. A kind of way they lived that, you know, if you went to dinner, you had salmon, fresh lettuce out of the garden there, yogurt dressing that he made and perhaps a baked potato. I'm not sure what. And then something good for dessert that they would have bought. Carol never made pies, and that's the way they ate. And you knew, they were never going to get fat. [Laughter] And they were never going to get falling down drunk because that's the kind of people they were. That was even true in that dark little house. It was dark colored, too, like, I don't know, not brown, but say, turquoise, avocado. That kind of . . . avocado would be a Seattle color. And there was the kitchen here, a dining room, living room-- quite dark--and then a bathroom, a space back there that they had a, I think, exercycle in, and then a garden. But, you know, very few things grow in that much shade. So they had, I don't know, columbine or fuchsias or something. It was, let's just say it was the \$30,000 equivalent of the \$100,000 one up above, facing the sun, the openness, the balcony, and the the Sound. And I never once heard either of them. How should I say--they weren't greedy. He was delighted to make money. They knew they needed money. They were very practical about money. But there was nothing you could call conspicuous consumption. Unless that house was in its a big openness; that living room was spectacular. But there was no ostentation.

Mary Murphy [01:08:18] Right. Right.

Lois Welch [01:08:19] None.

Mary Murphy [01:08:19] Right.

Lois Welch [01:08:21] But mind you, you knew they weren't shabby poor because nothing was allowed to be shabby. I have chips in the paint over there. That I think, you know, that's a bad sign. [Laughter]

Lois Welch [01:08:43] That's shabby. Jim would disapprove.

Mary Murphy [01:08:47] Would he?

Lois Welch [01:08:48] He would. Because he would say that I wasn't . . . you know, I'm not taking care of things properly. Being too much like my mother. But it's very hard now.

Mary Murphy [01:09:07] Yes.

Lois Welch [01:09:07] So anyhow. I know that both those guys grew up knowing they wanted something--a life that wasn't shabby. And they both got it. And I think part of that just comes from growing up poor and shabby in that kind of country, where that's how things are. I don't know, I've never been able to figure out with Ivan, kind of, what that turning point was in his life, apart from listening to his mother breathe her last. But that doesn't do it.

Mary Murphy [01:09:58] Well, and I don't know either. I mean, I think that the school teacher he had up in the Dupuyer country was very influential. I mean, he portrays that.

Lois Welch [01:10:11] That's true. He does. But.

Mary Murphy [01:10:14] Yeah. But. Where that decision, that drive to. . . Well, I guess he, you know, Carol said that one of his early ambitions when he was in journalism was to be in broadcast journalism, to be like Walter Cronkite. So he worked on his voice. You hear that. He talked about being able to project and the sort of cover-all-bases accent or lack of accent. So I think that that, choosing to do journalism, having that. But he took all those steps, then becoming a historian, but deciding not to be an academic.

Lois Welch [01:11:01] Right.

Mary Murphy [01:11:02] And then, you know, discussions about becoming a writer. And, you know, I love this parallel that you and Carol draw between yourselves as women of a certain period where it was very unusual to sort of be the breadwinner of the household so that your partners could try to be writers, which was a risky business.

Lois Welch [01:11:28] Right? And in both cases, it was "try."

Mary Murphy [01:11:33] Right. And you must have been very aware of that in your role as the impresario, of inviting writers and knowing the backstories of whatever got them to the place where you would invite them as a representative writer.

Lois Welch [01:11:48] Right. Yes. And I didn't expect that. I had no inkling. Jim had great confidence in himself somehow, more than I did. And so when he wanted to be a poet and I'd seen just a bit of what he'd done, I just trusted it, perhaps foolishly but I remember my mother, also, after the culturally deprived speech, the next thing she said was you'll have to support him all your life because he's a poet. And I probably said the meanest thing I ever said to my mother in response, because, of course, I was irritated. "If you thought I got a Ph.D. In order to marry a man who would then support me, and I would raise three children, you have to think again." Because I, you know, I knew my mother resented kind of her secondary position, and actually she's responsible for my not being an activist of any sort because she ran women's groups and taught Sunday school and was the state PTA head and the state TB society and all of that stuff. And it seemed to me deeply futile when your house is a wreck, and I just felt I had no place in my own house. And so she was doing all these good deeds. And it was to make her feel that she mattered. And I thought you should start at the other end. And so I got a Ph.D. because I wanted to learn that stuff. And it turns out that after I got over a certain quantity of shyness, I liked doing

that. And then it turns out I'm very good at organizing, which I don't think I really knew. And there goes the rest of that story. But where did we start with that?

Mary Murphy [01:14:49] The parallels between.

Lois Welch [01:14:51] Between both of us. Yeah. Because we'd never we never even talked about, Did you ever want to have children? I think we knew the answer was, no. And obviously we were married to men for whom the answer was, no. Jim and I had a one-sentence discussion about that before we got married. It wasn't long enough to keep your attention on it. So it was clear what we wanted to do was to have this kind of a life. And that's what they wanted. I didn't realize that it was unusual. Maybe that's silly of me. Or maybe it's that when you're trying to do what you're trying to do, you block out certain messages that are raining down on you.

Mary Murphy [01:16:02] You were in a community, and I don't know a lot about the community of Missoula writers. I know Diane Smith is working on a project.

Lois Welch [01:16:13] Do you know Diane? Of course you do.

Mary Murphy [01:16:15] Yes.

Lois Welch [01:16:16] Of course. I hadn't thought of that. Of course.

Mary Murphy [01:16:20] Yeah.

Mary Murphy [01:16:21] But, you know, obviously there were, an array of partnerships of people who were working and people who were doing other kinds of creative work, whether they were in formally paid positions or not. And so you were, it seems to me that you were in that world.

Lois Welch [01:16:41] Yeah. It was a whole milieu. It's true. Yeah.

Mary Murphy [01:16:48] So you talked about, you know, having the dinner with the "usual suspects." How did Ivan and Carol fit into that community? Because they came maybe once a year or so, and you get the impression . . . Well, I get the impression from just the correspondence that I read that you and Jim were very much hosts and often . . .

Lois Welch [01:17:11] Right.

Mary Murphy [01:17:13] Had the parties and supported that group. So how, where did Carol and Ivan as a Montana writer who wasn't in Montana kind of fit in that?

Lois Welch [01:17:27] Well, everybody liked them. Everybody knew their books. They just slipped right in, and I suppose it's partly because of the kind of people they were. First of all, Montanans, and Ivan wanted to be anonymous, he said. And I think Jim, in the same way, wanted to be, not under the pressures of the life story that he was supposed to have as an Indian. He really was trying to live a counter-narrative to that. He didn't want his brother's life, his father's life, his mother's life. He didn't want the life of anyone, actually, that he knew. He wanted to live as a writer. And it's easier. It was easier to be far away from home because then you don't have those kinds of demands. And then on top of that, it's true. There was that whole ambiance of writers in the creative writing program and graduating from it and hanging around because housing wasn't expensive. And, you know,

I thought twice in 1966 whether I should pay \$275 a month, when I'd been paying \$225 before. We paid--this house was \$43,000. I was earning \$38,000 at the time. The guy at the credit union said that wasn't enough for a mortgage. Jim said, I earn money, too. That night in the middle of the night, he was playing music loud, and I said, what are you doing waking me up? And he said, I earn money, too. We have to have that house. And it's true. He had an option on . . . the guy had taken an option on *Winter in the Blood* to make a movie. Both of us, both Jim and I and the guy at the credit union were too naive to know that your chances of getting the movie made are this big, but it got us the mortgage, which then he was to pay half, and I was to pay half from my salary. And that's how we did it. Which is why he started teaching. And I think because Carol had actually a better job, that is, it paid more there. And because he probably got better advances than Jim did on his poems at first. Jim sold *Winter in the Blood* in 1974 for \$10,000. I don't know what Ivan got for that. I just found that figure for Jim. You know, once you have that, you have that kind of security; it gives you a different place in the world.

Mary Murphy [01:21:29] I think that point that you made of, it was easier to be a writer away from family. And I think Ivan found that, too. You know, and he, didn't necessarily put it that eloquently or talk about family, but I think that when Marcella . . . when I asked Marcella about when they would go on road trips, he didn't want to connect to family. You know, he was there to write and that was overweening, you know . . .

Lois Welch [01:22:09] Absolutely right. I hate to say it this way, but yes, Jim was begrudging even though he loved his family. I was more begrudging because I loved mine less.

Mary Murphy [01:22:28] Well, how are you doing on time and energy? Are we okay to keep going a little bit more?

Lois Welch [01:22:34] Well. I don't know what my archivist is actually doing, but he's a clever boy and there's a lot he can do. And so I'm, I'm game to go a little longer if you are.

Mary Murphy [01:22:50] Well, I guess, let me, I just wanted to . . .

Lois Welch [01:22:53] And by the way, humor was never a matter of discussion. It was simply a part of what was going on.

Mary Murphy [01:23:02] Well, I, found the correspondence between the four of you so witty. You know, there was just an understanding, and the way that you wrote about your activities. And it was charming, and it was also very witty.

Lois Welch [01:23:24] Right. Well, I think that is true, but nobody was deliberately being funny.

Mary Murphy [01:23:33] Right, right, right. Yeah. I didn't mean that, I meant that sort of wry . . . I saw that wry appreciation of life in there.

Lois Welch [01:23:41] Ivan was good at the wry. Jim was an Indian. And Indian humor is a whole other thing. Do you know about Indian humor at all? Well, one of the reasons is, of course, it's a survival stance. But Jim often . . . and other Indians have too. I had a student once in 1967 this kid . . . I finished my dissertation in 1966 so I only had a PhD from then. And it was, as I said, on comedy. I had this kid come to me who said--you know, he didn't write very well. And then he said, you white people have no sense of humor. Which was

news to me, having written, just finished, my dissertation on comedy and thought I had rather a fine sense of humor. He also said earlier, I was born sometime in 1957, in 1957? Sometime in the 1950s on Hill 57. Later, he said, we moved to town. Which tells you more than you'd like to know. But he thought we had no sense of humor. And Jim says that when I'm with a group of Indians, of course I'm the white girl, and it simmers them down. But you get a bunch of Indian guys together, they are always laughing. You know, my favorite because I could remember it is: what's a Sioux picnic? A six pack of puppies and a beer. That's a Navajo joke. They are so crass. And it was great consequently, being around Jim. It was always so funny, and--not always, but the humor was always in our dinners because Ivan really was very witty. Carol was, I think, do you think Carol is more retiring than I am?

Mary Murphy [01:26:38] Yes.

Lois Welch [01:26:39] I think so.

Mary Murphy [01:26:44] I think, I mean, what has struck me about Carol is the range and depth of her friendships and also a sort of core of reserve.

Lois Welch [01:26:59] Right. I think she is more reserved than I am. The reason I ask that is partly in relation to humor. Because I will risk jokes, and I never saw Carol doing that. And also she dresses in a much more . . . I mean when I'm willing to, I have a flamboyant side, and I've never seen it in Carol.

Mary Murphy [01:27:39] No.

Lois Welch [01:27:43] It doesn't go with a white blouse and a blue denim skirt. And then I know I'll just go (indecipherable word)! (Indecipherable).

[01:27:55] Well, my in-laws are from the Seattle area, and so I feel like-- Ivan, who I didn't know well; I knew him a little bit before he died. But having gotten to know Carol more, I see this kind of Northwest character in that they all had early REI numbers, right?

Lois Welch [01:28:25] That's really funny.

Mary Murphy [01:28:27] You know, the importance of the outdoors and hiking and the kind of look of that, you know, that's what's natural for them now, I think.

Lois Welch [01:28:37] I think that's true.

Mary Murphy [01:28:39] I guess the last thing I wanted to ask about was, as you and then Carol became widows, do you feel your relationship changed?

Lois Welch [01:28:52] Well, actually, it literally did, because we just see one another less. And we weren't predisposed to talk on the phone to one another. And I have seen her. Before my stroke I went over and visited her more than once. I remember the last time I was at the house, she said she didn't want to drive you to the airport anymore, and God bless her, it's so far. And she called a driver who drove me, and I wished she had been in the car two minutes after we drove away because the driver said, "Doig, is that Ivan Doig?" And I said, "Yes, actually it is." "He's my favorite author." And for half of the two-hour drive to the airport, he talked about Ivan's books, and I thought that was just great. But no, it's true that I was going today to, and I will later, I was going to say you were going to come.

Mary Murphy [01:30:22] I told her I was coming.

Lois Welch [01:30:24] And I was going to tell her that and wish her Ivan's 87th birthday, and and I'll do that. But I know I haven't corresponded with her since maybe February. And she was talking about . . . She has dizziness, I guess.

Mary Murphy [01:30:47] She's got some difficulty walking.

Lois Welch [01:30:49] Right. But I gather it's not muscular, but it's. . .

Mary Murphy [01:30:55] Yeah, I'm not quite sure.

Lois Welch [01:30:56] I went a year ago, I started going to a PT. Well, until my therapist threw me out a month ago, I've been going for eight years about Wilbur here [referring to her left arm], because when I had my stroke, there was nobody home. It was a dead salmon hooked to my arm, to my shoulder. And so I have, by that measure, made a remarkable comeback, because I can even do this if I must [holds a cup] but mind you, I can't pick it up, and I'm not sure I can really hold it.

Mary Murphy [01:31:36] Right. You can prop it in that hand.

Lois Welch [01:31:38] Right? And so I know I've come . . . you know, it's 85 percent at least. But I went to PT because I felt I was beginning to lose my balance. Right. I felt like I was losing it whether I fell over or not. And so I wanted to . . . and with me there just strengthening me up. But I gather it's something else with her because it's been ongoing.

Mary Murphy [01:32:12] I know that she's worked with in fact, one of her, a Feldenkreis teacher, came the last time I was there so we all did a class together. It was really fun.

Lois Welch [01:32:24] What do they do?

Mary Murphy [01:32:26] Well, it's a lot of exercises to try, as I understand it, to try to make you aware of how your body is aligned and how even small movements can in fact improve your balance or your strength, or your awareness of the position you have in space around you, which is all about balance.

Lois Welch [01:32:51] Proprioception and balance.

Mary Murphy [01:32:53] Yeah, right.

Lois Welch [01:32:54] Got it.

Mary Murphy [01:32:57] Well, is there any last thing that you've been thinking about that we didn't have a chance to talk about, a last story about Ivan or Ivan or Carol.

Lois Welch [01:33:06] I'm sorry I didn't get to see him during his very last years because I just didn't get over there. But of course, you know, it rather tore my life apart to lose Jim in 2003. And so, you know, I think I went over there at least once after that. Jim went over and we stayed in their house after they left in the spring of 2003. We stayed in the house after they were gone. And it was very pleasant to have such a lovely space there and to feel what it was like without them in it.

Lois Welch [01:34:11] Because you know, they were remarkable. I would especially . . . See, I have come to understand the way Jim got the way he was to a large degree. But he wasn't likely to talk about it as much as I am. He didn't think it was interesting or important. And his agent called it a kind of pathological modesty, because every time he called her office, he would say, this is Jim Welch, one of Elaine's clients, as though they didn't know that. And Ivan. What Ivan wasn't was an egomaniac. I know people who tell nothing but stories about their exploits. It's a cowboy thing. It's a bar thing. It's an unpleasant thing. There are writers who do it. It's unpleasant. Ivan, on the one hand, would hone in and want to talk to you, with you, ask you stuff. He was always alive and interested, but it wasn't because he wanted to impose himself on you, which I feel a lot of those cowboy talkers--if you allow the phrase--though, that's what they want. They want you to subside. And hear about how wonderful they are. And what I felt that Ivan was, was almost an information vacuum. And that was the energy behind his socializing, which is not true of most people.

Mary Murphy [01:36:34] I agree. I think that that curiosity about people, about the way they spoke, about the way they worked, what they, how they related, I think that's how I've come to see Ivan. And I think that for him, it wasn't about writing the great American novel. You know, Carol said, when he finished one novel, he had two or three ideas for the next one. It was his work.

Lois Welch [01:37:10] I asked him once, how do you avoid postpartum depression? Because writers get that. He said, I always have the next one.

Mary Murphy [01:37:22] And I think that discipline that sounds like both of them shared, that was evident in Ivan's clothespin and his notebooks and everything. You know, he wouldn't do anything unless he had his word count or his hour count for the day done. Because that was his job.

Lois Welch [01:37:43] Right. But it wasn't his job in the sense that doing the dishes is your job. It was his profession really. Even though it was a duty, it was not because it had to be done but because he was to do it.

Mary Murphy [01:38:17] And I think it became his calling.

Lois Welch [01:38:21] Yeah.

Mary Murphy [01:38:22] You know, and the difference between, let's say for me being a historian and being a professor, being a historian is my calling. Being a professor was my job. And I think that both for Ivan and for Jim, having you and having Carol, enabled them to come to that place of where their calling and their job became one.

Lois Welch [01:38:49] I think that's true. Do you know other . . . I don't know of other writers of whom this is true. Do you?

Mary Murphy [01:38:58] No. I wouldn't know anywhere near as many as you do. But I do think they're unusual.

Lois Welch [01:39:04] I never hear Mrs. Updike [Laughter] I know nothing about Mrs. Updike.

Mary Murphy [01:39:17] Well, Lois, I was I just want to thank you so much.

Lois Welch [01:39:20] Well, I feel somehow like I haven't told you the story that needs to be told. Because I guess I have to talk a lot before I can figure out what that needs to be. And so I feel that I should offer something I don't know yet, but I think I've learned, it's like the Marguerita story I was telling you. You don't realize the significance until later when you can put it in a bigger perspective. And I've come to some of that about Ivan and Carol. One of the things I realized, and I'm not sure how to deal with it quite yet, because I realized just lately that Lois, the notebooker . . . When I was in the hospital with my heart surgery, I felt bad because I didn't have a notebook to write stuff in, and I asked a friend to get me one. [Laughter] And I've always done that. And Jim had no interest in that at all. The only reason he had a notebook for his novels is so he could draw the diagrams of the particular chapters or note down stuff. I had to teach him footnoting. Oh, I have a picture up there. I'm sure Ivan wouldn't do this. I have a picture of Jim's floor strewn.

Lois Welch [01:41:23] Yes, I found it. [the microphone slipped]. It's a one-handed thing.

Lois Welch [01:41:33] Jim's floor is strewn with books. And partly, it turns out, when he was working on the film script for the Battle of the Little Bighorn, if one of the books mentioned, if they called Indians "savages," he would stop reading. There were a lot of them.

Mary Murphy [01:41:56] Yes.

Lois Welch [01:41:59] But he also in Fools Crow and other books, he would refer, you know, he would use books as a resource. And he thought he would remember where he found the quotes. I said, no, you will not. You have a great memory. It's all fine. You will not. You must learn parenthetical documentation. I don't care how brief it is. You have to have the title and a page. And he started doing it and was glad. But I was thinking, Ivan would never, never have had to be taught that. Ivan probably did footnotes when he was eleven. Don't you think? [Laughter]

Mary Murphy [01:42:54] I can totally see him writing notes when he was eleven. Well, if you ever think of that story that is in you that you haven't articulated yet, you can email me and I'll come back and get it.

Lois Welch [01:43:09] Well, that's true because you want it on this. I hope I'm clear enough on that. I know we've gone round but I assume also that that's the usual way.

Mary Murphy [01:43:23] Absolutely.

Lois Welch [01:43:24] Because it's in the discussion you find things you want to talk about.

Mary Murphy [01:43:30] I feel like I saw, I put pieces together in ways that I hadn't thought about it.

Lois Welch [01:43:36] Right.

Mary Murphy [01:43:37] And I guess my hope for, you know, Carol sees very much the archive as Ivan's legacy and, of course, that the books will continue to be published and read, but that people will have access to both the way he worked professionally as a writer, what he went through when he was dealing with cancer. You know that things will

be helpful for students or scholars. I hope someone will write, come to write a biography of Ivan and that these conversations will help people make connections. And I would imagine that you see the "Jimoir" and his archive in the same way.

Lois Welch [01:44:26] Right. Of course I do. And especially I feel that people don't know certain things, and I need to tell that story because of that. Yeah. And I need to have done it earlier, but I . . . it was very hard for me. I don't sense that Carol had any ambition herself. I always wanted to be a writer. I thought it was the best thing in the world ever since I read children's books. Yes, you know about children's books, Alice in Wonderland. "The Jumblies go to sea in the sieve, in a sieve they go to sea. Their heads are green and their eyes are blue. In a sieve they went to sea." The Silly Jumblies. I always thought they were magical. It was actually, it was easy to be the Boswell around here, because up there at Hugo's, where they would talk endlessly about poetry, sometimes baseball, but mostly poetry and stories about writers, long into the night. And I have specific instances of how I was just elbowed out of the group into the nice wife, who made a witty remark now and then and cooked pretty well. And then they admired me for being such a bright person as an academic, but I wasn't part of that. Diane Smith and I sat a whole winter and talked about those stories, and it became sort of startlingly clear that in this crowd here, if you married a writer, you agreed to living under a bushel. And I think one of the things I liked about the Ivan-Carol relationship was that it was set up that way, the way it was, and it worked this way. And there was no disparaging. Now, it's true, Carol never told me about her courses, and I never told her about mine. But still, we weren't shuffled off. And that doesn't . . . well, there are several marriages like that around, but not all of them.

Mary Murphy [01:47:39] Yeah. And I think that Carol and Ivan had such respect for each other's work, as I think you and Jim did, that it would have been hard to have such a long and satisfying marriage if you didn't have that.

Lois Welch [01:47:56] Oh, yeah.

Mary Murphy [01:48:01] And that you so easily came to those decisions of not having children and getting married. Yes. Let's get married. It seems the right thing to do. I mean, the stories are so similar in that way.

Lois Welch [01:48:12] Right.

Mary Murphy [01:48:12] So there's a, I don't know, a kind of, a sort of, I don't know what word I'm looking for. Atmosphere isn't the right thing, but, a way in which the four of you inhabited your spaces that overlapped.

Lois Welch [01:48:31] Well, I feel sometimes like you think maybe that you're the only people who are like this. And when you meet somebody else who is, you feel like you belong to a club where you've checked all the boxes. And it works and it works like that.

Mary Murphy [01:48:56] Yes. Fingers closely intertwined.

Lois Welch [01:48:59] Even if one hand doesn't work anyway. Can I ask you some questions?

Mary Murphy [01:49:05] Sure. Do you want us to [be on tape]?

Lois Welch [01:49:07] I don't want to. No.

Mary Murphy [01:49:07] Okay. So thank you very much.