

Interview with

C.M. Giesler

By

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Kennedy Space Center, Florida

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Dr. Lipartito: Ah, this is Kenneth Lipartito on June 3rd 2004. Vierra speaking with C.M. Giesler oral interview for the Kennedy History Project.

Dr. Lipartito: Mr. Giesler why don't you start by giving me your full, your full official name that you want to be remembered by?

Mr. Giesler: That's the, that's the hardest, well I couldn't give you all of it if I wanted to be remembered by it

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, alright.

Mr. Giesler: But its Carson Monroe Giesler

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: and I don't like the Monroe at all or or the Carson either. That's why people call me C.M.

Dr. Lipartito: You went by C.M.

Mr. Giesler: Yeah, all my life.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright. Very good

Mr. Giesler: And, uh, what did you say just give you a summary?

Dr. Lipartito: Well I'd like to talk to you. Let's begin with your your childhood, where you were brought up and how how eventually you got into the space program.

Mr. Giesler: Ok, it was long and tough. Group up on a farm, forty acres in Polk Count Arkansas, three miles from the Oklahoma line and a mile and a half from the city of Cove, a city of three hundred strong,

Dr. Lipartito: Three hundred.

Mr. Giesler: all hill billies like me. I went to high school there, we actually had a high school and got through it and got graduated in forty-eight. Went to work at a saw mill a mile

and a half south of town, rode a bicycle down there and back home everyday. Three months was enough of that. (laughter) This is after I got out of high school. And that's a tough job, they put me in the hold, they call it the hold, jerking strips right off the, off bearing right off the saw, you know.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, that doesn't sound like fun.

Mr. Giesler: And that's a tough, tough life. So I did that for three months and decided, hm, Navy, Navy. I kept seeing this posters down there "Uncle Sam needs you"

Dr. Lipartito: So you were too young for World, World War II then.

Mr. Giesler: Yep, my brother, my older brother Moes was a big World War II man, but I I was just right for the Korean,

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: Korean broke out just while I was in and I got an extra year in the Navy because of it.

Dr. Lipartito: So you had signed up before the war.

Mr. Giesler: I signed up before the war, right after high school after three months at the saw mill. That made the Navy look good. (laughter) I signed up for three years and the Korean War broke out. I was ready for discharge, I was due leaving Guam like any minute for discharge and the Korean War broke out and they said you've got another year.

Dr. Lipartito: Ohh. Boy.

Mr. Giesler: So I spent another year there at Guam.

Dr. Lipartito: What did you do, what did you do in the Navy?

Mr. Giesler: I was a technician. I I got out of boot camp and I, I went to a a ATAL school, they call it, in Memphis, Tennessee. That's a Navy, a huge Navy school there and they treat, they teach all technical aspects of Navy jobs. Any any technical rate in the Navy

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: they just about teach them all there, but I went there and and became, I went to the ATAL school. That that ATAL is a radio technician slash operator.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: You learn to be both there.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: So I went through boot camp, then went to Memphis for a year. Took a year to go through that school. Had an offer to stay there for my career and play baseball. Probably the biggest mistake of my life, but I said "No thanks." I was playing

Dr. Lipartito: To play base?

Mr. Giesler: To play baseball

Dr. Lipartito: In Memphis?

Mr. Giesler: in Memphis in a league. In a, in a in a league there involving Memphis and the county and everybody in the world that was there. Pretty good, it was pretty good. At least cless, Class A ball

Dr. Lipartito: Really?

Mr. Giesler: Pretty good stuff.

Dr. Lipartito: So you played baseball in high school?

Mr. Giesler: Didn't play in high school. I played. You know, they didn't play baseball in high school. They played soft ball.

Dr. Lipartito: Really

Mr. Giesler: But I played baseball at age 12, 14 and really got serious with town teams, the town teams. In fact I got recruited from the town four, four miles up the road. Wasn't even my home town. Man, that's big stuff.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: But yeah, I played baseball all my life. And and there at Memphis in the Navy I played. They tried to get me to stay there for, you know, the career, and I didn't and so I left. Now what were we talking about?

Dr. Lipartito: You were in the Navy for an extra year cause of Korea.

Mr. Giesler: Yeah.

Dr. Lipartito: So you must have got out in fifty-two?

Mr. Giesler: Fifty-two is correct. Went to Dallas Texas, because I'd just gotten married in Hawaii, which was my last duty station. Along the way I did a year in Guam, or two years in Guam I guess, because of the Korean War. I think I already said that. But my new bride and I decided, she she decided really, I guess both of us wanted to go back to the states because she lived in Hawaii at the time. And the closest place to Arkansas that I could get a job was Dallas Texas Chance Vought Aircraft so I went out there and started there

Dr. Lipartito: Ah, ok.

Mr. Giesler: And they hired me as a technician and I'm and I immediately went to work on the Regulus missile which was a Navy ship to shore or shore to shore kind of thing. An inter, intermediate IRBM, I guess you called them.

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: Ballistic Missile

Dr. Lipartito: The Regulus. I don't think I've ever heard of it.

Mr. Giesler: Regulus, Regulus, Navy, Navy launched, submarine. It could launch it underwater or you could launch it off an aircraft carrier like a plane.

Dr. Lipartito: Huh

Mr. Giesler: Or you could launch it off of any strip.

Dr. Lipartito: Huh.

Mr. Giesler: And it was a

Dr. Lipartito: Was it a cruise type missile?

Mr. Giesler: It was a cruise missile, uh huh.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: I forgot the range on it. I believe it was something like five hundred miles, something like that.

Dr. Lipartito: Huh.

Mr. Giesler: It could get up and fly forever, you know,

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: like an airplane.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: Big fuel tanks

Dr. Lipartito: Big fuel

Mr. Giesler: Wasn't, wasn't a rocket.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: It was an air breather.

Dr. Lipartito: Right. Is that R-E-G-U-L-U-S?

Mr. Giesler: Regulus, R-E-G-U, Regulus R-E-G-U-L-U-S I think. I don't know.

Lynn can tell you. She's, she can spell anything.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: I, I've got it in this book here. We can look it up.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: Later I can show you how to spell it. I think it's, I think its. Well it doesn't matter. We'll look it up. So

Dr. Lipartito: So you were working on that with Chance Vought

Mr. Giesler: Chance Vought

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: I spent eight years there.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh. Really.

Mr. Giesler: Running, testing and selling Regulus missiles to the Navy. In fact I turned, I've got a picture upstairs that shows me and my crew standing in front of the seven hundred and fiftieth Regulus I.

Dr. Lipartito: Wow.

Mr. Giesler: And then we sold, we got a new one, a new missile, Reg II, which was a lots larger and longer range

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: than the other one. And just improved in every way. And we, we we tested seventy five of those

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: and shipped to the Navy. Navy inspection came in. It was there in the plant forty eight hours a day observing all the tests and they stamped it off for the Navy when we finished.

Dr. Lipartito: Huh.

Mr. Giesler: So it was sealed and sent directly to the Navy. Left there. We were running out of job and and in fact tested the last one and of course people in industry knew that. So there was a guy from McDonnell Aircraft in St. Louis came down and interviewed me one day like at one one day before I left or maybe the day after. Came out to the house and all that. And hired me to go to McDonnell

Dr. Lipartito: Ohhh

Mr. Giesler: in St Louis to, I don't remember what he hired me for. I think I guess they hired me; I was hands on lead man at the missile ramps at testing the missiles, you know, and selling them to the Navy. And I knew, knew them from one end to the other. So they hired me to work on a missile that they had a contract for which was a bomber launched missile. I believe it was the B-20, not the B-29, B-36. Was there a B-36, some big mother?

Dr. Lipartito: twenty-nine and fifty five

Mr. Giesler: Monster. Anyway some, some Air Force missile that was launched from under the wing

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok.

Mr. Giesler: of an aircraft of some kind, I don't remember what.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: And they hired me to do that. And I went there and about, maybe one or two or three months, in that range. It might have been as short as one or it might have been

as long as three months, along came NASA and and gave McDonnell a contract for the Mercury Spacecraft

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: And McDonnell instantly came to our organization because we were doing missile stuff you know

Dr. Lipartito: Huh huh.

Mr. Giesler: And you know it's pretty close to the, to the Regulus missile. It was a missile

Dr. Lipartito: (laughter) Is that the only thing missiling?

Mr. Giesler: No the Regulus, I'm mixed up now. That was, that was the, yeah that was the one at Chance Vought

Dr. Lipartito: That was, right.

Mr. Giesler: They got the Mercury thing and and you know, spaceships and missiles have a lot of common systems in them

Dr. Lipartito: Sure, sure

Mr. Giesler: So they immediately took me and put me on that program.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok

Mr. Giesler: And I had to change buildings and all that jazz. And I was I I was hired by these to write test procedures because I had been writing; we had been writing our own at Chance Vought. So anyway when they got this Mercury Spaceship contract, they took me and a handful of other guys that was there working on the big Am72, whatever that was and sent us over there to start a new group to, to work on the NASA stuff

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok.

Mr. Giesler: And we did that and I was working for a guy named Lloyd Fry (phonetic) and the group was, I don't know, twelve of us probably some something like that, twelve or fourteen and about six months he, the company decided they had to send him and a group to Kennedy

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: and get started down there. Boy it wasn't that soon it was probably maybe six months to a year but they decided they had to have some technical writers at Kennedy

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: For when the spacecraft got there,

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: they would continue to write test procedures down there for it. And we were doing those we were doing factory checkout procedures.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: So that all took place and I was there, you know, they left all the others and I had a group there, probably twelve to fourteen people writing test procedures for the factory checkout of the bird. And low and behold we got word one day that NASA was coming up. The big guns from NASA and get ready for a shock, you know, they're going to eat us up. And actually one thing I left out I guess, before that I had went to Bell Aircraft

Dr. Lipartito: Oh

Mr. Giesler: which is at the North Pole (laughter), you know, as far as I'm concerned.

Dr. Lipartito: The North Pole.

Mr. Giesler: What's that place were the big waterfall is?

Dr. Lipartito: Niag,

Mr. Giesler: Niagara Falls

Dr. Lipartito: Niagara Falls up in New York Oh, that's right. Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: I spent a winter in Niagara Falls (laughter), I mean dead of winter, working on the RCS home system on the Mercury capsule which was the small rocket system attitude control

Dr. Lipartito: Oh.

Mr. Giesler: and the retro rockets and all that stuff. All, everything except the booster, you know, it had its own control system.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok.

Mr. Giesler: So I went up and spent a winter in Bell, like three or four months, learning those systems

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: So I could write the test procedures on them when the thing got to

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: to St. Louis.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: And about the time I got back, now this is John Yardley country. John Yardley was the head of the group I was in

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: And it was like writing procedures for God, or the devil, or a combo, combination. No one on earth could please John Riley, John Yardley. He was the smartest man on earth you know.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: He was really tough

Dr. Lipartito: What was his, so his job was what?

Mr. Giesler: He was head of the project

Dr. Lipartito: project

Mr. Giesler: of the Mercury/Gemini which it became soon Mercury slash

Gemini. He was the head of the organization

Dr. Lipartito: Ok.

Mr. Giesler: that was designing it and putting it on paper and of course for the guys to build, so

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: he later came to Kennedy

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: and became NASA

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: and we were, we all clapped (hands clapping) (laughter)

Dr. Lipartito: Well he worked for, he worked for McDonnell.

Mr. Giesler: He was McDonnell

Dr. Lipartito: Ahhh.

Mr. Giesler: He was McDonnell vice President

Dr. Lipartito: Oh really

Mr. Giesler: One of those, there was several of them.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah, sure, Ok

Mr. Giesler: I'm not sure, I think he may have become Vice president when he went down there, not before,

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: but I can't be sure of that.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: I believe Logan McMillan (phonetic) was the vice president of that group that Yardley was in when he was there. But anyway, I went into that group and wrote test procedures for months and months and months, seemed like half my life, that were used there and then they were taken to the Cape and used down there. And my boss at the time was Lloyd Fry. When it got time for the first spaceship to be delivered he, he went with it.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: to Kennedy

Dr. Lipartito: Sure

Mr. Giesler: And I was left behind in charge and that was the first time I became a supervisor up there and I had like fourteen people, fourteen tech writers working for me to stay there and continue

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: the procedural stuff. Now in other, it wasn't long, probably six months at most after Lloyd left, it might a, might have been quicker, NASA started coming in up there from the Cape

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: wanting to look at these procedures that

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: they knew was going to come down with the bird which hadn't come down yet.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: And they were interested in looking at the bird and finding out about it and being part of the test and checkout effort which I like I did in Rockwell later as a NASA man. And one of the guys, two of the guys I remember coming up was John Williams and Joe Bobick (phonetic)

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: And John was head of Spacecraft Ops at that time and Bobick was head of Spacecraft Ops Qual like they both were when they retired.

Dr. Lipartito: Huh

Mr. Giesler: That was their jobs for life, you know. And I remember them both coming up there and Bobick of course the first thing he did was shut them down, shut us, shut the Mercury Gemini, Mercury/Gemini, it was both by that time. He shut, shut the operation down because he, he got to looking at the tile on the space ship and wanted to know where what, he wanted to see the spec.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: I remember that just as clear and you know Bobick well, whether you knew him or not

Dr. Lipartito: I do not know him.

Mr. Giesler: He was a the world's meanest, orneriest and probably most intelligent inspector that there ever was. He was our neighbor out here in the North County for

years and years and years. Good man. But anyway he, he said "I want to see the spec on these shingles these heat heat protective shingles on this thing." Well guess what, we didn't have one.

Dr. Lipartito: (laughter) You didn't have any.

Mr. Giesler: That's why I remember that. But anyway and then the next thing I remember from NASA was John Williams when he arrived. With his big Stogy and his Alabama talk. He's an Alabama boy. And he headed for my shop. He wanted to see the, whose those guys were writing procedures because he was interested in the procedures cause he was going to have to man the console down at the Cape, you know

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: So he came in looking for the procedure bunch and found me and with his cigar and he says [in southern accent] "You name Giesler" I says "Yeah, I'm Giesler" He says, "You write this crap?" (laughter) "Yes sir." He said "Come over here and talk to me." And we became good friends. And he started trying to hire me.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok.

Mr. Giesler: And he said "I want you to come back to the Cape with me Giesler." And I said "Well, I can't do that right now, I'm going to night school to finish at Double E degree."

Dr. Lipartito: Uh huh

Mr. Giesler: I hadn't got it yet.

Dr. Lipartito: So you, you were, you were going to school and working full time at the same time?

Mr. Giesler: I was going to sch. I worked days all day long and went, went to school all night long. And I had done that ever, I did that for ten years

Dr. Lipartito: Ten years

Mr. Giesler: total. Starting in in Chance Vought, Dallas,

Dr. Lipartito: Uh huh.

Mr. Giesler: at whatever that state school. Arlington State which is Texas A&M

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah, right.

Mr. Giesler: Texas A&M whatever, fallout or something

Dr. Lipartito: Ok, and so then you were in St. Louis

Mr. Giesler: I finished it at Washington University

Dr. Lipartito: At Washington University

Mr. Giesler: finally and I kept putting off John Williams because I didn't have a degree yet. He assumed I did, but I didn't

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: and I know, I knew NASA when we get to the door

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: and they see my stuff, they say "hey, whoa. This jockey, I can't give you the GS uppity up. He was talking GS-12 or 13, something like that. And he didn't know I didn't have a degree.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok.

Mr. Giesler: So I kept putting him, putting him off. I was real close, you know, because I was working days and going to night school. I did that, I think I said it, ten years. Anyway, one day he came by and hit me again and I said, "When do you want me to come down there Jim? I just got the paper you know.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, right

Mr. Giesler: So I came down with, simultaneously with the delivery of the first Gemini.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: I worked, I worked through all the Mercury's up there

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: and he was up there during that time.

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: But with the delivery of the first Gemini, I came. I arrived the same day.

Dr. Lipartito: That would have been sixty three, four?

Mr. Giesler: sixty four I believe

Dr. Lipartito: ok

Mr. Giesler: Sixty four wasn't it?

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: I think it's sixty four.

Dr. Lipartito: I couldn't tell its sixties

Mr. Giesler: I'm I think it was.

Dr. Lipartito: We can check that

Mr. Giesler: I I believe it was. I believe it's sixty-four. I've got a. It says in this book here, but it's too much trouble to look it up.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: It doesn't matter. Whenever the arrival of the first Gemini.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: I came down. And he was up there during Mercury, you know.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: And he was back again on Gemini but I came down with it

Dr. Lipartito: So the procede, the basic, you know, procedures were the same for Mercury and Gemini, building it in St. Louis and they would come up and look at it.

Mr. Giesler: They interfaced with NASA.

Dr. Lipartito: NASA

Mr. Giesler: They did it for both.

Dr. Lipartito: for both.

Mr. Giesler: Very similar, same thing.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: Absolutely. And so I came on down and finally you know John, I said "Hey John, I'm ready." and it sort of shocked him. And he rolled that cigar and wasn't sure he wanted me then (laughter) Wait a minute. And he said, let me have Wiley Williams, the guy you'd be working for come up here and interview you.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok.

Mr. Giesler: And so I went through that harassment and Wiley was John's best friend.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: And he said ok and so I came on down like I said about the same tie that first Gemini arrived and started working for Wiley Williams. And at that time there wasn't no Manned Space Center that exists today. We were in hanger S.

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: And there were outbuildings around hangar S that housed the people that worked in it, which included Wiley William, Williams and his office personnel, Gene Thomas and

Dr. Lipartito: Ohhh.

Mr. Giesler: a whole bunch. You probably know Gene Thomas

Dr. Lipartito: Gene Thomas, right

Mr. Giesler: He was there; I had a desk right by him

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: And his his wife Nita Thomas was the secretary in the office, which was illegal, (laughter) totally as you would know,

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: even in those days.

Dr. Lipartito: Yes.

Mr. Giesler: So Nita was there and Gene was there and Gordon Turner and, I don't know, there was six or seven of us.

Dr. Lipartito: Now what organization in NASA were you working for at that point?

Mr. Giesler: It was all under John Williams, actually the, he wasn't a big dog, Durett (phonetic); Bill Durett was the head of it.

Dr. Lipartito: Durett

Mr. Giesler: You ever hear of Bill Durett

Dr. Lipartito: No

Mr. Giesler: He was a retired Navy Captain

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: And they were in the E and, E & L building, which was one of the buildings outside Hangar S in that complex there

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: I believe it was E&L. E&O or E&L, one. Actually that was the boss in there us grunts were in trailers.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh really.

Mr. Giesler: Wiley was in a trailer

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: John, John I'm not sure where, John had to be in a trailer too. But anyway we were over there and the work, the spaceship came in from St. Louis, as as I did, and was in that Hangar

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: and went through checkout. And I don't know how long it went on over there but uh, Merritt Island complex was in work,

Dr. Lipartito: Was in, right.

Mr. Giesler: you know, was being built.

Dr. Lipartito: So it's before the Manned Spacecraft Center and before Merritt Island and uh

Mr. Giesler: It was the Florida Operations I think it is what they called it.

Dr. Lipartito: Florida Operations

Mr. Giesler: Florida Ops, I think

Dr. Lipartito: That's right

Mr. Giesler: I think it was

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Giesler: Again, we could look it up in that book, but. We towed way over there and eventually moved in to, you know, the O&C building

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok

Mr. Giesler: And I remember moving and there wasn't anything startling or different. We kept doing our thing over there and checking out the the hardware and once and a while lucky enough to get one to launch. I remember the the Regulu, not the Regulus, the that one that popped, went up and set back down. What was, I forget which launch and popped the parachutes

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: and all that. Oh, what a mess that was. (laughter)

Dr. Lipartito: Now were you, were you working. At that point there was, there was a, it was called a Launch Operations Center. That was like '64 that was created even though they were still building it. Were you working for them or were you working for the people that became the Space Task Group?

Mr. Giesler: No I was working for John Williams and my boss, direct supervisor was Wiley Williams when I came on board.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: And that was Florida Ops in the future.

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: You know Florida operations or whatever you called it.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: That was just a big designator. Let's say Spacecraft operations

Dr. Lipartito: Spacecraft Operations

Mr. Giesler: is what they really called it.

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: That was the nucleus of them.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah, right

Mr. Giesler: And John was the chief

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: and he had a boss I believe, I don't know whether he had the boss at that time? G. Merritt Preston came in there. No no

Dr. Lipartito: Yep.

Mr. Giesler: Bill Durett was the boss at that time.

Dr. Lipartito: Durett? Preston was there too. He was in

Mr. Giesler: Well he, he wasn't over there in that complex

Dr. Lipartito: Ah, he wasn't.

Mr. Giesler: Over there was the other guy I just mentioned, whoever what that was.

Dr. Lipartito: Durett?

Mr. Giesler: Durett. I remember I was sent over I was sent over to, I saw. This is, this is not very important, but obviously, well none of it is but to me, but I, the first order, I might as well put this in the record

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: the first person that told me anything to do down there, you see I come into the office and Gene Thomas is there and Gordon Turner and another guy or two, but Wiley and John are gone back to St. Louis.

Dr. Lipartito: Ah. Ok.

Mr. Giesler: They weren't even there.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: Well I'm out wandering the halls, looking stupid and a guy came up named Paul Donnelly

Dr. Lipartito: Ohh, sure.

Mr. Giesler: Who said, "Who are you?" I said "I'm Giesler". "Where did you come from?" "I came from St. Louis." "Who do you work for?" on and on. He said "You know anything useful?" I said, you know, "Not much" He said "Well I want you to write a book for me." And it just, you know, I didn't even work for him. You know, if you know Paul Donnelly this is very good

Dr. Lipartito: I've interviewed Paul Donnelly

Mr. Giesler: See he gave me a chore to do. And it was a PIA; I don't know why he wanted it. He said, "Do you know anything about Preinstallation Acceptance and Checkout?" and that's you pull a black box off the shelf and before you put it in the bird, you have to test it to make sure it works, that's Pre-Installation Acceptance Test.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok.

Mr. Giesler: I said, "Yes sir I know all about that," which I did. He said "I want you to write me a book about it."

Dr. Lipartito: Wow.

Mr. Giesler: And I said, you know I didn't ask who he was or nothing, I'm just this sheep that just walked in, so I did.

Dr. Lipartito: Wow

Mr. Giesler: And I remember he and when I took it to him and he said, he did, just done that. If you know Paul Donnelly he wouldn't care about any details

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: About that thick, that's all he cared about.

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: And he got to sign it.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok.

Mr. Giesler: And he said, "Now take it over there to Mr. Bill Durett."

Dr. Lipartito: Ah

Mr. Giesler: Who was the big cheese.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: He was head of all these guys; he was John Williams's boss.

Dr. Lipartito: Ok.

Mr. Giesler: I never heard, saw him before, never heard of him. I go over to his office with this book about that thick and I go in there and and he's sitting at his desk and he's leaning back in his great big black leather chair and he's got his eyes closed and his mouth's open and he's going like this (laughter) and I sit there about five minutes and I thought he was having a heart attack. I got to the phone and I started to call the phone, finally decided he was asleep.

Dr. Lipartito: He was asleep.

Mr. Giesler: And he was sleeping. And if you know him he slept about half the time he was in office.

Dr. Lipartito: No, well there's

Mr. Giesler: I found that out. Anytime, if you hadn't called ahead and woke him up he'd be asleep when you went in there. Nicest fellow you ever saw, became a good friend of mine, was an excellent guitar picker

Dr. Lipartito: Uh huh.

Mr. Giesler: and we had to thousands of hootenannies at my house with him. (laughter) And he wanted to sit right smack in the middle of the floor on nothing when he played the guitar, and he was an academy type

Dr. Lipartito: uh huh

Mr. Giesler: The Navy

Dr. Lipartito: The Navy guy.

Mr. Giesler: and he had one bad habit. (unintelligible) and I ain't going to tell. Its too, it's too nasty to tell

Dr. Lipartito: Oh oh.

Mr. Giesler: But you do, you don't want him sitting in your floor picking his guitar.

Dr. Lipartito: Ok.

Mr. Giesler: But Bill Durett was head of that organization at that time

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: and and I believe G. Merritt was off over there somewhere and I'm not sure if he was over Durette or Durette was it.

Dr. Lipartito: We can look that up.

Mr. Giesler: I didn't know G. Merritt in those, later got to work directly for him and he's a great guy, but I don't know if he was the boss at that time or not.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright, change the tape side here.

END SIDE A

Apparently missing section of interview

Dr. Lipartito: Donnelly?

Mr. Giesler: Yes. That didn't take long. That was,

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, good.

Mr. Giesler: that was pretty quick. It probably took a couple of days. It was, it was nothing because I was extremely familiar with it. I don't know how he knew, (laughter) but Donnelly was a strange guy.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh is that, he's, you know, we interviewed him. He's still down in Merritt Island and.

Mr. Giesler: I saw him here the other day in the parking lot. Oh it was six months ago I think.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh really.

Mr. Giesler: Seems like he told me he was building houses. (laughter) I believe he did. I'm thinking he said he was building houses over there.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh my God.

Mr. Giesler: Anyway, back to what?

Dr. Lipartito: You're working for Walt, Wall, Wally

Mr. Giesler: Wiley.

Dr. Lipartito: Wiley.

Mr. Giesler: Uh Bill Durette and what happened next. I guess, wil, yes. Wiley is off in St. Louis and I I didn't see him for three or four months. Finally one day he called me from St. Louis.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh.

Mr. Giesler: and said "Hey, I've got a job for you" and I said "Well it's about time," you know. I hadn't really been doing much. Wondering around trying to find something to do. He said "I want you to go to White Sands." You ever hear of White Sands?" I said "No." (laughter) He said, "Well you're going to go out there and help launch a rocket

Dr. Lipartito: Ohhh.

Mr. Giesler: Since you know all about this check out and stuff." And he sent me to White Sands as a Launch Integration Engineer

Dr. Lipartito: Hm

Mr. Giesler: on the rocket that was launching an Apollo boiler plate

Dr. Lipartito: Ohh.

Mr. Giesler: It was to test the heat shield.

Dr. Lipartito: Really

Mr. Giesler: and Rockwell was going to be running the show and from Downey

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: The guys from Downey. And I went out there and did that and Skip Chauvin was the test conductor

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: Out there. Working, he was assigned to White Sands, he had never been to the Cape.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh is that Right? Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: He was out there. There was a contingent at White Sands of NASA people from Houston at that time. They worked for Houston. And I can't think of the boss's name. I'll, It'll come to be later. A nice fellow. But I went out there and as the Integration Engineer and Fritz Whitig (phonetic), I may already have said that

Dr. Lipartito: No.

Mr. Giesler: Went with me as the launch director

Dr. Lipartito: Hmm

Mr. Giesler: and I was technical integration, whatever that was, which mainly was making sure the procedures were correct

Dr. Lipartito: Huh

Mr. Giesler: and the interfaces were all tested properly

Dr. Lipartito: Ok.

Mr. Giesler: I guess if you would have looked at a piece of paper it would have said that. And so

Dr. Lipartito: Now you were launching a? What were you launching out there?

Mr. Giesler: It was a Redstone

Dr. Lipartito: It was a Redstone

Mr. Giesler: with a Mercury capsule

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: on top of it.

Dr. Lipartito: Mercury, Ok

Mr. Giesler: Mercury. Yeah. That's. Yeah. Or was it Gemini. No they couldn't.

It was, it was Mercury and it was to to test the escape tower

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok

Mr. Giesler: And the, let see, there was parachutes involved

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: And the and the parachute system that was, What did the parachute system do to that thing. Well it let the capsule down

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: Yeah

Dr. Lipartito: So that

Mr. Giesler: So it fired the tower and and pulled the escape capsule off and then separated and let it come down. Unmanned of course

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: Was no manned involved. So I went out there and did that and it was a Rockwell supported launch. Same guys, same organization that would be at Kennedy later

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: And that was already there, the forerunners of it. Bill Edson (phonetic) was already down there. In fact he went out there with me. Hank Gusnick (phonetic) he was there. But we went out there and launched that thing and no problems. It went great and I had the time of my life and met a lot of folks from the contractor shop and got acquainted with them. And Ernie Reyes was out there.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, ok

Mr. Giesler: NASA

Dr. Lipartito: Sure.

Mr. Giesler: And Skip was the Launch Director and I was technical Integration.

Dr. Lipartito: Now was this an Apollo? or a Mercury?

Mr. Giesler: Mercury

Dr. Lipartito: It was a Mercury.

Mr. Giesler: Hm hm.

Dr. Lipartito: Ok.

Mr. Giesler: A little bitty Redstone rocket. No it wasn't it was little Joe.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh Ok.

Mr. Giesler: The picture of it.

Dr. Lipartito: Now I got it.

Mr. Giesler: And I've got a picture of it and the spaceship on it right up there somewhere on the wall

Dr. Lipartito: Ok.

Mr. Giesler: And we did that successfully and had a wonderful time. It's a great place to be out there in the desert, you know, and lot, nice places to go, a little ways to go to get to them but it was a great great time. And Rockwell was the technical, you know, the contractor arm of that from Downey.

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: And we did that and we come back home and I don't remember what I did next.

Dr. Lipartito: Well were you in, what year are we to now? sixty-five, sixty-four, sixty-five.

Mr. Giesler: Gosh, I ca, I, I, I lose track of the years. Came down here in '64.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: So went out there immediately

Dr. Lipartito: Oh it was, Ok

Mr. Giesler: So it had to be '64. It had to be the fall of '64.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: That was exac, I could, I got a, I could look it up in there, but. So got that done and I came back and went into harness for Wiley and again my job was test integration engineer which says you sat on the console in the firing room as a console writer and running a test you are the technical supervisor of that test which is the same out there, I was playing that role out there. That, that was the thing that my job description said I was to do. I was the console writer and I was the technical man like the launch director was in charge of pushing buttons and and the sequence but this, I was the technical man there.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: Never did that job here. I did. I went out there and did it.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: on that one, but when I come back never got in to one of those because the accident came along

Dr. Lipartito: Ahhh.

Mr. Giesler: The fire

Dr. Lipartito: Hm, Ok

Mr. Giesler: I remember I was coming home one day when I heard that on the radio. I'd just left work, went out and all that happened. But that changed everything and I really here at Kennedy never went out and got hands on a bird that I remember and did anything technical out there. I was in and out and I did some procedures. I wrote some test procedures. Wiley's shop was in charge of writing real time test procedures and then sitting on station, I may have said all this, and being the technical lead on that. I never made a console here. Again I use to write them up in St. Louis. I went to White Sands and did it, but when I got back I never got out there on the console in real time cause the accident came along and I got highly involved in that with Wiley. Wiley Williams was the lead on putting the technical document together that went to Congress to explain that

Dr. Lipartito: Oh really

Mr. Giesler: And naturally he yanked me up there and everybody else in his office and I spent many months working those things.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: Writing what what we were trying to do and we ended up with a document that thick that that tried to explain that away.

Dr. Lipartito: Huh huh.

Mr. Giesler: And you couldn't do it. We were guilty. But it took a lot of paper. We used a lot of paper

Dr. Lipartito: Right. Ok.

Mr. Giesler: And I remember so clearly Rocco Petrone was the boss then

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: And every page we wrote, and again Wiley Williams was in charge of that and he had greatest, mainly his whole office plus some other smarties from here and there were writing this document that that spoke to that to that problem, what happened and it ended up about that thick and and every page and I do mean every page had to be taken to Rocco Petrone by the writer

Dr. Lipartito: I see, right.

Mr. Giesler: and get him to sign off on it.

Dr. Lipartito: Wow

Mr. Giesler: And also Wiley had to go with every one. That was Rocco's requirement.

Dr. Lipartito: Wow.

Mr. Giesler: and that was just for the fun of it, that was the last of Wiley. That stuff killed his; you know he was my favorite person, he and John Williams.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm

Mr. Giesler: And one day we got, I don't know, I don't imagine this got any place in your story but one day we, I was trying to to uh talk away, spin our way out of what happened to a hypergolic fire in a barrel and I don't remember where the barrel was now, whether it was on a launch pad on a where, on a hangar, I don't remember that detail. I could go look it up in there but, Wy, Rocco, and I'm writing this thing and Wylie has to go up there with me, you know, (laughter) and and I couldn't, I kept trying to write it so it made us look good but was still technical enough to be correct and you couldn't do it.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: And Rocco just "No, no no (Sound of something tapping on wood)" I, you know, you don't say it that way. You can't admit that we did that. And on and on and on. And finally and his biggy was that I had too much verbiage

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: He said, "Less data, less data, less data." And finally the last time we went in up there he just, you know Rocco, he just got red in the face and just had a fit and said "I said cut it in half." and he said a bunch of bad words (laughter) and I had took a pair of scissors with me (laughter) and I took this thing and I just did this (sound of cutting paper). I was tired of it.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: and I was crazy or I wouldn't have done it. And it fell in two pieces on his desk. (laughter) And, you know, he set there a minute and just got started and he got this red and then he thought again and he started giggling about it (laughter) and he started laughing.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh.

Mr. Giesler: And he said "You can go Giesler." And I, and he said "Wiley, you stay."

Dr. Lipartito: Oh

Mr. Giesler: He was still mad

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: And the next day Wiley, Wiley quit and went to work for Grumman

Dr. Lipartito: Oh is that right?

Mr. Giesler: No one knows whether he was fired or whether he just chose to do that. I suspect the latter

Dr. Lipartito: Really?

Mr. Giesler: But that was the last day.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh that's interesting

Mr. Giesler: Wiley Williams was there and he was my boss you know

Dr. Lipartito: Well I've heard a lot, we haven't interviewed Rocco Petrone though,
he's someone were trying to

Mr. Giesler: Well he would be a dandy

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: Well if you do mention me.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, I will (laughter)

Mr. Giesler: He'll remember

Dr. Lipartito: He'll remember? Well

Mr. Giesler: He'll remember me and several other things.

Dr. Lipartito: I think, I think that he was, he was quite a strong character.

Mr. Giesler: Well, he's the strongest character I ever saw in NASA and he was,
Probably, I don't know that he was the smartest. It's hard to gauge smart how smart is it and you
don't know from just talking to him but he was he was something else.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm

Mr. Giesler: But the next day, the bottom line of that that thing when I walked
away and he said "Williams, you stay behind." The next day Wiley quit.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: Went to Grumman.

Dr. Lipartito: It was too much.

Mr. Giesler: And Rocco was still around for quite a while

Dr. Lipartito: Oh yeah.

Mr. Giesler: he also went to Washington of course

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: a little later.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm. Um. After the, after the fire I take it there were a lot of changes in how the spacecraft operations were going to be managed. Were you, was that something you saw yourself? You were

Mr. Giesler: Uh

Dr. Lipartito: Or was that a little

Mr. Giesler: Well I saw it but I I don't recall any startling differences

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: There were a lot of more sign offs on procedures

Dr. Lipartito: More sign offs. Right.

Mr. Giesler: procedures. And I know that because I was into procedures. Wylie Williams's group at that time was, was integration group and they had to sign off on every procedure

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: and in fact I still wrote some procedures when I came down here.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm

Mr. Giesler: Uh, I think, I don't know, I guess there were, there was two big changes. Probably the biggest change was influencing in inspection.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: Inspection became stronger

Dr. Lipartito: Really

Mr. Giesler: And they just had to stamp off everything and they got lots more people.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: And on and on and on, but really organizationally speaking I don't remember any drastic changes in organization

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: to make that kind of thing work but it's been so long I could probably find something in that book maybe.

Dr. Lipartito: Well a lot of people often talked, and I'm not sure where you were in this, but all about the difference between the sort of spacecraft people and the launch vehicle people, you know, were you more in the, you were more in the spacecraft.

Mr. Giesler: I was all totally spacecraft

Dr. Lipartito: Totally spacecraft.

Mr. Giesler: I knew very little about the other side but I can tell you the basic difference.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright, I'd appreciate that.

Mr. Giesler: In my opinion, having been there a few years and having been to the source of both places, you know, the launch vehicle guys came came from Marshall

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: basically and maybe some of them from, well they didn't really come from the one development center. I was trying to think of that one up North

Dr. Lipartito: Uh, Lewis?

Mr. Giesler: Lewis, yeah. They had some reps here but they didn't really have any workers here. But the culture difference between the Launch Vehicle people and the Spacecraft people was simply the difference between Houston and Huntsville.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: And and Huntsville had the deepest German influence and they were very rigid, just did things the hard way (laughter) all the time and they were all launch vehicle oriented, not spacecraft.

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: And the spacecraft people were much more flexible because they represented US type people and their thinking, you know, versus the German culture which was just far more rigid and inspection crazy and all that, and

Dr. Lipartito: They liked to go through things just one step at a time.

Mr. Giesler: You betcha

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: and nothing wrong with that, you know, either. I wouldn't say that was wrong at all, but there was different culture.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: and they just did things different.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: And I I couldn't begin to explain them all of them but they were different.

Dr. Lipartito: (laughter) The other, the other difference that comes out is the spacecraft Houston tradition is influenced by the Air Force kind of management and contractor sort of approach as opposed to the more in house approach of the

Mr. Giesler: I would say certainly more contractor for sure.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: I, I don't know about the Air Force. That may be true, I wouldn't know. We had, I remember an Air Force Rep in my office usually but they didn't have much to do with anything.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh

Mr. Giesler: They were just there.

Dr. Lipartito: Well more in the sense that it was there

Mr. Giesler: With the way Air Force does

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah, the way they does, do things. Right.

Mr. Giesler: Well I wouldn't have thought of that. I don't know how the Air Force does things being a Navy guy

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah, that's true. (laughter)

Mr. Giesler: If you'd have said Navy I could of spoke to that. But that, that would seem sensible to me.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: But Marshall, but basically the difference between Spacecraft and Launch Vehicle was rigidity

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: and and line authority

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah, that's right

Mr. Giesler: You could do things twice as easy and twice as big and get and get it done twice as quick in the spacecraft world versus Launch Vehicle. They were very rigid.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: and you're gonna do it by the numbers

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: That's the old Debus influence

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: And I've made, I made a, I might as well mention it. I made a presentation to Debus a few times, but one time I making one to him, at the moment I'd have to think a minute to figure out what it was about, but when I got done, he said, "Very good presentation, very good, very good." [with German accent] I said "Thank you Dr. Debus." He said, "Not you, not you, the presentation." (laughter) I said, "But I made the presentation too, I wrote it." "Ahhhh," he said (laughter) True story.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright. Alright. So not not a lot of interaction with Debus and

Mr. Giesler: Oh at my level, none.

Dr. Lipartito: None.

Mr. Giesler: If you want a guy that was Debus's son. Debus loved him and every time Debus wanted to know what was going on in the firing room or to complain or to find out or whatever he'd call this guy. He's an extremely good friend of mine, it's Andy Pickett.

Dr. Lipartito: Ohh.

Mr. Giesler: Andy is, is Mr. Debus.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: Of all the people in in this country down here

Dr. Lipartito: Yep.

Mr. Giesler: That has has had an interface with Mr. Debus, Andy was the man.

De, Debus when he wanted to know anything that was going on in the firing room he called Andy.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: And don't say Andy knew it, but he trusted Andy and Debus was a trust guy. You had to earn his respect and his trust.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: or he didn't deal with you

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: and he certainly never dealt with me. I made humty ump presentations to him but he never knew who I was

Dr. Lipartito: Uh huh.

Mr. Giesler: and didn't care.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: But he did complement me once on my presentation and then disavowed. "Ah not you, it's the presentation" [German accent] (laughter)

Dr. Lipartito: Your just incidental.

Mr. Giesler: But if you ever want to know anything about Debus, Andy Pickett

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: is your man Andy Pickett

Dr. Lipartito: I'd better

Mr. Giesler: cause he was he was Pickett's, he was Debus's boy

Dr. Lipartito: Alright

Mr. Giesler: in the firing room when he wanted to know anything in the firing room he called Andy, and Andy, giving him credit, he would know it.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: The biggest thing though about Andy that he liked, I would guess, just reading the lines is Andy was God awful honest. He wouldn't lie if his mother was going to be shot,

Dr. Lipartito: Oh.

Mr. Giesler: you know, he would tell the truth.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: And Debus knew that and "We want the truth (German Accent)"

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah. (laughter)

Mr. Giesler: And he was honest and straight.

Dr. Lipartito: Well some people have also talked about, I think we interviewed Andy Pickett so it may have been him, the trust that that was part of the kind of German tradition, you really relied on people rather than procedures or paper

Mr. Giesler: Absolutely.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: You're exactly right.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: I think that's correct. That sounds like Andy. He would say that.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: I would, I would never think that (laughter), you know, but I think that's exactly

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: And Andy's one of these guys that, you know, when I, if I going to throw a switch, I might think about it twice if it's a red one.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm, Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: Andy going to think about every one of them. He's doing to think about it about twelve times

Dr. Lipartito: I see

Mr. Giesler: before he does it.

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: And if you ask him "Andy, look at that cloud out there, do you think it's going to rain? Well you can expect an answer in about five minutes.

Dr. Lipartito: (laughter). Yeah. He's very deliberate. I can see that.

Mr. Giesler: I see you've been around him. Andy's one of my best friends. he and I have done a lot of things together,

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: some of them good, some of them bad.

Dr. Lipartito: Uh, through the Apollo program what were you doing? What was, did you

Mr. Giesler: Apollo

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah, you mentioned the fire, what about the next couple of years?

Mr. Giesler: Uh Well the fire is what started me; you know I was a test integration engineer up til that time. My job was to, description says a senior, senior test engineer

Dr. Lipartito: Oh.

Mr. Giesler: in charge on the console and I did, that's what I did out in White Sands and whatever. But when I came back it wasn't long till the fire came along. And when the fire came along, one of the recommendations in the report that was to be different, done different was to create a something called a Contract Tech Manager, Contract Technical Manager. Why was that? Well and they called them CTM acronym wise and I became one of those.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh really.

Mr. Giesler: What was that all about? Well one of the findings of the of the Research Review Board I'd guess you call it.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: Was that maybe, just maybe and most likely and probably that the Kennedy influence was not enough. Wasn't what it ought to be and too much influence was being still, now this is in my opinion, but I suspect Pickett would back this up if you asked him that and he might have already told you that I don't know but I kind of doubt it because he wasn't in to this kind of stuff. There was a thought that KSC influence, I lost my train of thought

Dr. Lipartito: Well the contract technical manager.

Mr. Giesler: Yeah there was a thought that the people at Kennedy, the NASA workers, were too influenced by the contractors. They weren't as rigid as them old German boys used to be.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: They didn't give a damn about the inspector. They didn't have inspection incidentally

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: They did their own inspection.

Dr. Lipartito: did their own inspection.

Mr. Giesler: Inspection was something new and different invented here, you know, by early on whatever. And, now I lost my train of thought again, I keep knocking it away. Huh, what were we trying to answer.

Dr. Lipartito: Well what the Contract Technical Manager was supposed to do

Mr. Giesler: Ok, what caused that?

Dr. Lipartito: The fire's comes out of the recommendation. So what was, is that what the difference

Mr. Giesler: Ok, the contract tech managers came about because there was a thought, God it's hard to keep on to that thought, that Houston

Dr. Lipartito: Oh.

Mr. Giesler: and Marshall were still pulling the strings down here

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: and that KSC was not independent enough

Dr. Lipartito: Got it.

Mr. Giesler: in every respect. These, these guys could still call up down here and and yank our chain

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: and we would do it and they didn't have a damn thing to do with it and there was some philosophy that said, these guys until we cut the string to mama's tit, they ain't ever going to be independent and do their own job and ain't ever no going to do it right.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: So they said "how can we make that happen?" Well at that time the contracts with the with the companies that pushed switches were still controlled and written by Houston.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: So some brilliant guy up there somewhere said "Let's give KSC their own contractors,

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: contracts."

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: So they'll be independent of the development centers and they'll they'll feel the fire at their feet more likely

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: When it, when it blows this time we ain't going at the development centers we're going at you guys cause we're going to let you have your own contract. And there is some truth in that in this. In the days prior to the days when we got our own contracts, when the contractors didn't like what we were saying to do here at KSC they'd call mama at Houston

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: or Marshall and say, "Hey these idiots want to do this down there. I don't want to do it. Why don't you call them?" and we didn't get to do what we wanted to do.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: So the powers that be said we're going to give KSC your own contracts so you'll be independent of that loop. And in the future when you blow something it's just you baby

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: And it did make a lot of difference.

Dr. Lipartito: Really?

Mr. Giesler: Oh, I think so.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: Everybody was just a, felt a little bit different about doing something

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah.

Mr. Giesler: because there was no mama anywhere and he's going to get it

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: and he's going to get it locally

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: and that's what the

Dr. Lipartito: So the contracts actually were written here?

Mr. Giesler: that's why they were written and they pulled guys like me and Buckley and Knocks Wiley and I don't know Orsley Carroway, (phonetic) somebody out and said, you guys. I remember going over to Bill; I got a call from Bill Losee (phonetic) say "Come over here." And a bunch of us, four of us went over there and he said "You guys are going to write some contracts." I said "You crazy" and my wife used to go to Sunday school with Bill Losee in

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, so I knew him pretty well and I said "Who told you you were going to do that. But I know there was four of us, me and Buckley and some body else, well Carroway and somebody else, maybe Knocks Wiley, I don't remember, were pulled out and sent to contract school.

Dr. Lipartito: Ohhh.

Mr. Giesler: We went to a government contract school out in Los Angeles somewhere and I was even so worried about it, I didn't get much out of that, I went down here to FT, F, FTU?

Dr. Lipartito: Uh

Mr. Giesler: FSU? FSU would be Florida State.

Dr. Lipartito: Uh No Florida Technical, Florida Institute of Technology, FIT.

Mr. Giesler: Yeah, yeah it was. That's right, FIT and I got a Masters in contracts.

Dr. Lipartito: Oh, good.

Mr. Giesler: I just said "Hey if I'm going to have to write contracts, I don't know a contract from a mole's butt," you know.

Dr. Lipartito: Huh.

Mr. Giesler: So I went down there and got a Masters degree in night school in contracts.

Dr. Lipartito: Alright.

Mr. Giesler: Tell you what contracts was all about. But in the mean time I was writing one.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: Had to write the LEM contract. Buckley wrote the Apollo contract for Rockwell and Knox Wiley (phonetic) wrote GSE or something, I don't know the Ground stuff.

Dr. Lipartito: Ground stuff.

Mr. Giesler: I think it was Knox Riley, I believe. Anyway we came up with some KSC contracts signed off by us.

Dr. Lipartito: Hm hm.

Mr. Giesler: and Bill Losee

Dr. Lipartito: Huh huh.

Mr. Giesler: was the big man

Dr. Lipartito: Ok

Mr. Giesler: in the, in the contract shop that signed it. And I think that had an effect

Dr. Lipartito: Really?

Mr. Giesler: probably.

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: You know it's nothing that you can go out there and measure or

Dr. Lipartito: Right

Mr. Giesler: say that thing is different, but it was a different attitude

Dr. Lipartito: Yeah

Mr. Giesler: I believe, I believe it forced Kennedy to think more

Dr. Lipartito: Hm.

Mr. Giesler: and to be more responsible because the buck stopped there.

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: and they signed off on those procedures

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

Mr. Giesler: As well as us guys that had to write them but the technical guys signed them and

Dr. Lipartito: So you picked the

Mr. Giesler: they looked at them pretty close.

Dr. Lipartito: The contract would have been between Kennedy and, you know,

Mr. Giesler: the Rockwell

Dr. Lipartito: Rockwell

Mr. Giesler: or Grumman

Dr. Lipartito: or Grumman

Mr. Giesler: where it use to be with those guys

Dr. Lipartito: Ok, because, because they were doing, that was because they were doing work here. They were doing preparation and launch work.

Mr. Giesler: Yeah and those guys were the development centers

Dr. Lipartito: They were the development right, yeah.

Mr. Giesler: So they arranged contractually. We didn't have a contract with those guys

Dr. Lipartito: Right.

END OF TAPE.