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**Ms. Sue Butler**

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**Oral History**

4

**Kennedy Space Center**

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**Held on June 25, 2002**

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**Interviewer: Dr. Patrick Moore**

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Transcriptionist: Sharon Youngquist

1 Moore: Today is Tuesday, June 25, 2002. I'm Dr. Patrick Moore, University of West Florida  
2 Public History Program and Kennedy Space Center Summer Faculty Fellow. Today I am interviewing  
3 Sue Butler who was a longtime reporter here at Kennedy Space Center reporting on the NASA  
4 program and has a lot of interesting insights. How are you today?

5

6 Sue Butler: Thank you Dr. Moore. Uh, you want it in a little...

7

8 Moore: Sure, tell me a little bit about your background. When were you born and what brought  
9 you to the U.S. and . . .

10

11 Sue Butler: At this point in my life I am willing to admit my age, in fact, I'm bragging about it. Uh,  
12 this month I will be 80.

13

14 Moore: You don't look it. So . . .

15

16 Sue Butler: Well, and I formally quit the AP last year on my 79<sup>th</sup> birthday. Not that I didn't love  
17 working for the AP but those night hours were killing me, being up all night with the Shuttle and it  
18 would take – I would have one or two nights in a row maybe if the Shuttle slipped or a launch slipped  
19 and I would take a week to recover from the night. I am not a night owl – so that is why I left  
20 regrettably, regretfully. I miss both. Anyway, I was born in Vienna. I know nothing about politics. I  
21 wasn't interested in politics but Hitler made me acutely aware of politics. I suddenly found that I was  
22 unwelcome. I was Jewish even though I wasn't practicing and I was a Polish citizen so being a  
23 Jewish Pole, a Polish Jew was just the worst combination you could get. And uh, I ran for my life and

1 went to Poland where my father lived and from the frying pan into the fire. I was in Warsaw when  
2 Warsaw was bombed. The bombs just followed me around even to Glasgow, Scotland and the first  
3 bomb that fell on Aberdeen, Scotland fell on the playing grounds of Kings College where I was a  
4 student, so bombs just followed me.

5

6 Moore: You did manage to get out of Poland when the bombs started falling and...

7

8 Sue Butler: I was brought out on one of the kindred transports where the society of France tried to  
9 save children. The uh, most help refugee organizations, um only helped their own, like the Catholics  
10 helped Catholic children and Jewish they helped Jewish children and so far as the Society of France  
11 was the only organization to my knowledge that didn't ask what your religion was, where you came  
12 from – you were a child you deserved to be rescued. And, I went out on one of the fishing boats they  
13 had hired to transport children. And we went to through the Kattegat and Skagerrak. We went  
14 through the North Seas, through the German mine fields and we landed. We went up the Thames,  
15 docked in London – I don't know if you want to hear all of that – it had nothing to do with NASA but –  
16 and people ask me what it feels like to be free. I said I associate freedom with being de-liced, having  
17 my hair parted and checked for lice because I didn't come from the kind of family where lice were  
18 known. But it was necessary. And um, anyway I went to the University of Aberdeen then, mainly  
19 because I found that there were only two things refugees could do. They could work as the domestic  
20 servants or they could be students so it was a great incentive to pass a test to gain admission so I  
21 wouldn't have to be a domestic servant, some inspiration for going to college. (Laughs) And later on I  
22 joined the OSS and I won't talk about my experiences in the OSS but it was thanks to those  
23 experiences that I was able to enter this country. I'm not a war bride. I was admitted, uh, on the

1 basis of my war service as were many – it was never promised. It was never an inducement to do  
2 anything but after the war those of us who rendered useful service were given the opportunity to  
3 come and that's how I came.

4

5 Moore: So you were essentially invited by the US Government to come to the U.S.?

6

7 Sue Butler: I was allowed.

8

9 Moore: Allowed.

10

11 Sue Butler: Yes. And I stressed that I was not a war bride because I know too many who married,  
12 uh, trip to America. I didn't. And I did have a funny experience – and I know this is not part of it  
13 either. When I came on the freighter I went below when we docked, went below, put on my U.S.  
14 Army dress uniform and lined up with the immigrants, you know there are two lines, one for U.S.  
15 citizens legally and one for immigrants. No, no, you are in the wrong line they said. I'm not in the  
16 wrong line. I was in the correct line and when the immigration people in Boston where we landed...

17

18 Moore: This was in Boston?

19

20 Sue Butler: Yes. Landed in Boston. They weren't as experienced, I guess, as the people in the  
21 New York so they were a little confused but I showed them my documentation and then they say do  
22 you have anything to declare?, and I laid my certified Webley and Scott on the table, my gun. Oh no,  
23 you can't bring that. I said yes I can and here is my weapons permit from Scotland Yard who

1 accepted where I work. I still have that gun by the way. My daughter covets it. That is the only thing  
2 she wants me to leave her is my... well it's interesting because I have the original weapons permit to  
3 go with it which is... can only be revoked for cause, if I commit some crime. Anyway, let me get back  
4 to NASA.

5  
6 Moore: Well, no. This is interesting. I, so then you entered the U.S. and then how did you end  
7 up down here?

8  
9 Sue Butler: Well, my late husband, Chris Butler, was the first full-time aerospace reporter here,  
10 before Howard Benedict, before, before Jay Barbary. He was the Bureau Chief of a now a defunct  
11 magazine called Missiles and Rockets. It was published by, I can't think of the publisher now, it was  
12 the competition to Aviation Week, and it folded eventually and I jumped ship before it folded but I  
13 didn't know I had no insight. It was just, it was just that McGraw Hill offered to double my stipend,  
14 that was my motivation. Anyway.

15  
16 Moore: Well, so did you come down here with you husband?

17  
18 Sue Butler: I came here with my husband and I went to work for the Daytona Beach News Journal  
19 just as a reporter, covering everything including space. And my husband came down with cancer and  
20 it was pretty obvious that he wasn't going to get out of bed anymore but he asked me to pitch-hit for  
21 him and the magazine's editor, Bill Kauflin, went along with it because by that time I had done  
22 covered some launches but never on a technical basis. And uh, so after he died the magazine said, I  
23 said I appreciate that you let me do this because we needed his health insurance desperately. And I

1 said I guess you have somebody in the wings waiting. They said no, we know who we have. We had  
2 already changed the masthead, we just put Sue Butler instead of Chris Butler on it and that is how I  
3 became an aerospace reporter. And I....

4

5 Moore: Now what year was this in? He came down, with.. when did you two come down?

6

7 Sue Butler: I'm thinking in '57.

8

9 Moore: So you really were right at the first.

10

11 Sue Butler: Yes.

12

13 Moore: Where were you before you moved down here?

14

15 Sue Butler: He worked for a little paper in Lakeland just to get a toe-hold in Florida and I went to  
16 work for a radio station there. It was nothing, nothing interesting.

17

18 Moore: Well, the question was – is, this was really a relatively inhospitable place in the early  
19 years. Were you excited about leaving – you came into Boston – were you already living in the  
20 south?

21

22 Sue Butler: Oh, oh, no, no, I was already an experienced reporter. I was a reporter on the New  
23 Orleans Item.

1

2 Moore: So you were already in the south?

3

4 Sue Butler: Oh yes.

5

6 Moore: The question was, is what – this is kind of a jump. You came here when there was little  
7 or nothing in the area.

8

9 Sue Butler: I hadn't, well, (laughs) I do remember for what's it worth and I don't think Howard would  
10 even know this or anyone else but when they rolled the first Saturn V facilities model to the launch  
11 pad on the crawler it was a 10-hour trip and the guys could step into the bushes and relieve  
12 themselves but I had to have good bladder control and I did have it but when we got to the pad, when  
13 we got to the pad, I just needed the facilities. I could swear this is, I am looking at the back of this  
14 guy's head and I think I know him. Um, they only had a man's room on the pad, they never had a  
15 woman on the pad. They said you can't go there so one of the NASA public affairs people stood  
16 guard while I used the man's room and then one of those rent-a-cops came around and ticketed me  
17 for being in a forbidden area. I..

18

19 Moore: The men's room?

20

21 Sue Butler: Yeah. I got a ticket for using the men's room. But they waived it. I wasn't really fined  
22 but it was kind of funny, getting a ticket for using the men because there was no facility there. I was  
23 probably the first woman there. There was one other woman who covered space ahead of me and it

1 was Mercia Livermore, you probably heard about Mercia . She is dead now. A lot of people laughed  
2 at her but she was very smart and very knowledgeable. They made fun of her southern accent which  
3 she emphasized, it was part of her trade. They must have told you about Mercia and some of her  
4 stories. I wish she were alive she could tell you some stories and I was the second woman here.  
5 Then there was another woman who came after me who claims to have been first but we won't bother  
6 mentioning her. I had no trouble being accepted but the funny part was that I would, there was no  
7 place to interview sources. You couldn't sit in a public hotel, there weren't that many around,  
8 because not all the sources wanted to be seen talking with me. And my so-called office was in my  
9 home on Merritt Island and I couldn't expect some of those people to come there so I generally said,  
10 well how about your motel room? And I spent a lot of time in men's motel rooms with a thick  
11 briefcase and I took a lot of flack for that, just poking fun. I remember some of the VIPs nervously  
12 sitting on the bed motioning me to the chair across the room. So, I mean, where, where can you  
13 have a private conversation. So that was kind of fun that I'm sure some of my male colleagues  
14 interviewed in hotel rooms but it was strange for me.

15  
16 Moore: No question there, when a young woman goes into a motel rooms. Why was it so, why  
17 were people so reserved about interviewing with you?

18  
19 Sue Butler: Because, you mean as a woman? There was just no place to talk with me. There was  
20 no, we couldn't talk in a restaurant where we might be overheard. It wasn't that..

21  
22 Moore: Was this for press reasons, so that you would keep your sources private or was it..  
23

1 Sue Butler: Yes.

2

3 Moore: ...or was it because there were security issues?

4

5 Sue Butler: No, no. Well, uh.

6

7 Moore: These were the early years of the program, and...

8

9 Sue Butler: The early years.

10

11 Moore: ...and the openness was much more limited.

12

13 Sue Butler: These were the early years and no reporter is better than his or her sources and I had  
14 my share of good sources who didn't want to be known as my sources so we had to find privacy and  
15 the only privacy was in the man's motel rooms so I took a lot of kidding about that.

16

17 Moore: How did things evolve? This was in the early years – the Vanguard program, the early  
18 launches.

19

20 Sue Butler: Well, talking about not much openness – General Yates I think was the one who  
21 instituted a policy out there whereby they made a deal with reporters, I'm talking 1957-'58 time period  
22 – before NASA actually. Uh, they would tell you – well let me backtrack. The only way we could find  
23 out anything is by hanging around bars. It wasn't my style to hang around bars. Many men did

1 including Howard and Jay. But the Air Force offered reporters a deal, they would tell you when what  
2 would be launched on condition you didn't print it, use it until it was over. And then, this was the deal.  
3 If you didn't want to take part in the deal it was fine – you were on your own and uh, good or bad they  
4 wouldn't tell you anything and I opted for being on my own. And many other reporters did too. I  
5 mean, who wants to cover by handouts after the fact, and uh, we wanted to print when something  
6 would happen. Not afterward when the Air Force handed us, would hand us a release. I'm sure  
7 you've heard that before.

8  
9 Moore: Absolutely but I have not met anybody yet who went on their own. So this is...

10  
11 Sue Butler: No, other reporters refused to sign onto that Air Force deal. They may be dead by now.  
12 I'm trying to think.

13  
14 Moore: That's right. Nobody I've spoken to so you're the first.

15  
16 Sue Butler: (laughs)...

17  
18 Moore: What was it... Did it pose a challenge when you had people like, like Howard Benedict  
19 who had the information...

20  
21 Sue Butler: Howard came later. Howard came several years after me. But, yes of course it was a  
22 challenge. It became a big challenge because now I was pitting my wits against them. I found funny  
23 signs on my car like – there was a security officer named, I can't think of his name. I think his first

1 name was Sam. I am not talking about the NASA guy, Sam Beddingfield. I'm not talking... It was an  
2 Air Force officer and I would find little notices under the windshield – Sam's watching you. My fellow  
3 reporters poked fun at it. But, I did my job. I found things out by having \_\_\_\_\_ sources and by  
4 scrupulously maintaining their confidence because I think it is stupid when a reporter squeals and the  
5 most, the latest example I think is Connie Chung when she had poor old, Mrs., what's her name, say  
6 something in her ear. The mother of what's his name – the Republican leader – Gingrich. She had  
7 her whisper something in her ear and then Connie Chung broadcast that. You remember that.

8  
9 Moore: Yeah.

10  
11 Sue Butler: I thought, who would give her the time of the day when she betrays a confidant. I never,  
12 never betrayed a confidant and so they felt free to tell me things and I'd put a different dateline on the  
13 story so that I would further veer away from the suspicion that somebody gave me information.

14  
15 Moore: Now was this at the time when they were, this was the time when they would give you  
16 the information if you agreed.

17  
18 Sue Butler: Yes.

19  
20 Moore: And you weren't allowed to print it until it actually cleared the launch pad.

21  
22 Sue Butler: Yes, yes.

1 Moore: Was this at a point when you were allowed to go out and witness the launches in  
2 person? This was before this.

3  
4 Sue Butler: No, no, no, no, no. The nearest we reporters got was birdwatch hill which is now the  
5 Jetty Park and there was one pay telephone where, what do they have now, I think the entrance to  
6 the Jetty Park, there was one pay telephone. That was before cellular phones and the like, and my  
7 late husband was still working and so we had a deal – whoever could, if we had a launch, whoever  
8 could sprint to the pay telephone first got the story in first. It had nothing to do with competence, it  
9 had to do with how fast you can sprint to the pay telephone. Howard was never in that position  
10 because then NASA opened up and we could talk to people but NASA still, to the present day, is  
11 skittish about reporters talking to some of their people without the public affairs officer being present.  
12 I think you know that. You know that. And they make them inaccessible sometimes. I rather started  
13 telling you about the security after 9-11. They wouldn't give me a badge and I would've had to drive  
14 from Cocoa Beach to Titusville to the gate there and get a machine badge for one day. If the launch  
15 slipped, I was stuck, I'd have to do it again. Drive clear around, and I, then they wouldn't let us take  
16 our cars in. God knows what they thought we had in our cars. So then we'd have to wait until public  
17 affairs officer picked us up and took us out. It was a lot of hassle, a great deal of hassle for the  
18 reporters and for the public affairs people who really weren't meant to be chauffeurs, they were meant  
19 to handle the press not just be drivers. And uh, we were told that this is on orders of the Center  
20 Director. Well I went to a lunch of...

21  
22 Moore: This was just since September 11<sup>th</sup>?  
23

1 Sue Butler: Oh yes. I happened to go to a lunch of the, for the Space Club, for the National Space  
2 Club Florida Committee and there sat Roy Bridges with some other big-shots at lunch and I went up  
3 to him and I said could you please tell me why I cannot get a badge, and he couldn't tell me and then  
4 I told him, and I said, I think it's ridiculous that Marsha Dunn, The AP Bureau Chief, needs an escort  
5 to go to the cafeteria. What mischief do you think she could do between the press site and the  
6 cafeteria? Well he didn't say anything and I thought well it didn't make any difference. I mean he's  
7 got a...have you met him? He's, well you know how he is.

8

9 Moore: Yes.

10

11 Sue Butler: The next day within 24 hours they called me, public affairs, Bill Johnson called me and  
12 said hey kid go up there and get your picture taken for your badge and the next day everybody could  
13 go into the cafeteria and eat. I mean, it took 24 hours. My just walking up to him, but normally I don't  
14 have access to the center director. He didn't know all this was being done in his name. He didn't  
15 know that. And I could tell you who the, who the people are who did it. I don't think you want to use  
16 her name but she's the, you probably have talked with her. Well I'll tell you – it was Joann Morgan's  
17 orders.

18

19 Moore: How did you find that out, just word of mouth?

20

21 Sue Butler: Oh that came by word of mouth. But that's how I got my badge and that's how other  
22 legitimate reporters got their badges back. They wanted to restrict access to bona fide reporters but I

1 was a bona fide reporter, I've been here for 40 years and suddenly I am not trustworthy enough. So,  
2 uh, it still goes on to some extent. Um, ask me something, I digress now.

3

4 Moore: Sure, sure. Tell me about how things started to change, then NASA started to take over  
5 the program after NASA was created, uh, and...

6

7 Sue Butler: Well I'm sure you heard about the rivalry between NASA and the Air Force.

8

9 Moore: Tell me about that, how that worked for your gaining information about launches and  
10 this kind of thing.

11

12 Sue Butler: Well it depends whether you're talking Air Force launches or NASA launches and it was  
13 very involved because maybe NASA controlled the rocket but the Air Force had a satellite sitting on  
14 top or it could be an Air Force rocket that had a NASA satellite on top. It was, it wasn't cut and dry.  
15 The Air Force launched everything and NASA had the satellite on top. It was, I don't know how to  
16 explain it. It...once we had our badges there was no problem. In fact, the Air Force never gave us  
17 reporters any problems. Uh, their security either was more lax or they had less bureaucracy or they  
18 had better snoops to make sure that only legitimate reporters could get in. I never had any problems  
19 with the Air Force, it's NASA that gave me grief.

20

21 Moore: Even in the early years?

22

23 Sue Butler: Well in the early years they wouldn't allow us on, you know I told you.

1

2 Moore: Well I mean when, as soon as the transitions started to take place with NASA. There  
3 were people like Kenneth Grine who...

4

5 Sue Butler: An old friend.

6

7 Moore: ...helped facilitate getting more access for the reporters.

8

9 Sue Butler: Yeah. Have you seen the picture of Ken Grime when he was still wearing his blue suits  
10 and he was Public Affairs Officer and Shorty Powers was sitting next to him, I have it home I should  
11 have brought it, and there was somebody else sitting with him on a podium and they all put their hand  
12 over the microphone and the pictures captured, and Ken sits there holding the microphone  
13 whispering in Shorty Powers ear and saying what shall we tell them. It was a big joke. They won't  
14 tell us everything.

15

16 Moore: No, (laughs) I haven't seen this picture.

17

18 Sue Butler: It was a fun, there are several like around. They would show them when we had the  
19 Pioneer Reunions and it is not what it used to be. In the old days the Pioneer Reunions were people  
20 who were involved in the space program whether they were with NASA or whether they were with the  
21 Air Force or they worked for neither who in some way were involved. It was opened to everybody.  
22 The most democratic system, you could be the center director or you could be the janitor, as long as you  
23 had an involvement in the space program you could join the group. And we had, it still exists. Our

1 annual parties, every April following the Space Congress, but one, one particular party was run by  
2 Marty, the late Marty Caden. I'm sure you know of Marty Caden. He was a brilliant reporter but he  
3 wasn't always in good, what he did wasn't always in good taste and he, he, for that particular reunion  
4 he showed porno movies and some, the guys attending didn't like for their wives to be exposed to the  
5 porno movies so it caused a big uproar and since then the Pioneer Reunion is nothing. The dinner  
6 and they have a speaker and the speaker may be good or bad so it is no longer anything. But at  
7 these parties they would show funny movies like that, funny pictures or they would show the launch  
8 gantry being lifted, you must have seen then. They had another funny movie, picture not movie, of  
9 me and my VW being stuck on the crawler way. I had a company issued VW from the Daytona  
10 Beach News Journal, it said Daytona Beach News Journal on the side and I went out to an early  
11 morning launch and I didn't know my way and I zigged instead of zagged, I don't know how but I  
12 wound up on the crawler way and the crawler was chugging out slowly, dawn was just coming and  
13 everybody just screamed with laughter. Here I was sitting in my 1800-pound VW...

14  
15 Moore: Was this a Volkswagen...

16  
17 Sue Butler: A regular Beetle.

18  
19 Moore: ...a Beetle?

20  
21 Sue Butler: Yeah a Beetle. And of course these rocks were like boulders and it was no match for  
22 the six-million pound crawler.

1 Moore: And the crawler was coming.

2

3 Sue Butler: Very slowly, well yeah.

4

5 Moore: (laughs) Two-miles-an-hour.

6

7 Sue Butler: Very, very, less than two-miles-an-hour. Well finally some of the guys came and picked  
8 up – there were four guys and they picked up the VW and moved it. And of course there were  
9 pictures taken of the VW sitting on the crawler way with the VAB in the back.

10

11 Moore: Was the crawler empty when this happened or was there?

12

13 Sue Butler: No. Well I was going to a launch.

14

15 Moore: There a rocket on board.

16

17 Sue Butler: Yeah. Things were less formal than they are now.

18

19 Moore: (Laughs)

20

21 Sue Butler: Well I was in no danger.

22

23 Moore: (Laughs) That's just a wonderful story. Do you have a picture of the...

1

2 Sue Butler: Yeah.

3

4 Moore: Of your car. (Laughs)

5

6 Sue Butler: Yeah, of course.

7

8 Moore: Well it was nice of them to move your car.

9

10 Sue Butler: Yes. Well it was helpful to they could proceed with the...I forget what was being  
11 launched at the particular moment.

12

13 Moore: That's a wonderful story. (Laughs)

14

15 Sue Butler: If I can find it I could make you a copy and send it to you maybe.

16

17 Moore: That would be great. We'd love to have that for the archives. Well things certainly  
18 changed. By this point, during the...tell me about kind of the transition after human space flight  
19 began. Did information start to come more readily for you to share with the public?

20

21 Sue Butler: Yes and no. As long as everything went well it was forthcoming, great volume. As soon  
22 as there was a problem things screeched to a halt. Uh...

23

1 Moore: Explain. Examples.

2

3 Sue Butler: Well, I'll give you the more, I'm sure you have got the same from some others. Uh, on a  
4 Friday evening on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, 1967, I was home with my kid, other kids in for dinner and I,  
5 one of my sources say there was an accident on the pad, the launch pad. So naturally I called NASA.  
6 In those days. . . You know Jack King don't you? Well Jack King was in charge and they had an  
7 office in the Cape Royal, the top floor of the Cape Royal Building here, that was that NASA Press  
8 Center, and Jack or whoever answered said well we don't know anything about it. You must be  
9 mistaken. Well pretty soon I heard that it was not just an accident it was a fatal accident on the pad  
10 and at that point I drove out to the Cape Royal and confronted Jack King and all of the Public Affairs  
11 people and said tell me about it – but I wasn't the only one – Howard was there. Bill Lassiter, have  
12 you talked with him? He was there, he was ABC radio. Um, I forget all of the people – there were  
13 half-a-dozen of us who got tipped, whether we all had the same source I don't know, who drove out  
14 and they did not tell us about this fatal accident. Oh, they knew nothing about a fatal accident. Uh,  
15 we reporters, not the, but we reporters were roughly two hours ahead of NASA admitting anything.  
16 By the time NASA admitted there was a fatal accident we already knew that one astronaut had died.  
17 By the time they admitted one was dead we already knew three were dead. We were all, they were  
18 like two hours behind in acknowledging what we reporters dug out through our own sources. And  
19 subsequent to that I was being interviewed on the radio station owned by the Daytona Beach News  
20 Journal because I contributed information to the radio station and I was interviewed and they said,  
21 “Do you believe everything NASA tells you?” and I said, “Hell no.” And Jack King called me up – he  
22 was almost crying and he said what have we ever done to you Sue that you would say that on the  
23 air? But since then we have buried the hatchet but, we are, he's Public Affairs now for the United

1 Space Alliance but he was in tears because I said, in a radio broadcast, “Hell no, I don’t believe  
2 everything NASA tells me.” And, that was when Apollo One, the fire. It was years later I think when  
3 they admitted that they asphyxiated – they didn’t burn they were asphyxiated. Maybe not years but it  
4 was months later. And history repeated itself when the Challenger accident happened. It took them  
5 five hours to talk to us. They confiscated the cameras that was set out, you know the remote  
6 cameras – they confiscated them because, they confiscated them on the grounds, and I will not say  
7 there was some justification – they wanted all the videos and film to be able to identify the source of  
8 the problem but it took them a long time to return the cameras and the film. I don’t even know when  
9 these, you need to ask Carlton Miller, somebody who was around photographers – how long it was  
10 before – or Ralph Morris who lives in Vero Beach, not Vero - I could probably get you his phone  
11 number – he is a retired chief.

12  
13 Moore: What was his name?

14  
15 Sue Butler: Ralph Morris.

16  
17 Moore: Rife Morris?

18  
19 Sue Butler: Ralph. He was the chief photographer for Time and Life here for years. He is retired.  
20 He lives in, my God, south of Vero Beach. I don’t know how cooperative, he lost his wife not long ago  
21 so I don’t know how cooperative he would be. But it took a long time before they got the cameras  
22 back and it was five hours before NASA called a press conference having lost the plan how to deal  
23 with the press after the Apollo fire and then they lied to us.

1

2 Moore: What did they say?

3

4 Sue Butler: Well, the guy then in charge was Jessie, Jessie, I can't think of his name, it must be in  
5 your history records, a NASA Administrator, and uh, I don't recall how...

6

7 Moore: Hugh Harris?

8

9 Sue Butler: No, no, no. Way above him.

10

11 Moore: Above, oh above him, oh I see.

12

13 Sue Butler: No, way above him. Uh, you've talked with Hugh haven't you? Hugh is a nice guy but  
14 he wasn't very effective, but a nice guy. He never lied to me let's put it this way.

15

16 Moore: He was honest with you, straight forward, what made him not effective?

17

18 Sue Butler: Uh, he didn't \_\_\_\_\_ here. You had to go to him...I'll give you example. In  
19 connection with the same Challenger accident there was a guy named, he died recently, he was  
20 hired, he was a NASA guy, hired to explain things to us reporters. It was a great idea. Oh God what  
21 was his name. Howard would remember or Jay would remember. I can't think of his name, lived in  
22 Titusville. I see his picture from here. He had terminal cancer. He died in the last two or three years.  
23 Anyway, he was a NASA employee hired to help out in the press center, it'll come to me the middle of

1 the night probably, and he was very helpful. He explained things in layman terms but the booster,  
2 you know, he was tremendously helpful but he was so helpful he told us things that NASA wasn't  
3 ready to disclose like, he was the one who, the first one who told me it's not the, it's not the Orbiter it's  
4 one of the boosters. Well NASA wasn't ready to disclose that the problem was with one of the  
5 boosters but it came out a couple of days later, but I can't think of his name. Anyway, NASA removed  
6 him.

7  
8 Moore: Because he talked too much.

9  
10 Sue Butler: Yes, he talked too much. And I don't know who was responsible for removing him, I  
11 don't know, but one day he was gone. Oh God what's his name.

12  
13 Moore: Well, going back who was doing the lying? Where were the lies coming from during the  
14 Challenger? What were they telling you or telling you?

15  
16 Sue Butler: They weren't telling us anything.

17  
18 Moore: Well to lie though they have to have said something that was not true rather than just  
19 withholding information.

20  
21 Sue Butler: Uh, I'm trying to give you an example and I can't, I can't think of one. Uh...

1 Moore: We can come back to that. You were mentioning that Hugh never lied to you, very  
2 straight forward but you had to pull information unlike, were there other people higher in NASA who  
3 were chief external affairs type people at the top who were better about giving information...

4

5 Sue Butler: No.

6

7 Moore: ...providing it.

8

9 Sue Butler: No, no. The guy who was really good was Hugh's predecessor who is dead. Now what  
10 is his name? Uh, I can't think of it. You look it up in the files. Who was, he also died of cancer. It's  
11 terrible, all your good sources are gone.

12

13 Moore: Well what would he do?

14

15 Sue Butler: Well he would call you and say hey, this and this happened. In short, he volunteered  
16 things instead of having to drag it out of the NASA people. God I can't think of his name either. Uh,  
17 uh, I'm...my minds gone. My minds gone.

18

19 Moore: Oh, that's okay. We can...it's just a name. That's, that's, that's not...but it was Hugh's  
20 predecessor.

21

1 Sue Butler: It was Hugh's predecessor. Yeah. I tell you other guys who would be very helpful as  
2 opposed to the majority is Sam Beddingfield who is still a volunteer out there so don't get him in  
3 trouble. It was many of the old-timers that went back as volunteers.

4

5 Moore: What did Sam do? Was he a reporter as well or was he...

6

7 Sue Butler: No...

8

9 Moore: ...a NASA employee?

10

11 Sue Butler: He was a NASA engineer but he was helpful, he would tell you things. He was a source  
12 for many of us. So you don't get him in trouble.

13

14 Moore: I won't.

15

16 Sue Butler: Uh, let me call Jerry and see what the guy's...

17

18 Moore: I'll just push pause on this for a minute...

19

20 Sue Butler: It bugs me that I can't remember his name. Here he was so helpful and now he is gone,  
21 I can't even think of his name. I feel guilty about it. Really.

22

1 Moore: Maybe it'll come back when you stop thinking about it. What, during this time,  
2 especially during the early years and how this changed – what were your editors looking for? Were  
3 they just pretty much relying on you to provide the story or was there something particular that they  
4 were searching for in what they wanted to send out.

5

6 Sue Butler: My editors left it up to me but, remember I worked for a relatively small daily paper, The  
7 Daytona Beach News Journal, and the publisher was my executive editor, just left it up to me, and  
8 ironically when Challenger explored the News Journal I hadn't work for a long time they called me for  
9 information. No, they left it up to me. Um, I'm not typical in that sense. I think other reporters weren't  
10 given the freedom that I had so I'm sorry I can't help you there.

11

12 Moore: Well that's fine. That's, that's I think in some ways I think that is a more common story.  
13 So what you were reporting then during the early years – the Mercury, the Gemini, the Apollo years –  
14 was there something specific, did you base what you were reporting in the vein of what was  
15 happening internationally?

16

17 Sue Butler: No. No. We were very provincial here. Maybe not AP and maybe not, not the big  
18 networks but working for a daily paper we were very provincial. When I could I talked about the  
19 Russian program too using some of my sources, mainly, I had a, they syndicated the column I had -  
20 Man and Missiles. I told Jim 'til the day we dropped it that it wasn't missiles it was rockets but it  
21 sounded better.

22

23 Moore: A little alliteration always...

1

2 Sue Butler: Yeah. So, I covered if you will some of the Russian, aspect of the Russian program in  
3 my columns but I didn't have as much access as say Jim Oberg for instance. I think you should talk  
4 with him and, uh, he is not a great friend of NASA, but and his wife Cookie. But Jim would be your  
5 best source. James Oberg. He lives in, outside Houston, and you must have read his books, but he  
6 also had very great insight in what NASA would tolerate and what NASA would not tolerate. I would  
7 send you to him ahead of anyone else. I have his phone number but not on me.

8

9 Moore: We can get it later. You were mentioning before we started recording about meeting  
10 with a Russian...

11

12 Sue Butler: Yeah.

13

14 Moore: ...in New York and what he told you.

15

16 Sue Butler: Yeah.

17

18 Moore: Tell me that story yet again.

19

20 Sue Butler: Well, I was concerned about whether they would beat us to the moon because that was  
21 a story. In fact it was Howard Benedict who told me I was way out on a limb when I printed the  
22 Russian's were not going near the moon in 1968, 'cause that was the story. They were going to go to  
23 the moon in '68 – that's what the AP said. And uh, the story was that they would go about three

1 weeks before we would launch. Well here we launched the thing on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December but the  
2 Russian told me he would tap my shoulder and wink – you can sleep, we're not going to the moon  
3 this year.

4  
5 Moore: Who was this individual?

6  
7 Sue Butler: Saathoff, Leonard Saathoff. He was a member of the Soviet Academy of Scientists.  
8 And uh, I stayed in contact with him for a while. He is dead now I think. He would have to be 100  
9 years old.

10  
11 Moore: Now you were telling me that he shooed the KGB...

12  
13 Sue Butler: Yeah. He could, he was a big enough fish to get rid of his minder as opposed to, well,  
14 don't get me started..

15  
16 Moore: Yeah, yeah.

17  
18 Sue Butler: He always had his minder, when I say his minder I could say bodyguard but he wasn't, it  
19 was just his minder. He was just a guy to pull him and say, \_\_\_\_\_ you can't dance with her, you  
20 can't tell her that. In later years he would just pull him away from the question. And I'm still waiting  
21 for an answer to a question I asked Dan Goldin that has to do with the community incidentally.

22  
23 Moore: What was the question?

1

2 Sue Butler: Well, the question was – How could you give away to a private profit-making company,  
3 Delaware North, all the contents of the firing rooms of Mercury and Gemini that we taxpayers have  
4 paid for and they are now charging admission to you to see it. Admittedly they cleaned it up. They  
5 repainted everything. And his reply initially was – Well look, Sea World and Disney World were  
6 created and charged more for admission. I said, yeah but they paid for it themselves, they didn't use  
7 taxpayer provided stuff. Here you go into Delaware North and to the Visitor Center which NASA is  
8 operating and they charge you twenty-four bucks to see what you have already paid for – the  
9 contents of the firing rooms and all the NASA equipment. And it became, really a joke between us  
10 because all of the other reporters knew on landing when Dan Goldin would come to the fence, we  
11 were separated by fence at the landing site, and everybody knew that I would ask that question,  
12 never got an answer.

13

14 Moore: He'd never respond.

15

16 Sue Butler: No. Never. 'Cause he knew after a while, the few landings what I would ask, and I do  
17 think it is grossly unfair, I think they should charge for the maintenance of it but they shouldn't make a  
18 profit on what, on what all of us taxpayers have paid. I feel very strongly about that. That's not what  
19 you want to hear.

20

21 Moore: No, that's, that's fine I am not arguing there so.

22

23 Sue Butler: They are still doing it. You still have to pay to get in, really.

1

2 Moore: Well actually they don't let anybody see that over there now. The early, the Cape-side  
3 resources.

4

5 Sue Butler: Really?

6

7 Moore: The Air Force has blocked it since September 11<sup>th</sup> but Delaware North would like to get  
8 back over there and continue so.

9

10 Sue Butler: Now that, I think there was a big competition between the Air Force and NASA and for a  
11 while NASA wouldn't run tour buses past the Air Force museum on the grounds, get this, on the  
12 grounds that their buses which weren't the current ones were older were dropping oil and the Air  
13 Force wouldn't like to have the roadway soiled by the oil from the NASA buses so for a while they  
14 wouldn't run buses by the Air Force museum. Now everything's changed since 9-11 of course. It's a  
15 pity because before that on Sunday anyone could drive through and see the Air Force stop there and  
16 see the Air Force museum, the contents which is – have you been inside? Well then you know it's  
17 worth seeing. So...

18

19 Moore: That's a tragedy that that has taken place that way.

20

21 Sue Butler: But I am livid over Delaware North with NASA's approval is collect, making all this  
22 money with stuff we have paid for.

23

1 Moore: I see this.

2

3 Sue Butler: Now you know that there were other deals that most of us reporters didn't approve – the  
4 deal that NASA allowed the astronauts, the early astronauts, to make with Life Magazine. That's well  
5 documented and they posted their own reporter around to keep other reporters away from the homes  
6 of these astronauts.

7

8 Moore: Tell me about your reaction to that.

9

10 Sue Butler: I got kicked out of Buzz Aldrin's home that way.

11

12 Moore: By Life magazine

13

14 Sue Butler: Well..

15

16 Moore: Or by the...

17

18 Sue Butler: I don't...

19

20 Moore: Was it the family that asked you to leave or was it...

21

22 Sue Butler: Well I, Buzz Aldrin's then wife was speaking a little theatre and that was before, before  
23 Apollo 11 and I was desperate to get to talk to the Apollo 11 astronauts, know about their lives. I

1 wound up doing a good series of stories on them and their wives but, to the present day I get kidded  
2 how did I know that Mike Collins uh, likes to read cook books in bed. Well, his wife told me. It wasn't  
3 as sexy as it sounds. But that particular time when I got kicked out I knew his wife was speaking a  
4 little theatre and she had a performance, it was in Houston, she had a performance of the Crucible I  
5 think it was by Alfred Miller and I knew that after it was the first performance she would invite  
6 everybody in the audience to their home afterwards. I was included wasn't I, I was in the audience. I  
7 didn't know where they lived but I just followed the majority and found my way there and I chatted  
8 with the kids, stood in the kitchen and then he came out of his study and said, "What the hell are you  
9 doing here." I said I attended your wife's play, I was invited. But...

10  
11 Moore: This was Buzz Aldrin who said this?

12  
13 Sue Butler: Yeah.

14  
15 Moore: And then what happened.

16  
17 Sue Butler: Nothing happened. I mean...

18  
19 Moore: You stayed.

20  
21 Sue Butler: Of course. I mean, I picked up enough color to write a story. So why not.

22  
23 Moore: So you weren't actually kicked out of the house you were just confronted.

1

2 Sue Butler: No, no. I was confronted. I was confronted.

3

4 Moore: (Laughs) Was he amicable after this?

5

6 Sue Butler: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

7

8 Moore: Did you have a chance to talk to him?

9

10 Sue Butler: Of yeah.

11

12 Moore: And so you printed your story.

13

14 Sue Butler: He was shocked.

15

16 Moore: Was Life (laughs), was Life magazine, was there any response to the fact that you  
17 found this story.

18

19 Sue Butler: No. Remember I worked for a small daily. They couldn't care less. They really didn't  
20 care.

21

1 Moore: Now were any of the stories you wrote, obviously, you were getting this inside story,  
2 you've got all these great previous stories. You talked to the Soviet scientist who said that we're not  
3 going to the moon – relax you can sleep.

4

5 Sue Butler: That year. Now he didn't say we're never going to the moon, he said that year, '68.

6

7 Moore: But did any of your stories ever get picked up and run nationally?

8

9 Sue Butler: My columns did. I had a, this syndicated column but I didn't syndicate it, the Daytona  
10 Beach News Journal syndicated it and they made the profit from it. I didn't see a penny of it. It  
11 probably showed up in my salary some way. But I was a very small fish, and besides, having an  
12 accent has been helpful at times. Uh...

13

14 Moore: Explain.

15

16 Sue Butler: Somewhere there is still a tape where there were all these Germans in the early days  
17 and I would ask in press conference, I would ask my question in German and then I would get a  
18 German answer and Howard would scream "Sue Butler speak English" 'cause I got German answers.  
19 I didn't have to share with other reporters. Can't do it now anymore. I've tried it a few other times.  
20 French speaking astronauts but NASA won't hold still for that.

21

22 Moore: They don't, they don't respond. They don't mind if you do it.

23

1 Sue Butler: Everybody translates, and if a question is asked in a foreign language it is translated,  
2 the astronauts themselves translate it for everybody else.

3

4 Moore: Did you find that the early German scientist when you would do this that they were more  
5 receptive to your questions than others?

6

7 Sue Butler: Yes. But only one of them knew that I was a Holocaust survivor. The others didn't  
8 know my background. Only one knew.

9

10 Moore: Who was that?

11

12 Sue Butler: He just died last year, Karl Sendler who was the Deputy Center Director, yeah. I mean  
13 he was an engineer but he was a Deputy Center Director and uh. I was put in a very, very awkward  
14 situation with my contacts with these Germans because I was invited to their homes for parties  
15 including Karl Sendler who knew my background, they all lived in Cocoa Beach, had Christmas  
16 parties and they would talk frankly about things that were not meant for reporter's ears. In fact, I was  
17 with that group the evening of the fatal accident on the pad, and uh, so I knew a hell of a lot more  
18 than most reporters knew but I couldn't use it because it was in the privacy of one of their homes so I  
19 was treading a very, very narrow line of separating my private life from my reportorial life and my  
20 editor never knew that because he would have probably fired me for not printing something I knew.

21

22 Moore: Did you ever hear things and then look for the information from other sources so you  
23 wouldn't compromise that.

1

2 Sue Butler: Of course. Of course. Of course. But here I was in a position of knowing what had  
3 happened in great detail during this – then it became known that they didn't burn they asphyxiated.  
4 That the heart rates and all this, I was privy to this but I couldn't use it because I was there not as a  
5 reporter I was there as an invited guest.

6

7 Moore: Then they must have known that they had your confidence that you wouldn't share any  
8 of that. They knew you were a reporter.

9

10 Sue Butler: Yes. And, and, in fact I was castigated by the late Kurt Debus. It turned out that the  
11 Orlando Sentinel had a little insert, the Brevard section. Am I holding you up from something? They  
12 had an insert, the Brevard section, the pink section they called it, and one of the society reporters, at  
13 least that was the name, caught something – got wind that the German had a get together that  
14 evening and the get together was next to the Cape Royal in the Twin Towers in the home of one of  
15 the Germans who was dying of cancer and when the accident on the pad happened they all called  
16 around and said well do we call it off or what do we do and they decided to go ahead and get together  
17 because it wouldn't be fair to the guy who was dying or his wife to call everything off, only it wasn't a  
18 party we just went, had a drink, said how awful it was what happened on the pad and went home.  
19 Well she got wind of this – this society reporter and printed a story, a little story in the pink section to  
20 the fact that while three astronauts lay dead on a slab the NASA big-wigs were partying. And Kurt  
21 Debus called me after and said now what do we do? You are a reporter and you were there, you  
22 know. She named a lot of people who were at that party. She might as well have included my name.  
23 And I said, you do absolutely nothing, it will go away. 'Cause if you now respond and deny that it was

1 meant to be a party but the guy was dying and all we did was talk about the terrible accident and went  
2 home – it wasn't a party. That puts you in the position, you're the Center Director and you're  
3 rebutting a story, two paragraphs.

4  
5 Moore: In the society column.

6  
7 Sue Butler: So I said do nothing and he did nothing and it went away. But I had their confidence  
8 and I, because I strictly separated my personal life. I'm sorry that's not what you want to hear.

9  
10 Moore: No. No. This is fine. I am a collector of history as well and these are important parts of  
11 history. Certainly.

12  
13 Sue Butler: Yeah, but not necessarily NASA history. And how open it became. It's very open when  
14 nothing bad happens but if something bad happens.

15  
16 Moore: Now when you say something bad happens, we certainly have key things. The Apollo  
17 One fire, the Challenger accident.

18  
19 Sue Butler: Yeah.

20  
21 Moore: What about other things, they aren't necessarily bad failed missions, per the Gemini  
22 program when we had the problem with the Agena vehicle and we had to scrub the program or these  
23 types of things.

1 Sue Butler: They just weren't forthcoming.

2

3 Moore: Were they not forthcoming on things like that?

4

5 Sue Butler: Not, not forthcoming. We dug these things out ourselves. And then they said, yeah  
6 you're right. They didn't volunteer anything and God knows they have enough bodies. They had  
7 more bodies in public affairs and they were not forthcoming. They were probably all ordered, respond  
8 to a direct question but no more, I imagine.

9

10 Moore: So this was coming from above...

11

12 Sue Butler: Yes. Yes.

13

14 Moore: Okay. The public affairs people, did you sense – you had a close relationship with  
15 these people.

16

17 Sue Butler: Oh yes.

18

19 Moore: Did you sense that they were under orders not to share? People like Hugh Harris that  
20 you mentioned, that he was very honest...

21

22 Sue Butler: He was very nice.

23

1 Moore: ...and straight forward but not as effective as some for your needs. Was that because  
2 he was under direction to say, this is how far you take it etc., or was it...

3

4 Sue Butler: Probably, I don't know. Probably. Um, I am still looking for the Director of Public Affairs  
5 before but I can't think of his name. Terrible, my memory slips.

6

7 Moore: Tell me about the years in between the end of the Apollo program, Apollo 17 and then  
8 we have the Apollo-Soyuz test project and Skylab, and then we have a lull in there from essentially  
9 '76 up until 1981.

10

11 Sue Butler: Yeah.

12

13 Moore: Was that a challenge to report? This is kind of the change from the Cold War years to  
14 much more scientific.

15

16 Sue Butler: Of course because nothing happened. I mean it was a lull and a lull doesn't make an  
17 interesting story. So when you, you have to, you have to write but you don't have anything to write  
18 about.

19

20 Moore: Well during this year or so we are also having expendable launch vehicles, we are  
21 developing the Shuttle.

22

23 Sue Butler: Yeah but...

1

2 Moore: That's not...

3

4 Sue Butler: It's not news. It really isn't news. I know, for instance, public affairs person for ILS, I  
5 don't know if you know Julie Anders, she tries, she puts out news really that she clutches at anything.  
6 Do you want to come out and photograph the putting a flag on the gantry of the new Atlas sites. I  
7 mean she tries awfully hard to create news.

8

9 Moore: That's right now.

10

11 Sue Butler: Yes.

12

13 Moore: Yeah.

14

15 Sue Butler: But this sort of thing. The PR people they really try and they tried then but it wasn't  
16 news.

17

18 Moore: But some of these things went on to make news, the launching of the Hubble space  
19 telescope, um, some of the mars, these types of things.

20

21 Sue Butler: Yeah.

22

23 Moore: But the launch, is it news? It's later...

1

2 Sue Butler: Oh boy what did you drop.

3

4 Moore: Oh, it's my bag. It's alright.

5

6 Sue Butler: Something else fell. I heard something fall on the floor.

7

8 Moore: It's a battery. I'll get it. Go ahead.

9

10 Sue Butler: I wish I had a battery in my cell phone. During Apollo 11, I'll show you how short the  
11 public interest is, during Apollo 11, I was, just before the launch, I was besieged by publications I'd  
12 never even heard of wanting stories about the astronauts and going to the moon, etc., etc., etc. I  
13 really didn't have time to serve all these people but I thought, well I may need them. I may need a  
14 job, an assignment so I killed myself to accommodate them. I remember two days before the launch I  
15 had a query from an, the Italian version of Business Week, how many Italians were working on the  
16 Apollo program. Of course the most obvious was Rocco Patrone but he was an American-born  
17 Italian. They wanted to know the real Italian. There were a few but. . . One of them is still alive on  
18 Merritt Island. You can talk with him, \_\_\_\_\_(Donalia) Dussich, he was with the Boeing  
19 Company and he can tell you all kinds of stories... Dussich, d-u-s-s-i-c-h, and he is in his 90's but the  
20 last time I knew he had all of his marbles. In fact he took a new wife after his wife died a couple of  
21 three years ago. Anyway, uh, I knocked myself out to accommodate publications because I thought I  
22 might need them even though I really had no time to spare. Apollo 12 rolled around and I contacted  
23 all these publications and say what would you like, how may I serve you. And the answer was – well

1 thank you very much but you know we subscribe to the AP or UP or whatever and thanks anyway.  
2 Not one wanted a story about Apollo 12, not one. Of course I filed on it for my daily newspapers, I  
3 mean it wasn't that I was depending my living on that. The public interest goes away with the launch.  
4 You have the launch and then again there is an interest if we hook up with the Hubble or with the  
5 space station but not very much and the landings and coming back is blah. On paragraph – the  
6 Shuttle returns after successful 12-day mission. Really there is no interest.

7

8 Moore: Now this is the perception that's coming from the papers that there is no interest yet still  
9 we have millions literally of people flocking to this part of Florida to come and see NASA and to see  
10 the place where everything happened.

11

12 Sue Butler: You are right. It's up to the editor's. They, they perceive that there is no interest, and  
13 uh, Marsha Dunn since you've talked with her – she is a very dear personal friend of mine and  
14 besides the fact that I worked for her for those 10 years and she can tell you that the interest just isn't  
15 there. She will kill herself to do a great story and it may not, it may be used but much curtailed. She  
16 is on vacation right now. Have you talked with her already?

17

18 Moore: No.

19

20 Sue Butler: Okay, she'll be back on July the 6<sup>th</sup>, I know because I'm picking her and her husband up  
21 at the plane. She will be back on July 6<sup>th</sup>, so after that talk to her. She's been here for over 10 years  
22 now and she can tell you a lot. Not about the early days but about, about the interest. How many  
23 inches she gets out of a story in print. She knocks herself out. She's very good.

1

2 Moore: Now did you find though, you're still trying...

3

4 Sue Butler: And I'll tell you – this is not really nothing to do with it but when Marsha came Howard  
5 was not pleased because: a) He thought he was indispensable and in a way he was and he really  
6 was a tremendous reporter, his sources never ended. I mean he was terrific. But here he was being  
7 replaced by a little girl, Marsha is shorter than I am, she is, I won't tell you her age but she looks 10  
8 years younger than she is so she looks like a little girl and his male ego was, I think, offended by –  
9 who is she taking his job. I know one of the NASA Public Affairs people asked me, before I went to  
10 work for her, said, what is she like, what is she, I said she is not just good she is excellent. She is at  
11 least as good as Howard and then some on her features, and they didn't believe me really. You  
12 know, there is this, this, male – you're a man you can understand that – how would you like to be  
13 replaced by a little girl who came from nowhere, from a Pittsburgh bureau. Who cares about  
14 Pittsburgh bureau. So there was a certain – I don't want to say animosity I mean but it was difficult  
15 for Howard to accept.

16

17 Moore: Well he was leaving anyway wasn't he?

18

19 Sue Butler: Yes. Yes.

20

21 Moore: I was just his replacement. He wasn't being...

22

23 Sue Butler: Yes.

1

2 Moore: ...canned or anything. So...

3

4 Sue Butler: Yes. No. But...

5

6 Moore: His predecessor but he thought it was less than should have been replacing him.

7

8 Sue Butler: Yes. But every reporter you talk to here will tell you what they think of Dan Goldin and  
9 he was, we all thought he was terrible. Ask any reporter and they will tell you what they think of Dan  
10 Goldin. He schmoozed a lot, that is the right word, but he didn't do the space program any good  
11 when you think of all the money over-runs. He had to know, and he kept denying it to all of us. I'm  
12 sorry I can't do better for you.

13

14 Moore: No, this is, you're doing wonderfully. In terms of your experience with what you were  
15 trying present, between the Apollo years and the later years and then return to flight, I guess, when  
16 we started the Shuttle program in 19 in '91, not the return to flight in '88.

17

18 Sue Butler: But the return the flight was a big deal because, you know, there is no...

19

20 Moore: In '88.

21

22 Sue Butler: Yeah. Well it could have been. Interesting, you know they were all male military people  
23 on that flight. They didn't take any chances. So, I mean, a Challenger could have still happened

1 again but I think NASA was more comfortable by having military men aboard than women scientist or  
2 whatever. But in between, I was hard-pressed to find things to write about.

3

4 Moore: Well when the Shuttle program started, the mission before, we're going to the moon,  
5 we're beating the Soviets. You yourself brought up these issues.

6

7 Sue Butler: Yeah.

8

9 Moore: It was a very clear kind of direction. When the Shuttle program started certainly the first  
10 3 or 4 missions, new test program, the Shuttle is now working, we have these successes – what was  
11 your slant, what were you trying to present in what the mission of this new STS program was about?

12

13 Sue Butler: You want the truth? What I wrote and what I really feel are two different things. My  
14 personal feeling was and is that NASA has no direction, no aim, I don't care whether it's O'Keefe or  
15 anyone else, that the Shuttle's sole purpose was to go to a space station and the space station, now  
16 this is my belief, has no real mission even before the crew was cut from 7 to 3 and let's face it the  
17 Shuttle needs two guys to run it so you have one doing a little, a few experiments. The space station  
18 was not, is not needed as a jumping off place to go back to the moon or to go to Mars. The space  
19 station, the space station, think about it, it cannot be all things to all people. They want a centrifuge  
20 on it for people, for astronauts to exercise but that it is in direct contrast to the people who need  
21 absolute, as near as possible, to produce drugs. It's a contradiction with the space station. And in  
22 my personal view it's useless. It was useless even before it was reduced to just limping along with  
23 what we have. There is no meaning for science being performed on it. There cannot be under the

1 present circumstances, and it is not going anywhere, it is only going in circles. It is not going  
2 anywhere to take us to colonies on the moon or trips to Mars. You can go to moon and we did  
3 without having a space station and if we don't have a space station the Shuttle is even more  
4 superfluous. Really and truly that is my feeling.

5  
6 Moore: That's your personal side.

7  
8 Sue Butler: Yes.

9  
10 Moore: So what do you report. You said that what you report and what you believe are two  
11 different things.

12  
13 Sue Butler: Well, if I, when I had a column to write, my syndicated column I could say that and did  
14 say that essentially. What I printed as a reported is what went on. You know, the nitty gritty. Guess  
15 what, they found an Oreo cookie in a Shuttle orbiter. Well what was the Oreo cookie doing, that was  
16 a very, very early flight when they had no business taking solid food up. I mean, it's, it's nothing. It's  
17 not worth anything. It isn't, there is a big gap between, as you pointed out, between our first space  
18 station – we let it fall in Australia in pieces, I mean...

19  
20 Moore: Skylab.

21  
22 Sue Butler: Yeah, our first space station is what it was. And then nothing. And this Apollo-Soyuz it  
23 was good politics but it didn't achieve anything. You have to agree with that – just good politics. So,

1 I'm sorry I can't tell you anything of use to you as a historian. You just have to leave a few pages  
2 blank.

3

4 Moore: So where are we going? Where is NASA going?

5

6 Sue Butler: Nowhere. Nowhere. Even if NASA were not four-billion in, behind. Even if NASA didn't  
7 owe that and even if O'Keefe hadn't curtailed it to 3 people who can really do nothing but operate the  
8 space station and there is no trick to that anymore, the Russians did it for years very well, we're not  
9 going anywhere.

10

11 Moore: Do you think that's gonna change?

12

13 Sue Butler: Um, well a lot depends on politics. Everything depends on the politics and I have not  
14 seen any tremendous interest in the Bush administration in space. For that matter I haven't seen it  
15 much in the Clinton administration either. I really don't see a change. I don't see it. And there is no  
16 goal – yeah they say we want to go to Mars. They are not doing anything. Look they scrapped X-33  
17 as a replacement for the Shuttle. I know X-33 wasn't going to Mars anyway but they scrapped it  
18 because they had some problems with the materials. I think they swept it up and distributed the  
19 pieces to the various centers. Now that was an honest attempt to do something. Think of the DC,  
20 think of the Star Clipper – only they didn't call it the Star Clipper at that point – the single stage to orbit  
21 that was being tried by various companies.

22

23 Moore: The Venture Star?

1

2 Sue Butler: The Venture Star is the most obvious.

3

4 Moore: Sub's of the X-33. Right.

5

6 Sue Butler: Yeah.

7

8 Moore: The same.

9

10 Sue Butler: But uh, oh there were better attempts before Lockheed got into it. There were,  
11 McDonald Douglas got into a single stage to orbit. You may remember, it flew straight up, sideways  
12 and down and then they had an accident and nobody wanted to pay for doing it anymore. It wasn't a  
13 bad accident. I think it landed on three instead of four legs. It was a minor accident. But, I don't see  
14 the government or industry investing in, in the future. I don't see it. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry  
15 because I enjoy what I'm doing. I believe in what I'm doing but I don't see NASA or the space  
16 program going anywhere.

17

18 Moore: Do you think the competition with the Chinese could spark something since they are  
19 talking about putting a man in orbit.

20

21 Sue Butler: They are talking. They are talking. Well even if they did the Russians put men in orbit.  
22 I haven't seen anyone going out into Mars. I haven't seen anyone going to the moon to colonize it so  
23 you have a few more ships going around. I don't see it.

1

2 Moore: On the grounds of this and logically as you said it is all driven by politics...

3

4 Sue Butler: Of course.

5

6 Moore: . . . that the administration and congress has to find some kind of a catch. At the same  
7 time you have a population which is very interested in space. They do polls, not by NASA obviously  
8 because they cannot but other agencies that say – do you believe in the program, do you believe in  
9 the mission and the majority routinely says yes we think this is a good thing...

10

11 Sue Butler: Well...

12

13 Moore: Why isn't there this collaboration?

14

15 Sue Butler: Why not say it is a good thing. It doesn't cost them to say oh, yeah, great deal. It's  
16 great.

17

18 Moore: But it does cost them.

19

20 Sue Butler: Yeah, you see people coming to see the launches but the interest fades the day after  
21 the launch has gone and they've forgotten about the mission. And, here we watch Channel 15, we  
22 get the NASA channel, we know what's going on anyway but you don't have elsewhere. It's boring to

1 them all. Oh, you have something else up there now. Oh really. That's the attitude. Believe me, I'm  
2 depressed about it. Talk to somebody who is a better believer, who sees something ahead. I don't.

3

4 Moore: When did you sense that this started to fade? Did they have a mission during the 1970s  
5 when they were looking forward to the Shuttle program? Was there a mission there?

6

7 Sue Butler: In the 1970s? Well...

8

9 Moore: Sure, when they were building...

10

11 Sue Butler: Well we had the Apollo-Soyuz.

12

13 Moore: When they were going through... Well I'm talking about when the plan to build the  
14 Shuttle, when the Enterprise test, when they brought the pieces together, they did the glider test, they  
15 were constructing Columbia. They delivered Columbia. They launched it in 1981.

16

17 Sue Butler: Okay.

18

19 Moore: Did you sense that there was a mission there, there was a goal?

20

21 Sue Butler: I personally thought the only mission would be to go back to the moon and the Shuttle  
22 could never do it. It is too bad they scrapped the Saturn V and I think they lost the blueprints for it,  
23 didn't they?

1

2 Moore: Yeah, they're gone.

3

4 Sue Butler: Which is just, boggles the mind. How can you lose the blueprints to the rocket that took  
5 us to the moon? But the space station isn't going to take us to the moon. It's not going to take us  
6 anywhere and the Shuttles aren't going to take us anywhere except to re-supply the space station,  
7 and in truth we don't even need that. The Russians have the Soyuz they can send up with the people  
8 and bring them back and they have the progress tankers. In truth we don't need the Shuttle. You  
9 work for NASA so I shouldn't say that.

10

11 Moore: No, no. I'm essentially a contractor on the side, so then. I'm a historian.

12

13 Sue Butler: We do not need the Shuttle. The world doesn't need the Shuttle. As long as the  
14 Russians build Soyuz and Progress.

15

16 Moore: But at the same time you continue to, you go to all the launches...

17

18 Sue Butler: Yeah.

19

20 Moore: ...you watch all the missions.

21

22 Sue Butler: Yeah.

23

1 Moore: ...you report on the landing.

2

3 Sue Butler: Yeah.

4

5 Moore: ...you and I couldn't get together until we launched it which took forever, and then we  
6 landed which took forever.

7

8 Sue Butler: That's because I have a job to do. I report to the Daytona Beach News Journal.

9

10 Moore: But you're a skilled reporter with all kinds of world experiences, couldn't you go find  
11 something that you really were passionate about?

12

13 Sue Butler: Well, I have to be...

14

15 Moore: There must be something that keeps you connected.

16

17 Sue Butler: I have to be, when I report I don't inject my personal feelings. I better not. Now this is  
18 contrary to what they do in some other countries where a reporter, I expect them to inject their  
19 personal views and we have a newspaper in Austria that they have three major parties and the paper  
20 prints, I don't know if you realize that, has reporters from these three major parties reporting on  
21 events with their particular slant. But here we report things, we have what is known as balance and  
22 so as a reporter I just report what is going on.

23

1 Moore: Well I guess the difference is is you continue to do this but Howard Benedict told me  
2 that when he decided to leave in 1990 he was bored with it, he didn't see a direction, he figured he  
3 was gonna do something else with his life.

4

5 Sue Butler: Well I don't see any direction either. I agree with him there; however, he is still very  
6 involved with the astronaut, with the Mercury 7 Foundation so that is his thing and that keeps him  
7 busy, and uh...

8

9 Moore: Well I can't believe for a minute that you don't have something that you could find...

10

11 Sue Butler: I'm 80 years old. (Laughs)

12

13 Moore: So you got a long time to go.

14

15 Sue Butler: I don't know what I'll do but I don't think I'll be reporting for the News Journal after this  
16 year. I'll do my stint and I'll go out and watch and report how it goes, and God help us if we ever have  
17 an accident. You know, they must have told you, it's known as a body watch and this is the polite  
18 word for it, the body watch. Most reporters, they may not tell you this, but most reporters and their  
19 editors who send them there, they go out in case something goes very wrong and then they have a  
20 story but it takes lives and that's the only reason most reporters go out.

21

22 Moore: There's just a handful of you who actually report on it for the sake of the mission.

23

1 Sue Butler: Yeah. Maybe not even a handful. Yeah, maybe a handful. But my ambition, you know  
2 at my age I'm not having any great ambitions. I have a husband who is older than I am who needs  
3 my TLC, now that's not the husband who died of cancer (laughs), I skipped a few decades here. So,  
4 I have no real ambitions as far as space goes. I'm disappointed that we haven't gone back to the  
5 moon. I'm disappointed that none of these things were attempted. I mean the National Space  
6 Society is great but it is not going anywhere either. Do you see us going to Mars?

7  
8 Moore: Not in the immediate future.

9  
10 Sue Butler: Do you see, let me turn it around...

11  
12 Moore: No you can't do that to me. (Laughs)

13  
14 Sue Butler: Do you see any, you don't have to use it, do you see any purpose to the space station?

15  
16 Moore: (Laughs) I'm the historian collecting. Every reporter I talk to does this to me.

17  
18 Sue Butler: Huh?

19  
20 Moore: Every reporter I talk to does this to me. (Both laugh)

21  
22 Sue Butler: Well it's part of your job.

23

1 Sue Butler: Do you see, I told you very honestly what I think. Now do you see a purpose, and I'll go  
2 a step further, why I think it's bologna. All these missions that we taxpayers pay out, we go and find  
3 another star or we make, have some obscure experiment on the space station, this is and the  
4 principle investigators they get something out of it in their life, why should the taxpayer support a tiny  
5 cluster of scientists. They don't do us any good. Tell me, do you think they do us any good?

6

7 Moore: (Laughs) Perhaps, on the off chance that they do discover something that becomes of  
8 value.

9

10 Sue Butler: Well I don't believe it anymore. So I'm in effect a has-been. I'm through. I applied for  
11 being the journalist in space as did Jay Barbree (he still brags about it, that he was selected.)  
12 Unfortunately he had a heart attack right after he was selected. You know that.

13

14 Moore: No. He didn't share that part.

15

16 Sue Butler: He is in good shape again. He wrote a book about it. He's very, very enterprising. But  
17 it's kind of odd that he was picked, well in part because he seemed to be in good health. Also, I knew  
18 I wouldn't be picked when I applied because the second or third paragraph on the question there said  
19 what do you want to do 20 years from now and at my age I knew I wasn't going to be picked because  
20 I couldn't say what I wanted to do 20 years later. So. But you won't answer me.

21

22 Moore: Me??

23

1 Sue Butler: Yeah. You won't tell me what you think.

2

3 Moore: (Laughs) As a historian I'm not supposed to interject my opinions. (laughs)

4

5 Sue Butler: Yeah, but.

6

7 Moore: That's the same reason that you are a reporter and you aren't supposed to interject your  
8 opinions. I can't tell...

9

10 Sue Butler: Well, how about this. I promise not to write about you.

11

12 Moore: I don't mind if you write about me. It's on the tape. (Laughs) When we make a tape we  
13 do it for 50 years in the future not so much about...

14

15 Sue Butler: No really, what do you... You've talk to other reporters. Don't you find that most of us  
16 feel that way? Have you talked with...

17

18 Moore: I do.

19

20 Sue Butler: ...with uh, I can't think of his name now. ABC guy.

21

22 Moore: Bill Harwood.

23

1 Sue Butler: No, no. He's CBS.

2

3 Moore: Oh he's CBS.

4

5 Sue Butler: He lives in Washington. Only comes down for launches. He comes for the body watch.

6 Uh, uh, that's the trouble the name escapes me. Um, Bill, Bill, I can't think of now. Anyway, have you

7 talked with people outside this community? Like reporters who come from Washington.

8

9 Moore: No.

10

11 Sue Butler: For that. Most reporters who are still around in my generation are disappointed with the

12 space program. Maybe the young squirts don't feel that way but most are disappointed. I think. Is

13 that your opinion?

14

15 Moore: Yep, that is indeed.

16

17 Sue Butler: Have you encountered it.

18

19 Moore: Yeah, absolutely.

20

21 Sue Butler: Okay, I have taken up too much of your time.

22

23 Moore: No, no. I...

1

2 Sue Butler: And I really haven't told you anything useful. What else did you want?

3

4 Moore: Okay. Today is Tuesday, June 25, 2002. Patrick Moore, University of West Florida in a  
5 continuing interview, the second tape of the interview with Sue Butler.

6

7 Moore: We were talking about the individual. You just found out the name of the individual who  
8 gave you the source on the information.

9

10 Sue Butler: Yes. He was a NASA employee. He was an engineer and to my knowledge he had no  
11 public affairs background but he had the gift of explaining very technical matters in language that we  
12 reporters could understand. He translated the technical mumbo jumbo for us. His name was Jim  
13 Mizell, m-i-z-e-l-l, first name Jim. In addition to translating the mumbo jumbo he gave us information  
14 that NASA didn't want to let out. For instance he was the one who blabbed the truth, if you will, that  
15 the problem was not with the orbiter but with the booster and NASA quickly eliminated him, got rid of  
16 him because he was talking out of turn. He wasn't, he wasn't speaking the party line. Okay what was  
17 the other thing that...we couldn't think of.

18

19 Moore: The Administrator before Hugh Harris.

20

21 Sue Butler: Yeah. He couldn't think of it. He wasn't here then so he doesn't remember that.

22

1 Moore: Did you find that there was a number of people out there – certainly I think many of the  
2 former astronauts especially who look back and say – I think when people criticize NASA about their  
3 inability to say, share what they are doing, many of the reporters have said and I shouldn't be feeding  
4 this to you – but many of the reporters have said that compared to other government agencies NASA  
5 does the best job of telling its story in contrast. At the same time a number of people have criticized  
6 and said that they don't do a good enough job. Perhaps in some way this stems from the fact that the  
7 technical side, the bulk of the scientists out there who were working on these projects are maybe not  
8 unwilling but in some ways unable to share with the common man in layman's terms exactly what is  
9 going on. Did you find this to be the case?  
10

11 Sue Butler: Well that was the great strength of this Jim Mizell who NASA kicked out because he  
12 could say it in language. I know quite a number of now retired NASA people who are the top who  
13 could translate things for us but there are very few and most of them are gone. This Sam  
14 Beddingfield I mentioned earlier, he is still around. He lives in Titusville I think if you wanted to call  
15 him. He's a nice guy and he remembers a lot. Most of the old timers, well they're dead or their  
16 memories are gone like mine. Um, uh, but it would take a visionary, a visionary NASA administrator  
17 and I don't see any on the horizon, it would take a visionary and believer as president and I do not  
18 see anyone who is going to try to be president who has an interest in space. None of the candidates  
19 of any of the parties are interested in space. Maybe because there are problems on Earth and the  
20 general feeling seems to be – I think of, look at all the money we invest in space to help a few  
21 scientists glean another bit of information about how the world started, it doesn't help the common  
22 man.  
23

1 Moore: Did you find that there was a point in going back to this, and maybe if the scientists  
2 were able to explain what it was they were going to do to help the common man it might be easier to  
3 sell that. Was there a time when NASA tried to teach their scientist to talk to the press?  
4

5 Sue Butler: I do not believe so. I can't speak for NASA itself but I don't believe so and the example  
6 that, I'm glad my husband reminded me now, of Jim Mizell is the few people they had who could and  
7 would they didn't want around. So that is my feeling.  
8

9 Moore: You were telling me while we had stopped that maybe some of these kind of interest  
10 stories that you had an opportunity or your hall or wall of successes.  
11

12 Sue Butler: Oh yes, yes.  
13

14 Moore: Tell me about some of these things.  
15

16 Sue Butler: Well I had an opportunity to go fly in the vomit comet as it is popularly known because  
17 most people who are not trained do have a problem with weightlessness and there is one, I had a  
18 wonderful time because I didn't drink anything the night before but most people did although they  
19 were told don't have a drink, others who went up flying, floating with me. I have a picture of myself  
20 floating and I have a piece of film transformed into video tape of me floating, free floating. It is a  
21 wonderful feeling. And, of course I wrote a story for my newspaper about it and my executive editor  
22 really liked it and he caught me in the hallway once and put his arm around me and said – now tell,  
23 that was a great story you did on flying weightlessly, tell me what was it really like and I said next best

1 thing to sex and he said I'm glad you didn't put it in your story, we have a family newspaper. So that  
2 was my experience. I like to do things myself so I can report first person. I drove the crawler. I drove  
3 the crawler, not very far and I had seven nervous engineers hanging over my shoulder.  
4

5 Moore: They didn't let you take it out on the freeway.  
6

7 Sue Butler: No.  
8

9 Moore: That was a joke. (Laughs)  
10

11 Sue Butler: Oh. And, they wouldn't even let the highway patrolman in, I wanted the highway  
12 patrolman there with his foot on one of the cleats writing out a ticket to me because I was zigging  
13 instead of zagging. They wouldn't go along with it. It would have been a great publicity shot for the  
14 Highway Patrol to NASA. Don't get me started. NASA has no sense of humor. They have no sense  
15 of humor and I think they, they have more people on the payroll for public affairs and they are not  
16 doing their job. That's what it boils down to.  
17

18 Moore: That the public affairs people aren't.  
19

20 Sue Butler: They're not doing their job.  
21

22 Moore: How so?  
23

1 Sue Butler: If they were really doing their job they would likely have a sense of humor, get publicity  
2 that way. They don't know how to get publicity. For a while, they had, the first time that it was fun.  
3 They had a piece at Christmas time about Santa Claus, not on a sleigh but on a rocket, but they don't  
4 know how to, they don't know how to tell their story to reporters who will then want to go out to their  
5 computers and do a little fun piece. They don't know how to inspire me to say – Gee that will make a  
6 great story.

7

8 Moore: I want to go back just briefly to both of these two experiences. One, how did you end up  
9 being a guest on the vomit comet? You did this out in Houston.

10

11 Sue Butler: No. This was at Wright Patterson Air Force base.

12

13 Moore: Wright Patterson.

14

15 Sue Butler: I was there because I had just won my second first prize in aerospace writing, Aviation  
16 Space Writers Association, and I won the prize two years in a row and I never entered again because  
17 I figured people would think well, she just knew the right people.

18

19 Moore: What year was this?

20

21 Sue Butler: Nobody, nobody had ever won two years in a row. I won in '68 and '69.

22

23 Moore: So this was right after that that you got to fly on this.

1

2 Sue Butler: The first time in '68. That was before they had, they've had some aircraft that the wings  
3 were over stressed, they had to replace then. Well I was on one where the wings stayed on.

4

5 Moore: I take it.

6

7 (Laughter)

8

9 Sue Butler: But they now have students at various universities who can sign up to fly. I think they  
10 offer this at, I think they offer it at Embry Riddle Aeronautics Degree University for students. I think  
11 they have to pay, of course, to do it. But I just enjoyed doing first person stories involved with this  
12 and, what they never let me do is fly the rocket belt and I don't know what ever happened, a real  
13 rocket belt in development that you would strap on. And I can't remember the name of the inventor of  
14 it. They never went anywhere with it. I think there are a lot of good ideas.

15

16 Moore: That was a problem with it they never went anywhere with it. (laughs)

17

18 Sue Butler: Well. (laughs) Yeah, but they should've given it a second or a third chance. It would  
19 have been terrific. I don't think they have the imagination they should. I don't have it but then I'm not  
20 in the business of selling NASA.

21

22 Moore: So when you flew in this, and I hate to keep coming back to this, 'cause it's interesting  
23 that they invited you to do this. Was it, was it what you expected?

1

2 Sue Butler: Well I say it in my story that I thought I was walking on the moon but it is really not a  
3 good analogy because on the moon you have 1/6 gravity and I had zero gravity. I was surprised  
4 when they handed me a cup of water and the water flew up out of the cup. Nowadays it's no big deal.  
5 The astronauts aboard the space station have the same experience but then it was an unusual  
6 experience and they gave me this opportunity because I had just won another big prize.

7

8 Moore: Now this works by going through this parabola where you have a short amount of time...

9

10 Sue Butler: You go up, you go up two-and-a-half miles, I think, I forget, very, very short. Faster  
11 than, maybe it was 2 Gs or 3 Gs, you go up and then you are weightless for about 30 seconds and  
12 then you dive down and you do this a few times and some people who did this got sick. I'll tell you  
13 one funny story about weightless flying and I didn't do it but the guy to whom the captain told me – Dr.  
14 Carl Hanize who was a NASA scientist, he was the first scientist astronaut that NASA had and I knew  
15 Carl pretty well and he told me how he had to qualify the suits the astronauts were going to wear. I  
16 think to wear them going to the moon – this was way back I am talking, in '68. And, Carl said that he  
17 could easily, he had to unzip himself going up and rezip himself going down but he had to perform  
18 certain \_\_\_\_\_(Shuman) functions during the weightless period and he found it very difficult.  
19 The aim, and you all the problems they had. They tried to install a fan. You heard about the fan?  
20 You know that the fan went up after the leaves of the fan, the blades, they were supposed to suck it  
21 down but they had a little problem with this. The man might lose his family jewels that way so they  
22 changed the fan and the fan blew it all over the, on the walls. You've heard about the S - H - I - T  
23 hitting the ceiling – well it did hit the ceiling. They had a lot of problems. That's why they never had a

1 potty on the Apollo. They never had one. They all had to wear diapers throughout the Apollo  
2 program. Have you ever though about that? I don't know what else I can tell you about diapers,  
3 wearing diapers.

4  
5 Moore: The diapered Apollos.

6  
7 (Laughter)

8  
9 Sue Butler: Didn't you know that?

10  
11 Moore: Yeah. But I think... (laughs) Yeah but I'm seeing it from your side.

12  
13 Sue Butler: Well that happened to Dr. Carl Hanize and he's gone. That's the trouble with some of  
14 my best sources – they all died off.

15  
16 Moore: It's rude when they do that.

17  
18 Sue Butler: Yeah. In fact when I worked for Marsha Dunn she kept taking, she knows I have such  
19 terrific sources and I say Marsha they're all dead, the terrific sources I had.

20  
21 Moore: That's tragedy.

22  
23 Sue Butler: Yeah.

1

2 Moore: Well tell me about the crawler. How was it that after you parked your car on it. Was  
3 this...

4

5 Sue Butler: No, it was no connection.

6

7 Moore: Okay. So (laughs).

8

9 Sue Butler: No connection. However, the fact that I did park my little VW there probably had  
10 something to do with the powers that be, I think it was Bendix in those days had the contract for the,  
11 operate the crawler and Frank Warren was a buddy of mine who was the manager and so he  
12 arranged with NASA for me to drive the crawler a very short distance. You know the crawler's  
13 maximum speed I think is 1 mile an hour. And, you know it has seat belts – the driver has a seat belt  
14 – and there were these 7 engineers hanging over my shoulder so I didn't really get to do very much. I  
15 didn't get to drive it very far but it was a really fun experience because you sit in this little caboose  
16 and look down but you can't really see straight down you can only look ahead. You can't look straight  
17 down and you know they can't turn it 'round. If you want to go back you have to sit in the other  
18 caboose. It was fun. I, maybe that's why I enjoyed being where I was. I...

19

20 Moore: What year did this happen, when you drove this?

21

22 Sue Butler: Sighs. I have it hanging on my trophy wall - my driver's license for the, that big with my  
23 picture on it, the crawler driver license. I don't remember really. It's...

1

2 Moore: Was during this during the Apollo years or the Shuttle years?

3

4 Sue Butler: Huh, it was during the Apollo years because I wrote in my story, I think, that I  
5 complained that they didn't let me carry, do anything useful like carrying a Saturn to the pad.

6

7 Moore: It was empty when you got to drive it.

8

9 Sue Butler: Yeah, it was empty. They didn't let me do useful work. So it was Apollo years. The  
10 later Apollo years. I would guess, late '69 maybe.

11

12 Moore: Remarkable.

13

14 Sue Butler: Well it's on my wall, I don't know. So that's that.

15

16 Moore: Do you have any, are there any other stories like this that you can think of off the top of  
17 your head.

18

19 Sue Butler: Oh I probably have but right now (laughs) I don't know. I didn't know what you wanted.

20

21 Moore: Well this has really been wonderful. I know you. . . Yes.

22

1 Sue Butler: But you should by all means mention that I got ticked for using the men's room on the  
2 launch pad, on the Apollo launch pad, pad 39A.

3

4 Moore: Now this, this. Not on the Apollo. This was in the early years wasn't it?

5

6 Sue Butler: It was Apollo. When they took they Saturn V out.

7

8 Moore: This wasn't the Apollo. I thought this was out on the Cape side that you got ticketed.

9

10 Sue Butler: Well you know where the launch pads are, they're in the middle of water and this was  
11 on launch pad 39A and...

12

13 Moore: I'm glad you recount. I thought this was earlier so.

14

15 Sue Butler: No, and the first Saturn V which was never flown, it was a facilities model to see if  
16 everything fit. They rolled out very slowly, it took 10 hours or something and I had good bladder  
17 control up to a point. But that's why I used the men's room and got ticketed.

18

19 Moore: What came of the ticket?

20

21 Sue Butler: Oh, I don't remember. I probably kept it as a fun thing. I don't know what I did with it. I  
22 had a colorful life in many ways.

23

1 Moore: You certainly have. It has been a, it has been a...

2

3 Sue Butler: And it's been totally different from my war time years which was also colorful. What  
4 would you like to know about the B17's and the old fashioned parachute they used? You know you  
5 couldn't control them.

6

7 Moore: The B17's?

8

9 Sue Butler: No the parachutes.

10

11 Moore: Oh, when you would have to jump out.

12

13 Sue Butler: Yeah. I mean the... I had a colorful life period.

14

15 Moore: Did you have an opportunity to jump out of these.

16

17 Sue Butler: Yep. Opportunity! Scared the hell out of me. Never, never..

18

19 Moore: You, you jumped out, out of necessity.

20

21 Sue Butler: Necessity yes.

22

23 Moore: What happened? Where were you when this happened?

1

2 Sue Butler: We were in World War II remember?

3

4 Moore: Yeah I was aware of that. (laughs) But there were lots of parts of World War II where  
5 people weren't jumping out of B17's out of necessity.

6

7 Sue Butler: Yeah. I had fun. In those days I didn't realize the scary part of it. I had fun, I was  
8 young. I had fun. And besides I had a little revenge too. So...

9

10 Moore: Well this has been a pleasure. I hope that if I have future questions that we can call and  
11 continue our interview.

12

13 Sue Butler: Yeah.

14

15 Moore: Thank you so very much.

16

17 Sue Butler: You have a card with your phone number. Do you have a card?

18