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CLYDE CONRAD:

Clyde Conrad was in charge of the La Ronge RCMP detachment in 1967 when Brady and Halkett disappeared. He headed the search.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The search for Brady and Halkett.
- Theories on their disappearance.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Sergeant C.K.G. Conrad of Gull Lake Detachment was the commanding officer of the La Ronge detachment in 1967 when Jim Brady and Absolum Halkitt disappeared on a prospecting trip in the Foster Lake area of northern Sask. Sgt. Conrad headed the search party for the two men. The search lasted about three weeks and included air, canoe, and ground searches. No trace of the men's final fate was ever found.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: Can you recall what prompted the search, the actual prompting of the search? Who reported it?

Clyde: Well are you familiar with Berry Richards?

Murray: Yes, I have interviewed him.

Clyde: Okay, well Berry Richards called in to Otter Lake and he stated that he had gone up to the camp when fellows hadn't

reported in by radio. And he'd found the canoe abandoned up the creek and he checked the camp and he found that they'd only had the one meal at the camp. And the Otter Lake radio got ahold of me. And I flew up there.

Murray: You flew up that same day or...?

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: And did you start the search at that time?

Clyde: Well, by the time we learned about it and got everything prepared we were... I think we got some searching done the first day. Just the immediate area.

Murray: So that would have been a ground search at that time?

Clyde: No, no.

Murray: Oh, that was an air search.

Clyde: From the air, yeah.

Murray: Right. What was the assumption on your part during the search? What assumption had you made in terms of what you were looking for? You were looking for lost men basically.

Clyde: Yeah, well, the way they were dropped off, they were dropped off at the wrong location, eh.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: And it appeared to me that if they had been dropped off at the proper location, they would've walked over east and hit Middle Foster Lake. And then on Middle Foster Lake, Cyril Hanson had a trapper's camp. He lived there. And they would have been able to gain access to Cyril Hanson's house and they would have been fine. So my feeling was that they were under this assumption, this is what they were trying to do. So we concentrated our search initially to the east and southeast. All the way over to Johnson River. Is it Johnson River or what the hell river was it? Paull River, Paull River.

Murray: That's right, yeah. Now there was indication from the coroner's report that there was what was thought to be their trail that led for about four miles in the direction you mentioned. Did you follow that one as well?

Clyde: The dog man did. We brought in a dog the following day and he did a ground search. And he found blazed, the trees and whatnot going in that direction.

Murray: And the trail just stopped at some point? Is that accurate? I mean, the dog lost the trail at a certain point?

Clyde: Well, I don't think the dog necessarily followed the trail as much as looked for human scent but he was able to find

these different trees that were blazed and from there we had no difficulty following the dog man's process. We could see him quite clearly. And the country itself where they initially went lost, was an old burned and it was still fairly open and it wasn't heavily, you know...

Murray: So it was fairly easy terrain for walking?

Clyde: Yeah. Yeah, it was easy terrain for walking. Well, it was rough terrain for walking but it was open; you weren't busting through trees.

Murray: Right. What was your feeling when that trail ended? Was there any possibility that the men had realized they were lost and turned around and gone back to the camp?

Clyde: No. No, then we put a ground search out on the Paull River system and by golly, I'd have to look at a map. On one of the lakes in the Paull River system - the Paull River runs basically northeast to southwest. And right on the system, we

found where they had come to the lake. By this time, this would be several days later, we had a full search going. Our special constable out of La Ronge who was a pretty good Indian in the bush and he and another group of fellows found where they come out to this lake and they had knocked down a bunch of jack pine. And it looked like they were attempting to make a raft. This lake was a long narrow lake.

Murray: Was that Lapointe Lake?

Clyde: Lapointe Lake, right on. Yeah. And they had tried to make a raft there and you could see where they... like these Indians looked at the wood chips and whatnot and felt they were only a day or, well, within a week old.

Murray: That's a fairly crucial point it seems, isn't it? There is some disagreement on how recently that raft was made, but as you recall it, the native people you were with thought it was recently made.

Clyde: Yeah, and they showed me too. They showed me where the sap was still running and if those chips had been very old, they would have been dry.

Murray: So they figured that it was well within reason that those men had made that raft.

Clyde: Within a week. Right, a week.

Murray: Right. Was there anyone else near Lapointe Lake at all?

Clyde: No.

Murray: Did you attempt to backtrack from Lapointe to see if you could find any trail from where they might have arrived

from?

Clyde: No, by this time we had charges being detonated at Rottenstone Mine about every hour on the hour. You see, when we found their position there at Lapointe Lake, they started to detonate charges at Rottenstone Mine. There is kind of a natural rift running right through to Rottenstone at the bottom of Lapointe Lake.

Murray: And you were hoping that that's the direction they had taken?

Clyde: And when they set off those dynamite charges, you could hear the explosion come all the way down the rift. So we felt that they would eventually try to work their way out along that rift to Rottenstone Mine. They could easily have walked there.

Murray: Right. The raft idea obviously had failed seeing as the raft was still there. Did you find any trail leading away from that point?

Clyde: No.

Murray: There was nothing at all?

Clyde: No, we assumed that they would have walked south from there.

Murray: What was the terrain like there? Would it have been hard to follow a trail?

Clyde: No, they could have followed in along the lakeshore.

Murray: But would they have left any marks that you might have been able to find?

Clyde: No.

Murray: Was there a lot of moss or was it pretty...?

Clyde: No, no, it was a jack pine area which was fairly sandy.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: And fairly open.

Murray: So they wouldn't likely have left a trail that could have been followed.

Clyde: No, we used the dog there too but he couldn't pick up any scent.

Murray: And of course, that would have been almost a week after.

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: They would have been through that period. How long do you think it would've taken them to get from their camp to Lapointe Lake? What would be the maximum time it would've taken them?

Clyde: I would assume that they were probably almost there when we started the search. Because it seemed it was only a matter of a week, not even a week after... oh it wouldn't even have been that, it would be about four or five days after we started the search that we discovered where they had been chopping the trees there.

Murray: Right. The raft was quite small, I understand. Would it have supported one or two men?

Clyde: Well, if they had layed on top of it and paddled, they could have gone across.

Murray: Do you think that attempt was made?

Clyde: I don't know what they tried to do. There was some of the logs in the water so I think probably that they started to do that and then they thought, well, maybe they could walk around the lake. I don't believe either one of them were swimmers.

Murray: Was the raft actually made? It was tied together in some way?

Clyde: There was nothing tied together, no.

Murray: There was just the bare logs lying there?

Clyde: Right.

Murray: I see, so the raft idea had been rejected before even the raft was made.

Clyde: That's right. And we examined the trees that they knocked down and there was indication that, at that point, their axe would have been awfully dull because you would see jagged marks in the cuts, you know. Which indicated a dull axe.

Murray: Right. They had been carrying Geiger counters. No sign was ever found of those?

Clyde: No.

Murray: What was the assumption, that they had just dumped them at some point when they realized they were lost?

Clyde: I assume so, yes.

Murray: There was quite a ground search and you set up a number of camps. What led you to set up the camps where you

did?

Clyde: Well, as soon as we found the raft then we moved our location. There, if you go south on Lapointe Lake, this rift makes a right angle to the east. And the explosion noise coming down the rift would have drawn them in that direction. Now we set up our camp on the rift and there was a series of small lakes and a river going all the way through to Rottenstone. And we set up, oh, maybe I'd say three miles east on a little lake that we could land an airplane on. And we started our ground search east and west of there and also south of Lapointe Lake.

Murray: In case they had gone south instead of east.

Clyde: In case they had gone south, yeah.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: And then we had the aircraft flying that area quite extensively.

Murray: There was one other question I was going to ask about the raft? Did the number of stumps correspond in number to the number of trees lying down?

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: So another raft hadn't been made and some left behind.

Clyde: No.

Murray: Right. There was, at the inquest, as I read the coroner's report, mention that two men had been on Lower Foster Lake. Do you recall that at all?

Clyde: Not offhand I don't.

Murray: According to the report, you gave your report and then you were recalled at the end of the inquest and asked about the existence of two guides, I think, on Lower Foster Lake when you first arrived.

Clyde: Oh, right, right. They were working for Gary Thompson. Okay, fine. Yeah.

Murray: Do you recall their names at all?

Clyde: Gosh, I don't. I think they would probably be Cooks out of Stanley Mission.

Murray: I see. It wouldn't have been a fellow by the name of Ben McKenzie?

Clyde: Right, your on. (chuckles)

Murray: That's him, eh?

Clyde: Yeah, that was him, yeah.

Murray: That was one of them. I don't recall the other man's name.

Clyde: Yeah, I think one was a Cook and one was a McKenzie.

Murray: Right. Were they with a tourist party at the time do you recall?

Clyde: No, no. They were waiting for a tourist party to come in.

Murray: I see. So they would have been landed earlier on?

Clyde: Yeah, well they would have spent the summer there. And see, they worked for Gary Thompson, Thompson Camping.

Murray: Oh I see, so they would be set on that lake and wait for tourists to arrive.

Clyde: That's right. And they would guide them as they come in.

Murray: Whereabouts on Lower Foster was their camp?

Clyde: It would be about two thirds of the way down the lake.

Murray: So it was quite a distance from where Brady had set up his camp.

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: Do you recall if they had firearms with them at all?

Clyde: Oh, I would think. I can't recall but I've never ever seen an Indian go into the bush without a .22.

Murray: At least a .22.

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: Right. Were you aware at the time of the search of the rumors going around about these two men? Apparently, and this is how I understand it from talking to people in the area, that either Ben or the younger fellow with him, had said that they had shot two men. And then of course, after this admission or story when they had been drinking, they refused to repeat this story and denied it. Were you aware of that story at all when you...?

Clyde: Yeah, well, see anytime anything happens up there, (chuckles) from my experience in working in La Ronge, you get millions of stories.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: And, like they were supposed to have been shot on the edge of a cliff and fell into the lake or something but...

Murray: There is no cliff around there.

Clyde: There is no cliff around there.

Murray: Right. So, you treated that story basically as the kind of thing that naturally comes out of a disappearance in the north?

Clyde: Yeah, right.

Murray: Was there ever any consideration of investigating that at all?

Clyde: No, it was discounted when we found the evidence that they had been at...

Murray: Lapointe.

Clyde: At Lapointe. And also, we found a squared off tree, you know how you take a tree and you square it off on all four sides?

Murray: Right.

Clyde: And Brady and Halkett had both put their initials and the date on it.

Murray: What was the date on the post?

Clyde: Oh God, I can't recall now.

Murray: Do you know whether it was...

Clyde: It was several days after their disappearance.

Murray: It was at least, you'd say at least three or four days?

Clyde: Yeah. They had used a marking pen to mark the tree.

Murray: Whereabouts was this in relation to the other...?

Clyde: About halfway between Lapointe and where they went missing.

Murray: Oh I see.

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: So it was beyond the end of, where that first trail was lost then?

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: But it was in a logical spot in terms of where they would have gone...

Clyde: It confirmed the fact that they were heading for that point, yeah.

Murray: I see, I didn't realize that the post wasn't in then that close to Lower Foster?

Clyde: No, no, it was heading off into the direction of Lapointe.

Murray: Did the RCMP discover that or was that...?

Clyde: I can't recall who did. I think it was one of the groundmen.

Murray: So once you, in your own mind, confirmed that that raft had been made by them and that post, that pretty much eliminated the possibility of them being done in by foul play?

Clyde: Oh yeah, right.

Murray: That was basically why you didn't feel it was at all necessary to investigate any suggestion of foul play?

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: It would be ridiculous because I mean, it would have to swing around and hit back west and be wandering down Foster Lake. See, if it was somebody that was not familiar with the bush and very stupid, you couldn't discount it. Knowing Brady and Halkett, they would have struck out straight east because they would have hit... you see, all those lakes and rivers all run from northeast to southwest.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: So even if you haven't got a compass, if you're familiar with the bush, you know the general direction you're going because of the lay of the land.

Murray: So they had decided to walk out. That seemed to be the conclusion.

Clyde: That's what I felt, yeah.

Murray: Did that strike you as a peculiar action on the part of men who knew the bush fairly well?

Clyde: Well, I think it was kind of stupid on their part because if they had stayed put when they found they had been lost, they had a radio and they knew somebody would come in if they didn't check in. If they had stayed where they were, well then they would have probably been saved without too much

difficulty.

Murray: That did strike you as being somewhat peculiar then?

Clyde: It struck me as being, you know... but again Brady was a kind of an oddball type. He had a mind of his own. I think he probably said, "To hell with everybody," and he would just damn well do what he wanted to do and start walking out himself.

Murray: So as far as the individual is concerned, it maybe wasn't as peculiar as it might have seemed?

Clyde: No, no. I didn't know Brady that well but talking to people that did... You know, he worked for the DNR years ago and whatnot and he was kind of a bullheaded type of individual and it's not too inconsistent with the way he thinks.

Murray: Right. He maybe thought that he didn't want to bother anybody and that he could get out of this thing himself. Would that be his attitude perhaps?

Clyde: Yeah. Right.

Murray: And you feel that they weren't actually at the camp for more than what, a day and a half or two days?

Clyde: No, one day.

Murray: One day. So they left the next morning probably.

Clyde: See they ate their breakfast and then they were gone.

Murray: I see. So they stayed overnight I suppose and then left the next morning.

Clyde: Yeah, they could tell this by the amount of grub that was gone.

Murray: Right. And what about, could you determine from the state of their camp how long it seemed they expected to be gone when they left that morning?

Clyde: Well, they packed a lunch. So they probably were going to spend the day out on the claim block and then come back.

Murray: Which would be the normal procedure from that camp.

Clyde: Right. They probably would have taken enough sandwiches and whatnot to last them through the day and then come back.

Murray: Right. What was your overall feeling at the end of the search?

Clyde: Well, when we got into that rift heading for Rotten-

stone, it was all sandhills in there and believe me it was a bugger when we were camped there because there was ants all over the bloody place. They were into our sleeping bags and everything else. And it was early in June and there was quite a number of bears in the area. In fact, we saw bears by the thousands when we were flying along that rift. And I feel that, it's just a conclusion and not a definite conclusion, but if you've ever encountered a sow bear with cubs in the bush, you've got a lot of problems. And they might have encountered a cub. Being hungry, they might have made an attempt to kill it.

Murray: And encountered the mother.

Clyde: And encountered the mother and this could have done them in. Because there is no other way that they wouldn't make it out. You know, they would have walked through to Rottenstone or we would have picked them up.

Murray: So you think that they must have encountered some fairly dramatic incident to stop them.

Clyde: Yeah, see our ground crew were encountering bears quite a bit and we saw a hell of a pile of them from the air.

Murray: What are the other possibilities, of one of them being injured and the other sort of getting exhausted, did you...?

Clyde: Well, Halkett had been, I believe he had broken an ankle the year before, the winter before. And he had just had it taken out of the cast so I imagine he would have been hobbling along pretty badly.

Murray: But one of the things that eliminates so many theories is that there were two men along. One can imagine one man being attacked by a bear and being killed but you'd think that the other might well escape.

Clyde: Well, not necessarily. If you've ever talked to anybody that's encountered them, like a pair of people, the bear usually takes them both on.

Murray: Is that right?

Clyde: Oh yeah, will knock down one, chew him up and then go after the other one.

Murray: So it's quite conceivable that they both would have been attacked?

Clyde: This is one assumption. They might have tried to swim across Lapointe Lake and they drowned. But if they had drowned we would have found the bodies because we were flying that area for a good week to ten days.

Murray: How far across was it from the point where the raft

was found?

Clyde: Oh, I'd say less than a quarter of a mile.

Murray: And you, did you actually do a boat search of the lake for the bodies or...?

Clyde: Well, if they had drowned in the lake, they would have popped up and we wouldn't have had any difficulty seeing them at all from the air.

Murray: The body would rise to the air from decay is that the normal..?

Clyde: Yeah, usually at that time of year. That lake was fairly warm even though it was springtime, it was a shallow lake. And I would say that five to six days, the body should come up.

Murray: Right. So you were there over a period of time that you would've seen them?

Clyde: Oh we were there for at least a week after that.

Murray: Right. And the lake is quite shallow for the whole length of it, eh?

Clyde: The whole system is quite shallow.

Murray: Right. Does that apply to Lower Foster as well?

Clyde: No, that's a deep lake.

Murray: It is a deep lake.

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: It's a trout lake.

Murray: How long did the search actually go on from the point you started it?

Clyde: We went on until freeze up. It wasn't a daily continuous thing but I would say I was flying that area like, after we had completely eliminated the main area, then we went to all the natural waterways where they couldn't get across. And we flew that whole length as far as could be conceivably possible to the north, down to the Churchill and across to Churchill and followed all the little lakes and rapids across that way. And then up the Foster River. Those are natural barriers that they wouldn't be able to get across.

Murray: There was never any trace of fire. Do you think that they may, because they were only going out for the day,

not have taken matches with them?

Clyde: Well, Halkett smoked I'm sure. I don't know if Brady did. Yeah, Brady smoked because I remember he used to walk around with a butt hanging out of his mouth. No, they both smoked so they should have had matches with them. Probably a pouch of tobacco.

Murray: What was your assumption about the lack of any evidence of a fire?

Clyde: I don't know. You know, for the two people involved, they certainly didn't use their head. It was quite stupid on their part that they didn't stop somewhere, light one hell of a fire because, you know, that time of the year is a fire season.

Murray: And people are looking for it.

Clyde: And the DNR are looking for it and every pilot in the north that's flying anywhere, if he sees smoke he investigates it because the normal procedure at that time is that the pilot found the fire, the company that he's flying for got assigned to fight the fire. So, they were very, very conscious...

Murray: There was an incentive to report fires.

Clyde: That's right. So they were very conscious of any smoke that's in the country. But again, Jim could be quite bull-headed and think that well, he could look after himself and he didn't need anybody else's help and it might have been his downfall.

Murray: Right. What was Halkett's character in that sort of direction?

Clyde: Well, Halkett was the type of person that needed a leader, eh. He would go along with anything that Jim said.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: He wouldn't be prepared to stand up and argue with him.

Murray: Jim's personality was that much stronger than Halkett's probably.

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: Okay, I think that probably does it. I can't think of any other questions. Is there anything else that I haven't asked that might be relevant?

Clyde: Yeah, well one thing that happened the night after we got there, no, two nights after we got there. See, the weather closed in and initially we got snow and then it rained and fogged and everything else for about two or three days so that

delayed the search. We couldn't do a damn thing except for that local area right around Foster, Lower Foster.

Murray: So that was a full three days that it stopped you?

Clyde: Yeah, we got one full day of good searching in, one or two, I'm not sure which. It's so long since I've reviewed the file. There would be one or two full days of good searching and then we got handcuffed because of the weather.

Murray: Did you find the raft before the weather set in?

Clyde: No, it was after.

Murray: I see. So if it hadn't been for the weather, you might've caught up to them.

Clyde: We might have caught up to them. But even at that, they should have heard the airplanes flying and stayed still. We had a Beaver aircraft and we were flying at about, maybe a thousand feet. So they should have seen the aircraft because we were damn near over to Lapointe Lake doing our grids.

Murray: Right. And at that point, upon hearing the aircraft the logical thing from your point of view would have been to light a fire or chop trees into the lake or...?

Clyde: Yeah, well, see this is what normally happens with people that have any knowledge of the bush. They usually cut a big bloody tree and when the airplane comes anywhere close, they just push it as hard as they bloody well can out into the lake and then, you know, anything out of the ordinary you'll spot from the air. If you see a fresh green tree floating in the lake, well you got them.

Murray: Right. So even if they didn't have matches, there were things they could do to...?

Clyde: There was other things they could do and that's something that they should've known. You know, Brady was always chalked up as being a good bushman but, after that episode, I was reluctant to think he was.

Murray: Was there any other evidence before they disappeared that perhaps Brady wasn't as competent in the bush as people had said?

Clyde: Well, there is that and the fact that he walked away. He didn't set a fire and stay with it you know. And these are all golden rules if you get lost in the bush, especially anybody that's been up there for any length of time, is that you stay put and light a great big bloody fire and stay there.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: Because eventually somebody is going to come looking

for you.

Murray: Okay, I think that probably does it.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Murray: And they were, I should have asked you more details about this, was McKenzie with the camp that the RCMP had set up?

Clyde: No.

Murray: Did he stay with them at all?

Clyde: No, no, no.

Murray: He was at his own camp the whole time?

Clyde: No, he was working for Thompson's Fly-in Fishing Camps, Gary Thompson out of Otter Lake.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: And he was working on Lower Foster.

Murray: You talked to him. Did he spend any time with you at all or did he go right back to his camp?

Clyde: No, no, we were staying there. We got rained out. The weather turned sour on us and we moved out of the tents and down, and Gary Thompson said we could use his camp down there. So we moved into the cabin. He didn't have any fishing people in then so we moved right in there.

Murray: Oh I see, and Benny was right there then because that's where he had his camp?

Clyde: Yeah, he had his camp right next to us.

Murray: Oh, I see. How long did you stay at that camp? This was the two or three days where you were rained in and couldn't search.

Clyde: Yeah, I'd say about two or three days.

Murray: Right. Did you talk to Benny much or was he just, he was there?

Clyde: Oh yeah, in fact the dog man was with us and the dog man and him went fishing in the evenings.

Murray: Do you recall the name of the dog man?

Clyde: He was out of Saskatoon. We had our own dog man out of

Prince Albert and he was on leave.

Murray: Oh, I see.

Clyde: So we had the dog man out of, I think he's since resigned the force but he was out of Saskatoon at the time.

Murray: So they might be able to tell me who he would've been?

Clyde: Yeah, he would've been the dog man at that time.

Murray: And there would only be one in Saskatoon probably.

Clyde: Yeah, he was a constable there.

Murray: Right. What was Benny doing while the search was going on? Of course, it was raining while you were with him so he wouldn't have been doing anything either.

Clyde: Well, he was guiding.

Murray: Right.

Clyde: They had a fishing party in there just before we got there and another party came in the day after we left there.

Murray: Was he guiding for someone at the time that Brady and Halkett arrived on the lake?

Clyde: Oh yeah, yeah.

Murray: He was working for someone then?

Clyde: See, that was the prime fishing season so there would be American parties coming in and out all the time.

Murray: Right. But you don't recall any names? I don't suppose Thompson would know, might know the names?

Clyde: Oh God, no. But he was guiding just before we used the camp and he was guiding them... well, we pulled out and some Americans came in right behind us.

Murray: Did Benny express an interest in the disappearance or offer an opinion as to what he thought might have happened to them?

Clyde: Well, not really. I mean, everybody was concerned but you know, it's (chuckles) it's hard to say. I can't recall any conversation with him at all but he would be concerned and we asked him to keep an eye out for any signs while they were fishing, guiding. If he saw anything at all to let us know.

Murray: Right, right.

Clyde: Because they would have followed the shoreline of the whole lake when they were guiding.

Murray: Yeah, okay. The reason that I am asking you these questions, there is still so many people persist in the idea that the two men were murdered and I want to prove once and for all that it isn't true.

Clyde: Well, that's nonsense but I can recall, just to show you how those rumors spread up there, we had a lady freeze to death just south of La Ronge on the highway. And I acted as coroner, my capacity as corporal of the detachment then. And we brought the body in, the doctor examined it and did a rectum thermal examination and found out that she did die of exposure and the body went over to Pelican Narrows for burial. And the next thing you know, we got word back that the people that prepared the body at Pelican Narrows said that her neck

was broken. And we went, Christ, we went over there and we exhumed the body from the grave and checked her over and there was no indication of a broken neck at all but these people always get a rumor going. You know, when something like, when a tragedy occurs you always get some kind of a rumor going.

Murray: Some conspiracy or something that happened.

Clyde: Yeah, right. Especially when there is a little bit of a mystery to actually what happened. But in my mind, there is no doubt that they were down that area and that was far away from where McKenzie was. And there was two people there, had been camped there, and they tried to go across Lapointe Lake in a raft and there is just no way anybody else could have been there. It had to be them. And then also, coming away from Foster Lake, we located that post where they had chipped it and they put their names and the date on it, you know. So they had to be...

Murray: That ties the two things together.

Clyde: Yeah, they had to be away from Foster Lake and I'm sure that McKenzie wasn't going to travel overland to Lapointe Lake to shoot them.

Murray: Well, he couldn't have found them. He had no way of knowing where they were, in any case.

Clyde: No, so that's just ridiculous. It's so far-fetched that it's beyond the realm of possibility. The only person that could have put the markings on the post would have been McKenzie who would have to go inland, you know, five or six miles and do that and then walk over to Lapointe Lake and chop down those trees which is, you know, it's...

Murray: It's a bit much to think that he would....

Clyde: It's so far-fetched it's ridiculous.

Murray: Right. Was there any suggestion from local people at the time that that murder theory be investigated?

Clyde: No, no. See, even the people that were up there, friends of Brady, they said it was ridiculous and there is just no way it could be. But again, the people that were spreading those rumors didn't even know what was going on.

Murray: I see, so you felt that it was the people who weren't particularly helpful that were spreading...?

Clyde: Oh yeah, it wasn't people that were up there searching. The people that were up there searching knew exactly what was going on and as far as we were concerned it was just absolutely ridiculous.

Murray: To get away from that topic, what kind of effect do you think it would have on the two men, the cold, wet weather you had just after you started the search. What kind of effect would it have on them in terms of their ability to survive the wilderness?

Clyde: Well, you know, at any time if they had stayed where they were, even on Lapointe Lake... And I never thought of this, but I was up in La Ronge just a week and a half ago and I was talking to Walt Shupe. And they had built a lean-to there, at Lapointe Lake.

Murray: Oh yeah.

Clyde: Which I hadn't thought of when I called you before but we were discussing it and Shupe remembers the lean-to. So you know, they built some type of shelter and if they'd stayed there we would have got them.

Murray: Right, but in terms of wearing them down, how would that weather have affected them do you think? In their ability to keep going?

Clyde: Well, you know, at that time of year your berries aren't ripe so they wouldn't be getting very much to eat. But again, Halkett and Brady should have known. You know, there is lots of things they could have eaten that would have kept them going. And probably they did. They might have been completely healthy by the time they got down that area and either drowned or got consumed by bears. It's quite feasible that they were in good shape. Their axes weren't.

Murray: Their axes were dull but they took them with them anyway.

Clyde: Yeah. But you know, again, they might have made the fatal mistake of running across a cub somewhere along the line and tried to kill it.

Murray: And tried to kill it, right.

Clyde: Something else that I never thought of when I talked to you before is that apparently some of the people that were working at Rottenstone Mine one evening, late in the evening, just before dark, along that same draw that they were heading up, they had heard some yelling. And it sounded like a person yelling. And a pounding noise. You know, Shupe reminded me of this. I had forgotten about it. But that could have been indicative of them running into a female bear with cubs trying to ward her off.

Murray: That must have been, that would have to have been pretty close to the mine for them to...

Clyde: Well, not really. Not at night up there.

Murray: Sound travels quite a ways, eh? How far away do you think they might have been?

Clyde: Well, they could have been anywhere from ten to fifteen miles away even.

Murray: And they might have picked that sound up.

Clyde: That sound would have carried right down the draw, especially if they were yelling loudly. If you ever get up in that country and just stand on a calm night and you stand out on a rock and you let a yell go, you can hear the reverberations for about five minutes.

Murray: Really, yeah. So, was that ever investigated? Did the people attempt to...

Clyde: Yeah, yeah, see it was right on course.

Murray: It was right where you were at the time.

Clyde: We were just to the west of where that happened and we searched that draw back and forth. Oh hell, we were there for about a week and...

Murray: So it was while you were there that they heard these yells?

Clyde: I think it would be just about the same time, you know. Just before we got there or just around the time we were there.

Murray: It was around, it would have been...

Clyde: I think it was before we got there because, you know, then we really centred our attention to that area.

Murray: So it sort of confirmed what you had planned to do?

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: You would have been around Lapointe Lake at that time probably.

Clyde: Yeah, yeah. Have you got a map there?

Murray: Ah, yeah. I don't have it in front of me.

Clyde: Yeah, well, there is a chain of lakes that runs right over to Rottenstone along a draw there.

Murray: Yeah, right. Yeah, I can see that. I remember looking at the map and there is a clear indication.

Clyde: Yeah, it's too bad you didn't have the means to go up there and have a look at it...

Murray: Well, I may do that next year I think.

Clyde: You sure could appreciate it a lot more, because you could see flying over it or walking over it, you could picture just what could occur.

Murray: Right, right. What kind of food could the men have eaten if they had only an axe with them? They couldn't have snared any animals, they wouldn't have had any wires with them, but they could have eaten lichen and that sort of stuff?

Clyde: Yeah, lichen and birch bark and this Alaska tea, you know. There is lots of things. And there is caribou moss they could have eaten.

Murray: And I suppose there might have been some dried berries on bushes and things.

Clyde: Yeah, there would be still some cranberries from last year, the previous year.

Murray: Right. Okay, that probably does it then.

Clyde: But the area that they went through was just infested with bears and it was all sand. Where we were camped, if you see it you can appreciate it, there is ridges of sand all through that area along that draw and we were camped on a sand ridge and our biggest problem was ants.

Murray: Right, so they would have had those same kind of problems if they were...

Clyde: Well, this would attract the bears. You see, all these ants would attract bears.

Murray: Right. And of course, they wouldn't have had sleeping bags or anything, they would have just had to sit down and...

Clyde: Well, even in our sleeping bags, we were getting lots

of ants in there.

Murray: Right. Okay, is there anything else you can think of that you hadn't mentioned before?

Clyde: Not offhand. I'll tell you, if you've got the time I'd give Walt Shupe a call in La Ronge.

Murray: Yeah, I'll do that. He was with you when you examined that raft.

Clyde: Yeah. He might think of something that I didn't think of.

Murray: Okay, I'll do that.

Clyde: Yeah.

Murray: Thanks very much, Sergeant Conrad.

Clyde: Okay.

Murray: Bye.

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