

Peter Roycraft Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Peter Roycraft served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia from 1962 to 1964 on an agriculture project.

Access

Open.

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Oral History Interview

with

Peter Roycraft

June 24, 2009
Branson, Missouri

By Sharleen Hirschi Simpson

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

SIMPSON: [00:00:05] All right, just wait, wait just a second. We're recording now. All right. This is June 24, 2009, and this is Sharleen Hirschi Simpson, and I'm interviewing Pete, Peter Roycraft. All right. The first question actually, what I have is about, uh, what you're doing now and more or less. Can you talk a little bit about that?

ROYCRAFT: [00:00:37] Sure, life has certainly been this strange journey of many chapters in which the Peace Corps was one. And I guess I can wonder, you know, how I came from that point to present point now as a church janitor. I hear them all of those chapters have some journey of spirituality to them, I think. A weakening of some spiritual force in terms of how we relate to other people, and I think that's the common theme, that as a church janitor, I do deal some with people. And I but I deal with more so an environment. So I so I work at trying to make a pleasant environment for people to come together as a community to become something more

than what we are as individual people. And if we're going to build whatever we call community or church. We need to come together in some type of environment that provides solace. It provides some kind of a pleasant energy deal for us to gather together. We did that in the Peace Corps in probably some rather crude ways and training and as volunteers in terms of the people that we dealt with in Bolivia. So I guess that's kind of the theme that I see in life. So that being a church janitor in part is because I needed, or wanted, to have health and medical coverage, and I worked for a church that pays all of my insurance. And the money's okay too. It enables me to shovel snow in the wintertime, which I enjoy, and plant flowers and in the summertime to accent the church buildings. I used to do the church decorating, which was an exciting kind of thing. Prior to that, I did artwork for about 10 years, which was a great spiritual experience.

SIMPSON: [00:03:15] What kind of artwork?

ROYCRAFT: [00:03:17] Fiber. In the early to mid '80s, I was involved in a graduate program administered through Loyola University in New Orleans, and it was a peer group learning process in which the university sent the information. We had a group facility, but we did not have an instructor. The students became responsible for presenting the content and divided that up. And I thought, well, that's a real interesting approach, that we can present the content and we can learn from one another. And that did alter my life. I realized that I was a survivor. I didn't have to be dependent on a on a good income, and I wound up leaving social work and eventually doing artwork for about 10 years and I did fiberwork. I didn't have any money. I wasn't interested in going out and buying material. So I used where I could find within the area. And I wove basically local fiber, wood and brush twigs.

ROYCRAFT: [00:04:38] Wove baskets. Did bundles of twigs where you find the willow, have the cut to the same length, lash it together with hand tailored rings that would hold it, put large knots on to hold them in place. And I sold them. They would start, they were they were really quite lovely pieces.

Did some great art fairs, never sold too well but comments were generally quite good. Started weaving baskets in the early '90s and eventually shifted to weaving tree branches. Would find forked branches and put ribs in them and then weave them to the branches that would either lie flat so you could use them as table basket or hang them on the wall. That was a great kind of life, yeah, it was a great time of exploring my relationship with the environment. And I think that the Peace Corps exposed me to a new sensitivity to an environment, because it was a strange place I hadn't been to before so I became more environmentally conscious. I think the other theme that has evolved is the extent to which I'm basically a pacifist and how important it is to be on peaceful terms with people and to be at peaceful terms with the environment.

SIMPSON: [00:06:37] Uh, let's take with a little bit here and have you think back about before you joined the Peace Corps. What were you doing? How did you feel about it and what made you decide to join us?

ROYCRAFT: [00:06:52] I was in college at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. I was aware of Peace Corps probably through news media. I had a fraternity brother who had gone into the Peace Corps. I was well aware that I didn't want to go into military service.

SIMPSON: [00:07:22] What were you studying?

ROYCRAFT: [00:07:24] Um, I have a degree in agriculture. I think that I was also going to be the idealism of the early '60s which I think was the kind of idealism that was probably rampant among young people and very hopeful among the middle aged and older. It really was an exciting time. And I thought the Peace Corps offered an incredible opportunity to be someplace else and do something significant. At the end of the Peace Corps, I.

SIMPSON: [00:08:12] Well, we can come to that, but let's talk about when you got to training, for example. Let's talk about that experience a little bit.

ROYCRAFT: [00:08:29] That was kind of exciting. It was an incredible mixed bag.

SIMPSON: [00:08:33] Of people, you mean?

ROYCRAFT: [00:08:36] Yes, because I think there were about 60. My initial impact was, what are we all doing here? I found it in some way scary because there was this variety of people there. And I guess in some way, a variety of in the range of stability, I think that would be putting it kindly.

SIMPSON: [00:09:24] So talk about what your reaction was when you got there and, you know, were doing the activities that they.

ROYCRAFT: [00:09:35] Some of it seemed rather trite to me because of some of the agricultural training was pretty much things that I'd had in high school. Or maybe college. Not a lot of the agricultural stuff with new other than the subtropical perhaps, but the agricultural training wasn't overly useful for me. The language training, for me personally, was not good. In part because I'd never studied a language. In subsequent years in the Peace Corps, I realized that that I'm visual learner and our training was auditory, to repeat and repeat and repeat. Well, that's not how I learn. And no one told me that and I didn't know. That began to settle in when I came back and went to graduate school. So I think that the training was good in terms of an endurance test. I think that some of the things that they put us through. I think the selection process was at times scary. I thought the whole selection process was probably initially poor. They could have done a much better job of screening people before they got there. I think the Peace Corps has changed significantly since then. To start out with about 60 people and wind up with 32 does not suggest that the institution has a good working model or theory on which to do the programming.

SIMPSON: [00:11:34] I don't think they did at that time, do you?

ROYCRAFT: [00:11:36] No, no. But that's how institutions learn, and I'm not sure that the institution got better. I think it was not necessarily to our advantage

to have gotten moved around as much as we did. Because we started out as at Arizona State, then went on to the Indian reservation, then we went to the physical training camp at Arecibo, and then we went to Mayaguez, then we came home, then we take off from Miami and we were held up and so we went to Brattleboro, Vermont.

SIMPSON: [00:12:31] Ok, so of the experiences in that time, is there anything that really stands out in your mind? In that training period?

ROYCRAFT: [00:12:50] I think that one of the things that, what I would think of generally as a certain level of disorganization, I think it made us resilient. While that was not the intent to make it seem that way. I think it did in some other ways that they didn't recognize. They wanted us to be prepared. I think, yeah, they did, but I'm not sure that it in the way they had planned. I think the kind of bonding that happened, I really wasn't aware of the depth of bonding within the group until I came to first end year. Because we were a very mixed group and we did not have what I would have thought of it as harmony at all times. Give us a chance. And we could be argumentative.

SIMPSON: [00:13:57] Do you think it was probably the training process that further developed that bonded, that esprit de corps, or whatever?

ROYCRAFT: [00:14:02] I think so.

SIMPSON: [00:14:08] Well, I have to say, I think it's probably one of the more unusual training.

ROYCRAFT: [00:14:16] Probably. I think that that there were for me, the Peace Corps really became a growing up experience in terms of young adulthood. College really didn't do it because I never really had to leave home, well I did leave home and lived in Madison, but I was back to the family farm often.

SIMPSON: How old were you when you?

ROYCRAFT: 22, 23. But the other people in the group really hadn't been away from home either, for the most part. They may have traveled some, but for the most part, it was our major cross cultural experience, I think.

SIMPSON: [00:15:11] Yeah, going on from that. When was there anything that really stands out in your mind about the Puerto Rican experience? All the different kinds of activities that we did there at the physical training and the various?

ROYCRAFT: [00:15:33] Well, fortunately or unfortunately, I missed it. Because playing baseball out on the Indian reservation in Arizona, I got hit with a baseball bat, and it split the skin on my chin and it didn't heal. So they sutured it in Arizona and then it didn't heal right. And it had to be resewn. So I couldn't get in the swimming pool and in Puerto Rico, I couldn't go out in the tracks, I didn't go out on the overnight camping.

SIMPSON: [00:16:20] Did you not do the 40 mile?

ROYCRAFT: [00:16:26] No, no, no. I missed all of that. Oh, I missed drown proofing. Yeah, I missed the panic. Well, I witnessed the panic of some of the people getting into the pool with their hands tied. And I also witnessed their fear and resulting anger. And so I stood by the poolside and tried to be consoling and supportive of those who were being thrown into the pool.

SIMPSON: [00:17:17] Did you not do any of the mountain climbing or the rappelling?

ROYCRAFT: [00:17:22] Rappelling, I got to do. And I thought, oh, this is wonderful.

SIMPSON: [00:17:30] No fear of heights for you.

ROYCRAFT: [00:17:33] Actually, that's probably quite a bit. But said, I'm probably competitive and there are a lot of things that I would do on a dare, which I wouldn't volunteer to do otherwise.

SIMPSON: [00:17:50] Ok, after when you decided to go in the Peace Corps, what your family and friends think about that?

ROYCRAFT: [00:17:58] I think probably my parents would have had some anxiety about where and where I was going, what was going to happen, what I knew about it, but my older brother had been in military service and I think whatever anxiety they might have had would have been pretty normal. As I recall, they were supportive. I think, probably excited about that when one of the kids, was first of all, finishing college, and secondly, going to do something kind of special because Peace Corps was something special then.

SIMPSON: [00:18:46] Ok, now what can you tell us what project you were part of and what, you know, you were assigned to do in Bolivia?

ROYCRAFT: [00:18:57] Well, I thought I was going to Bolivia to work at an agricultural experiment station, which was true. That's where I went, at General Saavedra, and I thought I was going to work on a dairy project and they were going to develop a dairy herd, which I thought, well, that's kind of exciting. I grew up on a dairy farm. I'll be OK there. And to work on the pastures or forages, which I thought, well, I don't know much about subtropical pastures. But I'll survive that. Well, as the months moved past, the cows never came. And after I was there several months, somebody from U.S. AID came and said, oh no, we're not sending cows here. I thought, don't aid programs tell the Bolivian institutions what's going on? Because AID did support this experiment station and experiment station director didn't know. So I didn't have a real positive view of USAID. I thought they spent a lot of money. And I thought they probably not necessarily very happy with Peace Corps volunteers.

SIMPSON: [00:20:39] Yeah, well, a lot of Peace Corps volunteers were not happy with the status quo.

ROYCRAFT: [00:20:52] True. So I worked on these little pasture plots the whole time that I was there.

SIMPSON: [00:20:55] When you say worked on pasture plots, what do you mean?

ROYCRAFT: [00:21:00] I planted a variety of grass seeds. So we have these little forage plots and check them to see what the growth was, whether they might adapt to the area.

SIMPSON: [00:21:20] Did you find any that worked?

ROYCRAFT: [00:21:23] Yeah, after I'd been there for while and we had. We did plant a field or two after we had grown enough cuttings to plant. But yeah.

SIMPSON: [00:21:51] So the job was a little bit too slow and not real defined?

ROYCRAFT: [00:22:01] Um, I'm not sure that they really knew what to do with me at times, and I'm not sure I knew what to do with them. But I think other volunteers found that also. And so I did work with extension for a few months also. Before I got hepatitis.

SIMPSON: Did you get hepatitis? Hepatitis A?

ROYCRAFT: Yeah.

SIMPSON: [00:22:37] But when was that?

ROYCRAFT: March of '64.

SIMPSON: Oh, you were almost ready to go home.

ROYCRAFT: [00:22:46] Well, maybe this was even before March. It must have been before much because I spent my 25th birthday at the clinic of Santa Isabel in La Paz.

SIMPSON: [00:23:01] Oh, all the way to La Paz?

ROYCRAFT: [00:23:05] Yeah, and I think the president's wife was at the same clinic at that time. He would come to visit in the morning. He'd come in with his escort in the morning.

SIMPSON: [00:23:23] So, OK, so you, I have to ask you, Pete, you know, we all the rumor going around was that you had saved up so much money you had to hang out to dry.

ROYCRAFT: No, no!

SIMPSON: Cause we got paid in all those.

ROYCRAFT: [00:23:39] Sure. Yeah. Well, I never had to hang it up to dry, but I did have a large stock and I kept it in a suitcase and I remember one month the money will slow coming from Washington and Harold needed to pay the volunteers, so, I gave them gave him the money.

SIMPSON: Bankrolled the volunteers.

ROYCRAFT: Well, yeah, but you know, money, money. And so those days and subsequent years and I mean, you get this huge pile of it.

SIMPSON: [00:24:26] And didn't really mean anything.

ROYCRAFT: [00:24:30] No, it didn't. And actually, whatever amount that we got, I think it may be 90 or 100 a month.

SIMPSON: I think it was 80 dollars or something.

ROYCRAFT: And I didn't have any place to spend that. So I did save. I've always been frugal and saved anyway. So, yeah, so to the best of my recollection, the stories that I would hang up my money to dry it was.

SIMPSON: [00:25:05] A fabrication?

ROYCRAFT: [00:25:08] Yeah, somewhat.

SIMPSON: [00:25:10] Didn't have to guard against mildew.

ROYCRAFT: [00:25:15] Well, actually, I think it did mildew. Like everything.

SIMPSON: [00:25:23] Yes, it probably did. OK, so you're down in Santa Cruz and after like the first midway through your time there, what were you feeling and how what kind of things were happening after the first day?

ROYCRAFT: [00:25:52] I remember the feeling of not being real productive. And I think that the expectation that I was going to make the world kind of contribution and the fact that that didn't happen. I think that was tough. I think that one of the experiences as a young adult, that we're not going to change the world, and that was that was not only the feeling at the end of the first year, but certainly when I came home, I had that feeling and I still do. I can't say I did anything wonderful for poor Bolivia, but I didn't do them any damage, I'm reasonably sure of that. And it wasn't particularly what we did for Bolivia, it was what they did for us. Because when I look around the group, it changed our lives and our life, and for the most part, I think that it left an impact on most of us in terms of what we can do. I'm impressed with what people have done in terms of service to other people.

SIMPSON: Lot of people involved in service kinds of work.

ROYCRAFT: Yeah, and I'm not sure that that would have been true in the same. But I don't think it would have been true in the same way for me personally.

ROYCRAFT: [00:27:31] And I'm appreciative that that experience changed my life. And I think that that really was the significance of the Peace Corps. It what it did to a whole generation of people. A generation of U.S. citizens

without damaging, without doing a whole lot of damage to other countries. And granted, some volunteers did do some damage.

SIMPSON: [00:28:02] Tell me when you weren't working. What did you do for fun or entertainment or recreation?

ROYCRAFT: [00:28:11] Well, initially I spent some time with the people and they were readily available, you know, tried to play soccer and realized that I really was too old to play the game and not in as good a physical shape as they were.

SIMPSON: [00:28:44] Did you do take any trips, vacations?

ROYCRAFT: [00:28:46] Bill and I went to Asuncion and then Chile. Took the train back to Bolivia. So I only took the one.

SIMPSON: [00:29:02] How was that trip? Pretty good? Interesting?

ROYCRAFT: [00:29:05] I thought so, yeah. Um. Yeah, it was a good adventure for me and I think gave me some motivation or courage to go back to Bolivia by myself and travel.

SIMPSON: [00:29:25] And when did you go back to Bolivia?

ROYCRAFT: [00:29:34] '69, '70.

SIMPSON: So various times.

ROYCRAFT: I've been back by five times. The last of which was 1984, with Brian Bennett.

SIMPSON: [00:29:51] And so what did you do when you went back? Do you have any projects going on?

ROYCRAFT: [00:29:59] I didn't have any projects. Met a woman from Bolivia at University of Wisconsin when I was going to graduate school in the '60s. And I was aware that she had gone back to take care of a parent. I looked her up and when I went back, I would stay with her and her family, that would be my launching site to travel around the country, so I actually wound up seeing a whole lot more of Bolivia after that. Like going to Copensee and Sucre, Poderon. I've spent a fair amount of time there. Part of what I did was collected art.

SIMPSON: [00:30:52] Oh, Bolivian art. You know, I still have some stuff that's hanging in my house and I framed it with prints that I got there. They're really nice when you get them framed.

ROYCRAFT: [00:31:03] Yeah, I probably collected at least 50 paintings and prints from 12 of 15 different artists. Collected some from a Bolivian artist after I came back. Also collected an assortment of other things, like hand spun and hand woven things, ponchos, little coca purses. Incredible detail where they'll have like a dozen horses fighting. Wonderful pieces. But collected a whole variety of other hand spun kinds of things too. Collected silver spoons, the one time that that yeah, that that I was there. *Tupu*. They were spoon shaped thing with a stick pin end and the woman wore them to hold their shawls. I have a few of those. We just collected a whole variety of stuff.

SIMPSON: [00:32:46] Were you able to keep in contact with any of the people that you had worked with before when you went back?

ROYCRAFT: [00:32:52] I did briefly with my counterpart because they came to the States eventually and [inaudible] went to the University of Utah. I went out to see them I think in December of '71. And I used to stop and see them. Correspondence, you know, but I don't correspond well with anybody. So.

SIMPSON: [00:33:31] Bolivians are not known noted for their correspondences.

ROYCRAFT: [00:33:35] Well, well, well, I reciprocated that type of relationship very well.

SIMPSON: [00:33:42] So can you think of. Tell me about any of the things that you remember that happened that we haven't talked about that were impressive or the good or bad or whatever. Any kinds of things that happened. Where were you when Kennedy was assassinated?

ROYCRAFT: [00:34:10] I was at Saavedra. And I remember that one of the other, one of the technicians came and said that he had been shot. I was impressed with what kind of a moment that was and how that affected the Bolivians, that they expressed sympathy. There was some expression that, you know, that maybe Lyndon Johnson had had him shot. Because that would have been a normal Bolivian kind of a thought. I mean, do your enemy in. But yeah, Kennedy's death, that was the one time that I would like to have been back in the States in a certain sense. It wouldn't have made any difference, but. We also had a kind of meeting in Cochabamba at that time, I think that was good for us.

SIMPSON: [00:35:27] So tell me, looking back over your time there, what you did. I think you already addressed this when you said you thought the major thing that happened was what you got from the Bolivians rather than any contribution you made.

ROYCRAFT: [00:35:49] Yeah, I don't think that we can always measure our own contribution. I think sometimes when we when we do our own self measurement, then we're using our standards. And sometimes that's not a fair analysis to apply to another culture. At best, I can evaluate what it did for me. When I left Bolivia, I was planning to go back to work for US AID. I had gone to La Paz, Bolivia, shortly before I left for an interview and thought, ok, I wouldn't mind coming back, but it has to be a little bit on my terms. I mean, it has to have more structure. There are some goods that I would like to have and I would like a little better living accommodation and certainly be the money would have afforded that. But the programing would have to be better structured also. So I came

home thinking that I was going to go back there. I was home by the 1st of July, and so I waited this summer and I didn't hear from them. And August rolled around, the end of August came, 1st of September was here, and I hadn't heard. So I thought, well, if I'm going to sit around, maybe I should think of going to school, so I saw so I did. I enrolled at the University of Wisconsin as a specialist student. I needed to my grades, I figured. And while after I was there, I got this letter from Myrt I think. She said, oh, they dropped whatever project that you would be working on, so that took care of that. So I was thankful that I was back in school and had something to do. I was still recovering from hepatitis.

SIMPSON: [00:38:21] It takes about a year.

ROYCRAFT: [00:38:23] It does. But being back in school went well, I had a great adviser who was supportive when I started graduate school, so I did.

SIMPSON: [00:38:36] And what did you major in?

ROYCRAFT: [00:38:41] Extension ed. So I was there for two years to finish my master's. I thought, oh, well, I will certainly put this to good use out there, there in the world, and went to Washington, interviewed for a job. And along the summer, I thought I was going to Jamaica on a dairy project. So I must have known that at the start of the summer, because I was there for summer school, so I took this dairy production course. So I would know a little bit more about both bulls and production and breeding and stuff like that. And I sat and waited to get a response. And fall came and I wasn't hearing from them. Thought, well, it's just been a month. In November, I got a letter one day and said, we hope we have not inconvenienced you, but the project's been dropped. So, it's November, I'm out of money by that time. I'm at my parents' farm, so I don't have any big expenses. I had given up my car because I thought, well, well, I'm leaving. There's no point of coverage, of insuring it and getting another license. I simply gave the car to my parents. So then I really had to start scratching. You know, we've been at the end of November.

ROYCRAFT: [00:40:34] So I contacted university extension. Well, I could replace some 4H club agent. I thought I was going to do that, I went out and bought a car, a new car, because I did have savings and I had just enough to cover this Volkswagen, which in the mid '60s, you can buy them for sixteen hundred dollars, and I did, so I was broke. And the Friday before I was to replace this 4H club agent, I got a phone call. He's decided not to go to school. And I thought, well, I'm not doing well with what the government agencies, U.S. or the extension, so I had a social worker friend who said, well, we're in need of people and we'll hire almost anybody. So I went and interviewed on a Friday and started on Monday in in Marinette, Wisconsin, and have never left.

SIMPSON: [00:41:45] What did you do in terms of social work, what kinds of the cases?

ROYCRAFT: [00:41:52] Well, the county at that time, we would have I think at that time we were probably doing some food stamps, aid to families with dependent children. I think we even had had disabled and some of those programs shifted to other but shifted around. But so it was a mixed bag caseload. Well, I lasted there about a year and a half, couldn't cope with the director. He was just a sleaze. And I was still a purist and in terms of working standards. So the phrase probation in that county did leave and so I replaced him. And within the first week, I knew I didn't belong as a probation. So here's my whole educational background, which is in agriculture and extensions, six, seven years of it. And I don't want to do.

ROYCRAFT: [00:43:01] Actually. Actually, I knew when I finished that. Once I finished or graduated, I didn't have any need to do that anymore. I mean, I'd got my satisfaction out of it. So I wound up working for the Green Bay Diocese for 18 years, and that was wonderful.

SIMPSON: [00:43:25] So what did you do for them?

ROYCRAFT: [00:43:29] I was a social worker with a mixed bag of some kinds of cases from adoption, depressed, family counseling.

SIMPSON: [00:43:39] Is that who you do the janitorial work for?

ROYCRAFT: [00:43:44] And then I left there, I left there as I was finishing a master's in pastoral studies with Loyola. And in the process of that of the program with Loyola, I really became aware that there's more to life than tying all of your security to where you're at mid-life. I thought I really more of a survivor than what I ever thought I was, maybe, maybe I don't need that security that I can survive. So I became aware of the fact that I trusted some higher power that I was going to be all right. And so I made a decision that I would leave and did. Took my time in leaving and eventually did artwork for 10 years.

SIMPSON: [00:44:59] I understand you did the craft fair circuit and that kind of thing.

ROYCRAFT: [00:45:04] About nine years ago, the cost of health insurance was. It was at a point where it literally was going to take all of my income. It took more than what my net income was. Took half of what my gross income was, and I thought, well, I either go without or else I do something else. And it was time to consider other options, so.

SIMPSON: [00:45:42] So you said in the beginning that you thought that your time in the Peace Corps really contributed to the general place you ended up with and probably made you, it sounds like made you realize that you are a survivor. When you think of that and all the other things, do you think you would have done the things that you did subsequently without having initial Peace Corps experience?

ROYCRAFT: [00:46:09] I don't know. I can only say that nobody else in my family has. I think part of it being the third born child, you know, I guess I've always looked up to older siblings in terms of or they're smarter and they're more competent. Well, someplace along that line, I really began to have

to take stock of my own competency. And it's not that I believe that I'm super competent, not at all. I think that life is a very humbling process.

SIMPSON: Yeah, it is.

ROYCRAFT: And when we think we're somebody then we really need a need a reality check. And I think that that was a major contribution from the Peace Corps. It was a reality check that I wasn't going to change the world. Actually, that was hard coming home to.

SIMPSON: [00:47:24] You need to realize that the idealism was.

ROYCRAFT: [00:47:28] The idealism was OK, but we're not always everything that we hope that we're going to become. But that's the reality of young adulthood is realizing that we're not going to be everything that we think that we might possibly be, and we're going to have to settle for what we got.

SIMPSON: And if there's nothing wrong with that.

ROYCRAFT: No, because once you accept that, you can get on to living life and it's going to be full if you let it be.

SIMPSON: [00:48:05] Well, Pete, it sounds like you've had quite an interesting life experience.

ROYCRAFT: [00:48:13] Oh, yeah.

SIMPSON: [00:48:17] Since you got out of the Peace Corps and including your time in the Peace Corps.

ROYCRAFT: [00:48:19] Yeah, I would like to go back to Bolivia. I don't want to travel by myself. Just a lot of uncertainties and just language skills. Twenty five years ago, I would have risked not having the language skills.

SIMPSON: [00:48:37] Well, I think it gets a little more difficult to spend a long time. I was a Fulbright scholar in Jamaica, which, you know, I mean, it's English, but they have that dialect. But it's time away from the family and all that. It gets harder I think the older you get.

ROYCRAFT: [00:49:01] So I don't know what the next chapter is. But I'm reasonably sure there is another. I went through a chapter of contemplating religious life. But. But passed through that.

SIMPSON: [00:49:25] Decided you didn't really want to do the ministry? At least not in a formal way.

ROYCRAFT: [00:49:34] Well, not in a contemplative lifestyle. Although that would have been OK, too, because I'm reasonably sure that as a survivor, I would have found great forms of personal expression, and that was one of the things that I saw in that Trappist monastery that I spent a little time, that was. I marveled. That's such a diverse population could tolerate each other under one one roof.

SIMPSON: [00:50:16] At the Trappist monastery. Silence.

ROYCRAFT: [00:50:22] Yeah, they were at times. But they were bright, mentally healthy people who managed to survive one another. And I look at the Peace Corps experience that we also managed to survive one another.

SIMPSON: [00:50:45] Which wasn't always easy, was it?

ROYCRAFT: [00:50:47] No, no. So that coming to gather is a very nostalgic thing for me, but it's also kind of like, it is kind of like getting a shot then that makes you feel different and it rekindles something. I get the same kind of rush from looking at artwork, if it's decent. It's exciting.

SIMPSON: [00:51:25] Well, I guess we've probably come to the end of this, so thank you Pete.

ROYCRAFT: [00:51:31] You are very welcome.

[END OF INTERVIEW]