- Discusses Indian conception of power.
Fred:  ...like a sheet of, oh my goodness.
Roger:  Fertility drug.
Fred:  Shit, don't take it. You'll have kids till you're 100 years old.
Roger:  For the sake of the Archives could you tell what it is?
Janice:  Yeah, could you give the name of that particular root? I had it written down, (Indian)?
Fred:  (Indian). Well, you can't get that. The only place you can get that is in Michigan.
Roger:  Is this the birth control or the fertility?
Fred:  Oh yeah, it's good for everything.
Janice:  This is the way... Fred, I may not be correct in saying...
Fred: Another thing, (Indian). Listen, I had three heart attacks, so I went into this tavern. I met a man there I used to know way back when I was working in Mississauga -- Sam Bobby Bush. "Hello, Fred, how are you?" "I'm very good, Sam. I had three heart attacks." "Would you take the medicine if I gave it to you?" I says, "Sure." He gave me a little wee bit aspirin tablet, bottle full. You wet your tongue like that and you tip that over there, that powder, put that on your tongue, it will burn, eh. One bottle of that... Well, you know that. You took me to the doctor for examination. He says, "There isn't anything wrong with this guy. Better be careful with him." (laughs)

Janice: Fred is 87.

Fred: Gee, I got kind of a bellyache. It's that carrot I ate.

Janice: Oh, well, goodness. Probably the vinegar in it or something.

Roger: Oh yeah, not used to...

Fred: You know, if you want me, you call me. If you don't, well you don't blame me. I don't beg anybody to... I can't do it, there's things... Like I got to press people, I got to press people. Well, if I go overboard in this...

Janice: You'd said that you felt because they offended this (Indian) therefore they lost some of their power in relation to other groups. And yet on the other hand...

Fred: I'm not, I'm not, I'm going to wait a little while yet. I'm going to tell you this, the whole thing, after a while. I'm not ready to let this thing loose, but you will know all about this after a while.

Janice: Well, this hasn't anything to do with specifics, it only has to do with generalities, so it probably won't be that difficult to answer. But what is... I'm still having trouble here with this view that in white society we have individuals, really, who try to gain a great deal of knowledge for specific reasons. Sometimes it's political prestige, sometimes it's money, wealth or something like that. In Indian society many of the people with power I've talked to are not after political prestige or money, but they're still working very hard towards a certain goal. I don't know whether it's maximization of power. I don't... See, I'm still (inaudible). A lot of it seems to be knowledge, being able to learn as much as you can.

Fred: Well, that's pretty hard to... I've got an explanation for that. This here, like you think of knowledge, knowledge is like a, the way I figure, knowledge is something big, eh, like big (inaudible), see, that's knowledge. But got to tickle it a little bit. But you don't use it that way, you were never allowed to do that. Don't be any better than any-
body else, that's the (inaudible). You get the knowledge but don't use it. Look at me here, just, is that knowledge what you feel? That's (inaudible) see she pay (inaudible) knowledge, big, you're very high on your knowledge.

Janice: Would (name) have been that type of person?
Fred: Oh, he was a really big knowledge that one.

Janice: That's the only thing I can think of that would come close to what we could see. Maybe it's ideal in our society, but don't use it. In our society you would be expected to use it.

Fred: You got so far, you got this far now. (name) had this big knowledge but after a while he had to use it. He had to use it because the people didn't believe him, he had to prove himself. That's that reason why I told you he come out in the cloud, eh. See, he had sort of people. He had the knowledge, he was a knowledge, he was a big man, eh.

Janice: That would make him, put him in a very dangerous position. Again this is...

Fred: They tried to kill him.

Janice: It's strange, you know, because I had a person say to me, you know, "How close would this be in terms of charisma in our society?" Because most people in the white society don't have the same thinking, it's not the same position, and the view that you have to prove youself in terms of charisma, sort of almost a mesmeric appeal on people so that you sort of reach into their psychology and somehow, well, semi-control their thinking in certain ways.

Roger: Well in this day and age charisma is what goes well on television.

Janice: Well, okay. Image management, for instance, or in film making. And the strange thing about (name) is that he would not project an image, though, would he? Unless it would be the withholding of this image, to be humble. Is that right?

Fred: What's that again, honey?

Janice: You know, again, I was thinking in terms of charisma, or the fact that you have to project yourself strongly in a certain group setting.

Fred: No, he wasn't that kind of a man. He wasn't there to kill, to make harm for anybody. He was there to make peace because that was his culture. That's why they called him the headman of the Ojibway nations. But they didn't believe that for a long time -- they worked against him. He fought all his life, but other people... until he had to fast again, see. Nine times the man fasted, see. And when he got fasted the
ninth time, well, he had control of everything. So he had to
prove this what he was, eh. He had to prove it to them. That
was why he flew. You know how he used to fly around? (Indian).

Janice: I'm still trying to link up the concept of charisma
with Indian leadership. I don't think the two concepts are
going to ever meet. I can assure, though, that what Fred's
talking is quite consistent.

Fred: Years ago, like what you're working on there today, a
lot of time it's kind of complicated to understand, eh. What
kind of a power the man had.

Janice: He was an excellent speaker. You've got to admit
that when it came to oratory he was... Over and over again in
the documents he's called the best speaker of his entire
nation. And he was always the man who was appointed to speak
to whatever representatives of the British authority is put
forward. He must have been a magnificent man to watch in a
setting where the Indian people wished to present their views.

Fred: By golly, you know, I was there put these words
together, you know. Like we are working just like this, we're
missing lots of things. Like to put the power together, eh.
The power the man had, it's hard to describe, you know.

Janice: I think you've put that very well. I guess what I'm
trying to do is try and translate it into white person's terms.

Fred: And that's your Indian culture, it's a very powerful
thing. (inaudible) she's pretty old, she's about... They
could just move in, they didn't want no rent. He had that
power, eh. And he invited that -- he was a man, too,
electricity. He came from here. But he was given the power to
control the air.

Janice: Is that (name)?

Fred: (Indian) He made the woman, he took her up
to see, he was a man.

Janice: Fred, it's not that I don't... I understand what
you're saying. The thing is I'm trying to find if there's any
meeting ground between white conceptions of power and Indian
conceptions of power. I think that's the trouble I've had
right from the beginning. And I really can't find very many
meeting points; it's been viewed as a relation or a possession.
It seems to me that Indian concepts of power involve both a
possession of power, which is bestowed on you as a blessing from
a spirit source, and a relation, that some people are more
powerful than others...

Fred: What I started (inaudible) but I didn't get, I didn't
finish my job. I wanted to learn so I can understand, so I can
write Indian to send these girls so that nobody can't read to me. I sent her a big letter last spring and a big (inaudible). (laughs)

Roger: It certainly would be probably a lot easier to explain some of these concepts in Ojibway rather than English. Once they were translated to the...

Fred: The more you work on this, the thicker it will get. You know, that you...

Janice: The more you work on it, the more complex it gets. I certainly agree.

Fred: You're pretty good.

Roger: Also you're probably feeding it to you a little at a time so that you can take it.

Janice: One of the things I've noticed, Fred, is that Ojibway never push a point. They always let the other person come to the same conclusion that they are hoping to hear. It's that the integration comes in the listener rather than in the person giving the advice.

Fred: And animals, and animals too. They take certain parts of the animals and give this to kid(?).

Janice: So there's other agents involved in the transmission of that.

Fred: See, what I told you about that (inaudible). And all those things, like the Blackfoot Indian told me about the trouble they had out there -- he's got a good story. They had to use animals. They're up in a big tree and you get it up. They all get together and kill these animals. They kill them, them big huge animals. Them was the people that made the prairies. Them big animals, they ate up all the trees.

Janice: Like mastodons and things like that, or buffalo?

Fred: Yeah. They call that (Indian), (Indian) is wood. Them was the people... Look what happened, that's one thing I must let you know tonight. Look what happened to the (inaudible). What happened to it? That's the woman's feet. God put that in there, "Don't touch it ever -- forbidden." We had seven (inaudible) in (inaudible). You can't split that. You can't use it for wood. What happened? They put bugs in the roots because they were cutting them trees down and they weren't supposed to do that. See, we got no more elm. And there's others come.

Janice: Do you think that the white man has sinned a great deal then in the way he dealt with certain persons and then nature?
Fred: He's done a lot of it, yeah. Like I told you today, put back what you took. Well, Indian never believed in taking everything. He took but he put it back, he put the seed back in, eh. Look at all the clear land they had, it's all growed up today. After they got done work they go and get seed in the bushes, put it all over the bush and then all over... God knows, it all rubs out. Used to be all clear land, farm land. They put the seed back in. Take out, don't take, don't be greedy what the Lord brought you -- put it back. You only borrowed it.

About three, four pages I got to take back, you got to write tonight and take it back. Hey, did you get any booze?

Janice: Okay, I think your voice is getting a little bit dry to tell you the truth. I think Fred deserves a little bit of something to relax his throat muscles.

(END OF SIDE A)
(END OF TAPE)