

2000 03 07 Tuesday Desert Chad Mojave Desert Phone Booth

AB: "Good morning, everybody. I'm Art Bell. And in a moment we're gonna talk with the *famous man* ... I think ... famous man, who sits out in the middle of the desert sometimes for days or even weeks on end and talks to people who call a certain telephone booth out there.

I finally got him on the line. Comin' up next!"

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AB: "Well, well, well, well ... would you look at what I just received (!) A fax. It says:

'Hello, Art. I am the madman in the desert, who camps for days at a time at the Moja- ... at the Mojave Desert phone booth.' (This is a phone booth out in the middle of nowhere I guess). I've wanted to chat with you for a few years now, but I have always suspected the government monitors *all* your calls.'

Well, sure they do.

'This was confirmed for me when Mel from Washington called you and also the guy from Area 51, who warned of triangle, ah, of the triangle-shaped ones.

But now I just don't care anymore.

I wish so much that you could have gotten through to me on my last trip to the desert.' (Now I did try, some of you will recall).

'I am forty (40) years old now and would like to tell you all of my experiences, especially what I just went through in the desert last week – *the closest they ever came (!)*

I'm at the phone booth in the desert often. I'm going back soon. I'll stay for a week at a time.

I live in Concord, California.' (His name is 'Desert Chad'. And he's got a website, um, which we can tell you about in a moment).

Here is ... he says ... now he could be an 'urban legend'. Maybe he's an urban legend – I don't know. Here's Desert Chad:

Chad, hello."

DC: "Good evening, Art."

AB: "Are you real?"

DC: "Yes I am."

AB: "You are really the guy who goes out ... where in the hell is this phone booth?"

DC: "This phone booth is sitting on a plateau forty-two hundred feet (4200 ft.) up in the middle of a Joshua Tree forest on an old mining road, um, off of I-15 [Interstate Fifteen] as say you're going from Baker, California into Vegas"

AB: "Right."

DC: "To the right there's ... there's three (3) different ways to get up there. I believe a rancher has one of the ways blocked at the moment. Um, I could suggest four (4)-wheel drive, even though I don't have a 4-wheel drive ..."

AB: "Why would anybody put a phone booth in a place where you'd need a 4-wheel drive vehicle to get to it?"

DC: "Well, I'll tell you, Art, there used to be a mine up there in the Sixties (1960s) and the phone company put that phone in there, so the miners would be able to call home to their families."

AB: "Ohhh!"

DC: "And I *believe* it was 1968 that the mine closed and the phone company never bothered ... went up there and take the phone out."

AB: "You're ... kidding?"

So that phone booth to this very day remains there ..."

DC: "That phone booth, yeah."

AB: "And ... and for ..."

DC: "And the phone's like maybe like a 1954 model. All the glass is shot out of it. It's in a billion shards all around it."

AB: "Yeah."

DC: "With holes in the frame. The door's ripped off."

I ... there's a local rancher, 'cause I camp out there regularly. Um, Charley, he was tellin' me that it was the oddest thing:

The phone company came up there in 1977 and put a push-button in, and then left (!) (AB laughs heartily). And he laughed because there's no traffic on this road."

AB: (laughs) "Right!"

DC: "It's fifteen (15) miles from the nearest pavement."

AB: "They ... they actually upgraded the phone?"

DC: "Yes!"

AB: "Well that ... you know, the phone company's a big company and you can imagine the bureaucracy in a phone company, who would send this poor slob up in the middle of nowhere to replace the phone and ... and upgrade it."

DC: "He's probably wonderin': 'What the hell am I doin't his for?'"

AB: "I'm sure he was.

So ... so there's actually a modern push-button phone there?"

DC: "Yes there is."

AB: "And nobody's ripped it out or destroyed it?"

DC: "No, and Art, it rings twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week from around the world.

I talk to Switzerland.

AB: "Ahh ..."

DC: "I talk to Australia ... Africa. Of course, I talk to Kansas, ah, Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

AB: (laughs) 'Well ... (AB laughs more), but why ... gee, a million 'whys'...

Why do people call from all over the world?

How do they even know to call this phone booth in the middle of nowhere?"

DC: "I'm not really sure how fast ... or I don't understand the ... how fast the phenomena swept up. But it's only been recently starting, ah, to appear in magazines.

I'll be out there camping, Art, for instance and ... and one (1) day I'll ... I have to take the phone off the hook at night to sleep, and I can't sleep."

AB: "You're kidding!"

DC: "No, and I feel guilty about that."

AB: "It rings that much?"

DC: "It rings that much.

I feel guilty about takin' it off the hook, but I feel guilty if it's ringin' and I don't get out of my van and answer it."

AB: "Huh? (pause)

So in other words, I called you – it was about a week and a half ago I think – I actually dialed it on the air and all I could get was a busy signal."

DC: "*I was talkin' to the world.*"

AB: "You were ... you were actually awake at that hour?"

DC: "I ... I get up in the mornings before the sun comes up, get my coffee on, and I put the phone on receiver, and I have stood in that phone booth to up to three (3) days from seven (7 am) to three (3 am)."

AB: "Seven in the morning (7:00 am) till ..."

DC: "Three in the morning (3:00 am)."

AB: "... till three in the morning?"

DC: "Yes. I leave the phone booth ... I can't sleep for three (3) days."

AB: "Um, Chad, *why do you do this?*"

DC: (exclaims) "I really don't know. (!) I mean, I ... some callers ... I have a call from a guy in Toledo, Ohio, who said: 'What the hell are you doing, standing in the middle of a desert answering a pay phone?'"

And I said: 'Sir, what are you doing calling a pay phone in the middle of the desert?'"

AB: "To which he replied?"

DC: "He said: 'I don't know.'

And I said: 'Well you know, I really don't know why I'm here. What does it all mean?'"

AB: (laughs).

DC: "You know, we came to the conclusion that it's just ... you know, people just wanta connect. And that is just a [sic] extremely unique way to do it. I mean, we have the internet and you can sit in your house and you can talk to the world. But there is just something so unique about standing in the middle of nowhere on a plateau talking to Australia."

AB: "Well, yeah!"

DC: "And ... and women from Paris, France."

AB: "Women from Paris! (?)"

DC: "Aw, women from Paris. Women from Germany. Women from Tahiti."

AB: "Really!"

DC: "Aw, the girls from Tahiti just laugh and laugh, and just scream: 'We love American men!'"

AB: "We love American men?"

Have you ever ... have you ever met anybody that you have talked to on that phone?"

DC: "Actually I have. I talked ... um, I was out there for the Millenium and as a few of the callers comin' in, they were really intrigued that I was standin' out there in the middle of nowhere ..."

AB: "I mean, especially the girls from France ... !"

DC: "Well, yeah. Some of the girls from France have my cellphone number now, and they said when they learn better English they're gonna call me."

AB: (laughs) "You've gotta be kidding!"

DC: “No ...”

AB: “So you never know. You could ... you could meet yer mate.”

DC: “Oh! ... definitely. You can meet some really unique people out there. I mean, this one guy from Germany called – and I like to ask ‘em what their name is, where they’re calling from, and just ... you know, questions about their life.

And this guy told me he couldn’t tell me his real name. He called himself ‘Cinderella.’ (AB laughs). Says he’s wanted by the FBI. He was the Anti-Christ. He’s into Satanic things. *I mean, they get some wild calls.*

And I’ll hang up the phone and the next call will be like a ten (10) year-old, innocent little girl from Germany, who I can’t even understand her name!”

AB: “Ah, um ...”

DC: “It’s amazing!”

AB: “Ah, how does this phone number of this phone booth get passed around the world?

I ... I s’pose the internet, huh?”

DC: “Well, I think it’s on the internet now, but before it was passed I guess it got picked up on the AP [Associated Press] service. A LA [Los Angeles] Times reporter did this little, small article on it and it spread from there.”

AB: “Ohh ...”

DC: “Like one day I hung up on the phone, Art, and I had about twenty-five (25) calls in a row from Scotland (!) And I start askin’ these people: ‘Where are you getting this number?’”

AB: “Right! Right!”

DC: “And they say: ‘It was in our morning paper (!)’

I talked to a guy from Istanbul, Hungary [?? – s/b Turkiye] who got the number out of a small underground rock magazine. I mean, it’s just unbelievable [where] these people are gettin’ the number from.”

AB: “Well, you know, Chad, there are some ... Desert Chad, there are some who would say if you meet your mate, ah ... ah, in a situation like that

where you're in the middle of a phone booth and she's in, ah, I don't know, Jamaica ... whatever, and you end up getting married, that the two (2) of you would absolutely deserve each other and have a heluva story about the way you met."

DC: "Oh, you bet!" (DC laughs).

AB: "Um, I ... how long have you been doing this now?"

DC: "Um, you know actually, Art, I ... the first ... the first time I ever been to the desert in my life was for the Millenium. I'm always usually at the beach – I like the ocean surf and I ocean kayak and surf and stuff, and I, um, I was thinking of not really worst case scenario – I don't really give a damn if the computers went down and the power went out, you know? I'm still alive ... that's cool.

What I was wondering about was like all the crazy people, you know?"

AB: "Yeah."

DC: "I mean, I didn't wanta be in a situation, caught up ... then get caught in the crossfire. So, I'm lookin' at a map of California where I live and I'm tryin' to find the safest place to go. And I'm thinkin': 'Well, the desert ... there's no one out there.

So I go to the bookstore and I read everything I can on the Mojave Desert – the plant life, the weather, temperature ... everything, the animals ..."

AB: "Tryin' to figure out whether you could survive?"

DC: "Yeah. And then ... so I packed up, um, two (2) weeks, three (3) weeks worth of food. About a month worth of water. All the firewood I could get – I did run out of firewood, um, three (3) nights before I left, but thank God, a rancher came through for me!

So I just packed up and I, um, took off. And I found that plateau and I'm driving up this old mining road – and I'm just tearing the hell out of my van – and I come around this bend and there is this *phone booth (!)* **And it's just so odd!**

I'm looking ..."

AB: "So then, did you actually begin all of this ... I mean, this is almost ... we talked about 'urban legends' before I got you on the phone. This is almost in the category of the urban legend, you know, the phone booth out in the

middle of the desert with a guy who talks to people from around the world.”

DC: “Yeah!”

AB: “But you’re saying: ‘It’s no legend. It’s really true?’”

DC: “It is really true ... it is there! I live in that thing.”

AB: “You ... you live in it?”

DC: “Ah, basically. Most of my days when I’m in the desert, I’m standin’ in that booth.”

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AB: “Other ... other people would ask: ‘But you must not have a life?’”

DC: “Well, I have a very, very, very busy life.

I just ... I find time. You know, I have to have like a week or two (2) weeks off at a time just to be away from everything ...”

AB: “Yeah?”

DC: “And so, you know, I’m really not away from everything, ’cause that damn phone just won’t stop ringing.”

AB: “Well, have ...”

DC: “It’s just too interesting, and I can’t let it go, Art.”

AB: “Have others ... yeah, I ... it’s like a *compulsion* ... I guess?”

DC: “Yeah.”

AB: “All right.

Have others taken up your cause? In other words, do others know specifically where the phone booth is? Is it a crowd to get to that booth now, to sit there and answer it?”

DC: “Oh, no, it’s not yet. But ’chu know what? It’s ... the popularity of it is ... is spreading so fast, I’m afraid it’s gonna be its death. Because if people start trailin’ up past those ranchers’ houses – they’ve been up there, you know, in isolation for years and years and years and years.”

AB: "Yeah?"

DC: "And if there's a parade comin' by their house, pretty soon ..."

AB: "... they're not gonna like it."

DC: "Yeah.

I read an article in the LA Times [newspaper] not long ago. It said:
Mojave Rangers Declare War on the Booth."

AB: "War on ... ?"

DC: "That's *Mojave Rangers [Declare] ...*"

AB: "*War on the Booth?*"

DC: "*War on the Booth.*" (DC laughs).

AB: "WHAT!"

DC: "But the rangers I have met have been very nice to me."

AB: "Why ... why ... why would they ... why would they not ...

Well, because they don't want people spoiling the area environmentally?"

DC: "Yeah, it's a natural preserve and it's a place ... it's an out of the way place where tourists don't usually go, so if ... if people start crowding there, that means people have to go out of their way to drive fifteen (15) miles up that road just to make sure thing's [are] all right at least once a day."

AB: "Fifteen (15) miles."

DC: "Well, sure it's fifteen (15) miles from the nearest paved road."

AB: "Boy, that would not be easy to find."

DC: "No, it's not easy to find. I just found it by sheer luck."

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AB: "Um, did *you* disseminate the number, ah, Chad, or ... now I know you've got a website, right?"

DC: "Yes. And I ... that was totally unexpected. I mean ..."

- AB: "It's members ... it's members.xoom [pronounced 'zoom']
.com/desertchad, right?"
- DC: "Yeah. And then a '/' after 'desertchad' ... forward-slash (/) desertchad
forward-slash (/)"
- AB: "'desertchad', twice?"
- DC: "No, there's a forward-slash (/) after 'desertchad'."
- AB: "After 'desertchad'?"
- DC: "Yeah."
- AB: "c-h-a-d."
- DC: "And you don't have to type in triple-w (www) ..."
- AB: "So now ... yeah but what I'm wondering here is: *Are you the one that got
this started ...?*"
- DC: "No."
- AB: "... or was it already going ... ?"
- DC: "No. It was already going, because, Art, this is the crazy thing:

When I came around the bend and I seen [sic] the booth, the phone was
ringing (!) And I parked my van and I get out, and it's just ringing. And I'm
looking around three hundred and sixty degrees (360⁰) – *there is nothing*.
And this phone is ringing. I thought somebody's there ..."
- AB: "You lookin' for somebody who's gonna answer?"
- DC: "I picked it up. **It was New Zealand (!)**"
- AB: "New Zealand?"
- DC: "The very first call.

I was standing in the middle of the desert lookin' at Joshua Trees, a couple
of cows walked by me ... I'm talkin' to a lady in New Zealand (!)"
- AB: (laughs) "*About what! (?)*"

DC: "Um, she was askin' me about the weather there. Um, 'Why ... is it really in the desert there? Is it real?'

A lot of overseas callers. I had a guy from Scotland call me and say he heard a rumor it was in downtown Vegas, and it was all a joke.

And I told him: 'No.' And I explained to him: 'It is real.' And I sent to him a picture of it. I got his address. I took a picture of me ..."

AB: "Oh! That's a good ... by the way, are there pictures of it on your website?"

DC: "Yes. I have twenty-seven (27) pictures of my adventures out there."

AB: "You do!"

DC: Just over the Millenium. I have a lot more I wanta put up, but I've been busy at work. There's a lot ..."

AB: "So you do ... you do work then?"

DC: "Yes. I'm a subcontractor, so I ... I can work when I want. I just contract myself out to various companies and ..."

AB: "I see."

DC: "... it allows me to do what I want."

AB: (grins) "So you can then devote, ah, your spare time to your *hobby*?"

DC: "Yes. I have more spare time than most ..."

AB: "Than most people."

DC: "... people, yeah. Because I'm not really chasin' after money. I could give a damn about that."

AB: "Has ... has anybody who's called ever, you know, either solicited you for money or, um, sent you money ... or just plain solicited you?"

DC: "Um, no one's ever solicited me, but people have sent me gifts in the mail. I talked to a record producer in Istanbul and he sent me some CDs."

AB: "A record producer in Istanbul, Turkiye."

DC: "Yes. And I talked to a fireman in Columbus, Ohio, who's sendin' me a firehat from the station he lives in."

AB: (laughs).

DC: "And this is a good one, Art. Um, yes- ... right before I left ..."

AB: "Yes?"

DC: "... the day before yesterday, ..."

AB: "Yeah?"

DC: "... I picked up the phone and it was a company who distributes guitars and violins, and the whole company has been interested in that phone. Been callin' for a month. And it just rings off the hook and no one ever answers.

I picked it up. I talked to 'em for five (5) minutes – *they're sendin' me a guitar (!)*"

AB: "No!"

DC: "Yes. Not that I'm sayin' if anybody goes up there, you're gonna get showered with gifts. I mean, I ... that's just a couple little trinkets I got, but I sit there weeks at a time. Or *days* at a time – I'm sorry."

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AB: "How many of the people that call on the phone think you're crazy and oughta be called 'Crazy Chad'?"

DC: "Uh! Well, a lot of 'em. You know, I get a lot of calls from Florida and they're just shocked that someone answers the phone. And they all say the same thing: 'You're a nut!' They love that word 'nut' down there. *'You're a nut!' 'You're a nut!'*

And I can't believe people just ..."

AB: "I ... I ..."

DC: "I can't believe you're just standin' in the desert!"

AB: "I suppose the best comeback is: 'Well, what are you doin' callin' *me*?'"

DC: "Yeah, exactly. (AB laughs).

And you know, people just wanta connect. It's a ... it's a crazy thing!"

AB: "Do you get more guys or more girls?"

DC: "I get, um ... it goes in waves. I get a lot of female callers from France and then all of a sudden I'll get all these drunken guys from Scotland.

Ohh, I get this guy ..."

AB: "Drunken guys from Scotland?"

DC: "Yeah, I get a lotta guys that calls from bars, and, um ..."

AB: "But ... but occasionally you do get the female, right?"

DC: "Oh yeah, I get lots of females, yeah."

AB: "Okay, Chad. Hold on! All right?"

DC: "Okay."

AB: "Okay. Stay right there."

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AB: "Anybody out there know Chad?"

We'll be right back."

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AB: "Well, Richard Roeper from the Chicago Sun-Times, who wrote *Urban Legends*, said I'm an urban legend. *I am* ... and so is my guest, Desert Chad.

Can you imagine sitting out there in the middle of the night, *in the cold*, in the desert by a phone booth that nobody knows about – or maybe everybody knows about – and taking calls from all over the world for who knows what reason except to have a lotta fun?

Desert Chad, he's my guest."

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AB: "All right, ah, back now to my guest, ah, whose name is Desert Chad. That's what we call him, and he, um, frequent- ...how ... how frequently Chad, do you, I guess, pack up your supplies 'n' head for the desert?"

DC: "Well ..."

AB: "First of all, where are you now?"

DC: "I'm at home now. I'm in Concord, California."

AB: "Concord, California. All right."

DC: "Um, yeah."

AB: "Right. How often do you pack up 'n' ..."

DC: "Well, I'll tell ya. After I went up there, um, for a week over the Millenium, I came back and I just ... I couldn't get [it] out of my head. I was tryin' to concentrate on my work and I just couldn't do it.

And I only lasted about, um, three (3) or four (4) weeks, I took off again. And I stayed up there five (5), six (6), seven (7) days ..."

AB: "Seven (7) days?"

DC: "I'm a blur. I'm not really sure how many days. After a while, it's ... it's surreal."

AB: "I mean, don't 'chu get sunburned standing there?"

DC: "Um, right now my ... my nose is about to peel off my face. (AB laughs). I forgot to put my sunscreen on."

AB: (laughing) "Ah, you can't do that. I mean, the desert 'll kill ya."

DC: "Oh yes, it will."

AB: "So what ... whaddya bring with you?"

DC: "I bring, um, a lot of potatoes. Um, pre-packaged snack foods and dehydrated fruit 'n' things like that. And lots and lots of water to cook and bathe with.

I just hate the waterless stove, and you know, I'm out in the desert by myself. And I just strip down by myself naked ..."

AB: "Naked?"

DC: "Yeah, 'n' sponge myself off.

I've actually stood in the booth naked and took calls."

AB: "Really!"

DC: "Once. For about twenty (20) minutes – it got really cold."

AB: "Did you ... (laughs).

The desert has unique characteristics. In other words, during the day it warms up very nicely and it's like a spring day in most places. A lotta times. And then at night the minute the sun goes down, as you must well know, ah, it ... it gets cold out there, baby! And if the wind's blowin', it's really cold!"

DC: "Always! You know it!

I've never ... I've never seen temperature extremes swing like that!

You know, I'm watchin' this beautiful, beautiful sunset hanging over these volcanic cinder cones. I'm standin' out there goin': 'This is beautiful!' It's about fifty-five (55⁰).

And the second I can't see the sun, it seems like it's twenty degrees (20⁰) (!) I couldn't believe it! I'm just freezin' to death!"

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AB: "Okay, I wanna try somethin' here, Chad."

DC: "Okay."

AB: "Just for grins. Here we go ... now let's ... let's see what happens.

What I'm doing is I'm ringing that phone booth right now. And I'm (sound of phone ringing) ..."

DC: "Ah! [Unintelligible]."

AB: "Probably not gonna be anybody there now, huh?"

DC: "No."

(Sound of phone ringing).

AB: "Ah, are there others like you though that are doing this now? I mean, do you have even one (1) or two (2) other ..."

DC: “Well, you see, Art, some people come up and they’ll spend like a few hours answering the phone and leave. Some people will come up and camp like one (1) night with me ...”

AB: “Yeah.”

DC: “... but then they always leave ‘cause it’s a harsh environment. People can only take it a short period of time.”

AB: “So you’ve got to be prepared for an odyssey like this.”

DC: “You’ve got to be very prepared.”

AB: “Uh-huh. Um, if there was somebody up there, they could conceivably be in a car or a vehicle like yours hearing the phone ring right now ...”

DC: “And they would have to answer it.

*Once you answer the phone one time, you can’t **not** ...”*

AB: *“You can’t not answer it?”*

DC: *“You cannot just sit there and let it ring – you take it off the hook first.”*

AB: “It drives me nuts hearing, ah, hearing a phone ring that I don’t pick up (!)”

DC: “I’m just ... picture it right now, Art.

In the middle of the desert at night there’s no lights, there’s no cars and no traffic ... and there’s a phone ringing right now.” (Sound of phone ringing).

AB: “Right now.”

DC: “Right now!”

AB: “That’s right.”

DC: “There’s coyotes probably scatterin’.”

AB: “Hah, hah! Yeah, prob’ly scat- ... because there’s no ... there’s no glass left in the phone booth ...”

DC: “No.”

AB: “So in other words, when you’re standing there subject to the wind and the cold and whatever else ... ?”

DC: “Yes. When it gets very windy I have a tarp that I tarp the booth off on three (3) sides. And I tape an umbrella over the top of it sometimes into the doorway.”

AB: “I see.”

DC: “And I got a little stool and I sit in there. I light candles up at night 'cause there's no lights. You gotta bring a lotta candles and tape em' all over the booth.”

AB: “So then you're ... you're just like a ... if somebody were to see you at a distance it would prob'ly look pretty ghostly – you there with the candles burning in the middle of nowhere?”

DC: “Oh, I bet it would.” (Both laugh).

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AB: “Um, there's one (1) other aspect I wanna ask you about ... and that is: Because of where you're going, um, we all know this part of the world – I ... I live adjacent to Area 51 ...”

DC: “Yes, I know.”

AB: “... and you spent a lotta nights in the desert **alone** in the cold, in the dark – *then you must've seen stuff while you were out there.*”

DC: “Well ... yes, Art, I have actually.”

AB: “Like what?”

DC: “Well, over the Millenium I was ... I knew that place ...”

AB: “Wait ... wait a minute ...”

Operator: ‘The phone is not answering. Please try your call later. We're sorry, but your call will now be disconnected. 113T [one three tee].’

AB: “Well, there you are. See, nobody answered.”

DC: “Ohh ... oh yeah ... oh yeah, Art, over the Millenium when I was there for two (2) nights I seen these lights that I've seen a few times. Maybe three (3) or four (4) times in the past at isolated beaches along the north coast. They're little orbs and they change colors really vibrantly ... really violently, I mean ...”

AB: “Oh, it’s amazing that you would talk about orbs, because, ah, a guest of mine – Peter Davenport – um, all of a sudden we’re getting all these orb reports. Um, orange ... glowing frequently ...”

DC: “Oh, Art, in ... in ’92 I seen an orb very close and this ... I wanta call it a cloud, ... but it looked like a fake cloud. It was kind of a dirty cloud. It was oscillating so fast back and forth, I could see the trails of it – it was moving so quick.

And this, um, it was only maybe four (4) or five (5), six (6) telephone poles high ... at least stacked telephone poles end to end.”

AB: “Yeah?”

DC: “Yeah.”

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AB: “And ... and so, ah, when are you going back next? For everybody out there who wanta connect with you in the middle of nowhere.”

DC: “I will be going back with ... possibly within two (2) weeks.”

AB: “Within ... ?”

DC: “Inside of two (2) weeks, yes.

I’m gonna try to bust my butt at work and get some money together and pay a few bills, and then take off.”

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AB: “Aren’t ’chu worried that like some ... maybe some forest rangers or something will come by and talk to you a while, and you’ll tell them what you’re doing, and they will take you in for a real quick examination?”

DC: “Art, anytime I see a uniform, *I panic.*”

AB: “You know what? They’re gonna say – typical cop of any kind is gonna say: ‘Hi there, um, what are you doin’? Wha’ ’cha doin’ out here?’

And yer gonna say: ‘Well, I come out here to camp to answer this phone when it rings.’

See, at that point they’re gonna start thinking *psychiatric evaluation.*”

DC: “Exactly. I ... you know, I’ve always been slightly worried about that ...”

AB: "Yeah?"

DC: "For sure, yeah. So far ... so far I've ... it's been cool"

AB: "Hmpf. (AB and DC laugh). You mean they actually understand?"

DC: "Yeah. As the ... one (1) ranger, um, one ranger ... he's been really nice.

Actually, you know, I can sit up there for days and not see a ranger, 'cause it's not on the beaten path. You can sit up there for a week, and they might come by once."

AB: "Well ... well, but that's all it would take!"

DC: "Yeah. Well, the last time I got really lucky. I mean the guy rolled by and he was a young guy. He had a big smile on his face and he just kinda waved. And I waved back. And I was just thinking: 'Keep going ...'"

AB: "Keep going ..."

DC: (laughs).

AB: "... keep going. Please keep going.

Ah, you know, I can sort of imagine a dialogue:

'Young fella, this is really interesting what you're doing. Have a seat here in the back of the car and, ah, we're gonna sit ... we're gonna let 'cha talk to some really nice people.'

DC: "Okay."

AB: (laughs).

DC: "Sure."

AB: (laughs more).

DC: "Yeah, right."

AB: "Um ..."

DC: "I'm tellin' you, Art, there's something fascinating though I want to tell you about. And, ah ..."

AB: "Sure!"

DC: "This last time ... I think it was ... it was, you know, it would be March ... March 1st, um, March 1st late at night ..."

AB: "Yeah?"

DC: "Oh no, no , no ... not late at night – I'm sorry. It was only about nine-thirty or ten-thirty (9:30 pm – 10:30 pm) between that time. But there was ... I thought it was gonna start lightning.

I thought I saw a couple of flashes ..."

AB: "Yes."

DC: "... I was standing in a little bluff of a flat plateau – it was no place to be."

AB: "Good point."

DC: "Yeah, so I took the phone off the hook and I get in my van, and I can't sleep. So I'm just lookin' out my window. I had these nice big bay windows in my van.

Ah, I like the sky out there, you know? There's no lighting. You can just see a billion stars."

AB: "Actually I tell people, um, across this country that where I live you can look and you can see the Milky Way literally ..."

DC: "Yeah!"

AB: "... for one horizon all the way to the other horizon."

DC: "Yes. I know. I've seen it."

AB: "Right."

DC: "It's incredible!

So I'm enjoyin' the view and, um, ... God, I hope I can describe this right. It's the entrance I need to get right on this.

And I seen, ah, a pinpoint of light. At the second ... at the second I see the pinpoint of light, it burst out to the sides, um, I would say like a ... a lighthouse beacon ..."

AB: "Yes!"

DC: "... you know? The ... the ... the light got wider as it went out ..."

AB: "Right."

DC: "... and it started at the point. But I mean the point and the flash were milliseconds apart."

AB: "Uh-huh."

DC: "And I say: 'What the hell is that? (!)'"

AB: "Yeah."

DC: "So I got up a little closer to my window. And I'm lookin' out and there's nothing. There's nothing ... there's nothing.

About a minute or two goes by – I can't take my eyes off of it."

AB: "Uh-huh."

DC: "And all of a sudden ... I don't wanna say ... it ... it didn't make this sound, but the only way I can describe it is that it just popped into view. And there it was. I mean ..."

AB: "'Where there what was?'"

DC: "Okay. I ... this was ... it has a yellow light on top.

I seen this before at a beach called McClures Beach. I mention it briefly in my journal on my website. I'd like to go into more detail ..."

AB: "Oh, you have a whole journal on your website? (!)"

DC: "Yes, I have a journal of just my adventures out there in the desert. But I touch briefly on an incident at a beach called McClures Beach.

It was a very, very, intense, intense incident. I ... it was the same light ... the same light this time ... except it was so close I could see actually more of the light.

This was the very first time, Art, I have ever seen a solid structure. I've always seen, you know ..."

AB: "Oh, I agree so ... so it was more than a light you actually saw?"

DC: "It was close enough ..."

AB: "Oh my!"

DC: "It was zig-zagging toward me and, um, I had ..."

AB: "Well ..."

DC: "I would like to go into more detail about ..."

AB: "... well ..."

DC: "... what was in my mind and all that."

AB: "Well, I ... yeah ... here, let me imagine what might be in your mind. I mean, you're twenty-four (24) miles or whatever from anything ..."

DC: "Yes."

AB: "... and you're all alone and it's nighttime and it's dark. And here comes this thing toward you.

I mean, you could imagine, ah, being, I don't know, disemboweled and left in the desert like a ... a ... a gutted cow!"

DC: "Well, you know actually, Art, you know, I'm not worried about that because of past experiences. I ... I kinda knew what they were there for. I hope I don't sound like a nut, but I kinda knew what was gonna happen."

AB: "You ... you did?"

DC: "I asked for it and then I changed my mind and, um, it left me alone.

But it zig-zagged ..."

AB: "So you wished it there?"

DC: "Oh, from ... I've seen it before ..."

AB: "Now there are those ..."

DC: "... and never get tired of seein' it from a distance."

AB: "... there are those ... Chad, they would say two (2) things:

One, that you were a ... a victim of exposure. You had been out in the desert sun and cold too long, and you began to hallucinate.

What ...”

DC: “Art, you ... yeah, I wouldn’t buy that though.”

AB: “You wouldn’t buy that?”

DC: “No.”

AB: “Ah, there are also ... also, ah, many who would say that you take alcoholic refreshments out there with you.”

DC: “Actually ... New Year’s Eve I took five (5) bottles of champagne. Other than that ...”

AB: “Five (5) ?”

DC: “... I don’t drink much alcohol.”

AB: “Excuse me, five (5) bottles?”

DC: “Yes.”

AB: “Did the people understand what you were saying on the phone at all?”

DC: “Um, actually I got really crazy on the phone. I gotta (exclaims) ... I gotta get a little carried away a little bit!

I was tryin’ to talk women into takin’ their shirts off ‘n’ stuff.”

AB: (guffaws).

DC: “I mean, it wudn’t gonna do me any good – I was just gettin’ a kick out of it.”

AB: (continuing to laugh) “How many of ‘em did?”

DC: “Actually four (4) or five (5) said they did. Only one (1) of ‘em I truly believe.”

AB: (laughs).

DC: “And one girl called me up and I had phone sex on the phone out there, and that was weird.

Some girl called me up. She heard I was in the desert and she like was tryin' to give me phone sex or something."

AB: "Really?"

DC: "Yeah!

It was very interesting."

AB: "Well, I guess you're gonna run into all of it out there, because people have really strange motives.

I mean, for another thing aren't you a little bit afraid? Have you ... are ... I mean, you tell people basically where you are, right?"

DC: "Um, when I go there?"

AB: "Yeah."

DC: "I usually ... I just tell people I'm goin' to the desert and there's a phone booth. No one ... I really never took anybody, except ..."

AB: "No, no, no ... I mean, when ... when somebody calls you on the phone and they say: 'I've heard this is a phone booth out in the middle of the desert out in the middle of nowhere. Where is it really?'

You tell 'em, right?"

DC: Oh yes. I just describe the surroundings and they're just ... they're just blown away!"

AB: "Well, suppose somebody were to decide to come and actually see you, ah, meet you, ah ... ?"

DC: "Well, here's ... Art, this is great! I wanna tell you about this, ah, if we can go into details some other time about this ... what this, um, this sighting I had – because it really wobbled really bad and it came up close by the van – but I wanta get inta that, but let me tell you about ... 'cause you're gonna love this ... talkin' about people comin' to meet me."

AB: "Yeah?"

DC: "Three (3) guys from New York City called me two (2) days before New Years' Eve and they been callin' the booth for six (6) or seven (7) months.

No one ever answered. I answered.

We ended up talking for about twenty (20) or thirty (30) minutes and before the conversation ended, the guy goes: 'You know, Chad, I think I'm gonna come out there and visit you. I'm gonna fly to Vegas, rent a SUV, and let's have a party New Year's Eve!'

I said: 'Sure.'

A couple from Santa Barbara ... 'Sure.'

A couple from Michigan ... 'Okay.'

A couple guys, um, from somewhere in southern California ...

Before I knew, Art, I was bein' descended on, you know, New Year's Day Eve by people – I had like forty (40) people ..."

AB: "What!"

DC: "I had to dig another fire pit."

AB: "What! What! You mean they actually came out?"

DC: "Art, they came out!"

I was standin' on my phone talkin' to Halle, Germany or something and this little ... little jeep comes up and this guy opened the door and says: 'Are you Chad?'

I said: 'Yeah.'

He goes: 'I'm Nick from New York. I talked to you the day before yesterday.' (AB guffaws).

I said: 'No shit.' [This actually got on the air.]

And I tell you, Art, this was amazing because I started to worry because no one every- ... no one knew each other *and we were miles from any kind of 'HELP'*. I'm thinkin' there's alcohol, it's New Year's Eve ... *what if there's personality clash here?"*

AB: "Yeah!"

DC: "What ... what is going to happen?"

And you know what?

No worries. That phone booth seems to only draw a certain type of person – I figured that out. Out of everybody that's passed my way up there ..."

AB: "You mean it's like there's a profile for a person who would ... ?"

DC: "They are all extremely cool, laid back, respect the landscape, the booth, what's goin' on with it, respect the overseas callers, don't be a jerk to them, you know?"

AB: "Be a good American."

DC: "Exactly."

AB: "Be a ..."

DC: "Even though, Art, these guys from Iran ... ooh, let me tell you somethin' about this."

AB: "You had callers from Iran?"

DC: "I can't even say the word on the radio.

But this is ... ooh, this guy – he gets me all the time – and, um, I don't let him get me riled up on the phone, but sometimes I'm gettin' a little sick of him. I don't know how he gets through so many times. But he tells me all these nasty things about my mother – and in the background I hear those guys screamin': 'Down With America! Down With America!'"

AB: "He insults you?"

DC: "Oh yeah, he ..."

AB: "And us?"

DC: "... insults me beyond all belief and I try to kill him with kindness and finally he gets so mad at me because I'm just so nice – he hangs up.

But finally I got so fed up with it, Art, he called and I recognized his voice right away.

I said: 'You know what, buddy? *Bill Clinton's comin' over there to kick your ass!*'

He said: 'What?'

I go: 'I'm sendin' my President over there – I'm tired of you.'"

AB: (laughs).

DC: "And then I hung up on him.

And you know what? *That's the only caller I've ever hung up on.*"

AB: "So in other words, normally you don't hang up on people?"

DC: "I never hang up on anybody.

I talked to a lady in Canada, who was sixty-two (62) years old. She was a shut-in. She had back surgery. She was on morphine. Her family never came to visit her. I talked to her for an hour and a half ..."

AB: "Yeah?"

DC: "... and traded emails and I stay in touch with her."

* * *

AB: "Um, do you have a family?"

DC: "Um, I have a family, but I rarely see 'em. I just have a couple (2) sisters that live about sixty (60) miles away from me, and, ah, I'm livin' with some friends."

AB: "So your parents are not alive?"

DC: "No, neither one."

AB: "Your sisters are though?"

DC: "Yes. I just see them on holidays."

AB: "I ... I ... I take it that you've at least told your sisters what you do?"

DC: "Oh yeah, they know every time I leave the house. They can't ... they can't believe what I'm wantin' to do."

AB: (laughs).

DC: "When I came back from Japan, they could not believe, I mean, what I told 'em I did over there. It was just surreal."

AB: "I have some Japan stories myself."

DC: "Yeah, it's amazing!"

AB: "Anyway, um, but ... but they ... they don't think you're, ah ... hmpf, *unbalanced?*"

DC: "Um, you know, yeah, they joke about it.

They say: 'You know, you must have a chemical imbalance in your brain or somethin'.'

But you know, I have a good time. And ..."

AB: "Okay. Now I ..."

DC: "... I don't worry about what other people ... if you go through your life worrying about what other people think about you, ..."

AB: "You're ..."

DC: "... you're gonna be an old man and you've never done anything you really wanta do, 'cause you're worried about what another human being's gonna think of you ... ?"

AB: "You're right! Oh, no – you're right!"

DC: "Ah, you can't live like that."

AB: "*I think what 'chu do is cool.* Now I can have ... Keith [Rowland, Art's webmaster] ... I'm gonna give your website out here again."

DC: "Sure."

AB: "And I ... and I ... Keith put a, ah, a link up to it now.

Is the ... in addition to the photographs of the, ah, phone booth, um, the phone number is there also?"

DC: "The phone number's on my opening page."

AB: (laughs) "All right. Ah, your website is members.xoom (that's [pronounced] 'zoom') .com/desertchad/."

DC: "That's right."

- AB: "That's correct?"
- DC: "That's correct."
- AB: "Okay, well, we'll have Keith get a link up to that and again ..."
- DC: "I'll be adding a lot more. I've got a short, little three (3) or four (4) minute video. I take, um, three (3) calls ..."
- AB: "What?"
- DC: "A guy called to order a pizza and he's not joking, Art. He thinks he called a place to order a pizza. And ... and then I got ... I took a call from Scotland and a call from France. And I got it on a little video I'm gonna ..."
- AB: "You have all this on video?"
- DC: "Yes."
- AB: "And did you manage to tape the voices of the people calling or just ..."
- DC: "Actually ... I, um, I haven't been able to do that. I'm ... someone has. I'm involved in a, um ... a film crew found me one night when I was up there after ..."
- AB: "Film crew?"
- DC: "A film crew from LA came up to shoot a short documentary on '*The Loneliest Phone Booth on the Planet*.'"
- AB: (laughs).
- DC: "They told ... they told ... Art ... Art, listen to this. It's like one in the morning (1:00 am). I'm out in the middle of nowhere. I got a sleepin' bag over my head. I got three (3) candles lit and off in the distance, 'cause you can see, you know, miles away."
- AB: "Oh, yeah."
- DC: "I see these lights comin' toward me. And I'm thinkin': 'My God, I don't have aliens and humans comin' at me right now. I'd feel safer, you know? Who drives in the middle of the desert at this time of night? I mean, are they ... dumpin' a body out? Are they seein' my candles? I'm blowin' out candles."

AB: “Yep.”

DC: “I still can’t let go of the phone. I have this girl in Germany.

They pull up. It turns out ... the LA film crew. Um, they look at my journal – the phone log. They look at me and they find out what I’ve been doin’ out there.

Now I’m in this, ah, independent film. And they shot a bunch of footage of it. And it’s just ... it’s just ...”

AB: “Are you going ... are you going to be in some kind of, ah, A&E [Arts & Entertainment channel] special or something?”

DC: “Well, I believe it’s gonna be released at Sundance next year.”

AB: “At ... at the Sundance Film Festival?”

DC: “Yes.”

AB: “So, then you’re sort of a living ‘urban legend’?”

DC: “I guess, ’cause they came back up and shot more footage of me since I’ve been up there again. And I think the director’s flyin’ into San Francisco next Thursday to see me.”

AB: “What? (!)

So there could be *Desert Chad: The Movie?*”

DC: “Yeah, and they’re interviewin’ some of the, ah, callers that actually go through and talked to me – some of the overseas people.”

AB: “Oh, you mean they actually fly? Ah, they’re ... they’re gonna fly ’n’ talk to these people ’n’ ... ?”

DC: “I don’t know if they’re gonna, ah ... some of the people are actually coming here.

I got a kid in Germany, who – I cannot believe this – he is, ah, he calls me on my cellphone while I’m at work. He’s gettin’ his, ah, plans together. He’s tryin’ to get a credit card that he can use in America ...”

AB: “Ha!”

DC: “He’s comin’ ... he’s ... he met me at the phone booth, Art. (AB laughs). This kid called me at the phone booth. He got through a couple times. And, um, now he wants to come visit me and wants me to take him up there.

I said: ‘Sure, you know, I’ll take you up there.’”

AB: “So to all the people who would say: ‘You’re crazy as a loon. You have too much time on your hands. You need to get a life.’ – you would say what?”

DC: “I have a life. *I’m havin’ a great time!*”

AB: (laughs) “Well, Desert Chad, my friend, you’re my kinda guy. I appreciate your coming on the air with me tonight.”

DC: “No problem, Art. Anytime.”

AB: “I, of course, I wish I could have gotten you at the booth.”

DC: “I ... you know, next time I’m gonna let ’chu know ahead of time when I’m gonna go.”

AB: “Would you do that?”

DC: “And maybe we can arrange a call ... a time and I’ll just keep the calls short, and you maybe just keep tryin’, you’ll get through.”

AB: “That’s all I can do is keep tryin’.”

DC: “That’s right.”

AB: “That’s all anybody can do is keep tryin’.”

DC: “That’s all anybody can do, yeah.”

AB: “All right. Desert Chad. Thank you.”

DC: “You’re welcome.”

AB: “And get some sleep!”

* * *