

INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT GREATHOUSE -- FEBRUARY, 1995 (PART 2 OF 4)

So I'm stopping eating by now and kind of watching them, and they're eating their salads, and Madeline goes, "This is really strange dressing..." And I just started cracking up laughing and said, "I don't know what's wrong with you guys. Why are you putting gravy on your salads?" And Dave's like, "Oh my God! That was *gravy*?" But that's a typical Dave thing. And the fact that she followed suit; that just took the cake. It was really funny. We were all laughing. The gravy was in a ramekin type thing, and usually dressing for your salad comes in a ramekin. But I believe there was already dressing on the salad so I don't know why he did it.

We drove to St. Louis in my car. It was really fun. We went through Tennessee. But that was the first time Dave noticed a KS lesion. It was a Saturday or a Sunday in St Louis, and we were going to go down the street to this huge science museum and then come back for the gig. We were driving down the freeway and he was looking in the mirror in the visor at his teeth and he looked up and there it was, on the roof of his mouth. That was the first sign of anything that he'd ever had. The lesion was pretty flat, and he couldn't feel it at first. Dave was pretty conscious of his body and he was always looking for that reason.

It was a turning point. It was a big slap in the face. It was something that both of us had been apprehensive about. I think at that stage--before you get a confirmation, really physically, that you're ill--in some way you're still kind of denying or thinking to yourself, "Maybe this won't happen to me." And that was just one more confirmation to Dave that he was sick, although his cell count was still pretty good then, pretty much stable, and had been for a while. And the way Dave handled things, it was a big deal for a couple days. It was a big deal no matter what, but it was really heavy on his mind and he talked about it and talked about it and talked about it. And he turned it into "Well, this is something I can handle." That real positive Dave side would shine through eventually, like with any other thing. But that was a big turning point for him, the first sign that he might perhaps be losing the battle or that this was going to be a tougher battle than he had thought. He was glad that the lesion didn't show up on the outside. He was pretty lucky with that.

The next one showed up on his arm, and they took a biopsy of that one. They tried radiation on the one on his mouth, but the thing that worked best on the KS was that chemotherapy protocol that he got on. That saved his life I think, because the Kaposi's sarcoma probably would have got him before anything else, internally or whatever. That chemo really got it under control. He would take that once a month and it wasn't making him sick. He didn't like the radiation. It really made him feel bad. They would place this hard metal cone in his mouth and press it up against the top of his mouth real hard, and he said it was real uncomfortable.

Dave and I were really building something at that point. We were starting to really build a relationship; this was a little over a year after we met. I was finding that our relationship and our feelings for each other went further than I ever thought they would. With him things were starting to get serious with his health. It was intense.

I never entertained thoughts of "Should I bail out?" or anything like that. I was very concerned about him. We had had talks where he'd say, "Is this a good idea? If this gets serious and something happens to me, look what you're going to have to

go through." That kind of stuff. But as far as calling off the relationship because of that, no, nothing ever really that serious came of it. I think that every time something like that happened it just brought us closer together.

Dave's first hospitalization was the first big trauma. I remember driving over trying to get his emergency Medicaid. That was the first really tough, big traumatic time in our relationship, because he had been sick for too long and he needed to get to the hospital and couldn't. There wasn't any insurance. The CMV had just started up in his intestines and was giving him colitis type symptoms, and it was really uncomfortable for him. But he had dealt with it for a week or longer and his stomach was really bothering him and he couldn't eat very well and didn't want to eat and was losing weight and was feeling real weak and couldn't do anything about it. He was waiting on Medicare.

So Dr. B. ended up admitting him to the hospital--just getting him in there--and Dave got Medicaid at the last minute. The day he went in there they put the catheter port in his chest, to make it easier to treat the CMV with sufficient Cytovene. But just seeing him after that, when they'd brought him back downstairs to the room... They'd put the catheter in, and he was kind of out. I remember looking down at him and thinking, "I can't believe this is happening. This is somebody that means the world to me." So that was probably the biggest turning point for both of us. We were talking later that night, and he was pretty freaked out. It was the first hospital visit. I was telling Dave how scared I was, and he was scared too, and we had a real touching moment. We really knew how much we loved each other, and how much he meant to me and how much I meant to him. At that point we really realized that, and he was really thankful that Linda was his friend and that he and I were together. Because he needed the help and he needed people there. And those conversations just happened more and more often the sicker he got. But they got the CMV in check for quite some time, and he got out of there pretty quick.

Dave bounced back pretty strong and was able to eat again. After he went to the hospital the first time for the CMV he got that catheter for a reason and he needed to start taking medication. So he had to kind of juggle that around and get it on a schedule that wouldn't interfere with his gigs. He and Linda had a deal where she started to try and find a sub for Dave--a standby--in case something happened that Dave couldn't make it or whatever, so there would be someone there who could jump in and fill his spot. But he didn't let that stop him, and it shouldn't have, because at that point he really wasn't weighted down too much. He had to take the Cytovene however often each day but he was still gigging quite a bit. One of the hardest things about the gigs for him though was that it was so taxing on him physically. That was more problem than anything else. Dave would come home just exhausted sometimes, and that was really frustrating for him because that wasn't like Dave. This guy who used to be able to go easily sixteen hours a day or so all of a sudden was getting tired and worn out. His body wasn't keeping up with him, and that was really frustrating for him.

The KS was spreading. It started growing down at the top of his legs and the lower waist where you have a lot of lymph nodes and started slowing down the flow of lymph, and he started to have an edema problem with his leg. So when he stood up all night at a gig it really made his leg swell, and he hated the way it looked, even though you really couldn't tell. His pants and socks and dress shoes became painful to wear. One leg was worse than the other. The KS was getting out of control. This was before the chemotherapy started, and at that point it wasn't even an option; I don't think he'd even heard about it. With regular chemotherapy you lose your hair, and he didn't like *that* idea. Dave's hair was his pride and joy! He had great hair. But those were the kinds of things that made gigs difficult at that time. He was still able to work

quite a bit, and it wasn't very often that he was too sick to make the gig.

Cezanne kind of took over. He jumped into Cezanne and wasn't taking all these receptions and gigs here and there. It made it a lot easier because Cezanne was so close, and Dave could just concentrate on one thing, and he enjoyed it so much. It was a big step for him. The place turned into Dave's club, and he was booking it. He really made it work out and changed Cezanne a lot in the public eye, and really made the place a lot busier than it had been when it was just a solo piano bar. It became one of Houston's big time jazz spots, and there aren't that many. So that gave him room to work or not work; he booked the club every month and he could schedule himself as much as he thought he could handle. Usually he pushed himself. There were times when he called somebody and would have them either come up or hang out and maybe sit in for a while to give him a break or just play the whole night, and there was always somebody here in Houston who would do that for Dave. It was incredible, the support he got. And he did people a lot of favors too. Dave was one of the most fair people around. Nothing would have made him happier than to pay everybody lots of money to play at the club. But the fact that Dave would have played for free or for low wages just to keep the club alive, I think that inspired everyone else; that Dave had such a desire to make the jazz scene work in Houston.

And he really was very creative with it. He was going to start a jazz artist sponsored series where so many people would pay whatever it would take for tickets so they could fly somebody down here--like Bob Berg or Art Lande--somebody pretty well known. It happened only once, and then Dave was getting too sick to really continue with it. But they'd fly the person down here for the gig, and the money from the tickets pretty much paid the artist the money to come down to perform. Then they had dinner before the concert upstairs at Cezanne where they had tables set up, and there were pretty many people there. It was really successful, and Art played his bit, and they all had dinner and everyone got to talk to him one-on-one. I believe the dinner was actually the night before the gig.

Dave tried every configuration he could at Cezanne to see what worked the best. He never lost faith or hope in it and he kept working with it. It was a frustrating thing, trying to get the balance right at Cezanne; the balance between making John Hansen and everybody happy so they would keep the place open--if Cezanne didn't make enough money for them they weren't going to keep it open--and then making enough money to pay the musicians to play. Those were the two basic needs, and Dave could have cared less if he got paid out of it really. He wanted the club just to stay open. They talked about closing it one time when Dave was in the hospital, and fortunately that didn't happen. It wasn't making a lot of money and it was hard to keep the place open, but the whole idea of Dave working at Cezanne really helped him because all his energy was localized in one place. He spent all his time dealing with Cezanne and there weren't very many other gigs he did, and he told Linda at that point that he wasn't doing any more wedding receptions and things like that. Dave worked a lot from home and spent time on the phone all day talking to everybody; musicians in town and musicians out of town.

I was getting irritated because Dave would have all the phone lines tied up. "Dave, I need to use the phone. I need to call someone..." I had a phone at my desk and had it on the second line, and so the deal was that when Dave was using the phone he would use the first line first, in case I needed to use the phone. But sometimes he would forget and just use the other line, and I'd be like, "I NEED THE PHONE, DAVE!!!" He had it where if he was on the first line and someone would call, we didn't have call waiting but it would roll over onto the second line. Then there was the fax machine going... It was

great. It worked out real well, and he was very productive from home. I was thankful for that because he could do his treatments at home and all that. He started that before he was too sick to go out; he still cruised around town up until four-some months before he died. He really was never so sick that he couldn't get around town at all. There were times in there yeah, but he did a lot better than some people. He wasn't laid up in bed forever until he died. And actually when he died he wasn't nearly as thin as he had been before.

Seeing Dave go through the process of dying, and the religious and spiritual aspects of all that was incredible. It's unexplainable. It's just so difficult to put into words what I saw in him and what I saw him go through. And I'm sure there were a lot of things he experienced--not being him--that I don't know about. Dave wasn't a very religious person when we first met. He wasn't an atheist but he didn't have a lot to say about it. I don't think he really didn't believe or believed either way. But by the time Dave died he did believe in a supreme being and he was peaceful when he died.

You know Dave was always kind of a spiritual person anyway. He and Linda shared a lot of time reading poetry together. Dave would call her in the middle of the night. Linda was into poetry and she kind of turned Dave onto it. Dave liked it, and they shared a lot together with that. It was really good for him. And Linda's so deep. She had a lot to share with Dave. Her voice is just so calming. I think she really helped him to get in touch with a lot more inside of himself than he would have without her. He read books on mind/body relationships and those kinds of things; Steven Hawking, talking about the universe, creation, evolution... All of that was very interesting to Dave; became very interesting to him, moreso than it had before.

Dave searched for inner peace and found it, whether it was from seeing the beauty of life, or the beauty of a relationship, or of a wonderful, incredibly close friendship. He started really appreciating life. He and Linda and I, or he and Linda, or he and I would go the Museum of Natural Science here which has a flower garden which is really cool; it's got a Zen garden. Things like that. He started getting into things more like that--the beauty of the Earth--and really appreciating that. Things that a lot of people would think were silly, like going to a butterfly exhibit.

The whole last couple of weeks in the hospital and the week he was home before he died--that whole three weeks--was a religious experience for him. He had talked to Dr. R., and they had had a big talk on the spiritual plane. In general, basically Dave was just really relieved. You could tell that he was getting things in order so that he could go. I think it meant a lot that he had a talk with Dr. R. I know it did. I wasn't there during the day, but Dr. R. had spoken to him and when he came back that night Dave was telling me that he felt like they had really touched souls or whatever, that he really connected very well that day, and felt very honored to be a friend of Dr. R.; that he'd really helped him. They just had a really good talk about the whole thing; life and relationships and dying and all that.

It was strange because Dave was having problems with one of his lungs at the time and he was in a lot of pain, and they were giving him Dilaudid--a real strong painkiller--and it was making him kind of go in and out of sleep sometimes. He could go from being very alert and real sharp--totally on top of things--to kind of out in another world, with droopy eyes and swaying head; like he was trying to fall asleep. And sometimes he would just lay there with his eyes closed, sort of sleeping, and he'd just be blabbering--you couldn't understand what he was saying--but it was like he was communicating

with something or someone. It was funny because he would wake up and he'd go, "I was just talking..." All of a sudden he was just like totally OK. He'd say, "I was talking, wasn't I?" He knew what he was saying wasn't something we could really understand. Sometimes he would say something you could understand, but most of the time it was just gibberish.

But it was really strange because that happened for two or three weeks--and I'm sure a lot of it had to do with the painkillers they were giving him--but he stopped doing that about two days before he died. He was completely silent. It's hard to say what causes that, if it was a spiritual link From being around Dave as much as I was and listening to what he was thinking and what he had been talking about, I really think that whatever force it is that communicates with you before you die was at Dave's side there, and they were "working it out."

Dave did not want to die. That's how it was. I don't care, and he didn't care how much he made his peace with it, he still didn't want to do it. He still had a lot of things that he wanted to do here and he wasn't finished yet. So I'm sure that if there's any way that you can argue with The Big Man, he *tried*. But he was quiet two days before he died. He didn't talk in his sleep. He wasn't restless. He was very, very calm. So it was all too significant to me that he had gone from what appeared to be some turmoil inside of him with this dreamy state he was going in and out of, and then all of a sudden he was just... There was no more talking or fading in and out. It was done. It was like there was a debate going on, whether on his conscious side or his subconscious, because when he would be talking like that and he would wake up and realize that we were there, he'd say, "You know, I know what I'm saying. I understand what I'm saying and that's all I can say about it. I know it sounds strange to you and you think I'm crazy, but I know what I'm saying." We believed him.

Dave and I talked about his dying for quite a while before he died. We had those conversations often enough. I don't think that we had to have those discussions to know where each other stood. I knew what he wanted and he knew what I wanted. He knew that if and when the day came that we weren't together anymore that I was going to be OK. Had he not felt that, I don't think he would have been as comfortable as he was that last week in the hospital.

Sometimes just out of the blue at home or wherever he was he'd get very upset about it. He would start crying and say, "I'm just thinking about what's going to happen when I'm not here anymore and it really upsets me to think about what you have to deal with." He was just so incredibly caring. Dave was always thinking about everybody else. At the time I was just like, "Don't worry about me. I'm going to be fine." I did my best to reassure him that I was OK, that that had to be one of the last things for him to worry about. There were enough things that were important for him to concentrate on.

(CONTINUED, PART 3)