

BILL VITKA for CHRIS JUNE 16

Chris Stanley had a story for everyone. There was no story too small or too large. But there's one story he never told us. When Chris was in the Air Force, his first assignment was counter-intelligence. As his brother, Tim, tells it when they found out about Chris' politics, he was reassigned – to supply. He was stationed in Thailand, there at the same time the US Government was conducting a secret bombing campaign in Laos. Chris was at the very air base from which the planes were launched. In Thailand Chris was already behind the mike, Armed Forces Radio. He worked at the station at that air base. 'Good Morning Thailand!' One day, a returning plane from the bombing effort crashed at the base. It plowed into the radio station -- think of it as a radio tent -- everybody at the station was killed. Chris — that day – had called in sick. I had thought when I began this that I would split this tribute, this epitaph, into two parts. One for the casual reader – or listener – and one for the rest of us. But there was nothing casual about Chris. This is the deep end of the pool. If you expected less, you didn't know Chris. Some facts are good. Some things we don't know as much as we'd like. But if Chris were here he'd tell us to report what we know. Some of those facts: He was born in Rhode Island, Woonsocket He grew up in Ohio. He thought of Youngstown as home. He has two brothers. The older is Mike, the younger is Tim. His father was in radio. He moved on to television. One of Chris' fondest memories of his youth is of movies. Back in the 50's, he saw, by his own count, every bad and good and every very bad science and monster movie made. They ran on his dad's TV station. And his father set up a projector at home and the Thing from Another World, It Came From Beyond Space, and Earth vs. the Flying Saucers all unspooled in front of his eyes both on the small screen and within the private walls of home sweet home. Maybe the seed is there, the broadcasting seed -- dad's TV station and dad's work in radio -- then, it germinates in Southeast Asia. But as well and before the Air Force, he's on the air in Goldsboro, North Carolina: WGBT -- a top 40 deejay. Chris Stanley: DJ. Try to picture him answering the phone taking a request from a listener. It's after the Air Force that he becomes a reporter: WIVK and WNOX in Knoxville. Now somewhere in this mix is a theater troupe. Chris studied drama at Pepperdine. The troupe barnstormed across the Midwest and parts of the south one summer. On his way West just a few weeks ago, Chris hooked-up again with one of the key players with whom he walked the boards back then. Hank Rosenfeld, a good friend of Chris', thought that final road trip might have been Chris revisiting his own resume, his own past. Theater wasn't the only thing on his mind on that trip. On the radio history ledger, I believe Green Bay is next. Don't know the calls. But something happens there. He meets folks from Texas. They tell him to come on down. In very Chris fashion, he uproots himself and his life in Wisconsin gets on a plane with a toothbrush, and he's in Houston. At KPFT, and now News Director, he's digging the

cosmic cowboy days that spilled over Austin. As Eben Brown, a colleague of Chris' from CBS and Fox, astutely notes: Chris may be the only radio journalist to have worked at both Fox News and Pacifica. After Texas, Chris heads to San Francisco. From cosmic cowboy to psychedelic – and Chris was psychedelic. Not a drug casualty. But the boy – he was in orbit. Hank Rosenfeld remembers the first time he laid eyes on Chris. Walking into the KSAN newsroom at 5 AM letting his freak- flag hair tumble down like a waterfall. Like a lot of us. It was a different time. It was the time of Hunter Thompson and Ken Kesey, the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane This is not nostalgia. That's wishing for something that wasn't. That was. If you're honest, you know it. Maybe you don't tell your kids about it but maybe you lived it. And you know it was real. It was the world we lived in and not a place of make-believe. Though – make-believe had a role to play. Chris had characters that he would play on the air. He'd call in when his gumba, Steven Capen, who has also joined that Heavenly Radio Choir, was on the air. He'd call himself "Fatboy," Corporate Head of Meglomeaningless. The bit would be different but the signoff was always the same: "You know what Fatboy wants? Fatboy wants more." Chris wanted more – more of his friends and more of his country. There's a thread – with voice work – with theater -- that picks up years later in New York. Chris would call in to Capen when Capen deejayed at KROC in New York. There, he was the voice of a travel agent urging people to visit the Big Apple for its many sights and sounds: 'Donald Chump' and Adnan Khashoggi, the Saudi black market arms dealer involved in Iran-Contra. Chris kept his feet on the ground -- most of the time. But we're not here to pretty things up. Chris was a man. He had flaws and failings. He could be a danger to himself. Sometimes, I think he felt too much. He had a talent for being in the right place at the wrong time, and at the wrong place at just the right time. Chris could also soar. And Chris in flight could take his flock to the right place at the right time, just where they needed to be. Chris Stanley not only wanted to report on the moment. He wanted to be in that moment. I met Chris Stanley in 1979. I worked with him in San Francisco. He hired me away from WMMR in Philadelphia. Our relationship started in peculiar fashion. The job was the Daily Planet, based in the City by the Bay. I put everything I owned in a U Haul, dragging it off to the Left Bank. We put programs on vinyl and they were mailed out to affiliates. I had a gig for about five weeks. There was a new owner, High Times Magazine. They changed the locks and pulled the phones out of the wall. Nothing like job security. None of this seemed to matter to Chris. As though a storm was going by and the sun would be out later. There's one detail worth mentioning. Chris and I worked on one show together there for which we shared a DuPont/ Columbia Citation award and a Clarion Award for radio documentary on the Guyana massacre. I ended up going back to New York. Unbeknownst to me, so did Chris. We found ourselves working together again: DIR Broadcasting. Again, programming on vinyl brought to you by the pony express. Another odd coincidence follows. I left to work for WPIX-FM and then,

departed to work for NBC Radio News. WPIX needed a newsman to fill my shoes. That guy turned out to be Chris Stanley. CBS Radio is next. He was there first. I followed. Chris had a good run: 1982 to 1998. For Chris, KNX is next: 1998 to 2007. He met Gail Eichenthal there. Gail played a large part in Chris' life. The two of them shared a Golden Mike for their Oscar coverage in 2003. In 2004; Chris won a Golden Mike and an Associated Press regional award for his series on Ronald Reagan. He also won a Golden Mike in 2002 for a series on the 25th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death. Ed Pyle who was the skipper at KNX then says he and Chris would have shouting matches. At the end of it, he says, they would be laughing. Ed says "It didn't make sense to be mad at a talent like that." Fox News Radio follows: 2007 to just a few weeks ago. I need to relay some other anecdotes: These are not in order, there's no chronology. Dave Clark, who worked with Chris at CBS, and while now in a different division at Fox, Dave was there when Chris was at Fox News Radio. He remembers meeting Chris in the late 70's. A protest to shut down the Seabrook nuclear plant in New Hampshire. Dave was the News Director for a Boston disco station. Chris wanted a ride to where the action was. The ride was a disco van – painted appropriately with fat red lips on the side. And there was Chris: waist-length hair. And I bet a quarter: San Francisco battle dress. They all crashed in a seedy motel room – and by Dave's account – had a blast. Flash forward to Fox where Dave says he couldn't imagine a more square peg in a round hole than Chris at Fox, and Dave adds: "but above all else, Chris was a pro." Chris was a pro, let that sink in, even if his death – hasn't. There are other stories about Chris, other memories. Larry McCoy, Chris' boss at CBS Radio News for so many years, says what made Chris so special was that he cared. Cared about the news, cared about what we, in the business, label as news. The line is blurred these days. Larry says it's upside down. Gossip and trivia in competition with the real events and policies that shape our lives. Chris was keenly aware of how much BS has entered the arena. When Chris was here, with us, it was easier to see where that line was. That's a loss we share, all of us. That's a loss the public shares. There's one less keen eye. One less sharp mind. One less voice of experience. You hear it all the time: what people want to know. What do people need to know. Chris Stanley knew where that line was. As Larry says: Chris loathed those who thought broadcast news should be arm of show business or a faucet for a political philosophy. Larry also touches on something else: Chris was not always easy to work with. Run-ins with Chris, he says, were triggered by his passion for reporting, doing it straight, and under great time pressure. Before Chris left New York and was packing up for California, he wanted to set his house in order. A few of us met for one last dinner. I saw him after that but alongside us at that dinner was Larry McCoy, Larry Cooper (the former Vice- President of Radio News at CBS) and Charlie Kaye who is still the Executive Producer for the CBS Radio News operation. Chris deeply respected Charlie and it was mutual. Charlie says of Chris that he was simply one of the

smartest journalists he has ever known. Charlie also makes the point that that is now a double-edged sword, a blessing and a curse -- at those times when Chris encountered people who did not grow up in that world where intellectual curiosity was required in journalism. Who, what, when, where and why. It's what we were taught -- not out of a book, but taught by life itself. Taught by the work. Charlie makes another point: that when warranted -- a reporter's job meant challenging authority. Chris' standards of ethics and integrity were impeccable, Mr. Kaye notes. And knowing Mr. Kaye I can assure you there is no higher standard -- or praise to be extended -- not in broadcast journalism. But here's where Chris -- or any other honest reporter -- could get bit in the rump. Heaven help him or her if they tried to lower the bar. Chris did not willingly compromise. When Chris blew it -- and there were times when he failed his standards -- failed himself -- he would come round a few days later and own up. Chris could be generous and gentle, even innocent, but never bashful and always fiercely loyal. He spoke his mind when others held their tongue. They're qualities -- as Charlie points out -- that are not always conducive to job security. Charlie makes another point, one that many of us who knew Chris, know to be true: he was a man who battled personal demons, sometimes with success, sometimes without. The last safe harbor Chris had was at Fox News Radio. I brought him in. It's Mitch Davis' shop. Mitch says that for four years, the radio division was blessed by Chris' presence. He calls him the embodiment of a professional broadcast journalist, noting his passion for truth and accuracy, his honest reporting, his fierce advocacy for the beliefs he held dear. Mitch says he was one of the best he has ever worked with. Now what do we say at the end? When Chris Stanley was in the room you knew he was there. He could be a gentlemen but he wasn't always polite. He was blunt, loud, insistent, adamant, abrasive, in-your-face. He was REAL. He gave no quarter. He welcomed challenge. He may have needed it. When times changed, when the world changed and reporting with it, Chris changed -- from local to national, from vinyl to digital. The old dinosaur changed because he wasn't ready to be written off. He learned. He adapted. He was proud of all of his work -- from his time in Green Bay to Fox. Chris could not do what he did and not take pride in it. That was his way. One thing never changed. Chris believed in the verities. Sometimes, I think, he believed in angels. That no matter how far he went they would protect him. I don't think Chris let the angels down. But they may have let him down. Let me tell you how we knew Chris had died. He was in LA, at his new home in Playa del Rey -- from which he told me -- he could see the mountains and one tiny patch of ocean. He was working on pieces for KUSC. Chris's big plan was to get to October 27th -- his birthday when he'd reach 65. There was a deadline for the segment he was working on for KUSC on Joel Grey. Chris missed the deadline. That's when a red light went off for Gail, the woman with whom Chris had a long relationship -- and KUSC is Gail's station. Chris Stanley, she thought, missing a deadline? That is radio. That is when the bells go off. If

he was alive, there'd be no missed deadline. I need to say some other things. Steely Dan is one. Chris loved that band. He loved Elmore Leonard. He loved Al Pacino. He loved Mailer. He loved Vonnegut. He loved to read. He loved movies, probably from the time he could watch them on a reel-to-reel projector dad brought home. He loved the day he interviewed Gore Vidal in Vidal's home in LA. He loved shooting the breeze with Edward Albee at Albee's home in New York. He loved his two dogs, the two dogs he shared with Gail. He loved snaring an interview with Abbie Hoffman when Abbie was on the run and the cops couldn't find him. He loved Gail's son. He loved not having -- things; the idea that he could throw all of his belongings into a suitcase and four boxes and just head out. He loved California. He hated winter. He loved political conventions. He covered six of them -- and he came away from one campaign in particular -- after riding the bus with Pat Buchanan -- telling all who would listen then, "Ride to the sound of the guns." All his life, Chris rode to the sound of the guns. So many people have ended up living their life guided now by a manual that is the opposite of the one that had been their compass. Chris was not one of those. He thought, fought, breathed, lived for everything at the end that he did at the beginning. Several people have told me they were envious of Chris' drive and talent. Everyone has told me they will miss him. Me -- I can't believe he's gone. He came from a world that when you had a story, you worked that story. You worked it that hour, that afternoon, that night, you worked it all that day and you worked it the next day. If you knew Chris, you had arguments. You had fights. Not school yard fights. Bar fights. They were knockdown drag out. But here's what's also true: I trusted Chris. I trusted his reporting. I had the chance to watch at close range for 33 years. There are very few other people in my life that I can say that about or will ever be able to say that about again. We are at the end. This ending, at least. If I can paraphrase Hemingway: you only know what you're fighting for when you've lost. We've lost something -- we've lost someone. At the very end of Touch of Evil, the Orson Welles-directed film noir, Tana, the character played by Marlene Dietrich says, "He was some kind of man. What does it matter what you say about people?" We can say this about Chris Stanley. He was a reporter.