

AUDIENCE # 3
Date of event: 2/7/93
Sunset: 5:06 pm

OK. So I'm here to talk about Red In Woods, and to describe the trajectory of my experience through this event, beginning with what I anticipated or what my expectations were, I suppose? I have to admit that I was certainly always intrigued by the idea, dating back to ... Is it 13 Actions In Yellow? - just with the generosity and the elegance of doing, constructing it, a whole piece for a single audience member. And so for quite some time I've wanted to have that encounter. And I know a little, not actually a lot, but I do know a little from - I don't know what source - about what the 13 Actions In Yellow piece was like.

But red is not the same as yellow, and that's what kept worrying me, when I was wondering what would take place. Plus the fact that this was happening at dusk and out in the woods. And you know me to the extent that I'd - you know I pretty much was not predicting too much what would happen. But when I would, or people would ask me what I thought was going to take place, I expected that there would be some preying upon peoples fears about being alone in the woods at at night, in the cold, and... And just all the - intensity of the color red and the suggestiveness of what one might do with exploring that color, (deep breath), so...

And on top of that, I was, for totally unrelated reasons, for personal reasons - the day before I was feeling intensely emotionally wrought because of some things that were going on and was feeling better the day of the event, but still, my emotions were close to the surface (throat clear)...

And so you escorted me around and we arrived at where we were to begin and I liked the fact that we passed that wonderful red jogger on the... Do you remember that? on the, sort of the last stretch.... I don't know - there was no one around, and here comes this guy jogging down the road in this bright red and black jogging suit and I was just starting to notice just how many things in that countryside seemed to be red. It seems to be a very pronounced color in people's farm houses and so forth.

You gave me the basic instructions and released me, and from the beginning I was, I think I was just kind of elated to be out in the country, which I always... I don't get enough time in countryside terrain where I live at the moment, and with everything that I'm doing (deep breath). So I was just sort of soaking that up -

I think the first thing I noticed beyond the thread was some sort of red object in a field in the distance that seemed quite a ways off, but I couldn't quite make out what it was. I proceeded down the path and I believe the first - as I even recount everything and go through - you know I have written notes - but even as I go through them, the dream quality of the whole experience was so successful and overwhelming that even right afterwards it was very, very hard to recollect where and when certain things happened and in which order (throat clear). And even in some cases, as you'll see, whether I actually saw or what I thought I saw or whether I'm projecting that...

But I think the first little detail that showed its face to me was the little tea kettle on the stone, and of course I had to test to see if there was something in it. I was hoping that there was some little

elixir that I could have a few drops on my tongue, but there was nothing to be had.

And I think even, well, I'm not sure if, from that position, I could see the little girl by the stream, or whether I had just gone up to the stream by myself. And like most boys, I suppose, in front of a stream, my impulse is always to look around in the rocks and look for any sort of little critter thing. And so I was - I just like being around streams. And so I was looking down and I didn't notice as I was approaching that there was somebody there for just, you know, for a couple of seconds. But enough so that when I did notice that there was someone there it was sort of startling, and it was almost as if they had almost popped into view, but it wasn't disturbing or frightening. I was quite pleased that already there was something semi-magical seeming to happen.

She asked me what I was doing and I don't remember what the hell I said, but I asked her what she was doing and she said she was waiting for her mother, and I had noticed before she was sort of looking around in different directions. And I remember asking her if she was afraid and she said "No." But she seemed very - her look was very harsh and intense, and didn't seem very open to my taking the conversation much further. And I didn't, right off the bat, given that I didn't feel much like pursuing it, although (took a breath) when I crossed the stream and very shortly thereafter came upon the - pretty soon was a cherry cordial, so I offered it to her and she didn't want it. I said my mother always told me not to take candy from strangers anyhow, so I suppose her- that's the right response, and then I can begin to hear the beckoning in the background of "where are you ?" And I like the fact that she didn't seem to be able to hear it or

acknowledge it, and whether it was directed towards me. I felt no desire to want to respond. If anything, it became the desire to - pretty much throughout - of wanting to flee from any anyone who might be following me.

So I know you're interested in what I saw or didn't see, among the things that are controlled. So I saw this miniature chair underneath some brush. I didn't climb down, climb under to get any closer to it (took a deep breath). I passed this spider web, reddish red spider web pattern above the branches. At some point I remember there was a little piece of vine that had red ribbon on it (deep breath). A container full of berries which I wasn't - I generally wasn't hungry, so I didn't taste - but I took some because I didn't know what was ahead of me and I thought it might come in handy in some way and that I should and I might have to barter for something or other. So I took a couple in my pocket. I also - when the little girl didn't want the candy I didn't want the candy either, so hopefully it was found by whoever was coming behind me. But I left it in the snow and put a circle around it so it could be seen.

And then somewhere, I'm sort of trying to recreate the progression as I remember it, but this gorgeous lilting music started wafting up from what I felt was the sort of valley area I had seen from a distance at the very beginning. And (deep breath) that was just exquisite, and along with that, as the sun was setting, the clouds are really mottled m-o-t-t-l-e-d you know, and they were really taking the color really nicely.

Knowing other Mobius pieces that are usually so heavily documented, I wasn't ever sure whether Bob was going to jump out with a camera or whether there was some hidden surveillance work going on.

So, this was one thing I thought about ahead of time, so I came prepared with my own little Instamatic. I don't know how any of these photos will come out but I had to get some shots of that sky because it was just so wonderful.

I think I saw, at different points, what seemed like a sort of - it was at a distance - but a kind of a bed, a red bed that I always assumed that I would eventually get to and then I never did. And I also saw at one point a figure, and I don't remember what color the figure was in, moving slowly towards me from that area. But then you know I took another turn and didn't see it again (throat clear).

I could also - besides the music, long before I came upon the dog - I could hear the dog barking and at numerous times I heard bird, just wonderful bird sounds that I'll have to ask - I don't think, maybe, now, but whether they were manufactured or were just happening there? Just happening, all of them? It - wow - pretty enchanted landscape you've found. (Deep breath)

And then I came to the turn where there was the deep hollow with the table set up with food. At first I stared down at it, and was generally sort of aware of your advice to follow the thread and it was - it seemed like the kind of advice like, you know, "stay on that yellow brick road," or something like that. Like if you get off, if you stray from this road that you know... And you didn't say that, but I was wondering if it was set up so that bad things might happen if I wandered too far away. But I had to go down and check it out. And I still sort of feel guilty that I had some of the tea and I had some red peppers. But I wasn't really hungry and afterwards I thought I should have left some note or thank you or something, because you know this has been laid out.

And I'm an uninvited guest or invited guest, which ever, it still was something that I felt afterwards. I also took a picture down there. I didn't want to hang out down there too long too, because you were down in this ditch and you can't see over and every so often I would hear a branches snapping.

I'll mention the few times I did notice anybody, but I was (swallow), it was just kind of a basic impulse not to want to be followed or at least not for people to be able to predict at what pace I was going to go, where I was going to.

And so what gradually started to happen, as the whole landscape seemed to feel like it was conscious and breathing and shifting and (short breath) it made me think a little of this great film, *Stalker*, my favorite film by the great, great filmmaker Andre Tarkovsky, in which the film charts these people going to this area called The Zone. It's a landscape in which you are psychologically tested as you progress through this landscape and even though with your eyes you can see your goal - this house which is at the center of The Zone that the three principle characters are progressing towards, you can't walk a straight line there. The landscape keeps shifting and you are set up with these various kinds of tests, which if you pass them, allow you - permit you to go deeper towards your destination. So that started becoming very, very present and I felt that sensation that there were always eyes, and there were always little things twitching, and that I better move along.

There was something, I don't remember what it was, I wrote down red bonnet in the trees, I don't know - there was something bright and red up in a branch somewhere. And then I get to a bowser - whatever the story is and I wasn't - I don't think that I was really that horrified by

the bones hanging from the tree. It didn't quite feel like Texas-chain-saw-massacre or something. But I have to say, I mean, he was far enough away from where the path was and I had thought well maybe I'll go over and give him some of the berries and he'll just eat them up and be quiet. But I didn't do it so, maybe I was a little intimidated by his bark.

I could see at that point - I think that might have been the first point I could see (deep inhale) the woman in the distance (deep exhale), in the clearing holding up something, which at that point I couldn't tell what, just sort of holding something. And because I was told from the onset that the performance happened 360 degrees I was always kind of - I wouldn't stare at her or anything for too long because I wanted to check all around me. (pause, deep breath and swallow)

According to my notes this is when I wondered about this bed and whether I saw this figure or not, but I am pretty sure that I did see this figure. (deep inhale) (exhale)

The next note I have was about finding the container with the tongue in it. But I didn't pull it out, so I don't know if it was the tongue or if its some piece of meat inside of it. That seemed to be expected, so it just kind of made sense, but I didn't have much desire to do much with it.

And then (inhale) I got to the log which (exhale) had the box with the scent of the potpourri in it, and the Throw It in the Fire tale. And I was very cold at this point and it was getting darker and I remember wanting to just, like, get to the point of it. I was - I kept feeling I'm waiting - I'm too long at this point, if there are people slowly sort of following me. I've got to be moving on. I was reading it and kind of skimming it saying, okay this is the path

of the needles and the other path, if I get asked this question. How, just how, did she get out of it so that I can do the same thing? And she said she had to go, I think my recollection is, she had to go to the bathroom or something, and managed to get out of the house and so I was saying, that's all I need to remember.

And (swallow) I could see the whole time I was reading through this, I could see much clearer the woman with the - which now I could see - was a lantern in front of her, waiting, and there was a little lantern there and a match but there was no - I tried the the log I was sitting on. I just couldn't get the thing lit. (swallow) And it was just really getting cold, so I just took the match with me and (swallow) went out into the clearing. That was quite a big clearing so I was slow to approach that woman and I was constantly checking out whether I might be setting myself up for a trap or something. I guess also just knowing Mobius pieces from the past I had an anticipation of more direct confrontations of some kind and since there was one right off the bat with the little girl, I was kind of anticipating that there might be such things. And you had said to me that I could engage in the piece in any way I wanted, so this was part of my mind set at the time: that there might be characters who were going to confront me in more direct ways.

As I approached her I realized that the thread was not taking me right up to her. But she was an attractive blonde woman and she'd stood there for a long time so I went up to her and I said howdy and that's all it took. She just fled, the second I opened my mouth.

And then I opened the box that she'd left behind and that's where I discovered these teeth, and took one because I also thought that I might have to protect

myself in some way and that this might come in handy. But I left her, in return, the match and some of the berries (deep inhale, exhale), but it bothered me that she ran away. It bothered me a little bit that I didn't run after her to find out whether I should have engaged in it that much.

And (inhale swallow and exhale) slowly I started to feel that the piece, to the extent that I was trying to engage with it, the piece was sort of eluding me. And overall, I kept sort of having mixed feelings about this. And afterwards, I'm jumping ahead now a little bit, afterwards as well, when I would reflect upon the traces that I had made, I'd think about whether I missed deeper opportunities to engage in the piece in some way that I am not aware of. And possibly that the company as a whole was kind of disappointed that I, that I didn't do certain things and ... OK, well, I want to come back to another thought related to that.

I continued on now. It's getting darker, I can see the spilled apples underneath some branches. I went under small places a couple of times, I remember going under some very small places and because of that, because of the small chair and the little places I had to crawl under, it would give me this kind of Alice in Wonderland feeling of being a giant in somebody else's landscape. And when I went through this one area where it was pretty hard to go through, where all these bells were hanging, it was pretty hard to go through without knocking and setting them off. That kind of bothered me because it seemed like a plan to give away where I was at that particular point in time. But once I knew that I wasn't going to avoid them I rang them anyhow to hear what they sounded like.

I also remember that I would - plenty of times, I would just sort of linger and listen and and sort of just scan around and I enjoyed doing it because it was fun and it was in the woods and -- but then I would also run much faster through certain sections just to keep people guessing as to what I thought this conscious landscape was guessing as to what my next move would be.

I also remember seeing the chair up in a tree at some point earlier on and now, as I am moving closer to this lower valley - well now its - I'm not clear when this happened. I remember earlier seeing what I thought was Mari Jones, a figure in white moving slowly off in the left to right in the distance. I also saw a smaller figure hunched down and making small steps through the undergrowth in black clothing or dark clothing, at a distance.

And the next clear memory is hearing my name being whispered through the nettles somewhere and it sounded like Mari's voice, so I responded back "Mari ?" but there was no answer. And then after one of the other callings of my name I called out to ask if they had a message for me and again there was no answer.

I think that was the final point in which I felt like at least on this level, I wasn't being engaged by whatever presences were around. And with the connotations to little red riding hood the story and the little girl waiting, it gradually dawned on me that I wasn't the person trying, or at least I didn't feel any longer like I was the person helplessly going through the dark woods trying to find my way home, but that I was the big bad wolf and that everyone was afraid of me. And since I love wolves, they're my favorite creature - people shouldn't have anything to be afraid of - I have to say there isn't this single historic recorded incident of a

healthy wolf ever attacking a human being so it's complete mythology (swallow).

Then what happened: (deep inhale) I took a picture through the nettle with the flash on. I don't know if I'll spot any figures somewhere back there. That was around the time that the whispering was happening and it was already dark. But there were some beautiful bird sounds at that point. There's also a plane that went overhead right above where I was. It seemed to have one red flashing light on, and that that's just a lovely thing to have happen.

There were the lanterns there that guiding me, and I liked the fact that it was getting darker. I started to hear somebody coming very noisily through the the brush. Seemingly trying to make quite a lot of noise, and I wasn't frightened but I intentionally wanted to run a good distance away from that person and unfortunately that brought me to the the place where the the note was that said that it was all over.

I think in terms of preconceptions I don't know, (deep inhale) I somehow imagined it taking place over a longer period of time and that part of your driving me around before - I almost thought that you wanted it intentionally to get dark because then it would be even more terrifying to be alone.

So that was kind of little sad to have the game over and afterwards I thought I should have just given out a a big wolf howl, to all of whoever was out there before I got in my car. As I headed towards my car I could see some figure with a kind of cape or black clothing or something, moving around. I didn't know if people were already quickly trying to

take down what was there while there was any light.

I guess that I'd say another sensation that I had progressing through it is that I was kind of moving through somebody else's dream in a way. I mean that the dream sense is the strongest adjective that applies to the piece and the fact that it didn't do certain things that I was anticipating - provided I'm right that I didn't blow, you know, major opportunities for big encounters that I'd never stumbled upon, - actually appeals to me quite a lot. You know I'd just as soon have it be this private thing and these suggestive but non-narrative elements shifting around made it one of the most intense dream, you know, sort of waking dream experiences I've had. But it didn't wholly represent a kind of dream landscape that seemed - nostalgic for me or resonant for me and I mean it felt in a way like a woman's dream and the fact that you designed the piece... I mean I think that's just a part of what comes out of it, and as I'm sure you well know the the piece doesn't seem to have totally ended since I keep finding these - the fairies keep bringing me little tokens to my doorstep. But you can tell me what you want [almost in a whisper] about that.

OK well we're back. I just wanted to get down on tape since Marilyn, you've elaborated to me how the various members of the company were essentially stationary throughout, and weren't following me around. And at first, I think we may have said this when we were rolling before, that the breaking branches or little sounds might have been birds or squirrels or something and I didn't argue with that. Well maybe, but now that we are talking about it further and specifically this section just towards the end when I was at the lowest part of the

field leading up to where the last note is, ending the piece.

There was absolutely no question, no hallucination that there was somebody, something in this thicket of branches in front of me, I'd say within seven feet of where I was, making a lot of noise like, you know, shhh ckl, really cracking branches loud to see if that would set me off. And since you're flatly declaring that no one did such a thing I am more convinced than ever that we successfully conjured up some spirits throughout this piece. And it's not really surprising, I mean because they are out there all the time and I've had a host of other kinds of encounters with ghosts or with people. I have had some of the closest people in my life die in the last few years and they have made themselves known in various sorts of ways, and even in our house now we have some poltergeist and I think this is - this seems sort of poltergeistish - that some other creatures wanted to get in on the fun. And it just has to be because my senses were very heightened and I wasn't imbibing and I know what I experienced. So that's a great thing that one can hopefully count on happening in future performances! I don't know what it all means - leave it up to the psychoanalysts, but I just kind of smirk when that's what part of the piece contained, so that's all!