

SWEET, from page 8

overcast. All of a sudden, the sky parted. The clouds disappeared, and it went into totality. I grabbed my camera out of the trunk, set it up, watched it and took pictures. The repairman took pictures. Soon after the totality, fogged up again: You couldn't see it again. It was luck, totally luck.

R.R.: *So the 1980s. Now on May 18, 1980, I lived in Silver Spring, Md., and I was in junior high. I remember hearing about Mount St. Helen's erupting, and I told myself that I always wanted to see that area of the world. What was it like to see it?*

B.S.: I was there every day for two weeks prior to the eruption. I was staying in a motel at the base of the mountain. I would set up positions and shoot pictures daily of the steam eruptions. My wife and I had plans to go to Paris, and it got to a point where I had to leave the mountain because we were gonna go on a trip. And I left. That first day we were in Paris, we're watching TV and there's this video of Mount St. Helen's blowing up. And I wasn't there. After all the preliminary stuff and planning, I wasn't there. When I got back, about a week later, every location where I had set up to take pictures was totally destroyed, every one of them. Not one existed. So my going to Paris with my wife saved my life.

I'm a lucky person. I did the riots in Watts (in August 1965, after a white California Highway Patrol officer pulled over and arrested a black motorist). I did the riots in South Central (in April 1992, linked to the acquittal of four white Los Angeles police officers in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King). And we would drive in pairs in L.A. wearing bulletproof vests in rental cars, rolling down the windows. One guy would drive; one guy would take pictures out of his passenger window. That's how we covered these things. A news photojournalist is not a safe profession.

R.R.: *You don't get emotional at events, but what about terror?*

B.S.: I'm cautious. When I get to a position that I think is dangerous, I immediately change from the normal camera that I have to a camera with a really long, telephoto lens: Don't put yourself in the position where you're in danger if you can help it. They wanted to send me to Vietnam, once as a photographer and once as a photo editor chief. I refused. I wasn't scared of the war: I didn't want to shoot a war every day. So they left me here and put me on riot duty and other stuff.

R.R.: *They have riot duty?*

B.S.: We would go where the riots were, yeah. I'd be in Seattle; they'd have a riot in Los Angeles. Before you knew it I was on an airplane to Los Angeles. The AP had a special group of photographers, a younger group, and they did a lot of traveling. I was part of that group.

R.R.: *All right. The 1990s.*

B.S.: I probably had more pictures in the old days of Bill Gates than anybody, including maybe Microsoft. I met Bill early on. He had, I think, one building in Redmond, maybe a couple dozen employees. I think they called the AP and said, "We're working on a computer thing, you might want to come out and meet him." I went out and met Bill. Bill and I kind of looked a little similar at that time. And I took pictures, and he seemed comfortable with me. Bill always wanted to be an international figure, not a Seattle person. So he or his staff periodically would call and say, "If you're free, Bill's meeting someone. Why don't you pop over?" It would be CEO of Intel or Comcast or (founder of Dell Computers) Michael Dell. It would be me, Bill, the other person, maybe a pr person from Microsoft. I'd come out and put the pictures on the wire because he knew it would go around the world. And that's what he wanted. I

would get phone calls from The Seattle Times and the P.I. after they've seen the pictures and say, "Did we miss a press conference?" Gates did not want his main exposure to be The Seattle Times and P.I. He wanted it to be in The New York Times, The Washington Post and LA Times. He liked me and trusted me. As he got bigger, the access disappeared.

R.R.: *You've got a photo here of this plane on a wire.*

B.S.: I always had police radios in my office, so I could monitor the Seattle Police Department, Fire Department. And I heard about a plane crash at Boeing Field. I immediately got in my car, and when I got there this is what I saw. The pilot was still in the plane. Eventually they put a fire engine and one of the big ladders up there and took him off. He just said he made a mistake in his navigation. Like I say, another day at the office.

R.R.: *I don't know if people thought it was so wonderful during WTO, however.*

It was just another riot scene. The demonstrators obviously wanted to be photographed: They wanted their story to be out. The police at that time were very cautious because they were worried about their image. They put up with the media, so we could pretty much go anywhere we wanted. There are a few [protestors], they were just out to cause trouble and break windows. The police loaded people in vans and did all that right in front of you.

R.R.: *Here we are, in the 2000s.*

B.S.: Another anti-war era. This was in the Tacoma Dome (indicates photo of woman kissing man in fatigues). This was the largest group of reservists from Washington that were activated and sent to Iraq. This was their departure ceremony. I didn't want to get in their face. I was up in the stands with a long lens, and I didn't interfere with anything that was going on. But it made a really emotional picture. They probably never even knew this was done until somebody saw it in the newspaper.

R.R.: *If you could take a picture in Seattle*

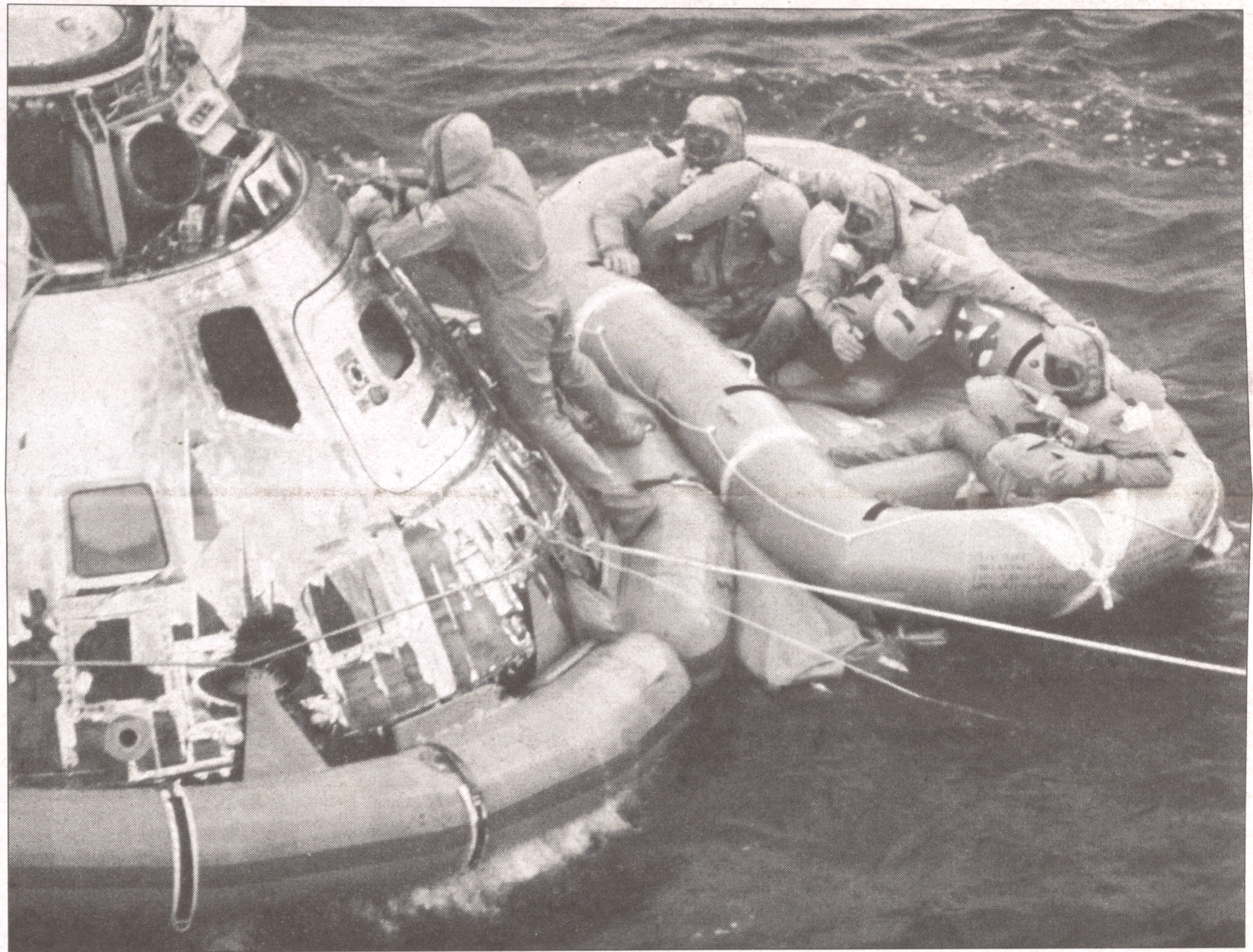
now, what would it be?

B.S.: Whatever I run into. I took pictures yesterday of Ste. Michelle, the winery. My wife and I took a camera, went out there and spent two, two-and-a-half hours in the Woodinville area taking pictures. I do that everywhere I go.

Last time I was in London, we stayed in an apartment, and my wife tells me there's a castle down the road: Kensington Palace. Took my camera, went down there. I have pictures of the grand halls, the bedrooms; they had things from Lady Di all over the place. It was wonderful. Came back, just recently they announce who's gonna move there? Prince William and his wife, Kate. Well, of course that place was secured, closed off. As it turned out, I had pictures inside. These pictures went to the different media sources that I still work with and they sold them worldwide.

So you take a camera when you go someplace: You never know what you're going to run into.

Reprinted from Real Change Newspaper, Seattle, Wash.



PHOTOS BY BARRY SWEET

Above, the Apollo 11 ocean recovery, 1969. Below, police confront protesters at the 1999 World Trade Organization demonstrations in Seattle.

