

D: Today is April 7, 1996, we are at 714 N.E. 12 Avenue, the house of Dirk Drake the interviewer. This is William Abney, the interviewee. How are you doing Bill?

A: Pretty good. It is a cold day and it is going to get colder. Sitting here doing a little oral history.

D: Your full name is William Abney.

A: Right.

D: What's your middle name?

A: Herbert. Abney is an old **Norman name**, \_\_\_\_\_. Thank goodness I do not have any Christian names, **William (Scott-helman)**, **Herbert(Norman)**, and **Abney (Norman name)**, no Christian names.

D: A little bit of your life history. You were born in Leesburg?

A: Yes, in Leesburg, Florida, June 1, 1947, except for a brief trip to California when my father was in the Korean War, I lived there until I was nineteen. Then I was drafted into the army.

D: So you were drafted into the army at nineteen?

A: Right.

D: What year would that have been?

A: 1967.

D: A conscription back then was two years?

A: Yes, two years in the military. I went to basic training at **Fort Benning, Georgia**, advanced infantry training and personnel training at **Fort Bicks, New Jersey**, and then spent about a year in Europe. Then I came back from a guided missile command in Europe.

D: I want to back track a little. Is your family an original Florida family?

A: Yes, sure, they go back on my father's side to the 1870s when they came from South Carolina. They planted orange groves around Leesburg. On my mother's side they go back even further. A lot of my relatives, on both sides of the family, were in the orange grove business, in one aspect or another. Some of them were very rich. One of them was president of **Florida Citrus Mutual**; one was president of the Florida Senate; very influential people. I just happen to be from the poorer side of the family. They owned a lot of orange groves, I worked for them when I was

a kid.

D: So, you left the military and came down to study at UF as an undergraduate.

A: Right, I was accepted at the University of Florida, and I attended in the fall of 1969 under the G.I. Bill. I had a .36 grade point average from junior college where I had attended in Leesburg before I was drafted. I used to hang out in the parking lot at junior college and drink malt liquor and never went to class. It was one of the lowest grade point averages they ever accepted. But they had to get their quota of veterans in that semester and they were short. The Vietnam War had not quite yet wound down, so they had to get veterans. So they let me in because of that, but on probation.

D: So you were a record holder on your entrance to the University.

A: Absolutely. I made a 3.5 the first semester, so they took me off probation.

D: What department did you study?

A: I was in the University College and then basically was a history major. I attended twice--from 1969 to 1971 and then 1979 to 1980. I never got a degree, but learned a lot of history and some other good things. That was never my intention, to get a degree, that is not why I went to school. I went to school, just because, I never had thought about getting a degree. I would not know what to do with it.

D: You were just interested in learning.

A: Yes, just interested in going to school. That is the only reason that I went.

D: I know that you have a fascination with history from a lot of our conversations.

A: Oh yes, definitely. I still read history books, I have read hundreds of history books since I quit going to school.

D: What work did you do at UF with the history department? Did you work with any professors?

A: Dr. Chalmers, history of the 1960s. I still owe him an incomplete from fifteen years ago. He just mentioned that the other day. I did my study on the Vietnam War. Studying Life Magazine, how it changed its views on the Vietnam War and how they were changing America's views on the Vietnam War. What happened first. Chalmers just mentioned that, I still owe him work on that. But things happen, and fifteen years later and I still have not done it. He wanted me to have it published actually.

D: It sounds interesting. So your specific focus was the history of media and public

perception of the Vietnam War.

- A: Right, and how it changed. How the media changed from being hoggish to govish in a couple years. And how, by showing certain pictures, they could do that. By showing different aspects, pleasant aspects towards the end. How the media influenced the public opinion on the war, by the way that they covered it.
- D: While you were at UF, especially with that focus that you just mentioned, what kind of social circles did you run with?
- A: The first year or two, I studied really hard actually. By 1970, I began to change. That was the Kent State [Kent State University, Ohio] incident. The Kent State incident on the University of Florida campus was very traumatic. They had to shut the school down.
- D: Now, for background sake, this was students in Ohio protesting.
- A: In May 1970, they were gunned down by the National Guard. The next day on the Plaza of the Americas, the University of Florida... I was very anti-military, I thought the military was a very fascist institution. After two years in it I was glad to get out. I was very conservative. I had worked for **Barry Goldwater's campaign in 1964** with my mother. She was a born-again Mormon, since deceased. She had moved to Arizona to be near Barry Goldwater after he failed in the election.
- D: Goldwater was a liberal republican.
- A: Goldwater was a very conservative republican. [He was] running against Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1964. I voted for Nixon in 1968 by absentee ballot when I was in Europe. But by 1972, to jump ahead, I voted for McGovern. So I changed drastically between 1968 and 1972, by time in the military being one of the major things, but the University of Florida is what really changed me around. I went to the Kent State rally. There were thousands of students on the plaza and we marched. Now some people had the intention to burn down the ROTC building like they did at Kent State. The ROTC building was [and still is] down near the O'Connell Center. The oldest student attending the University of Florida had been in the Alligator, I cannot remember his name now, was about eighty years old. He got up, he had his cane, and he said that he had seen strikers gunned down in the 1930s and we should go down and take out the ROTC building. If we were men and women who had any courage and that he was going to lead us. He said that he had been a communist in the 1930s and a radical, and he was going to show us how to do it. We went down there and by the time we got there the entire Gainesville Police Department and the entire ROTC contingent had surrounded the buildings with fixed bayonets and we could not get close enough. So we had a big rally. I was following along now, I was not radicalized then. I noticed that the radicals on campus had the best drugs, the best looking women who would have sex with you,

and they gave the best parties.

D: So this was like social life.

A: So social life was like really good for the radicals. I began to see this and hang out with them more and more, and talk less and less conservative stuff and paid more attention to what they were saying. In the spring of 1971 some black students occupied Tigert Hall. They were protesting the fact that there were not that many black students at the University of Florida. There were not that many, there was only a few maybe forty or fifty. They wanted more blacks admitted to the school. All the radicals who were protesting the war decided to use this as another pretext to have confrontation with authority. So they poured into Tigert Hall and occupied the president's office with the black students. The black students were arrested before we got there. We took over the entire building. One thing led to another, there was some rock throwing, some gasing, some shoving, I just went in there out of curiosity. I was an innocent person just seeing what was going on, I was curious about this. I was hit in the head with the club, I was mazed, I was knocked down by a fire hose. By the time that I got outside I was very irrate and did some anti-social actions that I will not go into here, and I became a local campus hero over night. I had proven myself. The only way you can prove yourself was by engaging in a confrontation with authority and was seen by hundreds of people doing it, many of whom had doubted by senerity in their cause. Then I became one of them. That is how I became a radical. That is how I got my nickname, Radical Bill. The next year or two I did other things that kind of added to this reputation. I became really radical.

D: You were clubbed and you were mazed, by whom?

A: UPD. I also got a good burst from the fire hose. All of this was because I was a little bit tardy in moving back. They were establishing lines and trying to drive people out of the building and I was a little slower and maybe a little anti-social. I did not like being ordered around after being in the military.

D: So from that incident you established a reputation and a social life in the radical movement. You were "Radical Bill."

A: I had proven myself out on the streets. This is how you proved yourself. This was in the spring of 1971. Starting then, I attended demonstrations, helped organize them, I went to Washington several times. I was arrested up there in several big antiwar protests. [I] went to the Republican Convention in Miami Beach in 1972. It was probably the greatest riot of all time, the most biazare. It involved Nazis attacking us. Cuban long-shoremen attacking us. Black thugs from Liberty City being paid by the republicans to attack us. And us beating the shit out of all of them. The republicans hired right-wing Cubans to attack us.

D: When you say us, you mean the organization of Veterans for Peace?

A: No, no. Vietnam Veterans Against the War. It was totally different. There is another organization of Veterans for Peace that I was in. I never got into Camil's [Scott Camil, one of the Gainesville Eight, a group of Gainesville Vietnam Veterans who did a lot of protest against the government after the war] group. Scott Camil had a pretty hard-core group. I call it a bike group without bikes. They liked guns, I won't go into any more details. They eventually were put on trial here in Gainesville for conspiracy to disrupt the republican convention.

D: They were known as the Gainesville Eight.

A: Right. Our group, that I went down there with was totally independent anarchists. **Norman Mahler** wrote about one of the members of our group. There was a whole half page dedicated to his anti-social acts.

D: This was in a magazine?

A: No it was in a book he wrote about the 1972 convention and **Hunter S. Thompson** covering the same convention wrote about our group. Some very famous pictures of us were taken and published in a magazine showing me defending myself against a right-wing Cuban thug with an American flag with the brass eagle on the end of it. I am just nudging him back gently, as I recall, and my friend, **Loco John**, comes in from behind me with another flag and splits his head open. It is kind of embarrassing, I had no intention of that happening, but shit happens.

D: Your organization is anarchist group.

A: We came as a group of anarchist for basically action. This is the same time that I threw a beer bottle at John Wayne and missed.

D: Was there an official name for this group?

A: No, we just happened to come across a large collection of very beautiful American flags with brass eagles that we flew upside down. This apparently enraged all these right-wingers who saw us flying them upside down.

D: OK, so you are nudging the crowd back with the flags.

A: Everybody wanted to capture our flags. Everybody always wanted to get our flags from us. We felt very great about these flags. We had undergone a lot of trouble to get these flags, I cannot really go into how we actually got them. We ended up in front of the Fountain Blue Hotel with the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and John Wayne and John Mitchell came out surrounding by bodyguards out of the

Fountain Blue, they had a police line drawn up about the Fountain Blue. It was the top of the line hotel on Miami Beach back then. A lot of the republican delegates that had money were staying at the Fountain Blue, John Wayne, unbeknownst to us all was staying there. He came out with Mitchell, Nixon's attorney general, and gave us the finger. We were saying John Wayne you pansy, you never served a day of your life in the military. We started taunting him, and he gave us the finger. One thing led to another, I had a small bud bottle that I was saving, it had not been opened, and I gave it a big heed. I was never a strong person, so it fell short and actually almost hit a couple of cops instead. That caused them to fire a lot of tear gas canisters at us. I did throw a beer bottle at John Wayne and gave him and John Mitchell the finger. Actually, that is one of the milder things that I did during that demonstration.

D: This is still in Miami.

A: Miami in 1972. The protests at the republican convention in 1972. It was covered extensively by Norman Mahler and Hunter S. Thompson. You can read the books that they wrote on this that deal with this.

D: You were not part of the Gainesville Eight.

A: Even though I knew Scott Camil and actually did plan some demonstrations with him. I dealt with him as a radical peer.

D: Scott Camil is still a local activist.

A: I believe so, I have kind of lost track of him. I do not know what he has been doing recently really.

D: As I understand it the Gainesville Eight were charged with trying to disrupt the national convention.

A: It turned out that half of the membership were FBI agents, which made the FBI task a lot easier. Scott Camil had not done a very good screening of his group and a lot of FBI informants were in his group.

D: But as independent anarchist you were removed from that group.

A: Absolutely.

D: And you were not charged?

A: In 1973 the last demonstration was held when a prisoner of war, who had graduated from the Air Force ROTC at the University of Florida, had been shot down during the Christmas bombing in 1972. [He was] put in a prisoner of war camp, and was

released when the treaty was signed six months later. They had a memorial service for him on the Plaza of the Americas. Stephen C. O'Connell [president, University of Florida, 1967-1973] was there to give him an award, a returned prisoner of war. He spent six months in the prisoner, had been shot down over North Vietnam.

D: He was a UF student. Do you remember his name?

A: No. Unfortunately, some people in our group had a rather bizarre sense of humor, so they put up all these flyers all over campus announcing that they were going to recapture him and put him on public trial in Gainesville for war crimes, to rope torture him and get him to confess to these violent crimes against the Vietnam people. Well, needless to say the police and the ROTC took this a little bit amiss. We all showed up on the plaza in protest against him appearing, this war monger being honored--the war machine that the University produced. My friend, Loco John, who has since disappeared, who is also one of the people that I went down to the Miami convention with, showed up on the plaza with a home-made Vietkong flag that he had made himself. He had spent many hours making this, he was proud of it. It is hard to buy one in the United States. So he went up, right in front of this officer who was attached to ROTC was waving the Vietkong flag. The officer tried to grab his flag, Loco knocked him cold. This caused Stephen C. O'Connell to grab the microphone and said are you red-blooded American men going to let this communist swine desecrate our country and attack your own officer. Needless to say, immediately that resulted in an attack, we eventually had to retreat from the plaza carrying our wounded with us. We did some damage. That was the end of that. That was the last antiwar demonstration I attended at UF. Once again, I committed no crimes, I was just innocent bystander watching all of this. I was shocked by the over response. I will have to admit it was in bad taste to say that we were going to capture the guy and torture him. That was never my idea, I did not put out that flier. I think Loco did.

D: This man had been a prisoner of the Vietkong.

A: No the North Vietnamese. Shot down in the massive bombing in 1972 that ended the war.

D: He was being recognized as a returning POW and the antiwar movement was threatening to recapture him.

A: A small fringe group was going to capture him and talking about torturing him in public and get him to confess to war crimes against people of Vietnam. It was misinterpreted by people, people over reacted. Stephen C. O'Connell encouraged the crowd to attack us, which they did.

D: These were the red-blooded Americans.

- A: Yes, and we were not any slouches either, we dealt out a few punches.
- D: With regard to the student body, it sounds like, when you described the red-blooded American boys versus the antiwar protesters, it sounds like they were your traditional students?
- A: More or less. A large percentage of the student body was totally against the Vietnam war. Even the frat boys had long hair back then. There was actually a lot of popular support for our view that we were taking then. You would not have that support now. Times were totally different then. There was a huge opposition to the Vietnam war. It had grown every year since I got there.
- D: It sounds like the issue of the war divided the student body, to the extent were you were brawling on the plaza.
- A: Oh yes, it did. We would brawl out in the streets. There was fighting on the streets. There was a big demonstration where they blocked off University Avenue and 13th Street. We would fight frat boys, we would fight rednecks. There was a lot of violence attached to this. Like it was violence on a personal level. There was no shootings or killings that I know of, but a lot of people got hurt.
- D: I am sorry to interrupt you, but I want to get this point clear. So society was fragmented over the war issue.
- A: Definitely.
- D: And the student body was fragmented over the war issue.
- A: Absolutely.
- D: You get an idea just from people that I have heard talking and some other people in the anthropology department. They have a book that was a study of the hippie student ghetto.
- A: I have actually read it.
- D: That is a book produced at UF about the student body. A lot of the romantic notions of the 1960s was that the students were against the war and it was a very big hippie festival. But what I am getting from you is that there were a lot of students who still supported the war.
- A: Absolutely.

D: Which reflects our society.

A: Yes. Back then. But you have to remember that the people who were opposing the war were in very large numbers. They were not a small minority. There was a large number of them, it was not just a small fringe group of radicals. You had a lot of people who opposed the war, simply because they did not want to be drafted and sent over there. If it was not for the draft, maybe there would not have been much opposition at all. It was the draft that caused the opposition of the war on campuses. People were hiding out on the campuses to avoid being sent into the military. They got student deferments. They were under a lot of pressure not to drop out of school or flunk out. Then when they graduated they knew they had to go into the military. Even at the height of radical politics there was always a very substantial number of the student body who were very conservative and very right winged. Matter of fact, the **Young Americans for Freedom** was a republican group that basically had their own kind of counter demonstrations and opposed us. [They] engaged in all kinds of dirty tricks against us. Later on I found out that Nixon had been funding them to do that as part of his campaign of destabilizing the antiwar movements. During this whole time the FBI was engaged in active harassment of University of Florida students. They came to my house several times to try to question me. I refused to talk to them.

D: The FBI?

A: And the Young Americans for Freedom it turned out were being financed by the CIA to disrupt demonstrations and engage in all kinds of sabotage against antiwar groups. This was the same time that Nixon is doing the Watergate. It is part of the same campaign that was being waged against antiwar groups to disrupt them.

D: This sounds like part of infiltration you mentioned at **Scott Camill's** Vietnam \_\_\_\_\_.

A: Absolutely. That would part of it too, and it is understandable in looking at from the way they thought it. They were doing the patriotic thing. The communists were infiltrating these groups and it was anti-American. But, I tell you there was a lot of this by then, deep opposition to the war. Not just in the student body but in the American public itself.

D: This brings to mind a question. Did the FBI or any of these forces infiltrate any of these groups that you were involved with. This independent anarchy.

A: The university police department did. They sent a man named **Glenn Gabriel** who later on became a city manager. He was a Gainesville police officer. He was made a Gainesville police officer right after this. We actually knew he was an infiltrator so

he was not much of a problem. We used to follow him from our meetings to the Gainesville Police Department.

D: These were the independent anarchist meetings?

A: All sorts of various meetings. **Gabriel** was always around trying to get us to do illegal things and violent things. We got a little suspicious. He did not look much like a hippie. He actually looked like a pig, physically. He looked like a pig, a huge pig. We found out that he actually was. We followed him to the Gainesville Police Department. He was a paid informant by them. Apparently I was told years later that the Gainesville police had a big file on me, had pictures of me, they had people who would spy on me and give them reports on me.

D: How did you find this?

A: This was told to me by a man who worked in the Gainesville Police Department as a clerk and they had files on all the campus radicals and he looked and mine and said it was really thick. They had kept track of me and always what I was up to.

D: So Radical Bill was an enemy of the state?

A: Well an enemy of the... yes, I guess so. So anyhow, that is basically the situation. Anyhow, Glenn Gabriel became the city manager and got involved in a lot of scandals and finally left town. He pulled a gun on me once and threatened to kill me when he was in his patrol car.

D: Really?

A: Yes. Well he found out we found out about him and that was the last time we ever saw him at our meetings. He confronted me and he was like afraid we were going to do something to him. But as a reward for spying on us he became a Gainesville police officer apparently. He had engaged in all kinds of brutal acts against women and hippies over the years that made the paper every now and then. Not a very nice person.

D: There is a lot here. I know the question that I prepared, I have in mind here, I wanted to get your thoughts and your memories with regard to the radical movement that you were involved with, obviously very deeply, and how that affected your studies, how that affected the academic progress that the university as a whole, it sounds like there was a lot of hands-on experience in some ways. I was curious what you thought. Did it liberalize the faculty?

A: Definitely. Over the years you got a much more liberal faculty by the whole movement, the whole antiwar movement, the drugs, the rock-n-roll. Actually people

were still able to go to school and make good grades and still do all these things. Matter of fact, I am about the only one of the group that I was with that never got a college degree and became a big success. I have visited friends of mine who are millionaires who used to be out on these demonstrations with me on the streets and do various other things and they are already millionaires by now. It did not affect them that much. They are participating in the American society this day.

- D: Apparently you had never really intended to get a degree?
- A: I never really had. I was curious and wanted to go to college and that was it. The government paid for it, from the GI Bill.
- D: As I am hearing it, you basically were getting the education you were interested in getting and you became involved in the radical movement and the results of that movement, as we can see in society and academia, are that it did liberalize a lot of peoples perceptions of the status quo of the government.
- A: Oh yes. It made people distrust the government intensely. That and Watergate that was following right at the time caused an intense distrust in the government. Obviously for a while it definitely liberalized the faculty because so many people in the baby boom got the \_\_\_\_\_ and went into academia which accounts for a lot of liberal professors probably still being around to this day even though the country has become much more conservative, than in the 1940s or 1950s.
- D: Did you ever encounter any problems in your school? You refer to Dr. **Chomer** and apparently he supported and understood your involvements there?
- A: Oh yes, he did not mind them at all.
- D: Were there other professors that were less tolerant?
- A: Well, I should not name names and I probably will not name names but there was an English professor who had an incident that reflects the times. This was a classic incident that reflects the times. He was an English professor. I was in his class and it was the first day of class and he passed out a three page questionnaire to all the students they had to fill out. This involved your religious views, your sexual views, your views on politics - this is for an English class.
- D: What semester would this have been?
- A: Probably in 1970 sometime or 1971. Like I say, he is still a professor there. I am not going to mention his name and am not going to offend anybody. He passed out all these questionnaires and then after we finished our questionnaires we had to go up in front of the class to the chalkboard with our name under it and he would take

our picture and then put our picture on the thing we just filled. It had nothing to do with English literature at all. So, everybody did this.

D: This was English literature class?

A: Yes. Everybody filled out the things and he had us come up and do it and then he says has anybody not filled out the folder and had their picture taken. And I raised my hand. He said, what is the problem? I said, I just came out of the military and I find this a little bit offensive. I do not think that any information in my life is any of your business. I am here to learn English and I ripped up the folder and dropped it on the floor that he had given me, the questionnaire. And I said, if you ever point that camera at me I am gonna cram it down your throat. So, I am going down the office and am going to withdraw from your class and file a complaint against you because you have no right to have any of this information. To this day, this man still hates my guts. He knows who I am and I know who he is but I am not going to mention this name. That is a good indication of the 1960s spirit right there, standing up refusing to be classified, refusing to be photographed like a prisoner, refusing to give information to people that can use it against you. See, I already had picked that up from being in the military. I did not want that to happen when I went to school. He has never forgiven me. I talked to professors and he still talks about it.

D: Do you see him on the plaza?

A: Occasionally. But he still deeply resents what I did in his class by refusing to give him personal information about my life, refusing to be photographed like a prisoner. He had no business with this information at all.

D: I am curious why he was getting that information to begin with.

A: Because he is a sick Jesus freak, that is why. Right winged Jesus freak which I found out years later.

D: What did he do with this information?

A: I think there were a few professors that made remarks. One of them had seen me at antiwar demonstration and made a remark to me in the class about he had seen me there. I said, yep. He did not like it but I think I still got a good grade from him. He was a physical science teacher. I forget his name too. But beyond that I received no harassment from the professors. It was just an incident that reflects the times.

D: What do you think this professor was doing with the photographs and the file?

A: Well, I hate to say it but he could be a perverted, right winged Christian. He was trying to get information, I have no idea. As a matter of fact, I did not care. I just

was not going to give him any information. I realize what I had done when I left the class. I said, wow, I just did that. I had changed. Something had changed in me. I was able to take up. I am not going to do this just because somebody tells me I am going to do. Just because somebody is in authority over me I do not have to do what they tell me to do.

D: Did you bring up Constitutional issues with him?

A: No, I just went down and ended up getting **Harry Kruz** class instead. They sent me right into Harry Kruz class instead. The guy says, hey, you sound like the kind-of guy that should be in Harry Kruz class instead of this guys' class. Sure enough, the next day I was in Harry Kruz class and hit it off. He was wearing a biker outfit you know, told us some dirty jokes and read weird literature a whole semester. Harry Kruz class was apparently where they sent everybody who apparently could not fit anywhere else in the English department. They would dump them on Harry Kruz.

D: As I understand it you became friends with Harry Kruz?

A: Oh yes. Me and Harry became buddies going on fifteen years after that. I have not seen Harry much recently. He is a busy man these days. I do not really see much of him. But we hung out, drank together, partied together, we did a lot of things together.

D: So you got out of the one class into a class that suited you better?

A: Absolutely. See, that is another spirit of the 1960s. Harry Kruz is the spirit of the 1960s, violence, sex, perversion in American literature. He added much more to my life.

D: Why would that be more to peoples liking at that point? I have to bring that question up.

A: I do not know, unconventional. Harry Kruz taught a unconventional class, a totally unconventional.

D: And that was the spirit of your generation?

A: Unstructured. The literature we read was subversive, erotic, radical-type literature that I would not have had in the other guys class, for sure.

D: So the spirit of the 1960s was to buck convention?

A: Anti-authoritarian. It encouraged you to become anti-authoritarian in all aspects of your life actually. I did not really like anybody telling me, even a radical, telling me

what to do. All the radicals were always bickering with each other and we were always bickering, no, you cannot tell me what to do.

D: A lot of these people have gone on to become authority figures themselves?

A: I would not say authority figures but, rich, very successful. Which I do not begrudge them at all. But they were marching with me in these antiwar protest back then. I go visit them sometimes in South Florida in their mansions. I am like the black sheep who kind-of went wrong and they end up putting me up for a day or two and I eat good food and other good things. Occasionally I will go and visit them and talk about old times you know.

D: Alright, that is all real interesting. We are coming close to the end of the half hour if the University of Florida was disrupted by this radical movement, this antiwar, anti-authoritarian movement - not that if it was but that it was - where do you feel your contribution was greatest? Where do you figure in that history?

A: I would say the disrupting of the university was incidental and almost accidental. The whole idea was to get across a political message basically about the Vietnam War although over the years there have been many other issues. We just happened to be in the community of the university. The fact that it was actually disrupted was a byproduct of this. I do not think there was any intentional, nobody wanted to shut the university down. They wanted to go to school there so the last thing they wanted to do was shut it down. Their actions might have disrupted it. But on the other hand the reaction of the police and the state to the demonstrations was also to disrupt us and to violate our Constitutional rights. Remember, this was not one-way violence. There was a lot of violence aimed at the antiwar demonstrators, a lot of harassment. Like I said, nobody was ever killed in Gainesville, some people were hurt, police and students. We had one demonstration that five hundred people were arrested in two nights.

D: Tell me about that demonstration.

A: Let us see, that would have been in 1972 during the mining of Haiphong which was considered an escalation in the war. Or, it could have been 1971. It resulted in University Avenue and 13th Street being blocked off by barricades, massive arrest and tear gassing, armored cars were brought in, the whole student ghetto was like doused with tear gas, people were flushed out of their houses and beaten with clubs. All through the campus there were acts of violence. Five hundred people were arrested. None of them arrested peacefully, incidently. They were all arrested violently. This was not a sit down demonstration. They were arrested by the police.

D: Five hundred people sounds like a lot for the UPD to have to deal with.

A: Oh no. They brought in all law enforcement agencies from various counties, they hired patrol, they mobilized the national guard but did not send them into the streets, they had them standing by to come in if it got out of hand. Out of hand being somebody had shot somebody which did not happen, thank goodness - it would have been both ways. There could have been a lot. During the \_\_\_\_\_ there was kind of a task agreement not to use guns. It was pretty much honored everywhere except in a few incidents like at Kent State and in **Berkeley** I believe once or twice. I believe in a black college in South Carolina where a couple students were shot down. There was a general consensus by the policy to not use guns because eventually it might be used on them. But the police used clubs and gas. The riders used stones and sticks. It was like a physical thing on the streets. It was not any guns or knives used.

D: In your case, American flags in Miami?

A: Well, that is true too. A convenient weapon, a patriotic weapon. But, like I say, those days are over now and since I am talking about this, I committed no illegal actions. I was only an innocent person. I just happened to be there even though I was planning demonstrations. The last thing I wanted was any acts of illegality to be done. This is a disclaimer. I was only acting in self-defense.

D: Do not worry, we will not give this tape to the UPD. Well, I still got time left on this tape. Let us finish this side here.

You mentioned five hundred people being arrested and the mining of Haiphong. Was related to the bombing of Cambodia?

A: The Cambodia incursion was in 1970 and that was the cause of the Kent State riot. What you had all through 1970, 1971 and 1972 where Nixon actually withdrawing American troops but escalating the war in the process. I think it was becoming more and more violent. Finally resulting in the Christmas bombing in 1972 that ended it. So that was basically what these protests were all about. Even as the American troops were coming home, the war actually escalated in violence in Vietnam. American troops were not dying as much anymore. I mean they were still dying up into 1971 I believe, on the ground. Actually see things became more radical not less radical as the 1970s went on. The antiwar movement got bigger and bigger instead of getting smaller until finally the war ended in 1972 or early 1973 so that ended the need for the antiwar movement so it stopped. That was the end of it. No more antiwar movement cause the war was over. Technically it was a draw. In actuality, it was a victory for the \_\_\_\_\_ cause by 1975 they had taken over Vietnam.

D: It sounds like you organized demonstrations based on you mentioned a Christmas bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong?

- A: The massive bombings that were carried out in 1972.
- D: When the news of these episodes came you organized demonstrations to respond to those episodes?
- A: Right, right, and the mining of Haiphong Harbor, the incursion to Cambodia, various things like that. There was a cause to these demonstrations.
- D: The incursion into Cambodia resulted in the Kent State riot and then students being killed their resulted in a demonstration.
- A: I might be fuzzy on the months of these things but the main antiwar protest I attended were from 1970 to 1973. Before that, I was in the Army and I did not really attend any demonstrations in 1969, in the fall. I mean, they were there I just did not pay any attention to them and there was a big antiwar movement.
- D: There was an antiwar movement already mobilized when you came to UF?
- A: Oh definitely.
- D: And you were still rather conservative?
- A: No, I listened to their speeches and stuff. But, I gradually picked up some of their ideas, not all of them. I did not agree with some of the things.
- D: By the spring of 1971 at that black student protest...
- A: That is when I kind of like joined them and immediately got into the whole world of the radical things, the politics, good looking women, drugs, the rock-n-roll, all of it.
- D: Which was the cultural psychologist at that time. A lot of this is anti-Southeast Asian War and then from your reference in the spring of 1971 you were involved in a civil rights demonstration for African Americans, were there any other issues that you were involved in or was there more civil rights protest at UF that you remember?
- A: Actually, the radicalism goes past this period when the war is over. I have taken part at the University of Florida in demonstration for Indian rights, against the **Shab**, Iran, against the Iraqi War, environmental demonstrations, you name it. I have taken part in demonstrations against right winged Christian preachers who are out there preaching hate. I have engaged in confrontations with them, not legal confrontations, freedom of speech confrontations with them. So I have continued over the years to take part occasionally in demonstrations, but not in the number and the violence of these demonstrations. I took a part \_\_\_\_\_ protesting in the mid-1980s, for instance, ten years, twelve years after this, thirteen years after the

antiwar demonstrations. Occasionally I still will engage in some forms of protest.

D: I think I first remember you when I was an undergraduate protesting the Granada invasion.

A: That was a stupid little thing. But, yes, I did. I protested in the invasion of \_\_\_\_\_ by the Israllies when the Israllies invaded Lebanon and got into a little brawl. We used to come out and have demonstrations against the Marines.

D: Unification?

A: Occasionally I will engage in acts of protest, lawful protests on campus to this day. The last one was the Iraqi War. I have been on many, many womens' rights protest about abortion, especially. The right of the women to have an abortion. I have taken part in a lot of demonstrations for women having that right to have an abortion. I have done some work with that and with **Earth First**, the environmental group in this area.

D: So you are widening the dialogue?

A: But, see what I am saying is that there is some radicalism and it still continues but the peak of it was in this early 1970s period.

D: With the Vietnam War?

A: Right. That was the peak of it. There has not been anything even approach that in intensity sense then and the number of people you classify as being radical or liberal has dropped every year since then. Now it is a very small number of people in Gainesville that you would consider to be liberal or radical or left winged, a very small number.

D: What percentage would you consider the student body at the height of the antiwar demonstrations, 1971 and 1972? What percentage of the student body would you consider to be left winged or I guess, antiwar?

A: 30 to 40 percent.

D: 30 to 40 percent?

A: Easily, yes.

D: So it was never a majority of the student body?

A: Right now it is a 1 to 2 percent and you would be pushing that. There was never

was a majority of people. Never was a majority to participate in these demonstrations even of the students. A lot of them were apathetic and some of them were very right winged like I had been before \_\_\_\_\_. It is a southern state actually like you would expect that.

- D: UF was fully integrated by the time you came here in 1968?
- A: Not fully integrated. It was integrated, but smallly integrated. The number of black students began to increase dramatically over the years I was here. I think the first black was only admitted in 1968 here and I got here in 1969. So, I never went to school with a black person. I graduated high school in 1965 we had complete segregation until late 1965. The first black to ever attend school was from Leesburg, I think. So, yes, integration was fairly new here. Over the years there has been some protest for the black students but nothing really intense. There were not enough of them here when I was here during the 1970s. There were very few blacks here on campus, period. That was all there was to it. Very few.
- D: Thinking about UF. Do you feel that there is a fair amount of academic freedom and freedom of speech and a lack of censorship? It seems to be, it has the reputation of being, a liberal campus, is that true?
- A: I find that hard to believe. But these right wingers will come out till this day and will have rallies saying they are being discriminated against. That their freedom of speech is being limited by left winged professors who have socialist views. Actually what they are trying to do is get the left winged professors fired which is the exact opposite of what they are talking about. They are basically trying to harass people who do not believe like they do. They use the guide that somehow their freedom of speech is being abused if they are not allowed to us racist terms or sexist terms. I frankly find that they should be allowed as long as they do not address them to any specific person. When you are calling a women a name or calling somebody a name because of the race they were raised I think there is a point where you really are harassing them and intimidating them. But as far as their right to give a speech, I guess they have a right to do that. That is what freedom of speech is all about.
- D: In general, you would say UF is pretty good about freedom of speech?
- A: Yes, I think it has been very good about it.
- D: Even though you see a lower percentage of liberals?
- A: Yes, times have changed. That is the way things are.
- D: I have heard UF referred to as the Berkeley of the south.

A: It actually, probably was. Gainesville is probably still the most liberal town of Florida. Probably more people with liberal views.

**SIDE B, TAPE ONE**

D: It the April 15, 1996, we are in the heart of the student ghetto here at the secret hideout of Radical Bill himself.

A: My ghetto pad, man.

D: How long have you been living here in this ghetto pad?

A: About a month. My last roommate I had free rented his house. He is a manic depressive paranoid schizophrenic with delusions of grandeur and persecution and I was just sort of like living in psychiatry. But he is alright now, he gets along, I speak to him every now and then. But I am living in my own place here.

D: Bill's got his own bungalow and courtyard here all to himself. It is beautiful.

Alright Bill, on the last tape we ended the tape to the conversation you were bringing up sex on the plaza and I mentioned that every historian is interested in that field of human behavior, of course, some more than others. You were saying something about sex at the time of the war demonstrations, the great 1960s sexual revolution, etc. I will let you pick up where you left off.

A: I think I was gonna say that to me, it seems like sex was like shaking hands. There were meaningful relationships, but sex was so much freer then. I hate to be trite, but before AIDS and the sexual revolution was definitely in full swing. It was quite a shock. I had had a few experiences in Europe. I had seduced a Army nurse in Switzerland on a USO Tour. I had seduced the wife of a captain on our base or actually I think I probably had been seduced by them, I was a pretty naive fellow, and a Canadian airline stewardess of Amsterdam picked me up in Amsterdam. So I had had a few experiences. I had had a very few experiences in Leesburg where I grew up. It was like Happy Days you know. It was like before the sexual revolution had hit Leesburg or any kind of revolution had had Leesburg. Sex was very few and far between for almost everybody there. Age of sexual repression I mean among the high school kids especially.

D: So that changed when you became a University of Florida student?

A: Oh, it was like the land of milk and honey. I could not believe it. The first week I was on campus I was out on the Plaza of the Americas just checking out the scene,

I was not really a part of the scene, I had just arrived in town and this woman who I recognized as being in my anthropology class saw me and walked over and sat down. She says, do you remember me, I sat next to you in the anthropology lecture? I said, yes, I remember you. She says, you know, you really knew a lot. It is like one of these classes with about three or four hundred people sitting in the auditorium. The professor had asked a series of questions to see what kind of knowledge people had about the world and I was the only one in the whole class who knew what **Coptic Christianity** was. It was the religion of Ethiopia. I do not know why I remember that, but I had raised my hand and said that and she was sitting next to me apparently and was very impressed by it. She says, look, I would like to come over and study at your place with you.

D: This was on the plaza?

A: On the plaza. I lived right across the street above what is now the Swamp. It is in what is the Swamp now. I lived in two different places there where **Amazons** is and where the Swamp is.

D: Where Chaucer's used to be?

A: Where Chaucers used to be. It was upstairs.

D: So that was student housing then?

A: Right, upstairs rooms were rented.

D: What year was this?

A: This was 1969. Downstairs was the first head shop in Gainesville. A head shop being a place where you buy a lot of various kinds of hippie stuff.

**Tape 2, Side A begins...**

D: Today is April 7, 1996 C.E. We are at 714 N.E. 12th Avenue, Gainesville, Florida, sitting here with an oral history interview project about the Plaza of the Americas on the University of Florida. My name is Dirk D. Drake, I am the interviewer and the interviewee is William H. Abney. Bill has extensive experience with many of the interesting happenings on the plaza in the last, how many years?

A: Since 1969 which would make it twenty-five, twenty-six years.

D: Those would include the anti-Southeast Asian war protest that we mentioned in the last interview which was a forty-five minute interview. We hope to conduct well over

two hours on this one. This will be the first tape with a hundred minutes. Where should we start Bill?

A: Well, I was just thinking about the phenomena of campus preaching which started in the early 1970s. Thanks to my research I found out why it started. The CIA and various conservative republican organizations funded right-winged preachers to go onto college campuses to disrupt antiwar activities. The first time I saw this was in Berkeley, on their plaza, **Stroll Plaza**, which is a little bit different set up than the Plaza of the Americas. Berkeley plaza is huge, much bigger, it is all concrete.

D: Were you a student there?

A: No, I was visiting **writer** friends of mine. He lived on the west coast in the early 1970s. It was quite a literary scene out there. A fascinating place, San Francisco, beautiful, beautiful city.

D: So you saw them in San Francisco and the first ones you saw in Gainesville...

A: I saw **Holy Hubert Lindsey** in San Francisco. We had Holy Hubert staked out naked at the republican convention in Miami Beach and performed the tickle torture on him. But I have got to say one thing, hippies captured Holy Hubert. He came into our campground and was preaching to us and even though he was laughing hysterically he kept preaching the word of God and the republican party to us while he was being tickle tortured and then he was finally rescued by the **Scott Camiles** vietnam veteran against the war who were the cops in the convention.

D: They were from Gainesville?

A: They were from Gainesville.

D: University of Florida created?

A: They escorted him out of the convention.

D: Did Holy Hubert preach on UF plaza?

A: Absolutely. But the first preacher that appeared was **Jed George Smock** who I still associate with. I do not know if I would call him a friend or not, but I have never figured out our relationship. He is from **Terre, Indiana**. It is in the corn belt there. It is home of **Eugene V. Debs** one of the great socialist leaders if you are into history there and **Jed George Smock**. I visited him once when I was hitchhiking from Colorado back to Gainesville and stopped into the Jed mansion. He had a picture of Ronald Reagan on the wall, this is during Reagan's presidency in the 1980s, and at

the bottom it said, thanks for helping me get elected from Ron to Jed. I think that was one of Jed's man jobs is getting ole Ronnie elected. Jed told me next to his dear mother and sister, **Cindie**, who we will get into later.

D: Who was his wife.

A: Who was his wife, sister Cindie. A University of Florida, I do not graduate, she was a journalism major who lived in Buchman Hall. Who he met during one of his preaching stint at the University.

D: Know was Jet the first preacher you saw on the plaza?

A: He was really the first one that I can remember.

D: What year do you think that was?

A: It was when they were building the Alaska pipeline cause I hitchiked back from Alaska, I had been working there for the summer building housing for the pipeline workers.

D: Did you hang out with **Harry Kruz** up there?

A: No, but Harry Kruz and I had very similar experiences in Alaska in his \_\_\_\_\_ story going down in Valdez which is definitely a classic of 1970s literature. It was in Playboy. Harry used to write for Playboy. It was quite the scene there during the pipeline. I hate to think that I aided in the destruction of the environment in Alaska but I guess inadvertently I did. I was not that environment conscious back then. I do not think I would do that now. I would not work on the pipeline. It was a horrible waste of everything, the Alaska pipeline. I remember it was the day I got back from Alaska, I had my backpack on. I came looking for my roommate to get the key to the place, we were living in the ghetto there, so I could put my gear up and there was Jed. I immediately felt compelled, like the devil made me do it or something, to start heckling Jed. Over the years continued this heckling. Rolling Stone magazine interviewed me saying that I was one of the Jesus freak hecklers in the United States, if not, the best. This was about ten or twelve years ago. My fame had spread on the Jesus freak circuit.

D: Do you still hold the belt?

A: I think I can handle.

D: You are the champion?

A: I am number one. When I am in my good form nobody... There are many other

preachers now. I have heckled just about all of them that have come on the campus. I believe in constructive heckling. I do not interrupt them I just wait till they have to catch their breath and say something really sarcastic, ironic or obscene that makes the crowd laugh at them. At the same time try to emphasize that these preachers their god is basically a white, right-winged republican that lives up in the sky and a god who loves the rich and hates the poor, a god who always votes republican.

D: Likes to fight wars, is that a part of it?

A: Love wars, especially if they are against anybody that is against white, republicans in country clubs, a god that is always on the side of white, American males in country clubs. Basically, that is what the tradition is all about. God was an American and a republican before America was ever discovered. There has always been an internal American up in heaven according to these preachers where the American dream has been with us forever. I mean God is an American leader. He is an American and he is for the rich.

D: So this is the Jed doctrine?

A: Definitely, pure 100 percent American God. Now, there is a political message that they work into this. They mix religion and politics completely together. Jed, being on the foremost ones. Jed is the most accomplished I think of the preachers I have met. Jed takes me out to dinner every time he is here, no matter how I heckle him. I think he expects me to not be as severe as I was in the old days with him. I try to lay off the sex things and stuff like that.

D: That is nice of you.

A: We used to go Sonny's bar-b-que which is a fine eating establishment but now that Jed's gotten I think five or six daughters with sister Cindie, we have to go to Morrisons. There is nothing like a Morrisons. It is very, very, very American. It is very good, I like Morrisons.

D: It reminds you of armed forces service food?

A: No, actually, it is much better, Morrisons is much better. It reminds me of cafeteria I went to when I was a kid in Central Florida, good ole home cooking, nothing fancy. Jed is infamous.

D: He travels the United States?

A: He travels the United States.

D: Does he go international?

A: Yes, of all places, South Africa. The South African government funded Jed to go down to South Africa and explain how a part tithe was really God's will and come back to America and spread it to Americans. Needless to say, Jed's suit case was bulging with Krugerrands when he got into the airport after leaving **JoHannasburg**. That was one of Jed's famous moments. He wrote a book called fire in the furnace or something like that about it glowing defense of South African part tithe.

D: So Jed is a racist?

A: Racist. No, I think Jed believes that black people can go to heaven, if they are republicans. But, he does not believe in race mixing saying that he would disavow his daughters if they ever went out with a black man no matter how religious he was or how American he was. I believe he does believe that blacks have their place and have probably given him shoe shines.

D: So he is a racist? That sounds racist to me, man.

A: That part of Indiana was part of the Klu Klux Klan where Jed was from. It is central to Southern Louisiana, Illinois and Ohio.

D: The birth of the nation Klu Klux Klan?

A: Yes, definitely. The Klan had its biggest membership...

D: The movie house klan?

A: Absolutely. The klan had its biggest membership in the 1920s and 1930s.

D: Those people are sick.

A: Jed is very, very interesting. I introduced Jed to his wife, Cindie. Now Cindie he calls the disco queen.

D: What was her maiden name? Do you know her maiden name?

A: I believe **Lassiter**. She was from **Brainer, Georgia**, which I think is up north of Atlanta. Cindie was a journalism major living in Buckman Hall. Well, I do not know, we had another nickname for it but I do not know if I should go into this.

D: Go ahead.

A: Oh, we called it Fuckman Hall.

D: Never heard that one.

A: For a good reason actually.

D: What year do you think it was that you introduced him to Cindie?

A: Late 1970s. Now Cindie was a journalism major. She was a disco queen, if there is such a thing. Actually me the Jesus freak might be one step above being a disco queen. I think that is one of the few professions I could put above it. Cindie went to black discos. She told me that Jed was the first white man that she had ever slept with. She basically went to fall night discothons. She once discoed for thirty-six solid hours with the brothers down on 5th Avenue and she won the disco prize.

D: Wow, disco queen.

A: I personally think she discoed one to many the day she saw Jed.

D: Was she doing drugs during these disco days?

A: That is a good question. I really do not know. I would not be surprised getting the disco scene in the 1970s it would be kind of a logical thing.

D: What drugs were they doing in those days?

A: I believe in discos, cocaine.

D: I have heard that.

A: Cocaine was very popular. Naturally only by hearsay. Radical Bill has never committed any legal or immoral act any where in on or around the Plaza of the Americas.

D: Or in the territory of the United States?

A: Right, I mean I am almost like a Christian out there. I mean, I am so pure as driven snow.

D: Apparently Cindie was not so pure because she was a disco queen and stayed out all night.

A: She would stay out all night like I say for thirty-six hours.

D: She talks about being a fornicator.

A: She apparently was a fornicator in her earlier years.

D: Jed saved her?

A: Jed saved her. I was heckling Jed and Cindie came up and said that is the handsomest man she had ever seen. I immediately said, Cindie I think you disoed a little too long. One thing led to another and I introduced them during a break. Jed always had an assistant preacher with him to take over the \_\_\_\_\_. He has had a long line of those, some of them are very interesting on their own.

D: We will talk about those a little bit later.

A: What it was is like me and some of the boys had gone to visit Jed at his hotel room at the Holiday Inn. It was not called the Holiday Inn. It was called the Flagler Inn then. Jed had rented out the auditorium for a revival, an old fashioned tent revival inside. It was inside the auditorium of the Holiday Inn. Some of my friends and I had gone up to Jed's room and drunk a case of beer and I believe one of them lit up an elicit herb and smoked it in front of Jed.

D: Oh dear.

A: I know. The jest of it is that I knew Jed's motel room number and so when I did, I told Cindie. I said, Cindie now, Jed says he has not had sex in twelve years. He does not masturbate and he has not even had a nocturnal emission because the lord is controlling his sexual desires. Now, if you think Jed is such a great guy and he is so pure, why do not you go up to see him tonight at the motel room at the Flagler and I gave her the motel room number.

D: You pimp.

A: I know. The next day I saw Cindie and I said hey, how did it go Cindie and she would not speak to me. My opinion is that Cindie went down on her knees in the motel room and it was not \_\_\_\_\_. So, I think this is the reason that Jed takes me out to dinner to commemorate this awesome event that changed his life forever.

D: How shortly after that were they married?

A: A couple of years. They had a long engagement as is very proper. According to Jed they did not kiss until they were married.

D: Lots of praying.

A: Lots of praying, lots down on the knees.

D: So, this international...

A: Do not forget, how did **Oral Roberts** really get his name. That is one of the questions I have always asked Jed and he has never given me a clear answer to that.

D: So, on the Plaza of the Americas you introduced this internationally famous campus preacher to his wife. She was Cindie Lassiter from Brainer, Georgia, and commonly known on campus as the disco queen.

A: Actually disco Cindie. I think Jed used the term disco Queen.

D: What semesters does Jed usually show up at UF?

A: Nowadays he shows up in what they used to call dead week in December, right at the end of the Fall semester. He has been very regular about that in the last ten years or so. People look forward to him coming.

D: Was he more common in the past that you are talking about?

A: No. He might have come several times in one year but he usually puts in three days to a week, but he has many assistant preachers who come and preach with him and they also come \_\_\_\_\_ and then there are other preachers who comes.

D: And does Cindie...

A: Cindie has soled out there by herself. Remember, they have five daughters now. The Lord appeared to Jed in a vision and said to Jed that Jed must have as many daughters as sons. Cindie's work is hardly over yet since she has five daughters that means she has got to have five sons, still.

D: Maybe they ought to try a new position.

A: Well, we call it the missionary position. I have always asked him about that. You know I say Jed what is your missionary position and he always refuses to show us out there. I have seen many bizarre events out there connected with Jed, totally bizarre.

D: Tell us about them.

A: One guy showed up with a penis-shaped gun filled with shaving creme, I hope it was shaving creme. It was very obscene looking and I have no idea where he got it and in the shall we say straticular part of the gun was where you squeezed it and he went up to Jed and shot a horrible load of whip cream all over Jed's face.

D: Was this a student?

A: I believe so, at the time. It might not have been. Another thing that I saw, a fellow had a dog that was in heat, very badly in heat.

D: Lord have mercy.

A: I know. There is no limit to this once the devil gets the people going. And he got the secretions from the female dog and somehow put them on a Windex squeeze type bottle and he had every friend of his in town that he knew show up with their male dogs...

D: Was this guy a veterinary student at UF?

A: I have no idea. I cannot really remember. I do remember the event, how it came down though.

D: What year was this?

A: This was probably in the late 1970s, early 1980s. Anyhow, he ran out and sprayed Jed with the mist of the essence of bitch. They had this all arranged, I had no knowledge of this prior to it happening. He sprayed it all over Jed. Now Jed thought some guy was just spraying him with water, which is bad enough, so Jed took a swing at him. They guy ran back into the crowd and all of a sudden all the dogs that were there, like twelve male dogs, came charging out after Jed and shall we say trying to achieve canine ecstasy with Jed's legs.

D: Canine connubial bliss?

A: I believe so.

D: Were they dancing?

A: Jed was being pursued actually by a pack of dogs. Unfortunately, other people intervened and stopped it before it got out of hand. There was also the attempt to crucify Jed. Which, incidentally, I had no knowledge of either.

D: You have any memories of the year of that?

A: Once again, back probably in the early 1980s. Some fellows got together and made a cross. They were not really going to crucify him. They were just going to tie him up. They had a post hole digger and a cross. It got to be very well known apparently and they made the mistake of coming out a little too soon and somebody

called those wonderful servants, the University Police Department, some of the finest law enforcement officials on the campus.

D: They are helpful.

A: Yes, they are helpful and they intervened in time to stop it.

D: They were not going to nail him were they?

A: No. They were going to tie him up.

D: Like one of the thieves?

A: Right. They were going to tie him up there in his suit. Incidentally, Jed only preaches in his suits. Jesus wears suits apparently. Jed has said this.

D: Has he said that?

A: Of course.

D: Did he explain what scriptural basis he has for that?

A: Basically, Ronald Reagan or Richard Nixon or something like that. No, that God loves the rich, that is why they are rich. God obviously hates the poor, that is why they are poor. So therefore, God must wear a suit because only a decent American would wear a suit. Like I said, this is the Jed type of Christianity.

D: Most of these hecklers you are describing with the squirt gun, the dogs in heat, the crucifixion...

A: This is what you call low class heckling, white trash heckling.

D: Yes.

A: It is not intellectual.

D: Some of them are students, former students?

A: Yes, oh definitely. Students or former students, most of them.

D: Do any students heckle him on intellectual, political or religious grounds?

A: Definitely. Not only students but professors. I have seen professors come out there many times and debate with Jed.

D: Let us hear about some of those.

A: I mean, it takes all kind of humor so you have the low and you have the high and you have very straight conversations. Remember Jed thrives on antagonism, he thrives on heckling.

D: I do not think he would like canine connubial bliss though?

A: No, those things got a little bit out of hand. Nobody wants to be seen having sex with a pack of male dogs in the middle of an open area. I have seen very serious intellectual discussions out there. Actually, the people who get the maddest at Jed are Christians that think Jed is putting their religion to ridicule which is absolutely 100 percent correct. I always wondered, Jed never took up a collection but Jed always drove around in Cadillac town cars and stayed at the nicest hotels, motels rather. Always seemed to have plenty of money, a wallet full of money. I began to inquire. I said, Jed, obviously your parents support you. You see, his daddy was a professor at the University of Southern Illinois.

D: In \_\_\_\_\_?

A: In \_\_\_\_\_ or some god forsaken place in the Indianas. Indiana is horrible. I have nightmares when I hitchhike through there.

D: Southern Indiana or Southern Illinois?

A: Central Indiana. It is the heart of the bible belt well, that might be in the south. It is definitely heart of the corn belt.

**D: Butternut Clan, Indiana.**

A: That is it. Jed told me that he was funded by the right-winged political and religious groups. The Businessmans Fellowship for Christ being one of them who gave him a grant and the Heritage Foundation and the James Madison Foundation which goes back to my original assertion that Jed got his start with government money probably to disrupt liberal radical activities on campus. Holy Hubert Lindsey definitely got his start doing that. That is what he was doing down at the republican convention that time he was captured and naked tickle tortured by the yuppies, no hippies, hippies. It is \_\_\_\_\_ how some of those names are.

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Basically over the years I have been to a demonstration on the plaza for everything you could possibly think of, against the Shah of Iran, for American Indians, for womens' rights, for womens right to choose, demonstrations to support the environment, demonstrations against the American War in the Middle East, against the Israeli incursion in Lebanon, against our Central American policies. There still is a lingering tradition on the plaza of demonstrations. It still is for the very, very small radical community one of the centers they go to. Actually now they have this media center on University Avenue. The radical community actually has an official headquarters now in the Civic Media Center on University Avenue. It has a very wide array of reading literature and it is basically a meeting place now for the radical community in Gainesville.

D: Let us go back to the heckling of Jed.

A: I use ironic humor and I do have an extensive knowledge of the Bible because I used to be an episcopalian until I was nineteen. I still have great fond memories of the church. The fact that our preacher was caught with his pants down on several of the alter boys resulting in a horrible scandal back in the early 1970s - I heard about this after I had left Leesburg.

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D: Have they found her yet?

A: Is she hiding out, I was not aware?

D: She disappeared.

A: Oh my God. Maybe, huh, well, who knows well she went. One of her sons turned against her. But I had my five hundred biblical contradictions, which are five hundred scriptures in the bible that contradict each other...

D: So here we have some theocratic heckling for a change.

A: So I would bring up these contradictions in the Bible to Jed and see if he could reconcile them. Jed made great efforts to do this.

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A: Well, okay. You start out with God created the sun, the moon and the stars. He created night and day three days before he created the sun, the moon and the stars so right off the bat in Genesis you begin to get into Adam and Eve's children went out and made the people who were living in the land therein, there is no mention of it. There are two creations in Genesis that totally contradict each other. There are five hundred of them that I knew about, five hundred biblical contradictions. Some of them are on my own, I found a few myself.

D: Jed will not acknowledge there were other people before Adam and Eve?

A: No. According to Jed, the Bible must be interpreted literally except when Jed wants to interpret it figuratively. Only Jed is allowed to do this. Jed says well, that is just figurative, Bill. Well, Jed you just told me the Bible is literal. Well, it is figurative when a man of experience like me can analyze and realize that God was preaching to simple minds like you and had to use figurative language. The Bible is just one long saga. The Old Testament is nothing but carnage and blood shed by the Jews on their fellow human beings and God is either punishing their enemies or punishing them for not worshipping him enough. In the New Testament y. One thing led to another and I introduced them during a break. Jed always had an assistant preacher with him to take over the \_\_\_\_\_. He has had a long line of those, some of them are very interesting on their own.

D: We will talk about those a little bit later.

A: What it was is like me and some of the boys had gone to visit Jed at his hotel room at the Holiday Inn. It was not called the Holiday Inn. It was called the Flagler Inn then. Jed had rented out the auditorium for a revival, an old fashioned tent revival inside. It was inside the auditorium of the Holiday Inn. Some of my friends and I had gone up to Jed's room and drunk a case of beer and I believe one of them lit up an elicit herb and smoked it in front of Jed.

D: Oh dear.

A: I know. The jest of it is that I knew Jed's motel room number and so when I did, I told Cindie. I said, Cindie now, Jed says he has not had sex in twelve years. He does not masturbate and he has not even had a nocturnal emission because the lord is controlling his sexual desires. Now, if you think Jed is such a great guy and he is so pure, why do not you go up to see him tonight at the motel room at the Flagler and I gave her the motel room number.

D: You pimp.

A: I know. The next day I saw Cindie and I said hey, how did it go Cindie and she would not speak to me. My opinion is that Cindie went down on her knees in the

motel room and it was not \_\_\_\_\_. So, I think this is the reason that Jed takes me out to dinner to commemorate this awesome event that changed his life forever.

D: How shortly after that were they married?

A: A couple of years. They had a long engagement as is very proper. According to Jed they did not kiss until they were married.

D: Lots of praying.

A: Lots of praying, lots down on the knees.

D: So, this international...

A: Do not forget, how did **Oral Roberts** really get his name. That is one of the questions I have always asked Jed and he has never given me a clear answer to that.

D: So, on the Plaza of the Americas you introduced this internationally famous campus preacher to his wife. She was Cindie Lassiter from Brainer, Georgia, and commonly known on campus as the disco queen.

A: Actually disco Cindie. I think Jed used the term disco Queen.

D: What semesters does Jed usually show up at UF?

A: Nowadays he shows up in what they used to call dead week in December, right at the end of the Fall semester. He has been very regular about that in the last ten years or so. People look forward to him coming.

D: Was he more common in the past than you are talking about?

A: No. He might have come several times in one year but he usually puts in three days to a week, but he has many assistant preachers who come and preach with him and they also come \_\_\_\_\_ and then there are other preachers who comes.

D: And does Cindie...

A: Cindie has soled out there by herself. Remember, they have five daughters now. The Lord appeared to Jed in a vision and said to Jed that Jed must have as many daughters as sons. Cindie's work is hardly over yet since she has five daughters that means she has got to have five sons, still.

D: Maybe they ought to try a new position.

A: Well, we call it the missionary position. I have always asked him about that. You know I say Jed what is your missionary position and he always refuses to show us out there. I have seen many bizarre events out there connected with Jed, totally bizarre.

D: Tell us about them.

A: One guy showed up with a penis-shaped gun filled with shaving creme, I hope it was shaving creme. It was very obscene looking and I have no idea where he got it and in the shall we say straticular part of the gun was where you squeezed it and he went up to Jed and shot a horrible load of whip cream all over Jed's face.

D: Was this a student?

A: I believe so, at the time. It might not have been. Another thing that I saw, a fellow had a dog that was in heat, very badly in heat.

D: Lord have mercy.

A: I know. There is no limit to this once the devil gets the people going. And he got the secretions from the female dog and somehow put them on a Windex squeeze type bottle and he had every friend of his in town that he knew show up with their male dogs...

D: Was this guy a veterinary student at UF?

A: I have no idea. I cannot really remember. I do remember the event, how it came down though.

D: What year was this?

A: This was probably in the late 1970s, early 1980s. Anyhow, he ran out and sprayed Jed with the mist of the essence of bitch. They had this all arranged, I had no knowledge of this prior to it happening. He sprayed it all over Jed. Now Jed thought some guy was just spraying him with water, which is bad enough, so Jed took a swing at him. They guy ran back into the crowd and all of a sudden all the dogs that were there, like twelve male dogs, came charging out after Jed and shall we say trying to achieve canine ecstasy with Jed's legs.

D: Canine connubial bliss?

A: I believe so.

D: Were they dancing?

A: Jed was being pursued actually by a pack of dogs. Unfortunately, other people intervened and stopped it before it got out of hand. There was also the attempt to crucify Jed. Which, incidentally, I had no knowledge of either.

D: You have any memories of the year of that?

A: Once again, back probably in the early 1980s. Some fellows got together and made a cross. They were not really going to crucify him. They were just going to tie him up. They had a post hole digger and a cross. It got to be very well known apparently and they made the mistake of coming out a little too soon and somebody called those wonderful servants, the University Police Department, some of the finest law enforcement officials on the campus.

D: They are helpful.

A: Yes, they are helpful and they intervened in time to stop it.

D: They were not going to nail him were they?

A: No. They were going to tie him up.

D: Like one of the thieves?

A: Right. They were going to tie him up there in his suit. Incidentally, Jed only preaches in his suits. Jesus wears suits apparently. Jed has said this.

D: Has he said that?

A: Of course.

D: Did he explain what scriptural basis he has for that?

A: Basically, Ronald Reagan or Richard Nixon or something like that. No, that God loves the rich, that is why they are rich. God obviously hates the poor, that is why they are poor. So therefore, God must wear a suit because only a decent American would wear a suit. Like I said, this is the Jed type of Christianity.

D: Most of these hecklers you are describing with the squirt gun, the dogs in heat, the crucifixion...

A: This is what you call low class heckling, white trash heckling.

D: Yes.

A: It is not intellectual.

D: Some of them are students, former students?

A: Yes, oh definitely. Students or former students, most of them.

D: Do any students heckle him on intellectual, political or religious grounds?

A: Definitely. Not only students but professors. I have seen professors come out there many times and debate with Jed.

D: Let us hear about some of those.

A: I mean, it takes all kind of humor so you have the low and you have the high and you have very straight conversations. Remember Jed thrives on antagonism, he thrives on heckling.

D: I do not think he would like canine connubial bliss though?

A: No, those things got a little bit out of hand. Nobody wants to be seen having sex with a pack of male dogs in the middle of an open area. I have seen very serious intellectual discussions out there. Actually, the people who get the maddest at Jed are Christians that think Jed is putting their religion to ridicule which is absolutely 100 percent correct. I always wondered, Jed never took up a collection but Jed always drove around in Cadillac town cars and stayed at the nicest hotels, motels rather. Always seemed to have plenty of money, a wallet full of money. I began to inquire. I said, Jed, obviously your parents support you. You see, his daddy was a professor at the University of Southern Illinois.

D: In \_\_\_\_\_?

A: In \_\_\_\_\_ or some god forsaken place in the Indianas. Indiana is horrible. I have nightmares when I hitchhike through there.

D: Southern Indiana or Southern Illinois?

A: Central Indiana. It is the heart of the bible belt well, that might be in the south. It is definitely heart of the corn belt.

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D: So I believe I asked you about theocratic heckling and you had mentioned some professors. You had professors engaging Jed and some of these other campus preachers?

A: Right. Graduate students and professors especially. \_\_\_\_\_ learning at Rabbis, obviously Jews take offense at this because they are going to go to hell according to Jed's doctrine. Matter of fact, Catholics are all going to hell. Everybody is going to hell except for the people who believe exactly like Jed does.

D: He has no \_\_\_\_\_ with telling them that?

A: Oh, not at all. His fellow Christians get the most irate. I have seen people break down in tears. Just the last time he was here a woman broke down in tears because Jed implied that she was a whore because she was wearing a skirt that went up above her knee line and she said she was a devout Christian and Jed called her Jezebel and she broke down into a hysterical fit and went running off the plaza crying. This is your typical caring Christianity here. He says that any woman who wears pants is a whore, any woman who wears a skirt is a whore, any woman who wears shorts is a whore, well you get the jest of what I am saying. It becomes quite a show on the plaza.

D: What does he believe women should be?

A: At home taking care of the kids and cooking. He does not believe that women should work, he does not believe that women should vote and he does not believe that women should hold office.

D: Really.

A: The only women I heard him talk womanly about was **Maggie Thatcher**, who obviously \_\_\_\_\_ Ronald Reagan should have married.

D: Well I do not think she does much cooking.

A: No, no, this is an exception. Maggie Thatcher was an exception because of her exceptional right-winged political views that Jed made an exception for her. Maggie Thatcher could be prime minister of Britain.

D: For her war like tendencies.

A: Right. I do not know, it is quite a show. It is entertainment and it also has a very intellectual, theocratical - I guess that is the word you would use.

D: I did.

A: It is entertaining. It can be very, very harsh and vulgar. Jed loves to talk about sex. He just gets into it.

D: So you think he pretty much inspires these students with the penis squirt guns and the dogs?

A: Absolutely, he encourages it.

D: What kind of things does he say about sex?

- A: For instance, that masturbation is the root cause of homosexuality. Anyone that masturbates is on the road to becoming a homosexual. Now Jed says that he never masturbated as a child, that somehow he was blessed to control this. A fornication is a \_\_\_\_\_ you were going to go to hell. Homosexuality is just obviously beyond, beyond the \_\_\_\_\_. You would have to say that Jed encourages this x-rated conversations which I am very good at getting into when Jed leads the way into these things.
- D: You have some expertise in those areas.
- A: Well, yes, yes, I guess I do, a little experience as everyone does. Jed is quite good at bringing out the worst in people. It becomes an open air circus. There is something very medieval about it. It is something about the origins of religion. Maybe Jesus actually did this kind of thing, who knows. There have been many other preachers besides Jed, Holy Hubert Lindsey who went stone blind eventually and quite coming. **Max Lynch**, ole potato head we called him, **homo Idahoest** another Indianan who was famous for being arrested for heckling **Jimmy Carter**, **Jim Jyles** who found God at a Van Halen concert. There is a whole line of these creatures that have come down the line that Jed has trained and now they are out on their own. They used to appear with Jed as a sort of apprentice. I say there are other groups that have come out there. I am trying to remember the name of this guy who comes here every year he tries to give some kind of veneer sophistication and intellectualism to Christianity, which is really absolutely impossible. I call him the pseudo intellectual for Jesus. I believe his name is Cliff. He shows up with an official campus group. I cannot remember what it is. Like I say, he puts on this big show about trying to prove scientifically and philosophically the existence of God which is quite, quite impossible because faith is what it is based on and faith is believing in something that you cannot really prove. So his name is Cliff. This is just one aspect of the plaza. Probably another interesting aspect that in a way has to do with religion are the Hari Krishnas.
- D: Before we get off on them I want to hear more about Jed's henchmen.
- A: Well, I just listed them.
- D: Do they have specific focuses, do they compliment Jed or do they have their own kind of thing?
- A: Max Lynch we called old potato head because he had a head that looked remarkably like a baked Idaho potato. This is kind of hard to believe unless you saw him, but he had no neck. I thought of the name homo Idahoest, man of Idaho, man and potato combined as a proof of evolution or devolution as you would say. Now Max's has a story about his wife. Max laid around the house telling his wife that God

was going to give him guidance about what to do and this went on for months. Max would lay around on the couch reading the Bible. He had been fired from his job as a math teacher in high school for preaching the Bible instead of teaching math in the class which I think was kind of a rational thing for the principal to do. After this he was unemployed and so his wife kept nagging Max saying Max, when are you going to get a job? He would say later women, I am waiting for God to inspire me. I am waiting for God to inspire me. God will give me the message. Finally, the women irritated him so much that she came over to Max and said Max, when are you going to get to job, Max leaped up slammed his wife on the side of the head with a Bible, knocked her out cold and said God just told me I am going to preach the gospel. This is how Max got his calling.

D: Did she tell you this story? Where did you here this from?

A: Max Lynch told me this story. He is quite proud of it. This is how he got his calling. A calling is when you get called into the business and Max did it by knocking his wife out cold for telling him to get a job, with the Bible incidently.

D: Not a bottle, a Bible?

A: A Bible, it was the Holy Bible.

D: Lord have mercy.

A: I know. This is just one of the many of Jed's followers.

D: I remember a guy named Jim.

A: Jim Jyles. Now Jim Jyles he found God at a Van Halen concert.

D: Was he on drugs?

A: He was on drugs, but apparently he was purified, miraculously purified, when Eddie Van Halen said something about the devil with the crowd, instantaneously Jim Jyles received holy purification of all the drugs in his body at the time and \_\_\_\_\_.

D: What kind of drugs were they?

A: Could have been LSD.

D: I think I have heard him say that.

A: Could have been other things too. God knows there is a whole list of them.

D: So he found Jesus on LSD?

- A: Jed found Jesus at a Burger King, he was sitting at Burger King. According to Jed, Sister Cindie found Jed at the Krystal restaurant across the street there. It has since closed down.
- D: So hamburgers and LSD?
- A: So apparently fast food and rock-n-roll...
- D: Joe tells a story about being on the beaches of Morocco.
- A: Yes, Jed went to San Francisco toward the height of the summer of love type activities there and did lots of marijuana and LSD and ended up dropping out and going to Morocco and an Arab Christian came up to Jed with a cross. Jed was naked on a beach meditating, doing yoga or something like this on the beach in North Africa, and this old Arab came up and stuck a cross in front of Jed and gave Jed a Bible, had some Bibles on him.
- D: For accuracy I remember hearing Jed saying he was high eating hashish while he was meditating.
- A: That is quite possible. Jed admits doing drugs.
- D: I have heard him say things like that.
- A: Jed has several very interesting books, \_\_\_\_\_ Rise Up, which would actually not be the greatest religious books that were written but definitely the greatest comedy books that were ever written where Jed describes his life story and how he was converted. It is very funny actually. The stories are so familiar to the people that are listening to them. After years of hearing them, even without a book, there are punch lines. Jed will say something and the whole crowd will respond. It is very much like the Rocky Horror picture show.
- D: Ring of fire or lake of fire?
- A: Lake of fire. Jed's stories are very well known and so the audience looks forward to hearing them and knows what he is going to say before he says it and they chant along with Jed by going into certain ritual like chants. Jed will say something and the crowd will answer.
- D: Like what?
- A: He will go into these names of the bands he heard in San Francisco and Jed will say, there was this band called the Grateful ... and the crowd will go, Dead. The

greatest singer, **Janice Joplin**, and her number one hit was ... and the crowd will go, cheap thrills. There is a chanting that goes back and forth. I did a video on it with a guy named **Steve Elliott** to place on the plaza. Steve videotaped me heckling Jed on the plaza and then later on we went to Cox Cable in the studio, had the complete studio with all these cameramen and everything, and did a half hour interview show with me and Jed. I was popping a six-pack of tall Buds and talking to Jed about theological matters. It was shown in New York and San Francisco and got good reviews. It was his project for school. It was shown on a lot of public access T.V. all of the country apparently.

D: Steve Elliott was in the English Department at UF?

A: I believe so or he was in journalism, I cannot really recall. He left town and moved to Atlanta and I have not seen him in a long, long, long time. I have no idea what happened to him.

D: So are there any other henchmen or associates of Jed that come and preach on the UF plaza?

A: He brings new ones. There have been I would say twenty or thirty of them. Most of them are from the mid-west, they show it. Horrible place, horrible, a region of darkness if there ever was one. Not of the light. The corn belt, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, places of conformity, the mind numbing conformity.

D: But the Plaza of the Americas is a place where there is lots of freedom of expression and thought?

A: Absolutely. Just recently this year there has been radical poetry readings. Oh, I forgot, these are not Jed's, we call them the men in red. They wear red suits and come out and yell and scream at everybody and if you say you do not want to listen to them they start telling you you are going to go to hell. We think they are all clansmen from some little inbreed section of Tennessee or something and they will not admit it. They definitely act like clansmen. There has been a lot of people out there on the plaza. I have seen Manson's followers out there, there were Klu Klux Klan on the plaza, Children of God, the White Robes, no sex, no killing, no materialism, there has been quite a few groups.

D: Were the Moonies ever out there.

A: Oh yes. The followers of **Reverend Sun Moon**. You would never forget those people. They are probably the most brainwashed people I have ever met in my whole life. Reverend Moon being a South Korean evangelist who turned out to be under one of the major players in the South Korean Central Intelligence Agencies whose whole mission was to make sure the United States always supported South

Korea. In order to assure that you would have the most right-winged militarist government in the United States would always support South Korea's right-winged militarist government. The moonies were totally brainwashed. They believe that Reverend Moon is Jesus Christ.

D: Would they preach this on the plaza?

A: Yes. At first they would deny who they were and then later on they received orders to go ahead and admit they were moonies. They would always try to get people to come over to their house for dinner then they would try to get you off to one of their work camps, I do mean work camps. I went to one in California to investigate it when I was at Berkeley and they worked the kids sixteen hours a day and preached to them the next day. Needless to say, you do not get any sleep but you sure do get good brainwashing that way after a while. You wait till people are complete fatigued from working incidently doing meaningful work that makes a lot of money for the moonies. Then you would preach to them when they were tired and eventually you are going to work them to a point when they are not going to do much work after a while but you are going to get your message across. That is the nature of brainwashing, using fatigue. They were out there. they are probably still around but in a much more subdued form. A very frightening group really, totally into brainwashing and control. The Maranatha Church is another one that was really big and why **Bob Weina** a real estate salesman has spent a little time in the federal pen for real estate fraud. they were another right-winged group that had their headquarter right across from campus. They were definitely into brainwashing, they had a newspaper called the Forerunner. They would come out and preach all the time. As a matter of fact, I got the impression they would always send their preachers out for me to work them over to see if they could take it under fire. I remember we had a womens' right to abortion on the plaza. I do not men we, I did not sponsor it. A woman professor spoke and there must have been twenty or thirty people because it had been raining that day. It was a very bad day to have it. They had a little platform set up n the plaza.

D: What year was this?

A: It had to be in the 1980s. This is when the Maranatha's were in their hay day. They had their headquarters in an ex-frat house across the street from Tigert Hall. They all showed up to counter protest this little rally and we had gathered around the speakers platform pretty close. There must have been thirty or forty people attending the rally. Then, five hundred Maranatha's showed up and ringed us. This must have been how Custer felt. We thought there might have been a little fowl play going to go on around here and so we kind of formed a defensive parameter around the stand. Then we began to realize that they were not going to do anything. They all had signs condemning abortion. So when I realized that they probably really were not going to do much of anything I made a round of the circle using some of

my, shall we say, tasteless abortion humor, in each one of them's face. It seems like it never provoked any of them. Nothing happened. They all left. I exercised my freedom of speech. I just wanted to see how far they were going to go with this intimidation, total intimidation. They all marched off and left in single. It was very eerie. These people about abortion are just total fanatics, Jed is, they all are. They are not really concerned about living children. It does not appear to bother them about killing babies in Iraq or children in the ghettos dying of diseases or malnutrition, only fetuses bother them. They do not care about living children that much. It is just a chance to control women's bodies.

D: Were the young men they sent to war?

A: Oh, not at all. It would be a privilege to die for God in a country, some God forsaken place where exploiting for our arms manufacture and where our big businessmen are employed.

D: That is what they believe?

A: Well, they would not put it in those terms that you are dying for American and God actually you are dying for arms manufacturers and big businesses. It has been the whole history of our foreign policy especially since World War II. We dominated the world, basically we still do. We are getting a little shaky. Jed and these religious people back up that philosophy totally that an American empire is essentially what we have had.

D: What do they call the women or the female students that are pro-abortion or that have had abortions?

A: Murderers.

D: The language gets very, very strong?

A: Very strong. I have seen them harass rallies out there. I have been to abortion clinics in Gainesville where I have seen what goes on when they picket them. Abortions are not a very pleasant thing, neither is having your appendix out. There might be some deep moral implications but I get very suspicious about people who do not believe in school lunches talking about saving fetuses. Those who do not believe in medical care for children, being guaranteed for children, that are very concerned about fetuses. You begin to think that this whole fetus issue is just an attempt by a male God, over the male dominated religion to control females. That is my opinion. I know there probably is some disagreement over that.

D: There is some strong language, they throw a lot of very judgmental accusations at female students?

- A: Absolutely harassing them.
- D: Condemning them as sinners.
- A: The last thing these people like is to have people tell them what you think of them. They love to dish it out but they really cannot take it. It is fun to see them when they are really exposed and that is one good thing about these religious people that come out onto the campus is that they are exposing their religion to public questioning unlike in their churches. If they are going to come out there and try to force people to listen to their religious dogma it is going to get criticized and that is something that you do not get in church. I think a lot of people have been turned off to this kind of born again Christianity by the Plaza of the Americas. A lot of Christians who have seen what goes on out there have been turned off by it. It is freedom of speech.
- D: Has any of their speech ever been determined to be too much?
- A: I do not understand what you mean by that? What do you mean?
- D: Have they instigated violence?
- A: I have seen minor violence on the Plaza of the Americas during demonstrations, during rallies. I have never seen anybody seriously hurt or anything like that. I have seen the police have to intervene in some of these things to calm things down.
- D: People were fighting?
- A: Scuffling I would call it, a little scuffling. I have never seen anything major, anybody hurt very bad or anything like that. I have never seen that. Obviously when you have these religious and political and religious feelings and you have deeply held feelings of both sides and the police will show up and intervene many times. They will find out what is going on and they have gotten in and stopped things before, gotten in between people out there. They do that quite a lot. They show up at certain types of demonstration that they think there is gonna be some problems at. They will show up and make their presence known. It is probably a valid use of policy force to prevent violence. I see nothing really wrong with it. Like I say, people have a freedom of speech and they have designated the plaza as a free speech area so until they change that that is the way I guess it will be. Until they make it a closed campus meaning you have to show your id. when you go onto the campus and it is closed off to everybody.
- D: That will limit free speech?
- A: Closed campuses are different than open campuses. Like the University of Florida is an open campus. Anybody can go onto the campus as long as they do not break

any laws and as long as they are not disrupting the university.

D: Have you seen any laws broken out on the campus with regard to the religious speakers?

A: Like I said, I have seen minor scuffles which would not be anything major, minor scuffles.

D: Have any of the students pressed charges against these prophesiers or did Jed press charges against the...

A: I do not think any charges have been pressed. One time the police were going to shut Jed down and all the people that were heckling started to chant, free Jed, free Jed.

D: Why did the police want to shut Jed down?

A: Cause they thought he was insighting a disturbance on campus and the people that were opposing him the most were the ones that wanted to keep him around there so they could keep heckling him or harassing him.

D: For entertainment?

A: Yes, for entertainment value if anything else. Actually they felt that Jed did have a right to do it even though they disagreed with what he was saying that he had the right to say it. The cops were going to arrest him and they just let Jed go when they realized that a lot of people just wanted to have him out there.

D: When they attempted to arrest him was it just because it was strong, loud language?

A: Well, there is some kind of law they have about interfering with the function of the University, because it is state property. I guess they interpret the law is that they could intervene and stop it because it was creating a public disturbance. There are laws like that everywhere, creating a public nuisance, disturbance. It is definitely interpreted by the policy involved that would have an interpretation of it, their interpretation of the law. It is not a fine clear cut thing, what a public disturbance is.

D: You mentioned some of these right-winged, Christian, republican God types and you have talked of the Moonies and you have talked about this newest, these right-winged preachers with the red coats. Are there any other Christian type minsters out there before we go to completely different religions?

A: I think I have pretty much covered them. There have been preachers who preached a socialist Jesus, a hippie, socialist Jesus. A guy named **Ronald McDonald** being one them rather eccentric character. There have been others like him who come

out there and preach a different kind of religion. They do not get heckled very much. Republicans are not very good at hecklers. They are good at yelling things at Clinton about his sex life or something like that. They are not very good at it. They do not have a very good talent for it. I have never seen it done very well by them.

- D: Well I guess you would have to have an intellectual foundation to heckle very well.
- A: Well the kind of heckling I do you would. I consider myself pretty knowledgeable in religion and history and political science, enough to carry on a conversation with anybody. Professors have come out on campus and asked my opinion on things, especially about history. They have come up and had conversations with me. Many times they seek me out when I am out there and just sit around and talk a little bit about history. I still study history. I find it fascinating.
- D: I have heard you talk about some of the Bible history when you were heckling some of these ministers. I think one example might be you try to put the doctrine they are preaching in historical perspective of bronze age sheep herders. I think that is a good one. Give us some examples.
- A: The nature photographer who did all the beautiful photographs of California, what is his name?
- D: The photographers name was?
- A: **Ansel Adams.** Ansel Adams was asked by **Bill Moreyers**, they were sitting in a beautiful amphitheater in \_\_\_\_\_ Park, all these beautiful granite mountain and Bill Moreyers said, when you see all this wonder do you think of the Bible, do you think of God being behind this? Ansel Adams just laughed, he said, frankly the babbling if a bunch of bronze age sheep herders in the middle east have nothing to do with this. I think that I might have picked it up from that. I do not think that Ansel Adams picked it up from me, I think I picked it up from them.
- D: That is a good one.
- A: However, if you do study the Bible and I am not coming down on people of the Jewish faith that the Old Testament, that Christians call the Old Testament, is basically a book by a bunch of very vindictive sheep herders. I believe it is in the Bible there, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, he leadeth me to green pastures. **Alrust Huxley** had a great little reflection on that. He said, why does a shepherd look after his sheep and he said, for three reasons. One, is to fleece the sheep of their wool when they need it the most, when it is cold. Two, is to castrate all the males except for a handful and three, is to eat any animal when it becomes useless for producing wool. A horrible analogy there. There was that human beings are sheep and that God is their shepherd. Well believe me a shepherd does not

look after his flock for the good of the flock because that flock is ordained for the oven or for castration or for having the hardship of having their wool taken off when it is needed the most. The Bible I consider to be the judeo-Christian religion and that includes the Muslim religion that came out of it too. Although the approaches from different angles are horrible, horrible. Anti-nature, anti-woman, anti-freedom, anti-intellectual, it is a horrible religion now. **Joseph Campbell** had a reflection on this. He was fast to compare Buddhism and Christianity. He started laughing hysterically, he said, here is this one philosophy that you are the center of the universe and you study it or reflect it your whole life or you try to achieve unity with it and you have this other religion that you are this inferior underlain of a huge male God in the sky who you either serve forever as a slave or you will be tortured forever. He says, which one of these is \_\_\_\_\_ like Buddhism. There is a capability that you can consider Christianity to be a valid answer for almost anything all though he does say that the myths of Christianity are valid, the lessons are valid but the religion itself is basically an inhumane religion, it is a horrible, horrible religion. That is one of the reasons that I think I like to heckle Jesus freaks. I would never go to a church and heckle anybody. I would never really heckle anybody who just got out there and read the Bible. But when you mix politics and religion together which incidentally is very much prohibited by a lot of scriptures in the Bible then you are open for having your religion challenged.

- D: On the Plaza of the Americas, Bill, have you found yourself challenging or heckling any other religions, non-judea Christian, any of the other religions that are out there? Do you have experience with any of them that you can talk about?
- A: No. I remember I angered a lot of Jewish students once when a handful of Iranian and Palestinians were out there protesting the invasion of Lebanon by Israel and I sided to them and I was exposed to a little abuse for that. I was able to endure it. In fact, the Palestinians were so impressed they made me an honorary member of the PLO on the spot.
- D: What year was that?
- A: Let us see, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon which resulted in the deaths of a couple hundred thousand people that was early 1980s. I cannot remember the exact year they did that. Utterly destroyed Lebanon as a country by the result of the invasion.
- D: Now, I think I recall you had said that the Hindu or East Indian guru who started the Krishna consciousness movement was on the Plaza of the Americas in 1971 or something like that.
- A: Well, a little bit later than that. I told you about Liebermann and how he met the first Hari Krishna who had ever come out to the campus. That was not their guru. Two or three years later the Krishnas instituted their food program, which still goes on

today.

D: Now who was Liebermann?

A: They called him radical Jack Liebermann, I believe. He used to hang out with his sister, interesting girl, I have no idea what happened to her. He became the first leader of the Hari Krishnas. He was the first Hari Krishna in Gainesville, **Convert**. He dropped out of radical politics and became Hari Krishna, the president of their temple.

D: His name was?

A: Jack Liebermann, I believe. I could be wrong with that but I think I am right. He is their chief attorney for the whole Hari Krishna religion. He went back to law school and got a degree. He is their number one attorney.

D: A Krishna lawyer?

A: Yes, he is their number one attorney.

D: Fancy that.

A: Yes, I know. **Pra Boo Pod**, the man from India who founded the America Hari Krishna movement came onto the Plaza of the Americas I would say in 1974, maybe.

D: So this man Liebermann had met a traveling Krishna on the plaza?

A: Right.

D: And become a Krishna...

A: Right, on the plaza. Like converted it.

D: And he started the Gainesville Krishna Temple?

A: Right and started their food program which they are famous for. They go out and they feed everybody a meal Monday through Friday and ask for donations on the plaza. Now Pra Boo Pod visited the plaza. To this day since I saw this and most of the Krishnas here are too young, many of them were barely born at the time or maybe unborn at the time, but not many Krishnas saw Pra Boo Pod except the ones my age.

D: Well, they may have been in previous incarnation.

A: Absolutely. Well there might have been convenience stores all through histories where.... well that is another story. They come up and ask me exactly where Pra Boo Pod sat on the plaza. I remember it distinctly where it was and I will go over and show them the spot and they will bow down and start worshiping it. I will not say worshipping it, I would say they go through some sort of, whatever they go through.

D: Chanting?

A: Yes, but that is considered to be a holy spot where Pra Boo Pod sat, literally, or anything that he did. I mean, there are scriptures...

D: He came out during the day and spoke for a few hours?

A: He spoke and they had chanting and dancing and various things like that.

D: Was he funded by the university?

A: That I do not know. I really do not. I would doubt it.

D: I was told he was recently.

A: Maybe he spoke at some function on the university besides the plaza. He might of had a meeting that I did not attend in the auditorium or something. That is entirely possible, it might be, I really do not know.

D: So you saw him on the plaza?

A: On the plaza, yes.

D: And spoke with him?

A: Yes, I think I asked him about my theory of reverse reincarnation called negative karma. According to the Krishnas, you are reborn higher and higher in life the better you lead your life. I asked Pra Boo Pod if you led such a base disgusting life should you be born lower and lower and reach the same goal as the person higher and higher of not being born again and being at one with the universe. I said if you were a rock or something like that you must be pretty at one with the universe. He immediately denounced me and called me a rascal. Now, I did not realize at the time what a rascal meant to a Hari Krishnas. I thought it was kind of cute.

D: Rascal Bill?

A: Rascal Bill. Basically that means s.o.b., low down, scum sucker, bottom feeder of the universe. When they use the word rascal it is not a nice term.

**Tape 3, Side A Begins...**

A: An illusion that you are in an unchanging population because the students come and go every four years, three years, a new generation comes along, but they are all the same age. So, it is kind of interesting. It is not like the real world. The people there have not had to sell out yet. There still in this never, never land that society has created for them, namely the university, which is a kind of a very easy way to spend three or four years. It is not very hard and I think everybody knows that that attends college. It is not really very difficult. Almost any kind of knowledge you get there you sit down and spend a little time you will be able memorize it enough to pass the test and go onto the next level. The university is very deficient in teaching people basic things about history or even science that they need to know.

D: I do not mean to interrupt, but I would interject that I think that is part to the public schools as well. Being a middle school teacher and seeing a lot of what is coming out of the high schools we have a lot of deficient education even these students entering college needing remedial classes. I interrupted you Bill, what were you going to say.

A: What I was going to say is what the plaza provides is ... Gainesville is the most, probably now, especially now, is the most liberal city in Florida. In the old days you could say that Miami Beach or parts of Miami might be have been very liberal because of its high Jewish population, mostly from the northeast, but now that is no longer the case. A lot of Cubans are not very liberal even though Miami did vote democrat for some reason the last election, they voted for Clinton and the Jewish population has become a lot more conservative because of Israel. So, Gainesville, believe it or not, is the most liberal place in Florida and the Plaza of the Americas is probably the most liberal place in the City of Gainesville. Therefore, you have this little mini environment that has gone on now for twenty something years essentially in the same form. It is a place where people with say values that are definitely different than the American mainstream are congregating. This is very aggravating to a lot of people.

D: What time of day is this activity you are talking about?

A: The activity goes on essentially from, I would imagine, 11:00 to about 2:00 or three in the afternoon and then it ceases. It only goes on during the week days and it only goes on when school is in session. In the summer it slacks off because the plaza slacks off during the summer. There is a lot less students and it is very hot and there is not that much activity, but it has basically going into your Fall and Winter semesters. Therefore, since I believe your class is studying the history of the plaza

that seems to be what it was. Before 1969, I do not really know. I heard it was a ROTC drill field and I was told by the head of the physical plant department when we had our little protest about the paving of the plaza that it was not a very major hangout. It was only until the library was built. What will be the future, I do not know. It is different. It is the only place where a right winged preacher would come out and probably get really soundly heckled on campus. Everywhere else people would either ignore them or agree with them, but on the plaza they are going to get some opposition. I think that is one reason they like to come out to the plaza. It is the last place where they think they can convert people to their cause that are unbelievers. It is the last little place that has a little bit of \_\_\_\_\_, where the people might think things that are not taught in class or might experience things that are not taught there, as opposed to other parts of the campus.

D: So they get a very unique education out there?

A: Yes, it is part of their education.

D: It is a social education between 11:00 and 1:00 when the Krishnas are...