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Oral history interview with Richard Schultz, 2012 September 25-26

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Richard Schultz on September 25, 2012. The interview took place in Brattleboro, Vermont, and was conducted by Jeannine Falino for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. The interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Richard Schultz has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

JEANNINE FALINO: Okay, this is Jeannine Falino [on September 25, 2012]. I am here on behalf of the Smithsonian Institution, the Archives of American Art, and I am meeting here at Brattleboro, Vermont with Richard Schultz at his kitchen table with a beautiful view of his backyard.

And Richard, we're going to — we're going to start at the very beginning and you're going to tell me about your parents and your youth. So tell us, where were you born?

RICHARD SCHULTZ: I was born in Indiana.

MS. FALINO: And the town?

MR. SCHULTZ: A place called Lafayette. And I was named after my grandfather. My first name is Moses.

MS. FALINO: Ah.

MR. SCHULTZ: And my second — named after two — my two grandfathers, Moses and Richard.

MS. FALINO: And Richard.

MR. SCHULTZ: My grandfather was a Jewish merchant there in Lafayette who had made a big success. He had a store and he was — he was a self-educated person. I think he — I'm sure he went to grade school. He learned how to do his sums, I suppose, but he was — he was a completely self-made man. He was — like in the — kind of an American icon.

MS. FALINO: Was he born in the United States?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, he was born in the United States, where his parents I think were not. I think it was his parents who — they came into this country through New Orleans and they made their way up through — up the Ohio River, or the — they got to Kentucky. And there are some graves there of my ancestors.

MS. FALINO: Do you know where they came from?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, that's a —

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: — big mystery, because I have a brother who has an interest in geology. I mean —

MS. FALINO: Genealogy.

MR. SCHULTZ: — genealogy. And he's got a daughter who is also interested in genealogy.

And they — because "Schultz" is essentially not a Jewish name. I mean, maybe this is — there are Jewish names. There are names that you can identify it as being Jewish, but I — we lived in — parenthetically, when we lived in Pennsylvania where there was this — it was settled by Germans from the Palatinate, which is Southern Germany, and they sort of — almost around the area of Stuttgart. They spoke a dialect. And there are graveyards there full of Schultz's, but the — I mean, they're all Lutherans.

I shouldn't tell you this story, but there was this guy, a doctor, in Allentown who we went to. He took care of rheumatism. And his name was Schultz. And I said, "Tell me about your background because I'm very curious." Well, he was Jewish, but he said, "My name was given to me on Ellis Island."

MS. FALINO: Typical.

MR. SCHULTZ: This is — the name they came — that my ancestors came here with, the guy said, "You can't deal with this. Nobody can pronounce that name. Nobody can spell that name. Why don't you take this name that's on this loaf of bread here, which is Schultz?" So he said, "That's how I got my name." I said, "Well, so this is kind of" —

The name Schultz as a Jewish name is not something that exists, but what we found out with this genealogical thing was that there was a time when Napoleon's forces took over Eastern — I mean, Western Germany. And they got into the area, and in that section the Jews still didn't have two names. I mean, they had oftentimes used the son of — Abraham, son of Isaac or god knows what.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So at this time Napoleon said: You can't do this. We have to have a system we can deal with here in terms of, you know, bookkeeping and archival stuff.

MS. FALINO: I see.

MR. SCHULTZ: So they forced the Jews to take a name. And apparently that's what happened to my ancestors, the Jewish ancestors, is that they took a name, which was Schultz, which is a very common German name. And then they left and they came to the United States —

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: — with this name.

MS. FALINO: All right. So —

MR. SCHULTZ: So — [laughs] — that's the whole story about that.

MS. FALINO: Was your family observant?

MR. SCHULTZ: Hmm?

MS. FALINO: Were they observant to the Jewish faith?

MR. SCHULTZ: No. That was the other thing that was funny. My mother was a Presbyterian, and she married this guy, my father, who was the son of Moses Schultz. Oh —

MS. FALINO: Your mother — what was your mother's maiden name?

MR. SCHULTZ: Howard.

MS. FALINO: Howard, okay. What was her first name?

MR. SCHULTZ: Mary.

MS. FALINO: Mary Howard, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: Mary Norris Howard — N-O-R-R-I-S — Mary Norris. She had that whole lineage back, you know, England through the Howards. And I remember as a child being sent to a — what we call — what was called a Sunday school, but it was a Jewish —

MS. FALINO: Oh, so it was a Hebrew school.

MR. SCHULTZ: No, no, no.

MS. FALINO: No, it wasn't Hebrew school. Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: Just — what we learned was Bible stories, but this was maybe only — maybe two years, at least maybe only one year. And it was in the basement of this temple there. By that time my parents had moved to Iowa to a town called Davenport, which is on the Mississippi. And they — because somehow my grandfather's business, this great guy that I was named after, collapsed, folded. I don't know what happened. I never —

MS. FALINO: The business failed.

MR. SCHULTZ: The business failed.

MS. FALINO: This is your grandfather, Moses?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: In Lafayette, failed. So my parents, who were just married, had — and I was born — they had to leave. They had relatives who had stores and they — my parents went to Iowa where they started from scratch. I mean, not really. They didn't start a business; they joined another family business —

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which was part of the — I mean, there was an intermarriage between — this other family was called Abrahams.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And they — my father ran — helped to run this store in Davenport.

MS. FALINO: So they were — this was just another kind of a business. Do you know what kind of business your grandfather's was? Was it —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, it was a women's clothing business.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And they also had, I think — well, what used to be called dry goods.

MS. FALINO: Yep. And then the Abrams family, was it the same kind of business.

MR. SCHULTZ: Mm-hmm. [Affirmation.]

MS. FALINO: Okay. So then you grew up in Davenport, really.

MR. SCHULTZ: I did. My whole life was in Davenport and — you know, up until the time I went into the Navy, but —

MS. FALINO: And so did you have any — in your childhood education, did you do much in the way of artwork or drawing or constructing?

MR. SCHULTZ: I was always interested in drawing, as many young children are at home. And I — my mother tried to supplement my art education by sending me to the local museum, which had lessons for children, but I remember being incredibly frustrated about because — I don't remember being taught anything substantial but being asked to draw — I remember this vivid thing. I was asked to draw a picture of a bunch of Indians sitting around a campfire. Well, I remember thinking, I have no idea how to — how do I start this?

MS. FALINO: How do you begin?

MR. SCHULTZ: And I just didn't know. It was incredibly frustrating. I was — I didn't — it wasn't a big thing in my life. It was a big thing in the sense — in a negative way, I suppose.

MS. FALINO: But you did a lot of drawing on your own.

MR. SCHULTZ: I did a lot of drawing. I used to copy drawings from magazines and books. I don't think I remember ever having — ever trying to draw anything original.

MS. FALINO: But you were — you were looking at pictures in magazines and your —

MR. SCHULTZ: I would copy.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: I would — yes, and my whole life revolved around a workshop that I had in my basement. And my father bought me, at some point — I guess I was maybe junior high or — a home — what's called a home workshop.

MS. FALINO: Right. So you had a little bench?

MR. SCHULTZ: I had a workbench with a — with a saw and a lathe and a jigsaw.

MS. FALINO: Wow.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was all this — yes, it was quite a — so I had this room in the basement, which was — I spent every moment I could there making — first of all, making things like model airplanes, which were, in those days — I don't know if young people do this anymore, but they're made out of sticks and balsa wood —

MS. FALINO: Balsa, right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and tissue paper, just wonderful stuff.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Did you enter them in competitions or it was just for pleasure?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, I just did it for — there was — I didn't know anybody — oh, I did know — I had one other friend who was interested in this. But eventually I designed — for some reason I got in — I don't know how — got interested in making a steam engine.

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: Now, you think, well, a steam engine? How do you do that?

MS. FALINO: Made it out of what?

MR. SCHULTZ: How do you go about doing that?

MS. FALINO: And out of what kind of materials?

MR. SCHULTZ: The other thing that was important about my education was that I — in the school I went to you had what was called manual training —

MS. FALINO: Right, manual education.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which you had — and you had it divided up in terms of materials. You had a wood shop.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: You had a metal shop. You even had as shop devoted to electricity. And I remember we made a little electric motor.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: These were — I loved this. This was just right down my alley.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And so I still have the steam engine, which I can show you later.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a very — I put it — there was one — I was given something called an Erector Set as a toy.

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: These are quite neat, well-designed toys. And so I'm using some of the parts from the Erector Set and other — I, you know, sort of put — and another thing you had in those days was a toy that allowed you to cast lead soldiers.

MS. FALINO: Oh, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: You had a mold and you — and a way of — kind of like a ladle, which you had put lead in.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And you could heat this lead up and pour it into this mold.

MS. FALINO: Right. And was it a two-part mold?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: It came apart. It was a metal mold. And this was terrific. I mean, you learned a lot from this.

MS. FALINO: Process. It's all about process.

MR. SCHULTZ: So —

MS. FALINO: So you made the — the steam engine you made as part of one of your classes in high school?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, no.

MS. FALINO: Or you made that in your —

MR. SCHULTZ: At home.

MS. FALINO: You made it at home.

MR. SCHULTZ: All this stuff I did at home. And what I remember making in class was a cookie sheet for my mother to bake.

MS. FALINO: To bake on.

MR. SCHULTZ: And you learned how to work with sheet metal.

MS. FALINO: Right, to crimp it and curl it.

MR. SCHULTZ: Fold it, yes.

MS. FALINO: Fold it.

MR. SCHULTZ: Do all these things.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And in the wood shop I made something for my mother to help her do the laundry. It was a wooden fork, a two-pronged affair, which was pretty big. And this was the — in those days you didn't have — the washing machine consisted of a device — it was an electric-powered — it was a tank full of soapy water and inside was a contraption that went back and forth like this and jostled the clothes, just sort of sloshed the clothes around. But then you had these clothes in this hot water and you had to lift them out and put them through a wringer.

MS. FALINO: Yes, and they were at the top. They had the rollers.

MR. SCHULTZ: You remember that. I mean —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — This fork was designed to lift the clothes up and stuff them into the wringer without burning your fingers, or without — you know, it wasn't that hot, but to make it easy.

MS. FALINO: Yes, it was an aid — an aid.

MR. SCHULTZ: So these were two things I made in school.

MS. FALINO: Great.

MR. SCHULTZ: But this steam engine — the big trick about a steam engine is — I don't know how to explain this easily. You have a cylinder, and inside of the cylinder there's a piston, which is on rod. This piston goes back and forth. That's what essentially an automobile engine is, an internal combustion. It has the piston.

Well, you have to figure out the trick is to have the steam enter this chamber, which is the cylinder, and push the piston this way, and then have the steam enter the other end of the cylinder and push it back again.

MS. FALINO: Push it back in.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, trick was, how do you do this without having the ability to machine metal, to read a micrometer, you know, just anything which was more — which went way beyond my abilities at that time. So I invented a valve which would do this, basically taking a radiator — radiators used to have a little valve which allowed the — to drain the water out of the one end.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a very simple little valve. And I took this valve and I modified it so that I could use it to do this trick of pushing the steam back and forth.

Well, I was so thrilled with this, that I had done this — I felt really good about it. I remember that. And then in the school I went to there was a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica. So I started looking up steam engines and I found out that this valve had been invented — I didn't invent it. I wasn't the first person to invent this. Of course not. This was a precursor to what they in fact ended up using for steam engines. But it took —

MS. FALINO: But it validated you.

MR. SCHULTZ: — it took a little bit of the edge off of my ego. But I realized that, okay, I designed something that somebody else had designed and this was —

MS. FALINO: Pretty cool.

MR. SCHULTZ: — it made me feel good. This was essentially what I have been doing the rest of my life.

MS. FALINO: So it was a realization that you could create something —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: — totally self-propelled and find the right solution.

MR. SCHULTZ: And, you know, except the big problem is that it didn't lead — it wasn't a direct path toward becoming a designer. It was determined that I should be an engineer. My mother was a graduate of a school called Purdue University, which was an engineering school, so — she didn't study engineering but she studied calculus and she was pretty well educated. But she had this idea that an engineer was a pretty good —

MS. FALINO: Respectable.

MR. SCHULTZ: — thing to be, you know?

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So I, not knowing really much of — not being able to make a decision about that, I was sent off to an engineering school.

MS. FALINO: Well, but first you went to Iowa State. Is that right?

MR. SCHULTZ: That's the engineering school.

MS. FALINO: That was where the engineering school was? Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And that was a disaster because I couldn't do the math. And it was terribly uninteresting for me. I couldn't do what I'd been doing in my basement all this time. I had to do this math, which gets really tricky. After calculus comes something called differential equations. And that's — I mean, it was — I really — I flunked out of the whole — but at the same time I had to deal with — I mean, with the — World War II came along.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And I enlisted in the Navy. And in an officer's training program — and for some reason — I never understood it but the Navy wanted you to study engineering in order to become an officer in the Navy, and this I couldn't do any better than I could do it as a civilian. So I was — I kept — I flunked out of that, and then they sent me to Chicago to study electronics, which was where I would be able to repair radios and radars and stuff like that. This I couldn't do either, because I couldn't do the math.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: I remember at one point somebody came to me — an officer said to me — I kept being sent to these schools because I think I had a pretty good — they give you a test when you go into the service to test your intelligence, and I guess I had a pretty good score on the test, so they kept trying to educate me more.

And so finally this officer asked me, "Well, what would you like to do?" And I thought, you know, I remember being impressed that he asked me this question because I thought, my god, here is this big war effort. You know, we've got to defeat the Japs and the Nazis and all, and they're asking me what I would like to do. I said, "Well, I'd like to go to sea," because up until that time I'd never been on a ship. I'd only been in Iowa and Illinois.

[They laugh.] Then I went and became a radar operator. That is somebody who actually looks at the radar and interprets what they see on it. That I could do.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: That was easy.

MS. FALINO: Good. Good.

MR. SCHULTZ: So then I did that for the rest of the time I was in the Navy. Then I got out of the Navy and my parents had moved by that time to a town in southern Indiana on the Ohio River called Evansville, where my father ran a store, as he had done before. And there was a — they knew a man who taught art at the local high school. This man somehow knew about this school in Chicago called The Institute of Design, which is this — this is this book.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And I don't know how he knew about it because it was so obscure, this place, this school. First of all, you know, it had existed for quite a long time under Moholy-Nagy, but moved around a lot because they could never keep the finances. I don't really know the whole —

MS. FALINO: It's a complicated story.

MR. SCHULTZ: It finally got to a building on Dearborn Street in Chicago where — and then, because of the GI Bill, it was full of students.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: They finally had a whole bunch of students, and it was the best thing that had ever happened to me from the point of view of education.

MS. FALINO: So this — you're talking about the Illinois Institute of Technology.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, but not that maybe, because it was called the Institute of Design. And the year I graduated, the school was acquired by IIT, Illinois Institute of Technology. The head of the architecture school there was Mies van der Rohe, but I — you know, I don't know really the details of how that all happened. It happened in spite of Mies — I mean, Mies — this school, the ID, was essentially an American version of the Bauhaus.

MS. FALINO: Right, when Moholy-Nagy established it, it was considered —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, it was.

MS. FALINO: — the new Bauhaus.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, it was called the new Bauhaus. What Moholy said he was doing was teaching a methodology of inventiveness —

MS. FALINO: I like that.

MR. SCHULTZ: — not design, not — he tried to avoid — one of his interesting ideas about teaching was to avoid naming things, to, in fact, set things up so that you, in fact, didn't — you're not — how should I put this? You are not trying to design a car; you're designing transportation.

MS. FALINO: Yes, to keep things as open-ended as possible.

MR. SCHULTZ: I went there and I just loved it. It was just great. The first three semesters, which they called the foundation course, was this kind of training.

MS. FALINO: And who were your teachers? Do you remember?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. One of the teachers was the head of the school, named Serge Chermayeff.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And Serge went off then became a professor at Yale and at Harvard. He started at Brooklyn College, actually. He came over here — that's another whole issue with this — which involves Hans Knoll a little bit. But essentially I got put in touch with the whole modern movement by going to this school.

MS. FALINO: Absolutely.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was — this is like a Bible to me, this book.

MS. FALINO: You're holding the book called *Vision in Motion* —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: — by —

MR. SCHULTZ: *Vision in Motion* by Moholy.

MS. FALINO: By Moholy-Nagy.

MR. SCHULTZ: And it's all about — everything in here is all these illustrations are work that was done in the school.

MS. FALINO: So it's student work, a lot of student work in the book?

MR. SCHULTZ: It's really student work — well, not all student work but —

MS. FALINO: And some of his own work.

MR. SCHULTZ: — the work of, you know, all the great — all the great artists of that period. So, you know, it was Picasso, the whole business.

MS. FALINO: And so let's just return to this. Serge was your first teacher, Serge Chermayeff.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, Serge Chermayeff was not the first teacher. He was the head of the school and he taught also architecture and design. In fact, I had him as — in a course — in one of my last courses that I had with him, with Serge.

He was a maniac. He was kind of — I just — somebody wrote a biography of him, which I just got a copy of after all these years. And I read — it's fascinating because when Serge left Russia, he went to England. He set up a — all the people knew each other. It was a big — it was kind of like a modernist mafia. And all those people who didn't come directly to the States but went to England knew each other in London. There was a firm called Plan, which was a — which was a furniture company that Serge designed some furniture for, and they sold — that's how Serge met Hans Knoll.

MS. FALINO: Ah.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was Hans made a trip — or moved to England from Germany.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: He left his father's business. And then he imported his father's furniture and they sold it in —

MS. FALINO: In London.

MR. SCHULTZ: — in England.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: This, as a student, I didn't know anything about, of course. And somebody like Peter Blake, for example — do you know about him?

MS. FALINO: I don't know who — who is Peter Blake?

MR. SCHULTZ: Peter Blake wrote a book. But had his finger in everything, but he was the editor of *Architectural Forum*, one of his major jobs. He was never — he was quite — he was sort of the verge of becoming the head of design at MoMA but didn't. But he knew Hans and he — I didn't — you know, none of this was something that I knew about as a student. In fact, you wouldn't.

MS. FALINO: Right. So what was Peter's involvement here? Was he teaching? Did he — he didn't teach in Illinois, did he?

MR. SCHULTZ: Blake?

MS. FALINO: No.

MR. SCHULTZ: I think he taught — he taught maybe at Carnegie Tech maybe for a while.

MS. FALINO: So who were your other teachers?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, there was a teacher named Filipowski.

MS. FALINO: Oh, Filipowski, right.

MR. SCHULTZ: Filipowski eventually went to MIT. All the good guys had to leave once they — what happened when the ID was absorbed into IIT, they hired a man who had been working for Raymond Loewy. Now, this is the kind of design which was — which — this was industrial design for — and they just — those people designed for industry. They designed for — somebody did a survey at a — what's it called? A salesperson or a marketing person figured out what this company should have based on what some other company was selling. Then they hired a design firm to design something which is a little bit different and better.

MS. FALINO: Yes?

MR. SCHULTZ: That was the whole system. That's not what Moholy taught.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Moholy taught — said you start from scratch. You start — you know. And this is basically what Knoll, Miller, the Eameses, they all had this attitude which was, invent something new —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — not do — not do what your competitor is doing but just doing it better, because you — you looked around and you saw, well, he was selling so and so many sofas or chairs to a client that wasn't buying yours, so you wanted to have something which is sort of like what the — what your competitors had but wasn't a copy and wasn't too far different.

MS. FALINO: Yes, but is not really very original or a new contribution.

MR. SCHULTZ: Originality was not part of it.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

Now, before we go on, do you want to move to this chair so the light's not on your eyes?

MR. SCHULTZ: You know what I'm looking at? Dirty windows.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.] So maybe you want to walk the other way.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Come around the other way.

MR. SCHULTZ: I should.

This whole thing was a disaster when they — it's as if these people at IIT had no idea what the Institute of Design was all about. They hired this guy. His name was Jay Doblin. He had been working for [Walter Dorwin] Teague or Roy [ph]. I can't remember which. And these guys, you know, they would design something like a streamlined pencil sharpener. There was no kind of — it was style.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: What they were interested in was style, which was not — the modern movement was nothing to do with style.

MS. FALINO: So, now, who else taught you besides Filipowski and Chermayeff?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, these are not names you would know.

MS. FALINO: That's okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: My first teacher there, who made a big impression on me, was named John Walley.

MS. FALINO: How do you spell his last name?

MR. SCHULTZ: John Walley — W-A-L-L-E-Y, I think. And John, I remember thinking — he made sculptures out of antlers. Now this was — I knew it — I mean, I just — I just knew this was junk, but John, as often happens with a teacher, you — the best teachers maybe aren't the greatest artists.

MS. FALINO: But he obviously made an impact.

MR. SCHULTZ: He made — he was — he was terrific the way he could talk to people, young people who were — well, we were — we weren't so young. We were all ex-GIs.

MS. FALINO: Right. And of course they often say GIs made better students because you really, you know —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, you're more mature, I guess.

MS. FALINO: You're more mature and you were focused on getting an education so you could get on with your lives.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. You know, I think about this GI Bill. That was a great thing. If you want to make a country —

MS. FALINO: Great.

MR. SCHULTZ: — great, I mean —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — pay for their — pay for their education. Send them to school.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's just — you know, I don't know where the money came from. Of course it came from the Treasury.

MS. FALINO: But it was — it created this phenomenal movement.

MR. SCHULTZ: Even when we bought that house, still the GI Bill was enforced, and we got a cheap mortgage.

MS. FALINO: Because you were a GI.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Yes, it made a lot of things possible.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was 4.5 percent but it was cheap.

MS. FALINO: Yes. [They laugh.]

MR. SCHULTZ: No, this is — this is just — there's a lot of stuff that isn't learned from history, but should be.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Well, that is certainly one of those.

MR. SCHULTZ: I don't think the Republicans would ever dream of a program — tell me, what happens to these ex-servicemen now who come home all beat up? Do they get — is the GI Bill still enforced for those people?

MS. FALINO: I believe that it survived in some fashion, but not to the extent it was.

MR. SCHULTZ: But the school, the IID, was really put on its feet by that GI Bill because —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — the whole school was full of — I remember when the first high school kids came. We looked at these kids like children.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: They were like children, and that was really funny.

MS. FALINO: Yes, and they would while away their time. They didn't have the same sense of — you know, the pressure.

MR. SCHULTZ: There were no grades in this school.

MS. FALINO: No grades?

MR. SCHULTZ: No grades. You either — I still have a postcard somewhere, which I got, which was — which said on it, "You have satisfactorily completed the work for the past year."

MS. FALINO: That's very progressive.

MR. SCHULTZ: That was called progressive education. Well, I taught afterwards.

MS. FALINO: You taught where?

MR. SCHULTZ: In Philadelphia at the school — after I left Knoll and we had almost no money, and before I got that job with Stow Davis. I taught what I was taught, a basic foundation course. And why did I bring that up?

MS. FALINO: No grades, progressive education?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, it was very difficult to grade work like that.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Now, Philadelphia College of Art, that's what's now University of the Arts?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: In those days, wasn't it called — was it part of the museum?

MR. SCHULTZ: Just before that it was called the Museum School.

MS. FALINO: Okay. All right. So we're talking about the same place.

MR. SCHULTZ: That school, yes.

MS. FALINO: Okay. Yes. When you — how long did you teach —

MR. SCHULTZ: But here is what happened: I was asked to grade every — the first year they had grades.

MS. FALINO: Right. Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So I figured out a system based on sort of comparing one student to another. I mean, there wasn't any gold standard on which I could say, well, this is — like, Leonardo da Vinci wouldn't have — so — but what happened was there was a — I was really nervous about this as to whether I was doing what was — I was doing really the right thing or not, but then there was a — there's a graph —

MS. FALINO: Oh, the Bell Curve.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a graph which shows how so and so — in any typical class there will be so and so many A's, so and so many B's —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — so and so many C's, D's and F's. And that's the way it turned out. [They laugh] I mean, I didn't even know about this.

MS. FALINO: So when you were teaching design there at the Philadelphia College of Art, did you get to know any of the other faculty members?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: This is like — what year is this, then? This is like —

MR. SCHULTZ: This is '70 maybe '3 and '4, '5?

MS. FALINO: 1973?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Oh, so after you worked for Knoll.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Oh, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, because Trudy had to go out and become a waitress.

MS. FALINO: After you left Knoll?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. We got some money as a kind of severance. They fired the whole gang of us at one fell swoop. We just were — we were told we're not — because they were getting a lot of really good work coming in from the outside, from — and they — there wasn't any reason they really needed to hire — to pay the salaries of these guys.

MS. FALINO: So they were outsourcing.

MR. SCHULTZ: Hmm?

MS. FALINO: They were outsourcing.

MR. SCHULTZ: They were, but I don't know if they were consciously doing it because it's really hard — that's really hard to do because you don't know who to ask to do the work. You don't go to Loth, Segal or Gwathmey — you know, all of those guys were designing for — young people would come in to Knoll with good ideas.

MS. FALINO: I'm sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: And they would say — and for those of us who were down in Pennsylvania working on our little projects, sometimes we would then become — or they would really run the whole — the project from — the outside guy would run through our shop to make it into a product. Do you know what's called the 40-in-4 chair? It's David Rowland.

MS. FALINO: Okay, I don't know it — 40-in-4 chair?

MR. SCHULTZ: Forty-in-4 means that you will stack 40 chairs in 4 feet high.

MS. FALINO: Oh, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, this is — if you look at — or you see one of these chairs, you will recognize it. It's a very, very well-thought-through stacking chair that was designed by this fellow, David Rowland, who brought it to Knoll in a rather unfinished condition.

What was important about the design was that the steel frame, which is made out of very thin steel rod, was designed in such a way that it would stack very, very closely. But what he hadn't solved was the seat and the back —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — the part you sit on.

MS. FALINO: That is kind of important.

MR. SCHULTZ: Right. [They laugh.] So he worked on that. He worked a lot on that. And finally — this is a sort of interesting Knoll story. I'm getting off — way off the track. We took the design up to New York for Shu's approval. Well, she said, no, we're not going to do it.

Well, part of the reason was I think she didn't really like the way it looked. It wasn't like a Barcelona chair. I mean, it didn't have this really great elegance.

MS. FALINO: Aesthetic that Knoll was known for.

MR. SCHULTZ: Except it does have. If you see it today you'll see it as a really nice concoction. But Eames had designed a stacking chair, which was essentially just a stacking base for a fiberglass shell. And the base had, on the side, a hook that was huge —

MS. FALINO: Oh, yes, so they just sit and fix them in place.

MR. SCHULTZ: — like a big —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And you could — you could take one of these chairs and throw it at another one and it would hook

together. Rowland, because this was an example of trying to compete with the competition, which I said was never done, but in this case it was deemed to be the thing that one needed to have in a stacking chair.

Well, because this thing stacked 40 and 4, because it was so miniscule in terms of the parts, we had to figure out a way of hooking these chairs together which wouldn't interfere with that stacking capability.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: But it was very tricky to use. I mean, you could — you could bang these chairs together and they would stay together if you were lucky. I mean, it was not a — it was not a good design. When we were there in the showroom trying to present this whole thing, it was obvious that it wasn't the greatest thing. And I think that and the way it looked killed it.

MS. FALINO: Ah. All right, now let me — we're almost at 50 minutes.

MR. SCHULTZ: That's completely off the track.

MS. FALINO: Off the track. That's okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: We got there because of — we were talking about outside designers.

MS. FALINO: That's right. So —

MR. SCHULTZ: That was one of the —

MS. FALINO: But I'm going to start a new chip, so I'm going to stop right now —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: — and we're going to pick up in just a moment.

MR. SCHULTZ: What time is it?

[End of disc.]

JEANNINE FALINO: Okay, this is the second session with Richard Schultz. And I'm here in Brattleboro, Vermont. This is Jeannine Falino.

And we were hearing about how Richard had been at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Or it had a different name but then it changed, and the faculty and the faculty approaches changed from what was originally presented by Moholy-Nagy, the idea of being creative and original in your designs to a new focus on just modifying other designs to be competitive, just to put it simply.

So tell us, what did you do after you graduated? I think I found somewhere that you went — you went to Europe for a while?

RICHARD SCHULTZ: Yes, I went to Europe — the first time I went to Europe was in 1948. I was a student at the ID, and —

MS. FALINO: So while you were — while you were at school in Chicago during —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, I went to Europe that summer —

MS. FALINO: That summer? Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: — on a bicycle trip. It was — it was an organization called the American Youth Association —

MS. FALINO: Sure. They still exist.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which didn't do too much in this country but in Europe there were hostels all over the place. And you could go very cheaply on a ship that had been a troop ship, and not converted back to a passenger ship. It was just used to transport, cheaply, people connected with education, whether a student or professors. It was a wonderful trip.

MS. FALINO: Terrific.

MR. SCHULTZ: So —

MS. FALINO: Did you travel alone?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, I went with a group of —

MS. FALINO: Students?

MR. SCHULTZ: — students. And that — I had along with me a letter of introduction to Le Corbusier —

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: From Serge Chermayeff.

MS. FALINO: Very nice.

MR. SCHULTZ: I still have the letter.

MS. FALINO: Great.

MR. SCHULTZ: And I went to visit Corb [Le Corbusier] in Paris. And he lived in a house that he'd built, a building. He lived on the top floor. That was a big thrill. I didn't know very much French, so I went with a friend from the group that we were — a big — just because I was in the same room with him, I mean, in his atelier and where he —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — we looked at his paintings and sculptures and stuff.

MS. FALINO: So was it — was it awesome?

MR. SCHULTZ: It was. I mean, to this day if I — if I wear a pair of espadrilles I think of Corb because he had on — that's what kind of shoes he had on.

MS. FALINO: Really? [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: He wasn't young at that time. I don't know when he died, but — oh, after that he would — came to New York when they were building the U.N. building.

MS. FALINO: But so let's stay in Europe now. Who did you — do you remember who you traveled with?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I traveled with a group of people I had never met before.

MS. FALINO: Oh, okay. All right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And one of them I still see. He was the leader of this group. We bicycled all over. Well, some days we took trains. And of course I tried to see — this was my first trip to Europe, so —

MS. FALINO: Were you trying to see a lot of architecture? Was that your focus?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I tried to see art history and modern buildings — not much modern buildings to be seen.

MS. FALINO: Can you remember any particular for us?

MR. SCHULTZ: I remember a building in Geneva that Corb [Pierre Chareau] designed, which I think was called the Maison de Verre. It was a glass building. But not much else. It wasn't until the second time I went, or maybe the third — I mean, I remember vividly visiting the Ronchamp, Corb's —

MS. FALINO: How do you —

MR. SCHULTZ: You have to go — R-O-N-C-H-A-M-P. It's in Eastern France.

MS. FALINO: Oh, is this the church?

MR. SCHULTZ: It's the church.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a completely free-form kind of building — concrete.

MS. FALINO: Yes, it looks a little bit like a chalet but it's not, and it has — it has —

MR. SCHULTZ: I don't know what it looks like because it doesn't resemble any —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — ecclesiastical architecture that you've ever seen before.

MS. FALINO: Yes, I would love to see that myself. That looks like one of the most fascinating buildings.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a great, great thing to see. Anyway —

MS. FALINO: Now, actually —

MR. SCHULTZ: — after graduating I went to Europe —

MS. FALINO: A second time.

MR. SCHULTZ: — a second time with my friends from the school.

MS. FALINO: And who were they?

MR. SCHULTZ: Madge and Gil Watrous. They were a married couple that I lived with. Madge and Gil were from the west coast, and they — although Madge is — this is a funny thing. The school had no dormitories. It was just this old building which was called the Chicago Historical Society on North Dearborn Street.

But you had to find a place to live, and Madge — I met some — I don't know how I met these two, but I met them early on. And Madge's family had a house on Michigan Avenue, and it was still the old house and hadn't been converted into anything. It was an old, kind of big brownstone house. And so that's where I started out living in Chicago. We were just sort of camping in there.

MS. FALINO: Excellent.

MR. SCHULTZ: And we didn't have any furniture or anything. But anyway, I went with Madge and Gil to Europe.

MS. FALINO: And who else? Who else?

MR. SCHULTZ: My idea was to go to a festival. Pablo Casals had started playing again after the war, and there was a festival in a place called Perpignan, which is down just over the border from Spain in Southern France. So I went there and Madge and Gil went off someplace else. They ended up — oh, I remember — this has nothing to do with design, but going to Spain, we went — we went into Spain and I saw a bullfight for the first time in my life.

MS. FALINO: Wow.

MR. SCHULTZ: I was very impressed with how scary that was and how forceful — I had no idea that a bullfight could be so like this, you know?

MS. FALINO: So the intensity, the violence?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, yes. This animal — I mean, it was just — anyway, then I came back from that trip at the end of the summer and went up to 575 Madison —

MS. FALINO: Oh, Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: — where the Knoll showroom was, and I asked for a job.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And I got it. [Laughs.]

MS. FALINO: All right, now before we — before we started Knoll — can we go back a moment? I meant to ask you, do you recall any of your classmates in Illinois?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, I do.

MS. FALINO: Okay, let's — why don't you tell us a bit about them?

MR. SCHULTZ: One of them was this guy Gil Watrous.

MS. FALINO: Right. And what did Gil end up doing?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, for my part it was disappointing, but here's an interesting story. The Museum of Modern Art had a lamp competition.

MS. FALINO: You were in that competition too, weren't you?

MR. SCHULTZ: I was.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: I was one of the winners.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: In fact, all of the winners were from our school.

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: That's great.

MR. SCHULTZ: And Gil was one of them.

MS. FALINO: Wonderful.

MR. SCHULTZ: And he had a lamp and I — the other day — not the other day, months ago I would — we were in New York and I said, I'm going to go up — we had almost no time left. We were supposed to meet Peter, I think, and I went up to the Department of Design, and I couldn't believe it. I had — there was this big — my original presentation.

MS. FALINO: Drawing?

MR. SCHULTZ: Not drawing, but photograph of my lamp that had —

MS. FALINO: Oh, how fantastic.

MR. SCHULTZ: I came down and I said, "Listen to this: They're showing my lamp there." Well, we finally — I finally got — oh, somebody wrote this show up. One of the critics on the *Times* wrote this show up. And through this review, which didn't mention me because my name is not on this thing, I found out who the curators were.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Was it Juliet Kinchin?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, she was. So I called her up and I said — I introduced myself and I said, "I have a product in the collection." And she said, "Yes, I know about you." And I said, "Well, they're showing a lamp of my design."

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: She said, "What?" She said, "We had no idea who designed that lamp."

MS. FALINO: Ah. That's wonderful that now she knows.

MR. SCHULTZ: So we went there and we had a nice chat with Juliet. And there was — there's another woman. They were co-curators.

MS. FALINO: I can't remember.

MR. SCHULTZ: So that was funny. But there — this fits into — these stories go forever, but the story we started talking about was do I remember other people at the school?

MS. FALINO: Right. So there's —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, all of those winners of that competition I knew.

MS. FALINO: Was it a competition? It was a lighting competition.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: A guy named Heifetz was a lamp manufacturer, and he went to the museum — all of this I found out later of course — and said he would produce these lamps, the winners. He would produce them. So that gave them an idea to make this — in those days the museum was in business promoting what they call good design.

MS. FALINO: Right. They had the shows in Chicago.

MR. SCHULTZ: There was a guy whose father did *Fallingwater*. What —

MS. FALINO: Right, Edgar Kaufmann.

MR. SCHULTZ: Hmm?

MS. FALINO: Edgar Kaufmann.

MR. SCHULTZ: Right. Edgar Kaufmann was working for the museum, putting on shows showing pliers or screwdrivers or, you know, stuff that was very utilitarian but —

MS. FALINO: But that were well-designed.

MR. SCHULTZ: — but that were good design.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So this show, this lamp show, sort of grew out of that —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — I think. But one of my favorite teachers now, that I had forgotten about, was a guy named Davis Pratt.

MS. FALINO: Davis Pratt.

MR. SCHULTZ: Davis Pratt taught then a course where we had — which was called product design. This was after the first three-semester course — product design. I designed a stepladder, which was — which I was very proud of. But Dave Pratt designed a chair — they had another — they had another furniture competition, actually the Eameses — the one Eames won. Dave submitted this chair which we were all so thrilled about as being his — I mean, the Museum of Modern Art was like a — like a temple, like St. Peter's. And to have a teacher win a prize there was a big deal. He designed this chair using an automobile inner tube.

MS. FALINO: Wow.

MR. SCHULTZ: You know what an inner tube is?

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, okay. You don't see them anymore because —

MS. FALINO: They don't make them anymore.

MR. SCHULTZ: No, because tires don't have inner tubes. But anyway, Dave designed this chair which is — I remember it consisted of two tubular pieces that were like this and then the other one was like this.

MS. FALINO: so two U shapes —

MR. SCHULTZ: Two, yes.

MS. FALINO: — that intersected?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. And then somehow he fitted this inner tube into those two tubes, which was fastened together where they crossed. And then he had some netting, which draped over the whole thing. So it was really an upholstered chair. It was a contraption. It wasn't a thing of beauty, but it was — it was incredibly ingenious.

MS. FALINO: And?

MR. SCHULTZ: And the museum still has it.

MS. FALINO: Oh, so it won a prize?

MR. SCHULTZ: Dave's chair was part of that show that — with my lamp in it.

MS. FALINO: Okay. That's great. Yes, MoMA, those shows I think gave a lot of hope to young designers.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, absolutely.

MS. FALINO: Yes, to get your —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: — a piece in that show was a big deal, and your lamp got honorable mention, I think.

MR. SCHULTZ: My lamp got honorable mention. Gil's lamp — Gil Watrous's lamp got first —

MS. FALINO: First prize?

MR. SCHULTZ: — a special prize. I have to say that most of these lamps really didn't have anything to do with lighting. What it had to do with is how to hold a light bulb up —

MS. FALINO: High, right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — someplace and be able to adjust.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And that's what Gil's lamp did using a magnet and a ball. And my lamp was a bunch of tubes that slid in and out of each other. But the lampshade —

MS. FALINO: For height.

MR. SCHULTZ: — the lampshade, the actual shade that produces — should produce a pleasing lamp — light, was something I made out of paper — [they laugh] — because I couldn't — I didn't have any other way of — another thing about the ID was that there was a big emphasis on making things —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — not drawing pictures of stuff —

MS. FALINO: Yes, you had to actually fabricate it.

MR. SCHULTZ: — but you had to make it. And that's why the basic workshop was so important, because you worked with tools.

MS. FALINO: That's right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And this is what I've been doing since I was a little kid.

MS. FALINO: Yes, isn't that wonderful?

MR. SCHULTZ: It fitted in perfectly.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: I couldn't have had a better —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So —

MS. FALINO: So what happened to that lamp of yours? Did it go into the MoMA collection?

MR. SCHULTZ: The actual lamp —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — they can't find.

MS. FALINO: But they did take it?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it — you know —

MS. FALINO: It won the prize —

MR. SCHULTZ: What they showed was what I was — what I presented to them, which was boards like this, two of them, with photographs of the lamp.

MS. FALINO: Oh, you didn't actually bring the object.

MR. SCHULTZ: I did —

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: — but they lost it.

MS. FALINO: Oh, my god.

MR. SCHULTZ: I don't know what happened to it.

MS. FALINO: But they kept everything, in other words.

MR. SCHULTZ: They kept these boards, which they must have found — one time there was a young man who was a curator there who I met over in New Jersey at an auction. There was a guy who auctioned off so-called antiques.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Was this David Rago?

MR. SCHULTZ: That's the guy.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: He had some of my furniture and he had some of this guy — I can't remember his name. I wouldn't — I never really thought of him as a person who designed modern furniture, but he designed upholstered furniture that was rather curiously formed — shaped.

MS. FALINO: Did it have a historic quality?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Was it like Robesjohn-Gibbings or —

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, no, but he'd — I saw his name the other day somewhere.

MS. FALINO: Was it Tommi Parzinger?

MR. SCHULTZ: No. Anyway, he and I had stuff in this show.

MS. FALINO: This same show at MoMA?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. And there was — and then there was this guy from the — from the modern museum who Rago had hired to give a little speech. So I got to know him, and he was a young man, and he invited us to go to the museum. This was before the recent renovation. What was that fellow's name who — he invited us to go up to the museum and he took us into the back rooms —

MS. FALINO: Oh, great.

MR. SCHULTZ: — where you could see — and I never saw such a mess in my life.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: I mean, they had stuff — there was stuff that you knew, you recognized as major stuff sort of sitting on the floor leaning against the wall. I guess they needed more storage.

MS. FALINO: Well, storage is a fluid thing, and it depends on where. Sometimes things are in the process of being moved.

MR. SCHULTZ: That could be.

MS. FALINO: Yes, I've seen a lot of storage.

MR. SCHULTZ: But, you know, I don't —

MS. FALINO: But so, did you see something at Dave Rago's in particular? Was there something at Dave's that you saw?

MR. SCHULTZ: Something that I designed that they were auctioning — why did we go there? We went there because they must have had a piece of mine that they were trying to sell.

TRUDY SCHULTZ: We went to a — somebody invited us to a restaurant there in —

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes, and ended up eating and drinking and all that stuff.

MS. FALINO: You were talking about MoMA, and I had asked you about your lamp and what had happened to it, and you said that MoMA took it but they misplaced it.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, yes.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: That's the story.

MS. FALINO: Okay. And the Dave Rago story is probably not —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, that's really a side issue.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: I was only trying to tell you how I met this young curator and —

MS. FALINO: Okay. All right. All right, then can you —

MR. SCHULTZ: That was, incidentally, when — the time came when Knoll Furniture, let's say —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — or Eames or Herman Miller was being found in junk shops, what I would call junk shops. And people would pay more money — people who didn't know that you could buy a Bertoia chair from Knoll, and a brand-new one — they were paying more than that for a rusty one.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: There was this whole idea, typical of kind of American inquisitiveness — you know, people will come up to New England and they'll go through junk shops and —

MS. FALINO: Right. So let's go back, though, to your classmates. Did you have some —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, all those guys —

MS. FALINO: Did you —

MR. SCHULTZ: — at that lamp show were my classmates.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: That's interesting.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Now —

MR. SCHULTZ: I mean, they weren't great — maybe necessarily good friends.

MS. FALINO: Did you collaborate with any of them?

MR. SCHULTZ: No.

MS. FALINO: Did you ever do any projects with them?

MR. SCHULTZ: No.

MS. FALINO: No. Okay. Did you know — I'm not sure if he was in your class but did you know Edgar Bartolucci?

MR. SCHULTZ: Bartolucci was before my time.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: He designed the *Barwa* chair —

MS. FALINO: The *Barwa* chair, right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which is a brilliant design.

MS. FALINO: Yes. You know, he lives just outside of New York City.

MR. SCHULTZ: He's still alive?

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: [Laughs.]

MS. FALINO: I can always arrange lunch if you want.

MR. SCHULTZ: That is so funny.

MS. FALINO: Yes, and in fact —

MR. SCHULTZ: Bartolucci and Waldheim, two guys —

MS. FALINO: And Waldheim, right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and they were — I remember when I went to the school the first time — I mean, in the beginning the *Barwa* chair was something that was a big deal because —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — it was actually a practical piece of furniture that you could sit on and it was comfortable.

MS. FALINO: Now, it's like 20 of 6:00. So I would like — if you want to break in, like, 15 minutes or so. I wanted to ask you —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, you can ask — it's not up to us. I was only saying that that time is when we have a cocktail. [They laugh.]

MS. FALINO: Well, I think that's a good breaking time. I think that's a good time to break. But I wanted to hear you tell me a little bit about something I knew nothing about, which is that you had — you were involved in a sculpture exhibition at MoMA.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: So tell us how that happened.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I'll show you the catalogue. I found it.

MS. FALINO: Oh, I would love to see the catalogue.

MR. SCHULTZ: Excuse me.

MS. FALINO: All right.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was my finest hour.

MS. FALINO: I can't wait. I can't wait. [Laughs.]

He's got a lot of great stories.

MS. SCHULTZ: Good. Dick likes to talk about the good old days.

MS. FALINO: The good old days. Well, you know, they were — it was a great time. You know, you picked a good time to come of age. And you knew so many important people at the time, and you were doing important things

yourselves. So let's see —

MS. SCHULTZ: Yes, looking back on it is interesting.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was something called the junior young women, I think, who were — what's it called?

MS. FALINO: Oh, the Junior Council.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: So the show was called *Recent Sculpture U.S.A.*, sponsored by the Junior Council of the Museum of Modern Art. So these were sort of the young members who were probably paying extra dues to be part of this group that could help support exhibitions.

MR. SCHULTZ: You know more about museum —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — stuff than I do.

MS. FALINO: And the date — the date of this —

MR. SCHULTZ: But there's no picture of my work in there.

MS. FALINO: No?

MR. SCHULTZ: Here's a funny, interesting story about it, is that I made this piece which I submitted in Paris.

MS. FALINO: You made it in Paris?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: And I was making stuff there made out of tin and wires. And I was sort of — there's a Bertoia.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And at the time I didn't — this didn't mean anything to me that there was a — I didn't know Harry then. This was — what year was that?

MS. FALINO: This says — let's see, I'm looking for the year — '59 — '59, so you must have —

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, that's true. Yes. Oh, I guess I did, but it didn't mean anything to me that — this whole thing sort of would pass me because the piece I submitted was almost falling apart.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: This was a very — it was about this big around and stood up on legs. It was called *Walled City* [ph].

MS. FALINO: Do you still have it?

MR. SCHULTZ: No. I have some photographs of it. And it was a big thrill, naturally.

MS. FALINO: Yes. So did somebody approach you or did you submit something to this — was it a competition?

MR. SCHULTZ: I knew — I submitted it. I still have the submission things upstairs. Maybe tomorrow we can find them — little pictures — little photographs — little slides, color slides.

MS. FALINO: Right. Okay. So were you trying to break out of furniture design and do sculpture?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, not very — a great amount of effort. I mean, there was a gallery in New York called the Staempfli Gallery —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which was up on Madison Avenue, very elegant location, who —

MS. FALINO: They actually showed Bertoia there I'm pretty sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: Showed what?

MS. FALINO: Bertoia.

MR. SCHULTZ: They did.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And it was through Harry that — one day Staempfli was down in Pennsylvania and Harry brought him up to our house —

MS. FALINO: Aha.

MR. SCHULTZ: — to see my work.

MS. FALINO: I see.

MR. SCHULTZ: And he said, "Fine, I'd love to show it." Well, he did and he — and it sold. Some stuff sold.

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: But it was so badly made that they had a lot of trouble with stuff breaking, and I thought, I can't do that. I mean, it's ridiculous. I've got to figure out a better way of making things than this. Time was what got to it because it was put together in such a way that the method of joining the parts introduced a certain amount of corrosion, which by its nature, sort of destroyed it.

MS. FALINO: I see.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was self-destructive.

MS. FALINO: Yes, inherent vice.

MR. SCHULTZ: So —

MS. FALINO: But it was an interesting chapter. Looking back on it, are you glad that you got involved in sculpture?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, that's what I do all the time now.

MS. FALINO: You're doing sculpture now?

MR. SCHULTZ: I do it.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: All that stuff in there is —

MS. FALINO: All right, we'll have to look at that later on. Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: I don't know; I thought it was a risky business to have a family and try to give up — although I wasn't making much money at Knoll, I would have been making a lot less if I'd quit working there and —

MS. FALINO: And tried to be a sculptor, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and tried to — oh, I know what actually happened. After I — I told you that stuff sort of fell apart. Well, I thought I would change my whole way of making things. And then Staempfli, or the guy who was running the gallery for him, wasn't interested. So I learned how you have to — as an artist, if you have a gallery, you have to more or less do not what you want to do but what they can sell —

MS. FALINO: True.

MR. SCHULTZ: — because they have to keep the smoke going up the chimney. [They laugh.] So I guess that one of the things — then I tried to interest a gallery — we have a good friend who is a painter who had a gallery in Philadelphia.

MS. FALINO: And who was that?

MR. SCHULTZ: Which gallery? Gross McCleaf.

MS. FALINO: Good.

MR. SCHULTZ: Gross McCleaf.

MS. FALINO: Gross McCleaf. How do you spell it?

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a gallery. They weren't interested in my stuff at all. I made a presentation to them.

MS. FALINO: Oh, I see. It didn't fly.

MR. SCHULTZ: It never got anywhere.

MS. FALINO: So you went back — so you decided you'd set aside sculpture until — for a later date.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I always made sculpture and I made drawings for sculpture, but never enough to call myself a sculptor, which is what I'm trying to do now, actually, more.

MS. FALINO: Right. That's fantastic.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: All right.

MR. SCHULTZ: If you saw that — did you see those pictures of that pyramid that we have in Pennsylvania?

MS. FALINO: No.

MR. SCHULTZ: Okay. Well, that's the kind of sculpture — it's huge. It's made out of sheet metal.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MS. SCHULTZ: In the yard.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: In the garden.

MS. FALINO: All right. So that was so — well, what we'll do is when we pick this up — I think we're going to conclude for now, but when we pick up again we can talk about your time at Knoll and your career after Knoll, and then we'll talk again — we'll return at the end to the sculpture that you're doing now —

MR. SCHULTZ: Okay.

MS. FALINO: — and the stuff you did in Barto.

MR. SCHULTZ: Okay.

MS. FALINO: Okay? All right, so this concludes our second session.

[End of disc]

MS. FALINO: Okay, this is the third session with Richard Schultz. And this is Jeannine Falino sitting with Richard Schultz in his home in Brattleboro, Vermont. And today we're going to pick up and hear about, first, Richard, how — how you got your job at Knoll.

MR. SCHULTZ: I had been on a trip to Europe after graduating from college, and I got off the — got off the boat — I think so, in those days still —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: I knew I wanted to try to work for Knoll, because in those days the work I wanted to do was only being done by Knoll and by Herman Miller, who was the company that was in the Middle West.

And so I went to the office. I didn't have an appointment, but I had a kind of portfolio. Why I had that along on that trip to Europe I don't know. As a matter of fact, maybe I went home first to Indiana where my parents were living. I'm not exactly sure about that but I know that I took my schoolwork to show there. And I had also drawings that I'd made in Europe.

MS. FALINO: Architectural renderings or —

MR. SCHULTZ: No, just —

MS. FALINO: Just sketches?

MR. SCHULTZ: Just sketches. And I went in without an appointment, knocked on the door, so to speak. And this was at 575 Madison Avenue, which is the first really big, impressive Knoll showroom after 601 Madison. And I got an interview with Mrs. Knoll.

So I told her whatever I could about my background and my education and showed her my stuff — just mostly my schoolwork and my sketches from Europe, which I heard later that she told somebody else that she was most impressed by the sketches —

MS. FALINO: Great.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which was not — I mean, nothing to do with furniture. That was — I guess, what got me the job. Then we talked for a little while and then she called Hans, who had the next-door office. Hans came in, sat down, and about all he had to say was, "How much do you want to make," which was of course something I didn't have any idea of, and I said, "Fifty dollars a week." And he said, "Fine, you're hired."

MS. FALINO: Great.

MR. SCHULTZ: What was interesting about this was that I was working in the Planning Unit, what was called the Planning Unit, which was Mrs. Knoll's design office. And the first week I worked every night because Hans was trying to sell the State Department on furnishing housing in Europe because the Marshall Plan was a big thing —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — in those days, and they were trying to — they wanted to have places for American people to live in. And Hans was a guy who knew everybody always. He knew the right people to talk to. So at the end of the week he was leaving for Europe with a little model of an apartment.

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: A scale model.

MS. FALINO: Nice.

MR. SCHULTZ: And my job was to make a secretarial chair to fit into this little model. And I — and there was no — there was not an architectural office — at least that one didn't have essentially a little workshop where you could actually make something.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: But I was good at that. It was something I had done all my life. And there was the secretarial chair and I just made a model of it. But it took me all week to — I had to go — I remember I had to go out shopping for materials and stuff. And I — but of course this was something I could easily do and loved to do, and it was — the rest of the work I did there in New York mostly had to do with jobs that they were doing, interior design jobs.

MS. FALINO: For residences or for offices?

MR. SCHULTZ: No. There was one I remember which was for a library, and I had to design some kind of a logo for this library, which we decided should be an owl. I'm not a very good draftsperson or delineator, but I figured out — I remember making lots of kind of sketches for owls.

MS. FALINO: So you were thrown into the mix right away.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes. I mean, the curious thing about this was that not long after this, I was told that I should go down to Pennsylvania. Now, Pennsylvania was where the factory — their old factory was. And they had just hired Harry Bertoia —

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: — who was a — who I knew about. I mean, he was not a name I didn't know, but not as a designer of furniture, because he hadn't designed any furniture at that point. At least he wasn't known for it. He had designed — he worked for the Eames office for a while.

MS. FALINO: So how did you — how did his reputation come to you? What did you — what did you know him for?

MR. SCHULTZ: For his monoprints —

MS. FALINO: Oh, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which were two-dimensional work that he did. A monoprint is something that very few artists actually do, and Harry did very — extremely well. You ink — you roll with a roller. You roll into onto a platant [flat, smooth surface]. It could be a piece of glass or a piece of masonite, anything that's solid and smooth. Then you put a piece of paper on top of that ink and you work on the back of the paper with your finger or with a pen or with any — or coal, god knows what — anything. And that will force the paper onto the ink and it will draw — it will make a line.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: The line is slightly fuzzy. And of course the ink can be all kinds of colors. It could be one color. It could be many colors. So Harry was really good at that.

MS. FALINO: And you had seen that work in Chicago, right?

MR. SCHULTZ: I had seen his work in Chicago in a shop that was called Baldwin Kingery. That was a shop on Oak Street I think in Chicago, near the school I went to.

MS. FALINO: So you knew him by reputation and by his monoprints, and then you went down —

MR. SCHULTZ: I knew Harry's name but I didn't know if he'd done any three-dimensional work, except some jewelry, which they showed also in Chicago.

MS. FALINO: So you met him then for the first time in Pennsylvania at the factory?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I went down to Pennsylvania, or was driven down there, and I met Harry. The community there was very interesting — old-world environment in a very sort of primitive little village where there was one hotel, but it wasn't even used as a hotel. It was called — people there said, "Let's go to the hotel," and I said, "Why are we going to the hotel?" He said, "Well, because the bar" — the hotel in those days in Pennsylvania was the only place you could get a drink.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: They had a bar. And the only place that — there were no bars or saloons or — god knows what you would call it. You know, it was all at the hotel — [they laugh] — except that these rooms were ancient and nobody would think of putting somebody up in this — in this place. The nearest kind of town that amounted to anything was Allentown.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: So the first night I stayed with Harry and Harry's family. Harry had found — all the old houses — most of the houses were old houses, very few modern houses, but they were all these ancient Pennsylvania German stone buildings heated with fireplaces, and some of them had central heating. So that was — I stayed there with his family, and he had two children I think at the time, Lesta and —

MS. FALINO: Val?

MR. SCHULTZ: — Val. And —

MS. FALINO: Now, he —

MR. SCHULTZ: — his wife was an interesting person. He met her at Cranbrook and they married, but her husband — I mean her father was a man named Valentiner, who was the head of the — of the —

MS. FALINO: It was at Rookwood.

MR. SCHULTZ: — the Detroit Institute of Arts.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: W.R. Valentiner. He was an expert on European art, I don't know what, maybe — I saw his name the other day. I was looking up something about Rembrandt and I saw a reference to him.

MS. FALINO: Oh. Okay, this was — okay, so that was his wife?

MR. SCHULTZ: She came from that kind of background. Both of her parents were from Germany, and Brigetta spoke German. And she had been a student at Cranbrook, where they met.

MS. FALINO: And was she an artist herself?

MR. SCHULTZ: Hmm?

MS. FALINO: Was she a practicing artist?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, she was a poet.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: Or she wrote poetry but she didn't have — she had — it was sort of self-published.

MS. FALINO: I see. So at this point Harry had already gotten property and settled into life in Pennsylvania.

MR. SCHULTZ: No, he was renting.

MS. FALINO: He was renting.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, he was renting houses.

MS. FALINO: So what was he like to work with?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, he was wonderful to work with. He was a very quiet person. He didn't talk much. But I had never worked with anybody before who was in fact doing design work. I mean, in school you associate with teachers but you don't have anything to do with their personal work.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: I mean, you don't — it's not an experience that teaches you how to do something practical I guess is the word.

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: But Harry was basically a sculptor. He didn't draw pictures of what he wanted to do; he made this stuff. So he worked in a workshop. We didn't have a drawing board. We worked with workbenches and various kinds of pieces of equipment.

MS. FALINO: Well, that must have pleased you, based upon your —

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes, I fitted right into the whole thing —

MS. FALINO: Nice.

MR. SCHULTZ: — because it was just very, very lucky. I mean, I knew how to do drafting, and one my first jobs was actually — Harry had designed a bench, which was a very nice design made with wooden slats and had a very simple metal base. This bench I think is still being made by Knoll.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And my first job down there was to draw — make a drawing of the base of the bench so that it could be made in the factory.

MS. FALINO: So your job was really translating the design into instructions.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, in that case yes.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: But the idea — what Harry was trying to do was to design chairs. And I got — I mean, I was a little bit — he didn't need me at first. I mean, he wasn't really ready to tell somebody else, do this, because he didn't know what quite — yet at what point — he didn't know what the project was. [They laugh.] There was no design. And he was working on that, but I worked with him on those very elementary kind of basic conceptual efforts, which really consisted of him taking wire — he knew he wanted to use wire.

He had made some sculptures out of wire. And the tool he used mostly in his life was his welding torch, and with this torch he could also make sculptures, which he did in the evening. When we would come in the next morning there would be a new sculpture, and —

MS. FALINO: Well, he's — like the little feelies he was making, those —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, in the beginning they were things out of wire rather than — but then he quickly discovered a way of using steel plates, which he coated with brass using the torch. Then he would fasten these plates together using something called a cut nail. A cut nail is a precursor to the kind of nail we use today, which is round and has a head on it. A cut nail was made out of steel by slicing a thin slice off of a strip of steel. When you do this you get a kind of rectangular part, which has as — one dimension is the thickness of the steel.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: The other dimension is how much you slice off. So you have this piece of steel which is tapered too, because they sliced it so that there was a wide top and it got narrower at the bottom. That was the nail. And —

MS. FALINO: But it was lacking a head.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was lacking a head. But Harry discovered — these were still available — you could buy them still. And so he discovered these, which in fact didn't look like a nail. I mean, it resembled a piece of steel similar to the plates that he was covering with brass — so by taking these plates and placing them in space and connecting the corners with these nails, you could start to construct a sculpture.

MS. FALINO: A sculpture like a screen-like sculpture.

MR. SCHULTZ: And then it became — no, he didn't make a screen in the early days. He made just a rectangular piece of —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: So this was what he was doing in the evening. During the day he was trying to design this chair. He built an armature, which consisted of — and he was working in a furniture factory so there were pieces of plywood around that were curved to make a chair seat for an upholstered chair. He took some of these pieces of plywood and he set them up as a seat in the back that were — with a way of adjusting their angle. This was then sitting on a support, and interesting — a very primitive chair, but an armature essentially —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — for a chair. So then you had established the essentials of the geometry of the chair — the height from the floor, the tilt of the seat, the tilt of the back, even slightly curved surfaces because this is curved plywood.

So he made that contraption, he started sketching with wire, long pieces of wire, and essentially sitting there and drawing the chair around himself, it started to define the space — the surface of this chair, which at that time he didn't even know what the perimeter of the — he didn't know what the chair was going to look like. It was all done in space. It was quite — and I don't know anybody else who worked this way, but this was the way Harry Bertoia, sculptor, felt comfortable working.

So I was just there and kind of arms and legs, and helping that effort — not that I could contribute anything in the way of, well, we should do this or we should do that. That was not something I did or even spoke about. Well, we would try — from time to time we would sit in this thing, which was sitting on this armature.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And we would say, "Well, this feels pretty good. Maybe we should have more surface here." The surface started to become a grid of wire. In fact, you can see it today. If you listen to this or read about this with a chair in mind, it becomes fairly obvious, I suppose, but what wasn't obvious in the beginning was whether there will be arms. And actually the beginning had to do with your seat and your back —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and whether you were going to have a surface there that you could essentially sit on and call a chair.

MS. FALINO: And this is what became known as the *Diamond Chair*? What was the name of it?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it did —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — but only because eventually it became a diamond.

MS. FALINO: So it grew into a diamond.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. So what happened was that the chair started to take its form, and it had this grid of the wires, but — and finally the arms — as the — he called it the baskets. As the basket grew up the sides of your body, you could then imagine it folding over. And it did fold over and then started to form a kind or arm, or a place to put your arm, which is not an applied arm.

MS. FALINO: It organically grew out of it.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was part of the form. So it came to pass that there was a problem that the chair wasn't big enough. It was not roomy enough. So Harry figured out to — he took the basket and turned it over, put it on the workbench. And the idea was to make another chair on top of the existing chair basket, which at that point didn't even have a rim wire going around it. It was just lots of wires sticking out.

So Harry — there was — you could still buy this stuff at the hardware store. It's called hardware cloth. Hardware cloth is —

MS. FALINO: Oh, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — is a grid of wires —

MS. FALINO: It's like a mesh.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a mesh and it's coated with galvanized zinc. So we bought that stuff and cut it up into little patches, which we then fastened to the outside of the basket to, in fact, enlarge the basket. Then by putting another set of wires over this hardware cloth and make — the other part of the basket that was not covered with the hardware cloth you could make a chair which was then bigger than the first one, because the hardware cloth made it bigger.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Then you could take out the smaller one when you were done?
MR. SCHULTZ: Hmm?

MS. FALINO: That you then take out the smaller basket when you were finished?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, the smaller basket was discarded.

MS. FALINO: Okay, so then you —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Basically you built a larger one around the —

MR. SCHULTZ: The smaller one.

MS. FALINO: — the volume of the smaller one.

MR. SCHULTZ: On top of the smaller one.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So it was —

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, that was the method.

MS. FALINO: And hardware cloth, if you crinkle it or you shape it, it holds its shape, right?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, you don't have to — it was just sort of bending it and laying it on the —

MS. FALINO: But it holds its structure.

MR. SCHULTZ: Pardon?

MS. FALINO: It holds its form?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's all fastened together.

MS. FALINO: Right. Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: I mean, the intersections are sort of stuck together by this zinc galvanizing.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: We learned later that this is a dangerous thing to do is to — you know, you ended up burning the — or heating up the hardware cloth —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — when you braised the new basket together —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — that then you inhaled all that stuff —

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which was — actually that's what Harry eventually died of — it was inhaling all these fumes from his — all his work as a sculptor.

MS. FALINO: I had no idea.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes, he got cancer of the lungs. Anyway, that was not an issue. Harry was kind of debonair about this. When you weld, you're supposed to wear goggles —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — to protect your eyes from the intensity of the melted — you know, the —

MS. FALINO: The flame.

MR. SCHULTZ: — the flame, but he didn't. He used to wear sunglasses — [they laugh] — I think which worked — which worked. What welders wore was a kind of goggle, which was annoying and not pleasant too. If you looked at — wanted to look over here at something else, this goggle was so dark and so dense that you couldn't see anything.

Essentially, then we finally got to the point where the chair started to take a form. And the outside of the chair, the rim of the chair, the edge, had to be defined, and it turned out that the best design, or shape for that was a diamond shape, because the wires were all crossing each other, not in a haphazard way, but with essentially a diamond pattern.

MS. FALINO: Pattern, right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And if you would cross four wires like that, that was the — basically this thing was incredibly organic because it just went like that. The diamond shape grew out of the very center of the chair.

MS. FALINO: So it flowed.

MR. SCHULTZ: So it made sense. And the worry about the arm was solved by the fact that the flow of the part that you sat on, which had this certain kind of basket-like shape, then started to fold out and become an arm. And the edge was defined by the outermost wires. So we finally ended up just putting a rim around that. And then we had a basket that was — it seemed to be pretty comfortable, except that there was no leg — there were no legs for it.

MS. FALINO: Little detail.

MR. SCHULTZ: We of course knew that that was the next step. But I had no input on that at all. I mean, I didn't even attempt — Harry didn't say to me, you figure out how to make a base for this. He did it.

MS. FALINO: I see.

MR. SCHULTZ: And one day we came in, in the morning, and he had mocked up this base, which made all kind of sense. It's very logical, very simple, has the same way of being fastened together as the wires did. This was what was called a cross-wire weld. A spot welder — which was a machine that welds metal by passing an electric current through it to the point where there's a lot of resistance built up to the flow of the current and the metal gets hot. So it's so hot that if there are two pieces, one on top of the other, it will melt together.

MS. FALINO: So they fuse.

MR. SCHULTZ: They were fused. But this we didn't do in the development — we didn't have a welder, although we knew such a thing could be obtained. I mean, you go to the supermarket and look at supermarket baskets, there they are.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: There the whole thing is. And then in those days those baskets existed. And baskets existed to use as a dish drainer in the sink.

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: And so we weren't designing for an unknown technology, but we didn't know was how these baskets — which you talk about a basket for French fries or something, or for a dish drainer, they're made flat. All the wires are put down in a jig going this way and then going this way. And then a sort of automated welding device welds them all together. Then you have what's basically a flat pattern, which is in the shape of a cross.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: The ends of these wires sticking out here, the ends of these wires sticking out here. Then you treat that is it were a piece of paper. You fold it up. There you have — then all you have to do is to put the rim around it —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and you have a basket. Well, that's pretty straightforward compared to our job, which was to somehow figure out a way of making these completely contoured baskets or chairs with a method that was repetitive; I mean that you could make hundreds of them.

MS. FALINO: So you could make multiples, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So this was interesting from my point of view. What I later began to understand was the essence of design, which is to design for a process. This was not that, because nobody knew how to make such a basket.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And then you — it didn't exist. The technology for — what somebody had done at one point I think was to make a garden chair by taking a piece of welded wire, a flat piece of welded wire like you would use for fencing —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and to actually treat it —

MS. FALINO: Force it into a die?

MR. SCHULTZ: — treat it as if it were — yes, as if it were a piece of sheet metal.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and form it.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, what this did was to produce — you could produce a chair-like configuration, but every intersection there, these intersections wouldn't do this —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — they would turn and make like a swastika shape, and it was ugly.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Did you try that?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, no, we didn't.

MS. FALINO: But you knew what the results would be.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, well, because these things existed in the market. And so what — well, it got to the point — in the evolution of these designs, the *Diamond Chair* came first. And then there was a base which Harry — I got off the track with this discussion about these welding —

MS. FALINO: No, that's all right.

MR. SCHULTZ: The base was made out of heavier — not wire but material that was about seven-sixteenths in diameter.

MS. FALINO: Heavy rods.

MR. SCHULTZ: Bars.

MS. FALINO: Bars.

MR. SCHULTZ: Bars. Bar stock, where we had to join them together. It was, again, a cross-wire weld. So the whole chair has an integrity or a consistency based on this whole method of joining wires or rods together.

MS. FALINO: But then, as I recall, yesterday we were talking at dinner perhaps, and you were saying that you designed a jig.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: So would you tell us about that? So was that —

MR. SCHULTZ: That's the next step.

MS. FALINO: Okay. All right.

MR. SCHULTZ: Or not exactly the next step. What the next step was, was to design another chair, which is — there's one in there in the living room. It's called the *Large Diamond*, which was simply to make another *Diamond Chair*, which was sort of pulled out and bigger and more generous.

MS. FALINO: More attenuated.

MR. SCHULTZ: That was essentially a sculptural problem, to make — and then this chair — Harry had this idea of not fastening the chair rigidly to the base but to put it in some kind of a flexible —

MS. FALINO: Cradle?

MR. SCHULTZ: — fastening, but the basket moved when you sat down on it.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: And at first we didn't know what that really should consist of. Harry had some ideas. He found some rubber — I remember they were sort of rubber bands but they were big, a diamond or maybe a quarter-of-an-inch strips of rubber, which he tried to join the base to the basket with. And it was really ugly and it didn't really work. It was pretty unsatisfactory.

And somehow we became aware of the fact that automobile engine were fastened into the car with something called a shock mount. They weren't screwed tightly to the frame of the car. But these shock mounts were stiff. They were rubber. And the car — the automobile engine could sit there and sort of shake or —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — move a little bit. So we discovered that there was company that made these, of course, and we got them to make some rubber mounts, which we called them.

MS. FALINO: Now, these weren't like rubber gaskets.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's not a gasket. It's like a cylinder.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: A rubber cylinder about an inch-and-a-half in diameter maybe, and about two inches long.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: A big thing like that.

MS. FALINO: All right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And it was rubber with steel plates — it was called welding but that's not the right term. They were somehow stuck to the ends of this rubber cylinder. The steel plates had a hole with a thread in it, and you could actually screw this in the one case to the base and in the other case to the basket. So the basket — so then when you sat on this chair, the rubber distorted, sort of parallelogramed.

MS. FALINO: Aha, so it gave a little.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was very successful and neat-looking.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So that was the next chair. That chair was also available on a base without rubber mounts, as I remember.

Then the thought occurred, I guess, to Harry — well, maybe — Harry would go up to New York and have meetings with Hans and Shu and — in those days those of us who were working with Harry didn't participate in those meetings, so I don't know how these ideas came about, but eventually Harry made what was called a headrest chair. So he took the *Diamond Chair* and made the —

MS. FALINO: Oh, extended the back?

MR. SCHULTZ: The back became a kind of vertical form —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — that you could lean against.

MS. FALINO: Right. Some people call that the *Bird Chair*.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: It was an ottoman?

MR. SCHULTZ: It had — there was this tendency to name things. We used numbers because they all had a product number.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And so there was — none of these chairs were dining chairs, though.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: They were all lounge chairs.

MS. FALINO: Correct.

MR. SCHULTZ: And what you really sell most of, furniture business, is four chairs and a table. Four chairs and a table is the formula for making money. So Harry had to make a dining chair. That was a tough job for him. It was a struggle because the form of the chair was not coming out — I mean, the small *Diamond Chair* didn't seem to be the answer.

And it was sort of — it looked like a children's version of the chair. Besides, you don't want those points sticking out when you have a chair and a chair and a chair and a table. So I remember that as a very challenging thing for him, but the chair turned out extremely well and was — and maybe they sell more of those chairs than they

do *Diamond Chairs*. I would think so.

MS. FALINO: I think you're right. I've seen them so many places.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. I remember there was this park in New York called the Paley Park, which was just a vacant lot that had a waterfall in the back. And one of the first uses of those chairs was in that park, first kind of prominent uses, and in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — where they had a lot of chairs — because those few of us who were close to the whole project were always very critical about how the chairs were holding up.

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: They were failing.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: In the garden of the museum I can remember they were breaking. It took a while — but that's another story, the story of quality control. So eventually the line was developed. The *Diamond Chairs*, the headrest chair, and then —

MS. FALINO: The large diamond.

MR. SCHULTZ: The large diamond, the small diamond, and the headrest, and the dining chairs. So at that point they decided to have a big show in New York to present the whole line, and at 575 they took the whole showroom apart. I mean, they took all the furniture out, and it was full of Harry's sculptures and the chairs.

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: The thing is that Harry had worked every night for two years making sculptures. There were plenty of sculptures there. He never went home. I mean, he was a workaholic, which in the end resulted in a huge career as a sculptor. But a big part of my work in this whole thing was the upholstery. We had to figure out a way — we found out that the chairs without a pad were minimally comfortable over any kind of time span.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: So what we tried to do was to figure out a way to upholster the chair.

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: But to upholster a concave surface wasn't so easy, and that's where tufting came in and everybody had tufted sofas and lounge chairs. But this was not something we wanted to introduce into this design —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — this old-fashioned way of doing it. Besides, we didn't want to have to laboriously attach this pad to the chairs. And we wanted to be able to sell additional pads or different pads or — you know.

MS. FALINO: Sure, and different colors.

MR. SCHULTZ: So I came up with this idea. What we did was we laminated — we made a kind of laminated pad, which was a pad that you — well, what I did was I made a plastic chair. I covered the chair with tape and I put fiberglass in there — made a plastic chair, which was — which was to be used upside-down. Then we determined that there had to be a seam —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And that would go from arm to arm.

MS. FALINO: Right across the center of the chair?

MR. SCHULTZ: Right across the center. So we developed that pattern. We sewed those covers together and then we pulled it down over this plastic chair and clamped it there. Then we glued a thin — half-inch-thick piece of foam to that. You sprayed the glue on there and the foam on there. Then you put an outside cover, which was the same as the inside cover but fitted over the foam.

So then you sewed around the edge of that. Well, you trimmed off the outside cover equal to where the foam was. The inside cover was sticking out here, which you then hemmed with a drawstring in it.

MS. FALINO: Ah. Oh, to tighten it.

MR. SCHULTZ: Then this whole thing — you put this in the chair and you pulled the outside with the drawstring in it around the chair —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and pulled up the drawstring, and it —

MS. FALINO: That's ingenious.

MR. SCHULTZ: — it conformed to the edge of the chair. That's what the Bertoia pads are. That's how they're made. So they fit right into the chair because they're not flat when they're not being used; they have the chair shape —

MS. FALINO: They're contoured.

MR. SCHULTZ: — because they're made over this plastic form. They're laminated like plywood.

MS. FALINO: So that's different from — like, the Eameses were doing their chairs at about the same time —

MR. SCHULTZ: They were.

MS. FALINO: — and those were fiberglass.

MR. SCHULTZ: No. No, they made wire chairs. Eames designed a wire chair.

MS. FALINO: True. True, but I'm just thinking about the shells.

MR. SCHULTZ: They had fiberglass shells too.

MS. FALINO: Yes, that's what I'm —

MR. SCHULTZ: They did, which to a certain extent I think had the same shape as the wire chair.

MS. FALINO: But they didn't have that kind of fabric covering that you devised.

MR. SCHULTZ: They had a pad for the wire chairs, a two-piece pad. The top was the back —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and the seat. They also had it going around the edge of the chair.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: This is not a normal thing — I mean a natural thing to do. So that was the method of upholstering the chairs.

I remember that at that time Eszter Haraszty was involved in the show, in designing the show. And she had some fabric dyed up, some special fabric — at that time we weren't using Prestini yet.

MS. FALINO: Oh, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: We were just using whatever fabric seemed to be appropriate that would lend itself to this shaping. And Eszter sent down this fabric that she had dyed special for this job, and I remember ruining some of it because we didn't have a good way of putting the glue on that. I told you that we sprayed the glue, but that was only later on in production. At the beginning we'd put it on with a paintbrush.

MS. FALINO: Oh. [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: This was tricky because if you put too much glue on, it went right through the fabric —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and ruined it. And I remember this happening. That was a kind of crisis, because everything was of course on a deadline for that show.

MS. FALINO: Sure. And by the time you got to the point of having the show, you had already — you must have figured out how to —

MR. SCHULTZ: Make more chairs.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: No.

MS. FALINO: No?

MR. SCHULTZ: They're all handmade.

MS. FALINO: Oh, my god.

MR. SCHULTZ: And we knew how to make handmade chairs. We bent the wires, fitted them on. We actually made the chairs on top of the — we made it — we had a master chair, sort of, and we made chairs by building a new — another chair on top of that one.

And it was a very laborious process because you bent the wire so that it sort of had the right shape and would sit there, but you had to fasten it on some way so that while you were putting all the other wires on and all the wires were going across that, that everything stayed in place. So it took forever. And all the chairs for that first show — if you ever see a Bertoia chair that's braised together —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — I mean, even though it's painted, you'll be able to see that because there will be kind of a lump there where the wires intersect instead of just being a clean — that would be a chair that was in that show.

MS. FALINO: That would be wonderful to find.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it might be interesting, yes, because there you would actually be able to say probably that this was a chair made by Bertoia. Otherwise —

MS. FALINO: And Richard Schultz.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, we —

MS. FALINO: You were making them too, right?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, I was doing them. And a friend of mine name Don Petipt was doing it. And there were others — a couple of other fellows who were involved. It's interesting — an amazing thing when I think about it because — and, you know, I suppose we all did it and happily did it because of Harry, because of the way — the kind of person he was.

MS. FALINO: But it seems also that they had — or Harry had the support of Hans in Florence, because that was —

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, big —

MS. FALINO: — because that was a — that's a long time for research and development for four chairs.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, it took us two years. Let's see, I went down there — it was at the end of '51 when I first went to Pennsylvania, and it was sort of near the end of '53 when we had this show.

MS. FALINO: Very intense.

MR. SCHULTZ: But by that time another thing happened, which was that we figured out how to make them in production. This chair — this show was all these handmade chairs.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: We still didn't know how to make a spot-welded chair, a machine-welded chair. And Harry in fact invented that too. He came in one day and I remember he had a piece of plywood, and he had nails, little — short little nails. He would put them in the — nail them into the plywood in a curve — something like that, something like this, something like that. The idea was to wrap a wire around these nails and —

MS. FALINO: And create — make a jig.

MR. SCHULTZ: — take it off and see what shape it had. If it didn't have the right shape, you'd change the shape of the nails.

MS. FALINO: But every line, every piece of wire required a separate jig, didn't it?

MR. SCHULTZ: A bending board is what we called it.

MS. FALINO: Yes, a bending board.

MR. SCHULTZ: And we had a whole vocabulary of bending boards. We had 25 wires going one direction and 25 wires going the other direction.

MS. FALINO: Wow.

MR. SCHULTZ: So there was no method. Maybe today with a computer you might be able to figure out what the spring-back was. I mean, if you take a piece of wire — not like this, but if you bend it, it will spring back.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And you have to figure out — if you knew what that was and you could quantify that, you could draw the shape you wanted. I'm quite sure that a computer would be able to —

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: — give you the shape that a bending board should be to, in fact, achieve that end product.

MS. FALINO: To get the curve you want.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Yes. So —

MR. SCHULTZ: But we didn't have that.

MS. FALINO: So you had to actually bend it more in order get the kind of shape you needed.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, you do. Yes, you did.

MS. FALINO: Yes. And that must have taken a lot of trial and error.

MR. SCHULTZ: It did.

MS. FALINO: Really, this is a phenomenal story.

MR. SCHULTZ: Tremendous — I mean, I don't know anybody — you can imagine at that point that Harry said, "I don't want to do anymore furniture" —

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: — because I don't know anybody who worked so — who was — whose design required so much effort to achieve — I mean, it wasn't as if he went to a factory that made wire chairs, you know? It was something that didn't exist. So in an iconic way that was sort of the way modern design was thought of by those who could —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — think of it, Harry was a craftsperson. He had big, heavy, thick, strong fingers and — it was a real experience to work with him.

MS. FALINO: That's great.

MR. SCHULTZ: So once we figured out how to do those — make those bending boards, we had a whole — and here's the thing: We didn't know if this was going to be a viable method because we didn't have any idea of testing how much it would cost to make these — bend these wires. Then we had to know what to do with them. We had a — we built a rack with slots, filled up with these wires. We had a guy there bending wires, bending wires.

And so then we invented this jig that was in fact a contraption that had little notches in it. And you could take a

wire and you could drop it into the correct place. You put a whole series of wires going this way. Then you had the next series of wires going this way.

Then you had a kind of clamp, which was a piece of metal which had the shape of a channel, which would come over and come down onto the form. It was hinged over here. It could be closed. All the clamps were closed, held all these wires in place. Then this device was attached to a — some ropes, which went up over some pulleys and they were attached to a weight, so that this device was then weightless. It was a counterbalance. In other words, the worker didn't hold this thing.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was just hanging there in the air.

MS. FALINO: Yes?

MR. SCHULTZ: Then he took it over to the welding machine and he placed it — the welding machine has two points which come together like this. They come together and then the power goes on and, zingo, a weld was made.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: So the guy got this jig —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and he takes it over to the welder and starts to — he uses his foot on a pedal and he tries to weld every joint — which he learns how to do — rather quickly at a high speed. I mean —

MS. FALINO: Yes, once you have the jig set up —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, once you have the jigs all set up, then it's only a question of how good you are at doing this —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — how quickly you can do it, and so forth. And —

MS. FALINO: I must say, it was quite a risk for Knoll to take, not realizing how much it was going to cost.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, you know, none of us were getting paid much money.

MS. FALINO: But it was an investment nonetheless, and —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it was an investment.

MS. FALINO: — and not knowing then what price point they could sell it at.

MR. SCHULTZ: That's true with all the — everything I ever designed, we didn't know — this furniture out here, we didn't know how much it was going to cost until we had the whole thing finished.

MS. FALINO: Wow.

MR. SCHULTZ: I mean, there was no kind of — that was — it was really interesting.

MS. FALINO: Well, that's perhaps why the results are so interesting.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's just the idea that this is what we want to do. It's more or less, I suppose, like a craftsman —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — who has a wheel —

MS. FALINO: Yep.

MR. SCHULTZ: — that he's going to make a vase —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — or a dish, but by that time he already knows what — how long it would take him to make a

bowl, so it doesn't matter much.

MS. FALINO: Now, I'm going to — I want to stop you right here because we're at 60 minutes, and I'm going to get another chip.

MR. SCHULTZ: Okay.

MS. FALINO: So we're going to just conclude this and pick up in just a moment.

[End of disc]

JEANNINE FALINO: Now we're recording. Sorry.

Now this is Jeannine Falino with Richard Schultz in the fourth session of our discussion and we were just hearing Richard talk about the *Diamond* series chairs. And what were you saying now about how to coat the wires?

RICHARD SCHULTZ: Right. The wires could be painted. But it was a question of whether — we thought there did seem to have a potential for being sold for outdoors, the chairs.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: But there was a seat pad instead of a whole upholstery, but you had a — just a seat pad, which —

MS. FALINO: Right, which you could —

MR. SCHULTZ: — we made out of — we covered with vinyl. But the wires would rust. So, there was a company over in Doylestown which was a town over in Pennsylvania over in Bucks County that was coating dish racks. And it was — they coated them with — how they coated them, they would — out of that mesh — that [inaudible].

MS. FALINO: Oh, hold on, let's —

MR. SCHULTZ: I'm sorry —

MS. FALINO: — yes, let's continue.

MR. SCHULTZ: All this is being recorded, okay.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: That's a parenthetical.

MS. FALINO: Yes, well, let's just continue.

MR. SCHULTZ: So, we took it to chairs over there and they proceeded to try to coat them. It was difficult to get the coating consistently — the thickness consistent and to avoid drips and lumps. And the dish racks — they had that down pretty — pretty — pretty good. So, they did, in fact, sell chairs with the plastic coating on.

MS. FALINO: So, is that, like, a rubberized coating?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, well, it seemed to be rubber but it was vinyl.

MS. FALINO: It was a vinyl coating, oh, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: A vinyl plastisol and it was a liquid in a tank. And I think what they did was they heated the basket up and dipped it in the tank, and then they'd pull it out and a certain amount of it — depending on how long it was in there — a certain amount of vinyl would stick to the wire. Then, you wouldn't want to have so much that you had drips and lumps and stuff, but it was a learning process.

MS. FALINO: Yes. All right.

MR. SCHULTZ: But, this didn't sort of hold up well because as soon — we didn't understand this, but the vinyl didn't really stick to the wire; it only encapsulated the wire.

MS. FALINO: Ah.

MR. SCHULTZ: So, if there was a crack or a break in the vinyl, moisture could get in there and the wire would start to rust, and it was a disaster. But this was something that was inevitable, where you screwed the basket to

the base and you had a screw going through a hole. It was a place where this rust would start. And that's how I got involved in doing outdoor furniture, because Mrs. Knoll had these chairs down — at that time she'd moved to Miami and she had a — stayed on the water. And this stuff would — the Bertoia chairs were all rusting away, especially with the saltwater. So, one day she came up to New York and she said, "Somebody's got to design some decent outdoor furniture that's going to hold up outdoors." So I said I would do that, I'd like to do that.

But that's a fringe thing about the Bertoia because that happened later. The first thing I was asked to do was to design a table. They were opening up a showroom in LA. They hadn't a showroom in LA yet. And they wanted to show Harry's furniture with a table. But there wasn't anything in the line that seemed to be appropriate for that. And Harry was not interested at all. He was off doing a big screen for General Motors. It was Eero Saarinen's General Motors Technical Center. A huge project.

So, I was asked to design a table. I didn't obviously take the path of designing a table that looked like it designed by Bertoia. I mean, I don't remember even thinking much about that. I designed this table, which had a wooden top that was divided up into eight segments.

MS. FALINO: And this is the *Petal Table* you're talking about.

MR. SCHULTZ: So-called *Petal Table* —

MS. FALINO: So called.

MR. SCHULTZ: — at this point. And it was, in a way, a crazy idea because it was so costly.

MS. FALINO: It was?

MR. SCHULTZ: The table.

MS. FALINO: Why?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it's expensive to make.

MS. FALINO: It's — the base?

MR. SCHULTZ: You had all these petals. It's like making eight different tables. The petal, which was very nicely designed with all kinds of interesting curves and radiuses and so on — it was expensive to make. Then there was the base, which is cast-iron. That was the top spider, which we called the spider, which was a cast aluminum. And all this had to be coated with — to resist, again, the outdoor exposure.

MS. FALINO: Yes, the elements.

MR. SCHULTZ: And this whole thing got — but it was — people liked it, so I remember being thrilled with it. They ran an ad in the *New Yorker*. In those days, they were advertising doll furniture in the *New Yorker*. They ran a full-page ad with the table in the center and Bertoia chairs. I was thrilled with that because — but that was the sort of benefit that you got from working with Knoll, when you didn't get paid royalties but you got paid in that way — of getting your name in the —

MS. FALINO: Sure. Sure, and did you find that that was an attractive thing, to — you know, because — at the George Nelson, which was also in New York, and a big, big design firm, those designers did not get any credit for their — for their work.

MR. SCHULTZ: No, there was the — it was the way life was. In architecture and design firms, the only person who got credit was the guy with the name on the door.

MS. FALINO: Right. And just to talk a little bit about Nelson, did you — did you meet George Nelson?

MR. SCHULTZ: I had met him and Don Petit, which we spoke of before, worked there.

MS. FALINO: Oh, he did?

MR. SCHULTZ: And designed those bubble lamps.

MS. FALINO: Oh, he designed the lamps.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, he spoke about them. He said that's — somehow, this was — this was based on a method that they had developed for what they called mothballing with fleet. [Laughs.] After the war, there were tons and tons of ships that needed to be somehow preserved, saved. And somebody came up with this method of

spraying plastic — spraying plastic over a kind of network of wires and you could actually produce a covering that was over whatever you were spraying. [Laughs.]

MS. FALINO: Sure, I see.

MR. SCHULTZ: So, Nelson or somebody in this office — maybe it was Don — figured out to make a wire armature and spray this stuff on it —

MS. FALINO: And there you have it.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and there you had a lampshade.

MS. FALINO: How fabulous.

MR. SCHULTZ: Don — the other guy who worked there who was — who actually then worked for Knoll was Charles Pollock.

MS. FALINO: Charlie Pollock, right.

MR. SCHULTZ: So, Charlie was working at Nelson's office as well. I don't know, really, how good of a designer Nelson was — [laughs] — but he was — at another firm, they — he was referred to as "God East" and Charlie was referred to as "God West."

MS. FALINO: Charlie — Charlie Eames, you mean?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Now, did you ever know Irving Harper? Did you meet him? He was responsible for a lot of the clocks.

MR. SCHULTZ: I know. I know. I don't know if I ever met him or not. I really can't say. Maybe at a party or something, but he wasn't somebody I knew. I wouldn't say I knew him. I mean, the name is —

MS. FALINO: Right. But they chose to work under the Nelson name, and I think they were very pleased and happy to because they were doing great design, but the recognition just really wasn't there until many years later.

MR. SCHULTZ: No. But this is the way life was in those days. I mean, if you worked for Raymond Loewy, you could have designed a Studebaker, and nobody knew it. A lot of those projects were a huge collaborative effort though, so nobody could really say that it was his idea, I suppose. But — and if you spoke to Charlie Pollock about what he did at the Nelson office, it could be a slight exaggeration that he said, "Oh, I designed this and this and this project." Maybe he didn't.

But you have to admit one thing, and I think this is something about Shu Knoll that I always thought was essentially a way of describing what she did vis-à-vis other designers: She was an editor. And She had a terrific eye and she was able to look at something and say, "Well, this whole thing has got to be this little bit more this," or "This radius has got to be changed," or "Let's make this radius a little tighter," or, you know, stuff like that. Not that she originated or even what you showed to her as an idea that you wanted to work on was already an idea, already a concept. What she did was —

MS. FALINO: But she — but she gave a good critique,

MR. SCHULTZ: — she was — she was an editor. She was terrific at that. And, you know, she had a good eye. And if you were lucky enough to be on the same kind of wavelength with her, it worked. I was — it worked out for me with her very well.

MS. FALINO: So, why don't you tell us now about some of the other designs that you did, like your chaise, for instance. This was part of the —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I did the chaise which is in the Museum of Modern Art, which is made out of wire. I was asked to do this chaise to go with an outdoor group, which was a failure because of the story I just told you about, this —

MS. FALINO: About the coating of the wire.

MR. SCHULTZ: The coating didn't hold up. [They laugh.] But I designed the chaise and that was a thrill because as soon as it was shown in the New York showroom, somebody from the museum came over and loved it and

put it in this collection.

MS. FALINO: Was that Edgar Kaufmann, you think?

MR. SCHULTZ: It was — no, it was a woman.

MS. FALINO: Oh, Greta —

MR. SCHULTZ: Greta — yes.

MS. FALINO: I'll come up with her name.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. Maybe it was. That was a — that was a nice moment — [inaudible] —

MS. FALINO: Yes, absolutely.

MR. SCHULTZ: — to happen. Except they never sold any of them. It didn't matter if they sold any or not because we didn't get paid the royalty. The design wasn't a success, mostly because they stopped offering the furniture for outdoors.

MS. FALINO: Oh, really?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, because it wasn't holding up. They didn't know how to make it —

MS. FALINO: Can I ask you a dumb question? What about automobile paint?

MR. SCHULTZ: In those days, automobiles were not really well-painted either. [They laugh.] I mean, what happened with painting stuff is powder coating, which is what everything is done today is powder — have you ever noticed that you don't see rusted cars much?

MS. FALINO: It's true. And that's because of powder coating?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: And that was a more recent invention?

MR. SCHULTZ: It's very recent. It sort of grew out of this idea of not — of making something that was environmentally friendly because painting with a spray gun essentially involves taking pigment, the paint, and mixing it with lacquer thinner, which is a solvent.

MS. FALINO: Right, so it's a lot of —

MR. SCHULTZ: And then this whole thing is sprayed onto the object. But most of the — in fact, I think it goes out the window.

MS. FALINO: Out the window, sure, right.

MR. SCHULTZ: I mean, taken by an exhaust fan. But powder coating is not that at all. It's powdered pigment, powdered paint that's sprayed onto a hot part.

MS. FALINO: And so it —

MR. SCHULTZ: The part is run through an oven. And then the spray gun sprays this — and it's done — what's called electrostatic spraying. The pigment is charged positively and the part is charged negatively. So, there's a — [claps hands].

MS. FALINO: Immediate bond.

MR. SCHULTZ: The powder sticks. It's not that you have a big cloud of this power that sort of happens to land on the part. It gets attracted to the part. And it's a great idea.

MS. FALINO: It's brilliant

MR. SCHULTZ: And what happened — [laughs] — remember, maybe as a child, I would — one thing one did for, well, not for your parents — you did it free — but for other people, you could try to get paid, you'd — what's called simonized the car. Simoniz was essentially a trade name for wax. The paint got — the paint on cars turned matte. It wasn't shiny anymore. So, you had to constantly wax the car, or you could pay to have this done. So, this is not the case anymore. The stuff is just, like, gangbusters. This paint out here on this — these two — it's

white paint, it's power coating.

MS. FALINO: On your — on your new furniture, this new line out here?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, that's not new. All the new furniture is the same. The white and the gray is the same coating. It's all powder coating.

MS. FALINO: Now, the — just to go back, the name of that curator that you were trying to remember, I think it may have been Greta Daniel.

MR. SCHULTZ: Correct.

MS. FALINO: That's it, okay.

So, if we were to continue on, you would be — you were — you spent quite a number of years at Knoll. You spent about —

MR. SCHULTZ: A long time. Twenty years.

MS. FALINO: — twenty years, yes. So, you've — you then began the leisure collection.

MR. SCHULTZ: That was the story I told you about, Shu having the Bertoia furniture, and so —

MS. FALINO: Oh, okay, so that's the — that's the outdoor collection.

MR. SCHULTZ: — the beginning of that, which was introduced in '66,

MS. FALINO: Right. Okay. And so, the — and the reclining chair, was that part of the leisure collection? No?

MR. SCHULTZ: What chair is that?

MS. FALINO: The chaise that MoMA purchased. Was that part of the —

MR. SCHULTZ: No.

MS. FALINO: No, that was separate.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, the one they purchased — well, they — I think they have this one out here. Then there's one that has a curvy shape.

MS. FALINO: Right. The one that I think they have has a — has a large wheel. Looks like this one out in your back porch. Large wheel and a very elegant line, and that's about all.

MR. SCHULTZ: Maybe this one.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Okay. So, and that was from —

MR. SCHULTZ: They also —

MS. FALINO: That was from '63.

MR. SCHULTZ: From 1966, yes.

MS. FALINO: Okay. So, then in '67, you got an international design award.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Can you tell us about that?

MR. SCHULTZ: No. [They laugh.] I, you know, so it's one of those things that happens. I think it was maybe — there was a magazine called *I.D.*, which was *Industrial Design*. It may have been in that magazine. Those — these guys, these publishers, are always looking sort of behind the scenes, dreaming up these awards and stuff. I don't remember getting an award or anybody giving me anything. [They laugh.]

MS. FALINO: Oh. All right. Then, in '68, you had — there was a show at — in Montreal, was it? The musée des arts décoratifs?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Oh, no, wait — yes, was it — it was in Canada, right?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: And then at the V&A in London?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, that was because somebody at Knoll, maybe Yves Vidal — do you know about Yves Vidal?

MS. FALINO: No. E — I don't know — how do you spell that?

MR. SCHULTZ: E-V — no, I'm sorry. Y-V-E-S, isn't it?

MS. FALINO: It's a man?

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a French name.

MS. FALINO: Yes, it's a — it's a man?

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a man.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Vidal?

MR. SCHULTZ: Vidal, V-I-D-A-L —

MS. FALINO: And who was he?

MR. SCHULTZ: — who was the head of the Knoll International, France — another one of Hans's brilliant hires. And he probably arranged this show at the Louvre. Oh, you're talking about V&A. That's Victoria & Albert.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: You know, all this was something I never — that didn't make any much of an impression on me because it was a Knoll project. She had a Knoll — she had a — she had a design with Knoll. We were part of that effort. I mean, I didn't —

MS. FALINO: Right, Okay. So you didn't have a particular role or —

MR. SCHULTZ: None.

MS. FALINO: Okay. All right. So, in the — in the end, you were telling me yesterday, I think, that in the end a lot of the staff of Knoll got fired?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: And this was in 1975?

MR. SCHULTZ: It was '72.

MS. FALINO: In '72, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: I think so.

MS. FALINO: And what was the —

MR. SCHULTZ: Bobby Cadwallader was the president of the company then.

MS. FALINO: Okay, Cadwalader, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And they decided — I mean, I have no idea how they decided this or what; I was not involved — that they didn't want to have this group anymore in Pennsylvania. Although all of us who were then at Knoll were in fact replaced by others who were not designers but who were kind of mechanics, who their job was developing the designs. The word "development" meant taking a design that was brought to the company and making it into a product.

MS. FALINO: I see, so they would — they would find outside designers.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, although they didn't have to look very hard because there was — the world was full of them.

MS. FALINO: Right, so they think —

MR. SCHULTZ: They were coming to Knoll with products that they wanted. One thing I remember that was interested was that when I was involved in with a group who tried to evaluate those outside designs, the thing that I remember being struck by was that most of those designs looked like Knoll products. And in that sense, they were knockoffs. Bertoia furniture didn't look like Knoll product. You know, *Womb Chair* didn't look like a Knoll.

What they didn't understand — [what] those people didn't understand was that Knoll was all about doing something new, not doing a Knoll-esque — it might have been all right for another company but not for Knoll because it wasn't — that wasn't the whole raison d'être for the company, and I don't think people understood this. But it wasn't easy to understand, I suppose, because you — I mean, if you looked at — Knoll didn't go out to Mies van der Rohe and say, "Design this chair. Design a tubular chair for me." That's not the way these things happen. In fact, as it was done before, Mies [wasn't ?] even out of school. So, you know, that whole period is an interesting period that very few designs that came to Knoll from outside designers that we thought were really something should be working on.

MS. FALINO: And yet somebody at Knoll, like Cadwallader, felt maybe it was an economy —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, they were getting good stuff.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: There was a guy named — there were two people named Morrison and Hannah — Bruce Hannah is a professor at Pratt now — who were very talented guys, and they designed some good furniture; some interesting designs. I don't know if any of them still exist in the line because the line is not what it used to be.

MS. FALINO: No. No. And they — I'm sure that they felt that they were saving on the research and development time, you know. To pay Harry Bertoia and you for two years to come up with a design —

MR. SCHULTZ: You know, I was left alone completely. I did what I wanted to do.

MS. FALINO: That's great.

MR. SCHULTZ: Almost none of the stuff got produced in those years. And I think later that it was curious because nobody came to me and said, "We need such-and-such a thing," or "There's a need — there's a gap in the — you need to fill this niche." Never, except that one time for the outdoor furniture.

MS. FALINO: Right, which was very early.

MR. SCHULTZ: But Shu didn't — she was thinking of her own self. She wasn't thinking of the market.

MS. FALINO: Funny.

MR. SCHULTZ: And we never thought about the market.

MS. FALINO: Wow. What a luxury.

MR. SCHULTZ: There wasn't any market for that stuff.

MS. FALINO: You created it.

MR. SCHULTZ: We created it. And that's what the modern movement is really all about. It's not following a style. The word "style" is — it has nothing to do with the modern movement in architecture and design until this whole post-modernist idea came about, which was essentially a style. And I thought was just the opposite of what modern design was all about.

MS. FALINO: So, here you are in the early '70s, and —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, then I — yes, then I was without a job.

MS. FALINO: That was a shock.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was a shock. What happened right away — this was a funny thing. There was a friend of mine who was at — really good designs done by Knoll — Max Pearson and I teamed up together. I had that house — I had a workshop at home, which Max didn't have, and nobody else did. I mean, we were just lucky enough to find that house.

MS. FALINO: This is — this is the house in Barto.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. So, Max — so — [laughs] — so, there was a guy who supplied Knoll with cardboard boxes and foam, and somebody there decided maybe they could make cardboard furniture. So, Max and I worked on this project the whole summer. And it was at the same time that Frank Gehry was working on cardboard furniture.

And I will never forget this whole business with — Gehry's furniture was introduced at Bloomingdale's, and we were completely shocked at what he did. First of all, we were not able to design furniture that was inexpensive enough, which one would think, you know, cardboard furniture should be, because the cardboard was a material that wasn't very strong. But to make enough — to use enough cardboard in the chair to make it something that you could actually sit on and that you had the idea that it would last made it expensive. Well, Frank Gehry didn't care anything about that. He approached it much more as an artist. I don't know if you remember this furniture —

MS. FALINO: I do.

MR. SCHULTZ: — but it was completely impractical.

MS. FALINO: Completely. [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: It had holes. The surface of the chair that you sat on was all holes, the holes of the cardboard.

MS. FALINO: They were on end.

MR. SCHULTZ: In on end. So, we sort of laughed it off —

MS. FALINO: Were you flabbergasted?

MR. SCHULTZ: — because we knew what the reason — you know, what would happen. What happened was, I guess, some of that furniture was sold because Frank at that time had a really big name and — [they laugh] — it was a peculiar experience. Then we — of course that —

MS. FALINO: So, you didn't market that.

MR. SCHULTZ: Nothing happened with that project, that whole cardboard project. You know, another thing we did, which I thought had some possibilities was we looked at the method of making egg cartons.

MS. FALINO: Egg cartons?

MR. SCHULTZ: Egg cartons are made out of a kind of papier mâché. The same company had a division that made egg cartons. And they made flowerpots, sort of pretty big, substantial stuff, which was thick, all made out of old newspapers. And we thought — but this was at the end of the whole project. It was one of those projects that died because I guess it took us too long or it was too much money was being spent. They were not in the furniture business. I mean, how were they going to market this stuff?

But I thought that the egg cartons thing would have been fun to work with because you could make a chair a little bit like a — how should I describe it. There's nothing really on the market that I can — if you had a big pile of newspapers and you sat down in the newspapers, okay, you have a kind of seat, this would be just a big — and if this were thin like an egg carton — well, not so thin but maybe halving it — it would be a chair.

MS. FALINO: Sure, oh, I can see the value, sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: It could be stacked and it could be colored, and I think it could be cheap. I don't remember that we ever got to the point of questioning whether that — but they were making these pots for flowers, which were pretty big and thick.

MS. FALINO: Did you ever see that show at MoMA, the — there was that early furniture competition? We talked about it, I think, the first day I was here.

MR. SCHULTZ: A more recent one?

MS. FALINO: No, no, it was in the '50s or late '40s. And Pristini had a chair. And that was made of — I think that was made of paper.

MR. SCHULTZ: Maybe, maybe. I mean, that's the chair that I think the show that Davis Pratt entered with his inner-tube chair I was telling you about yesterday.

MS. FALINO: I think, yes, I think that was the show.

MR. SCHULTZ: Maybe it was the same show.

MS. FALINO: Might have been the same show. So, from pressed paper and cardboard, what did you — what happened next?

MR. SCHULTZ: Max went off and got a job — [inaudible] — design but working at a company that made foam products. And I — well, I guess I got a job teaching.

MS. FALINO: Oh, that's about the time you went to Philadelphia College of Art.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, I was going down there twice a week, I guess, or something like that. That didn't pay a tremendous amount, but Trudy got a job as a waitress at the local restaurant.

MS. FALINO: And by this time you had four little kids.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes.

MS. FALINO: So, that was a challenge.

TRUDY SCHULTZ: Actually, Peter was ready to go to college.

MS. FALINO: So, Peter was going to college and the other children were in high school.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: They were about, so you needed money for college, too.

MR. SCHULTZ: I don't know how we did that. Actually, Peter, I guess, had some debts. There were [Federal] Pell grants.

MS. FALINO: Oh, yes, that was helpful.

MRS. SCHULTZ: Yes, it was helpful not to have money, actually. We got — we got scholarships.

MR. SCHULTZ: Thank you. We never worried about — I don't think we worried about college tuition in those days. Why, I don't know. Well, it wasn't as much as it used — as it is now.

MS. FALINO: That's true. All right, so let's continue —

MR. SCHULTZ: Then I was working on some ideas for office furniture, and there was this guy I mentioned before yesterday — Vince Cafiero — and Jens Risom's brother, Niels. Niels came around and asked me if he could represent me. And he would go out and try to sell my talents to manufacturers. So, we had an arrangement. And then I had this idea for office chairs, and I somehow got to the point, maybe — I think it was through Vince that I showed them to Stow/Davis, which is an old-time Grand Rapids furniture company that didn't make anything that resembled a modern design.

MS. FALINO: Now, this is the — what became known as the *Paradigm* series?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: But before Stow/Davis, what about Harvey Probber?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh my gosh. How do you know about him?

MS. FALINO: Hey, I read your bio. [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh. That was a funny thing. That was a failure.

MS. FALINO: All right, so tell us about Harvey first.

MR. SCHULTZ: That was a failure. That wasn't much.

MS. FALINO: You did an armchair.

MR. SCHULTZ: He actually made some, but I don't think he ever sold any.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: I was still working at Knoll. I became aware of the existence of a process for using scrap foam

rubber to make essentially reconstituted foam. They broke it up into little popcorn-like pieces and they mixed it with a liquid of some kind. Some kind of a binder. And they dumped it in a mold which had high sides on it, but then the other side of the mold fitted down inside, so you were compressing a lot of stuff. And then I can't remember whether I used heat, or some way or another —

MS. FALINO: You cured it.

MR. SCHULTZ: — this binder cured, and you had a part — a product, which was — would look kind of —

MS. FALINO: A seat or a back or something.

MR. SCHULTZ: What?

MS. FALINO: It would be a chair seat or a back.

MR. SCHULTZ: Or it could be — well, what I did was I made a chair — a whole chair. It was just a big cube, which you could —

MS. FALINO: Oh. Oh, yes, I've seen — that's right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which you could sit on — sit in, I mean. And then I had a method of upholstering it, which involved a zipper. You know these — at that time, they were producing these wonderful, big, gutsy zippers for ski clothes and stuff. So, I figured out a way of — I can't remember how that worked — of having the zipper — half of the zipper was part of the chair.

MS. FALINO: It was the — part of the design look.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was part of the — a part of the chair. The other half of the zipper was sewn onto the cover and you could just zip the cover onto the chair.

MS. FALINO: And that was like a — that chair was like a big cube.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was. And it was — you know, it was all right. It was a big, sort of lump chair which was — there was no part of it which was — which was rigid. There was no frame in there or anything.

MS. FALINO: So, but that was a brief —

MR. SCHULTZ: That was — I had already made this chair at Knoll. I remember trying to talk Bobby into manufacturing it, but he wouldn't. I think he didn't think it was "Knoll enough."

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: But, so that was a transition. I was — you know, I was trying to sell myself.

MS. FALINO: Sure, sure. So then you found Stow/ Davis.

MR. SCHULTZ: Then, when I found Stow/Davis, that turned out to be very lucrative; a good relationship with those people because they — [laughs] — another thing was about it, they hired — not only did they have Vince as a consultant; they had a young man named Phil Bradley, who was a graduate of Harvard and who was smart and didn't have any design training at all. But he was sort of in charge of marketing. He's the guy who came up with this name Paradigm.

MS. FALINO: I see. It's a great name.

MR. SCHULTZ: But they also hired a fellow whose name was Richardson, Don Richardson, who had been at Knoll as a technical person. And Don moved out to Grand Rapids and worked for Stow/Davis. And he was a guy who was the typical Knoll person who knew — who would not — who would solve any problem. I mean, he made things work. So, the combination of Vince and Don and this guy, Phil Bradley —

MS. FALINO: Phil Bradley.

MR. SCHULTZ: Phil Bradley was a marketing guy. He was in charge of, you know, NeoCon and all that. So, that project was really — they made the chair exactly the way I wanted it made. [Laughs.] Everything worked beautifully and they sold tons of them.

MS. FALINO: Great.

MR. SCHULTZ: And I was — we were — at that point, we were getting, like, a three-figure income. [Laughs.] I'll

never forget how much money we made.

MS. FALINO: Three figures?

MR. SCHULTZ: Three figures. I mean, like, $123,000.

MS. FALINO: Wow, that's a six-figure income.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, six-figure, I'm sorry.

MS. FALINO: Yes, that's great.

MR. SCHULTZ: Six-figure. So, anyway, we thought about trying to get some help with how to spend the money or to invest it.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.] Oh, such problems.

MR. SCHULTZ: We went to New York. We met with a guy, I remember. It's so funny. [Laughs.] He was the guy who handled rock stars and, you know, people like that, and we had just enough money to have him interested. Not anymore.

MS. FALINO: What a wonderful feeling.

MR. SCHULTZ: So, that lasted for quite a long time. And then we — but here's the story about [Niels] Risom. I had an agreement with Risom as a — as a consultant. And one of the people he claimed to have shown my work to was Stow/ Davis. But he didn't sell what I did to them. The way it worked was that I approached — I don't know if I approached Vince or somebody. It was the old mafia kind of thing — but I had to pay a percentage of everything we earned for years after that.

MS. FALINO: Ouch. Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: I remember I went to a lawyer and I tried to present this — my case to a lawyer and he said, "Have you ever paid him any money?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Then you can't."

MS. FALINO: Once you start.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. But what happened then, was that there was a big movement in this country to somehow make another Knoll furniture place. Cadwallader — Knoll was bought by Cogan and Swid. Cogan's son now is the head of the company. Cogan and Swid bought the — Bobby and a guy from Texas who was — what's his name, the sales guy from Texas? [Johnny Helm.]

MS. FALINO: I don't know.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was a group of ex-Knoll people who wanted to buy the company, but these guys Cogan and Swid outbid them and they bought the company. It was at that time it was owned by, I think, a company called — up in New York state, Art Metal, I think. Art Metal had to sell it because the government forced them to sell it for some reason or another.

So, after that, Bobby tried to start — Bobby — there was a company called Sunnerman.

MS. FALINO: How do you spell that?

MR. SCHULTZ: S-U-N — maybe S-U-N-N-E-R-M-A-N. I'm not sure I've got that name right.

MS. FALINO: Okay, and what did they do?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it was a furniture company. They were in Cleveland; the headquarters was in Cleveland. And Bobby got involved with them and he tried to kind of reinvent the company and he hired Michael Graves to design this very expensive showroom on Park Avenue and hired a lot of designers to do work. Mies van der Rohe.

MS. FALINO: Yes, Mies, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Mies designed terrific furniture for them. But the whole thing failed. And then Bobby got involved with a company in — with a guy in Italy, Sangiorgio. And he formed a company called Cadsana. It was a combination of their names.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: But that failed. And there was a guy — [laughs] — named Amos Melamede, who bought a company out in Elkhart, Indiana, that made office furniture and sold it to Midwest companies — a big insurance company out in the Midwest. Anyway, he bought this company and tried to — also hired me and all kinds of other people to run this company and make it into a Knoll. His wife was an architect, and so he was knowledgeable about design. That failed. I worked for them. I designed something called the *Barto* chair.

MS. FALINO: Oh. [Laughs.] Did you ever consider working for Dunbar?

MR. SCHULTZ: No.

MS. FALINO: Did you know Ed Wormley?

MR. SCHULTZ: I didn't.

MS. FALINO: No? Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: So, that was an interesting period, which they — there was a — there was a building over in Long Island City —

MS. FALINO: Where?

MR. SCHULTZ: In Long Island City, which was made into a — this was after — there was an event called Designer's Saturday. You could maybe research that. That took place in Manhattan, where designers — I mean, furniture showrooms would open their doors to people coming in. They would have food and drinks there. Designer's Saturday eventually turned into this thing called — a huge building over there on Long Island City just on the other side of the Queensboro Bridge that may have been — remember, years ago there was a building over there with a Pepsi-Cola — a big Pepsi-Cola sign.

MS. FALINO: Right, sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: It might have been that building, I don't know. Anyway, a huge amount of money was spent making that building into furniture showrooms. And Knoll had a showroom there and everybody had a showroom there. Amos Melamede had a showroom. His company was called — what was it called?

MRS. SCHULTZ: My mind's a-blank.

MR. SCHULTZ: I think he kept the name of this — the company that he bought, he kept the name.

MS. FALINO: This is the company he bought in Elkhart, Indiana?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, it was in Elkhart. I may — I'll think of it later.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: Everybody in the world had a showroom there. It was a huge building. It had this big atrium. Big, you know, stairways and elevators and escalators. People spent tons of money.

MS. FALINO: And did anybody come?

MR. SCHULTZ: The whole thing collapsed. All these companies that were invented during that period failed. And I was involved in a couple of them. Stow/Davis didn't fail. Eventually he sold it to — it came into — the family that owned Stow/Davis also owned Steelcase. And they transferred the Paradigm furniture over to Steelcase.

MS. FALINO: Oh, that's great.

MR. SCHULTZ: But it was great, but it was sort of the end of the *Paradigm* chair. What happened then was that what's-his-name over on the West Coast designed that blockbuster chair that was — looked — it didn't look like a conventional office chair. It looked like a piece of equipment. It looked more like a dentist's chair or a — made out of — it wasn't upholstered. It was — what's the name of that chair? Anyway, it became — it was a huge, huge success, and now he's designed some similar furniture for Knoll. It's not upholstered office furniture as it used to be — as that sort of thing used to be.

MS. FALINO: I'll have to look into who that was. And is he still designing for them?

MR. SCHULTZ: He designs for Knoll now, still. He was — I spoke about the early days when they were — people bringing designs into Knoll, we all thought they were misconceived. This guy was one of the people who was one of the really talented ones —

MS. FALINO: Right, we'll have to look into that.

MR. SCHULTZ: — although nobody made any of his stuff. But his stuff was very much more well-thought-out. What's his name? [Don Chadwick.]

MS. FALINO: So that was your big competition for the *Paradigm* chair?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, the *Paradigm* chair, finally they quit making it. It was old-fashioned-looking furniture, which was why it was a success in the beginning. I'll show you some pictures. What I figured out —

MS. FALINO: Actually, I think I have a picture of it right here.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, maybe you do.

MS. FALINO: The *Paradigm* chair? Here.

MR. SCHULTZ: That's it, yes. That's all based on a technique of how to upholster a chair that was — there was no sewing involved in this. This is a chair — there's a back and a seat, then there was this sort of boomerang shape, which fastened these two together, essentially. [Coughs.] Excuse me. All this was covered with leather or fabric, but all was stapled on, not sewn.

MS. FALINO: Oh, it was all stapled?

MR. SCHULTZ: All stapled.

MS. FALINO: So that made it less expensive.

MR. SCHULTZ: It made it less expensive and it was also something that you could learn — a person who wasn't an upholsterer could learn how to do it. But this was a — I mean, the big thing at Knoll, I remember, in those days, the upholstery — we're a bit getting off the track. But this was — oh, there you have a picture of it.

MS. FALINO: Yes, there's the *Probber* chair.

MR. SCHULTZ: What's this?

MS. FALINO: This is the Knoll sofa that's from 1963.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, that was interesting.

MS. FALINO: That was from 1975.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes.

MS. FALINO: It has a kind of a rolled back along the headrest. It has a rolled section where the headrest is?

MR. SCHULTZ: What I found out about was how they made parts for cars that is a headrest, the thing that, you know, behind your head, or armrests, they were made with an interesting technique where they cast a mold. First of all, they made the part that they wanted by upholstering something — a piece of foam or something — with a piece of upholstery, which consisted of seams and so forth.

MS. FALINO: Yes, a sewn edge.

MR. SCHULTZ: From this, they learned how to make a mold, a metal mold, by some technique involving plating. They would somehow make this piece of upholstery, turn it into something that would attract — [coughs]. So, they cast this — they were able to cast a skin into this mold, which was, in fact, the exact replica of the upholstered part. Then they'd take this piece and they'd put it into a holding fixture, which they stuck — where they injected foam, and at the same time, a metal part which stuck out that would be used to attach it, for example, to the car. So, they had this curious way of making it a piece of upholstery where they started with this upholstery and they worked in.

So, I thought this was quite an interesting way of making airport seating. At the time, the Eames office had made something called the O'Hare seating, which is still — I think it's one of the — it's the best. It was just a terrific design. And what we were looking for was a way of doing something similar.

MS. FALINO: Yes, and in fact, this bench, or this sofa, it looks like a car seat, in a way. It looks like a bench, a bench seat.

MR. SCHULTZ: It is. It was not intended to be a single seat. It was intended to be this —

MS. FALINO: Sectional?

MR. SCHULTZ: This support here — you see those legs, tubular steel?

MS. FALINO: Yes. It's like a — it's like a U-shaped —

MR. SCHULTZ: Connecting these legs was a beam, which this stuff hung on — the upholstery. So, it was intended to be a modular seating system.

MS. FALINO: And this was produced by Knoll, so was this before you left?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes, I was — it was designed before I left.

MS. FALINO: Okay. And was it intended —

MR. SCHULTZ: We got a guy up in Massachusetts somewhere who could make this automotive stuff. And we had to make a couple of those pieces. And I thought it was a brilliant idea, but nobody at Knoll did.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.] So, you didn't try to push it for —

MR. SCHULTZ: Then they liked the way it looked, so they introduced it as an upholstered bench — a multiple seating unit. I think it also had an arm, which would sort of — could be placed between those units.

MS. FALINO: And was it positioned for the domestic market or was it for airports?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, not for airports but for —

MS. FALINO: Corporate —

MR. SCHULTZ: — office waiting room areas, I suppose.

MS. FALINO: I see, yes, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: What's it called?

MS. FALINO: Corporate interiors?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, corporate interiors. Sofa seating. So, that was a — I considered it a failure. They made this stuff and presented it — they made a wonderful ad, a full-page ad, with me sitting in the chair, in the thing. It was a great piece of publicity, but they never marketed the chair right. Charlie Pfister was a — designed — the designer for Skidmore out on the West Coast, loved it, and he used it on a couple jobs. I think he did the Weyerhaeuser job, which was a big Knoll job, a huge Knoll job.

MS. FALINO: So then after that, it looks like you worked for a firm called Conde House, or how do you pronounce that?

MR. SCHULTZ: Conde House.

MS. FALINO: Conde House. And tell us about them.

MR. SCHULTZ: A friend of mine named Jack Flynn, who was a — who also worked at Knoll as a textile guy in that big — did you see that big book that they produced for that textile show?

MS. FALINO: Yes, the Knoll — you're talking about the Knoll textile show?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. Jack was pictured in there with Anni Albers.

MS. FALINO: And was he a textile designer?

MR. SCHULTZ: Jack? No. He's not a designer. He's just a businessman, I guess. But he somehow got in touch with a company up in Hokkaido —

MS. FALINO: Japan?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. Hokkaido is the northern-most island of the group there — who made beautiful wooden furniture. And in those days, anything made in Japan was very inexpensive but very well-made. And Jack, or they somehow — I don't know whose idea it was to have a company that's sold — [inaudible] — here in the States. So Jack was in charge of that.

MS. FALINO: So did he create Conde House? Did he establish it?

MR. SCHULTZ: He invented the name. He created that whole thing. He got really good people to work for him.

MS. FALINO: Like who besides you?

MR. SCHULTZ: He had an architect who was also Japanese. I can't remember her name. She ended up at Harvard, actually — the head of the department at Harvard at one point. But she had an office in New York to do showrooms. And —

MS. FALINO: And it was a New York-based firm?

MR. SCHULTZ: No. I really don't know where it was based. Essentially — you know, it was essentially based — the firm was in Japan.

MS. FALINO: So all the fabrication —

MR. SCHULTZ: Everything was made in Japan.

MS. FALINO: Made in Japan, but —

MR. SCHULTZ: This chair is one of their — one of the Conde House chairs.

MS. FALINO: This chair was sitting — you're sitting on is one of them?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Is that your design?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Now, that's the stack chair?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: It's the 1122 Stack Chair, yes. But the designers were American and Japanese.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, the designs were to be sold in this country because they were all — Japanese designs have to be smaller and shorter. Their seat height is not as high. The depth of the sofas is not as deep.

MS. FALINO: So this was strictly for U.S. export?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Okay. That's interesting.

MR. SCHULTZ: But the whole thing was a failure, and I never understood why. Jack came up here for a weekend a couple weeks ago, and I said, "Jack, I'm still interested in what happened to Conde House." He said his theory is that they — he told them not to use Japanese people in this country in the showrooms and so forth. "You should use Americans. You can't do this with Japanese." And he made sort of a joke about how that would sit there at lunch with their bento boxes on the desk. He'd say — well, his — I'm not sure that this was the case why it wasn't a success. I had all kinds of products there with them and lots of stuff, all beautifully made.

And so it was another sort of failure. It was curious how much — this is Bobby's stuff — Cadsana.

MS. FALINO: Cadsana, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: I'll show you. You know what he did? We had Bill Bonnell —

MS. FALINO: Who?

MR. SCHULTZ: Bill Bonnell is a graphic designer.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: He designed this catalogue. I'll tell you, this is outrageous.

MS. FALINO: He just stepped away from the microphone and he's looking for a book.

Well, maybe we should — I think we'll take a break and we will come back.

[End of disc]

MS. FALINO: All right. This is Jeannine Falino in Brattleboro, Vermont with Richard Schultz. This is our fifth session and final one.

And we are going to pick up where we left off. Richard was about to talk to us about the catalog that Bill Bonnell had designed for Cadsana which was the furniture design firm that was established by Cadwallader and Sangiorgio. Okay? So you — do you want to talk about the catalog and the amount of labor that they put into that book and what came of it all?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I was working with Bobby on this —

MS. FALINO: Bobby Cadwallader.

MR. SCHULTZ: — yes, Bobby Cadwallader — on this project that he was putting a lot of energy and money into. And I was — I knew he was working with Bill Bonnell who was a very talented designer, and a woman named — Bruce — what's Bruce's wife's name [Gail]? We can look it up.

MS. FALINO: Okay. Why don't you give me the catalog. Maybe it's in there.

MR. SCHULTZ: He worked and he worked with a woman named — he worked for — [inaudible].

MS. FALINO: Uh-huh. And who was that? Was she a designer, a book designer, or the owner?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, she was sort of a —

MS. FALINO: Was it Cini Boeri?

MR. SCHULTZ: Huh?

MS. FALINO: Cini or Cini Boeri?

MR. SCHULTZ: Cini Boeri?

MS. FALINO: Yes?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, she was a designer.

MS. FALINO: No? Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: But this woman — anyway, Jack had a lot of talented people working with him on this whole — no, I'm sorry, Bobby.

MS. FALINO: Uh-huh.

MR. SCHULTZ: I'm mixing up two things.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Bobby. So it was — and I was thrilled with the whole idea because he was doing some designs that I had a lot of hopes for and doing very well. And I mean, making them well. And when he produced this catalog, this hard-cover book, which he was giving away to, you know, design firms, I was astonished in the way that he can afford to do this.

MS. FALINO: So a big investment.

MR. SCHULTZ: But what happened in the end that the business failed. And I don't know why.

MS. FALINO: Were you thinking of Kay Langan? No?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, what — oh, what are some of those names there?

MS. FALINO: Well, it says the book was designed by Bonnell Design Associates, New York.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Bill Bonnell and Curt Jennings.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Written by Robert Cadwallader and Kay Langan.

MR. SCHULTZ: No.

MS. FALINO: Photographed by Bill Bonnell and Alberto Anganelli [ph].

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: That's about it.

MR. SCHULTZ: No other names?

MS. FALINO: Printed in Japan. In memory of Christine Rae.

MR. SCHULTZ: That's the woman.

MS. FALINO: Oh, and what —

MR. SCHULTZ: Christine Rae.

MS. FALINO: And what was her job?

MR. SCHULTZ: At — [inaudible] — she was a kind of assistant to — [inaudible].

MS. FALINO: Ah.

MR. SCHULTZ: And she was a — I have no idea what her background was, but she was a very imposing person and very — and had a lot of ability, I thought. She kept minutes of meetings with little sketches which were always very good.

MS. FALINO: Uh-huh.

MR. SCHULTZ: Christine was an interesting person, but I don't know — I can't tell you much about her.

MS. FALINO: Oh, okay. And it looks like she died — she worked with Bob Cadwallader from '65 until this book was published which was '86.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Looks like she died while it was —

MR. SCHULTZ: She had an office in New York after she left Knoll. There was a great kind of mass exodus of people after Cogan and Swid took over who were — whether they were right or not about leaving, they did because they were — had an allegiance to something that was much older —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and a different culture.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So, um —

MS. FALINO: So why do you feel the company did not succeed?

MR. SCHULTZ: I have no idea.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, I mean, it's like with all these other companies we were talking about —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — who didn't succeed and who had good designs.

MS. FALINO: And they were also located in Long Island city, they had a showroom in that building?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, they did, but that's not where their factories were. They had their showrooms there.

MS. FALINO: Yes. And the factories are where? In Italy?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, all over the place. This case of Bobby, they were in — it was all made in Milano.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And that was — when Bobby took over Knoll, he was infatuated with Italian design, and he bought a company called — oh, God — they made — they had a license for making Breuer chairs, I think, in Italy.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: And they made a lot of interesting stuff, a lot of foam stuff. There was a guy named Matta — M-a-t-t-a — who designed some foam furniture that was kind of like a jigsaw puzzle. They were a bunch of chairs all fitted together.

MS. FALINO: Yes, yes, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Maybe you've seen it.

MS. FALINO: Well, there are some that Verner Panton did.

MR. SCHULTZ: Sebastian Matta or something.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: I don't know.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: But anyway, Bobby bought that company and he started learning Italian. And he took me to Europe one time on a trip to look at all his stuff and to look at new — there were quite a few interesting new Italian designers that he was interested in signing up. I don't think — not much of it happened, but it was an interesting trip for me who hadn't been in Europe in the furniture world for many years before that.

MS. FALINO: But maybe he was having things made in a very high-quality level and maybe the costs were too high?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it was all high quality.

MS. FALINO: It was?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. But it didn't mean anything. Knoll was going through a period of hard times for some reasons which I don't know, but they ran an ad which was really strange, which showed all the executives standing in a room with no furniture. And the caption was we don't have any furniture either because apparently they were having hard trouble and having trouble delivering product.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: So they weren't — it was a goofy period of time. Maybe it was his — it was that period when I was referring to before where Cadsana — I mean, Conde House, Jack's company, failed. And they went out — [inaudible].

What as the name of that company? It was a funny name because people thought it was a European company and they tried to pronounce it with a European accent. And it was a middle-West company.

MS. FALINO: Oh, that's good. Well, let's — then let's — let's continue now. So this all — Cadsana was in the mid '80s —

MR. SCHULTZ: Uh-huh.

MS. FALINO: — and by '92, 1992, you decided to go back to your early designs and reissue some and also come up with some new designs for production. And that's where your son, Peter, came in.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. At one point, I got a call from Knoll who said they wanted me to come back and help them with reengineering the outdoor furniture line. They were having lots of trouble. Simple things, like they weren't using the right thread.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: The ladies in the sewing department didn't know which white thread to use. And it made a big difference. Outdoor furniture is very sensitive to UV degradation of everything.

MS. FALINO: And what was the name of the furniture line? Alto?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, it was my design.

MS. FALINO: What did you call it?

MR. SCHULTZ: Knoll called it leisure collection, we called it 66.

MS. FALINO: Okay. All right. So they've called you.

MR. SCHULTZ: They asked me to do this, to come back, and they said they would pay me royalties which I had never gotten. So I said, well, I'd be happy to do that. And I sat down with them to talk about how many problems they had. It was just amazing.

And so I started working on it. And I was making progress, and then they said to me, you know, we don't want to be in the outdoor furniture business, we don't have any reason to be in the outdoor furniture business. Here's the design and all the tooling and anything we have that's a tool that needs to be used to make the furniture, including all the molds for the products, aluminum products, everything.

MS. FALINO: Wow.

MR. SCHULTZ: So at that point I had been already working on some ideas for outdoor furniture of my own, thinking that I could sell them to these really big outdoor furniture people like the guys out in the West Coast. I forget that name.

MS. FALINO: Was it Jordan?

MR. SCHULTZ: Brown Jordan.

MS. FALINO: Brown Jordan.

MR. SCHULTZ: And so I actually did make a presentation to them. And they didn't like any of it. Didn't like any of this.

MS. FALINO: To heck with them.

MR. SCHULTZ: So then I said to Peter, you know, it would be interesting to start a furniture company and make this stuff and try to sell it. And we had, at that point, we had the rights to the Knoll furniture. So Peter thought that was a good idea, so we did start it.

MS. FALINO: Okay. And now Peter — say a little bit about Peter.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, Peter was our —

MS. FALINO: First of all, he's your oldest.

MR. SCHULTZ: — oldest son who graduated in architecture from Yale. So he was very bright and knew exactly kind of how to do this, how to run a business. I thought I knew something about it, but I found out pretty soon that I didn't. [They laugh.]

[Inaudible.]

MS. FALINO: And Trudy said don't do the business by yourself.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, Trudy was very much of that opinion, and she was right. Well —

MS. FALINO: So Peter turned out to be the businessman.

MR. SCHULTZ: Who did turn?

MS. FALINO: Peter.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes.

MS. FALINO: So he was the businessman.

MR. SCHULTZ: But he was a businessman with a good eye.

MS. FALINO: Of course.

MR. SCHULTZ: I mean, he knew what he was trying to do. He knew that the — a cheaper way of doing it was not going to be the right way.

MS. FALINO: And of course, he knew that the — you know, it was the Schultz brand.

MR. SCHULTZ: And we were — yes. And we were together in this business until I don't know how long it was. I don't remember when I told him that I thought I didn't belong there anymore and I gave the whole thing over to him.

MS. FALINO: Oh, you did?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. We were partners and I said, now you, you know, it's your business. And I stayed involved by adding new product.

MS. FALINO: So you were the only designer. You were the —

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, I — yes.

MS. FALINO: Yes. So why don't you tell us a little bit about the lines you developed. The Topiary?

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, this is — it goes back to this Brown Jordan thing. I thought I could interest them in various ideas, which I didn't do — manage to do. And then we decided to make them ourselves. And I was very lucky to live just down the road from a very talented young man who could make things. He was ostensibly a car repair buy, body and fender.

MS. FALINO: Oh, really?

MR. SCHULTZ: But he knew — and so he knew not only how to make things, and he had a wonderful workshop, but he knew how to make things look good because, you know, when you fix up an old car —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — it doesn't look like new. And he was a great neighbor to have and very friendly, a nice fellow, a vegan. That's before I knew what vegans were. His wife — he and his wife had a kind of menagerie there of broken animals, animals that had suffered injury or had been mutilated by unfriendly human beings. And so they were an interesting couple.

Bill was just terrific. I could go down there any time and take a project there to him and he knew exactly how to do it.

MS. FALINO: So what was his name?

MR. SCHULTZ: Bey — B-E-Y.

MS. FALINO: Bill Bey?

MR. SCHULTZ: Bill Bey — Bill and Linda Bey. They've since — they were — their parents had an old farm there. When we moved to our house in 1954, they had it — they raised turkeys. They had a sign on the road and it said turkey farm. But Bill and Linda had — didn't do any of that. They were vegans and they — the point is that I was able to make prototypes of all this stuff with Bill's help.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: And even though I didn't have the facilities anymore of the Knoll — in fact, Bill — I got Bill to go over and apply for a job at Knoll.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: They thought he was terrific, but he didn't like it there. He hated to work in a factory.

MS. FALINO: So he helped you with the prototypes and then who did the fabrication?

MR. SCHULTZ: Of the furniture?

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, well, the neighborhood of Pennsylvania there was full of Knoll subcontractors.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: People who made things out of plastic, out of steel, out of God knows what. So I knew, there was no question really of how to get things made. But we probably would have not been able to really make a successful business as easily as we did if we didn't have that Knoll product because that Knoll product, in the first place, there were tons of people out there in the world who wanted to get replacement parts for their chairs.

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: So that was a built-in client base —

MS. FALINO: Excellent.

MR. SCHULTZ: — right at the — right there off the starting block. I found a new source for the mesh, the mesh which was just back in the seat was failing for Knoll. And I found another source for that, which is — everybody was using for their mesh needs. And that was a big success, too, because they — that stuff was just wonderful.

MS. FALINO: And then did you establish a showroom in New York?

MR. SCHULTZ: Not in the beginning. Well, we did have a — we had a guy who had his furniture showroom on 59th Street near the bridge, who showed our stuff. It was not our showroom.

MS. FALINO: Who was that? Who was that?

MR. SCHULTZ: I can't remember.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: Eventually then, Peter didn't get along with him very well, so we shifted to — what did we do? We — because I can't remember — there must have been a place in — after this guy's place, we had — how did we show this stuff in New York? Oh!

MS. FALINO: Did you show at the — what do you call it, the furniture — F —

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, finally we ended up with a showroom at the D&D Building —

MS. FALINO: Oh, okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which took a long time. And that still exists, that showroom. But we did go ahead with the furniture that Brown Jordan rejected, the Topiary furniture was the first piece which we introduced —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which we had made there locally in the neighboring town, Boyertown.

MS. FALINO: Excellent.

MR. SCHULTZ: And then the pieces came along. I forget what we had after that.

MS. FALINO: You had the *Cafe* collection.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, that was a part of that collection — [inaudible] — chairs — like the chairs without the holes. The *Topiary* collection consisted of two versions, one of these what I would say funny-shaped holes punched in the aluminum, which in fact looked like leaves or shadows of leaves; hence, the name Topiary.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: Then it was brought to our attention that people could get their fingers or buttons caught in these holes, and so we thought, well, let's do a version with just slots, which we did. That had another name; I forget what that was.

MS. FALINO: Confetti?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: So that furniture was fairly successful, not as successful as I thought it might be. I thought it would appeal to people who liked old-fashioned furniture, sort of Victorian stuff, but it didn't. And when we would have shows at the ICFF, people would come over and rave about it, but they could — none of them could afford it.

MS. FALINO: Ah.

MR. SCHULTZ: [Laughs.] So —

MS. FALINO: But you were rebuilding the Schultz name.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it was — yes, that was very successful. Peter was great at marketing and what you call branding —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which is a term I didn't even know.

MS. FALINO: You got a lot of articles. I mean, I think Peter was very skillful at placing the name in the press.

MR. SCHULTZ: He was good at that.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Extremely good. People liked him, editors, young ladies who were mostly the ones who were running these operations, magazines and so forth. But that made it a successful thing. And we — then it came time — now, I don't know. Let's see, when did we start this business, '92?

MS. FALINO: '92.

MR. SCHULTZ: And he sold it last year, right?

MS. FALINO: Right, which was 2011 or 2012. I think it was 2012.

MR. SCHULTZ: [Inaudible] — that was quite a long time —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — that he was doing this and that we were doing it together. When we found a factory near — in the beginning, the furniture was made by a man who had left Knoll to establish — he was a — he was the supervisor or the foreman of the upholstery department at Knoll, so he left Knoll to establish his own business with his family and his sons. And he — there was a fairly big amount of labor goes into sewing on this chair because we sewed vinyl straps to the mesh.

And so Bobby —

MS. FALINO: Bobby, this foreman?

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: What's his last name?

MR. SCHULTZ: Bobby —

MS. FALINO: Well, that's probably —

MR. SCHULTZ: If you leave me a list of names I need to fill in for you.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Now, you're talking about the upholstery for the Leisure collection or for what?

MR. SCHULTZ: Huh?

MS. FALINO: You're talking about upholstery for what?

MR. SCHULTZ: No, he did the mesh for the seats —

MS. FALINO: Mesh.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and backs.

MS. FALINO: For which?

MR. SCHULTZ: He had the machine — he had a sewing machine.

MS. FALINO: But for which series.

MR. SCHULTZ: For 66.

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: So he left Knoll —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and with a lot of equipment —

MS. FALINO: Ah.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which included this machine which was specially set up for doing this kind of sewing.

MS. FALINO: Perfect.

MR. SCHULTZ: So what we then did is to set up a little frame assembly operation in his portion of his factory. He then moved — about three or four times he moved because it was — that's the nature of starting a new business really, not having your own facility —

MS. FALINO: The facilities, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and so one thing we had to deal with was finishing the frames, putting the coating on.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: That was a struggle that we had to go through to get the right coating that would resist the elements, especially saltwater. We bought a special machine for testing saltwater. It was called a weatherometer.

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: A weatherometer is a machine that sprays salty water on a product and then turns on UV lights and bakes the thing dry, sprays it again, bakes it, just a cycle.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So to see if it's going to hold up outdoors —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — especially on the sea coast.

MS. FALINO: Sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: So we learned a lot that way. We kept going from one finisher to the next to try to figure out how to coat these frames, because Knoll was having the same trouble. We couldn't use Knoll's method.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: It wasn't any good either. We finally discovered that we had to coat it twice. We had to coat it first with epoxy, which didn't resist ultraviolet and UV and — I mean, and salt spray.

MS. FALINO: Good.

MR. SCHULTZ: But polyester coatings did resist that. But you couldn't put the polyester on the aluminum because it didn't stick to the aluminum.

MS. FALINO: Didn't bind, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So we had to coat. First we do the epoxy and then we do the polyester. That was the solution to that problem, so we finally ended up with a chair that is really weatherproof.

MS. FALINO: Very durable, that's great.

MR. SCHULTZ: That was our sort of learning curve on making those chairs. And then slowly we introduced new products.

MS. FALINO: So of the products you introduced, like *Topiary*, there's the 2002, there's the Wing collection —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: — there's Swell, there's —

MR. SCHULTZ: Swell was a version of the 66.

MS. FALINO: Okay. So of these different designs, which ones do you feel especially pleased with or, you know, do you feel helped to, you know, sort of — you felt that your designs were making —

MR. SCHULTZ: I liked the *Topiary* very much.

MS. FALINO: Yes, I think it's very charming.

MR. SCHULTZ: And I like — there's one which — oh, you don't have — there's one that's called *Fresh Air*.

MS. FALINO: *Fresh Air.*

MR. SCHULTZ: Is that there?

MS. FALINO: I — this is — I'm just looking at a little list from Dick's own website. No, I see Pavilion, I don't see *Fresh Air*.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, it was an aluminum chair which was just bent a little, simple, a very simple design. But I liked it a lot. And I don't know how well it's selling at this point.

MS. FALINO: But did you like the fact that — you were basically running your own ship. You say I like this particular design and you didn't have to push it past — [inaudible] — or anybody.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, no. Right.

MS. FALINO: You just said, well, this is good enough, why don't I —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, just had to get it past Peter.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I mean, that's true. I mean, we were —

MS. FALINO: You were partners in the beginning.

MR. SCHULTZ: Peter really had to decide. He had to decide whether it was going to work or not in the marketplace.

MS. FALINO: Right. Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: The usual problem is the design, and is the design appealing just to look at it?

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: Is it appealing comfort-wise? Is it something we can manufacture?

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Has it — is it going to have all kinds of problems in the field? And yes, that's sort of it.

MS. FALINO: Yes. And will you get repeat buyers?

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, well, that I think kind of is — unless it has — like, for example, we had with the Topiary, we had some problems where Peter sold a big order to this guy Wynn who owns the —

MS. FALINO: Steve Wynn.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: He had these big hotel out in Las Vegas.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: And he had these big guys with cameras who sat in these chairs night and day. I mean, they got a lot of — they took a beating and the chairs were starting to bend, they weren't holding up.

MS. FALINO: Really?

MR. SCHULTZ: So we had to go to a thicker metal —

MS. FALINO: Ah-ha.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which was a solution to the problem, but I didn't like it because it made the chair much heavier. And you know, institutional furniture has to be built much stronger.

MS. FALINO: That's right, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: And we should go back maybe to talk about the Bertoia furniture falling apart. But Knoll didn't have any reading and quality control department. They were making furniture that didn't have problems. Wooden furniture doesn't fall apart. And Saarinen Furniture, which was, you know, in '71 — '71, '72 — armchairs and office furniture and wooden chairs. They're all really gutsy chairs, they don't fall apart.

But so there wasn't any testing equipment or anything that you would put a chair on and say — that was going to push on the chair or beat it up the way a customer would —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — until we started getting Bertoia chairs back from the customer. Wow, it was shocking. The wires — the only thing that was holding it together all through it was the upholstery. [They laugh.] You know, this drawstring, oh, we couldn't believe, we couldn't believe what these people were doing to these chairs because we were not using the chairs, nobody at Knoll was having this kind of a problem.

So we invented a machine. All this took place with this group of us who were — most of us were design-trained, but the one guy who was the brains of the outfit was a Princeton graduate who had spent the war as this conscientious objector and he had developed a huge repertoire of abilities to make things. He could do blacksmithing, he could do all kinds of things, plus he was just very smart. We used to call him our Leonardo.

Bob developed a machine to try to reproduce the customer breaks in the chairs, which meant pushing on the chair with a plunger, just, you know, putting pressure on the chair, it comes up again and again and again. And it wasn't long before we found out that the chairs were failing. It was metal fatigue.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: Metals — maybe you've one time taken, tried to bend or break a piece of metal. You can bend it — if you can bend it, you can bend it enough times so it will break.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: That's called work hardening. Well, that's what was happening to these chairs. People were, you know, sitting down in the chair, they're stressing the wires —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — it was breaking. So —

MS. FALINO: So what were you able to do?

MR. SCHULTZ: What we did was we learned first of all that we're not making good welds. This guy that I talked to you before about how they got really good at making chairs fast —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which is a mistake because they weren't making good welds.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: The welding machine had all kinds of controls on it. One was how much electricity was going, passing between the two wires. One was how long, how much pressure, these points came together with a certain amount of pressure, which was controlled.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: One was how long did they stay together after the weld was made.

MS. FALINO: Ah, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Lots of variables which we hadn't paid much attention to. But the welds looked good, but we didn't have any way of testing that they really were good. So we were all sort of amateurs doing this work. And it wasn't long after that that there was an organization formed called BIFMA —

MS. FALINO: BIFMA?

MR. SCHULTZ: which is called —

MS. FALINO: B —

MR. SCHULTZ: BIF — B-I-F-M-A —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association, I think, BIFMA. They produced a manual of how much a chair should, or a sofa or whatever, should be able to resist in terms of testing. And if you certified that your chair was a BIFMA, passed BIFMA tests, then that was a big thing in the marketplace.

MS. FALINO: I see, that was like that was like it was early standards.

MR. SCHULTZ: So we did — that was almost coincidental with this business with the Bertoia chairs. And after that, everything we did we tested before we got pretty far with it. We just — that was the routine. Nowadays, they have, if you go to the Knoll factory, you have a whole bunch of these machines testing away at these chairs.

MS. FALINO: The shaking and moving and pushing.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, yes.

MS. FALINO: That's great.

MR. SCHULTZ: So that was an interesting experience. The one thing which was being brought up somehow, so to speak, in the furniture factory made it possible for me to leave Knoll and go back to — [inaudible] — or somebody else —

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: — and speak intelligently about manufacturing furniture, not just about design.

MS. FALINO: Right, because you had seen it from both sides.

MR. SCHULTZ: Because we — yes, I was — it was a great education.

MS. FALINO: Yes. Yes. I'm sure it helped you a great deal as you went forward in your career after Knoll.

MR. SCHULTZ: It really did. It really helped me. For example, this — [inaudible] — *Davis* chair, which was all based on a method of upholstery, I wouldn't have understood, I wouldn't have really thought about this much if I hadn't been spending hours and hours in an upholstery factory.

MS. FALINO: Right. And then when you went into business with Peter —

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: — you were really — you were the designer, and you were research and development, you were production, too.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, I was the whole thing, yes.

MS. FALINO: So that information really stood you in good stead.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's absolutely right. Yes, it's true.

MS. FALINO: So now how do you feel now that the business has been sold back to Knoll? It's sort of a full circle.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, I feel a certain satisfaction. I think — I never thought I guess in the beginning of my career that I would be a manufacturer, although it did occur to me later on. And I said before when we — I said to Peter let's try to go into this outdoor furniture business, that appealed to me much more than office furniture which — because office furniture doesn't give you much chance to do interesting-looking stuff.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: It has to be, at least the way Knoll did it, very quiet and understated, and outdoor furniture seemed to open, be an area that was open to much more fun.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: So this whole effort with the control of the quality of the stuff is also a big factor, especially with this mesh —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — because the thread — I talk about the thread. You know what we ended up using for the thread was a material that's — what's it called — very high-performance plastic which won't — at first — when we first found out we could not use nylon, which is what most upholsterers use for sewing up fabrics. It dawned on me it doesn't do well outside under UV.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: We were using polyester —

MS. FALINO: Okay.

MR. SCHULTZ: — except that polyester doesn't hold up that long either —

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: — maybe seven years. And if you pay that much for an outdoor chair, you want it to last longer than seven years, though.

MS. FALINO: Right.

MR. SCHULTZ: Kevlar, I think, was the stuff —

MS. FALINO: Oh, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which you finally out really holds up. No, not the Kevlar. It as a name — you can't — it's a plastic that you can't — that won't — nothing will stick to.

MS. FALINO: Teflon?

MR. SCHULTZ: Teflon, exactly. And so what we use now is Teflon.

MS. FALINO: And it holds up under UV light.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: It does everything except the fact that it's so slippery that it's hard to tie a knot in it. [They laugh.] So the ladies who sew the stuff had to learn how to do that, which they do. I mean, they did work it out.

MS. FALINO: They figured out a way. Now, today, is Peter continuing in any fashion? Is he staying onboard with the company?

MR. SCHULTZ: He's a — for three years he's a consultant —

MS. FALINO: Consultant.

MR. SCHULTZ: — which means, I think, whatever they really want him to do.

MS. FALINO: And he's probably still —

MR. SCHULTZ: And it started out with talking to the sales people about the product, and then it probably will involve, if there are quality-control problems, he'll probably be asked about that. But he's — I don't know if he gets a salary or how he gets paid to do that, but he gets paid.

MS. FALINO: Well, it's good to have that continuity.

MR. SCHULTZ: Maybe by the hour, on the hour, I don't know.

MS. FALINO: It's probably just great, though, for continuity as it gets absorbed back into Knoll.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. So —

MS. FALINO: And so how do you feel — how do you feel looking back now on all of this, you know, your —

MR. SCHULTZ: I'm very pleased with the whole thing. I mean, I think it worked. It was — it's interesting when you think there's so many elements that are hard to quantify, elements that are pure luck, mostly luck.

MS. FALINO: And, well, and talent.

MR. SCHULTZ: This is like — to start with me getting that job at Knoll.

MS. FALINO: Right. Well, if you hadn't walked in there, you had the gumption to walk in the door.

MR. SCHULTZ: But I would have eventually, but years later I found out that Hans Knoll and Serge Chermayeff, who was the head of the school, were great friends.

MS. FALINO: Ah-ha.

MR. SCHULTZ: They knew each other in England.

MS. FALINO: Oh.

MR. SCHULTZ: And Hans knew everybody. This guy Peter Blake who I —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: You should read that book *No Place Like Utopia*.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's a primer on that whole period. Peter knew everybody. And he has a glowing report about the Knolls. He thought they were great people and, apparently, he was, according to him, they were friends, they were great friends. And Shu had an apartment, I guess Shu and Hans together had an apartment in Sutton Place. And I remember being invited there for dinner one night by Shu, and that was — it was a few weeks after I had started. I was very impressed to be invited to this I knew sort of iconic location in New York. But that was very pleasant.

And I think Peter Blake knew them during that period. Shu had a dog called Cartree, which was a sheep dog, a big dog, absolutely, completely covered with long fur. And he used to sit in the showroom during the day right behind the door, which you had to go into the — through to the offices. So in order to open this door, you had to push Cartree away. Cartree wouldn't move, he would just be pushed away.

MS. FALINO: [Laughs.]

MR. SCHULTZ: And so that —

MS. FALINO: So it was an opportunity, it was the fact that Hans and Serge knew each other.

MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, yes. And Hans knew everybody. I mean, Hans hired the best people.

MS. FALINO: So you think he must have put in a call to Serge after you met and said, well, what do you think about this guy?

MR. SCHULTZ: I have no idea. I have no idea if they — Serge knew me. He was a funny guy. He was a guy who didn't put his arm around you at all. He said — one of his famous statements was my wit is greater than yours and I can destroy you with a word. Now, this is to a class.

This book I bought on Serge mentions that, his attitude toward people.

MS. FALINO: But you were considered — I mean, you obviously got some kind of seal of approval.

MR. SCHULTZ: I must have — he must have thought I was okay because he gave me this letter to Corb.

MS. FALINO: Right. So you had the letter, yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: Okay, still have. And so, you know, one never — I never knew all of this that all these guys were in cahoots. I mean, there was a whole distant handful of people were running the whole show in those days.

MS. FALINO: Right, but you became one of them.

MR. SCHULTZ: Well, eventually. I mean, I wasn't a — just because I got some designs accepted at the museum didn't mean I was running any kind of show. But I was —

MS. FALINO: But you were one of the —

MR. SCHULTZ: — but I felt really good, it made me feel great to have that happen.

MS. FALINO: Yes, you were one of the recognized designers for sure.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes. It was a unique period. And what I didn't realize until a few years ago how it doesn't exist anymore, how what a unique period it was.

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: It was a zeitgeist —

MS. FALINO: Yes.

MR. SCHULTZ: — that existed in the world about design. And there were people who were interested in or somehow tuned in to this who were on a kind of wavelength. And you knew — everybody knew, for example, what the next step was going to be, and the question was, who's going to do it?

MS. FALINO: Wonderful.

MR. SCHULTZ: There was no kind of way of, like, Detroit, for example, where everybody copies everybody else. It didn't work in this kind of atmosphere. There was a real thing about being the first.

MS. FALINO: And being original.

MR. SCHULTZ: Being original. Well, that's what modern furniture was, it was original. I mean, who — you know, all the way from the Mies van der Rohe embroidered furniture, nobody had ever seen furniture like that before. Well, the question was, is it something anybody's going to buy? Those guys didn't worry about that because they were not furniture manufacturers, they were architects and they wanted furniture for their buildings.

But you know, when Shu took all those years, from 1927 or '26, those years when that stuff was being done to Europe, until Knoll decided to make that Mies furniture, nobody was making it.

MS. FALINO: So they took over the market, they became the market.

MR. SCHULTZ: It's true. And that —

MS. FALINO: And they made the market.

MR. SCHULTZ: I'm not sure it can be done again. You know, it's like — [inaudible] — saying how come we don't have anymore Rembrandts or how come we never have anymore da Vincis? It's — there — things go through cycles in culture.

MS. FALINO: Yes. And it was a wonderful, special moment in design.

MR. SCHULTZ: Especially — yes.

MS. FALINO: Well, I want to thank you very much for sharing your life with us.

MR. SCHULTZ: You're welcome. [Laughs.] Well, it's fun to do it. One thinks more about it as one gets older. And I guess it's okay. Well, it's not a bad idea to have this chance of talking about it.

MS. FALINO: Yes, reflecting on it.

MR. SCHULTZ: Yes, yes, yes. So I hope you're lucky. This is — you're doing this — what happened?

[End of interview]