



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Dennis Adrian,
2015 October 8-9

Funding for this interview was provided by the Terra Foundation for American
Art.

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Dennis Adrian on 2015 October 8 and 9. The interview took place at Adrian's home in Seaside, Oregon, and was conducted by Lanny Silverman for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's Chicago's Art-Related Archival Materials: A Terra Foundation Resource.

Dennis Adrian has reviewed the transcript. His corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, I guess the obvious place to start is I'm kind of curious Dennis—you're out here in the —near the Portland area, in the West Coast. Is this where you're from? And where were you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I was born around here, at the little town of Astoria. It's at the mouth of the Colombia [River -DA]. And as a child, I always liked the beach better than the river, and whenever I could get to the seaside, I—sometimes, one has a sense of, "This is my place."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I sort have known that forever. So, when it was possible to—I used to come out there on vacations [. . . -DA]—but when I was living in Chicago and New York, it was too expensive to do. So, anyway, I was finally able to sort of start coming out, in the summer, and—summers, and then this opportunity to [. . . buy -DA] the house presented itself, and I thought, Goody, I can even see the ocean if I stand on a stool in my bathroom window upstairs. I can see a whole inch—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, you do have a view—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —an inch of it. Well, —you have to go upstairs and stand in the bathroom.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. I thought our place was going to have a view, but we're a block away, same as you.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: We can kind of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —sense the ocean, if nothing else.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I'm glad that I'm not right next to it because it keeps all the tourists [at a distance -DA]—I mean, there's no—nothing for them to gawk at around here.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there's probably a lot more tourists where we're staying, up to Cannon Beach, than there are here.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, of course. Being—I mean, Cannon Beach is—you can tell what kind of town Cannon Beach is when it has shops such as Bruce's Candy Kitchen—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Been there.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Sometimes a Great Lotion—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I haven't seen that one yet.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Ali's Baubles.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Don't get us started on the art galleries here either.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right. Yeah. No, but—you know, and everyone's wearing Gucci loafers, and has their sweaters tied over their back, but their arms not in the sleeves, and sunglasses on top.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And they—there's a BMW lurking somewhere in the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It think it's Carmel or something, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, it's—actually looks like a little like a New England-y town to me. It sort of has that feel to it almost—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's totally fake, as you can see.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah [laughs]. It's funny, too, because we were just in Ocean City. We were [there -DA] for an event. There's some compromise—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Now, that's more real.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, they're speaking unreal [ph]. So, you grew up in this area, but you came back because you loved this [area -DA]—felt like—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes. As often as I could. Like a lemming, I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Came—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —came back to drown in the sea.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And when were you born? What year were you born?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Let's see. 1837—

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Come on.

DENNIS ADRIAN: 1937.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's all the same.

DENNIS ADRIAN: In the last millennium, anyway.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The last millennium.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, I'm pushing 80.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow. Well, you seem in good health, too. At least, doing better—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's all an illusion. It's the orange light and the hours I spend with makeup.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, in human years, this is your age—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but you've lived a long and amazing life.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I know. There's a very nice Roger Brown story, where I was with him and his partner, George Veranda, and we were out at the house that George had built for Roger. And we were talking about ladies we knew and their ages, and so someone said, "Well, what about Ruth Horwich?" So, I said, "Well, I know she's a February 29th girl, so she's probably 16 or something." And then, Gilda Buchbinder came up, and I somehow remembered what the year was, and someone talked about Hilda Soloman, who you may or may not have known her husband was an [architect -DA]. And Roger was sitting in the corner drawing, and I said, "Well, I don't know. She must be, I don't know, late 60s or something." And suddenly, Roger's voice said, "How much is that in human years?"

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I was just alluding to the fact that I think you've had a really rich and intense life.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I hope it's not [. . . -DA] over [yet -DA], but I know more of it's behind me than in front of me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there's a certain winding down where you can enjoy, perhaps, the fruits. We were talking about this off the record.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I want to enjoy everything except behind old.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, it's not—it's not for sissies; who sets that quote from?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, see. Stuck, so there you go.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I didn't mean it in that sense. Sorry. I knew you would pick up on that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, sure. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I thought about that. I was thinking, "Who is that quote from?"

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was thinking about it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, see.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Again, I'm forthright enough to come up with that one.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I know. Well, that's fine. It's also true.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You know that quote, though? I think it's a famous quote. Is it Oscar Wilde?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, it is. Well, I don't know if it's Oscar Wilde. I think—my favorite Oscar Wilde quotes are the—he's talking about women, and he says, "I wouldn't trust a woman who tells you her age. A woman like that would tell anything."

[They laugh.]

And the other one is—he didn't approve of women who told their true age because it looks so calculating.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I see. Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And then there was the widow whose hair "turned quite gold from grief."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, let's go back to your early origins.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was saying that I was—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Are there origins that are other than early? I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, late origins. Well, you're—yeah, I guess that's redundant. But you're—this, as a fellow curator, you're going to pick me up on—I don't know that it's a language that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, I'm just—I'm enjoying your company.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, this is great. I knew this would be a gas. So, one of the things that I'm curious about is I started out, and my cousin, for example, said I was curating jokes, something that I don't necessarily even tell now. I love humor, but I'm not a joke teller like you may be, but I was curating jokes, and I couldn't imagine that early self. Were you were a curator by birth? Did you feel like you had those skills as either a curator or a collector?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I didn't think they were skills. I think I had various impulses, which of—at the time, I was deeply ashamed, and probably still am, particularly, collecting.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, we were talking about hoarding.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Other things, you get over [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Once a hoarder, it's very hard to let that go.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's just—I think—it's my theory that some people come to be [collectors -DA], or maybe are even born with—[. . . a -DA] primary way of interacting with the world [that -DA] is visual.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that if that's the kind of person you are, then it's there for you. There are other people where that isn't so. Like, it's—you know, I'm sure when you go into someone's house and there are no pictures? I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I know that feeling, and people—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And it's like—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that have no visual sensibility or—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, they're about something else. They're mathematicians or they're musical, or they're—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure. Let's hope so.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, they're not inferior, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —anyway, I knew early on that I was a very visual person.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But I also know you love music. Was that also early on? That was—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, yeah. A bit. Somehow, early, I got on to opera. I don't know how.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. I mean, as a teenager. [At -DA] the Portland Public Library [. . . one] could check out records. [. . . -DA]I'm speaking of vinyl discs.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know. I'm—we're from that era. I'm there with you.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I would, you know, have shopping bags full of my [inaudible].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. No, I started early, too, with that kind of sensibility.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, was your family supportive of your interest in—

DENNIS ADRIAN: They were deeply horrified.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, my family is—they're all sort of immigrant origin. And what you're supposed to do is you're supposed to get a job, get married, and stay home and take care of everybody.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Buckle down and do the right thing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes. And perfectly logical, I didn't hold that against them—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —but I knew, somehow, that isn't me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's interesting. So, you felt somewhat of an outsider early on.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: For at least—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that reason—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —being an O.C.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I have all of the classical O.C. symptoms.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And my parents both worked very hard although they didn't—how can I—they're a pack of Finns, which maybe explains a lot, I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah. That says something, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so, they run to that tradition where everybody works hard, and you do the expected things, and you take care of business and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that fits with American values because there's this—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Protestant work ethic that you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But the Finns can take it to an extreme, and they have—I mean, they have some humor, but the typical Finnish story is, I'll make this fast: a guy goes outside and he sees the hardware store, and he sees his friend at the door, yanking on the door. And he sees the store is open. The lights are on, [there are -DA] people in there. And he says, you know, "You nut head. It says 'push,' not 'pull.'" And he says, "No goddamn door is telling me what to do."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, that's Finnish—that's a Finnish sentiment—

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's a very—the other one I like is, a Texan is visiting a Finn—in Finland, at the Finn's small farm. And the Texan says, "Well, I have a farm, too, but it takes a day and a half to drive around it." And the Finn says, "Well, I had a truck like that once, too."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's pretty good.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, there's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —the other—this is quick.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, you got another one? Sure, that's fine. Hey, feel free.

DENNIS ADRIAN: [inaudible] special about Finns, and the tango is somehow—is popular in Finland. Don't ask me why.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —among middle-aged people. And they have all these suits made in Romania. You know, these titanium suits. It's a—and there are a couple of rules in the tango parlors. You must dance with the woman you brought at least once, and you must not throw up on your date.

[They laugh.]

Somebody else is okay, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Actually, there are some perverse things in Europe. There's that thing about cowboys that the Germans have. That the cowboys and Indians—they were—

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's scary. Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's pretty strange. I don't know what they're—

DENNIS ADRIAN: It has too much to do with racial extermination to suit me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I'm not comfortable with it, either, but there are some strange displacements like that. So, you were sort of operating in your own little world. I know this sort of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, in the way that maybe single children do when both parents are working. I mean, that—you really only have family life when the folks get home from work, and then they're busy [. . . -DA], and they're tired, you know, they—their vision of parenting, which is quite correct, is that we're supporting you. You have a place to sleep. You're, you know, getting fed. You're getting—you're going to school. So what—you know, shut up.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Just be invisible, and do what you're supposed to.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that's enough, you know, or you don't realize how difficult how this much for us, which is true of many families.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, they grew up at the [. . . end of -DA] the Depression, so probably—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —it was a lot. I know this from my father: there was a lot of pressure, in addition to any other cultural pressures you were talking about. There's a lot of pressure to figuring out a way to survive.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, being an [inaudible] or an artist, or—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —any of these things must've seemed not only an anomaly, but totally out of—out of this world.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it was wasteful. I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —you can get a—you can work at some real work. You don't have to fart around with the art world. So, anyway, that—my mother's Depression story was, during the Depression, a refrigerator salesman came around to the door and tried to sell her a fridge. And he said she'd save \$35 a week on her food bill. And she said, "My food bill isn't \$35 a week." Slam.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: She's already—yeah, she'd been there.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, essentially, your experiences—were you—did you make art as a kid, or were you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that by accident, because my parents both worked, and they worked on weekends. It was during the war, when the war was raging, and so weekends were a problem. Saturday was a problem. My mother discovered somehow that the Portland Art Museum had inexpensive Saturday classes for children, which were really sort of all day. And during the war, you could not get a babysitter because every teenage girl was Rosie the Riveter working in the shipyards—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —doing that sort of stuff. And she thought, you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, this is an accident of circumstances—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but it was very convenient. This allowed you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and—yes, and so, there—[. . . at the museum school -DA]—I had never thought of being an artist, and I realized quite soon that I wasn't, that I was much more interested in what other people did.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, I'm kind of a voyeur of a nasty kind.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Us curators as voyeurs, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it's tough—especially if you're a perfectionist.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know you probably have very high standards—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and it's very hard, if you're not going to be the—you're not going to be the Picasso or whatever you want to name in whatever century, it's very hard to accept your limitations if you know too much.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, my problem is I have very high standards for everyone else, and very low for my own.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Knowing—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I don't know. You've accomplished a lot. You've done a lot. Maybe in terms of the—making the art is another matter.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—"accomplish" is a wiggly word there, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, squirrely.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —done stuff, I've been the perp, here and there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You've initiated—you've done a lot of—yeah, well, okay. Doing is—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, let's say I'm given credit for things that I didn't initiate.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, we'll get to that soon enough, I'm sure. Well, maybe you want to fess up here. Maybe you didn't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No. Well, it's just that you know enough about the art world, of the ghostly, the ghostly merry-go-round, spectral merry-go-round spectral air that surrounds it and feeds on it. And so, everyone's—"Well, you're the [. . . art -DA] person, aren't you?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And then, you want to say, "No. It really—here's the whole," but you don't have time. And then suddenly—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's much more complicated, yes.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —they write an—they mention you, and suddenly, you're their blah blah person.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's probably what you've been burned by. You alluded to that before we started. You've probably been—this is the problem with Chicago or in general. We'll come to that. But there's, like, certain stereotypes and characterizations that are not nearly nuanced enough. Even like, the images, how much do they have in common [inaudible] people? How do they really have in common? You know, they know each other—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, not a lot, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: If they were friends—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and they knew each other—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, some of them—when I was in school, it was Don Baum, who said, you know, "Have you met?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Well, we'll come to Don soon, too, because I want to get some stories about Don.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because there were not any others of those. So, early on—

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, anyway, I have the fortunate part of it was that because this was such good deal for my parents, they sent me to [. . . the Portland Museum school -DA] all the time in the summer. And so, I learned. I had hands on experience. So, it helped me visually to have touched the media, and know what—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's important.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, because I had this upfront, thumbs on experience, and was—I sort of did everything but cast bronze, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's important because there are a lot of younger curators that—now, there's museum studies, classes, and there's a whole different academic tradition. You came out of a time like when I did, when it was art history was the only avenue. But there are a lot of art historians and people that were more like, scholarly, and didn't really know—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —much about making, or the actual process—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. I know. I have a quick story about that. A professor of mine at the U.C., who shall remain nameless—who's a baroque scholar, and he had written for many years about a lost painting by some baroque master. That's just—that's identification enough. And he finally wrote on visual evidence and prints of it. He wrote this thing about kind of recovering this lost masterwork and doing research in Italy. And then, there was a letter in—I think it was *Art For*—not *Artforum*, but *Art* [inaudible] or something said, "Well, if the literary professor had only turned around in the biblioteca, so so so, he would've seen that painting hanging on the wall."

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the problem is yeah, sometimes you can be so in your head, you're not even aware of what's right in front of you.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Yeah. And caught up, poor Mr. so and so, who was—[no one -DA] deserves such ill treatment, but it was characteristic of—it still is characteristic of our history.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. I actually bypassed it to sort of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I did it without the art. I'd taken some advanced classes in art history [. . . at NYU. -DA]]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —had some really good training—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —not bad, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but I bypassed it because I thought it would turn me off from the actual love of art, which —

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, well, my friend Victor Carlson likes to say that he thinks that minimal art is very aptly named.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Indeed.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I'm afraid I—if it's such a great idea, tell me about it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Well, so you—your early school experiences? Did you have any school experiences that helped sort of foster your love of modern?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, not—well, only really at the art museum. I mean, it was during the war, so I was paraded through school rapidly, and I made early entrance—there was an early entrance program at the U of C, and I got [. . . in. -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, okay.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —after just two years of high school. So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —that, of course, made me incredibly vain and insupportable—

[They laugh.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —which I tried to continue that tradition until the end.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That'll grow for the rest of your life.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no, I'm not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was probably rewarded a little too early—too much, too early, too. There's a certain kind of thing that happens from that. So, you had—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, Mae West used to say, "Too much of a good thing can be absolutely wonderful."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, so you got—did you have any particular mentors, or people that impressed you at that point in time? And you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, some of the—I mean, the artists who gave these classes for schleps that they were, but one or two of them were—I didn't have classes with them, but the ceramic sculptor; his name was Peter Voukos—was around the museum then. And there was another one whose name I can't remember. It was a distinguished California person—and came up, and I took classes with him. And that gave me—how can I put it? The contact was someone who was really involved with—not just teaching about it to a bunch of bratty kids, but was really involved.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Passionate and really involved, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that was who he was, and that—I can't remember his name, sorry. But anyway, that was very important to me to see. And also—and sort of, his whole vision was attuned to vision. And I mean, it was like being told it was all right to be gay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, it's all right?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Permission, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, there's another one in the world.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There are other people like this.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And you actually got see a role model for what it means to be an artist. That's probably what you're talking about.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, though—well, at an impressionable age, it's sometimes—figures of power and influence who have qualities that you didn't know you admired so much appear [. . . to one. -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you think that's—do you think—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —awakening.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is a strange question to ask, but I can't help but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Go ahead.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —be curious, which is, do you think sometimes that things just fall into place, that you meet people at the right time? Do you think you were looking for that? Sometimes, experiences seem to lead you in a direction.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And some of it is persistence. You eventually get there by persistence.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think I was ignorant than that. In that, I think I came across stuff I needed that I didn't know I needed until it was there. So, it wasn't that I was searching always for the mentor—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you were just sort of fortunate?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it was just dumb luck, I guess.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And you took advantage of those opportunities when they came, probably.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I responded to these—exposure to things that I didn't know I required.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Because we—unfortunately, when we're young, we have not a clue.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No. I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: How it all fits together.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, one other thing that did happen during that period; it must've been in the '40s. There was a traveling show of European masterworks that had been looted by the Germans. And it went to the Portland museum. And well, that Botticelli, how naughty.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: [inaudible] I mean, it—that—because the Portland Museum has a good collection. But also, when you're a child and that's a place you sort of—you take it for granted. I mean, [groans] but when stuff comes around that you didn't know, and first level, it blasts—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. When you see the real stuff, you know it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that brings up a question that interests me, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, it's a connoisseurship. We both grew up in an age—I'm a little—I'm younger than you, obviously, but maybe not so obviously, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, quite a bit, I hope.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —[Laughs] the notion of connoisseurship, you know? Bernard Berenson and Kenneth Clark, and those people. It was a real big sense of connoisseurship. Now, of course, all the curators and directors are all about business degrees and schmoozing, and other qualities [. . . -DA]. But connoisseurship. I mean, how does one—it's a hard thing to teach or to gain [. . . -DA]], a very keen visual—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —sensitivity. And I picked up on that somewhat. Where do you think your—I mean, one of the qualities that I think you have that's astounding is your connoisseurship. Your ability to find the gem amongst all the crap out there. What do you think that came about? Were that—there's mentors or—that did that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think it was the experience of works of art when—important ones were put before me. Also, I think I realized quite early that my experience to nature was aesthetic. [. . . -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, it's sometimes hard to—it's hard to—when you talk about art, in comparison to nature, nature is—I mean, we're in a beautiful park now, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, it's just—it always meant something to me. And I thought, well, then—when the other stuff started, I mean, I thought, "Oh, this is like related to or connected with in somehow—or reflects in some way"—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, you put those two together. Your visual sensibility and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. That it gave me a sort of wholeness that I required.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now, I guess—I mean, I think one of my things I think my father had which I wondered about is this—I call it picking, the ability to find stuff amidst—and this is true of a lot of the Art Institute—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —people. You know, like Ray Yoshida and all of those—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that loved going out and finding the—really, the gem amongst the crap.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Did you have the—and that's the collecting kind of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —ability. Did you have early on? Were you a collector early on, too?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, yeah, sort of, but I think I caught it from other people. I had a friend whose parents owned a number of interesting and some vaguely important pieces of Northwest Coast American Indian—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I love that stuff, actually, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and there was a wonderful collection at Portland Museum. I mean, just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I went to see that, I think, largely for the—I should check that one, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —yeah, that's really good. And these people—and they had paintings, too. It was a—I think connected with the named C.S. Price. Kind of Nicholas de Staël of the '40s or something. Anyway, these people I met through a schoolmate of mine, and sometimes, you meet the family you know ought to be yours.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I know that feeling [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Why was I—I was sent to their—you know, return to sender at that—[laughs] I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is where you'd like to—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And these people, their parents were like that. And they had this acuity for—and that kind of sensibility. And they were amusing, and they were bright, and they read. And they didn't—they talked to you as if you were a person, not a child. And that was very important to me, that, oh, there're people that sort of take me sort of seriously.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's another world of intellectual curiosity—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, it just—how can I put it? If being a child is an illness, I thought that maybe they knew the cure.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Found a way toward adulthood, being treated seriously. So your persisting serious pursuits—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, they inspired me in that—and then, they lived with things; they were so casual about it. Well, yes, there was this—some northwest coast totem pole fragment in the living room.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And the wife was a political active person, with League of Women Voters. And during the— one of the Eisenhower elections, she said, "Oh, I must show you the Stevenson letters." And I thought, was she good in touch with Adlai Stevenson—or is it Adlai? I don't know. I mean, it must be vaguely hubris. And I said, "Well, sure, I'd like to see them." And she brought out these little envelopes with the stamps torn off. And then I read one, and I realized that it wasn't Adlai E. Stevenson. It was R.S.—R.L.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wait, who's that?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Robert Louis Stevenson.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that Stevenson. Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That Stevenson—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I didn't put that together—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —That is a whole shift. Whoa.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes. And whoa, I mean, first of all, it's one of those things that teaches you the world is bigger than you think and that there are things around that you don't know about—not your fault, but sometimes they come to you and pay attention. And that—I was very wowed by that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, you were opened to these experiences—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, by these friends and a few others. My grandfather had vaguely—my mother's father, had vaguely artistic nature. He made, as a hobby sort of, violins.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really. That's not something you can casually just sort of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, he would—this was in Astoria. Everyone had wood to heat, and so, everyone had a wood pile in their front yard. And my grandfather would—and if he saw a likely piece of cherry or something, he'd just [. . . appreciated it. -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sneak it away for something—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes. He had 10 children, and they all were made violins and all made to play the Finnish [inaudible], those kiddies, it must've been an agony for them. But that—how can I—that ingenuity and seeing the potential of something, I think maybe that sort of caught on. And he was a boat builder and had a boat shop. And I admire that because there were all these old Finns there that were—I think they existed largely on Four Roses or something. But you know—and they made wooden boats, fishing boats, and big ones, and you would see them, you know, kind of buzz, and you know, "I need an oak something or other [grumbles]." You know, and it would be just the right size, or you could—I mean, kind of by iron hand, not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, skills.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Measure for—forget measuring. And that there were ones looked like a machine that bent the oak ribs for a steam box.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. That's how they [inaudible]—that's how they did—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —those boxes, too. They'd steam them, and then they'd—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, this is was a Finnish—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Finnish tradition, but still—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I guess, probably. Maybe they got it from the [inaudible] for all I know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't know. It's not—yeah, anyway.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway, one thing, the smell of that steam box was wonderful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: The oak—steaming oak. That to go in and there was this shed-like construction with boats being built, and the smell of old men, whiskey, and the oak steam box.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] This is your primal memory.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes. Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's funny, too, because we're noticing this lovely smell of pine this day—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —sort of—and this forest smell, it's not something. We're both from the east coast—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —so this is not us. But we're thinking, this is a wonderful smell.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, it—I mean, that—the air comes all the way across—I mean, plenty of pollution comes with it, but at least from—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Seems quite clean to us, but yeah [laughs]. Anyways, so these are your early memories?

DENNIS ADRIAN: So—yeah, and I remember that—those stories about my grandfather. And also, I think he sold boats to—in Alaska, before that was common. And I think he did things like, you know, make toothbrushes out of odds and ends for the sailors. I mean, he's—was kind of an—and he invented a kind of an anti-itch lotion. I mean, a mosquito—and this was all—and made root beer. So, there was all this—but that's sort of Finnish silliness, I mean, that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it's still functional.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's a little different. I mean, because it was kind of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, the Finns, they have a word for a special quality, and the word is *sisu*. And it means an ungovernable stubbornness. It's "All right. You got to shoot me, you know? I don't care."

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, is that—is that a quality of yours, do you think?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I have—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Will you fess up to, at least?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, how can I put it? I have been known to be intemperate in my speech.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there are stories that go around—I even begin—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, only the bad ones are true.

[They laugh.]

And—but that awareness of that and others, there are people who have that, you know, well, the Finn's say, if the police are after you, they'll be in the door, and they'll die on the doorstep before they'll admit that you're there or let them in. It doesn't matter what—you don't have to tell them what you've done, or it doesn't matter. It's just, you're there, so all right. So, that's *sisu*, and another aspect of it is my uncle, who is a logger, talked about working in the woods with these big caterpillar tractors and things, and he said, one of them, a friend, rolled over on a friend of his, and all the gear shifts are tall, kind of, and he was punctured by these gear shifts as the thing rolled over. And I said, "That must've been agony." And my Uncle Chuck said, "Well, I probably tingled a little."

[They laugh.]

So, there's this witty understatement and Finnish as a language is inherently full of possibilities for puns, so—I don't speak any Finnish, but my grandparents did, and my parents do. But anyway, there's that, I don't know, willingness to stick to it, somehow. Even if you don't succeed.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's what I alluded to before. One way to have things work your way, in terms of being—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Is to give up.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, is to continually keep hitting your head and finding—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and one way is to be open to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that's the route you were talking about—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —is having these opportunities and taking them—

DENNIS ADRIAN: "No goddamn door is telling me what to do," yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Well, that too. But essentially, there's also this notion of this sticking to it. That's one way to become—I mean, it's not exactly a thriving living being—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —a curator. I know it's not an easy way to make—there's ways to get—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —money that are easier if you're actually interested in.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, there's the curatorial sensibility, which, let's face it, is essentially an MBA.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what I'm saying. I passed on the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: There are very few curators who I could say I admire, and I met—have met a few.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Such as Lawrence Alloway, who had become a friend of mine.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: My memory is getting [worse but my -DA]—my forgettory is excellent.

[They laugh.]

There was a—about the—like, making due—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —that "All right, this is the hand I'm dealt, so I'm going to play it as best I can." And there's that—well, another—the kins are—the Finns are clean freaks. I'm obviously a rebel. But one of the stories is a woman who had carpet put in her bathroom, and she liked it so much, she had it done all the way to the house.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's a very Finnish—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Very Finnish thing. So, yeah, I guess one of the things that's kind of interesting is—I mean, I

turned out being a curator, and I went through—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I managed to do it through, you know, I came to Chicago through [inaudible] gallery. The people that would have me, it's like that Groucho Marx thing. I didn't even want to become a member of any club that would have me essentially. So, I'm never going to get a job at the Getty because I didn't do the standard sort of route.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, you don't really want to Gettify, do you?

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. And actually, I'm happy because I'm interested in things around the fringes. A little like you in the sense I'm interested in either Avant-garde or other cultures of things that are not exactly establishment, and I thought an MBA or an MA at that time, art history would have killed my love for things. So, you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: You're right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I actually feel really good about the way I did, and I got—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, see, you had the great good fortune of having become yourself.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's exactly what happened. You grow into yourself.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, and congratulations.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, thank you.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's very rare.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, and you've—but you managed it, too. And I'm curious how you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I'm—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you got your chops from the U of C. You had some of the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but I'm an unfinished project still.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're still being—see, well, that's great.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Half-built. Yeah. It was a great idea. Too bad it didn't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, you're still—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Sonia Zaks used to have a wonderful story that she would tell ladies who had rather skimpy dresses on. She would say, "I love that dress you almost have on."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Or "Too bad you couldn't afford the whole dress."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Whole dress, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, there's all these stories that she had.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—but you had some of the standard chops by the U of C. You can't deny that sort of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. But it was a fluke.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You didn't go to Williams, though, like some people who we won't mention.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no. I didn't.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You did the standard route.

DENNIS ADRIAN: There was this early entrant program sponsored by a number of universities, and it was Yale, Harvard, Columbia, University of Wisconsin, and near my—and U of C. There might have been one other one. And when I'd gotten to this program by accidentally taking a test where I got into the process somehow, and the U of C was the last one—I didn't know anything about Chicago. I'd never been west of—east of Jellystone National Park. And when that acceptance came through, I did the only smart I've ever done in my life. I applied, and they say, "Well, you're admitted, but we can't support you," you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so, I wrote back, "Thank you for your notification. Does my scholarship include room and board, as well as tuition?" And they wrote back and said, "Yes." So, what had obviously happened was somebody had dropped out of the—yeah, and it was close enough to the cutoff that I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were on—so that's another one of those opportunities—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —slipped over the line—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You managed to get in, and that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's the only bright thing I've ever done.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, that's why you got to Chicago. That probably would've been a question of mine, but that answers that question.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Oh, my parents were thrilled.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And actually being—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, not about—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Your choice of careers.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, getting that rotten kid out of the house.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yes, they were—you were off their backs. This crazy kid who was doing these wild things.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. I mean, it's so embarrassing. I mean, you know, everybody else has at least, you know, three kids and their own trailer, see, and I wasn't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Inaudible] that's the sign of true Finnish success; are your—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it shows that they're willing to look for a job anywhere, and they don't have fancy-Dan ideas.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, did they ever—I mean, they must've seen your accomplishments. Did they ever give you any sense of support or reinforcement after you became successful? I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, not really. I think my mother—occasionally, people would say that they had seen my name in an article or something. And then, that she would say, "Well, I understand." But it just wasn't her universe.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It wasn't that world, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It wasn't that she was stupid. She wasn't. But it was just nothing that had any—and my father was the same way. I mean, he was encouraging after a while. I mean, I think I—as a child, I was a severe disappointment. I think, unexpected, which was a mean trick to play on them. And the Depression. How can you do this to us? And then, it was just so—it had parallels which they weren't aware of with a world of art and visual things. But they were so engrossed in staying alive. I mean, they were not—I mean, just, they were hard working people of the sort of stereotypical type. And that that was what life was about.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, and getting to personal matters—I don't know if you're comfortable with this, but did you ever come out to them as gay?

DENNIS ADRIAN: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Are they aware of that?

DENNIS ADRIAN: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, they had no clue about that. This is equally alien to them?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean I—first of all, coming out wasn't something people did until I was well, an adult, and then I wasn't living at home anymore.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right. So that's—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I don't know if my parents ever thought about it, but I—if they did, it was something—I mean, I don't think it was really in their experience—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —or they wouldn't have—not me, but they wouldn't have noticed the world of gay—I mean, they—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's totally changed in 20 years.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, they—I—it's just they weren't—it was there, of course, but I think they had no cognizance of it, or any reason to be so.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Things—and that's the whole notion of "coming out"—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —after the '50s and the '60s.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so, no. I mean, late in my mother's life, one of my cousins told her that I had—I had been unhappily—in an unhappy relationship for a long time, for—many years ago. Many years ago. And she, my mother, didn't quite understand; "Well, why was that so hurtful," you know? I mean, she sort of didn't get it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Because it never occurred to—oh, I mean, is that so? Really? How strange. And also, like many Finnish ladies, you can't get a word in if you fold it in half.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] I like that expression. It's a good one.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That—they're—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —yammerers, I mean, of a—I mean, they have talents of Semitic grandeur in being yentas.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yentas. Yes, I get yentas. Yes, I knew of three.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, at the very height of this, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You hit the right person because my mom was one of those. My dad was very quiet though, which was interesting. So, that's kind of interesting. I guess one of the things that intrigues me is—

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, my—I mean, my parents didn't throw me out. They were glad I was succeeding in some way that they had no—I mean, I was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were supporting yourself.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what they cared about, probably most.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, of course.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Because they felt—not so much to get rid of me, but see, they could then feel, "We have done our job. [. . . -DA]"

LANNY SILVERMAN: But it's working at some level.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, exactly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: We don't know what that is—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. And we don't want to know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I guess one of the questions I had is, in terms of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Sorry, I didn't mean to step on your line.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, that's okay. I'm an interrupter, too. I guess that's an east coast/Jewish thing, too. I guess one of the questions I have, though, is we're at the point where you've maybe—you've left the U of C. How did you—I've found my way, as I say, partly by persistence. I don't know. It may not have been town; it just being so fanatically in—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But you had an aim, then.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I had an aim. I had an idea of what I loved, and I like you, and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I didn't—the culture didn't really—how many, you know, how many poets or artists are there, or—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —curators are there in this country? Not that many, but relative to other professions. But how did you manage to make the transition from school? You were then—you got a gig at the Art Institute of Chicago—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, eventually, but the—before that, there may be some stuff missing, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —the slimy trail of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, the politics intrigue me because I've been—I'm curious—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, when I went to the U of C there, there was—I mean, I was young, and there was a program that older entrants were supposed to meet the new entrants who were much younger. And one of the people I met was my long time—lifetime friend, Victor Carlson. And Victor was musical. He was interested in art. And he collected, too. I mean, as a [inaudible] I think that he sort of got me—oh, you can—they're for sale? And you know, well, gee, a Miró, \$35? That seems like a—I don't have \$35. I'm getting \$5 a week from the parents, and I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That sounds right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But Victor was enlightened. And so, he became and remains a good friend of mine. And he became a curator. He went to the Fogg and then was curator at Baltimore and then L.A. County, and is now retired. But he was a very influential friend of mine. I mean, like, took me downtown Chicago. And like, oh, you can go to the symphony for 65 cents? And then—oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, Chicago's a great city.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Who knew?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not to mention, the architecture and all the museums and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And his parents, sort of—again, sort of more Swedish types, they were very kind to me. So, frequently, his—or Victor maybe arranged it, but his parents would say, "Come over for dinner on Saturday or Sunday" or something. So, that was very nice. I mean, they had television and everything, see, and that was very early, and that—and so, the fact that they had a son—they had four children—who was interested in this world of aesthetic experience didn't seem to bother them, and he was there at the U.C. also. And in fact, when we were getting closer to the end of our education there, I asked him what he—he said, "Well, I'm going to go into the art history department." "What's that?" "I don't know. Art history." "What? Who?" And I thought, well, art? I'll know someone who's there.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, there was—yeah, there was a path there for you.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes. That had already—you know, I had already had some exposure to museum, some innate sense of aesthetic—what's the word I want? Not invincibility, but victim to—subject to learn—liable to be caught by that sort of stuff. And then, Victor, who was is very kind, that sort of—it made my university experience sort of make—oh, now I know what I'm doing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, it was pretty late that you actually figured out the pathway. As it was for me. I actually—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I knew what I loved, like you, but figuring out how to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, see, I was all of 17, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's—yeah, that's pretty early, in terms of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I was an early entrant on that silly program.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's right. I forget that that was even earlier, yeah. And I also had to deal with avoiding the Vietnam War. There's some things—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I did, too. I was terrified during that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —thing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, there were some detours that had sort of had to do with trying to figure out a—growing up in that area, you had to deal with some practicalities that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, I managed on scholarship, so that I had sort of a—but that wasn't going to last forever. I was very relieved to see those headlines in 1953, you know, "Korea War Ends."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That was a while ago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, well, it's not—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And even later, you know, I was still vulnerable, but then I finally—I don't know really what happened, but I just never got called.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You managed to get a deferment somehow. School—I think they allowed school—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I was on deferments because I went to NYU for a while to keep the deferment status up, but I was also working full-time, which made it very difficult. I mean, I couldn't do it, so I just have an interesting year at NYU, which was then in the—I mean, in the 5th Avenue building, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So this is your entrance into the New York art world. Is this your first—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, no, it wasn't because that was more complicated because, well, being a friend of Victor Carlson's, he also took me to galleries in Chicago, of which there were a few.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I hear about three or four from other people, so I—descriptions, not as many—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I—yeah, Main Street Gallery, and there were a couple—I can't even remember the names of them. One was a man named Bulschlager [ph] who had—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't know if I've heard that. Who was above the Armenian restaurant? There was a—Rhona Hoffman or someone was telling me there was a gallery above—oh, I've forgotten the name of the restaurant that's downtown. Not too far from the—God, you don't know that one, but yeah, there weren't very many galleries way back.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I don't know any Armenians that Rhona knew.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it wasn't an Armenian gallery, but there's an Armenian restaurant that's pretty well known. I'm blanking out on the name of it, but it's down—

DENNIS ADRIAN: What area was it in?

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's down—it's just south of Ontario, so it's not too far from the MCA, but about four or five blocks away. God, I'm blanking out on the name of it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah [inaudible].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Anyways, but above that apparently there was a gallery that I'd never even heard of. But anyways. So, yeah, so you visited the Chicago galleries, but what was your first trip to New York in terms of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that came, I mean, really kind of before. But, see, then in '55 I guess it was, or there—maybe a little earlier, I had been taken to Frumkin's gallery.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I met a number of artists there, Golub, and June Leaf, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Joseph Goto, and people like Jeremy Anderson from the West Coast, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, my heaven.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Matta, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, Matta was in town here, that's right. Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Jeremy Anderson, that West Coast culture, and I can't—there were others.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you had a gig—you got a gig working for Frumkin?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that was before the Art Institute?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, so we—you—I never had a real taste of—I guess I'm perhaps fortunate, but in a way, you learn the sordid business, the commercial—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —business of art.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I have been crushed by the coarse embrace of mammon [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] So yeah—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Let's put it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that's kind of an interesting thing, too, because at one point, I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I learned a lot.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm sure you did.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And actually, you got to deal with collectors—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and knowing the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, so I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —the ins and outs—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —I met a lot of those, I mean, the Shapiros, and the Newmans, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of course.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and quite a few—Horwichs, and, well, lots of other people, too. And then there were foreign people that came, too, like I met Lawrence Alloway, came to Chicago, and I met—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —him because he was working, doing something about Golub at the ICA in London. And there were others, some dealers that later I realized were—I mean, I didn't know who the hell they were, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —French dealers and so forth that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —came, because Frumkin did a kind of international business. So anyway, I learned a lot there, and a lot about the art business which was more sordid than I had even dreamed.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Everyone thinks it's so—it's aesthetics, it's lovely and beautiful—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Ha.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but when you see the power grabs and the craziness. We've been in this business—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —long enough to compare notes.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and the sheer meanness—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and that it—I know it's Dave Mosiewicz [ph] and all that, but Frumkin was one of those people who kind of enjoyed putting people ill at ease, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: And he liked disconcerting people.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Interesting. Well, because I talked to Ted Halkin, who had really fond—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —memories of him—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and actually said some really good things about him, but I came to town—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I have a lot of good things to say about him too. But I think Ted is enough of a solid sort that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, he would—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —he wasn't going to be fazed by some—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I guess not.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —smart-ass dealer.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Although, I guess he also was—what Ted told me is he felt bad that he never really showed his appreciation, that he felt like he should have said something for all of the opportunities that he provided.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, you see, Allan was very good at, you know, spreading guilt about non-guilty issues.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] That sounds—speaking of Jewish, that sounds—but anyways.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, see, there you are—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —with the Frumkins and the whole—so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Exactly.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: At that point it was Frumkin Gallery before it was Frumkin Struve? Because I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, that was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I had some dealings with Bill Struve. Bill was on our board at some point and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, see, then when Frumkin wanted to open in New York in—when was it—'57, I guess, maybe. Anyway, he asked me to operate the New York gallery—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I didn't know that, either.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —the first couple of years. But then Allan came to New York and, I mean, there are many complex and weird Alan Frumkin stories, but we're not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I'm interested in weird stories—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —get me interested.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, here's one that really puzzled me, is that when I got to New York, got an apartment, I mean, it was—I mean, it was outrageous. It was \$160 a month, I mean—[laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Outrageously high to you at that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know, and now you couldn't buy a toaster oven [laughs]—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No. [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in New York for that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway, Frumkin went around looking with me and he said, "You know, if you find a place, I'll be in New York about a—every—once a month or a week or so"—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —"so let's find a place where I could stay and I'll chip in on the rent." Which he never did.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh. Yeah, now.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I never said anything because—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You didn't know any different, or—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, to whom could I complain?

LANNY SILVERMAN: And yeah, it's a little awkward a position.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, I wasn't about to say—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —"Hand it over, Alan."

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Yeah, right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He'd say, "Well, you know, take a hike." And then much later, he said, "I guess you wondered why I've never stayed in the apartment in New York." And I said, "Well, yes, I had wondered but I presume you had reasons." And he said, "Well, I got married." And I said, oh, you know, congratulations and all that stuff. And

he said, "But it's a secret." And I said, "Okay," and I thought, you know, "Bad breakup of another—you know, who—"

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, there's some story going on. Yeah, there's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I was cooking up lots of soap operas that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —all kinds of scenarios, of course.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —that could account for this. So I said fine, and I was never introduced. But people—there were sightings of Frumkin in Brooklyn when I didn't know he was in town, and so I thought, well, he's got—and who knows, I mean, it wasn't any of my business. So anyway, one day much later, he came into the gallery. He liked cigars and he was smoking a cigar. He said, "Well, you know, congratulate me. I mean, I have a child, or I have a son." And I said, "So, is the secret over?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: And he said, "What secret? What are you talking about?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, my God.

DENNIS ADRIAN: See, that—I mean, Frumkin, like in other people I've met, he could not change his mind because that meant he was wrong the first time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So what happened is, the first time never happened.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: You see, that just never occurred.

LANNY SILVERMAN: History, facts, these things are minor issues.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, and later the painter, Robert Barnes, who we've been talking about, he lived near me in New York at first, and suddenly he had a lot of strange furniture in his apartment, which wasn't that big, and I said, "Oh, you know, that's interesting." And he said, "Yeah, there was just all this stuff available. I just thought I'd better get it." And later I asked Barnes, "Did Frumkin ever tell you something that was a secret that you mustn't tell?" And he said, "Yes." And I said, "What was it?" And he said, "Well, it was about his being married." And he said, "You might have—all that furniture Frumkin was storing with me, you see."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, there's part of the secret's coming out.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There was a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right, I mean, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —little dribs and drabs of the storyline.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But he didn't—Barnes didn't fess up to me. I mean Barnes kept his. He kept his silence, being an honorable sort. But anyway, see, someone who's like that, who had many powerful gifts and was generous to me in many ways intellectually and—not professionally and financially, but I remember starting at 35 cents an hour.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, you—like you said, you were in an awkward place to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: It was in the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You—there was a—in the art—the art world—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I was a college kid in the early-'50s.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and you didn't—I mean, one of the things, the art world comes from a patrician class.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There were a lot of people that didn't need the job—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and the fact that they were providing you this opportunity—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you should be blessed so much. I guess is part of it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, but it wasn't too—it wasn't an occupation that too many people who were well-fixed had. I mean, often it was the wife or some relative of the owner, or—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's—yeah. Right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —something, or someone's sister-in-law who—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So it wasn't—it didn't have the fake cachet it seems to now, where—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, now—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —all those girls with straight hair and very good teeth and Belgian shoes and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —they're all named Leslie, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and everyone's a curator now.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The term has been diluted to the point where I just—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's like artisanal. I just want to puke [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I know. It's just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Curator, I'm sorry. [Laughs.] What makes you a curator?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Phooey. You know, don't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Phooey. And you can curate anything.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —don't call me that nasty thing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] It's like it's a curse word now.

DENNIS ADRIAN: If you want to start calling names, we'll—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —we could do it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm an artisanal curator—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that's what I should say [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I know my partner, Dick Born, is a curator, of course.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He's about to retire, too, I hear?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Good for him.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—well, I hope that's good for him.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Hopefully.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But anyway, I don't know if you remember, in Chicago there was that big post-office scandal of the postal clerks that were—they were taking the mail—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah, yeah. They—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and then burning it, or throwing it away.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, they weren't delivering. Yeah, that was—that was—

DENNIS ADRIAN: See, that was our post office up in—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I lived in that area, too—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because I lived down a block from you then, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that's when you heard the phrase, you know, somebody went postal.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah. That's—I remember this.

DENNIS ADRIAN: See, but Dick pointed out after—and I forget the occasion, and I'm not concealing anything. I really don't remember. But he said, you know, "So and so went curatorial."

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Which was a further—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Further—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean—I mean, not just a simple—I mean, it was a—what is the word I want—exponential [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Going—taking it to another limit.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I guess—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But he went curatorial.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you were getting paid for bupkis. Believe me, I know what that's like. I, you know, I had—when I came to NAME Gallery—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —it was my foot in the door in the Chicago art world—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because I had been at, as you know, at Madison—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and the only thing I got was, like, a couple months off, so I went to Indonesia and Southeast Asia for a couple months. Didn't have any money, really, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Did you enjoy working with—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Ken?

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Tom?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, Tom Garver?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that—speaking of the art world—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Tom was great. He gave me amazing opportunity.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He pulled me out of—he saw something and pulled me out of—I managed to work my way up by way of people—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —like that that saw something that wasn't the credentials.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Natasha's pretty interesting, too, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: She's a fascinating woman, and actually in terms of toys and stuff like that, her doll stuff. I haven't seen Tom in a while. He used to come to the art fairs, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I keep in touch with him occasionally. Natasha's just put out another exhibition and book and it's sort of a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I should find that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —cabinet of curiosity kind of exhibition in Madison.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that's kind of what my—that's my thing, because that's actually very—

DENNIS ADRIAN: So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —near and dear to me.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —there's a new thing she's just published, and it's still on in Madison, I guess.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll have to look for that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I like Garver—I mean, I met him in New York when he came visiting the gallery where I was working with Frumkin—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —that's where I met him. But then I got to know him, really, later when he was at Madison—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and Natasha and the whole connections with—what's her previous boyfriend, Connelly?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, the—Bruce Conners.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I passed on a Bruce Conner's piece.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I didn't want to—speaking of the sordidness of the art world—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I didn't want to—there's some things about Tom, there's a dark side to Tom. I worked for John Coplans, too—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —so we can talk dark sides—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and Ken Walker Hodorowski, too. Believe me, I know some stories—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in the art world. Boy, we both have some stories.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: But with Tom, I didn't want to be beholden, and boy, I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I'd actually like Bruce Conner's—he did drawings as well. I knew the films.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, you made a very moral decision.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and that's, you know, I could maybe regret that, but I can be—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I can live with myself, you know?

DENNIS ADRIAN: —nothing is more frequently regretted than sins we didn't commit.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I did do some wonderful things like put together John—I had worked for John—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —at the Akron Museum before I came to Madison, and I had him come and do something or other. He, of course, became a photographer later in life from—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —curating, but he was an amazing role model for me. I was really wowed by him—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —even more so than Tom in some ways. He not only did have a great eye, but he just knew everyone and was really—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and he was more energetic than—I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, Tom was, I think, he was through some, I think, some difficult—chemically-induced difficulties at that point in time—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —too. He had some real issues. But Tom was real—a sweetheart to me—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and really supportive, although when it got—in terms of board politics, when the board got a little nasty and he was in trouble—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I was thrown under the bus, in a way. And I understood completely—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because he wasn't about to do a battle over me. He actually, you know—I came there to be—to do one thing, and I grew into something else—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and he wasn't about to really support that pushback, you know, just to give—you know, this isn't about me, but I guess I should just say that I saw the art world and saw—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —even the good people, the people that support you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —they're beholden to forces and things that are far greater than you are.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, that—and that they can't control completely.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, I mean, when Tom got into one of his series of difficulties, I mean, I called him up and said, "Do you need"—I didn't have any, but I said, "Do you need any money?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And he said, "No, thank you." But I think in a way, that—it's awful to put it in those commercial terms, but I think in a way, it further strengthened the—I mean, he knew I was on his—had his back—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now, that's important.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —to whatever degree it was, which wasn't much, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because there—and there are very few real people—real friends, or real, as you say—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —it's pretty—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I wasn't that real in a big—I mean, you know, he could have said—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —"Well, thanks a lot, buddy," you know [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: "Thanks for nothing."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah, you don't have—your resources all go into art, I know that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't tend to live lavishly or the life of the, you know, the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, I'm not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —the landed gentry.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —what is it, the prisoner of the lure of the senses [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] That's a good one, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I guess I have been now and then. But—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, yeah, Tom was great. And actually, I—that was a very—person.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I mean, I've had, like—that's what I was kind of asking about. I've—you know, between Sherman Lee and John Coplans—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I had some role models—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —people like that that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Very high quality, very.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I can't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: The highest.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's pedigree, even if, you know, at the same time I didn't have the academic credentials, the people I worked for—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that—luckily, to those people, that wasn't the point.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, that's what I found, is that the people that were interested in me were interested in me for the reasons—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that intrigued me, not for the superficial ones. But the sordidness of the art world and the politics, you must have seen—well, let's go back to—before we get into the sordidness of the, like, Art Institute politics, which are—would be good [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I have some stories to tell you from what—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, good.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Rhona's version of that might be, which was weird.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, it was. She's a little weird herself.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because I interviewed her about a month ago or so. But the commercial end of things, that must have been a real learning experience to see, like, the—and speaking of the dirtiness of money and of—and some of the reasons for collecting art, there are collectors, and I know some of them—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —who are wonderful and have great eyes and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —are really in it for the right reasons, but some of that's about status and about the things that probably turn us both off.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Did you see that early on, and what did you make of that stuff?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, sometimes—I mean, I remember while still working at Frumkin in Chicago there were North Shore people who—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —I'd happily forget. I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Or I have to do a little self-editing. But I don't think I remember.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No—

DENNIS ADRIAN: They would, you know, come in and say, "Well, you know, I really love this," something expensive object, "and could you send it up to Lake Bluff?" or wherever they were ensconced. And then in the *Daily News* a few years—a few days later I'd see the, you know, big party at the Blah-Blah's, and views of guests

and their drinks with the picture—

LANNY SILVERMAN: In the background, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —in the background. And then on Monday, "My husband's decided he doesn't like it."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Doesn't match something.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it was sent—because it was just—and you had to pay the freight both—I mean, they were chintzy about it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, I mean, I thought, that wasn't very nice. I mean, it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, there are, you know—there—I don't put Frumkin in that category or very few others, but there is such a thing as evil in the world—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —that exists as an active principle.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that's very distressing to discover. I mean, if we pull back the rug, we'll get a view to the pit of hell—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, these days—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —right here.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in terms of the world politics, it's a little hard to even comprehend the level of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —the evil, and how something can be—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that—yet, if you grow up as an aesthete or someone who's involved with beauty, and have a notion of the—an ideal notion of the world—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —to see the reality of the world, it's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —not only frightening, but it's, like, appalling. It's hard to deal with.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. It's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not to mention the money thing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's deeply shocking, and it's an insult to one's own sense of being human. You're thinking—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —what, this is wrong.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But maybe I'm moralizing out of my territory, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I'm helping you along [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, good. Help me. I need all the help I can get.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I think we probably have some similarities in terms—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, or some—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —of sensibilities, and I feel—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —parallels in attitude.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —there's some parallels, and I guess I feel like something that intrigues me is, like, you know, how do you become who you—you talked about becoming yourself, growing into yourself, I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —how do you deal with the outside world? For me, that was a rude reality, the outside world.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's why I asked if you were an internal kind of kid who stuck to themselves, because for me, when I saw all the social behavior of other males—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —for example, I was not only appalled, but I couldn't comprehend it. It was just not—it was not my world.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, my friend Richard, he was sort of—I mean, through music and other things he would tell me, I mean, there were—he was kind of a, like, gossip. I mean, there were—say there was a funny picture in the paper of Mr. So-and-So at the symphony opening, and then he had this interest in—a kind of collecting interest in not society tidbits, but knowing goofy things about—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —people, and he had a lot of very good stories about eccentricities of the very well off. And not always unpleasant ones, but I remember he told me one about a Baltimore collector, and she was the daughter of someone important in Baltimore. And she had a big dinner party, and—Richard told me, and the first thing was, she had the white fence around the estate repainted, I mean, all around. And then there was some large number of dinner guests and I said, well, "How did they manage this service, I mean, for so many people sitting down?" He said, "Footmen, of course." [Laughs.] So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Another world.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I said—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, he knew I'd get a bang out of the craziness of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I mean, we're—I gather you're like me, not from—I'm from lower middle class, middle class.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: We're not—but lower middle class—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —even now. Well, so, it's like being—it's a whole other world, a view into a whole other world—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I think, the collector world.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Which is—which is quite interesting. I mean that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —one person I still know, but we'll keep anonymity there, she went shopping, you know, with me in Chicago to an antique place—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and—a pissy one on Wells Street or something, there's various pissy, and—is there any other kind?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she was—wanted to buy something, so she chose a clerk, and well, "I'd like to buy this and I'll give you a check on my bank." And he said, "Well, I'll have to clear this with the office," and so he went back and it was, "Sorry, madam, you know, I don't think we can deal with your—" And she said, "I don't think you quite understand, *it's my bank*" [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] That's another level of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yes, I'm sorry, the clearance is coming from me, thank you very much.

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.] Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] I'm here to announce.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You've got this whole thing backwards.

LANNY SILVERMAN: God. So, you were young—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And anyway, she didn't go back to that place. I'm happy to say that she said, "Well, screw you, buster."

LANNY SILVERMAN: So we're talking, you were young, then, when you were at Frumkin, when you were—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, how old were you about, then? I'm just trying to get a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, let's see. I was born in '37 and I started to work there about '53 or '4, I guess, maybe, so —

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —under 20.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you're—wow, that is young. And actually, well, nowadays, you know, it's a whole different crew that's—we'll talk about the changing art world—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but gallerists and the—yes, and the Belgian shoes—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I hate that word. They're dealers.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Gallerists, yes. I hate the word practice. Does that drive you nuts, too?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: My art practice? I tried—I noticed in one interview, I resorted to it and I thought, oh god, I mean, I've lost it—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I've succumbed to the mania.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, it's an attempt to ride the coattails of the title artist—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —which—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I see. It's some sort of, like—yes, fancy—

DENNIS ADRIAN: There are artists and there are galleries.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Gallerists, yes. Well, that's the Belgian shoes. You need—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, dealers, yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You need Belgian shoes to be a gallerist, [laughs] with people we know, yeah. So you were—yeah, you were very young, and so—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that must have been a really interesting phase.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it was, and I learned a lot. And I met a lot of interesting people at the time. I mean, some—I met Mies van der Rohe, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Quite by accident. I mean, I—Frumkin had borrowed a Paul Klee painting from him for a show he had and I was to return it to Mies' apartment, which was on Pierce or something, just—what, east of Michigan, and I was expecting, you know, steel and glass and, I don't know, some Bauhaus fantasy—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and there was this big frowsy old building and the large lobby was completely covered with Dorothy Draper wallpaper of giant banana leaves and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Hardly Miesian.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —yellow and—yeah. [Laughs.] I thought, well, okay. So I went up to the floor indicated and I rang the bell, and this sort of scruffy old guy holding a light bulb in his hand—and I thought, well, you know, the super's changing the bulb in the thing. And I said, well, "I'm here to see Mr. Mies van der Rohe," and he said, "Yes?" And then I went, "Oh, it's you" [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Changes the light bulbs.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, he was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Really doing it. Yeah, that's interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so he gave me a—it was snowing. He gave me a drink and showed me a lot of stuff, which was nice.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's neat.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And his furniture was that, you know, that kind of '30s mohair, that kind of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, God [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: —stuff stuffed with brown—I mean, the stuff that's sort of vaguely itchy.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It would be in—yeah, in parents'—our parents' houses, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —at the same time, you're thinking, like, you know, you expect some sort of minimalist or, you know—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Exactly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —refined Corbusier, you know, Mies or whatever—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —any of that stuff. Nothing—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, define refined Miesian stuff.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Miesian, just have his own stuff.

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.] Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You know, he—the mohair, sort of, that's—he didn't have plastic protectors over it, did he?

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no, no. And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That would be the final—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because that's of that era you grew up in, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I've been in houses in Skokie where there's a plastic runner from the front door to where you're supposed to go, and you're not supposed to—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —walk off it. And then all the furniture is plasticized and the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, God, that is just—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, it's this sort of wonderful experience to see that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —what attitude is behind this is, you know, it's fun to kind of fantasize, well, how did they get here?

LANNY SILVERMAN: How do they think about—yeah, how do they think about—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —well, let's just stick some plastic over it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, over everything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Over everything. [Laughs.] Plastic coated. Well, it was probably the '50s, '60s, when plastic was a big—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —wonderful thing and you could just see what -

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you could do with it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And there were also times when I was young enough still to have heard the expression when somebody would drop a fork or spill something, the hostess would say, "Don't worry, the schwartz will get it."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, well, that's my parents, too. Although I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you know, I think that—yeah. Oh, god, that now really hurts. I mean, technically speaking, in German or Yiddish, it's not probably quite as derogatory as the N-word, for example.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: But it still was, there was a tone of voice to it that wasn't quite—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, with this is another era, of course, we're talking about.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it was the—it meant, "I have a servant" -

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and this is, you know, this is the variety.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, I mean, even then I was young—or I was aware enough to realize, this isn't quite nice, is it?

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's something—yeah, there's something off here that isn't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. And that's funny, too, because I happen to like Jamaican music, reggae—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and stuff like that. My—the housekeeper that helped my mom was Jamaican—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and she used to make me, like, my petite madeleine, I didn't like pies, but she used to make a leftover that resembles, I hate to confess, but it's, like, Pop-tarts, the cinnamon Pop-tarts. She would take the cinnamon sugar and she would use the extra dough and roll up a little—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —twisty thing or something—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and make it for me—Edith—and so that's my petite madeleine.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, she sounds lovely and loving.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I loved Edith, more than—I mean, she spent a lot of time with me, so she—because my mom was, I mean, whatever reasons. But I actually, you know—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she relieved your mother of many momly duties.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Momly duties, but I also think—I wonder if some of that seeped—you know, some of your sensibilities sometimes seeps through from—I don't recall her ever playing any Jamaican music or—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —having any of that, but I wonder if there's some sort of thing there. Just like you were talking about some of your early experiences, some of that stuff seeps through your—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —your sense of the nature, and that you're talking about the smell and stuff like that. Some of that stuff affects you later on, and you don't realize it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't know where I'm going with that. Again, that's sort of a [laughs]—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't have enough brain cells left to do anything with.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's—but I just end up saying that. So, let's go back to—let's take a more—

DENNIS ADRIAN: All right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —rational approach in terms of my linear progression, here.

DENNIS ADRIAN: All right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were at Frumkin Gallery, and did—you saw what a stable of artists was? I know that you—in Chicago—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you were known for having a group of people that you really supported.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Did you do that through Strumpkin—Strumpkin—Frumkin Struve?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well –

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or Frumkin.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, not so much. For one thing, I mean, Frumkin had, I mean, he was connected with, like, Leon Golub and June Leaf Halkin and H. C. Westermann—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and was aware of people like George Cohen and others, so he knew about that. And that was already unusual in the early '50s to—whether it was a gallery where there might be a German expressionist print show, or even a cubist something-or-other, and then Leon—I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —that was odd. So the experience of being on—well, when you work somebody, you're not—for somebody else, you're not the boss, so the artists were always, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, and H. C. Westermann.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's incredible, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so I developed—or let's say, I was treated very well by the artists who realized I was this dopey kid who was this shrimper.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, all right. Well, that was fine. Yeah, that was true.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were taking it all in at the same time—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —though, there was lots of stuff that—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And somehow not realizing how interesting all of it was. I mean, I remember June Leaf had this big clunky boyfriend in Chicago, I mean, I don't know, some kind of writer.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This was before Robert Frank.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, long before Robert Frank.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Claes something-or-other was his name.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oldenburg, like?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Oh, yeah. I saw him at the Cleveland Museum, and I—you know, some of these people—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —some of your idols, when you meet them—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —they're kind of disappointing, unfortunately, too, when you know who they are [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I'm disappointed in the mirrors [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, there's disappointments of all kinds.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, anyway, I have a June Leaf sketchbook with some drawings of Oldenburg in it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, cool.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —from the '50s.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I didn't know they were a couple. That's an interesting one, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And then later, I mean, there may have been—I mean, I think June had an early marriage about which I know nothing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Huh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But she also was—took up with Paul Carroll, the poet.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I knew Paul Carroll, too, because I was—I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that was one of my possible professions.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —I knew him well, and then later, Mary Rose Carroll.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And there was a girlfriend in between of Paul's named Amarna or Amana or something who—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —was—well, Paul had an eye for beautiful women, and June was—and this girl whose name I—I want to call her Amana [ph], but that wasn't her name. But a very nice and very beautiful—I mean, just, you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Striking.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, and people often say to me, well, you know, "Why, anyway, you're not interested in women?" I said, well, "I'm gay. I'm not dead."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, there's beauty in—and the same thing for me.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm straight but there are beautiful men, and I, you know, I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and there are magnetic people.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And there are people that you really—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —yeah, that you—yes, you respond to.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And then they—I mean, whether it's their appearance or something of their manner or—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And luckily, I've met a number of women like that who've been very important to me, I mean,

are in my ideal mind of wonderful people.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I have some stories about those, too. But anyway, where—what—oh, so Paul—there were other ladies, I think, in between—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and then Mary Rose came along and kind of saved him. But—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, I'm trying to think where we were going. We were going with—we were at the gallery and you were—oh, about—asking about—so you were—you were doing the bidding; it wasn't your job to sort of discover new artists at the gallery—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, but I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you didn't get that kind of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —I met a lot of them who were then new artists.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, so at that point, yeah, some of these people were not—they're new people.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And actually, at that point I—there wasn't the term Monster Roster, either. You're talking about some of them.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no. Franz [Schulze] invented that a little bit later.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and I'm going to interview Franz—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Not much later, but yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —next month. That'll be interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Actually, he was an artist who showed at Frumkin.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. And that's interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I have an early Franz Schulze.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I didn't know he was an artist until he had a show at—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —up in Lake Forest, I got a card.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I didn't think—I thought of him more as a writer. I didn't realize—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —he even made art, although, a lot of curators are would-be artists.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, they're sort of a gloomy, dour.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Gloomy [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: But—well, Franz is sort of, I don't—I think he's like Mae West in a way. I mean, there must have once been a sort of real Franz Schulze who was sort of a kid, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —you know, but instead there's this sort of professorial—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that got took—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —savant.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —took over, huh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think it's—maybe that was his route to, I won't say success, but to survival, was to become a professorial type.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now, you give him credit for the Monster Roster term.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's something in my vague memory, which may or may not be true, which we'll get to in some of the other stories I'm about to compare notes with you on, but is that there was some, I don't know, dispute about who came up with the term imagism. Is that him or you, or do you care? Or does it—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: For Chicago.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —no, I don't care, but I think it was Franz, because he—there's that book he published that —*Images in Chicago*—

LANNY SILVERMAN: *Who's Chicago?*

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, the different—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Not *Who's Chicago*, but the —

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —the book of Franz's.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't think I've seen that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know there's his *Fantastic Images*. This isn't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that one, *Fantastic Images*.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So that word "images" was in it, you see.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah. So that's basically probably what—that's the first—the starting point.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think it's the first—I don't know whether Franz came up with it or somebody else—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —but it was the first work. It became current in print because it was in this book title.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right, okay. Yeah, the image is part.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, so that sort of started it off.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But they weren't called that until later, and the—none of the imagist artists ever [. . . called it - DA] that. I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah. And actually, it—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Or if they do, they would say so—I mean, they're stuck with it. What can they do?

LANNY SILVERMAN: And we started—I don't know if this is on tape or not, but we were talking about the fact that there isn't that much in common with a lot of these people other than that they were—they were Art

Institute, a lot of them—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —most of them, if not all—

DENNIS ADRIAN: All.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and they knew each other, all of them, I think. Yeah, and they knew each other and they were friends—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Slightly, but—at-well, because in Chicago, artists don't always live in the same neighborhood, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —you know, some were married some were not. So they met at—they were aware of one another in school, but there wasn't a—and it wasn't that imagist gang that -

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. And actually, it's getting revived now. I don't know if you saw the *New Yorker*, there's the Matthew Marks show that had—Art Green was in it, a bunch—and Carl [Wirsum], a bunch of people. [. . . - DA]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's only taken 40 years.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, we'll get to that in a while, too, because that's a whole story in and of itself. Why has Chicago got such a second city—or why does—why do we get no respect, a la Rodney Dangerfield? Why does it —

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —take so long for people to realize that worth?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, it's—I think it's because, see, the corruption of the New York art world is so deep and pervasive, they don't want to do anything that might make any acknowledgment of anything else that might threaten it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, even when there was acknowledgment in the sense—I mean, you remember the regionalist sort of whole—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —thing that, "Oh, let's look and see what else is around outside."

DENNIS ADRIAN: But that's condescending.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It is, and it's sort of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's like that Steinberg—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, Saul—I was thinking exactly the same thing—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that Saul Steinberg cartoon where—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —it's the end of the world, and monsters and demons [laughs] after—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —after New Jersey—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you can forget it, or even—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —after Manhattan. Forget about New Jersey, that's the pits. So, yeah. Yeah, well, we'll get to that later.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I want to go back to—I guess I'm trying to follow a fairly linear path.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But, I mean—but, see, there were certain inroads in New York made in the '50s. One was Peter Selz, who was the [curator at the Museum of Modern Art -DA]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —or curator of the Museum of Modern Art, and he—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —knew that *New Images of Man* show in '59.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I knew about that, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, you see, and that had Campoli, Golub, Westermann, I think maybe that was all.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Some signs from the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And maybe George Cohen, I don't remember.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm not sure. But yeah, signs of life from the hinterlands, yeah, the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. And I remember John Canaday at the time wrote a review of the show when he described Westermann as a kind of Yankee whittler.

LANNY SILVERMAN: God. [Laughs.] Like—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Canaday was one of those people that had little triangular glasses, little triangular half glasses.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: He was a peerer over of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know what you're talking about, yeah. And I didn't—I don't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —remember pictures of that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —oh, girlfriend, give me a bucking frake, here.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, there was a, like you said, a certain condescension—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —towards Chicago, and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —a weird sort of superiority. Well, of course, one of the things—I guess we'll get to it more later, but I—maybe even tomorrow, but it's so interesting that Chicago's sort of—it didn't bypass, and there's still abstract expressionists in the whole New York, when—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —New York really broke in the '50s and '60s. Chicago allowed a certain sort of freedom to do something different, which is kind of amazing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, and also, people didn't care.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, that—well, they're—

LANNY SILVERMAN: They're not going to make it in New York anyway, so—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no. I mean, there's an old story about when there was a Monet show at the Modern, which I remember going to because Eleanor Roosevelt was there, which dates me just a tiny bit.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] A tad.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It wasn't Theodore, at least.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, it could be worse [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: It could have been worse. And there was—the gossip by her maid was a New Yorker thing or something, but some New York lady was saying, you know, "Oh, we just got the most wonderful Monet," and the Chicago lady said, "Well, we don't buy them, we inherit them from our grandmothers" [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Gosh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That old stuff. I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, it's passé.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the—that's the stuff in the attic.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And, you know, and there was all that stuff out of the *Armory Show*—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and there were the Kandinskys—I mean—so, there was an awareness in Chicago, though the Art Institute students rioted against Matisse when the *Armory Show* was shown there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That—yeah, there wasn't a very positive—yeah [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: No. Well, not—well, it was to—what's his name, that collector who bought *La Grande Jatte* and

LANNY SILVERMAN: Bought what?

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Frank—the one who, I can't think of his name, who bought *La Grande Jatte* on the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, *La Grande Jatte*. Oh, I'm not sure who bought that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And the Kandinskys, I can't think of his name.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I think I know who you mean, but I'm blanking out on the name.

DENNIS ADRIAN: My mind has turned to—Frank something-or-other.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Huh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway, [since 1915] there was that, and also, I mean, the Renaissance Society in Chicago -

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —from 1950 I think had—I mean, you know, they were buddies with the Murphys and Gertrude Stein, and Léger. There was the first big Léger show in—before the Modern Show in '35 it was at the Renaissance Society.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Well, there's a whole tradition, the Arts Club, too, here. There's a whole [history. -DA]

DENNIS ADRIAN: With Duchamp—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Duchamp, I'm thinking—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —installing, and Brâncuși's first show. I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and there's a—there's a tradition—I was going to talk more about Chicago art—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but there's a whole thing about the surrealist collection—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and all that stuff. There's some reasons why—and the—you mentioned Mies, the architecture. Chicago's a, you know, well-kept secret, which is—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —just fine with me. I don't need more people there.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, I mean, we in Chicago, you know, we don't care.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, so they don't get it. I mean, fine.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that's fine. That's—like you said, that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —a certain liberating forces in artists—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because if you're following trends, you don't get to discover something new. It's one thing to be—and I know some painters, I won't name names, that are painting sort of ab ex, still—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in Chicago, but what's the reason for doing that? It's a little like you were saying the stuff in the attic, it's kind of—that's sort of history, in a way.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't go forward that way. But back to the—I want to see how you got to the Art Institute, because I'm eager to hear some—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, see that's a longer story, that when I was going to the U of C, I had a wonderful professor named Bertha Harris Wiles, who has written an important book and it's still, I guess, the big deal about—on renaissance table fountains.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Okay.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And anyway, Bertha was, I think, what used to be called a hoot, and it was she who remarked about a fellow professor whose initials are Edward Maser—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.] She said that she felt Mr. Maser was one of those people who had been educated considerably past his intelligence.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a good one, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes. Zing. I mean, basically, he was a good guy, and I loved him and she got along with him well, but he had his pretensions, and Bertha was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So it's somewhat true.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, she was observant of those things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she also had a terrible reputation with the rare books section of the then Harper only library, that she would borrow 15th century books with, you know, woodcuts in them and so forth and they would come back with the wrapper of a ham sandwich or something [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Standards were a little loose in those days.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know—well, Bertha was her own, but she was one of those wonderful teachers who, if you asked—like, I'd, you know, walk out of the class and say, "I wonder what Van Dyck was looking at in Venice" or something, and the next time you saw Ms. Wiles it was, "Hello," and she'd be pushing a book truck [. . . -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —"You asked about"—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, God.

DENNIS ADRIAN: — "Well, here's"—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's great.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, then, you had to look at it [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah. No, I had that experience in the Cleveland Museum, I was—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —doing stuff with Egypt with the little—with kids—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and the Egyptologist, the resident Egyptologist, was, "Oh, you're reading Budge. Here's what you should look at."

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And it was, like, whoa, when these people point you in the right direction, that's very nice.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, but they didn't have to.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, of course.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, she didn't have to go to the stacks and pull all that stuff and put it in the truck and bring it over to the—you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it's that thing about like minds.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think some of what we're talking about is not just the opportunities, but the fact that there's some sort of a coalescence of people that see that same—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —stuff or are interested in the same things.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she had been sort of passed over a bit at the U of C, though she was apparently given some kind of title too late in life.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: She was the curator of the Epstein Collection of prints and reproductions, which was the big visual resource there, and was the—part of the foundation of the Smart, its print and drawing collection.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really? I didn't know that. I guess that's the earlier history.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And the woman who worked with her, Ruth [Philbrick], later became a bit print and drawing person at the National Gallery. And one of the people connected with her who I met was Alan Fern, who I think is

still there—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and he was at the U of C at that time. So there were the, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Connections.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, of that kind. But anyway, Ms. Wiles, I mean, she—and she showed you not illustrations, but whenever she could get the facsimiles, I mean, those wonderful German—not just reproductions, but facsimiles. They were full-size and everything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she made you look at them, and Victor and I took—and there were several other people of note, I suppose, who—Peter Selz and I were in the—not in those classes, but we were at school at the same time together.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I didn't know that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He was finishing up. I mean, he was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —way beyond me, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway, Ms. Wiles was very important, because she reinforced at the university level, I mean, or the respectable intellectual level, a sort of—a love for things and a feeling for the closeness of them, and it was she who would take us to the Art Institute and make them haul out things which they didn't want to show us, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you got to see the things—yeah, sometimes the behind the scenes—just seeing the behind the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —some of the stuff in museums that you don't see—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —is as amazing or more so than any—the one they show.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, but she put your nose in it, which was —

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —very important, and I still think of her fondly, because she had this goofy charm about her. Oh, and when I visited her when I was working on a thesis, or what I called a thesis.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: She was living in a building on—near the U of C, and—a small apartment, kind of an efficiency thing, I don't even know if it had a bedroom. But I was asking her about some books, and she said "Oh, I have them right here," and she had—they were all in the refrigerator!

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: It was just—didn't keep anything in it. I mean, just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: God. Didn't cook, obviously.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, I mean, she heated up, perhaps, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Had to heat up the books, maybe.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, cool them down, I think.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Cool them down, I guess. So, I'm not sure—

DENNIS ADRIAN: She was an example of that true scholar and eccentric, and not giving a crap about any of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, she, I think, had her feelings hurt on a number of fronts, but being a woman and all that sort of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: She went to Harvard, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah. The field was—yeah, it's—well, there are exceptions. There are women in the field—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but usually, it's wealth or some sort of connections that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —it's something different. Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Or, you know, Barnard, or, I mean, what is that old Dorothy Parker thing that—if all the—what's the girl's college near Harvard, or Yale?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wellesley?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. If all the Wellesley girls who went to Yale football games were laid end-to-end, I wouldn't be surprised.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a good one. She had some real gems, I think, Dorothy—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I also liked her review of *I Am a Camera* was "No Leica" [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Succinct, yes. So, you got—I guess I'm still wondering how you got in the door, because for me, the first step in the museum door—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —was kind of a curious one. I'm—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that's how—I mean, I met some people at the Institute then, and then through the prints and drawings—Carl—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was trying to think of the guy that was still there around when I first came to town.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Harold Joachim, probably.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, Sam or something? That—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, Sam Carini, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, he was a character.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, yes, wonderful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I bet you have stories, because I know Mark pretty well and he introduced me—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —to Sam. He was still around, I think, when I got here—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but he's probably long gone.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, he was there when I was there. But I had a very funny experience with him, is that down one of those corridors of the Institute came the then-director, Charles Cunningham, and a couple of trustees and so forth, and Sam in the middle of them. And as they approached me, they were four abreast and so forth, and I sort of stopped for a minute, and Sam came up to me and gave me a very deep curtsy [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Saying, wait—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the kind of stories, yes, I figured you'd have about Sam, because—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and then he just—they just went on. But the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's great.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —the looks on the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, my God.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —faces were priceless. So I've always—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's pretty good.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —thanked him for—I don't know what got into him, because, I mean, we—I was—I was standing out of the way politely for someone I knew, and—with the biggies, and—but I just thought, how wonderful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: To break through that sort of decorum, that sensibility.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, or the acknowledgment to you that—I know—I know—I know this is all crap.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and that's one of the things we're talking about, is this—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But let's have some fun.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —the grand—the grand game.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what fascinates me, comparing notes with you, is that my career has parallels, and that we both had—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —a skepticism for the—but that's why I wanted to get into the Art Institute—the politics of institutions.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, I met collectors through Frumkin. I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, so you were already introduced.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —the Bergmans, the Shapiros. And Shapiro made a wonderful remark once when someone was asking him about collecting and, you know, didn't you have to be a person that—he said, "The one important thing about collecting is all it takes—all you have to have is money."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Knowledge, forget it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You get the—you can get these things for money, isn't that incredible?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, really. Not only that, you can pay someone to have taste. It's not really [laughs]—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's not really a matter of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that either.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, there's a difference between those who have taste and those who have appetite.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Yeah, definitely.

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a good distinction there, too. So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway, to resume. I mean, I had these vague contacts at the Institute—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and then when I went to New York, Harold Joachim from the print department called me up because someone they had been considering as a curator of—black man, I can't—Paul somebody-or-other, he was a Degas scholar, but he was killed on—some hustler killed him on Lakeshore Drive or something—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Geez.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and Harold called me if I wanted a job.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Ah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I said, yes. I mean, it was associate—you know, flunky. Flunky.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's how you get your way in the door and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you work your way up, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So that's how I got back to Chicago. And I knew people who were there, like James Spire I knew somewhat, and his sister, and—one of his sisters—well, she was sister—and so I had some extremely tenuous and thin and foggy social credentials [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] You build—it's called a house of cards. You build your—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —credentials, that's what I was thinking about my career.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's—it may be all an illusion—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but you build up slowly. You have, you know the right people, and this person is that, and —

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, and, I mean—and, I mean, I wasn't as bad as people who were, say, "Well, the last time I talked to Pablo—"

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.] I mean, there are those people, and I'm—I realized that that was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: There are many layers of the game.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, you didn't go there. Or I wasn't about to go there—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —it was disgusting.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, yeah, and there's people that throw it around more than others, because that all sort of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Or, you know, have attended every opening since the *Armory Show* in 1914, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, here's a story for you. I was interviewing—this is curious to me, as long as we're at the Art Institute now.

DENNIS ADRIAN: All right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: When I was interviewing Rhona, the story—it may be apocryphal. According to Rhona, it is. But what everyone tells me is that the reason the MCA formed was because of the anti-Semitism and sort of—the sort of separate cultures it was in the Midwest, we're talking about, which is not only somewhat conservative but, you know, let's face it, it's not—it's not East Coast Jewish kind of thing. It's New York, Philly, that kind of area that I come from. Everyone always told me that the MCA was a rebuttal or a sort of a way to funnel some of the Jewish collectors' interests. But Rhona said that that's not really true, it's much more nuanced, that it really wasn't about that at all, and she went on to give me some counterexamples of people, perhaps, that maybe are exceptions.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Such as?

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't remember. I'd have to go back to my tape to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —look at them, but there were some people that helped—that were on the—well, I guess there were some—there were some Jewish—there must have been some Jewish people on the board of the Art Institute at that point in time.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes. Well, Leigh Bloch.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't know if she mentioned Leigh Bloch, but she did mention one or two, and she then went on to talk, you know, about some of the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —exceptions. And I know it's more nuanced than that, but that's sort of a mythology that I wondered if she was just sort of—you know, I told Ted Halkin that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —being a Russian Jew, which is what I come from—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —we had a certain sort of immediate rapport about stuff like that, and he said, "No, she's just in denial." And he said, "Where's she from, is she German?" And I said I didn't know if Rhona's German or not, but he was wondering why—or if she's just still beholden to collectors to this day, since she's still operating at that level, just being discreet. But, so, is that story sort of exaggerated, or is that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Exaggerated—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —I think. But, I mean, there was a strong current of that where, I mean, it was still the age of restricted buildings and—on Astor Street and all that crap.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, sure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—but there were people, there were the collectors who gave some old masters to the —

Max and Leila Epstein—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —in the '20s, or before.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So that's way back, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And then later, the—I don't—during the war, I don't know about that period. I was in service.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so, there—I think there was an awareness of the importance and desirability of keeping good contacts with the Jewish community, largely for their commercial eminence.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But then also their intellectual connections, because when, you know, Gertrude Stein's *Four Saints in Three Acts* was performed in Chicago in 1935—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —with the—with the sets and costumes by Florine Stettheimer.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.] And that she and Ms. Toklas came to Chicago, and there are little notes about it in that wonderful—have you ever read it, the *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, of course. How could you not?

DENNIS ADRIAN: By Gertrude Stein, you know. It's just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's—no, I read that even in school. That was always—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. And so—but, so I think there were these filaments out there which were undeveloped, let's say, but they weren't absent entirely. They were potential, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And they weren't—I guess the story that—the way I heard it is kind of like—well, I came, of course, to Madison—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —there weren't even hardly any black people until the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —boatloads came from Cuba. I mean, it was a very blonde-haired, blue-eyed—the Midwest is fairly—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —fairly removed from that, especially way back. And I guess the way I heard the story of Chicago art politics was that it was—it wasn't just that there were these undercurrents of Jewish culture and money and collecting, but that there—but that that was really sort of shut out from the Art Institute. So, I guess that's exaggerated.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, to some degree, but I mean, what wasn't exaggerated was to the degree that the importance of these great collections then being formed was, not altogether, but ignored to some degree.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So that I think Morton Neumann always felt kind of, you know, shrugged off, and the Shapiros had their—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's, yeah, who we're talking about, the trustees at the MCA, right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. There was a funny—I was at the Shapiro's one afternoon and he got a phone call, and I

could tell from his response that it was Muriel Newman, who had just been appointed a trustee or something, because she had given her entire collection to the Metropolitan.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's some of the—that's some of what I'm talking about in terms of the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —yes, the politics of, yes—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —sticking it to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Joe said, "Well, you know why that is, don't you, Muriel?" and I could hear her laughing, and then they were going, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: "Yeah, of course we know what this is all about." But—so, he was aware of that. But, I mean, he made his dent in many important gifts to the Art Institute, and the Renaissance Society, and the University of Chicago, and other places, and was a very interesting and a goofy man. But—so then, I think the Blochs and—I mean, Leigh Bloch had a steel company. Samuel Marx was an important architect and they had that great collection of Matisses with the Moroccans at prayer—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and the *Still Life after de Heem*, and the big Léger city painting, and odds and ends of that kind.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Odds and ends, yes [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. This, that, and the other.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Just tossing that in the attic [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—[laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: As you say, the sort of things you inherit from your—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —from your—

DENNIS ADRIAN: The schwartza will get it [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. The schwartze will get it. [Laughs.] Oh, God. So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so, that began to be more noticeably—or, the connections became deeper and a little stronger. But I remember when Lew Manilow, who perhaps you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I sort of have met him, and I know him a little.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, he's—I think he's a little bonkers now, unfortunately.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really? I haven't seen him at the—he wasn't at the art fair.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I haven't either, but somebody told me he's maybe Alzheimer's or something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really? Because usually I'd see them at the art fair. I didn't see them this year.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, yeah. Well, I don't know. Maybe it's not so. I haven't seen him either. But when—maybe it was the present—it wasn't Susan. Maybe the previous wife, Lori, whatever—also a steel family—but when Lew became more prominent at the—the women's board told the then Mrs. Manilow that, well, she would be allowed to pour tea that the, you know, members' meetings, but that was about it, so don't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the one that's of the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —don't get your hope up, dear.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Oh, God. So that—this is—you're talking about, this is when the offshoot, the young—the MCA started? A year or two—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, around that time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And everyone said, well, of course it's the Jewish reaction to the snobbishness of the Art Institute. Which—and—how can I—in a very gross and fragmented way, that is so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —but there were many factors.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think in fairness to Rhona, I think that's kind of what she was saying—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —is that it's been simplified—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And the thing is that that's—you know, when I came here, that was the story, the storyline.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But the storyline is much, as is always the case, is much more complicated than that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Rhona sometimes has both a brief and intermittent contact with the truth.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I found it fascinating that she claimed—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: When I talked to her about Monster Roster, I think it was just her dislike of them, she said she didn't know that term. And I was thinking, oh, come on. She's not somebody who would be—not only that, but when I was thinking about Miyoko Ito—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —she said, "Oh, she's just"—she was pretty scathing about a lot of Chicago artists, but she said, "Miyoko Ito, just an okay painter." I'm sorry, I just—I'm—I don't know about you, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, see, and Rhona wanted to be in New York—wanted to play with the big kids, which meant in New York.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Oh, I know this—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —having talked with her.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —that's what it meant, and she felt that she was holding the beacon here in the darkness of Chicago with—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, she did do a lot of wonderful things. You've got to give her some credit.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, she did, but a lot of the wonderful things were really Donald Young.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I didn't know how much—I tried to ask her a little bit about that, but I didn't know—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —how much I could get out of her, and that's like, a delicate matter.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Now—and he unfortunately died recently.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I didn't know that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But his wife, who was one of the—what is it—there was that architect.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah, I know—he died about—oh, he died about three years ago.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, because they closed the gallery.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But his wife was related to that architect's family, a '30s and '40s architect, Kitty [Baldwin]. He had a sister named Kitty who was connected with Baldwin Kingrey somehow.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm not sure who that is, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: That was a smart furniture store at the time where—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I guess—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —you could get, you know, nifty things—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —from Denmark and way, way. And well, now, I mean, I've had my run-ins with Rhona, and she has on occasion behaved very badly. And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I got along.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —thank God none of us ever do that, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I was going to say, I got along with her fine, because—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —just like her, and you, we're both very opinionated and forthright.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And East Coast Jews, we could just—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —wham at each other and it was fine. But some of what she was saying I just found—like, yeah, the connection to the truth I just wondered about, because it seemed like—and that's why I wanted to just go back over that. I hadn't really heard that, and then I'm getting some sort of different information from other sources, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: But, yeah, Rhona's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think—I mean, because Rhona did see herself legitimately as kind of a beacon and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —standard-bearer for this, that, and the other, that anything that her recollections and memories about it are part of that—part of her identity.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So things that don't have to do with it, that's what she'd block—well, me—she's just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's kind of I think what happened with—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Monster Roster, she just sort of dismissed it, maybe she didn't even want to talk about it, so it was kind of like, "Who are they?"

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, also, I don't think any of them—if she made an approaches to anyone like Golub, but I don't think she got any.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, she represented Leon, and still does, for quite some time—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —so I had a feeling that she would have a connection to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Seymour, and to Rosofsky, and some of the others, but it sounded like she just, other than Leon, she had no interest in even talking about them.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, but, see, Leon and Seymour had been to Paris.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I see. That's who you're—imprimatur, that's sort of—yes, that's a whole different—

DENNIS ADRIAN: As had June Leaf.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So, I mean, that makes all the difference.

LANNY SILVERMAN: All the difference.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So anyway, and I don't want to trash Rhona, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, me neither. I didn't mean to do that either, but—because I think it's just—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, you're not. You're not, you're defending her, and I should more, too. She did a lot of terrific things, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, but I go back to the period when Rhona and Donald first—and she would call me up and say, "Can you come down to the blah blah blah opening?" And I said, "Well, yeah." She said, "There's nobody here," you know, "come down." And that was always a little bit—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it's tough in Chicago, because I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —as I say, it's the Midwest, and it's a blue-collar kind of town.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, but we've—I felt she was scraping the bottom—the bottom of the bottle.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] If she's calling you?

DENNIS ADRIAN: If she—if it was she—if she was calling.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, the thing is, it's tough to get support. I mean, this is a—I mean, finally—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I mean, dance, I love Avant-garde and even conventional dance. It's—Chicago has a history of being really a terrible town for that. It's starting to change, things are—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Things are. Chicago is moving forward in terms of things that it supports, and it's—I wouldn't say it's at the forefront of the art world, but there's a lot of—we've got, you know, some major players that come out of Chicago.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, but yeah, and the thing—the way I look at it is, it's not the other front, but another front —

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —globally, and that it doesn't have to be compared always to New York, or this or that or the other.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But there's a—it's difficult to be a leader and to try to push—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —forward. I think you know this, and we'll have this conversation, too. But to do something where it isn't—where you don't get audiences, I mean, other than I did some things in Madison. I thought—I tried to not pander to, but I tried to be aware of Madison tastes. I brought Pauline Oliveros.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I figured in new music, you know, the gay female community, which—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Madison at that point was, you know, thriving, I thought—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that would—it had, like, 20 people showed up. I tried—I did a Beat reunion, thinking that this is the perfect town to do it. I had Corso, Burroughs—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and Ginsberg, I had—I couldn't get the school to support it. I eventually did it, and it was a success.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, Jack Beal had problems there, too.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I knew Jack, actually, a little.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I'm going to have to straighten a seam, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, so wait a second, do you want to do a pause here?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, please.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Let's do a pause. And actually—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I will—

[Audio break.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: I guess I was in the middle of saying that, yes, I know what it's like to try to—and this is very much what we're going to talk about more tomorrow. We're only going to do probably another—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —15 minutes or so more here. But just like trying to promote stuff in the midst of—not heathens, that sounds sort of snooty, but just people that have no idea what it is you're trying to do, trying to be a little bit ahead of the game is—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and that's Rhona, I guess. So I'm trying to do—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well, but she believed firmly the head of the game was in New York.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's true.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's where the game was.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And fine, that was true to a great extent, but I think she put forth the idea that it was exclusively so.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, whereas there's a—not even just the stuff you promoted, but I mean, I know through some other traditions that you were interested in other things other than the stereotypical—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Hairy Who stuff, but there's, I mean, an amazing wealth of talent in Chicago that isn't related to the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —New York stuff.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and no one person has time for everything, so.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, but what she did was really—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —I think was trend-breaking and it was important for—and her and Marianne [Deson], who is a whole other—speaking of a character—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, ho, ho, ho.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —we won't—we both have, probably, Marianne stories.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I—well, I have one. Do you mind turning it off for a minute, because I wanted to tell you—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, sure, I'll do that. Just—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —just this one story.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Hang on, wait a second.

[Audio break.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Especially, you're going to get some of the advantages of being in the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I'm encouraging you shamelessly, so—[laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're—shamelessly. [Laughs.] Well, I guess what I wanted to do is along those lines, is some of the art politics. We covered the anti-Semitic as sort of mythology. How about other stories of learning the art politics? For me the—I mean, I'm—even though I had a lefty political sensibility, I'm very interested in—

DENNIS ADRIAN: How unexpected.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —social things. Well—

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Ken Walker had told me at one point he was a member of SDS early, I couldn't believe that. That's like, you know—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and he must have been 12 or something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He must have been 12. That's another life. I see him—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, his function there might have been a little louche [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] To say the least, but that's a story for later. I wouldn't mind getting your take—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —on some of that. That's a sordid side of the Chicago art politics. But let's get to your art politics, not mine. I guess, for the Art Institute for me, again, seeing the ugliness of the politics of the art world and the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —institutional stuff was real mind-bending. It was through other institutions, of course. So what was it like seeing the Art Institute, seeing that stuff? I mean, in addition to the collector base which we've talked about, which is one thing, how about the politics of working in a large—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's quite—in those—in the days I was there, which was up until '70, it was sort of compartmented. Harold Joachim had his fiefdom, prints, and drawings—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and there wasn't a lot of back-and-forth between—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Interplay, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Jim Speyer was the, you know, an eccentric on his own right. I mean, one of the things about Jim Spire, I think, is he had trouble raising money because he was rich.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Couldn't ask his friends?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think they thought, you know, you have deep pockets, Jim, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I see [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I think it explains a number of astonishing gaps in the collection—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —at times when he—I mean, also, he followed his own interest, and—interests, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —very rightly so. I mean, he was a man of his—one of the last of the dinosaurs, I think, in a certain way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How do you mean? I'm curious.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, a person of wealth who doesn't need the money to be curator.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Because the Speyers—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the thing I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —had a wonderful little piece of real estate called Pittsburgh [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Hello. [Laughs.] Well, I know—I—yeah, I guess that's what we were talking about in terms of, yes, the patrician aspect of—and I've worked for boards of people—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that had no idea of how to really work things. The would—they—you know, they—it's money, it's a whole different—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —it's a different way of operating than—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —well, you—you know.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, as far as—and I guess they were Frankfurt bankers that came to Pittsburgh in the 18th century—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Huh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —so they go way back, and it was Aaron James Speyer, I guess, what he preferred. [. . . -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —classier. And his mother, I guess, was a kind of artist. He told me once that she worked in something called the living stone [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Was it a kidney, or [laughs]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Oh, yeah, that's a bad reference. But yeah. So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But anyway, and she was a lady who—again, this is gossip—I guess spent the—summered in Venice, but always had her furniture sent over from Pittsburgh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, man. Yeah, that's a whole other level.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, you want to feel at home.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Bring the home to you.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, exactly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It can be in Venice.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's not so easy, it's a little bit of [laughs]—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it wasn't difficult for her.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not for her, yes. A whole other world.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So anyway, Jim Speyer, I mean, he did a lot of wonderful things but he had his limits, and some of them were the limits of genteel grandeur. I mean, he wasn't above the common touch, but I think there were areas which he was uncomfortable in. It wasn't because of his intellectual or aesthetic eminence, but it was this—

LANNY SILVERMAN: They weren't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —rich kid stuff that -

LANNY SILVERMAN: They didn't touch that. Well, it's going to—the Art Institute has an amazing collection of ethnographic, African art—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —all kinds of—and Asian—all kinds of other things that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —probably were not his - that's not his sort of bailiwick, or -

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think he responded to it, but I don't know just who all was responsible for that, curatorially. But there was that collector, Raymond Wielgus, who has a great collection at Indiana University. And Claire Zeisler and others who had really first-rate, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I didn't know that she—yeah, I didn't know that she—I knew her work, but I didn't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —know that she had a collection of the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —ethnographic art.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —there was a show at the Institute, the oceanic things, that I think had a lot of her stuff in it, that John Vinci installed sometime in the '60s.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's way before me, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But, I mean, Claire, another trip. I mean, absolutely—

LANNY SILVERMAN: A character. Again, any Claire stories? Because I'm curious. I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's before me, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I have a lot of them, but I don't know if I can cram them into the 15 minutes [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] We can save some for tomorrow, but I'm sure we're going to get more in—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I think I should, but I'll tell you one that is apocryphal.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Okay, well, that doesn't make a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Of course, but the story is, and I think I was there, that Claire was having a cocktail party at her place on Lakeshore Drive, and her ex-sister-in-law, Lillian Florsheim—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, okay.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —who invented the shoe, as you knew—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and Lillian, in her later years, aged undisclosed until she was 90, and then she was quite proud of it, you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I see. There's a certain—

DENNIS ADRIAN: "Hi, I'm Lillian Florsheim. I'm 90," you know?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.] But—

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's that awkward phase in between.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —she often had a lady attendant, a kind of—another elderly lady who kind of held Lillian's purse, or—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —I don't know what. But anyway, the story goes that at a party at Claire's, Lillian announces in her New Orleans accent, "One of these days, Claire's going to be found murdered in her bed with all the men she brings up here."

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that sort of stopped, you know, we were all putting down our little nut cups—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and figuring out what to do with our crab claws—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, what to do with the right—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, exactly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —silverware in the right place, all that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Claire's response, also, it is said was salty, was, "Oh, she's so full of shit. I never pay them until they come, and then they're too tired to try to kill me."

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] There you go, that's a good one.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And these are ladies in their late 70s or 80s, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Well, Ruth Horwich, there might be some stories there.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: She must have—she was a beauty in her youth.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, very beautiful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There must be some great—we'll save that for tomorrow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, all right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But you must have some great—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, she—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Ruth Horwich.

DENNIS ADRIAN: As a young woman, she looked very much like Paulette Goddard.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah. No, I saw some—when I was at her home one time and I looked at this—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —picture of her, and she still had [. . . -DA] glamour and style—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —even in her 80s, 90s, whatever—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but I, you know, looked at her young, and wow [laughs].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. No, she was—and to my mind, always was a great beauty, I mean -

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —into her last years—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —because she was always—she had a great gift that also Muriel Newman had, was with her clothes, which were always interesting. She dressed *for* you, not *at* you.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's an interesting distinction.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, it wasn't like, check out my, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —check out this. There are ladies who I won't go into right now who—it's at you.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I know what you're saying.

DENNIS ADRIAN: "Are you noticing my—?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Muriel Newman was the same way, that it was always, like, "Isn't this fun?" or, you know, "Isn't this goofy?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. A real—an innate sense of style—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: A sense of presentation, too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Also, Muriel showed until her last years a very fine leg—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: and—as they used to—and sitting on her sofa, I mean, one would always sort of go, well, I can't even lift my own leg—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —but the, you know, the—I mean, you would get a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: A little—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —a little knee, and this beautiful leg, or both of them, and she—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But she was one of the four great beauties at that time, which you've got June Leaf—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Robert Barnes's first wife, Lia, whose father was the librarian at the Chicago Symphony. Sayers, Lionel Sayers.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Ah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Lia had a twin sister named Dido, who—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —who married some poor man named Josh Greenberg or some such, so she ended up Dido Greenberg—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, God. [Laughs.] It doesn't work.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she was a dancer at City Center. Anyway, walking down the street, if Muriel and June Leaf and the Sayers sisters were there, I mean, cabs ran up onto the median, you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —buses stop, cars crash, people [saying -DA]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: "Did you catch that?" I mean, because they were all astonishingly beautiful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I can imagine, just from what I've seen of, yeah, some of the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —pictures, earlier picture.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —always were and still are. But that was always fun to—if you had the good luck to encounter that particular quartet, who didn't necessarily hang around together, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's quite a foursome.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —it's like, wow.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There you go. So the Art Institute must be rife with other grimy stories that you can—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —call to mind that are—that are reasonable to—for the record, and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, I know John Maxon was quite a case, I guess. He was [the Dictator and -DA] always called the POD, the prince of darkness [by many -DA].

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, I don't know him. What was he? What was his role there?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, you know, it's sort of a, I think, giddy queen. I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —he was the one that would have all the door frames marbleized by, I mean, troupes of Italian —

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —marbleists, marbleistas—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —who all were probably well known to John one way or another.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, so there's a certain—the sensibility that people don't—some people don't even—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —think about the presentation—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And he was—and he used to tap around—he had a cane, he used to tap, tap. So everyone—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Knew when he was coming.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —POD coming, you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: That—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, so some of the sensibility of presentation, some people don't think about this, but you know, it is something that—to realize that it's very important to—that it's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: His favorite color was something he called ashes of burnt lavender.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's good. [Laughs.] So he's flaming, even to your sensibility?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I know we just talked about your romantic sensibility, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but—and he was entertaining, and so forth, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Baroque.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —also, I mean, he was a little grabby with the hands, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —that everyone commented about. And in fact, when he died, there were funny things when he died because he died at the—that eating club on North Michigan Avenue. Not the Tavern Club, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —one at the very end—north end of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Trying to think.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —lower Michigan. The Tavern Club, is that what I mean?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Something like that. This is—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, it's not my realm. I don't know.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —it was—he choked on a piece of meat there, and someone said, "You know, I refuse to—John Maxon never choked on a piece of meat.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Inaudible.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I have to say, I would probably—I've worked for mostly gay—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —males in the art world. I've got to say, I would probably be further—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Are there—is there another kind?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, well—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Not—they're endangered species.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there are gay females, I mean, just to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yes. But anyways, so yeah, I probably think I would go further in this field, because it seems to be—at one point, at least, it seemed to have a lot of—or even closet gays, I mean, without—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —going into names, people that weren't—and we'll talk a little bit about Ken Walker tomorrow, too. Some of that story intrigues me in terms of the sordid power—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —of Chicago politics. But—

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, Maxon was a trip.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. So, did—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Was there a sort of camaraderie among a sort of a—from the inside? I'm on the outside—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —being straight. No? It didn't—that didn't affect your professional—other than a little grabby hands stuff or whatever?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, because the things were so compartmented.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that even if you saw somebody socially, unless you were at one of the rare gay parties that might include people you knew from the Institute, which was rare, or it might have been at some large gathering where everyone was at—I mean, not gay people only, but—so it was never—you kept the code and played—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, apparently there's a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —you know, old married ta.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there apparently, I—without naming—I won't name names, but it'll probably ring a bell with you, but one of the past directors was seen in a—was it a leather bar or something?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Someone who wasn't necessarily—someone was telling—this may be apocryphal, too. A couple directors back, without mentioning names, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —apparently had a sort of S&M dark side.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it—I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: When they partied, at least. Maybe—they may not have showed that at the Art Institute.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I don't—I don't know. I mean maybe that was Speyer and his boyfriend, Ronald Krueck, who later married the heiress Anstiss Drake.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But, I mean, it could be, but then there were a lot of the layers of the Art Institute that I've never—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I guess that's what I'm saying. I mean, there's a discretion—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But I think the—another possibility, there might be a kind of confusion between that guy who was at the Contemporary, Fitzpatrick—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —who was known to—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, no, this was Art Institute, and I'm trying to remember—I don't know any Fitzpatricks, the reason I'm trying to remember now.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I don't—I don't know who that—I mean, it could have been—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, I'm just saying that there's a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —there's a discretion in the art world—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —there's a certain kind of—and this isn't even period-wise in terms of '50s and '60s repression, there's a certain kind of—like, for—I mean, there's people that just don't talk - like, I worked for Greg Knight.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's people that just are very—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —very discreet. There's a discretion.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, Greg Knight is a very perfect example of the discretion that was practiced in—also, I mean, there was sort of the feeling that, look, we all got here as mad sissies and we're very well respected - don't make any waves.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. And actually, there's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Of any kind, to anybody.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and that's—I think that's—now, it's with the transgender level now—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's a whole different level of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —the accepting—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Very confusing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And it's amazing that the country is moving faster, of course, faster than the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Supreme Court or the politicians, but at the same time, that the culture has moved so far

that now we're talking about—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —like, transgenders getting equal treatment and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that's like—that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, that Ms. Jenner.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Ms. Jenner, yes. I don't know. Well, we can talk about that off the record or whatever. But I think we've covered a pretty good amount. I want to leave some for tomorrow, although it's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it was always—I mean, at the Institute, one always sort of knew or sensed, well, you know, this is, as one said then, a friend of Dorothy's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —as in the *Wizard of Oz*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, of course. That's the famous—

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Inaudible]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —yeah, the famous term, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So that was, I mean, you sort of—there was a lot of what the Germans called *augenspiel*, I guess, you know, that knowing look. Your *gay-dar* was on.

LANNY SILVERMAN: *Gay-dar*, yeah. That's, yeah, a more current term for it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, *augenspiel*, I haven't heard that term. That's a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so, the whole idea was that you didn't make a fuss about it, and that if you—you had to subtly let it known that you knew what the deal was and that you were not going to make any trouble.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, there was a level of just sort of - that's just sort of not a topic that was—you didn't hang out, it wasn't—there wasn't an—a *gay art mafia* in Chicago in any sensibility?

DENNIS ADRIAN: No. Well, I mean, not that I was aware of.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not that you felt any—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And even at the curatorial level, I mean, people said, you know, they all said, "I see enough of him at work, and I don't need to"—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So in a way, it's almost like an escape from the—yeah, right, that you had your own separate private lives.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Although, you, Jim, and there was a—you know, the home that you lived in down the block from where I—when I first came to Chicago—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —some of this is natural connections. It's not just—I mean, some of you were good friends and—well, actually, Jim, at that point—Jim Faulkner, I'm thinking of, and who else?

DENNIS ADRIAN: And John Jones.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And Jim Jones, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: John Jones.

LANNY SILVERMAN: John Jones, that's right. Some of that, some of those connections, were—there were friendships and things, but they weren't—and there were alliances, but there were—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's no—there's no conspiracy theory here in terms of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No. No, though we used to tease—at Wilton, we used to, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —when there was still sort of gang activity in that block, we used to think of spraying the front that would say, you know, "Insane Wilton Pansies" or something [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] I don't know if that protects you or not, I'm not sure. Someone tried to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't know. We—I guess maybe I thought we—it was too iffy.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] I mean, yeah, I'm not sure if that's good or bad.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But, you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't know where that gets—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —Insane Wilton pansies own it, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. God. I'm trying to think. I guess I wanted to leave a fair amount for tomorrow, too—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —although the time is flying by. I mean, I had—I didn't even look at my notes, but I've covered a fair amount of what I wanted to go over. I wanted to talk tomorrow more about Hairy Who, Chicago art —

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and how you—and you and Don Baum, and some of that stuff.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So we'll leave that for tomorrow, I think.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Okay, fine.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think we've got a pretty good amount on record. I don't know where we're at in terms—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Don was amazingly important.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean if there are 10 important people in the [Chicago -DA] art world, Don Baum is four or five of them.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He was on our board for—or, exhibition committee, for a little while, but I regret that he wasn't on long enough to really get a sense to know very well, because—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —he was pretty amazing, and I—and so was Ruth, for that matter. This was later –

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in her life, but yeah, he's kind of an amazing character. Let's see, I guess it stopped, in terms of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Okay, well—

[END OF adrian15_1of2_sd_track01_r.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is Lanny Silverman. I'm here at the home of Dennis Adrian in Seaside, Oregon, and it's October 8. And I'm recording this for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's 2015, by the way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And it's 2015, thank you.

[END OF adrian15_1of2_sd_track02_r.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is Lanny Silverman on the behalf of the Smithsonian Institute of American Art Archives, and it's October 9, 2015. I'm at Seaside in Dennis Adrian's home, and we'll be doing part two of our interview.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Seaside, Oregon. There are other Sea—

[END OF adrian15_2of2_sd_track01_r.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: There's a wonderful German word I saw in the University of Chicago magazine, called *besserschlimmerwahl*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Those portmanteaus of German words are wonderful.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. It means an improvement that makes things worse.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's wonderful.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, Germans are often so humorless, I thought—[laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, but the way they combine their words is just so fascinating.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So we were talking about your career, and I guess I wanted to ask you a little bit about your writing career. You wrote for the *Chicago*—

DENNIS ADRIAN: *Daily News*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —*Daily News*, which no longer exists.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and I had written for, in my time, *Artforum*—

LANNY SILVERMAN: *Artforum*, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —*Art International*, *Art News*, *Arts*, odds and ends—a lot of random museum catalogs, and so forth.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So there was quite a lot of that, and I don't know that—I don't have a bibliography. Well, maybe I could google that, I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the other thing, at some point we probably need to find—

DENNIS ADRIAN: That—that anthology that the University of Michigan published and collected Donald Kuspit asked me to participate—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's great.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —called *Sight out of Mind* I guess is my clever title.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I like it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so that's a UMI Press, and that's—is—I mean, you can find it, and it was not a rare book, but the edition was definitely not enormous.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wasn't a best seller.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't think they anticipated any such—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Big rush. So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: They weren't about to invest more than two or three logs in the paper process.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: The—so you enjoy the writing process, and I wondered—I was going to ask you, you're doing a little bit of writing now, have you ever fantasized doing fiction or any other kind of writing?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, no. I mean, people have said that I ought to write memoirs, but I have a feeling that I'm going to have that problem where I'm terrified. I'm afraid I would invent too much.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well sometimes reality is somewhat of a construct anyways, or at least memory is a construct.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, yeah, but I don't like the idea of putting into print things that are not true. It might be—not hurtful to other people or something but their family, I mean, just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. It's a little—yeah. There are other people involved.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So—and besides, I'm lazy.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know that feeling; it's like projects that—when you retire, the things you say you're going to—we had this conversation too yesterday. Yeah the things—the projects—so do you have any ideas—you talked a little about this, but do you have any fantasy projects you like to do that—that now that you have more time, that you are going to maybe get to, or are you just fantasize about?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't know, I mean I'm—I've been interviewed by Leslie Buchbinder for her project on Westermann.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure

DENNIS ADRIAN: But I don't really have any control over the content or even know who she's interviewing, and I know in some cases, she has not yet gotten to people who are still alive the new Westermann—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —because they're not well-known names, and well, that's—it's her project, I'm fine, I'm happy with it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That—that sort of thing, and—oh—I mean there's certain artists that I knew would be interesting, I mean to write for the short memoirs of like the artist Maryan—P.B. Maryan, Polish in origin, but a stateless person who worked in Israel then in Paris and then—Alan Frumkin showed him in New York and Chicago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll have to check that out, I'm curious.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, the Spertus [Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership] museum had a big retrospective of his about 15 years ago or so.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that went by me a bit.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you're thinking of, maybe of, there's some—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, he was a fascinating person—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and there is some focus on him, not a lot—M-A-R-Y-A-N—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Y-O-N?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Y-A-N.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Y-A-N. All right, well that's a different spelling than I would've guessed.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and not a lady, but a gentleman, and Maryan was a fascinating per—I mean, he did magic tricks.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He had— what was—wounded in the Second World War, I mean, in the camps he was shot up and left for dead and rescued by the Russians who pulled him out of the pits, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, he lost a leg there, and also he was magnetic in personality, and he was very beautiful. I mean, he looked sort of like a combination of Harpo Marx and Tyrone Power.

[They laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's an interesting combo, I'm still thinking—

DENNIS ADRIAN: He looked like a modern Polish movie star, and he didn't have airs or attitudes, but he was just one of those people who—he looked very beautiful, and I don't have any photographs of him here—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I'm kind of—I'll have to check that out, because that's intriguing me right there.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I knew his widow, I mean, for quite a long time before she died a year or two ago, but he was just—had a certain aura [. . . felt when -DA] I met Mark di Suvero, Westermann, and Maryan, and there're people that if they said get up, because we're immediately going to Saudi Arabia to become dental assistants, I mean you would just go.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know the kind of person you're talking about.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And they're not having you on; it's a natural thing they don't kind of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, it's an adventure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well you know that somehow they're connected with the truth—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and that you shouldn't question it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is like the opportunities we were talking about, the ones that you have to grab.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah, and Maryan had that magical quality.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, those kinds of people are magical and magnetic kinds of things [. . . must -DA] follow those leads.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah and plus being, you know, being striking looking not only because of the leg, but just—well he had those wonderful Polish good—I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I myself love the Hungarians; I had a pension for some of the high cheekbone Hungarians.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah, well and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I know the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's a rare and wonderful, you know, thank you

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Genes, yeah the genes.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Thank you, Pravez [ph] or whoever is doing that, because it's a great treat to encounter sometimes where you—when you find someone who has that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Not only the appearance, but that quality of -

LANNY SILVERMAN: The inner—inner magic as well as a sort of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: You—somehow you feel immediately at home with them.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And you feel that they understand you so, I mean—well sorry, we're deviating from your—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No I'm cool with that, because I think it's—some of this is, I mean, it's not just your history we're interested in, it's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah I know, but when he—when he lived—he was in Chicago from time to time. Herman Spertus collected some of his work and therefore the Jewish museum has—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I haven't been there in ages. They reopened—since they—I'm ashamed to say I haven't since they reopened. And it wasn't—the Spertus, actually, they actually did the new building and now it's only open a couple days a week, it's kind of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and the bookstore asked for the Maryan catalogs; I have a couple of them.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: The one I wrote—a shorter one, but I don't have a copy here I'm sorry to say.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, well I'll check it out. Online you can find lots of things that you'd be surprised.

DENNIS ADRIAN: One for the first museum and—there are artists of that kind who I would like to recollect. I mean, Roger Brown is one because he was—I mean, also had this strange quality, as does Philip Pearlstein—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —who I got to—who's 90, over 90 now.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow, he's still around, I didn't, you know, hear much.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, his wife, I think, is not terribly well, but she told me a wonderful—well, stories about herself. I mean they have three children and when they were young, Dorothy was walking down fifth avenue with them, and they got to the upper 50s or where that synagogue is, so caddy corner from the Plaza hotel.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: And the kids said, you know, "Mom what's that?" You know. And she said, "Oh, well that's the synagogue," and then she said, "I went a few more steps and I realized, my God, I forgot to tell them they are Jewish."

[They laugh.]

See, but not everyone would tell that story on herself.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So Dorothy just has that face unto her, but kind of wonderful coo-coo quality

LANNY SILVERMAN: Dingy. Sort of dingy or something, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and super intelligent and— well she's a wonderful—I hope you meet her sometime. And interesting artist in her own right as Dorothy Cantor, but I don't know where her work is, or if there is any surviving, but Philip is a hoot and a half too, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well you should do this project. This is what people were encouraging me with my projects after I get done with this I should probably—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah well, I have— I have one good Philip Pearlstein story that—they had, I mean they still have a townhouse in the east—west 80s, and Philip's studio is on the top floor and it had a copper cornice, one of those old—and he was home. He didn't realize he was alone, Dorothy must've gone out shopping, but the doorbell rang, so he went all the way downstairs, and it was the pigeon-no-more guy [. . . -DA]. So he—well, he came up with me, because Dorothy wasn't there, and the guy was following him, and Philip realized, oh, the models are in the studio, you know, so he called and said "I'm bringing somebody up, put something on," and

they put on the next disc of Don Giovanni.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's something. I mean that's what mattered to them more than the clothes.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean—but another story not everyone would tell of himself.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Can I do a few New York artists stories here?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure, why not? We're on that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: All right, well another one I learned a lot from was Paul Georges, the figure painter.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: And he was a kind of Smokey the Bear kind of big, solid guy—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Gruff the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and very Greek, and I used to go his studio from time, and Frumkin represented him for a while, and when I'd ask what he was up to and he would show me. There would be wonderful paintings around and then he would say, "Well, I'm really pleased with," and he'd bring out just an utter dog, I mean just something that was—I thought, he's having me, and he's—that's just one of those fag critics, you know, let's have a little fun with him.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And he would—it never failed that he had wonderful paintings sitting around and there were these things that were—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Why is he bringing out the crap for you?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, or leaving it out even.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Why?

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I finally learned from him—but he didn't say so, but I learned from—that the things that engrossed him were the things he wasn't done with.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Not unfinished, but he hadn't had—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well that's cause it's the latest, that's what you're involved with emotionally

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well he was telling me the truth, you see, and I was too dumb to realize that, of course he's most engrossed in what he's doing now, and not all of it is resolved, and some may never be. That's not the point.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But the others—he was done with those, you know, that's fine, okay, I'm happy, but I thought that, you know, he—I don't think he was trying to instruct me, but I'm very grateful for it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well it's odd because a lot of artists won't even show you what they're working on or won't even tell you what they're about to be working on. I know this to be—you know.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, you know he had—it was Mathew Brady's old studio on [inaudible] and Broadway.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow. That's dating back.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and anyways, he has a wonderful—had a wonderful wife, Lisette, whose father was an important photographer whose name I've forgotten.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's ironic, because Lisette Modell, I'm thinking as soon as you say Lisette; that's an

unusual name.

DENNIS ADRIAN: [. . . -DA] And their two beautiful daughters Yvette and Paulette.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, they all end in "ette." That's sort of like—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, that's a family thing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —diminutive, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But anyway, I'm always grateful to Paul for—maybe without intending to pass along a really important lesson, and I really learned from that a great deal when I looked at other things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well going to all their studios is—I mean, when I talked with Vera [Klement], she complained that most critics or curators that come through have a strange way of not even looking at what's on the walls, which is—I thought that odd because to me the first thing I'm curious about is, you know, what I see around me. Like you, visually what are the—whether it's finished or not finished, that's kind of an important part.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, also I think that Vera—I mean she's an imposing presence in a way—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and I think people are afraid of saying something and she'll say well you're absolutely wrong about that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, she's got strong opinions.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So I think that without intending to, I think some are—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Imposing, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But the—my other favorite is Sylvia Sleigh, who—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were going to tell me a Sylvia Sleigh story.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well there are several. One, I mean—born Welsh, kept her English citizenship always, and she died in her 90s just five or six years ago, and when she was doing those male nude paintings that Lucy Lippard and others were writing about in the '70s. She was getting all kinds of weird, creepy phone calls and Lawrence didn't want their phone number changed because it was important to him, so she had to deal with these creepy, creepy calls. And so she said that it was—if they had only wanted a painting of hers, that would be one—but they said, you know, "Do you want to paint me, maybe?" I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I'm sure I can imagine.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, drool, drool. And so she developed the ploy, she would say, "Well, are you very, very handsome?" Then it would click.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's interesting, that intimidated—that's the way to get rid of people.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well the other good one is her and Nancy Spero, and Irving Petlin's wife were among those early, kind of, better representation for women in galleries and so forth.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And in fact, at Irving Petlin's they had a bachelor party complete with what was then called blue movies, it was rated by Nancy [Petlin's fiancée -DA].

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is before Guerilla Girls.

DENNIS ADRIAN: In Irving's loft and they threw watermelons around and who else—it was Nancy Spero and the other two I just mentioned would be Sarah and—anyway—but what was really funny is that—I think it was Harold Rosenberg who was there, or it might have been Max Kozloff, but when the women started throwing stuff, it was either he or Max Kozloff. They hid behind a painting. I mean they were wearing good suits, you know, like, obviously didn't want to get messed up.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well this is early '60s or this is before the Guerilla Girls, this is like—we're talking like—Nancy was in there, I mean, as a feminist she was in there long before that, so that's an—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well Sylvia wasn't part of that [. . . -DA]—but that was an unforgettable New York moment for me and Sylvia. That used to be called in as sort of going in when other groups—woman artists groups were forming and they would ask her for advice about organization and that sort of thing. And she said she went to one where the program was very militantly feminist and they wanted to establish a program where the exhibitions and no men would be allowed.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Sylvia said that her idea, along with Nancy, they wanted equal time. They weren't exclusionist.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she didn't want to throw water on their parade, but she said—well she wasn't sure that she could entirely support a group that would exclude the fair sex.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's an interesting reversal.

DENNIS ADRIAN: How wonderful, so like—very delicately—

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's some layers and stuff going on in that little pithy—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and once—I mean a curator, I know who's now a dealer Russell Bowman

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know Russell, sure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, he sort of got caught up in—you know, if it's from New York that's what the good stuff is.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the thing you were talking about yesterday, which I want to talk to you about more, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and he was—he had a period where he was like that, and he had—there was a show of Sylvia's in Milwaukee and I was up there at Russell's house and he had a big sort of David Salle's loose painting drawing [to show Sylvia -DA]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. [. . . -DA] Just some really bad work—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —as an artist, but he asked Sylvia, you know, proudly, he said, "Let me show you the"—

LANNY SILVERMAN: The latest— the newest and latest from New York, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right, and you're an artist, maybe you'll learn something from this guy. I mean, she didn't—he didn't say that, but it was clear that that was sort of the flavor of the moment, and Sylvia looked at it and she said, "It's very big."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's one of those polite things where you say that's very interesting or something in those terms at least to avoid the—basically—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Now I have a few, when you see shows of artists who you like but you're not crazy about the work I would say, "Well, you must be very pleased with the"—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, so you've got—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's important to have those kinds of responses.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, it's certainly beautifully presented, I mean, you know, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Everything except "It's wonderful work," yeah, it's tough because I'm easy to read out, I don't know about you, but it's very hard to hide my sort of responses so I'm always in that awkward place

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but often artists will put you in that awkward position, it's like well what do you think? It's like Nuh-uh [Negative.].

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah well I always say, well you must be very happy with it, you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh I see you have a good stock response to get there.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and how pleased you must be with the installation.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's good, that's a good—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't want to be nasty to them.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, well that's important because—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But I also want to wiggle out of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's very hard to come up with the crap, you know, you don't want to do the BS either, because that's hard to do when you don't feel it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no. And because—and a lot of people—museum people, they—one who was at the Porter Museum before at Chicago, I introduced him to a painter, Robert Lucy who it happens to be there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Who at the time was still finishing up at the [Art -DA] Institute school, and I introduced him to Bruce Guenther.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I remember Bruce, he out in California or was for a while—Berkeley, and then he moved.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, yeah, and Naomi Vine and she wasn't too impressed with him.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And in Chicago, I was on the acquisition committee then and he attended those meetings, and someone had left the museum like \$5,000, and he said in the meeting, "Well, you really can't do anything, like I mean you can't get anything important with that. You could get something—a photograph maybe or maybe something local."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's that disdain, yes, for the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and [inaudible] and after everyone I said, "Bruce, that was," you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not the right thing to say.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Not, I mean, I see your point, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's not very tactful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well that's better than John Coplans, so I didn't tell you the stories. I have lots of John Coplans stories, but I guess he didn't last long in Akron. I worked under him at Akron. He alienated all the board members. He didn't have the pat response that you were talking about.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He would tell them like right out, "This is just total crap. This doesn't even belong in a museum," or whatever, he wouldn't—he didn't hide anything.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well and, you know, coming from elsewhere and then carrying on like that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —it isn't a good way to—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's not politically—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —to have any influence. I mean you don't have to suck up to everybody, but you have to have a little finesse in the [interaction -DA]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Finesse. I learned that at Madison, I mean I came in with a lot of attitude and I realized that it was like—I told you, it was a very different town than I expected in terms of, you know, the art world. It was very small, there was like two, three collectors and so forth.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well also I think you learn more by shutting up than rattling on, you know?

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think that's true in general, listening is an important thing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but let's see, there was another one.

LANNY SILVERMAN: A New York story, you were going to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah I think so—wasn't Sylvia, it wasn't Paul Geo—it wasn't—well I have some Westermann stories, but one I like especially—I mean I did an interview with Martin Friedman.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: There was some eight New York sculptors—eight new sculptures or something, and he was interviewing them all, and stalking—that was the [inaudible] on the catalog was these artists, and he had—and it was, I don't know, I don't think Lucas Samaras was one, but they—but the guy who used to do [inaudible]—he used to do like inflated plastic castles and inflated tires. Oh what was his name?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Huh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And they were plaster always, kind of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Plaster, I was thinking of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: They looked like detached parts of Lachaise's, I mean they were kind of bosomy and quite nice and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm not sure who that is, but that sounds vaguely familiar.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —'60s, '70s kind of stuff?

DENNIS ADRIAN: What?

LANNY SILVERMAN: '60s and '70s maybe?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That sounds familiar.

DENNIS ADRIAN: 1960s and 1970s. It wasn't Edward Higgins who showed at Castelli, but this guy did also, but anyway—now where was I?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh with—well apart from this—the guy that did

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, Westermann.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Westermann.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That—there're a lot of nice Westermann stories, but that's another whole thing and many of them are recorded, so—but anyway he made an object that was like a big little drum, like a big lollipop shape, a thick disk covered with carpet—shag carpet—had purple and all around was green, but—and he went to the rug store and said he wanted a piece of carpet, you know, he wanted about, you know, 12, 14 inches wide and 20 feet long, and the guy said, what are—what do you want it for?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And you know, Cliff was—what do I tell him? I'm making this giant—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No you can't talk arts—talk to these people. They won't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No there's no point, he said, "Well I have a very narrow hallway."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Very narrow, they probably had no idea where he was going—yeah. You just need to give them specs.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I've been there when you go to places for materials, you don't want to talk art, you want to talk specs, or you need to know their language.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's like the lady who didn't want to sell me the carton of cigarettes because she only had 10 left.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, same kind of thing. Well, let's go back to the writing stuff, because—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Okay, sorry, sorry.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —no that's okay because I love the stories and that's fine

DENNIS ADRIAN: But the [inaudible] are important and I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, I know you wanted to tell those and that—we were sort of at your writing career, and I think that that's an important aspect of Chicago. One of the reasons I speculate that Chicago got so second shift or whatever you want to say is that there really wasn't much of a writing community. There was Alan Artner, there was you, there was [inaudible] later for the *Art Examiner*—dialogue.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Derek Guthrie and Jane Allen.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Derek Guthrie, you know he's reviving that magazine; that's another story.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh dear.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, we won't go there. They—I just saw—picked up a copy at the expo of the new thing and it really looks bad.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I got a long with him, but when I—they wanted to talk to me and, you know, so we had a drink somewhere, and it was clear that what they were, were gossip tidbits.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh man, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So what really happened at the blah blah blah, and I was really offended—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, the level of discourse in Chicago is just—that's really sad.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And it wasn't that I thought I was such a great writer, but I—which I am not—I certainly wasn't—but to be asked for that kind of, you know, mingy—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're—yeah, that's a real waste of what you're capable of bringing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, you know, it's shit scraping and—I just ick [Negative.] .

LANNY SILVERMAN: Ick [Negative.] is right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So anyway, I always—I kept my distance from—also I wrote something for them, and he bounced a check on me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, God, and I mean it's from pittance, too, I'm sure. There's never really that much money, right?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well I think it was all \$75 or something, but something like that

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, but still, it's the principle.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it lost on my—my bank called me and I was charging, you know, \$40.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a lot of effort to get all this—yeah

DENNIS ADRIAN: And it cost me too

LANNY SILVERMAN: —grief.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I'm sorry to be such a miserly old fart—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, it's sad.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —but I was really annoyed. I was—you could've told me. I—tell—you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: To wait to—yeah

DENNIS ADRIAN: Wait, hold this check or something, but no.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Just be honest.

DENNIS ADRIAN: They hoped I wouldn't notice, and that—you know I thought, well, that wasn't very high-end of you.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So they alienated writers as well? Well the problem is that there really wasn't—I mean it's not New York; there aren't the journals; that's probably one of the reasons why we don't get the dissemination of the town.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's not the writing; it's the just the advertising basis for the magazines.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's true, yeah, because there're all the galleries and therefore they support the—I know how that goes to get the ad that, you know when we did the [inaudible]—no the Nick Cave show, Jack Shainman put out a full page ad of the installation at the cultural center, which is very sweet, but the cultural center couldn't afford that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but yeah, there's that sort of tie-in, and to get reviews, you know, the whole game is played.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah and there isn't in the Chicago art listings in [inaudible], I mean, there's just those little box things like in some of the New York theater things which are just little—I remember one of new age houses said *Irma la Douche*, which I liked a lot

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So many types that are having fun. Oh, well the Derek and Jane thing, there was at that time, I mean Vera was connected with Larry Solomon and I don't know what it was called—the group of five or something

LANNY SILVERMAN: There—yeah, I've heard of this.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Ted Angelopollos was maybe one of them, who I knew very well. And Derek and Jane [. . . -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh God.

DENNIS ADRIAN: They wanted trash about the—they wanted to stir up, and as it happened the—that abstract structure less group—a lot of them were friends of people that turned out to be, you know, different kinds of art. I mean they knew them in school—from school—or there wasn't any difficulty between them and then along—I mean there's a painting by—what Franz has come to label for better or worse "the imagists"—a lot of those people, I mean they were interested in new artists like Roland Ginzel, Jordan Davies, Angelopoulos [ph], I mean there was a lot of crossover there of acquaintance and friendship, even influence I would say, and that—so it was a complete invention, and I thought—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, speaking of inventions, well, I have a question for you about Alan Artner going back to the writing thing, when I first got here I knew the editor of *Dialogue* from John Copeland, from Akron, that's where it originated, and she told me this story, but other people told me too and it's in the painting, the Roger

Brown painting, *the Alan Artner Feud*.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Right, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I've heard—it's a little like we were talking about like the anti-Semitic thing, it's become a certain mythology thing, and I know the painting, but I don't know the story. What was that about in terms of Alan Artner and the—Roger?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean there was a time when Alan Artner, I mean he somehow took again against the image what he considered the imagists.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Particularly Roger Brown, because I think Alan was violently homophobic.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: And really hinted at that in his writings about Roger and others, and—which wasn't very nice, and so it was clear that he would—I mean, if there was a show of Poussin at the institute—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well he's a Francophile so that might pass most of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, the first two paragraphs [would be about -DA] how terrible Jim Nutt is and what's wrong with Roger Brown and what a bad person Karl Wirsum is, and I mean it was—there was always this intro of screed about that, and I thought, you know, we know you don't like—that's okay, I said, write an article about how they're so terrible, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Get to the assessment as opposed to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and when it's about something else, don't use that as your foot in the door, and I never got along with him at all. I used to—I mean, I'd sit there and I'd go boo, boo, boo and hiss him and whatnot.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well you have to—in terms of playing the game as a curator, I knew he was a Francophile, so through this aspect I knew how—you have to find the aspect, and I think he started out as a French literature kind of person or something.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Then he became a music critic.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or a music critic, yeah. So you have to find the right avenue to get him interested in the thing so you have to play the game with him a little.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Also he thought he was, you know, an Adonis, God's gift to women.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know some of the women he dated, so we won't even go there, but that's a whole other subject.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Toby knows better than me.

DENNIS ADRIAN: What he didn't know was many of them laughed at him because he would come on to them and, you know, give them a heavy line, you know, I'm the big art—well sometime mishegas he was trying out, and many—some of the women at the museum, where he worked named Laura, Laura somebody, anyway he dated a number of those ladies, and others too, but many of them—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: They were laughing at him because they realized what he was doing and he was so pompous about his come-ons—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well he was one of—he was one of the big guns in town, so I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well in his, you know, he was legend in his own mind.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's exactly right, the problem is that there wasn't—as I said, there weren't that many avenues for criticism or for disseminating information about the art world in Chicago.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, but he wasn't a good choice for that post.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it's like it was that or, I mean, I don't know what you make of Fred Camper but later at *the Reader* I thought he did a better job than Alan in some ways, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well some of—that woman who wrote for *the Reader*, I can't think of her name

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that might be before Fred

DENNIS ADRIAN: Was some art teachers, you know, from about 20 years ago or so.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Maybe before—I was around then.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But she wrote profiles and she did—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I think I do remember that, she did a piece when I did my first visual art show, art magic, *Artist as Alchemist*, was—she did something on that, I don't remember her name, but I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I can't—yeah, she did a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: She moved to New York, I believe.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I don't know, she did a profile on me too, I mean, in *the Reader*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But anyway, and Alan was deliberately nasty, and he took a few put shots at me publicly and in print that I was influencing collecting. I was this evil genius, making me this Machiavelli, I mean this Bengali, who kind of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Again, a characterization that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —told the catatonic—you know, buying this, with the hint that also that I was profiting from this, and what he didn't know was I always made it at—I mean, I'll advise anybody, and the deal is, my advice is free—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But if they want money advice, they should talk to their broker.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And there's ways to get their consultants, there's ways to make these kinds of money with which people and you didn't take that avenue.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well also, were I the sucker, I wouldn't trust anybody who had his hand out all the time that I commissioned, yeah. Oh you think this is a great painting because it's only \$10 million?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And your cut is what?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Exactly.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And there are people that do that with the collectors and then go back and hit the dealers too. Now you remember I brought in so-and-so, and I refuse to do that so I never charged a nickel for any—I mean I did for a while after was—did appraisals for free.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a different matter, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: In prints and drawing area, yeah, but that was all, and I didn't have anything to gain from it, I mean they were all using it for their—I didn't get anything out of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But, anyways, I resented that very much because I thought, well A) I knew it wasn't true, and I realized that it was muckraking and that I was—so I mean—well I just didn't have anything to do with him, but—[inaudible] boo in the elevators.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well so that the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Sorry I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So that—that's okay that's exactly what I need to hear, so you're thinking it's largely homophobic stuff that got—that got Roger—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well that was one of the threads of it, but I think he wanted—he wanted something—he wanted to have a whipping boy. He wanted to have something to be against.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That makes good—I mean, it gets people reading, I guess.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Entertainment.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that's what he chose because it seemed to him like a cohesive group of artists, which is not quite so, and he thought this was an ideal target, and it wasn't—I mean he's entitled to his own opinions, but it had something vengeful about it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It wasn't a fair assessment—

DENNIS ADRIAN: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you know, if he loved painting, you got to say like Jim Nutt is spectacular as a painter, I mean, and to move it off and have an agenda that's sort of really driving it rather than looking at the painting as painting, and maybe it's rude content by his standards, maybe he's got some refined sensibility that's prudish or something that he's offended—then say that and just let it be what it is.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But the idea of a homophobic womanizer who's also a prude is a very—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, those things—

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's probably all true.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, look at politics, look at the republicans who get caught, you know the ones that are the loudest talkers, the ones who are the, you know, the fundamentalist, the moralist, those are ones that get caught with the boys, you know, the foot tapping in the bathroom, you know, that guy or any of that stuff. It's a standard sort of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah that goofy congressman or whatever it was.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah you know what I'm talking about, whatever.

DENNIS ADRIAN: The guy who—he said that he had a wide stride.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that'll get him out of it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Don't—just don't go there, fella, just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah that doesn't work any better. So I guess in terms of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway that was the—but there were other people—some of them wrote briefly, there was a guy who briefly for *the Trib*, or for the *Daily News*, who went down state, an artist who—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't even know who that would be.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I don't know, it was in the '60s.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, this was way before me, yeah, so.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But there were several other people writing on-and-off.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, I mean the critical response in Chicago—well let's talk, let's go back to what really—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Fine, okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Even rather than writing, let's start from the beginning, because I don't know if I'm going in a logical order—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Doesn't matter.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and we were talking about—yeah it doesn't matter—Don Baum, we were talking about Don Baum and you were largely giving him credit for really promoting—the press wasn't really that favorable towards imagists, not just the New York press you mentioned John Canaday but, I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I don't really like the word promoting because—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well promoting is sounds like—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —it sounds self-interested.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's like Kim Kardashian kind of sounding.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—Don was—I mean, he was someone who acted on his convictions, and even if they were spontaneous responses to things, that's what you got.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I think—you always knew that Don wasn't giving—telling you any bullshit—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It came from the heart, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean it might be strange or odd or—but there was something [to which -DA] you should pay attention.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And also, I know, you know, he was in the perfect position to profit from his position at the Hyde Park Arts Center which he did not do, and he suggested a lot of those exhibitions and others unrelated to the Harry Who, and, you know, he—and he was princely toward—I mean, he was very good to every artist and highly regarded because he didn't want anything. I mean, and he was an artist—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He did it out just like you. He did it out of passion for the work and for the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: He had even much more legitimacy than I can even claim, because he was an artist. He had his—could show his chops—

LANNY SILVERMAN: His own work, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and so the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He could play both sides of it, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that in the community of artists, I think he was listened to because he was one of them, and—some other fugitive thought just went by, but Don—he did it out of his own conviction—that's who he was, that's what he was about.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean who else would've done that show, *Don Baum Says 'Chicago Needs,'* I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well this was an important part of Chicago history and that's why I wanted to start talking about it because this is, I mean, some of this has a lot to do, and this has repercussions even to this day. We—I briefly mentioned the fact that finally now New York is giving Chicago some of the respect, but legitimizing and giving vent to local artists and you eluded to the disdain of people—some people at the MCA. We won't, you know, go—we won't belabor that, but the fact is that ever since I got here one of the other mythologies and one of the other problems has always been that the MCA has always been Eurocentric and disliking—not supporting its own—eat its own kind of mentality, so.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Well there's been that and I have some other stories about that, but, I mean, Don—well everyone is unique, but his uniqueness stood out somehow.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And this long career as friends with many artists and the amount of good he did just altruistically—the help he managed to give people by encouragement or including them in show—he wasn't doing anybody any favors, it was stuff he believed in, but he had such a wide range of responses and interests

that they were a very high quality of—I mean, I think he was the most important figure in Chicago for a while, for 50 years, I mean even, I mean still [inaudible] and other people were still—and he was a friend of June Leaf's and he knew all those people, Cosmo Campoli and others.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So I don't think he can be over—I mean, I'm sure he had his ratty sides, but luckily he never tried them out on me and I never heard about it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And his wife is also an artist, you know her, Alice Shaddle?

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, I didn't know, I mean, I've probably met her at some point because she must have come to some of the openings.

DENNIS ADRIAN: She's one of those riley, resentful ladies who—he got all the attention, which at that time, you know, who's going to compete with Don? I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's a major.

DENNIS ADRIAN: As a persona even. And she's nice—Alice Shaddle is her name, and she does—is still working, and there's a son Charles who's a doctor who has an extremely beautiful wife who's Haitian or something, but she's absolutely another one of those drop-dead beauties like Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Be still my foolish heart, it's like—

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well so one of the things that I think about Don that you're saying is sort of could be applied to you, and to a much less extent myself. One of the real pleasures of being a curator is the thrill—it's the same thing as collecting, the thrill of a discovery and encouraging for me that's kind of like, that's what makes it all worth it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well Don Baum was a prime encourager and also in a position to act on—part of his encouragement was action

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, he was in a position where he could—that's what I was saying, I used maybe the term you didn't like, but bringing to the forefront people you can—you can fault them for, you know, not excluding, not doing this or that, but he did it out of a passion for finding something and encouraging it and it—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And he was open to all kinds of things, I mean he didn't have any illogical positions that had to be defended or anything of that sort, and he was amusing and—so I think he was—never really gotten his—he did have a show in New York when I was in New York at a gallery on 57th Street

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, I know their work

DENNIS ADRIAN: —things. There was a very nice one that was a big—like a big plastic capsule, so like an advertisement for a giant pill or something but it had one of these rubber [inaudible], like stuffed in it so it was scrunched up against this—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's sounding like Hans Bellmer now speaking of [inaudible]—something grotesque.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It was a specimen; it was really, wonderfully icky.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He had a great gift for that sort of thing. Anyways his wife is someone who's overlooked, so I want to mention her—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No that's important because there's a lot of Chicago—I mean I would mention there's some other traditions shown before, there's people like Mary Stoppert, there's people that just that are—fall under the radar—you wonder why that is.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No she's an excellent example of, I think a very interesting artist.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I love her. I have a piece and actually, it's one of my treasures.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, lucky you, and Margaret Wharton I think was another.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah. Yeah definitely, I was very impressed by the—when I came into Chicago I saw that chair show at the MCA.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That blew me away. That was a tour-de-force of art.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I wish that, you know, just if you have an X-Acto knife don't let her near your piano.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well I did work with her once. I did a show—I co-curated with Audrey Niffenegger a book related show—artists books and she did an aquarium piece—

DENNIS ADRIAN: With the guy who made the skooks. That—he was also a writer in Chicago who made things out of books. [Buzz Spector -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I know who you mean, but I can't think of the name.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, not Brian Detmar, he does work out of books too. That's more recent. That's a younger artist Harold Packer [ph] shows, but I think I know who you mean.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He was at the U of C and he wrote for something to read—I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't mind—I mean, the one who went off to Cornell or something

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Shows with—well, it doesn't matter.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Anyways—

DENNIS ADRIAN: He made objects out of books, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I think I know who you mean.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —usually kind of torn or—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It'll come to me when we're not trying, of course, because I think I know who you mean.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I know, it's like going to the doctor and having to give a specimen—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well I'm at a—I feel like I'm out of practice, yes, because I'm used to—I'm used to my own little world now. I've gotten away from some of the art references, but—God, I'm trying to think who it is, but anyways in terms of just like the MCA, let's go back and speaking of one of the problems is I—this has always been a problem wherever city I go, I always hear the complaints; the Cleveland Museum only had the Cleveland show—or the *May Show*, I'm sorry it was called the *May Show*. We had the Chicago and vicinity show, but the institutions never do the justice to the local artists. You hear like the whining from artists all the time and that's something that Rhona was picking up on too, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, also, the Chicago and vicinity [inaudible]—they always had outside jurors come in—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That helps to change it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And the *Momentum* shows were very important, and incidentally I have all the *Momentum* catalogs, which I inherited from Whitney Halstead, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's an important part of our history.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Irene Siegel and others—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I remember her, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—in any event, the institute—I think it resented having to do the Chicago show, it's just a Nuh-uh [Negative.], and then the outside jurors was a good idea, because, unless they happened to know a lot of local people, that removed some possibilities of, you know, that's my sister-in-law, so that's a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's often a problem when it's sort of the same circulating—same—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But that meant that not all the jurors choices were brilliant, so sometimes they looked for New York-iest stuff they could find, or who was in it last year, or that kind of stuff, and so they could be interesting, but it was—there was a place to—like, how did that get in here? That's good.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well the thing is if you at least rotate the—I mean one of the problems I think is when you keep the same pool of people, the same usual suspects. We talked a little bit about this yesterday, the triumvirate without naming names the REN [ph], UNC, UIC, and—who else is the third one—oh, and Mary Jane [Jacobs -DA]. There's certain—the threesome that sort of had the lock on Chicago taste. They're—and that's sort of a shame, because there's so much more, just like there's so much more than images as we're alluding to in Chicago.

DENNIS ADRIAN: An the first people to acknowledge that would be those artists who are so designated, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of course.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That—anyways, that is a—it's an institutional problem I think that's—all art museums at a certain point really get terribly corrupt, I think.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well it's about power and money, and it—sometimes to try and get, I mean the only reason why—I tried to send Karl Wirsum's show around the country, and I knew, having worked at Madison I got it there, but the only reason it really got there is because of McLean [ph] the collector—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and he was about to donate his work there, so it got—it had a context.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But it's power and money. The show would've never gone there if they weren't trying to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But they have a great collection.

LANNY SILVERMAN: They do, and that's probably from Tom largely from the year—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and then he lit a fire under those people, and said take a look at this.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, you need to get this. So they have that collection as a context, but they were about—they were courting this collector to get, you know, work, so I think that way they—people don't realize that shows are like horse-trading. It's not based on, you know, whether it should be of the moment, which Karl is definitely still very current and relevant, and, I mean, with all the graphic novels and other things that have come about in his wake, but the sense is that, you know, you only get a show if you either know the right people—you know, most of the—the young curator who I proposed it to, who was there, just like the MCA, she was only interested in promoting her career, and doing the next new Eurocentric conceptual—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's the whole casting couch business—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh God, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —because there's a good deal of nooky swapping.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's that too, and there's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Which is an—I mean, some [inaudible] human nature.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah, this is—this isn't just the art world, this is everything. It's all that way of course. Now when we talked about the MCA I know there was a huge brouhaha. You were at one point going to donate your collection. I never really heard that story properly either.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I did. I made a will, and I informed them that I was leaving them everything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And at that time then they asked for certain things, which I gave them a big Pearlstein painting, a Pearlstein drawing, a big Jim Nutt painting, two Westermann's.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah I was going to say, that's substantial enough.

DENNIS ADRIAN: For openers, I mean, okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And then it was clear they weren't interested in following any of these directions, and that they felt—not everyone there, Steve Prokopoff I think was very good, but some of the—the powers that be, or powers that were just felt, well this isn't big kid stuff.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah it isn't the Eurocentric or New York based wonder—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I mean that dealer Ann Nathan, she had—they had some images, along with some other very interesting things—

LANNY SILVERMAN: She's got some—she has interesting stuff.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —a great Red Grooms painting, and early one of New York—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And he was here too. He lived here for a while too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I know, him and Mimi [Gross]. And he did those films *Fat Feet* and *Tappy Toes*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's here. And actually I think Art Green was going to be in that, but I think Pas—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Paschke.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Paschke ended up getting the role, he told me that story, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Karl was in it I think. [Inaudible]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Karl was in it; yeah I've seen it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I don't know who all else, but—that's kind of vanished to wherever that stuff vanishes to. But I realized [the MCA wasn't -DA] interested in things that I had, and I really had partly—I tried to collect things that I thought would be of museum level interest at some point to somebody, I mean, I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Even if they was ahead, even if it was just Prussian, even if it wasn't at the moment, you knew was going to hold up in time.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I felt that anyway.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I know, that's what I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I knew—I thought I knew, so. But, you know, I'm not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, but they were—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —quite so impressionable as all that. And so—and then I—well they did a couple of things. They had promised Paschke a show for many years, like three or four or five years, and never got around to it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow, that's surprising.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Paschke, he had been asked to hold certain works and so forth, which he did, and once he complained to me. He was giving me a ride somewhere, and he said, "You know, they're not doing a thing about it." I said, "I understand they have their issues and problems and necessities, but they've been dangling me, I mean I've been doing things in their interests on their behalf for some years now, and then there's been no reaction to it." I thought, well that's, you know, not a good sign, and that's why the institute had that—that was a —there's a funny tie-in there that—because Jim Speyer was—he was doing that Chicago and Paris, Chicago and Moscow or whatever it was, they - or it was going to be Chicago and Paris, but he was working on that idea for the Beaubourg and then he died, and so that's how the Paschke show went to and opened at the Beaubourg instead of a show of a group of—it was Paschke and Dorothea Spire, Jim's sister, who was naturally involved with that, and then Ed came to the Institute from the Beaubourg.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That gives it a certain cache that they can—they can live with that.

DENNIS ADRIAN: well, also something that isn't very—the first one man show [by Richard Hunt -DA]—museum one man show I knew about was at the Museum of Modern Art [. . . -DA].

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's interesting too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well it gets a certain—it's the same thing with collectors feeling like something has to have the New York sort of approval, or else—not just the tax break, but it's in New York therefore it's okay, I can buy this now.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I'm now playing with the big kids.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The big kids, yeah. That's what we're talking about it. That's kind of sad about Chicago because there's a certain kind of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well it's sad about everywhere.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I guess so, and that's sad, because I look at Chicago as being an amazingly undervalued city. There's not only is there undervalued artists, but the architecture is like, not just world-class—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well that's the joy of it—who, you know, nobody—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Nobody knows—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Keep this to yourself.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and it's cheaper than New York to live here. You can afford to live in a studio and make art and not be in a tiny, little one room.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Also, artists here can afford to be married and have children, because they can find a place with studios and a school district that's—you know, and they can afford the inevitable orthodonture, shoes, all the kids' stuff.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The kid stuff.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, like Leon and Nancy Spero raised those three boys when—you know, on nothing, and they did a very good—I mean they're interesting men on their own who I don't know very well, but anyway, that didn't stop them at all, and Carl Wirsum is another one with two very nice children—

LANNY SILVERMAN: They're also talented artists, well mainly Zach.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah and I love the girl, and she's the only person I know who's named after a vegetable.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh wait, Zach and what's her name? I've forgotten her name.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Ruby.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But there was—there used to be the—[. . . -DA] there used to be those kinds of catalogs of seeds that came out, *Burpee's*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: *Burpee's*, yeah, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Carl saw an ad for something—a beet called the Ruby Wonder.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's where it comes from. I didn't know that root.

DENNIS ADRIAN: She was named after a beet.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll have to get my—I'm friends with Carl now and actually—and Toby has lunch with Lori—breakfast, so I'll have to give him a hard time about that. No, that sense of language play is very typical of all the gang.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I don't know who—to whom Zach belongs—

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's probably some story with Zach's name.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Maybe. Also Karl has an object that I deeply covet.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Which one's that? Because I know—

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's a plastic bank in the form of a box of cereal, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: What room's it in? Because I don't remember it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it used to be in the room off the living room sort of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Towards—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Towards the kitchen, but not in it, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I know what you mean, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And it has—the name of the [fake -DA] cereal is "Mice Krusties."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's wonderful. I'll have to look for that. I don't remember that. I wonder if he's moved it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well if you—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He's got so much stuff it's hard to see through it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well but if in your—if in your—you come across a Mice Krusties box, I'll happily go in with you.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, I'll need that. Let me jot that down just because that might be something you can do a search on.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But he's [Karl] had it for at least 30 years, so it's not new, but Mice Krusties—well you've been to their house but—maybe they still have it, but those chairs in the living room that have little baby socks on, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's also, you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He's got some great stuff.

DENNIS ADRIAN: [Inaudible] going to eat your heart out.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, well that's the thing that, I mean, I was looking at the Wolverine train bed behind me, but I unfortunately didn't get a—he was just on his way out, Roger Brown, by the time I got a chance to meet him, but some of those toys with silhouettes, that's one of the things.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It comes out of, I'm sure he saw all that, the dark silhouettes, that's—that sort of troupe comes out of a lot toys, and when I did a talk—a gallery talk on his work the show that came from where he's from in Alabama, that touring show—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Montgomery.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Montgomery, yeah, with Lisa as a matter of fact. I brought a toy in to show, this is with the source material, but I wanted to show Roger badly that I'd done some art work based on a—there was a toy factory—Plasticville it was called, and they had silhouettes in the windows of the factory workers and I backlit it and did some—I think I did some [inaudible]. But I wanted to show it to him and say this is inspired by your work and my collecting has some resonance with a lot of—I love those things, but I never got a chance. I did—you don't want to bother someone when—I don't think he—when he came through town I think he was not available—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I'm sorry he missed the chance to hear that from you.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it would've been fun and I actually would've easily given him the piece, but it's like, you know, I didn't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, he was a lovely man really and all those silhouette—they have this element of voyeurism, like it's something you—you're not really close to, but you see something you're not quite supposed to see.

LANNY SILVERMAN: If you look closely at some of them there's some reason for it to be viewed that way. There's some stuff happening in those things.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. Excuse me?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well one of my first introductions to Chicago art was in New York at Phyllis's. I should ask you about that too I guess, was a poster came, the one with the people jumping out of the buildings, it was from her gallery, so I still have that poster, it came to the Cleveland Museum.

DENNIS ADRIAN: The towers collapsing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The towers collapsing, exactly—whatever it's called now. They got a new name for the Sears Tower and whatever it is. But yeah, I saw that in Cleveland and then I—it came to the Cleveland Museum where I was working and then I was at Phyllis's gallery and I saw Jim Nutt's work, which was just spectacular to me. I thought that was a real eye opener, but Phyllis stories, I guess there's a—I met her late in life when I was getting a loan for Carl's show and she was very charming and lovely, but the sort of—all the mythology about her being a wild woman, and sort of really the crazy stuff I didn't see; she was actually very literate and very fascinating and very charming.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well there are a lot of sides to Phyllis.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll bet.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, many of them not as attractive as they might be.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, so there are some darker sides, that's not all—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Phyllis tried to introduce me to Barbara Rossi to whom I had introduced her—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's strange, yes. Whoa.

DENNIS ADRIAN: "I have this wonderful new artist; you must take a look at her work."

LANNY SILVERMAN: And "Excuse me, I"—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, and speaking of Barbara Rossi, it was John Miller, that painter [who taught at SAAC - DA] in the 50s who brought her work to my attention.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And he's now with Barbara Crane.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And he's making photography. I know John by way of that. He was—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah he's a little gaga I think.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, but he's entitled. But anyway, that's a typical Phyllicism.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: There's some funny ones, I'll tell you some nice ones here that when she was living in Hyde Park, she was giving a party and they lived in one of those row houses off 55th, you know—where the street divides, and she had put out at the foot of the stairway there was like kind of pedestal thing, and she put out a big bowl of beautiful oranges, and it was winter or something, and the kids were getting them; she said, "Nuh-uh [Negative.], give me those, put those things down, you think they grow on trees?"

[They laugh.]

She also would make an offer to make a "whopping pot of spaghetti." And once at South Haven I was there and Phyllis was there and Roger was there and Sam and Blanche Koffler, who gave all that stuff to the Smithsonian.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Blanche was there and she was wearing sort of a tennis skirt and—Blanche is another whole story, but anyway, she said, "Oh I wish I brought my bathing suit." And Phil said, "Well, you know, Blanche, I've got lots of bathing suits, you can have one of mine but you'd just swim in it."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a great choice of language, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yes, because Blanche was petite.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was going to say, for people that don't know, yes, Phyllis was rather grand.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, solid.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Speaks Yiddish] in the Yiddish term, yes.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, I mean [speaks Yiddish].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Speaks Yiddish] Toby noted that you had a lot of Yiddish-isms. See, you must have dealt with a lot of Jewish collectors and artists over the years.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And somehow, I don't know, it seems to—it never seemed exotic to me, it was just—well that's a big part of the world, so now I know nice people there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, and it's just like the gay stuff in terms of the art world, but there's a lot of Jewish—there's a lot of this that's part of the art world, and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Good, good, you know, yes, yes, what's wrong, you know, more, more.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And anyway, but Phyllis is—she too sometimes had sometimes a distant and intermittent acquaintance with the facts, and was—she pulled some fasties, one Roger Brown was going to have a show with Dorothea Spire in Paris, and Phyllis was going to send the work and she never did, because she was selling it in Chicago and saying it's going to be in Paris.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: So the show never came [to pass -DA], but Dorothea took a terrible revenge—she opened her gallery, and had in the center each ball had the post card of what would have been the Roger [Brown]—one of each.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Revenge is sweet, yes.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, what is it that saying—revenge is a dish that—persons of taste prefer served cold?

LANNY SILVERMAN: That sounds familiar, I can't remember, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I don't know, it was Machiavelli or somebody. I don't know, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So let's see, Phyllis stories. I was thinking, yeah, cause there's probably tons. I mean I—I've, again, I've only heard various stories of Phyllis, but, I mean, I—mostly they pre—I mean, she preceded me, she was on her way out to Chicago when I met her.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well and I think she had, you know, a teeny tiny bit of an interest in pouring powders up her nose and whatnot.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what I—someone, it was either you or somebody else was saying that, yes, she sort of deteriorated later on and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well I don't know whether it was that or just in general—I mean Phyllis was no kid. She must be my age, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think she's still alive somewhere out in California.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah, I think she sort of bummed out and her two sons are doctors, and I think they

realized—mom. Well once another Phyllis, a sort of an awful one, at Roger's house in New Buffalo, Phyllis had very recently had a boob job of some kind.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she was very proud of—you know, strutting around in those tight sweaters, and then at the table, her daughter—one of her daughters, Rachel was there, I guess, and Phyllis—I forget who else was there, maybe Bernie and Jane Sahlens or people, anyways Phyllis said, "You want to see?" And—when exposed flesh was like the color of those Italian [yellow -DA] plums, but with some bloody seams, I mean it was really, you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Thank you very much, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And her daughter going "Mother!"

LANNY SILVERMAN: That sort of fits in with the image I have of her as being larger than life. Maybe someone who would get up, a little too much to drink or sniff or whatever and get up on the table and start dancing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, or sometimes, just being Phyllis, and she was a demon charades player.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: And also sang harmony and other funny things, but she was very proud of being a Cohen and that descent and all that whole business.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well there's a whole—yes, in terms of—yeah, almost—not caste but it's kind of a, yeah. It's a higher—it's the—it's the revered. I didn't know that, but that's interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, there're all those intricate layers of the [inaudible].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and that's the upper layer.

DENNIS ADRIAN: People used to [inaudible] Helen Regenstein who was a great benefactor to the art institute, and Joe Shapiro and Mrs. Regenstein, because Joe's father had come to Chicago with a push cart twenty years later than her father had or something, that Joe was [not quite the class -DA].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not of the right—yeah. Didn't pass the mustard in terms of class.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, by her antique standards of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But she was an interesting—but, I mean Joe was terrific, but there was that whole thing, which I didn't know much about, but was informed, that well, there's a whole German complicated, cultural interior, geological—geographical.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's [inaudible], there's different—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Historical.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, there's different branches—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Mishmash of things that are—

LANNY SILVERMAN: All that stuff. I'm not sure I even completely gathered.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes you have to be a special kind of Spanish Jew and all kinds of things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, there's different layers of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well that's all very interesting and it's—you learn a lot from the history of the world from —

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh sure, because there's a dispersal, yeah there's a whole sort of—it's like gypsies or roma, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But yeah, I mean I got along with Phyllis, but, I mean, she pulled a couple of fast ones on me, which I wasn't pleased by, and once at Roger's we sat together on that sofa and I said, "Phyllis, I'm really behind

everything you do and I will help you as much as possible, but, you know, don't give me this crap all the time, and don't do gratuitous, nasty things."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And so I think we sort of sorted it out, in fact when she was opening her New York gallery she offered me a job.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Did you think about taking it?

DENNIS ADRIAN: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I didn't think so.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Not for one second.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Yeah I don't—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I just realized—I mean this was a one woman show, and Phyllis was it and there was no—there was no room for any other personality—not that I was a personality, but there just wasn't room for anybody, and it was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No that's not the kind of job where if you have a strong sensibility you want to sort of clash with. That's not a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, it's not that you'd have to clash with her, but you'd have to suppress yourself totally.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, you couldn't—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that—that's the part that bothered me, it wasn't—I mean I didn't mind disagreeing with Phyllis, but this having to, you know, bite your tongue all the time. So—well I want to tell you, that curator who was there for a while, Richard Francis.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah I know who you mean, I know him a little. Not much. Went to off the Christie's or Sotheby's or something, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, and—but I had a set-to with him, which I'll tell you about, because it's sort of public, but I was working on this Westermann catalog/resume.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The one—the show that Lynne did, I think or what?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well not Lynne, but Michael Rooks, really.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh Michael is Michael Rooks. That's got a great catalog too, it's a wonderful show.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and he deserves the credit. Lynne I think is another—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a story in a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, that's just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well let's start with where you were headed.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well anyway, Richard for—at that time his assistant, or his—and I think he attracted sort of a groupies, you know, gah-gah at—and one of them was a girl named Sophia Shaw whose grandmother, Rue Winterbotham Shaw, was the [long-time -DA] president of the Arts Club—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: [. . . -DA] They [Frances and his associates] were trying to tell me, well can't you do this on, you know, computer, and I said, "Look, I don't have a computer, I don't use the com—I'll type it and I'll get somebody to put it on, you know, whatever you need, but I—no." And they were, "Take this one," you know this

little thing and I said, "Look, if I came over to your house and told you or your wife that you were using the wrong kind of dishwasher or washing machine, you'd be—you'd say well fuck you."

LANNY SILVERMAN: And if the result is there, what's the difference?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and they went on and on about it, and finally—I owe Al Pacino or whoever made this—but finally I said to Richard, "Kiss me!" And he—

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: I can imagine. He's a little bit of prissy type too. So I can imagine that sort of response.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well a wussy.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wasn't he or something? He was British. He was British so not only prissy but prissy Brit.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And yep, so I said, "Kiss me!" And he said "Nuh-uh [Negative.]" , and I said "There's this wonderful movie with Al Pacino—*Dog Day Afternoon*."

LANNY SILVERMAN: *Dog*, oh that's an incredible movie. Yeah I know that movie.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Where the Pacino character is saying to the cop, "Well kiss me," and he answers, "Well I like to be kissed when I'm getting fucked."

[They laugh.]

And I said that to Richard, I like to be kissed when I'm getting fucked. And there—the office were all open ceiling —

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: That I think there was a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Everyone's ears are peaking up. That must've been good. You have to probably know something about Richard in terms of just that disconnect of styles, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean he was so top-lofty about it, but he didn't know Westermann, neither did Sophia Shaw, and she was pulling [inaudible] stuff, and when we went to visit Westermann's widow, and I was there in the Westermann's wonderful house with Joanna, who is still alive there, and they high-hatted her, and treated her like well yeah I know, you're here but no.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're not part of the picture.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. And Joanna who was ill then wasn't pleased, and I—she didn't say anything, but on the way back, riding back to the airport I told them, you know, you are—high-hatting Mrs. Westermann was not a great ploy, and they Nuh-uh [Negative.]. What, I mean, and it's just—that's so—it's pretentious, but it hurt me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it's also because the art world is really much about manners, and it's not really good manners, and it's not—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I loved Cliff and I love Joanna, and you can tell her that, I'm breaking up, but it hurt me, and so I felt—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's not right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —entitled to one of my intemperate remarks.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well this is what you eluded to before. This is what your—

DENNIS ADRIAN: That kind of thing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is where your notorious reputation comes in, so your response may not have been—

DENNIS ADRIAN: There have been other examples. Apparently once I—an artist—a lady artist who was being very pushy, how could she advance her career and so forth, and I said, "Well, have you considered suicide?"

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, in an ironic kind of sense, with a lot of artists, that's—you know, that's one of ways you get—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's not entirely—

DENNIS ADRIAN: It wasn't the most tactful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —not a discreet—speaking of manners and culture, it's not exactly—

[They laugh.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, exactly. So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So what was your intemperate response to Richard Francis?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that was it, "Kiss me."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Kiss me—oh just the kiss. Yeah, so that actually is a good one.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And "I like to be kissed when I'm getting fucked."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I think he deserved that, because essentially—oh I see, that's the response to him—to them not treating—you know.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, there's another - not involving Richard Francis, but an MCA stories that - you know that the city has that program of putting up banners?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Or it used to have it anyway.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Used to, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I knew somebody who knew somebody who was connected with putting them up, and we said, wouldn't it be great if a Roger Brown show, when it came to the MCA, we got Michigan and Ontario to do those, and the city did the event for free.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, it's no longer—but anyways

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah anyways, so this occurred and the banners went up on the—and the museum was outraged. I got so chewed out. "This is none of your business," you know, we do the—blah blah blah. And you know what?

LANNY SILVERMAN: How could you fault that? I mean it's like—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I mean, what's the problem here?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, really, you're helping, not—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Where it's like go down the block and see it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, what? It's advertising. It's everything a museum should want.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah but there was several of—I don't know who, but there was considerable upset about that, that I had trespassed on their turf or interfered with museum [functions -DA].

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's a whole committee that has to take that up and go through—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I'm sure there is, and I won't reveal to you my cohorts, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No that's fine, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But I thought it was a great idea.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, of course, and actually—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Roger was very [pleased -DA]—because George [Veranda], I said to George, Roger's [Brown] partner, make sure you get Roger down on Michigan and Ontario, just innocently, and Roger was thrilled, I mean he was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah he would love this. This is what it's about. It's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and he thought the museum did it, of course.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of course, and they will take the credit once it becomes, you know—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, of course.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well this is sort of—again we're talking about institutional politics.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean Mary Jane Jacobs was there [at MCA -DA] then I think.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's right, that's where she started from [in Chicago -DA], yeah, and actually—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, she was interesting, but the minute—I don't know. She was a user too, because, I mean, she would drop you in a minute if you—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Weren't of use to her.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, anymore.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what we were—that's true I think of—there's a certain—I don't know. The problem—it's one of the problems with the art world is who's your true friends. I was saying this yesterday. There's a certain—there's people you can only—as long as—and I learned this also when I retired; it's like you lose—you lose standing, and like abuse to people and you see who people really are friends.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and I'm on the redemptive list of everybody; you know don't have any to do with him.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, that's really a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, it's sad because, I mean the lack of real—finding—getting through the BS and seeing who's a real person and who isn't, it's important because in the art world there's so much pretense and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well I don't feel neglected, but I think, do you really have time for this kind of stuff? You know?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, who wants to be bothered?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Aren't there other things you'd rather be doing?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, it just seems like that person is wasting energy, which ought to go - something else.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There—like your personal choices. You're either doing this or you're doing something of value.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and so I've always thought that was crummy, but that's the way it is, so—but anyways, so that's my Richard Francis story. I don't know that I have any other—oh, well I have a very good Mrs. Robert Mayer story.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh sure, let's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: A good friend of mine who with whom I went to school was named Shao Yen Tse, a Chinese girl who had gone to—I don't know—what's the—Bryn Mawr something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Bryn Mawr. I'm from Philly so I know Bryn Mawr, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and she had—but she was Chinese. Her father was a nationalist Chinese ambassador to Brazil or something, and a very interesting family. She never married, but she had two sisters—one older and younger sister and then two brothers, an older one, an architect who designed the first Newport Jazz festival in Millan.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yen, that was her family. [. . . -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, the last names are first. They're reverse it to—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But also among the family they had these—first son, second son— I mean that's how— yeah there was Sanja [ph], Jayja, Ursa and I don't know what—but Gogo I think was the oldest one. Any—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Anyways.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway, that's the terms I was—because we had lived in the same slums and Chicago when Shao Yen was at the university.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And eventually she became—she retained her Canadian citizenship, and therefore had access to China, and so she eventually got the job of being director of the Ontario Art Museum, and then the Director of the National Gallery of Canada.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she gave—[Mrs. Robert Mayer had a -DA] lecture fund, and Yen was there and so was Buddy Mayer and Buddy Mayer was going on about their wonderful Chinese things

LANNY SILVERMAN: Collection, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Most of which were made in occupied New Jersey, it turns out.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah [laughs], oh well.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But—or a pastiche there so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or tourist art or whatever.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Anyway she did have sort of one big charger, whatever they're called. One of those enamel [plates -DA]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Bronze things.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, porcelain.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, the—yeah that's kind of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean very—and Yen had seen it and she said "Well, you know, we'd certainly be interested in that in the museum [National Gallery of Canada -DA]," and Buddy sort of, you know, "What?" Well, and Yen said "Do you have something against the queen?" And Buddy said "What?" She said, "Well [you said to her -DA] it would be a gift to the crown, you know."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: God.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Backpedaling from the [laughs]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But I thought very good Yen. I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Good work. Well, you know—I don't know. There's a courting thing that goes on with the—and that's why I was interested to hear your version of what happened with the MCA. There's a way to try to get—and these days you know what used to—it's just like tenure, you know when you require something. These days that doesn't mean anything. They can sell it. The word of mouth that—it's not only connoisseurship that's going down the road, but the sense of trust in terms of when you do bequeath something, what happens, and this whole courtship process is such a weird process.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well Buddy was high-hatting Yen.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And because Buddy [who is Canadian by birth -DA] retained Canadian citizenship too.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: See so Yen thought, well, this is fair game, but anyway I thought that was a wonderful deflation of the situation, but yeah, Yen was wonderful. But when she retired from the National Gallery, someone asked her for *Art News*, "What do you think was your principle accomplishment as director of the National Gallery of Canada?" She said, "Staying sane."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: In this business that's something, because I've seen some—and I won't even name names because we're getting into the more yenta-like gossip lever, but I've seen in some of the people you're talking about they're gone off and had scandals and stuff and then fall apart and it's kind of a messy business.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, there for the grace of God, go home or—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. No, we're survivors and you're doing well, and you've gotten through the—the craziness.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's, I guess it's my Finnish stubbornness.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That—that's what we started with was a certain circle there.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But anyway that was very funny and I thought Danoff was an interesting—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I worked for Da—technically speaking as the successor, I have a brief story to introduce Danoff. He succeeded Copeland, and it was a real let down. One of the things that happened was, I don't think he knew very much about—I even—I was friends with the crew. There were some really lovely people that were on the crew, and they learned from John how to set a show and have an amazing eye and the connoisseurship level was amazing. So when Danoff came, you know, he was like the stereotypical housewife. He says, "Oh move it to the left, move it to the right"—driving them crazy, and they could've done it in half the time. They had learned from John and it was kind of sad, and then he came to Chicago, which was kind of funny. He followed me here.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think he was over his head there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He was way over his head. I guess he had done a new building campaign in Akron, so that's probably why they hired him, because he—they were about to move into a new building, and that's probably—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But I think the internal part, I mean between Manilow and all those people, I think poor Mike just—I don't think he had any appetite for that and I don't—and as a result it wasn't anything that was a skill of his to maneuver among or within or something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And—but I liked him.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, he was nice enough.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I wasn't too crazy about Jan van der Marck, but—and his wife who was another whole—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Story in there.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —story. And then for a while, that guy—oh, what was his name. He was an art critic from New York and then he was living in Canada—Mario? Something—he was appointed director.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, with Lina Bertucci, the wife?

DENNIS ADRIAN: I don't know who his wife—or whether he had a wife—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh that's the—he was curator. That was the head curator. That was—that's Francesco Bonami I'm thinking of. Is that his name?

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, it was Mario—not Mario Amaya, but Mario. And he was kind of a blowhard, and I guess he was introduced at the Arts Club as the new director, and then he was—at which he was—there was much hoo-ha

about that in the paper for like two days. Then he suddenly accepted a job at—at the National—I mean the Royal Ontario in Canada.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And then he went off. No, I mean, if that was in the time that I was there, that's kind of odd because I thought I knew the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But he was the director for 10 minutes then—

LANNY SILVERMAN: 10 minutes, that's probably what happened there, I don't know.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but it wasn't very politic of his—I want to say Mario Amaya. [. . . -DA]

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: And rightly so. So we're going off, I guess I wanted to go back to another topic that—the joy of discovering artists. It's a little like finding the gem amidst—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah

LANNY SILVERMAN: What discoveries are you proudest of and what ones are you—do you have any regrets in terms of either your career in general or in terms of ones that got away? We all have those stories.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, yes. Also I think I have never discovered any artist on my own, but somebody—almost always another artists says this; have you ever seen work by blah blah?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Nothing happens in a vacuum. There's no real—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And all my connections with artists have been through "You want to look at"—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So that they've all been pointed out to be as an interest, and I followed up on those I could. So I think I'm glad I listened to those people, because artists have their own interests too, and—so I didn't—I can't really say I found anybody. I mean, I urged—I urged Philip Pearlstein on Allan Frumkin.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a big thing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But Philip had a previous career with the 10th Street Gallery—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He had galleries and things before that. So it wasn't like he was on—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, but I had reputation and so forth and—one's that got away. Well I never —Andy Warhol did. I was invited up to his apartment once when he was not anybody yet.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He was doing fashion illustration.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well whatever it was, but when I got—he wasn't home or he didn't answer the door, so—but later I was taken to one of the studios that are uptown, and this was in the aluminum wallpaper period

LANNY SILVERMAN: The Factory.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well it wasn't the one downtown—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh this was a—this was before that then.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and—but I was there with somebody else, I mean I was there tagging along with somebody, and I don't think Warhol was even there necessarily, but Gerard Malanga and all those other interests—

LANNY SILVERMAN: The crew.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —were there. And—so, I mean, how do you—my [inaudible]—so that and I mean I—because he came into Frumkin's gallery once—Joseph Cornell, I mean, I knew his work, because he had handled it and the Bergmans already had a lot of [pieces -DA]—and unfortunately Cornell came in [Frumkin's New York gallery -DA] when a Golub show was up, and, I mean, if you ever saw frightened rabbit in the circle of cougars—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well somehow you're saying Cornell is, yeah, he lived in a, you know. He was in another world and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah I mean, I though, yeah, very nice, you know, zoo.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well there was nothing there for him to see, why should he waste his time?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So I wasn't offended—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And once I had lunch with Marisol—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh

DENNIS ADRIAN: —who's another great beauty.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I've seen pictures of her. I know what she looks like. I know what you mean, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: A stunner.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I had lunch with her at a place on 54th street, I think, called Larry's which is a place that people went in between 5th and 6th, and it was a kind of—not an artist café, but—people like you and I would go there—let's put it that way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Regular people kind of, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I had lunch with her where she ordered brains I think she was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Whoa!

DENNIS ADRIAN: But she was very—well, mysterious.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Her work is mysterious, so that makes sense.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah and Frumkin sort of tried to get me to set a play up—I mean or asked that I do so, which I tried, but she didn't have any interest in this twerpy cur, I mean [me -DA]. She was very polite to me and very nice, and it was a wonderful experience for me to have lunch with—have this great beauty [laughs] at the table with you.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Even if nothing else happened that was fine.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I mean, it was fine with me, and so I won't say she got away because she—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was going to say, she did fine.

DENNIS ADRIAN: She never came near enough to be hooked.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, well it's the thing is that there's times those people walk in the door and you have to make those snap judgments because there's so many people that want the attention.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and I think—I'm not sure, but I think, Frumkin would've had maybe chances at Oldenburg.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well he lived in town [New York -DA] here so I don't know—and no one represented him when he was—when he was in town?

DENNIS ADRIAN: But he wasn't an artist, he was a writer.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He was a writer, he was doing [inaudible] performance, he was doing those siesta sort of—

[. . . -DA]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, he'd been doing [inaudible] was some kind of writer. I don't know anything about [inaudible]. I mean, fine. But we've kept—how can I put it, I've always been pleased that whenever I run into him, which is very rarely, he always says something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He remembers you. That's great, because there are people in the art world that act as if you're invisible even though you've done stuff for them.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I don't blame them because I am, or wish to be or I don't look the same—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're not looking for the attention or—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but I was always—he was always pleasant in that way, and I used to run into him at exhibitions, and I knew that first wife, Patty. The—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: The terror.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well the—the next wife ended up getting credit, or co-credit—that's an interesting issue in the art world. Look at Kienholz and Oldenburg. They're starting to acknowledge the fact that they were—

DENNIS ADRIAN: She's Dutch I think.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Dutch. Coosjie—Coosjie van something or other.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, I know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And even—and Christos too. I met them and Tom was friends with Christo and so he brought them by. There was an interesting character.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, not well, but you run across all kinds of people, and sometimes just once, and—I mean, maybe a lot of us were—like, I mean, I remember being introduced to Man Ray at the Museum of Modern Art where there was some Monet [show -DA]—something unlikely. Or maybe it was just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not what you would expect him to be going to—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Maybe it was the new images of a show or some—or the collage or something anyway. I was this dopey—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well that's great that he was interested in stuff outside his realm.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, he was there with other people, so I don't remember who all I was with at this—you know, this is—you know, this is Man Ray, you know, but we didn't have any conversation or anything. So I had a friend who was—he was an eagle. He could spot celebrities on the streets of New York. You know, and he'd say, "Well, there's Garbo? There's—" you know, I never saw these people. But—

LANNY SILVERMAN: New York is great that way, I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but the only person I've ever recognized was—remember the Hathaway shirt man with the eye patch? I saw him on the street.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I couldn't miss him, but other people—I didn't have a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I saw Tilda Swinton in New York getting—doing—looking—I guess she's married to a photographer or something. She was tall and elegant, just like I expected and that sort of strange, nude-like sort of complexion.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah

LANNY SILVERMAN: You know, that sort of very translucent skin. And it's so it had to be her, and I'm thinking, well what's she doing here, and she was going gallery to gallery, and I think she was just making the rounds. It was kind of cool that she was doing that. But—and I've seen Woody Allen. You see people; it's like it's hard to avoid it in New York. I mean, I've had my share of those—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But some are blind to it and I was one of those.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well I wasn't so much talking about—I've met like you, some wonderful people to great disappointment usually, but I was also interested in the discoveries that you could have made. The ones you could've brought to the forefront that for some reason you passed on.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I was never in a position to bring anybody to the forefront though. I could've maybe written about this one and that one, and—but I can't think of any major—well I'm probably just suppressing the chances I had here and there, but well, I mean, I think at a certain point Nevelson might have been available, I don't know. Her drag name was Woody.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's so appropriate

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Dusty O'Keefe.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah or course.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Peter, Paul and Mary Rubens.

[Telephone rings.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you want to get that? Here, we can do a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, you want to put it—once you're introduced to somebody—is—and there's no—is that somebody who got away? I mean I'm not—is that somebody who got away? I mean, I'm not—I said— ones that got away, so when I'm—we sort of—not stalking—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —but interested to make contact with, and I can't—I just can't. Artists used to come into the front, I mean like Lipschiz and others—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well those were—yeah, but those were people

DENNIS ADRIAN: Miro, and—Dimitri Mitropoulos, and people like that. But you know I was just a gallery, that creeped, you know—we sucked.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well I never took Lucas, this isn't ones that got away; he was already quite—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, Lucas Samaras did.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Lucas Samaras walked into the Madison art center, he had—Tom gave him a show there, and he was, speaking of watching, he was amazing. He was catlike. He could identify the money. His eyes you could just follow. The two collectors in town, who will remain nameless—he had zeroed in on him before I had even—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, he brought his box of pastels into Frumkin's to show me, and I told Frumkin about them, and I thought they were terrific, but Alan never followed up on that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: God.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He didn't get away from me, but he got a—Frumkin never approached him—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well I just couldn't take him up. He said "You should come to my studio when you're in New York." I saw him—I saw him at the Venice Biennale like 10 years later, after that show.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He's very strange.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Very strange—with the guy Philip. There's a painter, I don't know if it's-Tsiaris, I think his name is. A Greek. Another Greek painter. I don't know if he's a protégé or a lover or whatever, but in any case I saw them in—either one of them. I think I saw Philip and not Lucas, and he said "You should take him up on that." Never did—I would've been very cool to just go to the studio. That's not a one that got away because he was famous, I wasn't going to discover him, but you think, oh God, why didn't I—you know, why did I do that? I don't know.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I met him later a couple of times, I mean I don't think he'd recall. There's no reason he should recall me, but anyway, I mean, he was interesting looking what with that kind of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He's gorgeous too and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —bald spot and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He was kind of fascinating looking, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, and I guess one of those people who the creator favored in certain developmental areas—

[They laugh.]

—and if you regard that as a favor, but—and maybe his friend-acquaintance Philip has some equal providential benefit. I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, probably, but yeah, yeah it was Philip I saw at the Biennale. I saw Lucas the other day, but it's one of those things like—you know, I had a friend who Leo Castelli told him the photographer from Madison who told him, "Oh, you should bring me—show me your work," and my friend never did. It's like how many artists would die for that? And I give my friend a hard time; he's now not even really making art anymore, I say—I just, you know, last year when I talked to him I said, why didn't you not do that?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And he was Italian derivation, so he probably spoke a little Italian. It was the—and he was charming and could've easily gotten his way into something or other would've happened, and then you wonder why they pass these—we were talking about opportunities.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well there's this '20s song of, I dance with a man who married the girl who dance with the Prince of Wales or something of the '20s.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, something along those lines, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah well that was a boo boo, but I'm sure there were artists who I didn't recognize. I mean Philip Guston used to come in a lot, but I knew who he was already—and now he took long looks at Peter Saul.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well and that—one of— it's not— is it Michael Kimmelman who's one of the *Times* critics?

LANNY SILVERMAN: He's the *New York Times*, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He's one of the only person who's ever written that, you know, that those later Gustons owe a great deal to Peter Saul's work in the '60s, an enormous amount.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, like the— yeah the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And it'll just say were in antecedents in Houston, Guston's own directions [inaudible].

LANNY SILVERMAN: He did a real change to the later work. Actually Copelands did a show of the later work that's one of the great shows he did. So yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Isn't no Peter Saul, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean that's little—little more horseradish would be in order on your order of chopped liver.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, definitely. So in terms of just general regrets are there things you regret you didn't do in your career, or do you have things apart from like—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, yes, yes—well once I—somebody I knew was going on a trip to Paris and offered to let me come along. I was teaching at Roosevelt—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: — at that time. And they went and they visited Dubuffet's studio.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I told the Roosevelt people, I said, "I got his invitation but I'm not going to—anyway, I'm going to honor my contract," which I did, which was stupid.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh God. Yeah. Well sometimes yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah though I met Dubuffet later on at Ruth Horwich's house for lunch.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll bet she had some interesting salons, Ruth.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, well, she had two very good [Dubuffet] paintings, one of a shot gun and another kind of— one of those abstract ones, but she and Dubuffet were buddies I guess, and he had a strange circle of friends, I got, and he—I—[had met him at -DA] Paul Lamentia

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know Paul, and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I sent him to see Dubuffet, or suggested that he—I didn't send him a recommendation; Dubuffet didn't know who the hell I was, wasn't [inaudible], but Paul approached him and I guess they got along well and he sent Paul a very nice gouache.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And they became sort of pen pals or something, I mean, I don't know, but, you know Paul's a sort of weirdo. Wonderful weirdo. See somebody also under—underestimated.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He was pushing because I like Paul, I like his work.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I do too.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I wanted to do something at the cultural center. I couldn't really push that through because, again people don't realize that even if you have a strong voice, there's—internal politics, you know what's—and that happened with Evelyn Statsinger, I felt really bad with her.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, that was a great [. . . loss. -DA]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Undervalued and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah I regret I have never been able to do anything for her, because I had hopes when I was at — when I was in the vicinity of the Contemporary to be able to do something there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that she had shown in Hyde Park, I mean because she used to live there, so I met her and her husband when they actually lived on Kenwood or somewhere. But Evelyn is a great artist and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's sad, because—

DENNIS ADRIAN: She's had this recent show at Richard Gray I guess—

LANNY SILVERMAN: She's getting a show like—she's getting a show this fall in their new gallery, which is downtown. I've forgotten the name of it. It's a relatively new gallery. But she wanted to—I mean, a friend of mine Michele Feder-Nadoff was helping her to organize the show that was going to be at Rockford, it was going to be shared by the cultural center. It was going to have a number of venues, but at the Rockford the main funder fell through, and I felt really bad. So sometimes things are just—the money just doesn't play out right.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, they [Rockford] had promised me that I was going to do a Willenbrink show for them involving all the classical subjects and that fell through. I worked very hard on that and then it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, there's these false leads that sometimes people don't realize that it's not even in your control. That's not even—can't even really be a regret. You try to make something happen and then stuff—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, and it's—you know it—you have to be careful to not get the artist all wrapped up, like—you know, guess what, I'm working on a show for you, and then it doesn't happen and there's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah that's dangerous, because, yes, there's high expectations and as we said, I think one of the things I wanted to ask you about is that, we were talking about the sum already, about Chicago eating its own. That it doesn't give—I mean one of the re—when I came to Chicago one of the things I liked about NAME gallery was that—we mention probably Tom Kapsalis—they would do shows—Michiko—they would do one person shows that had catalogs and it was to - to sort of make up for the lack of attention that that other—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, now Kapsalis is someone that the people in Chicago had recommended to me many times—I mean other artists, other artists, and I finally did make contact, I mean, became friends—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —but late in the game. He's still around at—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, he's still around he shows—yeah I think with Corbett Dempsey, I think

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah I love him and his—is it his daughter or step-daughter that's married to the—one of the—the Corbett Dempsey Gallery.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Corbett Dempsey. That's what I was just saying. Yeah, yeah, I thought so because—

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's his daughter or niece or something?

LANNY SILVERMAN: There has to be a connection there, yeah

DENNIS ADRIAN: But Tom has a wonderful wife, Stella.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I've met her. I know Tom.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Oh, she terrific. I mean she's just marvelous. I mean, I can't—I don't know how to describe her, but you just think, boy "Tom are you a lucky guy."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Apparently George Cohen's wife was gorgeous too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, yeah, Connie, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Ted Halkin was saying there was a beauty too. I'm curious.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, I knew her and even gave a kind of eulogy for her at a gallery where George had been showing, or she had been showing what—yeah Connie, yeah. And I liked her work, which was very kind of—looked like it might have been done by Florine Stettheimer's mother.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, I—that's a good one. I guess what I'm about to sort of in the area of asking is like the—the history of Chicago and the fact that it doesn't—there're a lot of—it's not just some other tradition; sure, there's a lot of artists beneath the surface or the obvious stereotypes, because a lot of artists out there that you don't even know about. I mean like the Tom Kapsalis that are—that just—they're not even second tier, I mean, they're very first class artists. One of the things that's nice about John and Jim at that gallery, Corbett Dempsey, is that they're starting to do all the things that the cultural center couldn't do at all. We were doing lots of those shows. We did Michiko and Vera, and a whole bunch of people that deserve the one person shows; they had attention elsewhere. But that—what do you think, I mean, why do you think there isn't a huge—why do you think there hasn't been a huge outlet for Chicago, I think more so than in all the cities I've been in. It seems like there has not been fair treatment of the local artist.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well I think part of it is that that old bugaboo of being considered a regionalist, or -

LANNY SILVERMAN: So we have a—

DENNIS ADRIAN: You're from Chicago, you must be an—you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's an inferiority complex kind of thing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, I mean but that—how can I—I think a lot of artists—why should they risk being— going to someplace they know they'll be insulted?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Yeah, and that still persists, I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I mean I think that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And also there's this sort of goddammit I don't need this whole goofy, merry-go-round of fashion and fickle figure of fame and all that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The fad—the faddish part of, yeah, what's in today.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, I'm working out here in Roger's Park and I'm fine, and the wife has a job, and the kids are getting their teeth fixed, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well that's what we were saying, Chicago's a place where you can—and I think it's less and less—this is—this leads in, I guess, to the question I was going to ask, how the art world is really changed, you don't—that whole regional thing is not—it's a bugaboo that's gone kind of. You can work anywhere and work gets sold, as you know, online, and a lot of the stuff is done without having to be so reliant on New York and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But you have to go to New York.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, at some point, but I think that the issue is less what it used to be. You don't have to necessarily live in New York, you don't have to be New York-centric to be a, you know, an art star. Whatever the hell that is these days.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well there was that other guy from Chicago, you know, with a Greek name who went to New York and became a bartender. Did some of the big pastels. Kind of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I'm wondering.

DENNIS ADRIAN: What was it? I can't think—he became a bartender, George somebody or other.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Huh.

DENNIS ADRIAN: He showed with Richard Gray in the 620 building years and years ago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That might be before me, I'm not sure if I know that one.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and well there's some others, like Kerig Pope is still around, and I think he is not—never gotten a fair shake.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well there was so many—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but I think, you know, working at *Playboy* was a kiss of death.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: How terribly—but then you know really dreadful artists somehow get somewhere with that—thus was it ever. But I think it's partly that Chicago's got a reputation. Yes you can live here; yes you can be an artist here. Don't expect support from museums or critics.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's what we were talking about.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But, you know, you got to—if you were enter your own thing properly as an artist, you'll be fine, but just don't have any expectations and then, whatever good happens is gravy, but you don't—you know, there's no artist bar. People don't hang around.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, it's not that kind of scene or—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well it's the geographically spread, you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's even more spread. The galleries are more spread.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but, I mean, the artists always were from north shore to highway suburbs to—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's true, and there's then—and there's USD and USC, and there's Pilsen now also, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: All that's good, because I think—I mean it's sort of like Sienna and the rest. Someday someone is going to—hey!

LANNY SILVERMAN: You could be everywhere. I saw that interview that you did where you talked about, you know, the 17th century, and about the—that there's nothing new under the sun. Pluralism: that whole notion of, sort of that kind of independence of a center. So is that where you would like to—this a question I was going to ask—for me it would be the banquet years, you know the Roger Shattuck thing. I love that period of time, the Proust and the physics and the film and the flight and the lartee [ph] and the—all that stuff. That would be where I would love to visit if I could I time travel. Would you go back to the 17th century? Would that be—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't know, I think that I'd be terrified of being stabbed by—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't know if I want to live—you notice I said time travel. I think I'd want to have a return ticket. I don't know that I'd want to live back there. Same thing, but it's a fantasy.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't really—I think more would also be the banquet eras kind of thing, because I would feel, as an American, that I had some accessibility to it, which Americans seemed to have at that time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure, that's a big part of it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But I don't know that I would be so welcome to the 17th century.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, there's a whole bunch of other issues in—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But, I mean—but there're wonderful eccentric artists in the—I mean, one of my favorite—the name is a man named—called at least Anto Veduto Grammatica.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well that's quite a handful. That's beautiful.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I thought, surely that's made up.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's poetry, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But it turns out, the Grammaticas were very much looking forward to a son Anto Veduto and that was his name.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So yeah, that makes perfect sense in the context.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, you—only in Italy would you—well, I mean, don't get me going on Italy, but what I'll tell you one thing I was really crazy about—well, several things. I mean there's all that stuff. Conservationists are also, "Oh, it can't be in my"—and I remember going to the Gazino Borghese in the Borghese Gardens—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And in the gallery with the—the early Caravaggio's there mounted in the windows with brackets.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: So you could pull that sucker into the light, you see, to kind of get it in the sun.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Yeah that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And, you know, where it had been for 400 years

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, there are those hilarious contradictions. Well, we had work of the, you know, the Russian supremacists, you know like Malevich's and stuff, and it came from the Russian—one of the state museums.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Her drag name was Blanche.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Blanche. That's good. I like that. Well, the conservator that came along is—we were aghast—is working on these million dollar paintings which we barely could cover insurance wise in city, and with her watercolor set, which is, you know, at least it's—it's something you can rework, but sitting there playing with—he's touching them.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or in other countries—you go to Africa or India and you'll see that stuff it out with the bird shit, and it's out in public; it's not—our notions of conservation are a little bit misguided, I don't know.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't know that—it's become—it's a little like being a gallerist, I mean, you're in a special alchemical class where only so and so knows how to treat your Vermeer, and if you had one. But yeah, and—well that would be a time and—I mean, that—Europe in—I mean I think it would've been interesting to be between the wars in Berlin—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: —or in the expressionist era, and an artist I am very fond of is Louis Corinth—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure. Love his work.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —who is a great hero of mine.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I met his wife, or widow and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Really?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. She was funny, I mean. She was elderly of course when I met her. When I'd go there sometimes to visit with her, she would be on the phone, and often she'd say, "Oh I'll call you back," and several times it was this Alma she was talking to, and I thought, oh, oh that Alma.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The wife—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Alma Werfel Mahler

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that Alma. Whoa.

[They laugh.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, they were buddies.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow. Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, call you later, Alma, I got company now [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, it's funny when you're thrown in that way into someone that—it's like you don't realize, well that, yeah that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, but I mean Mrs. Corinth was an artist interesting in her own right, and obviously was a hot number in her—Corinth, he did some wonderful works of—one I really liked enormously is—it's a pastel and it shows him sort of from the chest down and in bed with her, and their legs are over, I mean, his legs—her legs over his. So there's this nice—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Interplay of the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, of the legs, that as the composition's growing, and I thought these are—what a sweetie.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I mean—wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, this makes me tearful to think of it, but what a nice thing. And she saved his life several times [inaudible], but also her sister, I guess, was an important novelist—Alice something or other. I want to say Berendt. Alice Berendt, maybe. B-E-R-E-N-D-T, because I think that was Corinth's wife's maiden name, Berendt. And they were buddies with the earlier generation of the Russians.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Solzhenitsyn?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, there's a, I mean there was an elder Solzhenitsyn, I guess—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh really? Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —who—maybe it wasn't—but they knew all—I mean like Corinth also designed the sheet music paper designs for Strauss's *Electra*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, which is a—huh?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Where it—where it cross connections is kind of interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well also I mean there are interesting stories about it. One I like is a—when the expressionists were coming into fashion, or being shown in Germany about 1910.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The original ones, of course, yes.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and Corinth I think said two are about character—you know, "Young man, I don't really have a clue what you're doing, but I—you know, keep honest, you know whatever it is, just keep doing it." And that—because he was on various juries and committees and stuff like that and big shows in Berlin, and I thought well, what a—what a good guy. But he also—when he was a young man, he wanted to go to Paris to study with Bouguereau who was then the most famous artist in the world.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a big one, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Which is why Corinth from provincial Germany—Konigsberg—I guess wanted to study with, and I guess he did—was at Bouguereau's studio for a while, and Bouguereau kept saying well it's very nice, but it isn't very well drawn [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well there's a big gap there. That's a surprising sort of—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, like what?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah that—that's an odd—I would never guessed that connection either. Well so some of your—the fantasy places, how about—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Ensor is another.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, Ensor, I love Ensor too, yeah. Actually they did a show of Ensor's at the Art Institute not too far back.

DENNIS ADRIAN: They had a chance I am told to buy the great *Entry of Christ into Brussels*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Now at the Getty.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's a deep pocket, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And because it, I am convinced was painted in—as a reponse to the *La Grande Jatte*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh really? That would've been a great combo.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Which was shown in Brussels the year before.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So he wouldn't have seen it.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes, and that was a big deal—big noise maker that started all that, you know, Flemish pointillism and what not.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I think that because it's a big, you know, they're big—monumental—they're monumental.

LANNY SILVERMAN: They would be a great interplay.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah well there's a lot of people in a landscape somehow.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But I think that it was—and also the title of the painting is the *Entry of Christ into Brussels in 1889*—well the painting [. . . -DA] 1888, so it was a kind of visionary.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Projection, yeah. Interesting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But the [1888 or 1887 or 1888 -DA] was when the *La Grande Jatte* was—the group—the 20 in Brussels, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So that's a real shame, it would've made a great combo. A nice, real interesting—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Also Ensor was buddies with Nolde somehow.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I used to love Nolde.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I do.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I regret one of the art books that I got lost along the ways, one of my first art books as a kid when I was interested in art was a giant Nolde book. I love that, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well he was very wonderful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And had his ups and downs but—and Dix is another artist who I think is fabulous.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Otto Dix, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And that goofy guy Christian Schad.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, he's wonderful. I know that work.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Very wonderful man with a concave chest and a transparent shirt, I mean those are—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah the beautiful people that Berlin—that sort of era is a whole other—that's a whole other—we—you mentioned that as a possible fantasy.

DENNIS ADRIAN: These are the beautiful people.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah decadent.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well there're all those Georg Grosz's of mutilated men playing cards and, I don't know, with all kinds of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Ooh yeah, there's that strange—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —weird.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —scary stuff. So I'm curious—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Sorry to wander.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, no, I was just about to ask if we've talked about—you've done a fair amount of—obviously you would have done a fair amount of traveling to Italy and you mention England.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no, I've only been to Italy once.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Only once? Wow you've got incredible—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean I've just never been to France. Never been to Germany.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm surprised, and obviously you've talked about London.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Italy and Scotland and England.

LANNY SILVERMAN: In the terms of ones that got away, do you regret not doing more travelling?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, yeah. I mean, because really I don't think I could do that kind of travel now, but I mean I really miss, you know, Vienna, Paris, of course.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Madrid, there's a few things there to look at I'm told and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, you got—well you missed a few. And like the Bosch thing which—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And Lisbon even.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh Lisbon I want to go to still.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and Berlin, of course.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Berlin is amazing, and much prettier city than you'd expect. It's very bucolic considering, you know, you have this—eastern part is kind of a little gritty, but it's really a very beautiful city.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, a friend of mine who's a—[. . . Deputy -DA] Director of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. I was about to call it the Snottish; they're not snotty at all. But anyway he has an apartment in Berlin because he went to school there and has kept in touch with the people with whom he roomed as a student and has an apartment. So I was—Keith Hartley is his name, and he is in with me and Dick on this house, and he has an apartment in Edenborough and he has a brother with whom he shares a house in London. So I will—I wanted to make him these fake business cards that said, you know, Keith Hartley, Esq.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Esquire, yes, of course.

DENNIS ADRIAN: You know, Director of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edenborough, London, Berlin, Seaside.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Seaside. I knew it was coming. I knew your punchline. And Seaside, Oregon we have to distinguish too here.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, you're right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not that you—no that's great. So it's actually said—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, but you don't have to say Paris, France the way some people do.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there's *Paris, Texas* as a Wenders film too, yes, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Sorry

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think I agree with you. I think you have to—some places you have to travel. I'm trying to get out of the way the ones that are—that we can still do while we're physically able to because some of them are very—they're worth it, like India, but they're very—they're exhausting and very difficult, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well Barbara Rossi has spent time in India. I think she has a sister who lives there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Who has?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Barbara Rossi

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, Barbara Rossi, oh yeah. And actually, that's interesting. Was she the one that was the nun before?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's what I thought.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Sister Babs.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sister Babs. That's a disconnect.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, that's what I call her, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well she's a—there's a certain kind of contained style—quiet, elegant style about her that makes sense, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, and then she belonged to one of those orders that became a sort of service order. I mean, I met her through—John Miller suggested I look at her work, and I did, and I went to see her while she was still in the habit way out in far-south suburbs somewhere. And I liked what she showed me, which she had a big painting of sort of odd things, and I sort of got on with her, and so I said, "What's next for you? You know, what—are you—do you have a studio here? Can you—" she said, "Well I'll probably end up teaching," you know? And I said "Like high school or something where there might be studio facilities or colleges?" "No probably elementary school," and I thought—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah I think I knew that too. Yeah, that's funny.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I thought Nuh-uh. [Negative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That doesn't seem quite -

DENNIS ADRIAN: So I talked to various people, I mean John Miller and Robert Barnes and others and suggested that she apply to the A. I. C. Institute, and she did apply to Indiana University, and I believe was accepted, but then decided the Institute made better sense for her. So I feel indirectly involved in—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You helped push it along in the right direction, or along the right direction.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well a nudge, a nudge in a moment was useful to her, let's put it that way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's what I was talking about. You may not have been in a position, you said, to promote, which term you didn't like, but you're able to take—the joy of being a curator is being able to help someone along, push them, and nudge them.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean promoter isn't a bad word, but it has that overtone of exploitation that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, but the idea of being able to help someone channel—get to the next step or move along to whatever gets in the right place.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well you have to try to be a good guy.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well that's the hope, especially among people of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I'm still trying.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So yeah, what do you—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I'm not succeeding.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: What's next for you? What do you see as next in terms—are you still, well, are you still involved with Chicago other than—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I don't go there. Or I was just there for this [inaudible], but it's so hard for me to travel, and I won't go when the weather's bad, because I can no longer go up those icy L steps—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, God.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —in the winter. I can't stand in a bus kiosk with my groceries from the Jewel [Osco]—lettuce turning black on top because it's 20 degrees outside and I'm waiting for the 151 bus to come along.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Those are the downsides of Chicago, yes.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but they last unfortunately from November to—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's a long season.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —to April.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, come on. You've got a lot of rain.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, but I'm used to this.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But it's temperate.

DENNIS ADRIAN: It's duck soup to me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, this is easy. Do you still follow Chicago I guess in terms of involving—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, I try to keep in touch with them.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Keep in touch with people and what's happening.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: What do you make of any new developments? I mentioned some—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I really don't see any. I mean I'm—I haven't been exposed to any, it's not that I'm looking and not finding, so I'm not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well I mentioned Theaster Gates for example, and he's like the hot new fad in terms of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, I'll certainly—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I'm not sure what to make of it, but it's a whole kind of art that I don't think it's your cup of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: If you have any Xeroxes you can send me about him, I'd like to—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll send you the something or other, the thing is that that's the kind of work that I don't think will appeal to you, because it's much more—there's this whole thing about social interactions. There's also industry the ordinary, that's Adam Brooks and his partner, or his partner in crime I should say in art crime. They do this—these like who school of art that's about—there's people that are like Rirkrit Tiravanija. I never can pronounce his—Thai guy who does dinners—serves dinners as art. There's stuff that's happening that social interaction is art, and I think like—I have the feeling that you would probably say, what's the big deal, and why is this even—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Hasn't this always been the case?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and there's people that in doing this—there was the store days and the food thing that I think Robert Morris did, so—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Caravaggio living in a cardinal's palace is—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, so, I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —not purely social.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But that's one of the hotter artists—new artists, and there's—but there's a lot of other things that are happening.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but I'd like to—no, but also, I mean, being pushing 80, you know, I'm an old fart that, you know, if I am—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's hard to get around.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Didn't you used to be somebody? I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Who would you used to be, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, who did you used to be?

LANNY SILVERMAN: I kind of think that's from somewhere other—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I mean, that's normal. That's natural, because I haven't lived in Chicago for 10 years, really, I mean I've been back and forth, but I'm there usually on business or see old friends then because we're all—I feel I'm the onion standing in the patch of redwoods that has fallen around me. There's this scraggly thing in the middle that's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well as a certain point, yeah, you're still standing and you start to watch this process. It's not an easy one.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I'm withering. I'm [inaudible] I think and, I mean, yeah there's so many people like, I mean like Golub and Westermann and George Cohen and Christina Ramberg and Roger Brown and Paschke and Muriel Newman and Joe Shapiro and Ruth Horwich and Cindy Bergman and Pussy Pepke, a name I've always adored.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Knew you couldn't like that one, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well also, there was a couple in Chicago on—he had something to do with the *Sun Times*. He was sort of a Clark Kent looking guy. Bernie and—Bernie Rogers and his wife, Bumpy.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Bumpy, that's good.

DENNIS ADRIAN: o I've always wanted to, you know, be at a party where there was Pussy Pepke -

LANNY SILVERMAN: And Bumpy and Bumpy.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, Pussy and Bumpy, Bumpy Pussy.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Bumpy Pussy, that's the name of something, I'm not sure. Maybe it's a punk group or something.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well it would be a good name for a stripper or something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well there's Pussy Galore that was a group. Yes, I guess we can have Bumpy Pussy.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And what was it that imaginary friend of Joan Rivers who had landing lights on her.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I don't even remember that one. So I guess then the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, something like Heidi Bernstein [ph], Heather Goldberg [ph] or something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I guess maybe to sort of wrap up a little, what in terms of posterity, if people come upon this and/or your legacy, what would you feel proudest of? What do you feel like—how would you like to be remembered in terms of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think I—I don't really have a very high opinion of my own writing, because when I reread it it's, oh, am I saying that again? Didn't I just say that?

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's like stories. You have sort of a repertoire. People, after you start to look at yourself—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, but, so I mean I hope that the things that I've written about are as such as the imagists, and artists like Corinth and Ensor, and I wrote something about Sylvia for the Milwaukee thing, and I think the imagists show that was in Iowa.

LANNY SILVERMAN: When Prokopoff was there?

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no, when—the guy who's now at Milwaukee, Brady Roberts or something, but it's that—one of those famous river town—famous river town on the Mississippi but, I mean it's north, farther north than Peoria, and it's[Davenport -DA]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think I know where you mean.

DENNIS ADRIAN: But it's a—anyway they have a—this guy Brady Roberts is his name, he's now director of Milwaukee. He did a big imagists, and I was very proud of the of that catalog, of which I thought came out well, and I was very pleased with the one I got—I did about Wirsum for Prokopoff down state at—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wherever I was. Yeah I got—yeah. Did you ever get a copy of the one we did at the cultural center, because that was a really lovely—I'll send one with Richard to you.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Which one?

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's Karl, I, and a designer from—he's actually in Milwaukee, used to be in New York. It's got a fold out; it's really beautiful. It's got the—oh no, it's got the self-portrait on the back. I'll—you didn't see that catalog in—John Neff did the catalog.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No I don't think so. Well I'll happily buy it, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, no, no, I'll send one to Richard. He's around the block from me—some point the next—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, send it here.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Send it here? Oh, you mean because he may—I can send you one though.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well then he's just got to send it to me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh well I thought, when next time he comes back up, but I can send it directly.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No, no that's fine. He would love to see it I'm sure. And I have a little Chicago section in biblioteca, Adriana [ph].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, very nice. You have your own section, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I have to think of some combined name that involves—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Your next door the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well [inaudible].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, so I mean you're fairly modest about your writing, and about your sense of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well, I mean it's evanescent too.

LANNY SILVERMAN: What isn't?

DENNIS ADRIAN: So I realize, I mean I was very flattered to be invited to that Donald Kuspit collection of critics

LANNY SILVERMAN: You mentioned that before, so that's something. That's a big deal.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I was able to choose the pieces, unfortunately there were no illustrations. But I thought I wrote well about Roger Brown in the Chicago WHO catalog.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know that catalog. I'll check that out.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I thought I wrote—I'd write about both Barbara Rossi and Christina Ramberg, and Phil Hanson.

LANNY SILVERMAN: She's another under-looked—she got a great show at Madison and it was a year I think, or Chicago rather.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, Phil Hanson—yeah who's also terrific. I did write something about Miyoko Ito. I have a nice Miyo story too. I was at her place once visiting her and she was showing me something upstairs, and on the stairwell there was a reproduction of a Klee watercolor.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh that's—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And she—I mean Miyo was always someone who I regarded. She sort of floated a few feet off the ground somehow, and she said, "Yes Klee is of the cosmos, while I am of the earth."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm not so sure about that in her.

DENNIS ADRIAN: If you are earth mother, dearie.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm not so sure about even in her work. I didn't notice her person, but I—and I actually could have owned, at certain point, you know right after her death. Her work was very affordable, couple grand for a painting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Even on our meager salaries, that was affordable, and I was thinking, God that—the one that got away in terms of collecting.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah I missed a painting or two of hers too, which I regret, but I mean, I'm really not in a position to—so there were a lot—I mean I've never really owned anything of Gladys' and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, God.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —and the Jim Nutt I gave to the Contemporary.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I only own a print and that's a treasures possession to even own a print, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But anyway I just love the idea of Miyo regarding herself as the earth goddess.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, even in her work you can see that. She's definitely pretty—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, she's not exactly [inaudible].

LANNY SILVERMAN: If that's the earth, yeah, than I don't know what else.

DENNIS ADRIAN: "Klee is of the"—[laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: God. So do you think, in terms of some of the projects that you've mentioned that you were thinking of doing, in terms of some writing and things like that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I'd still like to do the show of Willenbrink's classical pieces.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So that's the show that didn't happen that you'd like to reinstitute.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And I'm not unhappy with the figures, so figure tradition I did at the school.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DENNIS ADRIAN: I think that'd have some interesting connections made of it and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Some odd people like Mark Jackson and others.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah we talked about Mark probably off the record, but yeah. And he sort of doesn't much show anymore as a matter of fact.

DENNIS ADRIAN: No idea, I guess not, but I mean, he's around, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, he's running that project onward. It's not split off from the cultural center, it's now in Bridgeport. That's a whole other story too, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well I always liked him, and I thought in the whole Miyoko thing he got kind of handled roughly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah we had that conversation about the sordidness of the art world. Yeah that's really sad.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sad story.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —the whole thing is sad, but anyway, there are artists like that, that I would the chance to do a show of—a big show of. I mean certainly Evelyn [Statsinger]. I think working with Evelyn would be—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well when that fell through I felt really bad, and then to have to come back and interview her I felt a little embarrassed, because it wasn't—she knew it wasn't our fault; it was Rockford that fell through, but she's so deserving of—I mean Jan Cicero isn't around anymore; she has this new gallery, she's having a show there—commercial gallery, but she deserves something a little more attention. She's done a lot of—I mean when I did a studio visit for that, originally for that show, I saw that she had sculptures, she had done photograms, she had done wide range of things, and—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well she ought to be in the Whitney and the Modern and the MET and L.A. and, I mean, you know, I mean that's the level of quality and accomplishment and achievement over many, many years, so.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, and this is a long career. And it's sad because there are people as we were saying, there're people that—and those people like Michiko Itatani they would show internationally, but won't get shows in town. I mean they have a gallery maybe, here at best. Anyways.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, and June Leaf I think has also been—I mean she's started to devote herself to taking care of Robert and Frank who—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's a whole probably career right there, although—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, but June is quite wonderful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Still if you get a—I mean, still—I haven't seen her in about 10 years, but there's still—much remains of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Still that's the way you feel about—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —what was a very, very clear beauty, and I think she still is. To me she is.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I've never been—she and Robert came in and I was sort of in awe, like Robert Frank [inaudible]. She came in there was some sort of show and I think she was in the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, little show at Pritlett [ph]—Rolf.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Rolf Achilles did, yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And we wrote the little catalog raisonné of June's [inaudible].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah so they were in, I guess I didn't really—again, you know sometimes it's hard to sort of

like want to intrude on that bubble.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well I was at the opening, there were a lot men, and there was this guy bombing around taking pictures.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah I know, it's like—

DENNIS ADRIAN: And various people were looking, annoyed, like who is this bum who's—I didn't say anything because I knew it would blow his cover or might, and that he would not be pleased, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No that's definitely not something—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I was amused at it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, I knew who it was but I wasn't—yet some people you don't want to approach because you feel—on the other hand some people are like Vito Acconci when you meet him. It's like everything you'd expect. He's drunk, hungover, and completely like obnoxious for whatever; just bigger than his reputation and you don't even want to deal.

DENNIS ADRIAN: There're artists that will—some when left to work with doesn't really want to spend much time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. As a matter of fact—

DENNIS ADRIAN: But also, I mean to put it correctly, Robert Frank was at work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. He was doing the—yeah.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean, he was like, would you please stop what you're doing?

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, I thought that way—

DENNIS ADRIAN: So I knew enough not to do that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, and there are some people that are just very shy, like even the Lucas Samaras or David Bern was one of our openings. It's like I—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well it depends on who you are with Lucas Samaras, as you say—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah. His radar was out.

DENNIS ADRIAN: The money and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He was amazing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: —the gay-dar and the money radar.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Everything all at once.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah he was amazing to watch. Well this has been very enjoyable, Dennis, I've really—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well I don't know if we've covered all our ground here.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I mean a whole life? How do you condense a whole life into three or four hours?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I hope this isn't quite the end of it, but I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I hope to maintain contact with you.

DENNIS ADRIAN: I mean I'm now—not resigned to death, but I accept it more.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a difficult one to come to terms with, mortality. I mean—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I just hope I don't, you know, get vegged out and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well the lingering or losing your mind or losing—dementia, that kind of stuff is the scariest

thing.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well I mean my—I mean just losing my memory or what—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well you still got pretty spot on, but memory's very funny, you know I can remember like, you know, some obscure Polish new-wave stuff from the '60s but I can't remember what movies I've seen two weeks ago.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well it's me and my pal Anto Veduto Grammatica.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Also Lawrence Alloway and Sylvia [Sleigh] when they were in Padua I guess, which has a—I don't know if you've ever been there but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, I've been to Florence, but—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —it has a little pin ocotech [ph]; it was sort of secondary renaissance stuff, and it's worth—it's interesting seeing, but there's nothing really fabulous there that I recall. And—but Lawrence and Sylvia invented an artist that a lot of 14th century paintings are by an artist they dubbed someone named Blotto Dotti.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a good one too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: And there're—also there's Amico di Anonymo [ph], that's another one, and Nessuno D'Importanza.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's something when it changes into another language, it gains an importance and sort of pretension when—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah. I love Nessuno D'Importanza.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah it sounds much better when you can just roll that stuff off. Well anyways, yeah, I hope there's much more to come, and I hope you do this, just like people are egging me on.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I'm looking—I mean I'm afraid I probably will have to edit a few things out, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't think you're intemperate as you say in too much—most of—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I don't mind in certain cases, but I don't want to hurt any feelings.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, that's important, because I think that's something that people might be surprised by, that you have this sense of charm and diplomacy. It's not the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Totally of the unknown.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But there's sort of, you know, a mythology about as well that—

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, well and only the bad parts are true, that's what I always say. It's true. I mean I was mentioned once in a poem of Paul Carroll's that was very flattering.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll have to—what was that? What was the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: I don't remember what it was, but I was [inaudible]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I have some of his work somewhere off the—

DENNIS ADRIAN: —so that the bumble bees were coming out of my mouth or something. Zingers.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Some good zingers there. I'll have to check that one out too.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well the problem is I like—Mary—what is her name? Mary Carroll.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The wife of Paul.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't know, but you had that last name yesterday. It's on the record, I think tape—

DENNIS ADRIAN: That's not Mary Jane, but Mary Rose Carroll.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mary Rose.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Yeah, she has some beautiful things of June's which came from Paul, and some are quite important, and so there're always treasures. Mal. He's somebody else who is very interesting character, who deserves more conversation by somebody who maybe knew him better than I, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well there's a lot of people, and also the choices of who gets talked to and who doesn't—this is like the history is written by the winners, I guess, or by the institutions that are the power players. Who knows?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well I—and I gather he's—I don't know whether he's interviewable at this point. I haven't seen him.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well I suggested Phyllis as a—because I found out she was still alive, although

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well, I think yeah—well I think—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because apparently they had done an interview with Phyllis and she—we can go off the record here.

DENNIS ADRIAN: Several, I guess. There have been several, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: But she apparently fell asleep during the Smithsonian Archives one. And actually when I asked I thought that was sort of bizarre because I guess they had tried, but they didn't say anything. You know, do this thing. Where is my stop, but here?

DENNIS ADRIAN: Well.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]