RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH KENNETH M. MANDEL

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Kenneth M. Mandel on July 19, 2010, in West Orange, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth. Mr. Mandel, thank you very much for having me here today.

Kenneth M. Mandel: Great to do this, looking forward to it.

SI: To begin, could you tell me where and when you were born?

KM: I was born in Newark, New Jersey, February 25th, 1947. My parents actually lived in Manhattan, in the Lower Eastside, where they were both from and they both met there. However, my mother's mother had moved to Newark, and I think that's why she came here … to the hospital here, Beth Israel Hospital, in Newark.

SI: What were your parents' names?

KM: Well, my mom's still around, and she's Helen Mandel, and my dad Arthur. … He passed away in 1983, but he and she both met on the Lower Eastside of Manhattan.

SI: Do you know anything about your family's immigration history?

KM: … This may not be totally accurate, but both my parents were born in the United States, for sure. My grandparents--I know my paternal grandfather was born in the United States in about 1895, and I'm pretty sure my paternal grandmother--that's Barney Schechter and Ray Mandel--were born in the United States. My grandmother Mary--my mother's mother--Mary Schechter, I think she may have been born as an infant in Newark, but I am not hundred percent sure about that. I have to double check that and my grandfather, I think might have been born in Europe, also. That side of the family did come from the Kiev area; … I guess it's the Ukraine now. I think it was Russia then. … There are some stories about, them in that area where they grew up and emigrated from, and some came earlier and some came later. … I'm not exactly sure where my grandfathers' … family came from, although I have some documents. I could look it up. …

SI: When you said there were family stories about Europe, were you referring to things such as pogroms?

KM: Yes, you know, I think mostly they left for economic reasons. … I guess, my grandfather's family, I think the first people came from Europe. This is on my father's side, as early as 1880, which was relatively early for that period of immigration. … My mother's side of the family, they came a little later, I think, in general and, but all part of that same kind of, escape from Europe. … I don't really have any dramatic stories about that. There was one … cousin. … At the very beginning of World War I, the borders were starting to get closed off, and they escaped in the back of a hay wagon hiding to get across one border. … I think my grandparents [did not] have anything quite so dramatic. My father's father, my grandfather Barney, was born in the United States, and he was always very proud of that fact. He was American, and kind of teased the other relatives, that they had come from a foreign country. He was a true American, and he had served in World War I as well. … He was a real patriot, not in a yahoo kind of way but just

… typical of those immigrants at that time. They wanted to assimilate into America, as opposed to the ways of the old world, which they found kind of backward, and restricting, and so on. They all wound up living in a Jewish immigrant enclave on the Lower Eastside of Manhattan, which was somewhat famous, and had become a place where they all kind of found their relatives, and also what they called lonsman (a Yiddish word meaning kinship), which were like people from the village, that they knew each other from the same area, and they … wound up in the same neighborhoods and helped each other. … They formed associations that not only helped the new immigrants that came to the United States, but also sent money back to the old villages as well. So, you know, these were some of the stories. … I guess if I thought about it a little more, I probably would come up with some more. … Some of the older generation, I guess, my great-grandparents, some of those people never spoke English at all. … They came over and they barely learned to speak English, they were already probably, I don't know if they were adults; they weren't probably that old, but they just never figured it out. [laughter] I can recall being dragged up to their houses as a little kid, you know, hating to go there. … They all lived on the Lower Eastside too, and gradually they all kind of moved out. We moved to New Jersey in 1950. I think I was three, and so, from those first three years that we lived in Manhattan, and we moved out to New Jersey.

SI: What did your father do for a living?

KM: My dad was a salesman. He was a veteran of World War II, served in the Navy. I actually wrote an essay about him, which I probably should share with you. … I'll get to that in a minute, but he came back from the war, and kind of became a salesman and stayed that pretty much most of his life. We lived in Newark, until, I guess, about nine or ten years, and then moved to Hillside, sort of right next to Newark, south of Newark, and that's where, I went to high school. …

SH: Was there a company he worked for or a particular product he sold?

KM: Yes, he was a salesman … mostly for a company called Martin Packing Company, which was a Newark-based meat wholesaler, and it was on Plane Street which is called University Avenue which goes right through Newark-Rutgers. Then, it was called P-L-A-N-E Street, and I think the building might still be there, and he did that for quite a while, at least until I was through college, and then, I think worked for another company, similarly, same field after that.

SI: Did your mother ever work outside the home?

KM: Yes, she worked, she finally got a job, I guess my sister and I were, maybe, about ten, and she must have, sort of been, six or seven, roughly that age, and she went to work for Kresge's, which was a department store in downtown Newark, right on Broad Street and Raymond Boulevard. The building is still there now, I think it's owned by the city of Newark. It was a big, classical, multi-story department store, sort of like Macy's in New York still is now. … I remember it paid terribly, but it was the place to go, and Newark in those days was a pretty cool city, in the sense that, corner of Broad and Market was touted to be the intersection … at which the most busses crossed in any given day, any place in the world, or the United States. I have no idea if it's true or not, [laughter] but that's what they said, and there were a lot of busses. … You

could take the busses from, where we lived, which was still in Newark, on the South Ward of Newark. … Downtown Newark, you'd be there in about ten, fifteen minutes, or so, and probably cost about a quarter, and you go right to work down there. That's pretty much what she did every day, and what I did one summer, because I worked down there for a dollar-twenty-five an hour, Shaun. [laughter] So, I made fifty dollars for a forty hour week.

SI: At Kresge's?

KM: At Kresge's one summer … which wasn't so bad. [laughter] … It was okay. You know, I might have even snuck in a couple of hours of overtime once in a while, but it was not much, trust me. So, I don't know what that would have been, might not have gotten to two dollars an hour, at overtime. So, that was her job, and she did that for quite a while.

SI: Did she remain there during World War II?

KM: No, she didn't start that, I don't think until the late '50s, mid to late '50s. … So, I was born in '47. She probably didn't start until '57, I'd say, something like that. And I think partly, it was to try and save up money, you know, to pay for things like my Bar Mitzvah, … that kind of thing. … It was very different, I think, looking back at it now. I look back and sort of see that, most families--most of the kids that I knew--really the father was the one who worked and the mom stayed home, as opposed to today, where almost everybody I know has two-income families, and it's different then. I'm not sure what the difference is, or maybe some sociologist could figure this out, but there's a difference between having your mom around all the time, raising kids, versus you not being around. Probably has some difference, I'm not even sure it's a bad thing, but it's a different thing for kids today.

SI: I want to ask about your father's military experience.

KM: Oh, yes, sure.

SI: Did your mother ever share any stories of about what she did during the war?

KM: Well, not much. … I'm going to try go pump this out of her [laughter] in the next few years. … She doesn't talk about it too much. I think this, they sat and they worried, they got letters a lot, and I don't think she saved [any] that I'm aware of, any of the letters from my father, because I never saw them. Did she work? I think she had some kind of job, I don't know if it was a military-related job. … Where was she living? I don't even know where she was, if she was in New Jersey or in New York. Well, they weren't married yet, so she was probably at home in New Jersey with her mother. The one story I remember somewhat, kind of--every one swears this is true--is that … when my father was coming back from the Pacific, he sent a telegram that, you know, "Home in two weeks, prepare wedding," that was the kind of, the message. I guess you paid for telegrams by the word back then. [laughter] So, he kept it short. [laughter] … They got married January 6th, 1945, which was still during, while he was still in service. He came back for about a month on leave, and they got married in Manhattan. Very interestingly, I learned many years later, it was exactly the same day that George and Barbara Bush got married, January 6th, 1945. They got married in Rye, New York, and my parents got married in

Manhattan. I told that to Barbara Bush, and she was completely disinterested in it, so [laughter] I couldn't know [what] quite to make of it. … She said, "Oh, that's interesting," and that was it. …

SI: When did your father join the Navy?

KM: Yes, he enlisted in late 1942, … after the beginning of the war, and he served 'til through the end of the war. He served in the Pacific on a destroyer, called the USS *Chauncey*, DD-667. [Editor's Note: Commissioned in 1943, The USS *Chauncey* was a United States Navy destroyer stationed in the Pacific during WWII and Korea.] Actually, it's my screensaver here. Let's see if it will come. … I have to let it pop up in a second. … It was a ship that saw a lot of combat. … The project that I did with, after he died, … when my older son was graduating from college, it was somewhat, you know, nostalgic, because, my father died actually before my son was born. … My son never really knew his grandfather except by stories. So, I felt a little sad he wasn't there to see him graduate. … I sort of said, "Well, gee, you know, Artie's twenty-two now," so this was just a few years ago. "What was his grandfather doing when he was twenty-two," and so, he was, of course, in the Pacific on a destroyer. It was 1943, and I said, "Oh, gee, you know, it would be good to know it," … what a better life my son [has]… than his grandfather had. … Modern technology, being what it is, I was able to find people that served with my father on the ship because of two reasons. The internet and the fact that veterans' organizations are pretty organized, and you can find the organization, and they'd sort of know where people are, and they have reunions, that kind of thing. So, I managed to get about twelve names of people who had served with my father on the ship. … Of course, none of them have email addresses, they're in their eighties. [laughter] So, I wrote a letter to them. I told them what I was trying to do, to tell my father's grandson about what his life was like when he was young during the war. … I wrote the letter, and within about, however long it took to get the letter to people, two or three days, "boom," the phone started ringing, with people who were calling me back. … I wound up speaking to about eight or ten of them, and half of those people knew my father really well. So, I got these great stories from these people about, you know, what life was like on the ship, and certain incidents that had occurred during the war, and so on. I wrote this together in an essay, which I can share with you if you want. … I wrote it for both my sons, so they'd have a better understanding ... of what … my father had gone through. So, it was kind of cool, it was a really good experience. I probably could have expanded it into like, you know, a book or something. [laughter] … I think I did about enough as I wanted to, about a twelve-page essay, with all these quotes. Some of these guys, I'm sure you have had this experience interviewing that generation of people, but, a couple of them had actually collected a lot of stuff and kept it over the years. On the ship, they actually had; you would appreciate this as a journalist. They'd publish this newspaper, like a newsletter, they mimeographed it up, and stapled it together with cartoons and columns and articles about different stuff and, you know, obviously, they couldn't … publish a lot of military stories, because they would have been all censored, but, it was like life on the ship type stuff. … One of these fellows sent me these articles, and in these articles, there's mention of my father doing this or that, and so on, and so forth. It was just amazing to see all these things. Yes, it was really nice, and they couldn't have been happier to talk about it. They just, you know, were just happy somebody was really interested in hearing the stories. Most of them, some of them … [laughter] couldn't remember anything other than the name, "oh yes, sure." … Usually, they'd end it with something like, "Well, we just did what they asked us to do," kind of

story, but a few of the guys had a lot of real detailed stories that were just etched in their memory. So, the one I remember that I had previously no clue about was this incident that happened on the ship. … My father was a gunner's mate, and he was the captain of one of the five-inch guns on the ship. … They were shooting during some combat situation, and they fired a shell, and it didn't come out of the gun, and they knew the bridge saw this, and they said, "What's going on down there?" and he said, "The shell didn't come out of the gun. So, what are we going to do?" and they were concerned, because what it meant was the powder hadn't exploded, or partly exploded. They didn't know what. So, if they tried to do something, the thing could have exploded in the gun, and it really would have been a disaster, probably killed everybody there. So, they said, "We'll look." They talked to my father about it, and he said, "Look, I think we should put another … powder magazine in there, and fire it, and we'll get it out," and so, they said, "Okay, why don't you do it" and they did, and it fired, the shell kind of came, kind of like lobbed out of the gun. [laughter] Went about, I think they said, "Two, three hundred yards out, and sort of plopped into the water, … and everything was okay," because the second one had exploded it out, knocked the first one out too, I guess. … "And everybody had this big … moment of relief, because they averted this disaster." … I'm sure that happened more than just one time, maybe not that exact thing, but they were … firing heavy weapons at close quarters. Lots of accidents can happen. That kind of story that would have been lost forever had I not tried to do that.

SI: Was your father the type of World War II veteran that did not like to talk about things?

KM: Well, he was not closed off about it. He didn't like spout voluntarily. If we pumped him, he would talk about it. … The thing he said the most often was, "Nobody wins a war." That was one of his things, and the other thing, was as little kids, I remember we would ask him, "Were you a hero?" … He would say something like, "No, the only heroes are dead," you know that kind of stuff. … He would talk once in a while, particularly when I was older, after I got into college, and even after that. He would talk about it. He wasn't traumatized about it … and he wasn't, on the other hand, he wasn't … the other extreme. … He had a term for it. I actually can't remember it now, but kind of like exaggerating his accomplishments either. … I think he put it in perspective, and kind of moved on, and he kept some souvenirs, I remember. I think I still have a couple of the things that he had, I gave them mostly to my son Artie, who's named after him. … I think he had a pretty good handle on it, actually. Yes, I would say.

SI: Do you have any siblings?

KM: Yes, … I have one younger sister, her name's Shelley. She's four years younger than me and … I actually made a video about her [laughter] years later, too. … She's never forgiven me for it, but it's always a problem, … always remember this. When you write your memoir, … somebody would be mad at you if you're totally honest. [laughter] … She's forgiven me. … She's four years younger. She lives in Florida now, she lived in Montana for about thirty years, from New Jersey and … she's a really great person. … In 1982, she was in this single car accident in Montana, and wound up paralyzed as a result … from her waist down roughly, and has permanently been disabled in that way, but, she's never had like an ounce of self-pity, or anything like that. She's just kind of moved on, adapted. It's a long story, but, you know, she's been an advocate and a peer counselor for others with spinal cord injuries. … She had a really

good life, but challenging, but, she has turned like a negative into positive, I think, in that way, but, now she lives in Florida … with her husband. So, she's doing okay.

SI: For the first three years of your life you lived in New York. Do you have any memories of that period?

KM: … Well, no, I would say, memories would come through some pictures, but, to say that I actually remembered them would be probably exaggerating. I'm sort of a little proud of it, the fact that I came from the Lower East Side because it has a cache of a romantic era … but in fact, I was probably too young to remember it. My father … who really grew up there--this is my unmade film, sort of, they had a club there called the Henmonts, which stood for Henry and Montgomery Streets, which was a pretty well-known intersection in the Lower East Side, and they have a picture of them in their twenties, of, I guess, about twenty-five guys, all kind of young and pretty handsome. I think two of them are still alive from the picture, but, they were called the Henmonts. I constructed this screen-play scenario, where I was going to write about the, you know, the Henmonts and them growing up over the years. So, haven't quite got to it yet. [laughter] So, he grew up there. … My parents, … they moved to Newark in 1950, I think. So, I really grew up in Newark, in the South Ward of Newark. … The street was Peshine Avenue. … So, Peshine Avenue ran parallel to Bergen Street, which was one of the main streets in the South Ward of Newark. … I think we moved into the apartment that my grandmother--my mother's mother--lived in because, she and my grandfather were getting divorced, and my grandfather, this may be way too much detail, but he was an alcoholic, and so, it, probably had to be pretty bad, because people didn't get divorced back then, very commonly. The fact that they did, would lead me to believe it was really, things were pretty bad. So, my mom moved back, I guess, my grandfather had moved out because he wasn't around at all, and I even think one of my uncles, her youngest brother, still lived there in this apartment on Peshine Avenue. So, I grew up there until … I was in the, I want to say fourth grade. I think I was ten when we moved from--no let me get it straight--yes, we moved from Peshine Avenue to another street in Newark. … Do you want this much detail?

SI: Yes.

[TAPE PAUSED]

KM: … A couple of cousins lived down the block. There were a lot of relatives on my mother's side of the family in that neighborhood, including a cousin of mine, who I'm still very close to after all these years, who went to Rutgers with me. You might want to interview him, he's had pretty interesting stuff too. … That block was an interesting block because it was actually kind of a mixed neighborhood. … The family who lived next door to us, were the Jones', you know, they were black and Douglas "Dougie" Jones, was a good friend of mine, same age as me. … I think we were upstairs, people below us, were like … the "super" [superintendent] of the building and they were, Armenian I think, (Nikashian?) was their names, you know. So, it was a pretty interesting neighborhood to grow up in. There was a church across the street, and Tony the barber was down the corner. He was Italian, of course. … There was a little exposure to different kinds of people. … I started to go to Bergen Street School, and then, stayed there 'til fourth grade. My cousin, Joel's grandfather, and my grandfather, who was divorced, and my

father and Joel's father, there was kind of a cool story where there was a bar on the corner of West Runyon and Peshine Avenue. I kind of remember it as the Kazam's Bar, but I think it had a different name before that, and when the guys came back from World War II, they went down with Uncle Dave. … My grandfather was Izzy, Isador, and … Joel's father Carl, and my father have a drink, to welcome them home. So, the bartender knew the older guys pretty well, and the young guys came back and they would go, Uncle Dave, who was a big drinker, and my grandfather. The bartender would pour them a shot of rye. I forget, Four Roses, one of those things, that, you know, you can't drink, [laughter] and they pour them a shot and my Uncle Dave goes, "No, that's not enough." [laughter] He goes, "Keep pouring in the glass, I'll tell you when to stop." [laughter] … "Okay, that's good," you know.

SI: Four Roses Bourbon?

KM: [laughter] Oh, God, crazy. … That was the kind of neighborhood they lived in. So, apparently my grandfather was still around a little bit. I don't know what the hell happened to him.

SI: Was the neighborhood known as a particular type of ethnic neighborhood, or was it a melting pot?

KM: Well, … the South Ward was generally kind of like a Jewish enclave. Like I said, I don't know really the percentages of it. It was kind of more mixed than the Weequahic section of Newark, which we moved to. A lot of the families either worked, or had businesses in Newark in the Central Ward, or downtown Newark, which they commuted to from down there. … There were just cousins all over the neighborhood, and as a result, we saw each other a lot. … They had what was called … family circles then. They'd get together on every month or so, and everybody would be all together. So, our families, which were the Maloratskys were there. My parent's grand parents, I guess the great grandparents, were the Maloratskys on my mother's side. They had their family circle, and they'd get together at some local place, and the kids would come. …. Somebody even has some eight millimeter films of some of these things, when we were little kids. … So, as a result, I was closer to my mother's side of the family than my father's side. That's sort of the way that kind of thing worked out. So, we moved from there to the Weequahic section of Newark, you know, when I was in the fourth grade. … I wound up going to Maple Avenue School and we lived on Goldsmith Avenue in Newark, and about two houses behind the little playground at Maple Avenue School in Newark. I went there until I graduated from Maple Avenue School. … Newark used to have half-year graduations back then. They were one of the last places, I think, in the State, to do that. So, I graduated from elementary school in February or January of 1961, and then, I went to Weequahic High School for the last half of the year. … My parents bought a house in Hillside, it was literally about a mile away. We moved there, sort of like in June of that year, of 1961. School was not yet over, so I still went to Weequahic 'til the end of that month. I think illegally, [laughter] if I recall. … If you didn't live in Newark, you would have had to pay tuition or something. So, anyway, I finished up the year, and then I went to summer school in Newark, because I either was going to have to go back or forward a half a year. So, I decided I'd go forward a half a year. … I'm not exactly sure if that was a wise decision. … So, I was actually almost a year younger than everybody in school when I finally got to Hillside. … I took the two courses in summer school, and then I

transferred into Hillside High School in September of 1961, I guess. I think I got the year right, it had to of been. So, I went to Hillside for the last three years.

SI: Were there traditions that were kept up in your family?

KM: … I tried to resuscitate this family circle thing, years later, with at least just the cousins of my generation. We wound up getting together about three times, and then that kind of, you know, it didn't keep going. I always thought it was sort of fun just to keep in touch with people. By then the geographic thing was no longer there. People moved, if not really far away, just far enough away to make it a tiny bit inconvenient to establish different things that they were involved in. It was their local synagogue, or their local schools, often. Those things were different then than for everybody else. So, that took time, and the connections got frayed, and so, the traditions did not continue. They really, I think, suffered. … I personally think it's a loss that those things didn't continue as strongly as they might have. I mean you stayed [close], obviously with your nuclear family, but your aunts and uncles and your cousins and your second cousins, they all kind of, started to drift apart fairly quickly, and significantly. To the point in which; this might be a good punctuation mark on that kind of phenomenon. … I was just up in Anchorage, Alaska working last week, and I had learned over the winter that I had cousins in Anchorage, Alaska, Mandels. Not only didn't I know they were there, I don't think I'd ever met them, ever, in my life, and that was part of the fact that that separation had started fifty years ago and it was almost, not quite irrevocable, but it was, you know, pretty complete, severing of any contact with people. They said, the cousins, I had saw them, I had dinner with them, which was kind of interesting. I couldn't remember a time that I actually had met even their mother, who was there, who probably there would have been occasions that I might have been at the same place at the same time, even when I was young. So, yes, so the traditions I think … were not maintained at all, sadly.

SI: What about traditions in food, language, or practices?

KM: Yes, you know, … that's probably true, there's a little of that. There's one of the cousins, … and her son went to Rutgers actually, Arnold Hodes. Bess Hodes was my mother's first cousin, and she was this really good singer, just professional-caliber singer, but her father wouldn't let her become a singer. He forbid her to do this. She and her brother--her brother played the piano--and they would perform all the time at the family functions, and then, for decades later, at any other family wedding or Bar Mitzvah, or party, they would be singing. They were just great, I mean great, and … that was a tradition that continued forever, and there's a movie I ought to make, I'll try to collect those old films, and string together a movie about them. The last time I remember her singing, this is probably not the last time, but the last time I remember her singing was at my youngest son Tyler's Bar Mitzvah, here in South Orange at Temple Sharey Tefilo Israel. I'll give you all the facts, I know it sort of seems like it's a little too much. … She sang, and I guess, we had about a hundred people there, it wasn't one of these extravagant, you know, three hundred people, three hundred of your closest friends kind of thing. … We taped it, and she had the audience in the palm of her hand. It was just an amazing thing. She sang one of these Yiddish, kind of half-English, half-Yiddish songs that I guess were part of tradition back on the Lower East Side. … The languages merged, and then, she sang another kind of more Broadway-type of song, and you just watch the tape, you just go, "Man, she's like

unbelievable," and everybody's laughing, it was beautiful. Her brother passed away five or six years ago, and she said she's never going to be able to sing again. So, that was kind of sad. … That tradition continued, in fact, when we had a birthday party for my mom, when she turned eighty. My younger son and I, he has a really good voice, and I have a really crappy voice, but I am enthusiastic. So, we did a couple of songs, and Bess was there, and, you know, I kind of remember introducing her saying, you know, at family gatherings, … "Bess usually sings, but Bess has lost her accompanist, her brother Irv … who is irreplaceable. So, Tyler and I will try to continue the tradition, and do the best we could." So, we sang a couple of songs, karaoke machine helping us for the music, and it was kind of cool and Bess' niece, who was her brother Irv's daughter, was there at the party, and she was crying, tears were streaming down her face, [laughter] it was kind of cool.

SI: Was religion important to your family growing up?

KM: Oh, God. Well, I'm going to say no, and I'll explain [why]. … When we lived … in the South Ward, on Goldsmith Avenue, I was sent off to--like every kid in the neighborhood who was Jewish--to Hebrew school at Young Israel Synagogue on Weequahic Avenue in Newark. It was about a block away from the Beth Israel Hospital and we were sent to go. Every kid--well, maybe I'm exaggerating--but almost every kid hated it. My parents never went, they were like completely, or largely secular. I don't even think they went for the high holy days, you know, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, but we had to go. So, of course, when you're a kid, you pick up on this hypocrisy and … to make matters worse, this was an orthodox synagogue. So, this was really pretty strict or stringent, [in its] practices. So, I look back at it now, I just think about it, it was just horrible, and then, we have the Bar Mitzvah, when I'm thirteen, in which I and my partner would do the whole service, which we took as a sort of a challenge to do, not because we really understood it, or cared too much about it. Then, the rabbi there, this is going to get stricken from the record, but let's put it in for now, you know, was the meanest human being I can ever imagine, whose name was Rabbi Zev Segal, and he made everybody's life so miserable, mine in particular. … When I had kids of my own, I just did not want to put them through any experience like that, even though it … probably wouldn't have been like that, because he was gone, and he wasn't going to be able to inflict pain on anybody, but the feeling was so deep in me. [laughter] So, for years the kids didn't go to any, you know, synagogue, we didn't even join one. Then, at the very end, they were, I think … twelve and ten, you know, my older sons sort of said, "You know, I think I might like to go." … So, we kind of relented, but that would have been, you know, a good thirty years of, … pretty much close to zero organized religion for me. My wife didn't have quite as bad [of] an experience. … So, she was a little closer to it. ... [It was not as] bad for her.

SI: Did you have any interests while growing up? What did you do for fun and what activities you were involved in?

KM: … At Maple Avenue School, all we did was play baseball. … My grandfather and my father were both big Yankee fans, and we went to Yankee Stadium as soon as we were able to by ourselves, … in the seventh grade, I think. … You could travel from Newark to Yankee Stadium by yourself, with no fears or safety issue. … If you did that today with a twelve-year old kid, you should be arrested for child abuse or something, but then you could just do it, with zero

problem and we did it all the time. … I don't think, the Weequahic section was … famous for being this combination of things. I don't really romanticize it like a lot of people do, but it was sort of this intellectual enclave which a lot of … people like Philip Roth came from. … There was also a lot of kind of clannishness, and kind of backwardness, and fear, and prejudice and all kinds of crap that went on there. … I kind of … picked up on that pretty quickly. … My father's side of the family is somewhat intellectual--he wasn't particularly--but they were. My mother's … family, was a little more … working-class. … Not in like a factory worker sense, but in a sort of struggling to get by sense, and they all had good qualities about them. So, the combination in me, wound up to be a little of both, and I kind of had a bit of an intellectual streak, and I was a little curious about the world, and then, I had all the same what … I learned to call, "mother's fears," later. Don't make trouble, don't get in trouble, be good, don't stand out, that kind of stuff, and so, there was always a tension there between those kind of things. … So, I was pretty interested in, and pretty good in things in math and science. I was really pretty good in school, in a very competitive intellectual place, … which Weequahic High School was at the time. … I really wasn't into competition or challenge. I was pretty confident in my own ability to do pretty well there, and I had no notion much about what that meant in the outside world. … I was going to give you examples. I mean everything you could name would be, and I was pretty naïve too. … I remember going, when I was a freshman [to] Weequahic High School. I took Latin, I thought that was cool, Latin, what the hell do you take Latin for? You know, that was pretty good. I was really good at history. … Even earlier in school, the math side of things, they used to do a thing with flash cards. I don't know if you know what these things were? They would hold [up], you know, "eight times seven." You'd have to get the answer, and whoever got it first, you know, somebody would get eliminated, somebody would move on, it was a competition, and there was me and one other kid, who … [would] always be the winners, except it was almost always the other kid. This kid Ira Feinberg and Ira was like really, his father was a judge … and his brother was like this brilliant kid too, and he was the middle kid. So, he was, I guess he was the one they paid the least attention to, poor Ira, and so, he had to win, you know. This was like burning, and I think I beat him twice ever, and he was like sort of crying, and I wasn't happy that he was crying. … I was happy that I won and so he went to Rutgers too, Ira, and became a lawyer and his father was a judge for decades … in Essex County. So, Ira had sort of a sad, miserable life, I learned later on. … He should have let me win more, I guess, he would have been happier. … I had a lot of interests. … I wasn't narrow. … By the time I got to Rutgers, I sort of knew that, and it really was part of how my life turned out, was having this pretty wide variety, or base of things. I was kind of curious about, although limited in my ability to do much about it growing up in this somewhat enclave, tribal enclave of Newark, [laughter] that I was in.

SI: What was the highest education your parents achieved?

KM: … They were both high school graduates. They both went to the same high school in Manhattan, Seward Park High School. … My mother [told] me that she was not a very good student in high school, and I think my father was probably a pretty good student, but then I really learned much more about that. … So, I was the first person, you know, to go to college, and I'd say of any of my father's or mother's, you know, none of their brothers went to college. So, I was really the first person in the immediate family to go to college.

SI: Did they put any pressure on you to succeed in school?

KM: Yes, they were relatively demanding, but, on the other hand, my father in particular always used to say, you know, "Do something that made you happy more than anything else." So, I don't think he would have been upset with any decision I would have made. ... I think he was probably not all that happy with his job. He wasn't miserable … that I could tell, but, you know, I think that was probably on his mind a little bit, you know. The other thing he would say often was, you know, "It's a lot easier to work with your head than with your hands." So, you know, that was the motivation to go to school, obviously. So, they were encouraging about that … but I think more so, you know, on the side of doing something I liked to do.

SI: Were you involved in extracurricular activities, or did you only play baseball?

KM: Well, in high school, you know, only minimally, you know, I did a little of everything, but nothing with a passion. … I was in the senior play, you know, got some big laughs there, I had a pretty good sense of humor, and I made friends pretty quickly even after moving from one school to the other. I kept my old friends from Weequahic and I made a lot of new friends at Hillside, and I don't think I was too swift with girls, partly because … I was a full year younger. So, I didn't turn seventeen until … February of my senior year in high school. I didn't even have a driver's license, in other words, which was quite a problem if I tried to go out with a girl [laughter] and drive her someplace. I played soccer for a couple of years in Hillside. … I've been in a couple of clubs, but nothing stands out in my mind at all about it, but I was pretty social. I got around, and I had a lot [of] good friends, and Hillside had a really good basketball team. … We were [in] the finals, or the state championship, two years in a row. … My high school years, I'd say, were good; I wouldn't call them great, but, when looking back at them … wasn't really unhappy at all. I think my older son was very unhappy, … I never could figure it out, but, and now he's turned into … a real "with it" kid. I may never figure that out. I remember … deciding where to go to college. If this story sounds a little canned, because I sort of tell it a lot. … I was really good at math, science, great, really good at it, too. So, I took the SATs, I guess, as a junior, and I had, I don't know, seven something, you know, in math, and probably not [as] good in English, … 580 or something … as a junior. … So, the guidance counselor, of course, notices, you know, "Mandel had a 700 in math." So, then we meet with him, and he goes, "Hey, you're really good at math, science, and you should probably go to engineering school." "Oh, okay." … So, I just applied to Stevens Institute, and Rutgers has an engineering school, and Newark College of Engineering, as it was called at the time, you know. So, of course, I'm a senior in high school, so we apply, … but not to Stevens, because Stevens was too expensive. Now, you may know the accurate numbers, but if I recall the numbers then, Rutgers cost twelve hundred dollars a year to go to. Newark College of Engineering cost less because you'd commute to it, they had no dorms, so that was like five hundred, [laughter] and Stevens was probably about two thousand, or twenty-two hundred; it was a private school. My parents said, "I don't know if we're going to be able to afford to send you to Stevens." So, we didn't apply to Stevens. I applied to Rutgers and to NJIT [New Jersey Institute of Technology], or NCE [Newark College of Engineering]. Then, I [took] the SATs as a senior and, you know, I thought I didn't get one answer wrong in the math, and English I did a little better on, too. … It turned out I got like 783 or 772, or something, on the math, and 620 something on the English. So, now, you know, I [have] … to go to engineering school. So, I think I got accepted to Newark College of Engineering, I got accepted to Rutgers Engineering School, and my parents,

to their credit, you know, really encouraged me to go to Rutgers, to go away to school. … Rutgers had a program, I don't know if they still have it. You tell me if they still have it? They had a five-year engineering program, and the five year engineering program, you got … a BA and a BS, BS in engineering, and a bachelor of arts in liberal arts. It's a five year program, and it was a great program because it combined humanities with the engineering side. … At first, I was really interested in the other stuff, and second, you know, … it just seemed to fit … my thing. So, I took that program, there were other people, this kind of gets back to the Newark tribalism thing, you know, the kind of, trying to make it in America kind of thing, which was, you know, "What do you want to go for the extra year for, you get out there. … You get a job to make money. Isn't that what it's all about?" … That was never what it was about for me, I think. So, this five-year engineering program was not, was pretty rigorous because you had to take all the engineering courses, plus other stuff, so, including a foreign language, which scared a lot of people, because the engineers didn't have to take a language, no language requirement. But, this did … That didn't bother me too much, and so, that's what I wound up doing. So, I was a five year engineer, just like Ralph Zemmel [the President of the Rutgers Alumni Association] … which was when I met him. So, that's kind of how [I] wound up at Rutgers.

SI: In junior high and high school were you following what was happening in the world?

KM: Yes.

SI: What strikes me is that this was the high point in the Cold War. I was wondering if that affected you or if it was something that you thought about at all.

KM: Well, I mean I thought about it, I remember a few things about it. … That half year as a freshman at Weequahic High School was when the trial of Adolf Eichmann was taking place in Jerusalem, and … Weequahic was really predominantly Jewish, as opposed to Peshine Avenue, which is a lot more mixed. … I think there was one kid in our eighth grade class who wasn't Jewish out of, whatever, twenty-five, Skippy Clark and--nice kid--no black kids at all in Maple Avenue School. Weequahic, which combined, you know, sort of the previous neighborhood, and, you know, maybe it didn't. Anyway, Weequahic drew from a little larger area. … First of all, there were some black kids in school, maybe ten percent, maybe less even, but something small, and then some others, you know, mixed, Christians, mostly Catholic, I would imagine. … The trial of Eichmann … was a big deal, and so, yes, I remember learning the term *ex-post facto*, how can they try Eichmann *ex-post facto*, which meant the law that they were trying him under was made after the crime that he had done, was committed. So, the legal scholars thought this was a significant issue although I mean, I don't know. … The other side of the argument was you know, look, murder is always illegal, you know, just because Israel didn't exist, you know, doesn't mean that murder, you know, is okay to commit. … So, I remember that in particular, and then, that summer of--or maybe it was the summer of '61, yes, god--it would have been September of '60. Yes, okay, whatever I said earlier about 1960, I think it was '61. So, that summer of '61, I believe was the, you know, the Cuban Missile Crisis. [Editors note: Adolf Eichmann was a German Nazi in WWII and one of the major administrators of the Holocaust. After the conclusion of WWII, Eichmann escaped to Argentina, where he was later apprehended and sent to Israel to face criminal charges. He was executed in 1962.]

SI: October of 1962?

KM: Okay, but something was going on that summer. … When I was in summer school … there was something going on with Cuba, and there were a lot of threats going back and forth, and I remember this girl sitting next to me at summer school. She was like really upset about the nuclear war. … I told her, "No, it's going to be okay," and I told her whatever explanation I had for her. So, I was pretty aware of that at the time. The next things I recall going on [was] the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement. … We at Weequahic … kind of had this … faction that was really tuned in to that, a little less so at Hillside, but [we] had a very active kind of pro-Civil Rights movements, and Dr. King was starting to become a public figure and growing up on Peshine Avenue in Newark, and then at Weequahic there was this kind of duality about race relations. There were some people [who] were just racist, basically, Jewish racists, I guess. … Then, others were very pro, ardently pro-Civil Rights. So, there was always that going on. I don't remember any particular incidents that really happened, those are all pretty distant. Then, by moving to Hillside, where there were no black people at all, it was a totally white town. It was half Jewish, half Catholic--Polish and Italian Catholic--and there, they cared a lot less about all that stuff, because they didn't have to deal with it on a personal basis, most of them, but I was kind of interested in it a little bit. … This goes back even earlier; I remember traveling down to Newark with this kid from Weequahic. We might even be in eighth grade, to hear some Rutgers professor talk about, what the hell was he talking about, free speech, and some Civil Rights issue. So, I was a little bit into it. … This kid's parents were like communist party members or former communist party members. The father was a lawyer, and a very smart guy, and the mother was very smart too. I don't [think] she worked. … He had a sister who had gone off to the University of Wisconsin, and wore black leotards. … She was kind of like, a "beat" kind of person, she was sort of semi, a little exotic to us, but we were pretty young. So, we had no clue what it meant. … They were all into that. … Bottom line is I was interested in those kinds of, you know, semi, involved at least intellectually. Then, of course when we were in high school, you know, Kennedy is assassinated. So, this was huge. … [It] was the fall of my senior year, and he, you know, everyone remembers where they were. We were in gym, I think … outside and somebody said that, "The President was shot," and by the time we went inside they announced that he was dead. It was a Friday, … school was just about over at the time. So, we went home, and we pretty much watched TV the rest of the weekend as that all unfolded. … That, of course, just confused everybody, as to this day we don't really know who did it, why they did it, or how many people were involved in the whole, you know, but it sure shook people up quite a bit, including parents and adults. … They were just completely flummoxed about how it can happen, and why. … Then it was off to college, pretty much, I think.

SI: Had your family been supporters of Kennedy?

KM: Yes, they were. … This was a big Democratic neighborhood, it was a very traditional, you know, working-class neighborhood, a kind of Jewish liberal neighborhood, and I would … venture to guess, he probably got seventy-five percent or more of the vote in those areas. … We had an English teacher, [laughter] who was kind of an old lady at the time, she was probably younger than I am now, but, she seemed like really old. … She once gave us this rant in class about Franklin Roosevelt and how Roosevelt's election was the worst thing that ever happened to the United States. … We were all sitting there in the class going, "What the fuck is she talking

about, she's out of her mind," you know, because everybody's parents were Democrats, and Roosevelt was like a God to them. So, it was crazy [laughter] … They didn't do this very often, that's why it stood out. … They really didn't bring their own personal feelings or politics into this stuff very much.

SI: I would like to go back to the Eichmann trial for a minute.

KM: Yes.

SI: You talked about the neighborhood being mostly Jewish. Did it raise a lot of emotions in the neighborhood or spark any anger?

KM: You know, I have to say no, but I don't know for sure. I couldn't tell you. … I made a documentary about the trial of Eichmann, so I kind of … recall it more of an education for people that the Holocaust was not that much talked about. … A good friend of mine, his parents were survivors, and I knew them and … they were the kind of people that just wanted to turn the page on it, didn't want to talk about it at all. … What happened … later was that this really was an education for most of the world about the extent of the crimes that were committed back then, because it was the first real comprehensive public exposure of things, but I didn't know that at the time. … I don't think I followed it, you know, day by day.

SI: Were there any kinds of Holocaust education programs in your school?

KM: No, not that I can remember. Zero probably. I don't think that they were aware even if they had any relatives left over there. So, there was no personal loss there. I think my father may have mentioned … that they were largely unaware, which was true now historically. … A lot of people claim there was a lot of knowledge about things, and there was if you [were] looking for it, but it was relative to scale of everything that was going on in the world. … It wasn't jumping out the way, you know, the way everything else was. So, although, there was, you know, people trying to do things and expose things, and so on, in fact, it wasn't a whole hell of a lot that would have been done to change the way things, I mean, it was worth trying these things, but, you know, it wouldn't have fundamentally changed the outcome of what happened, [in] my opinion.

SI: What did it mean for you to grow up in post establishment Israel? Did Israel's existence mean anything you and your family?

KM: I don't recall it being a big part of our conversations, not in our family. … I'm drawing a little bit of a blank on it, because I don't remember even in the neighborhood or amongst friends … it being a big deal. … I'm sure, you know, we were aware of it. There was a certain pride in being Jewish. … Particularly moving to Hillside, where, as opposed to being Jewish, … you were like now, at least, you know, roughly fifty/fifty, and there was … a smidgen of anti-Semitism, but it … had nothing to do with Israel. It had just to do, you know, you are Jewish. … There are certain factions, I suppose [in] you know, the Catholic … Church, who were, you know, still [blaming] the Jews for killing Christ, kind of thing, lingering on. … Every once in a while there was like a fight between somebody, but it was always an individual thing. … People

would tell stories of that area being somewhat anti-Semitic before World War II, but it didn't affect us, hardly at all. … I think it … made people bound, people found [a lot] in common, you know, between Italian families and Jewish families. I guess, having big emphasis on family and food and things, there's more that they had in common then they had in differences. They were all struggling to move ahead economically, and they all wanted the same thing for their kids. So, I don't really think there was much, I could have been naïve too, but I don't think it was a dominant thing in those areas. …

SI: The only anti-Semitism that you noticed was in little confrontations?

KM: Yes, that's how I remember it. … It's not jumping out [at] me, so I think that had to be pretty much the case.

SI: Was Hillside more suburban than Newark?

KM: A little more than Newark. … It [had] more one-family houses … than Newark, the South Ward, did. … It was just like one notch, you know, different, and as people were moving out of Newark to West Orange and South Orange and Maplewood, and other suburbs, you know, … some of them were moving to Hillside [because of the] big factories. [The] big Bristol-Myers plant was there [and] a lot of smaller manufacturing plants. There [were] a lot of people working in those places, you know, and a lot of families with kids were the first kids to go to college. … [It] might [have] been a little less intellectual in the Weequahic section probably in that sense. … It was really not a whole lot different actually.

SI: Did you have any part-time jobs or summer jobs before you went to college?

KM: Yes, I worked for--let me get my years straight, now. I've been pretty bad on the years, so let me see if I can remember them.

SI: That is one of the things people go over when they get the transcript. Do not worry about that.

KM: I told you, I mentioned, I worked for Kresge's.

SI: Was that before you went to Rutgers?

KM: I think it was. It might have been the summer … after I graduated, before I went to Rutgers. So, I don't think I really worked at all in a major way while I was in high school. I really can't remember anything that I really did. I didn't go to camp either, [laughter] so I was hanging around. I don't remember if I did anything after my junior year of high school--what the hell did I do? Yes, I don't think I did anything. [At] the Kresge's job … I was working in the stock room. Oh wait, I did work like a little part-time [job]. I remember one Christmas; maybe it was … [the] last year of high school. I worked Christmas vacation at the store doing stuff. … I remember working some kind of thing where kids push buttons, through a program. … Then, I was doing some stockroom stuff in the back. I remember some guy coming in, it was like, they call him an executive, but I'm sure he probably made less than one hundred dollars a week, but

he came in and he goes, “You guys are doing a good job. You probably should work a little faster,” or something like that, and I remember snapping back at him, “For a dollar twenty-five an hour this is what you're getting," you know. He kind of looked at me, like a quizzical look on his face, and he chuckled, you know. So, that was about it, I think. I don't think I had any paper routes or did anything kind of cool as a job, yes.

SI: Had you ever had opportunities to travel outside of the Newark, New York area?

KM: No, zero. … It was like pathetic. We never went anywhere. … We went up to the Catskills as younger kids, but that was about as far as we went. We hardly went down [to] the shore. I don't think my parents liked it, so we didn't go down. We would go down in high school, you know, just with the guys, and kids, but, that was it. I don't even think I went to Pennsylvania or Connecticut that I can remember. … One time we went up to Massachusetts to visit some relatives. They had moved up to Worchester, Massachusetts. That was like one, you know, one little trip. Never left the country, never went to Europe, you know, or Hawaii or Puerto Rico. I like to kid my mother, … "We never went anywhere mom, we're too poor right?” and she gets mildly irritated with me about it, but she understands I'm just kidding. … In fact, my other line is that, until I got to Rutgers and ate at the Commons, I didn't know that there were, you know, spices, besides salt and pepper, you know, because she cooked … was a horrible cook. … That was my awakening to things like garlic or, you know, … cinnamon, or things. [laughter] It was just her. … So, that was another awakening.

SI: Going back to what we were talking about earlier, was the food you ate mostly Americanized or was it "traditional?"

KM: I think it was traditional. … It wasn't particularly, crazy traditional, you know. She did make things like, and I think my grandmother made a few things like, you know, chopped liver, and something called gefilte fish which was … ground up fish. They made … a little bit of that stuff, but mostly what we ate was probably regular old food. My mother still makes brisket, you know, kind of traditionally. … [This] leads me into … the holidays. I can't remember great moments at any of them, bad or good, to tell you the truth. I know we had them. [I remember] getting … "schlepped" as kids to some relative's house. … I don't remember anybody like getting into a big fight or anything real joyousness at any of them. They just kind of came and went. Yes, but I probably have to think a little more about them tomorrow, if I remember anything. I do remember grandparents, you know, uncles and aunts being there in the house. Our house in Hillside had this configuration, which we could kind of, like make a circle through the living room and dining room, like hallway and kitchen. So, you could kind of go around them. … I vaguely remember my grandfather and I marching around the circle … to some music or something. … A couple of laps of that, my mother [would] get kind of irritated with us, [she would yell] at us to stop, which we wouldn't stop until she really yelled a second time. … There was one memory. They got this stereo set, this like console kind of thing that sort of looked a little like that cabinet, but with a record player in it. This was a big acquisition at the time, and then, they had to buy records to play on it. So, they bought a lot of this "kitschy" kind of, sort of Americanized, like Jewish music, kind of like the Barry Sisters, and some of these kind of Americanized cantors like Jan Peerce. They had some of that, and then they had a lot of Broadway stuff that they would get. … I remember, I bought them a Sinatra record, probably

cost about two or three dollars--from one of my summer jobs, I had some money. … They had a few of those. … I have a few of them still left, I kept, but I don't have a turntable to play them on. [laughter] It broke and I haven't replaced it.

SI: Were you exposed to the arts and music during your youth? Did you play an instrument?

KM: Yes, I did play … up until I was a freshman. … Then, when I moved to Hillside, I played the French horn. So, I played at the Weequahic graduation, whatever the hell year that was, '61, June '61. Then I stopped playing after I moved to Hillside. I think I thought it was a little too nerdy, which was probably a mistake on my part. … My parents [didn't] play music, so they kind of just … listened to stuff, no classical music at all. I don't think we ever went to a museum as a kid; I never went to one, except once to the Newark Museum for some program. It wasn't … an art thing though. It was a little bit of a cultural waste land around our house, I think, in that way, at least, just high culture, you know, middle-brow, maybe a little bit. We had a few magazines come in. … There are plenty of books around, but nothing, you know, it wasn't classical literature, it was more popular stuff. … I think I was allowed to subscribe to the Book-of-the-Month club. So, this is distinctly middle-brow, I think it would be defined nowadays by the scholars. So, I remember getting *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which came out, and then, also a book about the Lindberg kidnapping, which was a big, thick, nonfiction book, and, oh, God, probably a bunch of others. So, there's some culture for you. … So, that was about it, I think though, for our exposure. They were not discouraging, but, you know, I don't think any of my friends did much of that either. The friends of mine that did have parents that were a little more into it, you know, kind of never really pushed it on you. I don't recall going any place with any of them to do it. It's interesting then that, like even people … a little richer, were only a little richer, you know, and there never was this feeling that there was this big divide between people and as kids, it doesn't quite make that impression on you. Anyway, … I don't think there was anything remotely like support of the arts. … There was this one kid, the kid whose parents were the communists, … they actually were into classical music, because I remember being at his house, they'd be listening to stuff, and I didn't know anything at all about it. … I was playing a little bit of it in the band, or the orchestra, you know, so I had a tad of exposure to it, and they were members of the Y, the YMHA on Chancellor Avenue in Newark, but mostly for like the athletic stuff. … They'd have some pretty major artists come in to play, and I remember going with Larry Konigsberg … to some concert there, [I] was probably in the eighth grade. … Somebody who was like a real big shot, who became even more famous, … Michael Tree. [He] was from the neighborhood, and then, either he was playing with at the time, or became part of the Julliard Quartet, which was a real big major quartet. … He was from Newark, … moved to Maplewood. … I think he was the violinist. So, he was like some, you know, high-level guy. We went to see him, but I'm telling you it was pretty thin culturally. Even the film sort of things, which you know, [I] eventually went into. … There was really not a whole lot of stuff, little bit. School was pretty good, it was exposing you to that, you know. I was taken; I remember seeing some French film, some Moliere film. It was in French, because--was I taking French? I don't know, I went to it, I can't remember if I was taking French or not, probably no in Weequahic. So, Weequahic had a pretty big cultural life, it seemed Hillside, less so, I remember.

SI: Was going to the movies something you enjoyed?

KM: Yes, we went a fair amount, again less so in Hillside. Where did we go? Yes, we went a little bit. I went more at Rutgers--the films--than in high school. I got more into it then, a lot more into it.

SI: Let us start talking about Rutgers.

KM: Oh, finally. Jesus to God, Shaun. [laughter] …

SI: What were your first few days and weeks like on campus?

KM: It was great. I remember it was just great to get out of Hillside, and down to New Brunswick. … I remember my parents moved me into Hegeman Hall, third floor. … My cousin Joel would also come down, and he was also in the Quad at, I forget, Pell, maybe, I think, at the other end, and we had decided we weren't going to be roommates even though we knew we were coming down together. So, we got down there, I remember … saying goodbye to my parents, I like, just dash off, and my mother keeps complaining to this day, how that first day I just left them standing there. [laughter] … That was it, and then getting into the dorm, and like all of a sudden, there was this whole new like crew of people that were all from … different places. Even … being from New Jersey, I hadn't heard of them. There was a kid from Maryland, a kid from Ohio, yes, this was all like just like a new world. We all just really … got together, and had a really close group of kids there as freshmen. I think they all maybe similarly were just getting away from home for the first time, or just really excited about it. I remember just going to … some dance at the Ledge. [Editor's Note: The Ledge, located on George Street, was the social hub of Rutgers College, where concerts, gatherings and events were held. The building currently houses the Student Activities Center.] … They had a freshman orientation program at the time, that you were supposed to have read these books, and then, they had a bunch of speakers come in the old Rutgers gym, at "The Barn." … They had the, I think the president or chairman of US Steel come, and there was a big lecture. Roger Blough I think was his name, it was US Steel. … We trekked across town to Douglass, you know. … So, I was going on there. … It was … real exciting. … They had some event where … the Rutgers cheerleaders, all men cheerleaders met, and my cousin, I can't even remember this kid's name, but Bill something was the captain of the cheerleaders, and he was like this blond-haired kid, you know. Growing up in Newark you never even see someone with blond hair, it was like, this was a blond-haired, kind of cheery kid, who was captain of the cheerleaders. … We learned all the Rutgers songs, the whole bit, and it was kind of fun. I think that event took place in Demarest, in the big lounge in Demarest. You know, Commons, walk into Commons, walking into the Ledge which was very different. [The] Ledge was the student center, and … all it had was the snack--I don't know if it's still there--the snack bar when you came in to the left, and then, when you went down the stairs, it was like a big room which they used like a big multi-purpose room. They had dances and other stuff … there. So, it was a whole new world opening [up] to me. It was kind of cool, a lot of fun. … I kind of recall a preoccupation at the time was to try to acquire alcohol. … So, we were, well, I was seventeen, I couldn't even drink legally in New York, the age was eighteen at the time, but we wound up doing this, I don't know who figured this out, but someone decided that instead of trying to buy beer illegally in New Jersey, we'd go buy [it] legally in New York. So we would designate two people to take two suitcases with them, … go and take the bus into New York, you know, buy as much beer as they could fit into these two suitcases, and

come back into New Jersey on the bus, and it worked really well, this system, for a long time and so, I guess they weren't doing anything illegal except drinking it here. So, that was our system to get alcohol into the dorms. Who was our preceptor at the time? It was this guy Bill Barr, yes, Bill Barr. He was this ROTC, very uptight guy, who was a little too strict for our taste, but I don't think he ever busted anybody for doing anything, you know, bad, because [there] was only one thing that was done in the dorm that was really bad, which I'll get to--but mostly he was sort of okay. I think he became the captain of the, whatever, the cadets, whatever the highest post you could become, but I think he was a junior when we were there, and I think he became that afterwards. So, he was always around a little too much. Let's see, … one of the guys who was in our dorm, was a kid named Tommy Hasson from Maryland. He was a lacrosse player, he was a goalie, and he [previously had] gone to some prep school. So, that became a running thing we teased mercilessly for being a preppie and, you know. He, of course, thought we were like these peasants from some public school in Newark, New Jersey. … He wound up pledging Chi Psi, which at that point was known for not allowing any blacks or Jews in it. … He would invite us over because we were his buddies. So, we got a lot of looks from his WASP-y fraternity brothers, but he always, to his credit, he always stuck up for us, and Tommy had a friend who had gone to high school with him, who was a sophomore. His name is Skip Flannigan and Skip was also a member of Chi Psi. … So, Skip was a year older than us, and he was a sophomore and, yes, he would have been a sophomore, and he was on the football team. So, this was very cool that we knew this guy on the football team, and he, I'll jump ahead just like a year. So, next year Skip Flannigan was a starter … at the Rutgers-Princeton game, the first game of the year, it would have been September '65, could be 1966. Skip Flannigan is back to receive the kickoff, and I'm pretty sure the kicker that year was Charlie Gogolak, I think, who became a really top pro kicker. He was a soccer style kicker, which was still unusual at the time, and he kicks the ball and it's a short kick, and it kind of lands sort of toward the sideline at about the twenty or twenty-five yard line, and Skip Flannigan instead of going to the ball and, you know, downing it, or touching it, or falling on it, just lets it bounce because he thinks it's like a punt, instead of a kickoff. Except it's a live ball, it's like an onside kick. … Princeton recovers the ball on the Rutgers twenty-five yard line, and, of course, goes in to score, you know, and Rutgers loses the game. Rutgers … had a pretty good team there, used to get whooped by Princeton most of the time back [in the] preceding years. So, of course, Skip Flannigan never plays another down for Rutgers [laughter] because John Bateman who was the coach, he couldn't figure out what the hell, he has had a mind freeze, you know. Poor Skip to this day, we never really found out what the hell was going through his mind. He never played again for John Bateman, but anyway Tommy joined that fraternity, then Tommy and I became roommates, because we did a roommate switch on our floor, you know, a few people just wanted to be together, so, and Tommy and I weren't super good friends, but we became pretty good friends because he moved into my room, which was an unlikely pair, but he was a good kid. He had a really gorgeous girlfriend [who] was still in high school, and a couple of times she brought up her friends to like be our dates for something, I forget what the hell the occasions were. … This was like, you know, oil and water, like these little blonde, preppy girls from Maryland, and these, sort of, Jewish kids from Newark. … [laughter] Like talking different languages, you know, they just couldn't see, so that didn't go anywhere. …

SI: You mentioned a picture of you in a dink by the Ledge. Was that a picture of an actual freshman initiation?

KM: No, the *Home News* was doing a story about, you know, new class of Rutgers comes down was coming into town, and we just happened to be there when he came, and took the picture. They published the picture, and I tried to get this for you, because … my cousin is supposed to email me … it, and he hasn't just yet. … Anyway, he's got it, and it's kind of a nice picture, Joel standing there, and Tom Hasson is in it, and my cousin Joel, and a couple of others, I'm not sure who else.

SI: Did you have to wear the dink for a certain amount of time?

KM: I think we wore it for about a week or so. I actually found it, that dink. … It's in my living room now. I kind of rescued it from some box that my mother kept, God bless her, for all these years, and it was in there. It doesn't fit though, I don't know what happened to it.

SI: Were there any other things freshmen had to do when they first came?

KM: Well, you know, we did do … this summer program stuff, we went to these lectures. … They had a fairly good orientation. … It wasn't a lot of rigid stuff; there wasn't any hazing of any sort like that. … I don't think it was any, no, nothing else that we really had to do. Then classes started pretty much right away. So they … got right to it. You bought the books, you know, that was a whole new thing, you know. You found your way around campus. … I was in the engineering school, and the engineering building was up, you know.

SI: At Busch?

KM: … We didn't call it Busch. We called it the Heights, University Heights. … The engineering building was relatively new. It was probably … four years old at the time. There was nothing around it. If you go up on that road now, you [will] see it up on the hill, now it's sort of surrounded by other buildings. I still went when I was down there, I tried to orient myself, and I couldn't figure out where the hell I was, or which way I was facing. It was kind of disconcerting looking back, [laughter] but anyway, the building is still there, I mean, it's the same building. So, we went up there for some classes, I think, now let me just, because the freshman, let's see, chemistry and calc and physics, okay. Physics was in the physics building up there, that I remember, chemistry was not, chemistry was down in one of the other halls, but calculus, where the hell was calculus? I think it was just for physics when I went up there. Nobody had cars as freshmen, so you had to take the bus. Anyway, yes, it was a different campus.

SI: Did you have to enroll into this five year program immediately?

KM: Yes, I did it before, so I was in. So, I had five courses as a freshman. I had chemistry, calculus and physics. I had English and I had French, I believe. So, I had five courses plus gym. You had gym then.

SI: Was gym mandatory?

KM: Yes.

SI: What about ROTC, was that mandatory?

KM: No, it was not mandatory. … It never entered my mind to do it either, and this was … September '64, is still way before, or at least a good year and a half before the Vietnam War became kind of an issue in people's minds. It was going on obviously, in terms of the early years of it, but it wasn't anything that was … raised to the level of protest or anything. So, it wasn't an issue. In other words I didn't join … ROTC because I was opposed to the Vietnam War or something at that time. It was a whole different thing. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: How did you adapt to the classes?

KM: I did pretty well. … The kids were a lot smarter than, you know, the high school classes that I was in, but I thought I was holding my own pretty well. I was pretty confident in all the science courses and I was pretty good. … What happened was, lets see, … like two traumatic things, [laughter] I call them traumatic, not traumatic so much as the kind of things that impacted me a bit for the rest of my academic career. One was … in chemistry. We had this professor who was like … the rabbi [laughter] that I had … hated. He was like just a mean son of a bitch. I got sick with something [that] I had to go to the infirmary for, and I missed something, and then, I came back and the bottom line [was] that I missed some lab that we were taking, and the bottom line of this whole story is I wound up having an average of seventy-nine point five and mostly because I missed this lab for which I either got a zero, or something really poor because I was sick. So, chemistry was a very hard course and … it was four credits. … It's the end of the semester, I get my grade back, [and] it's a "C." … I go to him, and I sort of said, "Gee, you know, seventy-nine point five" you know, and he goes, "Yes." I said, "Well, you know, here's what happened" and I just explained it. I wasn't really that aggressive about this stuff, you know, I was really a little bit shy about it, but I felt I had earned, you know, something better than that. … He was completely unmoved. … "Seventy-nine point five, it's not eighty. It's a 'C,' you know." … I can't remember the way they calculated it. I had like, you know, eighty-two on the exams, and whatever else that brought it down, or eighty-one on the exams and seventy-eight on the lab, I forget, whatever. They had calculated it down to that, and I was just really … pissed. … They also graded, you know, most of the professors, you know, … only ten percent of the kids got, you know, eighty or above, and I had really earned it. So, I was pissed at him about that. … That was one thing, because I had worked pretty hard and I thought I deserved it. Second was English, [laughter] first English exam. This was during the semester, and I remember the whole story, and I'm from Newark, right, and Hillside. I have no exposure to any of this outside world culture. The first exam was about a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins. Gerard Manley Hopkins is known for his religious, specifically, Catholic poetry, imagery. He's big in Catholic literary circles, I later learned. So, here's the poem, it's got questions about, "Explain the imagery of the stigmata and the cross," and I'm going, "What the fuck is he talking about?" [laughter] I have no idea, I have tears coming down. I have no idea like what any of this stuff means, right? So, of course, you know, … I got, I don't know, a "3" or something, "C" on this exam and I, you know, and I'm saying, "If this is the way it's going to be man, I have no

hope [laughter] of answering any of this stuff right." To this day, … I remember that first test and going, "Oh, man, this is like reading Chinese or something here." They're asking me questions like that, and all of us came out of there, you know. … So, we, of course, attributed it to anti-Semitism or something, you know. So, those are the two highlights of my first semester academically as a freshman. So, I wound up with, for engineering a GPA of a "2.5," I recall, because I got, calculus for engineers was five credits. So, I got a "C" in that. … No, I got a "B" in that. … I had no "As." I got a "B" in physics, I got a "C" in English, and maybe I'm wrong, I don't know, maybe, this doesn't sound like it's adding up, but, and a "C" in chemistry. Anyway, so I was a little disappointed in it, but I also said, "Look, if this is … the way it's going to be, I'm just going to do, you know, the best I can do, and not, you know, worry about it so much. … That's the way I kind of went through and I basically enjoyed it, you know, I really didn't sweat it. Today, you know, kids are way more, you know, the two things I hear about are grade inflation and really fighting to get, you know, high grades and to me … it sort of changed my course of things. I think I must just have … [took] my father's advice and sort of doing that, try doing things I liked to do. So, I don't know what I could have done to change it all, but I kind of worked about the same level as I did … throughout all my, except for that last year which I will get to. That was a change.

SI: What led you to get into industrial engineering as opposed to something else?

KM: Yes, you know, I'm not a hundred percent sure I can remember why. … I think to put it in the worst light was I thought it might be the easiest of the, I knew I didn't like the electrical engineering stuff at all, I kind [of] was a little bit interested in civil engineering, and mechanical engineering was not my thing. I just never really like, was into, you know, all of that stuff so this seemed pretty interesting to me, and I kind of liked that again. It was a little bit like the five year program. The industrial engineering program at the time was, you learned a little bit about all the engineering disciplines. … I thought it might just be a little more interesting, … but it wasn't a major positive kind of direction that I had decided on. It just kind of became maybe by elimination, maybe.

SI: Aside from the two negative examples, do any of your other professors stick out in your memory?

KM: I don't know if the English professor was being negative, but he was certainly, it just didn't fit. It was a cultural miss [laughter] you know, we were just not on the same page or wavelength. Well, you know, the other professor, there are a few professors I do remember from time to time. The guy who headed the industrial engineering program was a guy named Al Kuebler, and he had started the program. … It wasn't even its own department, it was part of the mechanical and aerospace … [department.] He was a veteran of industry. He was a real down to earth, pragmatic guy, and I really liked him. I really did well in his classes, and, you know, he just was … a solid guy, and he just kind of always, … was there enough for you, but he didn't push you. [He] couldn't quite understand, you know, the kids as their hair started to get longer and, you know, things started happening. … He really, kind of, probably, he kept me going as an engineer, probably long after I probably didn't want to be it anymore. Then, there are two professors there, you may even have one of them, who were, I kind of remember. So, I wound up taking a lot of philosophy courses as kind of my liberal arts stuff. I don't know exactly why I

did, but there was a professor named Amelie Rorty and I took a Plato course with her, and she was … one of these really smart ladies. Was it at Douglass? It might even been at Douglass at the time, and then, there was a course in classics I took with Palmer Bovie. Palmer Bovie was a really … intellectual kind of guy, like blue-blood kind of guy, he was just smart as a whip, and it was just like great. It was just like being at a night club listening to him … lecture, you know. All you needed was a drink in [your] hand, you know, a cigarette, you know. It was like a really good professor. … The other course I did, where I actually made a little bit of a mark was, and I learned he was still there, at least up to a few years ago, his name was Richard Hefner. … Richard Hefner taught a course called "Mass Communications and the American Image," and Hefner was, I think, had just started his TV show, and sort of was connected to all the, you know, TV networks and stuff. I'm sort of thinking this is 1967 when I took the course with him, and he liked to have engineers in the course although he was a little bit distant in a way. … You had to get into the course I think, and he said, "Well, I think it would be good to have you guys in there, a little different, you think a little bit different." … So, anyway, September of '67, I had just come back from one of the first big Vietnam War protests down in Washington. [I came] back, and it's the first lecture after that, and the *New York Times* and I think the TV networks barely covered this Vietnam War protest, and there were probably, I don't know 400,000, 500,000, a lot of people. … I raised my hand and I said, … "You know, the network news or the *Times* didn't really cover this event at all," I said, "You name me another event [where] 400,000 people, 500,000 people showed up, that they didn't think this was major news," and he gives this real defensive canned, "Well, I'm sure they evaluate this editorially," you know, so I did like this [motion] to him, I waved my hand at him, and he gets a little pissed at me. Well, a couple of days later, now its Thursday, I guess maybe it was Monday or Thursday or whenever the lecture was. He comes back in he goes, "To whoever it was who, you know, said that about," he goes, "I have to apologize, because I've thought about it and I looked at it, and you were right about [it]. … I think that this was a mistake on their part of not covering it. Perhaps it was influenced by political considerations, i.e. the President said or the administration said, you know, 'Please play this down because it would be bad for, you know, the nation.'" That was my one thing with Richard Hefner. That was my, you know, 'the star of the class.' So, the only other interesting interaction with a professor I had, there were two. We were talking about my last year, oh, no, next to last year in a lecture, in April of 1968, I was taking a civil engineering course with a professor named Donald Butler, who was a professor of civil engineering and it was typical. … There were twenty-six, I think, of us who were industrial engineers, we took all the engineering classes together. So, we got to know these guys really well, one of whom was Ralph. … We have a civil engineering exam, it wasn't the final, but it was just an exam in April planned, and you know, we were all studying pretty hard for it I recall, and … the day before or two days before, probably the day before was … [when] Martin Luther King was assassinated, and we get to the class, and he goes, "Look, we're not going to have the exam today, it's just not what we should be doing today." Well, I'd say twenty-four of the twenty-six kids in the class were pissed because they studied, they wanted to take the exam, and me and this other kid, you know, [we] thought he had made the right call, so they're grumbling [grumbling noises] and everybody leaves and I go up to talk to him afterwards and I told him … I thought he did the right thing and these kids, "These guys are a bunch of assholes." I'll have to ask Ralph what he thought about it, I don't remember what his reaction was, [laughter] you know, and I can't tell you how appreciative he was. He got this look on his face, you know, and he sort of said why he did it again and repeated it. … It was really, like a really good moment, and he really kind of felt that,

you know, very strongly about it, because it was a big deal, … and we had the exam the next class, I think probably early next week. So, I think you probably could remember what you had studied. So, that was one of them, then the next year, the other professor, I can't remember, God, oh, God, I can't remember his name. … I don't even remember the course, God, I think [it] might have been operations research, but … we're having an exam, and I'm going to say it's the beginning of my last semester. This [was] my fifth year, so I'm really staggering to the finish line, I just don't want to be there anymore, I don't want to be in school anymore. Most of my friends were gone, you know, plus, of course, the real reason was I had this girlfriend who I had just broken up with and I was really bummed about it, and so, we have the exam, and I go in to the professor and I said to him, [laughter] "I can't take the exam, I'm just like not, I'm just like a wreck" and he goes, "What do you mean?" … I try to say something to him, and he [laughter] goes, "You have to tell me, you know, tell me what's going on" and I tell him, "Well, I just broke up with my girlfriend and I'm really depressed" and he gets this big smile on his face, and he goes, "Oh really, oh look, it's okay, don't worry take it next week." [laughter] I say, "Really?" He goes, "No, I understand, you know. You're a kid, you know, don't worry about it." So, he let me take the exam next week. I did fine on it, I couldn't believe how understanding the guy was, I figure he [was] going to be a tight ass like Professor (Herter?) was when I was a freshman you know, I would have said, you know, 'Fuck it, I don't give a shit, you know, fail me," you know, but he had the complete opposite attitude. He said, "Don't worry about it, its fine." So, those are the professors as far as I can remember.

SI: It seems like you were at Rutgers when the school went from being about football and fraternities to being more politically aware. You mentioned your friends going into the fraternity, did you ever consider joining one?

KM: … I thought about it very briefly, but … it wasn't for me. I don't know it just seemed like a little too; I remember … talking to my parents about it and their concern was, "Oh, it's going to cost you money," you know. I said, "Well, yes, but you know, it's not going to be that much money and then they said, "No" and then I said, "I just don't really care enough about it, you know." It didn't seem like it was that big a deal to me. I think you had to wait 'til your second semester to do it if I recall, and by that time I was already kind of into to a rhythm and I didn't think about it too much. … My cousin did not join a fraternity, Jim Weston didn't; I think most of the kids didn't. … So, it didn't seem like a big deal.

SI: Was there a division between fraternity men and non-fraternity men?

KM: Well, not that I saw, you know, if I would go to Tommy's fraternity or another kid, friend of mine who joined, if I wanted to go once in a while we would go to their parties. It … wasn't on my scope. … I wasn't like disappointed, I wasn't rejected by anybody or any of that stuff. I think it was a time when they were sort of waning a little bit in their influence in the social scene, and then, they really … sort of faded down. They … took the traditional ones, you know, where, you know, like a lot of the athletes would join, that kind of stuff. … I don't know what the numbers are, but I would say less than half the kids joined a fraternity, maybe even far less. … I don't know you might know that, you know, it wasn't a big deal.

SI: Did you get involved in extracurricular activities or clubs?

KM: I want to say no. … I do have to tell you one incident, that was sort of back to the dorm thing. There was a big pep rally before the first Princeton game, we were freshmen. … People would build floats. The Quad built a float, and so on and so forth. … We kind of hung out there. We'd help them a little on that, and then, the floats did this march sort of up College Avenue and then made a turn on some street and went up, was it Union Street where the fraternities were, and everybody kind of came out it was a big deal. … This was the Rutgers-Princeton game and the signs were sort of like, you know, "Tie the Tiger's Tail" or "Put the Tiger in Your Tank" and like "Tony the Tiger was all tied up," and there was all this kind of, what we thought were … pretty lame kinds of things. So, [laughter] my cousin Joel and I came up with a … sign that we held up, I think it was like basically two oak tag boards together. The star for Princeton at the time was an All-American football player named Cosmo Iacavazzi, who I think was a senior that year, and he was an All-American. … On one side, we had a sign that said "Cosmo, You Suck" in really big letters, and we flipped the sign over, it said "Fuck Princeton." So, this like violated like genteel Rutgers, pseudo-Ivy League pretensions, you know, completely. So, we're [laughter] marching down, and people are going crazy. Some people love it, other people are screaming at us, like crazy and it was like we were sort of a big hit that night and I don't think we got reprimanded at all. So, that was kind of a fun, everybody thought we were a little outrageous, which we tried to be. The other bad incident, I should fess up about, was in the dorm, there was this kid, a sort of a nerdy kid that a lot of people picked on, not me. He was from the Canal Zone. … His father [was] in the military I think, and he was a very sort of studious type and kind of didn't really get along with too many people. … So, at some point during that year, I … think it was second semester, the kids [were] teasing him, and there was a phone booth in Hegeman Hall, but it was really like a closet, it was like a regular door … like a closet door, and they had installed a … pay phone. He went into the phone booth, and the kids decided they were going to lock him in the phone booth, a couple of the guys, and they were on his floor, he was on the first floor in the dorm, and I was on the third. So, you couldn't lock it like with a key or anything, but they put like a door stop in there, and it opened out so, you couldn't open it. So, he started getting mad, and then, one of the kids like an idiot … took like some … lighter fluid and like lit it on the floor … to scare him and then, like for maybe five seconds, it seemed like a long time, and he starts banging and screaming on the door, and then, they pull the door stop out and let him out. … It could have been like a disaster, and they could not have been able to get the door stop out, and I was there, I sort of like witnessed this thing. So, of course, everybody gets called into the dean's office, and the dean was Howard Crosby and Howard Crosby like interviews everybody individually and gets their story on what they did, and what they didn't do. … Nobody got thrown out of school, I don't think, fortunately for them, but a couple of kids got some kind of probation, and I got a letter of reprimand from Howard Crosby and I don't know what the terms of the probation kids were, I can't remember anymore, there were probably four of them, maybe five, and I think I got the lightest I think because they all probably agreed that I didn't really participate in it, other than not stopping it. … So, nothing happens the next semester, or the rest of the semester, and I was supposed to go and see Howard Crosby in September when I got back for my sophomore year and presumably, the letter would be expunged from my record or something. So, I walk into Crosby's office in September my sophomore year, and he goes, "Good to see you Ken, how was your summer?" and I tell him, you know, what I did for summer, and he goes "That's great," and then, you know, he goes, ... "What's going on this year?" and I tell him that, "I think I chose industrial engineering and, you

know, I'm living in Ford Hall" you know, and he didn't even mention the letter, he just took it, ripped it up, … like physically. I saw him rip it up, and that was the end of it, you know. He was like a real old school kind of, you know, dean, really kind of cared about the kids, knew you were kids, knew … you fuck up a little bit. … That was … freshman year. Anyway, so, I never really did participate in any extracurricular activities at all, I don't think, until if you want to call it anti-war activity, extracurricular activity, but … even that didn't begin until … the end of my sophomore year. I was living in Ford Hall, and there was the famous, I think it became a famous Rutgers teach-in on the Vietnam War, which Eugene Genovese famously said, you know, "Not only do I not fear a Vietcong or North Vietnamese victory, I welcome it," and Warren Susman and my good buddy Lloyd Gardner spoke at it as well. I think it was held in Scott Hall and I think Susman famously broke his watch pounding on the podium, and this set off … this reaction in New Jersey where the famous--I'm saying these things are famous, maybe completely unfamous--"Rid Rutgers of Reds Campaign" started with the state legislators started threatening to cut money to Rutgers. … Some people marched on campus, I remember they marched right down by Ford and Scott Hall, like … fifteen or twenty people protesting, and like about three people watching [laughter] and one of them was probably me standing outside of Ford Hall going, "What's going on, this is pretty, I wonder what that's all about." [laughter] … It became somewhat [of] a big deal, and then, of course, this became a free speech versus, and academic freedom versus, whatever. … I think that probably was the spring of '66 maybe, and then, by the next year, I think it really … started to, you know, escalate. [Editor's Note: Mr. Mandel is referring to the 1965 teach-in where historian Eugene Genovese took a pro-Vietcong stance, which led to criticism from New Jersey politicians. The Rutgers administration defended Genovese for exercising his academic freedom. Genovese later taught at Sir George Williams University in Montreal between 1967 and 1969 before moving on to other universities.]

SI: Were you at the Genovese sit-in?

KM: No, you know, I didn't even go to it. … I wasn't really involved in that way. I was still trying to be an engineer; I think I was playing a lot of bridge that year, [laughter] … that and trying to meet girls [with] somewhat moderate success, I'd say.

SI: Was there a lot of interaction between the Douglass campus and Rutgers?

KM: Well, yes, … that was the thing, you know. So, you would just hop on the bus, or if had a car, you'd hop over. Sophomore year, then we could have cars. I don't think I had one yet, but, yes, so there was plenty of [interaction], and … you could figure out after your first year, you'd have to take courses over there too. So, that became a way to do it, but, I actually enjoyed that situation. … I don't think I know anybody [that] agrees with me. I'll be interested to know if you have anybody. … I, like, enjoyed that, being at an all men's school, because you could get up in the morning, you wouldn't have to look [good] be grungy as you want to be, and go to some morning class, at eight o'clock in the morning. [laughter] You don't have to, like, look like you had to impress anybody or anything, and have to worry about having any women around. You just kind of be yourself, and … then deal with it later, after classes were over. … I'm sure it's, not like … all the girls are getting all dressed up. … I don't know what the hell they do. So, I found that quite relaxing for me to not have to think about that. There were no women engineers, zero. Later on there was one, an ugly girl--take that out there. [laughter] … So, now

we're at least two years [into college], and the third year, I moved to an apartment off-campus with my cousin, Joel, and there were two French girls who lived upstairs from us in this apartment building. They were teachers at Douglass, but they were … more like, graduate students that just graduated from college. So, this was a very exotic fantasy life that I had there, think about the French girls, who thought of me like their, sort of, little brother, as opposed to, you know, remotely their sexual partner, but it's fun to think about it. [laughter] I tried to look them up on the internet, like, the last few years and had no success finding either of them; but they were just the cutest things I ever saw; and then, of course, you know, the Vietnam War protest stuff started to break out really significantly. …

SI: What made you want to get involved in the anti-war movement?

KM: … I remember, like, having, like, a lot of conversations about this because … initially, you know, it wasn't the thing to do. … The more you read about it, the more you thought about it, just made no sense. … Finally, a guy really put it succinctly, who I knew, he said, "Ken, why the hell are we bombing the hell out of this little country. They're no threat to us at all." … I sort of said, "You know, you're right, you know. … Something's going wrong some place." … It didn't affect me that first year. It wasn't really … something I thought about. … The draft, you know, it was clearly a factor … but I had really become somebody who was … just opposed to it more than somebody who was; … I'll put it the cruelest way I can, you know, found it inconvenient for my career plans, to have to go into the military. I was not, and I know a lot of people like that, but that was not me, I really was opposed to it very deeply; and it grew, because the more you learn, the more you saw how misguided it really was. … It'll probably be an enduring debate, but I don't think I've changed my opinion about it, in terms of a mistake. … I more of less, worked in the area of American history--American foreign policy, a little bit of my documentary work--and it's clear that this was, you know, a blunder that … could have been avoided, and should have been avoided, and it was a huge waste of American lives, resources, pretty sad period. … I think I was pretty idealistic about it in that way, thought that our country could do better. At one point, my father, I can't get my years straight now, but I went down to something in the, I think it was this fall of '67, which would have been the beginning of my fourth year, and my father, who was a member of Jewish War Veterans, and I told you, you know his history, you know. I came back and I told him about some protest that had gone on there, it might have been the Pentagon raising, and he says to me, "Kenny are you a communist?" … I was shocked, and I said, "No, you know, I don't even think, you know, I don't know what it means to be a communist." [Editor's Note: Mr. Mandel is referring to anti-war protests in October 1967 in Washington DC.] I was not a member of an organization, except the student ones, you know. … It was a very interesting time to grow up, back then. … Somebody on your list you ought to interview, actually, who is still a good friend of mine, unless you've, maybe you've done it already--Stu Berman. Stu lives down in Washington, DC, and he was a good friend of mine down there, and still is, and Stu became one of the leaders of SDS, and then, formed his own organization, called MDS, I don't know if I remember what the hell the "M" stands for, movement, Movement for a Democratic Society. I don't know what the hell he was thinking, but, I think it existed in his mind, and out at Rutgers for a few months. [laughter] … Anyway, put him on your list. [Editor's Note: Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was a popular student activist movement during the mid to late 1960s that expanded across college campuses across the United States. They protested against racial discrimination, the Vietnam

War, inequality in the United States and for women's rights, but, eventually, fractured off into various splinter groups that advocated their own interests, sometimes through violent means.]

SI: Which organizations did you become active in?

KM: Well, you know, initially, I just went … sort of, independently. … You didn't actually join these things in some sort of formal sense where you paid dues. … They had a membership roster, you know, and meetings. So, to say you were a member of these things is a little "Loosey Goosey," but, you know, I was very friendly with guys in SDS … and I became something with Stuart, you know, in his MDS movement, and Rutgers' yearbook has a couple of pictures of me, sort of in profile, I don't know if you could tell they are me, but I should have brought it along. Actually, I think I've got it. You know, at some meeting that they had at, what's the lecture hall by, near "Willie the Silent," I forget the name of it. [Editor's Note: "Willie the Silent" is a reference to the statue of William the Silent, a Dutch national hero, in Voorhees Mall on the College Avenue Campus.]

SI: It is not Scott Hall.

KM: No, it's not Scott; it's on the other side, Milledoler?

SI: Milledoler, yes.

KM: Yes, Milledoler, I think it was at Milledoler, had that nice lecture hall there. So, you know, that was where, and you know, the organizations were really kind of, I don't know if the people who are running them would agree with it, but I thought they were somewhat informal. The SDS people became affiliated with, … one of my friends would really kill me for not remembering this stuff, but they became affiliated with the Progressive Labor Party, which was a Marxist, maybe they were a Maoist group. I used to know all this stuff, but I can't remember anymore. … They were a real, you know, kind of Stalinist type group. … They thought of themselves as a party in the old, like, lefty way, you know, coming out of the Russian Revolution, they were, some, derived, you know, some family tree out of all that shit. … They became, like, mouthing this party line, which turned off a lot of--this is a '60s term--turned off a lot of people. … We had our own minds, and didn't have to tow anybody else's. … Maybe that's why Stu started his own movement. … They were pretty widespread, you know, and they were relatively popular on campus; and there was certainly a lot of sympathy, you know, and … again, I wouldn't venture to put stats on it, but I'd say most of the campus was anti-Vietnam War, except for, you know, some ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] people, I suppose, and some of the frat guys, who seemed to have a little more, traditional, line. … I don't remember there being any big fights about any of this, … physical violence over it. We took over some stuff, I guess, I remember vaguely. I'll have to think about that, what they were, a little more.

SI: Yes.

KM: I am happy to go into it, I mean, if you're looking to talk, as much as you want.

SI: What forms did the protests take on campus?

KM: … There were a lot of these, you know, teach-in things. … Let's see, '68, Columbia strike, what the hell happened at Rutgers? [Editor's Note: Mr. Mandel is referring to the Columbia University protests of 1968 over social and anti-war concerns.] God, I don't recall anything … all that violent at Rutgers, or any takeovers. Oh, there was the … ROTC building, got taken over. That's the same one that still exists next to the Commons there, College Ave, and that would have been, oh, God, shit, I can't fucking remember. … Spring of '68, maybe, and we could pinpoint a date because, Norman Thomas, the old socialist, was coming to give a big lecture on campus that day, and he walked down to the protestors in support of them that day. They held the building. … I stayed there for about … three days, and then non-violently, you know, left. I forget … if there were any concessions or not. There was no fight or anything between any of the ROTC guys and the protestors.

SI: What was involved with the takeovers? Did you just walk in as a group?

KM: Yes, they walked in as a group, [and] took over. So, we're taking over the building, and you know, I forget the specific incident. … If it was '68, that would have been when Johnson, like, said he wasn't running again for President, March of that year. So, what would have been the reason? … I can't remember if there was a specific trigger, maybe it was just some general protesting [of] the war, and … the visible symbol of the war, … ROTC on campus.

SI: Was the Old Queens takeover during your years at Rutgers?

KM: That was, I think, Cambodia, and I had graduated. I was, though, still in New Brunswick. I remember being outside the building at that time and people were really mad, and they took it over. [I have] got to give you one other. [laughter] Rich Najarian and Jim Fine were the heads of SDS. … We're leading some protest march up to Rutgers, up to President Mason Gross' house. … We'd march up across the bridge up to his house. We had a list of demands, most of which were kind of campus-related events, and a few things like ROTC off-campus, you know, something like that. … Maybe, no … military recruiters on campus and probably a few others related [to] Civil Rights type things. So, we have this list of demands, and I guess there might have been fifty or a hundred of us up there, and we get up to Gross' house, and the campus police are there, but they're letting us march as long as we're not doing anything, you know, trashing anything, and we're not. … We go up to Gross' house; we go to the front door now. He comes out the door, [laughter] if you know anybody's who's talked about Mason Gross; Mason Gross was like this, like, very savvy, very erudite guy, perfect president of a college. Opens the door, and says, "Hi, everybody, thanks for coming, if you guys want to, come in and [laughter] go have some tea, iced tea or something to drink." … We go, "Oh, we have our demands, you know, here to present to you," and he goes, "Okay, let me see them," and he takes them, and he reads through, it was, like, a page, and he reads them, and he goes, "Okay, you know, it's good, okay, yes, okay, yes, this one, yes." He goes, "Yes, the first, you know, these first four, I don't have any problem with these at all, and this one, well, we'll have to talk about this because there are some little issues here, and, yes, I think this is all important to talk about." Talk about co-opting a demonstration, it was like, "Oh, okay." [laughter] That's all you had to do was ask and it's all going to happen, and he goes, "Okay, well, let's talk about it. We'll get together, we'll sit down, talk about it." We went back, "Oh man, some protest." … He was too much, he was a

class act. I think he left, he … couldn't have died. I think that might have been his last year, or next to last year, but I think 1970, I think Bloustein, Edward Bloustein took over as president.

SI: He began in 1971.

KM: … It was … three years, before Mason Gross left. … Bloustein was a whole different personality. … I think he felt more beholden to the "powers that be" at Rutgers, and I don't think Gross could care, you know, one way or the other, and he was, kind of, just true to himself, in a way, didn't have any obligations. [Editor's Note: Mason Gross was the Sixteenth President of Rutgers University, serving from 1959 to 1971. Dr. Edward J. Bloustein served as Rutgers University President from 1971 until his death in 1989.]

SI: Were you aware of the "Happenings Movement" at that time?

KM: You mean, sort of, countercultural things?

SI: Yes.

KM: Oh, yes. That was the other … major … strain, … bridged, both of those things. … My sophomore year, while I was in Ford Hall, Andy Warhol, and the Velvet Underground came and performed in Scott Hall. Can you imagine this? You know, Scott Hall, you know how big it is, there's like, what, three hundred people in there, maybe less, I don't know, and … Andy Warhol, Velvet Underground, which had Lou Reed in it, and … their singer at the time was this blonde named, Nico, Velvet Underground with Nico, and they had just come out with their album, which had his famous banana on it, I think. … I was there for this thing, and … my mind was blown, I think … was the term, and there was this woman there, who I had met as a freshman, who I had this little romance with, who had sort of had dumped me, I guess is the way to put it, and she was there at the time, and she had become like, you know, she'd probably classify herself as a "freak," you know. So, she had shoes, they were dancing around the aisles, and I remember talking to her, and she sort of vaguely remembered me. It was, like, six months later, and I was not into drugs at the time, you know, so I didn't quite tune into that, but I knew the album, I knew the Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground album. So, that had started, even as early as, like, '65, '66. In fact, that year, … the whole music thing started to really explode around then, and Rutgers had some pretty good concerts. They had, you know, the Temptations, at the Rutgers Gym, … which I went to. … I'll tell you, like, the first time anybody really tried to sell me drugs was on Albany Street, … right near the train station. It was a kid, it was a Rutgers student then, and I said, "No," at the time. Now, what the hell year was that? It would have been, I want to say … summer of '66, or fall of '66, something like that. So, it was just really starting to turn; and I say drugs, it would have been marijuana. So, yes, it … started to happen. … In those years, when I was in New Brunswick, you know, hair started to grow, … drug use became more widespread, … lots more music, and my last year of school was '68, '69. There were, like, two "head shops" that opened up in New Brunswick. I was living on Paterson Street, … or Church I think, and there was a guy who had opened a little store there, and who was from Edison--he didn't go to Rutgers. … He was in the neighborhood, so I became friends with him, and he opened a store around the corner, and he asked me if I wanted to work there, which I did, in my last year in college, and then, actually, even after college. I stayed there for a few months … and

that was, like, the scene there. They sold pipes, and rolling paper, and bell-bottom jeans, and things like that. It was a really a big year for that, it would have been '68, '69. That summer, of course, was Woodstock. [Editor's Note: Woodstock Music and Art Fair took place during the late summer of 1969, attracting an estimated 500,000 people to White Lake, New York.] I had graduated that spring. So, yes … it was a big scene, and then, related to that, of course, you know, there were people into film, and people into, you know, theater, and crazy theater, like the Living Theatre [which] came to Rutgers or Douglass, I think, with what's his name, and what's her name [laughter], I can't remember, the two of them. Malina, Julian Malina, I think, and, what the hell was her name? [Editor's Note: Mr. Mandel is referring to Judith Malina and Julian Beck, the founders of the experimental theater group, The Living Theater.] So, they were the "artsy-fartsy" kids. … Then there was, I think, the kind of the rise [of] gay and lesbians as they call them now, there were other terms we used, … that became, you know; more people came out more in that way, too. So, it was all happening, you know, it was pretty exciting, kind of, you know, a lot going on. There were like art … scenes they had at Douglass, I guess it was the Douglass art department at Rutgers, I don't remember the exact [name]. … People became some real heavy-hitters, some of whom I knew, … like Geoff Hendricks and Bob Watts and these guys, these were like major artists in the Fluxus modernist movements. I think Watts … became like one of the heads of this Fluxus movement, huge, you know. [Editor's Note: The Fluxus movement of the 1960s strived to fuse together media and various other art disciplines.] He was there at the time. What's his name, I think Roy Lichtenstein was there for a good year or two, teaching at Douglass, you know, and these are all people that are part of the scene. Then, there was this cool wife-swapping thing that went on [laughter] in the English department at Douglass. David Burrows, do you know [him]? I have to tell you, you know, see … these people, I guess, were in their thirties at the time, we were like, twenty, you know. So, we weren't that far apart in age. … A lot of these people were friends, and Burrows was having affairs with Douglass students. That I became aware of later. … I think they were all professors, and two of them were religion professors, I forget. Anyway, they swapped spouses, you know, and everybody sort of took it like with, you know, "Oh, that's interesting." It wasn't like, you know, they were shocked or outraged or something like that, I don't think I was outraged at all, but, I thought it was a little stupid, … but I didn't condemn it. So, that kind of stuff was going on that was a "happening," to use your word. ... So, it was like, sort of this sexual freedom thing. It … had become big, and I think, looking back at it now, … people were a lot more uncomfortable about it than they'd made it out to be, but that's what was going on. So, you either dealt with it or you were depressed, [laughter] I guess, or upset, but yes, there was a lot of, … I would say really more starting like '67, '68, '69 than earlier, because it was a real quick switch, I think. The druggies, and then the whole kind of hippie, freedom of expression, kind of cultural revolution thing, and that, you know, wasn't synonymous with the anti-war movement, … but it would overlap quite a bit. I would say a good seventy-five [percent] was an overlap, to the point where, in '68, '69, when most of my friends had gone away, one of my good friends had gone out as a graduate student to the University of Wisconsin, and I went out to visit him at some point during that year, and Wisconsin was probably one of the leading campuses for both anti-war protest, and … culture revolution stuff, and they had started something out there called the Mifflin Street Coop, Mifflin Street being the main street through that part of … Madison, where the students lived, and when I came back to New Brunswick, I kind of thought that we ought to have something like that. … I wound up founding one with a bunch of friends; we called it the New Brunswick People's Store. … It had about a two year existence, a year of trying to raise money

for it, and a year of it being open, until it failed miserably. [laughter] I called it, you know, "socialism in one city," you know, as Lenin pointed out back, then, when he was arguing for international revolution. This is going to … shift this whole interview into this area I don't want it to go, but, you know, he was for international revolution. You couldn't have, you know, socialism in one country, it had to be international. So, he had brought this pamphlet, criticizing socialism in one country, which was what, Russia, I guess. … He said it had to be international, which of course, you know, sent "bejeebers" down every government in Europe. So, our kind of analogy to that, … why our People's Store failed was, you couldn't have socialism in one city, which was clearly true, but we were too idealistic to realize.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Skipping ahead a little bit, what did you do after you graduated?

KM: … My last year of school, I really … staggered to the finish line, I call it. I really decided I really didn't want to be an engineer, and I really didn't know what exactly I wanted to do. I knew I didn't want to get drafted, I knew I didn't want to be an engineer, but those were two negatives. What did I want to do? … I didn't exactly know. So, my last year I was thinking about dropping out of school, and I go to Rutgers Health Center, and he goes, "I want you to talk to Roy Waldman," you know, this psychiatrist or psychologist. I said, "All right, fine." So, I go and talk to him, and I said, "I think I'm dropping out of school," and he goes, "Well, how long have you been here?" I said "Well, four and a half years," and he goes, "And you're going to drop out now?" I go, "Well, you know, I just don't feel like doing it anymore." He goes to me, "What are you going to do?" I said "Well, I don't know." "Well, if you don't know what you're going to do, you might as well stay in college, and not know what you're going to do, then to be not in college, and know what you not going to do." I said, "Well, you know, that makes a lot of sense, you know." So, that's what I did. So, I muddled through, to the point where, I had, like, really, pretty good grades. I was like third of the twenty-six kids in industrial engineering … after four years, and now I'm like really, like, you know, barely getting through, and it's my last [year], first semester, we take an electrical engineering course, and this was like taking Sanskrit or something, and I just couldn't figure out what the hell was going on. There's a lab in the course, so I go, I fail this course, never failed a course before, never got a "D" in a course before. So, now I got to make it up, and it's my last semester, and I just really don't want to be there, and I go to the professor and I said, "I just really can't," and he goes, "Look, I'm going to get you a tutor, and we'll get you through this." So, I get the tutor, and I'm not doing very well, and it's the final exams coming up. I got to pass it; otherwise, I just am not going to pass. So, he comes to me and he goes, "Here, take these problems," you know, "work on these problems because," he says, "they're the kind of problems that are going to be on the exams. So, if you can do these, you know, you'll be okay." So, I do them, and I summon up everything I've got, and I do them, and I go into the exam, I take the exam, and not only are they similar to the problems that were on, these are the exact problems on there. They were the same things, he didn't tell me that, all right, but, that's what they were, and I look at them, and, of course, I could do them, you know, so I did them, and I passed, and I graduated. … The graduation was at Rutgers stadium, and I remember walking down to the row of students to get our degrees, and at the same time, coming down the aisle, are the guys getting masters and PhDs, which he was one, and we see each other. We lock eyes, … the graduate student and I, and we both smile at the same time, [laughter] because, you

know, he knew that I knew, you know, and I think what they figured was, you know, the guy, the kid has put in, you know, four and a half years. Just let him get through. So, I don't remember his name, I don't know what happened to him, but it was an act of charity, I guess in the religious sense to do that. So, I graduated, and then, I decided I wasn't going to be an engineer. So, I decided I was going to continue to work at the store. It was called, The Closet, because it had started off as a little store that was smaller than this room, but they had moved into a … little bit bigger space. We were working there, and I had my apartment, was around the corner on Church Street. That building is no longer there but, and I worked there for almost a year, I think, after I graduated from college. My parents were like mortified, that I didn't get a job as an engineer, but I just didn't want to do it, I just couldn't do it. My wife now, who was my girlfriend at the time, … had just met each other, and … she had either moved in or was about to move in the Church Street apartment. I think she hadn't moved in yet, but she was going to. … I came back, and I decided I was going to start this People's Store, this co-op food store, that was going to, you know, help people in the poor New Brunswick community. … Other friends of mine and I formed New Brunswick's first underground newspaper, which was called *All You Can Eat* and I won't tell you the story, but there's sort of a idiotic story about how it got named that, but it was called *All You Can Eat*. One of the founders was Max Sawicky, he was one of the *Targum* editors, and another guy was a *Targum* editor, worked on it. There [were] five of us, I think, did it, and then, another guy, a friend of ours, was a very energetic guy named Roger Kranz, who was, like, a true hippie. [laughter]… He and I both had a little bit of business sense, and we went out and sold ads to all the, kind of, usual suspects … and we were very successful for about eighteen months, I'd say, … and had about thirty-thousand circulation, free, around the State. We'd drop these papers off. Good writers, kids who were really smart, good writers--we had some good articles. … So, that went on for us. I stayed in New Brunswick 'til 1971, pretty much, from September '69 to some point in '71.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: You were in New Brunswick until 1971. What did you do next?

KM: Well, I got a job, part-time; after I stopped working at the store, … up at Livingston College, which had just opened. … Somebody had introduced me to the assistant dean up there, this guy named Brian Blake, and Brian was like this six-foot eight-inch former basketball player from Seton Hall, who was the dean of the student center up there, maybe he had other responsibilities. … He was looking for people … with ties to the community, like me, to be his assistant. So, I got a job there as assistant to the dean of the student center, and which was a … pretty good job for me because, you know, I knew a lot of people, and, kind of, people knew me around town. I guess I was a big fish in a small pond, something like that, and I worked up there with Brian for about a year. One funny thing I remember is, Brian was a fairly with-it guy, and at 6'8," he could be pretty intimidating too. So, he kind of kept everybody in line there, and there were a lot of … characters up at Livingston that first couple of years. … He figured out that he should get the first video games put into the student center, and he got Asteroids and Pong [video games], which were these huge consoles, gigantic things, that he put in the student center. He had one of each, and I remember, if I was working like at night, and I close down the student center, one of my jobs was--after the doors were locked--I'd go to the machines and empty out the quarters that people put in, and this was like a small fortune of money that he got in cash. …

We didn't have a counting machine, I remember I just put it in a bag, and threw it in this little safe he had in his office, but this was like very innovative … at the time. It was a riot to just see these people throwing money in continuously. … As soon as it opened up, until it closed, those machines were in use, and if one of them broke down, everybody was really upset. … That was a good year up there at Livingston. Then, you know … the group with … the newspaper was fairly political, and this is part of the story I'll abbreviate. … There's a lot to talk about … but I don't really want to go into here too much. … In the summer and fall of 1971 … the anti-war movement was kind of splintering apart. The war was sort of, kind of, winding down a bit, and things were somewhat, kind of, getting a little bit back to normalcy on the campus, but we were still looking for some, you know, ways to make our mark politically … and the newspaper was one way of doing it, but even this was … kind of unfocused. So, a few of us got involved, and I can't remember who brought the guy down, but [someone] invited a guy to come down, who was a member of something called the Labor Committee, the big formal name was National Caucus of Labor Committees [NCLC], and this was a group that was founded around '68 by a bunch of people around Columbia University, and led by this guy named LaRouche, Lyndon LaRouche. So, he comes down, and he has this economic analysis of Nixon's wage price freeze, which was, you know, something that most of us had no clue about, understanding what this meant, and kind of, some fairly, we thought, sophisticated analysis of capitalism. So, we decided, we're going to join this organization, and we do. … So, the *All You Can Eat* newspaper, which we called, "The Collective," had a split between the people who want to go, and the people who don't, and we write an issue of this newspaper called the *Liberated All You Can Eat*, and we quit, and we join, and we start recruiting people to become members of this organization. … I'm going to sum this up in about two paragraphs. This is basically a political cult. Of course, we don't know this at the time, but this is basically what it is, and it's a cult of personality, led by this guy LaRouche, and basically we, this group of us, which has a substantial number, like seven, and then, becomes ten, and twelve of us, from New Brunswick, become … part of this organization, and we all do this from between, let's say, beginning of '72, like, for between five and nine years. In other words, between '72 and '80, and in the course of that we, you know, pretty much don't do anything but this political activity, which includes … him running for president in 1976 and 1980, and a bunch of other, what seem like, now, somewhat crazy, but somewhat moderately interesting campaigns. … I think, at that time, all, up until halfway through it, was all based on, like, this idea of a socialist revolution in America. Now, from '72 to '76, now the Vietnam War is over, you know, and like everybody's getting on with their lives, and we're still a little bit stuck in the preceding decade. [Editor's Note: In 1973, The United States officially ended its military involvement in the Vietnam War with the signing of the Paris Peace Accords.] So, eventually it dawns on me, this is, like, not working, and this is a little bull-shitty. I am the person who starts to do the media for these political campaigns, when he's running for president, so it's 1976. I produce, with a few other people, this half-hour television spot, which he qualifies for buying under the federal election laws, and then, in '78 and '79, he decides he's going to run again, in February of '79, would have been the New Hampshire primary, no, February of '80. So in '79, he starts to, you know, do this again, and I then set up a company to do this called, Grand Design Advertising, and I do the political advertising for this. … So, you say, "Well, where did this come from, you're an engineer, you know." Well, I didn't know anything about it, but I sort of learned it by the seat of my pants, but the one thing I learned from this, was that I was a pretty good story teller, and I was, technically, I knew the equipment, and things didn't scare me or anything, and then, I also had this kind of problem-solving mentality. So, I was able to, kind of,

figure out what to do, internally, and then, also, you know, deal with the outside world, in terms of the advertising stations, and the advertising sales people, *et cetera, et cetera*. So, I kind of learned it all on the fly, and I, you know, by 1980, that campaign, … they run a very big campaign up in New Hampshire, and there's … some kind of illusion that he's going to actually, this was the year that Ted Kennedy is challenging Jimmy Carter in the Democratic primary, and LaRouche is running as the Democrat in the primary. … There's probably a couple of others, I can't remember who they were, and he thinks he's going … [to] attract a lot of votes. He was attracting four percent or three percent of the vote, which is, you know, not nothing, but it was pretty pathetic given the effort that they made. … At this point I decided, this is like, I'm trying to get out, can't find a job [laughter] of course, and I'm married to my former girlfriend--now my wife--and she's got a teaching degree. She had gone to Douglass. She had gone into a program and got a teacher's license early on, she taught for a couple of years, and she had sort of left teaching, and kind of was doing the same, doing the thing with me, and so, she and I decided, okay, this is time to turn the page here, and move on. A friend of mine, … a guy who I met during this campaign, had gone to NYU film school, and was … making a film, and I said to him, "Look I got, I have a lot of ideas for documentaries," and he goes, "Oh, really, what are they?" and then we started talking about them. … So, I sort of closed up this advertising agency, this two-man band that I had. The other guy was my cousin, and I said, "Let me try to do this." … Had I known how long it was going to take, I probably wouldn't have done it, but I had saved a little bit of money up from this campaign, and the commissions I had made on the campaign, and then I took the plunge into this documentary storytelling. That's what I thought I was going to do. So, that was thirty years ago. So, that was about half my life ago. So, I was still pretty young, I was like thirty-four, maybe.

SI: What was the first documentary that you started working on?

KM: Well, the first documentary I started making … was a documentary that he, my former partner, Dan Polin, had come up with, … and it was this documentary called *Hollywood's Favorite Heavy*. … It was a pretty clever idea, it was based on the idea … that businessmen were being portrayed on television as villains far more disproportionate to the actual crimes they were actually committing … and that the result of this was that people were having negative connotations, negative attitude towards business. … It was based on some survey that some think tank had done, some conservative think tank had done, and he started working on this documentary, and he asked me to help him on it. In the meantime, I had, from my engineering background and some of the work I had done on the campaigns; some of the actual interesting stuff that the campaigns had talked about were some big engineering projects that they … thought would be good. So, I said, "You know, these would be actually pretty good stories." … They were actually being debated in the real world, as opposed to the cult world, I imagine. So, and I said, "Well, these are pretty cool stories," and my cousin from Rutgers, Joel had become a civil engineer, and I was talking about this project, and he said, "Well, you ought to talk to these guys at this engineering firm who built this huge dam in Pakistan, the Tarbela Dam," and I called the guy up, and he said, "Oh, yes, we have a film about it, come on over, I'll, you know, give you a copy," and I watched this film. It was an industrial, what we call an industrial film. It's not a TV show, and it was just their own film about what they had done to promote their company, and I said, "Man, this is a great story, this is visually spectacular, you know, it's really going to help the people of Pakistan by providing some huge amount of electricity, you know, make the world

a better place, you know. It's technologically innovative how they did this, this is great," … that's what I told Dan, my partner. I said, … "This kind of story, there's like a hundred stories like this, you know," and so that's how we came up with the idea to do this *Great Projects* series, and started working on it in '84, and [laughter] as fate would have it, it took almost twenty years to actually have it broadcast from beginning to end from the first, you know, this is a great idea, to, you know, tune in your TV on Thursday night and watch it. That was kind of the evolution, but in the meantime, … wound up making a whole lot of other stuff. … The interesting story about one of my friends from Rutgers, who had grown up with me in Hillside, and he had become a psychologist, and somewhere around the beginning of that period, when I was working on the documentary, still in the '80s, he said to me, "You know, looking back at it Ken, … if I had to think about it now, this is probably … what I would have predicted that you would have been doing. You would have been a writer, or a filmmaker or something like that, because when we were kids in high school and we were bored, and had nothing to do, you would start sort of telling some story, you know, and kind of keep us all occupied and interested in some, you know, whatever the hell was going on or popped into your head." … Looking back at it now, I attribute my years as an engineer, as that journey, from being fairly good, and then, getting the "C" in chemistry from that … evil professor until, like, that last year staring into the finish line to get the degree, as what I would call bad guidance counseling in high school, because he goes, "Oh, you got 782 on your college boards, you know, you ought to be an engineer," and I didn't like it, you know, I just was not interested in it. … If somebody had really been competent, they would have thought I might have had … other interests that I pursued. So, I didn't listen to my father until, like, ten years after, and do something I liked to do, and was good at, or at least decent at. I don't know if I'm great at it, but I was, you know, I was okay, and I enjoyed it. So, I muddled through those first couple of years. Dan, mostly himself, wound up getting a large grant from Mobil Oil, which was putting a lot of money into public television at that time. That show got made. It was a pretty entertaining program and got good reviews. It was pretty well-received, and that then propelled us forward. Dan had a partner at that time and they split up for reasons that didn't involve me, and Dan and I formed a new company, sort of working together, and I came up with the idea to make the George Marshall movie in the '80s, and it came out of going to a lot of meetings and conferences where people talked about big projects, you know, part of this *Great Projects* idea, and I was making next to no money, and my wife was teaching, so we were really living on her income. I was making a little bit, but it was like pathetic, you know. You get your social security things every year, and … you look back at the history of your earnings. So, a lot of those years, like, I have zeros there, and I look at it, "This just can't be possible," … and my wife goes, "Yes, it was possible. [laughter] You weren't making any money you idiot." I said, "Well, I'm making some money now, so shut up." [laughter] So, the George Marshall movie, we applied to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a big grant, and these are big thick applications, and then you have to wait four or five months to hear if you get it, and we put our first application in, and we, they didn't give us the grant we asked for, they gave us like a small amount; a "scripting grant" they called it. So, instead of getting four-hundred thousand dollars, we got like forty thousand dollars. So, this was a bummer, but it was something. … Then we reapplied, and then we got the grant for production, and we were on our way, basically, to make shows, and we basically kept it going, with a couple of little, minor bumps in the road; I mean financially, financial bumps. From, you know, 1988 to about 2008--twenty straight years--we were able to raise money for documentaries that, mostly, were our ideas to do, that we came up with and made, and PBS liked them. Here and there we made a

cable documentary, but mostly they were shows that were mostly my ideas and that I thought were really good stories to tell, and we went out and convinced people to give us money to make them, and then, we made them, and PBS broadcast them. … So, it, kind of, in the end, turned out the way I hoped it would, and … we could go into it a little more. I used to have the thing with my actual, you know, filmography. I better do a new one because I don't know where the hell the old ones are. … I think this is a partial. … [Mr. Mandel is referencing his partial filmography.] This is dated, and not quite so it is up to date, and there's a lot more. It's not a complete thing, it's selective. … Those are the broadcast dates on there, because the actual work on them precedes them by many years.

SI: With the George Marshall documentary, you had the idea and were the director of it.

KM: Yes.

SI: What does that entail in terms of a documentary?

KM: Well, yes, these terms are different than feature films somewhat, but director generally means … having creative control of the movie. Documentaries, at least the way we worked on them, were a little more collaborative, and so, the roles somewhat overlapped. … To be specific with what I actually did; … it was my idea to do the biography, then I researched it, which means I read all the books and started talking to people about it, who were mainly authors of books about Marshall, and some of the people who knew him. … I wrote the first draft of the script that the Endowment didn't like actually, … but I had compiled … a lot, all the stories that we thought were important. So, structurally it was pretty much what we wanted. … So, we wound up hiring another writer to rewrite the script who used a lot of what was in there, but was just better at crafting it, and this was Geoff Ward. Geoff Ward was famous for doing Ken Burns' writing, although he wasn't quite so famous at the time. … Then, we got the grant, and we went out and produced it, and I was the one who, almost entirely, went out and did the interviews with people and identified, along with some researchers, where the film and footage of him was, both film and photographic, and some documents, and then, we collected all that material and we do what's called "open the edit room," in which case, this was shot and edited in film at the time, in sixteen millimeter film, which is not done, pretty much, anymore. … We had our edit room open with an editor who is also listed as the co-director, Ken Levis, and we started to put together the movie, literally cut it piece by piece, in this case literally cutting with a razor--splicing machine--the film together and the sound together and making the movie, and you work on it as long as you can, which may be as long as your money holds out, or as long as, in our case we didn't have a deadline, but until your deadline, when you got to deliver it. So, we worked on it together, and Ken, the editor, and these processes, which I'm not, you know, indispensible, because they've got a good sense of all the material. … They can actually help the process by seeing things that you can't see. Sort of, "two heads are better than one," is one way to look at it, but they're also kind of good storytellers themselves, and you'll say, "I really want to tell a story," and they'll say "it's just not working, you know, we got to find a better way to do it," and then, you watch it and you sort of say, "I guess you're right." The story is good, but it's not quite working for various reasons, … and then, a certain case where you see, this is a very important story, but we don't have the material, we actually went right back out and reshot a couple of interviews or … did additional interviews to kind of get a fuller picture. …

Fortunately, … [we] had the funds to do it for that. So, we did it and … we had a board of advisers; I think we showed it to them. God, what format … would it have been in? I don't remember. Well, it had to be on some kind of tape. Anyway, it was a little more complicated then to make these things. … We delivered it to PBS, … we had a long debate with them about it, because it was ninety minutes long, and they wanted to schedule it at ten PM to eleven-thirty and we said, "No, that's no good, people aren't going to stay up that late to watch it." … They said, "No, what are we going to do with this extra half hour?" … Anyway, we held out, and so, it wound up being, you know, almost a year later before they actually broadcast it; extremely well-received. You know, it wound up, you know, winning an Emmy Award for best historical documentary. [Editor's Note: George Marshall was Army Chief of Staff during World War II, Secretary of State under President Truman, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Mr. Mandel's documentary on Marshall, *George Marshall and the American Century*, received an Emmy Award for the Outstanding History Program of 1993.] Some of the scenes in the movie were exactly the way I had conceived them … when I wrote them. Others were, you know, just things you discover in the edit room. It was probably the single movie that came out exactly the way I wanted it to, you know, there's some times you just don't quite get your mark on it, but this one did. We used the voice of George Marshall in this to tell his own story and I found that that was something there was a lot of debate about it, because the audio tapes were in horrible shape. The guy who recorded them had a little tape recorder, like a reel-to-reel tape recorder, and really was doing it to take notes too, but it was not a very good recording. It was just poorly recorded, but with modern technology, even back then, we were able to re-master them to save them and, you know, boost them, and that's what we did. We spent a fair amount of money doing that because George Marshall's voice, … informally speaking about his life, was never heard before, and we felt that we were revealing a lot about his personality and about his emotions … and things he cared about, that would not come through even in the film of him giving some formal speech, which is really all that existed of him. So, this made this film come alive, and there's a quality of remembrance where an older man, remember, he was in his seventies at the time, talking about things that happened to him as a boy or as a youth, … gave a quality to the story of him telling his own story that would not have been something you could duplicate. So, we had this rare element; people responded to it very well and it really just captures you from the very first words out of his mouth, and that is what you got to do in a movie, you got to capture people somehow. Most of the time people do it with explosions now--action scene--but this was very different, but it was very effective.

SI: Those were Pogue's interviews? [Editor's Note: Forrest Pogue served as George Marshall's official biographer and conducted oral histories with him in 1956 and 1957.]

KM: Yes, those are Pogue's interviews. Pogue to his credit, not only did the interviews for his book, but kept them. Forrest was a very generous man and he really gave us permission to use those interviews after a couple of really long conversations, [after] which he kind of felt we'd handle them the way they deserved to be handled. … He was very pleased with the outcome--he was still alive when the movie came out. He loved it, and others who saw it just really loved it. These military historians, they just went crazy about it, and the military people, and I had never served in the military so I didn't … really know what they really cared about what moved them, but they felt that we had captured Marshall's fundamental belief, this motivating belief that he had … that people who were serving in the military were sacrificing something, and you had to

care for them. … That would be your first concern, was to worry about them because you are asking them to do things that were extraordinary, you know, even the case to the extreme, of laying down their lives. So, they had to understand, you had to care for them, you had to have them, … understand why they were doing what they were doing, and I, truthfully, it had to be some kind of sort of conscious thing, and maybe some relation to my father, and what he had done, but, somehow it came through the movie. It was just really moving for them. So, it was almost embarrassing to me sometimes, … the kind of praise that was heaped on. … I mean, one level obviously, … you like to hear those things, but on the other hand you say, "Do I deserve it?" … I just wasn't even thinking about it that way when I did it, I mean, I understood it, but … it wasn't my mission to do this. The final thing I'll say is, one of the people who saw it, sort of … summed it up, I think, best, to me. He said, "By the time you got to the end of the movie, you really felt like you had lost something when he was gone," and so, that's pretty cool. You know, that is really the goal, to appreciate what this one human being had done for his country, that that's what he cared about, that was his duty. He didn't try to capitalize on it; he didn't try to glorify his achievements in any way. He didn't even want a book written about him. A cousin of my father's wrote to me after seeing it, and he goes, "You know, congratulations on winning the Emmy Award, you know. It was a great movie. … Not only am I congratulating you that it won an Emmy Award, but because it deserved to win an Emmy Award." So, that was kind of … cool. Because prizes are really, you know, kind of just, I don't know, like icing in a way. … They don't really mean that much, and Ben Hecht, the writer, has this phrase, … won a lot of awards for his writing, and he said about awards, "Well, awards are helpful in selling your next project, but they're very little help in making the next project because you just got to do the work and make them," … which is true. It doesn't help you make the next film as good as the one that you made, you just got to do it.

SI: Your next project was *An Essay on Matisse*?

KM: Well, I think we did the Eichmann show [*The Trial of Adolf Eichmann* (1997)] first, *An Essay on Matisse* (1996) was … really not … a personal thing of mine. … I was the executive producer of it and the producer was the guy, Perry Wolff, who was a great filmmaker, who [is] like in his eighties now. … The easiest way to sum up who Perry Wolf was, was he succeeded Edward R. Murrow at CBS, and when he retired from CBS he wanted to make documentaries, and so we, my partner Dan and I, served as his kind of producers "slash" executive producers, and he was kind of the director. … So, of that film, you know, ninety percent of it was his and ten percent of it was ours, or mine. He has his idea of what to do, and we just facilitated it, made it happen for him. The Eichmann story was more like the Marshall story, although the way it happened was a little different. It wasn't quite my idea. Somebody came to us and said, "Well, you think this would make a good documentary?" "You know," I said, "Well, I kind of remember 1961," I said, "Yes, I think, hell yes, I think it would make a good documentary," and they said, "Well, you write up a proposal for them, I'll see if I can get it funded." So, we said, "Yes," and he worked for ABC News, this guy, and he had a division called ABC News Productions, and we wrote up this proposal for him. … It turned out, I think, the best proposal that we ever wrote, and I wrote it with this young guy who was working for us at the time, and this thing was just great, I mean if I read it today, I would probably read it and say, "Man, this is great, this is a great proposal." So, we hand it to him, and he goes, "Oh, yes, this is great, this is terrific. … I think we can, you know, help, we can get money for this movie," and I figured, …

"It isn't happening." … [He] had relations with the cable companies, History Channel and A&E and those kinds of stations, and we didn't like to work for those kind of people because they just didn't pay enough money. So, you couldn't make the movie you wanted to make with the budget they were going to give us, and I said to them, "Look, you know, Bill, the last thing the world needs is another mediocre movie about the Holocaust. It's just, you know, it's … just going to be a waste of everybody's time." He goes, "Oh yes, don't worry." So, of course, he says, "Well, how much is this going to cost to make," and I … said like five hundred something thousand dollars, which was kind of typical for a public TV documentary at the time, … and he goes, "Oh, okay," and then, he goes, "Well, … do a budget for me," and we do the budget up and we try to pare it down a little bit, and sort of make it a little more palatable, but it's still four hundred and some thousand dollars, and we go meet with them, and they say, "Well, you know, I don't think this budget, you know, I don't think we're going to be able to get this much from them," and I said, "This is really what it's going to take," and I … repeated that line, "I don't think the world needs another mediocre movie about the Holocaust." I think I said worse than that, like, "Another shitty movie about the Holocaust." … We leave, and I said, "Well, that's the end of that, you know, and a day or two later, we get a call saying, "Guess what, PBS is interested in it," and I knew if PBS was interested in it they would pay more money for it. So, sure enough, we go down to PBS, in Virginia at the time, and they, all of a sudden, … maybe I wasn't paying attention, but we walk into the room there's about twelve people in the room, now. There's six of us, including these two guys who were their representatives in Washington (ABC News Productions), my partner and I, and this guy Bill from ABC News, and maybe there's five of us, and then there was like about five or six people from PBS including the head of programming, their scheduler. … There was a bunch of people I knew already, and they had the proposal, they really liked it, and they said "So, Ken, why don't you tell them about what the movie is." …

[TAPE PAUSED]

We're in the PBS meeting, and he (Bill) turns to me and says, "Well, Ken, why don't you tell them about the movie," so, [laughter] I am completely unprepared, at least formally, although I, like, knew the proposal inside-out. So, I said, "Well, I'm going to give you an example of how this movie is going to work." There's a scene in the testimony at Eichmann's trial in which a witness from Hungary is testifying about what happened to him when they were deported to Auschwitz. … The man who is testifying is dressed in a suit and tie, very formal man, and very dignified. I think he … was a lawyer, and he reminded me a lot of my grandfather, Barney, and he tells the story about his family arriving at Auschwitz and his wife and daughter sent to the right, and he and his son sent to the left, and, of course, they didn't know what that meant, other than that they were being separated, and I said, "Do you remember," … I'm telling them the story, "Do you remember the scene in *Schindler's List* of the girl in the red coat," and they go, "Oh yes, of course," and I said, "Well, you know, this is the scene that was told by this witness, at the Eichmann trial that the author of the *Schindler's List* novel, Keneally, included in the novel and, which is where Spielberg saw it. [Editor's Note: Mr. Mandel is referring to the Thomas Keneally novel, *Schindler's Ark* (1982), which was later adapted into the Stephen Spielberg movie, *Schindler's List* (1993).] It's a true story, and the witness, who reminds me of my grandfather, is confronted by a Nazi guard, and he said, "So, how old is your son?" and … he's testifying; he's Hungarian; and then he goes, "I didn't know what to say, I didn't know what the right answer was. So, I said, 'Well he's twelve,'" and then, the Nazi said, "Well, you send him

with his mother and his sister, in that line," and he goes "Oh, okay," and he goes, "But how is he going to find her, there's so many people there, I can't find them." Then he remembers, "I saw my daughter was wearing a red coat," and so, [he] said, "Look, go run to your mother and sister. They're there because your sister has got the red coat." So, the guy pauses, the prosecutor is standing there, … I interviewed the guy, his name was Gabriel Bach, and he goes, "I can't." I actually hadn't interviewed him yet, … but you see him in the other story. I read the story, I hadn't interviewed him yet, but the story is, he couldn't speak, and the witness is waiting for him to ask him the next question, and … the judge says, you know, "Mr. Bach, what's your next question?" and he said, "I couldn't speak because I, just that week, I had bought my own daughter a red raincoat." When the witness said this, of course, he didn't know what he's going to say, he was just left stunned and speechless, right? So, … I said, "So, the movie is going to have, you know, moments like this, you know, all right." So, and I look around there are tears are coming down their eyes, … and they're like, [weeping noises], you know, weeping, right, and so, of course, we leave the room and Bill goes, "Well, geez," you know, he says "They're going to fund this," and I said, "Well, we're going to need more money to make it, you know." So, we made the movie, it was a horrible experience of making it, not just for emotional side, it was horrible, and working for other people in that sense was just negative experience, and the movie came out like a "B+," "A-," I say, for a variety of reasons. It's a very good movie, and it got nominated for an Emmy Award too, and I think deservedly, too. It was not quite … as I had foreseen it because when we wound up interviewing a lot of the people who testified at the trial, and the people who testified at the trial were remembering both the trial, and then, remembering what actually happened to them. So, you had double layers of, it gets a little interesting there. … It was very good, it was a very moving movie, pretty well-received, probably could have been a little bit better, I think, than it was, but still pretty good, very good, actually. …

SI: I read that a lot of them didn't want to recall what happened, or at least some of them did not want to.

KM: … I think in general a lot of people don't want to, but the ones who agree to be interviewed, the people who do that, generally, have gotten past that, and they feel it's their duty to tell the story, because … maybe that's why they survived, was to be the people who could bear witness to what had really happened. … Some of them probably were telling their stories for the first time, but, so they had been reluctant up until then, but mostly they were willing, I'd say. They're probably in the minority of Holocaust survivors, so that most people don't really want to talk about it, or would rather not talk about it, and the Spielberg project … opened up a lot of that for people. So, at least they got it out, … similar to your oral history project, you know. These stories would be lost forever if they didn't at least do it once in their lives, yes, but you do feel a special obligation when they're telling their stories, … almost you don't want to interrupt them with a question because … you feel like, you know, their stories are so important that you can barely scratch the surface of their experience in a documentary by, you know, telling it. They were living in fear of death for two, three, four years, and you're going to tell their story in an hour? You know, it doesn't even make any sense at some level, right? … On the other hand, there's value for others to know, it's not fair to them, but I think it helps others a little bit.

SI: Do you want to proceed chronologically or is there anything you want to talk about?

KM: Well, no, whatever interests you, because, you know, there's a lot of them.

SI: They are all interesting, but the *America Rebuilds* series is particularly interesting.

KM: Yes, okay. That's a good one.

SI: It also seems for most of your subjects there is forty or fifty years of history between you and them, and this project is right after 9/11. What was that experience like?

KM: This is contemporary history, you know. It wasn't a history yet. … Really, from the beginning when my cousin Joel, the civil engineer, invited me to see the film about the Tarbela Dam, I really felt that my Rutgers engineering education wasn't a total waste because … I'd become engineering's story teller to some degree, at least on television. … So, the *Great Projects* series, which was a big sweeping history of big engineering projects in the United States was something that I felt … really directly related to my understanding and appreciation of engineering and technology and engineers; and engineers, even if they didn't understand it themselves, … were contributing to larger society and they were their own worst publicists and … maybe they couldn't even articulate it, but I understood it. … I felt that I was able to tell these stories in a way that really humanized them as opposed to more technical stories about, "Gee whiz, how'd they do that," kind of stuff. … That series was pretty much in the can, the four shows about engineering, *Great Project* series. … When 9/11 happened, … one of the engineers who had worked with us on the *Great Project* series, who was a partner of my cousin in his engineering firm, Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers, … he had worked as a young man on the original World Trade Center. … He had been called down there like, the second day by one of the other engineers who knew that he knew what the hell was there underground, … what they were going to face trying to rescue people, … and find bodies or whatever. Well, and George Tamaro was by then a pretty good friend of mine, and worked with me and helped me on these projects, on the engineering projects. [Editor's Note: On September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City resulted in their destruction. George Tamaro was an advisor at the post-9/11 Ground Zero site.] … I saw his name in the paper, I think the day after he got down there, a couple of days, and … I got a hold of him and I said, "George, can we come down there with you and follow you, about what you're doing," and he said, "Yes, that would be a great idea, except they're not letting anybody down there." [laughter] So, I said, "Well, all right, well," but he goes, "But, I'm going to see the mayor tomorrow, and I'll ask him," and I think that, by then it was Friday, and I don't hear from George, and a week goes by, and … I figure, "that's it," you know? So, now we're about, September 11, September 18, 19, 20, around there, and … phone rings and it's George, and he goes, "Ken, I saw the mayor yesterday, for the second time, and he said, 'yes.'" I said, "Really?" He goes, "Yes. Here's what you got to do. You got to come down and see this one and that one who is in charge and tell him what you want to do," and so we did. We went down there, and this was … just horrible down there. We meet with this guy from the city of New York, who was in charge, and one of his assistants, and you know, the mayor had said "Yes," so they really couldn't say, "No," but they could also make it a little difficult for us. So, we had to "schmooze" them a little, although "schmoozing" is really a bad word. We had to convince them that we would honor … the work being done down there, and the effort being done down there, and not to be exploitive. I think that was key, and we told them, "Look, we're not going on the news with this tomorrow. It's not going to be on for, you

know, 'til next September probably. Anybody feels uncomfortable, doesn't want us down, we won't film what they're doing." … We really assured them and they finally said, "Okay, oh yes, that's great," and then we said, "Look, but here's what we'd like to do. We'd like to come down, hang out a while without a camera, just so people get to know us, and we'll talk to them and ask them what's going on." Now, we're pretty much, by this point, in the chronology of it, it's virtually certain that nobody is left alive down there. So, really it's a matter of recovery, and cleanup at this point, by ten days later. … So, that's what we did, we bought a new camera, we had no money to make this, … but we figure we're going to … find some money. That, as a sort of business model, that was not the way we did things. We usually had an idea and did a little bit of work on it, but didn't start making it when you're actually spending a lot of money with cameras and stuff like that … before we had money. So, this was a departure, but it was … almost inconceivable that we wouldn't be able to succeed that way that we just went head on it, and then, after a week or two, we came down with the camera, and we started taping, and then we also decided we would also tape things that were taking place outside of the Trade Center site with the neighborhood, the architects, and the politicians and stuff like that. So, we had basically two crews of people operating. … First couple of months, we were there every single day and one of our young guys was there every day, and I was there about every other day. … Then we started doing interviews once the guys felt comfortable with us, and we followed them around, and all that footage that you see in the movie is completely unique because we were the only crew that was actually down there in the site. … We kept getting a lot of requests from people, you know, "Can we go with you, can we get your footage," and we said, "No we can't, I mean, the deal is, it's going to be for this documentary, and we can't do it," you know, so, kept saying, "No." Then PBS … gave us a little bit of money to make it, and in the meantime I started to talk to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which is a big foundation in New York that funds projects about science, technology, engineering, and they had given money to the *Great Projects* series years before that. So, they knew me a little bit, fortunately, and they eventually gave us money, but it didn't actually come until about five months later, but they kept saying, "Yes," you know, they … were encouraging about it. … It was a risk, but it seemed like less of a risk, and everybody, of course, was pitching in, and were willing to, you know, hold off on when to get paid until we really got this real money in. So, we were collecting this unique footage that would have this historical value. I felt like one of those World War II combat photographers whose footage would be used for decades afterwards, … about the events that happened there, and the aftermath really. … Our story was very much dedicated toward the engineering and construction guys who were trying to make something positive out of that horrible event. That was … kind of the idea that, what had happened had happened, and who was to blame and all that was going to be talked about to death, but, here you had this tragedy with these families who had lost loved ones who were going to have to live with it for the rest of their lives and the "who is to blame?" and "who should have known what?" and even "what a great job the people were doing to try to rescue these people;" and this is a line in the movie, one of the construction guys said, it's Christmas and I think it was a really sad Christmas for everybody obviously, and, so September to Christmas, right, it's like a three months basically. … Everybody paused for a little bit, and the worked stopped I think for a day or so. … He said, "Look, you know, we can pat ourselves on the back and say what a great job we're doing and helping to try to recover bodies and, you know, rebuild the place, but, you know, the people who lost people here are going to have to live with this for the rest of their lives, so, you know, well, their loss is permanent." So, that's what it was like, and you'd come home, and you've heard a lot of, you know, health talk about breathing

the stuff in, and that was a concern particularly for the people who were there those first couple of weeks. They were just kind of heedless of any safety rules and nothing was going to get them out of there, but, and afterwards people paid a little more attention to their own safety, but you would just come home like covered with this kind of like sooty stuff. You didn't know what the hell it was, but if you thought about it, even for a minute, you would say, "Well, these are these huge office buildings with glass, and furniture, you know, and shelves and stuff and … none of that was there, it was all gone." … Any of this that was burning, … you were breathing in glass particles or, you know, other things. So, because there was nothing there, it was just not, there was steel maybe that was there, you know. … Then you'd come home and you'd just be depressed, and you wouldn't want to go back, you know, the next day. Anyway, we worked on it and we kind of really wound up with another really profound movie, I think, that's really going to have some lasting value about what happened there that first year, and the pain that everybody suffered. … Hopefully, it was going to get to a point where there was a little bit of healing, a little bit of positive glow to it, but in reality, … it was really very little. You got that by the end of that first year and, you know, even the second show we did, which really was far less emotional, and far less traumatic and, the emotion was always palpable for us who went back down there even in places that were now rebuilt, you just sort of sighed, kind of recognizing what would have been there, and the horror that had taken place there. [Editor's Note: *America Rebuilds: A Year at Ground Zero* premiered on September 10, 2002 and the "second show" that Mr. Mandel refers to, *America Rebuilds II: Return to Ground Zero*, premiered on September 11, 2006.] … We talked about, "Well, we're going to do this, we're going to do that" … and it was still pretty sad. … On the other hand, it was, you know, it was a huge effort to get it back to a semblance of normality. Effort, politically, took way longer than it should have, but still, you know, in the end it'll probably be a good thing down there. This memorial is going to be very … emotional for people. It's going to be very good and … whether they should have ever built the buildings at all down there is something which I kind of lean toward they shouldn't have, but what they're going to be [are] buildings that have a lot of hard work and reverence that went into building them and creating them. So, they weren't done strictly for commercial, crass commercial reasons, and then who knows, we're supposed to do another show about it but I don't know if it's going to get done. … Initially, thought that ten years later, … something would be rebuilt, unfortunately, that won't be the case so, I'm not sure we're actually going to do it for 2011. We'll sort of see what happens. … Yes, that was a real, so you can see, you know, they really got to pour their heart and soul into these things, if they're really going to be worth doing as opposed to just trying to fill up an hour on somebody's TV schedule, you know. That's not exactly what I really wanted to do when I started doing this.

SI: When you are working with historical figures, how much character creation is there? You are trying to maintain objectivity, but in the *America Rebuilds* movies, I think of like Larry Silverstein, and you are trying to portray him as he is. Are you also in some way portraying either characters as either heroes or villians? [Editor's Note: Developer Larry Silverstein acquired the World Trade Center complex in July 2001.]

KM: Yes, well … you try not to make a judgment in advance, I think though by the end you … have your own point of view about it, and … it does, I think, become evident of what it is. … It's a bit of a dilemma to do that because … generally, you want to go in with an open mind, and sort of see what happens. Then, after you interview somebody, you kind of look at that and

make another judgment about it, and then, when you get everybody interviewed, you … make yet another judgment. … I know Silverstein may be a good example because I kind of thought that he was being portrayed in the news media as this kind of avaricious, kind of greedy businessman. He certainly is a businessman, and businessmen try to make money and I don't think he was trying to make money on anybody's tragedy, but he was in a position of being the legally obligated person who had to deal with this tragedy. So, it's somewhat unprecedented, and he was really in a kind of unfair position because his contract with the Port Authority said that he's obligated to rebuild these buildings, so how is he going to do that? [laughter] And does anybody want him to? So, that was where the mistake was made, and it wasn't his fault. … Everyone said, "Okay, well you're supposed to rebuild it, so you'll rebuild it and well, he's going to get the money from the insurance." There was a whole case about that, which made him look, like, greedy, because he was trying to collect money from the insurance companies to rebuild the buildings, and then, you had the politicians, meaning the governor of New York, George Pataki, the Port Authority of New York, which is run by both states [New York and New Jersey], and then, every other body, who had a voice in there. The mayor of New York, … it started out with Rudy Giuliani, [and] became Michael Bloomberg, all of whom are chiming in with, … in my opinion, varying degrees of intelligence about it, and Rudy Giuliani, at one point goes, "I think what we need to concentrate on is building a memorial, and consider maybe not rebuilding anything there," and he was like the lone voice in that, except for some of the victims' families, and everybody else on the money side of the equation said, "No, we got to rebuild, you know, if we don't rebuild it's like declaring Osama's victory," or some shit like that. [Editor's Note: Michael Bloomberg was elected mayor of New York in 2002.] Well, you know, this went on for a while, and then, it sort of became clear that they were going to rebuild things, and Rudy was out as mayor, and so he really didn't have a political capability, or … his mouth, which quickly became ignored by most people. So, I kind of think that Larry was kind of a, I won't call him a victim, but he was stuck there having to rebuild. … One of our producers, Dan Miller, … he sort of agreed with this, Larry as the, "He's just trying to collect the money," and I said, "No, Dan, this is not fair, look at the position that he is in," and I think the portrait of him came out a little more balanced as a result of that. … I mean I don't know exactly, I never surveyed this or tested it, but … you felt a little for him as a builder, you know, as a guy stuck in this position, he sort of understood, but he is kind of, you might say that he's arrogant. … He's a businessman, he thinks … he knows what he's doing, he's been successful at it, he's still got a lot of energy, he's about eighty now, … maybe eighty-something. He still works everyday doing his thing. He is the only guy that actually got something built down there, which was building seven. So, you can't take that away from him. … That was a building where nobody died, that was the building that just was more straight forward, less emotion attached to it. So, complicated, and some community issues involved, but nothing to the level of these other buildings. So, I kind of think … he's just an interesting character who wound up being placed in that very unique position. So, that's why I was hoping it would come through. So, I don't know if people agreed or not. Other characters in movies sometimes are a little less [controversial]. The George Marshall movie was easy to slip into this hagiographic mode in which … he could do no wrong, and everybody loved him. … We were worried about that because … the movie kind of leaned in that direction very heavily, but on the other hand, his critics were people that … almost everybody thinks are wrong in most cases, and in the two controversial things that are in that movie about policies that he was involved with were the dropping of the atomic bomb and the recognition of Israel, and I think we just laid them out and gave his opinion about it, and … gave a little bit of the other

opinion, and, well, a lot of it actually. … Then you would decide, you know--let history be. Documentary TV shows are really not, you know, complete in that way. So, I usually call my documentaries mental two-by-fours, in which, you know, you whack somebody on the head and say, "Boom, think about this," and then, they're going to get interested and they can delve into it … as much as they want by reading a book about it, by looking up more information, and so on, because, you know, when you're dealing with an hour, or like thirty or forty pages of the script, it can't possibly be complete, it can't possibly be thorough. You can try to be relatively fair if you approach it that way, … that's my philosophy. There's lots of other theories about this. There's advocacy documentary filmmaking which … I don't think I do. There is kind of propaganda, more like Michael Moore, he goes out with a point of view, and then finds stuff to fit his point of view. There's films of personal expression, where, you know, "I got to tell a story of my grandfather coming from Europe, and afraid of this prejudice and becoming," so, but there's a lot of it. … They all have something of value to them. As long as you don't masquerade one as the other, I think you're fine.

SI: If you were to look at yourself from the outside, what would you say are the hallmarks of a Kenneth Mandel movie?

KM: Well, I think these are documentaries that are sort of like a good glass of Cabernet Sauvignon. … They got a lot going on in them, they're complex, and you know, you got to think about it. We're not just handing you a couple of little cookies. You're going to have to think about these things and trust us, that we think these things are important enough for you to think about it a little bit. I think that's where … I just leave it at that, and I don't think I'm trying to be super creative. I'm not sure I'm trying to break a whole lot of new ground and technique; here and there once in a while but … that's not my mission. I'm not an artist in that way, but I think I'm borrowing this from my good friend Perry Wolff, but it's just a good story that … I think people would be interested in hearing, and it would be just like sitting around the fireplace talking about something, albeit a lot more expensive. …

SI: Your most recent film was on the building of Alaska, and you just recently came back from Alaska. Was your trip to Alaska related to the project?

KM: Yes, it's a follow-up project. The last word in *Building Alaska* (2009) is by a former governor of Alaska, Wally Hickel, really interesting character, and it goes back to my years a little bit at Rutgers in my memory of him. … Hickel, in the Building Alaska movie, says something about, "The future is all up here in the north in Alaska, the oil, the gas, the, you know, other treasures, it's all here, and we got to work to do things up here." Well, I got to know him a little bit over the years through making that movie and even once prior to that I had met him, and he was a real interesting guy to me. He was like, in a way, Marshall-esque, in that he just rose above, not in personality at all, but he just rose above, he tried to raise the standards of our understanding of what, in his case, politics is capable of. In Marshall's case, it was diplomacy and even an understanding of war as a tool of diplomacy. Marshall was just selfless, and always trying his best. Well, Hickel was like that too, and he had a philosophy which he developed over his years up in Alaska, and particularly after he left public life, of trying to utilize the resources of Alaska in particular, but [also] in the world in general, in what he called the "philosophy of the commons," and the commons was, being that these resources are owned by all of us. They're

not owned by some private companies or even countries. Who owns the sea, who owns the air, who owns space, and who owns a lot of land, but the nations in which they're, and people of those nations, you know, who are there and these things could be used to benefit these people, benefit the many not the few, and therefore eliminate or go a ways to eliminating poverty. There was no reason for poverty. It sounds like, is it communism or something? [laughter] What is he talking about? Well, he's not, and he articulates this. I said, "Oh, this is something, this is a man who is unique, and he has a normal life like everybody else and he's got his wins and his losses and his failures, and battles along the way. His most famous battle being, having been fired by Richard Nixon for protesting the invasion of Cambodia in May of 1970, for which he got fired as Secretary of the Interior. So, there is something that stands out right away, sort of like, he could get somebody of my generation's attention. A Republican businessman who actually did that, are you kidding me? Or how about now, somebody doing that without checking the polls, you know, no chance, right? So, you have a lot of political cowards and here's a guy who stands out from that, but he's a Republican, although he hesitates calling himself [that]. He was elected as a Republican governor and he's a businessman, a successful businessman. Well, what the hell is he talking about here now, alleviating poverty? Republican businessmen don't talk about that. So, he's very distinctive. So, that kind of sent me on … my next journey to try to do a biography of him. … I think it'd be great. It's going to be a great one because he's just a colorful guy, and on the national scene. If he was just an Alaskan, I think it would have a little … less interest from people, but I think his philosophy is an international one, and his life was led on a big stage, you know, and certainly a national stage, and I'm kind of looking forward to it. … I got to do what I've done with these others, which is to get a little emotional about him, pour myself in, you know, and just do it. You got to immerse, you can't half commit, you got to go all the way, and I'm not so young anymore, so it's harder to go all the way, Shaun. [laughter]

SI: Were you filming on this trip?

KM: No, this was research and fund raising. So, I'm relatively successful, and I feel pretty good that by January I'll be in production on it, and make it next year, and maybe have it on by the end of the year. That will be the goal, … that would be a good schedule if we can hit it, if I can hit it, of course. I know I got Rutgers football games … between now and then; it's going to take some time. … I'm a season ticket holder and tailgater in the scarlet lot. I've got at least seven days a year I can make it and maybe a bowl game if we're … lucky.

SI: You stay fairly involved with Rutgers?

KM: Relatively, yes, you know, I've gone to my last couple of reunions, the 30th and 35th, I guess. … Now, I'm a season ticket holder, and I've been going to the games and then tailgate with a bunch of us and [we] have fun. My cousin Joel, … I mentioned a couple of times, he goes; civil engineer. Yes, so we have a nice crew, couldn't convince any of my kids to go to Rutgers, but that turned out okay, [laughter] and then, still married to my wife, Janet Mandel from Douglass, class of '71. … We see quite a few people from the old days, you know, we still have some connection. You probably saw the article Shaun, I don't know, maybe you wrote it, about my roommate Steve Ostro who passed away, was … about a year ago, somebody did a nice …

SI: Profile.

KM: Profile, yes. … Steve … was also a Rutgers engineer. He became an astronomer, and went to work for the jet propulsion laboratory out at NASA's, out at Pasadena, California Institute of Technology, I think, and became one of the world's experts in asteroids, in what they call near earth asteroids, that come between the earth and the nearest planet. … Some of them can crash into earth like meteors do all the time, but these could be bigger ones, and so, he was one of the few people on the planet actually tracing, [laughter] which was sort of fruitless job to some degree because if you saw one and you knew it was coming to earth there was not much you could do except warn people in advance and you might not want to do that because everybody would panic. So, in any case, but he was pretty smart, and he passed away from cancer a year or so ago, a little more than a year ago. … The class of '69 … nominated him to be a distinguished alumni, which he didn't make the first year, but the *RAA Magazine* [*Rutgers Alumni Association Magazine*] did a … really nice profile of him, in which I contributed, and they did a really nice online article too, so that was good. He deserves to be recognized, good guy. He, [laughter] well the last year I was--what year it was--I don't know, I think it was about the end of my fourth year, he was a preceptor in Demarest Hall, and I was living in an apartment downtown, and the landlord of the apartment threw me out, threw us all out because he wanted to convert the building into an office building, and it was May, end of May. … We said to him, "Look," it was May 1st, I said, "Look, we got finals coming up, we'll be out of here in two or three weeks, just let us stay," and the son of a bitch wouldn't let us stay. … We all moved out, my roommate was graduating, I forget where the hell he went. The guy upstairs--I don't know what happened to him, he was a nice guy--and there was me, and I knew Steve because he was an engineer with me, and he said, "Look, there's a bed in the dorm, you know, why don't you just move into the dorm, you know, for three weeks, you know, and you didn't need anybody's permission," probably did, but he just let me move in, and I moved in, except I had a cat. "Don't worry, bring the cat, too." So, we had the cat, and … my roommate was a really nice guy, you know, for those three weeks, and a lot of guys in the dorm I actually knew through Steve already … and the guys became friends of mine too, and I lived there for those three weeks. … Then, Steve and I got an apartment in town, from the French girls I mentioned. They moved out of their apartment, and we moved in. They went back to France, never to be seen again by me. So, poor Steve, you know, a young guy, he passed away. A lot of good stories and a lot of good memories from Rutgers, you want one more? …

SI: I did want to touch upon your community activities.

KM: Yes, okay, well this chapter would be called "Ken Mandel: Serial Volunteer," stop him before he volunteers again. [laughter] When I moved to West Orange in 1985, we had been just talking about the beginning of the *Great Projects* series and I met a scholar from England named Asa Briggs, and Asa Briggs wanted to come see the Edison site, and I said, "Well, it's in my town, I'll just call them up, and, you know, we'll go over." [Editor's Note: Mr. Mandel is referring to the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in West Orange, New Jersey.] So, we go over to see the Edison site with Asa Briggs and Briggs is this very highly respected scholar, Lord Briggs, and had written major histories about the Victorian era. He … just like fell in love with the Edison site, and I had, like, been there once before, and they asked, and I told them, "I'm living in West Orange." He said, "Well, why don't you guys get involved here," and I said,

"Well, you know, it does make sense because, you know, I'm in the film business, and Edison invented the motion picture camera." So, I volunteered to become involved with the Friends of the Edison Historic Site at some point later, late '80s, I guess. I got involved, and then, I've been involved ever since. … I recently, and I'm not happy about this, but I had to become the chairman of the Friends of the Edison National Historical Park because the chairman resigned because his wife passed away, and I'm de facto the acting chairman. So, I've been doing that for a long time, and I've really enjoyed it because I've learned a lot, met a lot of people I wanted to know, and we've done an awful lot of stuff for the town and area about getting people acquainted with their history, and you see the connection, it's history, it's film, it's my town, so there was no way of getting out of that, right? Then, … at some point in the making of the *Great Projects* series I got involved, I went to see a play in New York about the Wright brothers, I thought that might be a part of our *Great Projects* series, and … [they] asked [me] to be on the board of that theater.

SI: That is The Ensemble Studio Theater?

KM: Ensemble Studio Theater, which I'm … still on the board of that. I was the acting chairman of that for a couple of years as they were going through some trouble, I raised them an awful lot of money from the Sloan Foundation, and I was very happy to be able to do that. … I'm like the king there; I can do no wrong, having raised all this money, millions of dollars. … I was able to write a play about a young, well, here you go, it brings it full-circle. I wrote a play based on a real story, but really it's more autobiographical, based on real story about a young idealistic engineer. … In this case, he goes to Nicaragua to try to help the Sandinistas after Somoza is overthrown, to make it a better country and, idealistically and naively, you know, goes down to Nicaragua and he winds up getting killed. So, I used this, as sort of to tell a story of my life as a young idealistic engineer who goes does something naively … but I don't get killed. [laughter] So, that's the good part of it, and I … wrote the play and it was actually performed in a reading list last November, it was really cool. It was one of the coolest things I've done because it had real actors and a real director taking these words that I had written and, you know, and making it come alive. A lot of friends came to see it. It was small, but it was kind of cool. So, that was that.

SI: What was the title of the play?

KM: It was called, [laughter] rather unimaginatively named, *The Death of an Engineer*, apologies to Arthur Miller. [Editor's Note: Arthur Miller wrote the play, *Death of a Salesman* (1949).] I'm going to change the title before its goes through its next iteration. Then, I was asked by the town of West Orange and the mayor and others to found something called the West Orange Film Society and since, I guess, one hand scratches the other's back, whatever, I don't know, they've sort of done me some favors, so I sort of felt I had to do it. So, I founded something called the Film Society and the West Orange Classic Film Festival. So, we've been doing that now for five years and that's kind of been fun too because, you know, again it's a film related thing, and I've learned a lot about film, and film making, but mostly films that I hadn't known too much about in the course of doing that. So, that's been a very successful event in town, it's made West Orange another little destination for a town where the movies were born. They're showing films at the AMC Theater right over there. So, that's been kind of cool. I was

on the board of the Black Maria Film Festival, but I've left that. … I could retire and still be pretty busy, Shaun. … I'm not planning to yet, one or two more films, I think I've got in there to do.

SI: It seems like you are working on a lot of things all at once.

KM: A few, not a lot. … The board here has like seven, one-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight. All right, so nine things, but three of them are just like, you know, little ideas, they're nothing really. So, I'm not really doing anything at the moment on any of them. This is the Ground Zero one that I talked about, and the top three, Hickel is the one I told you about, Atlanta is kind of a non-broadcast project about a big airport terminal they're building down there, and that's something that we've been following them do that for the last year or so, and they're going to go another year, that's sort of an occasional thing. … The top one, Opus Dei, that could become a big project. That's about a biography of the founder of Opus Dei, who is a Spanish priest who was made a saint about eight years ago, and so, … not being Catholic, and not knowing too much about Catholicism, it actually got my interest as opposed to just being another saint kind thing, because … I had, like, a personal connection through an old friend of mine who had actually become a member of Opus Dei. I hadn't seen him, about twenty-five years and he … has been sick. God, I know a lot of people that have been sick. He had been sick with cancer, and I kind of hung out with him a little bit, and then, he invited me to his house, and I met some of these folks who are members of Opus Dei, and I said to myself, "This is a pretty interesting story." I don't know if you know too much about it, but it's *Da Vinci Code* of course was where Opus Dei were the bad guys, which bore really no real semblance of the truth, it was just completely idiotic. [Editor's Note: Mr. Mandel is referring to the Dan Brown novel, *The Da Vinci Code* (2003).] … They were naturally unhappy about it, so they thought they'd like to get some fair portrayals of their existence, but I wasn't really interested in that, so much as a story of their founder who was really a twentieth century man. … There were still people alive who knew him. So, I thought that was a unique element in this telling of his story, and then, he lived through, like, the Spanish Civil War and World War II, of course, and then, the years of the Second Vatican Council which was … pretty interesting in religious history. So, I thought it's got some of that, that would interest a general audience, not just some Catholic audience. Anyway, so, I'm puttering around with that idea, and I wrote up something about it, then wrote up a longer thing that somebody else really wrote it, that I'm supposed to read today, which I'm not going to get to. … I don't even know if it's on the website, it might have been. That was an early incarnation of it, but it got tabled; now it's gotten resuscitated, and that's really not about Opus Dei anymore, it's really about the founder of Opus Dei, Saint Josemaria Escriva, who was the Spanish priest who was born around 1905, '02, died in '75, and created this major organization in the twentieth century out of nothing in reality, or what he says was a vision, from God speaking to him. So, I thought that was kind of cool, and it's hard to do these things because most of the analysis we do are on terms of the natural world, being political or physical or something but if you … get into the supernatural world, … how do you do that cinematically first of all, and then, how do you get people, if half your audience is secular and doesn't believe this stuff to begin with, how do you get them interested in it, or at least willing to accept it? I haven't figured that out yet, but … that's what I'm working on. So, if you got any ideas, send them to me. [laughter]

SI: I do not know.

KM: Yes, neither do I, but there he is right there, see his picture on … that box. Yes, that's him. He looks sort of like your avuncular uncle or something like that. So, there's a little film of him, that's the good part. There are some of him as an older guy on tape at these meetings where he held sway and question and answer things, so, you know, kind of interesting. …

SI: There was a final story you were going to tell.

KM: Oh, yes, this is … really a Rutgers story. That was my father and my cousin Joel, who I mentioned, and his father. So, people are honest with you telling their story at Rutgers, when they were somewhere between eighteen and twenty-two years old. … A lot of your time and your mind is preoccupied with meeting women, and more, with them. So, now we're 1965, '66. We're in Ford Hall. At Ford Hall we had a three room suite, there were four of us in there, and it really was supposed to be a single, a single, and a double. … We decided we would make one of those rooms into this lounge, and so we moved the beds into one room, and the desks into the big room, and we made a lounge into one, took the bed and the desk out and the dresser and … we got a couch from the Salvation Army, we had a chair, and we had some beer lights that rotated like a disco ball kind of thing, "pre-disco ball" disco balls. … We were in there, the year's going on and, my cousin Joel and I meet these women on Saturday night, … "townies" is the phrase, and I shudder to use it, but that's what it was back then. … We invite them over to the room the next day, completely illegal, of course, no women are allowed in the dorms except under some, whatever it was. But anyway, this was like a bad offense if we got caught. … The other two roommates are out, … I can't remember why, but they weren't going to be there, and Joel and I have the two girls … in the lounge, disco ball spinning around, and we had a couple of bottles of liquor. This was going to be it. … We're sitting there, and talking, and they had just gotten there maybe fifteen, twenty minutes, and we're talking, having a drink, and all of a sudden there's a knock on the door. "Oh, shit who could that be?" So, Joel goes to the door, and I hear the door slam, and he comes back in, and he goes, "You're not going to believe this, it's your father and my father at the door," [laughter] and I go, "Well, what are they doing here?" … He goes, "Well, I think they came down with this other friend of theirs," who had a ring that Joel had gotten for some present or something. … Henry had made the ring, and they were there to deliver the ring, but they hadn't called us. There's no cell phones or text messages and … they didn't call us. They just showed up because they figured we'd be around. So, now we have the girls in the room and the booze, and … he says, "All right, listen, we have to go, but they're going to want to come in, so you go, you have to get in the closet." We put the girls in the closet, and we put away the liquor, and they come in and we show them around real quick and I go, "Look, let's to the Ledge now and have, go get a soda, and we're acting a little weird, but nobody says anything, and they go, "Okay." … The dorm back then, you had to lock the door from the outside, I think, with your key, and then … you couldn't actually leave the room, I think, if the door was locked. Yes, anyway, … so Joel and I go, "Look, you take them out, go toward the car, and I'll go back in and tell Rich (Myer?), give him the key--Rich was the guy who lived upstairs and was a friend of ours--to let the girls out after we go. [laughter] So, that worked, I do that, we go back, I go back in and say, "Oh, I forgot something in the room," I go back in, I go, "Rich, you know, there's two girls in the room, in the closet, you got to let them out." So, he goes, "Okay, I'm going to let them out." So, that works, we go to the Ledge, we

have a soda, and the end of the story is we never saw the girls again. They wouldn't have anything to do with us. … We never saw Rich (Myer?) again after that year. … We've told that story for the next forty years. [laughter] That's what it was like in those days. … It was one adventure after another, a lot of fun.

SI: Thank you for all your time today, I really appreciate it.

KM: Okay, great.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Gerald Carlucci 9/25/11
Reviewed by David Freschl 9/25/11
Reviewed by Nicholas Molnar 10/7/11
Reviewed by Kenneth Mandel 3/5/12