

**University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives  
Unit One/Allen Hall Oral History Project  
Interviewee: Jeff Machota, former resident of Unit One  
Interviewer: Spenser Bailey, Student Life and Culture Archives  
Date: 1 February 2024  
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**Spenser Bailey: Okay! This is an interview for the University of Illinois Archives Unit One/Allen Hall Oral History Project. My name is Spenser Bailey, I am a postgraduate research assistant at the University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives. The date today is February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and I am pleased to be speaking with Mr. Jeff Machota, did I get that right?**

Jeff Machota: Right.

**SB: We're speaking via Zoom, and I am located at the Archives Research Center on the University of Illinois campus, and we're going to be speaking today about his experiences at the University of Illinois and with the Unit One Living-Learning Community. And before I begin answering any questions, please, if you want to just take a break, or pause, or anything at any time, just let me know, and we can move on from there.**

**So to begin, would you please say your full name?**

JM: My name is Jeff Machota.

**SB: And where are you from, Jeff, or what was your early life like?**

JM: So, I grew up in Cicero, Illinois, I'm not, are you aware of the Chicago area?

**SB: I grew up in the southwest suburbs and my folks are from the city.**

JM: Okay. So, yeah, so, Cicero, being a frontline suburb, really just like a split-off neighborhood. So I grew up there, Catholic education from kindergarten through senior year in high school. So the Catholic grade school was just two blocks from where I grew up, Our Lady of Charity, was sent by, maybe not by choice, to an all-male Catholic high school, Fenwick High School, but for academic reasons, the public high school was Morton East, which didn't really have much of a high college rate and Fenwick was college prep. So I, I was a, grade-wise I was a good student. I was a disciplinary problem at times, or many times. I did not like the people in

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<sup>1</sup> **Transcriber's Note:** Some "filler" words – "Um," "Mm hm," and others – were not included in this transcription. Additionally, repeated words and phrases were removed when possible. I endeavored to write a transcription as faithful as possible to the conversation between interviewer and interviewee. That said, there may be some errors, so anyone considering citing any part of this interview is encouraged to listen to the relevant part of the conversation and make their own determination of what was said.

charge of the discipline there, and the all-male Catholic stuff and all the rich kids that I ended up going to school with.

So, many stories there, but the goal was that I wanted to go, I was open to learning, I read a lot, and listened to lots of music. Me and my friends had gone from heavy metal to 60s music to the blues, and we would see blues. We were really into music, I was really into reading, political-type stuff, or countercultural type stuff. The teachers, most of the teachers at the high school were, and especially the disciplinarians, tried to squash that, they didn't want that. They wanted everybody to go to a small, Catholic college. When they, one of the college counselors was, of course, a football coach, because who better to know about college than a football coach? He, at one point, was passing out these release forms, this is senior year, to release our future academic progress so they could track us. Because Fenwick was big on tracking people. Then he said, "Oh, by the way, this is voluntary." So I crumpled it up and threw it away, that caused me to be pulled out of class the next period and screamed at. Even though it was voluntary.

So my whole goal was to get away from that. I wanted to learn, I was, I did not register for the selective service system. I did not want to do that, because that was still a requirement. There was no active draft, but my father had said if I didn't do that he wouldn't pay for college, and if he didn't pay for college, you're not eligible for any financial aid if you didn't sign. So I did begrudgingly sign the selective service, but I already had explored, with another friend in high school, Triple C-O, which was the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors. So, I knew that I needed to get out of Cicero, my time there was done. I didn't want to join the military to get out, I knew that wasn't an option, and I wanted to learn. So those were the primary goals and the U of I was, I only probably applied to a couple places. I did pretty good on the, I don't even remember what the scores are, on the things. But we had both the ACT and the SAT. I know the, I think the SAT doubled the English, or there was some kind of formula where I did better on that possibly than the ACT, but I still did pretty good. So I was able to get into the U of I. I maybe applied to one other school, I don't remember. So that was my beginning of my path to the U of I.

**SB: So, education when you were growing up, you enjoyed learning, education was important but you just wanted a different sort of environment than what you'd been experiencing?**

JM: I would say grade school, I mean it was nuns and lay teachers, and it sucked. High school, there were some good teachers, there were a couple decent priests and a couple lay teachers who were good. They were English, and history mostly. I was definitely not a numbers or science guy, I was into the words. Actually, the former governor, Quinn, his brother was one of the history teachers my junior year.

**SB: Oh, really.**

JM: Yeah. But yeah, I got away with, they were lenient, they let me do things that were probably not completely orthodox. I enjoyed learning, and not necessarily, as you will see as the story goes along, not necessarily in a structured University environment, but I enjoyed learning stuff.

**SB: That makes a lot of sense. And when, if I may, when was it that you first came to Illinois? When was your freshman year?**

JM: So Spring of 1984.

**SB: Spring of '84. Is there a reason why you started in the spring and not the fall like other students?**

JM: I'm sorry, I'm sorry. [chuckles] It would be fall of 1984.

**SB: Fall of '84.**

JM: Yes, fall of '84.

**SB: Okay. And had you ever been to U of I before you arrived as a freshman?**

JM: So there was one of those, I don't know, visit days or something over the summer, I found it supremely boring. I split off from it instantly, let my parents do it. And I found the Red Herring, Channing-Murray/Red Herring, and I saw that and said, "Okay, that's a place I need to go." Of course, it wasn't open, because it was summertime. And I found Nature's Table, which I don't know if you've ever heard of that, it was a jazz club right across from Krannert, where I ended up working for many years. But that was the other place, I said, "These are the places that I need to go when I get here."

**SB: So you came down for the official tour, and immediately bailed and went to go find the places you knew you were actually going to like.**

JM: Yes. And then, I don't know if you've heard of Treno's, so I went there and it was the whole big corner at that point, it was everything. I ordered a hamburger, because my parents are still doing the tour, I didn't know where they were, I was going to just sit there and wait and then I got the burger and I'm eating it, "I was like, this is the weirdest f\*\*\*\*\* hamburger I've ever had," but after I got halfway through it, someone said, "Oh, that was the veggie sprout burger you got, not, by accident," I'd never had anything like that before. So, it was fine.

**SB: Actually, because my first interview, you mentioned you knew Laura Haber. My first interview was with her, so she talked about Treno's and Nature's Table, which are of course not here any longer, but Red Herring is still, which is really nice.**

JM: Yeah.

**SB: What was your first impression, just of the whole University? What did you think when you first got here?**

JM: Well, so the other thing before I got here, I actually chose Unit One. [Unintelligible] Allen Hall/Unit One, I chose Allen Hall because of Unit One. Because they had promotional literature

that was available that you could request to live there. I did request to live there, and I requested to live there because of Unit One. I had a, I used to work at Brookfield Zoo, at least for one year, and there was this guy a couple years older than me who had gone, and he lived at Allen Hall, and he loved it, and though he only lasted a year, he loved it. I was like, "Ok." And one of my cousins hated it, but all the reasons she hated it for were exactly reasons I would like it. So I'd already chosen Allen Hall and Unit One, and I had no, I didn't have any plans for what I would go to school in. It was just, go to school. Unlike now, when you have to choose a major when you're in second grade, it wasn't the case. But I actually never chose a major [laughs]. Or I did the last week I was in school, I guess.

**SB: So not only, before you arrived, not only did you know about the University and you had been there before, but you also knew you were going to be living in Allen Hall and you had an idea of what you were going to experience there.**

JM: I wouldn't say I knew a lot about the University maybe, I only went to a few places that were, ended up in Urbana, I split off from the Quad. But, yeah. I knew that Allen Hall and Unit One was a place that looked extremely interesting to me and that I would be able to explore things that I wanted to explore.

**SB: And would you mind elaborating a little bit on why it was interesting to you or what was appealing about it?**

JM: Boy, you know I was looking through, I save a lot of s\*\*\*, and I don't have what the outreach literature was, but I was always interested in learning stuff, and learning things that were not just the mainstream stuff. And this seemed like there was the opportunity to learn that here, to find out more what I wanted to know. I mean, most of the stuff, I felt that was of most knowledge to me I read on my own. I wasn't necessarily in a class, this was in high school, and that. So that's what I was looking for, and whatever classes I saw or whatever description I saw, seemed like that was what I wanted.

**SB: So you already kind of knew that this was going to be a place where you were going to find some of what you were looking for at the University.**

JM: Yeah. And the big thing, too, which was against what the Catholic school people were advising, they wanted you to go to a small, insular place. I wanted to go to a big place where there'd be lots of people, and therefore there'd be a big diversity of opinion and it'd be easier for me to swim in whatever I wanted to swim in. As opposed to just going to a narrow place.

**SB: That's, yeah, that's one of the, in my opinion, the big appeals here about the "Big U." No matter what you're into, or even if you don't know what you're into yet, you're going to find something for you here.**

JM: Especially that, in retrospect, back in the days I went. There was a lot more flexibility.

**SB: Yeah. And when you first got here, in the fall of '84 as a student, what do you remember about move-in day, or your first impressions of when you got here and got settled in, and moving into Allen?**

JM: Well, I will give you a censored version of the story. So, as I said me and my friends were into music, we went out a lot. The night before my parents were driving me to college, went to see, it was a double billed Jerry Garcia and Frank Zappa. They weren't playing together, but they were on the same band. So I saw that, we were up very late, drove down with my, well, my parents drove down, it was like, unpacked, my records, my stereo, my, you know, all the big physical stuff. [Laughs] Books, whatever. We probably had lunch, and they took off. And I was just, well, I was wiped out and I was wandering around trying to find some like-minded souls, and I was about to give up. And I was wandering around, inside and out, and then, I looked at somebody, I was asking for something and I was like, "I give up." And then he asked me, and I said yes, so I ended up connecting with this person. And we ended up, he and his buds, we drove around, we ended up sitting in the Channing-Murray parking lot. Because we didn't know anything. But it turns out, none of the people I was hanging out with were students, that night. They were all there with their buddy, who ended up being my next-door neighbor, who ended up becoming good, like one of my closest friends the first few years down there. And they were all from Glen Ellyn, so the Cicero-Glen Ellyn connection began, which went on for quite a few years. So my first night was pretty momentous and pretty bizarre. [Laughs] At first, I was like, "Oh no, this seems too normal, I expected something a little less normal," then I ended up meeting these people and...

**SB: And the night before you had gone and seen Zappa and Jerry Garcia, so you had a very eventful 24 hours.**

JM: Yeah. And we were, I wasn't a Deadhead per se at that point, I'd seen them a few times. We, me and my buddies, we weren't necessarily partisans of either, we were there for both bands, we enjoyed both of their music. We had never seen Zappa before, we'd seen the Dead, and all the Zappa freaks turned, they stood up and turned their back on Jerry Garcia while he played. It was really weird, had a lot of weird vibes. But, so yeah.

**SB: I think weird vibes is a good way of describing Frank Zappa. [Both laugh]**

JM: Yeah.

**SB: So when you first arrived in the fall of '84, you had this crazy, eclectic first day on, first day in Allen. What was your first introduction to Allen Hall programming or to classes there or anything other than just simply living in the building?**

JM: So, this is where memory doesn't quite always pan out. I know I took, so I was there for two years, and when I had to declare a major, at the last week of my sophomore year or whatever it was, I said, I declared Unit One as a major, jokingly. Because that's what I preferred it to be, but it wasn't allowed, so I declared history, and then I took a semester break which I am still on, since the spring of 1986. So I took, I know I took Psych 101, which was offered, whether it was the first semester or first year or whatever, which was one of the things they were doing at that

point was offering some smaller versions of big classes, so that was there. But I took classes, so Marianne Brun, who was the director of the in-residence program, I took classes with her. And these are [unintelligible] multiple classes, I took classes with Mark Enslin, who's still around. I took Music, Culture, Society and then Music and Protest, I tried taking guitar lessons, the first year from Arun Chandra, it was credit/no credit, the next year from Mark Dziuba. I think I took a filmmaking class, [unintelligible] I'm pretty sure. So those were some of the classes, those were some of the more exciting classes I took, to me. Because they were small, so I enjoyed the fact that it was a small thing even though I was at a big University. I wasn't really taking any of the big, you know, except like, I don't know, Astronomy 101 or whatever, kind of things that were in the big things. They were all small things, and they were challenging, and sometimes they were a bit too much. There was a lot of people, older people, in these too, so I'm, very green [laughs], and so those were some of the classes I took. So those things stand out.

**SB: And were some of those, or were some or all of them taught in Allen Hall itself?**

JM: Yeah, those were all in Unit One, in Unit One. I lived in 1 North, so right below us was Unit One.

**SB: So it was the Ground Floor North where the classroom spaces and stuff were?**

JM: I know they reconfigure things, I think, over time, because it used to be, so that side, the north side, from 1 through whatever, 4, was men, and the women's side was the other side, except for Ground South, which was still men. So there was a Ground South floor which was men, and women above that.

**SB: That makes sense. And what was it like, you said you had a good friend who ended up being your neighbor, what was it like meeting people in Allen and what was the social scene, so to speak, like, or, just kind of, generally, when you're not participating in courses, how was it just to live there and be a part of that?**

JM: Well, I was trying to figure out who I was going to be. I was trying to shed some of my more excessive ways of high school. Of course, that didn't work, coming to college right away. That was my plan. You know, it took a little while to find things, I even, at first, went a couple of times to hang out at Newman Hall, because that was the men's Catholic dorm, only because there were a few people, I didn't really have many friends in high school. I was still friends with people from the neighborhood, but they didn't go to the high school, by and large. So I had very few friends in high school, but some of them were at Newman, so I went there, which was a bizarre place. And it took a little while to figure out what I was doing, and you know, I was searching for stuff, but my roommate freshman year was real, we became friends, I guess, we were friends. By the... so I'm going to tell you a couple momentous things, and we can track back, but as I was searching for stuff...

So I had Spanish 101, or whatever, and it was taught by Robin Cohen, who I believe was a former Unit One person, and she also put a political component to it. She showed things, you know who Ed Asner was?

So, he had this video he had made on Central America, and all the wars in Central America and [unintelligible]. She showed that in Spanish class. And then there was a sanctuary program, it was the Champaign-Urbana Ecumenical Committee on Sanctuary, which was housing an El Salvadorean refugee family. They were going to be, they were living at the Illinois Disciples Foundation, or speaking at the McKinley Church, so she encouraged me to go to that. I went to that, that was my first involvement and I signed up, I ended up becoming just like a low-level phone answerer, and that was kind of my gateway to meeting a whole bunch of different people, political people. Because the people I was meeting at Allen Hall weren't necessarily political. I was meeting the, these were the people I was looking for, the political people. And then by, I think, the spring of '85 I was involved in, started getting involved in a whole bunch of stuff, I got involved in a student government campaign. There was a slate called "Off-Center," I wasn't one of the people running, I was one of the volunteers. They won a bunch of seats, I got involved with that. That led to them taking over part of student government...

Anti-apartheid movement where I became a, in a couple of years I became a leader of it, but at that point, got involved in that. So by the summer of 1985, I got arrested at a Board of Trustees meeting protesting their failure to divest from South Africa. So that was the first summer of my, so by that time, I've already moving pretty quickly. By the spring of '86 I was one of the leaders of the anti-apartheid movement. And we actually did a panel discussion a few years back at the, I donated my archives to the Champaign County Historical Archive, and we did an event, and actually Rhonda Kurtz, who was the president of student government at the time, she was on the panel along with some other people. So there's a video of that, I can send that to you if you're interested.

**SB: Oh, yeah, that would be great. The more information that we have the better. When, and if I may ask, when did you, you said you were down here in the summer of '85, did you stay here or did you go home to Cicero?**

JM: Yeah, I stayed here. I've been here ever since I came to this school. [Laughs]

**SB: Oh, you're currently in Champaign-Urbana?**

JM: Yeah, yeah. I've been in Urbana since.

**SB: I got here as a freshman in the fall of '16...**

JM: Weeks...

**SB: Go ahead, sorry.**

JM: I went back for [unintelligible] weeks, I went home for a couple of weeks at one point, I was like, "It's too much. I love my parents, but nope." [Laughs]

**SB: I got here as a freshman in 2016 and I'm still here, so. When you started getting involved with, like you said, with student government, with political activism. How did you**

**get, how exactly did you find out about those opportunities? Did you just happen to know people and get introduced, or did you go looking for them?**

JM: Well, I would say that the gateway was going to that talk on Central America. It was, one of the refugees was speaking, he was in political refuge from El Salvador. They had to have assumed names, but they were in public sanctuary, so they would speak out. And then I was answering the phone with the Office of the Quakers, and I got to meet them fleeing Catholicism. But who knew I ended up meeting, I meet Quakers, I meet Unitarians, I meet Disciples, I meet all these people that were just, that were very committed to all this stuff. All of them, by and large, older than me. And it was just opening my mind, then, to all these things. And of course, there were flyers, there was all this stuff, the food co-op. which was just in a basement at that point, was right there, so I joined that even though I was still living in the dorms.

So, and then, Allen Hall, this is the days of posters, so there's posters everywhere. So I would look at things and go to different events. I would go to the in, so in-residence was crucial too, the in-residence program, I would go to almost, I thought I went to almost all of them, or I went to a lot of stuff there. So some of the ones that, so this is going to blur, which was like right away or not, but it was both artists and activists, was kind of the combination. So this was when Marianne Brun was in charge, there was this guy, Stephen Baird, he was a street musician, would play on the Quad but he was from Boston, I believe. So they would, you know about the in-residence program, right, how it works?

**SB: Oh, yeah.**

JM: They live there. Back then it was like two or three weeks they would stay there. So it was at least two weeks, so they were there. There was this guy Patrick Doherty, who was a punk musician and artist, George Hallett, South African photographer, Batya Weinbaum, a radical feminist, at a couple points I realized I was the only guy in the room and it was making people uncomfortable. I was still just learning all this s\*\*\*, absorbing it, Paul Hoover who was the first director of Unit One, he spoke, I ended up, I believe, spring break, my first spring break, spring break of 85, a van of us drove to Celo, North Carolina, where he lived. He had a solar home out in the woods, we hiked the mountains, stayed in the solar home, like five or six of us. Dave Lippman who was a performer who went under the name of George Shrub, from the Committee to Intervene Anywhere, the CIA.

Prexy Nesbitt, who ended up becoming, who was one of the powerhouse leader of the anti-apartheid movement, and who worked with, I ended up working with him pretty closely for a while. So there was all of that, there were the Performers Workshop Ensemble people, so these were the Herbert Brun, these were the first generation, first or second generation Herbert Brun disciples. So like Mark Enslin, Susan Parenti, Lori Blewett, a whole bunch of people who I ended up, so I got to meet all of these people as well. So it was a stew, it was just a lot going on. And going to these talks, it made me think a lot, made me, figuring out where I fit in all of this stuff.

**SB: Would there have been, was there a person in-residence, a person or a group in-residence at all times, or would there be a week or two in-between different residents?**



JM: You know... I don't know. [Chuckles] Most of the time. The schedule I sent you, I was like I know in the spring of '86 that Prexy Nesbitt was in-residence because we had our big rally where we took over the South Lounge of the Union and then the next day we had 60 people arrested at a Board of Trustees meeting, and Prexy spoke at the rally. He said, "Hey! I gotta be careful, I can't say 'Do something illegal.'" So he gave this speech which was on fire, and he stopped and one of our guys got up and said, "Time to take over the South Lounge of the Union!" Which he was practicing for like an hour ahead of time. And he's not on the schedule, so he probably got added, and then I found a thing for Dave Lippman, who's not on this schedule either, and this is the 85-86 schedule, and I found a flyer and some stuff from him, and he... so I think some things probably got changed, there was probably some room to move. Well, let's see... this goes, this is pretty back-to-back. So September 2<sup>nd</sup> to September 21, that's three weeks. [Unintelligible] October 3<sup>rd</sup>, well, that's shorter. So, it seems like it varied. October 13<sup>th</sup> to November 2<sup>nd</sup>, yeah, I don't know.

**SB: Seems like it jumped around, probably just according to when people were available.**

JM: Well, I think that was the big coordination thing. And you know, as time went on, I know by the time Laura took over, there was, well, funding issues and things like that, and people's availability. People weren't able to leave their gigs for two weeks for basically low pay and room and board. And living in a dorm. [Laughs]. Even though it was nice.

**SB: I have to ask, because you mentioned the Performers Workshop Ensemble and the people studying under Herbert Brun. Did that, did you ever meet Jeff Glassman?**

JM: Oh, yeah, I'm friends with Jeff, yeah.

**SB: I processed, I figured you'd probably know him. I processed his papers when he donated them to us over the last year and a half. When you started mentioning PWE and Herbert Brun, I was thinking back to Jeff's papers and records of the Mime Workers, which he also donated.**

JM: So January 27<sup>th</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup> was United Mime Workers, that's probably where I first met Jeff.

**SB: Do you remember anything about their time in-residence?**

JM: No. [Laughs] I'm sure I went to most everything. I remember something they did on the Quad... because they were already kind of broken up at that point, I think, it was more of a reunion thing. But Debbie Langerman was still in town, she was one of them, yeah, I'm actually the treasurer for Fay/Glassman performance, for their small nonprofit.

**SB: Oh, really? So you know, I met Jeff a couple times when I was working on his papers, and I processed Debbie's papers as well, which she actually donated first. And then I got to meet both of them, so I guess that's two-thirds of the core Mime Workers group, I think a little under a year ago when they came here. Debbie was in town and they came to see**

**everything, and it was really cool to meet them and get to see the people after I've been reading their stuff and working with their materials for so long. But, yeah, that must have really been, what an experience to have all of these people coming in almost back-to-back for weeks at a time.**

JM: And one of the things that, to this day, well, it's changing now because of time, but I've been friends with the multi-generational group of people since I came down here. I was the youngest person at that point, with some people who had been around, I mean, I knew Herbert, he was a character, I knew Marianne. I know, I mean, some of these people I still know, they're not necessarily my best friends, but we're still, we're friendly. And I might not see them for a year or two and then we'll get together at a memorial and talk. [Laughs] But yeah, so that was mind-opening to meet all these people. There was, I do remember an experience in one of Marianne Brun's class.

So Marianne was different than Herbert. They were similar, but she was someone who was an activist, she was involved in Women's International League of Peace and Freedom back in Germany. And you know there was some of that theoretical stuff, there was a grounding and stuff. But the classes, there were probably people who weren't necessarily students in some of the Unit One classes. I remember, so I'm a freshman, there was this one guy who was super obnoxious, and just kept on talking all the time and wouldn't let the students talk. And I finally said something, and then he shut up. [Laughs] But it took a lot, because it was like, these were small, it was kind of like coming in to what was an ongoing living room discussion that had been going on for a couple years, but now it was in a class. There was like three or four of us who were like, "We're just learning this stuff." So there was, it was navigating that stuff, and learning some of that stuff. And over the years, I don't necessarily agree with all the decisions made and the style of their stuff, but I remained friends with the people and we worked together on many different things.

But there was also, there were program advisors at that point, so they would, they lived, I haven't been in the basement in a while, of Unit One, but around the corner they had, there used to be a darkroom, there was, there were three apartments for the program advisors. So they were different than RAs, so the RAs were in charge of each floor, the program advisors were in charge of doing programming at Allen Hall, now, Unit One and beyond. So it would be doing other things too, I think, like more Allen Hall things that weren't Unit One based. One of those that I met then is still one of my close friends, and they were, the three that I knew at the time, they all got involved in the anti-apartheid movement, two of them got arrested, another one was involved in stuff. I think they may have gotten fired from Allen Hall at that point, or from Unit One at that point, so they're out in the anti-apartheid stuff. So there was a lot going on. There was a lot of, and a lot of it, when the anti-apartheid movement got into high gear, we often had meetings at Allen Hall. So that was also used as a base.

**SB: Was that because there were a lot of the people involved in the movement lived there or had connections to the Unit?**

JM: Yes, yes. My fourth semester, so my, spring of '86, I mostly lived on the Quad, in the shantytowns that we had. And that was probably when I stopped really being an Allen Hall,

even though I was still had a room there. I used to give out, I have a picture somewhere, they used to do meal, so on the old student ID, there was a meal ticket you got like every month. I had to like, they checked it off. My last one was like, there's nothing on there, because I wasn't there, I started working at Nature's Table, so I was eating there. I just wasn't available at the hours that they served food. There wasn't like a 24 hour food thing, it was certain times.

**SB: And was the dining hall, was there one in Allen Hall at the time?**

JM: Yeah, it wasn't as nice. So I've gone back over the years, I've, one of my friends taught there in the 2000s, I believe, 90s and 2000s, and I would audit a couple classes. And he would get passes into the dining room, and I was like, "This is nothing like when I was here," you know? [Laughs] No, it was a lot more school cafeteria like. Food quality and all.

**SB: I want to, I'd love to ask about the shantytowns on the Quad, because I heard a bit about that from Laura Haber when I interviewed her. She said that she kind of got involved with the anti-apartheid movement in the spring of '86, which was a little bit later than it seems like when you did. So how did the, would you talk a little bit about that movement on campus and, kind of, how it progressed or what lead to the whole shantytown on the Quad?**

JM: Sure. So the anti-apartheid movement on campus started in the late '70s. I think it was around, [unintelligible] the Sharpsville Massacre in South Africa. Actually, there was a undergrad at Eastern who was doing his dissertation on the anti-apartheid movement here, and I saw that the draft of his senior thesis or his advanced history thesis, I learned some things I didn't know. Because it was before me. I knew some of that stuff. But there was a wave of protests and then a lot of things died down, Reagan, people graduating and stuff like that. What was starting to happen in the, in '84, '85, is s\*\*\* was really heating up in South Africa.

So every day there was another massacre, another day there was something going on, and every day it was in the paper. And it was in the paper, it was, the *DI* was actually a real paper at that point, it was a legitimate news source, and the *News-Gazette*, there was, the *News-Gazette* had multiple editions. There was just constantly that happening. And then, there was the anti-apartheid movement, which was also happening, at Columbia University, Berkeley, all these places, there was stuff happening. It would be in the paper and it would be seen. So the student government slate, there was still a group called the Coalition Against Apartheid on campus. It was mostly professors at that point, and some grad students, and they'd kind of fallen into just an educational rut. But they were, they were great people, they really didn't have much energy.

Through the student government slate, Off-Center, a couple rallies were held, sponsored by Student Government, so we got to use their money, and things started to heat up again. So we formed the Divest Now coalition, and that ended up, we ended up being like a committee of the Coalition Against Apartheid, but we were all young. We were, some of us were 18, probably 18 to 22 was the main age of stuff, the main age of people. And so we started doing stuff in the, we started off on the educational stuff, so by spring of '85 we were doing stuff, there was a, there was a group in Chicago called the Divest Now coalition at Circle, I mean UIC, they were a little bit older than us, they had more experience, we were doing stuff, we learned about a little bit

from them. A bunch of us had gone up there that summer, someone introduced, there was this guy Al Logan, he brought up the vote every single meeting, and would get fired, would get shot down. So in a very disorganized fashion. My only arrest, we surrounded the Board and they gave us warnings and we wouldn't move and that was, made big news in the paper. And we came back, and then myself and some others were on conduct probation for a year. My lawyer from Student Legal Services at the time, is now still one of my best friends, [laughs]. So that was all bubbling, we were doing more and more stuff, the University was not responding. By, one of the guys, Joe Moag who actually just passed like a month ago, he and some other folks, we were out drinking at Coslow's or Treno's and we said we need to do a shantytown, because they're happening at other places.

We built one at his apartment, outside his apartment, which is just around where Krannert is, it was like south, it's all, no apartments anymore, it's all just business stuff. We built it, we took it to the, at noon, we took it over the Quad, we chained it to the Foellinger Auditorium, to the stairs. It got on the news, but the end of the day, there was like 15 of them, and then for the next semester, that just, it just, we had three different shantytowns, they went up and down. It was just nonstop activity, we got lawyers, we had to fight the University, free speech stuff, and then we had big rallies, we had marches, we took over the Board of Trustees movement, shut it down, we had 60 people arrested. So it was, there was a lot, there was no time to go to school. [Laughs]

[unintelligible] really at that point.

**SB: Seems like you were in school, in a way, you're learning about all of these things even if you're not sitting in a traditional classroom.**

JM: I would go back, I was taking not a, a higher level history course on South Africa, I believe, and it was boring and dry. I mean, I loved the teacher, it was hot and boring and dry. And nobody was doing anything. People in the room knew more about stuff than I did, and I was out, we were out in the shantytowns where we were doing direct education. We would have people come up and they say, what's this about, by the end of the day they're with us, the next day, they're educating people and they're bringing people into it. So it was an exciting time, there was a lot happening. My home base was still Allen Hall, Unit One. And I'd been working at Nature's Table, which was just in between the Quad and Allen Hall, and so learning a lot about jazz and I ended up running the place until it got shut down in '91.

**SB: How did you start working there?**

JM: [Laughs] My first job down here was at f\*\*\*\*\* Papa Del's, they had a, the original place was on 6<sup>th</sup> St., I think it's called Jerusalem, might be Jerusalem now, not sure if it's still Jerusalem, but I think that was the place. And they had the pizza factory on Green St. that had just been built. But I worked in this other place, it was, it was an experience. I worked there for the summer, every, people quit because it sucked, and then then manager was a dope, so he'd leave people on the schedule. So then those of us who were left were like over burdened with work. And I'd gone to Nature's Table, so like the first night, or the second, I don't know, the first week of being at the U of I, I started going to Nature's Table. I started meeting people

there, there was an overlap, a lot of people ended up in the anti-apartheid movement also worked at Nature's Table, and it was the, I think it was that summer of '85, and I was still working at Papa Del's, all these people were quitting, and they put up a "Help Wanted" sign and one of my mentors in the anti-apartheid movement, Teresa Donnelly, she was working there. She tore the sign down, she called me, she goes, "There's an opening! You gotta come talk to Terry right away." So I came, I got hired, I told Papa Del's, "F\*\*\* off," and that was that.

So, there was a big overlap, Nature's Table was another hub, so it was music, it was politics, it was art.

**SB: So you were, I guess, you were, you and your friends weren't going to Nature's Table just to eat, you were going to there to socialize, to talk, and to meet and discuss activism and other things too?**

JM: Sure, sure. I mean, so my buddy George, who was my neighbor, at Allen Hall the first year. He and I would go, and you know, as you know, the drinking age can be flexible, and Nature's Table didn't get hassled, so it was always, kind of like, if they're in college and they're cool, that was the rule. If they cause problems, they're out. So you'd get a pitcher of beer, a loaf of bread, we'd hear some jazz, and that was great.

**SB: Sounds like it was a great place.**

JM: It was. There was, sometimes you loop back many years later and you get the other side of the story. So the dorms didn't have dinner on Sundays forever, so Sundays you were on your own. Even though you were part of a meal plan, you were on your own. One Saturday, I believe, we were, me and George were at Nature's Table and some guys were like, "Hey, can we get a, buy a loaf of bread?" It was like a buck for a loaf of bread, and it was all homemade, wheat or white. This guy said, "Yeah, we got a whole bunch here! You can have..." And he gave us like 10 loaves of bread. [Laughs] So we're coming back to the dorm, we're giving out bread, this is so cool, we've got all this bread for like two dollars, and you know, the next day there's no food. So years later, so I'm friends with the owner years later, and I was telling the story, and he's like, "That f\*\*\*\*\* Darius, that was him! That's the guy who gave away all the f\*\*\*\*\* bread." They cooked bread there every day except Sunday, so all the Saturday bread had to hold over for the Sunday meals. And he'd given away all the bread. [Laughs]

I'm like, "That was us, Terry! We got it!"

**SB: Well, at least it went to a good use!**

JM: Oh, yeah! We enjoyed the hell out of it, we didn't waste it.

**SB: Even now, the dining halls are open on Sunday's, but the hours are really restricted. Even now, when they're open, still, people go and eat out and get food elsewhere a lot of times.**

JM: So on, jumping way ahead, on my Facebook memories today, five years ago today, a bunch of us who lived at Allen Hall went there and had lunch. Well, I didn't have lunch, but we were friends with the person who was the head of the food service there, and a couple of my friends, I think one of them had a daughter here, I didn't realize it, but we got together and met for like a couple hours. It was all snowy and stuff and we met inside Allen Hall.

**SB: What was that like, being back there? That probably wasn't the first time you'd been back to Allen since you graduated.**

JM: For some of them, it was the first time.

**SB: Oh, uh huh.**

JM: It was, for them it was the first time. But I'd been going there over the years, so I, even as a non-student, I went, I kept on going to the in-residence stuff over the years, eventually I phased that out just because I got too busy and it was too hard to get to campus. It was more and more difficult to park. But my friend Joe Miller taught a Vietnam film class and a Vietnam class there for many years, and I audited a couple of those. I sat in, and then he would bring our friend, I work with Vietnam Veterans Against the War, I'm their staff person, and I've been volunteering for them and working with them for over 30 years. And Barry Romo was one of the leaders, he would come and speak in the South Lounge and I recorded a couple of them, I can send you these links if you're interested.

**SB: Please do!**

JM: They're 99, 99 and 2000. They're like two-hour long presentations that he did. He would come every year to speak, and, so that was, we did a lot of. And also, over the years, so I was involved in the PRC, the Progressive Resource Action Cooperative, which was really around in mostly the '90s and early 2000s. We did anti-Gulf War stuff, we did anti-Chief stuff, we were multi-issues, we did a bunch of stuff. But we often used Allen Hall as a recruiting ground over the years. So people graduate, they move on, because we were a campus and community, go around, do some programs there, have speakers there. That was something that we did throughout the years.

**SB: Was it nice to have had the perspective of a former resident and someone who had been in the students' shoes when you were making these connections and getting people involved in later years?**

JM: Yeah, probably. Yeah. I mean, it was weird being in Joe's class, and I don't know, I was the oldest person by far except for him in the class. And he didn't introduce me right away, like the first class or something. People were like, "Who the f\*\*\* is that guy? Who's that guy, who's that old guy over there?" [Laughs] But it was interesting, especially the people who took the class, I mean the thing about, Vietnam vets kept on having kids really late, so there'd be freshmen whose parents were Vietnam vets, who were, you know, many, many years later.

**SB: And they're sitting there taking this class that's, that directly applies to their folks' experiences.**

JM: And we tried, over the years, we got Barry Romo, we got him to be an artist-in, well, an in-residence person. See, it started going down to like long weekends sometimes, too. Bill Ehrhart who's a Vietnam vet and poet, he did a couple stints in residence. And we used those as organizing tools as well.

So yeah, I kept in touch over the years, I'd say, definitely, slacked off. Laura would try to convince me to come out to some things, I'm just like, the older I get, and the more... Nobody had cars when I was an undergrad. Now everybody's got a car, there's no place to drive or park on campus. I don't want to get towed to go to an event or get a big ticket. Here's something over there. It used to be easy to park there before they started building everything up.

**SB: I try to bike everywhere for a reason, it's much more convenient.**

JM: I did back when I was a student. I didn't have a car, I came down here with no car, so.

**SB: And, just an interesting little segue there, when you were a student, you mentioned Treno's and Nature's Table, and Channing-Murray/The Red Herring, are those the places where you would go to hang out when you weren't working on activism or being a student? How did you spend your down time, or where did you go to blow off steam or see movies or anything like that?**

JM: So Treno's was owned by the same person who owned Coslow's, so Coslow's, it was the Bread Company recently, it's the one in Champaign, it's off of, it's near Johnstowne Center.

**SB: I think it's a Korean Barbeque place now.**

JM: Could be, yeah. But for many years it was this place, Coslow's, which was a cousin of Treno's, they were owned by the same guy. It was the same kind of place, you could get, you could move tables together, no table service, you could get calzones, pitchers of beer, whatever. So Coslow's was a big place where we would go. So Coslow's and Treno's, it was a question of whether you were going to go the one on campus or the one right by Krannert there, which was Treno's. So those would be places that we would go a lot. After, post-meetings, and do that.

So, movie-wise, then there's regrets. I look back at things I wish I would have taken. Even Unit One, I probably couldn't have taken many more Unit One courses than I did, because I had to take some classes that counted towards LAS general stuff. But there was this guy Ron Epple, who taught film classes, who ended up, I never took any of them, but he ended up starting this thing called Picture Start, and they ended up taking over the Art Theater in the early days. And he was a well-known film [unintelligible], I regret, many years later, not taking that. I could have taken that, learned a whole bunch of stuff. But they used to show movies at the Channing-Murray, McKinley Foundation, other places. They would show movies, you know, really cheap, and bad prints. S\*\*\*\*\* little speakers, but great stuff, like *Eraserhead*, or stuff like that. You could go see this stuff. So we would do that.

But once the movement heated up, the spring of '86 was anti-apartheid from the minute you wake up to the minute you finally pass out.

**SB: And Laura mentioned in her talk, and I wanted to ask you about this to get your impressions of it, she said that when the University wanted the shantytown taken down, that you all made it into a, like made the takedown into a performance in a way. Were you there for that, or would you speak to your memory of how that went down and how it was planned?**

JM: Sure. So, here's where there's the fog of war and Laura might not remember this [unintelligible], because it was hard to figure it all out, the chronology. We had three separate shantytowns, one of them, and I'm not going to remember [unintelligible] which one it was, but one of them, which was at Foellinger Auditorium, we were given a deadline to take it down. We had fought, we had lawyers, we were fighting back and forth with the people and [unintelligible] finally agreed we're going to take it down.

And they scheduled the chancellor, Everhart, to speak on the steps of Foellinger Auditorium coincidentally at noon, or whatever the time was that we were supposed to be, have them taken down by. Which, nobody ever spoke over there, nobody ever speaks on those stairs. So we organized, I think it was probably the most effective political guerilla theater thing I've ever been involved in for that. So we said, well, we'll take them down, we had a bunch of people dress up as the South African police, we had them attack us, tear stuff down, there was fighting, mock fighting, and then, there's some great pictures of this. He comes out to speak, and he doesn't change a word of his speech, and there's like 200 people, two, three hundred people laying in the grass like they're all dead. [Laughs] With the shantytown torn down.

And we were so effective. We got picked up as this was a real protest that cops were beating us, [laughs], and stuff. Because people thought it was, but, no, "This is theater! It's theater." But it was, but yeah, it was very intense. And very well done, it took a lot of coordination, because we had to really take down the shantytowns, but they didn't say you had to clear out, you just had to take them down. So we took them down and then we had the fighting and people joined in, it was a couple hundred people just lying there as he's speaking.

**SB: So it's sort of like, inadvertently, the Chancellor helped you guys out a little bit making it just that much more convincing and poignant, then.**

JM: Yeah, he was a dummy. Everhart.

**SB: When you were involved in this activism, did you ever, were you ever one of the people who spoke to or negotiated with the University administrators?**

JM: I was one of the coordinators, yeah.

**SB: What was that experience like?**



JM: So sometime between the spring of '85 and probably would have been fall '85 or so, we'd already marched to Ikenberry's house at one point, we'd marched there. The President of the University, "Oh, he's not home," then he comes out in his sweatpants, finally, after we had a few hundred people outside his house. "Oh, he's not home, is he?" Then he came out. There was a big shot on the front page of the *DI*, that was like a ground shot, so it looked like he was enormous.

We had this, there was a retreat on divestment that was being held at Allerton, and University YWCA somehow had seats. Like they weren't giving out passes to everybody, but we managed to work and get ourselves in. Because some of our members were part of the University YW. So I got to go, Teresa Donnelly got to go, who was one of the leaders, one of my mentors, and I'm not a very tall person, but I'm way taller than Teresa. And so, we show up at this event, and Ikenberry, we didn't have name tags on yet. Ikenberry says, "Hi Jeff, hi Teresa." That blew my s\*\*\*, I'm like, "What the f\*\*\*? He knows who we are!" And then Teresa comes back right away and she goes, "I thought you were a lot taller in real life!" [Laughs]

So they knew who we were. We had lots of stuff. I mean, Teresa, those of us who were arrested in the summer of '85 were on conduct probation, so we, if we were going to get arrested again, we'd face expulsion. So the spring of '86, we made a collective decision that even if we wanted to, we shouldn't, because then the focus would be on us and not on the collective action. So we made a decision not to, but we lead things and we were, I was there on the front lines. We just didn't step across the line, except this one guy, who agreed not to do it and did and then had to get all these front page stories about him. So exactly what we said was going to happen, happened. [Laughs]

**SB: Oh, so all, you recognized that you were perhaps prepared to go through with this, and you knew they were going to try and kick you out if you put a toe across the line, but you decided that, for the movement, that while you might get personal satisfaction from that stance, it wouldn't be the best thing?**

JM: Exactly.

**SB: And, I guess, kind of the common thread of a lot of your experiences when you were here as a student, really does seem to just come back to the experience that you had at Allen? Does that seem like a fair characterization?**

JM: I would say so. I would say that it was fundamental. I don't regret the choice I made at all, a year and a half would have been perfect. But the two years is what I took. But it was still good to have that as a base, even though. There were some people who stayed in Allen Hall, there was a guy on our dorm floor who was like a senior, I think. There were some people who stayed longer, some people, of course, one year and they're out. I was on the cusp of things, a lot of things were changing, because only a few years before, like less than five years before, the drinking age was 18 in Illinois, and there was, I'll dip my toe a little bit into this.

So Ground South was, they used to have shirts that said, "The highest basement at the U of I." And they would have a thing called DOT Night, Drunk on Thursday, so there was a tradition that

the RA was a former Ground South person, and the RA would disappear on Thursday nights, the whole floor would be, they'd roll in a keg or two, and there'd be, you could just go, you'd pay like a buck to get in, and you could smoke and drink on the whole floor. People would come in, and that was still happening in, cops didn't get called and get arrested like things happen now. So there were things like that going on.

I, we all had landlines, so you had the phone, whatever assigned phone number that you had. I would always get these calls, "Hey man, is Mouse there? Is Mouse there?" I'm like, "No, there's no Mouse here." Then a couple years later, I meet him, and he was a drummer, and I ended up knowing him and he was in rock bands and [unintelligible] in this African band that played at Nature's table. So there was this whole crew of people who were involved in the anti-apartheid movement who were in Allen Hall like two years before I was. So I got to meet a whole bunch of them, and find out, then hear all these stories about stuff that went on in the '70s. So Unit One had a big, Allen Hall/Unit One had a big role in it. And not everybody who lived in Allen Hall went to Unit One stuff, don't get me wrong. There were Unit One events that had nobody there, that was always the struggle. But, to me, that was an important part. Again, I would have just taken nothing but Unit One courses.

I tried to go back to school a couple times, and they wouldn't let me become a part-time student. Especially back then, and I think even still now, the U of I, UIUC is not conducive to people having jobs. Everything is offered in the daytime, like you can't work lunch at Nature's Table and then take classes in the evening because there are no evening classes. Like UIC used to be much more commuter-friendly and that. I wanted to ease my way back in, and take just stuff I was interested in learning, but they were like, "No, you've got to take Spanish 103 or whatever." And it's like, "Nooo!"

**SB: Just what you're trying to avoid.**

JM: Yeah. Well, not trying to avoid Spanish, I took Spanish in high school and I got A's for two years. But then I, but then it was like, what did they teach us, because I didn't place out of any of that? All I placed out of was English.

**SB: One of the questions I was going to ask was, one of the questions on my list, you know, is if you were going to do college over again, would you still be part of Unit One? And I feel like you've most definitely answered that and that would be a yes.**

JM: Sure! Yes, yes. I mean, what I would, in high school, since were college-prep, they said, "You take four years of the language, you take four years of the language and then you'll, that'll help you for college, you can probably place out and you [unintelligible] have to do it." So what does d\*\*\*\*\* Jeff take? He chooses French. Why the f\*\*\* did I choose French instead of Spanish, which would have been useful. I took French, it was taught by one nun for four years. After two years, you could switch, and, she was nuts, I hated her, even though I did fine in French I switched to Spanish. Therefore, I had two years and two years, enough to confuse me because there's so many similar vocabulary things and therefore I didn't place out at all.

And Spanish was just, it was too many hours, it was taught too poorly. Except for Robin's class, you know, who wants a semester of conjugating f\*\*\*\*\* verbs, it's like, in Spanish. That's not even teaching Spanish! [Laughs]

Those were the classes that I started missing the most by not attending.

I had some of my best papers my last semester were extension papers that were very eloquent. We had one professor who was involved in the movement, and he said, a bunch of us missed a test, and he said, "Just write your paper on how what you did relates to the life of Nelson Mandela." And that was our make-up test, and he was completely cool. So yeah, I mean, I would probably, that's a thing I would do differently. I would have, I still counsel people to finish college, even though I never did for myself. But I was too, I didn't make it far enough. And then the stuff that was left to take was soul-crushing. It was not what I wanted to learn.

And I was doing direct organizing, I continued to do organizing and work at Nature's Table and those were all important to me as well.

**SB: So that's part of, so you stayed after you took your time off from the University, which just became permanent, so to speak, you stayed in the community and you continued doing a lot of similar things?**

JM: Yeah, exactly, yep.

**SB: And I also want to ask, do you have any favorite memories of the University, just of your time here, not necessarily Unit One-related that you'd like to share?**

JM: Of the University...

**SB: Or just of anything you did when you were here or around here?**

JM: Well, I mean, the University has been my nemesis through most of the struggles. I mean, we fought around, we fought for them to divest, which we eventually kind of won, but it was a backhanded win. We fought for the CIA to stop recruiting. We fought the f\*\*\*\*\* mascot, I spent 15 years of my life on that. I mean, those were some scary, horrible protests that we were at. So a lot of my time has spent fighting different administrators, and, in fact, and I won't go into this, but our almost [unintelligible], when I donated my archives and we did this thing on the anti-apartheid movement a few years back.

It was going to be sponsored, co-sponsored by the Student Life Archives, and the other one, and some former administrator, some former University spokesperson was in there, and I wasn't going to get the, I wasn't going to eat the s\*\*\* that she was shoveling, and some grad student was assigned to call me up that night, and told me I need to settle down. And let's just say that didn't go over well. The event got cancelled. [Laughs] Everybody pulled out. But I was like, "Oh my god!" This person was basically trying to, like this was supposed to be a discussion on the movement, and lessons learned, what happened. And she was trying to tell us what apartheid was about and what was really going on. And I was like, "Wow! We're still, we can still strike

a nerve here at the U of I.” And that’s why I chose not to give my archives, it was before that happened, to the Student Life Archives. Because I’ve often fought them.

So that’s the administration. There’s a thing of maybe you’ve had a good teacher and you hate the high school, and same thing. So I’ve had so many positive experiences at the U of I, lifelong friends that, a lot of people who were associated with the School of Music, who were jazz musicians and that, again, Nature’s Table got eminent domain to build the building that was there. So we fought the University on that. So I’ve spent a lot of time fighting the University.

So a succinct memory on... it’s the people and the education and it’s what. The fear now is that, so a big place that it was, had a lot of room for different things to move. Whether it was tenured radicals from the ‘60s, whether it was music professors who were doing stuff on the outside, whether it was people, you know, using Unit One to teach their classes that they couldn’t get through the bigger system. As time has gone on, a lot of that stuff is getting pushed further and further as the U of I has become more and more expensive, as the students coming are richer and richer, and the ones who aren’t have nothing to do but, they have to work and work and work. And it’s not like back when I was a student you could work part time and afford an apartment and go to school. And that’s not really the case anymore. And I think, unfortunately, a lot of this stuff has been squeezed out, and it’s harder for, students don’t have the time or the luxury to do some of the stuff, some of the learning that takes place on the fringes. That takes place in the after-hour discussion after the class, or after the presentation.

And I think, unfortunately, a lot of that stuff, and the liberal arts in general is, you know, is under fire. It’s not the hard sciences and things like that, so, I don’t know if that answers any of your questions.

**SB: No, that’s just the sort of perspective I was hoping you’d offer. Especially from you as someone who has stayed in the community, you’ve seen the place change, and like you said, you’ve been going toe-to-toe with the admins for 40 years. So you’ve seen a lot of these things happen and change, and seen the way that stuff can evolve over time.**

JM: I would say, especially if you look at, like the Obama election and things like that, the student body is more progressive than it was in the middle of the Reagan years. But less active then we were. There’s pockets of activism, and there’s things, there’s flare-ups, there’s not a sustained organizing stuff that we. I mean, we had some of the largest protests in the mid-‘80s, since the Vietnam era, since Kent State and stuff like that. So there were still things happening, this is 60s, 70s, 80s, happening, 90s. But it’s become harder for that to happen, and again, I knew people who were like seven year undergrads, you could do that. They didn’t force you to graduate in three and a half years as your undergrad degree. They changed degrees, they were perpetual students, they worked at a restaurant, they worked at the bike shop, or they worked over there. And there was enough cheap housing, there weren’t just all these f\*\*\*\*\* high rises that cost \$1000 for a tiny room a month.

One of the things I, some comments I saw recently, I met some people who grew up here. Who were University kids, like their parents were professors and stuff like that. And I met some of them my freshman year, and they were just so different. Because they had been exposed to so

much s\*\*\*, that I had never, I would never be exposed to. They were, they were learning stuff at a much younger, if they were open to it, they were learning stuff at a much younger age and exposed to stuff. That was fascinating.

**SB: Yeah. Well, that's, Jeff, I just can't thank you enough for taking some time and speaking with me today. It's really, the perspectives that I've been getting on Unit One and Allen Hall have just, it's great hearing about that community and that place, and then also hearing about how living then has helped and influenced the people who I've met and who I've spoken with, later in their lives. And it's really, as I'm, I mean, I guess, it's nearly impossible to tell a cohesive story about a place, because everyone's experiences are going to be different, but the more people we get to speak with us, the richer that the project will be.**

JM: So Howie Schein was in charge for a long time, he was kind of, he had to toe a line, because Unit One was often on the chopping block. And then when a bunch of the PAs got arrested, program advisors, I think it put him in a precarious position. But he was, we saw him as kind of the administration. A few years ago, he calls me and says, "Hey, Jeff, I've got a bunch of albums, do you want em?" So I went through his collection of records and ended up with a huge amount of records. But then, after that, in charge of Unit One, it was Marianne Brun, then it was Lori Blewett, so it was, by the time Laura got it, it was a little different, it was the in-residence person. And Lori's still one of my good friends, and my guitar teacher, Arun, from that freshman year, he's married, he married her, they teach out at Evergreen College and I keep in touch even though we talk to each other maybe every few years.

But so, these are people, and again, one of the weird things too, of age and perspective, is some of these people, I didn't realize later, who were teaching me, were only like five years older than me or less. I mean, some, a bit older, but some, years later, I'm like, "Oh my God! They were only, they were young!" [Laughs]

**SB: That's the great thing about this place and something that I think has even persisted despite a lot of the changes, for good or for bad, is that there are, at least in my experience as an undergrad, there still, people are here who are learning from their peers, or their TAs, or their professors, however they can. So that's one thing that does seem to be a constant.**

JM: So besides Laura, who else did you interview?

**SB: Charlie Meyerson, he was, he would have been there 73, 75, so about ten years before you. And then George Miller, who was there just before Charlie, and he was actually in the first group when Unit One first opened. So I've kind of been moving through the decades, and that's just kind of how it worked out.**

JM: They used to do these big campouts, every summer, I think, that were Unit One/Allen Hall campouts.

**SB: Oh really? Did you ever go to one?**

JM: No, they were done by the time I got there. There used to be pictures of these campouts, because Howie was a big outdoors guy, I think. I mean, the only thing I did was go to that solar home thing, and I learned, I really learned how to change a tire on that trip, because the broke-down van we drove out in blew at least four tires. [Laughs] We had to take turns changing that, that was a really interesting experience.

**SB: Well, what's the fun of a road trip in the mid-80s without a bunch of blown tires in the middle of nowhere?**

JM: [Laughs] I'm just glad they didn't blow on one of the mountains we were navigating in North Carolina. But yeah, they used to have these big, there were these photos all over Allen Hall of these big campouts, so I'm sure that some of these people were part of them.

**SB: I'll have to add that to the questions list.**

JM: So, Howie is still in town.

**SB: Yeah. I'm, there's, I think after I, I still need to interview Laura for a second time, because we talked for over an hour about just her time as a student. So we're going to meet up again at her convenience and talk about her time as an admin. But I'd love to try and meet Howie as well, you said he's still in town here?**

JM: Yeah, yeah. Ask her, say, "What's it like to be younger than Jeff and f\*\*\*\*\* retired?"

**SB: Phrased just like that?**

JM: I've asked her that multiple times. I saw her recently and I was like, "What the f\*\*\*, Laura! How are you retired?" Good for her, but it's like, what the hell. So is there somebody in place now?

**SB: As the new director?**

JM: Yeah.

**SB: I'm not sure. I haven't heard one way or the other. There may well be, I just don't know.**

JM: They just, they reconfigured it. I mean, over her tenure, they reconfigured it. There used to be a lot more staff. And I think there was, there may have been a lot more, I don't know how many classes they offer over the past. There was the in-residence program, and then there was the Unit One classes. I don't know how many Unit One classes they still offer.

**SB: I think there's at least some, because I've had some friends that have lived there.**

JM: Okay.

**SB: But it's... Oh, and one more thing I want to ask before I forget, when you were living there, was Unit One the whole building, or was it just a few floors?**

JM: No, it was just the basement. It was just the basement on the north side.

**SB: Ok. That's where the programming stuff would take place?**

JM: I mean, it would happen in other parts of the building, right, but it was... I guess this is a tricky question. That's where the offices were, but there was really, there were classrooms down there, where some of the classes took place. But then there were things like the South Rec Room, where events would happen. Then there was the in-residence apartment on the main floor. What was that floating thumbs-up? [Referring to a reaction on the Zoom video platform]

So, that was always the struggle, because as time went on, people lived in Allen Hall because it was closer to the Engineering Quad or whatever, right. And IS, the whatcha-call-it was full up, so there were people starting to, who chose Allen Hall not because of Unit One.

**SB: But who knows, maybe they chose it for the location and then got involved by seeing a poster, you never know.**

JM: Mm hm. Yeah, Laura would know more about that stuff.

**SB: I'll have to add that. That's the other great thing about talking to multiple people, is every time I speak with someone, I'm going to add a thing to my questions about the picnics now, to ask, I didn't know about that. The more I learn, the better interviews I can do.**

JM: I'm positive those, campouts, they were campouts.

**SB: Campouts.**

JM: They went away and they camped out for, I don't know if it was spring break or whatever, but it was, I'm not saying I would have gone, but they were definitely done by the time...

**SB: Yeah.**

JM: Because there was this other guy, Ned Laff, it was Howie and Ned Laff that were the two in charge and he may have been a counselor too, or whatever. [Unintelligible]

**SB: Well, Jeff, I don't, we've been talking for almost an hour and a half, so I don't want to take too much more of your time today. But I just want to say, thank you, thank you very much for sharing this with me.**

JM: Good luck! So what's the plan here with all this that you're gathering...?

**SB: Yeah, so, one thing that I will say is I'm going to, we have a permission form, I need to talk to my boss about how to get that to people. Maybe we'll send it through the mail or something, or through email, I'm not sure. But then when we have enough of these, actually my next meeting in a little while is, we're talking about a new platform to host our oral histories. Because the archives, this is just one project, and they've done plenty in the past, too. And the website that we have them hosted on now is reaching the end of its technical lifespan.**

JM: Oh, no.

**SB: So we're trying to come up with a new sort-of platform. And I guess, what I, just for me, what I envision, is whenever we do get that built and launched, that having five or six Unit One interviews would be the first new collection that goes up on that platform.**

JM: Weren't they trying to do something for the 50<sup>th</sup>, what was it, 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary or whatever a few years ago?

**SB: I believe this is, this is just an idea that's been percolated around, and I have, I guess, my time now, that they've managed to get me up to full time gives me a set amount of hours to work on outreach and doing interviews and things like that, that we don't always have the time or the funding or the students to do.**

JM: I understand, I responded to some survey a few years ago.

**SB: That's how I got your info, yeah.**

JM: [Laughs] Okay. Which Laura was spreading around, so.

**SB: Well, Jeff, I can't say thank you enough.**

JM: Well, and if you need more people, there's Lisa Dixon's a professor here, of theater. She was one of the program advisors at Allen Hall, so she's still around. There's probably other people, if you need, well, I can only give you a certain generations, as well. I know you're trying to hit multiple generations.

**SB: I appreciate it.**

JM: Joe Miller might be...

**SB: I'll be in touch with the form and just with a brief follow-up.**

JM: Okay. Sounds good.

**SB: Alright great, thank you very much.**

JM: Nice to meet you, good luck. And let me know what comes of all this too.



**SB: Of course! We'll keep you posted.**

JM: Alright, thanks, bye.

**SB: Bye now.**

**END**