

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID LIEBERFARB
FOR THE
RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY
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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
JULY 1, 2019

TRANSCRIPT BY
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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. David Lieberfarb, on July 1, 2019, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Ryan Pezzolo: Ryan Pezzolo.

SI: Thank you very much for coming in today. We appreciate it.

David Lieberfarb: You're welcome. I look forward to it.

SI: Great. To begin, can you tell us where and when you were born?

DL: I was born at Beth Israel Hospital on Lyons Avenue in Newark, New Jersey, on May 27, 1948.

SI: Okay. First, we'd like to talk a little bit about your family history, maybe starting with your parents.

DL: Okay.

SI: I was interested to see in your survey that your mother also worked at the same hospital you were born at.

DL: Right, yes.

SI: Why don't we start with her side of the family?

DL: Okay.

SI: Do you know anything about how her side came here?

DL: All four of my grandparents were immigrants from Eastern Europe, the *shtetl*, whatever you want to call it. On my mother's side, I'm named after David Grubman, whom I never met. He died around the year my parents got married, in 1942. I knew my other three grandparents, including my mother's mother, Viola. She lived from about 1880 to 1960. She owned a building on 550 Hawthorne Avenue in Newark, where my mother grew up. It was a six-family building. Needless to say, I spent a lot of time there when I was a little kid and made some friends there that are people that I still have some contact with. [Editor's Note: *Shtetl* means town in Yiddish.]

My mother was the youngest of seven. She was the only one born here. All of her older siblings were born over there and came here with their mom. I think my grandfather came over first by himself, worked, saved money, a typical immigration story of that era, around the turn of the twentieth century. They more or less prospered, the ones who survived. As I said, my mother was the youngest. She was the only one born here, probably the only one of them who got a college degree. She went to New Jersey Normal School for Women, which is now Kean University. What I know of her main work history before I was born was at Kresge's [department store] in Newark and then at Beth Israel for about ten or eleven years. She quit

when she was pregnant with me. She never really worked full time again after that. That's all I can think of to say right now, unless you can ask me some questions.

SI: Let's talk about your father's side.

DL: Okay. My father was Carl. My mother was born in 1911 and died in '98. My father was born in 1912 and died in '99. They both went to South Side High School in Newark, which is now Malcolm X Shabazz. My grandparents on that side, I did know them. That was Sam and Mamie. Sam, my grandfather, was the one who lived the longest. He made it into his nineties and died around 1975. He was a jeweler. When I was growing up, my father was a jeweler, a manufacturing jeweler. He had a place in Irvington. Now, originally, they told me they had a place on Stratford Place in Newark, which is right near the downtown area, but I only know the place that they had in Irvington. The company still exists. It's called Lieberfarb & Son, Inc. I think they're in Rahway now. Other than my dropping in there about once every ten or twenty years, I've had really no contact with it, since my father sold the business in the '70s. He sold the business in '71 and worked for it as an employee for about ten years before he retired. After, when he retired, he played a lot of bridge. [Editor's Note: Established in 1917, Lieberfarb Jewelers specialized in wedding rings. In 1971, Mark Schonwetter purchased the company and expanded the jewelry line to include engraved wedding rings, engagement rings, anniversary rings and men's diamond rings. Ann Schonwetter Arnold and Isabella Schonwetter Fiske, Mark's children, continue to run the business under the brand name Lieberfarb.]

He was the middle of three, who are all gone, his older sister, my Aunt Cecile, his younger brother, my Uncle Charlie, who I think has a Rutgers degree. I think he went to Rutgers-Newark. He might have gone there before it was Rutgers-Newark. He took advantage of the GI Bill after World War II. My father did not. My father went to college for two years at NYU [New York University], dropped out during the Depression and never resumed his formal education. Where were we? Yes, go ahead.

SI: I am curious ...

DL: I'm an only child.

SI: Okay. I am curious, with all four grandparents having an immigrant background, were there any stories shared in the family of what life had been like in the old country or how they came here?

DL: Not much. I was probably too young to be curious about that stuff, more or less. I don't know if I'm typical, but I think I was of that generation that we're looking ahead, we're not looking back, maybe until we got a little older and then it was too late, at least too late to pump the grandparents. Fortunately, there are many people who were more farsighted about being rear-sighted. [laughter] I think when I was a kid with the grandparents, the world revolved around me. I don't think I ever pumped any of my grandparents.

My main memory of my grandfather, it's kind of silly. He was, as I said, a jeweler. Even though he wasn't really working anymore, when he was elderly, he was still going to the shop every day,

the tiny little factory. It looked like a pillbox from D-Day. He would be there. Being very comfortable working with numbers but not at all comfortable working with my hands, I would go to the shop not to learn how to make jewelry but to help out in the office. I was about twelve years old. I was helping out as the bookkeeper. Like I said, I was comfortable working with numbers but not working with machines. [I'm] still that way. I write left-handed. Grandpa was of that era, of that generation, they'd see a kid writing left-handed, and horrors. Fortunately, he didn't have any influence over the situation. I've heard of so many people who were lefties who were made to learn how to write right-handed. He never failed to express his wonder at my writing left-handed. Anyhow, that's my main memory of him. It didn't bother me. It amused me more than anything.

SI: Wow. Do you know how your parents met?

DL: Yes, well, they both went to South Side. They knew each other in high school. They didn't get married until 1942, when they were both at least thirty. Then, they got married. It was during the war. I think my father enlisted right away after Pearl Harbor in the National Guard or the state guard. He didn't enlist in the Army immediately, but he definitely enlisted. Again, I don't know that much about the details of it. He did end up in the Army. He did go to the Philippines, New Guinea. He was one of those veterans who liked to talk about the war. I think the main reason was he never really saw any kind of hand-to-hand combat. He was a radio operator. He was very, very proud of the fact that he developed his Morse code speed up to twenty-five words per minute, which is basically like a buzz. He taught me the Morse code when I was a little kid. We used to play tapping on each other, we'd do Morse code talk with each other. Of course, Morse code doesn't exist anymore. It exists, but nobody would use it anymore. It's way beyond that. He was very proud of that. He said even on the ships in the Pacific, they would flash lights doing Morse code. He could do that. I guess that spared him from ever having to shoot at anybody or get shot at. Therefore, he was not at all reluctant to talk about his experiences in World War II.

SI: He was in the Pacific.

DL: Yes, Philippines and New Guinea, primarily. Most of his anecdotes were lighthearted stuff. He had a way of saying the word "Jap" like you were spitting it out, or "Mitsubishi," because that was a company that manufactured warplanes. The great irony is--and I wrote a story about this, I should have brought that with me--my father hated Japan and my son lives there now. I identify more with my son in that regard now.

SI: Do you know what your mother did during the war? Was she at Beth Israel then?

DL: Yes. That's all I know.

SI: Okay, all right.

DL: Yes, she was there roughly, if I had to put numbers on it, I'd say from about 1937 to 1948. Yes, during the war, she was there. She had a fairly high-placed job there. First, she worked in the records room. Then, she was the assistant to the director or assistant director or something. I

don't know what exactly what that meant, except for the fact that I believe the director whose name, I think, was Ellis Behrman, he became my godfather.

SI: Wow.

DL: Of course, I was always welcome there. Beth Israel Hospital was right on the way between where we lived and Maple Avenue School, where I attended from grades one through eight. I would frequently stop in to say hello to people there or to have lunch in the cafeteria there. I was a golden child to some of those people. [laughter] The Beth was always part of my existence. Even now, whenever I fly out of Newark Airport or fly into Newark Airport, I always make it a point to spot the Beth, which you can see from the airport.

SI: Okay. It seems like your parents followed the pattern of marrying a little bit later because of the Depression perhaps.

DL: Probably, yes. I would imagine that was part of it.

SI: Yes, and then having kids after the war.

DL: Yes. I am told my mother had four pregnancies. I was the only one that made it. I don't know too much about it. I also knew that I'm written up in some medical journal because I was an Rh baby. I'm a person who medical information goes in one ear and out the other, so I'm not real strong on even my own medical information, which is not a good thing. I'm told I was an Rh baby and that I probably would not have survived. I had to have some transfusions when I was born. I was written up in some medical journal, which I did see it one time. I have no idea what the name of it is or how one might go about finding it. It's the kind of thing I should have paid more attention to at one time. [Editor's Note: Rh factor, or Rhesus factor, is a protein that can be found on the surface of red blood cells. If blood cells have this protein, one is Rh positive. If blood cells do not have this protein, one is Rh negative. During pregnancy, Rh incompatibility occurs when the mother's blood type is Rh negative and her fetus' blood type is Rh positive. Antibodies from an Rh-negative mother may enter the bloodstream of her unborn Rh-positive fetus and damage the red blood cells.]

SI: No, that is all right. We can look up the stuff later.

DL: Yes, I suppose, yes. I guess almost any bit of knowledge in the entire universe is available and accessible these days. It would be interesting to see that one again.

SI: Do you have any questions so far?

RP: Regarding your father's military service ...

DL: Yes.

RP: ... Did he ever talk about when the United States dropped the atomic bombs on Japan and what happened after?

DL: Yes. He was one of those veterans who was grateful for the atomic bomb. That's a good question. He probably would have been part of an invasion force of Japan, which would have had many casualties on both sides, obviously. Therefore, he got home by either late 1945 or early 1946, as opposed to possibly not surviving an attempt to invade the islands of Japan. Blessed by all of these years of hindsight and history, I don't necessarily agree with that, but I don't necessarily disagree with it either. I certainly am grateful that he survived because otherwise I wouldn't be here. He definitely was grateful for Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

An interesting sidelight, my significant other, who I've been with now for about twelve years, her name is Margaret Cohen, she was born the day after the Nagasaki bomb. Her family story is that when her mother woke up, the first words out of her mouth weren't, "Is it a boy or girl?" it was, "Is the war over yet?" That's her family history. [Editor's Note: The U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima on August 6 and on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. Japan surrendered unconditionally on August 15 and signed the formal surrender on September 2, 1945 to end the Second World War.]

SI: You were born in Newark. Was your family still living in Newark?

DL: We lived at 1 Lehigh Avenue. They were there until June of '66. Then, they moved to the Ivy Hill Apartments, which are also technically still in Newark. They're up near the Seton Hall Campus in South Orange. They went from one six-story high-rise to a fourteen-story high-rise, and that's where they spent their remaining years. They lived there for about thirty years, from '66 to '96. Then, my mother got meningitis. She was pretty much *non compos mentis* [not of sound mind] for about two years. She died in '98. My father, who I thought nothing would ever get him to move out of his apartment at Ivy Hill, when she was gone, he moved in with me for three years until he died.

I certainly was more than willing and happy to have him come stay with me for two reasons, none of which I'm really proud of. One was that helped me pay for my apartment at the time, so he certainly had a right to move in there. Secondly, I was in a relationship with a woman who lived in Manhattan on the Upper West Side. I was only spending two or three nights a week at my place and four or five nights a week in New York. Having him around didn't really put a crimp in my lifestyle, at the time. Like I said, I'm not real proud of myself for either of those things, but I was glad to be able to provide a place for him when he was ready. He was driving from Edison to West Orange. My mother was staying in an extended care facility in West Orange. He was driving up there. What was he? He was eighty-four, eighty-five years old at the time, driving up five, six days a week to visit her. Oh, boy, they loved him in the nursing home, man. He was so faithful showing up there.

SI: Going back to the late '40s, early '50s, when you were growing up, can you describe your neighborhood?

DL: I think like a lot of other people of my very specific, narrow group, I'm talking about Jews who grew up in the Weequahic section of Newark, it was pretty idyllic. We were a majority. I knew a handful of Black kids, a handful of non-Jewish kids, but didn't really know many of them

well. Most of my friends were very much like me, Jewish kids with Jewish parents. I lived in an apartment building. Obviously, I didn't have a backyard. Weequahic Park was my backyard. Our building was right across the street from the park. That's where I played baseball and football, not very well, not very talented at either, sleigh-riding and a little later on golf at the golf course there. Weequahic Park was my backyard. There were kids on the other streets.

I went to Peshine for kindergarten. The school district boundary ran down the middle of Lehigh Avenue, where I lived. The odd number side where I lived was in the Peshine District. The even number side was in the Maple District. My mother must have pulled some strings. Even though I was in the Peshine District, she got me into Maple for first grade. The kindergarten year--of course, I was five years old, my memories aren't real strong--I think I missed about half of the year. I had all of those childhood diseases that we would get then, like boom, boom, boom, back to back, measles, mumps, chicken pox, whatever. Whatever the hell they were, I got them. I was an only child. My mother, certainly to say she was overprotective is probably an understatement. I missed a lot of school that kindergarten year. Then, I found myself in Maple. That was September of '54. After about a week or two, they put me into second grade, because I was a boy genius. [laughter]

How that came about is an interesting little story. My father, as a jeweler, always had the same two weeks off every year, the first two weeks of July. We would take car trips. Most of them were places two hours away, maybe as much as four hours away, maybe a little longer. Anyhow, that summer we went to Niagara Falls, which was probably at least an eight-hour drive or more. We went to Niagara Falls that summer. That's the only time I've been to Niagara Falls, six years old. First week in school, the teacher brought to class a View-Master. I don't know if you guys know what View-Master is. It's low-tech, very low-tech for these days. It would be something which you would put in a thing with photos and it would make it three-dimensional. You'd look, you'd hold it up to your face, and you'd see three-dimensional photos. What does she bring in? She brings in one where the topic is Niagara Falls. I raised my little hand. I say, "Oh, we went to Niagara Falls this summer." She hands me the View-Master. I take a look at it. I read everything in the text as easily as I would read it today. Within a couple of days, I was in the second grade instead of first grade. I even have a cousin who tells me I taught her how to read, which I don't even remember. I always had high expectations after that, academically.

SI: Were your parents teaching you at home?

DL: Yes, they must have. Yes, of course. Surely, they must have read to me. I told you, my father taught me the Morse code. I was in the second-grade classroom a little bit later that year, the teacher puts the Morse code on the board. I corrected her. There was one letter she did wrong. I corrected her. I'm sure she loved that. [laughter] My father was teaching me the Morse code as a five or six-year-old. He'd go over numbers with me. I don't know exactly what age I was. He would teach me how to do square roots, long division, which I still know how to do, of course, not that I ever need to use it. I probably had some pretty good teaching at home.

SI: Tell us a little bit about Maple Avenue School. What were the teachers like?

DL: They were all wonderful. A couple weeks ago, I was with some friends who also went to Maple. They were telling me stuff that I had no clue about, "So and so, he was gay," "Those two women were in a relationship," or, "That one, she smoked like a fish." I had no clue about any of that stuff. Here I am, seventy-one years old, hearing about that stuff for the first time. The teachers were terrific. When we were comparing notes recently, we all agreed that there was one teacher named Miss Bornstein, Freida Bornstein, who was everybody's favorite. She might have been lesbian, too. She was Miss Bornstein and she was fifty years old or whatever. Who knows? I had no clue about things like gay and lesbian at that time. All I knew is I loved my teachers. I knew that they expected me to do well. My parents expected me to do well. So, I did well, for the most part. Miss Bornstein was a favorite. When I was in sixth grade, there was a Mrs. Birnbaum, who was a Weequahic foreign language teacher who came over--it was after school for her and maybe for the last period of the day and she was teaching us Spanish. Mrs. Birnbaum, when I went to Weequahic, she actually was my favorite teacher. I actually had her all four years, grades nine through twelve. I had her for Latin I in ninth grade, then Spanish I in tenth grade, then Spanish II and Spanish III. She was an amazing teacher, you know, my parents' generation. She lived to be about ninety-five, yes.

SI: You talked about how Weequahic Park was sort of your playground.

DL: Sure.

SI: Were there any organized activities that you were a part of, or was it all pickup games, stuff like that?

DL: Yes, all pickup stuff. Nothing organized then. I am glad you mentioned the word playground. There was literally a playground with sandboxes and swing and stuff over by Chancellor Avenue, which was a few blocks away. I went there once in a while when I was young. There was a batting cage almost literally across the street from my house. There was a batting cage there. There was a field where we played football. It wasn't marked or anything. We would just play either touch or tackle. I tended to shy away from tackle. There was a classmate who was kind of like a human bowling ball. He'd get the ball in his hands and I would just bounce off of him if I tried to tackle him. I knew early on that if I was going to have anything to do with sports, it would be writing about it and not excelling at it.

SI: Did you follow sports early on?

DL: Yes. Oh, absolutely. 1955 was the first year I was aware of baseball. I actually attended game four of the 1956 World Series, which was the day before Don Larsen pitched his perfect game. I missed it by one day. That was between the Yankees and the Brooklyn Dodgers. Then, forty-five years later, I attended one other World Series game. I used to go to Old Timers' Day a lot at Yankee Stadium. [Editor's Note: After losing the first two games in the 1956 World Series to the Brooklyn Dodgers, the New York Yankees won games three, four and five. In game five, Yankees pitcher Don Larsen retired all twenty-seven batters that he faced, recording the only perfect game in World Series history. The Yankees went on to win the World Series in game seven. In the 2001 World Series, the New York Yankees lost in seven games to the Arizona Diamondbacks.]

The guy who used to take me there, we were friends with; he was the only Jewish mayor of Newark, Doc Ellenstein, Meyer C. "Doc" Ellenstein, who was a mayor during the 1930s. By the time I got to know him, he obviously was an older gent. He lived a couple blocks away. He would take me to ball games. At Halloween--we're talking 1950s here--at Halloween, I'd go to his house and he'd give me a dollar. A dollar in the 1950s! He had a son who was an actor. His son was closer to my parents' age than to my age, clearly. His son was in movies. He was in *North by Northwest* as one of the thugs. That's the only thing I remember seeing him in when I was a kid. "Oh, yes, that's Robert Ellenstein, yes." [Editor's Note: Meyer C. Ellenstein served as the mayor of Newark from 1933 to 1941. His son, Robert Ellenstein, was an actor who played Licht in the 1959 Alfred Hitchcock film *North by Northwest*.]

SI: Wow. Did your parents know him?

DL: Oh, yes. My mother must have campaigned for him. She was friendly with him and his wife. If I'm going to embarrass myself here, I'm going to start now. My mother would always, when she went to vote, she would take me. We had voting in the firehouse on Bergen Street a couple blocks from where I lived. She would take me right in there with her. There was a song. Doc Ellenstein, I guess when I was about four or five, he had been mayor a long time ago, but I think he was still running for City Council or something. My mother would sing his campaign song, which of course still sticks in my memory. If you twist my arm, I would sing it.

SI: Please. [laughter]

DL: It was based on the Air Force theme. The melody is the same as the Air Force theme, which is "Da-da-da-da ..." [Editor's Note: Mr. Lieberfarb hums the melody.] "Rain or shine, this is the song we're singing. Ellenstein, we are for you. Far and near, we'll keep the doorbells ringing. Never fear, we'll see it through. You're the top. We'll have the whole town saying, 'Vote for Doc.' We'll show you how. To victory with Meyer C., everyone's out for Ellenstein now."

SI: Wow, very good.

DL: [I was] four years old, five years old. I don't know about you guys, but that kind of stuff sticks in my head as opposed to what I ate yesterday. Like I said, I'll probably embarrass myself more than once here.

SI: That is great. Would he just take you to games, or was he taking other kids?

DL: Yes, I think I remember one time there was an older boy, maybe I was eight, and there was an older boy, who was maybe ten or eleven. I remember having trouble keeping up. [laughter] It's just a vague recollection. I was having trouble keeping up with the bigger kid.

SI: Yes. Would you go to Newark Bears games?

DL: No, I never did go to one. I think the Bears were not any longer in existence by the time I became a fan. The Yankees, as I remember, that was their Triple-A farm team in the '30s and maybe early '40s. My first recollection of a Yankee Triple-A farm team was the Denver Bears, where guys like Bobby Richardson and Tony Kubek came up from. [Editor's Note: The Newark Bears were a minor league baseball team that played at Ruppert Stadium in Newark from the early 1900s to 1949. From 1932 to 1949, the Bears were the top-level minor-league affiliate of the New York Yankees. From 1955 to 1958, the Denver Bears were the Triple-A affiliate of the Yankees.]

SI: Going back to the neighborhood, you said it was majority Jewish.

DL: Yes.

SI: What role, if any, did religion play in your life growing up?

DL: Very little. I'm definitely a cultural Jew. My mother was raised Orthodox. My grandfather was definitely anti-religion, and my father was anti-religion. I remember my father used to walk around a lot with a book called *Man and His Gods*. That pretty much sums it up. He was definitely a believer that we create gods, not vice versa. I pretty much bought that most of my life. I try to be open-minded about it. I've never encountered any miracles or had any inspirations or anything. I'm not anti-religion. I definitely identify as Jewish. I had a bar mitzvah. I see how religion motivates many people to do good things. Maybe it motivates many people to not do bad things. I also see how religion generates hostility, prejudice, wars and stuff like that. I'm sort of in the middle on religion. I imagine I might end up having a deathbed conversion or something, but if I do, somebody should slap me. [laughter] [Editor's Note: *Man and His Gods* is a 1952 book by Homer W. Smith.]

Apropos of that, Margaret, my significant other, and I, we just finished taking an OLLI-RU class. I don't have to explain to you guys what OLLI-RU is. [Editor's Note: OLLI-RU refers to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Rutgers, which offers noncredit courses with no assignments or grades to adults over age fifty.]

SI: No, that is all right. We will put in notes for stuff like that.

DL: OLLI-RU is Osher Life Long Learning Institute at Rutgers University. It's sort of affiliated with Rutgers. We just finished taking an OLLI-RU class on Eastern religions in June. It was five Wednesdays. The last four Wednesdays, we went to a Hindu shrine, a Buddhist temple, a Jain temple and a Sikh temple. Very interesting experiences. I also audited a religion class at Rutgers, more of a Jewish history class with Gary Rendsburg, three or four years ago with Margaret. Like I said, I'm open-minded about religion. Of course, I realize that if my grandparents hadn't left when they did, none of them probably would have survived. It doesn't matter how religious you are as a Jew, under Hitler and under the countries where the Germans conquered during World War II, most of the Jews didn't survive.

SI: Yes, that is something we usually ask about. Do you know if any of your family was affected by the Holocaust?

DL: No, I have no knowledge of any family members. I only know about the family that came over here. I don't know anything about anybody who stayed behind.

SI: Were you taught about the Holocaust when you were growing up in school?

DL: Yes.

SI: A little bit?

DL: Yes. I don't remember specifics. Up until recently, I've tended to avoid stuff that dealt with the Holocaust. For example, certainly anything that trivialized it, I've tended to avoid, or that I might have perceived--let me try to phrase this--that I may have unfairly perceived as trivializing it, because sometimes you just make a snap judgment about something. There was the film a few years ago that won Academy Awards by the Italian actor, Roberto ...

SI: Benigni?

DL: Yes.

SI: *Life is Beautiful*.

DL: Yes, *Life is Beautiful*. I saw the trailers for that. I said, "I'm not going to see this. This is trivializing the Holocaust." Like I said, perceived that. I don't know. It got great reviews. He won awards. Clearly, it struck a chord for many people. I still haven't seen it. Sometimes one makes snap judgments about things; sometimes one changes one's mind and sometimes one doesn't. Anyhow, I digress.

SI: When you were growing up, going back to Newark, did you have a lot of freedom of movement? Did you just go anywhere in the city or get on a train and go to New York?

DL: Well, yes and no. As I said, my mother was very overprotective. I never learned how to ride a bicycle. Most of my friends did. We were at the bottom of a hill. There's a traffic light there. There was Elizabeth Avenue, which is a busy main street. I was an only child. My parents must have imagined that I would end up getting splattered on Elizabeth Avenue if I learned how to ride a bicycle, if they bought me a bicycle, so they never bought me a bicycle. I never learned. I wasn't the kind of kid that said, "I want a bicycle. Everybody else has one." My mother never drove. My father was a driver. We would take buses. She and I would take the 107 bus, the 8, the 9, the 10, the 48, whatever. We would take buses all over the place.

Then, when I went to school, imagine Maple Avenue School being second base and home being home plate. Especially coming home from school, when I was a little older, at either first base or third base, there was a candy store that had pinball machines. We were the farthest place in the district because we were actually not in that district. Walking home from school, I would frequently stop at a friend's house all over the place. Whoever I happened to walk home with, I'd often stop at their house. Then, my mother would start looking for me around six o'clock. I

would either be at a kid's house, play ball, go to pinball machines, whatever. We didn't have any of the stuff you have now with [cell] phones or anything. She would call somebody's house, "Is David there?" Sometimes, I'd even be thoughtful enough to let her know where I was, but most of the time, I wasn't. It was nice. It was assumed I'd get my homework done after dinner, which I usually did. School let out at three-fifteen. At least in my memory, I was almost never home until around six o'clock.

SI: Do you have a question?

RP: You said you lived near Weequahic Park. I actually golf there at that golf course.

DL: It's eighteen holes now. It was only nine when I was a kid.

RP: That is what I was going to ask.

DL: Yes.

RP: When you were younger, it was open. It was up and running then.

DL: Yes, it was a nine-hole course. In winter, we'd sleigh ride there, too, nice hills. When I was about fourteen, I bought a set of clubs from a woman for about ten dollars. That's a lot of money then. I would play at Weequahic Park with friends or cousins. I sucked. I think my best nine-hole score ever was fifty-four. [laughter] I never had any lessons or anything.

RP: Do you remember how much it was to play a round?

DL: A dollar, two dollars, three dollars.

RP: Really? Wow.

DL: It might have even been free for kids in the neighborhood then. Who knows? Whatever it was, if it had cost a lot, I wouldn't have been doing it. It definitely was not pricy. It'd be a weekday afternoon maybe. Like I said, I was around fourteen or fifteen. I didn't keep it up.

SI: As you were becoming a teenager, would you have part-time jobs or summer jobs?

DL: Yes and no. I started working at my father's shop when I was twelve. That was my main job. Yes, I'm a very lucky person. I hardly ever had to do a job that was a real physically taxing or a real drudgery unless I felt adventurous. My father's shop was really a blessing working there in one sense. I went through the period around seventeen or so where I hated my father. I could still work there. It was like wearing two hats as his employee at the shop. He was the boss. I was the employee. If he asked me to do something, I did it. It was doing bookkeeping, typing up statements and things like that. That was no problem. At home, I hated him, because he wouldn't let me use the car, among other things. That was interesting that he and I could both separate the two. Did I ever have any other real jobs outside of my father's shop? I know I did something. Not really. I never worked in any other stores or anything like that. Briefly, I was a

fill-in delivering the *Newark Evening News*. It was somebody else's route. I was just filling in for him when he needed help. Not much else.

SI: You mentioned how politically aware and even active your mother was. As the '60s were starting, do you remember them talking about John F. Kennedy?

DL: Yes, I remember 1960. That was the first election I was aware of a little bit. My mother was a conventional Democrat. My father was probably more radical in his thinking. I occasionally refer to myself as a red diaper baby, but I wasn't nearly as much of a red diaper baby as some of my other friends. My father, I remember him very strongly railing against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964, sort of like what's going on now with shooting down a drone in Iran. Obviously, 9/11. He died before 9/11. I guess I was using it as an example of a bad decision by our government. The Iraq invasion, that is. He perceived it as a war provocation that was bullshit, for want of a better term. There were only two senators who voted against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. One of them was Wayne Morse. I forget the other one. He would talk about those senators being courageous and not just going along with the crowd, and the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, of course, was pretty much the green light to start sending more of our people into Vietnam. [Editor's Note: A red diaper baby refers to the child of parents who were either members of the Communist Party or were sympathetic to its aims. On June 20, 2019, Iran shot down an American RQ-4A Global Hawk surveillance drone over the Strait of Hormuz. On August 7, 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, authorizing President Lyndon B. Johnson to send American combat soldiers to South Vietnam. Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening were the only two Senators to vote against the resolution. Several days earlier in the Gulf of Tonkin, North Vietnamese torpedo boats allegedly fired at the USS *Maddox*.]

For those of us who did even a little bit of campaigning for Lyndon Johnson in 1964 because Barry Goldwater was a warmonger, we became extremely disillusioned with Lyndon Johnson when escalation took place in Vietnam. Of course, it started dawning on us that we might be the next group of cannon fodder. The interesting thing was I did tend to be oblivious to the growing threat. It was my father who would sometimes take me to draft counseling sessions and stuff, at his initiative, not my initiative. It wasn't, "Dad, take me to a draft counseling session." It was like, "Let's go to draft counseling." He would be the one who was trying to keep me abreast of that stuff, while I was paying more attention to sports or whatever. I'm grateful to him for that.

SI: Was that when you were in high school?

DL: No, more so when I was in college. Yes, it was really when I was in college. I graduated [from high school] in '65, when things were building up. Of course, for four years, as long as I stayed in school, I didn't have to worry about having a deferment. Between '65 and '69, we had the continuing escalation. We're still learning about stuff that happened in those years. I was on the *Targum* editorial board in '68. The election of '68 was Vice President Hubert Humphrey running against former Vice President Richard Nixon. We on the *Targum* editorial board endorsed Dick Gregory for president. We weren't exactly being very realistic. We certainly expressed our disgust with both.

Of course, what we've learned, I felt bad for Hubert Humphrey. There's a parallel between Hubert Humphrey and Al Gore in that they were vice presidents who were seeking the presidency and lost to despicable Republicans. I mean that sincerely about the Republicans. I didn't love Humphrey at the time, like many of us. I wasn't voting yet, though. I was twenty. The voting age was still twenty-one in 1968. I didn't get a chance to vote in that election. I would have voted. I don't know; I don't know who I would have voted for. I certainly wouldn't have voted for Nixon. I don't know if I would've voted for Humphrey. In retrospect, I feel bad for him. He got swallowed up by Johnson by having to support or at least not break away from Johnson's policies while Johnson was still president, just like Gore, in a different way but sort of a parallel, who got swallowed up by all the controversy and the impeachment of Clinton. Gore did not know how to balance bragging or taking credit for the positive things of the Clinton Administration while trying to disassociate himself from the negatives. He won the popular vote and lost the election, just like our current president, lost the popular vote but won the election. I consider both of those, besides the fact that they were miscarriages of our so-called democracy, a tragedy, two real tragedies. [Editor's Note: The 26th Amendment to the Constitution decreased the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen years old. It was ratified in 1971. Hubert Humphrey, who served as vice president to Lyndon B. Johnson from 1965 to 1969, lost in the presidential election of 1968 to Republican Richard Nixon. Humphrey lost the popular vote by less than one percent. Al Gore, who served as vice president under President Bill Clinton between 1993 and 2001, lost in the presidential election in 2000 to George W. Bush. Gore won the popular vote by approximately 500,000 votes nationwide but lost the election. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Bush v. Gore* that a recount in Florida was unconstitutional, effectively awarding Florida's electoral votes to Bush and thus sealing his victory in the election.]

SI: You talked about the draft counseling sessions.

DL: Yes.

SI: For the record, do you remember anything about what they would tell you or what it consisted of or what it was like?

DL: Not much. It was basically, "Try to stay in school. Keep your student deferment." When I graduated, I think somebody was pulling some strings on my behalf. It might have been my mother. I was able to get into a teacher intern program in '69. I got a job right out of college. I got a job working for a local weekly newspaper chain, which is what I really wanted to do. I was draft bait. I actually took a physical in July of '69, right around the time of the lunar landing. I passed the physical. I got into the teacher intern program. It was Rutgers Graduate School of Education and teaching in Newark. I was back at my old high school, Weequahic, with half a teaching job, splitting with a friend of mine, one of my best friends. I would teach the first few classes in the morning. He would teach the classes in the afternoon. Then, we would go downtown to Rutgers-Newark and take classes. We took nine credits the fall semester, nine credits in the spring semester, and got six credits for student teaching. I had twenty-four graduate credits within a year after I graduated. I eventually got the M.Ed. [Master of Education] at Rutgers. I don't know if you have me down for that. I have an M.Ed. in '72. [Editor's Note: On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the Moon in

NASA's Apollo 11 mission. Michael Collins flew the Command Module Columbia in lunar orbit while they were on the Moon's surface.]

SI: Okay.

DL: I probably recorded that. I probably put that in.

SI: You said Graduate School of Education, '72.

DL: Yes, yes.

SI: You listed that, yes.

DL: I like to joke about it. It was the world's most rinky-dink master's degree because I didn't have to do a thesis. The spring semester in 1970 ended rather abruptly when Kent State happened. Basically, we got our nine credits without taking final exams or completing whatever papers we were supposed to write. I have a master's degree in education, for what it's worth. I taught for a couple years. Then, when I got a high number in the draft lottery, I started applying for newspaper jobs again. [Editor's Note: Following President Richard Nixon's expansion of the Vietnam War to Cambodia, a nationwide student strike commenced in the beginning of May 1970. On May 4, Ohio National Guardsmen opened fire on anti-war protesters and bystanders at Kent State University, killing four and wounding nine. In solidarity with the national strike, the faculties of colleges throughout Rutgers University voted to make classes and final exams optional and instituted pass/fail grades for the spring semester 1970. On December 1, 1969, the U.S. Selective Service held the first draft lottery, which was broadcast live on television and radio. The lottery selected birthdays to determine the order in which men born between 1944 and 1950 were called to report for induction in 1970. The last draft lottery took place in 1972.]

SI: We will come back to this period.

DL: Yes.

SI: Let's go back to Weequahic High School when you were a student.

DL: Yes.

SI: Do any teachers or subject areas stand out?

DL: Math was always my strongest subject. I had five years of math in four years. My senior year, I doubled up; they were officially MAP IV and MAP V. MAP IV was primarily trigonometry. MAP V was primarily calculus. In thirty marking periods at Weequahic High School, I had thirty "A's" in any of my math classes. On the SAT, I think I was in the 770s in math. I took one of the math achievement tests and I nailed an 800 on one of those. I started Rutgers as a math major on account of that. Also, like I said, I loved my Spanish teacher Mrs. Birnbaum. I had two years of Latin and three years of Spanish. Latin was very helpful to me. Taking Latin, you really learn a lot about grammar and about spelling. Eventually becoming a

copy editor, all that stuff proved very useful for me. Sciences I avoided. I think I managed to get "B's" in a couple of them, biology and chemistry. It was a struggle. English classes, I was pretty good at, because I was good at grammar, spelling and writing, but I was never real good at reading poetry or heavy literature. It was not a strength for me. It's probably more at Rutgers than in high school, but reading James Joyce, people like that, it would be a struggle. I never had a problem passing English classes because I could write well. I could throw enough stuff into an essay to get by. Math, foreign languages, English, science, what else is there? Phys ed [physical education], I got by in phys ed and health classes. Art and music. The only "F" I ever got in my life was in the first marking period of ninth grade at Weequahic. I just goofed off in that class. After the first marking period, I settled down enough to get "B's" or "C's," whatever. I had to pass, let's put it that way. I never had any interest in [it]. It was like my brain was locked into the idea of major classes and minor classes. If it was a major class, I took it seriously. If it was a minor, like art, music or something like that, I didn't take it seriously, which was stupid. As I got older, I would start to make up for those deficits in some ways, things like art and music. Like I said, my brain was locked in. If it was majors, I cared about it and tried to get good grades, and minors, like, who cares.

SI: Were you writing for the school paper?

DL: No, I tried out for it. She didn't accept me. My senior year, I got a job as a stringer for both *The Star-Ledger* and the *Newark Evening News*, covering sports at Untermann Field that whole year, football and then basketball and baseball. That was what I really loved to do.

SI: Was Untermann Field the school field?

DL: Yes, it's on Chancellor Avenue. You've got the Weequahic building, then the Chancellor Avenue Elementary School building, and then Untermann Field, side by side. That was a lot of fun. That was my job. You asked me earlier on, "Did you have a job while you were in school?" Yes, my senior year, I was the stringer for the two different newspapers, which confirms what I also said earlier. I've almost never had a job that felt like work, that was a real drudgery or real physically taxing, or anything like that.

SI: I have interviewed a number of people from Weequahic. It sounds like it has always been a very ...

DL: We have a lot of pride.

SI: Yes, a lot of pride, but also very academically focused, pushing people towards college.

DL: Absolutely, yes.

SI: I would imagine you were always looking at college as your goal.

DL: It was just an assumption. It was just like, "Of course." When Vietnam rolled around, it became significant, urgent. I remember I had a friend, more than one, but one specifically who changed majors. He was in the liberal arts, poli-sci. At the end of his sophomore year, he

decided to go into bio-sci, which made him a five-year student, not a four-year student. He ended up becoming a doctor, but thanks to good old Vietnam. I didn't change that drastically, but I did change. It was an assumption that I would go to college. I took all the tests, the PSATs and the SATs. I excelled at all those. Boy, if I could've gotten a job as a test taker, I would've been made in the shade. I never would have had a problem in life. I'm a good test taker, for what it's worth.

The only college I applied to was Rutgers. I wanted to apply to Michigan State. I probably had the qualifications to apply to any of the Ivies or anything like that. I let my parents call the shots. Again, I was an only child. Thank God they let me go to Rutgers in New Brunswick. I didn't go to Rutgers-Newark. I didn't live at home. I was able to live in a dormitory for four years. God knows what a mess I would have become if I had not gotten away to live on campus. It was just far enough away. They could come; I could go home. I maintained doing the job at my father's shop, which involved maybe two days a month. I could take the train home. I could get a ride home with somebody. They could come visit once in a while. My father liked to go to the football games. He would come down at least once a year for a football game, or we would go up to West Point. If we played Army, he loved to go to West Point. We'd go up to West Point to a football game. Later on in life, we did, too. It was just far enough away, thank God. I might have been better off a little farther away, too. Who knows? At least I was living in a dorm and learning how to interact with people from different backgrounds.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

SI: We talked about coming to Rutgers. It was giving you a little more distance and freedom from home. What were the first few days and weeks on campus like?

DL: To follow up on that a little bit, my mother, her contemporaries say she was really, I don't know about brilliant, but a very, very smart woman. She suffered from bipolar disorder. She was institutionalized the summer when I was ten and the summer when I was twelve. Bipolar, when you're up, you're really up and you're really high functioning. When you're down, of course, you're a mess. First of all, as I got older, I became aware of that. I was always fearful that it would at some point hit me. Turned out, it hit my daughter. My mother was functioning well enough to make sure I got a bar mitzvah at thirteen. Then, she crashed really badly and she was institutionalized. My father could no longer afford the private place that she was in those first two summers. It was the summer of '58 and summer of '60. She spent about six months in a public institution, shock treatments and all that stuff. It really took a lot out of her. She had ups and downs a couple more times later on. When I was young, I was a little bit fearful that at some point I might stop functioning. Fortunately, that never happened. Again, that's why I said earlier, thank God I was able to get away. Getting away to Rutgers--getting away anywhere would've been great--I think Rutgers turned out to be a good choice. As I've described it, I was close enough to home to still do work for my father and come home.

Rutgers, September of '65, all-male school. I was used to a coed high school. The boys from Weequahic, of which there were about a dozen of us, all got to be in dorms. The girls [from Weequahic] who went to Douglass, there was not enough dorm space for them. For the entire first semester and I think for some of them maybe the entire freshman year, they had to commute

from Newark if they still lived in Newark. A lot of them were moving out of Newark to the suburbs at that time. There was the Jewish exodus going on and Blacks moving into the neighborhood, which was a whole other story. We felt sorry for the girls. They had to commute and not get dorm space. Meanwhile, we're not seeing a woman for days. I remember we were eating our meals in the Commons. A female started walking down the ramp into the Commons. Everybody started cheering! It was that different.

Freshman year was pretty easy for me because I really had such a strong background from Weequahic. A lot of people hit a wall freshman year. I hit the wall sophomore year. Classes started becoming more challenging to me sophomore year, sociology and an English lit [literature] course with a lot of James Joyce, stuff like that. Freshman year, I was lucky enough, I was assigned to Wessels Dorm, which is part of the Quad. The *Targum* was in the basement of Wessels then. [Editor's Note: Wessels Hall is a residence hall on the College Avenue Campus that was built in 1929. It is part of the Bishop Quad.]

SI: Okay.

DL: I'm sure I would have joined the *Targum* staff no matter where on campus it was. It just happened to be in the basement of my dorm. I guess I've always been lucky in things like that. I joined *Targum* sports staff. That was my main extracurricular activity. I'd be interviewing the coaches and covering games and doing a little editing. The printer's office was a place called Thatcher-Anderson. You've probably heard about Thatcher-Anderson. Jack Anderson was, I think, a Class of 1938 graduate. T.A., as we referred to it, was in a kind of crappy area in New Brunswick. We'd go there at night. Part of being on the *Targum* staff was being responsible for one night a week working at the printer's office, which was linotype, hot type. That was my one and only experience dealing with hot type the first three years. It was fun, proofreading, editing, as well as writing stories. I used to say I majored in history and minored in *Targum*. Of course, in those days, *Targum* people didn't get paid. It was a much smaller paper then. It was four pages daily and eight on Friday. Four days a week, it was four pages, Monday through Thursday, eight on Friday. I loved it. That was my main interest outside of my classwork.

SI: I want to talk about *Targum* in a minute. You said you entered wanting to major in math. How did you make the switch to history?

DL: I was a National Merit Scholar. I'm going to cite numbers that are ridiculously low in today's day and age. Basically, what I do now is, anything from those days, you add a zero and you're pretty much in the right ballpark. I had a National Merit Scholarship for 350 dollars. It doesn't sound like much, right? Tuition for the whole year was four hundred. It was basically almost a full tuition scholarship. But it was a sponsored scholarship and it was based upon my major being what we would now call a STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] major, in math or science.

I started out as a math major. It was my best subject in school. Freshman year was pretty much a rerun of the calculus class that I took in high school. It wasn't very challenging. My memory is a little fuzzy on some of this stuff. There was a bit of a snafu. I think I was in a calculus section that was with mostly engineering majors, not prospective math majors. I don't know;

who knows how it would have been different, or if it might have been different. I lost interest. I still aced the class because I had the background, but I was never interested in theory. I just loved working with numbers. I still do. So, I lost interest.

Then, we get word, I forget exactly when, during freshman year or during the summer, that they were reducing the scholarship, which was a need-based scholarship somewhat, too. Maybe, who knows, my father had a good year or something; I don't know whatever numbers he filled in. They reduced it from 350 to one hundred dollars. I said, "A hundred dollars, who needs it?" That was one of the motivations to change my major, besides the fact that I'd lost interest in math. I didn't have any vision of what I would do as a math major other than teach math and I didn't really want to teach math because math was so intuitive for me. I'd have to learn how to learn math in order to learn how to teach it. You can hit me now with numbers. They have the thing on the phone for doing instant math calculation. I'm still incredibly fast. I lost interest.

Now, what do I want to major in if I don't want to major in math? I like history. I like English. One of my first English essays had been printed out for the whole freshman class as an example of a well-written essay. I liked Spanish. I had placed into a third-year level Spanish lit course as a freshman, which was probably the main reason I didn't major in Spanish. I looked at the course offerings. I said, "There aren't even enough course offerings that I would want to take to major in Spanish." The Journalism Department did not have a good reputation at the time. The History Department had a great reputation, so I ended up majoring in history. Then, I no longer had a scholarship after my sophomore year. That's how I ended up changing.

SI: Do any of the professors stand out in your memory?

DL: Yes, absolutely. There were some real radical history professors, Warren Susman, Lloyd Gardner. I was really learning alternative history. Dick McCormick was more conventional. I had him, I guess, for the main entry-level history class, and then I had him senior year for a seminar. Interestingly enough, fifty years later, I had his son. I audited his son's class on the "History of Political Corruption." That was just such fun. Dick McCormick, Sr. was a great prof. Dick McCormick, Jr., who, I'm sure as you well know, is a former president of the University. I can't say I consider him a friend now, but we're contemporaries. I occasionally see him at the gym. I loved taking his class. [Editor's Note: Warren Susman served as a history professor at Rutgers from 1960 to 1985. He died of a heart attack while addressing the national convention of the Organization of American Historians in Minneapolis. Lloyd Gardner is Professor Emeritus of History at Rutgers. He joined the faculty at Rutgers in 1963. Gardner's oral history resides in the collection of the Rutgers Oral History Archives. Richard P. McCormick was a Professor Emeritus of History at Rutgers. He joined the faculty in 1945 and retired in 1982. He served as the Dean of Rutgers College from 1974 to 1977. He is the father of Richard L. McCormick, who served as the president of Rutgers University from 2002 to 2012. Richard L. McCormick previously had served as a history professor at Rutgers from 1976 to 1992. After stepping down as president, he once again joined the faculty.]

SI: With the *Targum*, you were a sports writer. Was there a particular sport you covered?

DL: All of them.

SI: Was there a way they assigned things?

DL: It's random. [laughter] Embarrassing moment number two, at least. I've never been a pushy person. I figure, if there's a hierarchy, I'm not someone who's going to buck it. As a freshman, I did whatever I was told to do. I didn't expect any great assignments because the upperclassmen would get them. The beginning of sophomore year, who's our big game at the time? Princeton. First game of the season would be against Princeton down there. This was 1966. It was time to assign the Princeton game. It just happens to fall on Yom Kippur. Most of the other guys on the sports staff were also Jewish and were not going to cover the Princeton game on Yom Kippur. Guess who volunteered to cover the Princeton game on Yom Kippur. I did. I really didn't think anything of it. I still do not look forward to spending the day in temple on Yom Kippur. I have been doing that for the last twelve to thirteen years of my current relationship, because it's important to her. I do it without any great enthusiasm or eagerness. There are times when you have to go along for domestic harmony. [laughter] In 1966, I covered the Rutgers-Princeton game.

Later that year, this is a great story, that was the year we had Bobby Lloyd and Jimmy Valvano. The basketball team emerged as one of the hot things on campus. I had the pleasure of covering some of their games. When we got into the NIT, which was in the old Madison Square Garden on Eighth Avenue and 49th or 50th Street, I went to the first two games, just attended them. I didn't have any assignment. You had to win four rounds. We won the first round. We won the second round. I was at those games. The third round, semi-finals, Southern Illinois happened to have a guy named Walt Frazier on their team. I had never heard of him until then. [Editor's Note: Jim Valvano played basketball at Rutgers from 1964 to 1967. He went on to have a successful college coaching career, leading North Carolina State to the NCAA National Championship in 1983. He passed away from cancer in 1993. Bobby Lloyd played for Rutgers between 1964 and 1967. Lloyd and Valvano helped lead Rutgers to a third-place finish in the 1967 National Invitation Tournament (NIT). Rutgers made it to the Final Four, losing to Southern Illinois, 79-70. Walt Frazier played point guard for Southern Illinois from 1963 to 1967. He was then drafted by the New York Knicks in the first round and played for the team from 1967 to 1977. He led the Knicks to two championships in 1970 and 1973. He then played for the Cleveland Cavaliers from 1977 to 1980.]

The setup was that one of the guys, who, I believe, was a junior, was going to go to the Garden and cover the game. Of course, TV then was not what it is now. The game was going to be televised in the gym, in the Barn, on College Avenue. We could watch it there. My job would be to watch the game there and then go to the printer's office and take the story from Howie, whatever his name was. I watched the game. We had a great first half. Valvano was on fire in the first half. We led by about eight or nine at halftime. Then, their overall stronger team asserted itself. They won by about eight or nine. Of course, we were devastated. I went to the printer's office. I took my job seriously. I got there. I was like, "Where's the story?" The guy who went to the game was so devastated he couldn't write the story. [laughter] I wrote the story from what I knew from watching the game. That was certainly interesting. I'd love to see that story now.

Two days later, they had a consolation game. That was my all-time great basketball day. This was an amazing day. I was able to get my father's car. I guess I drove into Manhattan. I actually don't remember if I drove into Manhattan or if I took transportation into Manhattan and came home and then took my father's car. I went to the game at the old Garden. We watched Rutgers win the consolation game for third place in the NIT that year. I think we beat Marshall. I always get confused. I think the other two semi-finalists were Marquette and Marshall. I think Marquette won and lost to Southern Illinois in the finals. I think we beat Marshall for the consolation game. [Editor's Note: The final four teams of the 1967 NIT Tournament were Rutgers, Southern Illinois, Marquette and Marshall. Marquette defeated Marshall in the semi-finals and lost to Southern Illinois in the finals, 71-56. Rutgers came in third in the NIT Tournament, beating Marshall 93-76.]

I came home and I drove to Atlantic City. I was really a new driver then. I was still eighteen. I had had my license for less than two years. I hadn't done a lot of driving. It was a windy day in March. I remember specifically that it was windy because I'm driving to Atlantic City, by myself, to go to Convention Hall to see Weequahic play, an undefeated Weequahic team, one of the best high school teams ever, anywhere, an undefeated Weequahic team win the state championship at Convention Hall in Atlantic City. I'm driving down by myself. I remember the Parkway was two lanes, most of the southern half of the Parkway then, below the Raritan, below whatever, I don't know. There was almost no traffic. It's a Saturday in mid-March. Rather than driving in the right lane or the left lane, I was driving pretty much straddling the center line. It was so windy I was afraid if I was either in the left lane or the right lane, I'd get blown off the road. My main memories of that day are seeing the Rutgers game in the morning. I think it started at noon. It was over by about two o'clock, and then I drove to Atlantic City, having a white-knuckle drive to Atlantic City and seeing that game, seeing Weequahic win. I don't remember much about any of the games other than the fact that the good guys won. Then, I drove home that night. That was my all-time great basketball day, March of '67.

SI: Wow.

DL: I was with *Targum* two more years. The last two years, junior and senior year, I was also the stringer for the *Newark Evening News*, the long-defunct *Newark Evening News*. Between sophomore and junior year, I bought my father's car, a 1964 Plymouth Fury. I bought it from him. I gave him five hundred bucks. He was able to buy a 1967 Plymouth Fury. I had that car. I was driving all around campus as a stringer for the *Newark Evening News*. Technology was so different then. I would type up the story. I would bring it to the Western Union office, which was right here on Church Street, the first block off of George Street. I would file whatever I had written and send it by way of Western Union to Newark. I did that for two years. It was a lot of fun.

SI: Was there a sport that you particularly enjoyed covering?

DL: I'm still probably more of a baseball fan than any [other] sport. College baseball has never been that big a deal. I remember a couple times, I actually had the opportunity to sit in on the WRSU broadcast and be the color commentator. Football. Football, you had the chance to, after a game, on Sunday--again, relatively primitive technology compared to nowadays. They would

have eight-mm film, whatever they filmed the game on. The coaching staff would go over the game. I would get to write a little story for the Monday *Newark Evening News* about the follow-up to the Saturday game. That was a lot of fun. Then, of course, basketball. We still had good teams after Lloyd and Valvano graduated. My class had some pretty strong players, Dick Stewart, Doug Brittelle, and Bob Greacen, who played in the NBA for a while. Oh, and lacrosse. Freshman year, I saw a lacrosse game for the first time. Oh, my goodness, I still enjoy going to a lacrosse game once in a while. I was pretty ecumenical when it comes to sports. I did not become the sports editor of the *Targum*. I had a good friend and classmate, Mike Serkin, who became the sports editor. I got the consolation prize. I was the features editor. As I said, we were on the editorial board during '68-'69. We endorsed Dick Gregory for president. [laughter]

SI: On the editorial board, you would cover more than sports?

DL: [Yes]. I made the job superfluous. I had no clue about what kind of initiative, what being a features editor entailed. Basically, I had a clean slate to do whatever I want, and I did very little. I enjoyed the group. We had some really good people on the board. Owen Ullmann, Jim Gerstenzang, they ended up both being White House correspondents. I don't know if you have any contact with any of them. [Editor's Note: The oral history of Owen Ullmann, RC '69, resides in the collection of the Rutgers Oral History Archives.]

SI: The names are familiar.

DL: Owen just retired. I don't know if Jimmy is still working. Others, my friend George Berlet, who died about two or three years ago, he was on the *Targum* staff. He was not a strong student academically, but he ended up having a wonderful career. He made more money than any of us. He was in the reinsurance industry. I remember he had an office in the World Trade Center on the 43rd floor. I visited him once. Fortunately, I think he retired by the time 9/11 happened. That's how successful he was. I think he retired in his fifties. We had a good group on the editorial board. I enjoyed. Gary Freedman, my goodness, he was one of the editors. Our class scholarship is named after him. He died young. He was a friend. He moved to North Carolina. I remember visiting there in September of '91, about six months before he died. Part of the reason for the visit was that the football team was playing Duke down there. He was our host.

SI: Obviously, there is a lot happening here in the '60s, politically, socially, culturally. Were you involved or at least aware of things like the Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, or the anti-war movement in general?

DL: I was not active with any of the radical groups. I think my sympathies lay with those groups, but I was not active. Remember now, I grew up in Newark. The two summers, in '66 and '67, after my freshman and sophomore years, I worked at Prudential in downtown Newark. I had no idea what I was doing, literally. In those days, everything was on punch cards. I remember handling a lot of punch cards. I didn't know what it was all about. Again, people would tell me what to do, I would do it. I had no idea why or to what purpose. I enjoyed the food there. We had a break. We had like a ten-minute break in the morning and a ten-minute break in the afternoon. There were people who would play bridge. I would have a hand of bridge during the break. It was fun, sort of.

One day, in July of '67, I went to work, I think it was a Thursday, then I came home, and the next day, I didn't have to go to work because there were troops all over Newark. I think we missed a couple days of work. We had moved to Ivy Hill in '66. My old neighborhood was in the area that was cordoned off by troops, but where we were in Ivy Hill wasn't. I wasn't really inconvenienced. I've kind of always been lucky that way. Things of inconvenience, I'm usually on the periphery where I'm not inconvenienced. [laughter] I'm just lucky most of my life in things falling into place or avoiding the catastrophe, avoiding disaster. [Editor's Note: The Newark rebellion took place from July 12 to July 17, 1967.]

SI: Could you see what was happening from your place?

DL: Probably, yes. As a matter of fact, yes, now that you mention it, one of the things my father loved about our apartment in Ivy Hill, we were on the fourteenth floor, which was actually the thirteenth floor. The elevator skipped thirteen; the numerics of the elevator skipped thirteen. We were on the fourteenth floor. We had a view facing east, facing Newark and New York. He loved his view, especially at night. It was actually my bedroom window that had the view. I don't even remember making a point of looking out for the view at that time. Anyhow, we were not terribly inconvenienced by the civil disturbances of July 1967. Newark was devastated. It's still recovering in some ways. I think it's really making good progress now, but there are still some places where one wouldn't want to go hanging around there, especially at night.

SI: The Black Student Movement was really growing during this period.

DL: Yes, especially my senior year. I learned a lot. Even though I had gone to Weequahic and I knew some Black kids and was friendly with some Black kids, I was never really close, and I learned a lot. There was specifically one guy named Eugene Robinson, same name as the *Washington Post* columnist. I guess it was Gene Robinson. I remember talking to him. I don't remember anything specific that he said, but he opened my eyes to a lot of things. My sympathies were certainly with the student protests. I thought Rutgers, under Mason Gross, did a wonderful job of keeping a lid on things by not trying to keep a lid on things. [laughter] I thought they allowed the protests; they didn't try to clamp down too hard on the protests. They allowed things to run their course. They listened to the protests and to the demands. At least this was my perception. I'm sure there's other perceptions. There were some strong changes that were instituted during my senior year and after, in terms of student body, faculty and more. It was certainly less of a lily-white institution after that. Of course, about four years after I graduated, it went coed. Livingston Campus opened up in September of '69, which I knew about, but I never really spent any time there. Even though I graduated and was part of the Graduate School of Education that year, most of my classwork was in Newark in '69-'70, not in New Brunswick. [Editor's Note: Mason Gross (1911-1977) served as the president of Rutgers from 1959 to 1971.]

SI: One of the things that comes out of the Black Student Movement was the shifting in how Paul Robeson was treated at Rutgers. Do you remember? [Editor's Note: Paul Robeson was the third African American student to attend Rutgers. He was an All-American football player, member of Phi Beta Kappa and Rutgers' Cap and Skull, and valedictorian of the Class of 1919.]

He went on to become a lawyer, actor, singer and activist. During the Cold War, Robeson was shunned by much of society and stripped of his passport over comments he made in 1949 that were misconstrued to be sympathetic to the Soviet Union.]

DL: Oh, absolutely. It's shameful the way he was treated during the McCarthy era. Yes, he was a Communist. He probably was somewhat maybe naïve about Russia. He was certainly treated poorly here. He was a brilliant man, talented in so many ways. It was good to see that things started to change where he was concerned. He graduated in 1919. I graduated in '69. Now, this year was the fiftieth anniversary for my class and the hundredth anniversary for his. It was a nice confluence. It was good during our reunion that there was some stuff about Robeson, too. Then, in Newark, they named--I think the main student center is Robeson. [Editor's Note: At Rutgers-Newark, the student center is named the Paul Robeson Campus Center. In 2019, Rutgers put on a year-long centennial celebration of the life and times of Paul Robeson, who graduated from Rutgers in 1919.]

SI: I think they tried to name the Student Center here after him while you were a student. There was a referendum or something.

DL: I don't remember. The new Student Center opened up during my senior year with a bowling alley and the *Targum* office in there, neither of which is there now. That was when we shifted from a hot type to cold type, during my senior year. We stopped going to Thatcher-Anderson. We started taking more of a responsibility for putting the paper out ourselves.

SI: The paper was not independent then, was it?

DL: No.

SI: Okay.

DL: That reminds me, my next contribution to Rutgers is not going to be to the Class of 1969 Scholarship Fund; it's going to be to *Targum*.

SI: Oh, because they just lost their funding, yes. [Editor's Note: Every three years, the *Daily Targum* must hold a referendum vote and earn thirty percent approval from the student body to receive funding through student fees. On May 13, 2019, it failed to achieve thirty percent and saw its funding cut by seventy-five percent. It has reduced its circulation and no longer publishes a Friday paper.]

DL: Yes.

SI: Did the administration try to impose boundaries or its will on *Targum* at that time?

DL: No. We did silly stuff like endorsing Dick Gregory.

SI: Yes.

DL: Like I said, we had good guys, good reporters. Owen Ullmann, Jimmy Gerstenzang, and Bill Sleight. We had some really radical guys, like what was his name? Max Zawicki, he was pretty radical. Elliot Greenspan, who started out as a sports reporter, and he ended up becoming, I think he became editor-in-chief the next year, '69-'70. What was his name, Lyndon LaRouche. Have you heard of Lyndon LaRouche? Elliot joined a group--Elliot really got radicalized in a weird way. He was such a good kid and a smart kid. I really have no idea what direction he went after college. He was going off the deep end with that Lyndon LaRouche stuff. What I remember about that, it was when I first experienced, you'd get into a political argument with somebody and they'd have a bunch of facts that were their facts. If you didn't have your own, if you weren't really prepared to parry those facts or to cite facts of your own, there was no point in arguing with that person. That's still certainly the case. Clearly these days, with all the different television cable news networks, some of which I can't even watch for five minutes without getting sick, people can spin almost any set of facts almost any way they want. It's very difficult. But that was when I started first experiencing that, when I'd see people like Elliot with all this stuff, all his Lyndon LaRouche stuff. [Editor's Note: Lyndon LaRouche was a political activist who founded the LaRouche Movement and the National Democratic Policy Committee, through which he raised money and launched eight campaigns for the American presidency. Although he was attracted to Marxism and socialism early in his life, he gradually shifted to the right and by the 1970s became associated with far-right political beliefs.]

SI: Do you have other questions about Rutgers?

RP: I was going to ask about the paper and the sports. I figured football and basketball were big. Was there hockey around? Were you writing anything on that?

DL: Hockey was a club sport, I think. It's probably one of the only sports that I never covered, because we didn't even have a place on campus to practice. I think they had to go to Princeton to practice. I don't even remember well. We definitely did not have a varsity team compete at the NCAA level.

RP: Was there a golf team?

DL: Yes, there was a golf team. Fred Gruninger was the golf coach. Sometime after I had graduated, he became the AD [athletic director]. I don't have a high opinion of his stint as the AD. I think he was the one who was the AD when we had the opportunity to join the Big East when it was forming. He blew it. I think we would have been better off if we joined the Big East as soon as it was forming rather than when we belatedly did. [Editor's Note: After coaching golf at Rutgers 1963 to 1971, Fred Gruninger served as the athletic director from 1973 to 1998. The Big East Conference was founded in 1979. Rutgers was invited to join but declined. In 1991, Rutgers joined the conference and was a member until 2013, when it left to join the Big Ten Conference.]

RP: Another question, but this is not about Rutgers. This is about your father. You said with Japan, he had some strong feelings toward them. Did he ever say anything about Germany or Hitler in that sense, like the way he talked about Japan?

DL: Oh, certainly, yes. Being a Jew growing up in Newark, there was a strong German influence in Newark. Later years, I read some books and came to learn about how there was a lot of clashes going on in Newark between German supporters and Jews. As well as I give him credit for being prescient about Vietnam in 1964--he wasn't someone jumping on the anti-Vietnam bandwagon after the Tet Offensive in 1968, he was talking about it in 1964--he was also someone who did not think highly of Neville Chamberlain. He was someone who saw that things were building up in a bad way in Europe under Hitler and that 1938, at Munich, giving away Czechoslovakia, or whatever it was, was not going to work out well. [Editor's Note: The Tet Offensive, a series of offensives beginning on January 30, 1968 by the Viet Cong against every major city in South Vietnam, is seen as the point when American public opinion began turning against the war in Vietnam. Neville Chamberlain served as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1937 to 1940. He is known for his policy of appeasement towards Nazi Germany. On September 30, 1938, Chamberlain signed the Munich Agreement with Adolf Hitler, giving Germany the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia. In March 1939, Germany took over the rest of Czechoslovakia. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, sparking the start of World War II.]

I've said this already. I'm not really sure exactly when he did his enlisting and why he enlisted first in the State Guard and not directly into the U.S. Army. He was definitely in the U.S. Army by '44. They got married in October of '42. I have a picture of them where she went out to Camp Crowder in Missouri when he was stationed there. I have a picture of them together at Camp Crowder in 1944 before he got sent overseas. He didn't have anything good to say about the Germans either. [laughter] If I had ever bought a German car or Japanese car while he was still alive, he would have had a heart attack and died on the spot probably. I have driven Japanese cars. I still haven't had a German car, although now the Germans are the good guys and we're the bad guys. [laughter]

SI: Going back to the political climate then, did you actually ever take part in any demonstrations or anything like that?

DL: Yes, my memories are always so quirky. My friend Jimmy and I, we went to a demonstration on August 6, 1966. It was the twenty-first anniversary of Hiroshima. We took a bus into New York. We went to that demonstration. The only thing I remember about that day is we bought a big stick of pepperoni in New York, broke it in half, and we were just eating the stick of pepperoni while we were on the bus back home. I had the runs after that so bad from the pepperoni. That's all I remember from that. That's a great memory. I did go to anti-war demonstrations. I guess that was a SANE demonstration in '66. I was not a real activist. I'm still kind of that way. I'm involved with Citizens' Climate Lobby. I do a little bit for them. I go to some of their meetings. I've gone to a couple of Sierra Club meetings here at Panico's. It's like I dip my toes in the water and I don't take the plunge with activist groups usually. [Editor's Note: In 1957, SANE formed as an organization advocating nuclear disarmament. In 1993, it was renamed Peace Action. Founded in 2007, Citizens' Climate Lobby is an environmental organization that seeks to influence climate policy. The Sierra Club is a grassroots environmental and conservation organization that was founded in 1892 by John Muir. The Raritan Valley chapter meets at Panico's, a restaurant in New Brunswick, New Jersey.]

SI: Yes.

DL: I think I'm too content too easily. I don't have that real visceral anger that I think motivates people when they see injustice or they really get that way. I've written stuff. I've written letters to the editor. I didn't bring some of my writings. I don't have the fire in the belly for that sort of thing.

SI: Aside from some of the stories you told, like the two basketball games, are there any other events that you covered that stand out in your memory vividly?

DL: Not really. Let me think, junior year, senior year, not so much. Well, Rutgers and Princeton again. Freshman year, when we went to play Princeton, I wrote a silly little poem, which was basically, "Tiger, Tiger burning bright. Can you stop a Scarlet Knight?" I'm sure I'm not the first person to think of that. It was a couple more lines. It was published, I think, in the *Targum* edition. It was a special edition for the Princeton game. I'm trying to remember now. I think we lost to them freshman year. We lost to them sophomore year. I think we lost to them junior year. We beat them senior year. In September of '69 after I graduated, that was the one hundredth anniversary game. I wasn't involved anymore. I went to that game, of course. That was here. All four undergrad years, they were always at Palmer Stadium [at Princeton], but the centennial game was here. We beat them pretty handily that year. I remember that. I wasn't really involved in that other than looking forward to it for a long time and going to it. Then, I think that was around '69 that they announced that they were going to play a home-and-home series against the University of Hawaii. That became a big deal for me when they went to Hawaii in 1974. That was a real big deal for me. I don't know if you want to go there now. [Editor's Note: The first-ever college football game was played on November 6, 1869 between Rutgers and Princeton. On September 27, 1969, the two teams faced off in the centennial game, with Rutgers winning 29-0. Rutgers and the University of Hawaii have faced off two times in football, once on November 30, 1974 and once on October 4, 1975.]

SI: We can lead up to that, or you can tell us now, whatever you would like.

DL: Or I can go to the bathroom now.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

SI: We were talking about your time at Rutgers. You were obviously very active with the *Targum*. Were there any other groups or activities?

DL: Some of us from *Targum*, led by Gary Freedman, we did the freshman handbook one year.

SI: Oh, okay.

DL: I guess my senior year, I helped out with that. As I said, being a stringer for the *Newark News* took up a lot of my time, energy and interest. It's funny how the junior and senior years, there's so much other stuff that went on. Freshman year, I was in a three-man room in Wessels. I've almost had no contact with either of those guys, Tom D'Agostino and Dan Jones. Tom was

from Lyndhurst and started out as a chemistry major, didn't do real well as a chemistry major, and switched to one of the liberal arts majors. I've had no contact with him. Dan Jones was from Ewing Township. He literally was a farmer. He was in the Ag School. I've had no contact with him. I don't even know if either one of those guys are alive. A guy from the freshman year dormitory, he and I roomed--Marc Smolin from Scotch Plains--we roomed together as sophomores in Campbell. Junior year, I roomed with one of my high school classmates, Marvin Schlanger, in Campbell.

June of '67 was also the Six-Day War with Israel. Marvin and I, being both Jewish, it was a big deal for us then. We were fearful, of course. I was born the same month as the State of Israel. My attitude about Israel, even though I don't love their government now, is Israel only has to lose once and they're gone. Israel has to win every time. They have to stay undefeated; otherwise, they're gone. The Six-Day War was a great source of really more relief that they won that war, as well as pride. Marvin and I, we had a window facing George Street, on the third floor. We took toilet paper. We pasted it up in the window, "Israel 3, Arabs 0." We figured that in 1948, Israel survived. 1956, there was the Suez Canal Crisis. 1967, the Six-Day War. "Israel 3, Arabs 0." Needless to say, if that happened nowadays, we'd probably get a rock thrown through our window the first week. I was surprised we never got a rock thrown through our window then. There were probably very, very few students of Middle Eastern descent on campus in those days. [Editor's Note: The Six-Day War, or the Third Arab-Israeli War, occurred from June 5 to June 10, 1967 between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Syria and Jordan.]

Marvin and I, politically, are totally at opposite ends of the spectrum. He's been very successful. He was a chemical engineer. There was a dinner two or three years ago where he was one of the honorees. He invited me and a couple of other friends. It was really wonderful. Marvin and I, like I said, we're at opposite ends of the spectrum. He's very right-wing. I'm very left-wing. We still like each other, and I was really honored that he invited me to the dinner. It was a really good experience. He and the other honorees, there were like five other honorees, were such a wonderful example of the value of the University, these people, all from the Engineering School. One of them was a young woman who was an aspiring astronaut. One of them was a guy who was in charge of the Pulaski Skyway Project. The Skyway was recently preserved. One of them was a guy who had a strong career in the sciences. Then, he basically left and became a high school chemistry teacher for twenty years or something. They're all these really inspiring people. That was, what, two, three, four years ago, I don't know. Those are the kind of stories for me now that really contribute to how strongly I feel about Rutgers. Anyhow, I digress.

SI: Did you have any interaction with Hillel at all?

DL: No.

SI: No, okay.

DL: Remember, I said I covered the football game on Yom Kippur. No, never. Hillel, at that time, I think I would have to go to the Douglass Campus to do Hillel. I've been in the current Hillel building more than I ever was in Hillel in any of its incarnations or buildings over the previous fifty years.

SI: Do you remember the social side of Rutgers?

DL: Yes.

SI: Do you remember any of the concerts and performers?

DL: Oh, yes. I never pledged. I never even went to any fraternity parties or thought about pledging. I used to say that I minored in *Targum*. I used to say that the *Targum* was my fraternity. I'd go to dances. I was never a very good dancer and never a very good player, so to speak, more of a nerd. I loved, oh my goodness, the concerts, the movies, the entertainers. We had Woody Allen on campus. We had movies in Records Hall. Two specifically were hilarious. I'm not talking about the fact that they were comedies. *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, they showed it. Whenever Sessue Hayakawa would appear on the screen, he was the Japanese commander of the prison camp, "Hiss, boo," everybody. Records Hall was packed. They would go crazy on him. Then, they started doing it on Alec Guinness too toward the end of the movie.

Then, *Planet of the Apes*, oh, my God, when they showed *Planet of the Apes* on campus with Charlton Heston, the original *Planet of the Apes*, the first one--early on, he tries to escape. He's running around basically in just a loin cloth or whatever. Finally, the apes lasso him. They recapture him. "Get your stinking hands off of me, you filthy apes." The place erupts. It was really fun to see movies like that in Records Hall with a crowd. I would see some of the entertainers that we had.

SI: Would you go over to Douglass much?

DL: No. I think one year, it might have been senior year, I had a class over there. I never had a girlfriend over there. That would have certainly motivated me to go over there more often. Although, again, I felt so sorry--we were making great progress then socially on this campus, the College Avenue Campus. Freshman year, the only time you could have a girl in the room was like for a couple hours on Saturday after the football game. You had to keep the door at least ajar. By senior year, twenty-four/seven in the dorms, you could have a girl in the room. I don't know how it happened that fast, but that was part of growing up in the '60s. Junior year, I had a girlfriend for most of the year who was a senior in high school. Then, she went off to college and I didn't have a girlfriend senior year. I had friends who were female, but I didn't have a girlfriend. I was preceptor in Campbell senior year.

SI: What did being a preceptor entail at that time?

DL: Just trying to keep a lid on things. I was not yet twenty-one years old during senior year. My birthday is May 27th, so I turned twenty-one at the very end of the school year. I think I took my last exam on May 26th and had my birthday the next day. My hairline was already receding a little bit, so I looked a little bit older. I had a wing full of freshmen. I would go to the liquor store, buy beer, and bring it back. They'd pay me for that. I wouldn't take extra money. They'd pay for the beer. I was breaking the law, even myself, because I wasn't even twenty-one,

and certainly by passing it along to the eighteen-year-olds I was breaking the law. On the whole, the job as the preceptor was to keep a lid on things and help the kids when they needed help.

The greatest crazy incident that happened senior year--it's early November, around the first week of November. We had one of those days where thank goodness it wasn't snow. It was a heavy rain, wind. It would have been a forty-inch blizzard. Fortunately, the temperature might have been forty-two degrees or something rather than thirty-two degrees. It was a miserable day with the wind. I'm in a River Dorm. You've got the canal high, flowing up, going from right to left upstream and the river high, going from right to left upstream. At that time, we're talking the difference in technology. It was expensive to make phone calls then. I'd have one in the dormitory. There was one phone at the end of the hall. Nobody had cell phones. It was a payphone. I had a kid in my section who had his high school girlfriend who went to college in Ohio, and he used up a lot of money on telephone calls to his girlfriend in Ohio. He was broke. He was always looking to try to make money. This day when we had the storm, in order to earn money, he said that he would go out and try to swim across the river during the storm. "Pass the hat, I'll swim across the river." I find out about it, of course. I think his name was Joel. I tried to use a little reverse psychology. I said, "You can't be that stupid. You're not dumb enough to do this, are you?" It didn't work.

Sure enough, he goes out there, goes to the bank, on the banks of the old Raritan, he was only on the banks of the canal. He got in there and he swam across the canal. Then, at that point, I guess sanity took over. Meanwhile, we were calling campus patrol to get out whatever needed to be done to rescue him. Fortunately, he never went beyond the bank and into the [river.] He only swam across the canal. He didn't try the river. Many years later, I saw in *New Jersey Monthly* magazine his first-person take on that day. It was actually published. That was probably the greatest excitement of my time as a preceptor in Campbell. I wasn't very effective.

SI: Did the administration expect you to report on the students at all?

DL: I suppose.

SI: Yes.

DL: I don't remember. Let me put it this way, I was not much more mature than my freshmen in the section. I don't know how seriously I took the job. I mean, I took the job [seriously], obviously, since I brought back beer for the guys. I don't remember any memorable fiascos other than the kid trying to swim the river.

SI: Were drugs becoming an issue then?

DL: I think there were some kids in the section who had some awareness of pot and other stuff, but I was really not ready, at that point, to try anything myself. Even though I bought beer for the guys, I really didn't start drinking myself. I didn't really like beer yet. I do remember, my birthday was May 27th and I had finished; all I was doing was waiting around on campus for graduation. I went out on the night of the 26th, went out to one of the pubs, and waited until midnight to order because I was then legal. I wasn't into drinking much then. I'm trying to

remember if I tried any pot during the summer, during any of the summers before senior year. I'm not sure. I don't think I did. No, if anybody was into using anything, I wasn't aware of it.

SI: Before we leave Rutgers, are there any other memories that you want to share or anything that we skipped over?

DL: I don't know. Something might pop in.

SI: Yes, we can always add more.

DL: Yes, yes.

SI: You did describe earlier how you started working in the school.

DL: I immediately got a job at the newspaper, the *Union Leader* chain. When Woodstock was happening, I was working. People were saying, "Are you going to go to Woodstock?" I wasn't really that much into pop music. I didn't have any close friends that were going there. Probably if I had a close friend who was going there, I would have gone, but I didn't. I was working. I so enjoyed that job. I had to leave it, because it was the summer of '69, I was draft bait. I was 1-A. I went for my physical. I got the job as a teacher, and so I had to quit the newspaper. When we had the teachers' strike in February of '70, rather than doing a lot of picketing--I did go out and get arrested one day--mostly I worked for the guy who was the editor of that paper. His wife had been a teacher at Weequahic, so there was a strong connection. The job was open for me. During the three-and-a-half weeks that I was on strike, I probably worked at least twelve to fifteen days at the newspaper doing the same job I had been doing in the summer. [Editor's Note: A 1-A draft classification means that an individual is available for service.]

SI: Were you covering sports there?

DL: When you're at a weekly paper, you do everything. You edit at the desk. You cover meetings. You go out to the municipal buildings and check the police blotters. I was really a rookie. I had done sports writing, but this was really my maiden voyage in terms of doing anything besides sports writing. It was fun. It was good. I loved working there that summer, and I enjoyed working there a few days during the teachers' strike. I did go out one day and we went out for picketing in front of Miller Street School in Newark. I let myself get picked up. It was part of the strategy in the union.

SI: Can you describe that a little bit more when you say you let yourself get picked up?

DL: I didn't have to go out there that day. I knew if I went out there that day, I'd probably get arrested. I probably could have split, but I let myself get arrested. We were eventually sentenced to a ten-day sentence for contempt of court. That was the official--there was a court order against picketing. When we violated the court order, we were guilty. As I said at the time, I had plenty of contempt for that court. That's all, it was no big deal. I've often said, I'd rather say I got arrested for a Vietnam demonstration or a civil rights demonstration, but I got arrested for a teachers' strike. [Editor's Note: The Newark Teachers Union, Local 481, an affiliate of the

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, went on strike from February 2 to February 26, 1970. The teachers union voted overwhelmingly to strike for higher wages (as well as other issues, such as curriculum and class size), despite an antistrike court order. On January 31, Superior Court Judge Ward J. Herbert had barred a walkout, as New Jersey law forbade public employees from going on strike (From "Newark Teacher Strike Is Voted For Today Despite Court Order," *The New York Times*, February 2, 1970; and Walter H. Waggoner, "16 Are Convicted in Newark Strike: Teachers Get 10 to 30 Days for Defying Order of Court," *The New York Times*, March 10, 1970).]

SI: What was the sentence like?

DL: That was interesting. I was arrested in February of '70. I did my time in December of '71. It was almost two full years later. I'd already quit the teaching job. We were sentenced. We went into jail. It was during the Christmas break of '71. It was December 23rd we were taken. We got credit for one day of time served when we were arrested. It was a ten-day sentence. Then, we got credit for one day for good behavior. They kept us in for eight days and let us out on the morning of New Year's Eve. It was interesting. For me, again, when I talk about being lucky, in a weird way I was lucky when I was sentenced. Unlike people who were married and had families, it didn't tear me away from my responsibilities as a parent. Rather than being in small cells with just two or three people, we were in kind of a dormitory setting. There was about sixty of us. We were locked up at night. We could play cards. We could roll up a pair of socks and play catch. We had a guy who was a really good chess player. It was the only time in my life when I came close to really learning how to play chess. I mean, I know how to play chess. I learned when I was a kid, but I never really got into it. This guy was good. For a little while, I was really getting a sense of how to play chess. We played a lot of bridge. I learned how to play Whist. Yes, that's what it was. For me, it was just kind of a vacation away from a girlfriend who I was no longer interested in anyway and broke up with officially right after I got out.

The day we got out, we sang, "When teachers were in Caldwell land, let my teachers go." It was based on "Let My People Go" ["Go Down Moses"]. I made up some lyrics. There were TV crews when we were released. We started singing for the TV crews. We were up in Caldwell, which is off Bloomfield Avenue. We all went into the Claremont Diner, which, at that time, was a place to go. The TV crews also went to the Claremont Diner. When we were in jail, the only utensil we had to eat with was a spoon. Forks, knives could be weapons. First thing we did in the Claremont Diner, when the TV crews came in, was we held up our forks and knives.

For the officers in the union who did more time--some of them did three months or six months--it was a real hardship. For me, it was a little bit of a weird vacation. I don't know if I'm making myself clear when I say I feel lucky. I never had the worse things happen to me that could have happened, and always things fell into place for me, in some ways, not in all ways. I guess I look on the bright side, things like going to jail.

SI: Was there any violence or abuse when you were arrested?

DL: No. As a matter of fact, there's a guy who was a cop. I think he worked for Essex County, not Newark, John Mulvaney. I think he recently died. I think I saw him last September. He was looking pretty bad. I think I'd heard that he had died since then. He used to moonlight at *The Ledger*. We had cops at the office. It was Newark. It was nights. It was nighttime. They would make phone calls. They weren't just sitting there twiddling their thumbs. They would make phone calls, either to people who wrote letters to the editor to verify, or they'd make phone calls to the other police stations. Basically, they'd make the police checks. If there was something noteworthy, a reporter would follow it up. John Mulvaney would be sitting near me at night, when I was working nights at *The Ledger*. He would be doing his thing. I'd be working. Every now and then, we'd start talking. Every now and then, we'd start shooting rubber bands at each other. Every now and then, we'd cover the ground of the Newark teachers' strike. We'd speculate about whether or not he was the guy who actually arrested me. [laughter] We were never really sure if it was he or not, but it was possible that he was the guy who arrested me. We were pals by that time.

SI: Did that ever have any longer-term effects for you, like having a record and having gone to prison?

DL: No. My friend Jimmy, who became a lawyer, went through the trouble of having his record expunged. But it was contempt of court. He went to law school when we were about thirty-five, after teaching in Newark for a number of years, for the same reason that I did. Also, his father was a teacher. He went through the trouble of having his record expunged, and I never bothered. It never affected me in any way.

SI: I am curious, just in general, your experiences as a teacher, what did you think of working with students? Did you have a good experience in that regard?

DL: Yes, on the whole. On the whole, I enjoyed it. The students at Weequahic by then were almost all Black. I was only three or four years older than some of them, or five or six years older. I still have a little bit of contact with a handful of students from that era. I could have done a better job as a teacher. I was trying to do different things. I was trying to not just stick to the textbook. I was trying to create lessons that were a little different from what I had had, although I'd had good teachers. Between the fact that I was taking classes and the fact that my heart really wasn't totally into it, I wasn't as good a teacher as I could have been. Teachers have to either command respect or demand respect. Some people just naturally command respect. Some people have to demand respect. I've never considered myself someone who really commands respect. Especially at that time, I wasn't somebody really interested in demanding respect. I could have done a better job as a teacher. When I got my high number in the draft lottery, I was certainly ready to start looking for newspaper work.

There were two times actually when kids pulled knives on me. I [had] at least three confrontations during the two years I was teaching. One, a kid, a girl, pulled a knife on me. She was someone who I liked. I certainly don't think I was ever really hard on her and did anything. Basically, I just said, "What are you doing that for?" Whatever it was, I didn't respond angrily. I didn't confront her. She just eventually put the knife away. I never reported it. Something similar happened with a boy. Again, it was a kid who I kind of liked. I don't know why he

decided to pull a knife on me. Again, I didn't get all scared or nervous. I didn't confront him. I just talked softly, and he eventually put the knife away. I didn't report it. Maybe I should have reported it.

Then, there was one time during the strike when I was passing out leaflets about--I think we had some kind of alternative school. I was on the backside of the school on Vassar Avenue, and a parent confronted me. He snatched stuff out of my hands. I went back there with stuff. When I went back there with stuff, I went back there with a coke bottle. I never really had a physical confrontation. People got beat up, especially during the second strike. Teachers did get beaten up. Again, I was fortunate enough to never be in the wrong place at the wrong time, in that sense, and avoided the worst, avoided that possibility. Like I said, I tend to look on the bright side. [Editor's Note: After the expiration of the one-year agreement in the wake of the 1970 Newark teachers' strike, the Newark Teachers Union again went on strike for eleven weeks, from February to April, in 1971.]

SI: Do you have any other questions?

RP: They pulled knives on you because of grades you were giving them?

DL: Yes, maybe it was grades. I don't know. I don't even remember why. It was like I have this image where I'm standing by my desk and the girl is there. Maybe class had been let out and she was like the last one out of the room. I don't know, I don't really have a very strong memory of it. Maybe they were just trying to show how cool they were, how tough they were or something, I don't know. I would say something like, "You don't want to do something that'll ruin your life."

RP: It seems like since you remained calm, that is how it just kind of blew over.

DL: Yes. I don't know. I don't know why I remained calm either, because I've never taken Judo or karate. I would be pretty helpless if somebody attacked me, even then, fifty years ago. Whatever it was, it had no ramifications afterwards. I didn't treat them any differently afterwards.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

SI: We are back and we left off talking about your career in education and how you transitioned into journalism, which you had never really left for too long. Tell me more about that first job after teaching in the Newark Public School system.

DL: I'm transitioning to newspaper work. The two full years that I worked at Weequahic, the first year, I was half a teacher, taking a lot of classes at Rutgers, the graduate classes. The second year, I was a full-time teacher. Then, we had the second strike that was ten weeks long, from February 1st to the middle of April. Again, I found other things to do. I did a little work for the newspaper. I think I worked for the Census Bureau or something like that. I don't remember. Anyhow, I had moved out of my parents' house in 1970. The first full year I was living in my parents' apartment. Then, I moved into an apartment in East Orange. This is around

the summer of 1970. Of course, then I'm supporting myself. When I'm on strike, I have to find income. In September of '71, I no longer had a full-time teaching job. I guess I had gotten a good number in the draft lottery by that time, 296, my favorite number.

I signed up to do subbing, much of which I did at Weequahic, and I also got a job at Dorf Feature Service, which was affiliated with *The Ledger* but separate. It was sort of a satellite news organization of *The Ledger*. At the time, their main office was in downtown Newark at 909 Broad Street, a couple blocks from *The Star-Ledger* office and right near City Hall. Subbing was thirty-five dollars a day. Dorf's was twenty dollars if I was covering a meeting and thirty dollars if I was in the office for work, or vice versa. I think it was twenty if I was covering a school board meeting or a municipal council meeting. It was a terrible system. I'd never go to the same place twice, so I'd never build up any knowledge of a particular town or a school board or whatever. I really thought it was a bad system at the time. You'd go into a place cold. Somebody got up to speak, and you had no idea whether that person was a respected citizen or a crank or a gadfly or somebody who might be saying something that was sensible, but nobody was taking them seriously because he was perceived as a crank or a gadfly or something.

I did it. It's all a learning experience when you're twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four years old. That was throughout the 1971-'72 school year. I think I officially got my master's degree in '72; whatever stuff had to be completed finally was done. I was really looking for full-time newspaper work, sending out résumés right and left. I remember I got rejected at *The Ledger*. I applied to the sports department. I think I still have the rejection letter somewhere from *The Star-Ledger* from 1971 or '72.

That summer, again with the contacts I had from people in Newark in the schools, I got a job as a day-camp counselor in July. That was going to be for most of the summer of 1972. It was a day camp in Mount Freedom. It was pretty much the same people [as when] I had attended that day camp when I was ten or eleven. Now, here I was going back as a counselor, and I was given a group of the five-year-old boys. I wasn't really thrilled about that. I would have liked to have an older group, where there would be good games of softball or basketball, whatever. It was an interesting situation.

In the meantime, that summer, my friend Jimmy and I tried out for a quiz show, and we got accepted. There was a quiz show at the time called *Three on a Match*. Right now, I'll just make a long story short, I won three games and some nice prizes on *Three on a Match*. In order to do so, I would take off and I had to go to New York on days when I was supposed to work at the day camp. They weren't happy about that, but, hey, I wasn't going to give up going to a quiz show. Then, I got offered a full-time newspaper job starting around July 30th, right around the end of July. Then, I had to quit. Again, it was probably not fair to the people who ran the camp, but I got offered a full-time job in the career I want to pursue, as opposed to working maybe three or four more weeks at the day camp and not having that job be available. It wasn't really a close call at all for me, the ethics of it being questionable, I guess. You should give notice when you have a job. You should give a week, two weeks, or whatever, but I couldn't do that at the time. Again, I still feel a little bad about it. That was my start for a full-time job at a weekly newspaper called *The Belleville Telegram*.

SI: Do you have any other memories of the quiz show experience?

DL: I won three games. The moderator of the quiz show was Bill Cullen, who was very well known. I had seen him growing up. As a kid, I'd seen him on other shows like the *Price is Right* or whatever, I don't know. He was a genial gent. He was somewhat handicapped. You'd see him set up in front of his desk, a dais or whatever, but you didn't see how difficult walking was for him if you saw him on TV. [Editor's Note: Bill Cullen was a radio and television personality who was best known for being a game show host. He hosted twenty-three game shows during his career, including *The Price is Right*. Cullen survived polio as a baby and suffered physical disabilities throughout his life as a result.]

The interesting thing with my friend Jimmy, we'd known each other since fifth grade and we'd been in the teacher intern program together--he and I are still close--we tried out for the show at the same time. We passed the tests. We were told we'd be called back. He was called back first. The night before he's called back, we were discussing strategy and stuff like that. I said to him, "Why don't we go partners on this? That way if one of us does well and the other one doesn't, we'll split the difference." Sure enough, when he went in, he initially did very well answering questions. The way the game worked, you answer questions and you build up a certain amount of money. As soon as you have what you feel is enough money, you would go to the board. It was a little bit like Concentration in that you would try to make a match. You'd buy pieces of the board until you either made a match or ran out of money. He went to the board, and he didn't make a match. He ran out of money, and somebody else won the game. He got some kind of consolation prize. That was it.

A few days later, it was my turn. The exact opposite happened. In the first game that I was involved in, somebody else built up money, went to the board, tried to make a match, failed. I ended up then answering some questions and building up the money. I went to the board, and I won the game. Then, it happened a second time, the same thing. Then, I won a third game, although it wasn't as dramatic. I just built up the money and won the game. I won three games, which was the most you could win on that show. They retired you. One game, the prize--I don't remember the order--one game, the prize was a diamond bracelet. I didn't even have a girlfriend then, so I didn't have much use for it. One was a fur coat, the same thing. One was a living room furniture set. That's nice. I put it in my apartment. Then, after three games when they retire you, you get a car. It was a Renault, 1972. Interestingly enough, Jimmy and I are partners, and I had a car and he didn't. What we agreed on was that he would give me one thousand dollars and the car would be his. I kept everything else. The car listed for well over two thousand at the time. We agreed on that. He got the car. My father, who was a jeweler, helped me sell the bracelet. We also sold the mink coat. I kept the living room furniture. I think I won some cash, too. I think I won about three hundred dollars, not a lot of cash. It was a great experience. It cut into my time working at the poor day camp. Then, as I said, I had to quit the day camp.

SI: You went to work for the Belleville paper.

DL: *Belleville Telegram*, right. It was weird. Oh God, it was so weird. It was really not a very professional organization. The owners were not newspaper people. They were politically

connected people in Essex County. The nominal owner was a woman named Arlene Pannullo, who was a young mother maybe in her thirties. She had a couple young kids. Maybe she was in her forties, I don't know. Her father was kind of the power behind the throne. He was a former Assemblyman, Joe Biancardi. Imagine your stereotypical Essex County Italian Democratic politician. That was Joe Biancardi. [Editor's Note: Joseph Biancardi represented New Jersey's 11th District in the General Assembly from 1966 to 1968. He was also a leader of a local Teamsters Union and was found guilty of embezzling union funds in 1973.]

It was a learning experience. I put in many hours, especially on Tuesdays when we were putting the paper together in the printer's office. Like I said, it wasn't a very professional operation. I started there in the summer of '72. In the summer of '73, I went to take a vacation. I forget, I think I went to California. When I came back, they had given the job to somebody else. I was on unemployment for a few weeks. Then, the guy they gave the job to quit, and they offered the job back to me. I went in, and I worked there for a few more months.

Once I had an opportunity to work somewhere else, they offered me a job at the Kearny *Observer*, which was just across the river--it was another weekly paper--in the summer of '73, I just grabbed it. I said, "I'm out of here." *The Belleville Telegram* did not last much longer. It was really kind of a play thing for them. I got to learn a little bit about Essex County politics at the time. Of course, it was 1972 when I started working there. It was when George McGovern was running for president. Watergate happened that year. Tricky Dick was running for reelection. [Editor's Note: In the 1972 presidential election, Republican incumbent Richard Nixon defeated Democratic candidate George McGovern in a landslide. Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974, after being implicated in the break-in of the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate office complex on June 17, 1972.]

A lot of my idealism got washed away by my exposure to the Essex County Democratic leadership at that time. The kind of left-wing idealism that I had at the time, I could see that those people were not at all interested in that or in supporting somebody like McGovern. That was my first presidential election, because I had been only twenty in 1968. At age twenty-four, I finally got a chance to vote. I voted for McGovern, the first of a long line of losing candidates that I voted for. I think I'm three for ten or something in presidential elections, something like that. Maybe it's better than that. I have a poem about Watergate that I've written that I hope to get published someday. From *The Belleville Telegram*, I went to the Kearny *Observer*. It was a more professional operation. I went there as the assistant editor. I learned a lot from the guy who was there, the editor. He had retired from the *Newark Evening News*. It was a better experience than *The Belleville Telegram*.

SI: What kind of stories were you writing for these two papers?

DL: Local events, the municipal council, the board of education, a little bit of sports. It was Kearny, Harrison, East Newark, which are all in Hudson County, and North Arlington, which is in Bergen County. I got to know those people because they went to the same print shop as *The Belleville Telegram*. I met some of those people on the printing day, which was always Wednesday for Thursday release. That's probably why they offered me a job, when I got to know those people.

Kearny had great soccer. I got to know soccer a little bit there. I was there from '73 to '77. At some point in that period, the North American Soccer League, the Cosmos, Pelé, Chinaglia, these famous great soccer players of that era were here playing in New Jersey at the Meadowlands, a terrible field for soccer because it was artificial turf. I got to experience some of that. There was some excitement about that for a while. The Kearny *Observer* was a nice job for quite a while. It was during those three years that I got married and had my first kid. It was quite an interesting time. [Editor's Note: The North American Soccer League was in operation from 1967 to 1985. The New York Cosmos was the soccer club based in New York City and New Jersey from 1970 to 1985. The club and league became famous when Brazilian soccer star Pelé signed with the team in 1975. Giorgio Chinaglia was an Italian soccer player who played for the New York Cosmos from 1976 to 1983.]

SI: Do any stories stand out vividly in your memory?

DL: Belleville, my main memory is, like I said, becoming somewhat disillusioned about Democrats. Most of them were just party hacks and not interested in the kind of progressive thoughts that had been represented, say, by Gene McCarthy in '68, or Bobby Kennedy before he was killed, or by McGovern. I'm trying to remember if there was anything really significant. There was cutting my teeth on stuff like sidewalk sales, interviewing the merchant of the week, and writing a story about them. Like I said, working long hours on Tuesday. Then, Wednesday going to the printer's office, which was in Clifton. Then, there would be the easing back Thursday and Friday. The pressure would build again on Monday and Tuesday. It was a learning experience. I was twenty-four, twenty-five, and I didn't know nearly as much as I thought I knew.

The guy who was the mayor of Harrison, a guy named Frank Rodgers, he had been the mayor for about thirty or thirty-five years. He basically called all the shots in the town. Of course, I was all full of reform or whatever, I don't know, radical ideas about bosses and things like that. One time, I wrote something really negative about something about Harrison and Frank Rodgers, and it got killed. Either it got published and then I got ripped afterwards, or it got killed before it got published. I can't even remember now. I learned a lesson then about what you could do and what you could say with a local newspaper at the time. [Editor's Note: Frank E. Rodgers (1909-2000) served as the mayor of Harrison, New Jersey from 1946 to 1995.]

The nice thing though about working at those papers, when you work as an editor of a weekly paper, you do everything. During the time in Belleville, I took an adult school class on photography, I think, in the high school. I bought an SLR, a single-lens reflex, 35mm camera. I started becoming a pretty competent photographer. I enjoyed that. You work at a weekly and you cover the meeting, write the story, lay it out, take the pictures, get them developed. In those days, you got them developed at a photoshop across the street from the paper. You lay it out. You go to the printer's office. You throw it all together. I had no knowledge about layout at the time; we really threw it together hodgepodge. I hadn't majored in journalism. Who knows how much better off I might have been had I majored in journalism? It was all learning on the fly. You do everything, as opposed to when I started working at *The Star-Ledger*.

I eventually got to *The Star-Ledger* in 1978. I got on the copy desk, and basically, I hardly did any reporting again. In thirty years, I averaged about one byline a year. I primarily wrote headlines and captions and did layout. You become a specialist when you work at a daily, as opposed to a generalist at a weekly.

SI: You were at Kearny starting in the summer of 1973.

DL: Yes, '73 until, I guess, summer of '77. I became the editor. I was the assistant editor for about the first fifteen months. Then, oh, my goodness, 1974, three things happened almost simultaneously in November of '74. The publisher was dying at the Kearny *Observer*. The editor had announced that he was retiring. He had retired from the *Newark Evening News*, and this was sort of his little job for bowing out, second retirement. The publisher was dying. The editor was leaving. I was getting married. This all happened almost simultaneously. [laughter] There was a lot of stress and strain involved, especially on my marriage. In some ways, it got off to a bad start because of the way those things affected each other. As I said to you earlier, a lot of stuff happened in 1974. I guess we're up to that now.

The publisher was a guy named Ralph Bever. He was an older gent. He was dying of natural causes, nice man. There was an assistant publisher named Ted Wales, who took over. The editor was Bob Bush, who had had a nice career at the *Newark Evening News*, and he was retiring. I had decided, on somewhat short notice, to get married. I got married on November 25, 1974. I think Mr. Bever died about three or four days later. He might have died while I was on my honeymoon. Mr. Bush decided to retire at that very same time, leaving me a newlywed just back from my honeymoon having to go into the paper. I don't know if I was ready to go back. My wife was not happy about my going back so soon at that time. It was not the first time in our marriage that I made decisions like choosing work ahead of spouse that had negative effects on the marriage.

When we came back from the honeymoon, our apartment had been--or her apartment, I hadn't officially moved out of my apartment, which was nearby--her apartment had been broken into. She was really upset about that, and I bolted to go to work. To me, it wasn't that big a deal. I thought maybe she was overreacting. Nobody was hurt. It didn't appear that anything of any great value had been taken. There is an emotional component to becoming aware that your apartment has been broken into. She was feeling that strongly, and I was not. I was more motivated by the fact that the paper I had been working for, for over a year, the publisher had died and the editor had retired, and I was now the editor. There was no assistant editor yet. I had to hire an assistant editor eventually. It was all on me. I made the decision. To me, there wasn't that much to think about at the time. I can't say I'm proud of that, but I can't say that at any time in my life I would have done anything differently.

SI: At work, that is a very stressful situation where you are suddenly kind of fulfilling two roles.

DL: Yes, there was no assistant editor anymore. I had been the assistant editor. Now, I was doing both jobs until I could find somebody else to hire.

SI: The publisher, did another member of the family take over?

DL: There was an assistant publisher. As I said, Ted Wales became the publisher. The guy who was the advertising manager, of course, had been around for a long time. He was a good guy, Vinny Carchidi. He and I always got along well. The first thing we had to do, there was a death watch on the publisher. I think he died on a Wednesday night too, so we couldn't even get it into the paper that week because the paper was already in bed. It was a whole week until we could get an obit [obituary] on him in the paper. I had to be the one to take care of that, make sure the next edition got out.

I had been away--I'm trying to remember now--I had been on the Hawaii trip. I believe it was around 1969 or '70 that Rutgers announced they were going to play Hawaii in 1974. They were going to play on Thanksgiving weekend of 1974. At the time, I said to myself, "If I'm ever going to get to Hawaii in my life, that's going to be it. I'm going to go on that trip."

My friend Jimmy and I, quite a ways back, decided we'd go on it together, even though he didn't go as an undergraduate to Rutgers. He got the master's degree from Rutgers, and he got his law degree from Rutgers later on. At this point, he still only had the master's degree. We were going to go together on the trip to Hawaii, which turned out they booked a basketball game too that weekend. I don't know if it was Thanksgiving Day. It might have been the Friday and the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend. They'd have the football game, I think, on the Friday and the basketball game on the Saturday, something like that.

In the meantime, that year, I met a woman, and we got very close. We started thinking about the "M" word, but it was still fairly early in our relationship that summer. Jimmy and I were living in Essex County. I was in East Orange. He was in West Orange. We decided to come down here. I think the travel agency that was organizing the Rutgers trip to Hawaii was in Highland Park. He and I were going to drive down together to book the whole thing one day that summer. My lady friend, my sweetheart, Jocelyn, the day we were going to do this, she said, "Can I tag along with you guys?" "Yes, okay." She came down with us to the travel agency. Jimmy and I booked tickets, the flight, tickets, hotel, tickets to the games, whatever. She decided to do that also on her own. It's like July or August. We kept getting closer and closer, she and I. We decided to get married. I think I was inspired by *Rhoda*, the *Rhoda* TV series, with Valerie Harper. I think after watching that show one night, I broached the subject and popped the question. [Editor's Note: *Rhoda* was a sitcom that aired from 1974 to 1978. It was a spinoff of the *Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Valerie Harper reprised her role as *Rhoda*.]

We decided to get married on a Monday night before Thanksgiving. The flight to Hawaii was Tuesday. We got married on Monday night. It snowed. Tuesday morning, we flew to Hawaii. Now, instead of two guys in one room and one woman in the other room, it was going to be husband and wife in the room and Jimmy would get the other room, which was fine with him. Then, I did the really silly thing. We get to Hawaii. There's a big room, a nice room, and a little room. It just happens that the little room's number was 1766. Me, being the Rutgers nut that I am, I felt the stars were aligned. I had to be in room 1766. The other room was much nicer. Instead of the newlyweds being in the really nice room and the single guy being in the smaller room, because I'm a Rutgers nut and the number 1766, we switched. She wasn't happy about that. That was the first crack in a marriage that lasted twelve years. That was one of the first

little cracks. Just my silliness, my obsession with numbers and their significance, it was silly on my part. I certainly don't think it was unforgivable, just taking a less impressive, less elegant hotel room. It was a perfectly adequate hotel room for our needs, but it left a bad taste in her mouth.

SI: In terms of your role as editor, at first, you were just trying to get your head above water.

DL: Exactly.

SI: Do you then try to think of what you want for the future of the newspaper?

DL: The main thing, obviously, you don't know how long you're going to stay in a place. The pay was not great, but it was adequate. It was certainly adequate for a single guy. It was adequate for a married guy whose wife was working. [laughter] It wasn't necessarily adequate for a guy whose wife had to stop working and have a kid. My main goal, initially, was to find and hire an assistant. I hired someone who was a Rutgers alum. He was a guy named Steve Duthie. I think he had been on the freshman basketball team either when I was a senior or maybe the following year. His name was familiar to me from having been a freshman basketball player at Rutgers. He got his degree at Rutgers. He was interested in newspapers. I interviewed him. He seemed adequate. I hired him. He didn't have much experience, but he was a quick study. He took classes. He actually got hired at *The Star-Ledger* before I did. He was only around there for a year or two. He got hired at *The Ledger* as a reporter. It was actually he who tipped me off, after he had been there for a year or two, that I might have an opening in '78. I guess it was one of those nice cases of what goes around comes around in a positive way. I hired him in '74, and he helped me get into *The Ledger* in '78. I wasn't out to change anything much at the paper. As I said earlier, I did encounter a situation where I ran afoul of the longtime mayor of Harrison. They still have a street named after him in Harrison, Frank E. Rogers Boulevard. On the whole, it was a nice experience working there.

SI: Do you think the editor killed that story because he knew what would happen?

DL: Maybe it wasn't kill. Maybe it was that it ran, and there were repercussions. These are papers that are entirely dependent on their advertising, including legal advertising. I suppose if a town maybe threatens to pull its legal ads or the political ads, I don't know. I learned not to try to be any kind of crusader about Frank Rodgers. It's a weekly paper; it's not their goal to rock any boats.

SI: How many people would work for the Kearny *Observer*?

DL: All together, there was more than a handful. There would be an editor, an assistant editor, a couple of women who answered phones in the business department, the advertising manager, I guess five full-time employees maybe. There was the publisher. When I started, there were two publishers. Then, there was just one. I haven't really followed much about the *Observer* in recent years. I know they sold their building on Kearny Avenue and moved to another site that I've never been to. I remember I looked into it briefly after I left *The Ledger* to see if there might be a mutual fit there for doing a little part-time work, but there wasn't.

A weekly paper, basically it's an advertising sheet. The amount of ads that are sold controls the size of the paper. If you have enough ads for a ten, twelve, or a sixteen-page paper, or twenty, twenty-four, or twenty-eight, depending, that's what governs the size of the paper. The news side just fills in the holes. We didn't do any kind of fancy layouts. We would just send stories up to the printer's office. They would be printed out. Then, we would just go there and paste it up pretty haphazardly. I didn't really learn layout until years later. It was profitable then, at that time. I don't know if it still is, because newspaper advertising revenues are down everywhere on account of the Internet. That's why I ended up taking a buyout at age sixty at *The Ledger* instead of working, as I anticipated, until at least sixty-five or seventy. *The Ledger* downsized dramatically.

SI: Then, you moved to Suburban Publishing in between.

DL: Not initially. There was Joe DeLeo. There was Jeff Stohl. They started in a little wire service called Enterprise News. Jeff was a Kearny resident. He asked me if I was interested in working there as a reporter. I think I was the head of the office in Newark. I forget what the title was. I gave notice at the *Observer*. In the summer of '77, I went to work for this doomed operation. It didn't last very long. We were in the same building on Broad Street where I had worked at Dorf's a few years earlier. Dorf's had moved to East Orange by then. 909 Broad Street. I had two or three other reporters under me. We were basically a New Jersey-based wire service; it was like a minor-league Associated Press. I got an increase in pay, of course. After about two or three months, the paychecks stopped coming. I was married, and I had a one-year-old kid at the time. That became a problem.

I was lucky enough. The folks at Suburban Publishing, where I had worked in the summer of '69, I informed them of my plight. I was able to right away, in around December of '77, start working there. One Friday was my last day at Enterprise News. That Monday I was working at the other place, at the *Union Leader* again. I really loved that place. I loved it. Of all people, my mentor was Les Malamut, who was the editor at Suburban Publishing. I learned more from him than anybody. I learned from him. He was such a great role model. He had such character. I admired him so much. I knew I didn't have the kind of strength of character he had, or at least I sensed it. I don't know if I knew it. He was so firm. He was my parents' age. He had a son who was exactly my age. He had worked at *The Ledger*. He was around my parents' age. He was probably his late sixties, sixty-five or so, at that time. It was a nice place to work. Again, I actually took a slight pay cut to go from Enterprise News back to Suburban Publishing. My kid was almost two years old by then.

SI: Do any stories you worked on stand out?

DL: I was working mostly in the office doing editing, layout and stuff. I didn't get out of the office too much. I think my main memory of that year or that winter was one of the really bad snowstorms; I think I spent the night at Les's house. I know I didn't get home that night. I was relatively happy there.

Anyhow, the following summer, in the summer of '78, I started trying out for *The Ledger*. Steve Duthie, the guy that I hired in Kearny, he told me that there might be an opening for a reporter in the Morristown Bureau at *The Ledger*. I applied for that. Instead, they offered me a job on the copy desk. I was trying out for the copy desk. That summer, the summer of '78, my son was two years old. He was a handful at the time, as most two-year-olds are. Nothing out of the ordinary, just a normal two-year-old. Here I was, working days at my main job and trying out nights, about three nights a week that summer, at *The Ledger* on the copydesk for several weeks. I was on tryout. Basically, I wasn't home. That was starting to wear on my wife pretty much. Again, I did a lot of things wrong in my marriage. Then, they offered me the job at *The Ledger* around August 1st. I started working there full time. Instead of completely dropping Suburban Publishing, I was hanging on there part time, maybe still working there two or three days a week and continuing for about another month of that. Finally, my wife put her foot down and said, "It's either Les or me," Les being the editor in *Union*. I conceded that as much as I hated to let Les down, it was more important to my marriage to finally do the right thing there. In September, she was going back to work. I was working nightside at *The Ledger*, initially Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday night, and a double on Saturday, and off Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. I was taking care of the kid. We didn't have to hire anybody to take care of my preschool toddler. I was the day-time *hausfrau* [housewife]. I enjoyed it. Oh, I loved it. I love my son.

That's where I was when I started working at *The Ledger*. I didn't get a vacation. I didn't get a week off between the time I was working for Enterprise News all through 1978 because I changed jobs. I was working two jobs, but I never stopped. I never took a vacation from the job. *The Ledger* was oh-so generous about time off initially. Your first full year, you got one week off, at the time. I didn't get my first week off until the week my daughter was born in August of '79. I went practically two full years without any kind of vacation. I was up to it then. I was thirty years old. I was dedicated to whatever job I had, more dedicated to my jobs than to my family, I guess. As I said, I did love taking care of my son and my daughter when she was a preschooler. It was convenient to work nights at *The Ledger* and take care of kids in the daytime.

SI: Maybe this is a good place to leave off for today, and we will come back at another date.

DL: I have another forty years to cover.

SI: Yes. We can look at your career at *The Star-Ledger*.

DL: Yes.

SI: All right, thank you very much. I really appreciate it.

DL: Yes.

-----END OF TRANSCRIPT-----

Transcribed by Jesse Braddell

Reviewed by Anjelica Matcho
Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy Rizzi
Reviewed by Dave Lieberfarb 2/15/2023
Reviewed by Patrick Mullen 3/1/2023