

Jerome Richfield, Track 3

Tape 3 begins

00:00 JR: UPC was going to quit early that day and not do their work as a show of sympathy, like a—a one-day strike, for the faculty. That, you know, the idea being, management can't keep pushing us around and expect us to volunteer our time and services in the interests of curriculum and educational policy, whatever. Well, Cleary was enraged by that. They don't have the right to do that. Robert's rules. And, suddenly, he was throwing the book at them, the very book that he says, if you go by the book, you can't get things done. That's a privilege that he reserved for himself, but you're not allowed to use it. That kind of immorality is fine. And of course, Mininberg, Mininberg is beyond the pale, I think Mininberg should be arrested, I think maybe a thirty-five year sentence in San Quentin, or let him be alone in Alcatraz, would be appropriate.

JB: You want to expand on that?

JR: Well, I don't know how much good that's gonna do ya, I don't know how much of the history of the university this—he, uh, Mininberg is a guy who's—he laughs easily, he enjoys humor, he can make a few funnies of his own, and I know—he and I used to have a good time. I took an immediate shine to him, I think once again, that year that I was Vice President, I liked—I was attracted to his kind of personality. And the first thing I did in order to be helpful—and I introduced him to everybody, and I pointed out here's a skeleton and there's a hole, and walk around this, and be careful of that, and I mean I did everything I could to be helpful to him, even to the point, I thought, that, one of the long-term problems academic affairs had with administrative affairs, was that, they would make the decisions that made financial sense for them, or be expeditious or efficient for their operation, but without any regard to the consequences that it had on instruction. And they're supposed to be support groups. So the idea was that, they need to get to understand what our problems are better. So I invited Mininberg to come to Dean's council, when I was running it. Well, it was no time at all, before he's building his own power bases, if he disagreed with me about anything whether it was his area or my area, he would start making speeches, and I would tell him, Hey man, this is my turf, you know, you're dealing with your area. Several times we had lunches, he didn't—he wouldn't recognize these lines of what the areas were and who's responsible for them. I once got a notice about some convention involving the use of computers in instruction, and I didn't know whether to send Danny—Dave Topin or not. If you remember, he's someone that Benson picked to be the computer man, but he couldn't get along with Bowles, and there were all kinds of problems, most of which he foisted off on Jerry Bowles, but we got to realize, after a while, that he was the perpetrator of a few himself. And he seemed like the natural person for me to send, but I wasn't sure. And I thought, Well, I want to talk to Elizabeth and some others before I
5:00 decide. But Topin comes in and says to me, Hey I'm going to this meeting that's on, and I said, You are? Who asked you to go? He said, Mininberg. And I call Mininberg and I said, What are you doing? This has nothing to do with you. It's not—he doesn't represent the computer side of—this has to do with computers and instruction and that's what he's in this school for, and that's up to me, he reports to me, he doesn't report to you. Well, Mininberg poo-poo'd that

and it was to his own advantage to do it. But, you know, the—the—he's tricky, and he does a lot of tricky things. And I spent a lot of time—we'd go to lunch together and I would explain, Look, you can't do this that and the other and so on, and he would always say, Yeah, I shouldn't be in COPE(??) I guess I'm too aggressive this that whatever. But he'd be right back at it, I mean, he's all technique. His own group, we began to hear these awful stories about him. He was so mistrustful of everybody—and that's what happens when a guy's crooked himself, he figures everybody does it, so you don't trust anyone, right? Anyhow, I mean, he made it clear—he once called Stan Singer and he says, It's my wife's birthday. And I want to go out to a restaurant and take our best friends, the Richfields and the Singers, who had to celebrate her birthday now, what's a good restaurant around here? So Stan said, Café Como. So, we go to Café Como, he behaves as the host, he gets the wine list, he ordered—he picked the wine, he ordered two bottles, he this that and the other. When he gets the bill, Stan Singer saw the look on his face, it was a little bigger than he expected. So Stan, feeling sorry for him, takes out his wallet and says, What's my share? And Mininberg doesn't say a thing, he just says, Fifty-five or whatever it was. So because of Singer, I had to pay my share, (laughter) and I mean, you know, but I feel—you—that Mininberg, you know, invite us to dinner, and then when someone offers to pay and you accept it, you're really a big boy. I mean, so the bill was a little high, I mean, what, his pride, his dignity, his integrity, his honesty, none of that means anything. I think Stan himself believes that Mininberg is some kind of sociopath. But, Cleary needs him. Now, Cleary did punish him this year by not giving him the top salary raise. Yeah. And he said it was because he was not professional in his behavior towards Suzuki. So you know what the difference is between the top and the next? Five-tenths of a percent. Some punishment for being unprofessional.

JB: I'm sure a faculty member doesn't even wanna know what five-tenths of a percent amounts to in terms of top administrator's salary.

JR: Well, even then, you know, it—by the time you pay the taxes down, and I don't think it would've paid for just his share at that dinner that night.

JB: You indulged me, by letting me pump questions at you for two solid hours, which I hope doesn't put too much strain on our friendship.

JR: Thank you.

JB: And a lot of thought went into those questions, which has taken—one reason why it's taken me so long to get around interviewing you, one of several reasons, one of them. But, after one goes through two hours such as we've spent, one still isn't certain one's asked either all the questions or the right questions. What questions would you have liked to be asked that I didn't?

JR: I don't—I didn't spend any time thinking about what the questions would be or about—I mean there's so much that's gone on if we're going to go back thirty years of working at this place as chair, as a Dean, as acting vice president and all of that, as president of the faculty, as chair of the statewide senate. I mean if you just looked at my resume, there's hardly a

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committee I haven't served on, there's hardly a committee I haven't chaired at some point or other. And occasionally there were battles, not gonna lie. I don't—you see, I don't know what shape this is taking, I don't know what information you need, you're the one who has the sense of structure, and the pieces and the sequences, and it's up to you to decide what's worth talking about and what's not, what's relevant to what you intend on the basis of other data you have. I could—later on, if someone talks about something that we didn't cover and you want to get more than one person's perception, you shouldn't hesitate to call me, I mean, Linda calls me once a week, to stay in touch, there are others who call me, I'd be perfectly happy for you to do that, if you wanted to. If—if when you ever have the rough draft of a manuscript, you're interested if anything is left out that shouldn't be, probably there are several of us who might be able to take a quick look at that and say, Well wait a minute, you didn't talk about so and so at all. I don't know. I don't know what you have as a checklist for it or not. You obviously have some things.

JB: Follow up here. Let's pause for now, and think of this perhaps as a temporary pause, which pauses are. And if there is more other that—that—that you really want to talk about, or that I want you to talk about, let's get back together again, would you do that for me?

JR: Sure, sure.

[END OF TRACK 3]