

Jerome Richfield, Track 5

Tape 4, side 2 begins

00:00

JR: —Who objected to the reorganization, saying, You fly any closer to the dean, it would be obscene! (Broesamle laughs) I think that was cute.

JB: When we talked the first time, you—you mentioned, as I recall, you didn't feel that two hundred personnel within seventy departments were all that onerous.

JR: Oh no, I did.

JB: You did, alright, well, I misunderstood what you said, then, or misremembered it.

JR: No, I definitely was for the reorganization, both—as a member of the commission, because I took Ross's place on the commission when he resigned. The only questions I have for this whole thing: I think this is really a bad paragraph. It's too compacted and—and it feels a little strange to pull something out. And—and how consistent is it with—with its context? "Early in '72, Richfield became the Dean of Letters and science. Footnote. Besides being an administrator, Richfield was a charter member of UPC."

JB: I know, that is something—

JR: Course, I had also been faculty president and chairman of the statewide senate. And I mean it's a little odd that if you're gonna give any biographical relevant—biographical data to my academic background here, that you would mention that I was a charter member of UPC and not mention these other faculty leadership roles that I had. I wasn't even nominated to be faculty president and I ran, what do you call it when I'm not on the ticket? And knocked off the people who were. And that was the year that, I forget the number, we had either seven or eleven general faculty meetings to overturn the things that our conservative senate had done. Alright, "Some faculty referred to him as the Red Dean," yeah, in your department you'd hear a lot of that.

JB: Things I took from our earlier account.

JR: Yeah.

JB: By the way, by the time this all comes up, you've already been in and out of this manuscript a good deal, so you're not an unfamiliar—you're—

JR: Yeah, okay. You gotta have single quotes at least around, "managerial classes distinguished in the workers," cause these are not words about an ordinary use in an ordinary way. So that should be shorthand for, I was not a member of what they call a managerial class and, so, huh?

When you put single quotes around on it, it makes me more comfortable. Because, otherwise, I don't talk like that.

JB: You want to sound like Carrie Bridges.

JR: Ah. (Broesamle laughs) "I was a charter member of the union and I always approved the union objectives, *but* never approved." You should use the conjunct of 'but' rather than simply *and* never approved.

JB: Fine.

JR: That doesn't carry it, okay. Or, instead of "Never approved", "Was often unhappy with", I think would be more accurate. I may sometimes have approved some of their objectives. So, it goes too far to say I never approved, but it would be right to say I was often unhappy with the union strategies and tactics. Sometimes, I deplored those.

JB: Now we know.

JR: Yeah, I—just curious as to where'd you get that quote?

JB: From you. In our earlier taped conversations.

JR: Oh, okay.

JB: J.R. refers to you, it's simply your initials.

JR: Yeah, alright.

5:00

JB: Okay. Notice I put everything from that thesis in italics. Literally, everything. (laughs) If I did it from that thesis that day.

JR: Well, I'll tell you a major argument that I used in favor of reorganization that isn't in here. And that I think may have accounted for some people who were unwary about the Dean being closer and didn't like that, but I'll tell ya an argument that I meant, and it's not here and should be. As Dean of Letters and Science, I was Dean of more than half the university with seventeen departments and so on. And I would go to Dean's council, and there would be the Dean of the schools. Engineering, Division, and Earl Wallace from CAPS, FAPS, or whatever it was. The point is, that Benson reacted to each voice as an equal voice. It made no difference how many faculty you were representing, or how many students you were representing. So, I advised people, Look, when things come out, there's a competition growing between professional studies and the liberal arts on this campus. And although L.A. State's supposed to be the—the non-liberal arts school and we're supposed to be the liberal arts one, I don't think it's turning out that way. The administration up top clearly favors education and professional things, and so do the students. I said, If we divide into the Social Sciences and the Humanities and Science and Math,

we'll have three voices, and three votes in Dean's council instead of one. And that might make a big difference in our protecting liberal arts on this campus. That was a persuasive and a decisive argument in some people's minds. Cause there were people who told me, I wasn't gonna vote for it, but you convinced me that we oughta have a more of a say.

JB: As it played out, did they?

10:00 JR: Well, you can't—I don't think they did, but I don't think you can publish the reasons. The first reason was that—I think they did, to some extent. But Bianchi was very quiet, he would never say anything. And after a while, after I would raise issue after issue, I would say to Bianchi, Do you agree with these, or disagree with them? He said, I haven't disagreed with anything you've done. I said, Well, for god's sakes, you've gotta speak, man, because if you allow me to be the only spokesperson, the more I talk, the less weight I carry. And you got to pay attention to that. But that wasn't Bianchi's personality. Bianchi almost never speaks up. And the only time he'll talk if he gets really antagonized, then he may say something. Knowles, at the time, was so strange. And was, by no means, the typical Social and Behavioral Sciences person. And he wasn't terribly active, and I generally found that what he—what he would take the initiative on was somewhat strange. I think that, from the point of view of the argument that I made, that argument would've been a lot truer, and the three of us could have been a lot more effective in dealing with the liberal arts, if there were at least two different Deans.

JB: It should have worked.

JR: It should have worked, yes.

JB: Might work! At some future point.

JR: And—and I think to some extent it did. To some extent it did.

JB: At least they were voting.

JR: Now, when—who was the psychologist who came in at the Knows(??), what was the guy's name?

JB: Sampson.

JR: Sampson. He and I agreed far more often. And I was often supportive of him and him of me. And that kept Suzuki from doing a few strange things that nobody would've appreciated. So, in that sense it worked better with him. But then it turned out that Suzuki's ideas and attitudes and ideals and dispositions were very offensive to Sampson, and then Sampson took some liberties with his position, which he may have been compelled to do because he's down here and his wife's up there and all that kind of stuff, and Suzuki made him miserable for doing that, so he quit.

JB: Couple of thoughts on that, over lunch, incidentally. The statement I made from 1977 policy on teaching evaluations; A brief little statement, but does it square with what you know to have been the case?

JR: This 1977 policy, that's a trustee policy?

JB: Well I think that—I'm not certain if that's a trustee policy or whether it was our policy. My recollection of it is that it is our policy, that we mandated that. That's a good question, though, one worth raising, I forgot to determine whether that's the case or not.

JR: I'll tell you what's in the back of my head, and I don't think this'll be very helpful to you, but it might be relevant. I had been carrying on some kind of—or a lot of arguments with Luckmann. Who was not a trustee that faculty would appreciate. And I once got a letter from Luckmann in which he just said, "Hallelujah! sincerely yours," whatever his first—Sidman Luckmann, or whatever it was. I think what that had to do with, he, we kept talking about certain faculty prerogatives that needed to be more entrenched, and more defined, and more recognized. And it was something more specific than that and I can't put my finger on it now. If you think it's important, I might be able to dig up that material in some goddamn place, I've got some of that stuff which I never threw out. It might even be in the conference room next to the Humanities office. Anyway, in return for what I wanted, he wanted evaluation of faculty. It's just possible that the statewide senate initiated this policy, because it saw that there was a favorable quid pro quo. Now I'm not at all sure of this.

JB: Alright, let me dig into it. You'd have the materials, or you'd likely have the materials—

JR: If you find that it was a statewide thing, then I'll—I'd be willing to hunt to see if I could put my finger on the real content and the exchanges and things like that.

JB: Well, that would be helpful. Let me ask you another off-the-wall question. You don't have a set of 1966, '67 senate minutes, have you?

JR: Of our senate?

JB: Yeah.

JR: No.

JB: You know, it's very funny, they've disappeared. They're just gone. Barry Collins was president, so I checked with him, and (laughs) he—he hasn't any minutes from that era. He does remember it, but they're gone. And it's not as though it's irrelevant, things were building at that point.

JR: Somebody threw them out by mistake?

JB: Could've been burned in the President's office fire. That's also one of my suppositions.

JR: In the faculty president's office? That was never on fire.

JB: Well, I don't know where those—I don't know where those minutes were kept in that era, I mean if they were kept in the office of the faculty president—

JR: What were the years?

JB: '66, '67.

JR: Oh, I don't think they had a faculty president office in those years.

JB: So they could well have been—I do—I just don't know—

JR: '66.

JB: Cause they're in Blomgren's office.

15:00 JR: I was faculty president in '65.

JB: '65!

JR: Mmhm.

JB: I have your minutes.

JR: Do you?

JB: I just don't have Collins' minutes.

JR: I might have been thinking about peer review, it was really the consulate trustees.

JB: Alright. Cause those things tend to get confused over the years, I've noticed. As it stands, this seems to be fairly accurate, does it?

JR: Well, I—you as—it depends on your own concept on how to do history. To say that some sort of—I mean, an infringement on their right to teach as badly as they wished, it was a cute comment. Spiritually, it has an accuracy. But it may be the kind of thing that is out of keeping if you intend this to be a recitation of facts and what took place. Suddenly, instead of talking about what happened, you're talking about your speculation on why some people objected. And, of course, it says something if there's a little too much of your own attitude about it in here.

JB: Alright, let me rethink that. Too bad, it's one of my favorite—

JR: I mean, I like it—

JB: —It's one of my better lines—

JR: —Well, leave it then! I mean—

JB: —Well, I think it's true.

JR: How pure do you have to be?—

JB: Well—

JR: —Since its impossible to achieve total purity, is it really considered wrong to throw in something like this?

JB: I'm—I'm of the throw-in school of historiography I'm afraid, but let me—let me reconsider.

JR: On the other hand, a few of these will keep this from being too dry a recitation of events, too.

JB: Dry will be deadly and nobody will read it.

JR: Yeah.

JB: Dry will be a typical university history.

JR: Yeah, so good histories, and ones that get read, have a something of the author's personality and values in it, doesn't it.

JB: It's interpretive, good history is always interpretive.

JR: Okay, well then, you don't have to let me—What you're really saying here is that you don't believe that faculty had a good reason to rejecting, to finding out how students reacted to teaching. But didn't mean that they were bad teachers, depending on what reasons students had for liking and not liking. So that, in that sense, everybody—a lot of people objected that you left this reason out. The argument I heard the most, is that teaching evaluations are not reliable, and that the students who happen to not to like teachers will give them a bad review, and students who happen to like them will give them a good review and it may have nothing to do with their teaching. You know, I think a lot of that does happen.

JB: That needs to go in, too. Cause that one—here's that now, er, then?

JR: Yeah that—

JB: And I'll mention it.

JR: And I think it was a main—a main argument then.

JB: Sorry? It was then—

JR: It was the main argument then, that it was not a reliable instrument. It could give someone feedback, but the faculty member who gets this feedback oughta reject it, some students may say, Give him a bad score, the son of a bitch gives—some and he wants me to read three books this semester! Well, you say, Screw you, get out of the class.

JB: I don't think it works that way, but that's been the function of the opposition to it. You're right.

JR: Shaking, you wanna spell it right.

JB: Oh, well I—There's a lot of misspelling in this, with things not smeared(??), my sloppy typing to this, you're right. Leads one to the Neutra observations, which I know are not sensitive with you at all. (Laughs)

JR: Son of a bitch.

JB: I said what I said in black, with a particular sense of wanting to talk to you about it. The position that Neutra buildings are flexible structures, this is reflected by Louise Lewis in particular.

20:00

JR: Yeah, look. The art—the art department faculty wanted a convenience, and they didn't give a shit what happened. They didn't consider Neutra that important, or Louise Lewis doesn't uh—some of the others. But to be able to buy art supplies, right there in their building, instead of having to walk the short distance to the art building, was something for them. The argument that the building is flexible and legitimately changeable may be true, that a good architect would know how to build on without changing the character of the building. But when you take a three-story building, and you put a two-story addition there is no way of integrating that. It stands as a fucking lump.

JB: It's a stub.

JR: It is a tribute to the foundation's obsession with earning money rather than their interest in doing for the university what it can't do for itself, and that's why—what Caroline sent to me, she's gonna send me an English department resolution objecting to all the fast food shit they're going to bring on campus. I mean, they'll change the campus into a mall! And they would do it for money.

JB: Out on the central quad, it's already a bazaar several times a month.

JR: Well, the fights that I had to do to get that moved out from under Sierra Hall, and it took me years, and it made no difference to the administration that it'd interfere with classes. So, I mean I had to deal with people who didn't want to fight with students about it. Peckham wouldn't fight with the students, and so on. Even police didn't wanna bother with it.

JB: We were exiting from the Honors Convocation the other day, in the afternoon, and it was packed. And you had, you know, parents, you had spouses, you had everybody under the sun including academics, in medieval garb filing out in throngs. And here's this ring merchant, right in the middle. I mean, he's dead center, and they're—they're going around him. And he's hawking his wares right in the bloody middle of that. Unbelievable.

JR: Well, that's how students make money. They rent out that stuff as if they owned it.

JB: What would you add to my Neutra statement? Aside what I've heard you just—just add? It's an atrocity. Are there any details that need to be added to it?

JR: Well, what I've written here duplicates part of what I've just said—

JB: Oh, okay.

JR: The prominent—right, not all—the promise to making an addition fit in, but a two-story addition to a three-story building is hardly a seamless adjunct. The foundation's wish for greater earnings took obvious precedence over any historical or aesthetic considerations.

JB: May I quote you?

JR: Yeah.

JB: Good.

JR: There was an attempt, in rather typical administrative way, the initial meeting dealing with this took place in the summer, when people were away. The motion, to approve the change, was made by the architect who was to draw up the plans for the change. The campus architect. And it was seconded by the student body president. When I saw this in the minutes of the campus planning board, I immediately both phoned Mininberg, and also sent a deckmail(??) to him with a copy of it to the president. And I said, I thought it was a conflict of interest for the person who would get the job of designing the adjunct to be the one who makes the motion to approve of it, and the student body president was brand-new and hardly in a position to be expected to know what she was doing, and I felt strongly that this discussion had to take place when the faculty were here, especially those faculty from the art department who happened to be members of the campus planning board. And, I forget his name, one of the sculptors, I spoke

to him by phone, he said he was opposed to it but he agreed to go ahead, because he felt— somebody told him that if he antagonizes Mininberg, the School of the Arts would suffer. Now, that was ridiculous, and I'm not sure he believed me when I told him it was absurd, that Mininberg has nothing to do with how much budget or anything else the School of the Arts may get. He is in a position—I mean, it's conceivable that he would hurt them but, I—that's not how things work. Mininberg's crooked enough, but he doesn't—wouldn't respond to that.

JB: But the—the architectural consultant of the university will receive the contract to add the sub, is the one who makes the motion—

JR: In the summer—

JB: —To add the stub in the summer—

25:00 JR: —When the faculty aren't there. Now, you better get those campus planning minutes at— from that time, because I think that's worth knowing. I mean, the reason people gonna read this is you're gonna tell some truth that hasn't generally known, and some of it is scandalous and people like that, don't they. I mean, I've liked Madonna, on a higher plane.

JB: Kitty Kelly.

JR: Yeah.

JB: The Kitty Kelly school of historiography. Can I throw something at you that I didn't send you by mail, and this is really occurred—

JR: Yeah, go on ahead, go on.

JB: What I wanna know is simply whether what I say here still obtains today in all its aspects. It's the way things stood in the early 70's. And in exchange for that I'll refresh your drink.
(Sound of ice clinking)

Long pause.

30:00

JR: Yeah, I think all of this is fine, I think there's some stuff you may want to put in the discussion of the budget.

JB: What would you add?

JR: Two things—you know, I'm—I'm tuned in to the negative stuff because I spent my life fighting that kind of stuff, mostly with failure. So, when you fail, you don't get things, when you succeed, you let it go and turn your mind to something else. I couldn't tell you how many successes, if any, I have, but man, those failures are still hanging out there like a bad fog, you know? (Both laugh) On campus, this is fine for the system as a whole, and for the general

political context in which we operate. People on our campus, Oviatt for example, did not play the scheduling system, the C-schedule. How many students generate how many positions depends upon your classification of a course. Oviatt kept that secret. Those of us who were chairs and Deans and so on never got to see the goddamn thing until after Benson replaced Oviatt. Now, Cleary's overriding wish was that the campus would grow. Grow, grow, grow. You can't have buildings without the FTE, and since buildings are what he wanted, he wanted FTE. So we had tremendous numbers of classes that were C-1s, that were C-2s, and very little compared to other institutions of the C-48s and the C-36s, and so on. One of the things that Suzuki achieved, in the five or six years he functioned, was to reorganize the classification of courses, as you remember, in order to have fewer students generate more positions. And we were so out of line with the other institutions that the Chancellor's office never even objected to this. The fact is, for most of the years, for most of the thirty years that I was on that campus, our administration seemed to do little or nothing about the fact that we had the lowest budgetary income per capita of any of the other institutions, or if we weren't at the bottom we were second from the bottom but usually we were at the bottom. And we were badly supported and the basis for that was that: either people understood the C system and didn't work it to our advantage to generate funds for—generate positions so there would be smaller student-faculty ratios, or else they deliberately subverted the possibilities there. And I don't remember, but you can get the data from Suzuki's office, he can tell you how reclassification generated a significant number of new positions and better budget. So that's one thing about our budget crunch, we were being hurried all along, by the way we set out. I can remember, saying to Oviatt, I'm very pleased that Philosophy is a general absolute requirement in our general education program, but Philosophy is not a course that can be effectively taught to fifty, sixty students at a time. And he said, Well, there's nothing we can do about that, it's a requirement that you have that classification. Shortly after he said that, I ran into a guy, Sid Albert, who was chair of Philosophy at L.A. State, and I asked him, How many students do you have in your 150 course? Thirty-Five. How did you get that? Oviatt said it's impossible, he said, That's ridiculous. I came back to Oviatt naively assuming that he would be pleased to discover he made a mistake, well, he had just lied to me. And when I said to him, Hey, we don't have to have fifty students, we could—

Pause in recording as tape 4, side b ends

[END OF TRACK 5]