

Jerome Richfield, Track 7

Tape 5, side b begins.

JR: You just look, what [unintelligible] and Richfield were elected as faculty leaders, but the tide turned. And the next thing I know, who gets sent to the senate is Stelk, and so on. And Stelk made a big issue in front of the senate that I didn't know the—I couldn't speak for the faculty anymore. And none of the sneaky things that Cameron did, see Cameron became faculty President back home. There was this tradition already established that the senior senator, the senior statewide senator, that would give the report to the senate on what's going on at the statewide senate. Then of course, when the senior senator also turns out to be the chair, you would think that it's very natural, and I certainly expected to be called on to tell our senate what the senate was doing. Instead, Cameron called on Stelk, and left me sitting there and I didn't know what the hell was happening. He just felt free to do that, and he called on Stelk, and Stelk gave one of his usual diatribes, it was nasty, it was shitty, it was wrong, and it was perverse in its understanding and description of things, and I was beside myself with anger. I sputtered in fumes and that's about all, that's too bad. I should've got to my feet and pointed out that it was a disgusting aberration for the faculty president to take it upon himself to make a—unannounced change in senate tradition. Took advantage of the track that it isn't written anywhere that it isn't written anywhere that the senior member. And I said, If I would be asked, I would point out how unreliable Stelk's report is and so on, but I sat down and didn't want to talk about anything. And I saw Stelk in—on the Sierra Hall, I said to him, That was a bunch of shit, he said, Well, you oughta get out and say so like a man.

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JB: That's how he put it?

JR: Yeah. Very tempting to say, Ohh, I'll go over and hit you on the nose like a man.

JB: Do you know why there was a delay between—that long delay between Prator and his successor? We throw Blomgren to the breach, Prator gives us a notice a year before he leaves. What goes wrong?

JR: Well, I never got inside Prator's head, nor did Prator confide in me. We did get to know each other pretty well, he always wanted the faculty president to go and enter trustee meetings. Although, I suspect part of the reason is that he got bored with some of them and let the faculty president take notes and report them on what went on while he was in another room watching the World Series. (Broesamle laughs) That happened in Long Beach once, when he told me to take notes in this meeting and when I walked out afterwards I found him sitting and watching the game. Ralph prided himself on being what he called a clean-desk man. And there are a lot of things—he had a lot of ideas, he said for example, In a good university, some people are not qualified to be full professors, there is such things as part time and associate professors. Well, I found that encouraging, I thought that was the right attitude to him. You know, we had our own field building up a bunch of nincompoops

and feeling they should get promoted for being alive, like himself. My guess was that Ralph had in mind from the beginning that he would give himself ten years to get the campus started and after that he didn't want to play anymore. And that's what he did.

JB: That's close to what he told me.

JR: Yeah.

JB: But what's bewildering, is—and on it—he's not clear on why this occurred. There's simply wasn't a formal procedure to replace him that went into effect quickly enough to replace him, even though ample notice was given.

JR: Well, you always have an acting situation. Somebody is appointed immediately the next day after somebody gets out, while the process does go on.

JB: He was actually asked to serve another year as acting, and refused to do it. That's when Blomgren was called in. You mentioned that, when we talked before on tape, because we're always talking, but when we talk formally, that—that Benson arranged that sea cargo container deal before he left. And we were talking about sea cargo containers being hauled in as—as instructional space. Were they actually ordered? Do you know? I'd—there was a lot of very serious talk about bringing them in as temporary.

5:00

JR: Well, serious talk, there was—when I became acting Vice President, that was one of the first issues that I was sort of asked to deal with. Queen arranged the meeting, the President, himself, and me, to make sure I understood that there was what he called a moral agreement. And that was that the foundation was going to commit the illegal act of lending university money to Bar Assembly (??), which it's not allowed to do, but it was going to do it in a way that they felt the auditors wouldn't catch on and that is: academic affairs was to pay the computer center bill for the foundation in addition to paying its own. And that's how it would pay the foundation back for the sea cargo things. And I remember calling Kittingham and saying, Oh yes, the sign—I brought this file down called immoral agreements (Broesaemle laughs), and Cleary said to me with a wink, If you go by the book, you can't get anything done. You like that?

JB: What scotched the deal?

JR: I don't remember. I hope I did. I remember the only one who paid any attention to the appearances for what that would be like is the student body president at that time, who asked something about, Well, these things are always banged up, and this that and the other, and he raised the question of appearance, and Benson answered that by saying, Well, it'll have the paint on it.

JB: It would've looked like an oversized freight yard.

JR: Yeah.

JB: Of course, in many ways, it does anyway, but—

JR: Yeah. I don't remember, just what happened.

JB: You recall the—the professor profile issue of the 1960s, the idea of the students putting out a review of individual faculty and their courses for general distribution?

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JR: Very vaguely. It died too, huh?

JB: It did. There was no end of opposition to it.

JR: Yeah, that—that wasn't unique to this campus. It was being done around the country, at Harvard, and other places, and some of those things were wild, you know, some of the students would carry on one way or another. The chances of a student's bothering to write up a professor that they didn't either love or hate was very great and then the distortions that creates in young people were pretty substantial. I don't—I have no idea who they did here, or how long it took before it died, or whether it ever got started or not—

JB: It just—seems to never have gotten started. University saw it—they never saw an issue.

JR: Yeah, alright.

JB: Just it comes through the senate, and through the—

JR: Oh it was a book that was supposed to come out, is that right?

JB: That was the idea. They do a bound volume of some kind, a magazine? And it would rate us all. It was a couple years before I arrived, but it stretches on over time. I just have one other—one other item on the menu. It's Bob Hope. Bob—Bob Hope is now before us. Early '71 the faculty senate recommends that we confer an honorary degree on him. The statewide board of trustees unanimously endorsed it. What happened? What was that issue?

JR: Stafford killed it, and I'm not sure I remember how. What did he say about it? He must have—

JB: I didn't ask him, I'll have to call him. Cause I didn't know he killed it—

JR: He had more to do with it than anyone I know—

JB: I'll give him a ring.

JR: —and I—that’s—I would safely say that Stafford is the one that killed it.

JB: The thing looks right on track, bound to happen, then it doesn’t.

JR: You have the data that shows that the senate approved it—

JB: Yeah.

JR: —and it went to the trustees?

JB: Those, the trustees, the trustees endorsed it unanimously. I’ll call John.

JR: That’s always been my understanding but I don’t think I ever knew exactly what the facts are.

JB: I recall a video of sound and fury that year over a Hope degree of it not happening. But I never had known what had—what had queered it—

JR: Typical Cleary move. He has no sense of what’s appropriate and will do anything if it’ll bring money, and that was his reason. Why are you honoring Hope? Because, the colleges that do it get a donation from him, the—we want money. You don’t know how many times I’ve said it, Why don’t we open a whorehouse? And that didn’t mean anything to anyone, it just—Richfield’s a pain in the ass, you know?

JB: (laughs) That was never a formal proposal, that was a verbal one.

JR: Yeah, right. Those were discussions in places like SEG.

JB: He’s told me that 95% of what goes on in SEG is trivia.

JR: Who said that?

JB: Cleary.

JR: Well, ninety-five is not true. I mean, depends on what kinds of issues come up. A lot of what goes on in SEG is trivia, for example, Cleary had something before the year starts called the Administrative Preview, and he’ll get the whole administration over into the second floor of the library and they’ll start up by introducing each area, we’ll introduce who’s new, and what their plans, if any, for the year may be. It’s not a terrible idea but they’re usually boring meetings and people go to them, some out of curiosity, they fill out of the people who are hired to know who the hell is or—And Cleary would give a bad speech—he once pointed out Harry Finestone was sleeping, he said—Oh yeah, so what we do and say was he would come in with a script with the order in which things would be done and go on and on with this as if that was somehow important, and maybe to him it was. I

remember the time when I was Vice-President he came in with this and gave me a chance to react to it, and he was going to begin by introducing Heger, who just got his new job as the Intercollegiate of Letters Director. And I said, maybe, don't do that. I mean, that's kinda rubbing the noses of the people who worry about Division One. If you're presiding at the meeting, it's not inappropriate for you to go last as a host would do, and call on others. I said, Why don't ya introduce the faculty president first, something like that. And I say, You go last with this Division One business. He said, Well, alright but I'm gonna leave it to you to explain to the faculty president why he's gotta go out and start this thing. I said, Yeah, I'll be glad to do it. And I went to whats-his-name, Abe Rash. And I said, He was gonna put his Division One stuff first, I thought it would be more appropriate for the faculty president to come first, then academic affairs, and then—in that order. And Henry said sure, you're right, whatever.

Cleary acted as if he'd been upset.

JB: Have you go first, first man into the breach. Should we go off?

JR: Up to you.

JB: My list is exhausted.

JR: I think SEG can be important, and sometimes it is, for example: you know there was seven years of dispute between members of the community that lived around Zelzah Avenue and the fraternity houses. And it was Peckham's ineffectiveness and wishy-washy weak mentality that allowed that kind of thing to go on and on. And I finally pointed out, Hey you guys, I'm a member of that community, I live a block off campus. And we have a fraternity house rounding the corner, and I'm not paying the price for that. I just put in a new lawn, they drove over it, and the parking, and the noise, and the ruckus, and the students are meeting at four in the morning they'll holler and shout in the street and wake up everybody and—we had that not too long ago. So, we raised hell, and I said to Peckham, Why don't you threaten that you're going to pull a charter if they don't behave themselves? That they have a responsibility to the community, and it reflects bad on the university, et cetera et cetera. Well, I remember the lawyer at the time, he said, Well, wait a minute. It seems that we were in the midst of a lawsuit where there was a fraternity bash and one student hit another in the head by a two-by-four, and the lawyer didn't want the judge to understand that the university really had more control than it's exercising over such things. And I looked at him and I said, That's the kind of thing that's gonna govern what we do?

15:00

JB: Was he living a block off campus?

JR: That's right.

JB: And being on the receiving end of this?

JR: That's right.

JB: And conceivably a member of a community group?

JR: Yeah. I remember threatening and saying, Look, if you don't think that as a member of the community, I wouldn't write to Bernson, who's already complaining about north campus, and raise hell about the university's fraternity activities in the neighborhood, you're mistaken. And they backed down some, and Peckham then hired somebody who was in charge of the fraternity business. He wasn't going to deal with it. And that guy was supposed to maintain a certain amount of rules and regulations, and they came up with a bunch that were, very simply, flouted. That you had to notify the university when you were going to have a party ahead of time, so the police would know, you had to maintain—you had to break up no later than 11:00pm, and keep silence, you know, et cetera, and other things they didn't pay attention to. The SEG would deal with lots of issues that were of importance to the campus, but it also dealt with a lot of junk. I was the first one—when I was running Dean's council that year, I put SEG on the agenda because people were beginning to talk as if SEG was this mysterious group, they exaggerated what went on in SEG in some ways, and I thought, This will cut down on that. Well, what SEG does is confidential and Cleary is willing to talk about things at SEG that he's not willing to talk about to the rest of campus, and he was sort of horrified that I did that. So, there's a lot of things that we dealt with that I had to sort of skip over when the Dean's council—What I finally did, was to tell people what the agenda was in SEG and ask if there were any questions and occasionally I had to say, Well, I can't react to that.

JB: Do you think it's necessary to have a confidential executive decision-making body on the campus, or advisory body on the campus, is it a decision-making body?

JR: Sure it is, sure. Lots of decisions. Do I think it's necessary? Well, Prator once made a distinction which I don't think Cleary follows, although some of it is still there, between a board and a committee. The committees are faculty, and they're responsive to the senate and to faculty government. Boards, however, are directly responsible to the president. And the reason for this, he said, is there are two things he is responsible for that he cannot allow other people to deal with. One of those things involving money, state money. Cause he's personally responsible for that. The other, things that would result in bad publicity for the campus which it's up to him to try to avoid or mitigate. And fuck the campus planning board, see what the president could just overrule anything they would do which he couldn't just, or he wouldn't want to just do that with a committee. But Cleary has a fantastic way of exercising presidential power, and that's by ignoring what comes up. Something gets sent to him--*that* he knows how to do. And he will allow it to flutter down into the little—until you don't hear about it again. He puts you in a position to having to be sort of a nag. That's why I recently called Edda and I was so outraged to hear that the foundation is being asked for half a million dollars and the whole academic program instruction had been shot to pieces, and part-timers fired, careers terminating, and all that. And I—yeah, she's one of the people who's willing to make a confrontation, that's a nag. She was an effective president, and they're terrified by her.

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25:00

JB: Even WASC raised questions.

JR: Hm?

JB: Even WASC raised questions about the way in which division one might cost the university and how it might have to be abandoned—

JR: Yeah, I saw that.

JB: And that was a toothless, toothless group.

JR: Years ago, I'm the one that made a suggestion. Ackid—administrative affairs and other aspects of the campus outside of academic affairs would often come up with things, policies, and stuff, without regard to what its effect might be on instruction. A typical example: there was some guy there who was in charge of the mail run. And he once sent a memo to all department secretaries, You will divide the mail into these packages and you will do this and you will do that and you will do the other. And I sent all the secretaries in the school of humanities a memo saying, Disregard the memo that he wrote. This has not been discussed with the Deans or with the Chairs and so on, and I went and explained to the Vice President of administration and to the guy involved, I said, First of all, those people don't have to be responsive to you, they don't work for you, they work for us. And secondly, you've paid no attention to the workload problems in the department, you haven't even been interested. You are bringing these things to dean's council so that can be some discussion and you can find out what the problems are in the rest of the university, so that things you do that might have alternatives wouldn't worsen certain problems or create new ones unnecessarily. Okay, as a result of the idea in what I had in mind that we should invite those Vice Presidents to sit with the Dean's council for a while and to see what kinds of problems we do deal with. Just as I invited Mininberg and then had to kick the asshole out, I told him to stop coming finally when he was making more trouble than he's worth. Well, when Cleary organized something called the administrative council, and it met once a month. And it was so big, I mean it finally ended up, you had sixty-something people there, I don't know. You couldn't really discuss problems. There could be nothing at such a meeting but show and tell, and I remember the first motion I made, was that nothing that we receive in the mail or can receive in the mail should ever become an agenda item at the administrative council meeting.

Because we were wasting a whole goddamn Friday morning listening to repetitive announcements of things we'd already read and crap, cause Cleary was filling in the time, he wasn't about to talk about anything meaningful. And the one exception to that is he did bring the Division One thing after he creates a committee consisting of foxes to say should we have a henhouse or not. And he puts on Judy Brame, Heger, Langlass, Sefton, Sefton and Sellas rose bushes to keep his job, validating athletic eligibility, he loved that. And if you could—I've seen letters in which he demanded a private office on campus for that function, and all kinds of phones, space, tables, things we didn't have. And I couldn't believe that he

had no sense of our not having these things. And it was the most arrogant little, pissy, squirt memo. I mean I don't know whether to laugh or cry when I read the fucking thing. And when it came up in Dean's council, thank god that Cleary went along with it when I said, This is outrageous, it's impossible, we don't have it to give, and if you see it that we give it to them, that is first gonna create more trouble than it's worth, because people who do things that are more important to instruction than this don't have any office space. I had all kinds of interdisciplinary programs in my school with no place to put them, no secretarial help, no nothing. And poor guys like Kurag Douglas would take it out of his hide because he was committed to his subject.

JB: And I went over to Monterey Hall, to trying to hide out—

JR: Well, he loved doing it, but I often said, My god, you know, I'm allowing the exploitation of this guy, but there's nothing I can do, I couldn't generate your sources. I assume that behind some closed door over there is your bathroom?

JB: Yes, but you have to know which closed door.

JR: So, I can guess.

JB: This way.

JR: Course, I like to pee in the closet.

JB: There's no light in my closet...

Door squeaks and closes

Sound of paper crumples

[END OF INTERVIEW]