

SEAN REILLY '74

August 10, 1996

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Mame Warren,
Interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is the tenth of August, 1996. I'm in Bethesda, Maryland, with Sean Reilly. We're sitting out on his porch, so we may pick up a little atmospheric noise, but I think we're going to be just fine here. So, Sean, we've known each other a long time ago.

Reilly: Yes, indeed.

Warren: You're class of 1974. I didn't know you; I came in later. I didn't know you in your W&L years. What attracted you to W&L in the first place?

Reilly: Oh, boy, that's a tough one. I was living overseas. I had been overseas pretty much my whole childhood, and I was in Switzerland.

Warren: Why?

Reilly: My father just worked overseas. So there were only a few schools that I looked at. I had limited time period to come back and look at schools. Washington and Lee was more a suggestion by my father, who was from Norfolk, Virginia. So it was one of the schools he suggested I visit. In the end, it would have been either American University or Washington and Lee. The size of the school, I think, is what attracted me, plus the rural setting was attractive.

I went to Washington and Lee in 1969. It was a time of much upheaval, particularly amongst the students, although there was certainly a core of students who were very much straightlaced, but things were changing quite a bit.

Warren: So that was kind of a transitional period, wasn't it?

Reilly: Well, I think, for example, the fraternities were still strong when I came, but there was definitely an underground or sort of a non-fraternity group of students. Those were the people who I probably could tell you the most about. I guess my first semester was pretty uneventful, as it is, probably, for most freshmen just getting to know the school and learning the ropes of what's going on.

But by December, there were a lot of anti-war demonstrations going in Washington, and a lot of students from Washington and Lee got together and had trips up for the marches on Washington. Eventually – I don't want to get too much into the politics of the time, but –

Warren: Oh, please do. Please do.

Reilly: Obviously, the war was very controversial. I'd say the university was probably more in the mainstream of supporting the Nixon efforts, if you will. The student body, I think, shifted over that time period to where in the spring of 1970 there was a general strike that was voted on. It was a very unusual situation because the more radical students, and I wouldn't say that I was in any way a radical leader or anything like that, but there was Jeff Gingold and some of the other students who were trying to get the school to be just shut down.

The way the administration dealt with it, as I recall, was that they wanted to have a vote. They assumed that the student body, in general, was much more conservative, and therefore, if they could vote, have a vote, that the majority would vote not to strike. The reality was that the student body voted *to* strike. I've forgotten the total length of the period. It was maybe a few days or a week or something in the spring of 1970.

Meanwhile, there were a lot of other things going on. For me, that was my worst year academically because there were so many extracurricular activities, if you will. There was a group of people, students, who had gotten together and called themselves

the Chaos General Staff. That was really silliness, is what it was. But they were people who had not stayed in the fraternity realm. They included, as I recall, Ray Clemence [phonetic], who was General Chaos. There was Willard Henson, who was General Electric. Everyone had rather comical names. You may not want to use these. But Tom McMillan, Ron Penn.

Warren: Wait a minute. What were their general names? These are wonderful.

Reilly: Well, you know, I'll have to go back and remember. I don't remember Ron having a specific name. Although, Tom, I think, went from General Foods to General Motors. As I say, it was really just silliness. But initially, the first, I guess, six months of the year a lot of things happened around the freshman dorms. Then, somehow, in the second semester, Ray and Tom McMillan had moved into the old Dutch Inn, which I don't know if it's still used for student housing or not, but it had more or less apartments, although they were not suites like there are now.

Warren: Did they do this as freshmen?

Reilly: As freshmen.

Warren: I'm surprised that was permitted as freshmen.

Reilly: Well, the Dutch Inn was a freshman dorm.

Warren: It was?

Reilly: It was part of the freshman dorm or dorms at the time.

Warren: I didn't realize that.

Reilly: Anyway, so that was a gathering place. The Dutch Inn had kind of a lobby, an old lobby, when you walked in. I don't know if it's been changed much since then, or what its use is now. So that was a gathering place.

I'm trying to remember the specifics of that year. They kind of are pretty vague. There were several people, Bruce Ritz and Al Tharp and Carter Redd, along with Ron Penn and myself and several others, Henry Nichols, as I recall, who, sometime in April or very early May of 1970, rented a house out past East Lexington, which was the

Cartoon House, which not myself, but several of those people ended up renting for a few years after their freshman year. That was certainly the site of many parties and much craziness.

Warren: So had you all joined fraternities and then left fraternities?

Reilly: You know, I don't know about everyone else. I, myself, had joined a fraternity, and then decided it was not for me.

Warren: Can you try to dredge up that process, the process of being rushed and then deciding to leave it?

Reilly: Well, there was Rush Week, which happened fairly early in the freshman year. I assume it's still pretty much the same. The fraternities have tables up on the campus, and students come to try and check out the fraternities. In my opinion, the bigger fraternities are the better ones, if you will. The SAEs and so on pretty much had their lists of students that they wanted to pull in either because they were past fraternity members, either parents, or they had already gone through their list of incoming freshman that they had made those kind of decisions.

I guess I picked a fraternity just based on one that was interested in taking me in. Then I just decided I wasn't willing to go through the sort of standard process. I did for a while, and I still think highly and see, occasionally, some of the people who were in that fraternity, but it just wasn't for me, that's all. There were things that freshmen were required to do that I thought were overly demeaning. Of course, at the time I probably just wasn't aware of what the process was supposed to be.

Warren: You willing to talk about that, about what kinds of things?

Reilly: Well, not really. Not too much there. I think, in general, it was just the standard sort of pledges as being sort of subservient to all the other brothers and so on. I think, also, it wasn't even so much that, it's just that my interests had shifted. I realized that I wasn't really interested in sort of being part of that fraternity process, that I wasn't planning on living a fraternity house, that I would rather rent a house in the country. So

that's what I started looking for. In fact, that's what I did with several other people for my sophomore year.

Warren: So you were at Cartoon House?

Reilly: No, that was only a very short period, like May of 1970. I just visited out there. I've forgotten who all rented it. I think Bruce Ritz was probably the main person as far as being instrumental in getting the house rented. It was a run-down, somewhat, farm house. I don't know if it had been rented to students too much. It had one-story with maybe and small attic room, as I recall, and a wrap-around porch. It was on a dirt road or a gravel road.

The house that I rented, which we arranged at the end of my freshman year, which was called Chaos West, although I don't know why, now, thinking back, why it had that name except it was somewhat west of town. I rented originally with Orem Gresham, who has passed away since. And Rick Splittorf who, those two, were in Pi Kappa Phi, which was the fraternity I was in. And Patrick Hinely. Eventually, we had Bill Green, although he wasn't there in the beginning. That house I actually stayed in for all of my college years from then on and for many years thereafter since I stayed around Lexington.

Warren: And where was Chaos West located?

Reilly: Well, it was really out in the Murat, which—

Warren: In what?

Reilly: Murat, which is part of the county which is out past the Tardy's dairy farm off of Route 251 heading out towards Collierstown and then just after you pass over what is now the Thomas L. Dixon Bridge, which is named after a former county supervisor who is not living any longer, but he was the son of the person who owned the farm that we rented, actually.

Warren: How do you spell Murat?

Reilly: M-U-R-A-T.

Warren: So was there a Chaos East?

Reilly: Well, that would have been Cartoon House, except that it had its own character, so it was just called Cartoon House.

Warren: So how many of these houses were there?

Reilly: Oh, well, there were many houses that were rented by students. A little further past Chaos West was the Crooked Bridge Farm, which was also rented by students and was a sort of major party house. There was the Old Bear Farm, which was off of Route 60 on the way to Buena Vista. That was the site of many, many events. I'm trying to remember the people who owned that. I think it was Dick Nuchols [phonetic], the dairy farmer in the county who owned that whole area.

Warren: And how are we spelling Bear?

Reilly: You know, that's a good question. I think it's B-E-A-R. It had been rented by many sort of generations of students, from what I had understood. I suspect that it still is. But it was a stately old house, really. It had many, many bedrooms.

I'm trying to remember all the people who lived out there. There were a number of people who rented that house. I know that at one time, John Lanier, who you probably should talk to, that was before my time, I think, that he was one of the people who occupied that house. I think Willard Henson lived there. Tom McMillan did. I'm trying to remember now. Gary Tucker lived there for some period of time. These were all people who were involved in the Chaos General Staff, if you will. I don't know. Could we take a pause?

Warren: Sure. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Let's go to a party at one of those houses. When did they happen? Would they have happened on week nights or just on weekends?

Reilly: Typically, parties would happen on weekends. Friday afternoon, there would be a whole bunch of phone calls around to see where a party could be put together. They were pretty much impromptu. These were not sort of planned events where you

might think of a party being given, where someone has gotten in food and the dinner is made. The parties we had at Chaos West, for example, we might get some vegetables and some rice and try and make a simple dinner. Then people would bring whatever other things they wanted. It would just be a series of phone calls to whoever was available and wanted to come over. Then there would be a party. Typically, they'd start by four-thirty or five.

I guess one of the things that was unusual, there was probably less drinking going on than at typical Washington and Lee parties. Oftentimes, no alcohol would be there. Certainly, I'd say other substances were probably used, I would say marijuana being the one that was most prevalent, most likely to be seen. The parties might start early. People would pitch in and make a meal. Everybody would have a big dinner. Then music would be playing loudly.

Oftentimes you'd take a walk up where we were, the mountain which was really called Short Hills Mountain, which we called Mount Chaos. We would often, you know, after a party decide we'd have a walk up on Mount Chaos. On at least one occasion, we took a group of maybe twenty people all the way to the top in the pitch blackness with just some flashlights, which was probably pretty foolish. But I'd say it was mixture of, well, let's put it this way – it wasn't like a dance party or anything like that, it was just a lot of people got high, they'd sit around, listen to music, watch the stars, go for walks, and later many people would be passed out, you know, and wake up the next morning right where they were. They didn't try to go home, necessarily, in that state.

I guess it's hard to describe some of the parties in terms of what really happened. Occasionally there would be girls from Hollins or Mary Baldwin or Sweet Briar. But at that time, Washington and Lee was, of course, all male, so it was less common to have, I mean, except for the girls, if I can call them that without being politically incorrect, who came with their date and stayed for dinner and maybe for a little while. Then they'd

leave and go do something else. So I'd say it was probably 60, 70, 75 percent just Washington and Lee students just having a wild time, pretty much.

Warren: How about faculty? Would faculty come?

Reilly: No, typically not. I shouldn't say not at all, because as the years went by, the rowdier people were sort of weeded out. I mean, this was not a rowdy group in the sense that you'd think of a bunch of students drinking a keg of beer and then going on and raising hell around town or something. It was more laid back, you know. There would be sitting out on the porch watching the stars, discussing the cosmos or the meaning of life, whatever foolishness people discussed in those days. But that was the way things would end up. For example, at Chaos West we had a real big kitchen table which was an old telephone wire spool, but it was at least six feet around, and you could put a lot of people around the table.

So, there were occasions when there would be some faculty who would come and sort of join into the discussions. Of course, then the discussion got much more in depth, and there were many more questions raised. I think sort of the ignorance of youth was more rent asunder by the presence of the faculty, who would add a little insightful criticism. I think at those times the presence of drugs was much more limited or sort of taken away from the scene. There was certainly no attempt to bring the faculty into that. I don't think that was their – well, that was just not something that happened, I don't think. The faculty pretty much kept out of the drug scene, if you will.

Warren: So what kind of faculty would come to Chaos?

Reilly: Well, Harry Pemberton came a couple of times. He certainly livened up the discussions. I believe Mario Pellicciaro, he could come. I'm trying to remember one of the English faculty who's since passed away. I don't know his name –

Warren: Jim Boatwright.

Reilly: Yeah, Jim Boatwright would come. But it wasn't a frequent thing, and it was more of an invited guest situation where the party was more planned, and there was

more of an attempt to make a normal meal with a bottle of wine and that kind of thing. I guess as far as alcohol went at these events, that would be the most common. If there was going to be alcohol, it would be a large bottle of wine or two, you know, around the table, what I would consider a more civilized discussion, not just wild drunkenness or something.

The parties at the Bear Farm, for example, often ended up down at the river. I'm trying to remember now if that's the Maury down there or if that's James. I guess it's the Maury. There was a beautiful down spot not too far from the Bear Farm where you could walk down and go skinny-dipping. The railroad went by on the other side of the river, although I think now it's just a walking trail. There was a section of railroad track which was washed out.

Warren: So, parallel at this time, were there more traditional fraternity parties still going on? Were there two parallel lives going on at this time?

Reilly: Yeah, I would say so. I mean, I was pretty much out of that scene. I think after my sophomore year, I'd come to class from the farm, and I'd go to class, and I'd do whatever I needed to do in town, go to the library or go to the grocery store and whatever. And as soon as I was done with anything I had to do, I immediately went back to the farm, back to Chaos West. That was where most things took place, either there or at one of the other farms nearby.

I think there was a tremendous amount of regular fraternity activity. Fraternity parties were still going on. I would hazard a guess that no more than maybe a quarter or a third, at the most, of the students were really involved in sort of counterculture activities, if you will, which I would consider what was happening then. I mean, I think there were certainly more students involved in recreational marijuana use, say, even at those kinds of events at that time just because that what was going on. That was the time that had reached its peak.

But their parties, I think, were much more traditional, you know, starting out with, say, typically a road trip to Hollins or one of the other colleges on a Friday afternoon, early. There would be many cars from the various fraternities that would go down. Then they would have arranged dates oftentimes sort of en masse, you know, groups of Hollins girls who didn't even know who their dates necessarily were going to be, who would pile into cars and come back to Lexington. Then there would be these parties at fraternity houses and at other houses around. I'm probably not the right person to ask about that, because I just wasn't that much involved in it. I mean, I was in the early part of my freshman year when I had pledged a fraternity, and that was a pretty common bit of activity.

Warren: So would there ever have been road trips from the Bear Farm or from Chaos?

Reilly: Not so much. I mean, there were sort of groups of like-minded women at the colleges. Chelsea Marsh, for example, at Hollins is someone that I still know who lives in Old Lyme, Connecticut, and was formerly married to Gary Tucker. She actually moved in at the Bear Farm, I think, in the senior year at some point. But it wasn't sort of the road trip atmosphere at all. It was more like people who would pretty much latched up with somebody else already, you know. I don't know exactly when they got married, but she and Gary, and Gary had lived at the Bear Farm, were married somewhat soon after that time. Those were more sort of serious relationships that were already going on. I mean, there was a little bit of wildness, but it was really a transitional time. I mean, these parties at the fraternities, because they didn't want to make the trip back, say, on Friday night carrying all these cars of women from Hollins or wherever, there were guest houses all along Main Street where the owner or matron, whatever, would kind of watch out for the girls. There were curfews. I'm sure there are many people who could tell you in much more detail how that worked. They'd go to parties at the fraternities, have wild times, and then they'd have to be brought in at eleven to the guest house or otherwise they'd be locked out or whatever. There was a

time when – and that’s probably more of the traditional approach that took place for many years before I came to Washington and Lee.

But I think the parties, in general, the parties that I saw were fairly laid back, low-key kind of parties, not a lot of wildness going on in any way that I would consider wildness, not like the fraternities where chairs were being thrown out the windows and things. There was a whole different sort of feel, particularly the parties that we had at Chaos West. We tended to have a group of people that would get together and talk about the subjects that were dear to our hearts. It was not really wildness in any great way, although I shouldn’t say there wasn’t any wildness. Certainly there was.

One series of things that happened, and it’s not so much related to Washington and Lee, but I’m trying to recall exactly what year it was, but a former attorney, who, as far as I know, did not have a connection to Washington and Lee, bought the old Buffalo Creek Motel. There were several of us who would go over there, and we would have parties there. It had a regular restaurant. I don’t know, it still exists, I think. I don’t what is going on with it. It was a type of old motel where there were little cabins and then there was a main house with maybe a half-dozen rooms there. There was a restaurant and space big enough to have kind of a dance area and a stage for a band.

I think Buffalo Jim, we called him, I’m trying to remember his last name, and I should, who had given up his life as an attorney in Florida somewhere, opened that establishment back up. But we would provide free meals and, again, it was sort of a rice and vegetables and anything anyone else wanted to bring, then whoever wanted to get together as far as musically. The owner of the place played drums, so if he could get a couple of people on guitar and a singer or something, then there would be a band and then there would be a party.

It was a pretty mixed crowd. There were certainly students who came, but there were a lot of people who had moved to the county otherwise. The commune out at

North Mountain used to always come with a bunch of people out to the place. Not very much connected with Washington and Lee, so you probably don't want to use that.

I guess, I don't what else you really want to know in specifics. You want to know what was happening on campus?

Warren: Did you have a sense that what was happening in your life was the real break from the Washington and Lee tradition? Did you understand that what you were doing was really out of the mainstream?

Reilly: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. We were definitely not mainstream. For one thing, you know, we had long hair, and we sort of spurned the traditional dress. As I recall my freshman year at Washington and Lee, you still had to wear a coat and tie if you wanted to be served dinner in the freshman dining hall there. So we definitely had rebelled against that. I don't know how much effect that had on the overall Washington and Lee experience for others, but certainly we questioned a lot of things. We didn't take things for granted.

I have to say for myself, my first year was a very disappointing year academically, partly because I was involved in all these other things, including the anti-war demonstrations and so on, but also in that I had been in an atmosphere overseas, at least in my high school years, where I was in small classes with really interested teachers. When I came to Washington and Lee, I found that the freshman class, in general, was left with the old teachers reading from yellowed note cards, and giving the same lectures that they had given a hundred times before, with very little personal attention to the students. So that I found very difficult.

Certainly, once I got into the philosophy department a little bit more, that was not the case. But certainly in the prerequisite courses, I think that they just kind of dumped the freshmen into the courses with whoever they could get to teach them, and probably most professors didn't want to teach freshman courses, I found. So that was certainly disappointing to me. I think probably because I had been overseas and I really

wasn't very much tuned in to the expectations or the experience that others might have had, that I might have learned from, I think that's probably my biggest disappointment about my years at Washington and Lee, was that I didn't feel that I got the sense of direction academically. Therefore, there are things that I should have done and didn't.

But as far as the overall change that took place amongst the student body, I think that probably that period when there was the strike at the end of my freshman year and then the campus was shut down was probably a turning point in terms of making students think about the world around them. I don't know how long that carried on in terms of the students who came after, after I left. I think certainly towards the end of the time that I was at Washington and Lee, what I saw were changes where drug use was sort of mixed with alcohol use, and it was sort of back to situation normal except that there were different drugs of choice, not just alcohol. I'm not sure that was a good thing at all, frankly. I thought that during that time when I was there, the first couple of years, at least, there were a lot of people who were really seriously thinking about the issues that were facing the world and the issues that were important in people's lives, and not sort of the carefree and wild ways that I saw so many students, particularly in the fraternities, go. Perhaps that was just their rite of passage, which I guess it is for everyone, you're away from home and so on.

Warren: Are you talking about what was going on simultaneously when you were a freshman or later?

Reilly: I'm talking about when I was a freshman. I think that there were a lot more people that year who I thought really had been maybe shocked into looking at the world in a different way. I'm assuming the war had a lot to do with this.

Warren: How important do you think the draft was in getting you all to pay attention to the world?

Reilly: Well, it was pretty important. I mean, generally, if you were a student, you had the student exemptions. So that was a pretty straightforward way to go, although it

didn't take much to lose that exemption. As I recall, what I did, and I don't remember what year it was, but I had a draft number that was, I think, a hundred and thirty-six. Of course, there were three hundred sixty-five days in a year, and your birthday was selected out of a big hopper. So then you were put in that line with one being the most likely to be drafted, and three hundred sixty-five being the least likely.

I remember that we had draft counseling sessions. We did a lot of things like that, had tables out on the Commons and things that let people know what was happening. We were pretty activist in that way, at least, in the freshman year. But I remember one of the strategies that had been sort of passed down from people we talked to in Washington was that if you gave up your student exemption on the thirty-first of December, the trick was to telegraph your draft office on the thirty-first of December and say you wanted to be put 1A, which was eligible for the draft and give up your student exemption. But then they only had that day to draft you. So if they didn't draft you on that day, then the next year you'd already been through your year. So that then you were 1H, which meant that you'd already been through your period of being eligible for the draft. I don't know how many people did that, but that was a strategy that I used. Certainly they didn't draft me on December 31st. I have to remember what year it was, though. I think it was '71, and then I was 1H.

I think, in general, people thought that as long as they remained a student or went to graduate school or whatever, that they could get out of the war. I mean, that was certainly the time, at least in '69 and '70, when you saw the gruesome images on the evening news. I remember sitting in the student lounge, and they had a TV room there. After dinner, a lot of people would go in and watch the news with Walter Cronkite. You'd be seeing the bodies being dragged off the battlefield and so on. That was certainly an image that is pretty hard to forget.

I assumed that all the students pretty well knew that that was the situation, that if they were in school they were exempted. Certainly I knew people who kept their

student exemption and immediately planned on graduate school and so on. Of course, by then the war was starting to wind down anyway. But, it would probably be good to talk to someone who was, say, in the ROTC program or something like that. Certainly they had a whole different view of what was happening. And I would say as far as the whole student body was concerned, there was definitely a very sharp divide there.

There was definitely a lot of students who felt that this was a proper and just war and so on.

Warren: Can you think of anybody who would be a good spokesperson for that point of view?

Reilly: Boy, I'm trying to remember now.

Warren: Think about it.

Reilly: There was a fellow named McIlhany who was in my freshman class. Although I don't think he was in the ROTC program necessarily, but he was sort of a John Birch Society. There was a John Birch Society chapter. There were people who were sort of radically on that side of the issue.

The ROTC department was quite active then as well. I don't know how many students they had in there, but they were providing financial aid. People were going through school on that program.

One of the other big things was the VMI contingent being right next door. Certainly when Kent State happened, there was still a lot of student activism at Washington and Lee right then, there were definitely fears that there might be some similar thing happening at Washington and Lee and elsewhere. I mean, it was sort of an unknown time. People thought, "My gosh, they've called the National Guard, and they're killing students on their campuses for expressing their First Amendment right to free speech." That was a pretty scary time in a lot of ways.

Warren: I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Warren: I really would like you to talk more about May 1970.

Reilly: Well, I think we had, on the campus, we really had gotten a strong anti-war sentiment going. I know that there were faculty who were very much thinking along our lines. We had a lot of demonstrations, and we felt like we were making an impact. No doubt the events at Kent State really congealed a lot of those thoughts, particularly, as I was saying, the question of free speech rights. I remember the chants of Amerika with a K. You know, thinking that we were going into some kind of a, if not totalitarian, certainly authoritarian-type government where people's rights were going to be trampled on.

I think it also probably pushed a lot of people back away from their sort of counterculture way. I think a lot of people who, in fear, moved back into what would be considered more of a mainstream point of view, but certainly most of the people that I knew, that just them more radicalized. I certainly didn't consider myself to be a wild rabid sort of radical in the sense that I wouldn't think of burning down a building or destroying someone's property or something like that. But on the other hand, I felt that they were definitely rights that we had as Americans that were starting to be lost. I think a lot of students felt that way.

A lot of the old-line faculty probably felt the opposite. I think there was a very strong contingent of very conservative faculty who felt that this was wrong, that students should not be involved in any kind of political activities, particularly not criticizing the government.

Warren: Who would fall into that category in the faculty?

Reilly: Oh, gee. I guess, I'm thinking about some of the professors that I had, and maybe this is not fair, but Dr. [R. Winter] Royston was one. I don't know if he's still living or not. Gee, I have to go back. I could probably go back to some of my transcripts or something and look at courses that I was taking and tell you who the professors were. Because I know that certainly after the strike, there had been, I don't know the

exact details, but a lot of time had been missed from class and, I think exams had been missed and so on, so there was an effort on the part of the administration to make sure that students who were involved in that were still able to complete that semester.

Then the professors who were unhappy with the way things worked out, that students were even going on strike, penalized a lot of us just on that basis, that you were involved in an activity which they didn't approve of. But in all fairness, we certainly had sort of gone off the edge academically at that point. We just let everything drop.

That was certainly a very polarizing time. We definitely felt like there was a lot of tension in the air. You had friends and you had enemies, almost. I mean, it was a rough time, I'd say. I mean, we kind of kept having our parties and sloughed it off somewhat, but I think it left a pretty indelible impact on people.

Warren: Did you participate in the Free University classes that went on?

Reilly: Somewhat, yeah. I'm trying to remember what we had going on then. But, yeah, certainly I did. They were not academic in any sense. Boy, I hadn't even remembered that. Now you mentioned it, I'd have to think back as to what all we did. Maybe we could take a break.

Warren: Okay. [Tape recorder turned off.]

Reilly: I guess you just sparked my memory a little bit as far as what was being put out, although, you said published. I don't know that I really thought of it in that way. But back before the days of mini Xerox machines and so on, we would manually type up these mimeograph sheets. I think we had several things going out every day that we would mimeograph hundreds of copies, and we'd be out on campus handing out literature trying to get people active. I don't know if that's what you've got is mimeograph stuff, and it's been saved. That's incredible. I'd love to see it.

Warren: It's quite a volume of stuff.

Reilly: Boy, it's amazing that someone saved all that. I don't think I did.

Warren: The impression I got from reading this stuff is the townspeople were very involved, too. It wasn't just Washington and Lee. What's your memory of that?

Reilly: Boy, I certainly remember that the townspeople and county people who I saw more of were, a lot of them were very, if not conservative, they were very sort of anti-hippie. Of course, this was the hippie time, if you will. So there was a lot of negative feelings there. Now, I don't remember in town, particularly, how much was going on from an activist point of view. I remember there was a professor at VMI who was in the Democratic Committee in town. Certainly, from that point of view, the Democrats, the people who were against Nixon in general, had this as a focal point. I guess, if that's what you were thinking of, certainly there was a lot of that going on. I'd have to think back to remember all the names. Certainly after 1972 and the impeachment attempts or attempt to impeach Nixon and so on, there was a lot of activity.

Now, in my freshman year, I guess I didn't interact as much with the townspeople. I think there were certainly the younger townspeople who were students or young people out of high school working at jobs and so on, who also felt the same way as far as the war was concerned, but I don't have a real strong recollection of who they were and how they related. I know there was a lot of – there were faculty who were anti-war, and there were certainly children of faculty members who were either grown or high school age, senior in high school age, who were pretty active.

I'd say Mario Pellicciaro was very active. Henry Schloss, he was probably the most activist, and I think probably cost him his job, as I recall, of the professors or instructors – I'm not even sure what level he was on the hierarchy, obviously he wasn't tenured – who were very supportive.

I'm just trying to think back to all the things that we did put out on those mimeograph machines. That really brings back memories of typing all this stuff on the mimeos and what a different age it was. But we certainly put out a lot of stuff, and we did a lot of organizing to get people to go to Washington. We did a number of trips to

join the marches on Washington. I think Jeff Gingold, as I mentioned before, he's someone who—I think he's an attorney in Seattle or something now. He would certainly be someone to talk to about that.

Warren: In the middle of all this, reunions happened. Do you remember that aspect of it?

Reilly: Boy, no, you know, I don't. I think those things, they take place over the course of a year several times, so I don't have any strong recollections of any one or another that happened. I do remember that the Student Union Building was certainly a kind of gathering point for us in a lot the activities we did. So to the extent that there were alumni activities going on that went on there, they were certainly aware of our presence. Boy, I hadn't given that a lot of thought. Do you have people who you have interviewed who were at reunions?

Warren: No, I wish I could find somebody who was. I haven't found that, but I'd love to get—

Reilly: I'm sure they would have viewed it with displeasure. Let's take a minute break.

Warren: Okay. [Tape recorder turned off.]

So shall we shift gears? Maybe I've pumped you dry on this.

Reilly: Maybe give me a chance to—

Warren: Okay. I've got a totally out-in-left-field question. Were you around for Mel Greenberg?

Reilly: Oh, yes, I remember Mel Greenberg. That was a very funny time.

Warren: Tell about Mel Greenberg.

Reilly: Oh, boy. Mel Greenberg was, I guess, some kind of a scam artist who came into town. I don't remember exactly when it was now. You probably have got something that has got the date and time—

Warren: I can find out.

Reilly: But he was supposedly making a movie, and he had set himself up at the Keydet General [Motel], as I recall. He had rooms and was interviewing potential actors and extras for his movie. He was supposedly some big Hollywood producer. Boy, I didn't go in and try and get interviewed or anything, but many people did. He was treated very well. I mean, he was partied and wined and dined. As I recall, either city or county officials were really trying to woo him to do this film in Rockbridge County and so on. It turned out he was just a total scam artist, that there was no film. He had no connection to Hollywood. He had stayed in Hollywood once or something. I don't know, maybe Larry or Sally Mann might have a lot more information.

Warren: I think I remember them talking about it. It just flashed in my head that you were probably there at that time.

Reilly: Yeah, yeah, and I remember he was kind of, as I recall, sort of a flashy, middle-aged guy in a leisure suit sort of acting like he was a big-time producer from Hollywood. He really had people snowed over. I do remember that. It seemed too good to be true. He was offering huge amounts of money for people to be actors and extras and so on. It just didn't completely make sense to me. I didn't, I guess, get closely enough involved to give you a lot of particulars about what he offered individual people and so on. But there were stories about hanky-panky in the hotel rooms. I don't know whether he was caught or whether he left town without paying his bill there at Keydet General. I wonder if there's anyone at the Keydet General who would remember the specifics. But he flew the coop. I think he was eventually caught doing another scam in Roanoke.

Warren: He should have gone farther away. [Laughter]

Reilly: Yeah.

Warren: You've mentioned the classroom a few times. I guess since we're talking about your university days, we ought to talk a little bit more about academics. Were there teachers who made a big difference in your life?

Reilly: Well, there were several at Washington and Lee. I'd say probably Harry Pemberton was the one who made the most difference. I majored in philosophy. He was my advisor. I think probably Ramsey Martin, who has been head of department – I think he retired this year – probably wouldn't think as highly as me. I didn't do as much in terms as logic and that whole end of philosophy as he might have liked.

But certainly Harry Pemberton really brought a lot of insight. I took many courses from him. He definitely had a way to bring you into the whole realm of thought of the ancients, if you will. I remember he did seminars on Plato. There was a lot of sort of role-playing in the way that Plato's books and works had people engaged in discussion. I think he made a big difference to me in terms of how I looked at things, certainly opened up my eyes to a lot of philosophers and so on.

Although I didn't take any courses from him, Dr. [I-Hsiung] Ju, who was in the art department, who later went on to start the Art Farm. I believe he is still there. I don't know if he still teaches at all. But he was someone who I met who I admired a lot, and he wasn't in any way involved in sort of the early days, the radical thought, or anything like that, but just the Chinese painting and the whole tranquillity that he sort of has an aura around him was an influence. I knew many students of his. So I met him, in that I would meet them there. At that time, the art department and the philosophy department were both in the same building, so there was interaction there.

I'm trying to remember some of the other professors who I liked. Certainly Jim Boatwright I liked a lot. I don't remember how many courses, if any, I took from him, to be honest with you. Maybe one.

I'll just have to think back on that in terms of professors. I mean, I remember a lot of things about, for example, the Phys Ed department, which I, at the time, didn't think much of the physical education requirements. I tended to take whatever the courses were that I thought would be easiest to just get through and not have to deal with very much, such as skiing. I think I took skiing twice. That was because we didn't have

enough snow the first year. In fact, I remember now they gave me an "incomplete" in skiing one semester because there wasn't enough snow for us to have all the ski lessons. We actually drove to the Homestead to do our skiing.

In later years, I took things like bowling. [Laughter] But even there, I had my arguments. For example, I'm sure that Coach Lord would not be happy to remember me. In a bowling class, he had an arrangement where you would place bets. He was trying to get the interest going, not place bets, really, but everybody would put down a certain of money, and whoever won or had the best score that day would get the pot. I remember objecting to the gambling during sports, and even writing a letter to Dean John. He was probably pretty upset at me for doing that. As I recall, I actually had one credit to go, and they ended up changing my "incomplete" to a pass in the old skiing course so they didn't have to deal with me any more. [Laughter]

Warren: Get you out of there.

Reilly: They probably don't remember me with any fondness, if at all. Put me out of their minds.

I took a lot of journalism courses, actually. Pat Hinely would be the one to really tell you about the journalism department. He certainly had a lot of people over there who were his mentors, I think, in the early years.

I took a number of film courses. Why can't I remember the professor's name?

Warren: Tom Riegel?

Reilly: Tom Riegel, of course. Anyway, I thought very highly of him. He was a very interesting person. I actually thought seriously about changing my major to journalism, and I probably wasn't that far away from being able to do it in terms of the number of courses that I took. But he certainly was an influence on me in that way, I think just someone who had a lot of insights into what was going on in the real world. He certainly had been involved in film and production other than in the academic area.

Do you want to pause this for a second? [Tape recorder turned off.]

Warren: Were we in the middle of something? Did you want to continue?

Reilly: No, I think we had talked about Tom Riegel. That's where we stopped.

Warren: Was Fancy Dress still going on?

Reilly: Yes, I mean, it still went on. It was something that I never attended in my years over there. This was definitely the counterculture aspect of my time at Washington and Lee. All those kind of events, I mean, they were certainly related a lot to what was happening with the fraternities. Usually it was, you know, one of the fraternities was president or one of the fraternities would be president for Fancy Dress. It was just a whole different scene.

As I say, I think there were parallel sort of routes that people could take, still. As much as we tried to get people interested or active as far as the anti-war scene and all of that, there were still a lot of the just the traditional activities at the university, and the fraternities and so on that continued basically unchanged. I guess events on campus like that were just not really of much interest to myself or most of the people who I spent time with at that point.

Warren: But they were still going on?

Reilly: There may have been a year when they stopped them, but I don't remember.

Warren: I know at some point Fancy Dress, Fran Lawrence talked about it, at some point it just died out for two or three years.

Reilly: For lack of interest or whatever?

Warren: Yes, I just think it got petered out for lack of interest. I'm just not clear when that was.

Reilly: Yeah, I remember it going on, and I remember that the groups, the kind of music that we were listening to was the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane and Allman Brothers and so on. Fancy Dress was much more traditional in terms of music.

Warren: Were there any particular big concerts or important speakers who came during your time?

Reilly: Oh, gee. There were definitely important speakers, and I'm just trying to remember. I'd have to go back, though, and think. Probably Patrick would be the one to talk to about that, Patrick Hinely. Even concerts, I mean, there were concerts on campus pretty regularly. Even those, I didn't go to too many. The scene was just not – it was not the same scene that I was interested in, if you will.

I guess in that way, I'm probably not as good a person to give you a broad picture of the area as someone who stayed in town and really saw the things that went on at the campus twenty-four hours a day and so on. My freshman year was really the only year that I spent a lot of time on campus, and maybe my senior year, which, since I skipped out for a year and came back to finish in 1974, that year I certainly spent a lot of time on campus. Academically, that was the time when I put my nose to the grindstone pretty much.

Warren: Did you literally leave town?

Reilly: No, I stayed in Lexington.

Warren: And just didn't attend classes for a year?

Reilly: What happened was, and I'd have to go back again to my transcript to see, but I had signed up for my senior year for courses that I wanted to take. Of the, I guess, four courses that I was due to take that first semester of my senior year, when the registration came back, I had been not admitted to any of them, not for academic reasons, but supposedly because they were full. Then when I went to the registrar, I found that there were juniors who had been admitted, and that I had not been admitted as a senior, and it was my last chance to take those courses. So, needless to say, I was pretty perturbed about the whole thing. I went to the dean and basically demanded that I be let in to some of those courses, and they said, "Well, no. They're all closed now. It's all a done deal." So I withdrew. I know my father was pretty upset, probably more with me than with the university, but I was very perturbed at that time.

So I worked for a year. Probably put me into the occupation that I ended up in now in terms of pretty much the only thing you could do was construction or something along that line. Even then, around Lexington there wasn't that much going on. I had to travel to Covington and different places to work.

Warren: That was one of the things when I moved to Lexington in 1977, I was fascinated at how well educated the carpenters were in that town. So many of you from that era stayed or stayed for a while. What was going on there?

Reilly: Well, I think it probably the lure of the country, you know, the rural setting. That certainly was very attractive. Probably, in retrospect, a lot of it was just trying to hold on to those aspects of our college years that were the most enjoyable or the ones that I've gotten the most pleasure from, if you will.

Also, for me, I don't know about the other people who stayed and did carpentry or did whatever they did, blacksmithing and so on, I didn't really have any roots in the States, because I had lived overseas in different countries all my childhood. So to the extent that I was going to go somewhere, at that point, since from the time I got to college, my parents had moved from Switzerland to Ohio to Michigan, I didn't really have any connection with where they lived. Certainly, in terms of graduating from college and going back to live with my parents, that was just not even an option that I would have considered. And with my degree in philosophy, there wasn't exactly a big job market for me to jump into, either, if I had wanted to. So I just kept with what I had been doing in the year that I was off. I guess to the extent that I was able to earn a living and maintain the lifestyle that I had, that was all I was really looking for.

In retrospect, I think that was also one of the big failings of the university at that time, although I can't blame it totally on the university, but to the extent that so many of us kind of went on a different track, there really wasn't any counseling. I mean, there were some counselors, but there really wasn't a lot of emphasis on getting people pulled back into a career track. I think people who were in, say, the Commerce School,

the C-School, as it was called, they certainly had a track already in mind. By the time they were in their senior year, they were interviewing with companies for jobs and so on.

I think we, the people who I knew, none of us were really along in that mode at all to begin with. We pretty much sort of found our way in the dark, if you will, in terms of stumbling upon occupations. I think you probably should talk to John Gunner, if you haven't. He certainly would be one to talk to. He's someone who I knew during my student years, but only very slightly.

I think a lot of people who had moved to a country places, although with all this talk of these parties and wild events and so on which did happen with some regularity, I think there was also just getting away from it all and going to the country, working and living a fairly quiet life in a non-urban setting. I think that was very appealing to me and probably to a lot of people. In terms of my focus on the long term, I think that's something that I really didn't have then. That was not really something that was encouraged, I think, in any formal way.

I'm trying to think of things that happened in later years, say, in my junior or senior year. There was certainly several people in the Chaos General Staff, if you want to call it, Ray Clemence who dropped out. Bill Green, who ended up living at Chaos West, dropped out. There were a number of people who, I think, suffered because of the drug scene and because of the fact that, as with anything, any kind of drug or whether it be alcohol or whatever, there's some people that are going to be susceptible to just go off the deep end. I am not saying that's the case with all the people, but certainly I saw many people who withdrew or left because they had gotten in too deep over their heads. Certainly, in my freshman year there were a number of people who experimented with psychedelics and just lost it altogether. That was a very sad thing at the time.

I guess, to another extent also, the fact that people kind of went their own ways during those last few years, in no small way was due to the fact that this drug scene had developed really got pretty serious after a while. There were, clearly, people who were getting into the hard stuff, if you will. That was very troubling to me. Certainly, I saw people who were getting into what I considered the hard stuff, cocaine and other opiates and things like that that really kind of separated people out. You know, you either were or you weren't. And I wasn't.

Some people certainly kind of went over the edge that way. I think probably in those last couple of years that I was there, there were drug busts. Some students were sent to jail. That was a time when things had kind of come full circle. There was no longer sort of that carefree attitude that there was in the early days.

It's amazing in some ways, the different tracks that people did go on. Certainly, I remember Ben West, who is now a very successful advertising executive down in Tampa, I guess, or St. Petersburg, Florida, who certainly partied with the best of them, if you will, who was probably the person who introduced me to this group of chaotic people, if you will, and who, of all of them that I know of, has sort of risen above all that into a sort of success in the financial business world, if you will. He would probably be a good person for you to talk to, actually. He was featured in the alumni magazine a few issues back.

Warren: There's actually somebody else down there I need to talk to. He's in Tampa area?

Reilly: I think he's in Tampa now. He was from Jacksonville originally. I know he worked in New York for Young & Rubicon for a while, because I had an uncle who was chairman of Young & Rubicon. So we had helped make a connection back then.

Warren: Just to sort of round things out, when I first arrived in Lexington, not only were there all these very well-educated carpenters, but a theme that I picked up on very

quickly where there's seemed like every other car had a bumper sticker on it that said, "Chaos." [Laughter] Do you ever see Chaos bumper stickers anymore?

Reilly: I haven't in quite a long time, actually. I think I still have one or two stowed away somewhere for posterity. No, I guess what I would say about Chaos was that it was more of a response to what was actually going on, that the world had been turned upside down somewhat at that point for so many of us in terms of what our expectations were and what the realities were. So the bumper sticker "Chaos" was more telling it like it was as opposed to trying to create chaos, if you will. It wasn't so much that we were saying things *should* be chaotic as things *are* chaotic, and you just have to deal with it.

Of course, I've looked with interest on all these chaos theories and so that have come out in recent years. Certainly there's some element of that in the universe. But I think that's really what that was about. It was just a recognition, really, is all it was, although I'm sure it was seen, to some extent, as a threat to the established order, if you will.

I remember we got those bumper stickers printed up that first year. I think there were lots of things done with those bumper stickers that shouldn't have been.

Warren: Like?

Reilly: Like they were put on street signs, as I recall, one night. I don't remember everyone who was involved in it, but, you know, Nelson Street became Chaos Street. "No parking anytime" became "No chaos anytime." [Laughter] I think that was just youthful pranks and probably more considered vandalism nowadays.

Warren: How much do you think people like Bob Huntley were aware of Chaos?

Reilly: Probably more than we knew. I felt like they had – and I'm trying to remember the person who was in charge of security.

Warren: Murph.

Reilly: Murph. Yeah. Right. I think he knew. He had several people working for him who kept tabs on this kind of stuff. I think he probably knew who was who and what was going on where. You know, I think, to a certain extent, his job has become sort of being an intermediary to prevent any kind of conflict or – not conflict, but problems that occurred between the town police and the students, because certainly some of the activities that were going were either illegal or questionable. But I suspect a lot of the activities were, if not monitored, that there was some knowledge of who was who and what was happening with what people.

Certainly in the times when there was the student strike and all that kind of activism, I think there was very much more heightened awareness of who of the leaders of the strike and who were organizers. I can't imagine that he didn't have some kind of reports coming in. I think the point there was that, in general, the people who were on campus were not violent, were not interested in destruction of property, basically. So I guess with the exception of – I think Abby Hoffman came to campus once. There was probably some concern at that point. But I think if you could get Jeff Gingold to talk about those times; Henry Schloss would also be someone who had a lot of insight into the happenings in terms of the faculty and the administration and what awareness they had of what was going on.

Warren: I need to track them down. Well, thank you, Sean. We're just right at the end of the tape. If there's anything else, I'd be glad to pop in another tape.

Reilly: Well, no, I think I've pretty well drained myself.

Warren: Well, thank you. It's been great to get your reminiscences.

Reilly: You're welcome.

[End of interview]