VOICES of the Oral History Projectof GLHSNC
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Interview with Joel Fort
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By Interviewer: Paul Gabriel
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Videotape 1 of 1
1S1:000-099 = Tape One, Counter 000-099
1S1:000-099

JF: (speaking off camera) I found some interesting historical documents.
PG: Well, that's nice of you to bring them. Thank you.
JF: In fact I might talk about a few of them while they'll be appropriate.
PG: Yeah, when I interviewed Bill Beardemphel . . .
JF: Oh yes.
PG: He brought a copy of the President's Report of SIR from 1965, the very first year.
JF: Yeah, that must be a valuable document.
PG: We don't have a copy in our Archives. We have one from the sec, we have the second year report but not

the first year.
JF: (Inaudible, speaking from afar).
PG: Yeah, there's, we're fortunate that we've been collecting now long enough that we're beginning to fill in a lot of holes, although there are always holes that still exist. (Pause) Excuse me, do you mind if we sit. Is that okay?
JF: I didn't know you'd already started.
PG: Yeah, it's just a, sometimes the incidental conversation can be revealing.
JF: You're absolutely right. And the thing that I'm talking about I may still have over in the briefcase. It was a statement I drafted in 1966 that was very prominent at the time, signed by Evelyn Hooker and Joe Adams.
PG: Oh, okay.
JF: Along with me. It was circulated nationally.
PG: Ah, was this, was this during the Ten Days of August? Was it a press release?
JF: It did, it was issued to the press, yes. It was during the first National Homophile Meeting.
PG: Yes, and bill Beardemphel got up with you in a room and help negotiate it and it was the first, according to him, it was the first public statement by reputable medical professionals that homosexuality

should be taken off the illness list of the APA.
JF: I think that's correct, I think that's correct.
PG: And you have a copy of that.
JF: May I stand up for a moment? I brought it with me; it's just a matter of finding it. Here it is.
PG: Do you want to read it?
JF: Yes, I'd like to, because I'm proud of it because I think it, for the first time, put homosexuality in the proper contact. It was the 1966 Public Policy Statement on Homosexuality, drafted by me and issued by Joe Adams, Ph.D., Evelyn Hooker, Ph.D. and Joel Fort, MD at the National Homophile Conference in San Francisco.
Homosexuals, like heterosexuals, should be treated as individual human beings, not as a special group either by Law or social agencies or employers. Laws governing sexual behavior should be reformed to deal only with clearly anti-social behavior, such as behavior involving violence or youth. The sexual behavior of individual adults by mutual consent in private should not be a matter of public concern. Some homosexuals, like some heterosexuals, are ill. Some homosexuals, like some heterosexuals, are preoccupied with sex as a way of life, but probably for a majority of adults, their sexual orientation constitutes only one

component of a much more complicated lifestyle. I believe that statement still stands thirty-one years later, and if everybody understood and followed it, we'd have very few problems.
PG: That's quite a statement.
JF: Thank you.
PG: That's quite a statement. I'm very, I'm excited because this is what I was just talking about. I had an interview with Bill Beardemphel, he told me about this, and then you show up with the piece of paper.
JF: That is amazing. It took some searching for me to find it.
PG: But I knew about it.
JF: That's good. I'm glad he remembers it.
PG: Oh, he remembers it very fondly. You know, in all these years. it's one of the very, it's the only detailed memory he has retained of that National Homophile Conference here in San Francisco.
JF: That's amazing. There's an interesting parallel memory that I have, a much less significant one but interesting. One, some years later, I don't know how much later, it could have been the next year or two or three years later, I was consulting in Washington, DC, with the National Student Association and they were having, at the same period, the National Homophile

Conference. And I, naturally being interested and involved and concerned, chose to visit it and sit in on the meeting. When I arrived, those in charge excluded me from coming in because I was a heterosexual. So a discussion ensued in which I participated and several of my homosexual friends from San Francisco debated the issue and the result was the group voted to allow me to come and I integrated the Homophile Conference. Isn't that amusing?
PG: (laughs) That's such a late 1960's, early 1970's story, don't you think?
JF: Yes. And while I think of it, since we're operating somewhat informally, I was once talking about this whole matter of how society should react to and deal with gay and lesbian people in San Diego at a conference where I was one of the major speakers. And a man hollered out from the rear of the audience, what right do you have to talk about homosexuals when you're a heterosexual. And I tried to deal with it rationally. I can't really remember how I dealt with it, but I ordinarily would have pointed out that you don't have to commit suicide to help suicidal people, and you don't have to even be a woman to help deliver a baby in the case of obstetricians. And that people can have compassion and empathy and understanding,

even though they're somewhat different. But then I got back to The City and a gay friend of mine, Martin Stowe, who in fact I had hired at the Center for Special Problems soon after I started it in 1965. He said if they ever say that again, just say you love your fellow man. I don't think that answers it but it's a little bit amusing.
PG: Tell me, now that we've jumped in here, that's fine. Tell me what you remember about that 1966 Conference. How did you get involved and what memories do you retain of it?
JF: Well, I got involved by invitation because I had already in 1965 started the first public program in the country to work with homosexuals on an accepting and non-pathological basis within the context of working with any sexual problem that a person had, heterosexual, homosexual or otherwise. And I had already been involved in public interviews and lectures and debates with people from the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association, etc.
1S1:100-199
So part of the answer is that I was invited to the meeting because of the things that I'd already done. Another part is by default. There were very few people

that were interested in or willing to speak out about it, particularly very few heterosexual people who had nothing to gain and everything to lose.
PG: Especially professionals.
JF: Yes, that's right. In those days it was . . . that's a good choice of words or concepts, it was unprofessional, it was not proper psychiatrically or medically to do other that categorize in a pathological way homosexuality. And it was also not accepted to speak out on public issues. You were supposed to be quiet and just operating in a private office and not make waves. So that it did, of course, over a time, produce a lot of conflict for me.
PG: Could you tell the camera - we'll come back to that - but could you just tell the camera what, what brought those three individuals, that wrote that statement, together at that conference?
JF: Well, Evelyn, I remember mostly Evelyn Hooker. She, of course, was involved because she had done some of the most, even then I believe, some of the most important research on the subject, and was probably the best known researcher on the subject. She was a clinical psychologist, as I recall, teaching and researching at UCLA. The third person, Joe Adams, I only knew slightly. My recollection is he too was a

psychologist and was affiliated with eslin and I don't know whether he published anything on the subject or how he became involved. But I think we were on a panel and we were the main resource people for at least part of that meeting, and I can't recall if somebody asked us to draft the statement or a statement, or how that came about. But we, I think, were tied together by being on a panel. And I drafted the statement, as I said, and it was very quickly accepted by the other two and issued as our joint statement.
PG: What was your, can you remember, I know sometimes it's hard to remember details. Can you remember the feeling of being at that conference, the feeling maybe for yourself, but also for the people there?
JF: Only a little bit. You're correct, it is hard to remember it. Not so much because of the passage of years but because I've had a very intense life with a tremendous number of experiences, both in terms of working with sexuality and also with other problems that I chose to specialize in, namely Crime and Violence, Drug Abuse, within which I always included alcohol and tobacco. And social reform in general. So, many other events impinge on remembering exactly about this. But my recollection is that it was not heavily attended. I certainly don't remember how many were

there, but it was not overwhelming numbers. It must have been somewhere between a hundred and two hundred people. I think there was a sense of excitement and of accomplishment. People were glad to be there. Some uncertainty, questioning, anxiety, but a general positive feeling and a general openness to discussion and hopefulness about the future. That's about all I can remember about it.
PG: That's okay. Because we have a limited amount of time today, I want to back up even farther, although this is a not starting point here 'cause this is sort of your debutante debut to the homophile movement in a way. I want to back up, even before the Center for Special Problems. You said something about alcohol and tobacco which I thought was interesting. So my question is, I was talking to a friend who's an MD Ph.D. and I said I was going to be interviewing you and I said my impression was, and I could be wrong, my impression was that you initially got started in drug rehab. And he was saying, I wonder, he said is he a psychologist? And I said - Is he a psychiatrist? I said I don't think so, but I know he's an MD And then he said I wonder if he's an internist. And so I'm wondering what was your initial medical specialization, and something - my feeling is that a

lot of things in American society across the board were undergoing a lot of massive reevaluation starting in the mid to late '50s and then sort of reaching fruition in the '60s and . . .
JF: You're right.
PG: And I want to know is you as a medical professional, how do you see that and how did you participate in it? Is that, is that too broad of a question or?
JF: Let me attempt it and then you feel free to ask me some follow-up questions.
PG: But is it clear to you?
JF: Yes, I think so. Without going into too much detail or too much history, in part it began with my being a gifted questioning child who was curious about a great many things and began asking questions about things that most other people accepted as givens. I finished high school, I went off to college at fifteen and I majored in Philosophy and English. I had Bohemian interests in my teens, interest in the theater to some extent, and music, and to some extent, other arts. And very early on, I had an exposure to a diversity of people. Do you mind if I look at you instead of the camera? I find it artificial too.
PG: That's why, that's why I sit next to the camera.

Because what it does is you basically face the camera and actually, it's more natural in the image when you're a little bit off center of the camera.
JF: Oh good, okay.
PG: Just like in a picture, it's a little bit . . . .
JF: Okay, because you had said before, please look at the camera but that means I look away from you.
PG: I was getting you set up in a frame. But it's like a portrait painting. It's always a bit unnerving when you have a direct gaze. We tend to prefer to look at a painting where the person is a little bit off.
1S1:200-299
JF: I agree with you; that's very thoughtful. That's not usually the way they do it in videoland because I did some TV series as part of my life, a public affairs series and they're not as imaginative. Anyway to return to the story. Perhaps because of my early interest in philosophy and the arts and my questioning of tradition, I'd never had any negative feelings or adverse reactions, even from the beginning, when I had contact with homosexuals. And, by the way, I'll continue, if you don't mind, to use the word homosexual because I see nothing wrong with the word. That was one of the things I stressed in the beginning, that it should be as equal as the word

heterosexual. And I'm opposed to using euphemisms when you can use direct honest language. So, I, early on, met and was on friendly terms with homosexuals, particularly in the arts. And on a couple of occasions had overtures made to me by homosexuals. And I didn't think much of it at the time, I mean, I didn't think much of the fact that I had no negative reaction to it. In fact, I remember one occasion particularly where I was sharing a room, it was either in Paris or New York, with a painter. And he politely made overtures to me and I rejected them and we still spent the night in the same room and continued on a friendly basis. Now that was long before I had any kind of professional training. Of course, if I'd had professional training, my attitude might have been more negative rather than, rather than positive. But what I'm pointing out is that somehow I never had negative feelings toward, and that's true also of racially and other kinds of minorities in the society. So I already had a foundation for what became an important part of my life to work, as I now put it, to help everybody to become a credit to their race, namely the human race, the only race that matters. And to try to bridge the fragmentation's. Instead of dividing people up and labeling them, pathologizing

them, to try to stress health and independence and commonality. I'm not saying that was all articulated in my youth. I'm saying I believe that the foundation for what I later developed as my philosophy and became incorporated in my work, was already there in my teens.

And then I went on, I got an academic fellowship after I finished college at eighteen, an academic fellowship for a Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago in Clinical Psychology. I finished all the course work and languages for that, but then when I went back to medical school at Ohio State and finished that, not anticipating my future part-time career as a university professor where the actual Ph.D. degree is so important, I never bothered to get the degree. After I did one advance degree, the MD was enough. And then I went on to get, to do a regular internship and to take full training in Psychiatry. But I took, I was already a critic of conventional psychiatry for other reasons. For example, I always thought Freudian theory was very unscientific and over-generalized. And I managed to find a residency where I could learn a lot of other things besides psychiatry, namely the federal, the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky, which was the original federal

facility for treating narcotic addiction. And it was the most, not only the pioneering one, the most famous at that time in the mid '50s. And there not only did I get a remarkably comprehensive experience in drugs, and narcotic addition, but also I learned about the almost always concurrent use of other drugs. And I learned something that I later became a pioneer in doing. And that is that alcohol and tobacco were drugs and were the most destructive drugs, and it was totally unethical to express concern, and hypocritical, concern about marijuana and heroin and cocaine, and not worry about the deaths and disabilities from alcohol and tobacco.

So that became part of my later, what I call, the public health approach, to drugs and sex and violence and other things. But to finish that part of the story, there at Lexington I also learned a lot about homosexuality. There was a separate wing of the - they took those prisoners and volunteers. There was a separate area where homosexuals were housed, and a great many women, both men and women which was a unique aspect of it. And many women had been prostitutes to support their habit. So I was able, over the two years that I was there, to learn a great deal about prostitution, homosexuality, drug abuse and

traditional psychiatry. And I took that and built from it.

PG: Boot camp of the Tenderloin.

JF: And I built a foundation which I then integrated with my other knowledge and life experience, into an inter-disciplinary profession, which, for want of a better term, I called Societry, instead of Psychiatry. I've never written that; I usually don't use the word, but what I meant it to mean was an emphasis on the social causes and effects of problems, not to the exclusion of psychology or psychiatry, but more importantly than the psychological aspects. And I created an inter-disciplinary approach to problems that I thought needed special attention, and were being very poorly and destructively dealt with by society, namely sexual problems, drug problems, crime and violence, suicide.

1S1:300-399

And out of that background, which by that time also included university teaching in criminology at UC Berkeley, I created the Center for Special Problems in 1965.

PG: Through this Public Health Department?

JF: Through the San Francisco Health Department. I had returned, excuse me (takes sip of water), I had

returned from thirteen months working for the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, as a social affairs officer. And one of the jobs offered me, as I looked around for the most creative and fulfilling thing I could do, I had long before, parenthetically, long before I had rejected the model of commercialization of private practice as the goal of medicine. And it was already evolving what you could call public practice as opposed to private practice. One of the jobs offered me by the Health Department Director was directing a sort of moribund alcoholism clinic here in The City known as the Adult Guidance Center. Excuse me. I thought about what needed to be done based on the experience and concerns that I've already summarized, and I wrote out a vision of the program that I thought was necessary for this city and for the country, major cities in the country. And I spelled out the problems which I've already summarized and I stressed the variety of services that should be made available and I called them special problems, and a special approach that was needed, including non-ghettoization where people would be dealt with as people and in one facility, and not compartmentalized and divided up, and also because problems overlap, that these things, in many instances, went together.

Like as you were alluding to earlier, prostitution and drug-taking.
PG: Well, and also sexuality, especially with runaway youth.
JF: Certainly, certainly. Anyway, they accepted my proposal, I accepted the job and I then had one of the most exciting periods of my life. I later came to think of it as social artistry. I think it's a more important art form, that is creating new non-profit facilities to help human beings with serious problems. Certainly as important as wrapping a bridge in cloth or other things that have gotten a lot of attention as art. Whether it's as important as a Rembrandt or a Jackson Pollack is for others to decide, but my point is that it should be considered an art form to create innovative institutions to help solve human problems. And I was able to do that then, both. And it was extremely popular. People flocked into it including the new group that was honored by the media as being labeled the hippies. This was the only program that worked constructively with the hippies, and just as it was being widely accepted by SIR and the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis for its work with homosexuality, it was widely accepted by the hippies for that humanistic attitude at a time when The City

actually declared war on the hippie, which your research must have brought to your attention. And they weren't far from declaring war on the homosexual and war on other despised groups of people, including some of the same people who fall all over themselves now to gain the political support of what's called the gay and lesbian community. So there are a lot of ironies and a lot of hypocrisy here. In an case, I brought in new staff, hired individuals who had backgrounds that had never been represented on the staff before, including the first acknowledged male homosexual that, as far as I know, was hired by The City. And he later fulfilled another one of my ideals which was that you don't have to have an MD in order to be a leader of a program. The tradition had been that all clinics and all hospitals had to be administered by an MD So he with an MSW, years later, became director of the Center for Special Problems. I brought in people from racial minorities, youthful ages as well as the older staff that were there, trained people to relate to problems they hadn't worked with before, introduced new techniques, for example, anti-abuse treatment for the alcoholic, counseling and hormone therapy for the transsexual which the program also began serving. I brought in the

most learned authority on that subject, Doctor Harry Benjamin, with whom I became friendly and we remained friends until his death. He helped train my staff to work with the transsexual. And I trained the internists on the staff to administer hormones, developed a liaison with, what was then called, the VD Clinic, a liaison with Stanford.
PG: Check 33, right?
JF: That's right.
PG: Thirty-three Hunt Street.
JF: Yes, that's what it was, I'd forgotten that, exactly. You've done your research well.
PG: That was SIR's campaign, Check 33.
JF: I remember that now but I had forgotten it.
1S1:400-499
PG: Eliot Blackstone said he also had, at the - sorry to interrupt - but at the Poverty, at the Poverty Center headquarters which were down here also on Sixth Street for a while, then they moved to Third Street. They were at Sixth Street for about a year, and they had match books and on them he said Take the trip to stop the drip.
JF: I don't remember that at all.
PG: He was very proud of that; he had come up with that slogan himself.

JF: I've heard worse.
PG: So then, but you said you also worked with Stanford?
JF: I didn't work with them, I developed a liaison with their Plastic Surgery Department in order to make referrals. I had no connection myself, but went down there, invited them, their people, I think his name was Doctor Laub, L-A-U-B, who did the plastic surgery. But mainly worked out a special program that involved counseling, feminization where appropriate, masculizaton where appropriate, cosmetics where appropriate, that type of thing, and hormone therapy where the person was committed to the change and had gone through a period of extensive screening. In any case, the program was serving individuals and groups that had never had any kind of human acceptance and often had never had any kind of help available to them. And the case load was tripled without increasing the budget. The landlord was persuaded to let us use more space without paying more rent for it because there was vacant space in the building, which was on Van Ness Avenue. I developed two branches, one of which was the Jail Rehabilitation Branch where every inmate at the jail had any problems relating to our special, our specialties, could fill out a form and I

sent staff out there two days a week to provide services to them, and then a continuity of care when they got out jail. This was quite pioneering at the time and unfortunately there still are very few rehabilative services in jails or prisons and certainly none that provide for follow-up outpatient care when you get out.
The other branch also has an interesting history. I call that the Acute Drug Abuse Screening Branch which I set up at San Francisco General Hospital, and that dealt with treatment of acute withdrawal, bad trips, that type of thing. So many people from the Haight-Ashbury went out there for those services and then would come to the main outpatient clinic for follow-up services. And the program was well-accepted by The Diggers that were, they were the most creative group among the hippies. We worked with the poor and the middle class. I brought in all kinds of volunteers like AA was giving, was having meetings there. Synanon, for the only time in its career, sent some of its people into the Center for special problems to run Synanon groups. I had art therapy, poetry, the things that are now called New Age, holistic. It was all part of what I called a smorgasbord approach, that was my word for how I thought these problems needed to be

treated, and I used that metaphor to mean first that you make available every traditional and innovative technique of health that you can, that you use two, three or more in combination and that you give freedom of choice to the person, so that they were involved in, after you explained to them in understandable language what these different treatment methods were, how they worked, etc., they made a joint decision with you about that.
And I still feel all these years later, that's the right approach to drug problems and to other kinds of problems, certainly the freedom of choice and the not relying on any one method. Because no one method helps more than a minority of those who have a problem. And no one method is acceptable to everybody, even if it were theoretically of help to everybody. And if you force people into a choice between stay with Synanon all your life or die on the streets, as they used to tell people, or go on methadone maintenance all your life, or stay a heroin addict, I think you're doing them a disservice. You should seek to make them independent autonomous people with social responsibility, whether it's a sexual problem, a drug problem or something else.
PG: I'm curious, did your center become involved with

runaway youth?
1S1:500-599
JF: Some, but that was more a personal involvement of mine. I was on the board of Huckleberry's for Runaways in its early years.
PG: Excuse me. Could you tell me when, exactly, was Huckleberry House started?
JF: I don't think I can tell you exactly, but I can tell you how to find out.
PG: Your guesstimate would be mid '60s, late '60s?
JF: Oh that, yes, that part I could tell you, it was either '66 or '67. I thought you wanted an exact month.
PG: No, no, no, and it came a little bit, although, tell me how to track it like that.
JF: I can.
PG: But it came after the Hospitality House?
JF: I'm not sure of that. I remember Hospitality House but I don't know the chronology. That certainly came about the mid '60s also.
PG: And, okay, 'cause I've been following this because Hospitality House was very innovative, especially for runaway youth.
JF: Yes, yes it was.
PG: Because the reason why I ask you is that you're a

public agency and everybody I've talked to, including police officers, have said that the problem with runaway youth became rampant in San Francisco in the mid '60s to the late '60s because of the Summer of Love, and it just was a magnet. There was already runaway youth anyway but it became almost of crisis proportions.
JF: That's true.
PG: And the problem was a lot of these people were not, like how do I put this? They were not sort of your Depression Era youth who were usually eighteen or over and looking for work and kind of hoboes. These were kids who just dropped out of the middle class.
JF: That's correct.
PG: And sometimes even went and picked up money from their families. And a lot of these kids were legally juveniles.
JF: That's correct.
PG: And that was very dangerous, legally, for anyone except for the youth, Juvenile Youth Authority, to have anything to do with them. Does my painting of the situation sound correct?
JF: That sounds correct, but I don't remember those working with them being afraid of that danger. And I think Huckleberry's actually was more involved - I

don't know, I can't say that - as much involved as Hospitality House was. It was started by a minister named Larry Beggs who then invited a number of people who worked on problems that these young people had and/or worked with youth, to serve on the board. And he hired a number of very good staff members I recall, mostly youthful, and it was out on the Avenues. And the best way for you to track it is to look up at the Library the book he wrote about it, which, I believe, is called Huckleberry's. But he also, if he's still alive, is in Marin County living on a farm. He had a reunion of the people who had been associated him in Huckleberry's about, I'd say, about ten years ago. And that would have been, it was probably the twentieth reunion.

PG: Eighty-seven, from '67.

JF: My guess is that it was around '87. Yes, I think that's about what it was. So he, you can find him.

PG: 'Cause the Coleman Foundation, which produced Larkin Street Youth Center, Diamond House, Green House, Diamond Street House, these, these came about '74, '75. So I know that Huckleberry House was very innovative because for a long, long time, it was the only, it was the only overnight, it was the only overnight place for runaway youth in San Francisco

other than the Juvenile Youth Authority.

JF: I think that's so.

PG: Because even the Hospitality House was not overnight. It was just a crash place.

JF: Yeah, that's correct. Yeah, it was a . . .

PG: It was a coffee house.

JF: Yeah, it was come and go, or out, they weren't actually patients, but it was more like an outpatient than a live-in facility, that's right.

PG: And Huckleberry House was also, people have told me that it was maximum of 48 hours and under the proviso that you would attempt, if you had not attempted to contact your parents in that time, and tried to initiate some kind of reconciliation or dialogue, then you would lose your housing privileges.

JF: I don't remember the 48 hours. My recollection is that they were able to make exceptions to that if that was indeed the policy, but the other part I do remember clearly. They did seek to have everybody contact their parents, I mean, everybody under age.

PG: And I heard that they were raided for abetting the delinquency of minors.

JF: I don't remember that, but that's very possible because that was a period when the city fathers were dominated by a business, very conservative mentality.

1S1:600-699

And The City was mainly run by a man who became very vindictive toward me because of my, the work I was doing with sexual problems, drug users, hippies, etc. His name was Thomas Mellon, and he held the position, the most powerful position in The City called Chief Administrative Officer. Well, of course, the mayor was the one that was most often portrayed by the media as running The City. Before they reformed the charter just a few years ago, these were separate autonomous positions. So there were three branches of The City government: the Chief Administrative Officer, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors. And the Health Department came solely under the Chief Administrative Officer. The Mayor had no authority over it. So the Chief Administrative Officer and his flunky, the Health Director name Socks . . .

PG: Eliot Socks.

JF: No, Ellis, I think it was Ellis. I know Herb Caen called him LSD, Ellis D. Socks.

PG: (laughs), I just remember because he was sent as the Mayor's representative to that first homophile conference in 1966.

JF: I don't remember his being there. If he was sent, he didn't play any significant role.

PG: Phyllis and Del laughed about that because they said he was the Director of the Public Health Department but he was from the Mayor's office. They said it was very typical of sort of conscience of that time. They Mayor's representative to a homophile conference would be somebody who would deal with it as a public health issue.

JF: That's right, yeah. But the more important thing is to understand the power structure and that Mellon really ran the Health Department and much of The City government, and represented the most conservative elements of The City. And he's the one that instituted the war on the hippie, and, less formally, the war on other groups that he and his associates thought were too controversial, for giving The City a bad image, needed to be suppressed, and probably runaway youth would be one of those. That's why I brought that up because you were asking about raiding Huckleberry's. Although I have no specific memory of that, it's entirely consistent with the philosophy of the Health Director and of the Chief Administrative Office. And, for that matter, the Mental Health Director, who worked closely with both of those two and was entirely subservient to both of them, if not obsequious.

PG: How did you, then, on a more individual basis, how

did you get involved in problems of runaway youth in San Francisco?
JF: Only because Larry Beggs invited, asked for my advice at times because of my experience and involvement's with, with the problem areas that many of the young people were showing, that is sexual problems, drug problems, as you alluded to earlier. And then because he later asked me to serve on their board, and I would visit the program periodically and regularly participate in their board meetings. I can't remember the intervals of them now, but they were fairly regular.
PG: And what do you remember about Huckleberry House itself? How big was it? What was its capacity? What do you remember about how it was run? How many staff were there?
JF: Only a little. Remember, I was not directly involved in the hiring or training or the services there. I believe it was in a medium sized Victorian type house that had had six to ten staff members, that it was a very busy place. And it seems to me somewhat vaguely that there weren't more than a couple dozen, at the most, young people there at any given time. It was not a vast dormitory type thing like a homeless shelter.

1S1:700-799
But they were flexible and innovative and I believe people would sometimes be allowed to crash there. But if you're asking, as I thought you were, about people who stayed on for some period of time for services, getting social services and health services, I think it was no more than a couple dozen at a time.
PG: That's what other people have told me. And to your knowledge, is something like the Hospitality House or Huckleberry House, which started say about '66, '67 in San Francisco, are those, is it fair to say that nationally, those were very pioneering organizations?
JF: Yes, yes indeed. I think they were. I know less about Hospitality House but my recollection of it was that it was a pioneering thing. There were a number of pioneering things. My Center for Special Problems was, Huckleberry's was, the Haight-Ashbury Switchboard run by a very creative man named Al Rinker, that was a pioneering thing. SIR was a pioneering organization, I think very effective.
PG: Suicide Prevention Hotline? Were you involved in that? That started here in The City too.
JF: I was involved but I need to clarify that. Not in the sense that I had anything to do with starting that, but I was involved in the . . . that was one of

the groups I developed a liaison with. And we became, from the outset of my Center for Special Problems, the main place that they would refer people to for services after dealing with the Acute Crisis on the telephone. And I was involved, in some ways like I was at Huckleberry's, in that I would talk periodically with the director of that program. I think her name was Hazel something. She would call upon me for one thing or another and we would maintain liaison.
PG: So if I understand you correctly, the Center for Special Problems basically could be divided, its work could be divided in two ways. Either other agencies referred people to the Center itself where services were directly provided, or people came to the Center and then some services were provided there and then other services, you would refer them to other places, for example Stanford Surgical Clinic.
JF: No, that's not a . . .
PG: That's not a fair statement?
JF: No, it's a little bit misleading. Let me see if I can summarize it, and I believe I brought with me one of the original descriptions in fact. But nobody knows as much about it as I do because I created it.
PG: That's right.
JF: I mean, the whole idea of it was mine so it was

very . . . just like any creative project of yours, you know more about it than anybody else.
PG: Well, that's why I'm checking, because I was listening to you and I was beginning to realize I was developing a conception and I wanted to double-check with you.
JF: It wasn't that what, it wasn't that your summary was completely off base, but let me put it in context. First of all, it was entirely an outpatient program and one way of describing it is in terms of the problems it dealt with, which I've already done and won't repeat. There were a couple of others like obesity or overeating and some other things that I included, but the mainstays were, the most frequent ones that we worked on were the ones I've described.
1S1:800-899
A second way of describing it would be in terms of a wide range of services that were provided, and by the unusual blending of paid staff and volunteers which I involved in the program which enabled me to bring in a lot of people that couldn't be hired under City Civil Service regulations and a lot of new blood that you just can't in when you wait for the routine hiring practices. Another way of describing it is that it had two branches, one of which dealt with inmates, so they

were in an institution at the time, the jail. And the other which was an outpatient facility when they came for acute drug treatment, that program later, the guy I trained and hired, later after The City tried to close down the Center for Special Problems and when I, and asked me to resign and I refused and they then fired me, that Acute Drug Abuse Treatment Unit became the Haight-Ashbury Clinic.

PG: Oh, the Free Clinic.

JF: Yeah, it wouldn't, there never would have been a Haight-Ashbury Clinic had the program not . . . they did close down these two branches, but I managed to save the main office, the Center for Special Problems, by refusing to resign. Their whole plan as part of their war on these groups and getting rid of controversy and getting everything back in place, was to close down the Center completely. The media attention to their attempt and later successful dismissal of me . . . By the way, it was on a formal charge of being too independent.

PG: What year was that?

JF: Nineteen sixty-seven.

PG: Okay, good. I mean, not good that you were fired but . . .

JF: No, I understand. That sounds like somebody's

putting a charge in more comfortable, more positive language. But one of the unbelievable things about it was that the actual charge of being fired for being too independent. And then there was subcharges that I was involved with problems that I shouldn't have been involved with there, and had obligated The City by increasing the case load to that extent and getting extra space. And in the end, that I'd gotten a million dollar grant for a Poverty Center in the Mission district from the federal government. It's almost unbelievable but, as you know, in any bureaucracy, they can do anything they want to and usually get away with it. I almost won that battle too. I've won many and lost a few. But that had to be approved by the Civil Service Commission which had three members, and I lost that by a two to one vote. Things would have been very different otherwise. But in any case, I'm returning to your question about how to describe what the program did. So people came to it voluntarily; they'd heard about it by word of mouth or because it'd been written up. Many came by referral from SIR, Mattachine, Daughters of Bilitis, from the Haight-Ashbury Switchboard or the Diggers directly, from the Suicide Prevention Center. So as many came on their own, having heard about it, as came by referral. I

think that, I think that answers your question.

PG: Mm hm, Now your, whoops, is your wife's name Maria?

JF: That's right.

PG: And Maria, if I'm not mistaken, I have intelligence everywhere, your wife had a position in the upper echelons of the Poverty Program in San Francisco.

JF: That's correct. Not in San Francisco. She has worked for decades with the federal Office of Economic Opportunity that funds, evaluates, trains and so forth. And part of her responsibility for many years has been and was, because there was an interruption, the San Francisco Anti-Poverty Program. Her primary responsibility in recent years has been the Head Start Program to which she's very committed. But I also had a separate relationship with the local Anti-Poverty Program under Don Lucas and a man named Calvin Colt.

PG: Who started it.

JF: That's right.

PG: It came out of the Mission Anti-Poverty Program.

JF: That's right. And after I recovered from the terrible loss I'd experienced, 'cause I was very committed and very involved in the Center for Special Problems as you might imagine, to almost have the

program closed down and to lose my own creative involvement in it including all the staff that I had recruited and was working closely with in trying to evolve a greater sense of community and collaboration which is part of my ideal of bureaucracy which I later developed to its fullest extent when I created Fort Help. But as, within a year of my of this terrible blow, I was still fighting it in court, in the courts, which I lost, I developed another project that was funded through the Central City Anti-Poverty Program, and that was a Mobile Health and Social Welfare Unit, known simply as the Mobile Health Unit. And I converted a Dodge van into, built up the roof so people could stand up in it and put in a sink and a mobile telephone and trained staff and volunteered my own services and on a scheduled basis that we would announce in advance with posters and so forth, we would go into different poverty neighborhoods taking comprehensive services, working again with sex and drug and welfare and other kinds of social problems that the Center for Special Problems had not dealt with. And that's where I had my main contact with Don and Cal Colt. But Don I had first met through the Mattachine Society 'cause they too were very supportive of what I was doing at the Center for

Special Problems.
PG: Okay. First, as an aside and then there's another question. The aside is I've been doing a what's called a life history of Don Lucas.
JF:Oh. For this project?
PG: Yeah, but also, but this project is also just for our Archives. He's a very important person because his experience is so, so long. It's very vertical and it's very horizontal.
JF: That's interesting. I don't know of his work before I met him as a leader of the Mattachine Society.
PG: Well, you see, he'd been involved in the Mattachine Society very early.
JF: I see.
PG: And then he got involved in all these new services here in Central City and then he went off other places.
JF: And he did a good job.
PG: So, he said, when I asked him, for the last three or four hours of the videotape, he'd been talking about Central City. And I asked him of what he was most proud. And he named only two things and one was the mobile unit.
IS1:900-999

JF: Oh, that makes me feel good. Thank you for telling me. And did he tell you what happened to that unit? That was also, it was a minor tragedy but a tragedy. And an unbelievable story.
PG: Well, tell me.
JF: Yeah, then you tell me what he said because of my short memory. Unbelievable story of bureaucracy. A new administration took over and they decided to just use the van to transport people back and forth, and just dropped the whole project. The whole creative service concept was just, overnight, dropped because of an arbitrary bureaucratic decision to just use the van to move people around. What was Don's memory on it?
PG: Don's memory was similar. He said, if I remember him correctly because I've been doing a lot of interviewing so sometimes my memory gets a little bit skewed. But if I remember correctly, he said that one of the things that they said was that van is just too wide for the streets. It's blocking traffic, it's a nuisance.
JF: Isn't that interesting. I don't remember that at all and, of course, it wasn't too wide. It was not expanded in width; it was expanded in height. It was the conventional width of all Dodge vans.
PG: He was very excited about it, about what it did.

JF: Yes, it was a very fine, one of the most economical van. I got all kinds of people to volunteer services. Sometimes I'd take lawyers out. I later did that at Fort Help too. I had lawyers come in one night a week to give free legal services and other things. I kept building on the creative things that we've been able to do at the Center for Special Problems. Out of government you can do a lot more than you can in government. And the Poverty Program was sort of in between. I mean, Cal Colt and Don Lucas allowed for a lot more innovation than you can do in a conventional government program.
PG: Yeah, especially when the program's run by a homophile activist.
JF: That's right, that's right.
PG: What I was going to ask you is to, once again I'm going to throw something out and you reality check me.
JF: Okay. Keeping in mind, if I may say so, the fact that any of us might, after decades, have some distortions of memory.
PG: That's okay. I'm assembling a Frankenstein monster here, so don't worry about it. You have the Center for Special Problems. For a couple years you did something very innovative there and then The City squelched it at that site. And in response you created a Mobile

Center for Special Problems and went out into The City and found the people directly where they were and provided the services. And what I want to ask you is, is that movement a fair, is it fair to say that that was typical of what was happening to a lot of essential social services in the '60s, was that it went from I have to go find you at your building to, we will come and look for you and try to, we will go to the jail, we will go to your house, we will . . .
JF: Uh huh, that's a very thoughtful question, and my answer to it is no. First of all, it is kind of you and I hadn't really, and it's partially correct. I hadn't thought of it before. It was indeed taking part of the Center for Special Problems to neighborhoods, but it was very, very small compared to what could be done with a large staff, with a diversity of staff and a much greater space and so forth that we had at the fixed place at 2107 Van Ness Avenue, the Center for Special Problems. So in a sense, I took some of it and some of the, some of the problem areas, added a few social problem areas like welfare and legal service, that only a little bit had been done with at the Center for Special Problems. But it was small compared, also in terms of hours, it was small, 'cause we were open at least two nights a week as I recall,

maybe more, at the Center for Special Problems, in all, in most of the day.
PG: When you say night that means all night?
JF: Oh no, I'm sorry, I mean evening. Night hours as it's usually spoken of but not, I'd say it was until ten o'clock or eleven o'clock, something like that, and not every night. But even then, I was trying to do what I later did more fully at Fort Help which was to make a program more accessible to people. Most programs are organized . . . see, I had defined bureaucracy as a social problem itself by the early '60s. I wrote a paper called . . .
PG: It's a pathology (laughs).
JF: It is, that's right. I wrote a paper.
PG: (Laughs uncontrollably) I love it.
JF: It is a pathology, you're absolutely right.
PG: It's a neurosis bordering on psychosis (laughs).
JF: But what you're doing while justified also is representative of what, of how we deal with it, we laugh at it, as we should. It's absurd. But I try to do beyond that by . . . the paper that I wrote, if I can think of the title, says it better. Bureaucracy As a Social Problem and the Organization Man/Woman as Deviant. And most programs are organized for the convenience of their staff, not for the convenience of

people that they're supposed to work with.
PG: Bingo!
JF: I tried to reverse that. I accomplished a lot towards reversing it there and I took giant steps toward reversing it when I created Fort Help which we'll go into another time. But let me tell you another vignette of bureaucracy that's interesting that your questions recalls to mind. One of the things I tried to do to make it accessible was to create an easily remembered phone number. This was a minor piece of pioneering 32 years ago. The number was 864-HELP so that people could easily . . . and that HELP word is now built into dozens of lines across the country. But, more importantly, I realized that people, in order to find out where to get help for any of these problems that I'd set the place up to deal with, had to know to look under San Francisco City and County Government,
1S1:1000-1099
subcategory Department of Public Health, subcategory Community Mental Health Services, subcategory Center for Special Problems. I therefore requested permission verbally, and later in writing, as I was required to do, to be able to put a separate listing in both the White and Yellow Pages, Center for Special Problems,

with or without, also mentioning some of the problems we dealt with. That went all the way up to the Chief Administrative Officer and was turned down on the basis that it's not proper for a city program to advertise. Therefore, it was relatively inaccessible to a lot of people. That's a typical example of the way bureaucracy works. But the hours also. Many people can only come at night or on weekends. Most programs aren't available then, and so on and so forth.
PG: Well, also a lot of the problems that you're dealing with are going to be problems of people who don't have nine to five schedules.
JF: That's right. You have to be flexible. Another innovation I later developed was to get away from this ridiculous fixed time period, which is mostly a lie. Whereas therapists say My fee is X dollars per hour, and the hour is either 45 minutes or 50 minutes. If we had truth in therapy, the fee would be X dollars for 45 minutes. But the main point I'm making is that some people only need ten minutes and/or are only willing to sit still, or even stand up as the case may be, for ten minutes. Whereas other people need an hour and a half or two hours if they're in an acute crisis. And I built that into Fort Help later where, this flexibility, where you gave time according to what is

needed. And you can do it over a cup of coffee, a ping pong table, or in a formal office. I think that kind of flexibility is very important in reaching people.
PG: Okay, we're about an hour. If I may keep you about ten minutes?
JF: That'll be fine.
PG: Is that all right?
JF: Yes.
PG: Okay, thank you.
JF: Certainly.
PG: I just wanted to check in. I don't want to run your clock down. I have to keep you, I have more, I have more (laughs).
JF: Well, your questions are very good, Paul. You're obviously a very thoughtful person and you've researched this well.
PG: Well, it's fun, this is fun for me. I love this; I love talking to people. 'Cause I was also an English major who loved philosophy.
JF: Oh, how interesting.
PG: So, that's what I wanted to ask you for the last ten minutes, if you don't mind. You said that you went to school and that you studied English and Philosophy and I'd love to know what kinds of literature most attracted you and what philosophy you were most

interested in.
JF: Okay, do you mind if I give a little preface to that?
PG: Not at all.
JF: I had been an early reader and my main escape as a child was reading. Sometimes under the covers with a flashlight at night, after I was not supposed to be reading anymore. Did you do that too?
PG: My grandmother did that, because she was a girl, oldest girl, she's not supposed to read.
JF: Of course not.
PG: And she read under the covers.
JF: Yes, like slaves. Slaves weren't supposed to read or write either.
PG: And her husband refused to let her read. And since they shared the bedroom together, that broke her of the habit of reading. Isn't that awful?
JF: It's terrible.
PG: But go on, I'm sorry.
JF: It's primitive. Ah, so I read widely, comic books, science fiction, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Rice Burrows, The Hearty Boys, Nancy Drew, Bobsy Twins, Tom Swift, Boys' Life, Boy Scout Magazine, things like that. I think Colliers was another magazine I read at that time, extending, as I aged, into more varied and

more interesting reading. But now to get to your question. The things I most liked in literature in college were poetry, romantic and classical poetry.
PG: Could you name some authors?
JF: Oh, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Cristina Rossetti, ah, let's see. I'm sure of this, it could have been later, but William Blake at some point, Tennyson, Shakespeare, particularly Hamlet, not some of the more complex historical plays, I don't think I read those at that time. Those are the ones that come to mind. I'm sure that there were others.
PG: Do you know what attracted you to the British romantics? Most of those you named were early 19th century.
JF: That's right, right. My first global answer to it is that it probably came, what attracted me to it was the love that my teacher had for them in exposing me to them. And that reminds me of an unusual anecdote also. That teacher, whose name was Mr. Beck, had only a Bachelor's degree and was one of the most influential teachers in terms of encouraging my love of literature. And he would never be allowed to teach in a modern university where you have to have a Ph.D. You can't even teach if you have a Master's degree in many of these places, which I've always thought was

very stupid. But I think that when I was exposed to it, that still leaves a question why did I like it so much. I think the beauty of language, even, even before that, I'd say I was a beginning wordsmith. ISI:1100-1193
And the power of the English language and the variety of it, long before I knew what grammar and syntax and rhyming and things like that were, I just had a feeling for, it moved me. It was compelling; it was interesting. I like modern poetry too, but you asked me what it was at that time.
PG: How about philosophy?
JF: In philosophy, my interests were logic and aesthetics. And, again, I had, particularly in aesthetics, I had a very knowledgeable and committed professor whose name was Alesejo Vivas. And he first exposed me to Cezanne and other impressionist painters.
PG: How about logic, who did you study in logic?
JF: A professor named Hinshaw, Virgil Hinshaw. He was a very good teacher of logic. They both had high standards. Hinshaw, unfortunately, had a schizophrenic breakdown and I happened to be present when it became manifest during a lecture he was giving at one of our classes. It was an unforgettable experience.

PG: Wow, traumatic.
JF: Yeah. I still remember, he began talking totally out of context about Cesar Romero in a movie called One Thousand BC, if I remember the title correctly.
PG: Just went off.
JF: And then talked in some delusional about the significance of that movie. Who are your favorite poets, or who were they in an earlier stage of your life?
PG: When I was in school, who were my favorite poets? When I was in high school, I liked Edgar Allan Poe a lot.
JF: I liked Poe too.
PG: I read a lot of Poe. T. S. Eliot would say that was not a surprise 'cause he always liked to . . . I always thought it was very ironic, he liked to classify Poe as adolescent, as sort of a poet with lots of pimples about to burst. And yet he always had, he was forced to deal with Poe because the writers that he respected the most, the modern writers he respect the most, the French symbolists, all adored Poe.
JF: That was like (inaudible) and Rimbaud.
PG: Yes, and Flaubert. And I think that Beaudelaire translated Poe, his poetry and his short stories, and

actually the famous Cafe of The Black Cat came right out of a Poe story.
JF: I didn't know that.
PG: So that, if I'm correct. So I thought that was very ironic. And that also sums up me is when I first went to college, Eliot was venerated.
JF: I didn't read Eliot until much later.
PG: And I have a hard time with T. S. Eliot.
JF: I like Yeats, is one of my favorite poets.
PG: I like Yeats. I like Pound, Ezra Pound, just because he's so crazy and I love anybody who's that crazy.
JF: I like, much better than Pound, I like Odden (spelling?) Do you know his poem The Unknown Citizen?
PG: No.
JF: He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be one
Against whom there had been no formal complaint.

When there was war, he went. When there was peace, he was for peace.
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd.
For had anything been wrong, we certainly would have heard

PG: That's right. I liked Wallace Stevens a great deal.
JF: I know of him but I've never read his poetry.
PG: Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams I like a lot, still do. They were, they were probably the major poets who had a big effect on me personally, although I read widely. But I just, I read pretty voraciously.
JF: Well, we share that. I assume you're still a bibliophile.
PG: Yeah, but my reading habits have become very much nonfiction recently.
JF: Yeah, I read a lot of nonfiction too.
PG: I've become more and more fascinated by history. I read way too much theory when I was in school, to the point it's very hard for me now to read theory anymore. I have enjoyed doing this kind of stuff. I enjoy reading, I enjoy reading, I don't want to say straightforward, I don't like anything that's boring, written in any kind of boring plain prose. But I do like reading history. I sometimes think there's no greater story-telling than history. Faulkner, for example, is wonderful, tremendous story-telling.
JF: I haven't read most of Faulkner. I know I should have but I haven't.
PG: So, well let me, let me get . . .

JF: Well, we'll talk further.
PG: Let me, if I may, may I make some quick copies or do you want to get going?
JF: Yes, yes, there are a couple you can just keep without making a copy. I thought I had a copy of the Center of Special Problems brochure with me and I may have other there. I'll look for it while you're doing these. These are the ones I don't have copies of. Well, we have a lot to talk about in the future.
End of Interview

-C-

Joel Fort
Interviewed by Paul Gabriel
San Francisco, 1961 ---
CRH, SIR, Tenderloin, Night Ministry, Haight Ashbury
July 30, 1997
(This transcript is taken from a copy of a video tape)

Transcribed: Loren Basham

Joel Fort: Do you have a copy machine here?

Paul Gabriel: Yes.

JF: I found some interesting historical documents.

PG: It's nice of you to bring them. Thank you.

JF: In fact I would like to talk about them now. They would be appropriate.

PG: I interviewed Bill Beardemphel.

JF: Oh, yes.

PG: He brought a copy of the President's report of SIR from 1965. The very first year.

JF: It was very productive.

PG: We don't have a copy at our place. We have one from the, we have a second year report but not the first year. Fortunately we've been collecting now long enough that we are beginning to fill in a lot of holes. Although there are always holes in historic ___?___. Do you mind.

JF: I didn't you had already started.

PG: Sometimes there's incidental conversation.

JF: You're absolutely right. The thing I'm talking about is still over there in the briefcase. It was a statement I drafted in 1966 that was very prominent at that time. Signed by Evelyn Hooker and Joe Adams.

PG: Oh, okay.

JF: Along with me. It was circulated nationally.

PG: Was this during the Ten Days in August?

JF: It was....

PG: Was it a press release?

JF: It was issued to the press, yes. It was from the first national homophile meeting.

PG: Yes. And Bill Beardemphel got up with you in a room and helped negotiate it and it was the first public statement by reputable medical professionals that homosexuality should be taken off the illness list.

JF: I think that is correct. I think that's correct.

PG: And you have a copy of that?

JF: May I stand up for a moment

PG: Yes you may.

JF: I brought it with me it's just a matter of copying something. Here it is.

PG: Do you want to read it?

JF: Yes I would like be because I am proud of it because I think it for the first time put homosexuality in the proper context. It was called "Nineteen Sixty-Six Public Policy Statement on Homosexuality." Drafted by me and issued by Joe Adams, PhD, Evelyn Hooker, PhD and Joel Fort, M.D. at the National Homophile Conference in San Francisco.

> Homosexuals, like heterosexuals, should be treated as individual human beings not as a special group either by law or social agencies or employers. Laws governing sexual behavior should be reformed to deal only with clearly anti-social behavior, such as behavior involving violence or youth. The sexual behavior of individual adults by mutual consent in private should not be a matter of public concern. Some homosexuals like some heterosexuals are ill. Some homosexuals like some heterosexuals are preoccupied with sex as a way of life. But probably for a majority of adults their sexual orientation constitutes only one component of a much more complicated life style.

I believe that statement still stands 31 years later and if everybody understood and followed it we'd have very few problems.

PG: Quite a statement.

JF: Thank you.

PG: Quite a statement. I am excited because this is what I was just talking about. I had an interview with Bill Beardemphel. He told me about this and then you show up with this piece of paper.

JF: That is amazing. It took some searching for me to find it.

PG: But I knew about it. I knew....

JF: I'm glad he remembers it.

PG: Oh he remembers it very fondly. You know, all these years it's one of the very, it's the only detailed memory that he has retained of that national homophile conference here in San Francisco.

JF: There is an interesting parallel memory that I have. A much less significant one, but interesting. One, some years later, I don't how much later. It could have been the next year or 2 or 3 years after. I was consulting in Washington, DC with the National Student Association. And they were having at the same period the National Homophile Conference. I, naturally being interested and involved and concerned, chose to visit it and sit in on a meeting. Mel Wilder (sp?) was in charge excluded me from coming in because I was a heterosexual. So a discussion ensued in which I participated and several of my homosexual friends from San Francisco debated the issue and the result was that the group voted to allow me to come and I integrated the homophile conference. Is that amusing.

PG: That's such a late 1960s, early 1970s story. Don't you think?

JF: Yes. Every time I think of it since we are operating somewhat informally, I was once talking about this whole matter of how society should react to and deal with gay and lesbian people. In San Diego at a conference where I was one of the major speakers. A man hollered out from the rear of the audience, "what right do you have to talk about homosexuals when you are a heterosexual?" And I tried to deal with it rationally. I can't really remember how I dealt with it. But I ordinarily would have pointed out that you don't have to commit suicide to help suicidal people and you don't even have to be a woman to help deliver a baby in the case of obstetricians. And that people can have compassion and empathy and understanding even though they are somewhat different. When I got back to the City and a gay friend of mine, Martin Stoll, who in fact I had hired at the Center for Special Problems soon after I started it in 1965, he said if they ever say that again just say you love your fellow man. I don't think that answers it but it's a little bit amusing.

PG: Tell me, now that we've jumped in here, and that's fine, tell me what you remember about that 1966 conference. How did you get involved and what memories do you retain of it?

JF: Well I got involved by invitation because I had already in 1965 started the 1st public program in the country to work with homosexuals on an accepting and non-pathological basis within the context of working with any sexual problem that a person had, heterosexual, homosexual or otherwise. I had already been involved in public interviews and lectures and debates with people from the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, etc. So part of the answer is that I was involved with the meeting because of the things I had already done. Another part is by default, there were very few people that were interested in or willing to speak out about it. Particularly very few heterosexual people who had nothing to gain and everything to lose.

PG: Especially professionals.

JF: Yes, that's right. In those days it was, that's a good choice of words or concepts: it was unprofessional. It was not proper psychiatrically or medically to do other than categorize in a pathological way homosexuality. And it was also not accepted to speak out on public issues. You were supposed to be quiet and just operate in your private office and not make waves. So that, it did, of course, over a time produce a lot conflict for me.

PG: Could you tell the camera, we'll come back to that, could just tell the camera what brought those 3 individuals that wrote the statement together at that conference?

JF: Well, Evelyn, I remember mostly Evelyn Hooker. She of course was involved because she had done some of the most, even then, I believe some of the most important research on the subject. And was probably the best know researcher on the subject. She was a clinical psychologist as I recall. Teaching and researching at UCLA. The third person, Joe Adams, I only knew slightly. My recollection is he too was a psychologist and was affiliated with Esalen and I don't know whether he published anything on the subject or how he became involved. But I think being on our panel and we were the main resource people for at least part of that meeting. I can't recall if somebody asked us to draft the statement or a statement or how that came about, but we I think were tied together by being on a panel. And I drafted the statement, as I said, and it was very quickly accepted by the other 2 and issued as our joint statement.

PG: What was your, can you remember, I know sometimes it is hard to remember details. Can you remember the feeling of being at that conference? The feeling not only of yourself but also the people there.

JF: Only a little bit, you are correct, it is hard to remember. Not so much because of the passage of years, but because I've had a very intense life with a tremendous number of experiences, both in terms of working with sexuality and also with other problems that I chose to specialize in. Mainly crime and violence, drug abuse within which I always included alcohol and tobacco, and social reform in general. So many other events impinge on remembering exactly about this. But my recollection is that it was not heavily attended. I certainly don't remember how many were there but it was not overwhelming numbers. There must have been somewhere between a 100 and 200

people. I think there was a sense of excitement and of accomplishment. People were glad to be there. Some uncertainty, questioning, anxiety, but in general a positive feeling in the general openness to discussion and hopefulness about the future. That's about all I can remember about it.

PG: That's okay. Because we have a limited amount of time today. I want to backup even further. Although this is a nice starting point here, because this is sort of you're debutant debut in the homophile movement in a way. I want to back up, even before the Center for Special Problems. You said something about alcohol and tobacco which I thought was interesting. So my question is, I talking to a M.D. PhD, and I said I was going to be interviewing you and I said my impression was and I could be wrong, my impression was that you initially got started in drug rehab. And he was saying, is he a psychologist, is he a psychiatrist, and I said I don't think so. I know he is an M.D. And he said, I wonder if he is an internist. And so I am wondering, what was your initial medical specialization and something, my feeling is that a lot of things in American society across the board were undergoing a lot of massive re-evaluation starting in the mid to late '50s and then sort of reaching fruition in the '60s.

JF: You're right.

PG: And I want to know, as you the medical professional, how do you see that, and how did you participate in that? Is that too bad of a question?

JF: Let me attempt it and then you feel free to ask me some follow up questions.

PG: Was it clear to you?

JF: Yes I think so. Without going into too much detail or too much history. In part it began with my being a gifted, questioning child who was curious about a great many things and began asking questions about things that most other people accepted as givens. I finished high school and went off to college at 15 and majored in philosophy and English. I had bohemian interests in my teens, interested in the theater and music and to some extent other arts and very early on I had exposure to a diversity of people. You mind if I look at you instead of the camera. I find it artificial to....

PG: That's why I sat next to the camera. Because what it does, you basically face the camera and actually its more natural in the image when you are a little off center of the camera.

JF: Oh good.

PG: Just like in the picture of ....

JF: Because you had said before, please look at the camera. But that means looking away from you.

PG: I was getting you set up.

JF: Okay.

PG: But think of a portrait painting, its always a bit unnerving when you have a direct gaze. We tend to prefer when a person's a little bit off.

JF: I agree with you. That's very thoughtful. That's not usually the way they do it in video-land. Because I've done some TV series as part of my life. A public affairs series. And they're not as imaginative. Anyway, to return to the story. Perhaps because of my early interest in philosophy and the arts and my questioning of tradition, I never had any negative feelings or adverse reactions even from the beginning when I had contact with homosexuals. And by the way, I will continue if you don't mind to use the word homosexual because I see nothing wrong with the word. That was one of the things I stressed in the beginning. That should be as equal as the word heterosexual and I am opposed to using euphemisms when you can use direct honest language. So, I early on met and was on friendly terms with homosexuals and particularly in the arts. And on a couple of occasions had overtures made to my by homosexuals. I didn't think much of it at the time, I mean I didn't think much of the fact that I had no negative reaction to it. In fact I remember one occasion particularly where I was sharing a room, it was either in Paris or New York, with a painter. He politely made overtures to me and I rejected them and we still spent the night in the same room and continued on a friendly basis. Now that was long before I had any kind of professional training. Of course if I'd had professional training my attitudes might have been more negative rather than positive. But what I am pointing out is that somehow I never had negative feelings. And that's true also racially and with other kinds of minorities in the society. So I already had a foundation for what became an important part of my life. To work, as I now put it, to help everybody to become a credit to their race, namely the human race. The only race that matters. And to try to bridge the fragmentations. Instead of dividing people up, labeling them, pathologizing them, to try to stress health and independence and commonality. I am not saying that was all articulated in my youth, I'm saying I believe that the foundation for what I later developed for my philosophy and became incorporated in my work was already there in my teens. And then I went on, I got an academic fellowship after I finish college at 18, an academic fellowship for a PhD program at the University of Chicago in clinical psychology. I finished all the course work and languages for that but then I went back to medical school at Ohio State and finished that. Not anticipating my future part time career as a university professor where the actual PhD degree is so important, I never bothered to get the degree, I figured one advance degree, the MD, was enough. And then I went on to do a regular internship and to take full training in psychiatry. But I took, I was already a critic of conventional psychiatry for other reasons. For example, I always thought Freudian theory was very unscientific and over generalized. And I managed to find a residency where I could learn a lot of other things beside psychiatry, namely the federal, the US Public Health Service Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky. Which was the original federal facility for treating narcotic addiction. It was the most, not only the pioneering one, but the most famous at that time in the mid-50s. And there, not only did I get a remarkably comprehensive experience in drugs and narcotic addiction, but also I

learned about the almost always concurring use of other drugs and I learned something that I later became a pioneer in doing and that is that alcohol and tobacco were drugs and were the most destructive drugs and it was totally unethical to express concern and hypocritical, concern about marijuana and heroin and cocaine and not worry about the deaths and disabilities from alcohol and tobacco. So that became part of my later, what I called the public health approach to drugs and sex and violence and other things. But to finish that part of the story, there at Lexington I also learned a lot about homosexuality. There was a separate wing of the, they took both prisoners and volunteers. There was a separate area where homosexuals were housed. And there were a great many women. They took both men and women which was a unique aspect of it. And many women had been prostitutes to support their habit. So I was able over the two years I was there to learn a great deal about prostitution, homosexuality, drug abuse and traditional psychiatry. And I took that and I built a foundation which I then integrated with my other knowledge and life experience into an interdisciplinary profession. Which for want of a better term I called "societitry," instead of psychiatry. I have never written that, I usually don't use the word, but what I meant it to mean was an emphasis on the social causes and effects of problems, not to the exclusion of psychology or psychiatry, but more importantly than the psychological aspects. I created an interdisciplinary approach to problems that I though needed special attention and were being very poorly and destructively dealt with by society, namely sexual problems, drug problems, crime and violence, suicide. And out of that background, which by that time I also included university teaching in criminology at UC Berkeley, I created the Center for Special Problems in1965.

PG: Through the public health....

JF: Through the San Francisco Health Department. I had returned from 13 months working for the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland as a social affairs officer. And one of the jobs offered me as I looked around for the most creative and fulfilling thing I could do.... I had long before, parenthetically, long before I had rejected the model of commercialization of private practice as the goal of medicine and was already evolving what you could call public practices as opposed to private practice. One of the jobs offered me by the Health Department director was directing a sort of moribund alcoholism clinic here in the City, known as the adult guidance center. I thought about what needed to be done based on the experience and concerns that I have already summarized and I wrote out a vision of the program that I thought was necessary for this City and for the country, major cities in the country. I spelled out the problems which I have already summarized and I stressed the variety of services that should be made available and I called them "special problems" and a special approach that was needed, including non-ghettoization where people would be dealt with as people in one facility and not compartmentalized, divided up, and also because problems overlap. That these things in many cases went together. Like, as you were alluding to earlier, prostitution and drug taking.

PG: Well, and also sexuality. Especially with runaway youth.

JF: Certainly, certainly. Anyway, they accepted my proposal and I accepted the job. And I then had one of the most exciting periods of my life. I later came to think of it as social artistry. I think it's a more important art form that is creating new nonprofit facilities to help human beings with serious problems. Certainly as important and wrapping a bridge in cloth or other things that have gotten a lot of attention as art. Whether it's as important as a Rembrandt or Jackson Pollack is for others to decide but my point is it should be considered an art form to create innovative institutions to help solve human problems and I was able to do that then ___?___ and it was extremely popular. People flocked into it, including the new group that was honored by the media as being labeled the hippies. This was the only program that worked constructively with the hippies. And just as it was being widely accepted by SIR and the Mattachine Society and Daughters of Bilitis for its work with homosexuality it was widely accepted by the hippies for that humanistic attitude at a time when the City actually declared war on the hippie. Which your research must have brought to your attention. And they weren't far from declaring war on the homosexual and war on other despised groups of people, including some of the same people who fall all over themselves now to gain the political support of what's called the gay and lesbian community. So there were a lot of ironies and a lot of hypocrisy here. In any case, I brought in new staff, hired individuals who had backgrounds that had never been represented on a staff before, including the first acknowledged male homosexual ever, as far as I know, was hired by the City. And he later fulfilled another one of my ideals, which was that you don't have to have an MD in order to be a leader of a program. The tradition had been that all clinics and all hospitals had to be administered by an MD. So he with MSW, years later, became director of the Center for Special Problems. I brought in people from racial minorities, youthful ages as well as the older staff that worked there. Trained people to relate to problems they hadn't worked with before, introduced new techniques, for example antibuse treatment for the alcoholic, counseling and hormone therapy for the transsexual which the program also began serving. I brought in the most learned authority on that subject, Dr. Harry Benjamin, with whom I became friendly and we remained friends until his death. He helped train my staff to work with the transsexual and I trained the internist on the staff to administer hormones. Developed a liaison with the, what was then called the VD clinic, a liaison with Stanford....

PG: Check 33, 33 Hunt Street. (??)

JF: That's where it was, I had forgotten. Exactly, you're done your research well.

PG: That was SIR's campaign. Check 33.

JF: I remember that now but I had forgotten it.

PG: Elliott Blackstone said he also had, sorry to interrupt, but at the poverty center headquarters which were down also on 6th Street and they moved to 3rd Street. They were on 6th Street for about a year. And they had matchbooks, and on them he said, "take the trip to stop the drip."

JF: I don't remember that at all.

PG: He very proud of that, he remembered that slogan.

JF: I've heard worse.

PG: You said you also worked with Stanford.

JF: I didn't work with them. I developed a liaison with their plastic surgery department in order to make referrals. I had no connection myself. But went down there invited them, their people. I think his name was Dr. Laub, L-A-U-B, who did the plastic surgery. But mainly worked out a special program that involved counseling, feminization where appropriate, masculinization where appropriate, cosmetics where appropriate, that type of thing and hormone therapy. Where the person was committed to the change and had gone through a period of extensive screening. In any case, the program was serving individuals and groups that had never had any kind of human acceptance and often had never had any kind of help available to them. The case load was tripled without increasing the budget. The landlord was persuaded to let us use more space without paying more rent for it because it was vacant space in the building which was on Van Ness Avenue. I developed 2 branches, one of which was the jail rehabilitation branch where every inmate at the jail that had any problems relating to our specialties could fill out a form and I sent staff out there 2 days a week to provide services to them. And then a continuity of care when they got out of jail. This was quite pioneering at the time and unfortunately there still are very few rehabilitative services in jails or prisons and certainly none that provide for follow-up out patient care when you get out. The other branch also has an interesting history. I called that the acute drug abuse screening branch which I set up in San Francisco General Hospital. That dealt with treatment of acute withdrawal, bad trips, that type of thing. So many people from the Haight Ashbury went out there for both services and then would come to the main out-patient clinic for follow-up services. And the program was well accepted by the Diggers, they were the most creative group among the hippies. We worked with the poor and the middle class. I brought in all kinds of volunteers, like AA was having meetings there, Synanon for the only time in its career sent some of its people into the Center for Special Problems to run Synanon groups. I had art therapy, poetry, the things that are now called new age, holistic. It was all part of what I called a smorgasbord approach, that was my word, for how I felt these problems needed to be treated. I used that metaphor to mean first, that you make available every traditional and innovative technique of help that you can. But you use 2, 3 or more in combination and that you give freedom of choice to the person so that they were involved after you explained to them in understandable language what these different treatment methods were and how they worked and so on, they made the joint decision with you about that. I still feel all these years later that's the right approach to drug problems and to other kinds of problems. Certainly the freedom of choice and the not relying on any one method. Because no one method helps more than a minority of those who have a problem. And no one method is acceptable to everybody even if they were, theoretically, of help to everybody. If you force people into a choice between staying with Synanon all your life or die on the streets as they used to tell people or go

on Methadone maintenance all your life or stay a heroine addict. I think you're doing them a disservice. You should seek to make them independent autonomous people with social responsibility. Whether it's a sexual problem, a drug problem or something else.

PG: I'm curious. Did your center become involved with runaway youth?

JF: Some, but that was more a personal involvement of mine. I was on the board of Huckleberries for Runaways in its early years.

PG: Could you tell me, when exactly was Huckleberry House started?

JF: I don't think I can tell you exactly, but I can tell you how to find out.

PG: Your guestimate would be mid-'60s?

JF: Oh, that, yes. That part I can tell you was either '66 or '67.

PG: So it came....

JF: I thought you wanted an exact month.

PG: No. It came a little bit.... Tell me how to track that like that. It came after Hospitality House.

JF: I am not sure of that. I remember Hospitality House, but I don't know the chronology. That certainly came about the mid'60s also.

PG: Okay, I've been following this because Hospitality House was very innovative, especially with runaway youth.

JF: Yes it was.

PG: Because the reason that I ask you is that you were a public agency.

JF: That's right.

PG: And everybody I've talked to including police officers have said that the problem of runaway youth became rampant in San Francisco in the mid-'60s to the late '60s because of the Summer of Love and it just was a magnet. There was already runaway youth anyway, but it became almost a crisis proportions. And the problem with a lot of these people were not, like I've got ___?___, they were not sort of your depression era youth who were usually 18 or over and looking for work and kind of hobos. These were kids who just dropped out of middle class.

JF: That's correct.

PG: Sometimes even went and picked up money from their families.

JF: That's correct.

PG: And a lot of these kids were legally juveniles.

JF: That's correct.

PG: And that was very dangerous, legally, except for anyone except for the juvenile youth authorities having anything to do with them. Is my painting of the situation sound correct.

JF: That sounds correct, but I don't remember those working with them being afraid of that being true. I think Huckleberries actually was more involved. I don't know, I can't say that, as much involved as Hospitality House was. It was started by a minister named Larry Beggs, who then invited a number of people who worked on problems that these young people had and/or worked with youth to serve on the board and he hired a number of very good staff members, I recall, mostly youthful. It was out in the avenues and the best way for you to track it is to look up at the library the book he wrote about it, which I believe is called *Huckleberries*. But he also, if he is still alive, is in Marin County living on a farm. He had a reunion of the people who had been associated with him in Huckleberries about, I'd say about 10 years ago. That would have been, it was probably about the 20th reunion.

PG: Eighty-seven?

JF: My guess is that was about '87, yes I think that was about when it was. So he, you can find him.

PG: Cause the Coleman Foundation which produced Market Street Youth Center, Diamond House, Green House, Diamond Street House, these came about '74, '75.

JF: Yeah.

PG: So that I know that Huckleberry House was very innovative because for a long, long time it was the only, it was the only overnight, it was the only overnight place for runaway youth in San Francisco other than Juvenile Youth Authority.

JF: I think that's so.

PG: Because even Hospitality House was not overnight. It was just a crash place.

JF: That's correct.

PG: It was a coffee house.

JF: It was come and go, they weren't actually patients, but it was more like an out patient than a live in facility, that's right.

PG: And Huckleberry House, also people have told me that it was a maximum of 48 hours and under the proviso that you would attempt, if you had not attempted to contact your parents in that time and tried to initiate some kind of reconciliation or dialog then you would lose your housing privilege.

JF: I don't remember the 48 hours. My recollection is that they were able to make exceptions to that if that was indeed the policy. But the other part I do remember clearly they did seek to have everybody contact their parents. I mean everybody under age. Yeah.

PG: I heard that they were raided. For abetting the delinquency of minors.

JF: I don't remember that. But that's very possible because that was the period when the City fathers were dominated by a business, very conservative mentality. And the City was mainly run by a man who became very vindictive toward me because of my, the work I was doing with sexual problems, drug users, hippies, etc. His name was Thomas Mellon and he held the position, the most powerful position in the City, called Chief Administrative Officer. Well, of course the mayor was the one that was most often portrayed by the media as running the City. Before they reformed the charter just a few years ago, these were separate autonomous positions. So there were 3 branches to City government, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors. And the Health Department came solely under the Chief Administrative Officer. The Mayor had no authority over it. So the Chief Administrative Officer and his flunky, the Health Director named Socks.

PG: Elliott Socks?

JF: No. Ellis.

PG: Ellis.

JF: I think it was Ellis. I know Herb Caen called him LSD. LSD Socks.

PG: I just remembered because he was sent as the mayor's representative to that first homophile conference in 1966.

JF: I don't remember his being there. If he was sent he didn't play any significant role.

PG: Phyllis and Del laughed about that. Because they said it was the Director of the Public Health Department, but he was from the mayor. That was very typical of concepts at that time, the mayor represented to a homophile conference would be someone who deals with it as a public health issue.

JF: That's right. But the more important thing is to understand the power structure and that Mellon really ran the Health Department and much of the City government and represented the most conservative elements of the City. And he is the one that instituted the war on the hippie. And less formally, the war on other groups that he and his associates thought were too controversial. Were giving the City a bad image, needed to be suppressed and probably runaway youth would be one of those. That' why I brought that up because you were asking about raiding Huckleberries. And although I have no specific memory of that, its entirely consistent with the philosophy of the Health Director and of the Chief Administrative Officer. And, for that matter, the Mental Health Director, who worked closely with both of those two and was totally subservient to both of them, if not obsequious.

PG: How did you then, on an individual basis, how did you get involved in problems of runaway youth in San Francisco?

JF: Only because Larry Beggs invited, asked for my advice at times because of my experience and involvement with the problems areas that many of the young people were showing, that is sexual problems, drug problems, as you alluded to earlier. And then because he later asked me to serve on their board and I would visit the program periodically and regularly participate in their board meetings. I can't remember the intervals of them now, but they were fairly regular.

PG: What do you remember of Huckleberry House, itself? How big was it? What was its capacity? What do you remember about how it was run? How many staff were there?

JF: Only a little. Remember I was not directly involved in the hiring or training or the services there. I believe it was in a medium sized Victorian type house that it had 6 to 10 staff members. That it was a very busy place. It seems to me somewhat vaguely that no more than a couple of dozen at the most young people there at any given time. It was not a vast dormitory type thing. Like a homeless shelter. But they were flexible and innovative and I believe people would sometimes be allowed to crash there. But if you are asking, as I thought you were, about people who stayed on for some period of time for services, getting social services and health services, I think it was no more than a couple of dozen at a time.

PG: That's what other people told me. And to your knowledge is something like the Hospitality House and Huckleberry House, which started say about '66, '67 in San Francisco, are those, is it fair to say that nationally those are very pioneering...?

JF: Yes.

PG: ...Organizations?

JF: Yes indeed. I think they were. I know less about Hospitality House, but my recollection of it was that it was a pioneering thing. There were a number of pioneering things. My Center for Special Problems was, Huckleberries was, the Haight Ashbury

Switchboard run by a very creative man named Al Rinker, that was a pioneering thing. SIR was a pioneering organization. I think very effective.

PG: Suicide Prevention hotline? Were you involved with that. That started in the City too.

JF: I was involved, but I need to clarify that. Not in the sense that I had anything to do with starting that. But I was involved in that that was one of the groups that I developed a liaison with and we became from the outset of my Center for Special Problems the main place that they were refer people to for services after dealing with the acute crisis on the telephone. And I was involved in some ways like I was at Huckleberries in that I would talk periodically with the director of that program. I think her name was Hazel something. She would call upon me for one thing or another and we would maintain liaison.

PG: So, if I understand you correctly, the Center for Special Problems basically could be divided into work that could be divided 2 ways, either other agencies referred people to the center itself where services were directly provided or people came to the center and then some services were provided there and then other services you would refer them to other places, for example to Stanford surgical.

JF: No, that's not a ....

PG: That's not a fair statement?

JF: No, it's a little bit misleading. Let me see if I can summarize it. I believe I've got with me one of the original descriptions in fact. Nobody knows as much about it as I do because I created it.

PG: That's right.

JF: I mean, the whole idea of it was mine. So to some creative project of yours, you know more about it than anybody else.

PG: That's why I'm checking. As I was listening to you, I was beginning to realize that I was developing a conception.

JF: Yes.

PG: And I wanted to double check with you.

JF: It wasn't that your summary was completely off base but let me bluntly put it back in context. First of all, it was entirely an outpatient program. One way of describing it is in terms of the problems it dealt with, which I have already done. I won't repeat. There were a couple of others like obesity or over eating and some other things that I included, but the mainstays were the most frequent ones that we worked on were the ones I

described. A second way of describing it would be in terms of the broad range of services that were provided and by the unusual blending of paid staff and volunteers which I involved in the program which enabled me to bring in a lot of people that couldn't be hired under City civil service regulations. I has a lot of new blood that you just can't get in when you wait for the routine hiring practices. Another way of describing it is that had two branches, one of which dealt with inmates so they were in an institution at the time, the jail. And the other which was also an outpatient facility where they came for acute drug treatment. That program later, the guy I trained and hired, later after the City tried to close down the Center for Special Problems, and asked me to resign and I refused and they then fired me, that acute drug abuse treating unit, treatment unit, became the Haight Ashbury Clinic.

PG: Oh, the Free Clinic?

JF: Yeah. There never would have been a Haight Ashbury Clinic had the program not, they did close down these two branches. But I managed to save the main office, the Center for Special Problems by refusing to resign. There were plans, part of their war, on these groups and getting rid of controversy and getting everything back in place was to close down the Center completely. The media attention to their attempt and later successful dismissal of me, by the way was on the informal charge of being too independent.

PG: What year was that?

JF: Nineteen-sixty-seven.

PG: ___?___

JF: I understand. That sounds like somebody is putting a charge in more comfortable more positive language. But one of the unbelievable things about it was that was the actual charge. Of being fired for being too independent. And then there were sub-charges that I was involved with problems that I shouldn't have been involved with there and had obligated the City by increasing the caseload to that extent and getting extra space and that I got a million dollar grant from the poverty center in the Mission district from the federal government. It's almost unbelievable. But as you know in a bureaucracy they can do anything they want to and usually get away with it. I almost won that battle too. I'd won many and lost a few. But that had to be approved by the Civil Service Commission, which had 3 members and I lost that by a 2 to 1 vote. Things would have been very different otherwise. But, in any case, I'm returning to your question about how to describe what the program did. So people came to it voluntarily, they'd heard about it by word of mouth or because it had been written up. Many came by referral from SIR, Mattachine, Daughters of Bilitis, from the Haight Ashbury Switchboard or the Diggers directly, from the Suicide Prevention center. So as many came on their own having heard about is as came by referral. I think that answers your question.

PG: Thank you. Is your wife's name Maria?

JF: That's right.

PG: And Maria, if I am not mistaken. I have intelligence everywhere. You're wife had a position in the upper echelons of the poverty program in San Francisco?

JF: That's correct. Not in San Francisco. She has worked for decades with the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity. That funds, evaluates, trains and so forth. And part of her responsibility for many years has been and was, because there was an interruption, the San Francisco anti-poverty program. Her primary responsibility in recent years has been the Head Start program, to which she is very committed. But I also had a separate relationship with the local anti-poverty program. Don Lucas and a man named Calvin Colt....

PG: Who started it, came out of the Mission anti-poverty program.

JF: That's right. And after I recovered from the terrible loss I had experienced, because I was very committed and very involved in the Center for Special Problems. As you might imagine. To almost have the program closed down and to lose my own creative involvement in it, including all the staff that I had recruited and was working closely with and trying to evolve a greater sense of community and cooperation, which is part of my ideal bureaucracy, which I later developed to its fullest extent when I created Fort Help. But within a year of my of this terrible blow, I was still fighting it in the courts which I lost. I develop another project that was funded through the Central City Anti-Poverty program. And that was a mobile health and social welfare unit, known simply as the Mobile Help Unit. And I converted a Dodge van into, built up the roof so people could stand up in it and put in a sink and a mobile telephone and trained staff and volunteered my own services. And on a scheduled basis that we would announce in advance with posters and so forth, we would go into different poverty neighborhoods taking comprehensive services working again with sex and drugs and welfare and other kinds of social problems that the Center for Special Problems did had not dealt with. And that's where I had my main contact with Don and Cal Colt. But Don I had first met through the Mattachine Society because they too were very supportive of what I was doing at the Center for Special Problems.

PG: Okay. First an aside...

JF: Certainly.

PG: The aside is I have been doing its called a life history of Don Lucas.

JF: Oh, for this project?

PG: Yeah. But this project is also just for our archives. He's a very important person because his experience is so long. Its very vertical and its very horizontal.

JF: That's interesting. I don't know of his work before I met him as a leader of the Mattachine Society.

PG: Well he had been involved in the Mattachine Society very early.

JF: I see.

PG: And then he got involved in all these new services here in Central City.

JF: Certainly.

PG: And other places.

JF: And he did a good job.

PG: So he said when I asked him, we were talking for about 3 or 4 hours of video tape, he had been talking about Central City and I asked him of what he was most proud. And he named only 2 things and one was the mobile unit.

JF: Oh, that makes me feel good. Thank you for telling me. Did he tell you what happened to that unit. That was also....

PG: Yeah.

JF: It was a minor tragedy, but a tragedy. Unbelievable story ....

PG: Tell me.

JF: Then you tell me what he said. Unbelievable story of bureaucracy. A new administration took over. And they decided just to use the van to transport people back and forth, just drop the whole project. The whole creative service concept was just overnight dropped because of an arbitrary bureaucratic decision. Just use the van to move people around. Well, what was Don's memory?

PG: Don's memory is this, its similar. He said, if I remember him correctly, because I have been doing a lot of interviewing so sometimes my memory gets a little bit skewed. But if I remember correctly he said that one of the things they said was that van is just too wide for the streets. Its blocking traffic it's a nuisance.

JF: Isn't that interesting. I don't remember that at all. And of course, it wasn't too wide. It was not expanded in width, it was expanded in height. It was the conventional width of all Dodge vans.

PG: He was very excited about it. About what it did.

JF: Yes. It was very fine. One of the most economical vans. I got all kinds of people to volunteer services. Sometimes I would take lawyers out. I later did that at Fort Help too. I had lawyers come in 1 night a week to give free legal services and other things. I kept building on the creative things that we had been able to do at the Center for Special Problems. Out of government you can do a lot more than you can in government. And the poverty program was sort of in between. I mean Cal Colt and Don Lucas allowed for a lot more innovation than you can do in a conventional government program.

PG: Yeah, especially when the program is run by a homophile activist.

JF: That's right. That's right.

PG: What I was going to ask you, is to.... Once again I am going to throw something out and you reality check me.

JF: Okay. Keeping mind, if I may say so the fact that any of us after decades have some distortions of memory.

PG: That's okay, I am assembling a Frankenstein monster here.

JF: Then don't worry about it.

PG: You had the Center for Special Problems for a couple of years. You did something very innovative there. And then the City squashed it at that site and in response, you created a mobile Center for Special Problems. Went out into the city and found the people directly where they were and provided the services. And what I want to ask you is, is that movement a fair, is it fair to say that was typical of what was happening to a lot of social services in the '60s was that it went from I have to go find you in your building to we will come out and look for you, we will go to the jail, we will go to your house, we will....?

JF: That's a very thoughtful question and my answer to it is no. First of all, its kind of you, and its partially correct. I haven't thought of it before. It was indeed taking part of the Center for Special Problems to neighborhoods. But it was very, very small compared to what could be done with a large staff, with a diversity of staff and a much greater space and so forth than we had at the fixed place at 2107 Van Ness Avenue, the Center for Special Problems. So in a sense I took some of it, some of the problem areas, added a few social problems areas like welfare, legal services, that only a little bit had been done with at the Center for Special Problems. But is was small compared, also in terms of hours, it was small. Because we were open at least 2 nights a week as I recall, maybe more at the Center for Special Problems.

PG: When you say....

JF: And most of the day.

PG: When you say nights, that means all night?

JF: Oh, I'm sorry, evenings. Night hours as its usually spoken of, but not, I would say it was until 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock or something like that. And not every night. But even then I was trying to do what I later did more fully at Fort Help. Which was to make a program more accessible to people. Most programs are organized.... See I had defined bureaucracy as a social problem itself, by the early '60. I wrote a paper called ....

PG: It's a pathology. [Laughter]

JF: It is. I wrote a paper. (Some garbled material with both talking.) But what you're doing about half the time is also representative of how we deal with it, we laugh at it. So as we should, I mean its absurd. But I tried to go beyond that by the paper I wrote, if I can think of the title, says it better. "Bureaucracy as a Social Problem and the Organization Man/Woman as Deviant." And most programs are organized for the convenience of their staff not for the convenience of the people that they're supposed to work with. I tried to reverse that. I accomplished a lot toward reversing it there and I took giant steps toward reversing it when I created Fort Help. Which we'll go into another time. But let me tell you another vignette of bureaucracy that's interesting that your question recalls to mind. One of the things I tried to do to make it accessible was to create an easily remembered phone number. This was a minor piece of pioneering 32 years ago. The number was 864-HELP. So people could easily, that HELP word is now built into dozens of line across the country. But more importantly, I realized that people in order to find out where to get help for any of these problems that I had set the place up to deal with, had to know to look under San Francisco City and County Government, subcategory Department of Public Health, subcategory Community Mental Health Services, subcategory Center for Special Problems. I therefore requested permission verbally and later in writing, as I was required to do, to be able to put a separate listing in both the white and yellow pages, Center for Special Problems, with or without also mentioning some of the problems we dealt with. That went all the way up to the Chief Administrative Officer and was turned down on the basis that its not proper for a city program to advertise. Therefore it was relatively inaccessible to a lot of people. That's a typical example of the way bureaucracy works. But the hours also. Many people can only come at night or on weekends. Most programs aren't available then. And so on and so forth.

PG: Well, I see a lot of the problems you were dealing with are going to be problems of people who don't have 9 to 5 schedules.

JF: That's right. You have to be flexible. Another innovation I later developed was to get away from this ridiculous fixed time period, which is mostly a lie. Where therapists say my fee is X dollars per hour and the hour is either 45 minutes or 50 minutes. If we have truth in therapy the fee would be X dollars for 45 minutes. But the main point I'm making is that some people only need 10 minutes and or are only willing to sit still or even stand up as the case may be for 10 minutes, whereas other people need and hour and a half or 2 hours if they're having an acute crisis. And I built that into Fort Help later.

this flexibility. Where you gave time according to what is needed and you could do it over a cup of coffee, a ping-pong table or in a formal office. I think that kind of flexibility is very important in reaching people.

PG: Okay, we've gone an hour. Why don't I keep you about 10 minutes.

JF: That'll be fine.

PG: Is that alright?

JF: Yes.

PG: Thank you.

JF: Certainly.

PG: I just wanted to check in.

JF: I appreciate it.

PG: I have to keep adding more and more.

JF: Well your questions are very good Paul. You are obviously a very thoughtful person and your research is well....

PG: This if fun for me. I love talking to people.

JF: Good.

PG: Because I was also an English major who loved philosophy.

JF: How interesting.

PG: So that's what I wanted to ask you in the last 10 minutes, if you don't mind.

JF: Sure.

PG: You said that you went to school and you studied English and philosophy. I would love to know what kinds of literature most attracted you and what philosophy you were most interested in.

JF: Okay, do you mind if I give a little preface to that?

PG: Not at all.

JF: I had been an early reader and my main escape as a child was reading. Sometimes under the covers with a flashlight at night. After I was not supposed to be reading any more. Did you do that too?

PG: My grandmother did that. Because she's a girl and she's not supposed to read.

JF: Of course not.

PG: And she read under the covers.

JF: Yes. Or slaves, slaves weren't supposed to read or write either.

PG: And her husband refused to let her read and since they shared a bedroom together that broke her of the habit of reading. Isn't that awful?

JF: That's terrible.

PG: But go on, I'm sorry.

JF: Its primitive.

PG: Yes.

JF: So I read widely. Comic books, science fiction, James Fennimore Cooper, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Heidi Boyce, *Nancy Drew*, the *Bobsie Twins*, Tom Swift, *Boy's Life*, the Boy Scout magazine and things like that. I think *Collier's* was another magazine I read at that time. Extending as I aged into more varied and more interesting reading. But now to get to your question, the things I most liked in literature in college were poetry, romantic and classical poetry.

PG: Could you name some authors?

JF: Keats, Shelly, Byron, Christina Rosette, let's see. I'm not sure of this, it could have been later, but we Reed Blake at some point. Tennyson, Shakespeare, particularly Hamlet. That's some of the more complex plays. I don't think I read ___?___ at that time. Those are the ones that come to mind now, I am sure there were others.

PG: Do you know what attracted you to the British romantics? Most of those you named were really 19th century.

JF: That's right. My first level answer to it is that it probably came, or tried to be to it was the love that my teacher had for them in exposing me to them. And that reminds me of an unusual anecdote also. That teacher, whose name was Mr. Beek had only a bachelor's degree and was one of the most influential teachers in terms of encouraging my love of literature. And he would never be allowed to teach in a modern university where you have to have a PhD, you can't even teach if you have a master's degree in

many of these places. Which I have always thought is very stupid. But I think back and when I was exposed to it, that still leaves a question: why did I like it so much. I think the beauty of language, even before that, I'd say I was a beginning wordsmith. And the power of the English language and the variety of it, long before I knew what grammar and syntax and rhyming and things like that were. I just had a feeling for it. It moved me. Or it was compelling, it was interesting. I like modern poetry too but you asked me what it was at that time.

PG: How about philosophy?

JF: In philosophy, my interests were logic and esthetics. And again, particularly in esthetics I had a very knowledgeable and committed professor whose name was Eliseo Vivas. (sp?) He first exposed me to Cézanne and other expressionist painters.

PG: How about logic? Who did you study in logic?

JF: A professor name Hinshaw. Virgil Hinshaw, he was a very good teacher of logic. They both had high standards. Hinshaw unfortunately had a schizophrenic breakdown and I happened to be present when it became manifest during a lecture he was giving at one of our classes. It was an unforgettable experience.

PG: Traumatic.

JF: Yeah. I still remember he began talking totally out of context about Cesar Romero in a movie called *One Thousand BC*, if I remember the title correctly.

PG: Just went off.

JF: I remember him talking in some delusional way about the significance of that movie.

PG: Okay.

JF: Who are your favorite or who were they in an earlier stage of your life?

PG: When I was in school, who were my favorite poets? When I was in high school I like Edgar Alan Poe a lot.

JF: I like Poe too.

PG: I read a lot of Poe. T. S. Elliot would say that was not a surprise because he always liked to, I thought it was ironic. He liked to classify Poe as adolescent, as sort of Poe that writes of temples about the burst, and yet he always, he was forced to deal with Poe because the writers he respected the most, the modern writers he respected the most, the sex symbolists, ___?___....

JF: You're saying ___?___?

PG: Yeah, and they, and Robert and I think Baudelaire translated Poe. His poetry into short stories and actually the famous Café the Black Cat came right out of a Poe story.

JF: I didn't know that.

PG: So, if I am correct. So I was very erratic. And that also sums up for me when I first went to college, Elliott was venerated....

JF: I didn't read Elliott until much later.

PG: I have a hard time with T. S. Elliott.

JF: Yeats is one of my favorite poets.

PG: I like Yeats. I like Pound, Ezra Pound because he is so crazy, I love anybody whose that crazy.

JF: Much better than Pound, I like Auden. Do you know his poem The Unknown Citizen?

PG: No.

JF: "He was found by the bureau of statistics to be one against whom there had been no formal complaint. When there was war he went, when there was peace he was for peace, was he free was he happy. The question is absurd for anything been wrong we certainly would have heard."

PG: I liked Walter Stevens a great deal.

JF: I have heard of him but I have never read his poetry.

PG: Walter Stevens, Curtis Williams I liked a lot. Still do. They're probably the major poets that have a big effect on me personally. I read widely. I read pretty voraciously.

JF: I'm sure of that. I assume you still do.

PG: Yes. But my reading habits have become very much nonfiction recently.

JF: I read a lot of nonfiction too.

PG: I become more and more fascinated by history. I read way too much theory when I was in school to the point its very hard for me now to read theory any more. I had enjoyed this kind of stuff. I enjoyed reading. I don't want to say straight forward. I like using slang, prose. But I do like reading history. Sometimes I think there is no greater story telling.

JF: Than history.

PG: There Faulkner for example. Tremendous story telling.

JF: I haven't read most of Faulkner. I know I should have but I haven't.

PG: Let me if I may, may I make some quick copies.

JF: Yes, there are a couple you can just keep without making a copy. I thought I had a copy of the Center for Special Problems brochure with me and I may have over there I'll look for it while you're doing these. These are the ones I don't have copies of. Well we have a lot to talk about in the future.

[End of tape]