Regional Oral History Office
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Tom DeVries:
Free Speech Movement Oral History Project:

Interviews conducted by
Lisa Rubens
in 1999

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[Interview 1: May 9, 1999]

[Tape 1]

While setting up the tape recorder there is a discussion about Tom's recent work in Bosnia teaching television news people who are challenging state-controlled management. DeVries likens political figures in Bosnia to Hitler.

Rubens: How are the circumstances and responses analogous to Hitler?

DeVries: In everything, in big-picture propaganda. I mean, they had film makers, they had the radio, they had rallies, they staged demonstrations, they had photo opportunities. They had senior cabinet-level people in charge of propaganda. That was Hitler's Fascist nation state. And Milosovic [at the time of interview, President of Bosnia] did the same thing. He has TV and it broadcasts a certain political line. His view of politics and what is going on in the country is the one that is televised. TV was central to how he got power and kept it. And it's a critical factor why Serbs don't believe anything's happening that's particularly outrageous in Kosovo.

Rubens: This interview is taking place at the Hudson Bay Cafe, at Broadway and Manila Street about three miles from the campus. It's noisy, and Tom has limited time, since he's leaving for Bosnia tonight.

I interviewed Barbara Epstein yesterday--an historian at U.C. Santa Cruz--who talked about her experience at Harvard, the fall of l964. She heard about FSM through a SNCC [Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee] phone network. She received a call at home about 6 a.m., and by 9 her group picketed Harvard's administration for the right to pass out leaflets. By 1 p.m., the president had granted that right. I'm interested in how the news spreads, and that's why I'd like to get your story about Collegiate Press News Service. I remember you telling me at one time, when you learned of FSM, your response was "Welcome to the Movement." You could also start with where you were in '64? Either way.

DeVries: Let's see if I can separate the two things. One is that there was a movement. I mean, there was a SNCC, that's how Epstein heard about it. And the origins of the FSM were that; they were the right to petition on campus about something else. FSM was bringing the Civil Rights Movement back to the Northern campuses, in a sense. And what is important in my opinion, is that it was a movement of bringing political activity into the academic environment, which the academic establishment resisted. Like many other things, they may have been right. Nonetheless, with students in the Northeast and students in the Midwest, who were already fairly involved in off-campus civil rights activity, and although I wasn't living on the West Coast at the time, it seems to me that the West Coast gave all the evidence of being, not jealous exactly, but disappointed, feeling left out. I mean, there was stuff students had done.

Rubens: Sure, there's HUAC--

DeVries: You could find Mike Tigar, you could find out about SLATE, an organization which was overtly political and had a larger world view. So you could talk to all those SLATE guys, because it was a system-wide political party. And, yes, there had been the HUAC and the Auto Row demonstrations, and so forth. So it's not like there wasn't anything going on. But I think that the main thrust of New Left political activity had switched to civil rights, and most Berkeley people, certainly SLATE, weren't involved. Or didn't feel involved. I don't know, that was my sense of it. I wasn't here; you should ask them.

Rubens: This is exactly what I wanted. I wanted a view from the outside.

DeVries: From the outside there was an enormous amount of activity. If you look through the CPS [Collegiate Press News Service] materials I gave you--I haven't looked at them--but I bet you, you will see lots of discussion of the right of administrations to control student personal behavior, the *in loco parentis* discussion. There will be lots of discussions about the right of students to influence administrations or the curriculum, to ask for academic stuff.

Rubens: Classes, and subjects?

DeVries: Certain kinds of classes, certain kinds of subjects, certain amount of input, and so forth. But fairly mild. So that's one thing.

The second thing is that for all of being left out, when the West Coast, or particularly Berkeley, checked in, I mean it was revolutionary. There were--I used to know the number--but there was something short of two dozen other campuses that had similar kinds of activities, meaning to say, demonstrations of some significant level of intensity within a few months. It spread just like that [snaps fingers]. Just pyooom [sound imitating an engine take-off] or like fire spreading instantly, like that. So there was FSM, and then we are everywhere.

And it's funny because, you know Lisa, there was no self-consciousness about it, really. It was very innocent. There was no organization. The word was being spread by the Collegiate Press Service and by some mainstream organs, most of whom were not sympathetic. But nonetheless, the word got out.

Rubens: So now let's just back up and pursue two threads that lead you to observe FSM: your role in the Collegiate Press Service and then your personal role--meeting Michael Rossman and coming to Berkeley.

Do you want to say where you were in 1964?

DeVries: In 1964 I got married, left college. I left the *Chicago Sun Times*, which was my employer, and my wife and I, Marylou and I moved to Philadelphia to run the United States Student Press Association, which was the umbrella organization, and Collegiate Press Service, which was their press service. And the reason I did that is because I was married, I had a draft deferment. So it was like, talent, charm, and so forth, but really I was one of the people that it was safe for me to leave college and not get drafted. I went there at the end of the school year, so in June of '64 I went to Philadelphia. I overlapped with a guy named Dean Gottehrer. Dean now lives in Santa Cruz.

Rubens: How old was Collegiate Press Service?

DeVries: I guess it was the third year.

Rubens: But spawned by the U.S. Student Press Association?

DeVries: USSPA, United States Student Press Association, was formed and CPS was formed at the same moment, in 196---whatever it was. I was in Europe.

Rubens: I think '62.

DeVries: I think '62 is correct. It was formed in the summer of '62, and then functioned in '62-'63. Gottehrer was the editor in '63-'64. And then I picked it up. I was there for a year, '64-'65.

Rubens: You were there the year of FSM, I didn't realize that.

DeVries: Yes, we were in Philadelphia with no money and no budget, but we had the resources. We basically had telephones, and we had a subscription to virtually every student newspaper in the country. It was horrendous. We had this little tiny office, me and Paul Danish, who is now an administrator at Boulder County, Colorado. I mean, it was like a joke—a little teeny office, two desks just piled floor to ceiling with college newspapers, some of which we had read, some of which we had read and planned to clip, some clips, some of which were just waiting to be opened. I mean, it was totally overwhelming.

Rubens: No secretary?

DeVries: No, no. We didn't have a secretary. We had a woman named Joy who was in two or three days a week and who was paid minimum wage, and who was a sweetheart. She helped type, but she wasn't enough. I mean, Paul and I were doing all the reading and writing, and she was doing a lot of typing and correspondence. So we ran this organization which was de facto subsidized by the National Student Association, which was of course being subsidized by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Rubens: But do you know that at that point?

DeVries: Of course not.

Rubens: How did you know about the National Student Association?

DeVries: USNSA, was the recognized international student organization in this country. But that's a whole other story. They had a long-term secret relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency which, it would appear, began benevolently and which gradually, of course, like most of those things, got kind of corrupted.

Rubens: But you knew you were de facto being subsidized by the--

DeVries: I knew about the NSA money. I knew that NSA provided for me, which was a basement full of mimeograph machines, postage, folding machines in Philadelphia. There are historical reasons for that. They moved two years later, but they were then in Philly, across the street from the University of Pennsylvania on Chestnut. So what was going on essentially was we were a separate organization, but there was a building full of people who were in touch with what we were, and it was clear that something was going on.

Rubens: By going on, do you mean, for example, Mississippi Summer?

DeVries: It was COFO [Congress of Federated Organizations] summer.

Rubens: Schwerner, Cheney and Goodman were killed.

DeVries: Yes. Students were becoming important in the political and activist--before that there was no activist life. I mean, we were creating an activist cadre. And you know, there was a lot of stuff that goes along with that, for example splits within the Left and so forth. I just want to say that FSM wasn't ideologically left; FSM was a nonpartisan organization. I went to the meetings and things hadn't polarized that much; but the identification was student activism, not left activism/right activism. It wasn't polarized like it is now.

Rubens: Back to the summer of '64. The news is hot and heavy that summer.

DeVries: It was hot, it was going on. We were involved and the building [in Philadelphia] was a nexus of information and activity, and not the only one.

Rubens: You told me outside this interview, that you were in part being sustained by subscription, different colleges were subscribing to your service. But Berkeley had not subscribed.

DeVries: Berkeley hadn't subscribed, as I recall. We didn't have very much in the way of support out here [in the West]. New Mexico was very active, Arizona was active, Colorado was active. But the base of support, for both political and financial support, was Midwest and the Northeast. And Southern, actually the

Southern schools. Because Dean was from Tulane, and other officers from Alabama and stuff. So that the Southern students too, you know, it's not like the Southern students--

Rubens: Were acted upon?

DeVries: Well, but they were also white Southern students who were activists; and I think frequently it wasn't just black students from the South who were active in civil rights activity. There were white students from the South who were active in civil rights activity too. And the student newspapers, as I've said to you before, it's just for me the sort of outstanding thing I look back at. There was no alternative press. There was no *East Village Other*, there was no *Bay Guardian*. There was a mainstream press.

Rubens: There was no *Rolling Stone*.

DeVries: There was no *Rolling Stone*. There was nothing.

Rubens: No *Barb*?

DeVries: Of course not. No *Barb*, no *Sundance*, no nothing. So the closest thing to an alternative print voice--I mean, there were magazines. There was the *Nation* and the *Progressive* and stuff like that. But in terms of reaching this increasingly self-concious group of people, students, with political information of any kind, argument, opinion, facts, the student newspapers were it.

But, on the other hand, that's not so bad. They were everywhere. There was one on every campus, a weekly if not a daily. And they communicated with each other through this new organization, which is why we put it together. Two and three times a week we were mailing the press service out, five single-spaced pages two or three times a week.

Rubens: Mimeo-ed? Wouldn't e-mail have been great?

DeVries: Well, it's what it was. There were Xeroxes then, they were these big, flat bedded--and very slow. So student newspapers had no competition. They had a base of financial support from national advertising, cigarette advertising, car advertising and the other things, because students had begun to be identified by marketing institutions as a consumer group. And of course there were certain, you know, clothes and ties and smoke.

Rubens: And music?

DeVries: Well not quite. I don't think so. Maybe. I don't think so but I don't remember. In any case, there was money. They had money. They had budgets. They had, because academic institutions tended to be sort of stick-up-their-ass liberals,

they had at least some sense of first amendment freedoms, until they were challenged, and then they got yanked back real fast. But nonetheless, the student papers went into this with telephones, with bright, articulate people, with the freedom to publish, and with some money. Whoopee! And there were not just a few very active, activist student journalists, of the Tom Hayden mold. You know, there were a bunch. And so the stuff was coming in, and obviously you take that sensibility. You go to the South for one month and then you go back and you take that sensibility and you start looking at things in your own communities.

And so the student newspapers in Chicago where I was, for example, were actively covering their communities including off campus. Segregation in Chicago, racism in Chicago, nuclear testing. My student newspaper, for example, the *Roosevelt Torch*--the *Sun Times* was my real job, and the *Torch* actually paid my tuition. But the *Roosevelt Torch* published every issue an ear, which is on the front page above up by the title of the paper, with the Strontium 90 count in the milk. We discovered that the Health Department in the State of Illinois, or Cook County I guess, was keeping track of Strontium 90 which is a function of fallout. The cows eat the grass, the grass has got Strontium 90 in it from nuclear tests in Nevada, and the children drink it in milk. We were doing this in 1962-1963: agitating about nuclear testing, agitating about Cuba, agitating about segregated housing in Chicago. It was just sort of a natural thing, and it wasn't just the *Torch*.

I mean, the editor of the student newspaper of the University of Chicago is still a friend of mine. Neil Johnstone, he's a lawyer in New York. And Laura Gadovsky, his successor who worked for me at CPS was our Washington correspondent. Jeff Greenfield was the editor of the *Cardinal*, at Wisconsin, in Madison, actually for three years. And Roger Ebert was the editor of *The Daily Illini*, in Champaign-Urbana. And we talked on the phone all the time with these newspapers and other newspapers. So we were on the phone and we were trading this stuff. And into this came FSM, which was like the best because--I don't know, because they had to call the police.

Rubens: It was also California.

DeVries: It was California, they had to call the police, there was a lot of people, it made the news.

Rubens: Yes. Do you remember particularly getting the phone call or hearing about it?

DeVries: No, I don't. I vaguely remember it happen. It was December right?

Rubens: Yes. There had been an ebb and flow of agitation--including the surrounding of a police car-- leading up to the mass arrests in December.

DeVries: And we did cover that, and we did have people out there.

Rubens: Not you, you had not come out yet?

DeVries: No, no. But we would talk on the phone to whoever we had as a contact at the *Daily Cal*. So we were getting phone calls every day, and we were rewriting the *Daily Cal* and the newspapers, and getting dictation, and we were cranking this stuff out. You know I can't tell you like where I was the moment I heard, but I can tell you we all knew it was a big deal. I mean even in Philly. We knew it was a big deal.

Rubens: Did you meet Michael Rossman or anyone from the FSM on their East Coast publicity tours?

DeVries: No. It was not until the following year. Because I was out here, in Berkeley, the first time the following winter, I would say, in February or March, of l965.

Rubens: And why were you here?

DeVries: I attended a conference in San Francisco of a competing campus journalism organization, the name of which I cannot remember. I mean they were bland, they concerned themselves with increasing national advertising, what kind of paper stock to use, methods to screen and size pictures. We were doing politics and content, and they were doing production and mechanics and stuff like that. So they gave awards to newspapers for best design and that kind of stuff, but we were talking about in the trenches. But I attended basically to market on the West Coast. And so I wrote stories and passed out business cards.

Rubens: Did you have any contacts out here particularly at the Daily Cal?

DeVries: Oh yes, and I'm trying to remember. There was a guy named Konstantine Berlandt. He became a gay activist subsequently, as I recall. I mean the chronology of this is not that clear. Konstantine with a "K," as a freshman, became our correspondent because we could afford him, as I recall. And so, you know, yes I had people out here.

Rubens: You had the *Daily Cal*?

DeVries: I had the *Daily Cal* people; I had him. I don't believe I knew Russin at the time so I probably didn't have him. I didn't meet Joe Russin, I don't think until after. But Joe was the correspondent for *Newsweek* out here, and as he said, made his bones on the FSM. You should interview him; keep after him or email him or something. He was working for *Newsweek*.

Rubens: What college had he come from, by the way?

DeVries: Harvard. He was a crime managing editor. And Steve Roberts was the president of the *Crimson* and Joe was the managing editor.

Rubens: It was not Todd Gitlin? He was on it, but not the editor?

DeVries: No.

Rubens: Do you meet Rossman out here?

DeVries: Yes, but I can't remember when I met Rossman.

Rubens: Did you meet Mario at that time?

DeVries: Nope. No, later but not then. You know, it was pretty chaotic.

Rubens: Yes. You're not there so much to cover it as you're there for a conference and you're coming over here to see Berkeley. Your first time in California, by the way?

DeVries: Yes. It was pretty amazing. But I think that if you take anything out of all of this, Lisa, it's that there was this communications apparatus in place. The mainstream press covered the students and they covered it with enormous disapprobation, but that isn't it. You know it's the pictures that count, and what young people saw was themselves doing something real in the world, acting in the world. And that resonated. There was the campus newspapers, which were the fifth column. Only the campuses didn't realize that! The radical newspapers prior to this would criticize the food in the dorms, you know, that was it. That was out at the edge. And all of a sudden, all of a sudden, you know, this stuff, we're doing criticism.

I remember talking to the editor of the *Colorado Daily* who had barracked himself in his office to keep the campus police from removing him by force because he had been critical of Goldwater, Barry Goldwater. I mean he had been critical and he had mouthed-off in print, called him "an old putzer." And so they fired him and he refused to go. So I regard that as part of the fabric of the whole thing, you know? Students are sitting in and refusing to leave Sproul Plaza, and four months later a student editor a thousand miles away, in a totally different issue, barricades himself in his offices and refuses to leave. And what happens is that while that's going on he's on the phone with me and with other people and the word is being spread. It's like the faxes in Tianamen Square, you know, except there weren't any faxes. We had mimeograph machines, but it's the same thing. And it wasn't exactly that Berkeley was the first place where this mechanism kicked in, but it was the place where it went critical.

Rubens: Exactly. It was a spin that went in a new direction.

DeVries: It was like it was all kind of there, and kind of going, and all of a sudden [clap sound] the pedal hit the floor.

Rubens: What a wonderful way to put it.

DeVries: FSM opened up all of these--just blew out the tubes in terms of being able to move large amounts of information across the country. I wouldn't say instantaneous, because we have new thresholds, but relatively speaking, very fast. We're talking about going from Pony Express to telegraph here.

Rubens: Radio did that. Radio was the first time people heard news simultaneously.

DeVries: Yes, but I'm talking about creating a community in the sense of having a way of communicating to students who are beginning to be self-conscious as actors on the world, to see themselves as a group, just like working class people, or something like that, you know. Solidarity, or something like that. They saw the pictures. Pictures are the ballgame.

Rubens: I think I've told you about cameras swooping by me--dressed in my L.A. best--to capture the girl with fishnet stockings, long hair, flowing garments, standing next to me. I mean that's not how most people looked. You look at the pictures and you see that they were fairly conservative and didn't look all that different from their professors.

DeVries: Sure, of course. My first time that I ever went to the Fillmore I have vivid recollection, everybody had white shirts and short hair.

Rubens: And this was a few years later, I mean Fillmore is '66 I think.

DeVries: Probably, I think it was the winter of '66. I've tried to find the poster at that shop in North Beach.

Rubens: Do you remember who it was?

DeVries: Yes, Airplane and Quicksilver.

Rubens: I think I have that poster.

DeVries: You do?

Rubens: I may. I'll go look.

DeVries: Well, it's worth a lot of money Lisa!

Rubens: I just was at Jim Nelson's house, the brother of Tracy Nelson, and I was talking about it. He had one of the first posters, and I said I have that, Canned Tuna. He said, "No, no it wasn't called Canned Tuna." Canned Heat, Hot Tuna came later.

DeVries: Hot Tuna came later. Well you see if you do because they don't have it.

Rubens: Airplane and Quicksilver.

DeVries: Airplane and Quicksilver, whenever that was.

Rubens: Yes, okay.

DeVries: It was very early though. It was one of the first few weeks.

Rubens: Well let's just now just take a few threads and wrap them up. So you're out here seeing Berkeley for the first time in '65 and then did you help usher Rossman and other people around later?

DeVries: No, but well certainly somewhat later in the Peace Corps incarnation, which was--

Rubens: Briefly, then, when do you leave--?

DeVries: I left formal employment at USSPA, Student Press Association, in the middle of the following summer of '65. I did a one year tenure, $3,000 a year. Had a baby.

Rubens: Loren's born.

DeVries: Loren was born. And I moved to Washington to go to work for the Peace Corps. And so it was like admitting the serpent into the tent.

Rubens: You were the serpent.

DeVries: The Peace Corps, in a sense, basically opened itself up to the students. So the same bunch of people who were attracted to the idea of acting positively in the world were attracted to being in the Peace Corps. At least some cross cut of that bunch of people, you know what I mean? It's kind of fun.

--this wave of demonstrations, some of which became famous like Columbia, and all the rest, but that's just because it was in a media market. There were dozens of them, dozens. I mean, they were all over the place.

Rubens: I think you've established the base for that, and now trying to just chronicle this and tie those in, and make sure we get those newspapers as part of the archives.

Now tell me how long were you in the Peace Corps--you went there next, right?

DeVries: Almost two years.

Rubens: Two years, okay. And during that time you met Michael Rossman?

DeVries: Yes I brought, not just Rossman, my god, you know I brought Hayden into the Peace Corps, I just--

Rubens: What I didn't understand was bringing Rossman was not FSM related. You were bringing activists, as an activist yourself?

DeVries: As bringing activists into the government to try and basically kind of brown bag stuff. And it was before--

Rubens: "Brown bag" means?

DeVries: You know, like the luncheon. Everybody who wants to, come into the conference room and we've got Hayden, we've got Rossman. We've got whoever is in town.

Rubens: How did you go to North Carolina, I mean under whose auspices?

DeVries: I went to North Carolina, when Rossman came into town and went on the road show, kind of, you know the Johnny Appleseed of revolution, of campus dissent. And he was travelling around. I mean there are wonderful things, have we talked about those small Catholic girls?

Rubens: No. [chuckling]

DeVries: Okay, well what happened was that NSA, National Student Association, in order to stabilize the organization, made a concerted effort to recruit into the organization small Catholic girls' schools. So we used to talk about small Catholic girls. Well the horrendous mistake was that that vein of philosophical thought was all this Catholic worker shit. They were the most radical people you could possibly find and suddenly NSA is disproportionately full of these absolutely fearless, smart, committed--if polite--young women. So it skewed everything. Oh man!

Rubens: This is roughly when?

DeVries: Well, the organization was heavily infiltrated by small Catholic girls all the way through. But it's like when you start bringing this stuff in--. You know, so it becomes the communications wing, in a sense, of the National Student Movement, all of which blew up with the discovery that we were completely infiltrated by the intelligence apparatus. But you know, we didn't know, and in a sense it doesn't matter except that suddenly there were large amounts of money to do stuff with. I mean the CIA subsidized the Freedom Rides for Christ's sake. They didn't mean to, but I was there, I can tell you it happened. And, you know you could make something out that, but it isn't true.

Rubens: Well it's just like, I think, the role of the Communists at FSM or any of these other things. They're there and maybe they help facilitate it, but it's not being directed--

DeVries: It wasn't being directed by the agency but it was being paid for by the agency. Which is important, it was money. There were phone calls, there was travel budgets, there were credit cards. There were people who had full time jobs to go around and mess around.

Rubens: When was the blow up just roughly, I don't have that immediately in my head?

DeVries: '67. In the winter of 1967.

Rubens: Ok, but so these small Catholic girls? Is there a name, one name you think of particularly, do you remember?

DeVries: Oh you know, Holyoke. There're lots of them. Loyola.

Rubens: So why Rossman? Is there something there?

DeVries: Well so Rossman and others, there would be this circuit. You know, we could set up a speaking tour with five or six people, and the cache was the Steering Committee of the FSM. And being Mike--I mean we were making these trips carrying dope and Jefferson Airplane records along with the politics. So we were spreading revolution, sex and rock and roll. Ta-da! [chuckles]

Rubens: Two more things I want to talk about. The summer of l964, in the South, one doesn't really have an association with sex, drugs? Maybe rock and roll.

DeVries: There was sex.

Rubens: Of course there was sex, I guess.

DeVries: But I don't think there was drugs. It was so dangerous and so frightening. And there <u>weren't</u> any drugs, by the way. We didn't have drugs then, as far as I can tell.

Rubens: Well certainly drugs then meant marijuana.

DeVries: And there wasn't much music. That hadn't kind of happened yet. I mean "Kumbaya," but it wasn't rock and roll; there was "Kumbaya." There were still long haired people ironing their hair.

Rubens: And so Elvis? But I think to college kids, Elvis and Pat Boone are really old hat. It's not what the politicos are into. It's the fraternity kids. Okay.

DeVries: No, but the politicos to the degree--.There was like this, I can't say '64 because that was too early but ultimately, by '66 let's say, '65-'66, there's this split. Take SDS, of course Reed SDS which hasn't been straight for two and a half years, and Michigan SDS which was, you know, to the bone.

Rubens: All these splits coming out.

DeVries: Well kind of like a philosophical or lifestyle or something, something like that, Lisa. But at this time, in '64-'65 it was so strikingly innocent.

Rubens: And I think strikingly non-violent.

DeVries: Oh yes. It wasn't even non-violent, it wasn't an issue. I mean it wasn't non-violent, it wasn't one of the things you decided at the meeting. It didn't come up any more than to decide should we go naked or not.

Rubens: It was not in view.

DeVries: It was not on the list.

Rubens: Alright, so Rossman's later. So there's just no question that the spring of '65 and then the fall of '65 is this critical mass.

DeVries: No question in my mind. It was because it was before--I think with the exception of a very few people--it was before the War dominated everything.

Rubens: Before Black Power?

DeVries: Well I remember Stokely was in Bloomington, it must be that the National Student Congress was in Bloomington, I think in '64 or '65. '65 it was in Minneapolis, I'm pretty sure. '64 it was in Bloomington. Stokely was there, Hayden was there and it was still very talky.

Rubens: Relatively tame.

DeVries: Very. I can tell you how wonderful it was is that in whatever county that is, Bloomington, Indiana, three young men whom I had met--we went down there to do the story just before the Congress. These three young guys had picketed the post office to object to the blockade of Cuba, the post office being the only Federal US government facility they could find. So they had signs that said, you know, "Don't mess with Cuba," or something like that. And they were arrested and charged with sedition for attempting to overthrow the government by picketing the post office, under some Indiana sedition law. I mean it was so, like, sweet that—and you know, this was a big deal. This is before we started blowing up post offices, for example.

Rubens: Yes, exactly. And then the speed with which the movement changes.

DeVries: Then it just rocketed. Well I think that was the War. It was this huge, like--

Rubens: Shot in the arm--

DeVries: Shot in the arm of violence. So, you know, sometimes I wonder, Well, would the other stuff, this sort of inward looking youth-based thing have played out differently had it not been for the War, or would it just [have] gotten stoned?

Rubens: [Laughing] That's great. That's another question.

DeVries: I don't know the answer. You know, it's like not even necessarily an important question, but I'm just curious sometimes.

Rubens: That's a good one. It's a very good one. You know, my only touch with the quote, "leadership" was in 1967, the planning of the Meeting of the Tribes, and that really was Jerry Rubin And by then, you know, it is yippies and bringing the politicos together, recognizing there is this divergence, the stoners and the politicos and you can do both, they were saying. And Leary said that, "Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out."

DeVries: Yes, right. I was just trying to remember, what the hell was his name? He was at Columbia; he was an English lecturer at Columbia. Ponderosa Pine.

Rubens: Why do you say Ponderosa Pine?

DeVries: Because that's his name now, Ponderosa Pine. Changed his name to Ponderosa Pine. He has a public relations firm that represents endangered species, but he was one of the people. Bob Fass, Rubin, I mean there were the five people who met and invented the yippies in New York. [They] called a demonstration to go to Grand Central Station, which we all did. Then the police barred the door and beat the shit out of everybody. And they went to Chicago to plan the Convention and left everybody in jail.

Rubens: The Convention of 1968. Interesting. You then ,are two years with the Peace Corps and then go to the Lindsey Administration [Mayor Lindsey of New York City]?

DeVries: Yes.

Rubens: And then left Lindsey for McCarthy?

DeVries: For McCarthy, yes.

Rubens: And then after McCarthy out here to newsroom. '68, that's just a whole other story. Well, we'll do more of that at some other time. This is great. I just think this is great. This just sets a tone, shows a perspective, and establishes those two fundamental points you're making about the apparatus and, you said, the

two strains. There was a lot of political activity and Berkeley's in the backwater, and then the focus shifts. Right? They become revolutionary and there's already an apparatus to spread it.

DeVries: And the apparatus is there and it's funny. For me it's like, if you have an Internet you can't tell what will kind of rush in to fill that space, isn't that funny.

Milosovic uses television to--I mean it's not an accident all the people in Yugoslavia support him. It's not like they're being-- He's democratically elected. I mean his elections are as fair and free as ours, maybe a little sometimes more. You know, the guy's been elected, he'd be elected overwhelmingly now. What he has is control of a communications apparatus. I mean he has top-down control, which is different. This is cool because this is like the Internet in the sense that it has no center. We did write stuff in Philly and pump it out, but mostly we were rewriting, reprinting and stuff. And so it was like a decentralized news service. It was always intended to be a decentralized news service.

Rubens: You know, I've got to say that I've never seen anything written about this. I don't think anyone's ever done anything on this.

DeVries: That's funny. I was in New York a couple of weeks ago and taking about it to Jeff Greenfield, and we were both starting to try and see, where is so and so, where is so and so? And it was pretty intense. The guy Mark Aickov, who was the editor of the University of New Mexico daily paper *The Lobo*--I mean Mark Aickov, they would shoot into his office with guns. You know, it's a conservative state and stuff like that. But he was doing what we would consider, fairly mild critical editorials, raising certain issues politics. And they were shooting at his office.

Rubens: And where did he end up?

DeVries: You know, I was wondering where he went. I think he's a lawyer. I could probably find him. I haven't seen him for years.

Rubens: I must have Russin's email. You're saying Russin's back in--where is Russin?

DeVries: Russin's in the States. He's in Bethesda.

Rubens: And who does he work for?

DeVries: He works for himself.

Rubens: Okay, I hope to get to him. By the way, I'm going to interview Caroline Craven, she was in the SDS headquarters which at the time was in New York.

DeVries: Of course, that's how I met her. I met her here when she was still dating the saxophone player, Craven.

Rubens: Meaning here, you met her in Berkeley in l965?

DeVries: Yes. I went to the top of the Campanile with her and fell in love. [cross talk about contacting Joe Russin]

Rubens: Speaking of love, that's who Caroline loved for so long.

DeVries: Craven? Oh Joe.

Rubens: Where is Greenfield?

DeVries: On CNN, New York.

Rubens: Okay. And did you know Buddy Stein? He was an activist in FSM and recently nominated for a Pulitzer for journalism, and connected to a lot of other people I will interview. You see, I think they're lucky to have me as a historian. I'm starting from the periphery, but people who are still active, and working to some questions.

DeVries: Isn't it interesting? And I have that same reaction too, which is that a historian should do this. Whatever it is you learn in history college, you should bring those sort of--you know, it's like Karen Paget doing math for her work, you know.

Rubens: No. What is she doing these days?

DeVries: Well, she's writing a book about the CIA involvement with the National Student Association.

Rubens: Oh perfect. See, I was going to say, that story has to be told and Roger Ebert, I mean would that be worth it? Because he's so--

DeVries: It's too goddamn hard to reach him.

Rubens: Is it?

DeVries: You know, I have trouble reaching him. I was at Ebert's newspaper. I wrote the letter recommending him to be hired.

Rubens: Really?

DeVries: I mean I had worked there, and I have a carbon of the letter someplace saying you've got talk to this guy, to Jim Hogue who was the editor of the newspaper.

Rubens: Ebert's partner on the TV film review, Siskel, his death was a big loss, I thought.

DeVries: I think that Russin is an absolutely key person. And I think that Danish is also. Call Danish, he is funny, profane--.

Rubens: Where is he?

DeVries: He's the county administrator at Boulder County Colorado and I don't have his number with me, but do you have an email?

Rubens: Yes.

DeVries: Paul was in Philly that whole time, and he might have a set of the [CPS] papers, too. I don't know.

Rubens: Yes, yes, the papers would be great.

DeVries: And Konstantine--I've seen Konstantine Berlandt.

Rubens: I think my husband knows--

DeVries: I wouldn't be surprised because I've seen him. I mean, he and I had a funny history. He was this young, gawky, kid working away at the thing. And then I came out here, I ran into him in LA, Universal City someplace, in a hotel at some other meeting. I don't know why I was there, I don't know why he was there, but I ran into him. And he'd come out gay, and he was going to sort of introduce everybody to the pleasure of it all. So he kind of like chased me around the hotel.

Rubens: Yes--not tonight honey.

DeVries: Not tonight honey. I got a headache. And so we kind of like--you know, I didn't want to deal with that, and he was embarrassed. So then we didn't talk for a long time, but I <u>have</u> seen him since, and he <u>is</u> around. I don't know what the hell he is or where he is.

Rubens: You know Charlie Palmer. Was he around?

DeVries: No. He was People's Park.

Rubens: I used to confuse the names, Charlie Palmer, your friend, was student body president during People's Park. And Charlie Powell, who was student body president during FSM, who found God, then.

DeVries: Oh, well nice for him.

Rubens: Where's Palmer?

DeVries: And he's a lawyer in Los Angeles. He used to be married to Oates, to Mary Louise Oates.

Rubens: Who did you know first?

DeVries: Oates. She was in the Philadelphia crowd.

Rubens: No kidding. Back there from--

DeVries: Philly. So I knew her from--

Rubens: Was she a student editor, newspaper, something?

DeVries: No. She was around--I remember most vividly sitting and rolling the joints for a peace demonstration with her in somebody's apartment in Philly. And just, I mean you know, hundreds and hundreds of them.

Rubens: So this is when? '65?

DeVries: Well, '65.

Rubens: Can you remember the first time you turned on? [pause] Before you come out to Berkeley?

DeVries: Yes. I was with a fast crowd in Chicago.

Rubens: Is that more blues? Is that music people?

DeVries: Yes, it was music. It was absolutely music. The political guys didn't know from shit. The political guys--maybe out here, but not there.

Rubens: I bet not. It was the same thing here, I think.

DeVries: No it was music. It was music.

Rubens: Yes. That's the elixir.

DeVries: It was the music guys and they, I mean and not just weed it was--

Rubens: Hashish?

DeVries: Mescaline. UPS would deliver the stuff in boxes. You know, we'd grind it up and put it capsules and stuff.

Rubens: Oh geez. I never had mescaline. I remember Kenneth Anger's films about taking peyote.

DeVries: It's a nausea producing drug.

Rubens: But you were saying you remember Oates, rolling joints with her in Philadelphia. She was part of that and into politics. I have a friend named Paul Lyon, who is writing a book on New Left politics in Philly.

DeVries: Well she's married to Bob Shrum, the political analyst, speech writer. They live in D.C. now.

Rubens: Unbelievable. Did you read the Times profile a couple of days ago about politics in Israel?

DeVries: Yes. Isn't it interesting? I figure it would have pissed him off, because it gives Carville all of the attention. My guess is that Shrum is doing most of the work, and then Carville comes over and does the interviews and then leaves.

Rubens: Right, exactly.

DeVries: That's my guess. Isn't that interesting.

Rubens: I thought it was a fascinating portrait. And, I was also going to say that the New York Times had a wonderful thing last week on what happened as a result of proposition 209, here in California, the end of affirmative action. It talks about high schools having to do outreach into the communities. Riverside is better than they've ever been.

DeVries: I know it. I'm so disappointed that--. Yes, I saw the thing, and the Riverside story is intriguing isn't it?

Rubens: Just before this tape runs out, back to Mary Louise Oates, you meet her in Philadelphia She must have come out to California?

DeVries: She came out. She was living with Palmer here in Berkeley.

Rubens: How did she get out here? Probably graduate school, something?

DeVries: I don't even know. But then she went--you know she was an LA Times--

Rubens: Then the two of them go to LA.

DeVries: Go to LA, and she's and LA Times columnist.

Rubens: Right. So we'll have to do more another time. Too many names are swimming in my head.

DeVries: And then you know all the people around here. And Berlantz would be good, it seems to me, just because, you know, Hayden--because he's an interesting guy.

Rubens: There's also an African American guy who was at Berkeley in these years, who spoke at the class of l968 reunion. Johnathan--. He talks about how few Blacks there were, that he started talking to the Panthers and get pulled in by Mario.

DeVries: Joe may know him, he moves in those circles a lot.

Rubens: I'm trying to be presentist is some ways. Asking, where were the blacks, Latina/os, gays?

DeVries: Well, there weren't any gays. They didn't have homosexuality then, nearly as I can tell.

Rubens: It wasn't an issue, is the point.

DeVries: Well of course, that's what I mean. I mean I'm sure they were still huddling together secretly.

Rubens: And you were saying also sex was there. Other people have told me a measure was whose car was parked in front of whose house the next morning; or what breakfast place people showed up to, with whom.

DeVries: Well one, I suppose, could make the argument that the serendipitous development of communications apparatus, because the nexus was so much tighter in the East and the Midwest, and then that the content was provided by these folks out here who were more interesting. I mean you could go hear, in those days at least--I don't know what the hell he's doing--but if you go in those days and you listen to Hayden speak, his speeches were classic. I mean it was awful, awful, awful. I mean it was extraordinary and it was intriguing, but he would say, "Well, I think we've agreed now, and we've seen that there are six identifiable themes. And yesterday we talked about the first and the second. Now, on the third I want to show that there are four elements to these," and so on. This is entirely without notes. And it was total bullshit. And it was so impenetrably dense.

Rubens: And Mario was just so fresh.

DeVries: Right. And suddenly it's like sound bites. What we didn't have was sound bites. We did have this wonderful apparatus, we didn't have the right content. We were busy filling this thing with these grey, grey wordy--words. Oh man, could we crank out the words. So there is a kind of serendipitous--

Rubens: I just heard David Harris speak who became the sixties hero of the anti-war movement. But he was that old style, just the six points and we didn't pay attention. I mean it was like, you don't get it, David. It was just like, just stuck somewhere.

DeVries: Totally take it too seriously.

Rubens: Yes, exactly.

DeVries: But that is interesting, you know.

Rubens: The term sound bite wasn't there, then.

DeVries: There wasn't any such thing as a sound bite that we knew. I'm just saying is that in retrospect what we had was, we had the apparatus and we were busy pissing it away with boring stuff. And now, all of a sudden something comes in, in which we suddenly have the content that warrants this wonderful thing.

Rubens: And then you had the music--

DeVries: We had the pictures and the music and the sound. Right. And the other stuff. So, as I say, you can wonder how that would have played out if it hadn't been. The War is the big one, because I think--

Rubens: Yes, and I think the Black Panthers, and everything else, would never have been as crazy without government infiltration, the Co-Intel program.

DeVries: If the National Student Association hadn't been co-opted and had been able to continue to function--but what happened is, is that it was suddenly discredited and basically destroyed.

Rubens: I assume Collegiate Press Service came to an end too, I mean anything that was based on the campus then became discredited.

DeVries: If it's still around you would fool me, I haven't seen it.

Rubens: But in terms of smoking dope in the office of Collegiate Press Service, this is not what you did.

DeVries: Never.

Rubens: Everyone was always at night, after it was recreational.

DeVries: Never in the office. We were very serious about it.

Rubens: Sure, exactly, exactly.

DeVries: And you know, we were serious about it for lots of reasons. Some of us turned out to be professional spies.

Rubens: In demonstrations, the point you were talking about earlier, where Oates was preparing joints to smoke for a demonstration--a demonstration was what our social activity was, right? That's where you met people, it's where you learned and got information. What demonstrations were these, do you remember?

DeVries: You know, it was a peace demonstration but I can't remember what the--

Rubens: Because it's not the War yet.

DeVries: No, it wasn't the War yet. Who knows?

I do remember, however, being at a party on, I want to say Lancaster Avenue in West Philly, and Frank Rizzo's police force--. It's 2:00 in the morning, or 1:00 or midnight or something, hellacious racket. We all rush to the window and there's a cop every few feet as far as you can see banging on the light posts and the parking meters, the street, garbage cans. Making a noise. Because what would happen is everybody rushes to the windows, and this is a poor, essentially black part of town, so everybody rushes to the windows and gets the message. Don't fuck around. Because there had been demonstrations--I think that was the summer, '65, the riots in Detroit.

Rubens: Yes. Oh, the "Cry That Will be Heard," that was the cover of Life Magazine right after Watts, a picture of a little boy

DeVries: Anyway, so Frank Rizzo's police department, he was then Chief of Police, later mayor, as I recall. He just made that list I just saw in some book, *New York Times Book Review* last week as one of the ten worst mayors of all time.

[End of Interview]