













PHOTOGRAPHIST

Robert F. Heinecken

Interviewed by Stephen K. Lehmer

VOLUME I

Completed under the auspices  
of the  
Oral History Program  
University of California  
Los Angeles

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

### PERSONAL HISTORY:

**Born:** October 29, 1931, Denver.

**Education:** A.A., Riverside City College, 1951; B.A., Art, UCLA, 1959; M.A., Art, UCLA, 1960.

**Military Service:** Jet fighter pilot, United States Marine Corps, 1953-57.

**Spouses:** Janet Storey, married 1955, divorced 1980, three children; Joyce Neimanas, married 1984.

### CAREER HISTORY:

Instructor, photography, Department of Art, College of Fine Arts, UCLA, and UCLA University Extension, 1960-62; assistant professor, 1962-67; associate professor, 1968-73; professor, 1974-90; vice-chair, Department of Art, 1979-80; chair, 1988-89; professor emeritus, 1991-present.

Professor, San Francisco Art Institute, 1970.

Professor, Schools of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1970.

Professor, Harvard University, 1971.

Professor, Columbia College, 1983.

Professor, Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology, 1983.

### AFFILIATIONS:

Board of directors, Society for Photographic Education, 1970; chair, 1971-73.

Board of trustees, Friends of Photography, Carmel, California, 1973.

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

*Robert Heinecken*, Witkin Gallery, New York City, 1970.



*Robert Heinecken: Photographic Work*, Pasadena Art Museum, Pasadena, California, 1972.

Light Gallery, New York City, 1973, 1976, 1979.

*Robert Heinecken*, George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film, Rochester, New York, 1976. Circulating exhibition also shown at Chicago Center for Contemporary Photography, Columbia College; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Frederick S. Wight Art Gallery, UCLA, 1978.

*Robert Heinecken: Food, Sex, and TV*, Fotoforum, University of Kassel, West Germany, 1979.

*Heinecken: Selected Works from 1966-1986*, Gallery Min, Tokyo, Japan, 1986.

*Robert Heinecken: 1966-1989*, Sunnyside Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan, 1989.

#### AWARDS AND HONORS:

Guggenheim fellow, 1976.

Individual Artist's Grant, National Endowment for the Arts, 1977, 1981, 1986.

Members Award, California Museum of Photography, University of California, Riverside, 1984.

Polaroid Corporation grants, 1984, 1985, 1988.

Photographer of 1985, Friends of Photography, Carmel, California.

Honored Educator, Society for Photographic Education, 1992.

#### SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

*Are You Rea, 1964-68: Twenty-five Reproductions of a Series of Photographs*. Los Angeles, 1968 (artist's portfolio).

*Mansmag*, 1969 (artist's book).

*Just Good Eats for U Diner*, 1971 (artist's portfolio).



*He:/She:*, Chicago, Chicago Book, 1980 (artist's book).

1984, *A Case Study in Finding an Appropriate TV Newswoman (A CBS Docudrama in Words and Pictures)*, Los Angeles, 1985 (artist's book).

*Recto/Verso*, 1988 (artist's portfolio).





## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### INTERVIEWER:

Stephen K. Lehmer, Photography Area Manager, Department of Art, UCLA. B.F.A., Photography, San Francisco Art Institute; M.F.A., Photography, California Institute of the Arts.

### TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Heinecken's home studio, Los Angeles.

Dates, length of sessions: March 2, 1996 (65 minutes); March 9, 1996 (90); March 12, 1996 (90); March 25, 1996 (90); March 31, 1996 (89); April 10, 1996 (89); April 14, 1996 (88); April 27, 1996 (88); May 11, 1996 (90); May 25, 1996 (89); May 26, 1996 (80).

Total number of recorded hours: 15.8

Persons present during interview: Heinecken and Lehmer.

### CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

In preparing for the interview, Lehmer consulted available books and catalogs on Heinecken's work as well as articles, reviews, and correspondence from various periodicals about or by Heinecken. He also examined materials from the Robert Heinecken archive at the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona and additional materials supplied by Heinecken himself. Finally, Lehmer drew on the knowledge of Heinecken's world and life he had developed as the result of direct experience based on his years of working closely with Heinecken as a graduate student, teaching assistant, studio assistant, and personal friend.

The interview is organized chronologically, beginning with Heinecken's early years and continuing on through his stint as a jet fighter pilot in the Marine Corps, his education at UCLA and his eventual professorship there, and his career as a photographic artist of international acclaim. Major topics covered include the status of photography as an artistic discipline in both the art world and academia, the development of



UCLA's College of Fine Arts, pushing the boundaries of the photographic medium, Heinecken's work and methodology, the Society for Photographic Education, and the contemporary art world in Los Angeles.

#### EDITING:

Jennifer E. Levine, editorial assistant, edited the interview. She checked the verbatim transcript of the interview against the original tape recordings, edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling, and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Heinecken reviewed the transcript. He verified proper names and made a number of corrections and minor additions.

Alex Cline, editor, prepared the table of contents and interview history. Gail Ostergren, editorial assistant, compiled the biographical summary and index.

#### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.



TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

MARCH 2, 1996

HEINECKEN: Well, let me just start. [laughs] And we'll see what we get. I was born in Denver, Colorado, October 29, 1931. People discovered that that's a Scorpio sign, which I have never paid much attention to, but it does-- People who believe in it use it. It turns out I do have characteristics that those people who believe in it associate with [Scorpio].

LEHMER: What are you thinking of?

HEINECKEN: Well, a Scorpio-- I'm not sure. A Scorpio is a kind of self-centered person, rather direct and-- I shouldn't say direct. But there is an interest in sensuality. I shouldn't even be talking about this, because it's really someone else's opinion about astrology, which I don't necessarily believe in. But anyway, I am a Scorpio.

The reason I was born in Denver-- My father [Friedli Wilhelm Heinecken] was a Lutheran minister who was assigned to a church in Denver, Colorado, I think probably the year I was born. It was a mission church, which means that there is no church there. You go into a community, try to find the Lutherans [laughs], and get them excited or whatever, open a church, a mission church, which in



this case I recall--not directly but from photographs--was a storefront church in Denver, Colorado, which you are assigned to for a period of time to determine whether there is a congregation possible in this district or this city or whatever. So that was his job. So I was born there. Prior to that time, he and my mother [Mathilda Moehl Heinecken] had been to a couple of other places in Colorado doing the same thing, which I presume didn't materialize. I mean, whatever the survey was didn't produce enough people or whatever. And then, after the Denver situation, we also lived in other cities in Colorado. Golden [Colorado] comes to mind-- Now I can't remember, but they were in the vicinity of Denver and things like that. So that's the occasion of being born there. I'm not sure how to begin.

But anyway, in 1939--this would now be eight years later--my father falls in love with one of the parishioners of this mission church--right?--which they had established by that time. I didn't know any of this until much later, but-- So he falls in love, leaves the whole situation, runs off with this woman-- And it's not just that it's some woman, it's because it's a church person; that's the bad part of the whole deal, right? So he comes to California, presumably with this woman, goes to Hawaii, presumably with this woman. Maybe this is now





1940, something like that. The facts are all unclear. Why and how that happens I don't know.

Anyway, he ends up on Johnston Island, a tiny island in the South Pacific, maybe five hundred miles southeast of Hawaii. It's a tiny atoll which the United States is developing as a fuel stop kind of an idea. So his job is to go over there and dig these underground fuel reservoirs so then they could either land airplanes there or-- It's a very tiny island. I think mostly a ship would stop there, refuel, go on-- So what's interesting to me is in 1939-40 we're fully aware of the Japanese threat-- We're building these situations all over the Pacific in anticipation of this war [World War II]. I've always thought we started the war, anyway, one way or the other. So anyway, he's there. The woman stays in Hawaii. I have letters that are written to me from both places, which are interesting.

Anyway, at that point in 1939 my mother and I, for maybe six or eight months, moved around Colorado. She was looking for work. I remember that she took a job as a dental technician or a dental secretary or something like that in Colorado Springs, because we lived there for a while. We lived in Boulder for a while, where she took some other kind of a job.

But eventually in that same year, or maybe the following year, we moved to Dubuque, Iowa, which is where



her parents lived and where she had grown up and in fact where she met my father. So we moved there, which was a situation where the-- Her mother [Emma Moehl] and father [Henry Moehl] were there, but there was a maiden sister of my mother's [Else Moehl] who lived there, and a younger brother [Robert Moehl] who lived there who was probably eighteen or nineteen--at least too young to be going into the service--and the two of us were added into this situation. And in a very small house like in Dubuque-- Her father, by the way, was a confectionary cook--ran a bakery shop, a German bakery shop. But anyway, it was very uncomfortable. And I do remember some instances of not--I mean, it was like a tension there somehow that came from this older sister, who had never married-- I mean, I'm sort of going back in my mind, or maybe it's something I realized later, but there was an animosity between this sister who never married, and somehow a younger sister got married, but it didn't work, and maybe the older sister knew that that would never work. He was not the right guy for her. That kind of stuff was in the air, kind of. And her brother, who was younger, was-- I don't think he was abusive in any sense to me, but he was not so happy that either of us were there. It was just suddenly-- Four people in the house; it was now six people in the house. And there's this separation and whatever. So it wasn't an



interesting time for me. I think I was very reclusive. I remember I slept in the attic in a kind of cove. At least it was private, but it was not a room or anything like that.

So anyway, that period of time I think was difficult for my mother. I don't think she worked. She just kind of-- We lived there until something was figured out. So then, I guess, in 1940--I'm looking at my book here--

LEHMER: Let me interrupt you for a second here. I think in our discussions previous to this interview I was under the impression that your family had a long line of Lutheran ministers or something.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, that's true. Let me just make that point.

LEHMER: And I am going to guess that both sides of your family were German, too.

HEINECKEN: That's right.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: Actually, my father was born in Germany, but-- Let's go back. My grandfather [Friedli Heinecken], my paternal grandfather, is really the start of this whole thing. He was born on an island, actually, between what is now Denmark and Germany, so he's a northern German guy. His family is rather large, but I don't know a lot about what the rest of them did. He had two interests which



came very early on: one was the religion, Lutheranism, but the other was-- Well, he was a very skilled, natural-- You wouldn't say artist but-- Draftsman.

LEHMER: Draftsman?

HEINECKEN: Drawing. Right. So all through his life he's doing these drawings. I know this because he did his journals and books where the drawings were included. They're excellent. I mean, they are realistic drawings but excellent stuff.

Anyway--and this is all sort of hearsay from the family--at some point, he meets this doctor and the doctor's wife. The wife becomes interested in his drawing skills, pulls him out of whatever schooling he's in, allows him to go to Basel, Switzerland, to study art, right? And of course, it wasn't an art school, it was really a craft training school. Basically what he did was take his-- His drawing skills didn't matter too much, but he was trained as a lithographer. I remember my father telling me that like the first year you were there you did nothing but grind the stones by hand, which is a grueling, grueling job, right?

LEHMER: Is this like the turn of the century?

HEINECKEN: Let's see. This would have been-- I'd say 1875, something like that. I'd have to figure that out. But anyway, first year you grind the stones by hand, which





is just a grueling thing. Second year you get to work on the stones actually yourself under the direction of the guy who is really producing whatever they're making, which were like cheap reproductions for calendars, I think, and stuff like that. And then the third year, if you're talented enough, they allow you to really execute the drawing. So my understanding is he did these three years here.

But at the same time, the other half of his life--the Lutheran thing--is still present. And I'm not sure on what basis he makes the decision, but at some point he gives up the art idea, goes back to school in a Lutheran situation to become a missionary. His idea--in his journals he writes this--was that he wanted to go to Africa. His second choice he wanted to go to the Middle East to convert the Jewish people to Lutheranism. Those were the two choices that he thought were the most important. It was determined that for some reason the Africa thing didn't work out, and they had determined that they were not sending non-Jewish people into the Jewish situation. They had converted Jews who were Lutherans who would do that work. They sent him to India. So this would have been somewhere in the 1890s.

It's not clear exactly what his work was, but what is clear is that he fell in love with a half-caste Indian



woman who-- I'm not sure whether she was converted to Christianity or was in the process of that or whatever. But she had one white parent. So anyway, they fall in love. And there's some controversy about the fact that as an unmarried person he shouldn't be involved in all this. He'd gotten in trouble with the church somehow. So they actually left India without being married. She's now pregnant. As I say, this is kind of speculation, because they don't talk about it too much. But they had an awful time getting out of India. And her journals, or his journals about the situation, people would throw rocks at them, spit on them, interrupt their travels. It was like a bad period. Anyway, they finally get out of India.

They go to Berlin by train or whatever. So my father is born in Berlin in 1900, I think. He's out of the church, I think, at this point because of whatever the situation was. So again all of this is kind of unclear. But it turns out that the only way that they'll reinstate him is if he will go to the United States. And apparently that was arranged. They send him to Nebraska. My father's brother [Martin Heinecken] is the one who kind of talks about all this. He quotes my grandfather saying, "Where is Nebraska?" or "What is Nebraska?" or whatever, because who knows? So anyway, he gets sent there with my father and does I don't know how many years of work as a



Lutheran pastor in Nebraska, Kansas, whatever. So that's where my father sort of grew up. But what's interesting to me is his marital situation with this Indian woman, who dies, by the way, in childbirth of the fourth--

LEHMER: In Berlin?

HEINECKEN: No. They come to America with my father. There are three other children born then in the United States. But she dies in the childbirth of the last.

LEHMER: Of the fourth.

HEINECKEN: Of the fourth, which is a woman [Marie Heinecken Reck]. The other three are men. The other three go into the Lutheran ministry. The daughter, actually, marries a Lutheran minister. And some of those marriages are connections to, then, other families which have Lutheran ministries. So the whole clan is just connected to the Lutheran ministry kind of idea.

So at some point in all this, my father, for whatever reasons I don't know, he runs away. I'm getting all this from his younger brother, who is actually a very well-known theologian who is now retired. But he was the only one who really made it beyond being a kind of pastor. He was teaching, I think, comparative religion or something in seminaries. Anyway, he tells me all this. That's where I'm getting this from. So at some point my father runs off at probably age fourteen, fifteen, or something



like that. No one knows why exactly, but he was rebellious. He didn't conform to whatever the familial situation was.

LEHMER: I'm curious about the siblings. Where did your father land in the--? Was he the firstborn?

HEINECKEN: Yeah.

LEHMER: He's born in Berlin.

HEINECKEN: Then came to the United States, right.

LEHMER: And then there were three more.

HEINECKEN: Three more. Two more brothers and--

LEHMER: And the last one was a daughter.

HEINECKEN: Right, who married a Lutheran.

So at some point he runs off, and they never-- The way my uncle talks about it is that he would disappear for six months, he'd show back up for whatever reasons. And he had been to someplace in Oklahoma to drill old oil fields, or he'd been stacking hay, and he worked at some point on the Erie Canal in New York as a steamfitter. So his trade really was a steamfitter; that is what he got down to.

But at some point, through all this time--which is a long time, like from fourteen [years old] to twenty [years old] or something like that, no, older than that--anyway, he decides that he's going to go back to school. He has no education--none, zero. I mean, like junior high or





something like that. And he's going to become a minister, which is weird to me. By this time he has a full tattoo of a dagger on his arm. I'll tell you about that later. So he goes back to Dubuque, Iowa, to a place called Wartburg College, which is a Lutheran college. He's now age twenty-eight, twenty-nine. He's older than anybody else. And from there goes to the Lutheran seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, and completes that course with, I think, great difficulty probably. You have to learn Greek, you have to learn Latin, and he has no education at all. But he gets through all this I guess because of his drive-- I think the Lutherans would say his conversion or something, right?

So that's where he meets my mother. She's living in Dubuque and had no education. I mean, she graduated out of high school and actually had an interesting period of time where she was an itinerant teacher. She would get on the train in Dubuque and go out to some farm community and teach for four days and come back on the train for the weekend. And she used to tell us about riding in the cabooses of the freight trains for nothing because they would just take her back and forth. So she was interesting that way. But she had no profession to speak of. They get married, I think, in the same year that I was born, 1931. They go to Denver for this first church



kind of idea. So that's sort of the background.

But there are other connections to the Lutheran thing that maybe I'll think of later that are important, too. But the point is, in my history, these two men, my grandfather, who has this strange, rebellious kind of idea, the Indian thing and that woman, and my father, who breaks completely from the family into I guess kind of a hobo in some sense and decides to come back. So I'm thinking in some sense some of the moves I've made are not unlike some of these previous ancestors. But I have a great deal of respect for my father later on.

I knew nothing of this divorce. They didn't tell me that. He just-- I assumed. I think I was told that he was like in the service in the South Pacific, but he wasn't. He was in--they didn't have this--the Seabees [United States Navy construction battalions] or whatever. But the precursor to that was civilians who were all over the South Pacific building these things.

LEHMER: For the military.

HEINECKEN: For the military, right. So he did that and was on this Johnston Island on December 7, '41, when the Japanese-- There are two situations as I understand. One, they hit this Johnston Island where he was, and they hit Wake Island on December 6, and then the morning of the next day they hit Pearl Harbor. Wake Island I know



happened. It's in history. That was like ten hours before Pearl Harbor, and so was Johnston Island. But they didn't land or anything; they just shelled the island. It damaged whatever they were constructing.

The only thing he ever told me about that that was interesting is that they had marines on the island which were kind of the governor, you know, whoever was there-- But all the civilians were trained to man these guns, which they had set up like kind of artillery guns to shoot at whatever Japanese thing they anticipated. So all the civilians manned these guns, fired them up. And every gun failed. He said that the shell went off and the gun would just move from the cement platform back-- Just broke. Crack. [laughs] So they never had any-- Nothing worked was his point. Anyway, they didn't land. They just shelled the island from these submarines.

At that point they shut down the whole civilian thing, December 7, and sent them back to Hawaii, and then back to, in his case, Los Angeles. At that point my parents reunite. This is now 1940, I think. Let me see what I had written down here.

LEHMER: 'Forty-two.

HEINECKEN: 'Forty-two, right, where he's now a plumber and a steamfitter. But he is also working as an assistant pastor, because that's what he wants to do finally. He



still has his religion, his faith. But it's been broken off from the church because of running off with this woman earlier. So I don't know how that all gets reconciled, but he works as an assistant pastor in Glendale, California, where we moved. The pastor of that church became his mentor, I guess you could say. He was instrumental in getting my father a real church after another year or something like that, where he's a layman but actually working as an assistant pastor or something like that. So this guy gets him a job in Riverside [California]. He goes there, and then finally he has his own church.

LEHMER: And that's 1946? The family moves to Riverside?

HEINECKEN: That's right. And I actually stayed in Glendale. I was in the middle of some school term when they left. I stayed in Glendale, because I remember living with another family that had a son my age [Jack Davis]. I stayed there until the end of that school year. I moved to Riverside later-- So that's sort of that kind of history.

Now, I don't know whether it was because of my grandfather and his drawing thing or what exactly happened, but I do remember-- Well, my most clear memory of that period of time is reading. I was just like a voracious reader--everything. And my mother tells a story





of-- It was so obsessive that instead of eating breakfast I would read the Quaker oats box, or I would read signs. In some ways I still do that. I don't really study anything. I don't read for knowledge or for information. I just read for the love of reading. I mean, I just love the idea of that in language but not focused really-- Anyway, that was interesting to me. And then at some point--and I know this only because I have these drawings and paintings that I made both in Colorado before all of this and then also later when I get into high school or junior high--I have this interest in drawing. And certainly from the drawings that I made [I had] some skills in it for a kid that age. So I have some of that material. And it's not clear to me how that was paid for, because these were lessons that I got privately from someone, but this would have been the heart of the Depression. It's certainly not something that you'd paid for like you would now. This was something that people were doing, teaching art to make some money for bread. Because we were extremely poor. I do remember the circumstances were always like "Where's the next dollar coming from?" And I know in his churches in Colorado and in Denver there was no salary. I mean, the synod had no money to pay any salaries. Whatever you could get, you know. So he was paid like in food.



At some point it got so bad that I lived with another family, because they had a farm or something-- In other words, at least something to eat. It really talks about the Depression. But it was a bad period of time for everybody until we got the war. Then it was good, right?

LEHMER: Right. The war economy.

HEINECKEN: So-- I don't know. The thing that's interesting here so far is the religious idea as it exists in this family. None of the children of any of those people which would be my generation are involved in this at all. These are all professional people, but certainly not in the ministry and not religious, so I always thought. And they're interesting people. One is a professor [Tom Reck], one is a rather well-known experimental musician [David Reck], one is a publisher [Theodore Heinecken]. They're all like professional people like I am. But it stopped. The Lutheran thing stopped with that generation--it was my father's generation, but--

Where was I? Oh, this popped into my mind. I never knew that they were divorced, because they just never brought it up, right? But at some point there was a marriage ceremony going on. I don't know how old I would have been, but not old enough to grasp that this was really a wedding that was really to remarry one another.



I thought-- I don't know what I thought, but I didn't realize that that was a serious thing. I don't know. Maybe I thought it was some symbolic ceremony or something like that. But this older sister that I mentioned earlier--the one who was antagonistic--told me this at some point, took it upon herself to open up this scab so that I knew it. She was really kind of a vindictive person.

LEHMER: Dour person?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Just, I think, jealous for all her sisters and brothers who married and she never did and all of that.

So that gets us maybe to-- There are other things. The next thing maybe is like in school, when this-- How the art thing begins to figure in.

LEHMER: Your family moves to Riverside in '46, and in '49 you attend Riverside [City] College, where you get an A.A. degree in art from '49 to 51.

HEINECKEN: Even in high school I was in a kind of college preparatory program, but I worked on the yearbook both as a kind of writer and did drawings and stuff for this high school yearbook and was active in-- Oh, you'd have the literature club or drawing club or art-- None of these were taught as courses. They were--

LEHMER: Extracurricular.



HEINECKEN: Extracurricular kind of ideas. So again I have, or I had--I don't know where they are now--some writings I had done and a lot of drawings and illustrations, really, for the kinds of things a high school does. But I did take, not in high school but maybe-- Certainly in junior college I took formal classes in drawing and things like that.

LEHMER: Well, in high school, if we can back up here just a snitch, what were the courses that began to set or direct your interest? Were they like literature or history or--? What did you go into? Math and science? Or did you gravitate towards humanities?

HEINECKEN: This is clear in some sense. High school, maybe, the period of time. And in a burg like Riverside it's not as developed as it would be in bigger cities. But there was one teacher, a woman, who was the literature person.

LEHMER: What was the name of that teacher? Do you remember?

HEINECKEN: Her name?

LEHMER: Yeah.

HEINECKEN: No. I might bring it up sometime if I could, but-- She was very enthused about my writing and the combination, I guess, of the writing and the drawing interest. So she was very helpful and supportive and





probably in some sense the surrogate kind of mother that a good teacher becomes, like a woman to a young man, young boy.

Anyway, she got me interested in going to college and also actually lined me up for exams or interviews to see if I could go to Pomona College. Pomona College, for those of us who don't know, it is a wonderful, well-known private school-- Very expensive, which I-- My memory is that I qualified for-- But the scholarship that was offered was like a part, you know, half, maybe, and my parents just couldn't come up with the money for the rest of it. I don't think I was aware of how disappointing that-- I mean, I could have probably become a CEO [chief executive officer] of a bank somewhere today if I could have gone to Pomona College or something. [laughs] But it's a very good school. I could have gotten in, but there were some money problems, so I didn't go there. But it was this teacher who made sure that I had the opportunity to get involved in that. I wish I remembered her name, but--

LEHMER: Do you remember the kind of literature that you read that was meaningful to you in that high school period?

HEINECKEN: No, I don't, nor do I have any real memory of what was happening in art at that time. It's like a hick



high school, you know?

LEHMER: Right.

HEINECKEN: I think it wasn't so much of-- It must have included that kind of reading, but certainly no study of the history of art or anything like that. But I think she was just enthused by what she perceived to be talents that could be developed along certain lines that were creative, as opposed to mathematics or something like that.

LEHMER: Also what I'm picking up is that you've mentioned more of an active role rather than a passive role such as reading, that you mentioned writing versus the reading. You mentioned earlier that you were a voracious reader, but in high school at that kind of a critical point where we begin to see our future, you were actually producing at that point rather-- You were writing. You weren't necessarily reading literature where you don't remember specific types of literature or books or authors, but you were beginning to-- You're talking about that you're doing your own writing and drawing. What would be interesting to me is, what did you write about?

HEINECKEN: It's very interesting, because my mother through all of this saved everything that I drew. I still have a lot of it. Some of it's pretty advanced, and some is garbage and stuff like that. But the writings were never saved. I don't think she saw the importance of



that, or maybe she was simply focused in the other direction, maybe because of my grandfather's interest in art or something like that. And maybe in a sense my gift, if that's what we can call it, was more for the visual thing than it would be for writing. I remember writing. I remember being in these exhibitions of drawings. You'd have readings by students; I was involved in that. I do remember that. By I have no evidence of what that was, and I don't remember it. I don't think it was poetry. It was probably--what would we call that?--like "This is what I did for my summer vacation" or something. But in fact, at this point, and even in the evolution of my artwork, the what I would call a kind of literature aspect--that is to say the titling, the writing, the reference to writing, to language--in the pictures is very strong. Probably that's the only thing that you could trace that would be constant through all of it. It's not a visual art per se. It's an ideational art based on language principles, based on metaphors, simile, parody, all these things that are really literature ideas. We can talk about that more, but--

LEHMER: So that's in high school?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. And also I was very rebellious, which is the other side of this time period. I didn't want to leave Los Angeles. I had just entered high school, I



guess. And probably the freedom of living with this other family was good. I had this very good friend who was the guy who actually went on to become an Olympic hurdler. I forget his name right now. So I was not without-- I mean, I was without my parents, but had this surrogate family. But it was very good for me to do that, because-- And I didn't want to go to Riverside. They were insisting, "Well, you have to come to Riverside. You finished that school. Now you're coming." So I went, but very-- I went because they told me to go, but I didn't like it. It was a hick town. I was from Los Angeles, you know, all of that. But I went.

I had a very difficult time with my family regarding the church. My father was very tolerant because of his background. I mean, he wasn't going to come down on anybody simply because they were rebellious. [laughs] He knew about that. But finally, I remember very clearly at some point, I went to jail once, for which he had to come and bail me out.

LEHMER: What was that for? Do you remember?

HEINECKEN: I went drinking beer probably or something like that. It wasn't a serious thing, but it-- You know, when the minister has to go down to get the minister's son out of jail, it's not exactly what you want to do. But anyway, I don't know whether it was the direct result of





that, but I remember having a conversation with him which really came down to, "You can do whatever you want to do. I'm not going to tell you what to do. But you do have an obligation to my profession, which is ministry, so you will be in Sunday school, and you will be in church every Sunday. I don't care if you stay up till five o'clock Saturday night drinking beer, you will be there on Sunday morning. And that's our deal," he said. And I said, "Well, this is okay." I could sleep through Sunday school, church, whatever. "I'll be there" as a kind of symbol. Because he said, "If you're not there, how am I supposed to convince these people that their children should be here?" And I understood. So it was an agreement between us that was, as I think back-- I would have never been that gracious or that understanding with my kids. I just wasn't-- I didn't have that capacity. And my kids rebelled. I guess all kids rebel. But aside from this other kind of intellectual thing of the drawing and writing, I was like into hot rods more than anything else, and girls, obviously, and drinking beer and smoking, all of these things that the pastor's son is not supposed to do. Obviously I did it because I resented something about the whole thing.

LEHMER: And that rebellion is an interesting idea. I've always been intrigued by what you are rebelling against.



Are you trying to establish your own identity or express your own ideas? You're maturing, and you want to consider who you are versus who your family is. It sounds like you had a strong family. They were strong enough to be actively involved with other people's lives, trying to influence other people's lives, so they're obviously going to be doing that with you. And at some point you're trying to establish your own identity, I would imagine.

HEINECKEN: Well, I didn't know all the history of the family when this was going on. I mean, I know that now, and I've accumulated all this. But what strikes me about it as being very clear is that this is a man who made a big mistake with this woman, got himself in trouble with the church, lost his job, lost his profession, but decided somehow to go-- Well, first of all, to go back to school when he was a kid to start this whole thing, and then even after making this horrendous mistake went back again, because he finally got it figured out for himself. It wasn't necessarily just the religion of it but the morality of it, I think, or something. So he clearly saw in me some kind of replica of his running away. I mean, I never ran away, but in a sense running away from appropriate--

But I liked his deal, which was, "I've got my life figured out, I'm going to be a minister, and you are going



to conform to the extent that you will not damage my situation." I thought, "Well, this is--" Again, I'm remembering. I'm not remembering it verbatim, but this is an important thing, to have an understanding with your father that this is the deal. "And you will do it that way." And of course, for me it wasn't a bad deal. All I had to do was show up. I didn't have to believe that or anything. And I'm not sure where my mother was in any of this. She doesn't seem to enter the picture on this. This was a deal or an understanding that was made. But he was very tolerant. So was she.

I remember when I finally had a room of my own. It was covered with these pretty girls and [Alberto] Vargas girls, which passed for erotic pictures for a kid. [laughs] And then there was no objection on their part that this was there. It was private. That was my room. I can do whatever I want--masturbate, whatever-- Whew, right? And I think I still have a streak of-- I mean, I know what's right and wrong, and I try to do what I think is right. I'm not perfect at it, certainly, and I've made a lot of mistakes myself. But I do have a morality which is not based in formal religion necessarily, but it comes out of that religion, that there are some rules, right? There are the Ten Commandments and things like that which you can adhere to, or try to, without becoming religious



or something.

LEHMER: You have learned through your environment, through direct teachings from your parents, but did you ever feel like you wanted to rebel against that? Or was it just that--? Have you ever been able to identify what you did in high school? Some people I think pursue activities at that age in direct rebellion against their parents. Other times they're beginning to figure out what it is that they really want to do on their own. Or you know what's right, but-- Were you tempted to do what you knew was wrong for the thrill of it?

HEINECKEN: Oh, I think this is true then and now and forever, that the environment of-- Or being an adolescent, the environment of that culture in that school is the strongest thing there. I mean, the thing about peer pressure is, of course, true. I forget my point, but I had figured out somehow, not consciously necessarily-- At an early age I knew how to do school. Some people know that. Some people never-- It doesn't have anything to do with intelligence. It's just like I could do all of my homework in study hall. I never had homework to do. I just figured out how to do that. So I wasn't a bad student or anything. But again, this high school is so hick, you know. There aren't any bad students in this. They just show up or whatever. I got grades good enough,





as I said, to apply to this program, and certainly as a result I-- The summer I graduated I went to UCLA on a summer thing, which was to introduce you to university life for three months or whatever. Then you would--



TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE TWO

MARCH 2, 1996

HEINECKEN: So I was saying that I went to UCLA during the summer of 1949. That would have been to participate in the program which-- We actually took courses. I forget what I took, but I maybe can remember that. But it was really to give you an opportunity to transition from high school--no matter what kind of high school it was--into that situation. So they put us up somewhere. I can't remember. It was like a dorm kind of situation, so that was controlled. I don't know if they still do this or not, but they would meet you, you know-- Other students would-- In other words, it was like a program to acclimate you to this life, because it's so different from what your previous life was about. And we took courses, but-- And I can't remember what I took, but the point is that at the end of that three months, or maybe even before that, I had completely kind of washed out of this deal because I could not handle it. I mean, I was just too young or too immature, too mixed up or whatever. But in a sense what I did was fail this summer school kind of thing, which was a big disappointment, because this was my big move from, well, high school to college, or in this case university. I had been accepted, which was no problem, because of the



grades and whatever. But I guess emotionally or something I just wasn't ready for it. So that was a big disappointment.

At the end of this, or whenever I dropped out of it or flunked out of it, I went back to Riverside and enrolled in the community college--then called junior college--called Riverside College, which was a two-year basically vocational kind of school. But the lower-division college courses were all taught that would be transferable into university programs. I went back and did that. And I think I lived at home, basically. But there was a small group-- I know I lived at home, basically, but there was this other place, which was an apartment or something like that, where similar people like myself lived. And this was now 1950, right? Or 1949.

LEHMER: Yeah, 1949-50, when you were at Riverside College.

HEINECKEN: Right. Okay. So the Korean War happens in 1950. Oh, meanwhile, I should mention, in this junior college were still probably the last vestiges of the World War II veterans. So it was interesting, because you had in that age group people who had real experiences with that war along with eighteen-, nineteen-year-old kids. And it was really a schism between-- I mean, these guys were serious and older and had that aura of, like,



veterans. And then you had the regular kids, like the idiots who were much younger and with no experiences. So it was initially an educational problem--not a problem for me--to try to figure out how to deal with these mature people as opposed to these beer drinking people. Anyway, toss it aside.

So I did the two years there basically with the idea of taking lower-division academic courses to transfer to UCLA as a junior--right?--but also continued because I was going to major in art when I got to UCLA or anyplace.

LEHMER: So that was your intention even then, to go to UCLA?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Well, someplace. UCLA was obviously the major university at that point in the UC [University of California] system for Southern California. The other schools didn't exist. And I guess it would have been the only public university other than maybe some state colleges or-- Anyway, that's where I had decided to go.

But I took courses also in this junior college in art, like painting, finally something like that rather than drawing and illustration, basically. But it wasn't a program that introduced me very well into what I experienced in the art department at UCLA when I got there. It was more like still a second-class-- Well, really like an illustration kind of an idea or something





that could be applied art, design, something like that, and drawing not as an expressive or painting as an expressive idea but as a kind of skill, a kind of craft, a kind of-- You know, how to make something look like it should look. I have a lot of paintings and drawings from that period of time, which are kind of-- There is some skill there, but they're not exceptional. Anyway, I had like almost straight A's out of this two-year experience and still continued to-- Most of my time was spent like with the car culture and something. I wasn't a student necessarily. But it was easy for me still. I just knew how to do that somehow.

I forgot to mention that I met my wife Janet--Storey was her maiden name--in high school.

LEHMER: In high school?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. She was one of those women or girls, I guess you'd say, in high school who was part of the elite kind of group. There's always that group of like cheerleaders, although she didn't do that, I don't think. But they were all the good-looking girls, and they were lively and so on. So she was really one of those girls. We dated rather consistently--maybe we went steady, I can't remember--through high school or the last of high school. Then, when she graduated, she went into nursing school in Los Angeles, so that sort of ended our whatever



was going on. Except I would date her. I mean, I would come into L.A., or when she was in Riverside we would go out and whatever. And we were in love. I mean, it was that kind of thing. But it was that she was in L.A. and I was back-- I think that was probably what was disappointing about not getting into UCLA the first time, because she was in L.A. And we would have probably continued that relationship, which then became sort of less involved. Anyway, I was dating other people, she was, and so on. But that's how I met her. Later we'll talk about that, how and when we were married or whatever. So we'll try and maybe find a place to stop here which would kind of be easy to pick up on when we start again. Anyway, I'm graduated from this junior college. I'm going to transfer to UCLA and take up that life. So maybe we can stop at this point and pick it up at that juncture, if that's useful for you.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: There are probably things that will come to my mind about this time period that we haven't talked about, but--

LEHMER: Maybe we can pick that up right at the beginning of--

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Or if you listen to it and see if there are some gaps or whatever, because--



LEHMER: I'm sure I'll have some questions, and we can fill in things.

HEINECKEN: The only thing here that I thought was interesting is that as a kid-- Did anything stand out? And I was trying to think about that. The only thing that comes to my mind is the kind of independence or something that maybe comes from my parents or from the situation of living apart from my father, thinking he was part of this giant, wonderful military thing when in fact he wasn't, and that they were divorced and they didn't tell me. I don't know. These are kinds of things that I think probably at the time I didn't realize but later I kind of thought something was wrong there, or there was some-- I don't think it would be uncommon, let's say, especially during the war, that you wouldn't necessarily feel obligated to tell a kid seven or eight years old that you're divorced. I mean, why not spare him that? But in retrospect it just seemed like a kind of-- I didn't want to have to hear that from this maiden aunt. I needed to hear it from them.

LEHMER: You mentioned, I think it was in Glendale, you lived with a friend. You lived with a family whose son was a very close friend of yours.

HEINECKEN: Jack Davis. That was his name. That just popped into my mind.



LEHMER: Jack Davis. Well, maybe you can think about it, but I'm curious about other friends you had and what kind of relationships you had with them and what you did.

HEINECKEN: The implication here, which-- I never said it. I mean, I'm an only child. I think for me that breeds a kind of independence and also takes away any opportunity to use brothers and sisters as a familial device or-- You know, brothers and sisters enjoy something that no one else who doesn't have them ever gets. And I don't think I miss that, but I think it makes you self-centered. In my case, I think reading and fantasizing about reading-- fantasizing about everything and constructing your own internal world--can be beneficial, but it also isolates you from-- I mean, I think basically you're a colder person, because you don't grow up with the sense of-- And I had cousins or whatever, but I never saw them or anything. So that's important. If anything would stand out, it's that kind of notion. I don't know how to express it more clearly, but--

LEHMER: A form of survival based on independence or a form of independence based on--

HEINECKEN: Well, for me, it's a horrible thing to say, but I think I could probably do without most of the things that I have. I'd get by. I mean if Joy [Joyce Neimanas]





died it would be awful, but I'd get by. I mean, I adapt to things.

My whole childhood, the period of time with my mother in Iowa without my father and with this familial problem, I remember being just completely in my own world most of the time. I had these soldiers. I would recreate whatever the current World War II stuff going on was. I was just absolutely focused on the order and the-- These soldiers had to be the same scale. In other words, if I got a soldier that wasn't in scale, it would not work. I mean, that soldier was gone--right?--because it throws the whole thing out of kilter. I'm very much like that now, as you know. Things are on the surface very disorganized, as is my mind, but underneath that is this acute sense of--

LEHMER: Order.

HEINECKEN: --order and obsession with not knowing where all-- Well, knowing where all these pictures are and who has them is a very unusual kind of obsession. I mean, most people-- Like I was talking with Robert Frank last night about something like this, and he has no idea where these pictures-- Nor does he give a shit where they are [laughs], which is quite different than my-- And I think it's a kind of-- When you say that, it's an admission of not guilt, it's an admission of a weakness in relation to



what you make. It's as if they're your children and you want to know where they are. But that's silly. But that's the way I am.



TAPE NUMBER: II, SIDE ONE

MARCH 9, 1996

LEHMER: Why don't we start with talking about what you were mentioning about flight.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Well, as I said, probably everybody has certain experiences that they can always remember and always try to put value on. But in my case, basically, which we have already sort of covered up until, let's say, when I'm twenty-one years old or whatever-- When I went into the service I had flunked out of school. I was, for my age, quasi-alcoholic. I had no goals, no nothing, except to keep moving somehow. So you go from that state of mind to eighteen months later when I'm commissioned in the Marine Corps. I got my wings, and I'm completely confident, completely ready to do whatever life is going to be.

LEHMER: That's when you were second lieutenant?

HEINECKEN: Right. So you know that you've got four years that I'm going to be in the service. Eighteen months have passed, and that's all the training. Then you got two and a half years of active service to do and four more years in the reserves. In my case, I did it for a total of thirteen years. But the confidence that comes from a program like that is invaluable. Even now in the sense



that-- You can't say being able to fly a jet fighter has anything to do with being an artist except there is something to it about confidence and knowing that you can be put up against certain daily problems. Every day is a problem when you get into that airplane. It's never perfect. So out of all that you have a great deal of confidence in yourself to be able to figure out those kinds of things, not necessarily a philosophical or intellectual thing. But it is striking to me that in that short period of time they just take you raw and they make something out of you. It's amazing. Or if they can't make you, you're out.

LEHMER: When you said "life threatening," can you be more specific? I mean, crossing the street is life threatening. Going to work--

HEINECKEN: Well, there were two situations, both of which-- I could have been killed. I mean definitely. It was just that close. So I did the right things in both instances. But right up until the last moment of getting out of the situation, you don't know. I don't know if I mentioned this, but in one of these things-- You're on the radio all the time with the people, and they have the tapes. I'm praying and I'm screaming like, "Get me out of this and I'll do this and I'll--" Which I had no idea I was saying. But when you sit down and play the tape,





you're saying, "Who's that idiot talking?" And that's you talking, right? That was amazing to me. I have no memory of that, because you're just panicked. You're thinking you're going to die. And so you fall back suddenly on what? Twenty years before that you would have had this notion that there was a life after death and that you had to be a good person. So that's just an aside on all this, but--

LEHMER: Well, to try to clarify that a little more, because I'm sure it's--

HEINECKEN: On both of these occasions the person flying in the other airplane with me is dead.

LEHMER: So let's back up just a hair. As an outsider I don't have a clear picture of what you're talking about. Obviously you're in a plane, and you're piloting a plane. But beyond that I don't know what's going on. Did you stall or--?

HEINECKEN: Okay. Well, it's a long story. I don't know if you want to go through the whole thing. I can tell you very briefly. If you want to talk about it in more depth I can do that, too. But these incidents only pertain, I think, to a sense of confidence or whatever I'm trying to convey about going from one kind of adolescent frame of mind very quickly into a mature state of mind as it regards the job of being a naval aviator, jet fighter



pilot, which is a difficult job for anybody to do. But I'll make it very, very short. It's a long story.

But anyway, there's a mid-air collision with my wingman [D.R. Roland]. So there are four airplanes; you have two here and two here. And we're practicing this dogfighting stuff. So he runs into me--a lot of technical stuff that comes with this--but basically what happens is that my airplane goes out of control immediately after the crash, and we're at, I think, 25,000 feet. We're going like 300 knots in this maneuvering stuff when this occurs. The next thing that I know is that I'm at about 10,000 feet. The airplane is like a leaf. It's just like a leaf--no control, nothing. And I get it stabilized, so it's flying. But it's flying crooked because the whole tail of the airplane--not the whole tail, but most of the tail--is missing where the other airplane has basically hit the tail and hit the canopy of my airplane. So what happened is as soon as that impact [happened], the canopy comes off of my airplane because it's smashed, which means three or four things happen simultaneously. One, I got a concussion from where the canopy hit my helmet. So I got that.

LEHMER: When you're talking about the canopy, you're talking about the window over the--?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. It's the one big unit of glass.



There's a windshield, and then the canopy meets that.

LEHMER: Got you.

HEINECKEN: So that goes off.

LEHMER: Are you under air pressure then?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. You go from a pressurized situation of about 8,000 or 10,000 feet-- First, one of the things that happens is called explosive decompression, which means that your body suddenly goes from the pressurized state at 8,000 or 10,000 feet to 25,000. You get a big flash of light in your head, and your bowels empty, and your bladder empties immediately. Just everything goes out. That's part of the fear, I think, of the decompression. At the same time, I lose my helmet, which has the oxygen in it and has the radio where you're speaking, and the earphones are in the helmet. So that's gone, which means you're sitting then not only in a-- And it's cold, I mean definitely cold, and you've got the head banging. You've got an airplane out of control, basically.

But anyway, I get it under control, and it's flying. My wingman comes up, not the wingman that hit me, but the third guy [Patrick Guillfoyle]. He comes up next to me because the thing is just wobbling like a leaf and whatever. Because he can see I've got no hat and whatever, he gives me a hand signal, which is like this [gestures with hand] to eject. Everything in aviation has



a hand signal for it, because often you don't have radio or don't have-- I'm thinking, "Yeah." But it's a big deal to eject. Even though you're trained to do it, you know you're going to do it, it's a big move to get out with at least some kind of safety in this airplane. So anyway, the ejection handle is down here, and I pull the handle. The whole thing just came off in my hand. It didn't fire. So he's still giving me this [gestures with hand], because he's seeing the airplane is not going to fly. So I showed him the handle. Jesus Christ. This yellow handle light doesn't go out, it stays. The first inch or so after you pull, the canopy blows off. The canopy is now gone anyway. The second inch or two would be the explosives that fire the seat out. But none of that happens because the system is damaged by the mid-air, and the canopy's gone and whatever. So that's out, and we both know that.

The only thing to do is to try to land it, and we're out in the desert behind Palmdale [California]. And the fourth airplane-- Well, there are terms for this, but the other guy dispatches to the crash site to see what happened there, so he's gone. I don't hear any of this, but they're talking. That other guy alerts the helicopters out of Edwards Air Force Base, because that's what we're near. And so let's just say I didn't know this, but he confirms that that airplane has crashed, and





he sees the parachute on the ground, but he can't see the pilot. He's out of gas by that time because he's been flying around looking for this crash site, so he goes back to El Toro [Marine Corps Air Station]. But anyway, they got the helicopters out there, and they confirmed later the guy is dead. That's the guy who ran into me. The fourth guy goes back to El Toro. The third guy is the guy that's with me who's an experienced person just like I am. The other two were junior people and not as experienced. So we head to Mojave [Marine Corps Air Station], which is an urgency kind of landing thing out there. These are all technical things, but normally if everything is working you fly in low over the field, you brake, and land. But whenever you get any damage, especially if you have a flameout, which means no engine, you make a modified thing--

LEHMER: Okay, because it's a jet.

HEINECKEN: You come over at maybe 8,000 feet over where you're going to land and then just make a very gradual, long approach with the engine at idle, so that if it fails you're still in the position to glide in and make a safe landing. It's called a flameout approach. You practice that all the time. It's one of the things that you can do. But the difference here is now we got the airplane--  
Okay, after I showed him the handle, we're figuring



it out. So I figure, well, we're going to land it somehow, or try to.

LEHMER: There is no way that you can get out with a chute on your back?

HEINECKEN: No. No, you go right into the tail. It cuts you in half. You can't bail out of any jet; it has to be an ejection situation. So we're heading back to Mojave, but there are a couple of things that come up in my mind. One is that I know the seat's on because the canopy's off. I know that the ejection didn't work but that the seat is definitely charged, because once that handle is out you've got a live explosive in there. But it's not triggered, which is what fires the seat out. It's a very heavy charge-- I mean, it's a big charge thing. So anyway, I know that there is no way that I can get out of the airplane, but I know that the seat is-- I'm getting ahead of it a little bit.

The first thing I do is I drop the landing gear. And again, simply because that's now a new configuration for the airplane, it loses more altitude, but I get that stabilized. Then the next thing that you would do is to drop the flaps, which gives you added lift for landing. So I dropped the flaps. All of this has to do with the aerodynamics of the air over the tail. Anytime you change the gear or the flaps, you're putting a new lift-drag



ratio over the wings. So again it drops another 5,000 feet, because the flaps are disturbing what would ordinarily be a normal air flow, even though the thing's crooked. He's staying with me all the time doing the same stuff. He's right there watching it all and trying to figure it out. He's talking to Mojave, obviously, about what's happening. Anyway, I got the flaps up, so again I've got a stable airplane. I think by that time we're probably over the field, and I'm in this wide approach to the landing.

But then the problem comes up that the seat is charged. Normally, you land this airplane at about 125 knots or something. Now, the airplane doesn't fly below about 170 knots--way too fast really for a normal landing. You practice landings with no flaps, but you never actually try to complete the landing. You touch down. You know what speed you need with that, but you just take off again and you go around. It's not anything that you would want to complete, because it doesn't make any sense.

So anyway, I recalled that, or it flashed in my mind that, [there were] two incidents within the past month with this same type of airplane, one on the carrier and one not, where they had a charged seat for whatever reasons, and both times, because the landings were hard-- I forget what happened, but in both cases the seat went



off because the landing was much harder and much faster than normal. So I'm thinking, "Well, I don't have any choice about that. When it lands, it's either going to fire the seat or not." But there are these other two instances, and what happens there is the seat just goes out of the airplane. The airplane keeps going, and you die because there is no chute opening or anything like that. It just fires it out, and you're going a couple of hundred miles an hour and you die. So that was one option that could happen. I thought probably it would. But it didn't. It didn't.

Well, the other thing is that you've got a problem with the runway, which is an emergency runway, I think 4,000 feet, and normally you want 6,000 feet. So I know in some emergency fields they'll actually have wires like they have on the carrier which they can raise, and others have foam things that they put out so that there's no fire. Others have big nets that you fly into that actually stop you like on the old carriers and stuff like that. But none of that's there; it's just this emergency strip. The problem of this is how to get the airplane, if this is the runway, as close to here so you have as much runway as possible but not short of the runway, obviously.

So he's flying with me. And I just face the thing. If the seat fires, it doesn't matter. The airplane's





going to go somewhere down there, and it's not going to kill anybody or whatever. But that didn't happen.

Then the second thing that I know is going to happen is that the tires will probably blow at that air speed, because they're not made to actually brake. So if they don't blow, that's okay, but I can't brake at that speed, because if I brake--

LEHMER: You blow--

HEINECKEN: Well, I can. The tires will just go, and then you have no traction. You're trained to think about all this, but this is all happening in seconds.

So anyway, the tires did blow on landing. I did try to brake it, and it did, in a sense, slow down. I shut the engine off, and that helps a little bit, so I have no power. And it went all the way down the runway, off of the end of the runway, into the sand, but not at a very high speed by that time. The nose gear collapsed, and the airplane is just sitting on the sand--very embarrassing on one level, this whole thing. It seemed like there was one other possibility in there that was also threatening.

But anyway--the truck comes out, and they get me and eventually tow the airplane off. Meanwhile, the other pilot has to go around. He can't get back to El Toro; he doesn't have enough gas. So he has to make about--I think they told me--two or three passes waiting to get my



airplane out of the way. Because you don't want to land no matter what when you've got an airplane at the end. If something goes wrong, you're going to hit that. Finally he did land with the airplane still there. I was out of it. It's so short. But anyway, he landed it.

LEHMER: So he's got a threat, too.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. It's not a big deal, but you just don't land. They won't let you land with an airplane sitting out there, but they have to because he's got nowhere else to go. So that's the one situation.

This whole thing didn't take as long as it takes to talk about it. The whole thing is like two or three minutes. I mean, things are happening like that [knocks]. It's just all procedural logic which you're trained with. If this does this, then you do this. If that does that, then you do this, and so on. It's rogue in a sense. But all this was new. You practice all this stuff, but it's different when-- And plus the problem of the thing is the airplane is so screwy this way. It's like I know the airplane's path is going to be like this on the runway, but the airplane is cocked this way, which means you might shear the landing gear. Well, the airplane won't fly this way. Half the tail is gone, so the only way it flies is at this kind of a cocked angle.

LEHMER: You were attacking?



HEINECKEN: Yeah, you could call it that. But anyway, I get it down right here, so that it has 100, maybe 200 feet wide before it goes off the side. Because you can't steer it. You steer it with the brakes, if anything. I mean, you could tap one brake, but there's no brakes, no traction.

The one thing I forgot, which is also very weird, is that you're sitting in this airplane which is going like initially 250 knots down to 170 or something like that, but because it's cocked you got this 200 mile[s per hour] wind going right through the cockpit. Normally the windshield screen would wrap the airflow around you. All this time I'm sitting over at one side, because if I'm in the middle where you should be, you've got all this, you know-- The airflow blows your head off. That whole thing was just like-- I could shut my eyes and see it. You just never forget it.

Plus this guy dies, which was a bad thing. There is another whole story about that, but-- I don't know today whether I did anything that really did cause this. I mean, I was absolved of it. And you're never absolved of it. As flight leader, if anything happens in your flight you get a percentage of pilot error just automatically. But they finally assign, I don't know, 80 percent pilot error on the other guy's fault, some small percentage on



me, and another percentage on the operations officer who put this guy into this flight at the last minute. Because when I was preparing to brief the flight, one guy that was scheduled was sick or-- I don't know. Something happened to him and he didn't show up. So they got two standby pilots who were both second lieutenants with less experience than the two of us. So the operation officer picked this guy to be my wingman, the guy who hit me ultimately, and he didn't take the other guy. This is another decision that people make. You've got two standby pilots. They're both equal in some sense. This guy is maybe four or five hours of a certain type more experienced than this guy, but he doesn't take this guy and put him in my flight because he thinks he needs this guy in the next flight, which goes out an hour later, so he puts the least experienced person into this flight. So he gets assigned 20 percent supervisor error or something like that, which goes on his record. They have to come up with 100 percent, right? That's just the way they do it. Like even now, pilot error, always, no matter what happens-- But--

LEHMER: Well, in my mind there are two things that--

HEINECKEN: These are not unusual things, by the way. This is unusual because it's me. It happens all the time like this. This is very serious because of the mid-air





thing. But during this time period, if you took four airplanes up, which was what we would do typically, two of them would lose the radios, one would lose hydraulic power. None of these were bad things, they just happened. But the airplanes are old. You know, you fly TWA [Trans World Airlines]. That airplane lands with two or three systems that have gone, but their backup systems have taken-- You know, it doesn't worry you, because that's the way it is. But the fighter is a very complicated machine. And these were old airplanes, actually. They had just come back from Korea.

LEHMER: Well, I want to see if you can expand on this. There are two things that are going through your head in a sense when you survive this. One is, "Thank God." You never know how you're going to react in a crisis. You were able to keep your head enough to survive, and I think that, like you say, follows you for the rest of your life. You know that given a crisis there's a good chance you're going to be able to figure your way through it. But the second thing is that a fellow pilot lost his life, and you were spared. And these are two very different things, but I think of them as very important. One builds a lot of confidence. Like you say, if you can think your way through this or if you could survive this and not completely freeze up, you figure you can handle just about



anything, I would imagine.

HEINECKEN: Yes. It's not necessarily, as I was saying, transferable to intellectual or emotional qualities. But I suppose in some sense some people, if they were religious, would say, "Well, God saved me." That wasn't the situation with me. The point is I could have frozen and not done anything and just died. That happens sometimes; you just don't know what to do. Very fortunately, I had this wingman who-- Because I had no radio. If I didn't have him, the people wouldn't even know I'm coming there. They wouldn't have had a fire truck or anything like that. Suddenly an airplane would appear, which is just--

LEHMER: So when you're on the ground, when you're out of the plane, you were probably in a physical state of shock, but do you have any sense of how you felt with those two emotions? Or were there other emotions that I haven't mentioned?

HEINECKEN: I wouldn't have been able to recount it without having recounted it over and over to these people so that we know how to prevent it. And actually the next day I showed up-- There was always an accident investigation team like this made up of your squadron, or sometimes it will be higher-level people. So they showed up, and then also the representatives from Grumman



[Aircraft Engineering Corporation], who make the airplanes, showed up, because the airplane shouldn't have been flying the way it was. I mean, it should have just crashed with what was missing from it. So they were very interested to see the airplane and make photographs and test the metal and all that. Because this would be like the only time, let's say, that you have a particular airplane with a particular damage where they can say, "Well, okay, this one flew at x knots per hour with x damage." This is important that they know that, because it's part of the engineering of an airplane and things like that. So that was really important to them. And of course, the accident people want to figure out what happens to prevent this sort of thing. That's why they're assigning percentages of error to all people involved in it, including this officer who did nothing but assign this guy to this flight.

But there are things like--which is something you learn--actual dogfighting situations that you're involved in. The two of us are fighting this other pair. And then you switch advantage, and that's what we're practicing to do. So you're talking to the other people, but if you're really in combat you're probably on different frequencies than we were using. But when I say something, if I don't want the other section to hear me, then I'm on another



frequency with my wingman. And I think that's what we were on. I can't recall exactly. So there's a cadence. Well, I think Love Willie was caller. Anyway, I'd say, "Love Willie 2, this is 1." He puts in that he's listening, he knows I'm calling him. And then he has a cadence where in this case you'd say, "Brake [knock] right [knock] now [knock]," which means we're going to turn, hard-turn brake. We're going to turn right and now. It's the cadence that you anticipate. So first he hears "brake [knock]." He knows we're going to turn hard. "Right [knock]." We're going to right. "Now [knock]." So it's [knock knock knock]. You hear that second [knock] word, the cadence of the third word [knock], you go. You hear the word, but you go at the same time. So you can't say, "Brake [knock] right [knock, pause] now [knock]," because the cadence is off. Or you can't say, "Brake [knock, pause] right [knock] now [knock]." Follow what I'm saying?

LEHMER: Yes.

HEINECKEN: And this is something you learn.

LEHMER: How do you set that up? Do you set it up by saying "brake" or--?

HEINECKEN: You're just telling this other guy, because if-- And this is the problem. And it's like he's here [gestures]. Here are the wings. He has to maintain a





position which has clearance this way, a couple of feet and down and a couple of feet back, so that he can move this way or this way and never run into anything. And you're doing that all the time. You're doing up, down, around-- So I'm telling him we're going to brake right, which is into him. He knows that. And on that cadence, then he knows I'm going to move, and it's going to be fast. His job is to maintain the position of his airplane relative to mine no matter what it's doing. He's not even looking at anything except me, and he has to maintain that position. Well, the guys who saw it said that it looked like instead of somehow where you're like this, okay, now this airplane is going to turn, and because of this cadence, you're going to turn right at the same time, because you know that cadence, somehow he got up in here and tried to go over the top or something like that. It was a mistake on his part. But it depends on how it was executed. How was the cadence? Was he trained enough? Too bad. But the nose of his airplane hit my canopy because he was sitting back here. The wing of his airplane hit the tail, which is where the damage was. So those two points of impact--one blew the canopy off, the other blew part of the tail off. And because his wing is gone, his airplane just goes. They never did figure out-- I guess his ejection seat did fire, but it was too low for



the parachute to open and survive it. He never got out of the seat. Normally you're in the seat, the parachute opens, you get yourself out, you drop the seat so you're just in the chute. But he was still in the seat, so it killed him. That's why they saw the parachute, but they couldn't find the seat, or they didn't see him because he was still in the seat.

LEHMER: Okay. Before we go on--

HEINECKEN: The other one we don't need to go into, just a different situation where I said I started praying and whatever, was something that took probably eight to ten minutes. You have time there to start screaming and get paranoid, because you're not doing anything really in this second instance except waiting for something to happen, and you're running out of fuel. And the alternatives when that happens are pretty nil. So that's a different situation. I'm saying that because the thing I just described, it's all like two minutes at least. It couldn't be longer than that. You don't have time to think about anything; you're just doing stuff. The other one was different than that, but in both instances people died, which was-- Well, it's real. I think in the eighteen months that I was in that squadron I think we lost about eight people.

LEHMER: Out of how many?



HEINECKEN: Probably thirty, something like that. That varied. Twenty-four, thirty.

LEHMER: So you're talking about almost a third.

HEINECKEN: Is it a third? Yeah. And that's normal. I don't know whether they have a better rate now. Probably they do.

This is another story which I like very much. When you go into this situation, you have already enlisted. You're a naval aviation cadet, which is a position. You're not an enlisted man, but you're not an officer. You're a cadet like a midshipman. They march you, shave your head, get you all sort of looking the same, and march into this auditorium. This is my memory of it, one of those things which I may exaggerate or have exaggerated. There's maybe thirty of us or something like that in this class. We don't know each other. We're just lined up in there. The naval air training is all handled by the Marine Corps. You have naval officers who were in charge of it, but the drill sergeants and the people that are working you in pre-flight school are all marines, and they're tough. They're regular drill instructor types like you have seen in any of those movies. I mean, it's real. These guys are just-- Their job is to dehumanize you, make you into a working person along the lines that they want. That's the whole thing.



LEHMER: A working machine.

HEINECKEN: That's all they're going to do. So anyway, this master sergeant comes out on stage and introduces himself. He's the senior enlisted man in charge of this detachment. He says, "I'm going to introduce you to colonel so-and-so, and when he appears I'll call you to attention. You'll stand up and try to look like some decent human--" Meanwhile I'm saying, "Motherfucker," you know. "You'll stand up. And when he tells you to sit down, you sit down, and you listen to him."

So this guy appears. He's got his swagger stick. He's a lieutenant colonel, aviator, Marine Corps, eighty thousand rolls of ribbons, and he just looks like the real thing to me. He tells us to sit down. And he says, "I'm colonel so-and-so. I'm in charge of the pre-flight school. This sergeant is running your life now." You know, this kind of thing. He said, "You'll never see me again. You'll see me only once more under two different circumstances." He says, "One, I have to see all the cadets that drop out voluntarily, so you might see me there." No, it's different than that. He says, "Well, the other situation you'll see me in is when you graduate. You'll see me. I'll be up in the front. This is it. You'll never see me again. You'll see this master sergeant. You may see another officer, but not me." I mean, he's





telling it the way that is.

So he says, "Look at the man on your right." Some were looking, and the sergeant says something like, "The colonel says, 'Every man look to the right.'" And his voice, it means he's going to come out and beat you with this stick or something. You look over here at this guy next to you. You're seeing the back of his head. The colonel said, "The man you're looking at will drop out of this program or be washed out. He'll drop out voluntarily, or we'll wash him out."

"Now look to the man on your left." You look over here, and you're looking at the back of somebody else's head, and he said, "This man will be dead. In the four years that you're going to be in the service, this man will be dead. And if we're in combat, that will go up." So he said, "One-third of you will be gone from the program, one-third of you in four years will be dead."

These are the statistics. They know this. First of all, they know they're going to wash out one-third because they have taken two-thirds--I mean, they've taken a number of people that they're going to eliminate down to 66 percent. "We're going to get rid of the weakest candidates from the situation." That's clear. That's a fixed statistic. The other statistic is real.

So you think, "Well, this guy is going to drop out,



this guy is going to be dead, but I'm going to make it." But the other guy's looking at you. It's a beautiful kind of catch-22 thing that the colonel has set up for you. It doesn't occur to you what he's talking about until you see the situation. I don't know whether he did that with all the people, but it was just like-- Then you got it. So you either accept that even if everything goes right you've got a one-third chance of dying because of the nature of the work. If it's combat, it's higher than that. And a third of them are going to be gone, they're going to be back doing something else. I liked it. It was very clear.

LEHMER: Let me back up. I have some follow-up questions from last week. I think what I want to do is handle them at the end.

HEINECKEN: Well, I'm sorry to divert from that.

LEHMER: No. But this is really important. I have a question in relation to this. Something that has come to mind is you were probably a few months out of that UCLA program when you went in this? No. Two years. You went back to Riverside [City College], and went two years to school there and got your A.A. degree. Last week, you mentioned that you just weren't ready for UCLA or prepared for it. You weren't mature enough, or emotionally you weren't sure. Can you expand on that, explore that in



your head as to what the reasons might be for that return to Riverside? Just kind of briefly, can we explore the UCLA experience, the summer out of high school?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. That's not so clear to me, because it was a short three months. It was a summer thing. I know I had regular summer school courses. I presume that I failed these courses. I know that I probably just didn't go to class. It wasn't something that went on your records necessarily, because, as I told you, it's kind of like to put you in a situation where you were sort of going to real classes and you were living wherever you were living. It was like a camp or something to kind of-- Anyway, I just couldn't do it. I don't remember why or-- I was just too young, I think. Too big of a place, away from home, all of which seemed good, but I just couldn't concentrate, I guess, or I was just outclassed or something. I guess everybody only does it once, or not everybody-- But you go from high school into college. It depends on what the college is, how savvy the college is in regards to freshmen. So this is like this: Podunk high school to a very big, high-class university, and I couldn't do it. I don't know why. It was academic problems.

LEHMER: You feel like Riverside-- You just weren't prepared? They didn't prepare you for--?



HEINECKEN: Well, it certainly wasn't their fault. I took all the courses, I got the grades. I told you the grades were easy. I presume I was not intellectually or emotionally stable enough to do this. I made that choice. I mean, I was discouraged, I think, but I knew I just couldn't do that. So that's why I went back to Riverside. I'm just guessing now. Obviously that's going to be an easier situation because you're comfortable there. It's a small college, your friends are there. You're not like at UCLA.

LEHMER: But you didn't drop out of school?

HEINECKEN: No, I didn't. It wasn't something that ever showed up, I think, on my records. It was like a trial situation or an indoctrination.

LEHMER: But when you went back to Riverside, you went back into school, not necessarily to work in a garage as a mechanic or--?

HEINECKEN: No, no. I went back directly into the junior college.

LEHMER: So you weren't giving up the academic pursuit?

HEINECKEN: No.





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HEINECKEN: So probably in June I went to start this program. I don't know how long I was there--maybe a month, maybe two--but by the time of the fall semester beginning I was back in Riverside enrolled in the junior college. There is another factor in here which would come up anyway. This is now the fall of 1949. A year, maybe less, into junior college, the Korean War starts in July 1950, so it's been a year after that. Well, immediately-- I don't know whether they started it prior to that even, but certainly by the time that Korea broke out--the draft was reintroduced. So everybody my age and obviously older and younger were in the draft. Everybody who was in college got a deferment. The second year of the junior college I was deferred because I was in college, along with thousands of other people. But within that year, I would say 50, 60 percent of all of the men classmates in my high school class who didn't go to college went to Korea. They went in the army, and a very high percentage of those people were killed--very high. This is true all over the country, obviously. So it was the college thing that was always-- I mean, there are good reasons why they deferred people to go to college, but it's not really very



good unless you're going to be a doctor or something like that. But anyway, that was the way the policy was, and still is as far as that goes, I guess. So you're under that situation, because that's critical to the next phase of this, which I think fits at this point.

So the second year of junior college I transfer to UCLA.

LEHMER: At the end of your second year?

HEINECKEN: Yes. Now I'm like a junior or whatever. I've had all the lower-division courses except-- Basically I don't think I took that many art courses, maybe one or two, because there just wasn't room for that in this-- You know, the first two years at any university it's mostly academic stuff. So again I got all A's or whatever.

I go to UCLA only to discover pretty quickly that again I was in over my head pretty bad. I remember I took two years of German, and I had to have a third year of German, and they were speaking like-- I mean, I wasn't even in the ballpark. Yeah, I had two A's from this junior college, but I needed the third German class. So that was a problem. I had to drop that. I don't know whether I was probably going to Spanish, which I knew better, or something like that. But it was true of all the classes I took. I really had to fight to even stay in the ballpark. This was not emotional or whatever. This



was just pure lack of capacity to deal with the courses on the level compared to the junior college. And I think a lot of people still have that problem. You get people from some junior college into UCLA with decent grades, but then the trouble starts.

Anyway, I did the first year. I got through that. I'd have to look back at this, but I was put on probation for a year, I suppose, or a semester or something like that. This gets more vague for me. But the result is that after a year and a semester it's clear that I'm not going to be able to continue. I think I had two probations. I'd get back a little bit, but then it wouldn't work out. And this was the art classes as well as the academic classes. So I'm at that point. This would have been, let's say, the early spring of 1951. I get my draft notice, because they had been notified that I'm no longer in the university. Meanwhile, I didn't tell my parents any of this, which was stupid. So I'm ready to be drafted into the army, and I suppose I would have told my parents then, certainly, but as far as they are concerned I am ensconced at UCLA and doing fine.

LEHMER: So this isn't a summer after your first year?

HEINECKEN: No. What would have been my fourth year of school never really happened. I may have gone back briefly or something like that. But certainly by February



or something like that it's clear than I'm not going to get a deferment. I finally got letters that said that "You will be inducted on such and such a date," which was about two months down the line. So I was ready for that, which was not that rare. I mean, a lot of people in the same situation were losing their deferments for whatever reasons or graduating and then having to go in the service.

I don't know whether you want this story, because it's also long. What happens is I've got these two friends [Jeff Clark and Lee Weitzel], both of which are graduating from UCLA at that time. I don't know whether I was living with these guys or what-- I was sort of itinerant, but anyway, I had been out of school. I was parking cars at like Ciro's restaurant and those wonderful bars, nightclubs, in L.A. making a lot of money, gambling a lot, drinking a lot. It was like a perfect life, because I knew I was going to go into the army. So these two friends, they explain to me that they were going to go down and go into this flight training program or inquire about it or whatever, because they have graduated, or they are going to graduate. And I decide to go along with them. And I point this out because it's just the way things were. We decided we had to be there at like maybe Monday morning at eight o'clock or something.





So we sort of drank our way down Sepulveda Boulevard all the way to Long Beach. We show up there, I guess it was the day before, and we were just wiped out. It was just terrible. I remember that. We all got into a motel someplace and showed up in this place at seven or eight o'clock in the morning. To make this short, both of these guys flunk out. I mean, they don't pass the test. And I go along with the ride; it's like a joke to me. I'm just going to go down there and see what happens and whatever. One guy fails the medical test, and the other one fails-- I don't know. After two or three days, you stay there. They're gone, and I'm left there, and I didn't even want to be down there. I'm down there because these guys led me down there. I just stayed with it, and pretty soon they said, "Well, you're eligible for this program. Come back in like four days, and we'll finish up the serious medical exams and all the stuff. We'll enlist in four days," or something like that. So I'm thinking this is a wonderful thing that I escaped all of these problems.

I'm now in this program, which I know is going to be difficult. But the deal was that if you flunk out of the flight program-- First of all, you sign up for four years, right? If you flunk out of this program you become an enlisted person in the navy, and you serve out your four years that way. You might go to Korea, but you're going



to be on a boat or something. You're not going to be in the mud-- So it wasn't a bad deal even if you flunked out. You still had to do four years of military service, but it will not be so dangerous, I think. Anyway, a lot of people were doing it because it was a good deal.

Then there is another whole story which probably we don't need to go into. But getting past the physical exam-- I have perfect health, but I'm a quarter of an inch too short for this program. And nobody picked it up in this first go-around, the first four days. Then there's an extensive medical thing coming, and another set of intelligence tests and stuff like that before they actually will accept you. It's a complicated story. Do you want to hear it?

LEHMER: Yeah.

HEINECKEN: Might as well. We'll lose this whole day, as far as I'm concerned.

LEHMER: Let's do it.

HEINECKEN: Let me think of the sequence of things. At some point I run up against this situation where the technician's measuring me. I'm five foot five and three-quarter [inches], which is actually what I am, or was. The limit is five foot six [inches]. Later I learned in the Marine Corps they don't like it because you're too short. You don't look good when you're in the line with



all the other people, and that's the macho deal. But at this point it was you had to be five foot six. The reasoning was something to do with the airplane. Like if you were shorter than that, you would have difficulty, which I actually did run into later. In some airplanes I couldn't see out of them, or I couldn't reach the rudders. I always had to have the parachute guys build up a thing that would put me higher and closer in, which makes it easier to reach these things. Anyway, so I've got five foot six. Somehow that gets on the records, but then, that was the first medical stuff.

Now I'm back for the second thing, and I'm being measured by an enlisted corpsman. The navy guy is saying, "You're five foot five and three-quarters. You're not eligible for this program." I'm saying, "What?" This is just unheard of for me. They think I'm fat. So he said, "No, everything else is okay." But he said, "You can't make it. It's just the rules." So I'm telling him my whole story and whatever, and he said, "I don't want to hear this." He said, "It's now four thirty. I'm going off duty. You're going to be here all night. A new guy will come in in the morning. I'll just leave this part blank. You just tell him that you only got up to prior to the height-weight phase of this, and he'll pick it up from there. And he'll tell you the same thing, but at least



I'm not going to kick you out. This is the way it is."

So I'm in the infirmary overnight worrying about this, knowing that my plan is all shot to hell. I'm back down in the mud again. It occurred to me--and this is really weird--but I've got to get a quarter of an inch taller. It did come up, as he said, sometimes when you lay down overnight you get maybe a sixteenth taller. There's no way you're going to get a quarter of an inch. To make this story short, I'm staying overnight in the infirmary, and there's medicine stuff there and a bunch of magazines. So I got this knife or scissors. I got gauze. I got tape. I got the magazines. I cut out my footprints out of these magazines till they were at least a quarter of an inch, wrapped them with gauze with an adhesive tape, and taped them to my feet. Because I noticed the day before, you didn't take off your socks. You're down to your skivvy shorts and your socks. For whatever reason, they don't want you walking around getting dirty feet or whatever. So I figured, okay, I can wear my socks through the whole thing. It's worth a try. What are they going to do? They're not going to court-martial me. They're just going to throw me out, anyway. So I spent all night on this project. Somehow I got out of the building. I took all the scraps and everything, I got all that out into some kind of bag and out of the building somehow so I





didn't have any of that stuff around.

The next day, the new corpsman comes in, the doctors come in, and we start this thing. He said, "Well, the first thing we do the height-weight thing. I guess that's where they left off, right?" And I said, "Right." So they do the height-weight thing. I'm five foot six. I'm 142 pounds or whatever, which is okay. The doctor is looking at all the other things. At some point, the guy says, "All right. The next thing is going to be--" I think I had already had the blood pressure test, which was sort of okay but a little high or something, but it was okay. And he says, "Okay, the next thing is we're going to test your blood pressure again, which we're sure is going to be okay, and then you go in and the doctor will examine your feet. And then you will go to this--" And I'm thinking, "The doctor is going to examine my feet?" [laughs] "Well, what's he examining my feet for?" And he said, "You know, just to see whether the bone structure is right. Everybody passes it, no problem." Well, Jesus, you know.

So he says, "Okay. Lay down on the bunk here. The doctor will come in and check your blood pressure, and then you'll go on." So he said, "We'll leave you there about twenty minutes, so that everything will stabilize." Well, in the twenty minutes my blood pressure-- I can just



feel my heart pounding. I'm thinking, "What are they going to do to me?" Because this is probably a serious thing I'm doing here, but I can't change it. It occurs to me, okay, I've got like twenty minutes here. I've got my socks on, I've got the magazines, but the next thing is the foot exam. I get out of the bed, and there's a john adjacent to the room. I take all the magazines off, all the tape, all the shit, put it in the toilet, flush the toilet, and jump back in the bed. The guy comes in, puts the thing on me, and I got a blood pressure which is like 8,000, you know. [laughs] And the doctor said, "I don't-- What's going on?" I said, "I'm really kind of nervous about this whole thing." He said, "Well, there's nothing-- Your blood pressure is okay, but it's very elevated. I don't--" I said, "I'm just upset about this thing." And he said, "Okay. We'll give you another twenty minutes. Just relax. It will be okay."

So at that point, the doctor goes into the john, and I hear this shriek. And the doctor is saying, "Corpsman, get your ass in here." The guy is like, "What?" And he says, "What is all this shit in here?" You know, I didn't look at it, but all the stuff I had put in had come back out of the toilet. The corpsman is in there, and he comes back out and says, "The toilet is backed up with something weird. The fucking thing is full of magazine scraps. I



don't get it." And I'm just like, "I'm dead. I'm dead."  
[laughs] Oh, God, it was just-- So they get this squared  
away. And the doctor is screaming at this corpsman. He's  
saying, "I'm going to get your ass. Somebody is fucking  
with this toilet with these magazines, and it's your ass.  
You're going to answer to this." I said, "I don't know."  
I'm back here trying to physically make my heart stop  
pumping like that, but it didn't work. The guy said,  
"They want you." He said, "All right. I'm going to give  
you another day here." He said, "What you've got to do is  
to get yourself under control." Meanwhile they did my  
feet, so that was okay. "The only thing stopping you is  
the blood pressure, and we know that your blood pressure  
is normal." The next morning they come in. I beat this,  
because I just know I've got to do this somehow. So I  
pass this whole thing. Amazing, but--

So everyplace after that I've got on my records x  
pounds and five foot six, which-- You know, you have to be  
five foot six. Over the next thirteen years, every six  
months you have a physical. I finally learned how you can  
stand a certain way on that scale and you can pick up a  
quarter of an inch unless they're looking for it. They  
say, "Get on the scale. A hundred and forty something.  
Five foot six." All that time I had that on my records.

As I said, I did run into problems with certain



airplanes where I had to have a special thing made, because it's critical that you can reach all that stuff with your feet. So that's that story.

LEHMER: So you have had this intimate relationship with magazines for a long time? [laughs]

HEINECKEN: Well, that's the implication, but it's not true. It couldn't have anything to do with it. I was like in a box. I knew I had to do something, but--

LEHMER: All right.

HEINECKEN: That was pretty ingenious in a sense, but that's how desperate I was. I just had to do it somehow. And I knew that there is no way to grow a quarter of an inch overnight.

LEHMER: A question that I have based on this is--

HEINECKEN: I don't recall anything prior to that where I really was facing a situation. And I had to invent something quickly that would work. I still do that. I'll just makeshift something if I can get by with it, or I won't pay a lot of attention to something if I can do it an easier way. It's kind of an improvisational laziness or something that I have.

LEHMER: Well, a part of that is that independent thinking, to be liberal with that term "creative." But you're not bound to preconceived methodology or rules.

Let me run through some follow-up questions based on





last week's interview and see how much we can get done on that.

HEINECKEN: I have another idea. It would be interesting for me to have this tape when I'm talking about this mid-air. There is this other situation which I can add on to that. Maybe we'll lose the day in terms of what we really need to talk about, but that way I'll get it.

LEHMER: Let's talk about it now.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, I think so, and then we can start clean.

Okay, I think it would have been after-- No, it would have been before this mid-air collision thing. The whole military experience, at least in aviation, is that you're always in training for the next step of what you're going to do. When you go into combat it's different, and you have regular things--no, real things--to do every day. But until that happens, it's like going to school. Every day you're learning another thing, you're advanced into another position relative to the flight situation. All kinds of ratings have to be fulfilled, like instrument ratings, carrier landings, gunnery ratings--you know, it's a school is really what it is--every day, except you're paid to do it, and it's interesting and it's dangerous.

So this situation was having to do with instrument training, meaning you're flying in the clouds or in reduced visibility. In other words, you're inside the



airplane, and you're not looking outside of it because there is nothing to see. It's the thing that I was never as good at as a lot of people were. I was always nervous about it even in the flight training, and it was not my easiest thing to do. But I got through it. In the tactical squadron, you have to get so many actual instrument hours. You also have to get a certain number of training hours where they put you into a two-seated airplane, they close this hood thing over you so you're just flying the instruments. There's another guy in the front, though, who's there all the time. You fly the whole flight underneath this hood, but it's not dangerous, because this guy can take it over anytime. \*[The final check flight is done with two airplanes with an actual instrument approach and landing. You plan the entire flight, fly it, and the wingman, instruction pilot, follows you and evaluates your procedures and performance and passes you or fails you.]

So this flight was scheduled-- It must have been in the spring. I can't remember the dates. But El Toro, which is where I'm stationed, has the same weather, really, as here in Los Angeles, but it's a little

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\* Heinecken added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.



different. But during the morning you always get low clouds that burn off by about ten o'clock. We would always schedule the instrument flights-- If you wanted actual instrument conditions, you'd fly during that period of time so you'd get back before the weather clears.

This was to be my first actual GCA landing. GCA is a ground-controlled approach, where they actually talk you into the landing. That's it. It's a procedure that everybody-- I mean, it's just one of the things. Normally, if you have a high enough ceiling, you'll just fly it; you won't have a GCA. But when the visibility or clouds are so low, then you go into this GCA mode where you're talking to these people.

LEHMER: And what's GCA?

HEINECKEN: Ground-controlled approach, which means that at a certain point in the approach and landing, you don't talk to anybody and you just listen to these people, and they'll tell you you're approaching glide path, you're on glide path, you're going off glide path, turn right, you're going low at power-- You just sit there and listen to them, and you make these corrections. They're watching you on their radar screen. They can land you in absolute zero visibility, which isn't common. It's to get either the airplane on the ground in instrument conditions or get it underneath the clouds to where you can see what you're



doing.

So I think this was--what did I say?--first or second check flight in this thing. We had two airplanes. I have to plan the whole trip, which is we take off before dawn, so that we'll be back in an hour and a half or two. We still have the clouds, which is why we're doing it at that time. This happens a lot of times. I'll just describe the whole thing. So I'm leading the flight.

The guy who's flying with me [Dick Mabrey] is a captain. He's the instrument rating officer. He's not only the best instrument pilot but he's shot down four MIGs [Mikoyan and Gusevich Russian aircraft] in Korea. He's like one of the big guns on the squadron, but he's also getting out of the Marine Corps. He's done his time. He's just in this squadron for the next two or three months, but he's a very, very sharp, all-business guy.

So I plan the whole flight. I think we went to San Diego to [Las] Vegas to Sacramento, you know, so that you get back to El Toro while you still have the weather. So they have a situation where you're at, let's say, 20,000 feet. You're directly over the base where you want to land. They have what's called the penetration, which is to make a very rapid descent in a big-- Like here's where you are, right over the base, right? You make a very rapid descent on a big loop like this which comes down.





You're using no fuel, you're just diving into this thing. At some point there you enter the clouds, maybe at about 8,000 feet or something like that. They bring you around and set you up for the GCA.

It's nighttime; it's still dark. We're getting ready to go. (This will all figure in later.) I'm leading, we're taxiing out, and we have to hold because there are some lights out or something, I think. We have to wait for about five minutes for that. We get out to the end of the runway to take off, and there's some other kind of traffic problem. Again we had to wait about another five minutes or something, which means we're burning fuel. Even if you're idling you're burning fuel on the ground quietly. We don't think anything about this. We take off. We come back to make our penetration an hour and a half later, and it turns out that the visibility and the ceiling are low enough so that they are beginning to stack airplanes up. It's taking longer to get planes in and get planes out. By this time it's daylight, and they're launching planes, so it's just a busier time. We're sitting up here at like 20,000 feet orbiting for another twenty minutes or something like that--more fuel gone.

Then we're ready for the penetration, which I am leading. He's watching everything; he's making sure I do



it right. But it's all on my situation. We make the penetration. We come back around, and we get down to about 4,000 feet, and we're in the clouds. They've got some situation, and they put us in another orbit. Now it's getting a little bit more critical, because you're at a lower altitude, you're burning more fuel, and we're going around in this circle waiting for the GCA thing to get straightened out so that we can enter that pattern. They've got other airplanes taking off and landing there or something. I'm not even paying much attention to the fuel, but I'm not worried. We're within the bounds of everything.

So anyway, we finally get set up for the GCA. I was supposed to shoot the GCA. I was supposed to lead it. They tell us that the ceiling and visibility is such and such. And the check pilot says to me, "Okay. I'm sorry, but you can't land with those conditions. I've got to do the GCA, so you won't get your credit for this." Because if it were 200 feet and a mile, then I could have done it. But it was 100 feet and a half mile, and then he has to do it, because he's qualified and I'm not. That was disappointing, because I planned this whole flight. Anyway, I understood it.

Now he's leading the flight, and he's talking to GCA, and I could hear them. But at a certain point you go into



a situation where you can only listen. They shut you off, so that if they say "turn right" or "pull up" or "increase speed" or whatever, you don't answer them, you just do it. Because while you're answering them, they might want you to do something else, and you can't hear it. The mic[rophone] will be live to you all the time. You just listen and do what they say.

So anyway, he's flying the lead, and I'm the wingman. We get into the GCA pattern, which is that you're at a very low altitude until you intersect this theoretical or imaginary line that they're going to put you on and land you. Now it's daylight, but still early, and we're in the clouds. You start this over Dana Point, which would be on the water. You've got about maybe ten miles or something to fly into this situation, and you're at a very low altitude, 2,000 feet or something like that.

So we're in this thing, and it's all clouds. We know it's going to be all clouds right down to about 50 feet. I'm not worried, because I'm just following this guy who has done it fifty times. And at some point I'm listening to the GCA people, as is he, and they're saying, "You're going below glide path. Pull up"--or not pull up but "Add power." He gets back on track. Then the next thing I hear is that "You're drifting left. Turn right two degrees" or whatever. Well, what's going on? This guy's



the best. Then he said, "Okay. You're drifting right or left," whichever. He's kind of jockeying trying to find the glide path. I'm still not worried. But at some point we're on glide path. Then they're saying, "You're going below glide path." We made a correction, and we're back like this.

And all of a sudden his airplane just goes like that, just turns and disappears into the clouds and crashes. I mean, we're that close. I could see this big ball of flame. So I pull up. There was, it turns out later, a farmer out there who was right under the glide path. And the wheels of my aircraft cleared this hill by about this much. I didn't know that, because you've got gear down, flaps down. I'm just bananas like-- Anyway, they're saying, "Wave off, wave off, wave off," which means simply you add power and start over. You go straight ahead, and you climb out. And by this time, the clouds were like about maybe 1,500 feet from the ground, and the pattern is 2,000 feet. So I'm above the clouds. Meanwhile, they're starting me back around. They know that one airplane is crashed, because they're telling me, and I tell them, "I saw this. He crashed." They saw the two radar blips separate, so that screwed them up.

Then they got me again, and I come around for the next one. They don't descend me, because at this point





they're launching the rescue helicopters and all of that, the search-and-rescue things. They have to shut down the GCA to get these people out, because they're using the same radar to get them out with the bad clouds on the way. So I'm sitting here orbiting at 2,000 feet for about two or three minutes, and I'm looking at the gas, I'm looking at the gas. When you're low you're burning a lot more fuel than when you're high, and I'm wondering what's going to happen here. They finally set me up again, and now I'm really doing it. They have no choice except to take me, even though I'm not qualified for this weather. So they set me up, and I'm in the GCA pattern.

LEHMER: Now, wait. There are two people in the plane, though?

HEINECKEN: No. No. We're--

LEHMER: Two planes.

HEINECKEN: Two planes.

LEHMER: And the captain, the fighter, he goes down.

HEINECKEN: He crashes. Right.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: And we don't know why at this point.

LEHMER: All right. Now you're out there.

HEINECKEN: At some point they say, "Wave off, wave off." So I pull up, because he's gone, and I start this whole thing over again. And I'm a fucking wreck because I know



he's dead. I've never done this before with this low a weather condition. I'm looking at the gas.

So anyway, I'm set up again, and I'm entering the glide path. And they say, "Wave off, wave off," which is because now they're launching the helicopters or something. I went around again. I think the second time or the third time, something else happened. This is all just coincidental stuff. I finally said, "Look, I'm at nine hundred pounds. I've got about ten minutes left." "We understand. We'll get you in on the next thing." Well, before that, after the crash they said, "Maintain 2,000 feet in this pattern. We'll see if we can find you an alternative airport." But all the other airports, including the best one, George Air Force Base, which is out by Cajon Pass, have the same weather. I can't go anyplace else. And I don't have enough fuel to go to the desert, like to Edwards or whatever. So I'm going to do this. So I get back into the situation. I think I got three waves off, which weren't my fault but were the conditions of what was going on. Everything goes nuts when they get a crash.

I finally get in the third one. I'm really nervous by this time, because the guy is-- This could happen to me. I don't know quite what I am doing, but I'm doing it. I make the landing, and there was a very low ceiling. I



don't remember when I touched down. I was still--

LEHMER: They brought you in on a GCA, and you're lined up?

HEINECKEN: Right. They just talk you through the whole thing.

LEHMER: And you're doing all right? You're not going off path?

HEINECKEN: No. I think I was okay. But it wasn't like-- They're very patient, because they know the situation. And I think they probably gave me a little bit of leeway. Because their choice is, if they wave me off, the only thing I could do is head it out to sea and eject. There is no place to land, and they don't want to lose the airplane. They don't want to lose me necessarily. But that was their decision.

As soon as I get that thing landed, it's just a big relief. You pull into the flight line where you've got all these airplanes parked. I get it turned in to where they're going to direct me where to park it, and the engine dies. It's out of fuel. [laughs] It's like a minute maybe into the whole thing. I mean, if it would have been one minute later or another go-around--

LEHMER: Another wave-off.

HEINECKEN: We wouldn't be there. So this is different than the mid-air in the sense that this whole thing, as I



said, took at least twenty minutes, and I'm fucking screaming on the radio. It was long enough for me to really see what the consequences were going to be if this happens or this doesn't happen. So it was like a bad-- That's even more scary to me. I remember just shaking.

Later that day, they took me out to the crash site, which was-- Because normally they wouldn't do that. But for some reason I went out to the site with the accident people. And this airplane was just strewn over about a mile. I mean, it just hit and it bounced, and then it burned. This is so gruesome--I hate to even say this--the head is in the helmet. It just sheared off his head at some point. I was throwing up. It was an awful thing. I learned later-- They want to put you back into reality as soon as possible so you don't start thinking about it. So here's the plane; it's crashed. Here's the body; he's dead. I think they gave me one day off because I was shook up. The second day I had another flight. I was sitting around worrying about this stuff.

Anyway, the end of this story is that he had vertigo problems. Vertigo has to do with the hairs in your ears. You feel as if-- And everybody has it in the airplane. You have to fight against it. It means when you make a turn under any kind of g [gravitational] pressure, which you always have at least one g-- This is not technically





correct, necessarily. But the hairs in your ears are telling you where you are, and if you're turning, it will tell you. When you make a turn and then you level out, your ears are telling you that you are still turning. But if you look at the instrument, it will tell you whether or not you are still turning. So when you're in an instrument situation, you're always looking at basically this thing which tells you where you are and where the wings are. And he had a vertigo problem once, which it seems the doctor had covered up for him in Korea because he wanted to finish or whatever. Then he had a second vertigo incident on the carrier coming back, which they didn't cover up, but they reported it. But it wasn't something that they thought was serious. And this third incident, as they're surmising, he had it. Otherwise he wouldn't have done what he did. He made a correction. Then you're level where you want to be, but you feel like you're going like this. And so he made a turn to correct what he thought was this instead of being able to fly by the instruments.

LEHMER: So he went by his own--?

HEINECKEN: His feeling, yeah, which is the tendency. It is what you want to do. You have to just fight it. It's really hard to-- See, it's not an airliner, where you're making these kinds of-- You're making real changes and



you're very close to the ground. But anyway, that came out in the investigations. That's clearly what happened, because they couldn't figure out why he would have done it except when they looked back in his history.

But the other interesting thing was that-- I had previously met his wife. I guess we all knew each other's wives. I didn't know this until after he was killed, but this was the fourth Marine aviator that she had been married to, all of whom were dead. And she just kept going back to it. I mean, I don't know. They were explaining there are people like this, not just with the Marine Corps, but there is a kind of fascination or whatever that certain women have with this kind of danger. And this has nothing to do with me, but it was just a weird thing to meet her.

LEHMER: Well, it's an interesting comparison between yours and my near-death experiences. One thing I thought about is that I am totally at the mercy of my body and whatever, where you're involved in the instigation of this somehow. You're at the mercy of the mechanics of the plane, but what I'm thinking of is you in a sense elected to go up. There's a difference, maybe not a lot, but that's an interesting thing that I'm thinking about. The wife may elect to go back to this because there is an interesting adrenaline but also a real sense of life when



you're on the edge. And you choose to go into this knowing it. It almost seems like-- I bet a lot of people purposely, even though they might not consciously know it, wash out.

HEINECKEN: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

LEHMER: They may move that direction.

HEINECKEN: Well, I point out some of this, because these two situations would have--

LEHMER: We're running out of tape.

HEINECKEN: Well, anyway, these are life's-- Anybody would give you twenty, thirty incidents that are similar to this, where if this goes wrong, that goes wrong. There's just a way that you get through it. But these two incidents are the two times where there was extreme danger. I brought them up because of the idea that I didn't realize I was screaming to God on the radio, because that wasn't in my mind. I mean, I just didn't remember it. But there's your voice on the tape, which is reality, and that was weird. That tells you you don't quite ever lose whatever that last-minute plea would be to whomever you're praying to. But you do it.



TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE ONE

MARCH 12, 1996

LEHMER: I had a couple of questions before we get started with today's talk. Your father [Friedli Wilhelm Heinecken]'s ministry was in which synod? Is your whole family in one synod, or, you know, the clan? And what is a synod, I guess I should ask?

HEINECKEN: Well, the synod is an organizational term which means that--especially I think in the Lutheran religion--there were at least three divisions: one was called the American Lutheran Church, one was called the National Lutheran Church, and the third was called the Missouri Synod. The Missouri Synod was the conservative wing of all of this. I think this question probably is pointed at the Missouri Synod thing, which these people were not. They were the kind of radical, right-wing people. So it was the other two synods that they were in, although I don't know which one, but those two were sort of interchangeable. It was a matter of what region of the country, I think, basically, that they were in.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: Then also during the time that this happens, those different synods reorganize themselves. Maybe even at that point the Missouri Synod splits off or something





like that. There were the three, two of which were regular, while one was conservative, which was the Missouri Synod.

LEHMER: I think off tape you mentioned a certain trait that you observed about Lutheranism being somewhat of a group that was formed from Catholicism by--

HEINECKEN: Well, historically, yeah. [tape recorder off]

LEHMER: One thing that you mentioned to me about Lutheranism was that under Henry VIII the Anglican Church broke away from the Roman Catholic Church. There was a certain trait that you observed about Lutheranism, which was a type of rebellious attitude towards-- Well, can you explain that better than I can?

HEINECKEN: Well, I'm not a historian of this. The basic reason I think that Luther did what he did--he was, of course, a Catholic priest--was that certain practices of the church at that time, namely that you had to pay money in order to get into heaven-- There's a name for that: the sale of indulgences. But also the fallacy that the church is always right, which of course we still have. The infallible decisions that they make, which is not the case with the Protestant religions that broke off, where they have councils. They vote, they make decisions as a group. I think Luther is in this, because he is a harsh, common person instead of an elevated person.



LEHMER: One other follow-up question I have here, you mentioned in our first meeting that your father had a tattoo of a dagger.

HEINECKEN: [laughs] Oh, yeah, right.

LEHMER: And you said, "Well, I'll talk more about that later." This might be a good time.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. I don't know exactly when he got it. This uncle [Martin Heinecken] whom I keep talking about told me that when my father would run away and come back and then disappear again, that at some point he had this tattoo. So this would have been something that he got when he was a young person, like nineteen, twenty, something like that. I don't think I knew that he had a tattoo for a long time because it wasn't the kind of family or time period where you would see that necessarily. And I think he always wore long sleeves because of that. At some point I saw it, obviously, and it was big, like maybe ten inches. I liked it, because it's like an ornate Persian dagger with a kind of long blade which goes under the skin. I guess the only importance of this is that once you're aware of it--and I'm sure other people were aware of it as he went on through his life--you cannot erase this thing as a symbol of a mentality that couldn't be any further away from what he was trying to project at the time of his ministry. I didn't think of this until



just now. You could think of it as something that's not Lutheran. Like you have a tattoo of a dagger through your arm, but that's a different life. I suppose it would be a constant reminder to him of his youth, of his failure to conform to whatever that family was conforming to in terms of training and school and whatever.

LEHMER: You mentioned that your mother [Mathilda Moehl Heinecken] had no formal education. But then by the same token she ended up traveling by train to rural areas to teach. Now, was she doing this through the church?

HEINECKEN: Oh, no. It was not connected to the church. She wasn't educated past high school, that's what I should have said. She certainly had that and could probably teach in these farm towns with maybe eight students, six students, something like that. I don't think you needed to be trained at that time to do that. Probably you didn't need to be trained to teach in the city schools at that time.

LEHMER: The date of this is approximately 19--?

HEINECKEN: 'Twenty. The thing about the train is interesting because I didn't know that until later. She was talking about it one time. That city just allowed you to get on the caboose of the train. It would drop you off wherever you were going on Monday morning and pick you up again on Friday night to bring you back to Dubuque or



wherever. I thought it was interesting that that was going on.

LEHMER: That there was some kind of agreement?

HEINECKEN: Yeah, there must have been. While she was there she stayed at some farmer's house, different farmers at different times. She probably didn't get paid much but got food and whatever. She was actually proud of having done this. It was one of the things that, after I knew it, then I could see how it was probably the only real work that she ever had.

LEHMER: Now, I think we've covered this, but I've still got this question in my mind. What courses did you take at Riverside [City College]? I'm guessing that it was something like college preparatory, but you did mention that you were taking--

HEINECKEN: They weren't college preparatory because you're in college, but they were basic academic courses that you would be taking somewhere else anyway, like UCLA or something. This particular college--and I think most of them at that time had them and maybe they still do--had two tracks there: one was for people who were going to transfer to a four-year school, the other was for people who were not but were in vocational programs of this and that. So it was a mixture of those kinds of things. They still have kind of those two tracks.





I don't recall exactly how many courses I took in art, but I certainly took some. And as I think I mentioned earlier, I was active in the yearbook and stuff like that in terms of designing it and drawing things for it. I know I took some courses, because I have pictures that I made during that time period. There was clearly what they would call-- Well, I don't know what they would call it. We call it graphic design today, where you were not being pointed towards a kind of artist idea but towards an illustrator or a position where you would use a skill in drawing or whatever in the service of something else rather than as an artist thing.

LEHMER: A commercial approach.

HEINECKEN: Commercial art, yeah. But pictures made from that time period clearly aren't that, and some are that. Then, of course, when you get to UCLA it's a different situation. We can talk about that, too. [tape recorder off]

LEHMER: You mentioned that you were a voracious reader and that you didn't read so much for knowledge but that you just liked the idea of reading. A question comes into my mind as to whether you could expand on that idea.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Well, I think using the word voracious would indicate a time period as a kid, a boy. It's that kind of reading, because no one that age is looking for



knowledge. It's a habit. It's a hobby. It's a pastime. But I enjoyed it very much, and I had--

LEHMER: What age--?

HEINECKEN: Well, I'm thinking it's when you're ten years old to twelve or maybe earlier than that. When I got to be thirteen, fourteen, whatever, I'm not in that mode anymore. But I still read the same way, without thinking that I need to know something about this. I won't follow up with adjacent readings like a scholar or an intellectual would. I don't know if I said this before in a different way or something, but I just simply was not educated, and I'm still not, I should say. [laughs] I feel like my friends-- Carl Chiarenza comes to mind. This guy is educated--right?--and I'm not. It doesn't mean I can't have him as a friend and we can't talk or whatever. There's just a whole lot of stuff even in literature or in art which are the important things and I can't quote you. You know, I'm not well read. I haven't done that, and I don't feel the need to at this point. I distinguish between reading as a hobby as opposed to when you get to be an adult and you're in school and you're going to be a professional you're going to read the things that you need to know about. I just never did that.

LEHMER: I would imagine there are still certain things that attract you, and there is that selective process that



goes on with reading. There's certainly plenty that we haven't all read. But there's something that attracts you to reading, and I had this vision in my head when you were mentioning that of some of the later collage work that you did where you're putting bits--

HEINECKEN: Well, that's probably something to consider in terms of a working method, which is basically collage. Even in the sense of writing, it's that; it's a lot of scraps of different things put back together fictitiously most of the time.

Sort of an interesting thing came into my mind. It may not be quite true, but I think the visual arts may be one of the situations where certainly you want to know the history of art if you can, including the main distinctions that are made between eras and so on. But in the time period that we're talking about--let's say 1960 to now--I think you have more people entering this field of art without the knowledge that you would expect them to have. In other words, you don't need to know all this stuff to be an artist in this culture. It helps you if you do. And of course, if you're teaching it helps you a lot if you do. But it's not a time period where-- It's hard to express, but--

LEHMER: Do you think that's true of the last ten or fifteen years? I tend to think it might be different than



what you're saying--in other words, from the fifties to the seventies maybe.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, which is the time period of my training.

LEHMER: I'm thinking from the mid-seventies on there was this change where the important context of the work was beginning to be more theoretically based. I tend to think that there was a strong influence with the housing of visual art knowledge being at the university rather than in the master-apprentice relationship, so to speak.

HEINECKEN: Well, absolutely.

LEHMER: I'm wondering what ideas you might have on the-- maybe we're getting ahead of ourselves--influence of the academic institution on art making? Maybe we should leave that as a question for later or as something to be thought about because I don't know if you can talk about that in a couple of sentences at this moment.

HEINECKEN: Well, if you looked at the whole history of graduate students at UCLA, let's say, you would see from 1970 on a clear shift into some kind of postmodernist thinking, although it wouldn't be called that that early. But people like [James] Hugunin, Ellen Birrel, certainly, and David Bunn to some extent, are all affected by that sort of stuff. This may be dumb, but I don't think someone like myself has to understand all of that to understand the importance of it to a particular student





and how that student's using theory--if that's the word-- to advance that person through a series of things that are necessary for a graduate student to do.

Then, if you looked at the history of the people who were teaching not only photography there but all the other arts, you don't have anybody like Allan Sekula or Catherine Lord or whoever. The school wasn't recruiting those kinds of people, nor were those people interested in a public university like that. It's not the right place for this thing. It doesn't mean that students don't read and that they're not affected by all this. But if you look at the people who were there, I think when Mark McFadden came he was the first person who had begun to, even if not totally, adhere to some kind of theoretical position. The only other person who comes to mind is Mark [Alice] Durant, but he's much later. [inaudible] the teaching thing going up until 1975, where I was there pretty much most of the time. But from 1975 on is when this stuff was happening. I'm really not attached to the teaching job. I mean, I'm there for two years, and I'm working at it, and then I'm gone for two years. All those people that filled that in in the earlier days were [Robert] Fichter, [Garry] Winogrand, and [Lee] Friedlander, and these people are not theorists, right? I was just trying to get people in there who would represent



different attitudes about what photography was during this time period. After 1975, all I was interested in was getting somebody there whom I thought was a competent artist who could teach.

LEHMER: I think we're jumping ahead.

HEINECKEN: Does all that make sense?

LEHMER: I think I've got it.

HEINECKEN: This just popped into my mind, that when I went on leave in 1971--I went to [the Schools of the Art Institute of] Chicago to teach for a year--the first person I called to see if she would come to teach at UCLA was Joy [Joyce Neimanas]. I didn't even know her, but I knew her work and I knew her reputation. But she wouldn't come. I thought that was interesting.

LEHMER: I wanted to see if you could expand briefly on something that attracted me. A little light went off in my head. You described the environment, and I want to find out in what institution this was happening. There's like two different kind of students: the ones from Riverside, possibly, and the veterans from World War II--

HEINECKEN: And the Korean War.

LEHMER: Korea and World War II, okay. Can you expand briefly on what you observed, why this has impressed you to this day, the difference between the temperament of someone who had been through that experience and someone



who hadn't? Are there any observations you have about that?

HEINECKEN: It is somehow important, maybe not important, but I guess interesting. I think it has to do with an understanding that some socioeconomic event or whatever, such as World War II or the Korean War or the Depression or anything like that, does change the character of people. So I think the people who came back as veterans of either of those two wars were obviously older and they had experiences. What occurred to me was the contrast between an eighteen-year-old kid out of high school going to college with people who were at least four or five years older than them and who bring a kind of maturity to their studies or whatever. Although, I'll tell you, there was a lot of hellraising with those people as well. But they simply were back in school because they wanted to go back to school, and they were being paid to go back to school, which was the case when I got to that situation later. I'm not sure I can say why it's important. I think it's just clear that if you go to some undergraduate school and then you go into a graduate program, it's always the people who have not gone to the university directly from high school to be artists but have kicked around somewhere or done something else who-- Maybe it's simply that you have a few more years. Or if you happen



to be married and have children and you have all those responsibilities you're a different person. You're a student, but you're not there for a sorority idea or a social idea, which is basically what universities can become. I mean, a big part of their influence is socializing people and trying to introduce them to culture and so on.

LEHMER: Okay, as a segue into today's discussion, I think we'd like to talk about the start of your family. We could back up to your wife and high school sweetheart, Janet Storey, how you met. Another question that came into my mind that I noted was that you had mentioned to me on or off tape something to the effect of around 1949 you had a courtship that spanned between Riverside and Los Angeles, and I'm wondering, how long did it take to drive back and forth? There's not a freeway at that time.

HEINECKEN: [laughs] Right, yes. Let's see. Well, I will just go back. Janet and I were, I guess, going steady by the end of high school. I mentioned that she went off to Los Angeles to go to nursing school. I tried the UCLA thing, which I didn't-- So for two years I was in Riverside and she was in Los Angeles, and it got to be less and less of a relationship. We were just kids anyway. I mean, we dated. She dated other people, and I dated other people during that time period. By the time I





went back to UCLA--not back, but when I finally went there after junior college--she had finished school or almost finished school in Los Angeles. So at some point there she goes back to Riverside and goes to work. I guess essentially we were friends or something like that, but it wasn't serious or anything.

We must have become reinvolved with each other romantically, because I was always writing to her when I was in the service, and she would write to me. When I had leave I would come back and see her and my family. I think that just continued to escalate or become more serious as it got closer to when I would graduate from flight school and find out where I would go and what I would do and things like that. So by that time, which had been January 1955 or December before that-- But anyway, this is a good part of the story, because what happened-- And this is really something I don't talk to many people about, but it should be here, I think.

For some reason I came back maybe in November or December on leave, but I had to go back. What happened is that my mother--I don't know what her deal was--announced our engagement in the paper. My mother called the paper and announced our engagement. Janet was furious. I was already gone, so I don't know what effect that had on anything, except that we did get married in January. And



that was something that would have happened to us anyway, because, I mean, I was serious about getting married. She was, too. But it wasn't that we were engaged. We decided to get married late in January, I think it was, of that year. So we did. The whole thing was just screwy in terms of like-- In one sense it might have been good. It might have forced us to think seriously about whether we would be married. But it was something that never left our minds in terms of our relationship with my mother after that. I mean, it was just an insane thing for her to do. Well, she knew we were sleeping together; that probably hit her wrong. She's thinking babies and stuff like that, which could have happened as far as that goes. The twins [Geoffrey R. Heinecken and Kathe Heinecken Hull] were born six months later or something like that, or seven months.

The point of this is that someone was trying to manipulate a situation to fit her set of morals and ideals and whatever, even though it turned out to be okay. But it was just unforgivable what she did, and we never forgot. I never forgot. I'm sure she was acting out of whatever best instincts she had, but-- So anyway, we got married, right?

LEHMER: Now, after you were married you had the twins.

HEINECKEN: Right. Well, first thing that happened when



we got married was that we moved to Laguna Beach--maybe not right away. I think the first couple of months I was commissioned and went to the squadron at the U.S. Marine Corps in El Toro [Marine Corps Air Station]. I was in school in San Diego and Alameda and different places like that. I think she stayed in Riverside. When I finally got back to El Toro and went in the squadron, we moved to Laguna Beach, which was a wonderful place and close to El Toro, ten minutes or something. The twins were born in August of 1955. I was on maneuver someplace, either-- Let's see. Where would I have been? Fallon, Nevada, was one place we went a lot, or Yuma [Arizona] or something like that. Anyway, they were born prematurely. She went to the naval hospital in Corona [del Mar], where they were born. So I wasn't there when they were born. I got back like a week later, after they were born. So then we moved to Laguna with these two kids-- Or we didn't move. We lived there already, but we went into a different house. Karol [Heinecken Mora] was born four years later, which would have been 1959, I guess. I guess we were stationed in Florida when Karol was born.

LEHMER: The names of the twins: Geoffrey and Kathe.

HEINECKEN: Right. Geoffrey, Janet liked that name for some reason. And he got my name for his middle name.

LEHMER: Geoffrey Robert?



HEINECKEN: Geoffrey Robert. Kathe was a name that I liked. We spelled it like Käthe Kollwitz, kind of German, you know, K-A-T-H-E. And Marie was the name of this aunt that I had that I was so interested in, the one that was political and so on, so that's how she got that name.

LEHMER: Now, I know Janet worked in Riverside for a while. When you moved to Laguna, did she work?

HEINECKEN: No, she quit.

LEHMER: She pretty much had her hands full with two kids.

HEINECKEN: Right. I don't think she worked until I got out of the service. Then, when I was back at UCLA, she worked full-time, all the time, while I was a student there--or part-time. She had always preferred to work what we would call a swing shift, which is like three [o'clock] in the afternoon to eleven [o'clock] at night. I had arranged all of my courses or whatever so that I would be through with school, if possible, by two or three o'clock. Then she would go to work, and I would have the kids. So for, well, a couple of years we did that.

LEHMER: I want to get a few things straightened out here. You may have already said it on tape, so this might be redundant, but you had this friendship, and you did some dating. And you dated other people while you were at Riverside and Janet was in Los Angeles. Then, after two years there, you transferred to UCLA, and she moved back





to Riverside.

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: Okay. So you guys were still apart.

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: And then you were at UCLA for two years and then dropped out. At that point did you get married?

HEINECKEN: No, no. Well, the two years that I would have finished school, of course, I didn't finish, right? At that point I went into the service. I was in training for eighteen months. We're now at January '55, and that's when we got married.

LEHMER: Okay, got it. Let me back up and try to close this one open spot. You had transferred to UCLA. I'm finding that an interesting period, because you're moving from the country back into a more urban environment that you liked as a kid when you lived in Glendale.

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: Now you're coming to the University of California. Were you a liberal arts major or--? Can you give me a description of what you studied and what you went through?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. I was an art major. UCLA at that time was one of the best, if not the best, art departments in the country. There were articles about UCLA. *Life* magazine gave them a twelve-page spread during this time



period. It was notably a good art school. I took maybe for a year basically academic courses--maybe two-thirds academic courses like you would do even now--and then I had courses in drawing, painting, sculpture, and printmaking. I don't think there was at that time any application of art to commercial situations, which happened later and had happened before in junior college. It wasn't just the academic courses that I finally couldn't handle, it was also the art courses. I couldn't get myself focused on what I was doing.

LEHMER: But you were there for two years.

HEINECKEN: No, I was there for a year. I think I completed one the first year, but by the end of that year I went on probation. My grades were below what were required. I don't remember whether the art courses were any higher-- Probably the art courses were higher grades than-- Because I know I flunked this German course. I know I flunked some other kind of technical course. So I'm on probation at the end of the first year. Beginning in the fall of the next year I had to get off of probation. At the end of that semester--that would have been January 1953--I flunked out. I did not get the grades that I needed to get off of probation.

This intersects the time period when I was telling you that the only reason I was kept out of the service is



because I was in college and could defer it. I'd mentioned the frame of mind of like, "What am I going to do?" I'm going into the army in a couple of weeks because I got my draft notice. I'm out of school, just hanging out, really. I didn't tell my parents this because I knew that would tear them up. I didn't tell them, actually, that I was going into the service until I had already done it so they wouldn't put something in the newspaper that-- [laughs] That's a joke. I shouldn't say "they." That was my mother. My father would have never done that. He probably spoke harshly to her about that.

LEHMER: Let me back up. You mentioned that when you went to UCLA you-- I don't know if you knew this beforehand, but-- Well, you can answer that, too. But you discovered or knew that it was one of the best schools in the country. What I'm also wondering about is, who were the faculty at that time?

HEINECKEN: I took a lot of courses--not a lot, but some courses--with Jan Stussy. He was alive when you were there, right?

LEHMER: Yeah.

HEINECKEN: Sam [Samuel] Amato, Gordon [M.] Nunes. Two women painters were there, I think basically because this is still shortly after World War II when they were there, not because they were women, but because there were no



men. What's her name? [Annita] Delano is one woman's last name, and Dorothy [W.] Brown was the other one. Annita Delano and Dorothy Brown. And then maybe those three guys that I mentioned. Oh, and John Paul Jones, who was the printmaker there, although I don't think I studied with him until later, when I came back.

One of the courses I remember I had a lot of trouble with and probably flunked was this anatomy drawing course that Jan Stussy taught with a passion, right? This guy was just a terrific teacher, but I couldn't do it. I have pictures from these courses which are reasonable pictures, I think. But again, it was just a matter of not being capable of performing for whatever reason. I don't know. I mean, clearly I was outclassed in the sense that I wasn't able to handle the academic courses, and I wasn't doing all that well in the art courses. That's my memory of it, at least. I had to leave school because I didn't get the grades I needed to get off of probation.

In March of that year, which is now three months later, is when I told this story about going down to Los Alamitos with my two friends and actually joining that [navy flight] program.

LEHMER: That's March of '52?

HEINECKEN: 'Fifty-three.

LEHMER: March of '53.





HEINECKEN: Something like that. March or earlier.

LEHMER: Right.

HEINECKEN: July of that year is when I actually went into the service.

LEHMER: I wanted to try to pry into more about what it was. You're saying that you just weren't prepared. You were outclassed. That's hard for me to accept. I'm wondering if your priorities at that time were simply to party.

HEINECKEN: Basically that's right, yeah.

LEHMER: And that that distracted-- When you're in school, no matter how sharp you are, like you said in early-- You had figured it out. You had gotten your work done in study hall. I can't imagine that you were outclassed in that sense. But there is a certain amount of physical attention that you have to give to getting work done, especially at UCLA. Can you think back as to what might have been the reasoning behind it, because I have a hard time buying that you were outclassed or--?

HEINECKEN: Well, maybe that's not the right word, but I wasn't a good student. And I had gone into this fraternity kind of halfway. This other guy [Kenneth Knight] who also came from Riverside and who was a couple of years older than I-- We both came together. Or maybe he was already here. Anyway, we had this apartment in



Westwood, and at some point we decided that we could live more cheaply and without as much difficulty if we went to this fraternity.



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LEHMER: You decided to go into the fraternity because it would be cheaper--

HEINECKEN: Cheaper and-- I don't know. Maybe part of our mentality would have been that that would be the thing to do. That's part of what the university offered that we didn't have before.

LEHMER: Which fraternity was that?

HEINECKEN: Sigma Nu. But anyway, during this time period I had worked almost continually parking cars, even when I was in school, which made a lot of money, which you had to actually steal. I mean, you were supposed to pay the doorman all of it and then he paid you, but everybody would rake off that. So I worked at all of the main hotels and nightclubs on Sunset [Boulevard]--what's now the Sunset Strip--all through this time. I had a lot of money. I got into playing poker. In fact, there was a poker thing in Westwood that people would go to. I guess I didn't lose much or win much, but it was a kind of life. And I was drinking. All of those things I think contribute to-- First of all, parking cars for eight hours a day doesn't contribute very much to studying. Then having the money to spend and an interest in trying to



screw everybody you can--which probably wasn't much, but--  
All those are factors, I think.

And finally, I remember at the end of this period of time when I was-- I said these other two guys and I went down to look into this naval aviation thing. This other guy--not the same guy that I talked about before, but another friend that I had-- We were living in the basement of this fraternity house where we had sort of carved out a little room back there. The fraternity people didn't even know we were there I don't think. And down there is where he would run these poker games. But that guy went on to become a very--and still is--influential-- Not a stockbroker. He's beyond that even. He's a financial wizard.

LEHMER: Investment officer?

HEINECKEN: He's the one always who was running the poker. He had actually made book on the horse races out of that place. He was that smart. He could figure out all that stuff. Marty Bullock is his name. I still visit him.

LEHMER: A question I just thought of from last Saturday when you were talking about you and your buddies going down to enlist in the navy: What were their names?

HEINECKEN: Jeff Clark was one. I don't remember. There were two guys and me, and Jeff Clark was one. Maybe that other name will come to me, but I do remember Jeff,





because I actually knew him very well. He was an interesting guy whose father was a big hotshot doctor. He lived in Ojai [California], because I remember we'd go up to Ojai sometimes to this house on the lake, and it was just beautiful. I can't remember the other guy's name, but it will come to me, maybe.

LEHMER: Both of them are from UCLA.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, right.

LEHMER: And all three of you had chummed around.

HEINECKEN: Right. They were graduating that June.

That's why they were going down there in March to look into this, because they anticipated that that's what they wanted to do. They did both graduate. I don't know what happened to them, but--

LEHMER: And both of them washed out of--

HEINECKEN: Well, they never got in. They failed either the physical or the mental or both of them, the combination of those things. I think the other guy's name was Lee something. I'll think of it later. Lee Weitzel, maybe?

I don't want to characterize all this as being morose or whatever, but the whole time period, let's say after I graduated from high school until I went in the service, which is three and a half years, was a series of not being able to do whatever was being asked of me to do in terms



of the institutions that I was in, especially UCLA. I had two years to go there, and I would have finished. I got through the first semester, but by the end of that year I was on probation. I went back for the third semester and didn't make it. So at that point, January of 1955, I'm dead meat as far as the draft goes.

LEHMER: That's what heads you in there. Okay. In our last meeting we talked about the service and what went on fairly thoroughly.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. We don't need to go into that anymore. But I did mention, which I would stress again, that at the end of this four-year period I'm teaching in primary flight school, and I remember the very positive gratification of working with people who were like I was four years ago: just kids with no expectations, really, of how they're going to get through this. And as I said, I was tough on them, because I realized you just-- It's not like giving someone a "B" or a "C" or an "A." It's if this guy is going to go from your teaching to the next teaching to the next, and at any point during that it's clear that they're not going to make it, you wash them out. It's a difficult thing to do, because their life, their career, their whole thing is ruined at that point. Anyway, I didn't have it in my mind I would be a teacher, but I really enjoyed that work. It was very, very



gratifying work to do.

LEHMER: You took it seriously. And this is after your being in the squadron and going through what you had gone through, the two real close calls--

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: --which I think are very important. They add a new perspective to life.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. I want to say a couple more things. During this time period there were two or three things that were interesting. One was that I was put into a special group of people-- Well, let's see. Normally what you do, you'll take maybe five students or something, and you'll fly with those people through the certain stages until they finish that phase of what they're doing.

LEHMER: This is in Pensacola [Naval Air Station]?

HEINECKEN: This is in Pensacola. They formed a subgroup of this which was supposed to be the most experienced, best teachers.

And then we taught two interesting groups. One, I think they must have been Cubans. They were up here going through flight school. They all could speak English, but we had instructors who spoke Spanish in this group, as well. And in 1957--I think '57--the government gave back the right to Germany to rebuild their armed forces. There was a law passed after World War II that in nineteen so-



and-so they could start building their army back and their navy and whatever. So we got groups of these German pilots who were coming back to start from scratch, just like they had never flown. Some of them were aces; they had shot down many Spitfires. They were forty-year-old guys, or thirty-five, or something like that. It was very interesting to work with them, because the airplane that we were flying at that time--it's a propeller-driven airplane, but a very good airplane--had almost the same flight characteristics as a Messerschmitt [Bf 109] did, which they all flew, right? The 109 I think it was called. They were all going to be generals. These guys were beyond the point where they would be doing any flying, but for some reason the German government probably said, "You guys have to go through this school again. We'll recommission you as an officer, and then you'll build up the new German army, navy, air force, whatever." I could speak enough German after I worked with these guys long enough that I got kind of, not fluent, certainly, but I knew all the terms that I needed to know technically to talk with them. They were wonderful to work with. And the Cubans were also interesting. So those two experiences were interesting to me.

LEHMER: And both of those were at the same time?

HEINECKEN: Well, they were at separate times but the same





block of time. I thought the German thing was interesting, because I had no idea, really, until later that these people would-- I don't know how they selected them, but obviously these were people who were candidates for very high-ranking positions in the German armed forces. Some of them went to the air force, some of them went to army training bases. We happened to get this group of aviators.

LEHMER: Last Saturday we were talking about the two pretty intense close calls that you'd had when you were flying. A question I have at this point is, were you married to Janet at that time?

HEINECKEN: Yes, we were married when I was commissioned-- January 1955.

LEHMER: And the twins were--

HEINECKEN: With us there, yeah.

LEHMER: You've mentioned that they tried to get you back in the air as quickly as possible after one of those kinds of events. They took you to the crash site; you went through that experience. What my question at this point is, can you relate how you take your military career and meld it, blend it, and merge it with your family life? When was the first time that you had reached home after that? Was it that same day? Or was it a day later? And what did you describe to your family? Or how did you



handle this other world?

HEINECKEN: Well, let me think. The kids were two years old, or three, maybe, so they're not involved in this, really, except as-- You know, as they grow older they-- My son's actually very interested in all of that, because he's interested in aviation. But I think Janet-- I certainly accepted the idea that this was dangerous business. As I mentioned, a lot of people were killed one way or the other. Not a lot, but enough--

LEHMER: At least a third.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. You're not without an understanding that that could happen to you, and certainly the wives of all these people understand that, because they're sitting in the middle of the whole-- They know what's going on. I think Janet was very proud of me, because she saw me go through all of this, what I've described to you, and finally emerge at the end as some kind of professional person able to make a living and able to do the job well. And I can say I was good at it, or it fit me.

Well, this is complicated, I think, but we were stationed during one accident--the mid-air--in Mojave, so I didn't get home. The thing came out in the newspaper, but I had called her, or the Marine Corps called her, so that she knew about it, but I didn't get back there till maybe a week later.



LEHMER: Oh, I thought you were stationed at El Toro.

HEINECKEN: I was stationed there, but we were detached to the Marine Corps Air Station at Mojave. Usually it was for either two weeks or a month. We'd be detached to other facilities, but the base was at El Toro. Well, this isn't important, but the whole thrust of the Marine Corps at that time was that, like now, they're the only service that can actually pick up and go immediately. All the desks are wooden things that fold up and go kind of stuff, and the mobility of these units was a very important thing during the cold war. So anyway, we were up there for at least two weeks, and I can always look at my logbooks to see when I went back. Well, I had scared her, scared me, but--

LEHMER: You're saying that she knew that, she dealt with it. She knew it wasn't something that she could change--

HEINECKEN: That's right.

LEHMER: --and that she had to live with it.

HEINECKEN: I don't know whether the divorce rate would have been greater during that time period than another time period, but there are a lot of rocky marriages in this business because of things like this. And not only that, but because of the macho things that you develop you are not the most agreeable person to live with, and you get very cocky, and we drank a lot. *The Right Stuff*, did



you ever read that or--?

LEHMER: I saw the film.

HEINECKEN: It's a very good book on this whole situation. It very much gives you the picture of how people are formed to be not machines but something like that.

LEHMER: You have to have confidence.

HEINECKEN: Your job is ultimately to fight, right? And win. So it develops in people a kind of cockiness. You believe in yourself. You always know somebody's going to die, but you never think it's going to be you. And I think the wives of people in that situation-- Janet adapted to it, I thought, quite well. Some people didn't. As I said, I stayed in the reserve for another nine years. That's how we made our living. And she was okay about it.

LEHMER: Okay.

At this point, I'd like to discuss your return to UCLA. I guess the twins are five years old?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. They were born in '55. I went back to school in '57. They were two years old when I started. And I was there for a couple of years, so they would have been four or five at the end of that.

LEHMER: And Janet has a job as a nurse. What was her work?

HEINECKEN: I don't know. There wasn't much of a specialized thing in it. She advanced very rapidly





through whatever situation she was ever-- I mean, she was very good at it. By the way, her mother and her grandmother were nurses also, so that was in her family. My daughter Kathe thought she would be a nurse, but she didn't make it. But anyway, Janet was advanced through various supervisory roles and so on. She continued to work at UCLA even after we were divorced. She retired from there a couple of years ago.

LEHMER: You went back to UCLA after the service. I'd like to pick up there and see if we can cover some of that ground. You obviously have changed, because you've gone through some pretty impressive experiences.

HEINECKEN: Right, and I'm older.

LEHMER: You're older. You also have a family--

HEINECKEN: I also have a family. I mean, this has got to turn into something for me as a job or profession, whatever you want to call it. I did very well, I think, during that time period. I finished up everything that I needed to get done, including academic courses, because I'm ready to do it, and I know I have to do it.

LEHMER: How did you get back in if you had flunked out?

HEINECKEN: I had to go to [UCLA University] Extension, which at that time was not a separate program like we have now. It was exactly for this purpose. Like if you needed courses that you were not eligible to take at the



university you went to the Extension, which was downtown in one of the old city halls or something like that. So I went there, I made up whatever courses I had failed. I got off of probation by making acceptable grades there. They all recognized that you were here five years ago and you've done all that and you're ready to go to school, so you go there and take the courses-- Which was no problem. I did it. I think that was maybe only one semester that I went down there. And maybe it was even that you could be at UCLA-- Again, you're on probation until such a time as you complete these Extension courses. But I have a feeling that I was enrolled probably as taking art classes at the same time that I'm going to Extension to make up these other courses.

LEHMER: Did any of your experiences in the service work towards credit?

HEINECKEN: Well, I mentioned the other day that they did give me credit for some of the courses, which I now regret, actually.

LEHMER: That's right, I remember that.

HEINECKEN: Or I don't regret it, but it's kind of ironic. They're trying to help you as much as they can. And as I said, they want you to get in there and out of there as soon as they can make it happen. They were paying me to go to school. That's the way it was. I think when I



graduated in 1959 I certainly had grades that were acceptable enough to graduate.

And I became interested during that time period-- Then there was a guy named Don [Donald W.] Chipperfield, who was very influential on me. And I started making prints with John Paul Jones, who was the printmaking person. Chipperfield was the guy who introduced photography to me. There were no courses or anything, but he got me started in that. A third person was John Rosenfield, who is an art historian and an orientalist. I think both John Paul Jones-- Well, I know this was John Rosenfield's first teaching job at a university. John Paul Jones had just gotten out of the service or hospitalization or whatever, and he was very fresh to the thing. And Chipperfield I think was about the same. So these guys were probably only two or three years older than I was at the time. By that time I'm an older-- You know, the four years that I was, in a sense, not doing anything. Those are the three people who really helped me get focused. I'll tell the story about Chipperfield later.

Now, in this course of study there was a component of commercial art as well, and although the major was art, there were courses-- There was no design department there, but there was something sort of floating underneath this



which was to become the graphic design curriculum later. I don't know whether it was when I was an undergraduate or a graduate student, but I got very interested in what now you would think of as experimental typography or ideas about how you perceive language, all having something to do with advertising or something like that. At the same time, I was taking conventional art courses, you know, and painting courses, drawing, whatever.

Then I went to work for the UCLA [Wight Art] Gallery when Frederick [S.] Wight was the director of it and who it's now named after. I was designing the announcements and the catalogs, and I worked as a preparator in the museum. I won an art director's medal for one of the catalogs I did. So I had begun to understand here that the art thing was what I had always been pointed towards, but I didn't really understand until this time period that there's a whole industry out here which is not advertising but like serious designers.

And this guy I mentioned the other day, Jim [James A.] Cross, he taught, but he was not a permanent faculty. He was a very up-and-coming designer of books and typography and things like that. I could see that here's a guy who's got it figured out in terms of how to apply art ideas to advanced design and principles which were maybe Bauhaus principles, and things like that. So at the





same time I'm going to school I'm doing this job with the gallery, which was very helpful to me. This is 1959, when I graduated.

\*[I decided to apply to the M.A. program in art, was accepted and formed a tentative faculty committee of Don Chipperfield, John Paul Jones, John Rosenfield, and Tom (Thomas) Jennings. At this point UCLA was charged to instigate new graduate M.F.A. programs and to develop the new College of Fine Arts to begin in the fall of 1960.] So it was at that point when all these things were happening that I got out of undergraduate school. It took me one year, and I think it probably took everybody who was in a master's program one year. It was not a big deal. Especially since they knew the M.F.A. was going to come in, they were sort of cleaning up the trash of the previous graduate program. Basically you did an exhibition at the end of this thing. You put up the work, these guys show up, you discuss it, and then they sign the papers. It's not nearly as rigorous as it would be now. It was a very short period of time, and that's probably one of the reasons why I always said in discussions that the longer period of time should have been the case. I always wanted

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\* Heinecken added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.



a three-year M.F.A. program.

By this time I think I'm working full-time for the gallery as a combination preparator and designer of the announcements and stuff like that. I also worked for UCLA Extension designing the brochures that went out for all those courses and catalogs. By that time I didn't know all of that stuff, and I wasn't sure what I was going to do. There was no idea of teaching; that was out of the question. It just wasn't in the cards for me. I didn't even think about that very much. And I don't think that my state of mind would have been that with this-- Now this family is beginning to be people, so I needed a job. I was very much pointing myself towards this design thing, because I could see I was interested in it, and I was very good at it, and it was this guy Jim Cross who told me, "You are good, you could move in this." And it was never tainted by the idea of commercial art. It was a whole new field opening up. I'm now thirty years old approximately.

LEHMER: Twenty-nine.

HEINECKEN: Twenty-nine, right. I was working at Extension and at the gallery. You have to do the work, but it wasn't like you had to take courses or stuff like that. I mean, it was not a setup, but I knew these three people were the people who wanted me to go to graduate school, because they recognized some capability, and



they're obviously going to be on my committee, so it's not like I'm sweating it, you know? Like now people have to sweat this kind of thing, because it could fall out at the last moment or whatever. It was only a year. So I got my M.A. degree in 1960, and I had this job.

But anyway, it must have been probably August or sometime late in the summer of 1960 that this guy Chipperfield had a heart attack or something.

LEHMER: And he's young.

HEINECKEN: And he's young. Yeah. It was serious. I think it was a heart attack. He was completely incapacitated. So he--

Also, we had a new chairman that year, 1960. His name was Lester [D.] Longman. He was a real asshole, but-- Oops. [laughs] He was from the Midwest. He was an educationist kind of guy. He was actually hired to make the transition from this [College of] Applied Arts to the College of Fine Arts. He was the one who was going to develop all the programs and so on. You had to get along with him, but he was not very honest or something. Anyway, he had come to my M.A. exhibition. Maybe he did all of that as a course routine, but I remember he was there. He was very interested in what I was doing because it was part of what he could visualize as a design kind of situation like maybe he would develop. So he knew who I



was, and he told me he thought what I was doing was interesting for whatever reason, right?

So anyway, this guy Chipperfield has this heart attack. He's scheduled to teach in the next month, which is September or whatever. He recovers enough to say-- because I had TA'ed [acted as a teaching assistant for] his courses all the time--"Just hire him. Don't do a search. I'll be back out of this in two months or something like that. He can do it, and he'll do it well. So that's what I recommend you do." So this guy Longman hired me as an instructor, which was the lowest possible rank. It simply means that you're full-time, but it would be like a lecturer now.

For one semester [inaudible], so I don't even remember. I know there was certainly a drawing class that he taught. I also had TA'ed in printmaking, so I took [Chipperfield's] class. I think there was a drawing class. It might even have been some kind of printmaking class or an illustration class.

He never did recover from this. So the next semester they hired me to do his courses again.

LEHMER: Did that include printmaking?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Although John Paul Jones was the printmaking person, I did teach, either that first semester or the second one, some printmaking course. I





remember that. But it was mostly like a drawing course, and then some kind of typographic course or something like that. The expectation was always that he would be back, he'd get well. That's why they kept me on for the whole year, right? That was the end of 1961, I guess. I can't remember exactly whether he-- At some point it was clear that he wasn't coming back and that I would have this job as an instructor for an additional period of time.

So someplace in here, maybe 1961, '62, I proposed as part of the forming of the College of Fine Arts and the restructuring of the art department that we introduce photography into this. I made that case to the faculty and to Longman and to the deans and all that.

LEHMER: That's a lot of work.

HEINECKEN: It was a lot of work, and it wasn't altogether-- I mean, a lot of the painters weren't particularly interested in broadening things out when in fact they had just gone through to throw things out. They threw out jewelry, they threw out ceramics, silver-smithing. All these things were in the art department, and they just dumped everybody. Art education was a big part of it, and they dumped all of those people. It was like trimming down rather than trying to expand it. So they kept giving me--

Backing up here, Chipperfield was the guy who had



developed the photography department in Extension. So I also was teaching photography courses in Extension at that time, which were not offered in regular session.

LEHMER: So your first photography classes that you taught were actually Extension classes?

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: You had some sense as to what the potential was?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. By this time I know about the SPE [Society for Photographic Education]; I'm going to those meetings. I know that this is going to work out at some point. I just didn't know whether it would work at UCLA or how soon or how long it would take to convince people, because these people, the painters, were not ready to accept this, with the exception of a few of them. So it was a fight. And that went on for basically, I think, five years. I had other courses, but I was teaching photography, and that wasn't in the curriculum. It wasn't like you could major in it or anything like that.

I kept working in Extension all through this time. So by 1966 I was pretty much well into making photographs. And my first one-person exhibition was in '64, which would have been in the middle of this. Extension was going well. I was being accepted enough to at some point be made assistant professor and put on a tenure track.

LEHMER: We should get into that, I think, in our next



discussion, with a little bit of--

HEINECKEN: Well, anyway, let me just finish this thought. So 1966 was my sabbatical year, which was also the time when I was either going to be promoted to associate professor with tenure or let go. That was the way-- Well, it still works the same way.

LEHMER: In '66?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. For the academic year of '66, '67, I took a year of sabbatical leave, which is also the time when I quit the [Marine Corps] reserve because of, as I told you, planning the trip to Europe and stuff like that. So that year-- I really didn't think that they were going to buy this, because it-- When I left, I had written endless things. I cited the whole SPE litany of what's happening to photography, not only as an art but its importance in a social way and things like that. I wasn't certain that they were buying it, though. Some were, some weren't. So that whole sabbatical year I would have gotten one more year, but I wouldn't have been promoted, and then I'd been gone. But anyway, they decided that they would make me associate professor and I would develop the photography program as part of the curriculum. So this is all--I mean, I worked for it and it got done--very lucky. Very right time, right place.

LEHMER: But you worked for it because you had to make the



case--

HEINECKEN: Well, I convinced them, yeah.

LEHMER: You had to educate them.

HEINECKEN: There weren't any other photography programs that were part of the curriculum in the UC [University of California] system. [University of California] Berkeley had a workshop that they ran through the architecture school. None of the state colleges had--at least this is my memory--any kind of photography program. It was a breakthrough, really, to get it at UCLA. Berkeley, of course, never had one, never saw clearly that they should have it. That art department just folded up, anyway. And then all this sort of mushroomed into the state colleges and so on. That's all history, but--

What I'm trying to suggest here is a whole series, maybe ten years, twelve years, of things happening which were sometimes bad things, sometimes good things, but they all sort of keep adding up just by luck. This thing with Chipperfield, him having faith in me to do that job while he was sick and then not coming back, was-- I mean, who would have expected that? And then to have the right skills to convince the faculty and the administration that we should actually start a photography program there, which would never have happened except due to the fact that they were restructuring the College of Fine Arts. At





the same time you have the [Center for] Afro-American Studies starting, you have the Chicano Studies [Research Center] starting, you have all these effects of the student riots. The university is suddenly opening; they'll take anything that is going to get the students off their backs. So it only could have happened in that time period, something like this, with somebody who wasn't really experienced in any of it.

LEHMER: Briefly let's back up so we can close this one idea. At our next meeting we'll go into this a little more thoroughly. But let's back up and catch this one thing that we've lost. Can you expand more as to what you did for a thesis and what you got your degree in? It was obviously an M.A., but was there an emphasis like in printmaking or in drawing or--?

HEINECKEN: I think what I showed were basically prints. I don't recall. I might have had some photographs in there. They would have been [inaudible], figure studies, sort of [inaudible] at that time until 1964, when I had this show, which was a rather complete thirty pictures that all sort of looked like something.

LEHMER: Who was your committee?

HEINECKEN: These three guys.

LEHMER: The three. You said someone else, too.

HEINECKEN: Chipperfield, Rosenfield, John Paul Jones, and



Tom Jennings.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: And this other guy, Jim Cross, was teaching part-time there, and he was the one that I looked to, because he was a successful professional book designer. He actually probably got me the job at Extension.

LEHMER: One last question. You had some skill in art and drawing. You're into the service. You have survived some close calls. Did you consider becoming an airline pilot?

HEINECKEN: I was too short for that, by the way, but yeah.

LEHMER: What pulled you back to art? That's the last thing we need-- We don't have much room on this tape, so we might have to continue this.

HEINECKEN: Well, I think it's simply--it's not luck, because nothing is luck--that there were these sets of circumstances that happened to me which were fortuitous. None of it was really at the expense of anything, but it was at the-- Because of my motives of knowing that I had to go to work at the end of this and that I couldn't be hanging around the university anymore, I had to get a job. You know, everybody needs to get a job. But being able to--

LEHMER: But I was thinking back earlier, when you're in the service. I mean, you're deciding to go back to the



university.

HEINECKEN: Well, I wasn't trained to do anything, really, except be in the Marine Corps. I was too short. I applied-- I mean, I looked into the airline pilot thing, but I wasn't interested in that anyway.

There was an idea in my mind that because I did a lot of engineering stuff, as everyone does in flight training, I was interested maybe in something like that, but that didn't last very long, because that would have meant starting over in college, really. So I just took the easy way, which was to take the courses that I needed to get back off probation, finish my undergraduate degree, and see what happened. But then these guys just said, "Well, we're interested in what you're doing as an individual, so why don't you go ahead and just take the M.A.?" Because they were going to drop the M.A. then and go to the M.F.A. and so on.



TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

MARCH 25, 1996

LEHMER: Today what I'd like to go into would be the early years when you started to teach. I think we introduced how you began your career as a professor at UCLA; you might want to start there. But before we get into that, I wanted to do a real brief outline of your family life, kind of bring that up to your separation from Janet [Storey]. We'll start out with what the marriage with Janet was like. Was it January '55?

HEINECKEN: Yeah.

LEHMER: You were eighteen months into the service.

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: I guess you'd finished flight school?

HEINECKEN: Uh-huh, at that point. You couldn't be married, by the way, and be in this program. I mean, there were people who were, but they had to keep that a secret.

LEHMER: Then you moved to Laguna [Beach]--the family, you, and Janet.

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: What I remember was that the twins were born in August of '55, and you moved to a new home, but also in Laguna.





HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: And they were Geoffrey [R. Heinecken] and Kathe [Heinecken Hull].

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: It's probably not very important, but I was wondering, who was first? Who's the oldest?

HEINECKEN: Geoff was first, I think.

LEHMER: Geoff was first.

HEINECKEN: I'm pretty sure. Yeah. He's always talking to her about he's the older brother.

LEHMER: [laughs] By a couple of seconds or minutes.

HEINECKEN: Actually it was quite a long time, because-- I think I have this straight. Kathe was much less developed and was born maybe an hour or something like that after he was-- I'm not sure of that. But I know when I first saw them, which was about a week later, I think he was more or less formed, but she looked like some kind of a rat rolled up in a paper towel, because she was just much more premature. They were both premature, which is common in twins, I guess.

LEHMER: Where were they born? Was there a base hospital?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. They were born in the naval hospital in Corona [California], which was between the beach and Riverside [California].

LEHMER: Okay. That's got to be awfully close to El Toro



[Marine Corps Air Station]? Is that right?

HEINECKEN: It's about an hour or something like that. No, not that far. But anyway, everybody at El Toro went to that hospital if there was other than what they did locally there.

LEHMER: I remember photographing my daughter before the umbilical cord was cut and singing "Happy Birthday" to her in the hospital. You found out about this, and you were on a mission or flight.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. We were deployed somewhere--I'm not sure--but either Yuma [Arizona] or Mojave [California] or Fallon [Nevada] is where we always went. It wasn't that far away, but we were-- It was one of those situations where you take all the stuff--all the airplanes, all the men. You go someplace for a month or two, which is why I didn't get back right away. \*[I think I came back in a day or two, stayed a few days, and went back.] Oh, remember that Janet's a nurse and a very good, professional one when she goes through all of this. And I remember I was really appalled--or not appalled exactly--but the way that things were handled at a military hospital was much more expedient, and they kind of run

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\* Heinecken added the following bracketed section during his review of the transcript.



you through. This is the way they have to do things, obviously, compared to what she was used to in terms of a university hospital or whatever else she worked at.

LEHMER: Care versus maintenance.

HEINECKEN: Well, yeah. Or I think no matter where a military hospital is they use the same sort of procedures they would use anywhere, which is exactly what you're saying. It was like get them in, get them out, because it's a different mission that they have than at a regular hospital.

LEHMER: Then four years later Karol [Heinecken Mora] was born. That's a big gap.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. She was definitely not planned. I don't know whether this is something to keep in there, but between the twins and her there was I think maybe one miscarriage, but a couple of abortions, also. We weren't really smart about what we were doing. I think there was also an abortion after she was born. Where was I going with that? Those things I should really-- I mean, that's my memory of it, but I could check that out with Janet. But where was she born? Probably UCLA [Medical Center]. 'Fifty-nine. I would have been there. Yeah.

LEHMER: Where were you living at that point?

HEINECKEN: Let's see.

LEHMER: Was that Westwood? Or was it--?



HEINECKEN: Well, when I went back to school we applied for the veterans housing, but we had to wait until something opened up. They had another kind of an adjacent student housing in Mar Vista, Barrington [Avenue] and National [Boulevard], kind of. We were lined up to go into that, and somehow that fell through. It wasn't veterans housing, but it was the university housing, the apartments in Mar Vista, which we got into. So that's where we were probably when Karol was born. No, that's not quite right. I have to think about this, because-- Well, we moved to Beverly Glen [Boulevard] in 1960. So probably Karol was born in the veterans housing, when we were living in the veterans housing at UCLA on campus. Yeah. Because it would have been that year before that. Right, yeah.

LEHMER: You had mentioned to me earlier--maybe it was off tape--that the kids grew up in this ideal-like environment. There were lots of other kids around, young couples' housing. Can you describe that housing a little bit?

HEINECKEN: Well, I think the point I was making was that it was a unique situation in that it was like an apartment in a sense. I think there were twelve families in each building. There were five buildings. So you got a population of maybe five hundred people in this complex on





campus on Gayley [Avenue] across from the fraternity houses. Each building was really a kind of microcosm--I wouldn't say an intellectual community but professional people on professional tracks. We had doctors and law students and mathematicians. I always remember those math guys, because you could never figure them out. It was a thing where you never had to worry about a babysitter, because there was always someone. You were always babysitting for someone. It was like a commune in a strange way. We kept in touch with a couple of those families for a long time after that. Now we don't see them. But we became good friends with people here. Everybody is in the same-- You've got no money, you've got a bunch of kids, you're sweating school, and-- So it was great, a great thing to have.

LEHMER: Geoff and Kathe obviously would have strong memories of this. And you moved into Beverly Glen a year later, in '60?

HEINECKEN: I think so. It was 1960, yes.

LEHMER: So she's still pretty young?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. She's a kitten, yeah.

LEHMER: We visited, again off tape, with Geoff briefly about his experiences in the Glen. I have a feeling that it may have been a bigger territory, but he was fairly social and able to make friends throughout the Glen. It



was kind of an adventuresome place to live and grow up.

HEINECKEN: Uh-huh. And there weren't a lot of kids.

Well, I guess there were probably the same amount of kids that there were anywhere. But the nature of the canyon is such that you have kind of an immediate group like we do here on Viretta [Lane]. And you don't see everybody that way. But Janet met a lot of people through a play group situation where she actually volunteered, and the kids, I guess, went to that for a while. But it was a nice place for them to grow up. They went to Warner Avenue [Elementary] School, which is in Holmby Hills down there, which was one of those schools that was affiliated with the university as a teaching-- In other words--

LEHMER: A satellite.

HEINECKEN: If you went to UCLA you would go there to do your student teaching and stuff like that. So it was a good school that way.

The other thing about the school thing was that when I got appointed at UCLA, which was 1960, as an instructor, they were ready to go to school. The UES was there, which is the University Elementary School. This was an experimental school where the idea was that kids would be taken into that program, but you had to guarantee that they could go the whole six or seven years, because they weren't teaching them sequentially the way that they were



teaching in conventional schools. As far as the school was concerned, it was an experiment. It was research oriented to the university. But if Kathe and Geoff went there together--same age, identical--one might be in a program that is studying what happens if you don't teach them writing and reading in the order that would normally happen. What if you put them in a situation where they're reversing the order in which things are conventionally given? The point is that because I was employed at UCLA in the academic section, you could almost automatically get your kids into this school, because they wanted a range of kids, not only from that kind of family but from completely different backgrounds. It was a real interesting situation. We wanted them to get in there, but you had to guarantee or sign something that said they're not responsible if you have to leave this after three years, because you wouldn't be able to take that kid into a conventional school because he would be completely screwed up. Based on that, we decided that obviously we couldn't guarantee that we would be there seven years. I didn't know whether I would be there a year or two or what. So they went to this other school.

LEHMER: To Warner.

HEINECKEN: And if they would have gone there, I mean, those kids, at least as far as I understand that program



and how it works, they were very successful with this program. Those kids automatically went through high school, junior high school, and college with a different attitude about education. It was a good program. It's too bad that they didn't get to go there. It probably would have been better for them.

LEHMER: And Karol obviously started school.

We talked earlier--and I think this is on tape--about your transition around 1966, when you finally resigned your commission from the Marines Corps. And Karol's just starting school, too. Another element is you were going up for tenure. And Karol's in like first grade. I think it's '66. She's about six or seven years old.

HEINECKEN: Yeah.

LEHMER: So she's starting school, too. So your life is on the edge of solidifying into a whole other direction.

HEINECKEN: That's right. Well, it's beginning to become more or less permanent employment on the one hand, and moving to a place like this obviously could be a permanent situation. So, yeah, I think at that point, as far as Janet and I were concerned, everything was working very well. The twins were pretty wild, actually, both of them; Geoffrey especially was for a while. The time period here is, even in lower-level schools, you're beginning to experiment. Not in the sense that I was describing





earlier, but even at that level the schools did reflect the attitudes of what was happening to older students everywhere in terms of the protests and the [Vietnam] War, the free speech, free love, all of this stuff that was going on there. They were not unaffected by that, I think, as any kid at that age ordinarily would have been. Maybe I'm jumping ahead here a little bit. The twins went to University High School, in West L.A. Good school, obviously. But when Karol went--

LEHMER: What year was that when Karol went?

HEINECKEN: Well, she's--what?--four years younger, so I guess they would have been out of high school by the time she started, obviously. But anyway, what she got into was, I think they call it a free school, which was differentiated from the regular curriculum. It was taught by-- All this I learned later. We were excited about that program she was in. It was a kind of experiment within this conventional high school. To make a shorter story, as it turns out the people who were teaching this and who were setting it up were est [Erhard Seminars Training] people. I don't know what that stands for, but it was a sort of a quasi-crazy kind of a way to approach things. It was run by this guy Werner [Erhard]. I mean, est was a big thing.

LEHMER: Yeah. I remember that term. It's-- I don't want



to--

HEINECKEN: It stands for something. Anyway, I think it was a philosophy that accepted principles of freedom for each individual in ways that were much more radically defined than had been previously. We knew all of that, and Janet and I weren't concerned about it too much. It seemed okay to me. But by the time she graduated it turns out that the est people who were teaching it were also Scientologists for a large percentage. She came out of that high school as a Scientologist, and if you know anything about that-- At eighteen it's a little early to make a decision as radical as to be a Scientologist, but she was, and all her friends were.

LEHMER: And this was a public school.

HEINECKEN: Public school, yeah. When it got to that point, it was too late for us to do anything, but we were pissed. You know, you follow what a kid does. She's getting good grades, and she's a free kid. She does kind of what she wants as far as the school goes. I thought all of that was fine, because if she went to college she'd have to do whatever they had to do. I wasn't worried about it. But then it turned out that--I may be too radical--but Scientology is a kind of brainwashing, as far as I could figure out, and I still think it is. But it has an immense appeal to a certain kind of individual and



to a certain age where you don't know what you're going to do. It's like another family--bigger, better, more empathetic to you.

Anyway, she was in that, and we were a little bit disturbed. But the twins were very disturbed. They were old enough at that point that they felt they had something to say about what she was going to be and do and whatever. They gave her a bad time. I couldn't tolerate it. I couldn't stop it. I used to share what they felt, but I just didn't feel like I wanted to start stepping on things. So she stayed in that until-- Actually, she could still be in it. She married a guy who was in it. All her friends were in it. I think that's changed now, certainly. But the principles that were espoused I think she still holds. If you really are in this, as I understand it, it is a closed family. It's like the Mormons kind of. You want a plumber, you get a Scientologist. If you want this, you get a-- You keep it all, in a sense, so that you're helping each other to find employment and whatever.

In fact, this is an interesting aside. This was much later, certainly. Karol's husband John [Mora], who is an interesting guy, by the way, was among other things a kind of general contractor. He and some crew that he put together actually worked on Tom Cruise's house in Malibu.



Tom Cruise is a big Scientologist. That's the kind of networking that was a part of this.

What's important about it is that it was disturbing to some extent to Jan and I and to the other kids. And they were at an age where they would have much to say about it. They loved her and didn't want to see her go into something that they recognized to be something that they did reject or would reject. There was a tension connected to Karol and this Scientology thing that lasted on kind of an intense level for several years and still is something that's there. I think it's over in the sense of her becoming hardcore or being really dangerous about it. If you have the will to decide how to run your existence without having been told exactly how to do it-- It's like another religion, but it's a strange one.

LEHMER: I had a question. I want to back up.

HEINECKEN: One more thing about that. One other thing about Scientology is that you have to produce more and more money, take more and more of these courses, which begins to elevate you in certain steps in the hierarchy of this organization, and it costs a lot of money to do that. At some point, I think in the initial stages of this we had to help her, and even after Janet and I separated. I know, because we had talked about it still. Janet said, "I'm not giving another penny to this." And I said,





"Well, I won't either." So we didn't. At that point I don't know whether that had anything to do with her getting out of it or lessening her relationship to it, but nobody can afford the money that they want to train you to be-- It's like a pyramid club. You start raising money, and then pretty soon you'll come to the top of that pyramid, and you'll get the money. Anyway, that was what happened there.

LEHMER: Karol was born in '59?

HEINECKEN: Uh-huh.

LEHMER: It must have been the end of '59 if she's four years younger. August.

HEINECKEN: In the fall sometime, yeah. September maybe.

LEHMER: Okay. So she was graduating from high school in '77. This was going on in the mid-seventies, early seventies, in high school. Now, five years earlier, then that would be '73, when the twins are eighteen years old. So they graduated from high school and went to high school in the late sixties, early seventies. Definitely--

HEINECKEN: Yeah.

LEHMER: It's a real war protest period. I understand what you're saying on that.

Can you expand on that idea you were saying that the twins were wild?



HEINECKEN: Well, they probably weren't any wilder than other kids, but they were not-- I mean, I thought I was wild. The drug thing worried us a little bit, because they were obviously using whatever the current thing was, maybe not so much Kathe as Geoff. But Geoff will tell me now that he did everything there was to do, to ingest or whatever. There is no trace of any problem with him at all or probably with any of those kids. But they had friends who committed suicide and walked off of buildings from LSD, stuff like that. It was weird because of my own background. But I just didn't get a sense of drug use, as opposed to what my drug was--beer--which is not doing anything really bad to you, or so I thought. So I was not a very apathetic person in relation to the drug thing. I didn't get it. I didn't want to have my kids involved in it, but they were.

Kathe at one point was living with a full-blown heroin addict. I mean, he was just zonked all the time. They were living together in Venice in this kind of shack, which was romantic, I'm sure, and wonderful, but this guy was just zonked.

LEHMER: And this was after high school?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Yeah, probably well after high school. And this kid, by the way, was in-- We met his parents, who were both medical doctors and had a very high socio-economic



level. Well, this guy's name was Bobby. With all the promise of education and whatever, they could not understand what was going on with him. And we met, I guess, in the sense of what should we do about this, or should we do anything about it. They finally separated. I think he died, not during that time period, but whatever.

So that's the kind of drug thing I'm talking about. I don't think Karol was involved nearly as much, because that time had shifted, and she was into this other situation where you certainly wouldn't be taking drugs. I don't think she ever did it. And I don't think my experiences are much different than anybody who had kids of those ages in this environment here in a city like this. Probably it's the same. It's not a special experience.

LEHMER: No. And Janet as a nurse and--

HEINECKEN: Yeah. And there's that whole-- I mean, she understands. The highest rate of professional drug users are doctors and nurses, because they have high pressure situations, and the stuff is available. All you've got to do is go get it. No problem.

LEHMER: I didn't know that.

HEINECKEN: Oh, yeah.

LEHMER: So she's aware of the signs, or she's figured



this out.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. She had several professional friends who were working with her who had their licenses taken away and got hospitalized. It's not an uncommon thing at all. You don't hear about it as much in doctors, but it's a real-- They were the only people who had access to it, and they could sell it. Even if you're a doctor you get hooked. It's a problem.

LEHMER: Now, Janet was working at this--

HEINECKEN: One more thing. I keep thinking of things. I forget where we went. We left for a year maybe to Chicago or to New York or whatever, where I was going to teach, and Geoffrey refused to go. He would have been in high school, I think, still at that time. Whereas we had just expected that we would all go and whatever. And he wouldn't go.

LEHMER: What did you do?

HEINECKEN: Well, we had to go. And he stayed for at least maybe six months, eight months, maybe a year with a family in Beverly Glen. The most striking thing I remember about when we left is about his appearance. When we got back, he had gone through some stage of puberty that we hadn't experienced yet. He had long blond hair, scruffy, torn clothes, all the stuff where you just kind of went, "Oh, shit." Anyway, we got through that, too.





LEHMER: How long were you married to Janet?

HEINECKEN: Well, I married her in 1955.

LEHMER: January of '55.

HEINECKEN: Right, January '55. At some point, I'd say about 1965, things sort of began to go wrong with us. I start screwing around. I think she did a little bit, too. It never bothered-- I mean, it never came up. But it was always that I was married and at home or whatever. Again, the time period is such that this was not an uncommon situation. It may still not be uncommon. It was part of this whole attitude about individuality, I guess. I always reconciled whatever I did with her. She knew about it. She was certainly not pleased about it. I think probably because of the family and the situation, the stability--as screwy as it might have been--was more important than anything that she would have to do about it or I would have to do about it, and we sort of continued along those lines. Obviously in a marital situation it's not ideal.

At the same time, professionally I'm more visible, and I'm traveling more and doing talks. All those things open up a lot of possibilities during this time period for extramarital affairs. In fact, it was endemic in places like SPE [Society for Photographic Education] conventions, which were nothing more than a kind of party for this



purpose. But they got things done, too.

So anyway, in the summer of 1969 I went to Buffalo to teach for the summer at the state university there [State University of New York at Buffalo], and I got seriously involved with this woman there. And we had discussed that-- I mean, that came out. That was the biggest scandal problem that we had about a situation like that, and it was certainly not something that she could accept. So we got it figured out and reconciled, and I stopped doing that sort of thing. Well, I shouldn't say I stopped doing it, but it was not a situation where I was destroying the marriage or it was a bad thing.

But anyway, in 1975 I went to this Ansel Adams workshop in Yosemite. I met this woman whose name was Twinka [Thiebaud], who was a model. She was rather well known in her own little world, and beautiful and intelligent, all of those things. An absolutely loose woman. So I fell in love with her, which was just nuts, but I did. I never really came back home after I got back into town from this workshop. We took off somewhere for a couple of weeks and just did that.

LEHMER: This is in '75?

HEINECKEN: 'Seventy-five. Summer, fall of '75. I'm trying to think. Well, it was during this period of time that she lived in Henry Miller's house in Pacific



Palisades. She ran the household. She did the cooking. She had this small apartment within the house itself. I lived in a place in Venice on Bay Street, which was just this one-room situation, but I spent most of the time with her in his house, because there was enough room for both people. I would just go back and forth like that. That was a very exciting time period for me romantically, sexually, whatever. Because, as I said, she was probably the most obvious model for all these different people like Jack [W.] Welpott and Judith Dater and other people. People just knew her.

LEHMER: There is a famous Judy Dater photograph of Twinka sneaking around the trees, and there's Twinka.

HEINECKEN: That probably went on for six months or something. I see her occasionally. We're good friends. But what I'm trying to get at is that she had ambitions certainly beyond being a model. She had been to acting school. She had been to dancing school. By the way, she is the daughter of Wayne Thiebaud, who is a painter who taught at the University [of California] at Davis. All during her life, from the time she was a very young kid, she was a model for her father, who always used her as an individual to paint from or draw from or whatever. That's her story about how she got into modeling and what it meant to be a model and differentiating an artist model



from a clothing model. But her ambitions were to actually be something beyond what she was, which was a good figure model.

While we were together, two things happened for whatever reason, probably due to my psychic state or whatever. I started drinking more than I should have, which was a problem off and on anyway. And she began to get into situations where the phone would ring in the middle of the night, and her agent or some guy that was helping her said, "Love, so-and-so is in town. He needs some companionship," and she would have to go no matter what, because that was what a person in that situation-- You do that. I mean, anything you can do that's going to put you into the professional circuit is necessary. And I couldn't take it. I was just that conventional, in a sense, that I thought-- Well, what's perverse about it is that I expected Janet to accept my behavior, but I wasn't ready to give this woman the same freedom that Janet had given me, and I was troubled. I don't know exactly what happened, but I couldn't handle this lifestyle. Also, I had no studio, and I'm either living in this room or I'm at Henry Miller's. So I'm not doing anything really except trying to collect my thoughts. It wasn't a time that I accomplished very much.

LEHMER: And you didn't have a studio at school?





HEINECKEN: No, I always worked here, actually. I never was involved in anything that was so large or whatever that I couldn't actually do it in a conventional room.

LEHMER: Here on Viretta Lane.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. So anyway, that ended.

LEHMER: That went on for a year or six months?

HEINECKEN: I think six months. I think Twinka had explained to me at one point it wasn't even that long. I guess it was so intense that it felt like it was a longer period of time. She was unhappy with what had happened, but not to the point that she would change it. I mean, she had to do what she had to do. So anyway, we split up.

I got this place on Venice Boulevard at some point in there, maybe 1975. I moved there, I had this studio, and I was beginning to set that up to get going. I'm not involved with Twinka anymore, although I remember having her over there. There must have been some overlap between when I moved into this place-- I was probably still seeing her. That was the end of that situation. But as I said, we've remained friends ever since. She's now in Portland [Oregon]. Joy [Joyce Neimanas] and I saw her a year or so ago.

So the next situation, I guess, is in May of 1976-- April I think. I went to Chicago to do a week's workshop at Columbia College and at the Art Institute [of Chicago]



in a split situation. Somewhere in the middle of that week I went to dinner with the faculty of the Art Institute, and Joy was there. I had known her before from SPE meetings, but I had never had any real direct contact with her.

LEHMER: Well, I remember she was one of the first people you asked to come out and teach.

HEINECKEN: That's right. That was 1971, actually.

LEHMER: 'Seventy-one. And for one reason or another she couldn't do it.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. She was on sabbatical that year. As she would relate it now, she was interested in it. If it weren't that she was on sabbatical she might have come, which might have changed the whole thing, or would have changed it.

As I said, I had met her, but mostly I had seen her work often through this time period. I knew obviously she was an interesting artist, and thought that she would have fit in with whatever was going on at UCLA, but she couldn't come. So four years later I meet her again in this social situation, and we went home together. That's when all this started obviously, just bang, bang. Of course, at that point I'm not divorced, but I'm free. I mean, I'm obviously not going back to that situation.

LEHMER: It's not resolved between you and Janet, but it



seems like it's a separation that may not be formal. It sounds like you didn't deal with it on a formal level, but it was like--

HEINECKEN: Yeah. It's not that I don't want to talk about it, it's just blurred. The whole thing is blurred. But in her mind, Janet and I formally left here in 1975. So this would have been a year or something later than that.

LEHMER: Left the Viretta house.

HEINECKEN: I would have to talk to Janet further about her feelings or attitude during this point. I think both of us understood that we were not going to be living together, whether we should be married or not in relation to the family. We weren't divorced formally until 1980, which is a long time to wait to do that. I don't know why we did that.

So anyway, I came back to Los Angeles, and Joy and I were on the phone all the time and all the letters and stuff that goes on like that. In the summer of that year, 1976, she came out to visit me for a week in this new studio that I had moved into.

LEHMER: In Venice.

HEINECKEN: No, not in Venice, in Culver City, but on Venice Boulevard.



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MARCH 25, 1996

LEHMER: Okay. We finished up where you were moving into a studio in Culver City. I think you'd mentioned that you and Janet had moved out of Viretta.

HEINECKEN: No, she stayed here.

LEHMER: She stayed here. Okay.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. She lived here with differing arrangements between us financially since 1975--when I left--to 1984. So that's nine years that she-- I'm looking this up. I'm trying to remember exactly when we were divorced. I'll have to look these dates up.

I always paid half of the mortgage, the insurance, everything like that, and actually she lived here free during that whole time period. At some point we bought the other half-- This is after Joy and I were married. I bought the other half from her. At that point she left and went to where she lives now. I have to think about the dates there more.

LEHMER: Where does Janet live now?

HEINECKEN: She lives in West L.A., like the Pico [Boulevard]-Sepulveda [Boulevard] area.

LEHMER: Okay. When you came to school here--I'm jumping back now--in 1960-- No, no. It was earlier than that.





When you went back to school full-time, she went back to nursing full-time.

HEINECKEN: Right. Or part-time. I'm not sure exactly.

LEHMER: Was this always at UCLA?

HEINECKEN: Yeah.

LEHMER: Okay. So she's in the medical school at UCLA.

HEINECKEN: Well, it's a teaching hospital.

LEHMER: And she's there all the way through the sixties and seventies.

HEINECKEN: Uh-huh, until she retired, which was, I think, after I did. She had been there a long time.

LEHMER: You retired in '91, so she retired after that.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. I think so.

LEHMER: So she's looking at thirty years.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Yeah. Her story about her profession in relation to that school is interesting but not necessarily relevant. The reason she retired is that she became convinced that what she, a professional registered nurse, was being, at least at that institution-- They just kept elevating these people until you are no longer a nurse. You're running a floor or you're supervising other nurses who aren't registered nurses but are nurses' aides. That was what happened to the medical profession during that time. She wasn't interested in being the supervisor. She wanted to be what she always was, a nurse with the



patients.

She also realized that the doctors she's worked with over a long time period and the residents and interns-- She's begins to sniff out this kind of HMO [health maintenance organization] attitude that they had and that they were no longer compassionate to the degree she thought they should be. They were, in fact, becoming administrators, and even more of the medical stuff was being handed over to people who previously weren't thought of as qualified to do that work. That was her whole dissatisfaction. She stayed on, I guess, until she had full retirement.

I was just thinking also at some point here before 1975--this was not a conscious thing, but it just kind of happened--I always went by the name Bob. I mean, anybody who knew me, like Linda [Connor], will still call me Bob. Here's two people who when you know someone that long, that's what you call them, no matter what they call themselves. At some point in there during this time with Twinka and Henry Miller, somehow I got this tag name from him which was Raoul. So I began to use that name. I've got some picture that he gave me, of his drawings or whatever, that says, "To Raoul, the mystery man," or some shit like that. I'm not pretending that I had any relation to him other than just as this guy hanging around



his house or whatever. But I have a very clear impression of what he accomplished and how he lived his life, even though he was like eighty years old by this time and died shortly after all of this. It was a very interesting experience to be certainly not inside this circle, but an adjacent or tangent individual who saw what his life was like day to day. This was inspiring in terms of someone who was so important to a certain body of literature or certain time period still being this renegade person who's almost dead but still having writers over for dinner and lunch. They wanted to see him before he died, and he knew all that. And he played this renegade person. He was very outspoken, as older people are, about what's going on with no bullshit. He was a big--this has nothing to do with anything--Ping-Pong player, and I was a Ping-Pong player, and we did that. It was a very interesting experience.

But anyway, what I'm saying is somehow I took this name, which I thought to be kind of romantic, like Raoul Hausmann. Then at some point I decided I would not be called Bob anymore; I'd rather be called Robert, because it was a new life. It was a shedding of whatever had been my life up till that point with my family, my marriage. I thought that was sort of typically romantic.

LEHMER: This is '75?



HEINECKEN: Well, someplace in there, yeah. But within that short period of time I was Raoul. Still when I talk to people or write people who I knew then-- Like Irene Borger always calls me Raoul as a joke. She's another person whom we don't need to get into right now but whom I was very much affected by--with her and by her. I still am.

Okay. So I'm in this studio now in Culver City. It's July. This I'm not quite certain of, but we can check it with Joy. We were on the phone all the time and writing letters all the time. But I'm in the studio. I was on the second floor, and there was no doorbell or anything, but there was this bell kind of thing that was outside, and when you pulled this rope it rang the bell. I looked down there, and there was Joy just out of the blue. I didn't have any idea she was coming. She's with this friend of hers named Robert Loescher, who's this big, huge, fat guy who's a gay man. He's her best friend probably still.

LEHMER: And he's the art historian from the Art Institute of Chicago.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, right.

LEHMER: Where she's employed?

HEINECKEN: Right. His field is pre-Columbian art history. His subfield is the whole history of sex in art,





particularly gay sex and gay people within art. So he's very interesting. His is a side of life that I never really understood. I think one never understands it unless you are in it or you have someone very close to you in it or some context for it. For me he was the context whereby I began to really understand what this was without a sense of it being strange. Because I just never had any contact with it. I probably had a typical bourgeois attitude about it. But he helped me, and Joy.

Anyway, they just show up, and it's like midnight. They have a cab. I see who it is. I go down and get her, and he goes off to whatever he's going to do in the cab. That was like the first time that she ever made a move that was clearly something like I wasn't visiting her or I wasn't following her around. She was there.

Then I'm not sure whether it was that visit or a later visit, but it's now July 6, 1976.

LEHMER: July '76.

HEINECKEN: Right. So we're both living there, but briefly. I mean, maybe it's a weekend, or maybe it's she's visiting, or maybe she's been out here a while, I'm not sure. I can straighten that out with her.

But anyway, what happens is Darryl [J.] and Doris Curran were obviously-- He's been a good friend of mine for a long time. We were socially involved with them. He



let us know that he and Doris were going out of town for the evening and coming back the next day. Would we feed the cats?--which there were a dozen cats or whatever. We agreed to do that.

LEHMER: In West L.A.?

HEINECKEN: Yeah, in West L.A. So we did that. We went over there probably at eight or nine o'clock in the evening. This would become pertinent later.

But anyway, I have these books. I think I mentioned they were my grandfather [Friedli Heinecken]'s journals with his drawings or whatever. I had one of those books with me in the studio in Culver City. I didn't have a lot of stuff there. It was just a meager art place rather than anything comfortable. So I had this book, which is really a treasure to me and the only original book that I had. The others I had in storage. I had it with me. I was always telling Joy how interesting this was. I think she said, "Well, bring it along. I'll take a look at it." Anyway, I took this book over there to feed the cats. I don't know whether we decided we were going to stay over there before or not. I think we got there, and it was late. We just thought, "Well, we'll just stay here rather than go back down to the studio." Maybe we had to come back the next day or something to feed the cats again. Anyway, we stayed overnight.



It's early the next morning that this explosion happens on Venice Boulevard in the block where our studio was. I can tell you about the explosion later, but it just levels pretty much the whole block-- Maybe ten buildings are gone, one of which is this building that we would have been in that morning if we wouldn't have gone to feed the cats. If we didn't decide to sleep over there rather than go back, we would have been dead, there is no question. There were like forty people who died in this thing who were the occupants of that entire block. There were survivors, but--

LEHMER: This is the third close call.

HEINECKEN: Well, we didn't know anything about this, because we're still over there having breakfast. When the phone rings, I think one of us is in the shower and one person answers the phone. It's Eileen Cowin, who had a studio or a house also in Culver City near where we were. She's calling Darryl to find out if he knows anything about what happened--I think she knew Joy was there probably--to me and Joy. I think I'm in the shower and Joy picks up the phone to get this message from Eileen, "Do you know what happened to Heinecken?" I can't remember who was on the phone or whatever, but she's calling to tell Darryl that the building is gone, and I think her assumption was that we were gone, because the



block was this level plane. So we weren't. We were safe.

Bart Parker was teaching at UCLA at the time. He lived not too far from Culver City, too. She called him, also. But anyway, it was one of those lucky situations where we weren't there.

So that place is destroyed. I was absolutely despondent, because I had just come off of a Guggenheim [Fellowship] on a sabbatical leave. I had the whole studio laid out with all these prints. I had just finished printing a whole edition of these *Cliche Vary* prints. I had a lot of other materials stored there that were all gone, which was very devastating. We just got in the car and drove for maybe a week or two. We went up north and tried to forget the whole thing.

But what happened on Venice Boulevard, it turns out, is that the main pipeline for raw gasoline going from the refineries and--

LEHMER: El Segundo.

HEINECKEN: --El Segundo or wherever down to the next assisting main distribution, it's a pipe maybe ten feet in diameter which has raw gas in it, just like it comes out of the pump. It's moving it from one place to another. The city of Culver City is doing some repair work not on the gas pipeline but on something else. There's a bulldozer in that median there. Now there's no median,





but there was a parkway down that street. He's got a bad map that he got from Standard Oil [Company of California], who owns the gasoline, how deep he should go to do whatever he's doing. He's correct on the map, but the map is wrong. He hits this pipe and breaks this pipe open, which instantly vaporizes into the air under extremely high pressure. So what you've got is this raw vaporized gasoline, and somewhere somebody lights a cigarette or there's a spark or something, and it just boom! They never even found this guy or the bulldozer. That just disappeared. Because the map was wrong, Standard Oil was responsible for the accident. Standard Oil is represented, or it's a conglomerate situation.

I didn't mention before that the guy who owned the building was a sculptor who had all his sculpture stuff on the first floor, and on the adjacent lot were his big metal outdoor sculpture pieces. Mike Todd was his name. So he owned the building and also lost a lot of his work. His wife actually was a lawyer.

We took them all to court. It took like eighteen months to get it. I think I probably got \$30,000 or something like that. I used that money to get into the next studio, which we also made some money on. We moved to Inglewood to a studio there, which we turned around okay, which finally gave me the money to get back in here



[Viretta Lane]. So it was fortuitous that that money happened as a result of a tragedy.

LEHMER: But the sacrifice for that money was losing that art.

HEINECKEN: Well, in the long run-- I was upset at the time, but it's not as bad as losing your life, which we would have. The place was a two-story building. All of these were two-story buildings. There were bars there. One of these buildings was a place where the Mexican families all lived, where all the guys were working here and there. So there were about, I don't know, forty women and children in this one building living in this destitute, crowded poverty, and that whole building went.

LEHMER: Okay. So you get back in here after three studios.

HEINECKEN: One of the reasons we went away was we just had to get out of town definitely. I'm pretty sure that the lease-- Or that I was going to leave that building within a month or something, because I had lined up the other studio on Washington Boulevard, which is only a couple of blocks from this one. Joy wouldn't remember it, probably.

When we came back after our drive, we moved into this other studio, anyway. So we had a place to go.

LEHMER: This was during the summer?



HEINECKEN: Yeah. I think it was right around July 4, '76. It was the bicentennial celebration of 1776.

LEHMER: Okay. So now you're with Joy.

HEINECKEN: Well, I think I'm wrong. I didn't go into that studio immediately.

Stan Mock-- By the way, do you know him?

LEHMER: I know the name. I've heard the name.

HEINECKEN: He and I eventually bought this building together. He was already on the ground floor of the studio, and somebody else was in the upstairs where I finally went.

I think before that happened we went back to Chicago. I went back there with her, because whatever leave time she was on was over. I have to check with Joy about this, because she's more accurate with it. I think we went back to Chicago and lived there, and she went back to teaching. Then probably a year later we came back and went into this other studio. Because '76 was the first year. I think I was still on leave through the academic year there, and I went to Chicago at that point. I have that written down somewhere.

LEHMER: So you set up a studio on Washington because you were in a transitional state, ready to do that within a month?

HEINECKEN: I think. I'll get this straight.



LEHMER: And then you ended up going back to Chicago for a year.

HEINECKEN: Or maybe six months the first time or something like that.

LEHMER: I was going to say that you and Joy had worked out an interesting cooperative arrangement where you would spend a couple of years on leave from UCLA and she would work full-time.

HEINECKEN: Well, that actually developed a little bit later, I think. Initially, I know the first time that we did this, it wasn't two years. It was one year or something like that, and maybe she came out here for one year. But within the next three years we had established this two-year, back-and-forth plan. That, again, I can look up to be accurate. I think the point simply is that it was this huge destructive thing--

Oh, the book. I forgot about the book. So we took this book to Doris's. If I had lost that book I would have been very upset, because it's a family treasure. I never should have had it in that studio in the first place. So that was why I was telling it that way.

Of course, people like Stan, who is living in this studio there-- Eileen was there. Bart Parker lived down there someplace. They all assumed we were dead. Because you couldn't even get within a half a mile of this thing.





It was just a disaster area with all the fire people. The fire didn't even get put out. It's just like the top of an oil well with this stuff burning off until they can get it all capped off.

LEHMER: Incredible. Okay. I'm trying to wrap up this family--

HEINECKEN: Yes. The situation develops out of this fire thing. I'm pretty sure we didn't move into that studio. We went back to Chicago.

This is important, too. At some point in here--I guess it must have been before this--I had this opportunity to go to Hawaii, or I was doing an exhibition there and they wanted me to come over and do a workshop and a lecture and whatever. And I said yes, I would go. I think Joy was in Chicago still. I called her and said, "Look, you need to go to Hawaii with me." Well, she said, "I don't have any money." And I said, "I don't have any money," because I didn't. She borrowed the money from her grandmother or something, which was about \$500, and went to Hawaii with me. I remember at that point we got to talking more seriously about what we were going to do. I think she was still married at that point or recently divorced or going to be divorced. But it was on this Hawaii trip where I think we had a rather serious discussion about what we were going to do as adults and



possibly even discussed going back and forth. Actually, we said we loved each other and decided that we would try to figure out what to do with it.

LEHMER: Yeah. That's a tough situation. I'm sure the initial thought, which would be more traditional, is that one of you is going to have to give up your situation if you love each other and you decide you want to live together. I think it's kind of ingenious. I don't know that I ever heard of people being able to create a situation where they actually don't give up their careers.

HEINECKEN: Well, it could only happen if you're two higher-education teachers. No other teacher, like at a high school or whatever, could do that. And most people who are in business or whatever, they can't do that.

LEHMER: I wonder how many higher-education teachers can do that, too, in a sense. I mean, you have to be fairly reputable for them to give you that leave.

HEINECKEN: Well, maybe. You have to be more willing to accept the idea that you're really going to work for half pay. I mean, you're going to work half-time. There are going to be blocks of time with full pay and zero pay. Well, we've got two people with tenure making the decision to spend their time differently. It wouldn't have happened unless you had two artists or two similar people in regards to their personal work.



LEHMER: Robert, what's the date of Hawaii approximately?

HEINECKEN: I can tell you that, probably. It's one of the things that didn't show up in this book, but I think I wrote it in there. In fact, let's just look while we're thinking about it. You can shut that off.

At some point Geoffrey gets married briefly. I don't know exactly what year, because it's not in here. Janet can figure that out. But he lives in Los Angeles.

LEHMER: Okay. He's graduated from high school. He and Kathe graduate from high school in '73, approximately, or early seventies. Then a few years out he's married.

HEINECKEN: Well, they're born in '55.

LEHMER: 'Fifty-five.

HEINECKEN: 'Seventy-three they're out of high school, right?

LEHMER: Okay. Karol graduates approximately four years later, '77. That's when you're in Chicago on a leave. She's living with Janet, and Janet is living in West L.A.

HEINECKEN: Well, she's living here [Viretta], actually.

LEHMER: Oh, that's right. Okay. Karol is going to school at Uni[versity] High School from Viretta. She's another Beverly Glen-Uni High kid. Then she graduates, and Geoff marries.

HEINECKEN: Somewhere in there, yeah.

LEHMER: And you said briefly or something.



HEINECKEN: Yeah. Well, this is vague because I was disinvolved. I think he was married for less than a year. I remember the wedding.

LEHMER: This is approximately that same time period that Kathe was in Venice?

HEINECKEN: Yeah, it would have been. Right. Karol's still in school or just getting out of school.

LEHMER: Now, you said disinvolved. When you were separated from Janet and you were living in Culver City, what kind of a relationship did you have with your kids? I mean, time-wise did you get together with them weekly or monthly? Or was it more sporadic than that? What kind of relationship did you have with your family and Janet, too, at this time?

HEINECKEN: Well, we had a plan that we would get together, the kids and I. They were certainly-- Kathe and Geoff were completely devastated by it. I don't know how much they knew about what was going on that Janet and I knew about between us. You sense things like that, but they certainly weren't ready for this eventuality. And Janet I don't think would have seen me. I would say disengaged, or this state of mind where your focus is not on what you did wrong or your devastation but you're leaving. It's on what the opportunities are now, with Twinka in this case, and so on.





They, like all tragedies, they got over it. Janet certainly got over it, even though there was no reconciliation of it. But it was a resolution that they understood as time passed. It had to happen; there was no question about that. It was one of those things which I just did wrong. I mean, I could have done it completely rationally like some people do--trial separation, counseling, trying to figure out how to get back together. All of those things we never did. I don't think Janet would have. She was too hurt. I think luckily they were gone from the household, the older kids.

LEHMER: The twins.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Because it would have been even worse. Karol probably took the brunt of that problem.

LEHMER: You mentioned earlier that the kids, the twins, were devastated or hurt by this, but you didn't mention Karol. Karol's in high school, I think, and--

HEINECKEN: Or just finishing, '77.

LEHMER: It's got to be.

HEINECKEN: We wished we'd ended it the following year, but--

LEHMER: Was she more independent from the family, do you think? Or how do you think she responded to this?

HEINECKEN: I haven't discussed it with them, actually. Maybe I will just in terms of a more full record of



everybody's feelings. That's possible to expand that in some ways with them.

Now, for instance, everybody understands what's now is now. I certainly understand that whatever was going on with Janet and me was not productive for anybody. I think there was a period even when I was not pleased with all this. I had remorse. Everybody has that. But you kind of move on.

I think I am very fortunate that because of Janet's personality and her temperament we're on better terms now than we ever--not ever were--but I mean during this time period. So she's completely or probably pleased with what finally happened out of all this rather than going through more time, which was not a good time. I think of her as a good friend now. We were over there yesterday. Joy and she fully discussed her medical problems and whatever. She's empathetic to things like that. She knows what the inside of her operation is and so on. So it's like a family again in the sense of we see each other, we get together, we have dinners with Janet and the group. Joy is simply a part of that extended group.

LEHMER: Well, on the surface it might seem that you didn't necessarily resolve the devastation, but it sounds incredibly well resolved when you think of how many relationships never get resolved. It's a working



situation that I think is somewhat unique.

The chain of events is marrying, having children, and the children growing up. You and Janet separate and then finally divorce around '80.

HEINECKEN: 'Eighty-four.

LEHMER: 'Eighty-four.

HEINECKEN: I think that's it.

LEHMER: You and Joy marry at that point.

HEINECKEN: Nineteen eighty divorce, yeah. But '84, I think, is when we bought the house from her.

LEHMER: So she lived here till '84 in the Viretta Lane house.

HEINECKEN: She actually lent me about \$100,000, Janet did. She took the mortgage on this house, and we paid her until that loan was paid off. That was another clear indication that she was trying to help us, at least financially, and fully understood the situation, or else she wouldn't have lent me the money, which I thought was just amazing. In fact, she called me and said that she had found this house that she liked and she could afford, and would I like to buy my half of the house. I'd always been asking her every once in a while, because I wanted to get back here, obviously.

LEHMER: To the Viretta house.

HEINECKEN: So she's the one who actually initiated that



exchange. And I said, "Then lend me the money," which was amazing.

I may have said this before, and I don't know if it's pertinent, but she never wanted to be married. I told you that whole story, I guess. Marriage was something that was sort of pushed on us. She dates people. It wasn't because our marriage failed that-- She just never was a person who would have needed to be married or needed to have children. She had her own professional goals in life that didn't necessarily include the conventionality of marriage and family and things like that. Her father left. She has a younger sister [Doris Storey], maybe two years younger. She never knew her father; he was never there. When the second child was born or was going to be born, he left. They never saw him again. Nobody ever saw him. She grew up with her mother and this younger sister. Her mother was a nurse, her grandmother was a nurse, her great-grandmother was a nurse, that kind of thing.

LEHMER: You marry Joy in '84.

HEINECKEN: I think so.

LEHMER: Joyce Neimanas. I don't know if I mentioned it earlier.

HEINECKEN: This is her married name from her first marriage.

LEHMER: She kept that, like many artists do.





HEINECKEN: Yeah, because that was the name she was known by professionally. Incidentally, we're good friends with these people who lived a couple of blocks from us in Chicago.

LEHMER: The Neimanases.

HEINECKEN: The Neimanases, right. I don't think she minds me saying this. The thing that broke them up really was-- I don't know, certainly there were probably other factors, but he [John Neimanas] definitely wanted to have children desperately. I don't know why. His father's a Lutheran minister in Latvia or Lithuania and is a fantastic person in another right, this guy. As I understand it, the situation with them was that at this point Joy would be either out of school, beginning to teach, or whatever, but realizes that there's no way she can have the career she wants if she has children. As much as she might love children, there was just no way that she was going to do that. For a woman at that age to have the insight to know that that isn't something-- She has to make a choice there that's either you're going to work hard at being an artist or you're going to have to dilute that if you have a family. He now has four kids or something like that, which he's very happy with, I'm sure. He was also an art student and taught art in high school but left that.

LEHMER: Okay. You're married in '84. At that same point



you and Janet work out a system for you to move back into the Viretta house.

HEINECKEN: Or buying it.

LEHMER: Buying it.

HEINECKEN: Buying my half. In the divorce settlement we switched from joint ownership to joint tenants or vice versa. As I said, I paid all the taxes and repairs and the stuff during that time, because it just seemed appropriate to do that.

LEHMER: Now, after going through a divorce, why--? One last question: Why did you and Joy finally decide to get married after you'd both been through marriages?

HEINECKEN: Well, that's a good question. I'm not sure. We certainly wouldn't have had to be married to have the same life that we had. But I think both of us agreed that-- I certainly would feel this way now, at least, that with our relationship developing the way it did we had to do something symbolic to, I guess, solidify the idea that nobody's going to screw around anymore. Her list of people that she slept with is extensive like mine, because it was the time. So I think the marriage was not important for any legal reasons necessarily, although that always helps. It was a commitment to say, "Okay, we're going to be together until we decide not to, but we're going to have a life that's the two of us; no extramarital



bullshit and all that." I think that's the way I think of it, and I think she would agree.

LEHMER: Where were you married?

HEINECKEN: In Boston. I don't know why we did it there. But it was because Carl [Chiarenza] was there. Carl and Deke Morrison were the best men or whatever.

LEHMER: Deke from your Marine fighter days?

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: And Carl from your teaching.

HEINECKEN: Right. And actually we got married-- There was a church next to Carl's house, which I think was a Unitarian church or something. We did it there because it was close, and then we had this reception at Carl's house.

LEHMER: And that was in '84?

HEINECKEN: I think so.

LEHMER: Fall?

HEINECKEN: I don't know.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: August, I think. I'll ask Joy what her perception of that was, because it would be interesting for me to hear it or know it, I guess. I don't think there was a long discussion about it. We had been together for nine years and had been in a sense married that long-- I mean, living together and not having any other activities outside of that.



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MARCH 31, 1996

LEHMER: Today, Robert, I wanted to go over a few things. I wanted to back up just a bit to the beginning of your teaching. We've covered the start of that somewhat, but I had a few questions I wanted to start out with on that. Then that will get us rolling into teaching up to '75 or something like that, which is where you were pretty much continuously teaching, except for sabbaticals. If I'm not mistaken, from that point on you started doing two years on, two years off.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, that's correct.

LEHMER: Okay. First question I have, who were the tenured faculty at the time of your coming up for tenure? I think you had mentioned to me before that it was not simply you coming up for tenure, but the art department at UCLA was going to expand their curriculum to take in photography. Second--

HEINECKEN: There are two distinctions there. One-- Well, I talked about the undergraduate program versus the graduate program, because those are two different entities in a sense.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: I interrupted you, which I shouldn't.





LEHMER: Okay, maybe we could start out with that. Then the third question that I have gets into the faculty. First, who were the tenured faculty at that time, if you can think back. Secondly, who was in support of that expansion, because I know you had mentioned that there was a concerted effort. Maybe we should go into a brief description of the consolidation of the curriculum and the elimination of some directions in the art department and the effort to narrow the scope--then at that moment you were asking them to broaden to accept photography. It was a lot to ask. Maybe you could back up enough to tell us what the struggle was in that case. But first off, who were the tenured faculty at that time? I've got some names down here. Maybe we can add to it.

HEINECKEN: Right. Some of these people, like the younger ones like Elliot [J.] Elgart, maybe wouldn't be tenured at that point. Bill [William J.] Brice, which you have there, and [Jan] Stussy and [Samuel] Amato and Gordon [M.] Nunes you don't have here. And I think Diebenkorn--

LEHMER: Richard Diebenkorn.

HEINECKEN: Richard Diebenkorn came at some point in here. I can't recall his direct participation in these early debates, because maybe he came after that, but I think that's really all the people that were there. You note they're all men, although-- Let's see. I guess I did



mention that when I was there at first there were women because of--

LEHMER: Two, I think.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, principally two that I had studied with, but by this time I think they would have been gone.

Although-- Well, I shouldn't say gone. They were probably there, but they were at the edge of their career, being ready to retire. They probably weren't involved in these confrontations, because I don't recall that, but they might have been there. Dorothy [W.] Brown, I think I actually worked for her while I was in school. I'm just not sure whether it was prior to this time.

LEHMER: That name reminded me of Ray [Raymond B.] Brown, and he's not on the scene yet.

HEINECKEN: Ray Brown would be a contemporary with me but not involved in this decision. Ray Brown's situation, I think, was interesting, because-- Oh, and John Paul Jones. I forgot Jones.

LEHMER: Okay. And Chipper--

HEINECKEN: And [Donald W.] Chipperfield, right. Although he was not part of this so-called pictorial arts department; he was in the design department.

LEHMER: John Paul Jones was--

HEINECKEN: A printmaker.

LEHMER: The year of that was 1966? 'Sixty-five, '66?



HEINECKEN: Yeah, I would think something like that.

LEHMER: Even though you didn't come up for tenure until '66, I'm sure this was beginning to take place beforehand. Was it a year, two years before?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Maybe this is a good time to just kind of start it. I would be kind of hard-pressed to come up with an actual number of classes or whatever in the undergraduate division, although, from the time that I started there in 1960 there would have been courses in [UCLA University] Extension that I was teaching and actually using as a way to construct teaching ideas, even though these were adult people rather than students. But their motives and their interests in the medium were pretty much the same as anybody's. They don't know anything about art and photography. They're interested in photography; they know what that is. So the point I'm making here is that Extension served as a basis for the inclusion in a regular program, because we used Extension that way all the time. If students weren't sufficiently prepared, whether it be undergraduate students or graduates, they would go to Extension, as I mentioned that I did, which was a different situation. So Extension was a kind of proving ground not only for students who were not adequately prepared but for faculty. Like all of the part-time faculty in painting would have come out of



Extension first. That's where they would have started. Not these guys, but all of the part-time people were chosen based on their experience with Extension classes, because they could be observed, graded, evaluated, whatever. That's aside from the point, I guess. So let's just put the undergraduate thing on hold for a moment here until I can collect more data about that.

It was clear that at that time I was teaching drawing courses-- I taught all the courses that this other guy had, Chipperfield, which would have included beginning drawing classes. I'm trying to think of his courses. He taught these drawing courses, basic design courses. There's something else here I'm forgetting about. Oh, he was involved in what we would have thought of as practical work in terms of exhibitions, and he was connected to the [Wight Art] Gallery, also. So there were courses he would see as like putting together exhibitions--

LEHMER: Preparators?

HEINECKEN: Yeah, preparator, but not really the physical. But there was just stuff that he was interested in which were exhibition ideas--

LEHMER: Exhibition design?

HEINECKEN: Design, exhibition content. He actually worked, I suppose, on top of everything else he did, in the gallery or for the gallery in their program. Somewhere I





probably have good records on that.

I think what we want to suggest or understand here is simply that beginning in 1960, when I started, it would have been with those courses. Throughout that year or year and a half he was still thinking that he would come back, and then at some point he doesn't.

By 1962 we have the first-- This Ken [Kenneth] McGowan guy that I mentioned before, who was a painting student, excellent graduate student or undergraduate who then went into the graduate program-- But in 1962 I think he took his degree. What he showed in his M.A. show were photographs, personal photographs he had made, along with his drawings and paintings. I can't help but think, because he was such a talented guy, that-- I mean, he was sort of the star of that graduate period of time. If it would have been some other student who wasn't so talented in some of the other fields it wouldn't have had the same effect as he did. And he was terrific. Now, he later died of AIDS, which is simply a side note on him. But after he got out of graduate school most of his personal work remained in photography. That's how he got his exhibition record going. As gifted as he was in these other fields, he just sensed that photography was something that he wanted to do.

LEHMER: So he died of AIDS?



HEINECKEN: By that time he had established himself as a photographer. He was showing in different places and had publications going, was included in group shows and things like that.

LEHMER: This must have been like twenty years later.

HEINECKEN: Yeah.

LEHMER: His graduate show was in '62--

HEINECKEN: 'Sixty-two, yeah.

LEHMER: So it must have been like twenty years later. He must have been one of the first people to--

HEINECKEN: Certainly it was interesting, because the time period wasn't that someone was in or out of the closet, it was that he was who he was. His pictures now would suggest that kind of lifestyle or that kind of method, but no one had any problems. It wasn't an issue. Of course, the AIDS thing is always an issue, but that was certainly much later.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: I wish I had my records on this, because these things are easy to look up but hard to remember. Like who those guys were making the decision about this. But was Diebenkorn there? I don't know. Things like that. But that we just have to float with at this point.

LEHMER: I think what would be good in this segment of the oral history is, to the best of your recollection, now--



What I think will come out is not necessarily the cold, hard fact, because for all we know we might be able to go through-- I don't know if there were very well-kept notes of the art department faculty meeting, and I don't know-- HEINECKEN: Well, there would have been, but whether they survived any time period I don't know.

LEHMER: Yeah. And then in a couple of weeks you're going down, and then I'm trying to get down, to Tucson. We could probably look up what they have there.

What I think would be interesting on this level at this moment was you were trying to recall--and I put a lot of value in that--who you would feel was, of that tenured faculty-- I think we probably pretty well figured out who they were. Who was really in support of that? And who resisted it, to the best of your recollection? And you probably know why they resisted it.

HEINECKEN: Well, I think I mentioned Bill Brice as a proponent, and I cited that not only was he a broad-thinking individual, his family had come out of the entertainment business and so on. I think he definitely would have been the most supportive person. I don't know what their discussions were about, but his discussions with me were always very positive about what I was trying to do, and I think it's simply because he was a broad-minded individual.



I think Gordon Nunes would probably have been the most adamant detractor in this. He's an interesting character in all of this, because he's probably there longer than any of these people. He was like the patriarch. He was older than most of those people by at least five years. He pretty much ran it philosophically. You just didn't do something offhandedly. Or you wouldn't have set up a proposition to vote on that you thought you could win over him, because it wouldn't win. It's hard to explain a guy like this. He constructed the whole UCLA art department philosophically in some sense, which was a very rigid, serious business. Art was a serious business, and it wasn't decoration and all of the kind of things that fly around art. He was definitely the leader of this group, and he was not convinced that photography was going to fit into whatever he determined that department to be. I don't know how that was reconciled within this group, but I keep stressing it's not anything that was like one day it wasn't there and the next day it was. When I start there till when I get tenured, that's a seven-year period in which these things are constantly being evaluated. I'm pushing it, not knowing whether I'm going to be there or not, but it's not, bang, someone decides this. It's a working process where not until probably 1967 do we have our first graduate student graduating. Something like





that. Even that we can look up in our notes.

Prior to that it was this McGowan guy or Carl Cheng or Pat [Patrick] O'Neil, who were working mostly in other fields. The structure of the department at that time was that you could have, as I did, one artist, one historian, one design person was my committee. So now it's rigid. You have to have four people. They have to be from the art department and so on. It was much more flexible then, because no one knew what they were doing yet. I don't know what the point was there.

LEHMER: Where would you put Elliot Elgart on this scale?

HEINECKEN: Well, I think he's contemporary with me, or maybe he came a year before.

LEHMER: He's newly tenured.

HEINECKEN: No, he's not tenured.

LEHMER: He's not tenured?

HEINECKEN: No. He would have been an instructor or assistant professor or something. I think because of our similar situations he's the only person there that I ever became friends with, really--close, personal friends. I think it was because we were in the same system of being evaluated, although I think he was a year or so in front of me, because he was there when I came. All of the rest of them remained colleagues--some closer, some further. Nunes, for instance, I don't know of anybody that got



really close to him except Ray Brown. They were sort of buddies. This is not a criticism, but Ray Brown got a lot of his attitudes, his way of behavior, his way of obstructing things that he didn't feel were right, from Gordon Nunes. That was exactly the way that he controlled things.

LEHMER: You might say Gordon Nunes was his mentor.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, exactly. And they had similar personalities. Nunes was like that. You never quite knew what something was going to turn into. You needed someone like Gordon Nunes holding this whole thing together in terms of philosophy and direction. Maybe Ray saw himself in the same position, and he was also very effective in some ways as a leader.

LEHMER: Let's back up on a couple of people. Jan Stussy had been there since the forties, if I remember correctly.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Brice and Stussy and Amato all came at the same time. They were all right out of the service, probably, 1946 or '47. And those three people, maybe with Nunes, were in fact the-- I mentioned before UCLA was rated one of the highest-ranking art schools in the country somewhere in the late fifties, and it was primarily because of these three or four people. They were the ones that were there.

There were other people in that time period like



Peter Voulkos--

LEHMER: Did he teach down here?

HEINECKEN: You know, as a part-- Not part-time, but a year or two--

LEHMER: Visiting lecturer or--

HEINECKEN: It wouldn't have been that, but something like that.

Fred [Frederick S.] Wight, who was the director of the gallery at that time, was a very well-known local painter, even though he was an older person, but he painted right up until the day he died. He was a very visible name in many artist circles here.

John Paul Jones was probably the most visible printmaker in Los Angeles during this time period, along with maybe four or five other people.

These people were important. They were young artists, but they were all very ambitious in terms of their own work and creating at UCLA basically what was called pictorial arts at that time. They renamed it because that's exactly what they wanted it to be. Photography doesn't fit in or outside of that, necessarily. They're seeing it as something you-- You manipulate paint and manipulate whatever to make it a good picture, whatever they determine that to be.

LEHMER: So they're looking at having a lot of control



over the medium--creating, manipulating the canvas, the paint, the print, the ink--

HEINECKEN: But see, it's--

LEHMER: --where a straight photograph would not fit into that. Where all you're doing is click and turn.

HEINECKEN: No, I wouldn't say that, but that's an interesting question, because I think in a lot of people's minds-- You can certainly say Edward Weston to these people, and they would say, "Yes, this is an artist." His photographs, of course, are not manipulated, but they certainly recognize that the quality of his own work is a contribution to the idea of art in photography. So I'm not sure that that would have been the case.

Stussy, I think, made montage photographs either during this time or before. His inclination towards photography was the collage or montage, that type of thing.

LEHMER: So he would probably be on the side that would be supportive? He'd be on Bill Brice's side of--

HEINECKEN: Well, yeah. When I was first in school I took courses with Stussy, and I got to know him. For some reason he remembered me, and he was always telling me I was a bad-- Not a bad student, but not a good student of anatomical drawings. It might have been one of the courses I flunked, I'm not sure. He was a stickler for





that anatomy stuff. That, of course, is all gone now. In fact, he gave it up. But you knew every bone in the body, and you drew it endlessly from skeletons and whatever.

LEHMER: And Sam Amato, I think of him as a serious painter. Now, the reason I'm asking this is that if we look ahead from this point, you've definitely made some nationally recognized contributions to photography education, and you, I'm sure, have won over a lot of the faculty. I think you contributed to the conversion of a lot of people as to the credibility of photography. But at this moment it's new, and you're trying to educate them. You're trying to justify the medium. You're trying to explore something that's new. I'm not trying to set up a situation where there's good guys and bad guys, but it's a situation where there's at least two things that you've mentioned that could contribute to the resistance of photography. One, of course, which I think is interesting and that we should explore more, is, does it fall into that category of pictorial arts? The other is-- And now I'm forgetting what my point was, but there are various reasons. It's new at that point, and--

HEINECKEN: Yeah, and it's not maybe dissimilar from other institutions at the same time beginning to have the same inclinations. I think UCLA was different, with such a strong painting art department that it probably took



longer, in a sense, to get something really going there than it would have in San Francisco State [University], where you have the same thing going on. Jack [W.] Welpott is starting a program there, not a graduate program at that point. And the [San Francisco] Art Institute there had photographic programs from Minor White and Ansel Adams.

The difference here is I don't think there would have been any question--and maybe there wasn't really any question in their minds--about whether photography could be an undergraduate course. Anybody would think if you're going to be a painter, or whatever you're going to be, you are going to use photographs in some way, because everybody does for models and even for stupid things like documentation. You have to know that in order to really be an effective artist of any type. You have to know something about it.

And maybe it's not the easiest thing to convince anybody of, but one of the more simple things is that you put that camera up to your head, and you make a photograph of that, and you make a print of that, a black-and-white print, and you realize you can print it any way that you want. It's not like seeing it. And we all know that; that's the simplest thing there is about it. You make a snapshot of your kids or whatever. You sense the



difference between the event and the realistic representation of that or the facade of that event. And to make that distinction for a student artist is important. Not that the photograph matters so much, but there is something that is different.

So I think any mature artist in any medium during this time period would certainly understand that if you're educating someone you certainly can't leave out photography. But whether that becomes a viable vehicle for personal expression as they would want it was questionable.

LEHMER: In other words, whether you--

HEINECKEN: I mean, it's almost like saying you want to know how to photograph and know about it so that you can reject it in favor of the manual methods. In other words, it's to understand the difference so that you don't even have to go through the problem of how to make it into art. It's just what it is. It's just an important medium that any person should know about that's going to be an artist, or be an educated artist.

What I was trying to say about the undergraduate program was it was really being supported by that idea that it's not whether undergraduate students or Extension students make art or not. They're involved in something, and there's a definite sequence of things that you learn



about making photographs that can be taught. And it's valuable. That was never a problem, never a question. Whether this became part of the undergraduate curriculum, which is different than having a course, and certainly whether it became part of the graduate program, that was the issue. Whether you would actually take students in not just because they understood photography and how to do it or not do it, but they would use it to be artists. That was the big question. It still is a big question, I think, for some people.

LEHMER: You may have been on committees, graduate committees, but you did not have a graduate with an emphasis in photography until '67 or '68 or '69--

HEINECKEN: Well, for that we have to look at the--

LEHMER: What you're leading to is that UCLA did not have a graduate program until you were tenured. And UCLA didn't really have photography as part of the curriculum that you're discussing until you are tenured.

HEINECKEN: I think that's correct. That's something we should look at, definitely.

LEHMER: Most of the time I think of people coming up for tenure based on their qualifications as a faculty member, based on the teaching, research--

HEINECKEN: And their promise as an artist. Yeah. But all these people were functioning artists. It wasn't





about what you sold or even if you exhibited. You had to have the lifestyle that these people represented. It's not unique to UCLA.

LEHMER: No. But you've got another roadblock that you have to circumvent, and not necessarily circumvent but tear down, and that is the whole idea that your career is also based on whether or not they accept photography into the curriculum.

HEINECKEN: On a graduate level.

LEHMER: On a graduate level.

HEINECKEN: As it now is. I mean, now it's just a unit more or less equal to anything else as opposed to something where you-- As I said, the first students really--McGowan was one, Pat O'Neil was another, and Carl Cheng--very skilled and very highly developed in other fields like sculpture and painting. Pat O'Neil was still in the design department or something but doing experimental films which were right up there with the best being made in the city.

LEHMER: So he's well respected for--

HEINECKEN: You wouldn't say those people were given an M.A. degree or even an M.F.A. later on the basis that they were-- Well, they were filmmakers, they were sculptors, whatever, but--I'm just reminiscing--that seems okay. The film is obviously something, and experimental films at



that time were a very big thing at UCLA in the film department, so we understood all that. Not to bring up McGowan again, but it's like all of these early people, whether they were in the photography graduate program or not, were viewed as being as good as young artists as anybody else was, whether they were painting or not.

LEHMER: Where do you think Sam Amato fell on this decision?

HEINECKEN: I think Sam probably was, as he is today, a modulator kind of guy. He's not ever going to raise his voice at anything, or rarely. He's a-- What's the word I want?

LEHMER: Consensus--

HEINECKEN: Well, he's a mediator. And I don't think he ever likes-- Like Gordon Nunes would sit down and want to argue with you for an hour and a half. Sam would never do anything like that. It just wasn't worth his time, or it wasn't that interesting. So I think he was probably someone who was understanding of the whole thing and probably was helpful in it. I can't imagine that he was resisting it, because it wasn't his nature to resist much.

LEHMER: And then Richard Diebenkorn was there. He might have taken part, but he wasn't like a voting member.

HEINECKEN: There's a whole other story about him which we don't need to go into here. I'm not even sure he was



there during this time period. At some point he was a good friend of Bill Brice's. They were friends before any of this. And it was largely at Bill's, I think-- Actually, getting Diebenkorn even to consent to be teaching--because he wasn't that famous at that point, but he knew that he would be--was really a-- He sort of consented to do this work. He was full-time, but it wasn't like he was there all the time.

There was the other story I'll tell you later. I think it was probably after this time period. We'll see where the dates fall here, because we have to look that up, but at some point you have the first person--I'm going to have to look and see who that might be--who is not a well-rounded graduate student but is there to make photographs and is convincing in what he or she does and has that-- It's an M.A. or M.F.A. in photography. That's what we don't know. I have to look and see who that is, because there will be a time associated with that.

LEHMER: And I'm wondering if William Doherty would fall into that?

HEINECKEN: Doherty wasn't-- He was also--

LEHMER: A filmmaker.

HEINECKEN: --a filmmaker, right. His photographs were so demanding of him that he gave up filmmaking. He switched that moment when he first saw what that could be. If he



wouldn't have killed himself he would have been-- He wouldn't have been [Garry] Winogrand, but he would have been someone like that. He was so intense about everything he did. I don't know what happened to him, why he did it.

LEHMER: Okay. I want to get this on the record but not go into it at this moment. I want us to think about down the road. As a tenured faculty member you're facing the same decision with someone else who faced it with you, and I'm thinking of new genres and Chris Burden. I think that's important for us to discuss too, because this is part of your career as a faculty member.

HEINECKEN: I forgot one thing. Oliver [W.] Andrews was a sculptor in this, which I forgot, and he was very supportive.

LEHMER: Andrews?

HEINECKEN: Andrews, right.

LEHMER: Okay.

HEINECKEN: This is not so important, but sculpture at that time was not a major force at this program. So I think Oliver and I always-- We weren't close friends, but we were like the outsiders in a sense. When certain votes would come up about this or that, we would discuss how we would vote, because we represented the non-painting faculty, which is always interesting to me, that he--





LEHMER: Robert, what I've learned that I never really understood and obviously still don't have a full grasp of, but I have begun to respect since I've been at UCLA, is this relationship that you have with other tenured faculty. In a sense you're in bed with them for thirty years on a certain level. You have to coexist. I'm wondering if you could go into that, as an artist and as a faculty member what it was like in the art department.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Let me just think of something here. Well, one thing which I keep mentioning, and I'm thinking that I'm not clarifying it much, but 1960 starts either the first M.F.A. degree given or is when that program starts as opposed to the M.A. degree. Every art-related teaching unit within what was then the College of Applied Arts in the university is figuring out how to respond. Home economics was part of it, all of the things that are still part of-- Music, dance, whatever, although dance probably wasn't developed much at that point--maybe, I don't know. The point is that in the spirit of re-evaluating what kind of educational divisions you will make within the newly formed College of Fine Arts-- Right? So I don't know what happened exactly in the music and theater and the other departments, but in the art department the first thing that was dropped was art education completely out of the university. So all those



people who had those jobs, bang, they're gone or they're given notice. We had silversmithing. These were all within the-- I guess at that time it was called the Department of Art History.

The ceramics program, which was a big program under Laura [F.] Andreson. Students would come from all over the world to study with this woman.

LEHMER: What was her name?

HEINECKEN: Laura Andreson. She was probably the most well-known ceramicist in Southern California. And it was her program. She was older. I actually took courses, or took a course, with her when I was there as a student. Ceramics remained, but for some reason she was gone, the program was cut. Ceramics was probably half of the design department. She had all kinds of famous people in there all the time in one of the largest teaching areas. But that got cut back severely.

LEHMER: Was it that time that she was there that Peter Voulkos came in? Or later?

HEINECKEN: I would think later, but I'm not sure. She was a pure ceramicist. She made these vases that were just beautiful, and glazes were her whole thing. She was famous for this. But it's one of the things that got cut or redefined.

So the thing is, how are we going to redesign the art



department in terms of what's no longer there? I think pictorial arts was what the name of painting people was. Design was split off, which part of that time it wasn't, into the Department of Design. Art history separated later, in a sense, into their own unit. So there were three teaching units in the Department of Art during this time period after 1960.

LEHMER: So it's been there for quite a while, because that was up until three-quarters of the way through the eighties. Because when I came in in '86, art history and design were all in one department [Department of Art, Design, and Art History].

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Well, that was-- Maybe it was later. But you see, art education would have been another division in there which was gone completely. There are other things that are escaping me at the moment--courses, not necessarily programs--that simply were deemed not part of what the College of Fine Arts was to be.

LEHMER: So in 1960 you redefined the curriculum and you narrowed it to pictorial arts. Or is that a term that maybe was dropped?

HEINECKEN: No, I think--

LEHMER: When did it become fine arts?

HEINECKEN: Well, let me just stop here a minute. College of Fine Arts-- When you said fine arts it struck a thing.



This was a big decision to make on the part of the university, because what it meant was that there was something called fine arts that they were going to teach. And associated with all of these changes was the introduction of graduate degrees in things like dance, musicology, and whatever else. Film, for instance. Then it was a department of film, theater, and television, or something like that [Department of Theater Arts], as opposed to now it's cleaned up into whatever else. So you cannot ever not consider what the university was doing-- UCLA--what the UC [University of California] system was doing. This is when [University of California] Santa Cruz is someplace in here, which was set up as an alternative kind of university. You've got [University of California] Riverside becoming something. In other words, it was sort of the glory days, I would say--1960, 1970--before all the money got to be a problem. So it's a restructuring of the-- This is important, although it may not seem to be. This is when the *Master Plan [for Higher Education in the State of California, 1960-1975]* is invented. The master plan designates that [University of California] Berkeley and UCLA would have graduate programs. Nobody else would have graduate programs.

LEHMER: In art.

HEINECKEN: Anything. This is the plan. All of the other





UC campuses are somewhere between Berkeley, UCLA, and the next level. They have certain programs, but Ph.D.'s are basically what they don't have.

Then the state college systems were set up to feed into the graduate programs in the UC system. The junior colleges were to develop the first two years of education in California. It was a system by which the lowest level, community college, would still be vocational but would give you the first two years, and you could get into any state university--not into the University of California.



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LEHMER: So the defining of the role of the community college, which would feed into both the state--

HEINECKEN: Then-called state colleges.

LEHMER: State colleges-- But also the UC system?

HEINECKEN: Well, there was no-- [University of California] Irvine wasn't there. Santa Cruz, maybe, is later. Riverside is an agricultural division that's really called an experimental station before it was a university. So these things are all happening. The seeds of all this are happening during this time, at which point everything happens. But definitely UCLA and Berkeley were going to give the advanced degrees. The state colleges would have no graduate programs. Now they all do. So this plan, whatever it was, got altered by the money, by the change of attitude, or too many people, or who knows. They modified it. In the United States higher educational system this master plan for the university and the arts within that was the biggest thing that happened in education. A lot of states immediately began to follow this thing where you'd have the junior college, the state college, university, because it made sense.

LEHMER: All right. I want to go back and briefly touch



on--

HEINECKEN: So all of this master plan stuff affects everybody in the university from the ground level up in redefining. It's because of the redefinition and the utopian view of what this could become, where all of this stuff is allowed to happen, and some things are not allowed to happen, like art education. So it was kind of a big housecleaning.

Painting--and I don't argue with this--is, or certainly at that time was, the most flexible medium in which a lot of things could happen. And drawing was the basis of painting. I don't think that's changed necessarily; I think that's still the way it is. Although things like videotape, performance, new genre, whatever you want to call that-- The absolute change in filmmaking and in photography really, all those broadening effects, are because of what schools like UCLA did. They did it right, I think.

It doesn't ever change the idea in anybody's mind. If on an airplane they say, "What do you do?" you say, "An artist." "Well, what do you paint?" I mean, that's just clear.

LEHMER: Yeah. And if you say you're a photographer they don't understand, either.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Or if you said, "I work in new genre,"



they-- "Wow. Swell. What's that?"

LEHMER: So you got your--

HEINECKEN: And let me finish something there I forgot. Now what we have in 1990-whatever, you have new genre, which includes video, you have--

LEHMER: And performance.

HEINECKEN: And performance. You have sculpture as a separate entity but obviously very much inclined towards new genre thinking. You have others, like photography. What else do you have? Printmaking in some ways was still there, but reduced. All of which point to a distribution of money and faculty to the divisions of painting and drawing, which now still, as I understand it, would be twice as much money, twice as much faculty, twice as much space as any of these so-called equal things. Obviously it was a good device to double the--

LEHMER: The budget?

HEINECKEN: Well, yeah, and double the graduate students, double the undergraduate courses to provide for what probably still is thought of as the most important unit within the art department. And maybe it is. I mean, I could say it is.

LEHMER: Something that I have observed is the number of applicants received-- I think photography was down to like twenty-one, twenty-three, something like that. I thought,





well, maybe that's because we were in transition from your retirement. But I also heard that the numbers were low on, like, sculpture. And there we have an internationally renowned, highly visible person at this moment, Charlie Ray. And Nancy Rubens.

HEINECKEN: And Paul [McCarthy]. Well, Paul's not in sculpture per se.

LEHMER: But I think we had well over a hundred painting applicants, and so in a sense what you're saying is not-- The applicants are not strictly a representation of the visibility of the faculty, which one might think would be possible. What also seems to be even more important is what you're alluding to, and that's the power and the strength of the tradition of painting and drawing.

HEINECKEN: I don't think it's necessarily that much different in any other university, that things would fall differently, but the thing is the principle is there.

LEHMER: There's a question that I want to get discussed, and that is that by not being part of the painting or drawing faculty you are supposedly a contemporary, an associate, and yet represent somewhat of a minority in thought in some ways. I don't know exactly the right term. How did you delicately work with faculty who might vote differently from you in meetings? I think of you as someone who has shown great skill in being able to coexist



with very diverse people and their philosophies.

HEINECKEN: Okay. Well, my situation or UCLA's situation maybe isn't that different from maybe the English department at UCLA, which has completely changed itself from one thing to another with the postmodernist kind of thing. I'm just saying that it's probably happening to some degree similarly all over this country, which I think is interesting, with certain things emerging.

Like a place like Irvine. If you go to Irvine to do graduate work in photography, you're going there because of that faculty and the program and the clear emphasis which is there.

If, on the other hand, you-- [University of California] San Diego has emerged because of the faculty. Political photographs basically is what they make, which is fine. I may not know enough about it to speak this way, but generally, you can see this.

Riverside has no graduate program at this point. What you have there is the [California] Museum of Photography associated with that place. I guess maybe you have better historical or philosophical ideas developing for those undergraduate students because of that museum and because of what seems to be a critically focused faculty. Not John [Divola], but the historians.

LEHMER: That's right.



HEINECKEN: On the other hand, UCLA, with the art history department moving to the history department, there was nobody on that faculty interested in contemporary art, video, whatever. They wouldn't hire anybody who would ever teach that permanently. It wasn't a big blow to us that they left. In a sense it might be more so to the painting people, because they were teaching the whole history of art, which painters need.

Anyway, it's the political shifts of this. Berkeley, for instance, still has never developed their graduate program in art. They have it, but you never see anybody coming out of there, and you never know anything about it.

LEHMER: That's true. They've elected to go a certain direction or moved into a certain direction. How would you define Berkeley versus UCLA as far as their art programs?

HEINECKEN: I really don't know much about it, but it's simply not visible. There isn't anything to know about, as far as I can tell.

LEHMER: Did you ever have any intercampus meetings or discussions?

HEINECKEN: We did, actually, yeah. Mostly they turned into kind of drunken arguments when it became social-- We had one in this house once. Some people that I'd never seen before in my life stayed three days.



But look at [University of California] Davis. Davis has, or did have, and still-- If you're going to study art in the University of California in Northern California, you go to Davis. You don't go to Berkeley.

LEHMER: People from San Francisco State [University] ended up at Davis. Faculty-wise there was a connection--

HEINECKEN: Well, and San Francisco State probably has a better art department than Berkeley.

LEHMER: I've heard that.

HEINECKEN: But Berkeley is not-- I suppose when all the people that are still associated with it who should be dead by now are dead, then maybe they could just stop it or something. They have the architecture school. They have no art department. I think it's all sort of--or photography is certainly--funneled through the architecture department still.

LEHMER: Well, do you think their art history is where their emphasis went historically or critically? In other words, how would you define Berkeley versus UCLA? I'm thinking there's a studio direction, or a theoretical, critical direction, or--

HEINECKEN: Well, for those of us--

LEHMER: Or even a draft direction--

HEINECKEN: It's kind of a joke, but, I mean, you can't compare-- I mean, UCLA has got a football and basketball





team. Berkeley has the intelligence. They're the intellectuals. Nobody at UCLA that would-- This is bullshit, kind of, but I never compared the two. If you look at the list of the ten best universities in the country, Berkeley is number two. UCLA doesn't make that list, I don't think. It's just not an important university in that sense. It's like the difference between Los Angeles and San Francisco somehow. We have a population here, we're supporting twenty or thirty universities in Southern California. Above Santa Barbara you've got like four or something. You go to Berkeley, you take a Ph.D. in history or something, you have something. I'm not saying UCLA doesn't, but Berkeley is Berkeley. It was first. It's still first.

LEHMER: You're saying that the state of California whether intentionally or by default, that art was not fostered in the most serious institution.

HEINECKEN: Well, no one has room to do everything, right? You have places like Harvard [University], Yale [University]. They have photography courses, but you don't go to school there to study it. It's for the undergraduates to learn about it.

LEHMER: Exposure.

HEINECKEN: You know, get their hands wet in something. It's terrific, but Yale and Harvard, they have the



museums. Berkeley's museum, not much there.

I don't know how important all this is, but there's a bigger picture than I'm able to describe here. I'm just sitting in the bottom level of all this, but there's an education-- For instance, when the student riots happened, UCLA had a little bit. We had a few helicopters and the National Guard, but Berkeley came apart.

LEHMER. Right.

HEINECKEN: They were the ones. Santa Cruz didn't even know what happened.

So it's a very interesting system that began with this master plan, and then it simply lost track of that and modified it in ways that are probably very effective.

At some point in here you can take [California State University] Fullerton, and now I think probably other places have the M.F.A. degree. Wouldn't you rather go to Fullerton, where it costs half as much, have a studio, or have facilities, and study photography rather than UCLA? It's an equal program, the degree is equal. If they didn't get the M.F.A., they had the M.A., then people would have to go to UCLA to get the highest degree. Well, somebody figured out that these state universities should be able to give those degrees. There are enough students for it.

LEHMER: All right. Now, what I want to get into in the



last section of today--

HEINECKEN: We're all over the place today.

LEHMER: --would be your decisions, your choices, your evolution of curriculum within photography. We can bring it back down to, how did you teach photography? How did you structure your course? Did you actually have a conscious structure? Or did you let it just kind of flow? How much emphasis did you have on the classroom, the discussion of the work, versus the darkroom or the studio? How did you start out? And how did you finally level out into a curriculum?

HEINECKEN: A couple of things come to mind. One is that there's a, I suppose, curricular idea which goes undescribed in any field, and the content of the curriculum is dependent upon each individual instructor. So you might have someone like Paul McCarthy working next to who knows-- But Paul McCarthy is an absolute individual in what he does and the way he teaches and so on. I shouldn't put it there; I should put it in photography. So a person like Mark [Alice] Durant, or even Mark McFadden, very strong theoretic base. In Mark [McFadden]'s case, a failure to bring whatever wonderful intelligence he had to what he knew all the time was a necessity to make pictures that at least you could look at, at least they'd be exhibitable. He failed to do that, so that was



a big blow, actually, to me, because I thought he would come through and do it. It was my fault. That was a very bad choice on my part, because he took a lot of the space for a long period of time there without ever fulfilling what he knew he was supposed to do. He was a very effective teacher. All the students that worked with him got stuff that they'd never get from me or anybody else. I mean, he had particular kinds of insight that he brought. I think his interest was probably not so much in the pictures they made as much as the basis on which they would make them or the theory behind all of that. So he was excellent that way. I know no student that ever took him seriously who was not absolutely committed to what he was as a teacher. He was very good. But wrong time, wrong place. How did I get on that? I don't know.

But you can't say exactly what the curriculum is if you have someone-- Like for one year, two years, [Robert] Fichter and I taught together. We were the faculty.

LEHMER: Robert Fichter?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. So that people who did either undergraduate or graduate work during that time period probably got a hard push of iconoclastic stuff from Fichter and using offset and a completely different kind of thing than when Winogrand would have been there or [Lee] Friedlander. If you look at the whole long picture





you have a kind of balance. At any given point you can look in there and see, well, if you got [Edmund] Teske teaching, you know what's going to happen there. Or if you have, well--

LEHMER: Michael Bishop.

HEINECKEN: Michael Bishop, yeah, or any of these people. They're all people who either were beginning to be well-known as artists and as teachers or who were well known-- people like Winogrand or Friedlander, which were just one-shot things.

LEHMER: What you're saying is that--

HEINECKEN: So back to my own thing. What I would try to do with an undergraduate class was conform, to some extent, to this idea which I discussed earlier about when you make the photograph you learn something about the difference from what the photograph is to whatever else there is, drawing or reality or whatever. I was always very interested in having people understand that. If they never understood anything else, that it was not a passive tool, not a mechanical tool--or it is, but it's not-- Because it's like eyeglasses. They're not mechanical, but you see things differently when you wear them if you need them or you don't. They're not neutral; they do something. Or a hearing aid or whatever. This is not the right analogy.



So anyway, that idea was always something that on an undergraduate level I would think of as a primary idea, that this is different. You don't expect undergraduate students in any course to become artists. That's not why they're there. They're there to see, in this case, how making art with photography is different than making art with painting and sculptures and so on. The balance between what an undergraduate student has should allow that person to have formed an effective, practiced notion about how these things work; a history, to some extent, of each of these media, which in our case we had to provide rather than the art history people providing; and a sense that art can be made, and it's hard to make art. It's work. It takes time. You have to think about it. I mean, you have to do something, and, in fact, it can be made. You can make something that you weren't capable of making ten weeks earlier and so on.

I never actually taught lower division courses, because that started after I left. I would have liked to have done that, because I think that was the place to start people with these ideas rather than upper division.

Try to identify within a period of four years or two years where are the people who are your students who can actually compete for graduate school with other students from outside or who can compete if they go to another



graduate program, if they can't get into UCLA-- That's maybe--what?--two, three people a year? Where you really can say, "Well, you've got something. You may not understand it, but trust me, you need to go further with this. Not necessarily UCLA, but somewhere." So what I'm getting at is the other 97 percent or whatever are simply taking another course in studio art--a different medium, a different set of tools, a different set of principles, whatever. But it's basically, in my view, that at a university like that, you major in art, you take twenty courses out of two hundred or something in that major. You're really getting a whole different education than what you major in. It's a much more practical set of things that you learn about than art could ever teach you--except art history, which is good.

I think, incidentally, a lot of the time for all people teaching in this which could have gone to teaching photography and whatever went to teaching art history or photography history, which is a shame, because you can't get that-- I mean, you can make people read, and we had a wonderful library--which was my library, which I lent out, basically--but you can't get the history of this medium that way. You have to have somebody organizing it for you and presenting it, people like myself or Mark [McFadden] or even Mark Durant, who are amateurs at this. But you're



trying to allow them to see that they are not sitting in a vacuum. Albeit a short history, you are in a history of people who have made photography what it is. It goes back far enough that you can relate it to other countries and other time periods and impressionism and all kinds of things.

I spoke to the art history faculty numerous times about this, and they knew that they were deficient in this, but it was too recent for them. That's not an excuse, that's just saying, "Look, we're still trying to get people to cover Egyptology here and the Renaissance before we even get to film or photography." That's just the way it is. Or even contemporary painting. There are surveys of contemporary painting but no scholars on that faculty working on it. Maybe Al [Albert] Boime is an exception. That's aside from the fact, I guess.

Is that a clear answer about what I'm trying to do with undergraduates?

LEHMER: It gives us an idea of, philosophically, how you made decisions. It sounds to me like this begins to make it more understandable as to the importance of and your conscious choices in faculty who worked with you or came in and worked in the program that you had elected to bring in, and that list is impressive. You were capable of convincing and arranging to have some of the best artists





in the country come in and work in this program. When I look at the faculty list of people who have taught here while you were here as visiting faculty, it's a very impressive list.

HEINECKEN: Yeah.

LEHMER: Maybe we could list some of them. It would be Edmund Teske, Robert Fichter-- I'm thinking we should get these down on tape.

HEINECKEN: Lee Friedlander.

LEHMER: Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Michael Bishop, Jerry McMillan.

HEINECKEN: And Winogrand is in there. Well, he's later, I guess, in this list, but--

LEHMER: Robert Cumming, Carl Chiarenza, Bea Nettles, Bill [William] Larson, Henry Holmes Smith, Anne Tucker, Todd Walker.

HEINECKEN: That last group was at some special summer symposium. Are those the end of this?

LEHMER: Judith Golden, Bart Parker. It's an incredible list.

HEINECKEN: And John Divola.

LEHMER: John Divola.

HEINECKEN: Judith Golden starts at UCLA. Karen Truax, Mark McFadden, Ken [Kenneth] Josephson, Garry Winogrand, Barbara Jo Revelle, Lee [Leland] Rice, again, John Divola,



George Legrady, and Chris Enos. That's up till 1984.

LEHMER: And now we have people like Mark Durant and Kaucyila Brooke and--

HEINECKEN: Connie [Constance J.] Samaras--

LEHMER: Connie Samaras and Judy [Judith Anne] Fiskin and Joyce Neimanas. I'm sure we've left some people out.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. The other thing that comes to mind in relation to this is that because of photography being a small unit within this, as were sculpture, new forms, whatever, there's never more than two full-time people there all through all those years, as opposed to the painting, drawing, printmaking component in later years with Ray Brown, which would have been half of the faculty in those things, or more. So what I'm saying is that none of these people other than myself, probably, and Mark McFadden and later Mark Durant had any continuum in the thing. Most of these people are in and out of there, obviously, for shorter periods of time. Robert Fichter would have been the other one who was there a long enough time to make an effect. There was never a possibility of broadening the number of courses or faculty to start to cover other areas that would have been-- I mean, if you had had someone like Nathan Lyons in here, for instance, for a year, you'd have another thing entirely, which would have been very valuable. But there was never that



opportunity, even in any three-year period, which had been a graduate student's period of time, to build any comprehensive kind of faculty. Maybe by that time you don't need a faculty that much, anyway. You're looking for faculty comments and assistance and whatever, but--

I forget who it was, but somebody, whom I can't necessarily identify, afterwards we were talking and saying, "What was the most valuable experience you had with Winograd?" I think it was [Robert] Flick who said this. "Because he absolutely rejected everything that I did or made, and it was a valuable lesson to learn." It wasn't somebody telling him what to do; he was telling him what not to do. So that, in his view, was as positive a way of having a faculty relationship as any other one.

LEHMER: That's interesting. Let's try to explore a little more in detail the way you set up your specific courses on the undergraduate level. Your intent, as you've described, is to expose these people to the potentials of this medium, and you're talking about a comparison. You're always reminding them, or you're consciously trying to remind them, of the comparison of photography to other mediums--how they compare, their uniquenesses, their strong points. But in the actual structure of your teaching you have to get them operating within the program. There's got to be some technical



exposure, training. There's got to be a discussion, critique, of the results. There's got to be some final projects. Can you just explore those?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Something comes to mind here which I think is not necessarily unique to me, but in any undergraduate class, especially in the beginning class, I try to explain the problem of grading this kind of material. It's not something you can be tested on. And the university runs basically on a system of testing and rating people and graduating some and not graduating others. As I said, you can't do that here or in any of these courses that you'll take here. It's a different thing. So I would lay out a series of general assignments around some idea that everybody would do throughout the ten weeks.

LEHMER: What were some of those general assignments? Can you think of a couple offhand?

HEINECKEN: Bring that up again. But the point I'm making here is that I say, "If you do all of these assignments on time, and you're working at it, then you'll get a passing grade. Automatically. No failures. This passing grade is a 'D.'" Then their jaws dropped. Nobody wants a "D." And I said, "If you do all of these exercises and you show up all the time and you participate in whatever it is that we're doing and these problems are done in my judgment or





in the TA [teaching assistant]'s judgment in a superior kind of way, then you get a 'C,' which is a perfectly good, average grade. Nobody gets an 'A' out of this course unless you really do something outstanding, which is what 'A' means." So I don't give "A"'s, whereas--and this is not a negative comment--the grade point average of art students is rarely below 3.8 or something like that. Most people think--and I could agree with this--that there isn't any reason to grade these people anyway. But if you're going to have to grade them, you might as well give them "A"'s and "B"'s and not sweat it, not worry about making those other distinctions, which I personally don't agree with, but I--

So that's a condition I think everybody understood right from the beginning, that probably there's going to be one or two "A"'s out of these twenty people or fifteen people, no more. How could there be? If you simply don't show up or don't participate, then you will not pass the course. This is not a course that's impossible to fail. I would take a kind of hard-nosed, drill sergeant kind of approach to them. I'd say, "This is the way it is. If it's not something you want, then don't be here."

LEHMER: Okay. You've discussed the grading situation, and you--

HEINECKEN: And their participation.



LEHMER: Right.

HEINECKEN: "The studio room and the darkrooms are open at these hours, and you will need x dollars to do this, and you will need this much time to do the work that you're being asked to do. If you can't do that, then you won't pass."

LEHMER: Okay. At the beginning, part of your curriculum is to try to lay out a clear picture of what is expected. Then you go into teaching some fundamentals so that as soon as possible they can get self-sufficient in the darkroom.

HEINECKEN: Well, my whole thing really-- I hadn't thought of it until just now, but I always had the TA's do the technical stuff, to get the film and the camera, because it's not something I'm interested in nor did I know as much, really, as a competent graduate student would know about that. But the printing I always liked to do, because that's where it is for me. All the things are going to happen in there, and that's just amazing to people who all their lives have been sending something to the drugstore and getting it back in a fixed way and mostly in color. They don't have any idea about that until you get them in there doing it. I love the darkroom. You know, it's like magic stuff goes on. You could take any negative that anybody makes and make ten



different pictures from it, all equally interesting, and each completely related but different.

LEHMER: If I were teaching a class, one thought I had on this whole idea of exploring the subjectivity of interpretation would be to take our slide duplicating machine, and instead of duplicating slides you would duplicate negatives and hand them out in an envelope to every student, identical negatives.

HEINECKEN: Well, this is interesting.

LEHMER: And then have them print it, and then put the work up on the wall.

HEINECKEN: Well, I don't think so much at UCLA, but in workshops I'll do that. I'll say, "Give me a negative," and I'll redistribute them so they're not working from something that they saw or even care about necessarily. That's a good exercise.

LEHMER: I think the proof of that would be one of the things that I remember at San Francisco Art Institute. In Jerry Burchard's Monday night classes, we had some interesting people come through, and we all went out on photo shoots together. We went everywhere, from the local Tick Tock burger stand to somebody's apartment to whatever event at different places, but we all went together, and then we all did the same work or the same subject. The work was always incredibly endeavorous in results. That



was a very impressive exploration.

I don't know that we ever discussed what this meant. You've got product now. I don't know if I'm jumping ahead too much, but in a course, in a foundation-level course, you've got product. How did you explore that? Did you discuss it in a class? Did you put it up on the wall? Or--?

HEINECKEN: Yeah, I suppose in that sense it's sort of conventional. I mean, some exercise has been assigned, and it's due on a certain day, and you're going to put everything up and discuss it. In those discussions, whether I'm saying it to them or not or I'm making it happen, I'm one individual. I'm running it. "You've got the TA's there, who are as skilled as I am in their own way about looking at things, and each of you are as skilled in your own way at looking at these. If you don't feel like you have enough intelligence or insight to discuss each of these pictures, then it's going to be difficult for you, because it isn't something that--" It's not that it can't be graded necessarily, but it's only-- Each one of these things, which is a kind of exercise, is designed to fit into the next one into the next one into the next one, and I'm the only one that makes a judgment about how that's going. You won't see all of people's other work in relation to where I'm seeing it, because





that's my job to see and to make corrections and recommendations or whatever. And to some extent it's the TA's job to do that, too.

But I'm very convinced that if you've got people who aren't able to participate and be open and not be frightened by it, then something's wrong. We have to open that student up differently. Everybody's embarrassed about this stuff. They don't know anything about it. But if they're convinced that there's no right or wrong way to do something and that everything could be something, it's very freeing for people. And I think in a lot of ways other media-- Like a bad drawing is very simple to see. I mean, it's hard to make a good drawing and to make a good painting, much more than like the way a photograph is going to be something. So it's not like what it looks like, it's what it fits into in sequence to some other thing. How you can take something that's so public and make it private is the real issue.

LEHMER: That's very interesting. I've never thought--

HEINECKEN: Even as undergraduates, I mean. And of course, a lot of these students are taking one course, two courses, but you might have ten or twenty people, like you do now, that take three courses, four courses. They get involved in it.

LEHMER: How did you start out your foundation courses?



Did you give direct assignments? Were they very specific? Or were they very abstract, open to individual interpretation?

HEINECKEN: Well, yeah. There were maybe five different basic ideas I would always try to introduce. One exercise would be to--it wouldn't be this didactic, maybe, but--to photograph only early in the morning, late at night, and late in the afternoon, so you have some angled effect of light on the things rather than down on it. Always make three or four exposures of the same thing using a different depth of field and a different shutter so that you get effects of movement, you get effects of focus. You get all the things that have to be retaught, because basically their background in it is to do it right the first time. Then there's only one negative to make--which is why color doesn't work very well for this idea. And then to try to make pictures that are about what's in focus and what's not, pictures about what's moving and what's stopped, pictures that are basically leaning toward an abstraction because of the harsh light that's being cast from the side, these kinds of things.

One of the first things I would do in maybe a second course would be to have them make self-portraits of collage using black paper, white paper, and newsprint. You have only three values basically to work with. You're



looking at yourself in the mirror, you're tearing a piece of paper to conform to an eye socket or something that you see. You teach them how to squint. These things are fantastic. This is a weekend thing that they do. When they bring all those things in, I put them in a stack, face down. They're all the same size like this. They're all self-portraits. And I put them up on the wall and have them look at them. Some of them are very crude, and some have maybe got five hundred scraps of paper, some have thirty. So you get the whole range of what's possible. Then I have one person just walk around the room and stand next to each picture and see that every one of those pictures, even though when you get down to the end and its process of elimination, you can see who that person is. It's a life-sized head seen only in three values. Basically what photography does is crush those values. I mean, you can do that. It's a fantastic thing, and it gives you confidence that you would never have in a drawing class doing a self-portrait or something like that, because it's so crude. This shape, paper, is going to designate one of three values. That's all there is in the picture.

LEHMER: This reminds me of that piece that you did of Susan Sontag.

HEINECKEN: It's like that in a sense, yeah. It's not a



mosaic kind of idea, but it just makes you look at yourself and learn that you're not dealing in colors, you're not dealing in a whole range of values in this piece, you're dealing with three values. And because the third, the middle one is newsprint, then you get all this text stuff coming into it, so that it's not just a value, it will say something, which I always like.





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LEHMER: Today, Robert, I wanted to go over some of your objectives, maybe an outline of how you developed the graduate program in the photography area of the art department at UCLA. One of the first questions I wanted to ask-- Let me start out with some quotes from the catalog that commemorated two decades of photography done by the Grunwald Center [for the Graphic Arts], an exhibition that I guess you formed or curated.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. Well, Cindy [Lucinda H.] Gedeon, who was the staff person at the Grunwald, was the curator. I simply contributed the pieces of writing and kind of oversaw it. It was really her job as curator. Then she had--I can't remember who they were--maybe four or five students who were active at that time still working on that, so they also had input into that.

LEHMER: This was in 1985?

HEINECKEN: Yeah, whatever it says.

LEHMER: Okay. Here are some quotes. I think these came out of Jim [James] Hugunin, who was one of your students. He wrote a very good article describing your program, kind of a historic overview of your program and the times themselves. I have some ideas that I'd like to elaborate-- I



think this oral history interview is the place where we can expand on some of the ideas that are always touched on. There are a lot of code words and terms that define and are signposts for that era that are delineated. I think what we can do is maybe expand on a couple of those, which will help.

HEINECKEN: Sure.

LEHMER: Here are some quotes: "Doing your own thing." "Counterculture." "Idealism." Another quote, the last one, is "Sixties: elite and popular consumption of fine art," which was being established. There was economy, there was money. There was money for social programs, and the arts were expanding. The combination of counterculture-- Jim Hugunin, I read in the article, was a pre-med[icine] major, and he ended up in art. It was a unique period where people elected to pursue another direction, from, what Jim said, the sciences and engineering to the arts and humanities. You were there at that moment to receive these people and to expand that educational pursuit. Can you, with that idea beginning, expand on--? Do any thoughts come to your mind as to what you were dealing with in that kind of an environment as far as graduate student intentions, how you pursued it, how you worked with that environment at that time?

HEINECKEN: Well, it would obviously be an evolution of



all of that through the time period that we're talking about.

LEHMER: Which would be what? The late sixties?

HEINECKEN: Well, I'm just saying the concepts or intentions that were set up in the sixties evolved, I suppose, without anyone really knowing it. It evolved in ways that were parallel to other educational developments, which is what he touches on with "counterculture" and all of that. They always say "the sixties." It was really the seventies when all of this took effect. I mean, in the sixties the germ of it starts.

But the radical part of all of that-- I don't remember when the riots were--what year, for instance. Well, this is an aside, kind of, but at some point the school shuts down briefly. We didn't have nearly the problem that [University of California] Berkeley had, but the school shut down. The National Guard was there and stuff like that. So I'm trying to figure out whether-- I know that all that's important for all the students who were in universities at that time. They'll never forget that. Because I think for the first time--at least in my history--the students actually took things over and demanded educational reforms that I suppose most faculty would have agreed with, but the administration didn't necessarily. I'm not talking just about UCLA but all



over. There is a kind of empowerment students feel. Not just graduate students but the whole range of people were affected. Their attitudes were affected by what I think was then perceived to be a power they didn't know they had.

LEHMER: How does that relate to--? I mean, if we can take that lofty thought or philosophical idea and put it into the classroom or into the seminar room, what were some of the concerns of the graduates with their work? What were your concerns? How did you respond to their production?

HEINECKEN: Well, one thing comes-- Basically I think the effect of, let's say, the cultural and educational changes that were going on would support the premise that I would have had anyway, which was that it's largely a matter of the graduate student to determine what their education will be. They have certain resources there--faculty and studios and libraries and slide collections--but it's no longer even a possibility of thought that you would follow some curriculum that everybody else was following. As I said, this was not an idea that would have been new to me. But certainly when you suddenly have the support of the university or at least partial support-- If the attitude in a graduate situation is opened up suddenly, the students realize, even if it's unconsciously, that the faculty is not going to fill in what's open. It's up to





them to fill that in. I support that very much, obviously. That's what graduate studies should be, an independent personalized investigation of what it is that art is for them, each one of them, given in this case the loosest definition of what would be considered to be photographic.

Because often there were cases when you would go to a graduate M.F.A. exhibition and sense that it wasn't necessarily photography that was being talked about, but the metaphor would be there for it-- Or even a kind of sense of what photography does could be present in something which wasn't photography. I think probably UCLA was a good model for that. That is to say, basically it was opening up the definition of what photography is as an art idea beyond formal constraints, which of course is where it all starts. You can say that the same decisions about structure and all of those kinds of formal ideas can be put as an overlay over any medium, including photography. But what it looks like is actually quite different than what theory it's from, if that makes sense, or what it can be or should be. So I just-- I don't know. I'll say things as they come to me.

But I think one of the things that every graduate student right from the beginning would have had the sense-- The way that I approach it was that they had to invent



something that we've never seen before. I parallel that with Ph.D. work, which is when you have to reveal something about something that no one else has ever done before. No one has ever researched a certain thing. And there's a form and a way that a dissertation is put together. I don't know if I'd use the word, but these shows are dissertations in the sense that they're personal. They're using history and theory, but it's a personalized account of that particular--I wouldn't call it research; it's not research--activity of making art. How is that personalized to an individual? That's the basis of the whole thing. You don't have the opportunity to refine something that already exists in a research situation. Research is new. So in a sense my attitude, because it's an academic situation at a major university, was you can get away with that because that's what everybody else does in graduate school. It's simply that it's not research but its motives, its ideals, its obviously originality, which every artist has to have anyway. So you're really forcing that situation on them. Nobody's going to tell them what to do. They have to do something.

LEHMER: This is an interesting twist, because my observations for thirty years-- As you know, my first introduction to a serious approach toward photography was



in the spring of '66, so we're celebrating that thirtieth anniversary here in this interview. I've always felt that art education was always bucking the system. Yet what I'm hearing from you is you have turned that, in a sense, research environment-- You've always approached it in a positive way. In other words, you have somehow understood the idea of research and exploring the unknown to complement art aesthetics, that creative pursuit, on a positive level. Rather than fighting the system, you used the system as a vehicle, which is kind of interesting.

HEINECKEN: Right, yeah. There's a point here I want to mention. It would be understood, I guess, but because it's photography and because it's this time period in a department that's recently accepted this idea and is obviously looking at how graduate work in that area compares to all of the other areas-- And of course, when you have new forms or new genres and the shift in sculpture or whatever, you have other models that we haven't seen before. The new genre was a big thing to do then. That was certainly more problematic in a lot of ways than photography was. I mean, you're talking performance, you're talking conceptual art. All of these things were fresh. So it's not photography per se that I'm talking about here. Because, as you know, while each of us had our own special courses, obviously we were



looking for the bigger picture of the department rather than anything as a separate element in it. [tape recorder off]

LEHMER: That goes along with the whole idea that we've discussed earlier, which was that it was a very interdisciplinary attempt by the department to encourage students to work in multiple areas.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. The development of the university, of the College of Fine Arts, as I keep saying, and of course the individual departments within that college and then the areas within them-- I mean, it is like a hierarchy starting with the students, working up to the chancellor. There are like five steps there or something that are important.

But I think for our purposes here it's the idea that it's not a matter of a student refining, let's say, concepts that were set up by [Edward] Weston or someone like that. That's not going to do it. I mean, it would be good if a particular student used Weston or knew something about Weston and whatever-- Also, I think implicit in this is if you're asked to be original, the people--faculty in this case--making judgments about this may or may not have enough intuition or insight to know exactly where the quality is. How do we determine what the quality is as opposed to just being original? At that





point the corollary between it and a dissertation stops, because a dissertation is all written in English. It has to go into a particular form. If you can read, you can understand this. It's different in the arts--dance, theater, whatever. You suddenly don't have a common language that you can revert to. If, in fact, the work is truly original, you should have no language to understand it. It has to speak to you. You have to learn how to look at something like that. That's particularly true of something like performance, where there's no tangible object.

LEHMER: One of your former students made a statement that I'd like you to respond to and elaborate on. In a sense other disciplines could look at it as a sign of an irresponsible program, so I want you to defend the statement or elaborate on it. Victor Landweber said in the catalog that we're working with today:

It was understood that students admitted to the program were always working as artists. I always felt that I was respected for my work. It wasn't required that I do anything other than what I was doing or learn anything more than what I needed to know. I appreciated being left alone in the sense of not needing to change, knowing that so long as I continued to produce satisfactory work I would be supported in the program.

Now, that could be looked at as "I'm going to just continue doing-- This program has no influence on me."  
Can you defend that? What does that statement mean?



HEINECKEN: Well, of course, this is one person's way of articulating his experience there. I think it's actually kind of telling about Victor. He was one of the more interesting students because of things like he's talking about-- He's taciturn, you know. He was a person who I think had some difficulty aside from what he's saying here. But in the end, as so many people do, somehow they see the light after three years of it. And they're looking at these other thirty graduate students who are their peers and seeing what they're doing--not necessarily in his sense--and seeing what you're not doing. You're not in competition with them. You're in competition with that degree and all other degrees. That's my point about it, that no one actually has to understand what you're doing except you and the four people who are giving you this degree. But if there are not four people there's no degree and so on. So something has to be original, but has to ultimately be understandable over a period of time of, in this case, three years working with a variety of people, getting their opinions, getting their takes. Eventually it has to come together to look like something, to show that there's an individual behind this.

As much as Victor might have thought he was being left alone, he wasn't. That's the ideal educational situation, I think, where you feel like you're generating



your own movement but you're being guided in ways that you're not even aware of. It's this little rejection here or that little praise there. You know, those are the things that add up. It's a good statement. I think it's accurate for an attitude that certainly I would project. But it shouldn't suggest that there's a softness involved in this, because there isn't. It was unusual, but there are people who didn't finish these programs. Some maybe because they couldn't handle that freedom, or others maybe who couldn't handle the discipline. I don't know if that answers it.

I think basically--again using the dissertation as a model--there are times when you have to meddle in something with a student because you can just see that it's not going anywhere or it's wrong or it's been said before. You have to control that development. But if you're a good teacher it's a subtle kind of thing. The best thing would be--it's almost like brainwashing--where you don't even know that you're being taught anything. Someday you wake up and you know all this stuff.

LEHMER: Let's see if this goes along with it. Hugunin says--

HEINECKEN: I wanted to say something about that. Again, back to the dissertation, no one gives a damn, really, what that history Ph.D. student does after graduating. At



that point the university is through with that person. He or she may find a job teaching or researching, whatever. It's not--for me, at least--the problem of the university or faculty to worry one bit about that. You want to keep track of them, you want to help them if they need help, but your job is over at that point. They're only at the start of something. It's not like the end of-- Well, it's the end of formal schooling. But the real work obviously then starts.

LEHMER: I always liked that idea of commencement ceremonies.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, as something forward from that.

Also, it should be noted, because it's very important, that--I don't know when that time period would start; maybe right at the beginning--all of these students who now are full professors at USC [University of Southern California] and so on graduated in a time period where it was very likely that they could get a teaching job in photography, because the whole field was expanding all over the country. So all of these people-- Victor was an exception, who probably was so taciturn he wouldn't have been able to teach anyway. This is not a negative thing. He's just not that kind of person. He found another way to do it, that's all. But the educational system of the country in the arts is, especially in photography and





video, beginning to need new, young teachers to teach this stuff. So there's a whole group of people in here--we don't need to name them--who were very fortunate, because their graduate studies ended at a time when there were jobs.

Now, of course, there are no jobs, which is much healthier, I think, in a sense. It's very easy to get kind of fat and sloppy at a university-- I'm not saying who is or who isn't-- But there is no job in the world better than a university professor. I mean, there's freedom, good money, all the time you need. So it's not, I think, particularly conducive to generating more artists. It's generating more teachers of art. There is a distinction always to be made there, I think. I mean, I think--I hope--I'm the exception to that, but it's hard work. You can't do both of these jobs without some-- Well, in my case I just simply didn't teach that much. I left and came back and so on.

LEHMER: I think that should be noted.

HEINECKEN: And the students are not unaware of this. They're seeing it-- If I'm a model of anything, I'm a model of "I'm interested in what you're doing, but at five o'clock I'm not interested in what you're doing. And I'm not interested in what you're doing until I see you next time, because I have a life to live here as an artist.



I'm not here just to teach you." I mean, I'm getting paid to do that, but it's not my job to-- It's not my interest to take this job so seriously that I stop being an active artist. Of course, in universities and in our art department we have several people who--and all the universities would have the same thing--go right through their thirty years and never do anything except teach. It's that kind of system. The system is bad that way.

LEHMER: Well, when you say-- I mean, I understand your choices.

HEINECKEN: Well, the point is I think the graduate students would recognize, certainly, a difference between myself and someone not like myself. It doesn't mean that you can't get equal amounts of information from these kinds of people. But their respect, I think, of someone who is actually doing what you're trying to teach them to be is a very big point.

LEHMER: Yeah. I have observed that very directly. I think if there's a difference between you and me-- There are many differences, but one very important distinction at this point is that you have always been and continue to be very productive in your own work, where I have taken on a very input-absorption type of approach, where I'm just not outputting. When I know something and I am very firm, I still don't have the clout or the influence that you



might have, because I lack the credibility. You know, talk is cheap. Where is this coming from? Where's the product? Where's the experience? So in a sense, yes, there may be people who are very knowledgeable about the subject, but without the actual practice it's hard to make students believe in that. That is a very important point.

HEINECKEN: Also, it better defines what the roles are of all the individuals in situations like this, from the faculty on down to the teaching assistants--they're always confused about what they're supposed to do--and the lab assistants.

And Bill [William] Bowman-- He's nothing, in a sense, but he's organized along lines that make him very effective in certain ways and not in others.

I'm just trying to say that--not your job necessarily--all lab assistants in the sciences are there because they provide technical assistance to the faculty. That's basically what they do. It's obviously a very valuable job. We thought that because it wasn't science there were no lab assistants for years. You know, it takes another 20 percent of your time to do all the work. So getting lab assistants in the department was a very big thing to get.

LEHMER: I think what I was talking about was more when I was teaching previous to my coming here.



HEINECKEN: I don't want to interrupt you, but you'll remember things that I won't.

The point--which I've now lost--is that a lab assistant is working forty hours a week. Well, nobody can work forty hours a week and be an artist unless you're a writer and you don't need anything but a pencil or something. So it's almost unusual that you would have someone like Bowman. But you never expected him to do anything. He did his own work, but he had no ambition for it. He had no drive to make it go to the point that he could quit being a lab assistant. Once you get into a job like that, as you know, you can't quit it. I mean, you could go to another job like it, but it's also a full-time job.

LEHMER: It's a strange kind of trap.

HEINECKEN: But very valuable. I'm relating that to the idea that it's the same as the faculty, because the faculty could consider teaching to be a full-time job. Let's say if you're not an artist but you're a scientist or something, if you're not able to take the work that you're teaching about and apply it to what you're doing as a scientist, you also wouldn't have time to do this. Teaching has to somehow overlap what it is that you're interested in or else you wouldn't have time to do it.

LEHMER: Which is why even though you're paid a full-time





salary, people don't understand that just because you work a portion of the work week for the university directly you are expected to fulfill the rest of that week for the university on an indirect level.

HEINECKEN: Right.

LEHMER: That's part of that "publish or perish" mentality, I think, that is just so very important for establishing credibility with students.

HEINECKEN: But the very term "publish or perish" is, of course, a negative way of looking at this. And like a negative thing, it's true. You know, it's not a bad term for it, but it has a derogatory kind of sound to it. Whoever coined the phrase meant it to be derogatory. It's a problem.

LEHMER: But I think on a positive note it's establishing credibility.

HEINECKEN: Also, I'd have to say, not only in our department but other departments, you do have people who emerge out of this. [Richard] Diebenkorn is an excellent example. Here's the premier West Coast painter. He can have any job he wants. He can sell whatever he makes. He's an excellent teacher and a wonderful person, but he couldn't handle the system because-- Well, it's a complicated story. Anyway, you can't have people--and maybe this is happening even more now--where the



credibility of someone as an artist surpasses their capacity to function in the university effectively. Some of our current faculty would fit that.

LEHMER: What do you mean? Can you expand on that? You would think that the greater the artist--on a naive level--the better the educator.

HEINECKEN: Well, the better the artist, the more time that you have to put into that career. You have to travel. You have to go to shows. You have to do everything, all of which comes off of the time for teaching. If you can go in there for four hours and still wander around behind people's easels watching them paint and be a thousand miles away in your mind, all you have to be is in the room if you're that kind of person.

LEHMER: Right. But I can also justify the limited contact, because I've known faculty who were so effective in just a short period of time. They were able to accomplish in a couple of hours what would take someone else a couple of days. I knew an architectural instructor like that.

HEINECKEN: Well, sure. What I'm trying to say is it's still trying to strike a balance between being an effective teacher, and to some extent everybody has some administrative work to do and be effective at that. If you're an area head or something, you spend a lot of time



on that. It's still trying to strike a balance between all these things that are-- My point is, the career can become something that takes up so much time. You get the notoriety--I'm not speaking of myself--but at some time the university is no longer important to you intellectually or financially.

LEHMER: I see in your own situation where at a certain point you opted to work approximately two years on, two years off. On the two years off you were doing primarily your own work, which you've never really discontinued when you were teaching. But you obviously had to split your production with your teaching responsibilities. This allowed you to continue to effectively produce your work.

HEINECKEN: But there's a caveat which you really have to fight in that you're there two full days. So those two days are gone--Tuesday and Thursday or whatever. This means that if it were Monday and Tuesday it would be better, because then just those two days would-- So anyway, what I'm saying is that you lose Wednesday. It's not even worth getting set up or getting in a frame of mind-- You just have to do something else that you have to do. So you really have four days. And if you're married and have a family, you lose Sunday, and maybe you lose Saturday. So what it does give you is, let's say, twenty hours that you have to work, which is not enough time. I



mean, ideally you stop work, you go to bed, you get up, and you just get right back at it where you left off. You don't have to wait a day or a week. So what I'm getting at is that the art that's made--at least this was my observation of myself and others--is sort of quick art. It's something that you can almost put together in a day or two without necessarily having it be a longer-range kind of thing that you keep adding to.

Painters, I think, are fortunate in this way. You can have a painting or two or three going at once. You can walk in there and work four hours and accomplish something and then stop. But other fields, I think-- Well, I could never do that. Maybe because there's a process involved which involves getting set up. You have to get things organized to work. You have to have a studio, obviously, which can stay the same while you're not there.

So I think university artists tend to be no less significant in some ways, but their work is not-- They're small ideas that you can pull off. That's a problem, I think.

LEHMER: That's something I have never thought about.

HEINECKEN: Well, I don't know. Some people may have a different temperament and can just shut it off and start it up again. The reason that this comes to mind and the





reason for leaving the university during those times is exactly to counter the problem of having to show up even those eight hours or sixteen hours.

LEHMER: So then you have to have a space, a studio. You have to have an environment where you're not interrupted.

HEINECKEN: And not having to think about someone like Victor Landweber or whomever and to not give up part of your time to other things.

LEHMER: Here is a quote that you made in this Grunwald catalog. Hopefully it's not too far out of context for us to be able to deal with it: "That out of such 'university' of beliefs might come a diversity of aesthetic production."

HEINECKEN: Is that Hugunin?

LEHMER: That's Hugunin quoting you. That's actually something that you observed or favored or hoped for. What does that mean?

HEINECKEN: That sounds clever. [laughs] It means--it's a kind of language idea--that universality would imply a leveling or--what's the word here?--commonality. I don't know that the word "university" comes out of universality; it's probably the other way around. But a "university," I guess, would define--

LEHMER: Giving people weight.

HEINECKEN: Yeah. I mean, that's the last level of formal



education, usually, that people have. It's defined by grades, units, common courses that everybody takes in a university. So the word "university" would tend to be a kind of leveling device--which it is; it's a high level, but it's a leveling device--and doesn't call for diversity, which is part of the word or sounds like the word. If we could coin a different word which would suggest commonality but with differences, then that's diversity. So it's really just kind of a comment in which I think I'm trying to say something. But it's too-- Like I'll often do, I'll use language in ways to make it a little bit more unique or interesting to look at or read or write.

LEHMER: But you have "a diversity of aesthetic production." In other words, I'm thinking of the individuality of the graduate students, that you respected that. You weren't trying to mold them into--

HEINECKEN: Quite the contrary. It gets back to the originality idea and the kind of innovation that I've always felt was necessary for artists to have. What I'm trying to say is that the nature of the university is to not produce diversity. Its goal is to elevate everybody to some kind of common level of intellect except on the graduate level. And artists just don't fit that necessarily.



LEHMER: The next question I have is if you could expand on a quote of yours: "Pushing the boundaries of the photographic medium." Can you think of some examples of what that meant to you during your career? More on the level of an educator at this point.

HEINECKEN: Well, I have to go back again to the model of the dissertation in the sense that it's got to be something that only you know about, that you put it, in the case of the dissertation, into a language that can be read by other people who can understand what you're talking about. That's where the model of the dissertation breaks down. It's not a dissertation. It's not being put into English, in most cases, so it can be read. It's another language. It has to be something that-- I use the word "photography," but it could be used with "painting" or "dancer" or whatever. At a university graduate program you have to originate something. It has to be in some ways made clear what that origination is, how does one project individualism. Six paintings in a room that show you what an idea is, not six paintings that represent six different ideas. That's not a way to make something understood.

The boundaries are no less interesting in any medium, but in photography, especially during this time period, this is a fresh idea. You have Weston, you have [Alfred]



Stieglitz, and you have this whole history of people who laid the groundwork for whatever else would happen, because each one of these people either had an idea that looked at the medium differently or-- Stieglitz tried to make artwork which pushed the boundaries of what was acceptable. Weston was doing that. We don't tend to see it that way, but we didn't live then, right? I'm just saying that it isn't-- Using the word "boundary" implies at least a kind of pushing or stretching of some idea rather than just stopping this and starting that. That's not stretching; that's reinventing something.

So I think graduate students are caught--well, everybody's caught--between some kind of expansion of ideas as opposed to radically stopping something and starting something else, like a revolution, like Marcel Duchamp.





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LEHMER: I'd like to be able to expand on this idea that we've been exploring here. We have in front of us an outline of academic years--faculty that taught and the students that received their M.F.A.'s. You can kind of get a handle on what graduate students worked under what faculty in what time period without going-- This is a copy that maybe we don't have to put on tape. I'd like to use this to have you expand on some of the ideas. Are there certain projects--? And I'm sure we're going to leave some important things out this way. But I think what we want to get across in this interview is some ideas that-- Maybe there's a product that we can talk about that would confirm some of these ideas that you've discussed, such as "pushing the boundaries." There was certainly attention paid to process but also to content, as you mentioned earlier. When you look over this list, are there any people here who you can think of whose work as a graduate student reassured your ideas?

HEINECKEN: Well, let me go back to one thing first, which is the kind of notion that you run into-- I don't want to say regularly. But if you're putting pressure of any kind on an individual to conform to whatever it is that you



want, two things can happen: either the person rejects it for whatever reason, and that's not so good, or they follow it too much to the letter, and that's not so good. So it's always a thing of trying to find some approach with each individual that may be completely different than it would be with another person--which is not inconsistency, it's trying to tailor whatever comments you're making to that individual. You know them pretty well after three years or so. I think the point I'm trying to make here is that it's a very interesting job in the sense that you have your own ideals in mind and in my case for the program, which was always, during the early time period, under fire in a sense. "Well, we're trying this out, we're trying--"

The same with the other-- I keep saying "new genre." Whenever that came in, same thing. You had to fight or at least justify your students' work in light of a group of people who weren't understanding it necessarily but saw the value of it. It's a common idea.

But I guess I'm missing my point here, which is when the student reaches a point, let's say, when pushing the boundaries of photography is no longer useful for them because they've pushed the boundaries in photography as much as they're willing to do-- I'm thinking of Susan Hornbeak [Ortiz], for instance, moving even at the last



year of her work out of photography into sculpture, which was much more inventive and much more powerful and demanding than anything she had made before. Well, that's wonderful. That happens sometimes.

But there's also the sense that when you're in a minor program here--you're not in painting and drawing--if you begin to paint, let's say, and it doesn't develop along lines that have anything to do with photography or doesn't even depend upon in its thinking anything about photography, then you wonder if that's a mistake in one sense. I mean, I would say this to people: "You're sitting in a chair; there are only six chairs here, and you're using up a chair--" I wouldn't say this because they had moved out to something else. But if they're not really doing anything, I'd say, "You're occupying a chair that somebody else should be in." That sort of thing.

LEHMER: How does that differ from someone who moves from one medium to another but who is active? In other words, you're saying someone who's nonproductive is taking up a chair.

HEINECKEN: Well, that, but I'm also trying to get to this idea that you obviously want the student to develop along whatever lines are the best for that student in relation to making art. That's the picture. All I'm saying is that when you're in an evolving media, you do have a sense



that-- I'm back to how to choose the graduate students in my mind. You can't guarantee what they're going to do, fail or not. You can't even determine what they're going to make. But that's why we have something called a "photography area" or "new genre" or "sculpture." There are certain implications there that if it's conventional sculpture it's something that has volume, whatever. And of course, they break that down right away. They did that in photography, which is wonderful.

What I'm saying is that through the early years of this, if you had people defecting to other areas of art, something would be wrong. Because that would in a sense prove that the medium of photography, no matter how far you can press it out of what it's been may not be enough. Maybe it's not a medium that belongs in this art department. Or maybe "new genre" wasn't a medium that belonged-- There were certain strong feelings that it wasn't. Chris Burden proved that it should be, that's all. I proved that photography should be here, and those students did. Certainly whatever permutation will be next will have the same problem.

During this time period then--these are my friends-- the painting faculty were beginning to see the idea that painting is dead. I mean, that was the watchword for this. And it was true. They no longer were sitting on





the top of this media heap in this university. In some of them that produced attitudes which were good and some which were bad. The students reflect that. That's what I'm getting to, is that you want them--graduate students--to move into whatever realm of the unknown that they can originate in. But you also--

I mean, I've made a lot of different things, but somehow there's a photographic idea in it or even just using the process or something like that. But once you run out of that, then you don't have an area. The photography area is not characterized by the undergraduate courses; we all understand that. Neither is painting nor undergraduate courses in anything. It's the graduate students who are getting the highest level of education with their degree. That makes sense. It's kind of like there's always a dilemma there, and no less a dilemma for painting at certain points.

LEHMER: When we look through this list, what were some--?

HEINECKEN: Well, what comes to my mind first, before I even start thinking about this, a very good example of someone like this is Ellen Birrel. She wasn't someone who moved out of photography. She's moved out of everything, in a sense, to become a kind of theoretician. She was very effective in that, especially as a graduate student. I tended to try to use her as a TA [teaching assistant] with me as much as I



could, because she knew a lot of stuff, and she was developing a lot of stuff that I had no idea about. So I used her, in a sense, that way for myself, mostly I think to test how effective or how necessary the theoretical approach was for these students at this level of development. I mean, I'm still not sure of that. Luckily, I don't need to worry about it. But in any event, when someone like Ellen-- I don't know whether she's making artwork now, nor do I care one way or the other. I do know that she's an effective educator. She's been elevated through the ranks of that field. Without an M.F.A. degree from somewhere, she would never have been employed, and she's a person who needed to be employed in order to develop these ideas. Initially in her work in graduate school she did that, but it wasn't anything that anybody else could relate to, probably, except me, because I knew what she was doing and why she was doing it. So it doesn't bother me that she's not making art, because she's doing something probably more interesting than making art. There are other people like that, too.

LEHMER: What about some other examples of people that--?

HEINECKEN: See, because they're a couple it's kind of strange, but David Bunn also was similar. Maybe it's because they were together or not, I don't know. He's not making photographs anymore, but he is definitely a working



artist. Whatever it is he's doing it's being seen and being talked about. So that's the difference I'm trying to make. These two people, even if they were not a couple I would still compare them that way. But if someone began to develop-- [tape recorder off]

LEHMER: Well, that would be an evolution whether it was still anchored with photographic ideas but that it moved into a theoretical--

HEINECKEN: My point is that Ellen's M.F.A. show was a model for what she perceived to be not only her exposition of a certain set of ideas, kinds of didactic ideas, but was the model for what she would begin to be interested in as a teacher and theorist. So I think in some ways a person like that is more important to the program. I mean, when she puts down "M.F.A., UCLA" and people understand what she does, that can only throw a good light on the program, even though she's not, or seems not to be, a functioning artist. Which doesn't matter, right? If she were living on the streets I would worry.

LEHMER: That brings me to another question that I had. Maybe we can expand on that through your ideas that are at the surface at this moment. The quote is--let me see if I can paraphrase it--you came into an era of "problematic zone, a postmodernist 'quotation and effect,'" which is a statement from Jim Huginin. How can we define that? What



effect did that have on the program, if any? It's called the "problematic zone" of postmodernism. I would imagine it's problematic because it's colliding with modernism or something.

HEINECKEN: Right, sure.

LEHMER: But when he's trying to define that as "quotation and effect," do you have any idea--? Can you expand on that?

HEINECKEN: The first answer is no. I don't know.

Huginin knows. It just always seemed to me that-- Well, I'm not a person who works out of a theory, so it's always difficult for me to actually grasp in what ways other people could be happy with that, but obviously they are. It's just so far removed from my temperament or my way of thinking about art that it's not anything that I'm clear about. I've been called that, and I don't even know why I'm being called that.

LEHMER: You're being called what?

HEINECKEN: A postmodernist or whatever. I think in some ways I invented it without knowing anything about it, which is not to invent "it," it's just to do whatever you do naturally.

LEHMER: Well, the word "quotation" means that you are using someone else's thoughts, I would imagine. In other words--





HEINECKEN: It's a vague term. It's an art history term. We have a lot of them. What's "quotation"? I don't know. You'd have to ask them what's the difference between that and the next term and so on.

LEHMER: Well, the next term might be that it's an original thought, but a quotation is like appropriating other ideas or other people's theories.

HEINECKEN: Artists have always done that. Nobody comes out of the blue with any of this stuff that I know about. I mean, it starts someplace--with education, or you see a painting. You can hardly do anything--see, I won't even use the word "quote"--that's absolutely original. It has to come from something. If you were that kind of person, you wouldn't be an artist. You'd be something else. You'd be schizophrenic or something.

LEHMER: Well, I'm sensing--correct me--that the difference between postmodernism and modernism could be possibly that in modernism you may have appropriation, the use of ideas that preceded you, but that what you have done is to dovetail these ideas for your own use to express your own ideas. Where what I'm sensing in a postmodern environment is a disassociation of you from the work and that it's anti-personal.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, I think I would agree with that. There's also no stylistic identification in postmodernism,



or there theoretically shouldn't be. There obviously is when someone makes enough things along a certain-- Like Richard Prince. You know that that's his picture. Or Barbara Kruger, if she fits this--I don't know--style. But I've never made anything, no matter how automatic it might seem, that isn't looked at and changed or discarded because of its look. So I'm tied to that, I guess, as a modernist idea. The structure of it is what makes it interesting to make, not the quotation of it. Well, it's part of both, I guess. Making the photograms of the magazine pages, which you made dozens or hundreds of, we ended up with twelve pictures there, all of which were based on what the structure of the picture is and what it looks like, not its meaning. All of them have the same meaning.

I just looked at-- [Allan] Sekula had a thing in *Camera Austria*--it's a slide show--a hundred and some slides, which the article didn't reproduce. You see the description of the slides, and you see five examples. Well, I understand they're not going to print 120 pictures, but there's just no distinguishing characteristic about these pictures. They're just pictures of people standing around or doing something. It's the social or the economic position that they're in, none of which is visible in the picture. It's explained



in the text. I don't know why I'm bringing this up, but I was just struck by this guy. He's obviously brilliant. He knows exactly what he's doing. He's so wonderfully focused. I really respect this, but I don't get it. I just don't get it. I don't know why anybody gets it, except if you're in the frame of reference which is to understand how this fits into the next biggest overview of things.

My point is that I don't know if I even care to-- I never worry about what it is I am or what I'm doing. I don't want that worry. It can make you stop. But I do know how I pick the pictures: it's how they look. I mean, whatever education I've had--which I've begun to reveal is not much, I guess--was modernist. We didn't call it that. But it was what the thing looked like. How complicated was it? How interesting was it to see? To experience it visually. It's still very much a part of what I do. As far as the materials, maybe, magazines and stuff like that are not conventional art materials, but the ideas are very conventional.

LEHMER: Why do you think people would say that you are one of the original postmodernists?

HEINECKEN: I think because I was doing things before we had the term.

LEHMER: What were you doing?



HEINECKEN: I was using as subject matter public images but with no theory, no quotations, no appropriation. These are all terms-- Appropriation, actually, in my understanding-- I forget what I was reading, but there were five or six critics in New York who sat down, in a sense, and invented this word to represent what it was that they were interested in or talking about.

LEHMER: This may seem like we're off the subject, but I don't think so. Let me try to tie this together. You are an artist and an educator--

HEINECKEN: Was an educator, except through exposition, as we talked about.

LEHMER: I balk when you say that "was," because I figure we're always learning from--

HEINECKEN: Well, it's true.

LEHMER: Well, I'm always learning from you. But with this idea that you're an active artist, and when you were an active professor, the head of the photography area in the art department, one of your critically important responsibilities--and we've laid a lot of groundwork in this interview--was to select graduate students from an application pool. It may seem oversimplistic, but you have a hell of a batting average for what the students have done. For instance, the year of this publication that we're using--1985--six of your alumni were given NEA





[National Endowment for the Arts] grants. It's a small pool, but that's an incredibly high percentage for one given year.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, that's a very high percentage.

LEHMER: Others of your alumni have received Fulbright [scholarship]s, Guggenheim [fellowship]s, and are in very prestigious-- Not simply teaching, which is rare, but they're teaching in some of the most prestigious institutions in this country. Simple question: How did you select your grad applicants? What did you look for?

HEINECKEN: Well, I don't know how to rank all of these things, which I may have mentioned. But one consideration I think always exists is, after some initial looking, to try to figure out-- Well, I would try to avoid bringing in what I would think was maybe a marginal student who was doing work along the line of a student who was already there. Like Ron Kelley. By the time that he showed up here, nobody was doing so-called documentary photographs. Clearly he had a vision very early on in his-- He was a writer. One wouldn't expect him to make pictures that were not literate, in a sense understandable. The subject was there and so on. His vision of kind of the apocalyptic character of all of this was unique. But if he were in graduate school and another person like that showed up-- If it's only going to be six people, you don't



want to start something that makes one-third of the students moving in similar ways.

LEHMER: You don't want to typecast the--

HEINECKEN: You always have fifteen people that could be accepted in this program, and each year you're going to choose two or three at the most. So I'm just saying one thing I'm always conscious of is it's so small a situation that you can't afford to double up something. You have to contact that person and say, "You're certainly acceptable, but you're not accepted here. I hope you find the right place." And maybe you say, "Look at Yale [University] or [University of] New Mexico."

LEHMER: So you're looking for diversity. You're trying to maintain diversity within the program.

HEINECKEN: That's right. Because it's so small you can't accommodate-- I mean, if you've got three people doing stuff like Ron Kelley it begins to look like a deal or a setup or something, which is what we don't want. So that's one thing.

It was interesting, the other night, when we were talking about the interview-- I've been extremely-- I mean, I've had both sides of this, where the [prospective student's] slides look like really something and you accept them. Later you meet this person and you have no understanding of how this person ever got to that.



[There's] no way to talk with that person about it, because it's just a fluke, maybe, that they did these things. So I don't know. There is definitely a kind of intuition. I think you don't have intuition until you've done it enough that there are gut feelings about something.

Another thing which I-- It's kind of hard to define, but you're looking at something you don't quite get, but you know something's in it. That's very important. That's a characteristic that you don't necessarily want to have them achieve, but if they already have that coming in, somehow that's an advantage. It's like seeing something you never saw before, and you're seeing twenty slides. You can sort of figure out whether this is a fluke or not.

LEHMER: Well, the criteria of the department is twenty slides of your most recent work and also a statement of purpose.

HEINECKEN: I don't think we required that statement very much until recently.

LEHMER: You didn't?

HEINECKEN: I mean, I don't think the department did.

LEHMER: So it was another means of pursuing whether or not this person knew what they were doing or on what level the work should be addressed. You may be reading too much



into it or something like that.

HEINECKEN: Well, I think the first kind of go-through of something like that-- I would not want to know where that person went to school or what they were writing about or whatever. Because if it doesn't look like something to me-- I don't want to have to read something to understand it.

LEHMER: So the hierarchy is that the visual work has to--

HEINECKEN: Also, I think you develop--it's beyond an intuition--how to read slides, because they're just not the work. Especially if it's painting or something, you have no sense, really, of what that thing is. There's no surface, you know, all those things.

But it can't just be my intuition. You always have at least one other faculty member, who usually would be someone who has a completely different frame of mind than you do. So you're using that person's particularized set of intuitions coming from a different point of view.

Also, I can't really be clear about how the graduate students fit into this, but I always use the graduate students first and let them look at the applicants' slides and rank them. It doesn't mean we're going to accept their opinions, just that we want their opinions. Because their state of mind would even be something where this person is too good, this person is better than I am. That





kind of thing comes up, you know. Do we want this person here? But mostly it's just to take their opinions seriously. Look at the current group of students, look at the applicants, try to figure out-- Well, let's say Ellen Birrel is graduating this year. We don't count her in this because she's gone. But what is the next three-year period going to look like? What kind of students would seem to expand the possibilities of that? And on top of that, the slides have to look like something.

Once I get beyond that, the age of a person is interesting. If a person is right out of undergraduate school, I see that as a kind of a disadvantage as opposed to someone who's not. If you see somebody from an art institute versus university or college, you assume certain things about that. If a person has never lived in the city and they come to Los Angeles, that's going to take you a year to sort that out. Things like that. And these are all minor points, but I guess what I could say is that it's not something that I took lightly. It's a serious thing to do. You know, it's hard to do. I guess you could identify five, six, ten factors. Once you get a group of people that maybe is three times the number you want, and they're all equal, then you can start looking at things like age--I would look at things like age--or where they come from or who they might study with, things like



that, but not before having made the decision about what they looked like first and getting that set up.

LEHMER: The work?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. And maybe secondly how it would seem to fit into-- Like if you got somebody whom you might recognize as being--

Well, another thing comes into this. Let me think about this for a minute. The thing about women and wanting-- At some point they are very consciously aware of what you have not been achieving before in that regard. And then the gay and lesbian thing is equally important to that. But again, if you've got six slots, you can't always accommodate for that. I don't know when it would have happened in here, but I don't even think it would have been conscious to say, "Well, we need half women." There was certainly in my mind a kind of consciousness what that was about. I never could figure out accurately how the sexual preference thing would affect being an artist. At one point we had, I think, three gay men in this program at the same time, which changed it. I'm not saying it was bad or good, it's just--

LEHMER: It was interesting to me because it happened, but it wasn't a conscious choice that I could figure out. It happened when I was around. It seemed to be always the quality of the work. I mean, it just happened to be that--



HEINECKEN: Oh, yeah. Sure, sure. I'm just saying-- I would guess that they were in three different years, if it was recognized that they were gay.

LEHMER: I think you're right. I think they were. And then at that time we also had a faculty member who was lesbian.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, right. Well, that's interesting too, because all of these would be constructs about justice. I think universities and most large institutions were not conscious of this or were not sympathetic to it. It goes against the grain of the way--

You know, my thinking about this always was an antiquated idea, but at some point I recognized that. It's more difficult to balance a program given such new factors when it's small. So you could get down to some point when it would be a political decision. Is it Democrat or Republican or communist or liberal? You can't represent all these groups. Basically, if you're making a decision on two or three people a year, and the department's making a decision about forty or something like that, it's still a very small situation. But, I mean, the idea of each area screening the slides first already gives you-- Let's say if you have a woman running an area, that woman's going to be conscious of this. Or if you have a gay person, as you mentioned, conscious of



it, then obviously they have their own set of principles, agendas, beliefs, all of which have to be reconciled. Then the quality of the work as is has to be modified by all these other important factors.

LEHMER: I think what I'd like to do is see if we can tie this up today with an overview. Maybe some of the evolutionary, transitional highpoints of a very important institution connected to the academic program--that's the Society for Photographic Education. Is that the right term?

HEINECKEN: Uh-huh.

LEHMER: Which we call SPE. You were in, I think, from the very beginning on this.

HEINECKEN: Yeah, pretty much.

LEHMER: There are some points I can think of where there were evolutions, changes, transitions-- There was always the defining of the educator or the defining of the program or defining of photography in general, and the redefining. What this institution did was to kind of formally lay out the redefinition. I remember listening to a program where you were on a panel with other people to define graduate programs. I think there was a woman from [University of] Indiana who said, "We look at their grades first. We know that most of these people are going to go out into the teaching environment. We want to make





sure that they can survive with the other academically astute faculty in a university." And you came with a different approach. At that time you said, "We look at the work."

HEINECKEN: Which is a wonderfully arrogant kind of position to take, but yeah.

LEHMER: And then, "Based on that, if we like the work, and their grades aren't good enough to get in"--let's say didn't meet the standards of the graduate school--that you would petition to get them in. Since I've been involved with the program, I have observed not one situation where these people weren't incredibly intelligent. But your parameters were unique in the sense that you would do whatever you had to to get that person in based on the quality of their work, not necessarily on the quality of their grades.

HEINECKEN: Well, they have to have a certain [grade point] average to apply, right?

LEHMER: Right.

HEINECKEN: But obviously that can be changed by petition.

LEHMER: But your priorities were that of the quality of the work.

SPE went through a lot of transitions. Can you think of some of the ones that would stand out in your mind? Let me give you one example so that you can see where I'm



headed. I'd been out in the middle of nowhere up in Montana, and I came down to an SPE conference at Asilomar [Hotel and Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, California]. Someone that I had known from my days in the sixties and the early seventies while studying at San Francisco Art Institute-- There was a body of work that was very strong, Les [Leslie] Krims's *The Deerslayers*. So he's the honored educator at this conference. It must have been 1978 or something like that. There were a lot of people in the audience who rejected his work and his ideas to the point where they practically booed him out of the auditorium. I was stunned at the assertiveness and the confidence of these people to act so disrespectfully in this situation. But there must have been other defining moments within the SPE, that this institution could show us, as to the evolution of, the change in, the ideas of art and photographic education. Can you think of any other situations?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. I think the first distinctions that were made would be around the technical idea. Techniques were seen to be in the service of something--in most of our cases for an art idea. It had no value beyond servicing some other thing, as opposed to a group of people that were teaching in programs which were basically technical. That's all there was in the very beginning.



So that was a kind of crisis. There was a division, certainly, between the technical versus whatever else. These things don't happen like UCLA, and then only slowly.

The idea of commercial photography, again, was a very strong component of a lot of undergraduate situations, including places like Art Center [College of Design] at that point and Pratt [Institute School of Art and Design]. Probably the institutions that would come to mind if you wanted to study photography would have been one of these places. Or you went to RIT [Rochester Institute of Technology]. So there's that hitch of not just the technical but the commercial application of the work. Commercial photography is what that is. There's nothing wrong with it. But it wasn't anything that a Society for Photographic Education would center on. It certainly would be in the beginning of that organization. The people you would have come, like Art Kane or people like that, were basically commercial photographers, but they're good at it. Somehow, slowly that became something that was no longer interesting. Because now all the programs for commercial photography were identified as opposed to something with an art idea to it. So that shifted. It's reflected in the programming and in the people who are asked to speak. [tape recorder off]

Then I think maybe the next thing is how any of what



I was previously talking about affects education per se. Not really graduate education, because that was still something that was developed later or at least became an important kind of issue.

Then I think there's a period of time when it's finally stable--nothing, no real problems.

LEHMER: What kind of year range are you thinking?

HEINECKEN: I don't know.

LEHMER: Was that the late sixties or--?

HEINECKEN: Yeah. I think maybe early seventies, something like that.

But at some point you get--I think first it would have been the students--the question of whether students were to be accepted into this situation, or were they simply visitors to the conferences. Could they actually belong to the organization? These were issues that were discussed. But the student revolution that was going on in all these places anyway made it very clear that students were to be an active part of this. And then at some point it's the feminist movement, which changes it completely.











