

A TEI Project

Interview of Ted Alvy

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1. Transcript

1.1. TAPE NUMBER: I, Side One (April 8, 2004)

CLINE

Okay, we're rolling. Today is April 8th, 2004). I'm interviewing Ted Alvy. This is Alex Cline. Tape number one in our first session here in his home in Van Nuys [California]. Good morning.

ALVY

Good morning.

CLINE

Thank you for meeting with us. I hear you wanted to start with a quote.

ALVY

Yes. I'm a Los Angeles native, and as far as underground radio in Los Angeles that started in the late sixties, I was one of the few L.A. natives that happened to be a part of it. It just seemed people came from all over the country. David Hidalgo of Los Lobos, this is a quote. He did this in a telephone interview when he was about to do a gig back in 1994 in Santa Barbara. [reads] "Yeah, sure. In L.A. there was a station back in the sixties that was just free-form radio, KPPC. I'd come home from school and turn on the radio. I heard a lot of stuff that I wouldn't have otherwise. Typically, they'd play Jethro Tull, Led Zeppelin or [Jimi] Hendrix, but they'd also mix in some Clifton Chenier or Albert King, so I got to hear a lot of this stuff. Again, it was all mixed together. That helped form my taste in music. That's where I heard the Band, too. They turned out to be one of my biggest influences, the whole concept and the way they did things. They rubbed off on us a lot." I just thought that was pretty typical.

CLINE

It was typical, in the sense that I can claim the same thing myself, being a native who grew up listening to KPPC, and you were involved in that station very heavily, and that's why we want to talk to you. But first, since you said you are a native, I'd like to get on the record where and when were you born exactly.

ALVY

I was born at California Hospital in downtown Los Angeles on Hope Street, so there was some optimism there. Our family was living in the Fairfax District near Third [Street] and La Cienega [Boulevard]. My grandparents, my mother's parents, had a duplex or a fourplex or something near there, and we lived there until I was two years old. Then my parents moved to the San Fernando Valley; moved into a house not too far from here, actually across the wash, the other side of the L.A. River in North Hollywood. So I would walk to Coldwater Canyon Elementary School just north of Vanowen [Street], and then we'd walk to Madison Junior High School, which was just a little bit west of there, off of Ethel [Avenue], just

north of Vanowen. One of my first tastes of freedom was listening to KFWB when I was nine years old. Chuck Blore put together 980, Channel 98, KFWB, it went on the air, actually, January 2nd of 1958, and one of the disc jockeys on six to nine was B. Mitchel Reed. Now, it was obvious that he was sort of like a hipster. It was obvious he was Jewish. My father was Jewish and also from New York. B. Mitchel Reed was from Brooklyn. So that was one of my first identities, listening on the radio to B. Mitchel Reed. KFWB became number one in the city for like five years. I listened constantly. I had a transistor radio plugged in my ear, and I'd sit on the front porch and, you know, I'd listen a lot. I remember watching TV, you know, a really small TV, because I was still living in this house when the Beatles came in. We lived there until summer of '64. Just after I got my driver's license, we moved into this house. So all I know from this house is having the freedom of driving a car. [Cline laughs.] So I was listening to KFWB. I remember one of the first hits, number one songs, was "Twilight Time" by the Platters. I looked it up; it's a couple of months into KFWB. So I hadn't turned ten yet and I hadn't really hit puberty yet, and I was listening to rock and roll. [Cline laughs.] There was also a guy across the street that— In those days, if you were one or two years older, it was a big deal, if you were just one or two years older. Because this guy was into— He had 45s of Elvis Presley, Fats Domino, you know, things like that, so I got turned on to rock and roll also from him. Also, KFWB, every three hours there would be a different personality. There would be Elliot Fields, who's still living, I think in Palm Springs, who had voices, like he had his sidekick "Tex" with him and whatever. Bruce Hayes was on in the morning. Eventually Gary Owens started there after—you know, later on, I think around '62. Joe Yokum, was there, "Jolly" Joe Yokum. Bill Ballance was there after B. Mitchel Reed. Gene Weed eventually came over. A lot of people went through there. But they'd have these contests, and you were allowed to win them once a month. I learned somehow how to win radio contests. I dialed, I'd get through, I'd use different names, and I'd cut a deal with different people in the

neighborhood. If I used their name, they'd get a percentage of the gift, and it would be various things. Eventually B. Mitchel Reed was giving away a high school Top Ten, which I won several times using different names. When I told him that— He had a great sense of humor. He loved things like that, because he was a true outlaw spirit, which I can get into. So now I'm listening to transistor radio. I'm listening to rock and roll. In junior high school I have the annual for '63, which was the third year, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade. There weren't middle schools at the time. So in the ninth grade, a guy named—I remember his name—Roger Edgerly wrote in it. He was like a jock. He was like removed from who I was. I was nothing like that. I wasn't part of the "soces." I wasn't a jock. I was pretty good at athletics, but I never really made the big teams or whatever. He wrote, "Thanks for playing records at the parties." So apparently, the first time I was ever a disc jockey. I won— White Front Department Store sponsored a show on [KCOP TV] Channel 13, and I forget the host, but April and Nino were the guest hosts, and they gave away a record player, then also gave me the Top Ten of 45s, and I went into White Front and I won. They were the hippest thing. You know, they were the hottest thing. So I took them to a party, and I wasn't into dancing; I was a wallflower and all of that. So that was my first disc jockeying experience. Then when I went to Grant High School, Ulysses S. Grant High School was formed— It's right on the wash. You cross the wash, and you're in North Hollywood; you cross it here. It was made up from students from North Hollywood High [School] and Van Nuys High [School]. And the first celebrity to graduate, in one of the very first classes, was Tom Selleck. The second celebrity to graduate was a half year in front of me. He was the senior A president in spring of '66. Tom Scott, the musician.

CLINE

Oh yes.

ALVY

So I knew his background. I knew his dad had been scoring stuff. So I was able to follow his career. At KPPC in early '68, when I was B. Mitchel Reed's engineer and producer, his

album, his very first album by Tom Scott, came through. We looked at it and I told Mitch who Tom was, that he'd graduated with me, that he was playing in the big orchestra that Don Ellis had put together and played at Bonesville every Monday night. We chose— Mitch looked at it, and we decided to play the [John] Coltrane, "Naima." He played that ballad. So we actually played Tom Scott before anyone else.

CLINE

Okay, wait. Let me back up here. I want to talk a little bit about your family and your neighborhood, since this is very interesting local history. Let's get to your family first. You mentioned that your father was Jewish, from New York.

ALVY

My mother was Jewish, too. The thing is, all four of my grandparents were Sephardic Jews, Spanish Jews, so they spoke Spanish, which my parents, you know, my mother spoke mainly, more so than my dad, but by then spoke— I didn't learn the whole Yiddish tradition and everything; I would learn that from friends. So it was actually better to know Spanish in Los Angeles, obviously, than Yiddish, even though we were living in the Fairfax area.

CLINE

Where was your mother from?

ALVY

She was actually born in Chicago, on their way from New York to Los Angeles. So she was just a few days old, so she's real close to being a native of Los Angeles. They lived in that area. They lived in the Fairfax area. This is near Third and La Cienega, so it's that part of it. They lived there for a long time. The property that was there, we moved into— The family would live in, I think it was four apartments, two duplexes up and down. I remember a chicken coop in the backyard. And the thing is, it's right on the outskirts of Beverly Hills. It's also in West Hollywood. We used to call it, when I lived there afterwards— They built a big apartment building on there. I lived there in the seventies off and on. We called it where Boystown meets the Borscht Belt.

CLINE

[laughs] Right, exactly.

ALVY

It was a real interesting neighborhood.

CLINE

It's still very kind of on the border there.

ALVY

Yeah, I was actually out walking home from a party, because I couldn't get a ride, the night that Sal Mineo was murdered. There was all the helicopters, and we knew something was going on. I got home as quick as— Because I didn't know what the hell was going on. But yeah.

CLINE

And, of course, the Beverly Center is right there now.

ALVY

Yeah, now. But we moved to the Valley at age two, in 1950, and the house had just been built. It's a tract home. It's on a small street that's right near Vanowen. It was south of Vanowen and close to the wash, so it was west of Coldwater [Canyon Avenue], and Coldwater and Vanowen was where my grammar school was.

CLINE

Did your parents meet in Los Angeles, then?

ALVY

Yeah. They met, I guess, basically— It's weird, because they're all sort of from the same area. My mother's mother is more from a fishing village near Istanbul, near Turkey, but they all came through this area called Monastir, which, if you look on a map, it's just above the Greek border. But at the time, it was all a Turkish, Ottoman, you know— They came right in the beginning of the century. So they all came, and three of them came through basically the same type of area, so I guess they sort of knew each other. It was like they met that way, I guess from being Sephardic or whatever.

CLINE

So, obviously, there would be some people that would have similar background in the Fairfax area. What about when you came out to the Valley here?

ALVY

Well, I remember high school. It's like the majority— In fact, I remember all the way through, the majority of the students

were Jewish. It was very white and Jewish, and they basically closed down, I know, Yom Kippur. But Rosh Hashanah, it might even have been both days instead of just one day. They just, between the teachers and students, it was better for them to just make it a holiday.

CLINE

Interesting.

ALVY

So it was that type of thing. Now, what happened, in 1963, which was right near the end of— Actually, it was the end of junior high school, when I've actually been a disc jockey at a party, my first taste of freedom was we started hitchhiking to the beach, and there was a group of us. My best friend, I met in September 1960. We're still tight. He lives in Northern California, Michael Robinson. So he and I were tight. Actually, he didn't go to Coldwater Elementary School, but he knew two people that I knew from Coldwater, Jerry Alpert and Richard Caplan, so it's like the four of us did a bunch of things together. We'd end up hitchhiking to the beach. Then there was the James Dean-type guy, Dave Reynolds, from Decatur, Illinois, the soybean capital of the world. We decided to start a group called the Wailers, where the four of us— You know, like street-corner singing or whatever. He started the Renwoods and whatever— But amongst us, we started hitchhiking to the beach, and that's when I first started hitchhiking. Eventually, the sixties and the seventies, I was hitchhiking between here and Seattle all the time, between here and Eureka all the time. I mean, I was a real hippie hitchhiker. I mean, I just didn't talk it; I was out there, which is good, because I learned to be like a street person. Okay, so what I wanted to skip ahead was I got into student government in high school here at Grant High School, sort of on a fluke. I was in electric class, and I learned to make a box that had lights on it that would blink randomly. It was a project. So a friend of mine, Mitch Lynn, was running for senior B vice president, so I made him two things. I made a blinking sign that would be in the hallway, where you put all your signs, and I made a sign that had lights and a big battery he'd put around his waist, where

you'd just click on yourself. Now, I figured if I'm doing it for him, I might as well run for something, so I ran for senior B treasurer. My senior year was going to start in September of '65, so this is like spring of '65. This is when like the Byrds are starting, and [Bob] Dylan all of a sudden puts out a six-minute single, "Like a Rolling Stone." I mean, we're going crazy. We started going crazy in early '64 when "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" came on, and we were just walking around Grant High School with our transistor radios, just freaking out, you know. What was that, you know? Then when Dylan— So all this is happening in '65. So I ran for senior B against, as it turned out—I've still got the newspaper—five women, who were like socialites, five girls. They were all socialites. I was a nothing. I gave a speech at the assembly, where I pretended, and this is something that George [W.] Bush just did, only I pretended that I was showing slides, and I had that clicker, like a frog clicker. Every now and then I would do puns, like I was a treasurer. I was, "Here is a bakery I used to work at, so I'm good with dough." And I snuck in a *Playboy* [magazine]. "Oh, this shouldn't be here," and this and that. And I was getting laughs, because I was the only speech that was funny. Okay, they canceled out, and I won. [Cline laughs.] Okay, there was a guy who was actually murdered, and it's a murder mystery, Hal Arthur, who would get all the senior classes together, and he ended up organizing reunions and things, too. But he was in charge of the senior classes, and what I learned was, as a senior B treasurer, I could get out of everything. I basically had a hall pass to do whatever I wanted. So when they had a thing called Recognition Day where they gave out— We revealed our sweater, which was a blue sweater, and we were the Parthians. The yellow sweater, the Aureoreans, was what Tom Scott, who became the senior A president, that was his class. So on Recognition Day they had a variety show, and I produced the whole thing. I also—I've got photos—I wore a raincoat, an overcoat raincoat, like a private eye, and put on sunglasses, and I would walk around when classes were in session. I'd walk into a room and then I'd walk into a room and then I'd look around and then just walk out. A few

people would see me. Over the course of doing that, over the course of a few weeks, people were wondering, "What the hell is going on?" So then when we had the variety show, which was everyone doing different types of things, different acts, I had a tricycle, and I would go across the stage dressed up in the overcoat and the sunglasses, and I had a big box with a question mark on it. Anyway, that turned out to be the sweater, and what it was, it was the Aureorean sweater, which we stomped on, me and this other guy, who was the senior B president or whatever. So that's one way I also got into show business. [I also was deejay on our Senior Snow Trip.] But I also learned through the whole senior A year, when I wasn't an officer, because I didn't run again, I was still part of planning the prom, they let me plan the senior breakfast, and I've still got the thing. Bob's Big Boy hamburger, chocolate shake, and fries is what we had. So I got to plan that. I got to plan part of Senior Day and all this stuff.

CLINE

Would this be the original Bob's over in Burbank, too?

ALVY

No, that's the Toluca Lake one. We did the one over here on Van Nuys Boulevard, which is no longer there. Van Nuys Boulevard, cruising took place; Wednesday night was all the car clubs, so that was cruising. Then, of course, Friday and Saturday. But Wednesday you might make a date to see someone cruising Friday or Saturday. There was all kinds of combinations. [L.A.] Valley College here, which is two blocks away, they had various things called fraternities, which are basically just people living together with an excuse to have parties and things. So the car clubs were going, and that was the Bob's Big Boy there. There was also the one which is now at Toluca Lake last. There was one at Glendale. There were a few. But the one at Van Nuys Boulevard, it's north of Magnolia [Boulevard] about three blocks, it's now a car dealership. But that was the one. So I got to do all that. So what I learned was I learned how— Almost like a celebrity status, I got to do things because I had been a senior officer, so I could get in and out of classes. I could get all these

special things. So I learned that right away, and basically what I was learning was what the Hollywood tradition is. If you're hot, you get to go to all the parties. So that was one of the things I learned. I also was accepted at UCLA and really didn't want to go. I wasn't real sure what I wanted to do. I figured I was going to be a poli[tical] sci[ence] major and then become a lawyer. One of my other friends was going to do that, as well. He ended up a criminal lawyer, Jerry Alpert. I never did. I would have had to either get an apartment in West L.A. or drive the car over. And, you know, my folks didn't really have a lot of money. I wasn't really that into it. I walked over to Valley College right after I graduated in June of '66, and a bunch of things happened. I registered. I decided to take a radio class in the fall, September. I took two classes to get out of the way right away at summer school, which I aced, which helped me later on by getting the As in the beginning. And I saw a job at the [U.S.] Post Office, twenty hours a week, which was amazing. I ended up making more money than, you know— It paid well; twenty hours a week. You just go in four hours a day and pick up mailboxes. I'd drive a— You were in a death trap, those little mail things. But still— And then afterwards, I ended up taking the test and becoming a full-time collector, which means I'd collect the mailboxes, and then I'd throw mail, and I'd get about thirty-six hours a week, six six-hour days, making good money. They gave me an allowance where I could buy Florsheim shoes and then the clothes and the uniform and the whole thing. Plus I met a guru, Rick Nance. Richard Nance was in charge of air mail, and he was a hippie, hipster, with a beard. He knew music people. He was going to the Whiskey [A Go Go], running the light show. He became like my guru, more than a mentor, because of him. So I ended up hanging around with musician types and celebrity types and whatever that were accepting me, even though I didn't smoke pot. Because usually the test was if you wouldn't light up, if you wouldn't smoke pot with someone, they'd be suspicious of you. But because of Rick's reputation, they knew that I was cool, and they respected— Because there were people that weren't getting high that

were still allowed into the inner circle, because the main concern was we don't want to let a narc in, because, you know, all that stuff happened.

CLINE

One question. At this period, like people in general, like students you had been going to school with, you said you were listening to the Beatles. That changed everything. You were getting involved in hearing all this music. What do you remember about the kind of general student population's awareness of the music, and how much interest was there in it?

ALVY

There was a small hip group that I wasn't aware of. I became aware of it when I went to Valley College. I didn't realize there were still people—that there were people in high school doing it. The people I knew, who came over mainly from—Mainly Mike Robinson remained my friend. But then a friend of his and Jerry's and Rich's was Steve Tarr, who was a little bit older, and he turned me on to Richard Fariña. We became roommates for a while near the post office, between Valley College and the post office. He basically paid for— He was supposed to go to the Monterey Pop Festival with me, so he bought the tickets. He backed out. My friend Larry Glass, who I'd met at Valley College, went with me to Monterey Pop Festival. But Steve Tarr turned me on to a lot of things. I've since lost touch with him, but by turning me on to Richard Fariña, the novel and the music, and then like a lot of other things. So he was a little bit ahead musically. Mike Robinson's middle sister, who just recently died last year from complications of diabetes, she had a girlfriend who turned her on to Dylan, and then she turned us on to Dylan. So this would be before '65 when I saw him at the Hollywood Bowl. September 3rd, '65, Dylan played the Hollywood Bowl, and he went electric for a second set, which was great. So she had turned Lela [Robinson] on to Dylan, who turned Mike Robinson, her brother, and her older sister was Freya [Robinson], and me on to like Dylan, and then this girl was riding on the back of a motorcycle and was killed, and that's the way Richard Fariña was killed. His book *Been Down So*

Long It Looks Like Up to Me had just been published, and he was on the back of a motorcycle, so—

CLINE

Your group of people listening to this music and being into this, would this have made you some oddball, or were people pretty aware of what was happening?

ALVY

You know, I don't really— The interesting thing about KFWB and Top 40 radio, especially in '58, '59, '60, '61, and '62, this is when they were number one in the whole city. At times they had a fifty-one share, meaning every radio station in the city did not have the amount of listeners that KFWB had. During the summer, especially '58 and '59, when Chuck Blore had this oldies thing, where he'd play a lot of songs before '58, rock and roll songs, you'd walk along the beach and you'd hear transistor radios. It was so surreal. You might hear a hundred transistor radios all turned to KFWB, and you've only walked six or eight blocks. I mean, it was Newport Beach, Balboa [Beach and Island]. We used to go there during the summer. Santa Monica. It was unbelievable. P.O.P; there used to be a pier, Pacific Ocean Park, a pier which is now gone. I saw Johnny Cash sing "Ring of Fire" at P.O.P. Everyone remembers in February, 1964, when the Beatles came on [the] Ed Sullivan [Show]. Then in I think it was around June, on Lankershim [Boulevard], and I know it wasn't the El Portal Theatre, it was the other theater, I think. I forget its name. We went to see *A Hard Day's Night*, and then that cemented it. I mean, you basically knew that it was sort of nod, nod, wink, wink, or nudge, nudge, wink, wink. The Beatles were, you know— They were doing it for us, you know. The Byrds always talk— [Roger, back then Jim] McGuinn always talks about how he went twelve-string immediately. Basically the Byrds formed because they all went to see *A Hard Day's Night* and whatever.

CLINE

Now, what about like surf music and stuff before that? Was anybody into that?

ALVY

I used to spend the summers— For several weeks we would rent like an apartment and then the different members of the aunts and uncles would share it out in the Newport/Balboa area. So they would have surf concerts out there. I was too young for them. I was aware of surf music. I used to like the Marketts, *Balboa Blue*. I used to have that 45. One of the very first movies I remember seeing, my grandmother took me to the Balboa Theatre and I saw *King Creole*, which is still, I think, Elvis' best movie. But it was my first Elvis movie. It was like the whole rebellion thing, because *Rebel Without a Cause* I hadn't seen yet.

CLINE

Did you have any siblings, by the way?

ALVY

Yeah, I have a brother who's two years younger and a sister who was born in '57. She's nine years younger. She used to listen to me on the radio in junior high school. She went to the junior high a few blocks from here off of Magnolia. She said they used to go out on their breaks and they'd listen to KPPC. For a while, for like late January, 1971, for about six months, I was on the air there from right after Jeff Gonzer. I went on from nine until one o'clock. At one o'clock I'd play the Credibility Gap from the previous evening. It ran at six and was repeated at eleven, between ["the Obscene] Steven Clean" [Steven Segal] and "Mississippi Fats" [Joseph Rogers]. The original one would be at six, during Les Carter's show. They'd come in, the four of them would come in. Originally Michael McKean was the last to join. He brought his guitar and was the last to join. But Richard Beebe, who had been with KRLA, for years, and then David L. Lander and Harry Shearer, they would come in like in the afternoon, and they would just sit around and basically write everything right there, so it was like immediate. It would be on the air at six; be on the air again at eleven; and then I would get to play it at one; and then the Pierce Family, Dave [David] Pierce, was following me. So my sister was able to listen to me.

CLINE

Wow, that must have been cool.

ALVY

Yeah. Then I changed. I went to weekends, and Les gave me, actually, a double shift. He gave me noon to three and three to six, and I would do like a— Noon to three, I'd do a mellow hippie show, because he wanted someone from the old days that would play a lot of the stuff that got neglected. So on weekends I might play a fifteen-minute cut by T. Rex that never gets played, or this or that. Then from three until six, I'd rock more. Especially on Saturday I'd be doing a lot of commercials for stuff to do. But on Sunday I'd do the same thing, because there were so many things happening. It was basically Saturday night was the prime night; then Friday, then Sunday. Then like the Troubadour would have like open night, hootenanny night on Monday. The Ash Grove would have stuff like all week long. The Whiskey would have stuff. But Les basically gave me a double shift, and he ended up putting Zach Zenor, my roommate—we were living in Santa Monica Canyon together—on my shift, nine to one after Jeff Gonzer. Then Sam Kopper came out from Boston. He had known Joe Rogers ["Mississippi Fats"], and Deirdre O'Donoghue; both had come out from WBCN [Boston]. The deal with WBCN, Ray Riepen or whatever, who started it, came out here to meet Tom Donahue in San Francisco, because he wanted to do the same thing in Boston. Like I said, Joe Rogers was the first guy to go on the air supposedly at ten o'clock eastern time, Friday, the fifteenth of March, 1968, which is the last weekend we were on the air, because the KPPC-KMPX strike started at three a.m., March 18th, on Monday. What happened was, after our strike was over— The KMPX strike was settled May 21st, which was Tom Donahue's birthday. He went on the air on KSAN, because Metromedia, the general manager at KSAN, invited Tom to bring everybody over from KMPX, and at least 90 percent of the people came right over. So KSAN was on the air immediately, twenty-four hours a day. Here, we were on strike an extra month, and KMET had just purchased automation equipment for a quarter of a million dollars, something like that. You know, it was depreciated. They had to use it because they'd already bought it. It was all female

voices, middle of the road. That was their gimmick. But it was all automated, so they'd only hired B. Mitchel Reed. Mitch was going to do automated stuff for a year, and Tom Donahue was sending down two hours, eventually four hours, from San Francisco, because that's how they started, for the first three months at KMET in '68. We started around the summer with a taped show that took nine hours for us to tape the B. Mitchel Reed show, a two-hour show. So he flew up to KSAN, and him and Tom Donahue used the KSAN library, and would constantly tape shows, run them to the airport, send them to KMET. First it was two hours each, and then eventually four hours. I and my friend Larry Glass, who I'd met here at the college radio station at Valley College, put together the record library, which I had kept in my closet here at this house, that I had put together when I was at KPPC, because we didn't know where we were going. So Mitch was stuck without being able to do a live show. They wouldn't let him do a live show. Steve Segal and I were supposed to go to WBCN for a year and then come back and join Mitch as the three live jocks. Steven went. That's one of the reasons that Joe Rogers and Deirdre O'Donoghue and eventually Sam Kopper, the production guy— Zach Zenor was the production wizard, and he was getting burned out, so Les gave him my air shift, and then Sam Kopper did production. Then eventually like J. J. Jackson came out in '71, and like we didn't have room for him, so he went to KLOS. Otherwise, I'm sure he would have joined our staff, but we just had more people than we needed.

CLINE

I want to get more into this as we get more into that period

ALVY

My sister listened, like I said. They were into music. My brother and I— I don't know. I was the first grandson on both sides, and this and that, and so it was a little different. He sort of has drifted away right now, so I won't get into any— My sister, I'm in touch with regularly. And my parents, I'm in touch with them regularly.

CLINE

How about your parents? What do they think of your interest in all this music?

ALVY

Looking back on it, they were very free with me, as far as they were letting me make a lot of my own decisions, which, luckily, I didn't screw up too much.

CLINE

Because, yeah, you're like going and hanging out at the beach. You're doing all these things.

ALVY

Yeah, this and that. Then once I turned sixteen and we moved into this house, they always let me— First we had a '56 Chevy station wagon. Then they got an Oldsmobile Cutlass with bucket seats that we used in '68. That was the main vehicle during the strike in '68. I drove people from Pasadena and all over. I was like part of the strike crew and whatever, plus it was a twenty-four-hour picket line. From March 18th, 1968, through around the weekend before summer started in June of '68, there was a twenty-four-hour picket line around the Pasadena Presbyterian Church in downtown Pasadena on Colorado Boulevard, where the Rose Parade passes. So, yeah, they basically— They let me do a lot. I never really got into alcohol. The thing growing up was there was always either a bar mitzvah or— We didn't go to temple or whatever, but there was always like Manischewitz or Mogen David wine, so we'd always be able to sample it, so I never had a craving for alcohol. I never became an alcoholic. The main thing with B. Mitchel Reed was his generation was alcohol. Mine was just pot. If you didn't drink alcohol or do any other drugs and just did pot, to me that was the purest way. When you're young, you wake up without a hangover. You don't overdo it. You don't realize that eventually any type of smoking will damage your lungs. You know, you have to eventually— They say that no one's ever died from pot, but that just means if you— What happens if you overdose? You fall asleep. [Cline laughs.] I mean, you can get hard-core drugs, Vicodin. You can get OxyContin, like Rush Limbaugh got, by prescription, but you can't even get marijuana by prescription. It's so bizarre. So

many people don't realize that starting in the sixties, a lot of the attitudes about society was the fact that 90 percent of the young people were criminals, because if you smoked pot, you were a criminal. Ten/6/66. You know what 10/6/66 is?

CLINE

No.

ALVY

It's October 6th of 1966. That's when LSD was illegal. Before that it was legal. Tests were made on citizens, Cary Grant, Jack Nicholson. You know, all that stuff. So there was that whole thing, the feeling of being an outlaw, and for a stupid reason. It's not like you were shooting heroin or something like that. So a lot of people had that attitude.

CLINE

How common was pot use when you were growing up? You said that first you weren't smoking pot with this guy that you knew.

ALVY

I was part of different things. I would go to parties. I'd meet people, this or that, and it was just my choice not to get high, which was cool if— If you were accepted as a person, it was cool, because that was just a healthier thing to do. If you could do it with meditation, you know, once meditation became popular, this and that, you didn't do drugs. That was the ultimate way. What ruined it, as far as I'm concerned, is people started mixing drugs and stuff. You know, cocaine became prominent. I was lucky to dodge cocaine, because it was real easy to get. One of the reasons I moved out of L.A. instead of working at KMET was I figured I'd end up getting addicted to coke, because all the beautiful women wanted cocaine, and if you had a chance to get— The type of women you would meet usually would just be what you'd call the crème de la crème, and you'd have to have a lot of stuff for them, including cocaine, and if you didn't— So I could see if I were to stay here, I would have been a— I could have gotten a job at KMET. I never did a gig at KMET. In '68 two commercials ran. Did I give you the Les Carter interview with Frank Zappa?

CLINE

Yeah.

ALVY

Okay. There's two commercials for Music Revolution that I did with Susan Carter. That's the only stuff that my voice ever ran on KMET, because I hated these suits there, especially David Moorhead, the "hound," the general manager. I hated those people so much, I refused to work there. So I was supposed to come back sometime after Woodstock with Steve Segal, and him and me and B. Mitchel Reed were going to be the three live jocks. Instead, Tom Gamache had already come out from Boston doing college hippie radio, and he'd been at KPPC in the basement. So he worked with Mitch, and then Steve came, so the three of them were live. Then finally— Because up until that point, I was programming all the music for B. Mitchel Reed and for the automated station, twenty-four hours a day, going through the library, listening to records, marking, you know; you mark them on the album. I was doing all that stuff. Larry Glass was helping a lot of the time, but I was spending hours and hours, because I was also working at Les Carter's Music Revolution, so I knew not only what the hip records were, because that's what we stocked, but what was selling and stuff like that. So I had radio. I had retail. I was into the underground press, because, you know, the *[Los Angeles] Free Press* was delivered; we were selling it at our record store. We started selling *Rolling Stone*. Les Carter's Music Revolution started on July 4th of '68. I started with him finally around September of '68. They went to New York to record Susan's album, *Susan Carter*, on Epic with Blood, Sweat, and Tears backing her up. They came back in fall of '69, and they had to just close down the store. I was keeping it open by going to the bank and cashing checks and buying stolen records from a gangster-type guy. His name was Si, and his company was called Si Co. [Cline laughs.] After Music Revolution closed in our West L.A. apartment, he ended up delivering stolen records, and then we would sell them to a record store in Hollywood, and we would pay for our rent, and we'd go to Alfie's on the [Sunset] Strip and get filet mignon and lobster and all this.

CLINE

Wow. [laughs]

ALVY

Then one day he disappeared, after about four months of doing this. He called us three weeks later, and he said, "You remember hearing about the Led Zeppelin II, where a giant truck was stolen and hijacked, and it was full of Led Zeppelin II albums? Well, they were down in Phoenix, near Phoenix, and I was about to cut a deal where I was going to bring them all to your apartment, and I noticed something hinky." Or I forget what word he used. The FBI; he saw the FBI was about to bust these guys. So if they had gone the next step and let him buy them on credit from these gangster types or whatever, bring them to our apartment, the FBI would have busted all of us.

CLINE

Oh, boy.

ALVY

We were basically college students, and we all worked at Les Carter's.

CLINE

Ouch. Okay.

ALVY

So I had all this going. I was at KMET in the record library. I was doing retail. I was at UCLA in the film school.

CLINE

We have to actually back up to get to know how you got to these places.

ALVY

Right, right.

CLINE

Because there's some key things here that I want to get into.

ALVY

Yes, yes, that's what I want.

CLINE

One is you're at L.A. Valley College. You're doing a radio course. You're doing these things. You're working at the post office. You're meeting this hipster guy. You're obviously getting introduced to more and more interesting and

important music, and obviously, when you said that eventually you had the record library here at this house, you're exposed to and becoming really— Not only that you're exposed to a lot of music, but you're developing a lot of expertise as to what's going on, who's doing what, what's good, what isn't. We want to know how this happened, basically, because obviously you met some key people, some very influential people, and eventually this led to you going to the Monterey Pop Festival, where you met B. Mitchel Reed.

ALVY

Who I'd been listening to since '58, January of '58.

CLINE

So walk us through how you got so into the music, so plugged into this scene, and who you met and what happened.

ALVY

Okay, so I'm now working at the post office twenty hours a week. I don't know; I'm making good money. I forget what it is, but compared to everything else that, you know, my age of jobs you can get.

CLINE

I'm sure, yeah.

ALVY

Rick Nance was turning me on to stuff. He'd be playing me music. He'd be introducing me to musicians. He was doing a light show, a liquid light show at the Whiskey. He let me do it once when Spirit was there, and I just loved it. Then I did it, but I would never do it again, because I realized there was an art to it, and I was just— It's like music. I realized I wasn't a natural musician, so I didn't try and be one, because I knew I could have been a poser. What I concentrated on was writing lyrics. Mike Robinson and I wrote a song, and I ended up getting lyrics recorded by Mallard, which was Zoot Horn Rollo and Rockette Morton. And Mark Boston, Rockette Morton, used one of my lyrics on his solo album, which came out last year and whatever. But I got to know Bill Harkleroad (Zoot Horn Rollo), and Mark Boston (Rockette Morton), when I was living in Eureka and

they were up there recording. They did *Clear Spot* while they were up there, and then they did *Unconditionally Guaranteed* and quit in 1974 after [Captain] Beefheart hired producers that messed up the basic tracks. Okay, so this is summer of '66. Now, right here in this front bedroom, my bedroom, my folks had gotten this stereo. You know those big cabinets; they were bulky. It had the turntable. It had something that was kind of rare in those days; it had an FM radio. I think it might have even been in multiplex; I don't know. But they never used it, so I moved it into my bedroom, and from I think it was Sunday through Thursday, eleven p.m. to three a.m., I started listening to KPFK, *Radio Free Oz*, Peter Bergman. It was unbelievable. I mean, this was my first experience. I would put on the headphones and basically listen all night and stuff. The Firesign Theater ended up coming together in the fall, where they did a phony film festival and this and that. Then eventually they promoted the very first Los Angeles Human Be-In, which they called the Love-In [named by Peter Bergman]. January 14th of 1967, Polo Field, Golden Gate Park, the very first Human Be-In. Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Charles Lloyd was playing flute with the Dead, things like that. Here it was—I've got the dates somewhere— It was March 26th, Easter Sunday of 1967. Not only was this promoted by *Radio Free Oz* and the Firesign Theater, that same night they moved to KRLA. They started on KRLA-AM, you know, eleven ten. So that was something. The poster for that is in the big art rock book I've got for that. Later on I heard that B. Mitchel Reed was there, but he didn't want to be acknowledged. Because everyone was just so into what was going on. It was just a natural event. And it's Elysian Park right near the Police Academy. [Cline laughs.] So, Firesign Theater, so listening to them gave me a lot of— I mean, basically, the first radio I really loved was freedom, because color radio, Top Forty radio, the good thing about it is that Top Forty had great songs for a while. I mean, you'd hear the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, the Yardbirds, the Animals, the Hollies, the Kinks. I mean, this is amazing stuff. Then all of a sudden the Byrds and Buffalo Springfield. B. Mitchel Reed, he did number one

radio, where he was like number one in the city. He married like a model. He knew Steve McQueen. You know, I mean, he was like A-list. He'd go to A-list parties. If they were going to, "Hey, let's hire— Let's bring a DJ— Oh, B. Mitchel Reed." He was the one. He was the A-list guy. He went back to New York, his hometown. He's from Brooklyn, WMCA. They also had the good guys. It was sort of like KFVB, a very similar-type thing. This was like February '63. He stayed for two years. He came back in early '65. He was number one. He wanted to knock off "Murray the K", because "Murray the K," he felt, was disrespecting his idol, who was Alan Freed. B. Mitchel Reed, who's Burton Mitchel Goldberg. [Reed was probably suggested by a roommate because Mitch was tall and thin.] I spent thousands of hours with B. Mitchel Reed, and if I knew what I know now, we would have talked about a lot of different things. I mean, I could have just— We talked about so much, but there's so much more we could have talked to. You need to turn me over?

CLINE

I need to turn the tape.

ALVY

Okay.

CLINE

One moment.

1.2. TAPE NUMBER: I, Side Two (April 8, 2004)

CLINE

We're back on. This is side two, and we're talking about B. Mitchel Reed and your experience being exposed to creative free radio here in Los Angeles when you were younger.

ALVY

Okay, so *Radio Free Oz* ends up forming the Firesign Theater. We know who they are. The Monterey Pop Festival was announced through the *Los Angeles Free Press*, which, if people don't know, this was an underground newspaper, and there were people standing on street corners selling it for a quarter. There were a lot of hippies that made a living— The only way they ever got money for food and stuff was by

selling the *Free Press*. It was like a thing. It would be sold through record stores and this and that.

CLINE

Eventually they had a bookstore in Westwood.

ALVY

And called Kazoo on Fairfax and they also had one in Pasadena. Pasadena because— Yes, the Free Press Bookstore. But other than that, one of the main ticket outlets was Wallach's Music City, Sunset [Boulevard] and Vine [Street], which, if you walked along Sunset, you'd see glass booths where people would sit in and get to sample. You'd get to play the record before you bought it, which was amazing. Wallach's Music City was real important in a lot of other ways. They also had a survey of sales through all their stores, and Wallach's was quoted. They actually had a survey that would be printed out, just like KFWB had a survey, but this was one of the first main stores where you'd actually see retail sales. Radio stations, to make their surveys, they'd call around and talk to record stores and this and that and whatever; there would be various ways of putting together the surveys. KRLA had a printed survey. KHJ had a printed survey. You know, they'd come out every week. So Wallach's Music City had a survey, and that's very important. So that's where I ended up buying the tickets to the Monterey Pop Festival. Now, the tickets were really inexpensive, if you think about, you know— We ended up sitting about halfway back, which, in a way, was kind of good. Steve Tarr and I were ready to go, and for some reason, Steve couldn't go. Now, in June of 1967 I bought my first car. It was a 1957 Chevrolet convertible—

CLINE

Whoa.

ALVY

—with no front fender; there was a wood fender. No back window, so if you had the top down and whatever. It was a convertible, and that's what I drove to KFWB and whatever. It wouldn't make it to Monterey, so my parents loaned me the Cutlass, the Oldsmobile Cutlass. Larry Glass, who went to Monroe High School, lived in Panorama City. I met him at

Valley College. September of 1966, my first class at Valley College was a radio class. I walked in. Larry Glass was just hanging out there, and we started talking Rolling Stones or something like that. So he ended up coming to the Monterey Pop Festival with me. September of '66, I'm listening to *Radio Free Oz* constantly. I'm taking a radio class that does not allow us to do a radio show. You have to take the beginning class. It's like, you know, learn this, learn that. You go and get your license. I went downtown and got my third-class license with broadcast endorsement. You needed that to be able to fill out logs. If I was really smart, I would have got a first-class license, because if you had a first-class license, you could get a job anywhere, and every year they got harder and harder. One year they threw on color TV, and just about everyone gave up. [Cline laughs.] But you know, if I would have had that— A lot of people got into radio because they had a first-class license. I didn't do that. But I was one of the first people— So I got to start doing one hour a week on— We had two turntables. There was a classroom where people could sit and listen to the show, or there'd be a cafeteria outdoors in the area. They'd run a speaker out there. That's all you could hear it. So I was doing it as "The Thin Man," and Mike Robinson was "The Prophet," and this and that. Larry Glass and I would pull out the hip records, because they'd run it like a Top Forty radio station, so the guy that— There was a program director, and they wanted everyone to be Top Forty. We started doing things like segueing records together. We were basically experimenting, Larry Glass and I. Okay, so the end of '66, I had my license, I knew I was going to be doing a radio show, I decided to subscribe—this was like a gift to myself, because I was making good money at the post office; for a kid, it was unbelievable—*Billboard* magazine for a year; *Record World* magazine for a year; *Cashbox* magazine for a year. Now, even radio stations only subscribed to one of them. Even libraries didn't have all of them. They were trades publications, but it wasn't like you could go to any newsstand and get them like you can now and whatever. So I had, right here at my fingertips every week, three publications. I knew

more about what was going on than people that had been in the business for ten years, just because, you know, I was absorbing everything. So I knew what was going on. I knew FM rock radio had started in San Francisco. I knew they eventually went stereo, I think in August of '67. At the Monterey Pop Festival, the very first question I asked at a seminar that took place Saturday afternoon before the blues show, Saturday morning, actually, where the immediate representative for DJs was B. Mitchel Reed—he was the celebrity guest for that— I asked him a question. I knew him. I had listened to him for years. “How soon do you think there will be a stereo rock station in Los Angeles?” He did like a double-take, and I had no idea what was going on until later I found out he had talked to Tom Donahue just a few hours ago about that same thing, doing it in L.A. Les Carter, who was a number one jazz jock, according to *Billboard*, in '66 and '67, had also talked to Tom Donahue at the Monterey Pop Festival. So Mitch said, “Yeah, I think it’s going to happen soon.” Okay. I’m throwing this whole thing together. Okay, let me go back to the radio station. When I met Larry Glass, he was a little bit older than me, so he had graduated high school, I guess, a year early. He was in police science, which eventually he did a complete 180, after meeting B. Mitchel Reed and everything you know. He ended up graduating. Then he went to Cal[ifornia] State [University Los Angeles], and he was involved in a lot of the anti-war demonstrations. In fact, there was a photo of him on the freeway. He had a legal— They had a picture of him stopping the freeway at Cal State or something like that.

CLINE

Now, which Cal State is this?

ALVY

Cal State L.A. This was in early 1970 and stuff. Then the Kent State [University] thing happened and whatever. Okay, so Larry was into things before me. Like he already knew who the Who were and stuff like that, okay? I was subscribing to some magazine or something that allowed me to buy things directly from England. So we got together, and I had the money. I mean, I had disposable— It’s

unbelievable, I mean, for a kid. I'm eighteen and I've got this disposable income. So I not only subscribed to these three magazines, which nobody subscribed to all three, I started buying import 45s from England that would either be different because the flip side would be different, or they'd be things that weren't even released here. Now, because of that, I had a lot of Rolling Stones singles that nobody else had. I went to KBLA in Burbank and knocked on the door. There's Dave Diamond, and I said, "Dave, I'm—," yadda, yadda, yadda. "I'm at the college radio station." Because KBLA, we had like a relationship. They did a show called *Chalk Talk* on KBLA, public service, which was Valley College sports and this and that. There were some things going back and forth. They didn't really have interns at the time; there wasn't the term intern, but we were sort of tied with KBLA. I handed him these 45s, and he just went like, "Whoa." He says, "Come back here. Can you come back here a week from tonight?" I said, "Yes." He says, "I'll have them for you, because I want to put them on tape." He put them on cart tape. I show up a week later. He walks me in. He's cutting commercials. He shows me how to cut commercials and things. He gives me like a little— You know, it's amazing. This is Dave Diamond, who's— *Stones City* was Humble Harve, and then Dave Diamond took off; started doing *The Diamond Mine*, and he took over *Stones City*, so he's playing things that he got from me that no one else has. Okay, now this is early '67. Eventually the Firesign Theater started broadcasting—we're talking fall of '67—on KRLA from the Magic Mushroom nightclub, which is now called the Platinum something; it's on Ventura [Boulevard] on the north side of the street, east of Tujunga [Boulevard]. It's the Platinum something right now, because Little Feat had an album release party there. But it used to be called the Magic Mushroom, and a lot of bands like Spirit played there, Captain Beefheart. Before that, I think it was Cinnamon Cinder, where the Beatles had that famous interview. They had a 1964 press conference at the Cinnamon Cinder because of the disc jockey— I can't think of his name right now. It was Bob Eubanks who promoted the Beatles at the

Hollywood Bowl. Okay, so I'm listening to Firesign Theater. I'm reading the three trades. I'm doing a one-hour radio show where I'm actually segueing records together instead of doing a commercial after each one, which was basically— They're doing sixteen commercials, at least sixteen commercials, minutes, on all the stations. I move out in the spring with Steve Tarr, because he also has money, and he and I are like roommates. He has a girlfriend, Ivy [his future wife], who's becoming like— And Mike Robinson would sleep over occasionally. So we'd all hang out together. We were all going to Valley College together. I was doing the radio class. Mike was doing the radio class. Steve decided not to go to Monterey Pop. I went with Larry Glass. The very first thing that happened was I lost the tickets. I have tickets for all five concerts. I lost them. We turned around. We walked back three blocks. There they were, lying on the ground. [Cline laughs.] I pick them up, and from that day on, and this is June 16th, 17th, and 18th, it's Monterey Pop Festival, this is the Friday night, I always keep my wallet in my front left pocket, ever since then. Before that, I stopped wearing— In late '66 I stopped wearing all rings and wristwatches, because I might scratch a record. I was so into the tactile. The thing you don't get now, by not segueing vinyl records, is underground radio was very tactile, because you'd feel things. You'd learn how to— We have three turntables, so every now and then I'd do a quickie drop-in between two songs, and you'd watch, and it would be— But it would be a real tactile feel to it and whatever. So we're at the Monterey Pop Festival. First night, we go in, and the headliners are Simon and Garfunkel, who I had seen out in West Covina. They had a circle in the round, where it would rotate; the stage would rotate. Simon and Garfunkel were out there, and the Rascals were out there later on, and B. Mitchel Reed and Larry, we all went, because he knew the Rascals from New York, so we went out to West Covina. So I had seen Simon and Garfunkel, and I was also into them, and whenever they were on TV, like Paul Simon was in London, and they made it a folk rock [record "Sounds Of Silence"]. He was all of a sudden a hit. He flew back. Him and Art Garfunkel made one

or two rare TV appearances. For some reason, I was always into watching rare TV things. When the Beatles, in May of '68, when [John] Lennon and [Paul] McCartney were on the *Tonight Show*, when they were here to promote their Apple Records label, Joe Garagiola was the host. They kept saying, "Where's Johnny [Carson]?" All right. I clipped two alligator clips on the speaker, and I taped it. I not only have that tape, I donated it to the Museum of Television and Radio. They now have it as part of their library. I contacted Johnny Carson Productions. They don't have the audio or the video of that, because a lot of the New York shows just— So I was able to donate a little bit of history. I also taped the debate right before RFK was murdered, between Robert F. Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy, and I donated that also to the— Then there was the TV show that—they've recently shown it at the museum—that right before Monterey Pop, Leonard Bernstein did a show, *Inside Pop* on CBS, and he had— Like Brian Wilson was in a sandbox playing "Surf's Up," and basically it was an intellectual view of rock and roll. Even in the Monterey Pop Festival booklet, there was a— It was like a program, but it had photos. It was about forty pages, fifty pages long, something like that. I've got it. The Beatles had a page in it and whatever. Even in that, the— What was I saying right before that? I've lost my train of thought. Monterey Pop Festival. All right, so we're at the Monterey Pop Festival. We slept in the car that night. I had gone and waited in line, and Derek Taylor, who had done publicity for the Byrds and the Beatles and, you know, Apple [Records] and all that, he was running the show, the press show. B. Mitchel Reed's old lady, Carole Solari, who eventually married him and she became Carole Solari Reed, was working, volunteering in the booth there. Because Mitch was given permission from KFWB to cover the festival—and he knew everyone; I mean, he knew everyone—if he would phone in reports. So he phoned in reports back to the station; that was part of the deal. Okay, so Derek Taylor saw my little "Oz" button that I was wearing, from *Radio Free Oz*. There was a thing called a Love-In kit, where you had a proclamation, "The vehicle is ecstasy. The time is now. The

answer, yes." You had a Mexican Free Air Force membership card, and you had an "Oz" button, which, if you turned it one way, it said, "No." If you turned it the other way, it said, "Zo." He saw it. I told him I was from the college radio station, Larry Glass and I. He gave us a press pass. Okay, the front area at Monterey Pop, if you had a press pass, you could get in there to hear music. So people were abusing the privilege. The next morning, all passes were off. Derek Taylor reissued them. Life magazine was right in front of us. "Four passes for *Life* magazine." He says, "Sorry, only two. We have to cut back." I show up with my "Oz" button. I said, "Look, here's the tickets." I showed him we had tickets. I said, "We've got tickets. We don't want to get in the front area." Because he said that that was one of the reasons. I've got one of his press releases, which is great, from Monterey Pop. I said, "All we want is the ability to come in and out of the fairgrounds with the pass." He said, "Fine." Because he knew, you know. I mean, he knew I wasn't jiving him. I showed him we had the tickets. He remembered the "Oz" button from the day before. So Larry Glass and I still had a press pass. Because of that, I got to go Saturday morning. Okay, the Saturday afternoon concert was a blues concert. Saturday evening was Saturday evening where Jefferson Airplane blew everyone away with the light show and everything, and then everyone was just starting to leave, and all of a sudden Booker T and the MGs start playing. Then Otis Redding comes out and blows everyone away. Sunday afternoon was just Ravi Shankar. He was the original person booked for the festival before it was a charity event, so he actually got paid to come out from India. He had [Ustad] Alla Rakha, this great tabla player. I forget who was playing tamboura. But that was Sunday, and then Sunday night was the Mamas and the Papas headlining, because it was their deal. They had brought back [Paul] Butterfield, Saturday night, after they played Saturday afternoon. Well, anyway, the reason Janis Joplin came back was the band didn't want to be filmed, and they did a kick-ass performance Saturday afternoon. They basically almost stole the show. I mean, everyone was talking Janis Joplin.

CLINE

So this is Big Brother [and the Holding Company] you're talking about.

ALVY

Yes, so they all voted to be filmed, and they did a performance again, the one you see in the film [Monterey Pop]. It's great, but it's not as good as the Saturday afternoon one, because this is like an afterthought. Butterfield was hired just to— They had Butterfield do another show—(it was Saturday night) just because Butterfield is Butterfield. Mike Bloomfield had debuted the Electric Flag, "American Music Band," so he was no longer. But Butterfield was still like he was it. The two Butterfield Blues Bands, the first one [*Paul Butterfield Blues Band*] and *East-West*, are still the ultimate double-guitar albums for everyone, Mike Bloomfield and Elvin Bishop. Then, like I said, Sunday night ended with the Mamas and Papas and the whole thing, and then we drove home. Saturday afternoon— There were a lot of booths where you could go around and see things, like Robert Moog had a booth, where the very first Moog synthesizer was there. Being that we had this pass, we could get in the fairgrounds, in and out, anytime we wanted. Okay, the seminar, B. Mitchel Reed. "Do you think there will be an FM stereo rock station in Los Angeles soon?" Yadda, yadda, yadda, okay. That's all over. It was a seminar, this and that. The afternoon concert hasn't started yet. This is the big blues concert where Canned Heat is going to blow everyone away; Steve Miller [Band], I mean everyone. Country Joe [and the Fish] is going to be on and everything. Larry and I are just walking around, taking everything in. Larry hadn't started getting high yet. I worked with some friends to make this chocolate syrup that was full of marijuana, and I bought the Solvang butter cookies in that bucket, like the Kentucky Fried Chicken bucket, and I put the chocolate stuff on it. So I was getting high in front of the police. And the police were cool. They had flowers on. They weren't getting hassled by anyone, so basically the Monterey police were cool, which never happened again, probably, ever in the history of— This was like a festival— No one ever

knew what to expect from the Monterey Pop Festival. Then when it turned into a charity event, where the money was eventually used for various purposes, like to set up musical scholarships and things. So B. Mitchel Reed, who, it's like I knew him. Larry told me afterward, in fact, recently, he said, "Hey, it's just as if you and Mitch knew each other." Obviously I'd listened to him in those five years, and then he came back, and I was listening to him again on the radio, because when he came back, he wasn't the fastest tongue in the West. He was seeing the Byrds at Ciro's, so he was starting to play that type of music. So he was lost, and I walked up to him. "Hey, Mitch, did you lose something?" He says, "I've got to call the station. I've got to call this interview to the station, and I don't have the little—," and he describes this thing to me. It's basically two alligator clips on a plug, and you use it to clip onto the phone, and you plug the plug into the tape recorder, and, you know, you run the thing. I reach in my pocket. I said, "Like this?" He says, "Where did you get that?" I said, "Larry and I have this Roberts portable, battery-operated tape recorder that takes five-inch reels, and we're taping some of the festival." I said, "Here," you know. He says, "Well, I'll—." I say, you know, "Here." He says, "Thank you." He took down our names. We talked, this and that. He says, "You saved my life." Yadda, yadda. We went through the thing. Sunday morning he says, "Will you and Larry tell me about the Ravi Shankar? Because I'm not able to go." Because something came up, whatever it was. So we basically covered it for him. Little did we know, when he called back that night, still using my little thing, which I ended up giving him, the alligator clips, he used Larry's and my name. He thanked "two Valley College radio students." We got back and we were like mini-celebrities, you know. [Cline laughs.] So from that point on, both of us told Mitch never to mention our names again. It was better if we were incognito, especially for me, because I was really into this incognito thing. Okay. So basically Mitch said, "Will you and Larry come down to the radio station and play the tapes of the festival for our general manager and program director?" We said, "Yeah." So Monday we were just all wiped

out. So Tuesday I call him on the air. I just got off my shift at the Valley Annex Post Office. Valley Annex, which was out by— It was past Van Nuys Boulevard and Saticoy [Street], out towards Kester [Avenue]. It was called an SCF, a sectional center facility, meaning every piece of mail that came in and out of the San Fernando Valley had to go through that facility, where now it's out at Santa Clarita or something. So that's why we pick up the mailboxes; bring them back, sort the mail, da, da, da, da, da. It was the sectional— So I got off my shift. The pay phone, I called B. Mitchel Reed, da, da, da, da, da. He says, "Can you and Larry come Saturday?" He wanted me to bring my tape recorder to play. I had bought a Sony stereo. I've still got the tape recorder, reel-to-reel. He wanted me to play the tapes for the— We said, "Yeah." I said, "Mitch, B. Mitchel Reed, BMR. You know, I've listened to you for years. Why don't you call it 'Better Music Radio'?" He says, "Okay." So he played something like an album cut and used that immediately. This is when I'm driving home. I hear him using it immediately, and I went, "Wow!" This is the first time I ever experienced what I would experience for years. I would call Mitch up and give him a set of songs, and he would almost sometimes play them immediately. I'd say, "You got the new Steve Miller album?" He says, "Yeah." I said, "Track seven," yadda, yadda, yadda. "Play that. Remember the Taj Mahal you played last week?" "Yeah." "Play that first. Then as the third one, take that Canned Heat one," da, da, da, da, da. "Okay." Then I'd hear stuff on the radio almost immediately after I'd say it, which was— I mean, it could have gone to my head, and I only let it happen once. I tried to impress a girl, and it turned out Mitch was on tape, and I didn't even realize it. I called, and he couldn't play the song, because I was going to impress her. From that point on, I never tried to do that.

CLINE

Let me ask you to talk about the Monterey Pop Festival a bit before we get into the radio thing here. Was it okay for you to go around recording all these people with your tape machine?

ALVY

Nobody said anything. It hadn't really been done. What we had was, being that we sat about halfway back— It was a little less than halfway back. We sat somewhere in here. [shows seating chart from the program] These were the real expensive seats. These were three-fifty. I think we got five-dollar seats, so we were right here. For some reason, all the sound that came off the stage was recorded in pretty good quality. It was just surreal. And we'd start and stop, and we had no idea Jimi Hendrix was going to be there. We didn't get to see his whole show, obviously, because you're watching it, and you just can't believe your eyes. So then every time we saw the movie [*Monterey Pop*] afterward—and now, you know, you get it on videotape and this and that—I'm not sure how much I really saw there. I mean, everyone was blown away. But not so much as when you really saw what he was doing, which means you had to either be in the front or watch it on film. So various things got taped. Okay. Friday night, June 16th, the Association, they actually started. Now, Lou Adler is quoted in that L.A. [*Los Angeles Times*] thing, that the Association started with "Along Comes Mary," and he even did it wrong. He says, "Along Came Mary." Now, I called and asked his assistant. His assistant said he was doing that sort of as a— He knew that the first song they played was "Enter the Young," because that's how they started the festival, but that he did the "Along Came Mary" because people would recognize it, and instead of "Along Comes Mary," he said "Along Came Mary" so people— Anyway, that was his excuse. The Poppers from Canada. Apparently that might have been through Bob Dylan's manager, I'm not sure. Lou Rawls, who— He did a really good set. There was a song that the Jefferson Airplane cover of his ["Tobacco Road"]. Beverly, who was a folksinger that apparently Paul Simon brought out. Johnny Rivers, who, a few years back, Ben Fong-Torres has a book called *The Hits [Just] Keep on Coming*. The Museum of Television and Radio, they had a seminar on that, where a bunch of Top Forty— Like Chuck Blore and a bunch of Top Forty disc jockeys and whatever. Then on the roof in Beverly Hills, Johnny Rivers

did an amazing set of music. This was about four or five years ago. Eric Burdon and the Animals, this is when he had his electric violinist, and he did it on acid. He did the show on acid. Simon and Garfunkel, who were amazing. They were from New York, but they were like of our generation. They were one of those people. Saturday afternoon, Canned Heat, who I'd already seen in L.A. Big Brother and the Holding Company; no one, you know, other than in the Bay Area—Janis just blew everyone away. Country Joe and the Fish, their album had already been out, I think, so we knew who they were. Al Kooper, who looked like Bob Dylan when he was walking around; he was the assistant stage manager. His book is great, by the way, *Backstage Passes and Back Stabbers*. It's great. Butterfield Blues Band, which had Elvin Bishop. Quicksilver [Messenger Service], who, you know, did— I don't think their first album [self-titled] was out. That movie *Revolution* had a sound track where Steve Miller did three tracks and Quicksilver did three tracks, like "Codine" and Steve Miller did like— He did two tracks that David Lindley covered on his first El Rayo-X album [David Lindley, El Rayo-X], "Mercury Blues" and "Your Old Lady," the Isley Brothers song. So Steve Miller, and then the Electric Flag was Mike Bloomfield, his debut. Okay. Then Saturday evening, Moby Grape, three guitars, unbelievable. Hugh Masekela, who I had seen, because he played with the Byrds on "So You Wanna Be a Rock 'n' Roll Star," okay? We knew who he— And then the Byrds came out. Hugh Masekela joined them for "Rock 'n' Roll Star." Butterfield Blues Band again Saturday evening, just because they were so fuckin' good. [Cline laughs.] They brought them back. Laura Nyro, who, some people loved her; some people hated her. Basically, it was like Beverly; it just didn't work in that atmosphere. Jefferson Airplane, okay, they not only blew everyone away, and they not only had the light show, one of the songs they were debuting that they were going to record for *After Bathing at Baxter's* was "The Ballad of You & Me & Pooneil." It was eleven minutes long, and [Paul] Kantner says, "Watch the lights," and then the light show happened. Okay, this is Saturday night, after this entire concert.

Everyone was just drained by the Airplane. I mean, this was like the perfect— You go home. You're— Everyone's starting to leave. Okay, Booker T and the MGs come out. It's great music for leaving, because people are starting to move, the cameramen who are filming for ABC-TV. The show never got aired on ABC because Coca-Cola and all the sponsors didn't want to be associated with it. It was supposed to be a special in the fall on ABC-TV. Then all of a sudden Otis comes out, and everyone stops in their tracks. He just blows everyone away. The place, everyone is up and dancing, and this is after being wiped out by this long— You know, if you went to the afternoon and the evening, I mean— Otis Redding was just unbelievable. Okay. Then the Ravi Shankar concert, which was basically a mellow concert, and B. Mitchel Reed phoned it in and credited Larry Glass and Ted Alvy, Valley College radio students. Okay. Then Sunday evening the Blues Project, who I had actually, in— I knew who the Blues Project were. Al Kooper had recently left them. Big Brother and the Holding Company came back Sunday night. This was because they wanted to be on film. Group with No Name was a guy from the Association; I forget. Buffalo Springfield with David Crosby joined in, because Neil Young wasn't there. Originally, the guy from the Daily Flash was the guitarist for a while, Doug Hastings; I don't know. The Who, a lot of people— Larry Glass, my friend, knew who they were, and we started in '67— Here in Van Nuys, at Victory [Boulevard] and Van Nuys, on the northwest corner, was the House of Sight and Sound. That was the stereo store. That was like the equivalent— That was like a mini-Wallach's Music City. They'd have the Top Forty 45s, things like that. Across the street was this little hippie record store, Records Ltd., by this guy from England, Thomas. So we would shop there, and we bought the first Who album and things like that, so Larry was in touch. So the Who, they basically freaked everyone out, because—

CLINE

Because they destroyed all their instruments. [laughs]

ALVY

Yes, they thought— Their big thing was they thought the Mamas and— Lou Adler and John Phillips thought the Mamas and the Papas wouldn't get to perform. They thought that was it. But basically they got everything going. The Grateful Dead went on, and they claim that they always do bad sets at [festivals like] Monterey. They claim they did a bad set at Woodstock. I think they said they did all right up at Glen, the one with the Band and the Allman Brothers [Band], the Watkins Glen [rock festival]. So then the Grateful Dead came on, who I had never seen before. Then Jimi Hendrix, you know, ends up burning the guitar and the whole thing, blowing people away. Scott MacKenzie did his San Francisco song, and then the Mamas and Papas, and that was basically it. We slept in the car. I was eating those Solvang butter cookies dipped with chocolate marijuana syrup, so I had a buzz. It was more like a mescaline high, because when you eat stuff, you don't know how it's going to affect you. Larry wasn't getting high, so he was like the designated driver; Larry Glass. From that point on, we started listening to music we normally wouldn't have listened to, which was great. I mean, we got turned to basically listening to roots music, which, if you listen to it when you're young, then that's basically your frame of mind instead of garbage, you know, a lot of pop music that was just basically garbage. We go back. The radio station now in the college is still the same setup, but Larry Glass and I are— We see all the music that's mailed into the station first. We would open everything. The Tuesday after Monterey Pop, I called Mitch. That Saturday after Monterey Pop—16th, 17th, 18th—the 24th of June, 1967, I brought my tape recorder. I played tapes of the Monterey Pop Festival for Bob Oakes, the program director. Jim Lightfoot, the general manager, who was really responsible for everything at KFWB at this point, in '67, he put Loman and Barkley together at KLAC and then brought them over. He hired Emperor Bob Hudson. He let B. Mitchell Reed go from six to ten at night to seven to eleven at night, Monday through Saturday, bringing Dave Diamond over two weeks later, two weeks after Monterey Pop, because KBLA had just gone KBBQ country. Bill Ward turned it into a

country station. So Dave Diamond, two weeks later, he came over. He brought his *The Diamond Mine* after B. Mitchel Reed, so Mitch is on seven to eleven. Jim Lightfoot allowed us to play album cuts, as did Bob Oakes. The music director, Bob K, who I've been in touch with the last couple of years, hired me as an intern once or twice a week, where there hadn't ever been the concept of an intern. So I was seeing all the music coming into KFWB as well. I would hide certain things for B. Mitchel Reed. I knew how to sneak into the library after hours. B. Mitchel Reed, Larry Glass, and Ted Alvy, we formed almost like a conspiracy for music to get album cuts on the air. Some of the things we did— This was starting in late June of '67 until almost Thanksgiving, when Mitch left KFWB, waiting for KPPC to start up. '67, one of the things we did was I was doing a folk music show here in Van Nuys at KVFM; I think it was 94.3, the top of the Panorama Towers on Van Nuys Boulevard just south of Roscoe [Boulevard] on the west side of the street. I was doing six to nine on Sunday nights. It was called the KVFM Folk Festival. It was a pretty traditional folk show. The thing is, the guy who was doing it was working at the post office. I knew him from working at the post office. He was throwing parcels, him and this other guy. He walked into the college radio station early in fall of '67 and said, "I've got to give up the show. Is there anyone here with a third-class license that wants to do it?" I said, "Hey, I'll do it," and he knew me, so I started immediately. I've still got air checks of it. Being that I was working with B. Mitchel Reed and programming album cuts, I slowly changed it by playing folk rock. Like I would play Stephen Stills doing a Buffalo Springfield song, but then I would do someone like the Limelighters, the guy from the Limelighters. I'll think of his name [Glenn Yarbrough]. He was covering Stephen Stills' songs, so I'd play "Everybody's Wrong" by, you know— I started playing— I had gone to this CAFF concert, this C-A-F-F concert [Community Action for (Artistic) Facts and Freedom] out in Woodland Hills to raise money for the fund after the riot on Sunset Strip. Jim Dickson and the Byrds put it together. It was Peter, Paul, and Mary, Buffalo Springfield, the Byrds, and the Doors, the

only time they ever played together. So I had already been to that concert.

CLINE

This is actually where I wanted to go, actually, right now. Sorry to interrupt you. You saw all this music at the Monterey Pop Festival. I wanted to know about other live music you may have seen, before and after that, here in the area, and where the venues were, who was playing, what was going on. You mentioned Ciro's. You mentioned the Whiskey.

ALVY

Let's see. I remember seeing Love for a dollar on Victory Boulevard, probably in Reseda at what they called the Teen Center.

CLINE

Really.

ALVY

Okay. Now, that would have been maybe '66. Okay. In December of 1966, this is when I was at Valley College; my first radio class was just about over, meaning that that following January I would be able to start doing one hour a week of my own show, even though it was just on the college station. I subscribed to *Billboard*, *Cashbox*, and *Record World*. This is like December of 1966. The riots on the Sunset Strip had already taken place. KBLA was still on the air. They had what they called a Rolls Royce Concert; Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium]. They gave away a Rolls-Royce. Who gave it away? Sonny and Cher. [Cline laughs.] They came out dressed like Sonny and Cher. They gave it away. Who was on the bill? Buffalo Springfield. The very first album [self-titled] was about to come out in December. My friend Mike Robinson, his older sister, Freya, knew Cher through a girlfriend. They had the same managers as Buffalo Springfield, Green and Stone [Charles Green and Brian Stone]. She was out in Palm Desert. We were out there, you know, out just during winter break. She played me Buffalo Springfield album, and that was the one that had "Baby, Don't Scold Me." They took that song off and put "For What It's Worth," because it had become a hit single. Okay, Rolls

Royce Concert, we've got Buffalo Springfield, okay? We've got Love. He [Arthur Lee] had just recorded the second album, *Da Capo*, so he had his horn section. This is one of the first gigs they had done. The Music Machine was on.

CLINE

Oh, wow.

ALVY

The what— "Talk Talk," the Seeds were on it, who I ended up seeing in Palm Springs during spring break with Mike Robinson. We used to go to Palm Springs during spring break and just do what you do, meet at Sambo's and then get a motel room with eight guys sleeping in a motel room and all that.

CLINE

Wow. [laughs]

ALVY

So we've seen the Seeds at a disco-type place in Palm Springs. The Santa Monica Civic; who else was on that gig? Love, Music Machine, Seeds, Buffalo Springfield. Someone else. It might have been the Turtles. Yeah, the Turtles were in it. So that was one of the first things. The Hollywood Palladium had the teen shows. What did they call it, during spring break? The Teenage Fairs.

CLINE

Oh yeah.

ALVY

So the Palladium, there would be music occasionally at the Palladium. I started going to the Troubadour, but not until KPPC; not really until '70. They were having the Monday night hoots, and like Linda Ronstadt was being backed up by the band that eventually became the Eagles. The Ash Grove, I'd see like Howlin' Wolf there. I'd see Ramblin' Jack Elliott there. The Ash Grove was great. I think in '74 is when it closed down, after a fire.

CLINE

After the third fire, I think.

ALVY

The Whiskey, the first time I went to the Whiskey was with B. Mitchel Reed. I looked it up, because there's a calendar

I've got with all the shows. I think it was around October of '67; it was for Cream. It was completely sold out, the late Saturday night show at midnight. Mitch went off the air at eleven. There was a table with Robert Mitchum's son; I think it was Chris Mitchum and a bunch of people. They brought in chairs for me, Larry Glass, and B. Mitchel Reed to see Cream and his old lady, Carole, because he obviously knew Elmer Valentine, the owner, and Mario [Maglieri], who ran the door and ended up being the— So that was my first time seeing the Whiskey. Marshall amps in the Whiskey. First time I saw Eric Clapton, who I knew from, I guess, the John Mayall[']s Bluesbreakers] album and the Yardbirds and whatever, because we were into all that, you know, who did this. By knowing B. Mitchel Reed, and by first— I mentioned that I had won, in '63, I won a little phonograph and the Top Ten records through White Front. Apparently my mother used to date a guy who bought White Front, and they liquidated the White Front stores. So he got me a job at the White Front in Pacoima. Because I subscribed to Billboard, Cashbox, and Record World, I knew that eventually mono and stereo records would be kept in the same area together, because mono was going to be phased out, and stereo would also play on mono. So I took Pacoima, and I was the first record store in all of L.A. that had one section. You'd want Jack Jones; you'd only go to one place. You wouldn't have to go to a mono and a stereo section. So I ended up doing that. So I had retail experience. I had college radio experience. I had all the trade papers. I had gone to Monterey. I knew B. Mitchel Reed. I had access to the record library two or three times a week from Bob K. Some of the other places that I saw music— The Cheetah opened up at 1 Navy Street. It was like a bunch of stainless steel. It was like everything was mirrored. I saw Electric Flag there. I saw Janis Joplin there, number 1 Navy Street. The Whiskey I ended up going to a lot. Whiskey, Troubadour, Ash Grove all the time. Santa Monica Civic would have concerts. The Forum in spring of '69 was Jimi Hendrix. In 1968 there was Cream, and the following year was Blind Faith.

CLINE

Well, before we get into '69, you mentioned this concert after the Sunset Strip riots.

ALVY

The Rolls Royce Concert.

CLINE

The one with the Byrds and the Doors that you said—

ALVY

No, that was before that. That was the CAFF concert.

CLINE

The CAFF concert, right.

ALVY

C-A-F-F. That was February 22, 1967. It was Peter, Paul, and Mary, and it was the only time that the Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and Doors were all on the same bill, was to raise money for Community Action something. The Rolls Royce Concert in the Santa Monica Civic around December of '66, Stephen Stills was in San Francisco during the riots, and he wrote "For What It's Worth," even though he hadn't attended. The thing was going constantly. The Doors singing about "Meet me at the back of the blue bus," which is what the police, you know— So like all that stuff was going. I was usually the youngest person in a lot of places. Now, the weird thing at the Whiskey, okay, I turned nineteen right before the Monterey Pop Festival. B. Mitchel Reed's birthday is June 10th. Mine's June 12th. He was born— When I met him in '67, he was forty-one, so he was twenty-two years older. My parents were '24, '25, and then Mitch was born like in '26, so the same age as my parents. Okay. I'd just turned nineteen. We were going to the radio station constantly to program for Mitch, the album cuts, Larry and I. Mitch was able to get Larry hired as the phone guy. He got actually paid to answer the phones, because Mitch's old lady, Carole, had been doing it for free. This freed her up. So one day I called up the station. A lot of times we weren't let in; we'd have to hang out on the back stairs. There was a stairway to get up there. They were real finicky about who could go in and out. Even though I worked occasionally in the record library, there were times I couldn't go in and whatever. So I called once, and Larry knew it was me right away. I said, "This is

so-and-so, head of the Jimi Hendrix Fan Club in Ventura. Are you aware that there's two Top Five singles? 'Purple Haze,' 'The Wind Cries Mary.' They've just been released in America with them both on the same 45." Right away he put me through to Mitch. I gave Mitch the sell, and Mitch thought it sounded authentic. He says, "Well, Program Director Bob Oakes is right here in the room. Take the phone." So now I do it to Bob Oakes, and he really thinks I'm legit, even though I've met the guy. So the next day Mitch was given permission to play "Purple Haze" and "The Wind Cries Mary." Okay. Larry Glass went down to Lewin's Record Paradise on Hollywood Boulevard. Lewin's Record Paradise was one of the first stores to import records from England. He got the very first Jimi Hendrix album [*Are You Experienced?*], which had a few different cuts than the American one, than the American one they put on the singles, like "Hey Joe" and "Purple Haze" and "The Wind Cries Mary." They weren't on the English one. Mitch started playing the English Jimi Hendrix album, the first one, plus "The Wind Cries Mary," "Purple Haze." Three weeks later, the very first Jimi Hendrix album came out on Reprise Records in America. It was number one. I mean, it was number three on the Wallach's Music City chart the first week it came out, and Mitch was the only one playing it. That proved— Okay. One of the songs I taped at Monterey Pop was "The Ballad of You and Me and Pooneil." Mitch played that eleven-minute track on his radio shift. Okay, I'm doing the Folk Festival, KVFM. First, they cut me from six to nine to seven to nine. Then on December 4th, 1967, they canceled the show. The reason was I started playing folk rock. They had a thing where a stereo store wanted super stereo. Very few people had stereos, but if they did, they'd get an FM tuner and this and that. It was called a super stereo set of three songs. So I would take like "Screamin'" by Bloomfield with Paul Butterfield. I'd take a song by Canned Heat. I'd take a song by Jimi Hendrix. I'd take a song by, I don't know, the Blues Project, something like that. Then I would do things like an hour worth of Bob Dylan. I did a lot of anti-war sets, so I ended up getting replaced. [Cline laughs.] So I'm playing folk music, and I'm slowly moving in folk rock,

from what I'm learning from what we're playing on KFWB, and I tell Mitch, "Every week the most requested song is 'Alice's Restaurant' by Arlo Guthrie." So we finally figured out— Eighteen minutes or something. We finally figured out how to play it. We interrupted it three times with commercials, and we'd run like three commercials each time, and we were able to play it. So we were doing amazing— Plus we were playing album cuts. We were playing Butterfield. We were playing Canned Heat. We were playing Doors. We were playing Buffalo Springfield. We were playing Byrds. We were playing "Mr. Blue," the Tom Paxton song, by Clear Light, you know. All kinds of songs, plus the traditional stuff that he used to play on Top Forty. Kinks, Byrds— I mean Kinks, Yardbirds, Animals, Beatles, Stones.

1.3. TAPE NUMBER: II, Side One (April 8, 2004)

CLINE

Okay, we're doing good. I see needles wiggling. I see lights blinking. This is Alex Cline interviewing Ted Alvy. It's April 8th, 2004). This is tape number two, continuing our first session. You were talking about how you basically wound up ceasing to do your folk show [the KVFM Folk Festival].

ALVY

Right. I was playing anti-war songs. I've got air checks, but the problem was the tape I had deteriorated. I tried to loan it to the Museum of Television and Radio. I had made a cassette tape. The quality wasn't that good to begin with, but the music scoped. You know, it's just a little bits, but you can tell what the sets are. So I know— I sort of wrote down— I know why they finally got rid of me. I was playing the folk rock on the super stereo stuff, and, you know, and I was playing anti-war songs. But because of that, okay, I'm one of the few people that had not only worked at a record store, even though it was White Front in Pacoima, and was able to do that, then I had the [L.A. Valley] College radio thing. Then I had the record library at KFWB. Then Larry Glass and I were helping B. Mitchel Reed program his show, you know, finding records, finding this. I was still reading all three trades [*Billboard*, *Cashbox*, and *Record World* magazines]. I

mean, even at KFWB, they only subscribed to one; usually it was *Billboard* or *Cashbox*. Some places would do it two, but no one would do three. So all this stuff going on, and then there was this weird period where I started going down to the Magic Mushroom to watch Firesign Theater on Sunday nights. They were on from nine to midnight, so my show was six to nine, then seven to nine, so I was able to barely get there on time. Then Mitch left KFWB, because he had made a commitment to Tom Donahue. Somewhere around Halloween night at midnight of '67, Sleepy Gross went on the air, and that was Les Carter on KPPC. He was doing like late at night after his show at KBCA. So after doing that for a while, Saul Levine, who still owns K-Mozart and whatever, he gave Les the ultimatum. He says, "You've got to—" and Les chose KPPC, and there was this little gap here. Mitch was waiting. Everyone was waiting for basically everything to get going. January 2nd, 1968, ten years after Chuck Blore started KFWB with B. Mitchel Reed, January 2nd, 1958, the original staff went on the air.

CLINE

Right. Actually, what I'd like to do is start our next session talking specifically about KPPC and its story, its history.

ALVY

Yeah, I have some things to give you, but I can't find it. Oh, here, this is what I wanted to read into— Yes, I can give you this. [reads] Okay, the staff that Tom Donahue put together was Les Carter from KBCA, the jazz station, six a.m. to eleven a.m. Eleven a.m. to four p.m. was Ed Mitchell from KFRC. That's a Top Forty Bill Drake station like (means to say) KHJ Boss Radio; that was in San Francisco. He was a top jock there and obviously wanted to get out of Top Forty. B. Mitchel Reed, four to nine, and I was Mitch's engineer and producer. Basically every record that was played, I played, and then I would handle phone calls, who got to talk to him. It was very weird. I was in a situation where I was basically screening who got to talk to Mitch. I'd make a few mistakes both ways. Every now and then I'd let the wrong people in, and then we'd try and squelch it. Every now and then the right people didn't get through. It's just a matter of really

not knowing. Tom Donahue did nine to midnight. Now, at times he was either in San Francisco or L.A. When he wasn't on the air in one city, he'd send the three-hour tape to the other sometimes. Occasionally Steve Segal [a.k.a. "the Obscene Steven Clean"] would sit in for him. Apparently, Zach Zenor, who was like my mentor and a production wizard, was working for Bill Graham's— Working for the [San Francisco] Mime Troupe doing sound engineering sometimes. Bill Graham was promoting. He drove down here because there was no jobs at KMPX, which started in April of '67 up at Green Street in the North Beach area of San Francisco, real hipster place, not too far from City Lights Books, I guess. So Zach couldn't get a gig there. He heard Tom was starting a station down here. Rumor has it that he picked up Steve Segal hitchhiking, and Steve ended up stealing Zach's gig and working with Tom Donahue. I show up, and Steve Segal, who had listened to B. Mitchel Reed in '63 to '65 in New York and was a big fan of his, was real jealous of me, because Mitch and I and Larry [Glass], I mean, we were real tight. I mean, it was obvious. Then Don Hall was midnight to six. Don Hall was great. At one point, [Michelangelo] Antonioni called up Don Hall on the phone and hired him to do the music for *Zabriskie Point*. So Don hired Pink Floyd; hired Jerry Garcia; did the Kaleidoscope tracks and the whole thing. So this is basically the airstaff.

CLINE

I want to talk in detail about this in the next session rather than get into this.

ALVY

Right, and then also the Firesign Theater. July 24th of '66 was the first *Radio Free Oz* broadcast from KPFK. Firesign Theater's first performance in the "Oz Film Festival," a three-hour improvisation on *Radio Free Oz* was November 17th of '66. Then the first broadcast of a four-hour documentary was followed by the first Love-In, organized by *Radio Free Oz*, March 26th of '67. That's when *Radio Free Oz* moved to KRLA. It was nine to midnight; AM radio. So all of a sudden, they were on mainstream radio in a lot of ways.

CLINE

Right. Yeah, fantastic.

ALVY

Okay, now, let me talk a little bit about the strike, okay?

CLINE

Actually, I'm going to have to call it soon, so I don't want to get into anything that's going to get really long and detailed. I'd like to save that for the next session.

ALVY

Okay, I was just going to just read this.

CLINE

Oh, okay, you can read that.

ALVY

This will just take a couple of minutes.

CLINE

You can read it into it, okay.

ALVY

Okay, this was during the strike. This is what we put out. [reads] "A.A.F.I.F.M.W.W. Amalgamated American Federation of International FM Workers of the World, Limited." Now, if you know Tom Donahue, that just probably came out of his— It rolled off his tongue probably just like that, and then that was it. [reads] "Pasadena Local No. 1, Hotel Green, Suite 400, phone number 449-0580." The Green Hotel [Hotel Green] also, either on the same floor as us, where we had the strike headquarters, or near it, was the Pasadena Playhouse students. So there were a lot of actors. So it was a very interesting place at the time. [reads] "March 20th, 1968. The tribe of people that brought the new music to San Francisco on KMPX and to Los Angeles on KPPC have gone on strike against the continuing harassment by the management and management attempts to prevent the artistic and personal freedoms that have, in themselves, made these stations a unique and beautiful experience. When these stations were teetering on the brink of collapse, as in the case of KMPX, or were starting from scratch, as with KPPC, management was content to have long-haired, bearded, or barefoot employees create the success these stations enjoy today. "Now management has seen fit to remove and replace some of the people who created the

concept of KMPX and KPPC. Management has attempted to deceive employees and create office conspiracies of such bizarre nature that they constitute impossible working conditions. Management has bled both operations financially to such an extent that checks bounced week after week, while most of the salaries are far below the average in the industry; in some cases, below the level of decent subsistence. "Management has lied about and misrepresented the goals of the striking employees in order to induce people to work as scabs. As a result of the foregoing, two executives who are most instrumental in the programming and financial success of both KMPX and KPPC, Tom Donahue and Milan Melvin, were forced to resign their positions in order to preserve their personal integrity and the collective integrity of both stations. They have joined us in our strike. "Since the strike began at three a.m., March 18th, at no time has Leon Crosby, owner, made any attempt to meet the striking employees, nor has his representative, Ron Hunt, made any offer to settle any of the points in question. We love these stations, not as a collection of chairs, desks, tubes, and turntables, but as a living idea of a loving group of people. We love our work and wish only to be allowed to do it as we have in the past. For the present, KMPX and KPPC are on the air. The idea is on the street. "In the meantime, we wish to express our extreme gratitude for the support we have received from our listeners, our advertisers. To our friend and associate, Ralph J. Gleason, to the members of the press, radio and TV, and particularly the people who make the music, that we hope we will soon be able to broadcast again. The striking employees of KMPX and KPPC, A.A.F.I.F.M.W.W., North Beach Local No. 1 and Pasadena Local No. 1."

CLINE

Wow. Excellent. So that sets the stage. We'll want to get all the details. We'll want to talk just about KPPC.

ALVY

Yes, there's a lot stuff I can tell you.

CLINE

Yes, we're going to get into that next time. Before we sign off today, I just wanted to ask you, on a personal note— You mentioned you went to Monterey Pop. You saw all these local bands, bands from England, bands from San Francisco. This is all amazingly classic material now. This is history, and this is great music. For example, you mentioned this concert that Buffalo Springfield, the Byrds, the Doors, all together.

ALVY

Right.

CLINE

This is local music history here. Just subjectively, had you been formulating opinions as to bands that you particularly liked, bands that you thought weren't happening? You saw Love; you saw the Seeds; some of these bands that have been forgotten. How did the music strike you at that point, at that early age, and were there things that really stood out that you haven't mentioned already? Obviously, you've mentioned the people at Monterey Pop who blew everybody away, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix. You even mentioned Mike Bloomfield, Otis Redding, all those things. But what about some of these local bands in particular?

ALVY

Well, very important to me was September 3rd, 1965, Bob Dylan. I mean, we had all heard about—

CLINE

This is the Hollywood Bowl.

ALVY

Yes, at the Hollywood Bowl. We had all heard about the folk rock thing, and there were all kinds of stories about people booing him and this and that. Even at the concert, people were calling him traitor. But he came out—in fact, I've even got a tape of this—he came out and did a really nice acoustic set. I mean, this is Bob Dylan. In '64, I guess, he had played Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium]. Now he's not only playing at the Hollywood Bowl; I mean, we've hung on almost every word he says. Then he comes out afterwards electric and just, I mean— There's a line in "Tombstone Blues," "The sun's not yellow, it's chicken." I turned around, and I saw the sun, and to me it was a psychedelic experience. I was

completely drug-free and alcohol-free, and just high on the music. Later I realized it was probably the spotlight I saw, from the very back of the Hollywood Bowl, you know, way back, going down. But hearing Dylan was a real psychedelic experience. It was one of my first real transcendental experiences, because of being— You know, following his every word, looking at the album covers, listening to the records, being at a college radio station and actually be able to play them on— This was two years later, but *Bringin' It All Back Home*, 1965; *Highway 61 Revisited*, 1965; those two albums. The two [Paul] Butterfield albums, *Paul Butterfield Blues Band* and *Paul Butterfield Blues Band East-West*, 1965. The Byrds started playing Dylan and all that. So all these things are happening. You'd drive around; the big thing, you'd hear people driving around in their car with tambourines. The Sunset Strip, people were cruising almost all the time. It got to where it was almost every night, where Van Nuys Boulevard, that happened, too, but mainly it was like Wednesday night and like Friday and Saturday and whatever. There was the cruising on Whittier Boulevard, you know, so there's the East L.A. trip. There's Hollywood Boulevard, then, there started cruising. But the Sunset Strip, cruising on the Sunset Strip. The Whiskey [A Go Go] was there. Diagonally across was a record store. I forget the name now. Les Carter was part of the Groove Company. He had a record store he was part of that's now where the Virgin Megastore is, Crescent Heights [Boulevard] and Sunset [Boulevard]. That's where— During the Sunset Strip riots, that's where the Pandora's Box was there.

CLINE

Right. That's what I was going to say. Right, Pandora's Box.

ALVY

In Fairfax, further down, Canter's twenty-four-hour—
Canter's Deli, twenty-four hours.

CLINE

Right. It's still there.

ALVY

In fact, there's that little bar next to it, the Kibbutz Room is where the Wallflowers started, Jakob Dylan. They started

there. But, you know, everyone went to Canter's and there, whenever. Then on the Strip, a twenty-four-hour place was Ben Frank's [now Mel's Drive-In]. Now it's something else, but it's now the other place that there was also one here on Ventura. I forget what it's called. But Ben Frank's was twenty-four hours. There used to be Zucky's Deli on Wilshire [Boulevard] near Fourth [Street] or Fifth [Street] that used to be twenty-four hours, when I lived in Santa Monica Canyon. We— I'm saying "we" as Larry Glass and I and, like I said, B. Mitchel Reed. We had this conspiracy—that's why, you know—to try and get good music on the air. We would lie, cheat, or steal, literally. I lied. I would sneak into the record library and get stuff out. Derek Taylor brought the very first album by Procol Harum [*Procol Harum*] and gave it to Mitch. And Mitch, we put it under the door in the record library, so Bob K could know that it was there, and he would log it in, and then we'd put it in. We had a couple of crates of album cuts. On the way out, Derek Taylor said, "How was it?" He says, "Oh, well, we didn't get to listen to it yet. We're going to." He says, "No, no, no. Inside." He says, "Well, what do you mean?" He says, "There was a reefer inside." So I had to sneak into the record library, which I knew how to do, and get the reefer out of the record album. [Cline laughs.] So I knew how to sneak in there, and like the very first Canned Heat single, "Rollin' and Tumblin'" backed by "Bullfrog Blues," and the Captain Beefheart [and his Magic Band], "Yellow Brick Road" backed by "Abba Zaba," I would sneak those out, things that weren't on the top— We'd take the Top Forty and cut off maybe thirty songs, and we'd have bunch of singles that weren't on the Top Forty, and then the album cuts and things. So we were getting exposed to music. Rick Nance took me to Bonesville to see Don Ellis's orchestra, which was amazing. This incredible jazz trumpet player, that has roots going way back to jazz, had a bunch of young guys just kicking ass. I've got that one album of his, the— Oh, what's it called? The— You know; where he used psychedelic trumpet or whatever. *Electric Bath*. We used to play that.

CLINE

Electric Bath, yes.

ALVY

Yeah, I've got that on CD. It doesn't sound the same now, but— And then I got into Miles [Davis]. I got to see Charles Lloyd, the original quartet at the Shelly's Manne-Hole, it used to be, where I saw [Rahsaan] Roland Kirk twice. The second time, he was in this real radical political movement. The first time, he was just kick-ass music. Then when I was doing the folk show, I wanted to get tickets to give away for the Judy Collins concert, so Bob K, the music director, the music librarian at KFWB, hooked me up with five copies of *In My Life* by Judy Collins to give away. I called who ended up being Steve Wolf. One of his very first concerts at the Santa Monica Civic was Judy Collins. He says, "Sure, I'll give you four tickets. Give two away on your show. You come with your girlfriend." I said, "Fine." I told him who I was and this and that. He said, "You know, I'd really love to meet B. Mitchel Reed." He was also Jewish, so there was— There was always this thing about Jewish. It was great to be Jewish, because all these comedians that were Jewish, and the show business thing and all that. I didn't really notice much anti-Semitism, because here in the [San Fernando] Valley, you know, there were Jews— You know, we were all over the place, and it wasn't big— You know, there were all types, so there was no— But, let's see. Where was I?

CLINE

You mentioned Bob Dylan as really standing out as memorable.

ALVY

Yeah, that particular concert. Well, what was I getting around to? Canned Heat— Oh, yes, the things that we were playing on the air. Then Mitch would— I would go out to various concerts. Sometimes I would go out on a Saturday to a concert, and Larry would be there working the switchboard and whatever. Twice Larry had contests where he went over all the things, Top Fifty [Rolling] Stones songs, the Top Fifty rock and roll songs. I've still got the list, where people voted. Then we played them down, and it was like countdown, which was pretty— You know, stuff that had never been done before. So we really got into music, and there were standout

concerts all the time. Donovan at the Hollywood Bowl, man, Donovan was like a god. You know, he was so mellow. His songs were great. There was a rumor— I was on the back steps at KFWB, one of the times I couldn't get in, and there was a lady talking about how Donovan was going to show up at the Maharishi [Mahesh Yogi] at the Santa Monica Civic. So I talked to Mitch. I said, "Do you want the Maharishi on your radio show?" He says, "Sure, go ahead." So at the end of the whole thing— First of all, during his presentation, I noticed the most beautiful hippie chick in the world, just walking around, and I knew she was looking for Donovan. When the thing was over, everyone was just stunned. I walked up on the stage and walked right backstage, and then the guy who was, you know— The guy freaked out. I said, "Hi, Ted Alvy, producer for B. Mitchel Reed, KFWB. Would the Maharishi like to be on the radio?" He says, "I don't think we can work it out. If we can—." I gave him the information. So I was acting like B. Mitchel Reed's producer. All I'd have to do is say that. [snaps fingers] I knew the thing from being in high school and being able to walk around the halls with a pass and everything. I knew, and I wasn't a jive artist. People knew. I would always be able to back stuff up. I could give them the phone number. I said, "Here, call." Larry would put him through to Mitch right away, and Mitch would verify it. So I would get to go to various concerts at times, and then Janis Joplin at the Hollywood Bowl was amazing. Jimi Hendrix at the Hollywood Bowl. He had Fat Mattress opening and Soft Machine, I think.

CLINE

Right.

ALVY

The most amazing concert was at the Shrine Auditorium, February of '68, when Hendrix headlined, and Mike Bloomfield wanted to get on it, so it was Electric Flag. Blue Cheer opened. Mitch Reed, for some reason, didn't get us on the right list, so Jimi Hendrix recognized Larry Glass, who had blond hair, from KFWB and let the two of us in. He says, "Hey, there's no tickets. You'll have to go into the pit." So it was just the two of us in the orchestra pit. First, it was Blue

Cheer. Then Mike Bloomfield, the second time we had seen him, because of Monterey, was just— Bloomfield was just unbelievable, I mean— And then Hendrix came out, and the first thing he said was, “We’re going to take time to tune up, because we respect your ears,” which is a put-down of Blue Cheer. [Cline laughs.] Then Hendrix killed, and it’s just Larry Glass and I in the orchestra pit, where, as a school kid, we’d taken school buses, right; seen *Hansel and Gretel* at the Shrine Auditorium. And here I am in the orchestra pit, looking up at the most amazing— One of the most amazing— You know, Electric Flag followed by Jimi Hendrix. I mean, in ’68 when the [Jimi Hendrix] Experience was just— And Mike was so happy. I think he ended up— I think he told them he’d work for free or something like that. Now, that was part of the Pinnacle Concerts, but the main ones were next door at the Shrine Exposition Hall, John Van Hamersveld and all those people, and they were like the Bill Grahams. There would be two or three headline acts, and they wouldn’t always mesh. Like Bill Graham would always have someone like Miles Davis or Charles Lloyd on with two rock bands, and so the Pinnacle Concerts were great. So I introduced Steve Wolf to B. Mitchel Reed, and one of the first things he wanted to do was Charles Lloyd and Richie Havens at the Santa Monica Civic. Then he did the Grateful Dead with “Different Drum” with Linda Ronstadt and the Stone Poneys) opening. He ended up doing Concert Associates, and then him and Rismiller did the Wolf and Rismiller Concerts. So anytime I wanted to, I could basically get tickets, and because I knew B. Mitchel Reed, Mitch would get tickets for everything. He was an A-list guy. So I usually had first dibs on all these tickets, so it was— You know, in ’68 I turned twenty, when we started programming KMET in June of ’68, I could get really good seats to almost anything. I mean, it was unbelievable. I could get into the Whiskey. I could get into the— At the Troubadour, sometimes we’d have a tab. The record companies would give us a tab. But at nineteen, for some reason, at the Whiskey I ordered a Shirley Temple with a double rum, and I’m nineteen. For some reason, I’d order that all the time, and the waitresses would let me drink

it. Mario let us in the door— Because I wasn't a sloppy drunk, and I'd always use up the alcohol by the time I left. I wasn't drunk, ever. So that was what I would do at the Whiskey, but I wasn't really heavy into alcohol, which was good for me. And I didn't ever really get into cocaine, which is also good.

CLINE

Very good. Okay, well, I want to pick it up next time with KPPC, more of these great concert experiences.

ALVY

Right, and I'll have all this—

CLINE

We've sort of come full circle, from wandering the halls with a hall pass to getting backstage and talking to Jimi Hendrix, so—

ALVY

Right.

CLINE

We'll continue. Thank you very much. [End of April 8, 2004) interview]

1.4. TAPE NUMBER: III, Side One (April 16, 2004)

CLINE

Today is April 16th, 2004). This is tape number three of the interview with Ted Alvy. I'm Alex Cline. This is our second session here at Ted's home in Van Nuys. Good morning once again, and thanks for doing this.

ALVY

Good morning.

CLINE

You wanted to read something.

ALVY

Yes. The last time we were here that was a full moon, and it's two weeks from a full moon this Monday. It's a Friday now, so just so far as energy and stuff. In fact, there was a whole book about what was the first rock and roll record, and they say, well, 1951 "Rocket 88," which is really Ike Turner, even though the singer Jackie Brenston got credit. What I like to do is, this is 2004), I'm calling it fifty years of rock

and roll, and this is how I'm figuring it. 1954, what happened? Okay. "Shake Rattle, and Roll" by Big Joe Turner recorded February 15th, 1954, written by Charles E. Calhoun. Now that, to me, can be the beginning of rock and roll, because then it was covered by Bill Haley and the Comets, who had a hit, which you can say, well, rock and roll started with "Rock Around the Clock." Well, actually, as a record it did not become a hit until *Blackboard Jungle* came out. Once the movie came out and "Rock Around the Clock" was in it, it became a big hit, and that really showed what movies could do. Then it was followed by all these Elvis Presley movies. My favorite was *King Creole*, the first one I saw at the Balboa Theatre in Balboa, California. Anyway, 1954, we got "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" by Big Joe Turner. We have the invention of the Fender Stratocaster electric guitar, which eventually is played by John Lennon, George Harrison, Pete Townshend, Jimi Hendrix. Also, 1954, the Regency TR1 transistor radio, a battery-operated AM radio, meaning you could go anywhere with an earphone plugged in your head, and we're talking 1954. So that's how I'm viewing everything as rock and roll being fifty years old right now.

CLINE

That's significant, and I hadn't been aware of a lot of that until this moment. I have some follow-up questions for you from our last session. One thing, when we were talking about the influence and various influences on you, things that got you into radio, things that got you into music, it occurs to me when you were talking about your years in high school, you seemed to have kind of a natural entertainer side to you, going around to these classrooms with the overcoat and the shades and running for this office and the various techniques you employed. It seems like there was a bit of a show business influence there. We didn't talk about television and things on TV that would have influenced you since you're coming from a generation of kids who were probably more than any before that very influenced by the somewhat earlier days of television, which, of course, we all now probably take for granted as being something that's incredibly pervasive as far as influences on the youth and on culture. What kind of

an influence did TV have on you, in terms of your interest in media and your approach to what you wound up doing, which eventually was working in radio?

ALVY

I'm going to give you from my point of view. Now, a lot of my writings I call true fiction, because a lot of times the point of view, if four of us went to a concert, we might have all different views of what went on depending on what was happening in our lives, sort of like the *Rashomon*, the [Akira] Kurosawa film, the view of the rape as from four different individuals, how it would look different. Television, 1948, when I was born, okay, Babe Ruth ends up dying. All right. That's the end of an era. My father was at the last baseball game in Yankee stadium played by Lou Gehrig. In fact, he still has the ticket stub. He was a big Lou Gehrig fan because my dad was also a left-handed first baseman. So he's got the stub, and then the next day Lou Gehrig went on the road, and he went and handed the umpire the starting lineup, and he wasn't in it for the first time, Lou Gehrig. So Babe Ruth was gone in 1948, so that's the end of an era. For the first time, network television begins in 1948. There's actually a network schedule that begins in the fall, and you can see how it grows and grows and grows from almost nothing. So in a lot of ways, 1948— They claim the baby boom generation is 1946 to 1964, you just reverse digits '64 and '46. Our generation was the first to grow up, in my view, with television and the fact that you can be destroyed by an atomic bomb. Our entire generation, 1946, the baby boomers, through '64, you can say, the way they look at it, there was always the shadow that we could always be blown up by—

CLINE

Absolutely. I remember that as well.

ALVY

So that definitely affected the generation. The fact that it's TV, everyone remembers watching black and white TV. Let me just stress some of the things that influenced me. Up the block, a rich kid had a bigger TV, a console TV, the first color TV on the block, and *Peter Pan* with Mary Martin. I don't

know if it was the first broadcast or the rebroadcast, because they ended up rebroadcasting it. It was one of the highlights of one of the first real color productions that I remember seeing. Everyone remembers February of '64 when the Beatles came on [the] *Ed Sullivan* [Show]. That was one of the first global villages or combined experiences of our generation. A lot of people don't know Marshall McLuhan and his whole global village philosophy of media, and the media is the message as opposed to, or sometimes parodied as, a massage, or the media, where television is real hot. He envisioned, as we were growing up in the sixties, what's happening now, this whole global village. It was a shame it happened during the [William J.] Clinton impeachment, but when there were at least three full-time twenty-four-hour news stations, all of a sudden the global village had been reached. So everyone remembers that. I remember *I Led Three Lives*, I mentioned that, where I learned about the FBI and basically it's one of those things like *The Art of War* where he says keep your friends close, keep your enemies closer. By watching *I Led Three Lives* where the guy was a citizen, he was a member of the Communist Party, and he was an FBI counterspy, so I remember that. I could just go through this book here, *The Complete Directory To Prime Time Network And Cable TV Shows* by Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh. I really loved the TV show *Topper*.

CLINE

All of this has real significance for you.

ALVY

The very first movie was with— Only the first *Topper* movie had— Let's see. I've got it right here. [refers to materials sitting next to him] It's from the book by Thorne Smith, but the very first movie had Cary Grant in it. But it was first telecast, this is *Topper*, October 9th of '53, and the last telecast was October 14th of 1956. Now, it ran on CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System]. It was a half-hour TV show. *Cosmo Topper*. *CosmoTopper*. I took the name *Cosmos Topper*. I added on, you know, made it more like hippie-dippie or whatever. [Reads] "Leo G. Carroll, Marion Kirby, and George Kirby, the ghosts, Ann Jeffries,

Robert Sterling, based on the characters originally created by Thorne Smith from his novel *Topper*, Ann Jeffries as Marion Kirby, the ghostess with the mostest, Robert Sterling as George Kirby, that most sporting spirit, and Leo G. Carroll, host to said ghosts, as *Topper*." In 1953, there was an episode with the astrologer Madame Kaza, who is played by Dorothy Adams, and Marion says, "No, no. She's talking about the stars, the universe, the cosmos." And George says, "I didn't know there were any other Cosmos besides Topper." So like that was a big— Well, anyway, this particular program was unique in the fact that in October 1955 through March of '56, it ran. These two seasons from CBS ran on ABC [American Broadcasting System], and then following that the two seasons that originally were filmed for CBS ran on NBC [National Broadcasting System]. So I ended up watching it. I'm sure I watched it through the years; I don't know exactly when or where. In 1958 when I got a transistor radio so I was able to listen to a station, Chuck Blore created "color radio" [on radio station KFWB] here. I first heard it at age nine, and it debuted January 2nd of 1958. I didn't turn ten until June of '58. B. Mitchel Reed became my favorite DJ, and I met him at the Monterey Pop Festival and then ended up becoming a close friend and worked as a producer for him for about nine years after that till I moved up north to Seattle. Let me just say a quick thing about B. Mitchel Reed, read this in here. [Reads] "Mitch was born Burton Mitchel Goldberg in Brooklyn on June 10th, 1926." My birthday's June 12th, so we're both Jewish Geminis. "And entered radio following a decision at the University of Illinois to forego a career teaching political science for the boogie and glamour of broadcasting. In 1956 he landed the all-night "Birdland" jazz show at WOR, New York. In 1957, Mitch moved his "boy on the couch" to KFWB Los Angeles, and there became one of the original "seven swingin' gentlemen" at the launch of Top Forty color radio in 1958. "The fastest tongue in the West" hosted a number-one-rated six to nine p.m. high-energy show using horns, bells, and buzzers, until February 7th, 1963, when he was wooed back to his hometown," which is actually Brooklyn, "as one of the good guys at

WMCA New York." I'm not talking too fast. You're listening too slow. "Again rated number one, your leader spent time in London developing contacts with Brian Epstein, Derek Taylor, and the Beatles, which led to exclusive interviews and advance record pressings that helped break the Beatles in New York." This was even though "Murray the K" was known as the fifth Beatle, and one of the reasons Mitch went back to New York was to beat out "Murray the K" in the ratings, because he felt he had dissed his idol and mentor Alan Freed. If you go from Burton Mitchel Goldberg to B. Mitchel Reed, you can see that Reed is just Freed without the "F," so you can see. So, B. Mitchel Reed is in New York. "After his final WMCA show on March 20th, 1965, he was cheered by thousands at the airport, a scene that was repeated when he landed in L.A. for his return to KFWB with 'The Wide, Wide, Weird World of BMR,' where he became a voice for the counterculture. Mitch recognized a music explosion was beginning, and he turned the evening hours into album-oriented rock [AOR] programming after he met with Tom Donahue at the June 1967 Monterey Pop Festival and discovered their common frustration with radio music restrictions." Now, Donahue had been a Top Forty jock in San Francisco at KYA and just had it; just dropped out. He had come from Philadelphia with his partner, Bobby Mitchell. "Donahue was PD [program director] of pioneer underground rock station KMPX FM San Francisco." That was in North Beach area of San Francisco, not too far from City Lights Books. "And was looking for an L.A. outlet. Mitch found KPPC FM in a basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church." Now, if you look at the biography from Wolfman Jack, he was also looking and trying to get KPPC. It was owned by the Pasadena Presbyterian Church. It was located in their basement. So he got beat out by Tom Donahue's money people, and B. Mitchel Reed had found that it was an available frequency located in the basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church. "After the combined KMPX San Francisco, KPPC Pasadena strike ended in June of 1968, Reed and Donahue each supplied KMET FM with four hours of taped album rock, while BMR programmed the rest of KMET,

one of the first twenty-four-hour automated music stations. 'The Beamer,' as B. Mitchel Reed became known, gained validity for underground radio from the ad agencies with his afternoon drive show that finally went live in summer of 1969." "Mitch underwent successful coronary bypass surgery in 1978, left KMET for KLOS FM," which he hated because they were formatted. "Mitch kept his mind open and his spirit free until his death from a lingering heart condition at age fifty-six on March 16th, 1983." So he was like only fifty-six at the time.

CLINE

Any more about TV before we move—

ALVY

B. Mitchel Reed was very influential in broadcasting in the entire United States and a little bit in England. People knew who he was because he had been number one in Los Angeles and then number one in New York and then he came back here, started playing album cuts on AM radio after the Monterey Pop Festival. That's when Larry Glass and I started as his producers.

CLINE

The conspiracy team.

ALVY

Yeah. Now, a lot of the things I talk about, Larry liked to be on the sideline. He decided not to go on the air. Tom Donahue offered him air shifts at KPPC in the early days, early '68. Tom then, after the strike, May 21st, 1968, which was Tom's birthday, he took the entire KMPX staff over to KSAN. So here we were stuck with a Metromedia station [KMET] that had invested a quarter-million dollars in automated equipment, and they wouldn't let anyone go live. So Mitch ended up, after Tom started shipping his show down, and then they tried a bunch of people, they tried Al "Jazzbo" Collins and a bunch of other people, they decided to have Mitch do everything, just be the voice on the air twenty-four hours a day, and then we could just have music. So I ended up programming the music. I was supposed to go back to WBCN in Boston with Steve [Steven] Segal [also known as the "Obscene Steven Clean"], and each of us were

going to do an air shift for a year and then come back and then join Mitch, and then the three of us were going to go live a year after, which would have been summer of '69. I stayed and helped Mitch out and went to UCLA film school, transferred there from L.A. Valley College, and then also worked at Les Carter's Music Revolution, all beginning in like September of '68. Steve came back after Woodstock and before Altamont and became a live disc jockey at KMET, along with B. Mitchel Reed, and along with "Uncle T," Tom Gamache, who had done underground radio in a college station in New England and then had worked a little at the basement at KPPC. They didn't move out of the basement at KPPC in the Pasadena Presbyterian Church until April 1st of 1970. They were installed near Cal[ifornia Institute of] Tech[nology] studios at 99 South Chester [Avenue] with Les Carter as the new program director, which Steve Segal was involved in and Steve ended up being the evening jock. He eventually went on, I think, seven to eleven. Out from 'BCN, he brought Joe [Joseph] Rogers out from 'BCN, who had been the first DJ to start 'BCN back on Friday, March 15th, 1968, which was the last Friday before we went on strike and walked the picket line beginning at three a.m., March 18th, 1968. So Joe Rogers came out, and he was on the air at WBCN in Boston as "Mississippi Harold Wilson," the prime minister of Britain. He came out here and became "Mississippi Brian Wilson," obviously, and eventually he dropped that and became "Mississippi Fats." His lady who came out was Deirdre O'Donoghue, and she ended up starting the KPPC switchboard where you could call in with any problem, whether it was VD [venereal disease] or pregnancy or suicide or anything, and she organized that. After we were all fired in October 24th of 1971, she moved it over to KMET. She was also responsible for distributing all the money that we raised for benefits that we ran to raise money for free clinics, and I'll go into that briefly, too. In fact, let me do that right now, because she never got credit for that. KPPC was a very hot underground station, and we loved Les Carter, all of us. We loved old movies and old TV shows and all that, and occasionally stuff— Like Les would

tape stuff off of TV shows and use it on his show. We'd have these old records, and I had one of all these W.C. Fields routines. So the Laemmle Theaters, Bob [Robert] Laemmle, and I believe it was Los Feliz [Theatre] that he was running in Hollywood, was going to do a week of W.C. Fields shorts, a whole program, I don't know, a couple hours of five of his shorts or something, that were in pristine condition and had never been restored ever. But he wasn't sure if it was going to work. So what we did was we ran a bunch of commercials using this album I had of W.C. Fields quotes. The commercials were so funny that we used to get requests for the commercials, and this wasn't just this particular one. KPPC would always get requests, "Please play that." We'd say, "We can't. It's a commercial," and we'd look ahead at the log and tell them what hour we'd be playing it. What we decided was, I said, "Can we have use of one of your theaters to run benefits?" Because I hooked up with this guy Alan Douglas, who's working for John Lennon and owns the rights to this film by [Alejandro] Jodorowski called *El Topo*. I went to a screening and it blew my mind, and two things happened. I asked them if we could show it as a benefit to raise money for the free clinics, and they said yes. And I used one of those phony credit cards we used to use and make a long-distance phone call to Eureka, talked to my former roommates from UCLA who were now living in Eureka going to Humboldt State [University], starting a little record store, and I asked them, "Are there any radio stations for sale?" They said, "Yeah, there's an FM here for ten thousand dollars," which I ended up having backers and we bought it and we got it on the air in January of '72. Well, anyway, the benefit concert worked out because what happened was Laemmle gave me like a dollar amount for running the commercials, and it was in trade. It was all done in trade. It was all done over the phone or on a handshake. The way it worked out, he gave me the Regent Theatre in downtown Westwood. The Regent Theatre. We ran *El Topo* Friday night. It was a press screening with— I still have the list of the people that attended. It was amazing the people that attended that, because the word of mouth on this film was

amazing. It was one of these spiritual westerns that was ultra violent. Then the next night, all the money that was raised, every dollar went into a bank account, and Deirdre O'Donoghue split it between various free clinics that needed it. I've still got the letters. Our trust was— I mean, all this cash was available and she was like trusted by everyone, even the evil general manager Doug [Douglas A. Cox] Cox, who ended up firing us all on October 24th, 1971, at eleven-thirty p.m. in the studios. So that's like Deirdre O'Donoghue. I wanted to give her a lot of credit. Also, Steven Segal brought out a lady named Delana who was an artist and she did a couple of the ads that ran in the *Free Press*. I've got the ads in the other room there. I forgot to bring them in to show you. Let's go through your questions first, because I know I'm—

CLINE

You mentioned when you were talking just a little while ago, and you talked a little bit about this last time, when you were talking about B. Mitchel Reed, you just mentioned this, the Jewish aspect. You said this was something that seemed very pervasive to you, and you said you hadn't really experienced anything akin to anti-Semitism through your whole career coming up through radio and all your music connections and everything.

ALVY

Yes, nothing that I really noticed, because there was a—

CLINE

What is it about that that you think is significant?

ALVY

I mentioned I approached it different because my four grandparents spoke Spanish, because we were Sephardic. So the whole Yiddish thing, I was learning all that, but there was sort of a kinship because it was different than the religious aspect. It was just sort of the thing of being able to understand certain things.

CLINE

Cultural things?

ALVY

Yeah. I mean, the whole Civil Rights Movement, it's a shame that it's turned, but what were called Negroes or colored people and all that, which are now African Americans, there seemed to be a kinship with a lot of Jewish people because there's a whole different thing. I mean, heaven is right here on earth; you don't really look for the afterlife. Rabbis have sex and get married, so there isn't that whole thing going on. It was just real interesting to hear him on the radio, because my parents didn't really push me to be religious; it was my grandparents. I got the bar mitzvah to satisfy my grandparents, and we couldn't get the regular Saturday morning one, so the Saturday afternoon one meant I had to read a lot of the Torah, so I had to spend an extra year with a rabbi, besides Hebrew school, which means it screwed up my social life. The lady from sixth grade, who in the seventh grade I had a crush on, Linda Brahm, I never really got to take her out, because besides not having enough free time, my wallet was stolen the day I was supposed to buy tickets for the Disneyland trip that I was going to ask her to. So it affected my life that way. But like all my friends that I hung out with, Mike Robinson, my best friend, and the other two guys who actually I went through grammar school with and then they knew Mike Robinson and introduced me to him, Jerry Alpert and Rich Caplan, we happen to all be Jewish. There just happened to be a concentration in this area, Coldwater [Canyon Avenue] Elementary School, Ulysses S. Grant High School, which is a few blocks from here next to [L.A.] Valley College, and the junior high school, James Madison [Junior High School], which took a lot from Coldwater and also from Michael's elementary school, which is here near Woodman [Avenue] and the other side of Vanowen [Street]. The whole neat thing going to Canter's meant a little more if you were Jewish and stuff, and just the fact that Bob Dylan was Jewish and he had such a major, major effect on me. I mean, the lady [Lela], who introduced us, I guess I mentioned how I was introduced to her.

CLINE

Yes, right.

ALVY

I don't know what else to say.

CLINE

Another thing that I wanted to ask you about, this is kind of going back to your earlier life and when you started to really get involved in all this stuff. One of the things I think is really interesting is that now, so many years later, you have a lot more encouragement from parents when their children decide they want to start a rock band or go to concerts or, in your case, get into broadcasting that kind of music on the radio. At some point, I'm guessing, your sense of style started to change. Back then, it was considered a big deal if you grew your hair and you started wearing certain kinds of clothing. When did that whole thing start to happen for you? When did you start to adopt the look of the culture, and how did your family react to the changes they may have been seeing in you?

ALVY

Yeah, I think there was a normal conflict. What happened was they supported me in my decisions. They made an automobile available to me, which is amazing, because, basically, Monterey Pop Festival, I'd just turned nineteen and B. Mitchel Reed had just turned forty-one. A year later, the KPPC strike was over and I was starting KMET with B. Mitchel Reed and it was just basically the two of us. Larry Glass was in and out of there, and he actually got hired, and then these suits came up from Metromedia in New York or somewhere and saw him, and three days later he was fired and stuff. So everything we did was for free. We never got paid. I never got a paycheck from KMET, which was cool because it made it more pure. KPPC, the only time I really started making good money was we were paid like eleven hundred dollars, a full-time jock, and I started in January of '71 after I'd finished my UCLA classes. So I only had about six months making eleven hundred dollars, but I was saving a lot of it. I mean it was a lot of money in those days, and I didn't really have high expenses because all of my concerts, all of my records, basically— If we didn't like a record, we'd trade it in at Manny Aron's [record store on Melrose Avenue across from Fairfax High School] or something, for something we

wanted. So they kept being circulated, you know, so it wasn't like they were being wasted. And a lot of time you could get stuff even before they were released, which was, you know— And plus, sex was offered to you, and it was a whole new thing, especially at that age and stuff, how it was. But I learned a lot from B. Mitchel Reed. I mentioned how Larry Glass and I had covered the Ravi Shankar concert at Monterey Pop for him. When we got back to Valley College, we were minor celebrities because he had used our names. He was known in L.A. since 1958. He was like an institution already. So there were people that listened to his every word and he would give messages. I learned this from him, and a lot he wouldn't tell me, but he had a group of people that he was basically doing things for, and he would give messages out over the air. You'd hear him do a little bit in an aside, and it would sort of make sense, but if you knew that that little aside was going to someone in the audience that maybe he had known since the sixties, or something, you know. Then we, Larry and I, would basically control who got in contact with Mitch, which was a huge responsibility. I know I must have blown it a few times. Sometimes I was aware of it and sometimes I wasn't, and both ways. You don't know if you cut off someone it might have changed everyone's life, because maybe the guy was actually going to— Because B. Mitchel Reed came back from New York in February '65 to do WKRP in Cincinnati. It wasn't called that, but they were going to do a show about a disc jockey and he was going to be it. Then when it finally happened, the casting was almost perfect, because he was a disc jockey working for Tom Donahue in San Francisco at KMPX, Howard Hesseman. He was supposedly the one that one of the Lovin' Spoonful turned in. There was a pot bust, and two guys from the Lovin' Spoonful pointed to some guy. He turned out to be a disc jockey at KMPX. From that point on, Tom Donahue and no one at KMPX or KSAN would ever play a Lovin' Spoonful record, because they blamed two of the guys. And who knows if it really happened because now Zally [Zal Yanovsky] just passed away and the drummer, Joe Butler. [Yancy Butler, actually Joe Butler's daughter], was

on *Witchblade* and all that stuff. That's why, one of the reasons *Witchblade* had great music. They cut it after about one and a half seasons, but it was great music, really.

CLINE

But anyway, this whole style thing. For example, you're working at the [U.S.] Post Office. I don't know if that affected how you looked.

ALVY

When I started, I kept my hair real short, which worked out real good because you could be real anonymous. But my dad was a real stickler. He would cut our hair and stuff. But anyway, so I just went with the whole thing. It just wasn't worth it. After I started working at KPPC and after we walked the picket line—I've got a picture of myself before then—I just started letting my hair grow. So when I interviewed Garcia in December of '70, I looked like [Jerry] Garcia. You saw that picture.

CLINE

Yeah.

ALVY

Yeah, I've got a bigger— Have you been in my room? Have I showed you the photos?

CLINE

Yes, when we did the pre-interview.

ALVY

I'll show you, because I've got the bigger photo. So I let my hair grow, and then I was really concerned about it, because I really felt it was a responsibility. I remember— I don't know if I should tell this. Well, maybe I should get it out there because I don't really think it will hurt anybody. I'll use— Let me see. How should I do this? At KBCA, Les Carter knew a lady and probably dated her, and she was a really good lady. She wasn't a groupie. She worked, I believe, in traffic, putting together how the ads run and how the advertisers are billed. Let me just call her Valerie right now, because I don't know if I should use her name. She ended up working at KPPC, and we're talking the early days, January 2nd of 1968 until March 18th at three a.m. of 1968. This is the KPPC staff. This is the Tom Donahue from nine to midnight.

This is the B. Mitchel Reed from four to nine. This is Ed Mitchell from KFRC in San Francisco, the ex-Boss jock from eleven to four p.m.; and Les Carter in the morning with his wife, Susan Carter, who's also a vocalist, six a.m. to eleven a.m.; and the all-nighter was Don Hall, who scored *Zubriskie Point* after [Michelangelo] Antonioni called him up on the air. So this is that particular era. Give me the question again. Where were we?

CLINE

Valerie. We were talking about style.

ALVY

Okay. So she ended up doing traffic and this and that. When I was given Tom Donahue's shift from nine to midnight, after doing Mitch's show for five hours, I would be segueing his records and helping him program, covering the phones, deciding who gets to talk to him and all this, and this was from four until nine, and then Tom Donahue's show was nine to midnight. When I was doing it those final two weeks, it just so happened that Pinnacle [Concerts] booked the Cream into the Shrine Exposition Hall. When you go to a Pinnacle concert, it's like the Bill Graham Fillmore ones. Usually they'd go through everyone twice, or at least two of the acts twice, or one of the acts twice. So Cream basically did these two long sets on a Friday and Saturday, and I went with Valerie and we just had a great time. I'm feeling my oats. I'm nineteen. We cleared the basement studios completely of people because there used to be junkies in the hall at times, which was scary. I mean there was a whole group. So basically, we wanted to clean up before the strike, because no one knew this— There were very few people knew the strike was going to happen. So I'm on the air down there, and I would call up Mario [Maglieri] at the Whiskey [A Go Go] and tell him I want to come to the midnight show. I said, "I'm on the air right now and I'm plugging the concert." I'd ask him a few questions, you know. I can fill in stuff. They said, "Hey, he sat in with them? Okay. I'll put that on the air right now." "So-and-so just sat in at the Whiskey with so-and-so." Maybe David Crosby sat in with Buffalo Springfield or something like that. We did things like there was a

parking lot right across the street from the church where we'd park. It was actually church property, though. We'd have sex in the front seat of the car. For a nineteen-year-old after seeing Cream and being a disc jockey, who for almost a year now I'd been known as B. Mitchel Reed's producer, which meant I got all the A-list tickets, I would decide who talked to Mitch and vice versa and things like that, and Mitch would send me out on errands and things, who to talk to, and this and that, so I was becoming very, in some ways, powerful, but I learned from Mitchel about fame. I really wanted to avoid fame. That's why when I got my full-time radio show I'd already changed my name to Cosmos Topper, which was then Cosmos, because I didn't want to become famous, because I saw what it did to B. Mitchel Reed and I saw that people were after him from the sixties, still. I mean there were people that he knew that he had to be polite to and stuff, and people had done him favors when he didn't ask them to do him favors, so they felt they were— So, so many things would happen. They'd loan him these tapes, and then I'd have to be careful of what— He was a packrat, but he really didn't go through all his stuff. He didn't know what he had and stuff like that. He'd save air checks and things. This 1997 release of *Golden Age of Underground Radio, B. Mitchel Reed, KMET, 1968-71*, a lot of those tapes were put together from tapes that he had of air checks and things that he didn't even know what was on them and passed away before he ever discovered them. I have a lot of things that I don't know what I have, but in a lot of ways I was a packrat, and I've got so much information that I'd really like to get out there. But just in case, basically there's two things going on. "60s L.A. Underground Radio: I Was a Teenage Disc Jockey" is basically what my website has been doing and what I have been doing since 1995, September '95, less than a month after Jerry Garcia died, because the Grateful Dead community was one of the first communities to really use the Internet. The community was called the Well, and a lot of it was a spinoff of the Whole Earth Catalog and all this stuff, and their whole existence. Now, I wanted to do a quick segue here. Let me give you an example of what went on. I

was living with B. Mitchel Reed out in Malibu. When I came back from Eureka in June of '73, he was living in the Colony, Malibu Colony, renting a house next to Sally Kellerman, I believe. We ended up moving to another house across the street from the ocean temporarily, and then we ended up on this one right near the entrance to the Colony that was amazing, right on the ocean. I lived in the pool house. There was no pool, but there was also no bathroom there, but I was right on the ocean. Stuff like that. This is where in '73 B. Mitchel Reed had a third birthday party for his son David [Reed], and this was a few months before the birth of his second son, Julian [Reed], and this is by his second marriage to Carole Solari Reed. I think I told you AJ the DJ was A.J. Solari [Carole's brother], and he had Kris Kristofferson on his show. Did I tell you?

CLINE

No.

ALVY

He was "AJ the DJ," and once at KPPC he was doing a Sunday afternoon show. He was really into country music. He even played guitar. Kris Kristofferson was on, when his first album came out, which was a killer album.

CLINE

This is *The Silver-Tongued Devil and I*?

ALVY

This had all the greats, his first.

CLINE

Yeah, "Me & Bobby Magee."

ALVY

So he had a guy singing with him, and I was out there, and I could hear that you couldn't hear the other guy, so in the middle of the interview I walked in and moved the mic. Kris Kristofferson said, "Oh, fuck," right over the air. This is Sunday afternoon. We'd just heard the church service, which goes off at noon. And once the disc jockey on Sunday morning ran Lenny Bruce, not realizing that the church audience was still listening, so we got a lot of complaints then. So this is the Sunday show, and A.J. Solari, "AJ the DJ," and his great wife Kathy [Solari], who made the best

cinnamon toast, he just looked at me. Then Mickey Newbury, who passed away recently, who wrote one of my favorite songs of all times, "She Even Woke Me Up to Say Goodbye," which I just got on CD yesterday and it's blowing my mind that I finally got it on CD, he says, "Don't worry about it." Afterward, Kris Kristofferson said, "Look. The guy was singing off key." I said, "Oh, I understand that. I'm sorry," dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. It all worked out in the end, but it was just a real strange incident. Now, what happened when I was working at KYMS in Santa Ana, this is after I was programming Mitch's show, and I was basically— I gained weight. What happened was I went from 150, 160 pounds, you know, at age nineteen. I'm living in an apartment in Westwood, going to UCLA, and I go up to 205, 210 pounds. I'm living over by Olympic [Boulevard], not too far from Bundy [Avenue]. Actually, it's right off of Federal [Avenue], a block from Federal.

CLINE

My old neighborhood.

ALVY

We have two TV sets, one of them only does sound and one of them only does picture. So if we want to really mess with people, this bottom set, we'd change the channel on the sound, and they'd sit there for hours stoned, just not knowing what the hell was going on. So we did mescaline, and we're running *Citizen Kane*, and I look in the mirror and I'm Orson Welles and I'm overweight. The next day, this was December of 1969, I went on a diet, nothing but cottage cheese and grapefruit juice for a month, and I literally lost at least forty pounds. I was down to 170, and that basically changed my whole lifestyle, doing that and whatever [still no red meat since 1969]. Well, anyway, this is 1970, January. I'm out in KYMS driving out there to Santa Ana and doing dedications to— In January, I mentioned, Slim Harpo died. Then in May, right before I came back to work for Les at KPPC again, Al Jarvis, the creator of the *Make-Believe Ballroom* on KFWB, had passed away. I also was doing things to Timothy Leary, who was in prison in Santa Ana. He was in jail before he split and disappeared and broke out, so I was

dedicating stuff to him. I was falling asleep coming back on the freeway. I literally had smelling salts up to my nose, because I had eight and nine o'clock classes at UCLA. So "AJ the DJ" was on after me. I was midnight to six. He was always late, but he would always bring this great cinnamon toast that Kathy made, and that would make it okay. We'd share a doobie and I'd do that. But he was always late. Jeff Gonzer was on eight to midnight, so he was on right before me, so I got to know him before he went over. He then ended up doing mornings, 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. at KPPC for Les Carter, and then in January 1971, I ended up following him from nine to one for about six months, running the Credibility Gap rerun at one p.m., which had been rerun at eleven p.m. right before Mississippi went on the air after Steve Segal's show, and it had been run live at six on Les Carter's show. Eventually, Les broke up the shows where the Pierce Family took over. They would follow me at one o'clock, and he cut them down from one to four, and then at four he put on his wife, Susan Carter, as "Miss Outrageous Nevada." Four to seven was his air shift, so he put Miss Outrageous Nevada on from one to four, which was the Pierce Family had been doing that. Then Zach Zenor took over my air shift from nine to one. He had been my roommate, and he was the wizard of production. He not only did production, but he taught production to people like Susan Carter, who became "Miss Outrageous Nevada," and Deirdre O'Donoghue. He was like a mentor to people. His wife was a vocalist. She was great. Sandy [Zenor], his first wife Sandy, was great. Then he married a disc jockey from KROQ, Jeanne Chappe, who had been one of the primetime jocks at KROQ. She may have been one of the first FM female primetime jocks when she was on late seventies on KROQ. And Zach Zenor and Jeanne Chappe moved to New Mexico. They were doing a lot of Internet stuff; they were representing artists and stuff like that. Did I answer that part of it enough, or is there more to it?

CLINE

I think it's okay.

ALVY

I'm trying to do these asides as I think of them, because they're things I'd like to get on— So besides, there's a broader thing. It's called "West Coast Underground Radio: Songs, Sets, and Segue-ways." So if you don't know how to pronounce it, you would pronounce it "Segues," if you do know how to pronounce it, "Seg-Way-Ways." Now, I was one of the few people that was a native of Los Angeles, first of all, that was involved at KPPC and then KMET. I was also one of the only people that traveled between here and Seattle visiting various FM underground stations that I would hear about. These guys would be blown away, because they not only knew about KPPC, but I'd mention B. Mitchel Reed and the fact that I worked for Tom Donahue and basically they brought out their best dope, they offered me their girlfriend's sister, you know, just about. It was unbelievable. But I would hit— Like there was one out in the field in Ventura that I hit on the way up. KTAO in Los Gatos [California] was part of the Crab Nebulae that Lorenzo Milam put together. There was KRAB. There was KBOO in Portland, KRAB in Seattle, KDNA in St. Louis, KTAO in Los Gatos. It was great. It was like a mini Pacifica network, but one guy, Lorenzo Milam, put it together. I've got a book he wrote on it. But he was responsible for that. I would visit him, and then I'd stop at various stations. Like when I visited on my way up to Eureka to see about buying this radio station in January of '71, my classes were done at UCLA. I didn't get my diploma until June of '71 because I had an incomplete that had to be worked out. But the trip up to Eureka, I stopped in San Francisco and I hung out at KMPX, and they were very leery at first of me. They thought I was a spy. Then what happened, I was going to come back and work full-time, and Ron Middag, who was the part-time music director known as Inor that was working full-time, was leaving the station. When I was at KMPX, that's when it took place. A couple of people up there, one from Pasadena, they were quizzing me, "Well, what's the deal, this guy getting fired?" They were real leery of me. They thought I was a spy. As it turned out, they ended up accepting me. Reno Nevada was on the air. He let me do a few segues. He took me to the Mothers of Invention

concert where Frank Zappa blew everyone's mind at Berkeley Community Theater, and Reno Nevada blew my mind with a psychedelic reefer that I still remember. They finally accepted me and realized that I wasn't there to spy. Then I ended up in Eureka and I came back and I convinced Zach Zenor, who had been my roommate at Santa Monica Canyon since around spring of '71, wanted to move up to Eureka, too. My uncle and his business partner became backers. They ended up stranding us and pulling the plug May 1st of '72.

CLINE

I'm going to turn the tape over.

ALVY

Okay.

1.5. TAPE NUMBER: III, Side Two (April 16, 2004)

CLINE

We're back on. You're talking about how your backers stranded you up in Eureka, you and Zach Zenor.

ALVY

Right. Zach came back. I ended up living there till around June of '73, but I came down a lot. What happened was I was on the air at KPPC before I got my full-time show. This was like late 1970 [December 27, 1970]. So one of the things I ended up doing on a Sunday afternoon was interviewing the Grateful Dead, Jerry Garcia and Bob Weir, and the New Riders of the Purple Sage, Marmaduke [John Dawson, songwriter], and David Nelson. They were all performing with the Grateful Dead and New Riders of the Purple Sage that night at the El Monte Legion Stadium. That whole area was going to be demolished, so this was the last gig. During the fifties it was famous for rock and roll concerts, fifty and early sixties. Guys wore ties, girls dressed nice. "El Monte Legion Stadium!" You know, like that. They almost did it like the car commercials, you know, "Sunday, Sunday, Sunday!"

CLINE

Right, drag racing and monster trucks and all that stuff.

ALVY

So one of the things that took place, probably when I was filling in for someone after midnight, the all-night shift, three albums had come out that were real interesting all at once. Little Feat, this is a promo copy, December 1970. Ry Cooder, this is the first Ry Cooder album [self-titled], his first solo, one of the best guitarists of all time, one of the best film scorers of all time. If you haven't researched Ry Cooder, I mean, the best, and he's still the best, everything he ever did, Little Village, everything. So I'm playing all these things. I ended up meeting Neon Park in May of 1970 at the Platterpuss Record Store, who I was going to do radio commercials for Mike Pinto, who ran Platterpuss Records. He had a store in Silver Lake near Vermont [Avenue] and Sunset [Boulevard]. So I met Neon Park there, and Neon was doing ads for us in the L.A. *Free Press*. He did a series of about twenty ads for KPPC, and then they also ran in the *UCLA Daily Bruin* and also *Rolling Stone*. *Rolling Stone* used to have an insert for L.A. also that was just separate. In the various areas there'd be a separate insert they could sell advertising on, and you'd only get it, I think, if you're a subscriber. I don't think it came on the newsstands. But anyway, Neon Park was doing ads for us. He had just done *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*, the cover for Frank Zappa, which was from an old men's magazine, which I've seen it online, the original men's magazine, *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*. So I end up becoming good friends with Marty [Martin Muller who was Neon Park], with Neon Park and stuff, and his wife, Chick Strand, was a filmmaker at UCLA, and I never knew the two of them were married. I knew of them separately. She was a well-known filmmaker at UCLA and ended up teaching twenty-five years at Occidental College film, and now she's retired out at Tujunga watching DVDs of things and editing films.

CLINE

We just recently did an oral history with her.

ALVY

I'd heard that. She's great. She's great. So that's one of the things that happened. Captain Beefheart called me up. I'm playing some of *Lick My Decals Off, Baby*. We ended up

doing a little interview over the air. Just as a coincidence, when I put together these movie benefits to raise money where Bob Laemmle just basically was great, he'd say, "Here, do it, do it." We did one right around the time we were all getting fired, October 24th, 1971, because it's on the air. There's a thirty-eight-minute air check from KPPC that has this. *Sacco and Vanzetti*, Joan Baez had done the soundtrack, so we were running it, and every penny was going to L.A. free clinics. There was a theater, I forget what it's called, on Doheny [Drive] above Wilshire [Boulevard], south of Wilshire, maybe the Doheny Classic Theater; *200 Motels*, we did the screening for that, but that was after we got fired, and that money was supposed to go as a benefit to the L.A. free clinic. But Bob Laemmle, letting us use the Regent Theatre for *El Topo* and then we did, like I said, *Sacco and Vanzetti*. I forget what else we did, but the money was pure, and it was so great to just do. I talked to him a few years ago and he remembered that. He said that one day Tom Donahue called him and said, "Are you doing anything midnight at Los Feliz Theater?" He says, "No." "Can we run *Magical Mystery Tour* by the Beatles to raise money for the strike fund?" And he says, "Sure." Then the Kaleidoscope guys, the guys who had the Kaleidoscope nightclub across from Hollywood Palladium, they put on one of their film orgies, which is how Gary Essert ended up starting Filmex, was the film orgies from— He was together with Skip Taylor, who was managing— Him and John Hartman managed people like Canned Heat and whatever. But our strike happened right before they were opening, and they were freaked out, so we had two great benefits there. Among them, Buffalo Springfield got back together to perform, and then they did a gig in Long Beach and then disbanded. Jefferson Airplane performed. Quicksilver Messenger Service performed. Firesign Theater performed. I mentioned the Doors performed. David Crosby performed with the Jefferson Airplane, I think, which was sort of a precursor for the future groups, I believe. I'll have to look it up. I've got the stuff in the other room that I should have here to look at, but I'll grab it in a minute. So there were two

benefit concerts that raised money for our strike fund, and we basically struck from March 18th, 1968, until the weekend before the summer solstice, because I took my first psychedelic trip. I dropped mescaline up at Palm Springs in Tahquitz Falls, and I had a guide. He was actually, I think, a year younger than me. We met at Valley College. He turned me on when I was first starting to get high. My very first getting-high experience was with a lady, Doris [Damone], whose boyfriend [Ken Forssi] played bass in Love, so she hung out with Love all the time. She sold it to me for ten dollars, but it was from Arthur Lee's personal stash, and you could have sold it for fifty bucks. So I got high with her, this is spring of 1967, before I went to Monterey. Then this other guy had Indian ganja, so we went to— This is my first experience in a supermarket high on pot, which was amazing. [Cline laughs.] Anyway, we went to class one day, and the planetarium astronomy class, there was a sign-in sheet. Professor wasn't going to be there. We noticed, basically, that everyone had signed in. Another half-hour had passed. There was no one around. He didn't have anyone come in and close up, so we shut the doors and turned on the planetarium. There's two guys high on pot. We basically controlled the universe for about twenty, thirty minutes, and a few things happened. It made me believe in astrology, not what you read in the paper, but the fact that there's all these forces besides gravity from the moon and the tides and all that. So basically I believed that it actually happened, but I didn't believe that you could just read the one in the newspaper and it would be right. And I also realized basically that we were just totally meaningless. We were like gnats, you know, in the universe. But it was a great experience, the planetarium. Okay. I'm living with B. Mitchel Reed. We move. In 1974 he moves to Trancas on Broad Beach Road. A few things take place there. Neil Young has a rustic cabin down on the beach. It's like a private beach. There's another level down there. That's where the Band has their house, and I think they had their studios down there in the house. I forget what they called them, Shangri La or something. It's the lower level. So there's a locked fence and a vacant lot

next door to this incredibly beautiful— It looks like a *Better Homes and Gardens* type house that they're renting there. It's great. It's got all these weird-shaped cubicles and things. I was sleeping in a little bed that was built like a ship or something. It was real weird. Anyway, Neil Young had a rustic cabin, and I think that's when *On the Beach* came out in '74. That was basically at the beach, Trancas, Broad Beach. After I moved out of there and was back living up in Eureka, I guess, there was a fire that hit, and not only did Mitch lose his house, but Neil Young lost his house, so Mitch ended up having to move after that. So things would happen. Like one day I answered the phone, "Is Mitch there?" "No, he's out," yadda, yadda, yadda." "Who's this?" "It's Ted Alvy, I'm his producer." "I'm Theodore Sturgeon." Oh. So anyway, just to begin, the science fiction writer, *More Than Human* was his all-time classic that came out. Now, I read an interview, either read or heard, Phil Lesh of the Grateful Dead talking about how *More Than Human* was like the Grateful Dead. What it was, was it was five different personalities that got together and the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. He said that's basically how the Grateful Dead is. He says, "There's times that we 'blesh,'" which is what Theodore Sturgeon's term was. Okay. So I'm on the phone with Theodore Sturgeon and he gives me his home phone number, so we're talking. What I find out later was "Wooden Ships," the song that was written by David Crosby and Stephen Stills on the Crosby, Stills, and Nash album, which if you were in the know you knew it was actually co-written by Paul Kantner of the Jefferson Airplane, but the credits, this was going on where record companies wouldn't let you record on other people's works if you had a certain clause in your contract and yadda, yadda. People like David Crosby and Paul Kantner and people like that, who not only had ties in the San Francisco hip scene but in the Venice scene as folk artists, were breaking down the barriers. Like jazz artists would all get together. In fact, jazz artists would release albums with groups of musicians that might just be together for that one session. So eventually, when "Wooden Ships" came out on the *Volunteers* album, the Jefferson

Airplane album, you see the credit that Paul Kantner was actually a co-writer. What was happening was they were trying to get Theodore Sturgeon to write a movie script out of "Wooden Ships." So that's why B. Mitchel Reed, who had lived in David Crosby's house in 1968 behind the Beverly Glen Canyon Store— I used to hang out there. Gram Parsons would hang out there. It was David Crosby's house. He'd have a little house on the side that he'd stay in occasionally, but he was renting it to B. Mitchel Reed. So he had this incredible sound system, state-of-the-art, these giant tubes, these tubes, he had everything was state-of-the-art. Plus they had these tapes lying around which ended up being like [M.] Witmark & Sons had Bob Dylan sit down with a guitar and record all his songs, and they'd send them out to people like the Byrds to be covered. So B. Mitchel Reed would pick up the tapes and we'd take them to KPPC and play them on the air, so that's how all the underground Dylan started getting play on the air. Then the Rubber Dubber put out the *Great White Wonder* as one of first bootleg albums, a double album of Dylan stuff. They basically were tapes that we were playing on the air. I still have a lot of copies. I dubbed those tapes at UCLA in the film school. They had two incredible tape decks that both played mono, which is what they were in anyway, and I dubbed from one to the other. I made myself second-generation copies. A lot of that stuff got bootlegged, and I haven't really compared them yet. There's a guy on the Internet that wants all my tapes. He said he'd take the time to compare them, because a lot of the stuff, there may have been different versions of things that got bootlegged. I don't know. So Mitch digs David Crosby, obviously. Another one of his favorite people is Stephen Stills, who used to have a house on the [Malibu] Colony that I visited where Mitch was hanging out when Buffalo Springfield was on the road. One day Larry Glass and I, when we first met Mitch, so this was summer of '67, were there with Terrence Stamp, the actor, who not only is Terrence Stamp, his brother Chris Stamp, along with Kit Lambert, started Track Records, which not only developed the Who, but Jimi Hendrix, people like that, I think the Crazy

World of Arthur Brown. So I get to know Theodore Sturgeon. "AJ the DJ" not only gets to know him, he visited him near Los Feliz [Boulevard] and said, "Hey, Theodore Sturgeon is a nudist, did you know?" I said, "No." So I talked to him about it. I moved up to Eureka to do the radio station. My friends are starting a record store up there. There's been about eight records stores in the little college town of Arcata, which is ten miles north of Eureka, Humboldt State College, which then became Humboldt State University, which had a great little radio station. I went on it occasionally. So they start a record store. This is my friends, my former roommates at UCLA. My friend Rick Donohoe and I started a— It turned into almost like a commune. We were working at Les Carter's Music Revolution together. We had a steady income. We got an apartment off of Olympic and Federal. Then I brought my best friend, Mike Robinson, who hung out there and wound up living there part-time, and then one of Rick's friends, Dave Mulhern, who also worked at Music Revolution, and their friend who became a computer whiz, who is now working in Japan working on data from the Hiroshima bombings—they're still doing follow-ups on people—Dale Preston and his friend who became a doctor, Lewis Guiss, we all became like roommates. When Music Revolution, which started July 4th of '68, and I ended up working there September of '68 until it closed in fall of '69. Les just closed it down after he came back from New York from recording. Susan Carter did an album with Blood, Sweat, and Tears, backing her up on Epic [Records]. It never sold well, but I mean it had Blood, Sweat, and Tears backing her up, so I mean it was a good album. So he came back, closed the store, and we took— A guy was selling stolen records. His name, I don't know if you ever heard of Music Man Murray.

CLINE

No.

ALVY

He's this famous guy downtown who pulled a gun on people before and whatever. Anyway, apparently one of his employees was selling stuff out the backdoor, and this guy from Las Vegas, who apparently was either a made man or

was close to being a made man, he drove this big Cadillac, and Mike Robinson and I were there. In front of us, he'd call it a "Jew canoe," and we would just go with that because it was cool, because, you know, like I said, it didn't really hurt us. We'd never really, you know— He'd open his trunk, and he'd have these stolen records that he was selling to us. When he sold them to us at the record store, I would go every day to the bank with all the checks and cash them and then take the cash, and with that I'd pay Si to buy the records. And then the records we didn't need, I'd—

CLINE

This is the Si Co guy?

ALVY

Yeah. I'd go through Music Revolution and every day pull the records that weren't selling and sell them to a store in Hollywood that could use them, and then Si's records would come in and sometimes we'd get eight copies of like a Janis Joplin album or this or that. Then we ended up started doing it through our apartment in West L.A. This guy Si, I'd write him a check, and his company was called Si Co. I'd have three days to go through the records that we got, and we'd give them all to ourselves, you know, like *Let it Bleed* [by the Rolling Stones], whatever. We'd give ourselves copies for our personal collection, and then I'd go through Recordworks and then I'd put together a bunch of things and then I'd drive to this store in Hollywood and sell them for cash. Then I'd go to the bank and deposit the money in time for the check to clear for Si Co. As it is, this took place through early '70. Right after that, every check that you put through your account was photographed. Up until that point, there was no record. If you would write me a check for twenty dollars because I gave you this book, the bank wouldn't have a record of it. They would just— You know. From that point on, and this was after Si left our lives, everything— So I would have eventually possibly been busted, you know, who knows, because I was the only one doing all the financial stuff. But that paid for going up to Alfie's on the Sunset Strip for steak and lobster, filet mignon and lobster. It paid our rent. Then Si disappeared, and three months later he called us and said,

"Remember that truck that was hijacked with all the Led Zeppelin II albums? Well, I followed the guys to Phoenix. They were about to make a deal where the truck was going to be driven to your guys' doors and you were going to have a week to get rid of all the albums, and the FBI busted them, so I laid low." So from that point on, we basically ended up— We broke up the apartment building. Okay. So, Theodore Sturgeon. I'm living in Arcata. We did our FM radio station in Eureka. There's North Town Books, which is a very leftwing-type bookstore. It's a very hip bookstore. I guess it would be sort of like the City Lights of North Town. They had these three science fiction books by Russian authors that had been translated into English, and they had imported them directly. These were real rare. So I bought two sets of each of them. One I kept for myself and ended up having to sell them in Santa Barbara, plus my original *Zap Comix* when my rent was tripled or something like that. I sent the other set to Theodore Sturgeon and he loved them. He ended up bringing these guys Arkady and Boris Strugatsky to America. He published their books here. He wrote an introduction for them. And he ended up sending me one. And the neat thing was he not only sent one with the introduction he wrote for these guys, with a thank-you note, he did not autograph it, which was cool, because that was like it was more personal. It wasn't like, "Here, guy," you know. So I ended up turning him on to these Russian science fiction writers, which is a trip. So they came out with a third edition of *Another Roadside Attraction* by Tom Robbins, and in either the foreword or the introduction, Sturgeon wrote how Tom Robbins' book *Another Roadside Attraction* really didn't classify as science fiction, but it did classify as fantasy. So he reviewed it in a science fiction and fantasy magazine. Okay. I've read *Another Roadside Attraction*. Mike Robinson and I have read it. It came out in 1971. It's like this great hippie book. I write the publisher, who forwards my letter to Tom Robbins. I'd like to get the film rights, and I'm just working for B. Mitchel Reed. I figure, who knows, maybe I can call his good buddy Lou Adler, who ended up doing *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, after the Mamas and the Papas. Who knows.

So I get a letter and it's handwritten and it's real hard to read, and it's to me saying, "The rights are out. Someone already has the rights temporarily." If it ever comes back to him, he'll let me know. "Sorry about my handwriting, but I was stung in the ocean by a jellyfish," yadda, yadda. I'm in contact with Tom Robbins, and then *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* comes out, then *Still Life with Woodpecker*, and then, what, *Jitterbug Perfume*, then *Skinny Legs and All*, *Half Asleep In Frog Pajamas*, then *Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates*, and *Via Incognito*. Well, anyway, so now I'm in touch with him. In 1997, summer solstice, Saturday, I believe it's June 21st, I believe it's a Saturday, Wadsworth Theater, UCLA property, next to UCLA, the UCLA Wadsworth Theater. There's a celebration. Tom Robbins appears. Paul Krassner appears. Firesign Theater minus David Ossman appears [Peter Bergman and Phil Proctor and Phil Austin]. There's a videotape from William [S.] Burroughs, who's about to die. Is it William Burroughs? Yeah. Basically, it's a celebration for a poet, for "Howl," for Allen Ginsberg. It's sort of like a "gathering of the tribes" thing. So I did two things. I called Paul Krassner and I gave him extra tickets that I had, so I ended up starting a relationship with Paul Krassner. He gave me permission to put stuff from his great magazine *The Realist*. In 1985, after being closed down in 1974, he started *The Realist* again, and he started it with an interview with Jerry Garcia, which was rare for Garcia to do an interview like that, and he let me put it on my website and I was in touch with him ever since, Paul Krassner. So now I'm in touch with Tom Robbins in Seattle, where I had lived, actually, summer of '76 to summer of '79, when he was living in La Conner north of there, writing and stuff. He's still up in the Skagit Bay area up there. He's appearing, so I leave a letter. I give it to Paul Krassner. He gives it to Tom Robbins. I get a letter a week or two later saying, "Thank you for the letter. My publisher and I are thinking about putting out a book of short stories and short articles that I've written." What I'd asked him in the letter was, to put it on my website, and I said Paul Krassner's let me put on Jerry Garcia, "I'd like to put the piece you wrote in the *Seattle*

Weekly," when I was up there. The Wallendas were going to appear inside the King Dome and walk across either the baseball or football field. I think at that time it was a baseball field. Right before that, in Puerto Rico, Karl Wallenda had died [falling from the wire]. So Tom Robbins wrote this piece about Karl Wallenda that was just mind-blowing. So he said, "Other than that, thank you. Otherwise I'd let you do it." His latest novel, *Via Incognito*, which came out last spring, Karl Wallenda is mentioned because there's a thing in Laos or Thailand or wherever, where they're walking like Karl Wallenda. To get to a certain thing, these expatriates who had crashed there during the Vietnam War, you had to walk across this thing like Karl Wallenda, like the Wallendas or whatever, which was real interesting. I sent Tom Robbins music that wasn't available in America, just out of the blue. I had bought import copies, and I figured, all right, I'll end up buying the American copies when they come out as well, so it's not like I'm really bootlegging these things, because I'm against sending out bootlegs. Stuff that's on the Internet, like concerts and things that are traded, I'm fine with that because it's out there. And basically, if you get a Dylan concert that's being bootlegged, you'll probably buy all of Dylan's stuff. Like I've bought all his releases anyway, including the new one, his 1964 Halloween concert in New York from— They're calling it the Bootleg Series. They had one, two, three, then they had the '66 concert was four in England, and then there's the Rolling Thunder [Revue] one, and now there's the '64 one, the solo concert in New York. So I sent him my favorites, who B. Mitchel Reed turned me on to, Fred Neil. I got the very first 1967, his first Capitol album, and I bought the 1965, his very first album, *Bleecker and MacDougal*, which has "The Other Side of this Life," which Jefferson Airplane covered. And Jefferson Airplane were so into them, mainly through Paul Kantner and people like that, that "The Ballad of You and Me and Pooneil" is Pooh Bear and Fred Neil, and then there's "House at Pooneil Corners." So Fred Neil was a big influence on Stephen Stills, on a lot of people. But B. Mitchel Reed, we used to play him on the air all the time, because I was turned on to B. Mitchel

Reed. So I put together the 1967 album, which has "Everybody's Talking" and a bunch of other really good Fred Neil songs. Then I took the first two Taj Mahal albums [self-titled, and *The Natch'l Blues*], which are amazing and were available only as imports. So I figured, all right, I'm doing this specially because for some reason I just felt he was going to start listening to blues music, and I was right, because when *Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates* came out in 1997, he was talking about the blues a lot. Okay. So all of a sudden, a couple years ago, I get a letter from him saying, "Thank you, thank you." No, this is last year, a year ago, right before *Via Incognito* came out. I guess he was in a mode of getting in touch with people. He had to go out and promote it. He said he was going out to promote. He says, "Fred Neil, thank you very much." Then he says, "Taj Mahal is, of course, Taj Mahal, or they wouldn't have named a building after him in India." He says, "I listen to them over and over again." He says, "I'm in the habit of doing that. When I finally listen to something, I may listen— For the past week, I've been listening to Fred Neil over and over and over." And I mentioned a couple other things I had sent him. I says, "There's no need to take the time to write me another letter. Thank you very—," dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. "But if for some you reason you didn't receive—," and I mentioned a couple other CDs that he didn't receive, and one was a George Harrison demo for 1970's *All Things Must Pass*, which I ended up sending. He did get the Beatle one from when they all got together at the George Harrison's house in May of 1968 and did demos, most have ended up on "the white album" and stuff. He did get that. So I got a letter back from him saying, "No, I didn't," and yadda, yadda, yadda, another letter back from him, but mentioning something else, which I could read those letters into this at some point. So now it's great because I was able to turn on Tom Robbins. And it's through meeting Theodore Sturgeon, who I turned on to Russian science fiction, and that was through knowing B. Mitchel Reed, who would get phone calls from Theodore Sturgeon, who not only was working on the "Wooden Ships" possibility, he wrote two scripts for *Star Trek*, including the

one that has Pon Farr ["Amok Time," 1967] where Spock goes into almost heat because of the sexual Pon Farr thing, plus the "live long and prosper" sign was first brought into that one. So Theodore Sturgeon, I mean, amazing. The book that came out after he died was *Godbody*, and what he did was, it's written— All the characters, I believe six or seven characters, are written all in first person, which is hard to do. This is a very spiritual book. I would suggest *Godbody*. 1986, it came out after he died. Sturgeon had died in 1985. B. Mitchel Reed died in 1983 in spring. Tom Donahue died in 1975. At that point, Raechel Donahue moved to L.A. and got into radio. She basically didn't do radio until after Tom died, and then she had a big career here in L.A. She was even Rick Dees' sidekick for a while; she also did KMET and K-WEST. When I first met Raechel Donahue, I was nineteen. She was this beautiful woman who hung out with Tom Donahue, this giant. Tom Donahue weighed as much as Shaquille O'Neill, only he wasn't as tall. He was this big bearded Buddha guy that the Grateful Dead trusted to make his record deal with Warner Bros. and who sold the church, the Pasadena Presbyterian Church, that it was all right to do hippie radio in the basement and stuff, and that he would eventually get it out of there and whatever. Raechel was just this amazing lady that would get everything done. She was the hostess with the mostest. She was the one, so everyone loved Raechel and obviously kept hands off. Tom was like a— He had been a politician back East. He had been accused of payola in Philadelphia with Bobby Mitchell. That's why they both came out here. I think Bobby Mitchell became Bobby Tripp on [KHJ] Boss Radio or whatever.

CLINE

This makes me think of a question. When you were working for all these radio stations, what did you see in terms of what we might now term influence peddling from record companies, particularly pressure to play records, especially in some places like KPPC where you don't have the format, you can play whatever you want. That's one thing. But when you're on these stations and they're— I mean, I know you weren't on a station like KMET, but these formatted stations

where there's a lot of desirability to have records played regularly.

ALVY

Right. They had like heavy rotation, light rotation, [inaudible] rotation.

CLINE

Yeah. What do you remember seeing? Obviously, they went through the whole payola scam.

ALVY

We all, one way or another, knew what color radio was, from '58 to '62. It was number one in Los Angeles. KFVB, Channel 98, color radio, "My mommy listens to KFVB," Chuck Blore had all these great things. Chuck Blore's the guy that did that TV commercial where you saw these lips and it was a whole radio station and they did them in different markets, and you'd hear the radio station coming from this beautiful woman's lips. That's one of the things he did mostly recently. So we were into that. We were into Stan Frieberg's whole thing. Stan Frieberg not only did his albums, he submitted things to radio stations that we could run. He did this whole thing about imagination where this giant mountain of Jell-O and whipped cream— He did this thing where showing things you could only do on radio, basically what Orson Welles did in 1938 with the *War of the Worlds* where at the beginning there was a disclaimer, but then people really thought it was real because of the power of radio, which we've really lost now. Formatted radio ruined it. Now, the way it worked was, at KPPC, I mentioned, the last couple weeks they hired me as the music librarian so I could make a duplicate— I call this the core library. I made a duplicate of the core library and kept it right here in the closet, right here in this house, for a while. Basically, I would substitute. I went through the main library and then I would look for new releases and I'd ask for duplicates of this and that, and I created a whole duplicate library that I would sneak out of there, because I was in there alone, basically. I would sneak out of there every night, you know, a few albums, so no one really knew what was going on. So somehow I got to know all the record company people. Okay. Then in June of '68 when we went to

KMET, I didn't move the library in right away because Mitch flew up to San Francisco and recorded shows at KSAN, so it was just him and Tom Donahue, first, two hours a night, and eventually four hours a night. The tapes were sent down to KMET and run. The rest of the time, it was this automated all-women middle-of-the-road-type stuff. Mitch moved down here after a couple of months. Larry Glass went up there and helped him for a while. He moved down here. I moved the library in from my house here. We called all the record companies. Mitch would just make a phone call and the guys would show up with tons of albums. I would go through them, Larry would go through them, we'd circle albums. I'd start writing sets of music that I'd hand to the engineers, and they'd put them on tape. It was weird. It had these so-many-cycle tones that would set off one machine and then set off— Like the commercials would be on one, the DJ B. Mitchel Reed talking would be on another machine, and then the music would be on two or three others. I put together sets of threes, basically. There might be three Canned Heats or might be this or that. The problem was we couldn't really tell them what hours to play them, because there was no way— You'd have to play the tape all the way through. It's not like now where you can select, like, track eight on the CD or go to the track on the album. Now, one of the things that hasn't really been talked about with underground radio, basically you'd play your own records. I would play them for B. Mitchel Reed. Tom Donahue would have an engineer play them for him, because they were from the old Top Forty days when they'd have a close rapport with their engineers but never really touched the vinyl. Being a disc jockey and playing your own records was very tactile. That's one thing you cannot get from digital. The one thing you can get from playing CDs is what Tom Donahue and B. Mitchel Reed and everyone— We were going to move KPPC to a nightclub in Old Town Pasadena that was going to have live music that we could run over the air, and then we were also going to try and get a system where you could call up the radio station and get anything played from almost anywhere, which basically that was it. Tom Donahue you could call and say,

"Hey, I'm here at the Whiskey. The Hollies here are about to go on. Please play this music," and the jock would just do it. I mean, you know, that was like unheard of. You can do that now. I could basically call a radio station with my computer and program the next hour of music, tell them what to play. They're not letting people do that. The reason everything is computerized, not for the music, because the disc jockey has to play the music, it figures everything out mathematically so the commercial can be run on time, so the commercials can be then printed out and the bills can be mailed so the computer is basically billing them. The whole thing is billing them. That's why everything's computerized. That's why you can't be creative on the air, because they want everything cut and dried so the less people. One guy can sit down and in twenty minutes voice-track. This guy that works at KIIS voice-tracks a thing in Cincinnati. He's number one in Cincinnati, but every day he just spends twenty minutes putting the voice track, which is then sent over the computer to be run digitally on a station. That's the whole deal with digital. Everything is done for the billing, for the bottom line. Through the years, it started in the seventies and it really went wild in the nineties, the value of radio stations were hyped so much so they could get on the stock exchange and they were doing in futures. They were saying, "In three months we've got this much billing." They were dealing in futures almost. They'd gotten the price of radio stations so high that it's almost impossible for people to buy an independent station now. That's why Air America is having so much trouble; Al Franken. I was part of the campaign to get him on live on the West Coast, which they're finally doing, at least his show. He's right up against Rush Limbaugh. That's the global village. He's on the entire country twenty-four hours a day doing the global village. Now, a lot of people think Marshall McLuhan was the guy that Woody Allen brought out in *MAnnie Hall*. He's standing in line in a movie and this blowhard is talking about Marshall McLuhan. So Woody Allen says, "You're wrong." He says, "What do you mean, I'm wrong?" "Well, here's Marshall McLuhan," and he brings— You know, that was the most surrealistic thing on

like four or five levels. Then McLuhan says, "You're completely wrong. This is what my theory was." But that is the Marshall McLuhan thing. That is the global village. Al Franken is on now live. The rest of it is on tape. What they wanted to do, have a balanced program, Franken would be on nine to noon, [inaudible] would be on dah, dah, dah. So now, at least, he's on live and then for two days the Chicago and the L.A. station were pulled off the air because of some financial problems, which is really a misunderstanding, because they have enough money in the bank to run it. They're slowly adding stations. They're adding San Francisco and San Jose, Portland, eventually Seattle. They had Chicago. They had New York. They had the Inland Empire here towards Riverside. But KBLA, this 1580 here in Santa Monica, was a Spanish-language station and the signal sucks. You can listen on the Internet. They apparently set a record the first week with hits on the Internet, and XM Radio apparently is going to run it. I don't know what shows they're going to run.

CLINE

Yeah, but back to the influence-peddling thing. What did you start to see from these people?

ALVY

So here's what happened. Starting with KMET, now, the deal with KMET, we didn't go live until '69 and then Steve Segal came out, back from WBCN. It was after Woodstock and before Altamont. I remember that because we were talking about it. I was talking with Steve. I decided to go to KYMS in January of '70 to get my chops back, because I was lazy. If there's something I discovered, I'd go to a club and see somebody and I'd find out they'd have an album or something, I'd call Mitch and it'd be on the air almost momentarily, which, like I said, it was very powerful. But I had to be in control of myself, I couldn't take advantage of it, and I could say to this day that I never played anything on the air or had B. Mitchel Reed play on the air that I didn't really believe should be. The only time there might be a borderline thing is if, let's say— We didn't really like Blue Cheer. But Tom Donahue and Abe "Voco" Kesh, who was a

DJ in San Francisco, who got Blue Cheer going and this and that, we would play them occasionally just because, you know. Then Silver Metre came out, which Tom Donahue was behind, which was so-so. Then really good bands that came out, he was involved in that whole caravan—I'll think of the name of it—that Warner Bros. put together, all these bands that went out on the road, and he was part of that and whatever. But we never really— You know. When Mitch broke the Vanilla Fudge "You Keep Me Hangin' On," on KFWB, so here, and I'll again repeat it, January 2nd, '68 to March 18th, '68, this is the original staff of KPPC where I'm in the basement all this time with B. Mitchel Reed. During January, I think it was January 18th, he had one of the most amazing shows where Hoyt Axton came down. And no one was signing Hoyt Axton. He had written "Greenback Dollar" and he made no publishing money because he sold it to the Kingston Trio. His mother [Mae Boren Axton] had co-written "Heartbreak Hotel." He did this amazing set on the radio on B. Mitchel Reed's show. Then Joni Mitchell came down. Elliot Roberts, who's known mainly, I think, now as Neil Young's manager and whatever, brought Joni Mitchell from New York, and she was staying with him on the floor at B. Mitchel Reed's house at Sunset Plaza before he moved to David Crosby's house in Beverly Glen. He brought her down and he didn't want her taped, though. So she did a short set on the show and an interview, and then she was at the Troubadour and her shows were sold out. I don't know how many she did. Monday was always hootenanny and sometimes you'd do like Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and then the Friday, Saturday, Sunday. I know she did at least six shows, and they were all sold out because of appearing on B. Mitchel Reed's show. Arlo Guthrie appeared with Steve Segal, who was— He would do Tom Donahue's show occasionally on Saturday at nine to midnight and then sit in and do fill-in and stuff. He interviewed Arlo Guthrie, and Arlo Guthrie did his own version of "Alice's Restaurant," which he called "Alice's Restaurant Massacree" about "the Flash who fell into a crevasse" in Topanga Canyon. Apparently he would do these custom "Alice's Restaurant"s all over the place. I mentioned I

was doing the folk music show, *Folk Festival* on KVFM in the San Fernando Valley here, and how I had been playing the most requested song, was "Alice's Restaurant," which B. Mitchel Reed did play. Now, basically we're talking a week after Monterey Pop Festival, the Saturday after that, which would have been June 24th. That's when Larry Glass and I played the music that we had taped at the Monterey Pop [Festival], and we convinced Bob Oakes, the program director, because Jim Lightfoot, the GM, had approved it and Bob K, the music librarian, that we'd start playing album cuts. Then the following week, Dave Diamond, who— Two weeks after KBLA went country, K-Bar-B-Q, which was the weekend of the Monterey Pop Festival, June 16th, 17th, and 18th, Dave Diamond showed up with his *Diamond Mine* at KFWB and, I don't know, him and Mitch maybe didn't always get along, but Mitch supported him being there 100 percent. I don't know if Dave Diamond knew that. I supported him 100 percent. Larry Glass supported him 100 percent. We thought it was great to have Dave Diamond on. They moved the six-to-ten show to seven to eleven around June 29th, and then Dave Diamond would follow the seven to eleven B. Mitchel Reed show, which was on six days a week. He would follow it like eleven to three or eleven to four and do his *Diamond Mine* and different levels he'd be diving to. When he showed up at the station and Larry Glass and I were there, he did a double-take, because he knew me, because I had been giving him those English Stones singles, which was like a double-take. Okay. So now KBLA goes country. Let me go back to— So I'm living with B. Mitchel Reed and Mitch is a workaholic. He would take two weeks off only during the Christmas season and go visit Carole Solari Reed's parents, A.J.'s sister, his wife, who he married, I believe it was October 22nd, 1967, on a Sunday, because I was on the air and I have an air check showing I did a tribute to B. Mitchel Reed here on the KVFM *Folk Festival*. Like I said, it was six to nine at night and they cut it to seven to nine, and then December 4th, they discontinued the show because of my anti-war songs and playing folk rock.

CLINE

I have a question about that, actually. To me, I can understand this, given the time period, but it seems ironic to me that one would get pulled for playing anti-war songs on a folk music show, a forum that's famous for protest, for political statement. How much do you think was the topical aspect and how much do you think was the fact that when you said folk rock, that stylistically this was just considered a little too daring, a little too outside the box for the people that were in charge of it?

ALVY

As usual, it was the advertisers that ruled. You have to remember, FM radio was brand new. Very few people had even an FM radio. Like I said, we had this console that we got at Sears that has a built-in turntable, AM radio and an FM radio, and the FM stereo even, and it's all built into this giant thing that I had moved into my bedroom so I could listen on headphones from eleven to three Sunday through Thursday, Radio Free Oz with Peter Bergman, which became the Firesign Theater on KPFK. I think it's 90.7, a Pacifica station here in Los Angeles.

CLINE

I'm going to put in a new tape, so hold that thought.

1.6. TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side One (April 16, 2004)

CLINE

This is tape number four, the interview with Ted Alvy. I'm Alex Cline. Once again, it's April 16th, 2004), here in Ted's home in Van Nuys. You were talking about advertisers. This was tying into two of my questions, one about influence peddling and the other the *Folk Festival* show that you did at KVFM in your early days, and you were getting yanked off the air for various reasons, shall we say. You were saying that it always comes down to the advertisers.

ALVY

There's very few FM radios around. An FM car radio was real rare. So what happened is Lenny Bruce called them "hi-fi nuts." These are the people that put together stereo systems in their house. Like David Crosby, I said, had that one with the giant tubes. One was a Fisher or I don't know,

unbelievable, with a great turntable and a great pickup and the speakers. So, I mean, we were listening to amazing state-of-the-art stuff, David Crosby's house that B. Mitchel Reed was renting in '68 behind the Beverly Glen Canyon Store. So to listen to FM, these various places, electronic stores, started carrying state-of-the-art equipment, so the people that bought them were usually fanatics. Just as with CDs, the first stuff they really did with CDs was classical and jazz because you have those groups of people. Those are the types of people that bought— You watch Hugh Hefner and his *Playboy After Dark*. He's got the stereo set playing jazz. You know, playing jazz, and that's good, and Lenny Bruce is on the show. It's great. I've seen those clips. They ran them at the Museum of Television and Radio, the Lenny Bruce stuff. So that's one of the aspects. If you own an FM radio, you've spent money. This is your hobby. This is like being a car fanatic or something. Your wife says, "All right, that's your hobby. Put the money into the car," this or that. So that's one of the things. We've got this one advertiser on KVFM, "the voice of the San Fernando Valley," that has what they call a super sound segment, where you play three songs together, and usually it would be something like Glenn Yarbrough playing his guitar, and he was with the— I'll think of it, who he was with [the Limelighters]. So there'd be three folksongs. I took like Paul Butterfield Blues Band instrumental "Screamin'" with Mike Bloomfield. I played "Bullfrog Blues" by Canned Heat. I played Jimi Hendrix, "Purple Haze." I played "The Night Time is the Right Time," a live version by the Blues Project at Town Hall. That's when Al Kooper was still with them. I also did things like Jim Healy was doing sports on KLAC and he had this clicker-type noise and he would do recordings of— Like he'd have some baseball manager that would make some line that he'd run over and over on carts. He was a real crazy guy. So I scraped the microphone with my hand, which freaked people out that had these hi-fi sets, and said in a Jim Healy voice, "I announce B. Mitchel Reed's wedding" and this and that and gave him a congratulations. Then I did a whole hour of Bob Dylan. I started playing anti-war songs. See, the *Folk*

Festival was run by a guy who I actually met at the post office in Van Nuys. Him and his friend would go from post office to post office, and he had been at this one for a long time. They would throw parcels, and they would know from the zip code where the bag was, and they became like— It was amazing to watch these guys work, and at the same time they had like a comedy routine going on, and they'd be talking to people. They'd look at the box, and they'd throw it in the right bag, and it was unbelievable to watch these guys work. He had the show. He walked into this little classroom here at the L.A. Valley College, said, "I've got to give up the folk show. So-and-so and I, we're leaving the post office, we're going to the Denver post office," or something like this. "I need someone with a third-class license to do it." I said, "Oh, yeah." I knew him, said, "I've got a third-class license." He says, "Can you be there at six o'clock this Sunday and do the show?" I said, "Yeah." So I got there a little early. I knew about vinyl. I was segueing albums at Valley College one hour a week and then in all my free time when they weren't supposedly on the air, which just meant being in the classroom or sitting in the lunch area. They'd have speakers outdoors in the cafeteria area. I knew how to segue records, and a lady at the station, a fellow student, Diane Mercy, who was a fellow hippie— I was becoming like a hippie just because hanging out with B. Mitchel Reed and Larry Glass and we rated the new records, and we'd meet Dave Diamond. I mean, all these things, we'd start meeting all these people. So she became my producer, Diane Mercy. She would take the phone calls. It was a basic folk-type show, and the requests were basically for folk music. The oddball request was like all of a sudden Arlo Guthrie, because his album came out, *Alice's Restaurant*. And like I said, I found Glen Yarbrough singing a Stephen Stills song, so I played him, and then I'd play a Buffalo Springfield song, and then I'd play Byrds, which is folk-rock. So I started playing folk-rock, so I was doing theme-type sets. I did a whole hour of Judy Collins, I think, when she was doing her concert, and then I asked questions, and I gave away five *In My Life* albums and a pair of tickets to see her at the Santa

Monica Civic [Auditorium], which I also attended with my high-school girlfriend [Andee Hock]. The Firesign Theater began on KRLA after the first Love-In here in Los Angeles, which was named after the January 14th, 1967 Human Be-In at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco with the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Charles Lloyd playing flute onstage with the Grateful Dead. The beginning of KPPC, the guy before me did a— Phil Blazer still does a TV show, a Jewish TV show. He was doing this Jewish hour on KVFM. He says, "They've let you go," because first they cut it from six to nine, to seven to nine. He said, "The sponsors complained. Cliff [inaudible] has got your two hours now." He was the guy after me that would play music. I said, "Could I say goodbye for Diane and I?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Goodbye. It looks like the only good music is happening at KPPC in Pasadena," which was kind of weird, because I knew B. Mitchel Reed. He had quit KFWB to take about a month off. He worked out the contract with them. They ended up going all news, KFWB in March of '68. So after the strike happened, not only did Mitch not have a place to go, because KFWB was gone, he couldn't go to KRLA at the time because they were overstaffed. They didn't have any room. [tape recorder off]

CLINE

We're back on.

ALVY

Okay. December 4th, '67, I'm let go. I know it was for anti-war and for folk-rock. It's just basically that's what was happening. The Radio Free Oz, nine to midnight on KRLA, they're now broadcasting, and this is the fall of '67, out of the Magic Mushroom nightclub here on Ventura [Boulevard] near Tujunga [Avenue]. It's now called the Platinum Live or whatever. It's where Little Feat had their album release party. They have their own record label now, Tomato Records, Little Feat. During this time that he was at KRLA, *Radio Free Oz*, basically it was Peter Bergman's show, but it was Firesign Theater. They had this guy that played gongs and sound effects and things. He was called Spontaneous Sound, and he would appear at like parks and love-ins and things.

CLINE

Christopher Tree was his name.

ALVY

His album was being promoted by Peter Bergman, so when Peter came to KFWB, I was there and I had talked to Peter Bergman at Valley College when he came to speak in this outdoor area, which is beautiful outdoors at Valley College. I'd mentioned a couple guys might be heckling him, because I'd overheard them, and just to watch. "Don't call on these two guys for questions," and this and that. We had a little talk and I told him this and that and B. Mitchel Reed. Then he was actually promoting it, so he walked up to KFWB and there I was. Okay. There had never really been an intern at a radio station at this point, at least according to Bob K, the music librarian at KFWB. Twice a week I went in there and basically did work for them. All the 45s were kept in these greenies, these cardboard green sleeves, you know, and stuffed in that. They would go back to the early rock and roll. They'd probably go back to '54, "Shake, Rattle, and Roll." Maybe even a little before that, I don't know; might have Big Joe Turner at the beginning. So I would work there and I would learn things. I knew what came in. I was subscribing to the three publications, Billboard, Cashbox, and Record World, so I basically knew more than anyone, really. If I wanted to spend the time, I obviously knew more because I had all the information. I would sneak stuff out of there for us to play at night on Mitch's show. I would sneak stuff. We would sneak stuff in there to get approved and this and that, basically. It was part of our conspiracy for music, though. I don't really feel like I was cheating. And I told Bob K this recently in the last few years with an e-mail. I said, "I hope if you never thought I had such-and-such an attitude towards you, it was not true. Complete respect for you and for Jim Lightfoot and Bob Oakes and the whole thing." But I wanted to let him know that it wasn't a disrespectful thing, and I mentioned how Derek Taylor gave us the first Procol Harum album. He rolled up an incredible joint and stuck it in there and we didn't know, and Mitch put it under the door in the record library. But I knew how to sneak in, so I was able to

sneak in, which I also learned how to sneak into KMET. That's why in the summer of '76 when they moved to Metromedia Square, where you had to go through guards and gates and KTTV and KLAC AM radio and all that, that's when I moved to Seattle. I couldn't work in L.A. anymore because I knew I couldn't sneak into KMET and they wouldn't hire me. If they had been smart, they would have hired me to be his producer and engineer and let all the other jocks run their own stuff and just really give him his due, because for years a lot of the advertisers on the station were because of things that B. Mitchel Reed had developed. Because the signal of KMET was excellent, Santa Barbara to San Diego at times, even, and even though we were automated until '69, when Tom Gamache, "Uncle T," joined Steven Segal, who was back from WBCN in Boston and B. Mitchel Reed doing twelve hours live, and then they started programming the twelve-hours' tape, so in January of '70 I started my all-nighters at KYMS because I wanted to become a jock again. Then I was listening and I freaked out. Les [Carter] was playing Merle Haggard, and I didn't really get it at the first time. I didn't realize how great a songwriter he was. The Grateful Dead got it. I mean, they recorded "Mama Tried," so I eventually got into Merle Haggard, but at the time I wasn't really sure it should be played, and I ended up cutting up a live version of "Okie from Muskogee." Instead of saying, "We don't smoke marijuana in Muskogee," it said, "We smoke marijuana in Muskogee" and we ended up playing that.

CLINE

And I remember hearing that on the radio at the time.

ALVY

I gave it to you on the air check, right?

CLINE

Exactly.

ALVY

I heard Harry Shearer on a Sunday, and this is in '70, spring of 1970, doing his *Destination Music* show, which was about two hours, which was so good that I thought it was bad. I thought it did not deserve to be on KPPC. We had picketed the church, the Pasadena Presbyterian Church, twenty-four

hours a day from March through June, you know, like three months. It was our airwaves. Sure, the signal was bad and people went in and out of the basement and eventually— But now we were promised in September we'd go full power. We had a brand-new studio. Michael Callaghan, his first engineering job, he runs the Clear Channel engineering now, like all eight stations, including KIIS. Him and Matt Rubin built this state-of-the-art slide pot boards. We could go left channel, right channel, stereo, mono. We have three turntables. We had a Scully tape deck. We had probably four cart decks to run commercials. So you could do drop-ins live. With three turntables, I'd play a three-second thing from one song in between two songs, and I'd be able to do that. It was very tactile. I'm sure it's easy to do now. You could actually write a little program to do it for you now digitally, which I'm looking forward to doing someday. The Firesign Theater was on nine to midnight [*Radio Free Oz*]. I'm going to the Magic Mushroom to the nightclub. Then December 31st, 1967, B. Mitchel Reed, who had done a couple of earlier sit-ins just to get the feel of everything, went on the air and brought in the brand-new year of 1968. I went down there with my girlfriend and Larry Glass with his date. We hung out and brought in the new year, and the people were out and waiting for the Rose Parade, sleeping overnight in front of the church and everything. Everyone takes Monday off, and then on Tuesday the lineup starts with B. Mitchel Reed, and he immediately wants me to be his engineer. I just fit right in immediately, because we had this communication thing where we could— A shorthand going. Plus I knew that he had a group of people going back to the sixties that he'd kept in contact with, and I had to know when to put the people through if they called on the phone. I had to facilitate him, give him a series of things like that we played and how we played this yesterday, dah, dah, dah, and then there'd be a little gap where he'd be able to do his private messages to people. A lot of them would just be to his wife and he'd say "Carole Lee," his wife, just to let her know, the few times that she wasn't there with him and stuff, but a lot of times it would be messages to people, so I'd have to facilitate that.

Now the Firesign Theater, I'm in the new station, I've met the people by putting together the library that we took to KMET. I've met the record people through Mitch and through KMET. I mean, they all love Mitch. People would come into L.A. from all over the country and in their motel rooms they'd listen to Mitch and then go back to their— So Mitch was influencing people for years and wasn't getting credit for it. Almost monthly he would get an offer to go back to New York. One was from the lady who ran WMCA. At one point we almost did it. He told me if I'd give him a two-years' commitment, we would live in Amagansett on the edge of Long Island, come into the city for four days a week and somehow do the fifth show. I forget what we were going to do. And make tons of money, and we'd only have to make a two-year commitment. Then we both backed out because we were both loving Malibu too much at this time. It was just he loved it. He had his new family. His first family, I think she was like a top model, and his son Darren [Reed] was born on his birthday, and he also had a daughter. That was his first family, and they were like A-list partygoers. Mitch was always on the A-list, so when he gave me tickets, I mean they were good tickets. They were his seats. He could get them for everything. Even the times I could get tickets on my own for the Band at the Hollywood Bowl where they had Miles Davis open for them with his *Bitches Brew* band, we couldn't get tickets. Les Carter, program director, you know, various people got them, the full-time jocks. I was still a part-time jock, so Mitch gave me his, so I had great— I'd drive to his house. Then he was living in Sherman Oaks here. That's where his first son, David, was born, in 1970. Like I said, 1973 he had this house in the [Malibu] Colony where he had a third birthday party for David, and Wayne Shorter showed up, which blew me away. His son from his first marriage, Darren, showed up, and some guy showed up with a reel-to-reel tape of the Rising Sons, who only put out a single. That was Ry Cooder and Taj Mahal and [not on recording] [Ed] Cassidy, the drummer from Spirit, and, I forget, Gary Marker was the bass player for a while. That was eventually released, but at the time it was just a rumor

and it was hard to get. So there's all these people at this party, and this is out on the beach. Then he moved to Trancas in '74 where Neil Young had the thing below. Okay, the record promoters. We got into the position— When I went back to KPPC in May of '70, working for Les Carter as program director and at the time Ron Middag ["Inor"] was acting music director—he had come up from KPRI in San Diego, which was a sister station to KYMS, our FM rock station out in Santa Ana—every record promoter would bring two or three copies for the record library, a couple of copies for the music director, and one copy for all the jocks. Usually it would go down to even the part-time jocks. If you were on the air regularly as a part-time jock, like I was, I would get them, and that was amazing. It was up to us to listen to them. If you played it on the air, you might mark it on the back of the album. You might mark this or that. Obviously, those records could have been collectibles, but I mean, we marked on the albums. You'd circle what you'd play. You mention this. You'd say, "Hey, this cuts right into that, be careful, it goes right into that," or this or that, all the little notes. So it was like you were your program director. You could bring in your— I would choose who I— You know, they'd ask me to do certain interviews, like I would end up doing occasional interviews like Ian Matthews. He and I hit it off because he had recorded two Richard Fariña songs, and I was a big Richard Fariña fan. So we hit it off immediately. Actually, him and Susan Carter [she was "Miss Outrageous Nevada" then], what I really meant was more so than that was T. Rex, Marc Bolan. Him and Susan Carter just hit it off amazingly. So I did his interview, and what happened was the guys from Blue Thumb Records brought in a 45. One side was "Summertime Blues" and one was "Ride A White Swan" or something. Marc Bolan was going to retire from the business or become an artist. I don't know what was going to happen, but he wasn't happy because he couldn't make it in America. He didn't believe that we had been playing Tyrannosaurus Rex albums before it was even T. Rex, how underground radio all over the country knew who he was. So he said, "Here, I'd like you to play this on the air. Marc Bolan

is going to listen between this half-hour to your show. We'd like you to—." The guy from Blue Thumb, I said, "Look." You know we only play what we like. "Let me listen to it." I listened to it. It was great. Immediately I played it. I played the flipside. Marc Bolan listened to it. He came in for an interview. Basically, he went out on tour. You know, it was one of those where you were able to do something, but if it was crap, wouldn't have played it. Okay. "You Keep Me Hangin' On" on KFWB, B. Mitchel Reed broke it for the Vanilla Fudge. We're down in the basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church. "The Beat Goes On" comes out, which is this weird montage of shit plus music, and we're thinking, "Hey, B. Mitchel Reed broke you because you were doing these R & B songs and you were adding new life to them. You came out with this bullshit montage." We broke it on the air. We literally broke the vinyl on the air and never played it after that. It was like one of these things, so there was some integrity there. Now, I can't speak for everybody. I never saw anybody so influenced that they played something, because one of the rarities of KPPC was the people that played records on the air not only could choose their records, they listened to the station twenty-four hours a day. The hardest thing to do was go to sleep and miss KPPC, go to a concert and miss KPPC, turn off KPPC so you could listen to new albums, whether it was like, "Hey, let's listen to the new [Rolling] Stones album" or, "What's this band, Little Feat? Let's listen to them." So I listened to Little Feat, loved it, and started playing it. "AJ the DJ" loved it. Jeff Gonzer loved it. I went to UCLA, and they had a free outdoor concert in the middle of the quad. It was Little Feat and Black Oak Arkansas. Loved it. So I ended up talking it up on the air. Then I think Little Feat ended up playing the Troubadour, I think in '70. So, anyway, I didn't interview Little Feat, but Jeff Gonzer ended up doing it eventually, and he ended up living in Laurel Canyon not too far from Sam Clayton, who joined with Kenny Gradney. The two of them were with Delaney and Bonnie, and they joined after Roy Estrada went to Captain Beefheart. So there's this release. We've got Little Feat, their very first album, Ry Cooder's very first album,

which includes drummer Richie Hayward of Little Feat on it, and *Lick My Decals Off, Baby*, where when I played it on the air, Captain Beefheart called me. We did an interview on the air. Roy Estrada left Little Feat to join Captain Beefheart's Magic Band. They're living in Santa Cruz, recording *The Spotlight Kid*. They're putting together The *Spotlight Kid* album, Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band, my benefits raising money with Bob Laemmle's theaters for the L.A. free clinics with Deirdre O'Donoghue doing all the work and then putting together the switchboard, we're juggling all of this at once. I'm thinking of so many things, I don't know what to say.

CLINE

Let me ask you something. It seems like there was a time when people working for record companies, people involved in managing bands and booking bands were very much traditional, conservative businesspeople, and as people like rock bands wound up being handled by booking agents, being booked along with all the old conservative acts, so to speak, because there was money to be made, did you start to see or do you remember when there started to be a change where, to put it in a certain way, people went from being guys in suits to being like long-hairs like the bands themselves? Do you remember this transition when the people handling the business side started to look and act more like the people they were actually handling?

ALVY

They wouldn't always go full out. Some of them would. But let me tell you about the Judy Collins concert in '67 when I called Steve Wolf, who was putting it on. He was beginning what became Concert Associates. And his partner, Jim Rismuller, they ended up doing Wolf and Rismuller Concerts, which KMET had this incredible tie-in with them. They came out with this incredible book of venues and stuff, which had the history of KMET and all this stuff. Steve Wolf wanted to meet B. Mitchel Reed. I put them together. From that point on, he would trust anything Mitch or I would say about booking acts, because we would never jive him. He said would so-and-so work, would so-and-so work? He put

together Richie Havens with Charles Lloyd Quartet, and they did Cream at the Santa Monica Civic before Pinnacle [Concerts] did it. Pinnacle, John Van Hamersveld and those people, Sepp [Donahower], the people that did Pinnacle, a lot of them actually were living the lifestyle. If you look at the book [The] Art [of] Rock and read the interview with John Van Hamersveld, that will basically tell you what was going on there. I'm sure there were a lot of shysters and things, but clubs would— Like a guy in Torrance opened up the Blue Law nightclub and Canned Heat helped them open it and we helped promote it. When the strike happened, the people at the Kaleidoscope freaked out because eventually the Kaleidoscope, which had that revolving stage, so we had the two benefits, you could set up three bands at once, and there would be continuous music because the stage would revolve. Then he'd have like the Film Orgy. Gary Essert, before he started Filmex, had a Film Orgy there where you'd sit for twelve hours and watch great old films. So he ran Magical Mystery Tour to raise money for KPPC, ran it six times in a row. You could go in at any time if you had your ticket. We had the two benefit concerts. I mentioned it included like Buffalo Springfield, Doors, Jefferson Airplane, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Firesign Theater. Traffic could not play because— For some reason, and this didn't happen too often. Elmer Valentine at the Whiskey [a Go Go] didn't want them to play anywhere else. He was afraid it would affect the gig at the Whiskey [a Go Go]. It was such an immediate sellout, there's no way it could have affected it. So Stevie Winwood, this young kid sitting in the dressing room, said, "We'd love to play, but we can't." I mean there were contracts. You know how they had those visas where if an English band came to America, you'd have to have an American band playing in England. There were tradeoff things. So the Who and Jimi Hendrix had on their visas that they couldn't go on any radio stations, and both of them went on KFWB with B. Mitchel Reed to thank him for playing their album cuts and singles and things. So it was real tight. Okay. Now we're going back to—

CLINE

You were going to mention something about Judy Collins.

ALVY

Yeah. Here's what I'm trying to— The Judy Collins concert was what Steve Wolf, one of the first concerts, that's how I got tied in with him, and now he would ask B. Mitchel Reed about it. This also meant I could get a concert. I was in in '74 visiting, after living up in Eureka back and forth, and Eric Clapton did his concert out at Long Beach in '74. I also got to see him in '79 when he had a different band up in Seattle at the Seattle Coliseum. But I just called up, and Mitch called up Steve Wolf, and immediately we had great seats, and it had been sold out for months and things. I don't know who did it, but there were only two Steely Dan concerts in L.A. in the summer of '73 and '74 at the Santa Monica Civic, and Mitch got me great seats. I remember one of them, Harry Shearer was there with his then new wife, Penny Nichols, who we had played her music at KFWB, and Billy James was her manager, who had been with Columbia [Records]. Mitch brought down Penny Nichols once, so I knew Penny, so she was there. Harry Shearer is now married to an incredible singer named Judith Owen. She's got her own website and her own CDs, and he even plays tracks that aren't available on CD yet. This great song "Famous Friends" he plays. The record promoters, I met a lot of these guys, and they all loved Mitch. They looked at Mitch like a living legend. At KPPC I met a guy named Steve Levine, like Hollywood and Le-Vine, working for A & M [Records]. He was a local guy and we would just hang out. He would bring the stuff. We'd listen to it. We'd play what we'd want. We'd hang out with them. He loved the station. He brought the main national guy, who not only traveled all over the country. He'd go to England. He was one of the first guys to bring reggae albums into this country, was Allan Mason who now does movie soundtracks. Barry Levinson. He did like *Diner*. He did the big hit one, the one with Dustin Hoffman, Tom Cruise. He did *Rain Man*. He did the music for *Rain Man*. He did the music for *Benny and Joon*. I think he made a big hit from *Hundred Miles*. He's just recently done the new Barry Levinson with Jack Black and whatever. So he does movie soundtracks and stuff. He's got

an amazing record collection and knowledge. So I met him at Allan Mason's. So Allan Mason and Steve Levine would come and we'd hang out together and this and that. Eventually, Steve Levine went out with Matthew King Kaufman, who was a friend of Allan Mason's, up to Berkeley and did Beserkeley Records. Allan Mason, for five years, put together GRT here, which ended up being Janus Records. They had like *Year of the Cat*. They had the big hit with Al Stewart. They even had stuff like some Chuck Berry stuff. They had various acts, and for five years they had Janus/Beserkeley Records. When I was living in Seattle, I was working for Peaches Records and I worked for Janus/Beserkeley. I helped break Greg Kihn [Band]. He did the one-dollar concert at the Paramount Northwest Theater. Okay. I was known for being tight with B. Mitchel Reed a lot, and I could tell whether a person was sincere with me or not by how they tried to use me to get to Mitch. If it was sincere, I would get him the album to listen to, or I would listen to it first and this and that. There were a lot of people that were insincere and you could really tell. It got to the point in the record business where you had to isolate yourself from your fans. It used to be you would answer your own phone. Then it got to there'd be a switchboard of people answering it for you. There was always a hotline. I'd always have B. Mitchel Reed's hotline. I've still got my phonebooks with the numbers where you'd call directly, and they'd change them every few months, because you'd give it to your girlfriend and then you'd break up with your girlfriend and then she'd call the other jock, and you'd have to change the number, but the hotline number. But you became more isolated from people. And the type of women you would meet were the most beautiful women in L.A., and that's saying a lot for L.A. I mean the type of people that would hang out with Hugh Hefner and this and that. The problem was, other than the ones that immediately hooked up with people because they had a true connection one way or another, whether they began as groupies, they were no longer groupies. They might have become the guy's old lady or his personal assistant or his best friend. Cocaine got involved beginning in the early seventies, and unless you

used coke or at least had coke, you couldn't get these women, because the ones that were left wanted the best, the best food, the best wine, the best coke, the best this. That's one of the reasons I moved to Seattle in '76, besides the fact I couldn't sneak into KMET anymore and Mitch couldn't get me hired at KMET to be his producer or anything, so there's no way I could support myself anymore. I was living in an apartment not too far, through my family, in the old neighborhood. It was the actual same location. They built an apartment house in the old— Where I grew up in 1948 through '50, in the Fairfax district near Third [Street] and La Cienega [Boulevard]. So I was living near KMET. So I couldn't get in there anymore, anyway, so that's another reason I moved up to Seattle. Because what I possibly could have done was gotten the all-night show at KMET, just because of Mitch, because of knowing Mitch and the people in charge. They still knew that he had, not necessarily power, but he had respect from the industry for years. He was a very respected person. I knew I would end up being hooked on cocaine. I just would have done it, because I would have done the all-night show, then I would have programmed his show. And his show, first he was doing mornings, and then he was doing ten to two. When he was doing the mornings, six to ten, his opposite was Mary Turner twelve hours later. She did six to ten followed by Jim Ladd. It was so small there across from La Brea tar pits, Mitch shared Mary Turner's office so I was stuck in there all the time. The stuff on the bulletin board, you could read, but I had to be real cool to not read her personal mail, because there was stuff on the bulletin board. They were referring to her as "Mary 'Mounds' Turner," and there was the affair she had with Jimmy Rabbitt. Now she's married to Norm Pattiz, who runs Westwood One, and you see them at the [Los Angeles] Lakers games together. I'm real happy for her because she looks real healthy, and it seems like all the free time she has because of his success she runs the benefit stuff where they donate money. I think they own the gift shop at the Museum of Television and Radio. They donate to that to keep it up. So it's real neat to see someone who did— I think she did ten

years at KMET. She was so successful. I mean she was syndicated all over the country with *On the Record* and I think even Armed Forces Radio. It's neat to see someone still alive and doing well. Jeff Gonzer, who was doing the mornings at KPPC and then KMET and then KLOS and KMET constantly in the mornings, then he went to Miami for a few years, went to Boston for a few years, came back here the same time I moved back from Santa Barbara in '93. He's been doing mornings five to nine out at— They go out to Valencia, Westwood One. He's syndicated all over the country. The closest east here is, I think, Ventura and Bakersfield. But he's on live five to nine here and then staggered. On the East Coast he's on eight a.m. to— And he's also the program director for adult rock. It's good to see him happy and healthy. He moved back to Laurel Canyon where he lived for years and years and years. I lost touch with a lot of the record company people. When I was up in Eureka doing my station [KFMI-FM], Claude Hall put a little notice in his "VOX JOX" column in *Billboard*, and I got service immediately. We went off the air May 1st of '72, and for a year I kept the license going, trying to get backers. I had a post office box, so I got records for a year. I just kept them myself. What could you do? Some of them I put in the Recordworks in Arcata, which then they opened another store in Eureka. My friend Larry Glass bought out Dale Preston, so it was him and my friend David Mulhern, who had been a roommate when I was going to UCLA and worked at Music Revolution. So they started Recordworks in Arcata, then Eureka, then they added stereos to both of them, then they started selling head-shop items, and moved to various locations. I put all my records in storage, and all my memorabilia and notebooks and magazines, all the research material, most of which I still have here, June of '73 when I moved in with Mitch in Malibu. Then three years later, summer of '76, before I moved to Seattle for three years, I took all my stuff out of storage and Larry kept it in his record store. He had to move it three different times. For a while, it was a lot of records. It was a couple thousand records. I ended up having Larry sell off most of them. I've kept a few

so I could convert to digital, because I had to start getting CDs. Beginning in '89, the station I worked at in Santa Barbara, I was doing all nights, and they had no turntables in the studio. They had two CD decks, so I slowly converted to digital. But as far as the record promoters, the concert people, a lot of them dressed the part, but as we found out later, a lot of people that got turned down for gigs at either KPPC or KMET, possibly at KLOS, who held grudges against people, it wasn't because they were bad jocks or didn't have good taste in music or were disliked for some petty thing. There was a type of fraternity where you didn't let anyone in if you felt they might be a potential narc, one way or another, because at that time everyone got high together. Now, the guy who turned me on to Indian ganja, maybe the second time I got high, and we ran the planetarium at Valley College, who was my guide when I did mescaline at Tahquitz Falls in Palm Springs, right before the— In fact, I've got footage of that that I took a year later at the Palm Springs Pop Festival that B. Mitchel Reed emceed. This was at the drive-in theater at Palm Springs, and the next night was Angels Stadium, and at the drive-in theater there was a riot that got covered. Ike and Tina Turner [Revue] played both nights. So did Canned Heat. It was an amazing— I could go into that later. The Tahquitz Falls, that was right before KMET started, so at the time the Green Hotel was where our base was. When I came back, Steve Segal and everyone, they sort of welcomed me into the fraternity, because once you've done psychedelics, you know things you never learned before. There's a certain thing you learn about smoking pot. There's a certain thing that you learn from getting stinking drunk and throwing up and being hung over. There's another thing from your first psychedelic experience. The only way I got into it— Because for a year, I was hanging out. Rick Nance had me hanging out with musicians and people that could have suspected me as a narc because I wasn't getting high, but respected the fact that I wasn't getting high. Once I did psychedelics, it was because I read Aldous Huxley. I read *Doors of Perception* and I realized, and that's why I switched to mescaline as opposed to doing LSD.

The guy who was my guide, he was also my guide on that mescaline trip in June of '68. He's the one that we did the planetarium at Valley College and he turned me on to Indian ganja. The concert people, the record promoters, the concert promoters—

CLINE

The fraternity of people—

ALVY

Yeah. We wouldn't let people— And that had to do with record company people, too. Now, there was an independent guy named Tony Richland, who Harry Nilsson wrote the song "Mr. Richland's Favorite Song" or something like that. He started stamping his name on his records because they would show at Manny Aron's store, and he would get real pissed. One day he showed up when I was on the air and there was no one else in the station, and I was doing three or four segues at once, and I said, "Please leave the records at the front door," through the intercom. He was so incensed that afterwards he had a whole— He was really pissed at me. I pissed off a lot of people. When Les Carter brought me back, he put me on Sunday midnight to five. It was the only shift available to start working me in, right after Elliot Mintz, who did a talk radio show, and we ended up in a feud. There was a recording that was on cart, "Hey, Elliot, you want a red? Hey, Elliot, you want a red, man?" that Steven Segal would run at all the time. There was a party that Les Carter and Susan Carter went to that Sue Lyons from the— Did I already tell this story?

CLINE

No.

ALVY

That Sue Lyons from *Lolita* threw. When Elliot walked through the door, Elliot Mintz—this is before he was a publicist for Bob Dylan and Don Johnson and all those people—and she said to him, "Hey, Elliot, you want a red?" He just— His face went red, Les said, after that. So I was following him, and then almost immediately Monday night, "Blue Monday," Johnny Otis was doing the show, so I'd sleep in a sleeping bag. I'd do midnight to five, right after Elliot

Mintz. Five in the morning, I'd go in the sleeping bag, and then I'd get up, and then I'd hang out at the station and do production. Then Monday night I'd engineer and produce Johnny Otis' show, and it was great. He had a teenage guitarist, Shuggie Otis, who could kick butt. Johnny Otis was, like, a legend. I just got a Johnny "Guitar" Watson CD that has some of the stuff he did with Johnny Otis, like "Gangster of Love," the original "Gangster of Love." So Johnny Otis brings in Johnny Shines for an interview, the slide guitarist who toured with Robert Johnson. He brings in the guy who just appeared in *The Shining*, that musician who also appears in Disney, Scatman Crouthers. He brings in Blind Sonny Terry, Sonny Terry and Brownie Magee, and talking with Sonny Terry, it was so amazing how this guy was blind but was so— It's like when I saw [Rahsaan] Roland Kirk twice at Shelly's Manne-Hole, once when he did his normal trip and once when he was a real activist. I saw Stevie Wonder in '72 opening for the Rolling Stones at Winterland. I flew in from Eureka and then I flew out that night to L.A. It was on one of my trips to L.A. So I saw guys. I never saw Ray Charles in person, but to me, what I do a lot around this house is I close my eyes. I don't burn a lot of lights, because I conserve electricity. I close my eyes a lot and go through things and try and imagine how a person could live that way. I wonder if you had to give up one sight [sense], what would it be? Because when you taste something, you get amazing memories. I'm having trouble sleeping, and now that I've started sleeping and dreaming again, my sense of smell has come back, which means my sense of taste has improved, so food tastes better. I'm so into hearing that I wonder if I could do without hearing, if I could be deaf. I wonder all those things. But Johnny Otis had these amazing guys, and I was learning amazing music. He had me play this amazing music. I blew it once. Lucille Bogan does "Shave 'Em Dry" on this import album, which I now have on CD, and I played the wrong version. They were back to back. I played the one that talks about titties and this and that. The general manager, Doug Cox, was looking for an excuse, because he hated Johnny Otis, to get him off the air, and he tried to use that.

That didn't work, because I did a mea culpa and took— He didn't want to get rid of me because he knew I was tight with Les, that I'd known Les and Steven since the early days. So the next thing I did was next Monday is Johnny Otis' birthday. "Let's have a birthday barbecue for him next week," because we had an empty lot next door where we had the pie fight with Elton John, where there was an actual pie fight with Elton John, and I was the emcee in the studio waiting for it to show up. Then the barbecue, there were so many people there that it caused the police had to be called. So Doug Cox is using this thing. So I end up having to resign the show after about all summer. I did summer of '70 until about the end of December. Ted Longmire took over. Now, he was the first what's now called African American. He was the first black disc jockey that we had hired. Les had been a jazz disc jockey, Les Carter, for years, and we had no problem. There was no one at the station that really had any problems with blacks or anything. Part of the deal, I guess, of hiring people that it was cool to get high with was also hiring people that were against the war and that were into civil rights and this and that. So Ted Longmire took over my gig, but I learned so much in this like six months from Johnny Otis.

CLINE

Why did Doug Cox hate him so much?

ALVY

Probably because he was black and played R & B.

CLINE

He wasn't black.

ALVY

Yeah, that he—

CLINE

He's an honorary black.

ALVY

He had grown up and— He's still got a website. He's still doing stuff.

CLINE

He's up in Sebastopol now.

ALVY

There's stuff you can buy. I recently bought his— When we were on the air, the albums that had come out was *Cold Shot* with Shuggie Otis on guitar, and there was this one that had dirty versions of songs called *Snatch and The Poontangs*, which we didn't actually play on the air. But I had both of those, and they both came out on the same CD, which is great. So I've got some really good Johnny Otis stuff with Shuggie Otis. Shuggie came out— His stuff's been reissued, he came out with some new stuff. He had like drug problems and things and they were claiming this and that, but he was an amazing guitarist. I learned so much from Johnny Otis. Doing the folk show, I learned that. Plus from B. Mitchel Reed—

1.7. TAPE NUMBER: IV, Side Two (April 16, 2004)

CLINE

Okay. We're back on. The tape ran out when you were talking about what you learned from Johnny Otis, and you mentioned also the folk show.

ALVY

Yeah, the folk show I did, I learned folk music, B. Mitchel Reed, because, you know, B. Mitchel Reed, he dated Mary Travers. I mean my god. He knew Bob Dylan's manager who also managed Peter, Paul, and Mary and all that.

CLINE

Was this Albert Grossman?

ALVY

Yeah, Albert Grossman. Mitch knew all those people, hung out with them in New York and this and that, and back here. He hung out with Steve McQueen, this and that. So I'm learning all this. Les Carter turned me on to some amazing jazz. B. Mitchel Reed turned me on to jazz and folk and rock. Okay. CAFF stands for Community Action for Facts and Freedom, also known as Community Action for Artistic Facts and Freedom. The Byrds' manager, Jim Dickson, was one of the organizers. The Byrds' publicist, Derek Taylor, was another organizer. B. Mitchel Reed was part of it. In 1967, this was when I was working at the college station. I had not met B. Mitchel Reed yet. Steve Tarr and his girlfriend, Ivy,

and I were sharing an apartment. I was working at the post office. Mike Robinson was over there a lot. We went to this concert in Woodland Hills at the Valley Music Theater. Now, I'm not sure, but this might have also been a theater in the round like the one out in Covina that had a stage that revolved. The headliners were Peter, Paul, and Mary. The money was— It was put together after the riots on the Sunset Strip. It was a reaction to the riots on the Sunset Strip. Stephen Stills was in San Francisco and heard about it and wrote "For What It's Worth." This is George Washington's birthday [February 22, 1967]. Besides Peter, Paul, and Mary—and I believe this is the first time these three bands, and maybe the only time, they ever played together—the Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and Doors. Seventy-three. The ad ran. And Hugh Masekela was also on it. I believe he played and then played with the Byrds on "So You Wanna Be a Rock 'n Roll Star," which he played with with Big Black the conga player, and he played with that at Monterey Pop [Festival]. The *Free Press* ad ran February 17th, 1967, on page five. So that's one of the mind-blowing concerts I went to before I started getting high and before I met B. Mitchel Reed, before I took mescaline because of Aldous Huxley. A weird thing that happened, my guru, Rick Nance from the post office, who turned me on to so many things, set me up where I met with Laura Huxley, Aldous Huxley's widow. She was also at the solstice thing in '97 with the Allen Ginsberg tribute. She was also there. I went up to her house. I turned her on to Emerson, Lake, and Palmer. I showed how we did things like played classical music, and I played this stuff for her. And she was blown away that we were doing these things on the air, because she might have started to listen to our station after that, because I explained how we— You know, this and that. I said, "Elliot Mintz does a talk show. He'd like to have you on his show," yadda, yadda. I think I told her how I played rock and roll after his show and there was some— We didn't really mesh. She gave me one of her spoken-word albums and a book. Now, I went to Elliot Mintz and said, "Look, we don't get along, but here's Laura Huxley's phone number. Here's the book. Here's the

album. I ask you one thing, one favor only. When she's going to be on your show, call me and let me know, because you know I basically don't listen to your show. I'm listening to the music or going to a concert on Sunday night." He never did that, so I never forgave him. When Neil Young did the *Tonight's the Night* concert with Nils Lofgren and the first time, the very first gig on the Sunset Strip that Lou Adler put together, the Rainbow [Bar and Grill], the very first gig, he was there. That's when Bob Dylan was sitting with Cher, and this and that. Elliot Mintz comes up to B. Mitchel Reed, who I'm sitting there with, because Mitch got me in obviously, and I had a perfect thing. I could have said, "Hey, Elliot, you want a red?" But I didn't, because when I was with Mitch I was sort of on good behavior. I could really screw Mitch up, because I'm going around saying I'm his producer and people are accepting me. I could have really messed Mitch up. So I had to hold back a lot, which in some ways I held back a lot of my creativity when I was dealing with Mitch. But then when I was on the air on my own, I got to really do it. Up in Eureka, I mean I was the program director, general manager, music director, doing my own show. I was the last guy on. I could stay on after midnight as late as I wanted to every night six nights a week, and I could play whatever I want. We played Frank Zappa, "Billy the Mountain," where he says "no fuckin' mountain" in it. I'm out in Arcata on my day off and a guy called and said, "Can I play this?" I said, "Sure," and we played it, stuff like that.

CLINE

So you were talking about Elliot Mintz and Laura Huxley and then Neil Young.

ALVY

Yeah. Then she appeared on his show and then he didn't call me and then there was sort of— Finally he had a falling-out and ended up leaving KPPC and he was briefly at KMET. He had been at KPFK a lot. When Radio Free Oz was on, Elliot Mintz was on around that time. So he was the good and the bad. He brought the Manson Family girls to KPPC. They showed up because he had *Lie*, which is the *Life* cover with the "F" off. The album that Manson recorded was in the

library because of Elliot Mintz, and then the Manson Family girls started hanging out. That's one of the reasons we got rid of Elliot Mintz, because they started hanging out at the station. That was scary.

CLINE

Yeah, no kidding. I have a question on here that I don't want to go too much longer, but when the Manson murders happened, this apparently sent some serious shockwaves through the community here.

ALVY

It did.

CLINE

What was your take on that? What do you remember about that?

ALVY

Yeah, I remember driving home on the Santa Monica Freeway with the sun setting, and I talked to Carole Reed, B. Mitchel Reed's wife. Carole Reed was like— Like I'm a cosmic catalyst. I'll get involved in things and they won't necessarily change me, but I would— Like I put together Tom Robbins and Theodore Sturgeon. They ended up having dinner together because one wrote me that he— Tom Robbins said, "I love to read Theodore Sturgeon." I called him up, put them together, they had dinner together, and then when I wrote Tom Robbins about wanting to run the Karl Wallenda piece after the solstice thing in 1997 for— I mentioned how I had put them together for dinner, so he knew exactly who I was, even though it had been a long time since we had conversed together. Which direction did you want to go?

CLINE

The Manson murders.

ALVY

So I called her and I would go to like— You know Warren Beatty in *Shampoo*? That was really based on a real thing. It was sort of Jay Sebring. I would go to these Beverly Hills beauty parlors with Carole Reed where celebrities' wives would sit and gossip, and they would accept me because I was with Carole Reed. I was like one of the girls. So I knew that was going on. So Carole was in touch with this sort of

underground. She knew that Mitch had this group of people that would call him. A lot of the people she wasn't aware of and she just let it be. But she was like you would tell her, and she would be able to get the pulse of people by calling them. And she said, "There is fear. The entire Hollywood community is fearful because they have no idea what's going on, who did it, why." There were so many possibilities, the Roman Polanski aspect, the Jay Sebring aspect, the heir to Folgers, the drugs, the way things were done, the things that were written on the wall. And then when the La Bianca things happened, it got even crazier, so, yeah. You'd think, well, what are the odds that someone else would get murdered? It's like if there was a terrorist act in L.A., okay, they ran the planes in the [World Trade Center] towers. What are the odds that it's also going to happen, let's say, at the Statue of Liberty or it could happen at the Empire State Building? The odds are really slim. But there was a lot of fear because people— And then the rumors things happen. Like someone from the Beach Boys used to have them.

CLINE

Dennis Wilson.

ALVY

All those things, the Topanga [Canyon] thing, the Spahn Ranch. There's a tie with Topanga. That whole thing was like a tie with the San Fernando Valley. There's a whole hippie thing out in Box Canyon that ties in. Then everyone knew somebody that knew somebody, so it was like one of those— It was three degrees of Kevin Bacon. It was even less. So, yeah, there was a lot of fear. And I don't know if you know it, but there's going to be another version of the Manson on TV during the May sweeps, I think. The other version, the main version, the *Helter Skelter* version was from the book.

CLINE

Yeah, [Vincent] Bugliosi.

ALVY

This is going to be from Manson and how he recruited the girls, and it's going to be— Now that they've had the Hitler movie and the Reagan movie and the Jesus movie and all this stuff, they're redoing this. I don't know if anyone can

do— I mean the actor that did it last time [Steve Railsback], that guy was amazing, that did the *Helter Skelter* one.

CLINE

You said there was a lot of fear. It really put quite a damper on the scene.

ALVY

I worked at the Beverly Hills Post Office for less than ninety days, because I broke my ankle and they got rid of me. I was a carrier. I was sitting in for people. I delivered up near— I didn't get that route, but I talked to people and they told me how for years after that they were real careful delivering up there. The whole thing's been razed and rebuilt, I think. I think they rebuilt the whole thing. But then there was the Gary Usher thing with the Byrds and the fact that Manson felt that he wasn't getting his due and he could have blamed Gary Usher, who had lived there before, before Sharon Tate moved in.

CLINE

This leads to another question, which I want to finish with. You mentioned earlier about the cross-pollination of some of the Bay Area rock bands and some of the bands down here, Paul Kantner, David Crosby, people came—

ALVY

Yeah, look at David Crosby's solo album and you'll see [Jerry] Garcia and a bunch of people.

CLINE

Exactly. He was certainly quite the multi scene-making kind of guy. Yet there's a lot made of the different sounds or the different qualities of groups from here versus there. People talk about if there's such a thing as an L.A. sound. You look at bands like the Doors and Love and some of these bands that when compared to the Bay Area seem a little, for lack of a better term, darker, maybe, a little more sinister edge, or maybe just more edge. That might be another way to put it. When you saw all these bands, and you saw all these bands at Monterey Pop, for example, when they were really, really, maybe in their prime—

ALVY

I also went to a few ballrooms and saw them. I'll mention them.

CLINE

But did you perceive there were more like an L.A. sound or you just didn't—

ALVY

No, a lot of this was all— It was almost like saying the media created this or that. Like the Summer of Love was basically— After the so-called Summer of Love, they had the Death of the Hippie, they had the funeral procession and whatever in San Francisco, the Death of the Hippie. Musicians didn't really think that. Like when people up in San Francisco called L.A. plastic, they weren't calling the musicians plastic; they were calling the business structure. When Lou Adler and John Phillips went to the Bay Area and tried to convince the Bay Area acts to play, they were so leery of it, even though John Phillips was a musician and songwriter and was sort of able— And the Grateful Dead ended up recording his "Me and My Uncle" and playing it live and this and that, so they got them in there. But the true people, the musicians and the underground radio disc jockeys, the underground press people, the record store people, all those people, the street people, the true hippies, the true street people, you knew that a band was a band. A lot of the so-called San Francisco sound was the fact they played in these big ballrooms. So if you listen to recordings now, there might be a certain quality to the sound. A lot of the good bands, obviously, were based on root music, be it folk, jazz, or blues, the neat cross-pollenization. Let me tell you, in 1976, I'm living in Eureka. Wild Bill Cody drives to San Francisco. This is Memorial Day weekend. Friday night we go to Winterland. The headliner is Kingfish with Bob Weir. They're incredible. One of the opening acts, Charlie Daniels. At that time, he was a great country rock band, and he wasn't— Even now he's still great, even though a lot of people do the patriotic thing. A lot of times he'll say things that will [inaudible]. The next Saturday, Greek Theater in Berkeley, Weather Report. Now, at UCLA in '68 in fall, their jazz festival, I bought tickets to the festival. Cannonball Adderley, "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy,"

with Joe Zawinul; the Miles Davis Quintet. Okay, now you've got Tony Williams on drums and Ron Carter on bass. You've got Wayne Shorter, who I met at B. Mitchel Reed's David Reed's birthday party. You've got Miles Davis. You've got Herbie Hancock, who scored *Blow-Up*, which had the Yardbirds doing "Stroll On," which is the only time Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck were together on film, and "Stroll On" is basically "Train Kept A-Rollin'." They destroyed their instruments because Antonioni wanted them to be like the Who. At the time, the Who were destroying instruments, so they did that. So there's that time with Herbie Hancock. And the other band was the Modern Jazz Quartet, who Apple [Records] signed, who did stuff. Then I see Weather Report, which is Joe Zawinul and Wayne Shorter. Okay. Sunday, the Paramount Theater in Oakland, Bob Marley and the Wailers, my god, Little Anthony opens, who did Little Anthony and the Imperials. Memorial Day weekend, Monday, San Jose Civic Auditorium, there's a solo concert by two solo artists, Ry Cooder and Randy Newman. Now, this is four days in the Bay Area in '76. Now that's the way it was in L.A. from, let's say, '67 through '72, which is when I say the sixties ended in California, because they actually started here. We were sort of half a jump ahead. Around '72, a couple things happened. We were all fired at KPPC October 24th, 1971. At the same time, KLOS—now, I'm not even going to mention the guy's name, because he gets a lot of credit and I hate him—they put together the very first formatted FM called "Rock in Stereo," which went on all the ABC stations around the country. Then it was followed, and they had these little three-by-five cards and there'd be orders, and you'd have to go through these and take one from here and you can't play your own records. Even at KLOS there were engineers. You didn't even get to touch the records, so you didn't have the tactile thing. So, to me, '67 through '71, those five years, I know the core music. I know what was in the libraries at KPPC and KMET. I put them together. I know what got left out as it moved into formatted radio. KMET, there was a lot of freedom when they became successful. Now, B. Mitchel Reed was fired in '78 after his heart attack, and he went to

KLOS, which he hated. He didn't even want me to come visit him over there. I mean, he was like he hated it. We'd talk on the phone and I'd give him input on stuff. He says, "I can't play it." After he left, they found a bunch of three-by-five cards behind the console, because when he saw— When a dud came in, a stiff, he'd just— Eventually they might replace it, but for a while, for three or four days, you'd have to play lame stuff. I used to do that. I hid CDs in Santa Barbara. There were a couple CDs that we were supposed to play according to the computerized list, so I just hid them and then I played my own stuff late at night. This was 1989 in Santa Barbara.

CLINE

You were on '67 to '72 in L.A.

ALVY

To '71, I know that core music. Then from '72 on, that's when they started keeping records because it was all formatted. They'd have a list of what they could play, and then it spread to other— Metromedia then started doing it. Then other stations started doing it. Then it became real formatted. Then, like I said, through the years they hyped up the stations so much that the values are so much that you and I can't go out and buy a station, where back in the early days you could. I don't know what Air America— Air America's getting these cheesy AM stations with bad signals because that's all that's available for talk radio. KLSX-FM was a great classic rock station, and they've ruined it. Sure, it's a successful talk station, but it means 24/7 is no longer rock music in L.A.

CLINE

One thing that I also had noticed when you were talking about these bills, you're talking about these very eclectic sorts of bills at these concerts, but also if you look at things like the Monterey Pop Festival, you look at these bills of these different kinds of acts put together, and one of the things that I'm really struck by that you just don't see so much now is the presence of groups and individuals who are really representing the roots of the music, the blues bands,

they are the folk people, they are combined with very adventurous more innovative rock bands of the time.

ALVY

Are you talking about young artists in their twenties and thirties?

CLINE

Yeah, I'm talking about people like, say, at Monterey Pop you've got Jefferson Airplane, but you've also got Paul Butterfield.

ALVY

Well, I love the Wallflowers. Now, I saw Michael Ward when he was playing with John Hiatt. I got to see him twice, and then he's now since left the Wallflowers, which means that [Jakob] Dylan will play a lot more guitar. I've seen them recently. I love them for so many reasons, the music they play, the true Dylan connection, the fact that Jakob Dylan is a true songwriter. I love "Empire of My Mind" on that show *The Guardian*. They use that as a theme song. On their last album it's a hidden track. I mean it's not a hidden track, it's not listed, but if you put it in there, it shows up. It's a separate track, "Empire of My Mind," which is great. For example, I would see the Allman Brothers [Band] in Santa Barbara over a period of about— I saw them maybe like four or five times in five years ending around '93, and I loved them. One time they had John Popper open. What's the name of his band?

CLINE

Yeah, Blues Traveler.

ALVY

Blues Traveler. I was all hopped for it, but they ended up sounding like speed metal. I've seen them since then when they were really good, but it's like I'm saying, "Hey, man, you know, you've got the licks and you've got the knowledge." But to me, a lot of it is one of the reasons the Telecom[munications] Act of 1996, besides making monopolies of a few people owning a lot of stations, it's ruined music. There's so few music—If young people could turn on like Los Lobos, if David Hidalgo could hear a KPPC now, if his son could hear a KPPC now, exposed to all this

music, they then have more choices of where to go with their music and their influence, and they know that what they hear No Doubt doing was done by someone even before them. Courtney Love should have been shot. Whoever shot Kurt Cobain should have shot Courtney Love, because she is— I mean, my god. Now it's like the whole fucking world is karaoke. I mean all these shows, these so-called reality shows, it's the lamest thing in the world. Then the guy that doesn't make it is even more popular, and the [Los Angeles] Dodgers have to play him in the clubhouse or they don't win before— Then all the good music cannot be heard on the radio. Sure, you can say, well, you can get an Internet station or you can get a satellite station. True American radio, true commercial radio, you become popular by playing good music. If you become popular, you have more commercials. If you get really good like we did at KPPC, you make your own commercials. They come to you. You make them for your audience. They're not only more successful for the product, the audience calls in and requests them. "Could you play that?" "I'm sorry, that was not an I.D." We'd have these creative—"That was an actual commercial for so-and-so. It's scheduled between three and three-thirty this afternoon," or whatever. To me, that's so amazing. That's why I'm going to do a show. I'm trying to do my "Brunch with the Blues" show. I want to do three or four hours on a Sunday afternoon around noon. I want to do a one-time thing, and if it works out, I want thirteen weeks and I want to prove what you can do. It's like if you build it, they will come, because I want young musicians to listen to good music, and you can do it. They could listen to one hour and get so much variety that it makes sense to them that it's all related. Even if it's not related, it's related.

CLINE

KPPC was broadcasting the roots music and the current music as these festivals were showing younger bands playing blues music, doing folk music, innovating the rock style, and we want to talk next time specifically about a lot of the programming personalities at KPPC.

ALVY

Great, and some of the other stations.

CLINE

I want you to paint a picture of the strike.

ALVY

How late do you want to go with FM, as far as into the seventies? How far do you want to go with this discussion and your whole— Because the premise of your thing—

CLINE

Yeah, we don't want to go too far into it.

ALVY

But do you want to go like '65 to '75 or do you want to go—

CLINE

That sounds fine. That sounds agreeable, yeah.

ALVY

Because, like I said, by then it had been— Even though, like I was hanging out with B. Mitchel Reed from '73 to '76 at the La Brea tar pits, KMET, hanging out in programming and getting high on the roof, and doing this and that, that all changed because even though when they went to KTTV, the Metromedia Square, I visited Jeff Gonzer once when I moved back from Seattle. It must have been in the fall of '79. I visited him. I met people. I was supposed to cut an audition tape for Sam Bellamy, and my heart wasn't into it. I ended up moving to Santa Barbara after that. I didn't want to really work, but I wanted to see what it was like because I knew— And to me, if they had let Mitch have his own person like me running the show for him, he probably wouldn't have had his heart attack; he would have had longevity. The station would have been successful sooner, and it would have had a real base, and it never would have reached the point where they cleaned out the good music, the roots music, from the library to where even if they had given the jocks freedom, let's say, in the late eighties, early nineties, they could have continued. The 1987, I guess what was it, Valentine's Day, that KMET became [KTWV] The Wave [smooth jazz]? Because I think the tenth anniversary was in ninety-something, something like that. They would have still been a rock station because B. Mitchel Reed had built up that frequency beginning in June of '68 reaching Santa Barbara to

San Diego, that 94.7, whether it was a little bit of heaven or whether it was whatever, was a rock and roll station, the first FM station for a lot of people who didn't hear KPPC until September of '70 where for a year we had full power, supposedly, up at Flint Peak, at least a better signal. Not like KMET, not like KLOS, and especially not like KFI, which I used to hear in Seattle. Clear Channel KFI, I used to hear it in Seattle.

CLINE

Okay. Well, we'll take it up next time. I want you to also just block the persons interested through the early days where the strike happens and what that was about and what happened as a result of that.

ALVY

Yeah, anything you want.

CLINE

Okay. All right. [End of April 16, 2004) interview]

1.8. TAPE NUMBER: V, Side One (April 23, 2004)

CLINE

Today is April 23rd, 2004). This is Alex Cline interviewing Ted Alvy, and this is tape number five. This is our third session here in Van Nuys. Good morning.

ALVY

Yes, Southeast Van Nuys, which now they're calling Valley Glen.

CLINE

Valley Glen, yes, I saw the sign.

ALVY

Yeah, the signs went up. It's basically the southeast corner of [L.A.] Valley College, actually includes Grant High School right along the wash there, and it shoots up from Burbank [Boulevard] all the way up the wash to Sherman Way and then it cuts over down Fulton [Avenue] to Vanowen [Street] and then over to Hazeltine [Avenue] and then down to Burbank. And they call it Valley Glen. I call it Southeast Van Nuys, but it borders on both North Hollywood and Sherman Oaks. It's kind of unique. To me, Beverly Glen is a glen.

Valley Glen here is just an excuse for them to— The realtors, basically.

CLINE

Yeah, make the property value go up.

ALVY

Now, there's this thing called the Oral History Program at UCLA, which blows me away, because I went to UCLA, and there's an actual musician named Alex Cline that's doing this whole thing on KPPC. I just want to say that I think it's amazing. Now, the book I'm writing, *60s Underground Radio: I Was a Teenage Disc Jockey* by Ted Alvy, I call it a true fiction, because like the movie *Rashomon* where there's four different versions of something, different people see things in a different way. Now, some of the important things that I just want to put out there, I think it was around 1965, the FCC [Federal Communication Commission] told radio station owners—at the time you could have one radio station, one AM, one FM, which sounded great, lot of diversity—that they could not duplicate the signal on their FM twenty-four hours a day like a lot of them were. So the AM would be on, and AM at the time was the best. Everyone had AM radios. FM was just brand new. AM would have 100 percent programming duplicated on FM, and the FCC said no. So all of a sudden, the owners of these radio stations had to make an investment in the FM and somehow get twelve hours of unique programming on the air. That's how hippie, underground, rock radio migrated to FM. Now, the most important concept in my mind is called the segue, s-e-g-u-e [seg-way], which is the gapless bridge. It's a transition that takes place usually between sound or video or film. That's how it's known. But you can look upon it as life or anything changing, so the segue and the fact that all of a sudden these signals were available to people off the street. The *Billboard* Hot 100, April 4th, 1964, so that's real close to where we are now. The Beatles on the *Ed Sullivan [Show]* program, their first gig was February 9th, 1964. Then the following Sunday, February 16th, 1964, was from Miami. Then on the 23rd, February 23rd was songs that had been taped on February 9th on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. This took

place in February. Then April 4th, the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart, five Beatles songs, "Can't Buy Me Love," "Twist and Shout," "She Loves You," "I Wanna Hold Your Hand," "Please Please Me," were the first five on the charts. That had never happened before. Also on the charts, number 31, "I Saw Her Standing There;" 41, "From Me to You;" 46, "Do You Want to Know a Secret;" 58, "All My Lovin';" 65, "You Can't Do That;" 68, "Roll Over Beethoven;" 79, "Thank You Girl." A *Hard Day's Night* didn't really come out till the beginning of the summer, so that's when the Byrds went and then they saw the Rickenbacker [twelve-string guitar]s and this and [Roger, then called Jim] McGuinn starts the Byrds. *Billboard* album chart, number one was *Meet the Beatles* on Capitol [Records]. Number two was *Introducing the Beatles* on Veejay [Records]. So that's something that was taking place. I just wanted to throw in a few things. Now, the Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl, Sunday, August 23rd, 1964; then Sunday, August 29th, 1965; then Monday, August 30th, 1965. The Beatles at Dodgers Stadium, which I went to, Sunday, August 28th, 1966, it was real difficult to hear the Beatles. Some of the other musicians you could actually hear better because there wasn't the shouting, which basically it was like the *Ed Sullivan Show* from beginning to end. The Beatles at Candlestick Park the next day was their last concert, Monday, August 29th, 1966. Okay. Some events. The Human Be-In took place January 14th, 1967, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, at the polo grounds, Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, etc. Los Angeles Elysian Park, not too far from the L.A. Police [Department] Academy, the first Love-In, which was coined by Peter Bergman of *Radio Free Oz* on the Firesign Theater. The Love-In took place Easter Sunday, March 26th, 1967, six a.m. sunrise service, and it went until nine at night. It was announced by the L.A. Free Press and on KPFK FM—that's the Pacifica station—and *Radio Free Oz*, which began broadcasting on KRLA AM that same night, March 26, 1967, and the Firesign Theater from an event poster and offering to the City of Los Angeles all those rock groups, bring bells, flutes, flags, drums, and flowers. "Bring tangerines, food, incense, candles, and joy." As a kid,

we used to sneak the transistor radios, which I told you began in 1954, in a hollowed-out book so we could listen to the World Series. The all-time thing, this is for a kid growing up in L.A., 1963, Dodgers Stadium, the World Series, the Dodgers. Sandy Koufax, October 2nd in New York, he beat Whitey Ford five to two. October 3rd, the next day, at Yankee Stadium, Johnny Podres, the classic lefty. When Sandy Koufax joined the Dodgers it was 1955, the first time they ever won the World Series, Podres was an ace back then. He beat the New York Yankees four to one. October 5th in Los Angeles here, Don Drysdale, the right-hander, beat New York one to nothing. Then October 6th in Los Angeles, Sandy Koufax, a two to one victory over Whitey Ford. Walter Alston was the Dodgers manager. Ralph Houk was the [New York] Yankees manager. That was like the ultimate. Now, right up the street here, right up Oxnard [Street], almost to Hazeltine used to be a place called Don Drysdale's Dugout, his own restaurant, which is now gone. Let me just throw in a few things now. They're talking about the Selective Service. [Reading] "For more than fifty years, Selective Service and a registration requirement for America's young men have served as a backup system to provide manpower to the U.S. armed forces. Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. '48 to '73, during both peacetime and periods of conflict, men were drafted to fill vacancies in the armed forces, which could not be filled through voluntary means. In 1973, the draft ended, and the U.S. converted to an all-volunteer military. "The registration requirement was suspended in April of '75. It was resumed again in 1980 by President [James E.] Carter in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Registration continues today as a hedge against underestimating the number of servicemen needed in future crisis. The obligation of a man to register is imposed by the Military Selective Service Act, the act established and governs the operations of the Selective Service System. December 1st, 1969 marked the date of the first draft lottery held since 1942. Men born between January 1st, '44, and December 31st, '50, a large container, men affected had to be eighteen to twenty-six,

and there were 366 blue plastic balls." So even if you were born on February 29th, like this is a leap year. "Estimated 850,000 men who will be nineteen through twenty-five were classified 1A or draft-eligible as of January 1st, 1970, were affected by the drawing. The highest number drafted in this group was 195. Lottery was held again July 1st, 1970; August 5th, 1971; February 2nd, 1972." Now, I had a student deferment at UCLA. I got a draft lawyer through disc jockey Les Carter, paid the guy fifty bucks. He said dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, "Keep your deferment. If you get 1A, will you say you're gay to get out of the draft?" I said, "Yeah. I don't want to go to Canada." He said, "Fine. Go back to school." I was at 272, so I was way up there. My best friend Mike Robinson was 155, so he was on the bubble, so he had to really sweat it. Where he went was—"The Mailman" lived on Federal [Avenue], the guy with the purple thumb who grew the best dope in West L.A. We lived on Colby [Avenue] right around the corner, right near— This is near Bundy [Avenue], and it's right off of Olympic [Boulevard]. Just north of there on Santa Monica Boulevard near the [Interstate 405] Freeway, near the San Diego Freeway, was Papa Bach Bookstore.

CLINE

Yeah, I used to go there all the time.

ALVY

A great place, underground, comics. Upstairs was the draft counseling, and that's where Mike Robinson went, because the whole time he was really sweating it. I wasn't, with 272 and a really good student deferment. So the draft was very important to everybody, all of us disc jockeys on the air. One of the mistakes that a lot of people made was, we were anti-war, but we obviously weren't anti-soldier, because we wanted to help them go up to Canada, this and that, become conscientious objectors. The one mistake that was made was when the [Vietnam War] veterans came back, they felt that they were shunned, and that was a big mistake. That's why now most of the people that are anti-war are pro-military, pro-soldiers. That was the mistake we made. I just want to do this real quick, okay? [Reading] "KMET was still

automated in June 1968 with female voices and middle-of-the-road music. When the stereo station first played rock music, it all began with BMR [B. Mitchel Reed] playing a Beatles song." Now I'm going to reveal this to you. At the Monterey Pop Festival where I met B. Mitchel Reed, Derek Taylor was running the press show. He was letting us in. He gave me and Larry Glass from L.A. Valley College radio a press pass because of our *Radio Free Oz* button that I had been wearing. He had a press release which is great, and at the bottom of it he says, "Turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream," from "Tomorrow Never Knows" [by the Beatles] because *Revolver*, even though this was June of '67 and *Sergeant Pepper* [*'s Lonely Hearts Club Band*] had just come out, *Revolver* had been the one that had been on everyone's mind for so long. So I wanted to sort of do a tribute to that, and this is June of '68, basically one year after I met Mitch. The [KMPX-KPPC] strike is now over. KSAN is basically full-time with most of the KMPX people who went on the air during Tom Donahue's birthday, May 21st of 1968. I had done my first mescaline trip at Tahquitz Falls, the Indian area reservation in Palm Springs. I came back. We tried to tape a B. Mitchel Reed show that took nine or ten hours just to get a two-hour show, because you had to have these tones. A tone would turn on one tape with Mitch's voice, then turn on a tape with the music, then turn on the commercials, then come back, and so it was real weird. So he flew up with Larry Glass to San Francisco and worked out of KSAN for two or three months taping shows. He and Tom Donahue would tape shows using the vast KSAN library and then send them down to KMET and they'd be run as taped shows, first two hours, then four hours. Then Mitch came back, and I decided not to go to Boston. WBCN had started Friday, March 15th, 1968, with "Mississippi Fats" [his name used on our station], who is basically— His name is Joseph Rogers. He's a great guy. He went on the air, I believe, at ten o'clock at night on Friday, 1968. It was March 15th, the last weekend before our strike. We went on strike Monday morning at three a.m. March 18th, 1968, with the Grateful Dead playing outdoors at KMPX and with us going twenty-

fours on a picket line around the Pasadena Presbyterian Church on Colorado Boulevard where the Rose Parade passes. So B. Mitchel Reed then became the voice of KMET 24/7, before the suits finally allowed the DJs to broadcast live. Now, Tom Donahue set it up how Steven Segal, who later became known as "the Obscene Steven Clean," very talented from New York State, went back to WBCN in Boston for one year to do full-time air shift and basically teach them what we had been doing, because the owner, Ray Riepen, had talked to Tom Donahue and flown to San Francisco and then started the station in Boston just from scratch. I was supposed to go back, and I didn't. Now, I've always wondered if I had gone back and done full-time radio at WBCN for a year, obviously my life would have changed. I may never have come back. Who knows? But I wonder which disc jockey wouldn't have gotten a gig at WBCN and how their lives may have changed. Now, it may have been J.J. Jackson, I don't know. He ended up coming out here in 1971 to work at KLOS because we had no room for him at KPPC. I know "Mississippi" Joseph Rogers worked with them out there. Joseph Rogers was great. He was "Mississippi Harold Wilson" on the air at WBCN in Boston, out of— The prime minister of England was called Harold Wilson. He moved out here and he became "Mississippi Brian Wilson." Then he really got into blues. We were hanging out at the Ash Grove constantly, and on his show a lot of times he'd let me play a blues song, and then he'd play one, then I'd play one, which was a thing we'd do a lot. When I was visiting KMPX, they would do the same type of thing where visiting people— You'd run to the library and you'd play a song. There'd be three or four people, sort of like on a tag team going on. So I'm curious. I've never figured out whose life would have changed if I had done a year back there. Now, I decided to stay here because in September I transferred to UCLA. They had accepted me out of high school, but I spent the two years at L.A. Valley College, which not only gave me access to going to the Monterey Pop Festival, meeting B. Mitchel Reed, because I was a full-time disc jockey on their college station, subscribing at home right here to *Billboard*, *Cashbox*,

and *Record World*. So B. Mitchel Reed finally went live in '69, four hours. Tom Gamache, who had done radio in Boston and had done a little radio here in the basement of the church here at KPPC, he came on as "Uncle T." He came on at KMET with B. Mitchel Reed and then Steven Segal. Sometime after Woodstock and before Altamont, because I remember he was here and we were talking about it, he came back and he went full-time. I was lazy, because I was programming the whole station. I was programming the B. Mitchel Reed show. I could make a phone call to B. Mitchel Reed now that he was on live and just tell him, suggest things, and he'd almost jump on them right away because it would energize him. We thought a lot alike, so the things that he didn't necessarily remember, I would remember. Like, "Remember back at KPPC when we played this track and we wanted to know if they'd ever have another album? Well, they do, and here's the three good tracks, and they'd go real good with the Steve Miller [Band] song and with this Canned Heat song," or things like that. So I got real lazy. I ended up going to KYMS in Santa Ana in late January of '70 where B. Mitchel Reed's brother-in-law, Carole Solari Reed's brother, A.J. Solari, was doing the morning shift out there. So I got the all-night shift for a while, beginning late January of '70 through May 15th of '70. Jeff Gonzer was on eight to midnight, and then he moved to KPPC in '70, April 1st, April Fools Day. Les Carter became the program director, and the station had moved out of the basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church to 99 South Chester [Avenue], which was near Caltech [California Institute of Technology]. So, KMET. I believe the glory years of KMET in the late seventies into the eighties would never have happened if B. Mitchel Reed hadn't built up 94.7 as a rock and roll outlet, plus he was well known. He was number one in L.A., and according to Chuck Blore [at KFWB], at times he had 42 share. He was on six to nine from January 2nd of '58 for five straight years, and he was number one. The station was number one, but he was number one, went to New York, he was number one for two years, beating out everybody, "Cousin Brucie." He didn't like what "Murray the K" had done to Alan Freed; he felt he dissed him. B. Mitchel

Reed could have— His name, Burton Mitchel Goldberg, you can see where he might have gotten the “Reed” from Alan Freed. He also beat people like Scott Muni, so he was well known. People didn’t realize it, when he was at KMET even for most of the year when we were automated and he wasn’t able to go on live and you couldn’t do on-the-spot interviews or newscasts or anything, it was real sterile there. But Mitch kept everything going, and I really feel that his health was damaged during the few years at KMET, ’68 through ’71. I don’t know if you got to listen to that air check yet.

CLINE

I haven’t gotten to that.

ALVY

I really feel that that hurt his health, and that’s one of the reasons I hate David Moorhead, who became the general manager. I hated all the suits at KMET. I refused to go on the air there, even though I was offered gigs left and right. I just loved programming Mitch’s show. In summer of ’76, Metromedia complex, I think it’s off of Wilton [Avenue] and Sunset [Boulevard], that’s where KTTV Channel 11 was, KLAC moved there, 570 [AM], and its sister station KMET moved there. I no longer had a way to sneak into the building. I could sneak into the La Brea tar pits building. I knew how to sneak in there. So basically I moved to Seattle in June of ’76. I worked with Mitch basically for nine years and after that I just— It was weird, being a native of L.A. David L. Lander from the Credibility Gap has a book out, *Fall Down Laughing: How Squiggy Caught Multiple Sclerosis and Didn’t Tell Nobody*, by David L. Lander with Lee Montgomery. This came out in 2000. He had become aware of multiple sclerosis, I believe in 1984, right around the time that *Laverne and Shirley* ended. He, of course, played Squiggy. His best friend, Michael McKean, both of them members of the Credibility Gap along with Harry Shearer of *The Simpsons* fame and *[This is] Spinal Tap* fame. Then the fourth member was Richard Beebe, who was a great radio voice and newsman on KRLA. Then eventually Michael McKean joined, who was also, besides Squiggy, his best friend. Besides being David L. Lander’s best friend, he was

also in *Spinal Tap* with Harry Shearer and then, of course, all his movie roles. So David L. Lander basically, for ten years, from '84 to around '94, he kept MS a secret because he felt that he wouldn't get work. Michael McKean didn't find out until ten years later. Because a lot of people, basically, who hired him thought he was an alcoholic, so he went with that. I was doing radio. In 1989, I worked about ninety days at an FM station where I worked all night, so I got to trip out on my own for about two hours between two and four at night. I'd just do KPPC. I'd go off the computerized playlist. There was a "shop till you drop" thing where they raised money for El Salvador, and this was run by Milan Melvin and his wife. Milan Melvin was a salesman at both KMPX and KPPC, a great guy. He passed away recently. So one of the guests at the "shop till you drop" was Squiggy, David L. Lander, so to I got interview him, and we talked about old times a little bit and I played a Credibility Gap cut from the album. He just looked—I knew there was something with him. I was just noticing my neurological disorder [Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease]. It was just starting to affect my sleep and stuff. I knew something about him, and I just knew he wasn't an alcoholic, and I just had a hunch that there was something there. This was '89, so he didn't really reveal it till '94. I wanted to get that out there because of MS and the fact that Deirdre O'Donoghue, who came out here from Boston with Joe Rogers and then did the KPPC switchboard, helped with the free clinic money that we raised through all the benefits that Bob Laemmle at the Laemmle Theaters let us run, she passed away from MS on the day that George [W.] Bush was inaugurated, January 20th, 2001. So it's kind of ironic, because I know she would have hated living under George Bush. My god. Okay. KPPC was located in the basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church, which is real underground radio. Les Carter was *Billboard* magazine Jazz DJ of the Year in '66 and '67. I used to listen to him. He was great. He was on in the evening. Actually, he was against B. Mitchel Reed when Mitch was on. Les Carter owned the Music Revolution underground record store in West Hollywood. It was west of La Cienega on Santa Monica. I worked there. Carried a great jazz, great

rock, and great R & B collection like Zappa played. In the store window was the famous Fillmore poster with [Frank] Zappa and Lenny Bruce. That was a concert that took place at the Fillmore. As well as a toilet bottom. The toilet bowl had an American flag on it, and then the poster behind it was this Fillmore poster with Zappa and Lenny Bruce. This was below the Sunset Strip. Music Revolution opened July 4th, 1968, according to an *L.A. Free Press* ad. Somewhere around October '69, Les Carter and Susan Carter came back from New York where he had produced an album of hers [self-titled] she recorded with Blood, Sweat, and Tears backing her up. The album on Epic [Records] didn't do well, even though it was well— Les Carter went back to KPCC in late 1968. This is when he interviewed Frank Zappa for three hours right before Thanksgiving, where Frank and Les played scratchy oldies on the air. KPCC, Les Carter was on four to eight, followed by Don Hall eight to midnight. On Don Hall's live show, a few days before the 1968 presidential election, and this is where Richard Nixon is elected and he would have been up against RFK [Robert F. Kennedy], just like in 1960 he was up against JFK [John F. Kennedy], but, of course, the assassination took place right after the debate he had, which I donated to the Museum of Television and Radio. He had a debate with Eugene McCarthy that I taped here and then donated. Then he was assassinated at the Ambassador Hotel here, and I was watching it on TV with my best friend Mike Robinson. We were drinking wine. That's the only time I ever drove drunk in my life, when I drove home in my '67 Chevy convertible, and I never drove drunk after that ever. Anyway, George Harrison came on, and Don Hall said to the lead guitarist of the Beatles, "Who are you backing for president, Hubert Humphrey?" He said, "No, I kind of like Pat Paulsen." During the summer, Pat Paulsen, the Summer Smothers Brothers Show, they ran Pat Paulsen for president, and he's still got a website. He passed away recently. It was pretty amazing that, you know, because if you notice, on the credits to *The Life of Brian*, producer George Harrison. George Harrison, unbeknownst to everyone, mortgaged his house just to finance *Life of Brian*, because he loves comedy, he

loved the Monty Python[’s Flying Circus] everything. Bonzo Dog [Doo-Dah] Band performed in the *Magical Mystery Tour*. They do “Death Cab for Cutie,” [inaudible]. That’s the Bonzo Dog Band at the time they were the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band. So, Les’ wife, Susan Carter, who became the DJ “Miss Outrageous Nevada,” which is a tribute to Reno Nevada up at KMPX, who was a great guy. During late 1970 until 10/24/71—that’s when we were all fired—she was a singer who had an album badly handled by a lame MGM Records label, just like the mishandling of Zappa and the Mothers [of Invention], which Frank Zappa discusses with Susan briefly during that interview. This is the Thanksgiving 1968 interview. Frank Zappa brought his scratchy 45s while he was promoting the album *Ruben and the Jets*, and he mentioned the new members of the band were Lowell George, who then he told to go form his own band because the song “Willin’” he didn’t think would work with the Mothers of Invention, and he also mentioned Bunk Gardner as a new member. So Roy Estrada, who was a bass player with the Mothers at the time, and Lowell George formed Little Feat with Bill Payne and Richie Hayward. Zappa could have just been on the air a few minutes and spew his anti-establishment against the record company, but Frank and Les and Susan hit it off so much that he stayed from five p.m. until eight p.m. Then at the very end, you could hear Don Hall saying, “It can’t happen here,” which is basically quoting Zappa. Don Hall was great. Don Hall was the original all-night man at KPPC when I was doing B. Mitchel Reed’s show, so he was on midnight to six. So it was a little awkward when I got Tom Donahue’s show nine to midnight for the two weeks before the March 18th strike in ’68. I was doing B. Mitchel Reed’s. So these are a bunch of prepared things. Now, this is something I put together.

CLINE

Actually, you gave me this.

ALVY

Did I already give you that? Okay, because that has— So I just wanted to get all this stuff out there. I’ve got a bunch of

other stuff, but I wanted to let you get involved first before I—

CLINE

Yeah, because some of this is stuff we've covered before, and what I really want to do now is since you were just talking about the lineup over at KPPC, for the sake of chronology, if you could, you've said a bit about the background of Tom Donahue looking for an FM frequency that would serve as the sister station to KMPX in San Francisco, which became KPPC, which he found in, of all places, a Presbyterian Church in Pasadena. One thing I wanted to ask before we take off into how the station got started, do you know anything about what led to the church agreeing to this sort of an arrangement? He must have really impressed or sweet-talked them somehow.

ALVY

Tom Donahue. The way I understand it, and I've heard Raechel Donahue talk about this on interviews, there was a guy, Leon Crosby, who owned KMPX at the time. There was a lot of foreign-language programs. Donahue called all the stations until he found one with its phone disconnected, and then he talked them into putting him and Raechel on the air, I guess eight to midnight. As it happened, Larry Miller was already doing an all-night thing and he was mixing music. The thing that Tom Donahue did was he put together an entire radio station. They actually didn't go twenty-four hours, I don't think, until August. But all the other people that claim that they were the first to go underground radio, they didn't get an entire radio station together. What he did was, once it was successful— And I think it was August is when they went stereo, August of '67. I think he got them twenty-four hours by the time the Monterey Pop Festival happened. I'd have to look into that. What he did was he convinced Leon Crosby to find this older guy named Lou Avery to be his partner, and apparently Lou Avery was such a sweetheart guy, and between him and Tom Donahue, they convinced the church to do it. Part of the deal was that the church got to keep the broadcasts. The AM was on all day Sunday, I believe, sunrise to— Maybe six a.m. to midnight.

Then I believe it was on Wednesday nights from like eight to midnight. So the church wanted to use the AM to continue the station on Wednesday night eight to midnight, and I believe they kept the AM on all Sunday for a while. For a while through 1970, we had to keep the church service on the FM until noon, and at that time Don Hall would go on. Eventually, we got rid of the church service on the FM. The station went full power. Basically, right next door to the Pasadena Presbyterian Church was the Pasadena Star News building, and there were these two towers on it, like AM towers, and then there was a wire between them and that was the FM antenna. That was KPPC. Eventually, September of '70, Flint Peak in Glendale is where our station went full power, so we had a better signal. All of a sudden, we probably increased the signal maybe as much as 70 percent, at least in potential audience. So we had what's called a Duck Rush, Neon Park ran. Neon Park, who was best known for doing the Little Feat album covers, I met him right after he painted the *Weasels Ripped My Flesh* cover for the Mothers of Invention that Frank Zappa wanted him to do. Then he met Lowell George, and Lowell had him painting the *Sailin' Shoes* album, which was the second Little Feat album that came out in '72. The first one was a photograph of the L.A. Fine Arts Squad painted a building in Venice, which is now gone because they built a building next to it, apparently, so you can't see it. It was the snow on Venice Beach, and then the four members of Little Feat were in front of it. That was the first one. From 1972 up until the recent album, which isn't Neon Park artwork, had Neon Park artwork. So he was doing calendars for Mike Pinto, who ran Platterpuss Records. He did his first calendar. He did a series of calendars that were given away free. It was free artwork, just paid for by Mike Pinto. So Les Carter hired Neon Park to do ads for KPPC and the *L.A. Free Press*. There's about twenty of them. They're amazing. I'm hoping to use them in my book. He did one for me, which I think I showed you as well. The Duck Rush was all requests, no commercials, for two straight days [1970]. I believe it was like a Friday and Saturday in September, which was repeated right around

Christmas in December, Duck Rush II. You'd call on the phone and quack like a duck and you'd make requests. On my air shift I did something. I played [the Last Poets'] "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," by Gil Scott-Heron, and these brothers are calling from South L.A. all flipped out because the guys at USC [University of Southern California] started listening to us, and we got an incredible audience of college students between 'SC and UCLA and Northridge. At the time it was San Fernando Valley State [College]. Then it became Cal[ifornia] State [College] Northridge. First it was a college, then it was a university and then, you know, even Cal[ifornia] State [University] L.A. [Los Angeles]. Everything. We had an amazing amount of listeners because of that. We're in the basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church. You'd walk in through the front door into this concrete bunker-like thing that had an old pipe organ broken up, and then the studio was real small. After the strike when KMET started, and they were twenty-four hours automated, and B. Mitchel Reed was the only voice they hired and I was basically helping him for free along with Larry Glass, before that happened, a new KPPC studio was built so they could go stereo, and it was a large studio. They put the record library in there, and the record library is really growing at this time. Late in 1968, Les Carter's on four to eight; Don Hall's on eight to midnight; and there's a radio— I cut two commercials with Susan Carter on the floor of Les and Susan's house up in Sunset Plaza where Les Carter turned me on to some amazing stuff, like Charlie Mingus, the *Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*. What an amazing album. What a rush. But basically he turned me on to a lot of great jazz, as did B. Mitchel Reed. So we cut two commercials for the Music Revolution, which you actually hear on the interview that Les Carter did with Frank Zappa. There's two Music Revolutions, my voice and Susan Carter's voice. We ran them also on KMET. KMET had such a great signal, even though it was still automated, it was just B. Mitchel Reed's voice, the engineers would screw up. I'd give the albums and tell them to put this music together, this and that. You'd hear things in the morning that you'd never want to listen to in the morning. It

was chaos. It was a lot of trouble to do it. But the signal was amazing, so we could not— To keep Music Revolution viable, besides the ad in the Free Press, the *Los Angeles Free Press*, which was sold on corners everywhere, hippies would sell them for twenty-five cents and keep the money for themselves. That's the way it worked, the *L.A. Free Press*, and we'd sell it at Music Revolution. You'd get it in underground record stores, bookstores like Papa Bach. Free Press opened up Kazoo. They opened on Fairfax [Avenue] a Free Press Bookstore. They opened in Pasadena, the Free Press Kazoo, the Free Press Bookstore. Besides that, we had to run on KMET. We had to run the ads, and the owner told Les Carter— The owner of KPPC told Les Carter, or the management, they said, "You either have to stop running commercials on KMET or stop doing a radio show." So he had to leave KPPC again. A lot of people went through KPPC until Les Carter became program director April Fools Day 1970, and Steve Segal, who became "the Obscene Steven Clean," had a lot to do with getting Les hired and being the first to get back on the air, because we were all from the original staff that Tom Donahue had hired, including B. Mitchel Reed and whatever.

CLINE

Two things. First off, when there's this historic meeting between B. Mitchel Reed and Tom Donahue at the Monterey Pop Festival that eventually leads to the formation and the startup of KPPC down here, obviously B. Mitchel Reed was very big-time at this point. How was the rest of the DJ staff put together?

ALVY

Okay. B. Mitchel Reed took a big cut in pay, something like— I don't know, he cut \$35,000 down to \$15,000, something like that. There's an interview with him in the *L.A. Times* magazine, where he's on the cover wearing a miner's hat, and it's about underground radio. He mentioned something, which he quotes in an interview, I believe. See, Jim Ladd did a four-part series, I guess on his interview program, "The History of FM Radio," which was fantastic. His book, *Radio Waves*, is fantastic, even though he used a lot of

pseudonyms and really didn't get into it. He missed the KPPC experience. He went from KNAC, underground radio in Long Beach, to KLOS, where you didn't even handle your own records. He gave that up, which is a high-paying, high-rated job, to go to KMET. He took the gamble. He was real successful. He helped people like Mary Turner, who went on before him. You had an incredible block of Mary Turner and Jim Ladd. I heard, I think, Raechel talking a couple of things. She said how great Lou Avery was because it was Crosby Avery Radio, and it was because of Lou Avery running KPPC that we basically— He got it going. The strike took place for ninety days under his watch, though. I got a— What do you call it? I got a letter from him, a termination letter, with my final check of less than ten dollars or something like that. I forget what it's for. But he was real sad about what was going on, because he understood the concept. I read you the thing where we talked about how the concept was out on the street and the fact that we didn't take any records when we left, because we didn't want to take music out of there. And even though they had the same records and the same library, they could not do decent radio shows. Everyone they brought in there just basically did mediocrity. Okay. At KPPC, there was a guy that came over with B. Mitchel Reed and myself and Larry Glass, named Dan Daniels. Dan Daniels, we met him at KFWB. He became one of us. He helped us. He could get on a pay phone and just do all kinds of scams. It's weird. Larry Glass and I once saw him up in Panorama City getting out of a limo with Mayor Sam Yorty. [Cline laughs.] Anyway, he was this guy. He was just a great character. The interview of January 18th when Hoyt Axton came on and did an amazing live show on B. Mitchel Reed's show, Dan Daniels walks in, and he knew Hoyt Axton because they used to shoot pool together and whatever. During the strike, Dan Daniels called the chief engineer, some guy they had hired, and said, "Hey, do you know that such-and-such is happening? Nothing's going out," dah, dah, dah. The engineer says, "No, no, no. What's going on?" He says, "Well, it's a finicky transmitter. This is what we used to do," and he basically convinced the guy to take the station off the

air. So all kinds of things were going on. This guy Al Phoques, I forget how he spelled his name, with a P-h. I used to give him a lot of shit every time he walked— He was a scab, because we had a twenty-four-hour picket line of hippies walking around. We all had to serve our picket duty, everybody. I was living out in Sierra Madre with Steven Clean, still Steven Segal at the time, because I had a car, and we were assigned picket duty together because I had a car, and he was a hippie living in Sierra Madre Canyon. At the time, when I would drive in from the Valley, there was no freeway. You would take Colorado Boulevard from the San Fernando Valley through Eagle Rock into Pasadena, or you would take the oldest freeway. The very first freeway was the Pasadena Freeway. It's still the oldest freeway. It's the funkiest, craziest freeway. That's the way we would go, like if you're coming from anywhere else, any other part of the city. Now, the basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church, the studio, these guys are in there. There's scabs in there for ninety days, all kinds of people. David Pierce was a scab; he thought he was saving underground radio for the masses, and all these people would go in there. They didn't understand the strike. Now, during the strike—

CLINE

Explain the strike, what caused the strike.

ALVY

Tom Donahue found out, probably through, I'm not sure who, that the owners, Leon Crosby mainly, wanted to start replacing the hippies, long-haired, barefoot people, with regular disc jockeys because most of these— He didn't realize where these people came from. Okay. Tom Donahue was a top disc jockey in San Francisco on KYA AM. He was number one. He was the guy every day when he went on the air he was there to "clear up your face and mess up your mind." That was Tom Donahue. In 1965, when all these changes started taking place, folk-rock was happening, all these bands were starting, the whole ballroom scene was starting, all these incredible mixed concerts were starting to happen, especially into '66 and '67, he's sitting around listening— What they claim is him and Raechel and a bunch

of other people are sitting around listening to the new Doors album, saying, "Who's going to play 'The End'? There's no one to play this stuff on the radio." So then they called around until they found KMPX had their phone disconnected, and basically when we would do a show, it's like sitting around the living room just turning people on to music, only you'd start putting in sets of music, and occasionally you'd put in drop-ins, and you'd mix all types of music, and different people would have different ways of doing it. Most of us were true believers; we believed in playing this music on the air. Now, what happened was, we had a meeting at Mitch's house behind the store in Beverly Glen Canyon, which was David Crosby's place, renting it, and we all basically agreed that if there was a strike, we would all go on strike. There were no dissenters at all. I'm not sure about San Francisco, if there were any dissenters. I just know that when KSAN started only two months into the strike, we had to go another month down here, the entire staff did not move over. There were a few people that didn't. I don't know the reasons for that because I wasn't really keeping in touch. Tom and Raechel had an apartment in Pasadena. They were down here very infrequently, really, especially once KSAN went on the air. So Raechel, who wrote a book, is writing a book, I think, called *Jock Itch*, and has talked a lot, especially at Museum of Television and Radio and in interviews and things, she did not really know what was happening down here that much. So that's why I'm able to fill in a lot of this stuff. She became a disc jockey in '75. She moved down here to L.A. with all the kids she was taking care of after Tom Donahue died. So she wasn't actually— But Tom at KMPX and then at KSAN hired female disc jockeys to be board operators. They were the engineers, and a lot of them eventually became disc jockeys off of that. Okay. Basement of Pasadena Presbyterian Church. Pasadena Star News is covering it. There's a photographer that's covering the strike. For ninety days we're circling the Pasadena Presbyterian, and this around the block. We go up here and then around the block there and around the block there and around the block there. Now, there's a parking lot that's

across the street which is where I told you this lady Valerie, who used to date Les Carter, that I was dating during the period right up to the strike— Now, one thing about Valerie, back in 1970 after Les Carter took over KPPC and I moved over there, I was there by May of '70, Valerie started hanging around again, but she was hanging around with me. She didn't really let Les or anyone else know that she was there. I was living out in Santa Monica Canyon, so we were good friends again. The very first concert that Warner Bros. put together, which was Ry Cooder, who at the time had a small band, Little Feat, and the headliner was Captain Beefheart and the Magic Band. *Lick My Decals [Off, Baby]* had just come out, the first Little Feat album had just come out, the first Ry Cooder album had come out. So there's a concert which Neon Park did an ad for that ran in the *L.A. Free Press* that's in the Little Feat album *Hoy-Hoy!*, which came out in '79 after Lowell George died. It was a double album, but in the CD booklet as well the big booklet that came with the L.P. is the ad. And what it is is it's *Hoy-Hoy!* It's a scissors sticking into a hamburger and a train coming out of Pasadena. I sold tickets for that. That was my gig at the station. I was in charge of the money and selling the tickets and making sure it got deposited in the bank. It was like a dollar-fifty. I had a migraine. I went to the concert with Valerie, and everyone else was on stage, the entire staff, introducing themselves, because people hadn't seen what they looked like. I think Les Carter came out in a gorilla suit or something. I had a migraine and I didn't want anyone to know. I didn't want to diss Susan Carter because I was there with Valerie, so they said, "Where's Ted Alvy?" And they couldn't find me, and that was fine with me. After seeing Ry Cooder, Little Feat, and Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band, my migraine was gone. Then Neon Park brought Lowell George over, and I was the one that ended up being the disc jockey there, playing the tunes, and I played some stuff to mellow us all down, like Cat Stevens [later Yusuf Islam] at the time was the guy that would mellow you down. But I took "Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor on the Bedpost Overnight?" by Lonnie Donnegan, and I played that.

When he goes, "One more time," I'd stop it, and I had a cartridge tape of Spike Jones, and I'd play, "One more time," and I'd play all this Spike Jones, and I mixed them all together using a turntable and a cart machine. Lowell George was blown away, and him and Neon Park just nodded because they knew that this was a combination. Here's this artist, Neon Park, here's this musician, and then here's this disc jockey. We all basically had the same consciousness, so it was really cool. The next concert that we did that Warner Bros.— Another dollar-fifty concert, the opening act was the Doobie Brothers, and it's weird, because we played "Beehive State," which was the song that Randy Newman had written, so Randy Newman was just starting to come out. All this stuff was coming out of Warner Bros. The British band, it was real hard to get "Don't Boogie Woogie with the King of Rock and Roll," that single is only on one CD. It's on this giant collection. It's really hard to find it on CD right now, Long John Baldry. Then the headliner was Tracy Nelson and Mother Earth, who were great, from San Francisco. So I was the emcee, and the photo that I have of myself in the long hair with the microphone that Don Barrett ran in his *laradio*, *laradio.com*, it's on there, and it's also in his book *L.A. Radio People*. That was taken there. I was the emcee, and some weird guy came onstage during Long John Baldry's concert or something, and no one—

1.9. TAPE NUMBER: V, Side Two (April 23, 2004)

CLINE

You were talking about the guy who got ejected at the Long John Baldry set.

ALVY

Okay. This is a dollar-fifty concert. Warner Bros. is doing these concerts in various locations. This is the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. This is the same place where Ry Cooder, Little Feat, Captain Beefheart concert. I sit on stage in between sets and talk about what's going on. I mention from England the guy who was on the stage wasn't part of the band. And I basically gave little bios of the bands, and that had never really been— I hadn't seen anyone doing that before. People

didn't know what was going on. Then to introduce Mother Earth, I went all the way around backstage and went up to her, and they were wondering "Where's this guy? What's going on? I said, "I just wanted to make sure that you were ready." She said yes. I went there, I just did a brief introduction, "Here's Miss Tracy Nelson and Mother Earth," and it was great. But that's the only time I ever really emceed a concert. The only time I ever really did a primetime show on KPPC was one Saturday night, "the Obscene Steven Clean" was sick, so I sat in for him. It's one of those shows where everything fell together where you just know; you're in the zone. Les Carter and Susan Carter are sitting up off of Wonderland in Laurel Canyon. They had people over and they were basically— We'd always play the station for our friends. Like I said, it was difficult to go to a concert because you'd miss a show, difficult to listen to new music because you'd miss so much. He was just loving it. He says, "Great." I also told him, I said, "Hey, you know that my thing isn't— I'm not trying to be competitive with Steven. I'm not after any air shift. I'm content in the mornings where I am, because it gives me time. I can come in early to do production. I can do production afterwards. I can come in anytime twenty-fours a day, seven days a week and do production in the production studio. Plus, I get to go to concerts at night because I'm not on the air." So he realized it. Steve Segal was real— We had a weird relationship going back, because supposedly when Zach Zenor left the [San Francisco] Mime Troupe to come down to KPPC to try to get a gig because Tom Donahue's station in San Francisco, KMPX, had no openings, supposedly the hitchhiker was Steve Segal and Steve Segal got the gig. He was Tom Donahue's engineer, and he would do Saturdays when Tom didn't do Saturday from nine to midnight, and things like that. We lived together out in Sierra Madre during the strike. He was a little upset that I got the nine-to-midnight shift the two weeks before the strike, because I was there doing— He was upset the first time he saw me with B. Mitchel Reed, because he knew B. Mitchel Reed from New York, and he sees this kid from the Valley that basically we had a relationship where

any— We had shorthand, we understood things. I'd say something. He would trust me. Like if he had to leave for a half hour to do something with some musician or somebody in another room or something, he'd trust me to just segue the music together. Then I'd give him a list of what he played. I would never try and cheat him. It was always— I would never try and cheat him. There were things that I wouldn't ask him to play that when I had my show I would play. When I had Tom Donahue's show, I did the contrast that there was. I did a real San Francisco Tom Donahue show, but every hour once or twice there'd be a little Ted Alvy thrown in. Where on B. Mitchel Reed's show, rarely, unless it was something that we would both play, I would rarely use something that I would do on my show on his. But he'd get a lot of current information from me, because I kept in touch with stuff. Okay. Now, the strike has taken place. B. Mitchel Reed and Tom Donahue go on a show by a former disc jockey who is famous for answering the question "Ginger or Maryanne?" Always "Ginger," because he was married to her [Tina Louise], Les Crane, who they all knew from the broadcast industry. He was doing a late-night show. They went on the air here, and they talked about the strike and what was going on. Les Crane was amazing. One of the other things that happened on Les Crane was the Firesign Theater went on, and they used the same persona. When they first got together and broadcast in fall of '67 on KPFK, on *Radio Free Oz*, there were these four foreign filmmakers at a film festival talking about films that didn't exist, and they didn't exist, and they apparently did the same put-on to Les Crane, and obviously he was into it. Besides, Tom Donahue and B. Mitchel Reed flew back to New York. This is where they talked to a bunch of people. Tom Donahue went back to San Francisco, and the general manager of Metromedia, KSAN, walked to the picket lines and said, "Tom, we want your entire staff right now. It's your station. I'll be the general manager. You're the program—." You know, yadda, yadda. We had a station down here that was a sister station, Metromedia KMET 94.7, automated, all girl voices, so that's how that thing went. So, during the strike, at the end of the

strike, all the money that had been gathered at benefit concerts we had at the Kaleidoscope— Besides Bob Laemmle of the Laemmle Theaters allowing *Magical Mystery Tour* to be shown just to raise money for the strike fund, meaning he basically picked up the tab on doing it, the Kaleidoscope, who included, I believe it was Skip Taylor and John Hartman who had managed Canned Heat, Gary Essert, who was very instrumental. He was the main power in putting together the Los Angeles Film Festival, the L.A. Filmex, which started right after we got fired. We all got fired a week before Halloween. We got fired October 24th, 1971. That Monday the Film Festival started, and we were going to be the station for the L.A. Filmex, because we were all film freaks. I had set that up and I was ready to go. I had to call Beverly Walker, who was doing publicity, and said, "Hey, sorry. Go to KMET." At the time, Gary Essert was a little gun-shy, because he had been a part of the Kaleidoscope, which was basically across from the Hollywood Paladium. It was originally the Moulin Rouge where they taped *Queen for a Day*, which was a great TV show. This woman would become queen for a day, which they should resurrect right now as a reality show. I'm sure they're going to. Then it became the— Hair was there when it was called the Rainbow Theater.

CLINE

Yeah, the Aquarius Theater.

ALVY

The Aquarius Theater, yeah. It had the stage, the circular stage that would revolve, so you could have three bands set up and go from band to band to band without missing a beat. During the applause from the encore from one, you'd go to the other. The money that was raised there, one of the concerts had— We had the Doors. We had Buffalo Springfield. We had the Committee. We had Firesign Theater. We had Quicksilver Messenger Service. Anyway, these two amazing things happened. So Gary Essert was a little gun-shy because we went on strike right before they opened, and they were trying to— You know. As it was, they had some money from someone back East who turned out to have mob ties. They came out here. My free tickets to go see Janis

Joplin— They had these round posters, was their gimmick, and round tickets where you'd push out— It would become a doughnut. You'd push out the round thing in the center. That's how they would— Then you keep the ticket as a souvenir. They wouldn't let us in for Janis Joplin, and Janis Joplin didn't want to perform, but she was convinced to perform because if she didn't, these were the mob guys from New York. So that's what happened to the Kaleidoscope concerts. The Pinnacle concerts started in late '67 at the Shrine Auditorium. That's where you're going to get John Van Hamersveld, and I'll let him fill that in. Because what you should do is you should get *The Art [of] Rock* book and basically have him read from his own interview, literally, and then let him embellish on that, because he basically nailed it in that, and that would be a good way— Like I'm reading from a lot of this stuff to get in there and then zero in off of that. So now, before KMET, we have a big meeting, and all the money that had been raised from the strike fund— Most people were really pissed that they didn't get enough money. Larry Glass and I, I don't know, we got like a hundred and fifty dollars or something. My parents' car, the Oldsmobile Cutlass that I was using to drive everyone around, we were in Beverly Hills when the transmission blew, so it got fixed and the money came from the strike fund. Certain people had their rent paid, people like B. Mitchel Reed and Les Carter, people that had high rents that had dropped their salaries to work at the station. As long as you had done your twenty-four-hour picket line duties and not screwed up, you basically got some money. At the time, like I said, the headquarters was at the Green Hotel [Hotel Green] in Pasadena, which also housed the actors from the Pasadena Playhouse, which is where people like, I believe, Dustin Hoffman and Gene Hackman, a lot of people, were involved. But this was basically like a bunch of hippies. There was free love going on. There was pot-smoking. I mean, I'm watching RFK get killed on TV. We're not on the air. This is around June 4th or 5th, I think. The Beatles start Apple [Records], so John Lennon and Paul McCartney are in America, they're on the *Tonight Show* [May 14, 1968]. Joe Garagiola is the

guest host. Tulula Bankhead is a guest. I taped it off the TV and donated it to the Museum of Television and Radio. I've since found a transcript, and apparently there was a couple minutes that got cut off my tape or whatever that didn't get aired, but that took place. Then they went back [to England]. [June 25, 1967] they had done their "All You Need is Love" with the greatest worldwide satellite audience of all time. We weren't on the air. KMET started, B. Mitchel Reed couldn't go live. We couldn't interview somebody. George Harrison is in town right before the election. He goes to Don Hall at basically the Pasadena Presbyterian Church. B. Mitchel Reed knows George Harrison personally. There's a disc jockey that put a remembrance on laradio.com. He was at KFWB on the air. It was Jack Hayes. I'm sure. He got a phone call and says, "Who is this?" "George Harrison." He says, "Yeah," hung up on him. It happened three or four times. B. Mitchel Reed comes on the phone, says, "Hey, this really is George Harrison. We're here hanging out at the Chateau Marmont." So Mitch knew all these guys, but we couldn't do interviews at KMET. [tape recorder off]

CLINE

We're back. So it was George Harrison calling.

ALVY

Yeah. This is back when Mitch was on KFWB, so this might have been— It might have been after he came back from New York, so maybe '65 or '66 or something. But what I mean is KMET, it was a drag. When they finally went twelve hours live, B. Mitchel Reed, Tom Gamache as "Uncle T," Steven Segal, he was still Steven Segal. He didn't become "the Obscene Steven Clean" until 1970 at KPPC, because like "Mississippi Brian Wilson" was here now, who he'd known, Joseph Rogers, who was "Mississippi Harold Wilson." Deirdre O'Donoghue was here, who did *Breakfast with the Beatles* here for many years. I just heard an air check of her. I believe she was on WABX in Detroit for a while as a hippie underground disc jockey. The station finally was twelve hours live, so you could do interviews. The studio at KMET was very, very small. The record library that was in there— There was a supplemental record library, which is where I

basically worked and stuff, because it was real, real small. At first, there was an engineer, so it was like union, and KLAC had engineers. The jocks couldn't touch the records. Finally, there was a big strike and the whole thing happened in—was it '73; I forget when—where David Moorhead— There was a strike and then they settled and all of a sudden the disc jockeys could run their own boards, which is what we wanted, because, like I said, it was very tactile. You'd be touching the records and everything was very tactile. Like I mentioned here, in 1997 I walked to L.A. Valley College and did two hours. I did an hour called *Rock with the Thin Man*, because that used to be my name back in '67 and '68 when I was at L.A. Valley College. Then I did *Brunch with the Blues*, and I was recreating all this stuff. What I realized was it really takes a lot of young people, and there's no young people out there that have the musical education. Now, I still have friends that have been collecting vinyl since the sixties and seventies that I know, people like "Dr. Demento" [Barry Hansen], who are musicologists. I mean, he does this so-called comedy novelty show that's syndicated, but he could sit down and program an entire radio station. He could sit down and do— He's got a blues book [Rhino's Cruise through the Blues] out and stuff. There's so many people that are wasted, but where are the young people that are learning about all this music? Now, if we had a radio station, I'd like to start doing a Sunday show called Brunch with the Blues. Eventually I'd like to expand it to maybe Monday through Friday *Brunch with the Blues*, as well as a Sunday *Brunch with the Blues*, and then maybe on Saturday you could do some other type of thing, maybe blues concerts. I don't know what. Then eventually you get people listening and then they become educated, because I truly believe that if you're really open-minded, you're into music, and you haven't damaged yourself by drugs or like certain governors may have done with steroids or God knows what, or presidents may have done with cocaine and alcohol and God and all this stuff, if you haven't done that, I really believe that if you listen to the good music, the good roots music, and build upon that, then when you start choosing so-called

popular music, the stuff that you're going to listen to over and over again at home and in cars and at parties and things, your basis will be different and therefore you may see, all of a sudden, Ry Cooder being in the Top Forty or something, instead of Britney Spears. These things can happen because I truly believe that. And I believe that if the young musicians at least have the background of real music that you could actually play, not synthesized music, but real music, going back to the roots and then progressing, and at least knowing that, even if you have no interest in it. I love the blues, but there's certain blues artists and certain blues music I just don't listen to. I'm bored by it. To me, one of the most amazing composers was Miles Davis. He's got amazing recordings that I'll listen to all the time. There's a lot of his stuff I just don't listen to, though. Same with Bob Dylan. I mean he's the most amazing American poet, songwriter, singer, like Woody Guthrie, a populist and all this stuff. There's a lot of his stuff I just don't like to listen to, but that's because there's such a vast variety of stuff. You go on these classic rock stations, I mean Led Zeppelin, my god, were they the only band? Now they're doing Cadillac commercials and stuff. Classic rock stations just keep playing it over and over and over. Now, occasionally they'll play [Eric] Clapton. He had a blues album back years ago [*From the Cradle*], and now he's got another blues album [*Me And Mr. Johnson*] where he's covering Robert Johnson. I've got two blues albums by Peter Green's Splinter Group where he's covering Robert Johnson. Robert Johnson only recorded twenty-nine songs. There's forty-two recordings, because there's alternate takes, but he only did twenty-nine songs. He's real influential, but even that, I've got a CD of the twenty-nine songs, and I can't really listen to all of the Robert Johnson's at once. So it's that type of thing, the greats, your Muddy Waters, your Chuck Berry, your Howlin' Wolf, that all came out of Chess Records. There's a recording of Rolling Stones in '64, June 10th and 11th. They were at Chess studios in Chicago recording. Okay. Let's go back. Where do you want to come back to? We've got the strike.

CLINE

Let's talk about how the strike ended and what happened after the '68 strike.

ALVY

Okay. KSAN's going strong. They're blowing people's minds because they're going 24/7 with an incredible signal, with a big-time network behind them, so they can keep upping their rates on all their spots. The thing they try to avoid is, they don't want to lose the record stores and the waterbed stores, all the people that were in with the beginning. You don't want to get the rates too high, so all that's worked out. Tom Donahue instituted eight minutes per hour, and the stipulation was they had to be one-minute spots. It's because him and Mitch came out— They were over sixteen, twenty minutes an hour on KFWB and KYA when both of them left. The meeting meant that everyone had to scatter. Okay. Now, Larry Glass ended up going with B. Mitchel Reed up to KSAN to record KMET shows that Tom Donahue was also doing up there. I went to UCLA. Tom Donahue, basically he didn't send anyone to replace me; it was just Steve Segal who went to WBCN. I don't know exactly what went on there. I'm hoping to interview Joseph Rogers, Joe Rogers. I haven't seen him in years because people are dying off. I was going to talk to J.J. Jackson, because he's been living out here, and now he's passed away. I wanted to ask him about 'BCN. Les Carter has the Music Revolution and is really into producing *Susan Carter* with Blood, Sweat, and Tears. Don Hall goes back on the air eight to midnight at KPPC. He was the original all-night man. During his stint at KPPC, he got a phone call from [Michelangelo] Antonioni, who was starting to put money together for hiring someone to do the music to *Zabriskie Point*, which he was willing to pay \$50,000 for Patti Page's *Tennessee Waltz* just to play it in a desert honky-tonk jukebox in the middle of nowhere. So Don Hall got to record the Grateful Dead. He just used Jerry Garcia to do stuff, and he put together Pink Floyd. They did a couple of tracks. A version of Kaleidoscope was put together with David Lindley doing a couple tracks. He put a Youngbloods track. It's a great soundtrack. It actually was then reissued, which I'd like to get a bunch of outtakes, the

Jerry Garcia and the Pink Floyd there's a bunch of outtakes for. But it was a great soundtrack. So Don Hall ended up working at MGM because *Zabriskie Point*, I guess, was released through MGM. So Don Hall's there at MGM, we go to see the screening of *Zabriskie Point* in Westwood. It's on Westwood Boulevard below Wilshire [Boulevard]. I think it's the Crest Theater?

CLINE

The Crest Theater, right.

ALVY

At the end of it, after this Pink Floyd explosions that's filmed with sixteen cameras, this real cheesy— And he's great, but a real cheesy Roy Orbison record is put on it by Michael Curb, who's running MGM before he became the conservative lieutenant governor [of California]. He got rid of most of the MGM artists, but because he was selling, he kept Eric Burdon and the Animals. So Eric Burdon had a bumper sticker that said "Curb the Clap" on his car. So, anyway, Don is just shattered. I'm there with him. I mean, this incredible soundtrack is ruined because Roy Orbison is supposed to have a hit single off of this, and it's a cheesy Roy Orbison song. And even if it was a great Roy Orbison song, it's taking Don Hall and going [coughs]. It's taking Antonioni and just slapping both of them in the face [slaps his hand in the air]. So Don Hall ended up working at MGM for a while. He worked part-time at KPPC. I ended up taking over his Sunday afternoon shift, I think noon to four, because right after Christmas I interviewed Jerry Garcia and Bob Weir, the Grateful Dead, and John Dawson, who's Marmaduke, and the songwriter for the New Riders of the Purple Sage along with David Nelson. They had all known each other before the Grateful Dead were started. They all came out of bluegrass and roots music and stuff. So we did that interview, and I was doing his— Then Harry Shearer followed me with *Destination Music* for a couple hours. So this was late 1970 [December 27, 1970].

CLINE

How would you define, then, the management's take on the strike? What was the final decision?

ALVY

Which management are we talking now? KPPC?

CLINE

Yeah.

ALVY

We did a preemptive strike because we knew that everyone was going to be fired. They were going to basically bring in a staff and have them play the same type of music.

CLINE

Supposedly.

ALVY

And have more than eight commercials an hour, and still be real successful because this is the hip now thing. Because even a lot of people that worked at KPPC didn't even understand the station, really, because they didn't know. I was a true believer. Larry Glass was a true believer. B. Mitchel Reed was a true believer. Steven Segal was a true believer. Other people became true believers. Les Carter was a true believer. That station, KPPC, 106.7, out of Pasadena, that was our frequency. We felt we had created something there that didn't exist, and then when we were all fired, we felt that that was it. Then the second most evil person behind David Moorhead, Doug Cox, the general manager, fired everyone after a year and then tried to do it and couldn't make it successful. Then someone bought it and turned it into KROQ, 106.7, and went through several stages.

CLINE

Right. But that was the later version.

ALVY

Yeah, that was the later.

CLINE

But after the '68 strike, things continued.

ALVY

In the basement of the church, they continued, but there was no real station sound. It was like individual shows and people came and went until the National Science Network bought KPPC, they bought KMPX in San Francisco. Michael Callaghan, who's now the engineer at the Clear Channel

here, he's got all eight stations running, including KIIS FM now, he was a novice engineer. His first gig was KPPC, and this guy from back East from New England, Matt Rubin, came out here, and Matt taught Mike and they built this incredible board, this slide-pot board that was state of the art for us. We put one at KMPX and one at KPPC. Now, KMPX at the time was weird, because KSAN was such a big, big hit because of its signal and the staff that was on the air, but KMPX was still an alternative to them because there were people that would call them, that they had sold out so-and-so, because they were so successful. So KMPX in San Francisco never really gelled either, and there was talk that they were going to bring Les Carter up, because we were not only successful with ratings, we were making money, having ratings, all this stuff. So they were real leery of people. When I went up to KMPX on my way to Eureka in January of 1971, where I ended up buying the station in Eureka with some partners, Zach Zenor came up, Larry Glass came up, my uncle and his partner funded it for us, and we lasted a hundred— We were on the air ninety-nine days, like late January of '72 to May 1st. I was still on the air, I guess, into May 2nd, but we went off the air. So KMPX, KPPC, same owners. After the strike, National Science Network invested money in a studio at 99 South Chester [Street] that was state of the art. It was a very big room. We could have our entire library in there, our entire record library, very big room. The library circled like one wall and then another wall. Then the other wall was all the equipment and then the board with three turntables and anywhere between two and four cart machines and a Scully tape deck and this incredible Matt Rubin-Michael Callaghan slide-pot board. We actually were looking out of windows into a courtyard in the middle of this. It was like a two story. It was almost like an apartment office building. It was an office building. It was real small. Next door was a vacant lot where Les Carter had the famous Elton John pie fight, where he came and there was a pie fight and I had the infamous Monday night Johnny Otis *Blue Monday* barbecue next door. I went recently and took photographs and visited again, like in the late nineties. It

was just a residential area. It was just there. The way the staff progressed, at one point I'm living out in Santa Monica Canyon with Zach Zenor, who's the main production guy. Like I said, he taught people like Susan Carter, "Miss Outrageous Nevada." He taught people like Deirdre O'Donoghue. Even when Sam Kopper came out from WBCN Boston, he was influenced by Zach Zenor. Zach Zenor was married to Sandy [Zenor], and she was a roommate also. She was a singer. They ended up splitting up, and he married a great lady, Jeanne Chappe, another great lady. She was a disc jockey at KROQ, and then they moved to New Mexico. So Sam Kopper brought a bus out that had like sort of a recording production studio in it, so he ended up taking over for Zach. Zach took over my air shift from nine to one after Gonzer. Les Carter decided to split a six-hour shift into two air shifts, so both he and Susan Carter each did three hours, and they could both basically get a full salary, which they basically deserved because Les was the one that gave us the freedom. If it wasn't for Les Carter just saying, "Fuck it. You guys do what you want, and if anyone notices anything wrong, just, you know, we'll talk about it," but basically he never told you what not to play. What he would tell me about was I used to come in the morning and just give everyone shit because the production hadn't been done. We didn't have all the right commercials ready to go, and I would complain to this. And I would complain about the commercials, because one of the salesmen would take a commercial that the agency gave him and he'd put it on cart and just put it in the studio without us listening to it, and we had a real strict commercial policy. Did I give the Simba, the Coca-Cola example?

CLINE

No.

ALVY

Okay. Around the time that we're going to get fired, a couple things are happening. National Science Network is running commercials for two of its products, Isodine mouthwash and Kerid ear drops. Coca-Cola made a major buy. They were launching a new soft drink called Simba. They used the Great

White Hunter in Africa motif for their commercials. They were so amazingly racist. We refused to play them. Doug Cox was going to fire everyone right there. As a compromise, Les and Susan and Zach and maybe Sam Kopper, they put together two or three alternative commercials, which were great. Doug Cox, general manager, turned them down, and so did the agency, so did Coca-Cola. So he was about to fire us. I had played the wrong track when I was engineering in the summer of '70. I engineered *Blue Monday* for Johnny Otis, and I played "Shave 'Em Dry" by Lucille Bogan. I played the wrong track. We had an import album, English import album, which I now have on CD, and there were two songs, and one was the clean version, one was the dirty version. So that was a reason that they were trying to fire Johnny Otis. So I just fell on my sword, and Ted Longmire took over as his engineer. But I had such an amazing education. Steven Segal, now "the Obscene Steven Clean," who was a great rapper, and I'm not talking rap rapper, I mean a riffer. He would just riff on the air. He was great. He brought this incredible musicologist on the air, Barry Hansen, who had graduated UCLA in musicology and been on John Fahey albums, helping him record them, and living with Spirit and Canned Heat. He was doing all this stuff. He became Dr. Demento. Now, I'd never heard this mentioned before, but according to a book I read, the lead singer from this band in Boston that everybody was hot on, Steve Segal, Joe Rogers, Deirdre O'Donoghue, Steve Segal's girlfriend Delana, who did some ads in the *Free Press* for us, she was an artist, they were called the J. Geils Band, and Peter Wolf, the lead singer was known as the "Woofa Goofa" or the— He was a disc jockey on WBCN. So he apparently had all these weird characters, and one of them was a Dr. Demento. So I'm not sure how that worked out. Dr. Demento would guest once a week with Steve Segal, and he'd play comedy records. He'd play blues records. He'd play what he'd called a salad, where he just cut things up, where you could hear like twenty oldies in like three minutes or something like that. So about the third time he did it, if I remember correctly, Steve was sick, so I engineered his show the same way I did Johnny Otis'

show, the same way I did B. Mitchel Reed's show. It was as if I wasn't there. I forced Barry for the first time to basically do his own show. He wasn't being introduced by someone, someone wasn't talking about him, discussing stuff, so he basically did his show. Eventually, he got a show Sunday nights, the *Dr. Demento Show*, all on his own, which when we were all fired he did a show, which you probably listened you on that final day, October 24th, 1971. At eleven-thirty Doug Cox pulled the plug up on Flint Peak at the transmitter and walked into the studio and said, "Can you all hear me? You're all fired." Now, just a weird aside. The people he didn't fire were Steven Segal, who he thought would stay on, he thought he was going to be a traitor and stay on; me, who for some reason he thought I would stay on, maybe because I had had a breakfast meeting with him and Mike Callaghan and mentioned some things that I was agreeing with some of their assessments of the station, because I felt the station was real vulnerable. I felt a lot of people didn't realize that the station was vulnerable; and Ted Longmire, who we told to stay on. I said, "Fire me right here," because I knew I was moving up to Eureka to do a radio station. Steve Segal followed suit and said, "Doug, fire me right here," and we all got on Ted Longmire, who was the first black or African American disc jockey that we'd hired. We said, "Keep the gig." He's on the tape. He's on the end of that thirty-minute montage. He ended up quitting right on the air the next day, because he just realized that, hey, it's not worth it, because he became a true believer. He knew. I would hear him doing shows, and the one mistake he made—he ended up being on KMET—he made a mistake that a lot of people made. Jimi Hendrix and Arthur Lee of Love go back to the early days before he was Jimi Hendrix. When Arthur Lee came out with *Vindicator* on A & M Records, his solo album, there was a lot of Jimi Hendrix sound on it because Jimi had taught him music and guitar, and he had taught Jimi how to sing. I mean it's just one of those things, and I know this for a lot of reasons, because the first lid of dope I ever bought for ten dollars was from the lady, Doris Damone, who was dating the bass player in Love [Ken

Forssi] and that's how, like from the private stash of Arthur Lee. It was great pot. I mean for ten dollars, this is pot you could easily have sold for sixty, seventy-five bucks at the time an ounce. So *Vindicator* came out, and I remember hearing Ted Longmire saying it was lousy. He said, "He's just ripping Hendrix off." So that pissed me off, but I understood it, because a lot of people got in it. Because that album was good. It's still good. It was good in its time, but people just didn't realize that he wasn't ripping them off. He wasn't ripping them off. Where do we want to go from this?

CLINE

One thing I want to clear up here is that after the '68 strike, even though the station goes on, at some point you call off the strike, right, the strike ends?

ALVY

Yeah, right around summer, right before summer solstice. We have the meeting the Sunday before, probably. If I'm correct, it was Friday night, Saturday mescaline trip; Sunday meeting where the money is distributed; or close to that, and then by Thursday, by the solstice, doing the two-hour B. Mitchel Reed show that took us— Mike Dayton was our engineer at the time, who had been the first class at KPPC. Took us between nine and thirteen hours to do a two-hour show. The strike is now over, and everyone else had to go their own ways. There were a few disgruntled people. KFRC, which was the Bill Drake Top Forty Boss Radio in San Francisco that Ed Mitchell, who spells his name I think with two Ls, like Joni Mitchell, not like B. Mitchel Reed who has only one L, he is rumored— During KPPC, he would spray the microphone, thinking that there was bugs down there. He got real crazy about the fact that he felt it was unsafe down there. Rumor has it, and I've heard this from so many people, he ended up driving a taxicab into a stationary airplane on an airport parked in Denver, and that's how he died, supposedly. Don Hall, I'm hoping, is still around. We had a falling-out in the late eighties in Santa Barbara, and he disappeared. I don't know what happened to him after '89. Steve Segal supposedly was a single parent living and doing radio in Wisconsin somewhere near Milwaukee. Les Carter

passed away from a heart attack after becoming a successful writer and TV producer. He passed away in '86, a year after Jerry Garcia, after I got my website [www.tedalvy.com/]. Actually, I did a show in '97, a year after he passed away in August, up here at Valley College. I dedicated it to him. Other disc jockeys, B. Mitchel Reed died from a heart attack in '83.

CLINE

While we're on him, he didn't stay on KPPC.

ALVY

No, he went to KMET. He started KMET. He was at KMET first on tape and then live until 1971. Now, right around the time—

CLINE

Why did he leave?

ALVY

Right around the time we're getting fired, let's say summer of '71, a few things are happening. KLOS is about to become "Rock in Stereo," which is the very first formatted FM album-cut station. This is basically the beginning of Led Zeppelin twenty-four hours a day. [Cline laughs.] So what we're talking about, '67 through '71, those five years, there was no real written record of what was getting played on the air or what was in the library. I knew that. I still know that. I could look at a CD or an album and basically it all comes back to me. I'm trying to get all this out in a book. Part of doing the oral history is to at least get a lot of this stuff out there. Okay. The library.

CLINE

B. Mitchel Reed going to KMET.

ALVY

B. Mitchel Reed goes to KMET. He stays there. In '71, "Rock in Stereo," KLOS, which was part of the KABC, it was KABC FM as part of the ABC network, their stations around the country, I forget how many, is going "Rock in Stereo." Shadove Stevens takes over at KRLA and wants to play album cuts like Mitch used to do at KFWB in the summer of '67 on the Top Forty station. KRLA had a great signal. It had a great reputation. To a lot of people, it was sacrilegious that he was

doing this. Okay. I was one of the people that was trying to convince Mitch Reed to go over there, because KMET just wasn't happening. They had this really small box that they had to broadcast from. They still had to use engineers. They didn't have a staff. They weren't able to hire people to do the record library. They weren't able to hire production people. It was going nowhere. People were hot on our station. Our station was the hottest, especially after September of '70 when we went full power. We had over a year of being the hottest station in L.A. I got into fights with Mitch over the phone. Mitch and I were both Jewish Geminis. He's June 10th. I'm June 12th. We would always have like these amazing fights and then we'd make up and everything. I finally convinced him to go to KRLA, and he did mornings for a year. He was great. Then when he went back to KMET, it was after— We were all fired October of '71. KPFK let a lot of the staff on the air late at night. A lot of people went over to KMET in early 1972, including Dr. Demento, Don Hall, Zach Zenor, Mississippi Fats. Inor was over there already, Ron Middag was there, "Inor". So Mitch went back and he was finally treated with respect by David Moorhead. Now, I believe that David Moorhead and some of the other people there forced Mitch into a situation that he had to single-handedly keep the station on the air until they finally went twenty-four hours. If it wasn't for him, it wouldn't have happened. He not only influenced stations all over the country, because they'd fly in here, rent a motel room, and just listen to KMET, or they'd be anywhere from Santa Barbara to San Diego to I don't know how far east, being influenced by B. Mitchel Reed. He was influencing everyone. He went back there with respect, and Michael Hunter went back there, who had been working at KRLA, I believe, for Shadoe Stevens. Michael Hunter was "Motorcycle" Michael. He was a great guy. I ended up selling a bunch of his records and he didn't realize that when you're selling records you don't always get what you think they're worth. So I ended up selling him some really good— I believe it was blond Lebanese hash, so he loved it because I was selling it basically at wholesale prices, because that's what we were

getting it at wholesale. Michael Hunter ended up there. Then Mitch is back at KMET, and it's very weird, because KLAC had this thing. Don Page wrote a column in the *L.A. Times* about radio, and he was the emcee of an hour show on KLAC every Sunday. In 1972, I think in September, there's a show and on it is Barry Hansen as Dr. Demento from KMET, B. Mitchel Reed as B. Mitchel Reed from KRLA, and then about two or three months later, there's another one, and it happens to be B. Mitchel Reed now from KMET. He's back in KMET later. So he was gone about a year. By fall of 1972, he's back on KMET and he's there until 1978. The whole station moves in 1976. That's when I stopped being involved. I just moved up to Seattle, because I couldn't— The only future I could possibly see was being a guy on the payroll, working all night, becoming a cocaine addict, and dating supermodels, doing all that stuff. I didn't see that as a future. Plus, being from L.A. as a native, I had a lot of family things that had built up. There's pressure on both sides of my family. I was the oldest grandson on both sides. Both mother and father had parents who were both Sephardic that came over here after the turn of the century. They each had four siblings. So I moved to Seattle at this time. So I would keep in touch with Mitch. As I mentioned, there were hotline phone numbers. I always had B. Mitchel Reed's hotline, so I could always get in touch with him. Okay. The Museum of Television and Radio here in Beverly Hills, which is an extension of the one in New York, I donated a lot of air checks to them. I donated the tape of my interview with Garcia and Weir and Marmaduke and David Nelson from December of '70. I donated an interview I did right before we were fired in October of '71, with the keyboard player, Richard Wright, and the drummer, Nick Mason, of Pink Floyd [October 10, 1971]. I donated some B. Mitchel Reed commercials, B. Mitchel Reed air check. In '67, probably in July, there was a Who concert that we all went to down in Anaheim where both [John] Entwistle and [Pete] Townshend broke their instruments as a tribute to B. Mitchel Reed and to L.A. and the fact that we had helped break the— I donated a bunch of other air checks to them. I wanted to

mention when I mentioned Tom Robbins' novels, *Via Incognito* is his latest, I forgot to mention *Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas*. That was before *Fierce Invalids Home from Hot Climates*. I'd forgotten that. Okay. A lot of artists. Ted Sturgeon, I mentioned how I met him through B. Mitchel Reed and he was trying to do "Wooden Ships" as a movie and he wrote two *Star Trek* TV scripts. I would always read Richard Brautigan books. You might remember him as the hippie in *Rolling Stone*. He would do a little column. When he finally died, when he committed suicide, that was like a shock, of course. Elmore Leonard, Les Carter turned me on to him. I read all the Elmore Leonard novels. I just read his latest, *Mr. Paradise*. Tom Robbins, of course, I read all his novels. Kinky Friedman, a Texan who had the Texas Jewboys as his band, one of my favorite songs, "They Don't Make Jews Like Jesus Anymore," he's been writing mystery novels. I just read his latest *Prisoner of Van Damme Street*, which is a takeoff on the *Rear Window* [Alfred] Hitchcock trip. Most of his novels were set in *Greenwich Village*, *Greenwich Killing Time*, *Case of the Lone Star*. He wrote a couple later in Texas. Now he's finally back writing his novels. So all these things are going on, all these novels are important. Important novels. Richard Fariña's novel. A year after he died in 1966, I read *Been Down So Long it Looks Like Up to Me*. Then for two or three springs after that, I would read it. Well, Leonard Cohen even had a novel [*Beautiful Lovers*]. JFK, I mentioned he was murdered November 22nd, 1963. He ran against Richard Nixon in 1960. The Beatles in the following February, one of the very first, I believe, communal television global village experiences was the Friday murder of JFK and then everything that took place from the Lee Harvey Oswald murder by Jack Ruby into the funeral, those four days were one of the very first communal global village television events that I really remember that really affected, I believe, the entire nation. Then the next one was watching the Beatles on [the] *Ed Sullivan [Show]*, which was the reverse of it. So that took place. Now, if RFK had not been murdered, he would have run against Richard Nixon in 1968, and even though George Harrison, who couldn't vote anyway, was

going to support Pat Paulsen, RFK, we felt, would have been elected. So that would have changed the course of events of the entire country.

CLINE

I'm going to put in a new tape.

1.10. TAPE NUMBER: VI, Side One (April 23, 2004)

CLINE

Today is April 23rd, 2004). Alex Cline interviewing Ted Alvy, continuing our third session here. This is tape number six. Ted's going to read something into the record here before we continue on the odyssey that is the history of the radio station KPPC today.

ALVY

Yeah. We're almost two weeks till a full moon, just to let you know. Here is most of the air staff of KPPC FM Pasadena during October 1971 when Douglas A. Cox, general manager, fired us all. Les Carter, he was a disc jockey. He was the program director. He also was on the air. He'd play oldies under the name Leslie "Frogman" Carter, and he had a little comic character he used called Mr. Gullible. Susan Carter, his wife, vocalist. She was known as "Miss Outrageous Nevada." Jeff Gonzer, great morning man. He's still doing mornings here for Westwood One all over the country. He's the adult rock PD [program director] out in Valencia, I guess is where they are. Zachary Zenor, deejay and production director, and he was an engineer for the Credibility Gap also. Ted Alvy, known as "Cosmos." Joseph Rogers, known as "Mississippi Fats," and I mentioned his other names from [W]BCN. Steve Segal, who became "the Obscene Steven Clean." This is a list, I think, that ran around the time— Here's another thing in 1971. I told you B. Mitchel Reed went to KRLA where Shadoe Stevens was a program director. Rock in Stereo was beginning on the ABC network, which here was KLOS FM. The *Los Angeles Free Press* split into two papers. A lot of the original people started *The Staff*, which didn't last that long. This was printed in *The Staff*, fall of 1971. A.J. Solari [also known as "AJ the DJ"], who is Carole Solari Reed's brother, B. Mitchel Reed's brother-in-law. David Pierce, who had the

Pierce Family on the air. He's back in Louisiana. I guess he works for a TV station selling time and he's also an actor. His wife, Kate Pierce, who was a salesperson as well as being a part of the Pierce Family, his two kids were on the air with them, which was great. She passed away recently. Ted Longmire, I don't know what happened to him. Bernie Mitchell, I don't know what happened to him. Barry Hansen, "Dr. Demento." Johnny Otis, he did *Blue Monday* on Sunday nights. He's still around. He's got his own website. Uncle Noel and Uncle Joel was old-time radio stuff that Joel Siegel would run. He then went back to ABC to become the film critic. He's now fighting cancer. He wrote a book to his kid Dylan [*Lessons for Dylan*] about that. Sam Kopper, who was the production guy from WBCN. Credibility Gap, which is Richard Beebe, Harry Shearer, David L. Lander, Michael McKean, and Bob Gowa, who was their engineer after Zach Zenor. So that was the KPPC staff that got fired. There were other names in there, but no one else that I can remember. Now, I mentioned Don Page, who did radio columns in the *L.A. [Los Angeles] Times*, who had the KLAC interview show where B. Mitchel Reed was on it in September of '72 as KRLA and Dr. Demento was KMET. Then a couple months later there was another group of disc jockeys, including B. Mitchel Reed then at KMET. Don Page, one of his columns was "Underground Sunshine at KMET." This ran Sunday, June 23rd, 1968. This is right after the summer solstice. This is right after KMET began. [Reading] "A lot of angry young and old citizens have been blowing their minds over two-way radio, the medium's modern version of a shock treatment. To many, it is wholly therapeutic as gay and beneficial as a lobotomy." Funny how the word "gay" is different back in 1968. [Reading] "However, while hundreds of this vociferous folk continually bombard the microphones of KLAC and KABC, a normally vocal faction out there remains unaccountably silent. It is the young disestablishment. Too mature for basic rock and roll and obviously too young for Leonard Bernstein, this group is comprised of radio dropouts." I'm just going to do a little insert now. The TV program that Leonard Bernstein did ["Inside Pop," CBS

1967] that included "Surf's Up" with Brian Wilson sitting with his piano in a sandbox and all that. The booklet that you bought at the Monterey Pop Festival that had the Beatles ad and stuff like that, it also mentioned the Leonard Bernstein thing. So he was one of the first, let's say, one of the first long-hair musicians, if you want to call it classical, who welcomed long-hair composers, be they Lennon and McCartney, etc. So that's that reference. [Reading] "It is only fitting then that one of the two-way stations has at last realized there is a vacuum to be filled in this area, and it's equally fitting this station is KLAC, which started the whole molar marathon. While the straight set engages in verbal hostilities on KLAC's AM band 570," which is now the [Los Angeles] Lakers station, and tonight they're playing game three against the Houston Rockets. If they win now, because, see, if they can sweep, then Kobe [Bryant] won't miss the fifth game because of his court appearances. "While the straight set engages in verbal hostilities on KLAC's AM band, its sister counterpart, KMET FM, which is 94.7, is establishing a sanctuary for the dropouts. Now, according to your persuasion, you can blow your mind on either end of the radio dial." I'm going to do an insert here. The Persuasions are an a cappella [singing] group that Les Carter befriended, and they did IDs for us at KPPC. I'm in touch with Jerry Lawson, their lead singer. He just went solo this year. His wife, Julie [Lawson], is handling his career now. But the Persuasions just did an album last year. [Reading] "While the straight set engages in verbal hostilities on KLAC's AM band, the sister counterpart KMET FM is establishing a sanctuary for the dropouts. Now, according to your persuasion, you can blow your mind on either end of the radio dial. KMET 94.7 last week premiered a nightly eight-to-ten excursion known as 'Underground Sunshine,' a stereo venture into adult rock, alternative radio, the disestablishment, as Metromedia publicists fancy it. 'Underground Sunshine' is a product of B. Mitchel Reed, the world's oldest hippie, and Tom Donahue, escapees of another psychedelic experiment on KPPC FM. "Reed and Donahue were the subjects of an explosion controversy on KPPC, something to do with free choice of

material and were summarily ejected by the Pasadena FM outlet. Leading proponents of 'This is where it's at' school of music, Reed and Donahue are dispensing the sophisticated, esoteric, the unusual, as long as the ingredients of sound, rhythm, melody, and lyric possess outstanding quality and distinction and as long as their press agent holds out. And he's holding up rather well at the moment, to wit. Except for the discretion of Donahue and Reed, there will be no restrictions on content or length of the selections played. With commercials being limited to eight one-minute spots per hour, the accent is to make each spin reward the listener with an emotional experience. "Personally, the last emotional experience we had from radio was when Joe Pine told a listener to go gargle with razorblades, but we can assure you that KMET these evenings is an experience, if nothing else. And certainly KLAC and KMET are performing a nonpartisan, mind-blowing public service." This is called "Underground Sunshine at KMET," by Don Page, *Los Angeles Times* Calendar section, Sunday, June 23rd, 1968. Okay. Derek Taylor, who was a publicist with the Byrds, went on to be part of the band, he was almost the "sixth Beatle" at times, if you wanted to call someone else the "fifth Beatle." Derek Taylor was running the publicity for the Monterey Pop Festival. One of his press releases said, "Turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream." My tribute to him was we're starting a brand-new radio station, "A splendid time is guaranteed for all." The very first song that B. Mitchel Reed played on KMET, and he was on before Tom Donahue's show, was "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite," which ended side one of *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which was a year old now, and the next side started with "Within You, Without You," you know, George Harrison. So that's something that has never been revealed, because no one remembers it but me because I did program it. I don't remember a lot of the other music we played, because I lost the list, because it got to the point where we were doing it every day, so there's no reason to keep track. Beginning in '72, everything was written down, so everyone knew everything. That's why all these classic rock stations keep

playing the same things and they never delve into the stuff they missed. Just to fill in a few other quick things here. Back at KPPC, Joni Mitchell did an interview with B. Mitchel Reed. Elliot Roberts, her manager, had been sleeping on Mitch's floor. This was early '68. She sold out the Troubadour for all her shows. I drove her and Elliot from KPPC in Pasadena down Pasadena Freeway into Laurel Canyon. Did I tell you that story?

CLINE

No.

ALVY

On the way to her house—I guess she has a place in Laurel Canyon now, she's no longer crashing at Mitch's—she tells me, though, to stop this VW microbus that was going the other way. I flag it down. It's David Crosby. He comes out, Joni, they all talk about her new album that he's going to mix right now. She's recorded her very first album [originally self-titled, later *Song to a Seagull*]. She performed live with B. Mitchel Reed in the basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church on KPPC and Elliot didn't want it taped. Then she did the Troubadour. But now she's working on her album. So to me, it was very interesting. I was trusted to drive these people home, so basically I was like the designated driver. To me it was a big responsibility. When I drove Janis Joplin and the bass player for Big Brother [and the Holding Company], Peter Albin, from the station to the motel they were staying near Hollywood High School off of Sunset and Highland at a motel, the same thing. She impressed me as a very vulnerable lady who was really into the music. They were talking music. They were real excited about playing gigs and writing new music. The weird thing was, I believe it might have been on a Sunday. She was there. Tom Donahue brought her there to introduce her to B. Mitchel Reed. I believe there was some law where they couldn't sell alcohol after a certain time on Sunday, because she wanted a beer and we drove around and couldn't find anything. So she said, "Screw it." We drove up the Pasadena Freeway. I didn't stop until I dropped them off at the motel. But it was interesting because both Joni and Janis, I was

never in a situation where I got to ever see them again in person, just one on one. The same with Jimi Hendrix at the party at B. Mitchel Reed's Mandeville Canyon house before his Forum gig in 1969 when I met Jimi Hendrix and handed him a joint. He was dressed beautifully, and a beautiful woman just took him out into the woods and we never saw him again after that. The party was thrown in his honor. Anyway, it was interesting to get to know these people, because if I had seen them in a different light, I was seeing them both as really innocents just starting their careers, which, to me, was real pure. I didn't really like hanging out with musicians and other famous people, because I always felt as a cosmic catalyst. I'm a Gemini and I could affect people, because I could see affecting people in positive and negative ways with things I did, so I really limited that type of thing now. Now, when we put together the benefit films, where we ran films to raise money for L.A. free clinics that Bob Laemmle let us use his theaters, one of the things was I put together a group called Perhaps to run these, and one of the people was Grant Gibbs. Grant Gibbs had an office near Paramount Studios off of Melrose [Avenue] there, down one of the streets where Lucy's Adobe was or something. They were making *Flesh Gordon*, which was the hardcore version of *Flash Gordon*. So, anyway, Grant Gibbs at the time was managing Captain Beefheart, so I had done this interview with Don Van Vliet on the air as Captain Beefheart when I sat in on a midnight show right after *Lick My Decals [Off, Baby]* had come out. Now I'm working with Grant Gibbs, and he's talking to Don Van Vliet on the phone, and they move up to Santa Cruz in the Redwoods to work on *The Spotlight Kid*. Then when they move up to Eureka, I meet them. I meet Bill Harkleroad, as "Zoot Horn Rollo." I meet Mark Boston, who's "Rockette Morton." I also meet Artie Tripp. I meet Roy Estrada. I meet those guys, but I became friends with Mark Boston and Bill Harkleroad, because when they formed Mallard, I wrote songs that they recorded. But anyway, so I had this weird tie-in. Now, Perhaps, which is managed by Grant Gibbs, it's to raise money for the free clinics. He's also managing Beefheart, who I've interviewed and who I'm going

to meet when I live in Eureka, and I'm also going to end up writing songs for them as they split out. So I've got all these weird segues going on. The Jefferson Starship, before they were the Jefferson Starship, as the Jefferson Airplane, they recorded an album called *Blows Against the Empire* by the Jefferson Starship, which included Jerry Garcia and David Crosby. I wanted to mention that because the list of the fifty worse songs that *Blender* magazine just put out, "We Built This City" is number one. It lists fifty so-called awful songs. It lists a few that are good but that have annoyed people, supposedly, like "Obla di Obla da." How could you say that's not a good song? [Cline laughs.] Segue, gapless bridge. UCLA, when I was going to UCLA film school, I started in September of '68 when Lew Alcindor was doing his final year. They'd already outlawed the dunk because of him in '67 after they won the championship, the NCAA. They outlawed the dunk, and what did he do? He became one of the best finesse players of all time, and they won two more championships for John Wooden. Okay. Some of the events that took place at Melnitz Hall. Now, I transferred as a poli[tical] sci[ence] major. I was going to become an attorney. As it happened, the only classes they didn't accept was my four radio classes, because they really didn't have radio courses. They had KLA, which broadcast from the dorms. So I had to go a full extra semester, which meant September through December of '70, and during that time I was doing shows on KPCC as a part-timer. Jimi Hendrix died. Janis Joplin died. I got to interview the [Grateful] Dead. I saw Little Feat for the first time in a concert outdoors at UCLA with Black Oak Arkansas. Okay. Some of the things that took place at Melnitz Hall. *Rosemary's Baby* was screened for us. Roman Polanski spent over three hours answering every question that was asked. Unbelievable. Paul Newman directed *Rachel, Rachel*, which with his wife, Joanne Woodward, who, in 1960, I believe, was the very first person to get a star on the [Hollywood] Walk of Fame. He spoke about *Rachel, Rachel* afterwards. Paul Newman, his first directorial debut, talking to us. Steve McQueen was one of the producers of the Mark Rydell film in 1969, *The Reivers*.

We didn't really have much of a discussion afterwards. I don't believe Steve McQueen spoke. He may have been in the audience. I believe he was. At the time, you know, he was a good buddy of B. Mitchel Reed, and then the Ali McGraw thing. Harold Lloyd, one of the all-time great comedians. If you list the five best comedians, you've got [Charlie] Chaplin, you've got Buster Keaton, you've got to put Harold Lloyd up there, and then you go maybe like Groucho Marx and Stan Laurel or something like that. He brought primo prints from his personal collection of his Harold Lloyd shorts, unbelievable, and then he just spoke for— So there's all this amazing stuff happening at UCLA. KPPC is playing music. Les Carter's got a record store below the Sunset Strip [Music Revolution], which one of the best— It's like a record library. KMET has a broadcast signal that's blasting rock and roll all over southern California. A lot of people who went on to become longtime disc jockeys, like Bob Coburn, who's been doing *Rockline* for years and everything, were disc jockeys at KPPC. A lot of people went through there. Tom Gamache went through there and then went to KMET as "Uncle T." There was never any steady station sound, though, until Les Carter took over April 1st, 1970, again. Because when we were on the air January 2nd of '68 until the strike of March 18th of '68, one of the most incredible radio— Radio was just amazing. It was so electric, especially when you were in the station watching it go on. But listening to it was just amazing, and that's with Les Carter in the morning and Ed Mitchell and B. Mitchel Reed in the afternoon when I was on his board, then Tom Donahue and then Don Hall all night long. So all this is going on. Spike Jones. I used to watch Spike Jones on TV. I mean, to watch these incredible musicians that were so good that they could parody musicians, I remember watching— That used to blow me away. So that was a big influence. Obviously Bonzo Dog Band was easy to get into, a lot of [Frank] Zappa's stuff, because of Spike Jones. When I got the show in late January of '71, nine a.m. to one, I used to do a Spike Jones segment every now and then where I had this— I had Spike Jones and all this stuff. I'd mix in music along with Spike Jones, like

maybe Holy Modal Rounders or Frank Zappa. Barry Hansen was starting to do the same thing on his show, so he became— He would write liner notes for Spike Jones, all kinds of stuff. I mentioned the Credibility Gap. They would come in five days a week. They would come in in the late afternoon. By six p.m., they would have a brand-new broadcast, completely original, that they had written and recorded. They played it during Les Carter's show. Then at the end, it would be repeated at eleven, between "the Obscene Steven Clean" and "Mississippi Fats" and then I would play it the following day or the following Monday if it was a Friday show at one p.m. at the end of my show right before the Pierce Family.

CLINE

This actually leads right into two questions that I really wanted to ask. One is, during this golden period at KPPC when it's really breaking a lot of new ground, other than the music, the quality of the music, which is obviously the main feature of the station, there's an aesthetic and there's an approach to programming that is extremely unique, extremely innovative, extremely original, all the way down to doing your own commercials. You mentioned the Spike Jones influence, all these things. It's an aesthetic, if you will, collectively, perhaps. Where would you say the inspiration really came from that created that aesthetic? What was it that made the KPPC style that people got so used to listening to and were so enamored of?

ALVY

Underground radio, B. Mitchel Reed has talked about this, I think, on Jim Ladd's *History of FM Radio* [Program], if I remember correctly. The underground press, like the *L.A. Free Press*, the *Berkeley Barb*, Bay Area had this newspaper called *The Oracle*, which had incredibly beautiful artwork. There was, besides the *L.A. Free Press*, like I said, *The Staff* split off in '71, was short-lived. There were other underground newspapers all over the country. Every city had one. There'd be one in Detroit, there'd be one in Ann Arbor, Michigan, one in Boston, one in, you know, all that, the underground press. Underground record stores were starting

to start. One of the first in L.A. was Manny Aron's, Aron's Records, which ended up on Melrose across from Fairfax High [School], and it's now Highland above Santa Monica [Boulevard]. He sold it circa 1996. But he was one of the pioneers. People would bring in their promo copies or their used albums and sell them, and that would have been how we recycled. The classical station disc jockey would want classical albums, and Manny would have the best. So he'd trade in his jazz and his rock and roll, and we'd buy the jazz and rock and roll and then we'd trade in our this and that. So that's one of the ways. Then I mentioned Les Carter's Music Revolution. Now, did I tell the story of *Abbey Road* [by the Beatles]?

CLINE

No.

ALVY

Okay. What happened was Thomas from England had Records Ltd. here in Van Nuys across from House of Sight and Sound, which was like the Wallach's Music City of Van Nuys on Victory Boulevard just west of Van Nuys Boulevard. He ended up starting the only import record distributor downtown. I ended up cutting a deal with him where he'd give me twenty-five albums a month of my choice that I'd just put in the KPPC library, and just by playing them, the only way you could get them was go to your records store and request them, and they'd have to buy from him, because he was the only importer, so it worked out great. Okay. When Music Revolution started, I went over in September of '68. So now it's a full-time store. Les and Susan Carter, besides having incredible taste in music and being real campy individuals, they could get into almost anything, be it old movies or old TV shows, they'd tape old TV shows off the air and use it on their shows and stuff.

CLINE

So this is where a lot of that aesthetic comes from, then?

ALVY

Yeah, because Tom Donahue's influence really— After the strike, he was basically in San Francisco. B. Mitchel Reed, between being on tape and then finally going live at KMET

and having the station stagnate and having to go to KRLA and then come back and having KMET finally go for a 24/7-type rock station with all kinds of people ending up going in there. Okay. Going back to the—

CLINE

Abbey Road.

ALVY

The Music Revolution is going. Les and Susan Carter do something very unique. We have home delivery. Rick Donohoe is one of the guys that do it. He and I became roommates on Colby [Avenue] across from the "Mailman" and in that hippie area with our apartment where Mike Robinson was my roommate. David Mulhern and Dale Preston were his roommates. They ended up starting the Recordworks up in Eureka where Larry Glass now runs the Recordworks. Okay. So one of the people making deliveries on a motorcycle is Ken Sander. Now, Ken Sander's sister is Ellen Sander, who wrote the book *Trips* in 1973, a rock journalist. So delivering, once Rick was offered— You usually get offered dope as a tip or something like that. One girl offered to lay him, you know, offered sex and this and that. So the *Abbey Road* is scheduled to come out in approximately eight weeks. Now, what *Abbey Road* is— *Let it Be* is in the can. They [the Beatles] decided to record *Abbey Road* because of all the problems they had with *Let it Be*, and they filmed it and this and that, and they did the concert on the roof. So *Let it Be* is a pure album, meaning it's not going to have hit singles that are going to be left off or put on. Like *Yesterday and Today* was a compilation album. They'd released fourteen tracks in England and only eleven in America, so eventually those extra tracks in the singles— If they put a single on the American album, they'd have to take off an album track. They did that with Jimi Hendrix's first album [*Are You Experienced?*]. So *Abbey Road* is going to be a pure album, meaning it's like *Sergeant Pepper*. It's not going to be different in America or England. Okay. Thomas flies in— Thomas and Manny Aron, who were buds working together, fly in *Abbey Road* as an import. Now, the import copy of *Abbey Road* is better than the American's going to be

because usually English import albums are better pressing, better mixing, the whole thing. We ran a little ad in the *Free Press*. We carried it. Aron's Record store carried it. I imagine if Ltd. was still open. Sold out immediately. Capitol Records was going crazy. Manny and Thomas hire another plane trip. They're ready. They're getting another batch ready to fly in. For the very first time, and I think it's the first time any record company ever did that, they immediately moved up the American release of *Abbey Road*, because they were afraid the import was going to kill them. So that's one of the things that took place. Also in late '68, we used to have a little TV in the store. Elvis Presley did his comeback, so we had that going in the store. Later on, a lady named Francie Schwartz, who is on the Beatles newsgroup and a lot of people call her, this and that, she wrote an article in *Rolling Stone* about the Beatles. She lived with Paul McCartney in '68. I had met her. She had come into Music Revolution right after that. This is before there was any controversy. She hadn't written anything, and people were calling her this or that. She literally was his girlfriend and hung out with him and got to know the Beatles and all that. She still knows Yoko [Ono] today and whatever, and she still has a problem with Paul as being her ex, and this and that. They have all that going on. So I met her. Cynthia Plaster Caster, who I've recently e-mailed her or sent her the Les Carter-Frank Zappa interview [on KPPC] from '68, which blew my mind, she came in because Zappa had the Plaster Casters meet with the GTOs [Girls Together Outrageously]. Simone Signore comes in, and Les and Susan have her autograph the wall. A lot of people come in. Richie Furay comes in and invites us to see his new band, Pogo, at the Troubadour. Then he got sued and he had to change the name to Poco. Yeah, I mean all these things. So this little record store, Music Revolution, had a lot going on while it was— Plus the selection. Les took me to a one-stop downtown, somewhere downtown. Prestige [Records] and Bluesville [Records] were getting rid of their entire line of records and coming out with a rechanneled stereo version, which was shit. So Les bought every single mono album. We'd buy them. I still have— I have that

Lightnin' Hopkins, all this incredible stuff. Took it to our store. He paid a dollar each for them. He bought a bunch. I bought a bunch. He sold them for two dollars at the store. He could have easily sold them for six or eight dollars and he would have sold out. So they were into the music that way. Sundays was Jewish deli day. They'd bring in lox and cream cheese and we'd do the Trip and whatever. Then eventually, like I said, they were in New York recording the album [Susan Carter's eponymous album backed by Blood, Sweat, and Tears] and hard times hit in the store and he eventually sold out the stock of his store in the fall of '69. Then by spring of '70, he was at KPPC as a disc jockey and program director again. Then after the station ended, after we were all fired, KPFC let a bunch of the air staff go on the air. Some of them went to KMET. Les and Susan went to Denver, I think with KFML, and they ran that for a while and that didn't really work out. Then the KMET staff. Jeff Gonzer eventually went to KLOS and became very successful as a morning man. Then he came back to KMET and then Jim Ladd followed him. Mary Turner was— In fact, if you watch the Laker game tonight, the guy with the jacket that has both— It used to just have "8" and "34" for Shaq [Shaquille O'Neal] and Kobe [Bryant], now on the other side of the coat he's got the Karl Malone-Gary Payton numbers, you know, "11" and "20," that's Norm Pattiz who owns Westwood One. His wife sitting next to him is Mary Turner, and she was "The Burner." When she dated Jimmy Rabbitt, she was called "Mounds," Mary "Mounds" Turner. So she's great. She's still around. B. Mitchel Reed told me about this young intern. I think she was at the radio station at Loyola [Marymount University], I'm not sure, Cynthia Fox. He told me about her a long time. She ended up replacing Mitch on the air after he had his heart attack in '78. The very evil David Moorhead fired him, and then Mitch eventually went to KLOS and he did that. Where were we? What else do I need to—

CLINE

The other thing I wanted— We were talking about the influences that made up the aesthetic of KPPC. Obviously, Les Carter—

ALVY

Okay. A lot of it was college students knowing music. It was street people. Steven Segal was a street person. I was clean-cut, living at— I was probably the only native person from L.A., native L.A., so I had nothing to lose. I lived here. If everything failed, I had that to fall back on. For some reason, I ended up, being that I met B. Mitchel Reed and ended up going to his concerts and being his producer and meeting people, I was like a street person. Plus, I was in touch with Platterpuss Records, and then Larry Glass ended up working for Mike Pinto. So he'd call me daily. We'd talk about what was selling. A guy named Billy Kincheloe was working on a small record store in Santa Monica. He called me and we ended up becoming good friends and he would help me with what was selling. He ended up starting Music Plus. He was one of the people that started Music Plus. I think he got screwed in that. His girlfriend ended up being Liz the Duck Lady when we had our first Duck Rush. She and her then boyfriend brought little baby ducks, and you'd hear them in the background on the air. I don't know if that was September or the December '70 Duck Rush that she brought those. [I introduced Billy to Liz in 1972]. Other influences—

CLINE

One of the things that's really characteristic is this very unpredictable, almost surreal, and at times very comic sort of presentation.

ALVY

Everyone would have a different way. Basically, you just didn't want anything to end. If a segue ended in dead air— Now, dead air to a lot of people was a mistake. I used dead air a lot for emphasis. In fact, still, when I did it in '97, I like a song to completely end.

CLINE

Oh, yeah.

ALVY

Sometimes crossfades, if it's done for a purpose, will work, and sometimes I would just leave dead air for emphasis, sometimes even in between songs. You'd play something that's so heavy. You don't want to mellow them out. You

want to jack them up another bit. So I might leave like one beat of dead air or two beats of dead air or something like that. The original concept with Tom Donahue with the eight commercials an hour was basically only about three breaks an hour, but you'd do sets of threes for some reason. If a new Canned Heat album would come out, or Steve Miller [Band] album would come out, or Airplane, you'd put a set of three together, and that would satisfy it. Standard sets, things that I'd like to do, there's the car sets, about southern California. You could do so many car songs, and there's so many sets you can do. There's so many political things you could do. I'd love to do a show Sundays on Air America, the liberal thing, because I could do it all in music, because I became a minimalist. I mean I grew up on B. Mitchel Reed, and I ended up being his close confidante. I mean, I could never try and be a B. Mitchel Reed. I could never be a Les Carter. Les had this amazing voice, and I listened to him for years. Tom Donahue had this— I couldn't do the personality trip. I would do it in short little bursts, and I would do a lot of edited stuff, a lot of the drop-ins and commercials and things I would do, a lot of the IDs. But with three turntables, I could do drop-ins and things. But I didn't go on long raps and riffs and things that much because I became a minimalist, and I was able to play more music. From what I understand, Jim Ladd is playing less music now than he really should. I don't listen that much because that's the time of day I'm doing stuff at night. I've heard him do amazing shows. Right after I moved back here from Santa Barbara, it was the anniversary of Watergate, about a year after. He did an amazing show then on— It was KLSX, which is the biggest waste in the world now that it's FM talk radio. It was twenty-four hours of classic rock that's gone seven days a week from the airwaves of Los Angeles. The [Vietnam] War galvanized everyone. We were all antiwar. The draft was important. Pot-smoking was important. Like I said, I had the feeling that the old generation was alcohol. When people started drinking alcohol and then adding other types of drugs to just pot-smoking, to me that's when everything started to change, especially when cocaine got involved. I don't remember needle people.

There was that one guy that died at KLOS that I think Jim Ladd calls him "The General." I think his name is Jim Patton. Jeff Gonzer was sent to bring him in. He missed an air shift or a meeting, and Jeff Gonzer discovered him OD'd in Laurel Canyon. But there was very little— I didn't know much about needle drugs, didn't really know much about speed, but obviously, as being a college student, you knew there were all-nighters going on. There were people that were into things. During the strike, a lot of strange people showed up. But before the strike, in the basement of the church, we had to clean it out the two weeks before the strike, because there was even heroin dealers down there. It was getting crazy. It was getting too loose. We were afraid of a big bust. Like I said, a lot of the people that didn't get hired at KPPC, KMPX, KMET, KSAN, whatever, it was because they didn't pass the test. They weren't being trusted. They might be a narc. They might be to the point where they might screw up. They might get drunk on the air and cause a pot bust or something like that. So a lot of people— Plus there were just so few openings. Like I said, J.J. Jackson came out here and had to work at KLOS. He would have been perfect at KPPC. He would have loved it, because he not only knew Steve Segal and "Mississippi" and Deirdre [O'Donoghue] and everything, he would have fit in perfectly.

CLINE

My other question, which will have to be my last question because of the time, you mentioned the Credibility Gap. What do you remember about how and why they were brought to the station since they've obviously clearly into topical humor, radio theater, if you will, not music, a group of really talented, innovative radio actors?

ALVY

Okay. Les Carter used to say that Harry Shearer was the funniest guy he knew. KRLA, it was actually started by other people, Lew Irwin's Credibility Gap. The folksinger was Len Chandler. That's what Michael McKean ended up bringing music to the group. Richard Beebe was a longtime voice. Apparently the first show with a guy who was working at an answering machine service and doing funny voices on his

home phone, David L. Lander; Harry Shearer, who had after his degree at UCLA, I think he taught at Watts or something like that, who was definitely into political humor and stuff like that. Their first show at KRLA was when RFK [Robert F. Kennedy] was murdered, so that was around June 5th of '68. So when Les hired them to come over, it was Richard Beebe, Harry Shearer, and David L. Lander. David L. Lander's good friend who came out from back East was Michael McKean, so that's how Michael McKean got in the group. Michael McKean and David L. Lander had a routine called somebody and Squiggy. I don't think it was Lenny at the time. They did it at a party, and Penny Marshall's father, Gary Marshall, saw them and wanted them on *Laverne and Shirley*, so that's how that happened. They ended up doing the Rose Parade where they would do the alternative—You'd turn to a certain station, and they would do the— It came out on an album called *Floats*. I've got a tape of it somewhere. They started doing that, and the very first one was Les and Susan Carter. It would have been January 1st of '71, Les and Susan Carter with the Credibility Gap. Then they did it at KMET and whatever. Let's see. What else were we talking about? The Credibility Gap. Then they did some shows at KMET for a while, then they went out, I think, on a college tour, and then Richard Beebe left. If you go to harryshearer.com, there's a lot of that information. He's got a website. You could also listen to his *Le Show*, which he does live from ten to eleven a.m. every Sundays from KCRW FM here in 89.9 out of Santa Monica College, which is syndicated worldwide and there's various [stations]. He's the best. Sometimes if you take the music he plays, even though he might play five or six songs, you could expand everything he played, let's say, in the past year, and you'd be able to format a radio station. He played some amazing music that shows up at times.

CLINE

He had a music show on KPPC for a while.

ALVY

Yes. It was called *Destination Music*. It was on Sundays in the afternoon. The first time I heard it, this was when I was

still at KYMS when I didn't understand why Les Carter was playing Merle Haggard. I didn't realize he was a great songwriter at the time. I was just pissed that he was singing "Okie from Muskogee." I didn't understand Harry Shearer at all. I mean, I fell in love with *Destination Music* after a while, but at first I just said, "I'm a true believer; 106.7 does not have a show like that on the air, you know. I'm a true believer."

CLINE

What was it about it that was—

ALVY

Destination Music, he would just mix music and all kinds of—

CLINE

Oh, I see, very eclectic.

ALVY

It was just amazing, satirical, song parody. I mean I wish there was still tape. I haven't been able to find any tapes. I wish he had some he could put on his website. It was just so good. It was so good that, like I said, it was the opposite. It's like the first time people saw Jimi Hendrix and couldn't understand him or heard Bob Dylan or so many bands, a lot of the first times you just didn't understand them, so you didn't like them. People that didn't realize that the Grateful Dead were a jazz band, because they didn't play the same thing twice, and if Jerry Garcia would play the same guitar throughout, where Little Feat might switch forty times playing guitars over two sets, or something like that, that they're really a jazz band. And Jimi Hendrix is really a jazz artist, that all these people— But it all goes back to the roots. The other spinoff, like I say, Johnny Otis is still alive and doing stuff, and he had a great show. I learned so much from him. I learned so much doing that folk show the autumn of '67.

CLINE

Folk Festival?

ALVY

The guy up at KSAN, who I believe started at KMPX, [Wes] "Scoop" Nisker, he was one of the first guys to do montages that were used from actual newscasts montages. He's still

doing stuff, and some of his stuff I think has been released. I donated an air check tape that just ended up in my collection to the Museum of Television and Radio. I also donated some other things, I forget what else, to the Museum of Television and Radio. They've come back. Don Barrett, who has laradio.com, put together these three groups of Top Forty disc jockeys, top names, did these amazing seminars. In fact, at the end of one of them, *The Hits [Just] Keep on Coming*, Ben Fong-Torres' book, he's also, besides being a part-time disc jockey, he was a writer for *Rolling Stone*. The seminar for his book ended up with Johnny Rivers, who was on the seminar thing, did this performance on the roof of the Museum of Television and Radio right there on little Santa Monica [Boulevard] and Beverly [Drive] in Beverly Hills. It was amazing. He just did this amazing set of songs. But a lot of these Top Forty disc jockeys were on the panel, like Elliot Field, that lives out in Palm Springs, and Bill Ballance and even Rick Dees and Casey Kasem. But lately the emphasis has been more towards TV, which is sort of a drag.

CLINE

And somehow not surprising.

ALVY

Yeah.

CLINE

I think I'm going to have to call it for today, if that's all right.

ALVY

Good. As soon as you turn it off, I've got a couple of things.

CLINE

Okay. We'll meet again and we'll continue the saga.

ALVY

Let me just say this again.

CLINE

Okay.

ALVY

This guy Alex Cline had a great idea. I really, really mean this. There's a lot that can happen off of this. I think there's a lot of people, once this is— I don't know how you publish this or whatever. Once this is in the libraries at UCLA and Berkeley, I can see another group of people getting together

wanting to do a similar thing. I think you're going to get people coming out of the woodwork eventually, but would be great.

CLINE

That's what I'm hoping for.

ALVY

I think you're being the cosmic catalyst, and I really respect that, and I hope I'm doing you justice.

CLINE

Thank you. Thank you for having your website [www.tedalvy.com/], which is how I found you, for anyone interested. Thanks. [End of April 23, 2004) interview]

1.11. TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side One (April 30, 2004)

CLINE

Today is April 30th, 2004). It's another Friday. This is Alex Cline. I'm interviewing Ted Alvy once again at his home in Van Nuys. This is tape number seven, the fourth session. Good morning.

ALVY

Good morning. It's about a week till the full moon now, and tomorrow's May 1st, one-year anniversary of the President of the United States, George W. Bush, landing on an aircraft carrier and saying, "Mission accomplished." The month of April has seen more American casualties since Vietnam [War], even more than during the original Gulf War. That's where we are right now.

CLINE

Okay. Thank you for that designation. So you have something you want to read?

ALVY

Yeah. This is an e-mail I sent to Don Barrett, who runs the laradio.com website. *Los Angeles Radio People* was his second volume of his book, came out in '97. "We always enjoy any history of *Los Angeles Radio* by Jim Hilliker, especially insight about KFWB Top Forty DJs and the genius of Chuck Blore." This was from laradio.com, April 28th, 2004). There was a history of Jim Hilliker wrote about KFWB turning, like, eighty years old. [Reading] "To name just a

few, it started with the 'seven swingin' gentlemen,' Bruce Hayes, Al Jarvis, Joe Yokum, Elliot Field, B. Mitchel Reed, Bill Ballance, and Ted Quillin." This is KFWB starting December 2nd, 1958. Chuck Blore put together Channel 98 Color Radio. [Reading] " And continues with other such as Gene Weed; 1962 morning man Gary Owens; air personality and later program director Jim Hawthorne; Sam Riddle; Roger Christian; Wink Martindale; Larry McCormick; and at the end of its music years, the team of Al Loman and Roger Barkley." Now, I noticed that there was something missing, so I added, "Probably lost in cyberspace, Emperor Bob Hudson began his reign at KFWB in 1967." He was there till in March of '68 KFWB dropped its music format and went all news. So it was Loman and Barkley and then Bob Hudson did his gig. [Reading] " Bob Hudson began his reign at KFWB in 1967, hired by visionary general manager Jim Lightfoot, who first teamed Loman and Barkley and allowed B. Mitchel Reed and Dave Diamond to play album cuts on a Top Forty station." This began in summer of '67. [Reading] " We saw the Emperor, during that summer and autumn, holding court in the bar at the back of Aldo's restaurant on Hollywood Boulevard. One could only enter KFWB by climbing the stairs in the back alley behind the station where there was a door that opened directly into Aldo's bar. Emperor Bob Hudson continued the party that was his radio show at that Hollywood restaurant, and it was cool. Bob died September 20th, 1997, at the age of sixty-six." I'll just give that to you. Now, just two other things. Bruce Lee had this to say. He created what was called Jeet Kune Do. The Kung Fu TV show was really created for him, and then they wouldn't hire an Oriental. They had to hire an Occidental, so David Carradine, who was the perfect choice because he's a martial arts master right now, he's even appeared on *Alias*, and he's great. The way of way of the intercepting fist, that's what Jeet Kune Do is. It's nonclassical. The only secret to martial arts, according to Bruce Lee, is the willingness to train hard enough to cultivate one's own innate abilities, and that's with any talent, musician, athlete. Some of the basics to Jeet Kun Do: economy of motion, simplicity, directness, using no way

as way, having no limitation as limitation. Bruce Lee did very few movies. His brief filmography. He was born November 27th, 1940, in San Francisco. He went to the University of Washington in Seattle, where he started his first studio where he taught martial arts, and there was a lot of criticism of him by the establishment, because they didn't want to teach it to anyone outside of the Chinese community. So in 1971, his first film, *The Big Boss*, came out, which was renamed *Fists of Fury* when it was redubbed. *Fists of Fury* came out in 1972, which was renamed *The Chinese Connection*. *The Way of the Dragon* in 1973 was directed by Bruce Lee, and that was renamed *Return of the Dragon* when it was released here in America. *Enter the Dragon*, 1973, this was the first big Hollywood film, and this made him an international star, especially the scene with the mirrors, some of the most amazing martial arts. The thing is people didn't realize. By seeing that, they thought maybe it was a special effects thing. He would do things live that special effects could not create. So when you saw him on film, that was Bruce Lee. That was not special effects. *The Game of Death*, there's only twelve minutes of Bruce Lee. This was a film that was never completed because he died. One of the scenes he taped was a martial arts combat between Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Bruce Lee, which is amazing. I've got that photograph. I don't know if I showed it to you. But the thing is, when I was at UCLA, Lew Alcindor [with the UCLA Bruins], his first year, they took away the dunk from college basketball because of that. So the final two years, his junior and senior year, because you weren't able to play as a freshman back then, so we're talking '67, '68, and '69, in '68 and '69, when they again won the championships, he became more of a finesse player, which turned into his great long professional career, first with [Milwaukee] and then with the Lakers, first with Oscar Robertson and then with [Earvin] "Magic" Johnson. But a lot of what he learned, I think, how to pace yourself, how to really become a warrior in the fourth quarter, was from Bruce Lee, as well as John Wooden. A lot of freeform underground radio that I came out of was a lot of these ideas that Bruce Lee had, we'd also apply them. One

last thing. This is what's going on. When Bill [William J.] Clinton was impeached, the Ken [Kenneth] Starr release to the Internet was almost like releasing pornography compared to what was out there now. Now, this is what they're trying to do now. As used in this section, "The term 'profane,' used with respect to language, includes the words shit, piss, fuck, cunt, asshole, and the phrases cocksucker, motherfucker, and asshole, compound use including hyphenated compounds of such words and phrases with each other or with other words or phrases and other grammatical forms of such words and phrases including verb, adjective, gerund, principal, and infinitive forms." This is HR 3687; that's House of Representatives Bill 3687, December 8th, 2003. And my answer, when I posted this on the Internet, was, "Shit piss fuck cunt asshole cocksucker motherfucker asshole." [Cline laughs.] So that's where we are today. And George Carlin, God bless him, is still alive and—

CLINE

His is. Right. I was just about to comment on George Carlin, the spirit of [inaudible].

ALVY

Now I'll let you ask some questions.

CLINE

This is interesting, because one of the things I wanted to talk about today, one of the things I wanted to finish up on is the second strike, the barricading in the studio that led to the final demise of KPPC, so we can make sure that we get that down for the historical record, even though we've talked about it some extent. I wanted you, especially since you mentioned KFWB at the beginning at this tape, to talk a little bit about what was happening in pop music radio that was by way of contrast to what was happening. I mean there had to be an overground radio. There was mainstream pop radio, AM radio, for example, stations like KFWB before they became an all-news channel, there was KRLA, and there was KHJ Boss Radio. You mentioned Sam Riddle, for example, starting on KFWB. Many of us, and I'm speaking now of myself, grew up hearing Top Forty radio on AM before we discovered that there was FM radio going on, and I

remember when album cuts were starting to be played on AM radio, and that's kind of what led me down the lovely garden path. So if you can, by way of contrast, maybe you can describe a little bit of what KPPC was sort of the antithesis to at the time that it was broadcasting its more innovative album-oriented format.

ALVY

There were some legendary disc jockeys that came out of Boss Radio, like Robert W. Morgan.

CLINE

Or guys like "Humble Harve" and—

ALVY

Yeah, I'm thinking of— Why can't I think of his name? This is weird. You know, Tina Delgado is alive, alive. "The Real Don Steele." But basically, let me give a point of view and let's take this as me. I call this true fiction because there's different views of really what happened on the same events. We did not like Boss Radio because of what it represented. Now, it took Top Forty and turned it into Top Thirty. [Cline laughs.] And it did it all over the country, so there were restrictions. Now, what Chuck Blore did at KFWB with Top Forty, every three hours there was a new entertainer sitting in that chair doing his own bit of entertainment, and he would prepare, basically— Usually they were supposed to prepare three hours for a three-hour show, so they basically had the show, because they knew what the music was going to be and the whole thing. The disc jockeys were allowed to meet once a week and each of them would have what they called their pick. There was "Wink's Wax to Watch" was Wink Martindale, this and that. But they would each have input, and if a record got enough votes, they would try it as an add-on and play it and see if it worked out. Early in his career, B. Mitchel Reed, who knew Herb Alpert, they were friends, Herb Alpert, Lou Adler, all that, Herb Alpert did this song "Tell It to the Birds" or something, and they played it and they loved it and it became a— But if it wasn't good, Chuck Blore wouldn't let it— If it was a stiff, it wouldn't get played again. If it was a hit, it would get played. And the Top Forty in those days, starting around '65, you started to hear

great records. You'd hear Bob Dylan, folk-rock, then you'd hear the Byrds and you'd hear a lot of the L.A. bands and things. KHJ was just too strict for us. KRLA occasionally would experiment, like the Credibility Gap came out of that. The weird thing was, there was some people involved in KRLA that weren't really good people, but they sort of liked being around stars and then they would take credit for it. One of these people was Doug [Douglas A.] Cox. He became the general manager at KPPC right around the time we went full power in September of '70, and then a year later he fired us all, thinking he could run the station on his own. But he had allowed a thing late at night. They played something. I forgot what they called it. But basically, there was no disc jockey. They just segued a bunch of music, which was real interesting until you had something to compare it to. Once we went full power, KMET, who had great power, and we started the station with B. Mitchel Reed in June of '68, it had been known as a rock and roll station. They just couldn't really compete with us. They didn't have a production staff. They weren't able to do their own production. They weren't able to run their own board. They were in this really small room. They weren't really given a staff to work there. We not only had a paid staff, we had people like Deirdre O'Donoghue putting together the KPPC switchboard, the community switchboard, where you could call in with any problems. Now, that served two purposes. The station, when it went full power in September of '70, there was a very hardcore audience that was following us, and basically our audience grew by two-thirds. So the new listeners outnumbered the old listeners. So when I decided to move to Eureka and start a radio station, I had visited there in January of '71 right before I got my full-time air shift. Part of it was I was seeing changes that were happening because record companies and advertising agencies, they were starting to line up, and we turned people away unless they'd let us produce the spots for them. So we used to get people calling up and requesting commercials, because they were so entertaining. There were off-the-wall things going on. I'd like to point out that the reissue of the *American Beauty* album by the Grateful Dead

on CD has a hidden track on the end, which is a commercial for the album that Steve Segal cut as he was "the Obscene Steven Clean" at the time at KPPC, and Zach Zenor produced it, because I noticed he used some of my duck sound effects on it that I had brought in. But it blew me away that it was on there. There's no credit, it's just like a hidden track, but it's a real good indication of the type of stuff we did on the air for production. Okay. Let's go back to— KPPC is now becoming more than just a blip on the ratings; we're starting to get good ratings. Now all of a sudden, the disc jockeys that have been on the air now are competing for ratings. Before, they weren't. We were just trying to get our message out there. We were trying to play good music, and it was sort of self— If something was done wrong, you'd hear about it from someone on the staff. It's like if it was a basketball team. If you weren't passing enough, they'd tell Kobe, "Hey, you're not passing enough," not realizing that he's probably the best passer on the team and when he does pass, you know. By the way, Kobe Bryant has just been amazing. That's what's going on right now. And the [Los Angeles] Dodgers are in first place. The [Anaheim] Angels are in first place. There's even trifectas, usually on a Sunday, when all three teams win and you're going, "Wow, what a great time to be in L.A." The station now is becoming real popular, because what we call full power, the Flint Peak antenna, it's not as good a signal as KMET, but they're starting to get— B. Mitchel Reed's getting a little depressed because they're not giving him the things they promised him when they first brought him over there. They're stuck in this little room and, like I said, they don't have a staff, they can't be real creative. He ends up around summer of '71 going over to KRLA working a year for Shadoe Stevens, who becomes the program director over there, which is something that I had encouraged. I've already decided to move up to Eureka and I got some backers to buy a station. It's only \$10,000 up there. Zach Zenor said he'd go with me, and Larry Glass said he'd go with me. Now, in May of '70, Les Carter put me on the air from midnight to five on Sundays, the only open shift while I was still going to UCLA, and I followed Elliot Mintz,

who did a talk show. We used to make fun of him, "Hey, Elliot, you want a red?" and all this stuff. The station now is becoming, like I said, real successful in a lot of ways. Everyone wants a part of it now. People want to work as salesmen for the station. Just to let people know, a lot of people that weren't allowed to work at either KPPC or KMET, a lot of it had to do with not being trusted. We couldn't allow anyone into this inner circle that may have been a narc, because basically everyone on the air probably was followed by the FBI or at least listened to because our views were anti-Nixon. We would make fun of Nixon. In fact, this commercial for the Grateful Dead's *American Beauty* makes fun of Richard Nixon if you listen to it. It's a little montage I put together from one of his speeches or something like that. The direction of the station is also changing because we brought some new blood out. Zach Zenor, who became a roommate of mine and was a super production, he would be able to do sound, he ended up working at the Village Recorders in Westwood, which a lot of people will recognize because a lot of people worked there like the Band. In fact, Captain Beefheart [and his Magic Band] members, Zoot Horn Rollo and Rockette Morton, who's formed a band, Mallard, that I wrote four lyrics for, recorded a song that Ian Anderson produced, called "The Magic Band" or something, and Zach was the engineer on it at the Village Recorders. He was going to come up to Eureka with me as well. He committed. He was sort of burned out because he had been working the production studio and whenever he was on the air, he was great. I loved listening to him. He was one of my favorite disc jockeys to listen to. Zach needed a full-time air shift, and there really wasn't one. So Les [Carter] sat down with me. I'd been on the air about six months full-time, and I was flying up to Eureka trying to get this radio station going, so he put me on the air on weekends, noon to six, which was actually two air shifts. So I got paid for two air shifts, and from noon to three I would do sort of a mellow, hippie afternoon-in-the-park-type show, both Saturday and Sunday, with a little variation, knowing the differences between Saturday and Sunday. Then from three to six, I'd do

a harder rocking-type show. Saturday would be for going to concerts. Sunday would be a combination of concerts and other places you can just go, you know, you could just go and do it. So he basically allowed me to get a pretty good, still decent salary. He put Zach on the air full-time, and Sam Kopper, who came out from WBCN in Boston with his studio bus, he was obviously good friends with "Mississippi Fats," who was Joe [Joseph] Rogers, and Deirdre O'Donoghue and Steve Segal, who had gone back to WCBN and then came out here and became "the Obscene Steven Clean." Steve brought out Delana who— Beautiful artist. She did some ads that ran in the *Free Press* for KPPC. Neon Park, when I met him in May of 1970, he began doing ads for KPPC that ran in the *Los Angeles Free Press*, the underground newspaper, twenty-five cents. It was sold on corners by barefoot hippies, you know the whole deal, and in underground record stores. The something-*Express* that would occasionally— *Rolling Stone* came out every two weeks, and occasionally there'd be something, I think the *L.A. Express*, that would be thrown in. What it allowed, it allowed local areas to sell more advertising, and then there'd be an insert with maybe an interview with somebody or something that would be unique to that area, and they'd be able to sell ads. Occasionally I think a Neon Park ad ran in that. But I know the main ad ran in the *UCLA Daily Bruin* as well, because we had, obviously, an incredible audience from UCLA. The free concert outdoors where Little Feat and Black Oak Arkansas played, that's the first time I got to see Little Feat. Just, coincidentally, besides them being a favorite band of mine and everything from the very beginning, then Neon Park met Lowell George and his résumé included the album cover for the Mothers of Invention that Frank Zappa hired him to do *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*. Then he did *Sailin' Shoes*, and I saw him painting it. It was like one of his first real-type oil paintings or whatever, and then he ended up doing all the Little Feat covers up through right before the current one, *Kickin' at the Barn*. They decided to use a photograph of the Barn, which is a studio that Fred Tackett has at his house in Topanga Canyon, so that's why there's a variation. This whole thing

led up to a confrontation where management wanted stricter control over programming, and what that basically meant was Doug Cox was hearing at cocktail parties and everywhere in the industry how hip KPPC was, and for some reason he wasn't able to take credit for it. Les Carter, the program director, would get it, or the free-talking "Obscene Steven Clean" or the sexy "Miss Outrageous Nevada" [Susan Carter] or the almost accidental "Mississippi Fats." His shows, it was almost like he was just throwing things together. And Zachary Zenor, who had this great voice and just had a knack for throwing great music together, and you just knew that a lot of women listened to him. Jeff Gonzer, who was the great morning guy, he would play old-time radio programs, which he got from Joel Siegel, who eventually went on to ABC to be their film critic, but he started with us with old-time radio shows. He'd play them late Sunday nights as Uncle Joel and Uncle Noel. Jeff Gonzer went on to KMET briefly, then he was the morning man at KLOS, and then back at KMET as the morning man. Then he went to Miami, then he went to Boston, then he came back here, and he's working out at Westwood One as the adult rock program director and doing five to nine live all over the country, and then they pick it up and do it whatever time they want to run it. I assume they do it live, but maybe they don't.

CLINE

But with a five-minute delay, the five minutes. Just a little joke.

ALVY

Yeah, that's another thing. The reason I read all about that House of Representatives bill is because this is the year where in January Janet Jackson flashed her breast during the Super Bowl and other things had happened. They said it was okay for Bono to say "fuck" because it didn't have anything to do with sex or an expletory, whatever the deal was on that, and then they rescinded it. And Colin Powell, who I don't call him a hero, just because he's different than Bush and [Richard] Cheney, I think he blew it back in '91. They could have ended this whole Saddam [Hussein] thing back

then. We all ended up in a battle with management that included Coca-Cola. Did I mention this?

CLINE

Yeah, the Simba ads.

ALVY

Basically, the ads that Les and Susan Carter and Zachary Zenor cut for Simba were great ads and probably would have made the drink very popular with our listeners if it tasted decent, I don't know, but they turned it down flat. And that was one of the things. And the fact that I had played the wrong song as Johnny Otis' engineer. "Shave 'Em Dry" [by Lucille Bogan], I played the one that said "titties" in it or something, that they tried to fire him for that and for the birthday barbecue that I planned for one of his Blue Monday shows. And I figured out later— Okay. Our chief engineer was Michael Callaghan, who this was his first gig, and now he's the head of the Clear Channel in Los Angeles. All eight radio stations are his. He's the chief engineer, and that includes KIIS. [tape recorder off]

CLINE

All right. We're back.

ALVY

He told me that there was a meeting a week before we were all fired. We were fired October 24th, 1971, which was a week before Halloween. That's probably why, because if it happened on Halloween, who knows what would have happened. But apparently the previous weekend, the staff that had been hired went to Doug Cox's house in Santa Barbara, and they all got together and talked about what they were going to do. So word sort of got back to us. Les Carter asked me to ask B. Mitchel Reed if B. Mitchel Reed knew who was going to replace us, and I called Mitch. He was back to me within like ten minutes. He talked to, I think it was, Dick Moreland over at KRLA or somebody, and they filled him in. So the staff had been planned, and we found out on, I think on the Thursday before, that something was going to happen, because we got word from New York ad agencies, record company executives, the promo guys that came by. A lot of the promotion people that worked in record

companies at the time were known as company hippies. They hired long-hairs, thinking, "Hey, these guys know what's happening with the kids on the street, so they'll be able to sell them the vinyl. They'll be able to sell them the records." There were a lot of cool people. From A & M [Records], Steve Levine used to come by, and then he brought the senior guy from A & M, Allan Mason, who now does soundtrack recording. He does music for all of Barry Levinson films and things like that. I think I mentioned him. Did I mention Allan Mason?

CLINE

Yes.

ALVY

But there were a lot of other cool people that came by, guys you'd get high with and hang out with and that knew if they gave you copies of every record, you'd decide on your own. They might point things out to you, but the ones that were really in tune with the station knew that if it was good, it would probably get played. If it wasn't, it wouldn't, so don't waste your time with it, maybe sell it to another station that might. Even if it's a hit, it might not get played, because every hit record we would play by somebody meant we couldn't play an album cut by that same artist, which maybe would either give a different point of view, either musically or politically or sexually or whatever. So if we knew that other stations— That's another thing. We would only listen to KPPC because we wanted to get turned on to music by the guys on the air, and usually with few exceptions there was no one else on the air at the same time that you wanted to listen to.

CLINE

Well, that answers a question I had, yeah.

ALVY

B. Mitchel Reed and I had a very close relationship, and he was not a prankster, but he loved guerilla-type theater and doing things. He loved things happening. Let me give you one example. KPPC and Channel 28 here in Los Angeles, which was the PBS [Public Broadcasting Service] station, KCET Channel 28, a guy who became a famous director, named Taylor Hackford, was working there. He hooked up

with Les Carter, a very special taping, where Leon Russell and Friends got together and jammed for about six hours. This was all put on videotape. It was edited down to ninety minutes. The unique thing was, three videotape recorders were running at once in sync, left-channel audio, right-channel audio, and video. KPPC was the first station to do a simulcast like this, at least that we knew of. We may have gotten beat in New York or San Francisco, who knows, but it was simulcast and it was live. You'd hear stereo by turning down the sound on your TV and listening to KPPC, which was amazing.

CLINE

Which my brother [Nels Cline] and I did, by the way. I remember that Leon Russell and Friends.

ALVY

About ninety minutes. When we ran it the weekend— There's a montage of our final weekend before we were all fired October 24th, 1971, where I tried to get engineers down there to hook us up. What was happening was we were rerunning a year later the Leon Russell and also a half-hour Cat Stevens [Yusuf Islam], which I saw the taping of that. Before he went out and did his Muslim trip, which a lot of people thought he was putting down— I don't know. There was some miscommunication. He really wasn't saying that Salman Rushdie should be killed. It was a whole misunderstanding, really, and now he's actually selling and hawking his own music on TV to make money for his humanitarian stuff. That was being repeated. We were rerunning it on the weekend, and there was no one down there to hook it up, so I gave a message out over the air. They were first broadcast when we went full power. Okay. What happened was, B. Mitchel Reed, he was up against Les Carter, on at the same time in the afternoon. I guess it was the four-to-eight-hour shift or something at the time. He was interviewing exclusively Neil Young, who was premiering After the Gold Rush. So they're talking and they're playing parts of After the Gold Rush. I'm in the production studio taping it and editing it to the point where you don't hear Mitch's or Neil Young's voice, you only hear his new album. I

edited it to the point where I had three tracks ready to go. I gave it to Les Carter. He said, "Here's three tracks from the new Neil Young album, After the Gold Rush. After the Leon Russell special, we'll play the rest of it." Then I taped the rest of it and gave it to him. Now, when I told Mitch about this, he loved it because he loved that kind of stuff. A lot of people didn't realize that, because a lot of people thought he was aloof and this and that. But think of a guy that came out here, he was doing The Boy on the Couch back East, which was basically him and his shrink talking back and forth, only he's talking to the audience and he's playing jazz music. In 1957, I forget the date—I could look that up—he's doing the all-night show, midnight to six, six hours of Frank Sinatra. Frank Sinatra gave him a gold watch, and according to his son, David [Reed], it says on it "Mitch, you're a big man," or something, "Francis Albert," and then puts the date on it, 5-17-57. Then Chuck Blore comes up with this Color Radio Channel 98 Top Forty idea that he sort of put together, coming from Texas. There's all of these names of who led up to Top Forty, but he's the guy that put it together. He convinced Mitch to try it. Mitch went on six to nine, and he was number one immediately. The whole station became number one within six months. He was number one for five years. He married, I think it was like a supermodel type or whatever, had a family, a son and a daughter, this and that, went back to New York for two years, became not only number one up against— He wanted to beat out "Murray the K" because he felt that "Murray the K" was dissing Alan Freed, his idol. Then he also beat out Scott Muni and "Cousin Brucie," who they were all friends and hung out together and whatever. He'd go to England and met Derek Taylor and the Beatles and hung out with them. Then he comes back and then he does a slower-talking thing. He's allowed to play album cuts after the Monterey Pop Festival on KFVB, which changed everything for everybody because people would always use L.A. radio, even New York people, to pick stuff up. Al Jarvis started playing phonograph records as if they were live recordings, as if he was introducing them live. So he called it the Make-Believe Ballroom. Then a guy in

another station in L.A., Martin Block, took the idea to New York and became world-famous with the Make-Believe Ballroom. But Al Jarvis, who ended up becoming one of the "seven swingin' gentlemen," a lot of people called him the first disc jockey. So, B. Mitchel Reed. A lot of what it was, he had so much baggage. There were so many people through the years that called upon him and kept asking him for favors, and I would have to screen the phone calls and stuff. So a lot of people that thought he was aloof, it was just a protective thing, because he met a lady named Carole Solari [Reed], whose brother was "AJ the DJ," A.J. Solari, who I knew from KYMS and then at KPPC. Mitch wanted to start a family with her, and during the strike, I think she maybe even had a miscarriage. So there was a lot of strain on it. Basically, it was like he was A-list celebrity, so a lot of people felt shunned by him. But if you really got to know him, he loved that kind of stuff, because when I called him about Jimi Hendrix and pretended to be the president of the Ventura [Jimi Hendrix] Fan Club and that ended up the next day to getting "Purple Haze" and "The Wind Cries Mary" on the air, he loved that kind of stuff. So that's one of the things that took place. He came by in the final weekend and read an advertisement in his real fast, speedy voice. That's on that montage. He did it for Scan A Pad.

CLINE

How did he feel now being a competitor with his old station?

ALVY

Like I say, he went to KRLA for a year, and then they brought him back. They brought him back in fall of '72 finally, and by then a lot of the KPPC people had drifted over there. Our thing was 3M, the tape that was made, the best recording tape we felt was Scotch. But instead of Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing, it was "music matters most." We were in it for the music. That was it. Anything else that happened on the sidelines, the music mattered most, and that also included concerts, supporting people that put on good concerts, because a lot of it was a risk. Bob Eubanks mortgaged his house to put on the Beatles in the Hollywood Bowl in '64, and it was a big success. Then he put them on in

'65, and then I think they did two concerts in '65 at the Hollywood Bowl and then in '66 at the Dodgers Stadium.

CLINE

Which you were there for.

ALVY

Yeah, which I was there for. Now, I went to see the Dodgers in '58 at the [Los Angeles Memorial] Coliseum. That's when they had a real short left field with this big screen. It was almost like the green wall in Boston at Fenway [Park], and Wally Moon would hit "moonshots" over it. Then in '59, they won the World Series, which was mind-blowing. Then in '62, they moved to Dodger Stadium. In '63, they swept the [New York] Yankees, and then [Sandy] Koufax and [Don] Drysdale were part of the '65 World Series victory again. Then they did their holdout and became hundred-thousand-dollar pitchers each, and then the next year Sandy Koufax had to retire because he had been pitching in pain every day. They had this very weird stuff. It was real, real hot pepper sauce that they would put on his left arm, besides the icing it and the this and that. It was just amazing. A lot of people don't realize in 1955 the Brooklyn Dodgers finally won the World Series. Johnny Podres was one of the aces on their staff. He became one of the pitchers in the 1963 sweep of the Yankees, along with Koufax winning twice and Drysdale winning once. Koufax was on the bench in 1955 and got a ring, but for about five years, he was an awful pitcher. The last five years of his career, he was one of the greatest all-time pitchers, I mean just unbelievable. John Wooden took over UCLA [basketball] in 1948. They didn't win their first championship until, what, '64? '64 and '65, and then they didn't in '66, then three with Alcindor, '67, '68, '69, and then they wound up winning seven straight because Bill Walton followed and Wooden had undefeated seasons and just amazing things. But he was hired in 1948. [John Wooden won ten championships in twelve years]. So there are things like that that happen, and that should give hope to anybody, musicians, artists, athletes, anything you're involved in. It can happen at any time and a whole new career can be built around it. That's why, you know, I'm approaching fifty-six,

I'd love to do *Brunch with the Blues* on Sunday and do what sixties L.A. underground radio is and just throw it out there for thirteen weeks. I wish they'd hire disc jockeys like they hire TV shows. They might hire you for thirteen weeks to see if it works out. Sometimes they'd only do it for six weeks, then they'll up it to thirteen, and then a full season is twenty-two. Why not try disc jockeys that way and let them play music? Because in talk radio, the producer and the talk host basically are deciding what's being said. It's like playing different phonograph records. Why not let a disc jockey do that, and if it doesn't work out after thirteen weeks, put another one in there? Because all you need is one hit. KIIS FM has had high ratings and high revenues in L.A. for years and years and years. Why? Because of Rick Dees, one name, one person. Howard Stern, whenever he's at a radio station, he's real popular. Now, Howard Stern, I believe in the First Amendment. I think listening to his show is a waste of time. I don't care how talented he is, if he was playing music instead of talking, it would be the most amazing thing with the audience that he has, because as far as I'm concerned, you can do the same with music, and why not do it with music as with talk. I've always been a minimalist, because I was around people like B. Mitchel Reed and Tom Donahue and Les Carter and "the Obscene Steven Clean" and even Jeff Gonzer, who wasn't known as an outlaw, but shit, man, he was always pushing the envelope in a way that was real palatable for people. He knew what it was like for people in the morning. A lot of musicians and industry people didn't really wake up till noon. So if they listened to Gonzer, it was almost like listening to an all-night show. He knew that. So he knew who his audience was, and that was the amazing thing. I wish he was on the air here on some station in the morning. What a waste of talent. I mean it's just unbelievable. So now we're in this bunker mentality. We all start to gravitate to the radio station. Now it becomes real difficult because we don't know when it's going to happen. We think it will happen during the weekend, so one of the first things I did, we had our own personal little lockers where we'd keep— When a promo man came, he'd hand

three copies for the record library, he'd give the music librarian whatever his cut was, one for each of the jocks. The music librarian would put them in our lockers. There would be a little slot big enough for a— So I asked Deirdre, I said, "Get everything out of these lockers, put them in plastic bags because some of us have our dope hidden there or our smoke or this or that and whatever." So we did that. That was the first thing is we cleared everything out. A few people stole stuff, like I know a couple microphones disappeared. But we decided—and I think I might have brought up the fact that we did the same thing when the strike happened in '68—we did not want to touch any of the LPs. We wanted to leave all the music there, because that's what we were in favor of. And if they brought in other disc jockeys, at least give them the full library that we had, even though we know that they wouldn't know what they were doing because we saw it before. A few talented people came through the door after that before they turned it into KROQ, people like Dr. Sound or Dr. Sounds, who is Ron Johnson, who at the very end he was our music director and whatever. He still is an audiovisual expert. He's just cut back to Friday, Saturday, and Sundays after doing it for so many years and stuff. But a lot of good, talented people went through there. But with Doug Cox in charge, there was no Les Carter. We knew with Les Carter if we were going to jump out of an airplane, that he would check our extra chute. It's like we were able to do what— All the talented people on the station were able to do it because of Les Carter, and the reason they were able to do it was because of what Tom Donahue and B. Mitchel Reed sacrificed in the very beginning. Les Carter also sacrificed. He was forced to give up his KBCA gig when he was just doing part-time at KPPC. So he made that decision. So then the bunker mentality. We ended up in there a lot. Les said, "Do your regular air shifts." That's where I think I was doing Saturday right up to the time we were going to rebroadcast the ninety-minute Leon Russell simulcast and the half-hour Cat Stevens. That was a two-hour block we were going to do, so I know I was there. Then I think on Sunday there were so many telegrams coming in that what I said on the

air was, "Send the telegrams collect. We will turn them down." So I figured all these other people could save money by sending them collect and having— So that pissed off Western Union. The attorneys who were sitting with Les Carter, I think there were two guys, they told Les to call me immediately and get me off the air, "Don't say things like that." So I was cool with that. I understood. So "Dr. Demento" [Barry Hansen] did his regular Sunday show. Les Carter would come off and on with messages and stuff to update the listeners. Then at eleven-thirty they pulled the plug up at Flint Peak at the transmitter and they were prepared to— They had pre-taped music that they had been preparing that they were going to run. But did I mention Doug Cox walked into the room at eleven-thirty and did his duty and what he said and who he fired, how he fired us all?

CLINE

Yes. Let me turn the tape over so I can get the rest of this.

1.12. TAPE NUMBER: VII, Side Two (April 30, 2004)

CLINE

We're back on. You had just told the story of Doug Cox coming in and announcing that you were all fired. Before you read this into it, I just wanted to say if you could just describe the scene a little bit, who was there, and how did it actually end. I know Ted Longmire was on the air at one point.

ALVY

What happened was, like I said, Doug Cox said, "You're all fired. Can you hear me? You're all fired." Now, he said, "Except Steve Segal, Ted Alvy, and Ted Longmire." I'm already planning to move up to Eureka, but my thing was I was trying to figure out why he said me. Apparently, when I had breakfast with him and Michael Callaghan, some of the things I said they agreed with, and they thought they were criticisms of Les Carter, where they really weren't. It was part of it me just sort of feeling them out for information. It was also me describing something that, to me, was an asset to the station, and they took it as a negative thing. "You guys don't have to turn in what music you say or play," or

sort of like a thing where we basically ran our own shows and stuff like that. To me, it was a positive. To Doug Cox, that was another reason to get down on Les Carter. And Michael Callaghan was just there because he was chief engineer. Afterwards, he apologized to us all and he said, "Look, I was just—." And we said, "Hey, Mike, we know. Don't ever—." And I've told him through the years. I've kept in touch with him through the various stations he's worked at, like once he was at K-WEST [KWST], and I kept in touch with him and just reiterated to him that, "Hey, there were no hard feelings. We knew what was going," because he didn't really do anything behind our backs. He just basically kept a secret that his boss told him, "Keep a secret or you're fired." What do you do? What would he have done?

CLINE

So they pulled the plug.

ALVY

They pulled it up at Flint Peak, and there was someone up there. I forget who it was was up there, but the person apparently had a tape recorder with music if they were going to do it. I think they just kept us off the air for maintenance. Right away, I said, "Doug, fire me," and it was like I was pulling on his cuff till he fired me. Then Steven Segal jumped in and said the same thing, and we told Ted Longmire to take the job because, like I said, he was the first black that we hired, and it wasn't because we hired him because he was black, it's just Les Carter, "Hey, this guy knows his music." Les wouldn't have hired him for any other reason unless he was good, which was nice, because he had put Susan Carter on the air as "Miss Outrageous Nevada" so we had broken the female barrier finally. So that was kind of neat. But we just said being that he hadn't been there that long, it would be harder for him to get a gig. A lot of the other jocks went over to KPFK. They made it available after midnight for jocks to go on the air and do our kind of show. So the next day Ted Longmire went on the air, and if you hear the air check, he just finally said, "Hey, it's all out on the street. The talent isn't here." Then eventually he just said, "Hey, I've got to

walk off the air." I forget what track he put on, but he walked off the air.

CLINE

The last track that was on the air check thing I heard, which is, I think, earlier, because it sounded like he waiting to find out if everyone was going to be fired, the last track is, I thought somewhat appropriately, "Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You" by Led Zeppelin.

ALVY

Yeah. I remember hearing that, too. The thing is, whoever edited that montage, I don't know who that person was, Mike Callaghan said someone sent it to him. That's why there's periods of dead air where you think the transmitter was pulled, and it really wasn't. Then finally you hear it, and it's the next day that Longmire's on the air when he walks off. We had already— We told him to keep his gig, because we figured Doug Cox had hired this other staff, let Longmire at least get his paycheck because when you come to work for a station and all of a sudden you're gone— He hadn't been there that long. But then he walked off, so that was the whole thing. But for a while there, it was bunker mentality. There were rumors going back and forth. We didn't really know what was going on. I was covered and so was Zach. One of the things I told Les Carter was, "Hey, I want nothing out of this, but please look after Zach," because I think Zach went down to KPFK because they needed an engineer to help out and stuff. But Zach was my roommate and he knew. He had visited Eureka. Larry Glass was managing Santa Monica Platterpuss [Records]. He started it. One of the reasons that Michael Pinto started Platterpuss Santa Monica was because of Larry Glass. He knew Larry'd be perfect. I had introduced him to Larry, and Larry was programming B. Mitchel Reed first at KFWB, then KPPC, then KMET, which was great because I could call the record store at any point and Larry would not only fill me in on new releases and how they sounded, what tracks were good, but what was selling, what wasn't selling, what the talk was on the street, all that stuff. It was great. And I mentioned I also had other people out there I could talk to. Billy Kincheloe, who was at a record

store in Santa Monica and then became involved in the Music Plus chain.

CLINE

Then you had a phenomenal audience response when there was the threat of you having the plug pulled, which then happened. What happened to your audience when KPPC was no longer?

ALVY

You mean after we were fired?

CLINE

Yeah. What happened?

ALVY

I moved up to Eureka to do my radio station, which went on the air in January of '72 with Larry Glass and Zach Zenor and myself, so I was basically just getting phone calls and talking to people and I'd be in and out of L.A. I was in for the benefit that we had set up for 200 Motels, the Frank Zappa benefit. This was after we were fired. It was at that theater in Beverly Hills, I guess the Beverly Canon [Theater] off of Wilshire [Boulevard] on Beverly Drive. I'm not sure where it is, the Beverly Canon in Beverly Hills. So we raised money for, I guess, the free clinics again. I've forgotten. I wasn't involved at that point because I was flying back and forth from Eureka. I was still living in Santa Monica Canyon with Zach Zenor, but we didn't have jobs anymore, and I had saved money. The money we were going to get paid in Eureka was free rent and very little money. I had to put together a real low budget just the three of us. That's why we only went on the air twelve hours to begin with. The other twelve hours we could use the studio to cut commercials or do promos or do things like that. So I was covered.

CLINE

Did the audience move to KMET?

ALVY

Some did because of the signal. KPPC just couldn't build an audience after that, that showed up on the ratings or that had the type of response. One of the things I wanted to mention, when we started the community switchboard, it got

to the point where I mentioned how our audience had basically, I felt, grown by two-thirds when we went full power. The disc jockey couldn't handle phone calls anymore. We were basically handling all our phones. We had to turn it over to switchboard, which was two things. It freed the disc jockey. It also removed them one step away. Now, there was a thing called the hotline. That number would be changed almost every month, because you'd give it to friends or your girlfriend. Well, if you broke up with your girlfriend, she'd give it to her boy— You know, stuff like that. But that was one way to keep in touch, and everybody had people they talked to. B. Mitchel Reed had people going back to the fifties that he was still in touch with. Some of them were like big-name celebrities and this and that. But some of them, I couldn't put them through to Mitch, because he had too much going on during the show. It was like he was juggling, but I mean he was great at it. That's why it worked so well with him having an engineer. I was his engineer. When he was at KLOS at the end of his career, he didn't know who the engineer was. The engineer didn't know music. The engineer couldn't program music for him. The engineer couldn't screen phone calls. The engineer couldn't get a phone call with someone who gives a bit of information that I give to Mitch and then he calls someone else and verifies it, and he's almost got like a world exclusive from the Beatles, just because of something like that. And if I made the mistake and didn't take the information and give it to Mitch, that would have never happened. So, so many events. There was so much going on. There were so many concerts. The Whiskey A Go Go, the Troubadour, the Ash Grove, which is blues, for a while the Bitter End West in late '70 opened up the block from Barney's Beanery on Santa Monica Boulevard. In North Hollywood, the Palomino, which you were starting to get a crossover of different younger bands or folk-rock, country-rock bands and stuff through the Palomino. In one night there was so much to see. Now, two of the most amazing performers I ever saw were Bette Midler— Beginning in, I believe, '74 before the Universal Amphitheater was enclosed, it was an outdoor arena, she did

her first show. The song ["The] Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy [of Company B"], her and her Harlettes. It was sort of a hit. But she had done *The Last of Sheila*, the song "Friends" at the end of *The Last of Sheila*, that movie. So she was it. The weird thing was, someone who I appreciate as a musician but never would buy his records or play them on the air, in the middle of her show, her music director, Barry Manilow, did a little trip. Then I saw her at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, I think, around Christmas of '75. Then when I was in Seattle, she was going out on a world tour, something like in '78, and I saw her at the Paramount Northwest Theatre, and recently here at the Universal Amphitheater, Christmas of '95, and then we had seen her in '93 twice at the Universal Amphitheater. My sister's a fashion designer and graphic artist and designer, and she was a big Bette Midler fan. But the thing is, I've seen very few performers give a performance as good as hers. The other person up in Seattle when I was the ad director at Peaches Records Store, which opened in fall of '77 in the University district in Seattle— We were about eight blocks from the University of Washington. I lived two blocks from there. But Dolly Parton had done a gig in Vancouver, drove down with her bus. She did a personal appearance at Peaches Records [Store]. I had her sign my shirt, and she put her handprints in cement because we had like a Rock Star Hall of Fame. She would not leave till everyone that was there to see her—this was over three hours—got to personally talk with her. I mean when she signed my shirt and she said something cute to me, I just remember— Then we saw her that night. She's one of the best songwriters ever. But just to mention type of things. TV shows. The Smothers Brothers, we went to tapings here at Television City on Beverly and Fairfax [Avenue]. Jefferson Airplane when Grace Slick was in blackface. They were amazing. I mean, they were like our heroes. Tommy Smothers even emceed part of the Monterey Pop Festival. But they were great performers, too. Their comedy was great. It was like Spike Jones or Bonzo Dog Band or whatever. They would make fun, but they were such musicians and good satirists.

CLINE

This actually leads to a question that I want to put in context because I think I know where you're going, which is, one of the things that's interesting about the development of this whole musical direction coming out of the Monterey Pop Festival is that there develops an audience for it, which means, of course, there's a market for it, which means it starts to get into the mainstream world. One of the ways this happened was on shows like the *Smothers Brothers [Comedy Hour]*, [the] *Ed Sullivan [Show]* we've talked about, where these bands actually played live. They actually performed, and the rest of America got to see what they were doing, what they looked like, which was an amazing thing, something that I remember watching religiously for that reason. So here's the infiltration of this whole movement in music coming on mainstream television because of people like the Smothers Brothers. What were some other influential shows?

ALVY

Which is one of the reasons they were gone, because "Waste Deep in the Big Muddy" was the song that Pete Seeger sang about the Vietnam War, and that was one of the things that got them. Smothers Brothers, we also mentioned the *Summer Brothers Smothers Show*. In '68 what they did was they ran Pat Paulsen for president, which was great. When George Harrison was interviewed by Don Hall in the basement of the Pasadena Presbyterian Church at KPCC right before the election, he said he supported Pat Paulsen. They were like cultural icons. You could see them when they were on the air. The great thing about L.A., I mean, being able to see taping of shows and stuff like that, I mean, unbelievable. Just to give an example, one afternoon I drove down to Grauman's Chinese Theater, where Robin Williams had just done *Patch Adams* so he had that red nose on, and he did the handprints and brought his kids. This is like classic Hollywood, right, doing the handprints. Okay. Then I drive to Burbank to NBC Studios and I do my thing of avoiding freeways. I just took the Cahuenga Pass to Barham [Avenue] so I didn't have to get on the freeways. The *Tonight Show*,

and I did the Grateful Dead thing of looking for a miracle, I just asked everyone, “Do you have an extra ticket?” and someone did. I was in line— Just to give a tip to people, if you’re among the first dozen people in line, you get the first three rows, which as long as you’re not wearing short pants, they’ll put you in the front row. These are the people that get to shake Jay Leno’s hands and are on TV, at least in the beginning. So whenever I was there, I was there twice to see Little Feat, once to see Jimmy Buffett, and then I went to see “Scully” from *The X Files*.

CLINE

David Duchovny?

ALVY

No, I went to “Scully” with the red hair, I went to see her. What’s-her-name was on the air.

CLINE

Gillian Anderson?

ALVY

What’s-her-name sang a song. Who’s the one— Oh god. She’s a big pop icon. I can’t think of her name [Alanis Morissette]. But then I also went to see Robin Williams. Now, they gave me the ticket, I was in the third row, I got to shake Jay Leno’s hand. During the intermission, Robin Williams didn’t stop. The band started going, he started singing with the band. Then they’d cut back after the commercials, and he’d be sitting there sweating, and no one knew what was going on. So when I went home and watched it, because I always tape it when he was there, I was able to see that people had no idea. And that would happen. If you ever go to the *Tonight Show*, one of the best bands is Kevin Eubanks’ band with [Marvin] “Smitty” [Smith], the drummer. They’re unbelievable, and you get between fifteen and twenty minutes of live music during the commercials that they’re playing. And no matter who’s in town, if the best band in the world is in town, they’re always going to be the second-best band. If the best band isn’t in town, they’re one of the best bands playing, because they’re so good. They’re so good. So I got to see Robin Williams at the Grauman’s Chinese Theater putting his hand in cement, and then at five

o'clock when they started the taping, I got to see. Then I got to come home and not only watch the eleven o'clock news where they all have Robin Williams at the Grauman's Chinese, but then at 11:35 watching him on the *Tonight Show* and being able to figure out what went on during those twenty minutes that unless you were in the studio you got to see. Now, one of the things that Jay Leno did— Obviously I'm a native of Los Angeles, I'm big on Los Angeles, I'm big on California, I'm big on Oregon and Washington as being part of the "left coast." I've hitchhiked between L.A. and Seattle several times, between L.A. and Eureka even more times. I've been a real hippie hitchhiker out on the road, even when I had long hair and all that stuff. But Jay Leno does things like— What happened was, when he took over for Johnny Carson, David Letterman and Johnny Carson, who Johnny Carson had basically sponsored and was producing his show, were real upset. And Letterman went to CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System], started his own show. For the first year Letterman was it. What Jay Leno did was he went out, I guess to Florida or somewhere else to do his show, and he had them totally remodel the studio. He moved out of Johnny Carson's studio into this really small studio. If you go to the taping of the *Tonight Show*, it's a lot smaller, and he's right up front like a comedian. That's why when the first three rows are shaking his hands, it's really like that. That changed the whole concept. It made it more— Because he goes out. When he's not working, he's out doing shows. He's a working comic. Whether you like him or not, he serves a real important purpose to the entertainment industry. He brought out people like Buddy Hackett. You'll see all these old guys coming out. He's helping them get enough money to make their SAG insurance so they don't lose their medical insurance. This is stuff you don't hear about that goes on all the time, stuff behind the scenes. Now, Letterman, when he came out here and did the Academy Awards and did his infamous "Uma, Oprah" trick, he just, to me— The East Coast always just leaves me— Now, Jay Leno is from Massachusetts, so I mean he is from there, but he really does a real service to the entertainment industry that people

don't really realize, like I said, whether you like him or not. You get a sense by listening to his monologue, his head writer, I guess, left about two years ago, but Branford Marsalis left and then Kevin—

CLINE

Took over the band.

ALVY

Yeah. The band is really hot. One of the first musical experiences from television was the *Ozzie and Harriet Show*. Ricky Nelson would do a song at the end, and that was just, if you think about it, it's amazing back then. Now, eventually, James Burton, Elvis Presley's guitarist, was his guitarist for a while and stuff like that. The *Johnny Cash Show*, '69, one of the first things, one of the first appearances by Bob Dylan in years. He hadn't been on TV. He was on the *Johnny Cash Show*. Johnny Cash had so many amazing musicians going through there. *Music Scene* in 1969. It was a forty-five-minute show. It was put together with another drama show that didn't work out. It was based on the *Billboard* [magazine] Top Forty, and what screwed it was during its initial period, number one was always "Sugar Sugar" by the Archies, who did not exist besides this. But like I said, I went to tapings. B. Mitchel Reed was hired. He would do like the offstage voice. He was hired as a musical consultant because of who he knew. Because of who he knew, he called Derek Taylor and they sent him a clip of the Beatles to run on *Music Scene*. We taped live shows of Janis Joplin, Sly and the Family Stone, amazing stuff. It didn't last that long. I think it just went barely into the beginning of next year. BMR is buried in a cemetery there, the Jewish cemetery in Culver City, along with Mike Bloomfield.

CLINE

Hillside [Memorial Cemetery].

ALVY

Yeah, along with Mike Bloomfield.

CLINE

And Al Jolson.

ALVY

Yeah. I told you how I met Neon Park at Platterpuss Records.

CLINE

Right.

ALVY

Air shift. One of the tactile things about an air shift that no longer exists, you would go in and pull your albums. You would pull the albums that you wanted to play on your show. Now, some people knew exactly what they wanted to do. Some of it was just an idea. Like if you knew you wanted to play a track by a certain artist, maybe Holy Modal Rounders, you'd pull all of their albums and not really know. You'd bring records from home, some that you might have bought at Manny Aron's [Records], some you might have bought elsewhere, some you might have had flown in from England, like I did. Some you might have been given by the music director, because all the promo men gave him copies for all the jocks, and you took them home and decided what you might want to play. You may be the first person to play something. That's why all the jocks would try and listen to KPPC to get turned on to new music, because that's something they might want to play on their show or something like that. So what you'd do, if you'd pull an album, you'd pull the album out next to it on its right, so it would stick out. It would make it easier to refile albums. What usually happened— And this was a tradition that we even did it at an AM station in Santa Barbara in 1982, we did the same thing, so apparently it was passed on to people. I don't know if it began at KMPX. I know we did it at KPPC in the basement of the church. You would put away the albums from the jock that was on before you, which would give you an idea of what he played. You may want to play another track from that album. You'd have his list. He'd write down what he had played, so you knew it if you hadn't been able to listen on the freeway, maybe you went into a tunnel, came a different route, whatever, if you hadn't listened to his full show, you didn't know what was on. So those were the two ways. You would put away the albums from the previous jock, and it would be made easier because the record next to it would have been pulled out. So Holy Modal Rounders, right around HOL, would have been pulled out, so it would be

easier to— So that was something that we did in 1989 in a station in Santa Barbara, which was the very first station I ever was in that had no turntables in the studio, only CD machines. The same thing, we'd put away the CDs from the jock before, and then we'd go in and pull our show because it was always printed out from the computer. I was doing mainly graveyard, so between two and four in the morning when people left the bars, I basically just lied and just played what I wanted to play, and I just lied, because basically the owners wouldn't be listening because they had to be at the station at eight or nine in the morning. So I would get away with that. So that was a real tactile thing. The other thing I mentioned, how segueing records was very tactile, having that vinyl in your hand, the fact that in the old days if it was a hit single, it would be side one, track one, if it was another hit single, it would be side two, last track. So jocks would know which tracks to play from that if they didn't know supposedly in the old days. We would mark on the albums suggested tracks or tracks that we played. If there was something like two tracks ran together, we'd mark it. If they said something, the *Volunteers* by the Jefferson Airplane, "Up against the wall, motherfucker," [from the song "We Can Be Together"], now you can hear that and you can also get away with it because it can just go by and not really be heard. On cable now, listen to *The Shield* and stuff, they're always saying "bullshit," this and that, because it's on cable [TV] right now, and they haven't gotten to cable. So TV shows, like I mentioned how Spike Jones' show, his TV show really affected me, giving me that sense of humor.

CLINE

I can hear that emphasis put into the aesthetic that drove KPPC's whole—

ALVY

Yeah, that whole consciousness. There was a radio station consciousness. Everyone talked about it being a family. Yeah, it was, but it was by nature a dysfunctional family, because being so creative, all these creative people, there were always problems. Like we'd always get on Steve Segal, and we'd blame him for damaging the albums and this and

that. I was a real stickler. Whenever I saw a damaged album, I would make sure it was replaced. If there was a bad cut, I'd mark it, I'd pull it, I'd follow up the next day because I worked the record libraries going back to— You know, I had record stores in '67 that I worked at. I was the record librarian at KPPC before the strike in March of '68, and I put together the KMET library, the one with Larry Glass and B. Mitchel Reed. So I was real concerned about that. From college radio, when I decided not to go to UCLA, even though they accepted me, I went to [L.A.] Valley College. June of '66, I started summer classes, started working at the [U.S.] Post Office. My very first radio class didn't allow me to do my own show, but we had to play records and tape them. I learned how to cut tape and splice tape together. This is like late '66. From that period on, I never wore rings on my fingers or wristwatches or anything, because you could scratch a record, and I still have that going on today, just like keeping a wallet in my front left-hand pocket, because I lost the Monterey Pop tickets. Just as an aside, one of the best concerts I ever saw was on Tom Donahue's birthday, May 21st, 1998, at Pauley Pavilion; Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Van Morrison.

CLINE

Yeah, I remember that, too.

ALVY

Unbelievable. One thing a lot of people didn't see, because I had binoculars and it was real dark, when Van Morrison left the stage, he pulled the microphone stand. Most people didn't see that somehow it was connected to a wire. And I saw part of the drum set get pulled over. He did it by mistake, and a lot of people, if people had seen it, they would have said, "Oh, he's back to his stage-fright days." It was just an accidental thing, but he was so into the music. They were so into playing with each other on the same gig, the three of them, because they were all amazing. A lot of people got to see how amazing a guitarist Joni Mitchell was, always changing keys and redoing between acoustic and electric and all this amazing stuff. Van Morrison, Bob Dylan, they were all amazing. The funny thing was, I had two

tickets for that gig, and I had to sell one, because whoever was going to come with me couldn't come. And I pulled out my wallet to check something and then walked away and realized I had lost those two tickets. I had gone to the UCLA store, the student store, to buy a candy bar or something, and when I took out my wallet, the two tickets— I went back to the store and there they were, laying right on the ground, right at the checkout stand where anyone could have seen them, just like at the Monterey Pop Festival. They were there for like the same thing, about five or ten minutes passed. And I just freaked. I found an amazing lady, who turned out to be a drummer, a female drummer who used to play with Cuban musicians, and I think I gave her the ticket. I don't remember what happened. So we sat together, and I had binoculars, so I was there with a musician. Amazing. She told me all the people she had played with. She was like a Sheila E, something like that. In fact, if I remembered her name, people would have recognized her, because she was a Latin well-known, and she was so happy to get a ticket, and I was so happy to see the concert with somebody that I knew was understanding what was going on really and wasn't just there because it was the thing to do. There it was in Pauley Pavilion where when I went to school, Lew Alcindor was— They were winning all the games. It was an unbelievable time. The film school was hopping. The concerts, I mentioned the Royce Hall. Like I saw Canned Heat in Royce Hall. I remember Mike Robinson, my best friend, came out and we saw that. And I guess I mentioned the Jazz Series, how Weather Report, how I saw—

CLINE

How you saw Weather Report at Royce Hall.

ALVY

[Not Weather Report, but musicians who became Weather Report]. I saw [Joe] Zawinul with Cannonball Adderley and then the Miles Davis Quintet that included Wayne Shorter who became later [inaudible] as well as, of course, Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, and Ron Carter. Then seeing the first jazz band that was recorded on Apple Records, the Modern Jazz Quartet. I think their album was called *Space*.

So there were so many amazing concerts. Then they remodeled Royce Hall, and the only concert I've been to at Royce Hall since was January of 2000, which was the tribute to Billy Higgins, the most recorded jazz drummer of all time with Charles Lloyd, one of my all-time favorite musicians. It was an unbelievable performance, and Royce Hall sounded great. They did something to the acoustics. Sorry I missed the April Fool's show, the tribute to Firesign Theater that I really would have liked to have attended this year but wasn't able to do it. I really missed it.

CLINE

Going back to TV, one thing I also wanted to mention is coming off of the hit radio thing, of course, were hit radio like Top Thirty, Top Forty TV shows starting with *American Bandstand*, we had *Shindig*, *Lloyd Thaxton [Show]*.

ALVY

Shebang, Hullabaloo.

CLINE

Hullabaloo, I remember that one.

ALVY

I think Delaney and Bonnie and Friends, who Eric Clapton toured with and who played the Bitter End West with the Grateful Dead, Delaney was one of the Hullabalooers. No, he was a Shindog, I think. There's a lot of session musicians, like Leon Russell and people, that played on all these sessions and things that were part of those shows. At my high school, I had mentioned, they had taped *Where the Action Is* with Donna Loren and Paul Revere and—

CLINE

Paul Revere and the Raiders.

ALVY

Who was the other guy? I should have got that from my yearbook. Detroit Wheels.

CLINE

Mitch Ryder.

ALVY

Mitch Ryder, yeah. They would tape it at high schools.

CLINE

Then later there were shows like the spinoff from KHJ, which was *Boss City*, with Sam Riddle where a lot of the bands—

ALVY

On Channel 9, was it, KHJ, because the stations were owned by the same people, KHJ was, RKO and somebody owned it.

CLINE

A lot of those really hip bands would come through and appear on there, but, of course, they were all lip-syncing, and they had the kids dancing and all that. Later there was the Groovy Show filmed on the Santa Monica beach with Michael Blodgett. One of the things I remember about this was that the bands that were really serious— I'm talking about bands that you would not think would be on these shows, Canned Heat, Sopwith Camel, Blue Cheer, Pink Floyd, I remember seeing Pink Floyd on *Boss City* when Syd Barrett was still in the band.

ALVY

I know. All those one of those things that just happened. The thing is, obviously there were no VCRs, so if you didn't see it live, you didn't see it.

CLINE

Yeah. Van Morrison, I remember "Brown Eyed Girl." I remember him being on *Boss City*, for example.

ALVY

They played two versions of "Brown Eyed Girl," you know. "Making love in the stadium," that was taken out and re-edited. In the Van Morrison album, there was a collection album of his, that had the lame version, and you had to buy an album called— There's a CD called *Bang! Master* that has the good version where he talks about making love in the stadium, because I remember that. The other thing I remember, Lloyd Price, there was a version that was played on *American Bandstand*, "He was gambling in the dark," where they edited it. They had another version that they played on the radio that didn't mention gambling or something, or maybe Dick Clark didn't play the one that mentioned gambling. "Stagger Lee." There's two versions of that. One, I think, the *American Bandstand* played. So you'd end up hearing two different versions, just like with "Brown

Eyed Girl,” and it was a form of censorship. The other thing was like when a hit record like “Fats” Domino was covered by Pat Boone. Now, a lot of people put down Pat Boone for that, but the songwriters were still making their publishing money, whoever they were. A lot of times a disc jockey or a person not involved would get their name on a song because publishing money was pure money. If you didn’t get an advance on the publishing, that money had to be paid because it was real easy to compute it. I mean, they’d keep secrets of how many they sold. But if you were a band, you were in debt to the record company, and everything you did, all the sales went back to pay off that debt, and you could keep going further and further into debt. But whoever wrote the songs, like Captain Beefheart, got all the money. The Magic Band was starving. They were living on Bill Harkelroad’s mother’s credit cards, “Zoot Horn Rollo’s” mother for a while there. That’s one of the reasons they left him in ’74. So the people that wrote the songs made all the money. That’s why the Doors, all their songs are by the Doors, so they all got the royalty. Obviously Jim Morrison was this incredible lyricist. “Light My Fire” wasn’t written by him; that was Robbie Krieger’s song. He wrote that. But whoever was the songwriter would make the money, and unless they got together and made some deals, there might be resentment in the band because of the person that wrote the songs making all the money. Then, of course, then cover versions would happen.

CLINE

Or the people who beat people to the punch like the Leaves doing “Hey Joe” before Love could get the record out.

ALVY

Yeah, but a lot of that was— There’s so many stories like that that I hear. So one of the things with B. Mitchel Reed, because we hit it off and had a lot of the similar qualities— He was not a good businessman. He didn’t like doing business. He had an accountant, Orville Kelman, who helped me out once with a tax problem, but he would give Mitch an allowance because Mitch owed— I don’t know. Just through the years he owed money. We’d get together and try and put

together business deals, and he was never really into it. If he had been maybe a little more greedy or just maybe a different type of person— He was a Gemini like me, like I said. He didn't like doing that stuff, and I don't like doing that stuff. Did I mention *Buying a Personal Computer for Dummies*?

CLINE

No.

ALVY

I wrote a book called *Buying a Personal Computer for Dummies*, which basically showed you how to go out and buy a computer. This was in 1990. How to go out and buy a computer, what the operating system, basically how to start a computer, how to run it. I had stuff in one book that was right up to date. Windows was just about to be redone in 3.1, and I think that there was a new version of DOS coming out, like 5.2. I was working on beta versions, so I knew all this stuff, and it was all in my book, so my book was real timely. I self-published it March 1st of 1990, I copyrighted it and self-published it. I had permission from the lady who wrote *Auto Repair for Dummies* [Deanna Sclar] in 1976. It was a bestseller. She had had two revisions since then. She gave me permission. I wrote Ten-Speed Press in Berkeley, who was then her publisher, and asked for permission. He gave me permission. He said he didn't think they should publish it because it wouldn't fit it in with what they had, but he gave me—And I shopped it around, and one of the people I shopped it around to was IDG Books. Now, some guy convinced a guy at IDG guys to come out with a book called *DOS for Dummies*, and they were basically ripping off *Auto Repair for Dummies* without any permission. They snubbed my book so they could make all the money, and basically it became a big success. I couldn't sue them because they tried to trademark. They trademarked this, and these lawyers from Boston threatened me, and this and that. But I had gotten into computers in 1981, January, right after John Lennon was murdered. I decided that the future was computers, because when I was given a tryout gig at KMET that Jeff Gonzer set up through the music director, the only

music director to really successfully make a format at KMET that wasn't that strict a format and allowed creativity and fought for the people on the air, Sam Bellamy. She made KMET real successful there at the end before they pulled the plug on it. It was an audition tape that really I just wanted to see what KMET was like behind closed doors. You had to go through a security guard to get into where KTTV Channel 11 was and KLAC 570 was and KMET, "A little bit of heaven, 94.7," "the Mighty MET" was located. I was never serious about getting a gig there, because I'd moved out of L.A. I'd lived three years in Seattle and then I ended up moving to Santa Barbara for twelve years. Just to give it context. I mentioned the *Music Scene*. When B. Mitchel Reed first came back from New York in '65, back to KFWB, he was supposed to do a TV show that was going to be like WKRP in Cincinnati, which I mentioned how Howard Hesseman had worked at— He was one of the original jocks working for Tom Donahue at KMPX in San Francisco. We would go to tapings. There was a taping at Channel 11 of a TV show that Mitch was part of that included Jethro Tull. I actually met Santana, and they were leery of us until they realized we were just street kids, Larry and I. We shared a joint and they were passing around Kahlua and stuff. It was one of these shows where there was great artists that were just put together. It was a one-off thing. I don't know if it was a pilot for a show or whatever, but I remember going to that. I don't remember the concept of them filming concerts, though. I'm trying to remember when that all began, because the Led Zeppelin thing came out in late seventies, *The Song Remains the Same*. There was the first one I remember, *Gimme Shelter*. The Rolling Stones one was done at the Bruin Theater in Westwood, and Ron Johnson, "Doctor Sound," used Bose speakers across the ceiling. I forget how many he used, but it was one of the best-sounding movies. It was like it set the standard. After that, everyone knew what theaters had to sound like, and then eventually THX, you know what happened. But Ron Johnson pulled it off with those incredible Bose speakers. I forget how many he had. But *Gimme Shelter* was one of the first experiences I remember of a rock

movie that— Because when *Monterey Pop* came out a year after the Monterey Pop Festival—I believe it was a year after; I think it came out in '68—Janis Joplin had performed Saturday afternoon with Big Brother, and they decided that they finally wanted to get taped so they went on Sunday night and got filmed. A lot of the stuff I saw in the film I saw live, but it's a little different. You don't really remember after it. Now that the years have gone by, I remember seeing Jimi light his guitar, but I think we were all saying, "Hey, what's he doing?" and standing on our chairs and trying to figure out what was going on, and then seeing him throw stuff into the stands, throw part of the guitar and all that. But then when you see it on film, it's a whole different thing. It's like now that there's so much trading through the Internet of live concerts and outtakes from things, things that if you were a fan of an artist you would own all their albums anyway, so it's not really hurting anybody. If you were to put out on the Internet commercially available music, that's a different thing. Recently, finally I got a CD—I'd had a taped version that I got about five years ago—of Bob Dylan at the Hollywood Bowl here, September 3rd, 1965. I actually have a tape of the concert now I can listen to. So I mean it's amazing. What I'm trying to say, it's great to still be alive. I've been back in L.A. almost as long as I was gone to Santa Barbara now. And I hate the smog, I hate the heat in the summer. November through February in L.A. is the best weather, I think, anywhere in the world because you have L.A. You can drive around L.A. You've got the mountains, you've got the ocean, the whole thing. But I think it's great to be alive in 2004). You turn on the TV, you don't know what the hell's going to go on. Unbelievable. It's unbelievable what's going to happen. I went to the Sports Arena to see Elgin Baylor and Jerry West, like when they played the Celtics and stuff when they first started. Chick Hearn started. They didn't have an announcer in '60, but in '61 during the playoffs they hired Chick Hearn, and he stayed with them until he died last year. Actually, the 2003 season was the first Lakers season without Chick Hearn. He had died the previous summer, which in my mind the fact— Three things

happened. Jerry West went to Memphis [Grizzlies], and he had brought Kobe Bryant here. Chick Hearn, who was part of the Lakers— People didn't realize what a great part he played in the development of the Lakers. It's like when Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was there, you were in the locker room with him every day. If you messed up in practice or in a game, he was there by example, so that had an amazing effect on the Lakers that people didn't realize. A lot of people put him down and said he did this, he slacked off. They didn't realize how he just paced himself for the fourth quarter, plus in his forties, he's in the playoffs. They did a back-to-back in '87, '88. They did back-to-back championships with him in his forties, just like Karl Malone in his forties. The family of Kobe Bryant moved back to Philadelphia, and they were upset that he was marrying too young. People said it was because she was Latin and not black, but it had to do with him being too young and being stubborn and wanting to run his own life. So he had lost all these influences. I think that's one of the things that led to his adultery, because anyone that was around the Lakers knew what "Magic" Johnson did. It was because of him committing adultery that he got HIV, you know. So I think that all those forces were going. I mentioned I'd been at the Coliseum to see the Dodgers. Of course I'd seen them at Dodgers Stadium, not that many times, but I also saw the Beatles there. The [Los Angeles] Rams, when they were in the Coliseum, I think it was '63 when they played the Baltimore Colts, there were over a hundred thousand people in the Coliseum. I mean think about that, a hundred thousand people in one place. Dodgers Stadium was fifty thousand people, and that was like a whole city. The Forum, obviously, Laker playoff games, not that many really, but seeing Cream there, seeing Blind Faith there, seeing Jimi Hendrix, things like that. Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium], lots of great, great concerts there. When Pink Floyd was there after I'd interviewed Nicky [Mason]—

CLINE

And Rick Wright.

ALVY

—and Rick, that’s one of the first times they used their quadraphonic things where—

CLINE

This was the *Atom Heart Mother* tour?

ALVY

No, this was Meddle [October 10, 1971], but [Atom Heart Mother, the year before], was the first time he used the— He had a little thing where he could quadraphonic sound all around there. That’s one of the first times we saw that, and we had talked about that, the state-of-the-art stuff. Because like Pete Townshend was doing a lot of stuff that Joe Walsh had first experimented with, repeating stuff. And we had talked about how jazz musicians had always gotten together, actually and sometimes just for an album. They might just get together, rehearse, play an album. The famous *Kind of Blue* by Miles Davis, he brought the musicians together, including John Coltrane, great musicians, and they basically improvised off of themes that he had put together. So it was the first time they had really played it. Apparently, they had done more and more versions of those things that people really thought. When one side was mastered to CD, they used a tape that was slow, and they found that out recently, and they reissued it with the right timing, so now you can actually hear how *Kind of Blue* was supposed to sound on CD but actually never did because they had screwed up one side. So things like that were going on.

CLINE

I’m going to put in a new tape before this one runs out.

1.13. TAPE NUMBER: VIII, Side One (April 30, 2004)

CLINE

This is still April 30th, 2004). This is Alex Cline interviewing Ted Alvy. This is tape number eight. I have a few questions I want to run by you here, going back to the music and the radio and also you mentioned some rock films. This plays into one of the questions. You mentioned *Monterey Pop*. You were at the Monterey Pop Festival. Certainly one of the most

famous and influential rock films ever from an event that was certainly one of the most influential was *Woodstock*. I wanted to ask you, particularly since you were at the Monterey Pop Festival and certainly you remember the whole fallout from Woodstock, how you view the significance of the two events. In what ways are they different and what ways would you say that they are influential today certainly as they must have been influential at the time they were happening?

ALVY

I've got the KRLA Beat, June 17th, 1967, "The LP [*Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*] everyone's been waiting for is here, complete with full printed lyrics for every song, plus Sergeant Pepper paper cutouts, and inside a double-size full-color foldout. Now available at your local Thrifty Cut-Rate Drugstores." Now, that says a lot, right? Okay.

CLINE

Monterey Pop and—

ALVY

Monterey Pop Festival was originally a for-profit venture. When Lou Adler and John Phillips took it over completely, they realized it should be a benefit, because that way it would be a lot purer. They could convince the San Francisco bands, which a lot of them thought the L.A. music industry was plastic, not the musicians. See, that was the thing. We made the mistake in Vietnam [War] when we gave the impression we were against the military. We might have been against military thinking, like saying, "Military intelligence, that's an oxymoron." We weren't against the soldier, but it didn't come out. It's starting to come out now with Iraq [War], that no matter how much you're against war, you support the troops 100 percent. Sure, some of them aren't the greatest, some of them mess up, but they're human beings. You've got to support them 100 percent. The same thing with musicians. Even though there was this feeling that L.A. was plastic, and this and that, and a lot of people just thought the music industry was plastic, if it wasn't for Tom Donahue taking the Grateful Dead to see Warner Bros. [Records], that might have never happened

because they trusted each other. The record executives at Warner's trusted Tom Donahue. Tom Donahue was trusted by the Grateful Dead. That thing was able to happen. It became a benefit concert. The money was going to be raised for a group that was put together of musicians and artists that would— I think Paul Simon put together a guitar program in New York for young kids, or this and that. Ravi Shankar had been promised money to come over from India. He was actually paid. He had to be paid because the whole thing had been worked out. People really didn't know what to expect. Monterey started to freak out. They expected the invasion of the hippies, because the Summer of Love was a coined phrase, but this whole vibe was already out there. San Francisco in 1967 at the corner of Haight [Street] and Ashbury [Street], it was called the Summer of Love. But what happened in the fall, they had a big parade called the Death of the Hippie, because they figured so-called *Life* magazine and the tourist bus created this. So the Monterey City Council, the citizens of Monterey, you can imagine some of the most conservative people probably in the whole country live in Monterey area.

CLINE

Yeah, Pebble Beach and all that.

ALVY

Yeah, all that area. Okay. What ended up was peace, love, and flowers. It really happened. The police were completely overwhelmed by numbers. They had no idea how many people would be there, because people were camping out at the campgrounds, I think Monterey City College or whatever it was. Some bands, Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe [and the Fish], they had free concerts out there. Larry Glass and I missed those, because we slept in the car. Even people that played at the real Monterey Pop Festival, they had this counter one for people that didn't have tickets and couldn't afford to get in. There were so many well-behaved people, I don't even remember hearing about pot busts. I don't remember hearing about— I think crime just really went down. The police would put flowers on their motorcycles. The next year it didn't happen, because it was such a freak

occurrence. It's like when I was up in Seattle, they had a thing called the Fat Tuesday. They did it during the Mardi Gras. It was '77, '78. So many people showed up that the police couldn't do anything, so people were drinking in the street and partying. The thing that happened was a couple of people started fornicating in the middle of everyone, and because that got on the news, the next year it was Gestapo; there were too many police. The following year, there was a compromise. They had certain tent areas where the police didn't enter, and the third Fat Tuesday was okay. This was like '79 or whatever. So the same thing happened at Monterey. It was a fluke. Larry Glass and I had passes so we could get in and out of the grounds whenever we want. There's certain areas that we couldn't, obviously, get into. We never tried to get into the musicians' area where they hung out, where you always hear rumors of these famous jams. Like Mike Bloomfield and Jimi Hendrix were just jamming away and everyone joined in, all this stuff, didn't get to see any of that. The weird thing about something like that, it's one of those things where I don't think there were more than I don't know how many thousand tickets, but it's one of those things where all of a sudden everyone was there. You hear stories of everyone at Woodstock that really wasn't there, whatever. To me, Woodstock was an example of the commercial potential of rock and roll exploding in such a way that a lot of businesspeople that knew nothing about music, nothing about art, got into it because it was a chance to make money. I'm glad I didn't go to Woodstock. I think when Steve Segal [a.k.a. "the Obscene Steven Clean"] came back here from WCBN, he was glad he did. We were talking about Altamont and how the Altamont thing happened. I remember Steven and I sitting on the roof of KMET smoking a doobie and talking about how this is what's going to happen now, because we could see the potential. It was sort of an unspoken thing. You could possibly see the potential of a rock star being assassinated at a rock concert. Obviously, the reverse thing, because we had seen Robert [F.] Kennedy had been at '68 at the Ambassador [Hotel], and now we had someone being killed by the Hell's Angels who used to be

friends with the Grateful Dead and everything until they got into psychedelics and then the Grateful Dead couldn't even control them. Then they knocked Marty Balin out when he was trying to do a gig with the Jefferson Airplane there and whatever. So Monterey was really peace, love, and flowers. It was an amazing experience because I was able to go to every concert and because I met B. Mitchel Reed and because I was with someone. I guess he was like my designated driver. Larry was letting me get as high as I wanted to, and he didn't. Neither of us were drinkers. And he made sure that the tape recorder was working when I wasn't doing it right. Because, like I said, we taped things like the Jefferson Airplane, "The Ballad of You and Me and Pooneil," which was the eleven-minute version B. Mitchel Reed played at KFWB. Woodstock to me was a real East Coast-type trip. The Watkins Glen [rock festival], which had the Band, and Allman Brothers [Band] and Grateful Dead, to me sounded like more of a festival festival. You've got the three bands and that's like— You didn't have a bunch of opening acts, you didn't have this or that. Monterey influenced a lot of musicians because they got to see other musicians. If you ask most musicians— I don't know if this true. I can ask you. Most musicians tell me because they're serious musicians they don't get to see a lot of other musicians unless they're on the same gig, unless they're playing there at the same club or they have a night off. They have very few night offs because on night offs they either rehearse or they write or they're traveling or they're doing their laundry at the motel or whatever. So something like that. The two benefit concerts we ran at the Kaleidoscope was another thing where we saw musicians getting to see each other. The fact that had a revolving stage with three setups at once, the music never stopped, so the bands really could come right off stage and then see the next band. They could either see them from the side of the stage or out front or whatever. That was pretty amazing. A lot of festivals were put on after that. Santa Clara, the San Jose State [University], Santa Clara Festival was— I think it was May of '69. Spirit was one of the headliners. Jimi Hendrix was the headliner. He played

Sunday, and they wouldn't let us film him. We filmed him from afar, because I was doing film for a guy who worked at Channel 4. There were a lot of great bands there, and there was also an alternate festival which we really didn't get to see where bands would play— musical group after musical group. Bands like Jefferson Airplane would always do free concerts whenever there were festivals, because they always knew that people couldn't either afford to get in or it was sold out and they couldn't get in, and they weren't breaking down the walls like they did in Woodstock to make it a free concert. So they would go to parks and places and do free music. There were a lot of L.A. bands, too. I mean it wasn't just San Francisco bands, but they set the standard for us. I mean when "Somebody to Love" and "White Rabbit" became hits, those were the songs that Jerry Garcia was really instrumental in getting produced right and everything, the two Grace Slick songs that she brought from the Great Society, who were managed by Tom Donahue. He was involved in that. He put together one of the first— Was it called Mother's? What was it called? One of the first psychedelic nightclubs he put together in San Francisco, Tom Donahue, besides going into things like Autumn Records, doing a record company and whatever. So there were standards. Down here, I mentioned the first Human Be-In was January 14th, '67, at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Easter Sunday here, 1967, the Love-In was a gathering of the tribes. A lot of L.A. bands played. There was little fanfare. People weren't trying to sell their next hit single or whatever. That was a real amazing thing because everyone was real well behaved and blown away, and there had never been anything like that in L.A. so people didn't know how to act. There was a regular weekend one after that, I think at Griffith Park, and there were various reviews. I didn't go to too many of those. Some of them were great. Some of them weren't. The thing is, I mentioned *Rashomon* and how four people could go to a concert and get different views of it. Different things would happen. Let's say you went to the Griffith Park Love-In two hours after Santana had left. Maybe Santana showed up for an hour or whatever. You may not

even know about it because a lot of the people that were there are no longer around there. So that's another good thing about what you're doing with the oral history. A lot of stuff's going to come out. One thing that the Oral History Program could do is maybe sit down with *Rolling Stone* magazines and [*Los Angeles*] *Free Presses* and just whip through them and read little tidbits of articles. That would really give an idea of what was going on. There was so much happening, and it was like I had an e-ticket from Disneyland because I got in and I was part of the inner circle. I wasn't an alcoholic or a drug addict, so I never really screwed up, which was good. I was trusted with driving people home. What if I had crashed Janis Joplin or Joni Mitchell? You know? Things like that. So I gave up certain things, but I also benefited from it and I was able to see—Growing up with going to bar mitzvahs and things, there was always Manishevitz wine or Mogen David, and my parents would always give me a little wine. They weren't heavy drinkers or anything. So, because of that, I never needed to rebel with alcohol, and I hated alcohol. When I moved up North, it was different; your blood was thicker. But whenever I drank beer out in the sun, I would get into fights with people, so I tried to avoid alcohol. I always knew what it would do. I never became an alcoholic, but I saw B. Mitchell Reed, who was an alcoholic, eventually die of heart problems. I don't think it was the smoking; I think it was the alcohol that hurt his heart. You never know.

CLINE

Just to go back to Woodstock briefly, it was billed originally as Three Days of Peace and Music, and it turned into this just absolutely humongous event, which, of course, then was filmed and became a successful film and a successful collection of LPs and is still talked about in terms of its tremendous significance. Yet one of the things that you just touched upon, I think, is key, is that clearly by now that whole so-called counterculture and its music had become very commercially viable. It had become fodder for big business, and this is something that you also saw happening when you were at the radio stations here in Los Angeles and

started to see what became a very creative underground sort of enterprise become the victim of basically a profit motive, and the whole music business was changing. One of the things I wanted to ask you is, before and after this business influence started to kick in, how would you describe the music itself? How would you describe its influence on broadcasting, on radio, and vice versa? Would you say there was an influence of radio on the music itself? What was the relationship between the music and the broadcasting style at the point that we're talking about, say when KPPC was breaking ground and in the early days of KMET when they had B. Mitchel Reed on there when he went live and all of these developments? How would you describe it between the music itself and the way it was broadcast?

ALVY

The story is Tom Donahue and Raechel Donahue are sitting around their apartment playing records for friends. They put on the new Doors album and they hear "The End" and they say, "The End, 'man, why isn't this being played on the radio somewhere?" So he got KMPX together. Another thing was John Fogerty wanted to get on KMPX. This is before Creedence Clearwater Revival was known to anyone. I think the previous version was called something like the Golliwogs or whatever. They did "I Put a Spell on You," Screamin' Jay Hawkins, they did the long version. Perfect. The disc jockey came— They put it on almost immediately, and it got so much reaction that they continued to play it. So musicians all of a sudden knew there was an outlet. Now, KMPX was a rumor to a lot of people. Like I said, I bought all three trades [*Billboard*, *Cashbox*, and *Record World* magazines], plus I had "street cred[ibility]" or whatever. I could get information from people at record stores, this or that. I was part of the so-called target generation at the time. You'd be able to play album cuts. I think a station in New York started doing that even before. You could play album cuts that were longer than three minutes. Now, one of the greatest art forms to me has always been the three-minute single. People always talk about that. What was done in less than three minutes, because that's the most that most radio stations would play,

that's still an art form, but you were able to expand it. Now, there's a lot of jam bands now, and a lot of them really aren't that good. The ones that are good, some of them are just amazing. But if you think about it, a lot of jazz concerts were that same thing. They'd go off, they'd do their trip, and it wasn't always scripted. If one guy was really hot, they'd give him another solo. I'm not a musician, but just from watching them like that. Various record companies had contracts that were so, I don't know, so restrictive, you couldn't play with other musicians. So a lot of musicians would get together and play on other people's albums uncredited. When benefit concerts finally started going, a lot of that was people just wanting to get together, people like Jackson Browne and Bonnie Raitt, who have probably done more concerts together that were benefit concerts, which is great, as well as doing things on their own. They're able to bring other musicians into it that don't really get to play together. So that was one way. But it was like the rock musicians now were like jazz musicians. They could get together. Some of them would blow it, and they'd do a long cut that just— You know. They'd think they were making something to be played on the radio, and maybe some stations would play it, but the people on the air with integrity, you'd just play— Even if it was good music, if you didn't play it and someone else was playing it, you knew you could ignore it. If Jeff Gonzer was playing a couple cuts from a new Elton John album and getting reaction and then playing him again three days later, the same cuts, which someone would say, "Don't overplay them," he's not overplaying them, but I don't have to play those. I can ignore them, because a lot of the same people are listening to me. They are people that woke up with Jeff or they're waking up now because they're musicians or whatever, and I liked a couple of other Elton John cuts. Maybe I like something from his first album that we hadn't played yet, you know, the *Empty Sky* album, or maybe a single that hasn't come out. As long as other people were playing it, you could avoid it. That's one thing with B. Mitchel Reed. We took the Top Forty survey at KFWB and basically crossed off

maybe twenty-five songs. Then there were the good ones. Then we'd find flip sides and we'd find album cuts. At KPPC, if we knew a song was good and would really benefit a musician by playing it on the air, we'd do it. But if it was getting support, let's say KRLA was already playing it, maybe it was even a single on KHJ, we didn't really need to play, because if they weren't a one-hit wonder, we could now explore the background stuff. We could do it in various ways. Let's say it's a Saturday afternoon, and I'm on the air. It had rained last weekend and we had done all these rain songs, now we're doing spring. Spring is starting. Maybe we'd do a set of car songs. You could play five or six car songs, and then you could do the same thing the following Saturday, and they'd be different songs. So you could do themes like that. You might want to comment on something that's going on in politics by saying maybe a few things, maybe reading something. At the end of twenty seconds, you might want to just do three sets of songs that last ten or fifteen minutes that really say it all. Then at the end, you may want to say something. Musicians would drop by and you'd just basically improvise and review. You'd improvise the interviews because the first thing you would do is say, "Hey, is there anything you'd like us to play? Go through the library." We'd get to know them. They'd say, "We can do that?" I'd say, "Yeah, there's certain things we can't play, and if we're going to interview you, how long can you stay?" "Well, we've got a lunch thing." "So you can be here, what, sixty minutes? Okay, among that time, if you don't want to talk that full sixty minutes, let's play music. But if we're going to play an eleven-minute cut, it's not going to work during the interview. Now, if you really want to play that cut, we can play it at the end of your interview, and you can listen on the freeway home." Then they'd realize and then they'd open up, and you'd try to get them to do stuff that they wouldn't do anywhere else, because the whole idea was the music. Like I said, when Ian Matthews came by, the album had two tracks by Richard Fariña, and right away we locked in on that and based the whole interview on that. We could play Richard Fariña. We could play some other— We could go back to his

Fairport Convention stuff. He could tell a story about Sandy Denny that no one knew and then play a track from her when she was with Fotheringay. We could do things like that, and it worked out great. There were times when Les Carter would be Leslie "Frogman" Carter, and he'd just do a full-on oldies show, and he'd play great R & B and great oldies that hadn't been heard for years. Steven Segal might go off on some political trip and just do his whole three-hour show, three or four hours, and at the end of it, he's not only sweaty, the audience is sweaty, because they know— There are moments when things happen that the audience knows, the jock knows, the program director listening, that are just moments that are just great moments that accidentally happen. Because Les Carter and before him, B. Mitchel Reed and Tom Donahue had opened up this whole freedom. At KMET they still worked in this little studio. They still didn't have the full-on production thing. They eventually got people doing production. They were able to put together a pretty creative station, but until they moved in '76 to Metromedia Square, where they had like two or three giant production studios. They could go on the air from any of them. Ace Young could do the news. They brought the broadcaster's son and named him Paraquat Kelly. They do the whole thing. They come up with a whole campaign. The station gets a whole campaign to get that spraying stopped on the marijuana fields in Mexico, like they're doing, because it causes problems. KMET has everyone call the switchboard at the White House, and they basically shut down the switchboard for twenty minutes or something. It freaked them out because callers from L.A. shut down the switchboard at the White House. It was because of the Paraquat that they were spraying on the fields, which was just— You were getting the marijuana anyway and then you'd smoke it and you'd get sick. People that were novices didn't realize it was bad marijuana, and it would give you this respiratory illness. It was terrible stuff. Another thing, when we had this apartment in 1969, Graham Kerr, *The Galloping Gourmet*, was on the air, and it was great. We'd do his recipes and we'd watch him. The cool thing is he's still

around today. Him and his wife, his producer, they had had automobile accidents that people didn't realize. But he was a breakthrough doing these incredible hippie-type shows, and he was always drinking wine on the show. He realized he had become addicted to the wine. The next thing, he started coming on with these low-calorie things where he'd do the same recipe. It would taste the same, but he would show it would be lower calorie. Now Emeril Lagasse is on TV. *Emeril Live* is doing these great shows on the Food Network that are not only incredible because he's actually cooking, he has musicians with him. He does live music. He usually has Doc Gibbs and Cliff [Starkey], but he brings out all these jazz musicians. He had Charlie Musselwhite on, who did a special, wrote a song called "The Pork Fat Blues." It's amazing. That is like KPPC, what he's doing; he's mixing cooking with entertainment with live music and stuff. So I want to mention that because that's one of these things. And *The Galloping Gourmet* is obviously— Okay. Bob Oakes was the PD [program director] at KFWB. Jim Lightfoot was the general manager that let Mitch play album cuts, B. Mitchel Reed. He hired Dave Diamond to follow B. Mitchel Reed and also play album cuts. Lightfoot put together Loman and Barkley and brought them over to KFWB. He brought Emperor Bob Hudson, and I read that letter at the beginning.

CLINE

I have a couple of questions before we knock off for today. Next time, by the way, I want to get into talking about your take on where things have gone and what's happening in radio today.

ALVY

Okay. Let me do one quick thing. The award is called the Marconi Award. He's given credit for creating radio. Basically, what he did was—

CLINE

"He" being? Who are we on now?

ALVY

Marconi.

CLINE

Marconi? Yes, the supposed inventor of radio.

ALVY

Right. What he did, he popularized it with public relations and things. The real inventor of radio was Nikola Tesla. Tesla, who invented alternating current when the light bulb was being run with direct current by [Thomas E.] Edison, he also had experiments, wireless experiments that apparently— When I was living in Seattle in the late seventies, Russia was using his experiments to move cold air off of Siberia towards Seattle, and for a while it was affecting the weather, and our government made them stop it, and you could tell by checking these certain frequency of waves that they were using. Anyway, Nikola Tesla, when he died during World War II, the [U.S.] Supreme Court made a decision that never got— It's like the retraction is on the eighth page and no one knows, that he was the inventor and that Marconi and everyone else—

CLINE

Right. He was one of his protégés.

ALVY

Edison, of course, was known as the genius, too, but Nikola Tesla was the guy, and [George] Westinghouse [Jr.] bought all his patents, and now that's NBC National Broadcasting Company]. Just like Edison, you know, the whole— But I wanted to get that in there because a lot of people don't— There is a true biography of him, *My Inventions*, there's stuff that really shows what he invented. He's an amazing person for people to get into.

CLINE

Right. Died in poverty.

ALVY

They're still trying to find inventions of his that disappeared that he may have done things that people want to do now that supposedly he had done.

CLINE

Yeah, and Morgan financed him and pulled the plug when he wasn't making him enough profit; J.P. Morgan. Since you mentioned—this seems kind of trivial but I wanted to ask it because it actually integrates with another interview that we've done in our Oral History Program. You mentioned the

longer tracks and the changes in broadcasting with the introduction of longer album tracks being broadcast. What about when it comes to that particular subject, the ever-popular “In-a-Gadda-Da-Vida” [by Iron Butterfly]? What do you remember about that, when that hit?

ALVY

I don’t think I played it, because it was a long cut. I wasn’t into them.

CLINE

Because they were a local band as well.

ALVY

Yeah, I wasn’t into it. The best usage of that is in— Is it *Manhunter*, the prequel to [*Silence of the Lambs*]

CLINE

The Michael Mann film?

ALVY

Yeah, where the serial killer listens to “In-a-Gadda-Da-Vida” and it’s perfect. It’s perfect for that. There’s a lot of music I don’t like that works on soundtracks, because I feel there’s so much crap out there. The Smothers Brothers had Jack Benny and George Burns on one of their shows, and all of a sudden people decided they were successful. This is from a 1967 article in the KRLA *Beat*. Dick Smothers, Tommy Smothers, fighting the censorship.

CLINE

One last question before we stop for today. You were at Monterey Pop. You were at these benefits for KPPC. You’ve talked a little bit about the kind of people who would come and hang around the station. You’ve talked a little bit about some of these live events, these big concerts that you were at. I wanted, particularly from Monterey Pop on, in relation to the radio stations that you worked for, can you describe for us, if you can, who your audience was? Who was listening to these stations? Who was going to these concerts? Who were these people? I know you’ve mentioned earlier you had students who were very supportive around the city. But if there’s a way you can characterize who your audience was, what kind of people were listening?

ALVY

There was a true counterculture of all ages, like B. Mitchel Reed and Tom Donahue. Like Les Carter was only five years older than me, so he had that. The counterculture involved— It was like everyone was a student, the way students lived when you were at college. All of a sudden, you didn't have the regiment of the nine-to-five aspect of like high school. There'd be electives. There'd be a Tuesday-Thursday class. There'd be a lot of free time. You were either getting supported or you had to find part-time jobs. I think eventually we started getting the military people who loved rock and roll. They would sort of disguise that they were military, but then if you wore a military jacket, fatigues were being worn by hippies and stuff. Young people, older people, people in their twenties, people in their thirties, people even in their forties, older, sort of like the Beat. I mentioned how like it went from the beatniks. It went from the beatniks to the hipsters to the hippies. B. Mitchel Reed was a hipster. He bridged between the beatnik and the hippie era, and he was a facilitator. I mean, he was born in 1926. He's around the same age as my parents. Tom Donahue was 1928, but only lasted till '75, probably because he weighed as much as Shaquille O'Neal. B. Mitchel Reed died in '83, and if there was any way that he would have got a heart transplant and still be alive today, he would have been able to do something in radio that it wouldn't have gotten as bad as it is now where there's massive corporate ownership, twelve hundred stations, by Clear Channel. They bought concert venues. If you didn't do concerts for them, they wouldn't play you on the air. Now there's lawsuits going on. I'd love to hear B. Mitchel Reed's voice out there. You still get to hear people like George Carlin. Mort Sahl, who makes fun of everybody, so your favorite might get knocked by Mort Sahl, but you really appreciate the way he does stuff. The Smothers Brothers occasionally are out there. I wish they were out there more. Tommy Smothers has appeared on retrospective shows and things, and I've seen both of them. They guest-starred, I think, on Bonnie Hunt [*Life With Bonnie*], which I'm hoping they're not canceling. They're not running today. They're only running [the] *George Lopez [Show]*, which is a

great show. George Lopez is great because L.A. is so in tune with the Mexican culture, you just can't get away. I embrace it. That's why I love bands like Los Lobos being spokesmen for L.A. They're a great representation of L.A.

CLINE

Speaking of which, when these audiences were supporting the station and the music, what about the so-called minority groups or what about the gender—

ALVY

That was a weird thing. You'd go to a Jimi Hendrix and it was almost— There were very little black audience members there. It was starting to change, I think, and I think he noticed it when he broke up the [Jimi Hendrix] Experience and started doing the Band and things.

CLINE

The Band of Gypsys.

ALVY

A lot of people don't realize, but he didn't appear at Woodstock. It was Monday morning after everything was over that he appeared. The festival was basically over when he finally performed, because everything got thrown back, and then he did "The Star-Spangled Banner" And stuff like that. I just read recently something about how "The Star-Spangled Banner" was the first thing played on Radio Hanoi— Not Radio— There's some alternative station in Vietnam, an anti-war station, the first thing they played was the Jimi Hendrix "Star-Spangled Banner" or whatever. Eventually, I think it was going to grow because I would go to R & B concerts and things, I would go to the Ash Grove and obviously there would be R & B fans. You see Howlin' Wolf there or Buddy Guy and Junior Wells or something like that, but then you'd also see Ramblin' Jack Elliott . That's one of the things. I really think if the stations had been successful and hadn't been ruined by corporate takeover and "Rock in Stereo" at KLOS where everything's formatted and the jocks can't touch the records, and things like that, that those were the two things. I really think it would have been more like the Rainbow Coalition. I really think there would be more, because I think we had a lot of listeners that were

closeted listeners. They were out there, but we really didn't know about them, and they didn't always hear the same music. They would listen to certain people and hear their different quirks. We'd each have our own faint little gimmicks and things that we would do, certain songs that we might play every few months that the other jocks weren't playing.

CLINE

Any more about the audience? Men, women?

ALVY

I would say there were more men, but there were a lot of women. I don't remember. I guess there was that where a couple girls would get together and go to a concert. Yeah, there was all that stuff going on. I had a weird thing, because I was always on lists. I was always able to get in, so it was a little different. I'd get a different view of it. I even talked myself into a— I bullshitted my way into a concert at the Shrine [Auditorium] once. I brought this lady with me and I had a camera and I claimed I was working for the World Countdown, because I knew Charles Royal. He used to come into the Music Revolution. I just needed to get in, and we went in. A couple other times I learned how to become invisible. I would just walk in. The most recent thing was 1989 in Santa Barbara, the very first *Batman* movie. I saw it, and I was part of the radio station. I had to leave and I missed like five minutes of it. So I went back the next day and I basically just walked in. I just walked in and I saw it and I walked out. I learned how to be invisible. I've done that at a few places where I just decided I was invisible, and if you pretend you're supposed to be there and just— But I learned that at a real early age. I learned it from high school to senior year where I had full access, and from B. Mitchel Reed learning what being on the A-list meant. It meant you could get into a lot of things, but you also had to be really careful. I had to be careful with Mitch that I didn't let a narc into our friendship. I couldn't make friends with someone that knew I knew Mitch and wanted to take advantage of him but do it in a negative way. Because you know how it all came out that there were several FBI agents at all these anti-war rallies just taking names. There were even members

of the Weathermen who were part of the FBI. I learned all of that from *I Led Three Lives*, that TV show. I always felt that. I always felt I was a native of Los Angeles, I was a secret supporter of music that would do anything to get it on the air, and I was something else, a counterspy for underground radio disc jockey, or something like that, being three different things.

CLINE

Well, I'm going to call it for today. I want to talk next time where things have gone, more about what you just started to touch on, where things have gone, where radio went, where things are going, what your view of the situation is these days. Okay?

ALVY

Okay.

CLINE

All right. Thanks a lot. [End of April 30, 2004) interview]

1.14. TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side One (May 7, 2004)

CLINE

Today is May 7th, 2004). This is Alex Cline interviewing Ted Alvy once again at his home in Van Nuys. This is tape number nine. Good morning again.

ALVY

Good morning.

CLINE

You had some things you wanted to cover before I start the question aspect of our morning.

ALVY

This is going to be such a pivotal year with the presidential election. It's a leap year. I always wondered why the presidential election doesn't fall on a national holiday because we have an extra day. It's a leap year. If it was a national holiday, everyone could vote. *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart covers politics like nobody else. It's every Monday through Thursday at eleven o'clock for a half hour, and the best bits are often done by an amazing comedian that does "Back in Black," Lewis Black. Then, of course, Harry Shearer, who broadcasts out of KCRW at Santa Monica

College every Sunday ten a.m. live Pacific Time, he does an hour of *Le Show*, which began back at KPPC as *Destination Music*. Sunday afternoons, he would be on the air a couple hours doing satire and parodies and just introducing all kinds of great— He still plays an incredible variety of music. I mentioned seeing Little Feat twice on the *Tonight Show*, and once seeing Jimmy Buffett. Scully, Gillian Anderson, from *The X-Files*— Alanis Morissette was the guest, and I did the same thing where I begged to get the tickets, because I wanted to see Scully. According to Tom Robbins, my favorite novelist, who I actually am happy to be able to correspond with occasionally, there's only 4 percent of the population that are natural redheads, so that's something. Alanis Morissette, after that mega-mega-mega-hit album [*Jagged Little Pill*], she basically went into creative exile, so this was her coming out. She hadn't done a gig in a while, so that was real interesting. But the thing with the *Tonight Show*, you send away for tickets and you have no idea what you're going to get tickets for. Then at eight a.m., you could go down to KNBC, go down right there to NBC in Burbank, and if there's any tickets left, they'll give you them. And they don't guarantee you to be admitted, so you have to really get there early. So I just felt like after I had seen Robin Williams, who did about twenty minutes of shtick while the commercials were running, after he had put his handprints at Grauman's Chinese Theater, I did the same thing, where I just said, "Anyone got an extra ticket?" and it worked out. But you have to be prepared to get there before noon and wait like four hours before they let you in. They tape around five. They let you in around four. Bob Dylan, in 1992, had his thirtieth anniversary concert that came out on Pay Per View. It was not only an amazing group of musicians, it was right before the election. It was almost like it was populist gathering on the airwaves where you know that anyone that would pay for Pay Per View would have a bunch of people over. You just couldn't— Most people would just have parties or have groups of people. So what he did was what Woody Guthrie might have done in 1992. So what did he start out with? The first song he sang was "To Woody," his acoustic.

Then the next song, "It's All Right Ma, I'm Only Bleeding," which has the line in it, "Even the president of the United States must have to stand naked sometimes," or something like that. I'm paraphrasing it. So I thought that was amazing. A lot of things happened with the election of Bill Clinton. It caught me by surprise. I was up there where the western White House was in Santa Barbara for the full time they were up watching press conferences. You got local coverage that never went national and stuff. It was almost like they were twenty-four-hour news stations, and they really weren't then. Back then it was just beginning. When Bill Clinton was elected, the Firesign Theater got back together, and they went on tour. They played the Wiltern Theater here in 1993. It was great. It was, I think, in November. Chick Hearn, since the [NBA] playoffs, which began in 1961, was a steadying voice in Los Angeles. He was a national treasure, but he was a treasure to Los Angeles. I've been a Hollywood child because of being born in Los Angeles. My parents were always into movies and stuff, old movies, and they gave me the freedom to watch television. I'm amazed at what I actually watched when I look back in all these books about TV, what I actually watched, because there were no VCRs [video cassette recorders]. You had to be there. Where did I find the time to do that and do all the other things? I discovered rock and roll in 1958 when KFWB went Top Forty, and the summer of '58 and '59 I spent out at Newport [Beach]. I think I mentioned that. We had this place out in Balboa where the family would live, so I spent most of the summer out there. Now, my dad was a big Lou Gehrig fan. He went to Lou Gehrig's last appearance at Yankee Stadium. A lot of people don't know that, but the next day he handed in the lineup card without his name, but that was on the road. So my dad kept that stub. So he was always into Lou Gehrig. He was a lefthander. He was a first baseman. The whole myth of Lou Gehrig was not a myth; he was the real deal. And ALS [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis], Lou Gehrig's Disease, took a very good friend of mine, Neon Park, who did the album covers for Little Feat, among other things, *Weasels Ripped My Flesh* for [Frank] Zappa. He died

September 1st, 1993, of ALS. People from Brooklyn. B. Mitchel Reed was from Brooklyn. Wolfman Jack was from Brooklyn. Ramblin' Jack Elliott, I believe, who was a contemporary of Woody Guthrie's. The second-to-the-last *Tonight Show* was the one that had Bette Midler, singing with Johnny Carson, and Robin Williams. They were the only two guests, so it was actually the second one. To me, the best composer of the twentieth century was Bernard Herrmann, who did soundtracks. He was in radio back East, so he knew how to do these short cues working for CBS radio. Then when the *War of the Worlds* happened, when Orson Welles did that amazing radio hoax where people really thought martians were landing in New Jersey, Bernard Herrmann came out to Hollywood. The first film he did, obviously, was one of the best of all times, *Citizen Kane*. He also did *The Magnificent Ambersons*, which got butchered by the studio. He went on to do 1951's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* where he brought the theremin in. If you play that, just from that soundtrack, people will know that that's where all science fiction soundtracks after that basically came from. He did the [Alfred] Hitchcock trilogy of *North by Northwest* and *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, among other films for Alfred Hitchcock. An amazing composer, Esa-Pekka Salonen, who is the head of the L.A. [Los Angeles] Philharmonic [Orchestra] now, has even done an album of recordings where they performed Bernard Herrmann. My favorite all-time composing musician/performer would have to be Charles Lloyd, just because I got to see him 1967 through 2000, with his collaboration with Billy Higgins. The "Boobs a Lot" song that was originally done on the Fugs album by the Holy Modal Rounders, they were members of the Fugs, then they released it, we basically played it on KPPC a lot. It became a standard with "Dr. Demento" [Barry Hansen]. But I actually got to cut the national ad for that with my girlfriend at the time, Denise. 1973 through '75, I lived in Malibu with B. Mitchel Reed. We went through three different houses, so I was actually living with him. We drove to the La Brea Tar Pits KMET building and had tons and tons of conversations, among various things. We always hear about

the golden age of TV. Coincidentally, next week there's a reunion of Mary Tyler Moore and Dick Van Dyke and Carl Reiner and Rose Marie, and they're going to talk about the late Morey Amsterdam and the other two cast members. So that's kind of interesting. Now, I really have felt the last several years that we're living in the platinum age of television, because there's so many amazing actors and writers working in not only network television, but basic cable, which has commercials, and then premium cable, which a lot of people can't get, which it's going to end up on DVDs anyway. So if you miss anything on premium cable, it's going to come out. You don't have to watch *Sex and the City* on TNT without the sex because you'll be able to see it on DVD. Vin Scully, a lot of people think he's from Brooklyn, actually born in the Bronx, but became a native son of Brooklyn, came out here after being trained by Red Barber, who I imagine was 4 percent redhead. When B. Mitchel Reed came out here in 1957, the Brooklyn Dodgers, his Brooklyn Dodgers, followed. So he was always a Vin Scully fan and, obviously, always a Sandy Koufax fan. The Dead. When the Grateful Dead came to KPPC and I did an interview with Jerry Garcia and Bob Weir and members of the New Riders of the Purple Sage, John Dawson, who was known as Marmaduke, who's the main writer for the New Riders, and then David Nelson, they all basically knew each other from the bluegrass days, and we did an interview. I basically got them to do an interview, sort of a history of the Grateful Dead, to sum up the first five years. Then they were playing at El Monte Legion Stadium, which is where fifties rock and roll was, and it was actually going to be torn down after that. So that was real interesting. There was an intern, a lady named Cameron O'Rourke, who worked at the Troubadour. She worked as a waitress, but she hung out in the sound booth where everyone got high, and knew the band members. She's the one that brought the white label Sea Train album. They had played the Troubadour, and before it came out, which had Richard Greene, one of my all-time favorite violinists. He was with [Jim] Kweskin, and then he did a bunch of other side projects. So he was with them. But she also was there for

the Grateful Dead interview with the New Riders. She was on there rolling the joints and being like the hippie chick lady. It was great that she was there, because she was a cool lady. She wasn't a phony. I mentioned this lady Valerie that I'd gone to the concerts with. I also went to the Miles Davis-Nina Simone concert. Did I mention that at the Shrine [Auditorium]?

CLINE

Yeah. I was there.

ALVY

Yeah. Because Miles came out first, and he was the headliner, and said, "Nobody follows a lady like Nina Simone." And it was unbelievable. Then I also saw him as the guest, unannounced guest, of the Band at the Hollywood Bowl, which was after the *Bitches Brew* era, so we're talking about summer of '70. The Band had already done a concert, one of their few concerts, at the Pasadena Civic [Auditorium], [which KPPC cosponsored] with the guy who wrote "Louise" that Bonnie Raitt covered. Paul Siebel was the opening act, and his guitarist was David Bromberg. So this was like Bromberg's introduction to everybody. Over fifty [years old]. When I saw *Politically Incorrect* with Bill Maher, who actually has a special on Comedy Central tonight, coincidentally, first, I sat across from Judy Collins, a lady who I followed obviously since like '66, '67 and was in love with, and by over fifty she was amazing. Then they taped another show, and her seat was replaced by Lauren Hutton, who was an over-fifty beauty in another way. But Bill Maher, I used to tape his show every night and then watch it the next morning, like I do with *The Daily Show*. Vietnam, [Richard M.] Nixon, RFK [Robert F. Kennedy]. We were on the air. We were anti-Nixon. We'd play Nixon parody stuff, and we'd play Nixon's voice saying all kinds of things. When RFK was shot here at the Ambassador Hotel, if he had not been murdered, I really believe he would have been the president and we would have been out of Vietnam and we wouldn't have Richard Nixon. Everything would have been changed, obviously. He was murdered by a Palestinian radicalist, supposedly. I mean we don't really know at this

point. Set and setting. Most psychedelic experiences go back to what Richard Alpert, who became Baba Ram Dass, and Timothy Leary, who became Dr. Timothy Leary, you know. Set and setting, the way I explain it is change it to mindset and setting. When you take any psychedelic trip, especially for the first time, you must have a guide, because the two important things of your setting, where you are, who you're with, what's going on, what you've taken, and the mindset, what your personal mindset is, how you approach it, and then what you explore, what music you listen to, what maybe movies you watch, what adventures you take, which could take place in the supermarket. It's very important. It's not something to be overdone. You have to respect a psychedelic. LSD got very weird. There'd be all this killer LSD with all kinds of names. Some would come out of [Stanley] Owsley, but pure mescaline, if it was really pure mescaline. Some people went into psilocybin off of mushrooms, but pure mescaline is what Aldous Huxley talks about in *Doors of Perception* from around 1954. Reading that book gives an explanation of what you really need to do. Smoking pot can get you into certain areas that are semi-psychedelic or psychedelic, but a lot of that is also set and setting if you approach it in the same way. Nowadays, it's a shame that you can get a prescription for all these opiates, for everything from dental problems to back problems, but you can't get a prescription for marijuana where if you OD, you fall asleep. Anything, though, that you smoke can do damage to your lungs, irregardless, whether it's secondhand tobacco smoke, whether it's any other material that you smoke. So if you're young, you have to know that. They're finding out that your brain really isn't developed till you're eighteen to twenty years old. The problem is if we're letting you go to war at age eighteen, you have to be able to vote, you should be able to smoke pot, you should be able to drink alcohol. There should be strict penalties for anyone between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one that break laws, even stricter than twenty-one because just of that. But if you're going to go to war at eighteen, you should be given all these other things. We blew it in 1972. We fought for four years to get

the vote. Where I was living in Arcata, California, we elected George McGovern president and we passed the California marijuana initiative [Proposition 215], but obviously we were the exception. We blew it because there were enough of us between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine, let's say, that could have voted. It's very weird about the age twenty-seven, of people dying at age twenty-seven. You're going to find a lot of people died, besides [Jimi] Hendrix and [Janis] Joplin and [Jim] Morrison, and I believe [Alan] "Blind Owl" Wilson of Canned Heat. I just read of someone else, a major figure that died at age twenty-seven. It's a weird age. You have to get through that. That's about it. New journalism. Les Carter, it was very weird, because I knew he was a TV writer, and I knew he was a big Humphrey Bogart fan. At Melnitz Hall at UCLA, where I saw some amazing things, I hadn't been there in years, I went back in 1996 during the summer. They showed the original *Big Sleep*, which has been restored. *The Big Sleep* was only shown overseas to the troops. Then when Bogart and Bacall become hot as a couple, they recut the movie, put more scenes with Bogart and Bacall, and the one that you actually see when you went to the theater or watch on TV is not the original version; it's the newer version. So they showed it, and this was the first time it was ever shown, and the fact that I couldn't find Les and Susan Carter, I was really concerned. Then he died in September of that year. And the way I heard about it, this is 1996, I had had my web pages going for almost a year then, because I did it right after Jerry Garcia died. September of '95 is when I did it. He passed away in August. So in '96, it was weird because I just had a weird feeling about Les, because I hadn't seen him since he was living in Ojai, and I visited him in early '87 and he was really, really, really overweight. I knew he sat down and wrote every day, and I knew he tried to use an exercycle and that it wasn't working. It was just I had a very weird feeling, because I expected to see him at Melnitz Hall at this [*Big Sleep*] screening. It was very, very strange. I mentioned that I had written lyrics for Mallard, I think. I've got them on my web pages. It was a real honor that Bill Harkleroad, Zoot Horn Rollo, and

Rockette Morton, Mark Boston, and on the first album Artie Tripp, who was known as Ed Marimba and is a practicing chiropractor in McKinleyville, which is north of Arcata, north of Eureka. Arcata is ten miles north of Eureka, and that's where Humboldt State University is now. Then you go further and you get what a lot of people think is part of the leylines where flying saucers pass. There's Clam Beach and then there's Moonstone Beach and there's incredible rock formation at Trinidad Head. That's where Captain Beefheart lives, north of there, Trinidad Head. Then you end up eventually hitting areas north of there. There are more redwood trees north of there. There's the big Blue Ox that you see with Paul Bunyan. That's up further north. They actually put Pelican Bay [State] Prison up there, that heavy-duty security thing. Then you eventually hit Oregon. That's basically the stuff I just wanted to throw out there. California counterculture is what I'm interested in, so all aspects, and I feel it actually began with JFK [John F. Kennedy] and then the Beatles. That's actually where the counterculture began, as far as I'm concerned. So you usually start with questions, I believe.

CLINE

Yeah. This plays right into the things that I wanted to ask today, so let me start with this question. Since you're talking about the counterculture, we're talking about underground radio and you're bringing it up into the present day, you mentioned a lot of TV things that you like to watch, and it brings to mind the way a lot of things have changed. What do you think you can say by way of definition is the reason what people think of as the sixties, and really what we're talking about specifically is the later sixties into the very early seventies, very few years of time, particularly if you look at the big picture of history, what was so compelling and important about that period? How would you define what's really so crucial about those few years, and how should we look at that now with so many years since? I mean it's now 2004). It's been a long time and people are still talking about that period, they're fascinated by that period, and everyone

seems to agree about what an important period that was. What was important about it?

ALVY

Looking back, part of what— I always go back to the thing about beatniks to hipsters to hippies and the transition, because there were so many age groups that have that same feelings. Like the so-called baby boom generation, which they label 1946 to '64, right after World War II and then there was the war babies before that, they're starting to become more prominent because of the numbers and the fact that so many of them are going to reach Social Security age and so many of them have health problems because that's natural. Now, it's hard to tell. Okay. I was born in Los Angeles, which to me is the greatest place in the world to have been born. I've lived up and down the West Coast. I've never crossed over into Canada, except once, and then they told me to return because they thought I was dodging the draft. I was always afraid to cross the Mexican border. I just felt something would happen, and it was just a weird feeling. I never wanted to go back to the East Coast. I could have gone back. If I'd told B. Mitchel Reed I'd give him two years, he would have gone back and done radio in New York for two years and been a major hit and would have been a big influence just like he was. He was influencing East Coast radio just by being on KMET in Los Angeles because of their signal from '68 to '71, and then he went back in the fall of 1972 after doing a year with Shadove Stevens at KRLA. Big influence. I would have lived probably at the end of Long Island, and we would have taken some train. I don't know that would have worked. Or I could have worked right out of KPPC and gone the summer of '68 to Boston where I was guaranteed an air shift, just like Steve Segal was, at WBCN. Like I said, at some point I'd like to talk to someone, hopefully Joseph Rogers. I'd be interested, if I'd gone back, who wouldn't have gotten an air shift? Which means that person would have then probably been the part-time person, meaning one or two part-timers would have never worked at 'BCN, and their lives would have been changed. Who could it have been? What if it was someone like J.J. Jackson? By me

not going back, that left a full-time air shift. Maybe it was his. I don't really know. And I've always felt that way every year since, and this is since the late seventies when I did a week on KILO AM up in Kirkland, Washington. I was Captain Kirkland, and we broadcast it across the Canadian border and into Seattle with freeform rock that Michael Schultz was the program director. He was on the air as Michael Fox, and then he went to Tacoma at an FM and gave me Saturdays. Then the second time, my car broke down, so I didn't get to do much radio up there. But the idea of underground radio, it spread all over the country where various areas would have at least one underground radio station. It might be in Ann Arbor, Michigan. There'd be competition by album rock stations. Eventually everything was formatted and there were special magazines for progressive rock. I can't think of the name right now. One of them really helped us when we moved to Eureka to do the radio show in January of '72, when we bought a station up there. There was progressive—I forget. I should remember all this stuff. Eventually, I've got the information elsewhere. But I would visit stations up and down the Coast. In 1972, after our station was put off the air for a year in Eureka, eventually after a year we got rid of it, but it was off the air for a full year, I drove up to Seattle just because I wanted to visit some friends up in—Radio friends of friends, like friends of Deirdre O'Donoghue and people like that, that had gone up to Canada for various reasons because I had two cousins who had avoided the draft up there. I think one or both became teachers, and I think they're both living in Vancouver. But I went to Seattle, and there was a hippie radio station, and right away we talked the same language. They knew who—I mentioned Tom Donahue, I'd mention B. Mitchel Reed, I'd mention all the people I worked with, and it was like, "Yeah, great." So one of the guys, I think it was Daryl—I forget what name he was using. Daryl Despe or something. He let me just stay at his house with his old lady. Then there's a writer who wrote reviews for the *Seattle Times* when I went back in 1990. There was an anniversary of Jimi Hendrix, and he had done an article. There was an anniversary. Jimi Hendrix had gone

to high school at Garfield High School up there and this and that. I've got to think of his name. It is Patrick MacDonald because he was a great guy. He let me stay at his house after they threw me out of Canada and wouldn't let me go up there. He became a writer for the *Seattle Times*. As far as I know, he's been their rock music writer for years and years and years, and I don't know why I could not think of his name [Patrick MacDonald]. So there are different age groups. Besides me coming out of college age, eighteen, nineteen, twenty, that's what Tom Donahue and that's what B. Mitchel Reed wanted. They wanted street people that came out of the street or came out of college radio, that knew the music and knew what was going on. I was lucky because I had B. Mitchel Reed. Like at KFWB from when he started playing album cuts at the end of June of '67 until he left around the end of November of '67, then the ratings came out, and his ratings were phenomenal. But Westinghouse had bought the station and decided in March, right around the time we went on strike, they went all news. It was weird that it all happened the same time, because that also meant B. Mitchel Reed could not go back to KFWB. There was no way for him to really work at KRLA because of the management and the people working there, so he had to find an FM to take us all to, and none of the stations would take us. But Metromedia took Tom Donahue's staff to KSAN in San Francisco from KMPX. We struck for another month, and then B. Mitchel Reed's the only one they would take at KMET. But the fact that his age group, our age group, and the younger people coming up that started listening to KMET and were influenced, the music started to change after they moved in '76 to Metromedia Square where you were behind— There were guards to get in KLAC, and KTTV was there. It was a major production studio, besides just being a TV station. They produced a lot of TV shows there. I remember that one rock show where B. Mitchel Reed was an emcee, the one with Santana and Jethro Tull and whatever. [tape recorder off]

CLINE

All right. We're on.

ALVY

Now, part of it is me growing up in Los Angeles. At age sixteen, basically— I talked to my mother and father. They always loaned me a car. It's weird. I guess they always either went without or my dad had a car to go to work with that they would use for errands and things. So it was amazing that they let me do that, and I was pretty damned good about it. I didn't get tickets or accidents or things like that. Because, I was trying to remember, it seemed like I always had a car, which meant when I went to KFWB we'd park in the back alley there, and especially on Saturday night, the stairs that went up to the second floor, which is how you got into KFWB, were full of people. It was like a party. One girl would come in, "I just flew in from England, and the stuff that Peter Green is doing with John Mayall is amazing. Wait till you hear 'Supernatural,' this instrumental." So there'd be stuff like that. Plus, Mitchel would always get phone calls through the KFWB switchboard, and then eventually he'd have a hotline. Occasionally, he'd give his hotline out to the wrong people, which means the number would have to be changed regularly, but I always had a hotline at KPPC and KMET. I always had a hotline number, and we always had control at KFWB because first his future wife, Carole Solari, who became Carole Solari Reed, I think it was October 22nd, 1967, because I have an air check of my folk festival show on KVFM where I dedicated songs to B. Mitchel Reed and his new wife. I think they got married on a Sunday, and I believe the only other person there, I think, was Herb Alpert, who was B. Mitchel Reed's best man at the wedding. It was a small wedding. I don't think Lou Adler was there. So that's about the time that happened. Then Larry Glass, my partner who went to the Monterey Pop Festival and from Valley College radio station here, became the switchboard operator guy, so we always had control of that. Like I said, Mitchel always had people going back to the fifties that he was in touch with that would call him, and he'd get amazing tidbits of information. Part of it was self-censorship. You got so much information, and you know that some of it you didn't really— You had to check with another

source before you did it. Some of it you just knew it was so now that you didn't want to put it out there. You wanted to let it go through normal channels because you shouldn't really have that information. It's stuff that Mitch shouldn't have, and these two teenage guys hanging out with them shouldn't have, so we didn't release it. So there was a real sense of how powerful it was with what you could do on the radio. You could say something or play something and really affect a lot of people. We got to the point with FM radio where we knew that a lot of the people listening were stoned, some were drunk, some were actually psychedelic, and some weren't going through the set and setting thing. Some people were either doing it on their own. They didn't have a guide who wasn't psychedelic. It's like your designated driver. So at times we had to be real careful what you played, because you could do sets of music that were so amazing that they would drive people insane. There was literally stuff being recorded in those days, because record labels all of a sudden would record and put out anything and just throw it and see what sticks to the wall, because they had no idea. There was no rhyme or reason. If you played it on the radio, there was a chance that it could become requested and become a hit or even it could sell records and never show up on charts. But at the same time, you could waste your airtime by playing stuff that really wasn't good, and we tried not to do that. We tried to give everyone an equal shot. If they would give us an album to listen to, we would try and at least sample it. If we didn't hear something good, if someone else on the air mentioned it or played it or circled it with a little note saying, "This might be good for you all night, but it really doesn't work anywhere unless it's someone like Les Carter who knows how to mix it with a good jazz track."

CLINE

I have a question relating to this. Music really started to become more innovative, more experimental, more adventurous, people were experimenting with longer tracks, different kinds of orchestration, different sounds, different song forms, all this sort of thing, which these are all things

we think of as being associated with this time period. What do you think inspired this? This is not only affecting the music. Then it affects radio programming. Everything is starting to change very quickly.

ALVY

It was creativity. Look, we followed the Beatles. They were wearing suits and having really basically short haircuts, if you think about it, on *Ed Sullivan*, and all that stuff and on their concerts. Their concerts were only '64, they supported the *A Hard Day's Night* movie, and here they played the Hollywood Bowl. '65, they did two concerts at the Hollywood Bowl. Then the following summer, they played Dodgers Stadium and Candlestick Park, and that was basically it. They went up on the roof for the *Let it Be* performance. But other than that, like that was it. But we followed them creatively, any news you could get. The great thing for young people today is they have total access to so much stuff. I had to go to UCLA film school and sit in Melnitz Hall and go to various movie theaters for years and years and years. A lot of them were the ones like the Fox Venice [Theater] and the [Nuart] Theater that based themselves on at the Arcata Minor Theatre where every three days there'd be a new double bill or something like that, and you could catch them as classics. You actually would see them in the communal experience of a movie theater, which nowadays you really can't do because there's so much and it's so expensive and such a hassle with so many kids. But everyone could rent it, and now with DVDs it's the point where it's almost overkill. Unless it's a really favorite movie, you know, to me the VHS version is fine, because I don't need all that extra stuff. You can get it so inexpensive now, the few VHS ones that are still out there for sale, a lot of it on the Internet. That whole idea of what jazz musicians did, rock musicians started talking to each other. This idea, when they mention experimental, Harry Shearer, I think, still refers to KPPC as an experimental radio station. A lot of us were true believers, and being true believers, we were into the idea that it's all based on roots music, but you could be white and Jewish, like Ramblin' Jack Elliott, come from Brooklyn, and still have soul in your

music. You could be B. Mitchel Reed or Wolfman Jack from Brooklyn and still have soul and this and that, and still communicate with the audience. The creativity. Creative people got into management positions at record companies. It wasn't always just the house hippie. Sometimes the head of the record label and sometimes the head of AR [artist and repertoire] and various AR men were creative. They actually were either ex-musicians or new musicians or were current musicians, were able to put musicians together, would sort of cheat. They'd let musicians play together even though the contracts wouldn't allow them to, and then let them either put in a phony name or not get credit till a later date, which is real important in publishing or whatever. The musicians themselves, it's very strange. I try and watch pop music. Now, MTV [Music Television] used to play music. They don't anymore. And these other ones, I don't have the other cable channels to get them. But the musicians, the young musicians that are coming up, with few exceptions, I really don't see them as adding to the overall history of rock and roll, which is now fifty years old. Bands that I love, like Jakob Dylan, the Wallflowers, I mean, besides his pedigree and where he comes from, to me that's adding to the culture. There's so many musicians. It's weird. It's almost like we were young, but the young people that maybe even were a year older that were playing rock and roll and playing it all over the world, be they from L.A. like the Byrds and Buffalo Springfield or the Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead from San Francisco, because L.A. was always a little ahead of San Francisco, even though San Francisco would never admit it, and California was always ahead of the rest of the country, even though the East Coast would never admit it. So much great music came out. And if you remember, an album usually was only like sixteen minutes on a side. There were some variations on that. That's why a lot of times you buy a CD and it's thirty-six minutes long. Sometimes they'll put two albums on it or put bonus tracks or whatever, which in a lot of ways is amazing. That's the other thing, now so much music is available that wasn't back then, music that got recorded but never got released, which is amazing. Plus

on the Internet, almost every concert that anyone every taped now is just traded for free because— Very few bands are against that, because they knew if you're buying a [Bob] Dylan concert, you probably are buying his new releases as well because you love the fact that there's incredible photos and there's either lyrics or there's intelligent talk about the music, or there's credits where you know who wrote what or who's appearing on what, if Dylan had a co-writer or something or what the deal is. If Willie Nelson does an album and Dylan appears on it, that was a great album. There's a lot of crosspollination that's still going on. Los Lobos, who I just watched, who was on Craig Kilborn [the *Late, Late Show with Craig Kilborn*], and before that on the *Tonight Show*, Los Lobos is coming out with an album where they've got guests on it, other people on it. They've been doing it for like thirty years. They're a true authentic L.A. band. East L.A. is still their cultural, spiritual home. Little Feat, they're doing a European tour again. They're amazing. They got back together in '88. I saw them in Santa Barbara when they got back together. Five years. Craig Fuller was the vocalist and the third guitarist, and now Shaun Murphy, who had sang with them before since '93, she's out there fronting the band. They're a great band. They're touring, like I said, all over the world now. They go back to the sixties. They were in the Mothers of Invention. Lowell George and Roy Estrada were the Mothers, and then Bill Payne and Richie Hayward joined, and then the current band [with guitarist Paul Barrère]. They added from Delaney and Bonnie background Sam Clayton, who's Merry Clayton's brother. And they added Fred Tackett, who had been a guitarist and songwriter with Little Feat before, and also from Delaney and Bonnie, the bass player— Why am I spacing out on his name? I dig him a lot.

CLINE

We can fill that in later.

ALVY

Kenny Gradney. I'm sorry. Bass player.

CLINE

Clearly the music changed after a while. Broadcasting changed. The Beatles broke up, "classic rock" program

formatting, all that stuff. What happened? What do you think was going on that changed all the what you call accurately, I think, creativity of the late sixties?

ALVY

There was so much money being made in the record companies by so many people. It's almost like the bubble that burst from the dot.com. I knew a lot of that stuff was vaporware. I'd been involved since '81. All these companies that started and were successful and a lot of them promised all these things, I mean, the biggest and most innovative software program of all time was Lotus 123, because it made the PC something that had never been done before, and they disappeared because they couldn't convert to Windows like Excel did off of the Macintosh. Excel was the program that made the Macintosh, because you could do business stuff off of it. So I saw this vaporware. The same thing happened. And there's usually two words that I use: cocaine and Mercedes. Really, everybody used cocaine and everybody drove a Mercedes. Janis Joplin, listen to her song "Mercedes-Benz." Sure, they used it in a commercial, but listen to the blues in that and in her voice. I mean basically that's it. People wanted it and it was available, and so many people were successful. Even the nontalented people started to become successful. Then there'd be stadium tours, which just— I don't know, man. I refused. That's why I never got to see Led Zeppelin after I saw them at the Anaheim Convention Center when they first played. They came out to support their first album [self-titled], and Jethro Tull was supporting their second album [*Stand Up*]. It was one of the great concerts that happened. It was at the Anaheim Convention Center. I never got to see them. I saw the Eagles do their *Desperado* show. I was in from— I'd been living either in Eureka or— Anyway, they did the *Desperado* show at the Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium], and it was amazing because they still had Bernie Leadon in the group. It was before they went— So because they went on the road and did their tours in stadiums, I never got to see the Eagles after that. I refused to go. I refused to see Fleetwood Mac. I just really didn't like the new band. I mean Peter Green's

Fleetwood Mac with Danny Kerwin and Jeremy Spencer as guitarists, all three of them, with Mick Fleetwood and John McVie, who had come out of John Mayall, Peter Green had played with him and whatever, they were so good at that Shrine [Auditorium] concert when they were there with the Who and the unannounced Steve Miller Band with Boz Skaggs and opening act the Crazy World of Arthur Brown, they were so good, and because of that I never got to see them again. Now, when I was in Seattle, I did go to the Coliseum and see concerts, like Eric Clapton, but when New Year's— When 1979 began, Heart did one of the best shows I'd ever seen, and that was in the Coliseum, but it was like a party. It was as if they were in a little tavern because it was New Year's Eve. So it really meant something. Corporate greed. Then consolidation began. Companies started eating up companies to where now what are there just four or five record companies? That started to begin. Musicians, like a lot of the athletes, refused to take responsibility for themselves. They didn't realize— I think the Beatles did, because Derek Taylor knew this firsthand. Derek Taylor was an English gentleman who was also a street person. He could go right on the street and hang out with people. It was amazing. So I feel the Beatles knew that. I knew that they knew that certain things that got released— I mean like when [Paul] McCartney talked about smoking pot and then talked about dropping acid, and this and that, they knew it would affect people, but they didn't always know how. But sometimes they would release information just because they felt they had to be honest with people that they knew were listening to their every word. I mean crazy people like [Charles] Manson and the "Helter Skelter" thing, using that and claiming that's what turned them on to the race war and this whole thing that was going to happen, that's the unfortunate thing. As a disc jockey, I know I did certain things on the radio that hurt people because they were tripped out and— You know. They thought we were talking to them. They thought everything had to do with them. It's just at the same time you had to turn people on to stuff. We had to let them know about the [Vietnam] War and what the war really

meant. I don't think we were effective enough in telling people, "Hey, we support people. We're trying to get them to get out of the draft." Or we support them if we go to Canada. We didn't support the people that came home in the way we should have, because— I also blame this on bad drugs. I think a lot of people were so messed up with drugs that they didn't know that these were young— These were still our brothers, the ones coming home from Vietnam. A lot of them became anti-war, even like John Kerry, and we would support them. But I think we made a mistake, and I feel that a lot of it had to do with radio stations becoming more formatted and not letting the DJs say or play certain things. Because once the ratings started to happen, when a radio station would sell, they would base it on advertising. A lot of that, like I said, was like that dot.com bubble. A lot of it was vaporware. It could disappear overnight.

CLINE

I'm going to turn the tape over so I don't miss anything.

1.15. TAPE NUMBER: IX, Side Two (May 7, 2004)

CLINE

Okay.

ALVY

[Los Angeles] Dodgers are in first place with the best record right now in baseball by one game over San Diego [Padres] and the [Anaheim] Angels are right up there and Texas [Rangers] is still— Texas apparently is going to fade because of their pitching, where I really think the Angels' pitching is going to get stronger. It's like the old days, man, the [Los Angeles] Lakers, where you lose the first two on the road. They've got to win the first two at home. If they do, this has the potential to be one of the greatest series of all time, I really feel that, because if all the players are healthy and can play on both rosters— I mean the biggest loss, and people don't mention it, why the Lakers are having problems like last year, as soon as Rick Fox got hurt, I knew it was over. I just knew that we needed a full team to beat the [San Antonio] Spurs and we didn't have it. Devean George then got hurt, and he wouldn't have gotten hurt. Horace Grant,

who knew the triangle, won both with the Lakers and the [Chicago] Bulls for Phil Jackson, the fact that he isn't in the playoffs where he could spell both Shaquille O'Neal and/or Karl Malone and not only know the triangle, but being healthy enough to hit shots. One of the mistakes that Phil Jackson made was playing Horace Grant too much during that period when he needed an extra power forward. I really feel that. The only mistake that I feel Pat Riley ever made was the "three-peat" didn't happen because they were eleven and O going against Detroit [Pistons]. They had won everything, but they had tons of days off, like eleven days off. He took them to Santa Barbara and he worked them too hard. Hamstring, [Erwin] "Magic" Johnson. Hamstring, Byron Scott. Three-peat out the window, swept by Detroit after beating Detroit barely in the seventh game the year before and after that having beat Boston [Celtics], which they first beat in 1985, which was on the parquet floor in Boston, the greatest thing ever. I guess the Lakers lost to Boston more than any other team. They'd always go to the finals and lose to Boston. That was the thing even when it was Jerry West and Elgin Baylor. When the Lakers finally won in '72, after [Wilt] Chamberlain had been with them and it was West and Gail Goodrich as the big stars, and for the first time Elgin Baylor had to retire at the beginning of the season, but that for some reason he had carried them from Minnesota and made them a franchise here, started with the rookie Jerry West, nicknamed Zeke from Cabin Creek just revolutionized guard play in a lot of years. They finally won the championship in '72 with the biggest winning streak ever, thirty-three games and whatever. But if you remember the year before in '71, it was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar with Oscar Robertson winning it for Milwaukee [Bucks], and the year before that the [New York] Knick[erbocker]s defeated the Lakers in the seventh game with the injured center coming out—Willis Reed—and making it. Then in '73, the Phil Jackson Knicks finally won, so there was that going on. So that's where we are right now with the Lakers. But if you remember in 2000, they beat Indiana [Pacers], but they had to go seven games with Portland [Trailblazers], and they

barely won it in the fourth quarter with that great comeback here. The problem here now is the seventh game would be in San Antonio, and they have never won in the new building yet. They haven't won a game in the new building in the playoffs. But I really feel that's important with southern California consciousness, all this stuff going on. It's great to be in first. It's great to have the Dodgers and the Angels both up there. It feels good. It makes everyone feel good, because there's very little. We're still having problems with the LAX, with the [Los Angeles International] airport. Going back to the sixties, a lot of us, like I said, we were real careful not— We were trying not to let a narc become a member of the inner circle of underground FM radio disc jockeys. There were very few of us. It was almost like a fraternity. There was even a big conference back East that was put together. I'll think of his name. He did news at KMET for a while [Larry Yurdin]. There's all these people that I've got the reference books, but they're not active in my mind. Since I got involved with computers in 1981, I try and do random access memory. If I can look it up in a book, I try not to keep it in my mind. So I'm missing a lot of these really important people to underground radio. I'd be able to put them in a book.

CLINE

The music changed. The broadcasting changed. You were talking about cocaine, Mercedes-Benzes.

ALVY

I just read recently, probably in the new *Tracks* magazine, about the closing of the Bottom Line [club in New York City] and how they would put on these great mixed concerts, almost like Bill Graham would put on. They mentioned in this article, there was an interview with various people talking about their memories of it, and there seemed to be mentioned more than once, and I've seen this in other articles recently, how the fact that you could get certain things played on the radio in the late sixties and through the seventies, even, on a lot of stations, meant a lot as to what you would record, what you would spend your time on. A lot of people would write tons and tons of songs, but what they

would end up recording and then culling down and editing down to what they would actually release had to do with the fact that you could get airplay. You could actually get airplay in various ways, which doesn't really exist at all. There's certain people that they know if they put out a single, there's a chance it will get played. So if they've got a cause, it's great that they could put it out there, but even that is changing now with the— I mean, first of all, Colin Powell failed back in the first Gulf War. His son, Michael Powell, has ruined the FCC [Federal Communication Commission]. I mean, they're still letting major ownership happen, and they always claim only a certain percentage of the stations are actually owned by Clear Channel, even though they own twelve hundred stations and control concert venues and are being sued by acts that if they don't perform for a certain price at a certain concert venue on a certain date, they don't get airplay on certain stations and all that. Because the whole thing that was going on, there was underground independent promoters back at KPPC that would come by. They'd turn us on to the music, but they knew if we didn't like it, we wouldn't play it. Sure, some of them got us high. Some of them used cocaine on people. I refused to take cocaine from a record person. Sure, you'd get high with them, smoke, whatever. But other people did take it, and that's when it started to change. The fact that I don't think I had an addictive personality because I didn't really dig drinking alcohol and, as a kid, Manischewitz or Mogen David were always available at bar mitzvahs or whatever, so I didn't have a craving for alcohol. I'd never really got into the cocaine thing, but I think a lot of people did. One of the reasons I left radio and didn't get involved with working at KMET, which I could have because B. Mitchel Reed at the time, he still had a lot of pull as to what went down there. He even discovered people. Like Cynthia Fox, I think, is back on KLOS. B. Mitchel Reed told me about her when she was an intern and stuff. He knew the potential of young people, and that's what fueled underground radio in the sixties. That's what hasn't fueled it since the nineties, because there aren't people that have learned the music. There's no station they

could listen to and hear it used. Unless they might work at a record store or have friends who were collectors that turned them on to music or waste their time on Internet radio, unless they're listening to Internet radio and doing other things on computer, that's okay, but then you need an even more powerful computer to do that. I wish there were stations you could listen to aboveground, at home, outdoors, in your car, which are called commercial radio stations, which now— You know. I mean, even an FM station like KLSX used to be— Even though it was classic rock semi-formatted from a list, it still is twenty-four hours of music that's missing seven days a week, and they've got this lame FM talk stuff. Sure, Howard Stern has a big audience, but I mean, they don't play music. So that's something that's happened today. The fact that the radio stations have become so valuable because of this thing of through the years using the amount of advertising they get and the best way to get ratings is to have some sort of a lame LCD, lowest common denominator, format that doesn't necessarily get listeners but gets ratings. A lot of people don't realize, even the Nielsen [ratings]s. There's a way to get ratings that doesn't really reflect the listeners, and there's a way to have listeners that don't really reflect in the ratings. It happens. That's why if enough people register to vote in certain groups and the main group is young people from eighteen to, let's say, thirty-something or whatever, if they register and vote, they can change this election one way or another. They can change this election, because there are so many people out there that have views on things that don't vote anymore, it's a shame. It's been that way through the years. The last election wouldn't even have been close if young people had voted more so. The same thing with musicians. I really feel a lot of the so-called star musicians, you see these shows or awards, it's the same people over and over and over. A lot of them, they're too into so-called fashion that is almost this pop fashion that really has nothing to do with what's going on in the world. It's just part of capitalism and consumerism, which we really don't need now. We need a return to the roots. We need people educated, and one of the greatest ways to educate a

person is through music, people listening to roots music, people listening to albums by people you may not have heard before, the Alex Cline Ensemble, *Sparks Fly Upward*, there's a thirty-one-minute track called "Sparks Fly Upward." Now, just looking at this, there's a drummer who produced it, named Peter Erskine. Peter Erskine, I saw. He went out on the 8:30 [by Weather Report] tour. I got to see him at the Santa Monica Civic somewhere around '79. Then I saw him in Santa Barbara with Weather Report. To see violins and electric guitars together, to me, is amazing. This is something that I'd never heard of, but it may— If it came into KPPC it may even get played, really. Literally, there's a chance it could get played. Today, where? Maybe a college radio station.

CLINE

Right. This is my question. You mentioned earlier Harry Shearer. What about National Public Radio? What about music on these noncommercial stations?

ALVY

KCRW here, they've always had this *Morning Becomes Eclectic* show, which is great. National Public Radio, to me, in the last several years has become as bad as commercial radio because you hear all these basic— You know, all these supporters. The music, even though they may play some of the most eclectic music outside of college radio, to me it's still limited. I would love there to be a noncommercial station that was 24/7 music and would tell news through the music. You might have news updates and things, but you could really do it. There's so many creative people that did it besides the Credibility Gap and besides [Wes] "Scoop" Nisker up at KSAN in San Francisco, people that were known for that. There were other people that were doing it on all these stations that they never were either— There's no air checks around, or they didn't have albums that were released that would point to them. Some of the albums that released, you can't get the Credibility Gap on CD right now. I still don't know why. Eventually, I imagine it will happen. There's a lot of other groups out there like Congress of Wonders and people like that that are out on CD finally. The music stations

that you hear about now that are exploring music, I think are still college stations, really. There must be a network. The problem is there's been so many people, and I say that bad chemicals and bad drugs are a part of this, have been listening to bad music through so many years. A lot of it is rap that is crap. A lot of it's hip-hop that is crap. A lot of it is people that don't explore the roots of rhythm and blues, and blues and American rock and roll and jazz. And because of that, they may have made millions of dollars by maybe sampling these artists or copying these artists and not really being original, and they becoming the spokesmen. There's been so much negativity about their music that you could say, well, they're just expressing what's happening on the streets. Yeah, but if that's the only thing happening on the streets, I still believe that 90 percent of human beings want peace. They want to listen to good music. They don't want violence. I really believe that. But I believe a lot of them are either so intimidated or so out of the mainstream financially that every moment of every day is just surviving to the point where they really don't know what's going on in the world. I mean, the defense secretary, Secretary of Defense [Donald] Rumsfeld is testifying right now before the Senate hearing on abuse to prisoners in Iraq. He never even called it. He said, "I'm not a lawyer, but I believe it's abuse. I don't believe it's called torture." I mean, my god, this is the Secretary of Defense. And the president [George W. Bush] and everyone is lying and using all these attack ads and things to the point where most people don't even know what's going on because they don't have a moment to really find out what's going on in the world. So they either use their old prejudices or they use a patriotism that they think is real patriotism, but it goes back to John Prine. "Your flag decal won't get you into heaven anymore." B. Mitchel Reed used to talk about, at KMET, how a lot of the listeners would put the flag decals on upside down on their cars, and maybe they'd have a KMET bumper sticker. Neon Park did a great billboard campaign with that mouse for KMET and whatever. He did a little work for KMET, which I wish he had done more. But there was the KMET mouse and whatever. There's so much you can do

through music that it's almost if you really look into it, I could really get depressed if I wanted to, because I realize by having seen it firsthand what music can do and what a radio station's consciousness could do to a community, you could mention everything. Like I'm talking about the Lakers and the Dodgers and Angels. You could mention all that on the air. You could give a brief history just putting together where different musicians came from that have had a current release, which isn't really being done. It might be being done with interviews, but they're few and far between. It's such a waste because these big corporations could still sell advertising and get ratings if they hired people that were musicologists, just like supposedly the talk stations are hiring people that know what they're talking about, and most of them really don't. The ones that are still around today know one thing; they know how to get ratings and that's all they know. They don't know how to connect with an audience. They really don't, because they really aren't. They're wasting their connection with an audience. And I keep seeing it over and over again. Radio should be playing music, and there's so much of it out there. The greatest treasure that American culture has given the world, I really believe, is music, and I believe that just so much. There's so little that I can do. I could have been a disc jockey all these years, even with the health problems you start to get in your forties and fifties. I could have played what they said and every now and then either cheated or convinced them to play something good. I never learned to do a radio show with music I didn't pick on my own. I never did. The people that have done it through the years, be they Jeff Gonzer or Jim Ladd or people like that, I respect. I wish there were more people like that that had the roots in music, that in some way are reflecting and influencing so many people. It would be so amazing. There's so many things about musicians that you really have to be on your own. You have to check around. All of sudden, Weather Report put out a greatest hits album, which was great because something called *The Best of [Weather Report]* because people could get a thing. Then they put outtakes, live stuff that never got released and whatever,

which had never been out there, which is all this music that even if you just listened to it once, even if that's it, but you know the string of where these musicians came from and went to, if you're a creative person. Neon Park used to listen to KPPC all the time when he was doing his paintings, be they Little Feat album covers or ads for us, the black-and-white ads that he did. The consciousness of the radio station did that. There doesn't seem to be any stations with any real consciousness. They might have sort of a station sound, but they're really wasting it. There's a lot of talented people still on the radio that have some sort of connection, but where are the young people learning the roots of American music? It's not happening on college stations that much. You're getting variety. You're getting an eclectic music sound of various music, but a lot of times it's still just within one or two hours. Maybe someone will just play reggae and throw in Rand B, and that's their trip. But it's not happening enough. It's a wasted art form, because one person can really influence a community. The deal was, you'd do a radio show for one person. It was either someone you knew that you knew was in the audience every day, whether it was your old lady or your best friend or a guy you went to college with that you still keep in touch with, or that person out there that is your third eye, who's in your third eye, someone out there that you imagine to have a certain consciousness because you imagine that they listen to KPPC all the time. And you zero in on them, and you do a show just for that one person, and you try and be aware of especially what the guy before you played, and if the guy after you is going to do something special, he phones you and lets you know. If certain people that work at the station need to show up at a meeting and no one knows where they are, you give a message out on the air to them, which the FCC doesn't allow, but you do it anyway. I learned from B. Mitchel Reed how to do that, because he did it, and I would do it, and there was just a certain way to get the word out. But you would more and more learn the responsibility of what you were doing. Occasionally, you did a show which maybe the audience just thought it was a fine show and they enjoyed it or at least it

was background music. But you knew you had failed. You knew that for some reason you didn't give it your all, and you'd try and correct it the next day. It was great to be a full-time jock, because for five days a week you knew you'd always have a show, or when you were on six days a week. If you just did weekends, it was great to at least just have two days on the air. If you just had one day on the air, it was real difficult because you had so much in your head from that whole week that you couldn't really fit it into three or four hours, but you tried. Sometimes, though, those were the best shows you ever did, because everything was sort of abbreviated. You'd basically cut to the chase on all your sets of music and things. Occasionally you'd have to play something that you knew the audience would have to— You'd ask them to sit through it because you'd tell them that if they learned from that, what they'd hear after it that was familiar to them would have a different meaning. And a lot of times you'd get immediate— After that, people would call up and say, "Yeah, I see what you're saying." By listening to this Frank Zappa cut with this violinist who used to be in Don and Dewey, Don "Sugarcane" Harris, "Directly From My Heart to You" on the *Weasels Ripped My Flesh* album, which Neon Park did the album cover for, Sugarcane Harris is doing this violin solo on a song that was written by Little Richard. If you listen to that, then you'll understand. You know, we'll play a Don and Dewey, then we play dah, dah, dah, and then people understand what you're talking about. A lot of times you'd have that leap of faith where the audience would just jump in. If they'd hear something that was so weird, like I said, the first time I listened to *Destination Music* with Harry Shearer, I wanted him thrown off the station because I said, "That does not fit." Then after listening to it more and more, I realized what he was doing and I was blown away. I was in awe of him. When I saw the Credibility Gap work, when he would bring in David L. Lander and Richard Beebe and then Michael McKean, and they would sit down and put together this Credibility Gap show that was live every day, five days a week, it was topical, it was now, it was what was happening, it was so funny that we'd repeat it. It would run at six o'clock

in the Les Carter show, then we'd repeat it after Steven Clean or "the Obscene Steven Clean," Steven Segal at eleven, going into Joe Rogers, "Mississippi Fats." Then at one o'clock I'd repeat it, and then eventually as Zach Zenor took my air shift, he'd repeat it at one from either the previous day or the previous Friday if it was a Monday. Then the Pierce Family would go on after it. It was so amazing to see this creativity. And the fact that Les Carter and everyone else that worked there that had that belief in what KPPC stood for, we had the freedom to do what we want. We also had the freedom to fail. You could try something and fall flat on your face and apologize to the audience if something went wrong. But you could do so many positive things by giving people things to think about. We didn't always preach. At times it was obvious that we felt that there shouldn't be death happening in Vietnam, that we shouldn't be over there. We felt those things. We felt the government was lying to us. Eventually it came out with Watergate that we were right about a lot of things. We knew that the FBI had infiltrated a lot of antiwar groups and things. There was a lot of strange things going on. When I was on the air in Santa Ana, Timothy Leary was in prison. Then like he escaped to Morocco or somewhere, and came back and found out that his wife [Rosemary Woodruff Leary] was turning him into the FBI. A lot of people condemned him, saying he named names when supposedly people that really knew him well knew that the names he was naming were already known to the FBI, and he wasn't like the second source. It's like they already knew these people and they were trying to get verification, and by him telling the truth, supposedly, he hoped it would work out. So there's a lot of controversy going on. To this day, I don't know if there were any saboteurs, if there were any members of our staffs at KPPC or KMET or even KLOS or even later stations like KWST [K-West] or when KMPC FM, The Edge, when certain people went over there who had worked in underground radio. I don't know if we were infiltrated or what. I tried Freedom of Information Act, and the FBI said there were no files on me. I assumed all of us had files, but like I said, I tried to keep a low profile and

changed my name to "Cosmos Topper" which became "Cosmos," which I said, "The music is coming from the Cosmos," and unless I introduced myself, a lot of people just— You know. I was cool with that. I enjoyed being an anonymous going to a club and being able to call B. Mitchel Reed up on the phone and immediately say, "Have you guys gotten this guy's album in?" and he says, "Yeah." "Well, look, I just saw him at the Troubadour. Read me a few tracks," and he does it. I says, "That's the one. That's the one he just played." He might even get it on the air within minutes. And I was working at KPPC. I didn't have an air shift that day. I'd give it to B. Mitchel Reed at night. Sure, maybe he was up against Steven Clean, but we were not up against each other. I know Mitch believed that. I believe Steven Clean. I know Larry Glass. I know a lot of people, even Les Carter, because I told him about my relationship with B. Mitchel Reed, how it never changed and how we always talked music. I believe that we really were in it for the music. A lot of people sacrificed their personal lives to do various things. I loved the fact that at night I could go out to concerts and clubs and things because I didn't have that night shift. I'm sure Les Carter, Susan Carter as "Miss Outrageous Nevada," Steve Segal as "the Obscene Steven Clean," Joseph Rogers as "Mississippi Fats," I'm sure that even though they had to miss a lot of concerts because they were on the air, I'm sure that they were doing on the air what we going to the concerts could listen to either going to in our cars or they'd play our station at intermission or something, that the consciousness would continue. It was amazing how the same consciousness— It would end up in print like in the *Free Press*, Los Angeles Free Press, and then for a short period there around the time we were fired in October of '71 they became The Staff for a while. Occasionally on TV shows you'd hear that so-and-so was going to be on, and it was great to see them because there was very little rock music on TV. Eventually, like I said, Music Scene tried to do it. [The] *Johnny Cash [Show]* actually did it, beginning in '69 for a few years. The *Smothers Brothers [Comedy Hour]* obviously did it. It was such a waste. It was great to see late shows

having bands, finally. I mean now when the *Tonight Show* has a band, even though they just do one song, I think it's a great thing.

CLINE

For a while there were shows like, later in the seventies, *Don Kirchner's Rock Concert*, *Midnight Special*.

ALVY

Definitely. Even Wolfman Jack was an emcee on that. A lot of that stuff's starting to come out on DVDs.

CLINE

What about *Saturday Night Live*, for example?

ALVY

Well, you know, I started watching it when it first came on in '75. Immediate influence musically. I mean, look, I think even George Harrison, Paul Simon, all these people that hadn't done concerts and stuff supported that idea. Obviously the original cast was great. A lot of people forget that Chevy Chase was just in the first season. I've got a VHS of that first season, and they've added some things. Because there was a classic with Chevy Chase and Richard Pryor, where they were talking about they ended up in a job interview. Chevy Chase would bring up words and then it got pretty—I even think he said “nigger,” and Richard Pryor said “dead whitey” or something like that. It even got to that point. But the thing I mentioned is you literally had to watch them live because there were no VCRs. Now, I got to the point finally where it wasn't until about the mid-eighties where I had one or two VCRs, and I would tape *Saturday Night Live* and watch it the next day because it was so difficult to watch. I don't know how I was able to do it, but I missed very few through the years, because when they started doing reruns, there were very few that I was actually looking for to see. It was always, and still to me, “Weekend Update” is still one of the best things happening. Tina Fey, one of the head writers, took it over a few years ago, and since then the one with her and Jimmy Fallon, I mean the writing is just amazing. The opening sketches are amazing. Darrell Hammond is just unbelievable. I, luckily, got to see him once doing a live show here at the Santa Monica Pier at

the new Ash Grove, which didn't last too long. He was taping that Louie Anderson show that ran after *Saturday Night Live*, so I actually saw him as a standup. But he's amazing. He's like the Phil Hartman now because he can do so much. But his political— The guys he does, his Rumsfeld that he did recently. So usually the opening skit and "Weekend Update," I tape it and that's worth it. Sometimes the musical acts I just don't like. If the host is really good, usually most of the skits are good. By taping it, you can just whip through the lame stuff, so I really don't watch them all the way through anymore. I haven't for several years. But I do tape it even because I know there's something there that's valid, and I think that's amazing. I wish there was a West Coast version. If you remember *Fridays*, which Michael Richards appeared on, it would be great to do one here. Now, the way they do it there, they do it live, okay, at eleven-thirty Eastern, which is eight-thirty here. But they also do a dress rehearsal before it and they can do changes and if something gets really messed up, they could actually use the tape, the segments from that. Now, the way to do it here is you do the dress rehearsal at eight-thirty, which is live back East at eleven-thirty, and then you do a separate show live for the West Coast at eleven-thirty Pacific, which is basically the same show but, of course, it's a second show, so different things can happen. Some things could be dropped. Some things could be edited. The actual show could be different. So you could do that on Friday nights here, and it would be live, but it would be from the West Coast where you have a different talent pool and a different attitude both politically and culturally and being basically ahead of the world. I believe Southern California is where everything starts, the good, the bad, the ugly, one way or another. People blame it on Hollywood, which, to me, is a stereotype, but it's also— I'm proud. I'm proud of Hollywood. My god, what Hollywood has done through the years and still does. I'm proud to watch a Humphrey Bogart performance. I'm proud to watch an Alfred Hitchcock movie, especially with a Bernard Herrmann score. I'm proud to be an American. I'm proud to be a native of Los Angeles. I'm proud to be a Californian. I think all this stuff is

great. All these stereotypes, you know, I'm proud, and I'm proud of the creativity that's happening here. I'm proud of this being the platinum age of television. You can see the most amazing acting and writing. My genre has always been serial episodic one-hour dramas. I've always loved them. Sure, I love the— Like *Friends* just ended, and I was satisfied with the ending because it was easy to predict in a lot of ways. I watched it always through the years. I probably never missed one, but to me it was no *Seinfeld*. To me, *Seinfeld* was the best. But there's still a lot of great half-hour comedies that I continue to watch, because I have three tape recorders going. But I love shows that do breakthroughs, like *NYPD Blue* did it. Now *The Shield* is doing it. There's so many shows that show up now on basic cable that are actually pretty good. FX [Network] and USA [Network] are doing things. USA is running shows. I mean I love *Dragnet* with Ed O'Neill, and then the second season they called it *L.A. Dragnet*, which made more sense, and they only ran a few of them. I love Karen Cisco because Carla Gugino is just amazing. Was she the girlfriend of Michael J. Fox in the beginning of his series [*Spin City*]? Yes. 1996 only. And she's with Robert Forster, and that's a spinoff of *Out of Sight*, which is Elmore Leonard. So Elmore Leonard on TV, I wish that would have worked. But USA Network is rerunning both of them, which is great. I think they're even running episodes that didn't run. But the thing is, when a new TV season comes out, if you don't watch everything, things get cancelled and they may have been good and they may never show up again. They may never show up on TV Land, they may never show up on DVD. So if you didn't watch them, you may miss them. And to me, that's like watching sports. Sports happen and then they're gone. Some of the greatest games, like I always tape the Laker playoff games, and if I don't like the first half, I tape over it. If they lose a game, I tape over it. So I've got all the games they've won in 2000, 2001, and 2002. Then in 2003, I only have the four they won against Minnesota [Timberwolves] and the two against the Spurs. I don't have the games they lost against the Spurs. Now, I've only got the games they won against

the Houston Rockets, those four, but some are only the second half. But I haven't been able to tape the Spurs yet. I've taped them over, the two that they've lost. But at the same time, most of the stuff I tape, I keep tons of stuff on archive. But like I didn't need to keep *Friends* because it's going to be out on DVD soon. But there's a lot of great programs. I remember when there were a lot of inside parody things of television that people didn't realize how incredible they were, like *Max Headroom*, which didn't run that long. I've got the pilot that ran in England. There was a different version of *Max Headroom*. There were so many amazing things through the years. There's so much potential now. All you really need is basic cable TV to get so much entertainment. And just like with politics and current events, there's a lot of citizens of the United States that don't have the time to really sample television. That's why there's just a few mega hits, because that's all people know about, or they aren't able to really explore things because they really don't have the time. They're raising a family or they're working. My whole consciousness has been different through the years, and a lot of it's had to do with health. But a lot of it is almost like a blessing. I watched the very first Court TV thing with the William Kennedy Smith rape trial where a lot of people— I watched Iran-Contra [hearings]. So from then on whenever there's been a congressional thing, I've been able to watch it. O.J. Simpson killed his wife [Nicole Brown Simpson] and her friend [Ron Goldman] on my birthday, a year after my birthday. The year before in '93, I got to see Charles Lloyd do two shows at a small club— I mean my birthday the next year. So I followed O.J., I followed all this stuff, and I've been lucky to— And I've been lucky to follow a lot of episodic television. I've also been able to follow music, because I've gone into credit card debt to buy CDs and keep up with albums. So at any moment, if someone says, "We need you to do a four-hour show," I can not only go back to the sixties and seventies and have these things on CD, but I could have current releases, and I could play the most recent Little Feat or John Hiatt or Bonnie Raitt or Los Lobos and mix them in and still be up to date and still actually have it, and

have the little unique tracks that I would play that a lot of people didn't play that were part of my arsenal, be it a little Spike Jones or a little Holy Modal Rounders, and actually have a Fred Neil, of course, who to me is B. Mitchel Reed turned me on. People like that, I could actually do a show. So I'm keeping my mind active still, and it's because I was turned on to music by Chuck Blore on KFWB Top Forty when there'd actually be good music in the Top Forty; by B. Mitchel Reed, who knew jazz as well as rock and roll and folk and R & B; but Les Carter, who not only knew jazz but really knew R & B, I mean a musicologist in R & B, as well as rock; and people like Barry Hansen, "Dr. Demento," a true musicologist of all types of music. I mean he still has 78s. Robert Johnson only recorded in two sessions, 1936 and 1937, twenty-nine songs. There's only twenty-nine Robert Johnson songs. Some he re-recorded so there's actually forty-two recordings, but he only recorded twenty-nine songs, and a lot of music is based on that. B.B. King is finally getting a lot of recognition. Everyone was influenced by B.B. King, and he's still doing concerts, which is great. A guy who worked at Columbia Records in '70 and '71 in Century City was a promo[tional] guy, A & R guy, Paul Rappaport. He was a guy that would come to our station and hang out. We would go to his office, get high, hang out. He moved to New York for years and years and years. After 9/11, he got involved with A and E [Arts and Entertainment Network], and he's doing the *By Request Live* where people call in and request songs for two hours. My favorites were he did Santana and he did Willie Nelson, and he's still doing that. I don't think he's with Columbia anymore. But that's like showing someone moving through, a creative person who was in the music business for years, and you know for the last ten or fifteen years working at Columbia under Sony has not been easy, because it's not the same thing where you release good music and you turn disc jockeys on to everything. I mean it's not the same thing. So by him going through that, he was able to morph into this musical thing, which is amazing. For two hours you watch on A & E, which is basic cable, so there are commercials, you watch guys

playing music by request, which is basically most of their hits, but it's in a context that you don't see anymore. Hopefully, there will be more shows like *Austin City Limits*, where groups will do a half-hour show or an hour thing or whatever. Hopefully, there's more groups like that. There was just this thing on PBS [Public Broadcasting Service], the blues thing [The Blues] where Martin Scorsese put it together. I haven't watched all of it yet. I know it's out on DVD. But something like that is so educational to people. Like I said, a lot of these things, even if you just listen to them once. Now, listen to the twenty-nine Robert Johnson songs. Now, if you're really into it, certain songs, which is easy now with a CD, you want to listen to again, because maybe other guys have recorded them and you want to check it out again, because there's so many versions of Robert Johnson songs out there that Eric Clapton recorded Robert Johnson. *Me and Mr. Johnson* CD, that's his current one. Where Peter Green and the Splinter Group had put out two albums that totaled the twenty-nine Robert Johnson songs [*Robert Johnson Songbook and Hot Foot Powder*]. Even if you just listen to things once. If I were to do a radio show, I wouldn't play that much original Robert Johnson, because a lot of people can't listen to basic old blues. You might want to just play one and then get into other versions of songs and stuff, or turn people on to Mike Bloomfield by going his various types of bands before he died in 1981 tragically of a drug overdose. I think someone gave him too much. They gave him a hot flash, a speedball something. You know how these guys— They want to turn you on. It used to be they'd turn you on the best dope or the best hash, the best weed. That was okay. Then it was the best coke. Then it was the best heroin. Anyone who uses needles, I think Abbie Hoffman said, "I think the only thing you should shoot is Richard Nixon," or something like that. I mean, even the real radical people knew that cocaine and then heroin and then meth and then other types of speed and other things, they not only ruin music, they ruin society right now. I'm really sad at the state of American society. I am what might be called a human racist. I believe that the human

race is letting down the planet Earth, and by letting down the planet Earth, we're letting down whatever the universe is. I mean, whatever is going on that I don't know if the human mind will ever comprehend the universe. We say we're only using 10 percent of our mind, and I know that there's people that hear things and see things different because they're using parts of their mind and they're not aware of it. They might be using the third eye. They might only get into that creative state occasionally. The thing that happened in the sixties and the seventies, because you could read in magazines and newspapers, you could read counterculture ideas, because you could listen to music that would explore the counterculture ideas in various forms, because you could hear a live human being on the radio talking to you like a human being, I believe that more people were inspired to create better music, music that has lasted, music that hasn't even been discovered, music that is more valid that people understand now, but that have people that are listening to it, that are learning it, that are creating more. But the society does not encourage creativity. You cannot be John Fogerty, listen to KMPX, and recording a tape, a long version of Screamin' Jay Hawkins "I Put a Spell on You" just to be played on the air, knowing that not only will Tom Donahue listen to it, he will probably play it, which means eventually when they go twenty-four hours and then in stereo that any of the disc jockeys could play it that get a request, which they probably would, can't really happen right now.

CLINE

Right. I'm going to put in a new tape here.

1.16. TAPE NUMBER: X, Side One (May 7, 2004)

CLINE

This is Alex Cline interviewing Ted Alvy on May 7th, 2004), continuing our conversation here on tape number ten. We were talking about characteristics of the sixties, and we were talking about radio and music. I had a question. Two questions, actually, relating directly to the music. First off, continuing in the realm of what you were just discussing, you mentioned, for example, bands like the Wallflowers and

current people that you actually enjoy. Are there any other people from the young bands, younger artists currently happening that you have some interest in?

ALVY

See, I'd have to look through a bunch of— No one comes really to mind, because I haven't really been purchasing too many young artists. There's people I appreciate. I'll appreciate them if I see them on TV. I'll appreciate them if their song is used on a soundtrack to a TV show or a movie. One of the things I wanted to mention, my point of view, I was a young person, I was a teenager, and my eyes were that of someone who was wide open to experience, but had very little experience. So a lot of my point of view was the normal growing-up of someone going through high school, and then I went through junior college by choice. I was chosen to go to UCLA, I turned them down, which was great because I— You know. Then I went to UCLA. I don't know how much of what I saw and how much of the excitement and how much of the intellectual curiosity was because I was young. Because the people of the next generation, maybe the people that were in their late twenties or early thirties and disc jockeys, or the fathers, B. Mitchel Reed, Tom Donahue— Mitch was born in '26, Tom Donahue in '28, Les Carter— I was born in '48, he was five years— He was born in '43, so he was like he had a different sense of experience. Because I really feel it was obvious that if someone was one year older than you, they could turn you on to so much stuff, because in high school one year older made a big difference. Now, I mentioned Ulysses S. Grant High School. I just saw Tom Selleck on TV where he is playing [Dwight D.] Eisenhower now, and he does this incredible transformation. So he came out, so I could figure, why didn't someone else come out of Ulysses S. Grant High School and become a famous actor? Why not? Van Nuys High School had Robert Redford and had Marilyn Monroe and all that. We also had Tom Scott, the musician, whose father was a musician, and he went on. I mean you still see him in all these great shows. Whenever there's a show where they have to put together a bunch of people, a band or something, he's like

almost the first choice. He could be a musical director at any point. He's amazing. The only other famous person recently is Gilbert Arenas, who played with Golden State [Warriors], and now he's a great superstar basketball player for the [Washington] Wizards right now. It would be great if he came back to L.A. at some point. So I don't know. Now, then the next thing is also as I'm getting older, I'm going through getting older and having the physical changes and the other changes, my point of view is different, because at some point when I turned forty, my best friend Mike Robinson got married, ended up having two beautiful daughters who are both approaching teenager years now. They're twenty-one months apart. One was born in '89 in December, a year after they were married. They were married in Catalina. Then the other, like almost two years later. So he has a different point of view. But at that point I decided I wasn't going to father any children. Now I felt, as it is, I have a neurological disorder. It's not like MS [multiple sclerosis]. It basically has to do with peripheral neuropathy. It started in my toes. It's moving up. The main disruption is sleep. With lack of sleep all these years since like '88, it's affected my health. I've learned to control it in a lot of ways. Because of it, I don't go out much, so I get to watch a lot of TV and stay in the current events, and eventually get into music and eventually get into stuff that's out there now that if you don't go to movie theaters eventually you get to see them, sometimes real soon. It's sad when you can't go to concerts. I don't go to really concerts anymore. So my experience, and I also decided never to have children, because at first I thought there was insanity running in my family. Now I know there's a 50 percent chance that any offspring would have what I have, and I would never have children now. So my point of view is different. Now, when I get older and have certain aches and pains and certain things, is it because I'm getting older or is it because maybe of the physical problems I'm having? I don't know that. So I don't know if my point of view when I was young, how valid that was. I don't know if through the years how my view has changed. I still feel like a nineteen-year-old when I get into certain consciousness. I

can close my eyes and go back and see things, and because this particular house we'd been in since I got my drivers' license, we've been here since August of '64, I went through both earthquakes here. In '71 [the Sylmar earthquake] I was on the air after Jeff Gonzer, and he got knocked off the air. I got there at nine and then the station was back on the air. I had no idea. I was back in the house here in '94 for the Northridge earthquake. So it was interesting. I was glad I was back here. Frank Zappa had died in December of '93. Of course, I mentioned how Neon Park had died in September of '93. It's weird how they were connected with *Weasel's Ripped My Flesh*. Neon Park had no choice. I mean, who knows what caused his ALS [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis]. Frank Zappa was misdiagnosed for nine years. He had prostate cancer. He had symptoms for nine years. He'd still be alive today, which would be amazing, because we lost so many people. He was a great composer. I wish Bernard Herrmann was still alive. Obviously, I wish that B. Mitchel Reed was still alive. I wish that Tom Donahue was still alive. I wish that Les Carter was still alive. There's a few people alive now that I wish had died before that, because they screwed up things for us, but what can you do? You asked the question about— I don't know. Ask another question, because I'm trying to—

CLINE

Well, this is the second part of my question. A lot of the musicians, other than ones that you just mentioned, who were around at the time that all this creativity and all this revolution in culture and music and radio was happening, are actually still around. Could you ever have imagined, for example, that the Rolling Stones would still be doing concerts in 2004), or the Who or whoever's out there?

ALVY

Right. They recorded two new songs and they released a greatest hits thing with those, and one's a tribute, I believe, to John Entwistle. My friend Larry Glass at KFWB, we met a lot of people. He actually got to hang out with John Entwistle for several hours, which is cool. Between both of us, occasionally, at times we'd meet people and we'd just

really try and blend in the background, because I knew that I could be a cosmic catalyst, and that could be for good or evil. I mean, you do something and if two or three people get together and a creative thing happens, whether it's B. Mitchel Reed mentioning something on the air or interviewing someone on the air or playing something on the air, and connecting with someone in the audience, who then calls us and then something interesting happens because of it. I also knew that that type of energy could detract from what was going on. For example, B. Mitchel Reed on KMET was interviewing Roger McGuinn of the Byrds. I believe he was Roger McGuinn. I believe he had already changed his name from Jim McGuinn. Now, Jim McGuinn was on Judy Collins' albums in the early days, so B. Mitchel Reed knew Jim McGuinn before the Troubadour days, before he came back from New York. I mean, B. Mitchel Reed was an anglophile. When he was at WMCA in New York, he would go over to England and hang out with the Beatles, because of Derek Taylor. When I was in L.A., I had a lot of experiences with him, but two of the greatest ones was going to Hollywood Boulevard and seeing the then X-rated *A Clockwork Orange* with B. Mitchel Reed, because he was such an anglophile, you know, the Anthony Burgess science fiction book. Then seeing *O Lucky Man!* also I believe at the Crest Theater in Westwood [Boulevard] right below Wilshire [Boulevard] there. That's where *Zabriskie Point* played, and I saw it with Don Hall, and he freaked out because they changed the soundtrack. And that's a long movie, with Alan [Price]. I'm going back to the Animals. What's the name of it, the movie I saw with B. Mitchel Reed that was also in English? *O Lucky Man!* with Malcolm MacDowell. I remember when we all saw that first Malcolm MacDowell movie that was like a cult movie [If. . .]. Seeing foreign movies and things. But *O Lucky Man!* where Alan— He was with the Animals and then he left. He was in *Don't Look Back*. Why can't I think of his name? The piano—

CLINE

I know who you mean, and I can't think of it either for some reason. [tape recorder off]

CLINE

He's got it.

ALVY

Alan Price. Now, what happened was, if you remember in *Don't Look Back*, Alan Price was talking to [Bob] Dylan, he's playing on a piano, he talks about how he was leaving the Animals, because Dylan had recorded as a folksong "House of the Rising Sun," obviously. So there was that connection, the fact that— Now, we played the Alan Price album, I believe, at the early KPPC, '68, the Tom Donahue era with B. Mitchel Reed. And I think he covered "Simon Smith and the Amazing Dancing Bear," the Randy Newman song or whatever. *O Lucky Man!* was about musicians, what a great, great movie about musicians traveling in a van, and Alan Price, and I believe that Malcolm MacDowell was a coffee dealer or something. There was all this great stuff happening.

CLINE

Very surreal film.

ALVY

But B. Mitchel Reed, I remember moments with him, and it's like Alan Price did some musical thing and Mitch was just so into it. Just watching B. Mitchel Reed watch things, it was so amazing, because he was giving of himself to so many people, that it was real difficult— It was real difficult for him to spend time on his own. It's almost like people were always taking from him. And through the years, he and I had these conflicts, just because we were Jewish Geminis and stubborn and we have dual personalities, but we were similar in a lot of ways. So in some ways I feel responsible for the fact that he didn't really get to communicate with people as much as he wanted to, and maybe I hurt his health in some ways. I learned so much from him, and since those days I look at things in such a different way. But like I said, it's almost like I'm putting radio shows together, and if someone would give me a twelve-hour block on the air and say, "We'd like to see what B. Mitchel Reed did and we'd like to see what Tom Donahue did and we'd like to see what you did," or whatever, I could literally do three four-hour shows that

were totally different that would actually, I feel, be tributes to these people. Now, mixed in there would be a lot of what I learned from Les Carter, because both B. Mitchel Reed and Tom Donahue learned a lot of jazz from Les Carter just in the short time we were all together, which was cool, because people turn people on to other things. You only have so much time to sit down and listen to music. If you know what to listen to, it's better. So we all learned from each other. The way most of us did was listening to the station, the very few of us that got to hang around and spend hours and hours. Now, I spent five hours as B. Mitchel Reed's engineer, so I was there every day in the early days. Later on, besides I had a part-time air shift when I was at UCLA or in January of '71 when finally my classes were done, I got my diploma in June, the shows— The ability to do a full-time radio show or whatever, all that time I was a production person. I was either doing commercials for Platterpuss [Records], for Mike Pinto's record store, where I got Larry Glass involved and he started the Santa Monica store and made it completely unique. It was a great store. It was big. Musicians could hang out. He could constantly tell us about music, and we could get it on the air almost immediately. He could find hard-to-get things for us that we couldn't even find. When they would get things like blues albums, they'd put them on sale for sometimes even a dollar each just to turn people on to music, you know, not make profits on certain things. They were the very people to not only take in used albums, but to take in used cassettes. So Platterpuss Santa Monica was a very revolutionary record store because Larry Glass was involved. He was one of the— In the very early days of KPPC, which began at KFVB, which began at the Monterey Pop Festival. I just looked up Alan Price in the *Rock Encyclopedia*. Lillian Roxon was the very first person to put together in August of '69 was the hard cover. I had the hard cover. I had the paperback. In '69, Lillian Roxon, who died too young, put together a book that she calls an encyclopedia, but is a tribute to music. If we were to going to do an FM radio show, we could just go through this and find out who was in the group then, who is in it now, what albums they put out, what

tracks are on it. One of the most amazing things. The only other book I'll hype right now is Neon Park's *Weasels Ripped My Flesh* on the cover. This is called *Somewhere over the Rainbow: the Art of Neon Park*. It's published by Last Gasp Comix. You can get it at lastgasp.com or LaLuzdeJesus.com, their art gallery on Hollywood Boulevard. It's most of the Little Feat covers. For some reason, the work he did on *Let it Roll* doesn't show up. But he and Chick Strand in the later years did these incredible paintings where they would put masking tape on it and then he'd actually have two paintings in one. On some of them you could actually see different things going on. But this is an incredible art book. I cannot believe the art you get in here for \$29.95. Really, I'm blown away, because I would pay that for just one of these prints. There's some great information on Neon by Chick Strand and by Bill Payne and by Paul Barrère of Little Feat. Bill Payne was an original member of Little Feat. Paul Barrère, I guess, went to Hollywood High School with Lowell George. There's a blurb that Neon Park wrote about himself, which they actually got off my website, that I got from the Little Feat *Let it Roll* tour book of 1989, and Chick Strand does a biography. There's a little picture of Chickie, too, in here, which is great, as well as Marty [Neon Park is Martin Muller]. The artwork in here is so amazing. You could just go over it at any time. It's very stimulating. If I were to recommend an art book, there's so much great stuff out there. The real thick book, *The Art of Rock*, which has rock-and-roll posters, *The Beatles Anthology Book*, real thick, these are things you could spend the rest of your life going through at any point really and getting turned on to stuff, and you could turn your children on to it, literally. There's so information in some of this. This new magazine *Tracks* is trying to respect music more, even the old artists, stuff that just— People complain about *Rolling Stone*, but I still subscribe to it. I have a collection that I didn't get going until spring of '69. It goes through at least '81. It's amazing. But there's always some stuff in there that you can't get anywhere else. A lot of it's political stuff, stuff about the war, because Jann Wenner does put stuff in there. He helped with the Rock and Roll Hall

of Fame thing. A lot of people feel that *Rolling Stone* ignores a lot of bands like Little Feat, who should have been in the Hall a long time. Hopefully because Bonnie Raitt's in there and because Warren Zevon is probably going to get in there next year, and Jackson Browne mentioned Little Feat and how Shaun Murphy of Little Feat, their singer, backed up Bob Seger on the original tour and the original album with "Old Time Rock and Roll" and appeared at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame backing him up singing it, that hopefully Little Feat will get inducted. B. Mitchel Reed should have been inducted as a disc jockey. Tom Donahue was inducted. There should be something here in Hollywood called the Hollywood Rock Music Museum or something. There was at one time. But it would be great to have something here. I know the Guitar Center has the handprints of musicians and things. There are a few things going on, but it would be great to have a museum here in Hollywood. The Hollywood Museum of Entertainment in the Galaxy Theater building on the south side of Hollywood Boulevard at Sycamore [Avenue] up the block from Grauman's Chinese Theater that Chris Horak, the museum curator, put on a show recently that ended Sunday, April 11th. It ran for a couple months of psychedelic rock album covers. He put this in the lobby as you walked in, and he did it all on his own. I saw the blurb when the L.A. [*Los Angeles*] *Times* called him, and he took three of my Neon Park album covers. I had gave him the Little Feat *Sailin' Shoes*, which is a double-wide album that opens up that Neon Park did. I gave him the *Weasels Ripped My Flesh* that Neon Park did for the Mothers of Invention for Frank Zappa. And I gave him the double opening album that Neon Park did for David Bowie, which is real rare. It's called *Images*. And he has these little cartoon vignettes for each of the album tracks. I also loaned him the Kelly-Mouse Studios *Rolling Thunder* album by Mickey Hart, and the classic R. Crumb cover for *Cheap Thrills*, Big Brother and the Holding Company, which is Janis Joplin's debut with them in a big corporate record company environment where they changed the album. The album cover was supposed to be put on the back because they didn't want it on the front, but they let R.

Crumb's cover go. I don't know if they made any changes on it, but they changed it to *Cheap Thrills* instead of "Dope, Sex, and Cheap Thrills." So Chris Horak ran that on his own, and I think it was great that he did that, because in 2004) it's showing. I hope other people pick up on it that there was a great group of artists that did album covers. Like John Van Hamersveld, who did the Pinnacle Concerts and amazing posters, his posters for the first concert in November, 1967 of Grateful Dead and Buffalo Springfield that he did, "Electric Wonders" poster. Then he did the classic Jefferson Airplane with the American Indian that's become a classic. Then he did a classic Hendrix poster for the— I believe it was the February '68, that was the show at the Shrine actual Auditorium where Jimi Hendrix Experience headlined, and then you saw Mike Bloomfield's Electric Flag before that. That's when Larry Glass and I were in the orchestra pit. [John Van Hamersveld did *Crown of Creation*, the Jefferson Airplane cover. He also did the famous *Endless Summer* movie poster.] The music. There's great music being done today, but a lot of it is by artists that have been around a long time. And young people should not be turned off by that, because the whole idea of jazz musicians playing into their forties and fifties and sixties, sometimes they get together with people and do a combination that never happened before, and it's just as good as the old stuff. Now, the old stuff wasn't the best music ever done. It just wasn't. The Theodore Sturgeon law, Sturgeon's law still applies. He said, "Ninety percent of science fiction writing was junk," or something like that, or crap. They changed it into Sturgeon's Law, 90 percent of everything is crap. Now, he actually agreed with that, because it really was. But that 10 percent, the rich 10 percent happened to be richer in the era of the Beatles into what they spawned into the seventies. For some reason, a lot of great bands happened during the punk period and the new garage period, the late seventies into eighties. But by then, cocaine and bad chemicals, as *Breakfast of Champions* Kurt Vonnegut [Jr.] said, "Bad chemicals ruined it" [paraphrase]. Today there is so much mind-cell destruction by either bad chemicals or alcohol or

young people experimenting with things that if they want to experiment, they should wait until at least their early twenties. You can wait to smoke anything. You can wait to ingest any drugs. If you want to try a little alcohol, try and do it by being honest with your parents and trying it. Maybe try to get drunk and get sick and see how it affects you. Now, if it makes you an alcoholic, at least you're with someone that can try and take it away from you, because I don't know if just one episode will do it. I know if you get sick from drinking too much, there is a chance after you throw up that you won't try it again. That would be great. I tried cocaine less than a handful of times and only really enjoyed it once for the period of one long Frank Zappa song that was played to me by a disc jockey. I don't want to mention his name because it was in the studio. He was on the air. I loved it. I got a request once by a friend of mine who was on coke when I was doing Tom Donahue's show in '68. He wanted to hear "Hey Bulldog" by the Beatles, which if you listen to it, it's obviously a coke rush at the end, if you're on coke. It's a musical rush, whatever. But I never liked cocaine. I left the Troubadour once, after doing coke, and a guy had one of these bumper stickers against long hairs, and I kept flashing lights and honking my horn. He came out of his car and he wanted to have a fight right there on Santa Monica Boulevard, and I had to apologize to Zach Zenor's wife, Sandy Zenor. She was with me. Then I didn't really do it too many times, because I didn't like it. But by at least trying it, I knew how it could affect people, and I knew it was doing it to people. I had one of my very best friends involved in cocaine, and we literally didn't talk for eighteen months because I just couldn't get around it, the fact that he was doing it. It was during my ten years of not smoking anything, from '82 to '92. So if I would have occasional alcohol, it was just for either having Mexican food or something. I drank very little alcohol after I came back from Seattle. Seattle and Eureka, your blood was different. So from the period of starting to go up there in '72, I was off and on in Eureka '72 to '76 and then a few years in Seattle and whatever. A great experience, got to experience a lot of

other different radio stations. Nowadays I listen to very little, because at night I might listen to Jim Ladd, but I'm doing too much. So I listen to *Le Show*. I listen to Harry Shearer every Sunday. I run the tape recorder in case something happens, that at least I'll have it on tape. I try not to leave here. If I have to leave here, I try and at least start it at ten so I'll have the tape. I listen to it. I take out the incredible creative stuff he did. He might do a "President 41-43," you know, the two George Bushes. He used to do "Clinton-something" all the time. He'd do these great skits, so I've saved all those. I wish more would be put out. I assume more would be put out. *The Simpsons* finally, after holding out years ago, were making [something like \$125,000] an episode. Now they're making a quarter of a million dollars an episode for twenty-two episodes. That's basically six actors, including Harry Shearer. If you look upon the success going back to the beginning of Fox network, where Tracy Ullman started with *The Simpsons*, *Married with Children* became one of the longest running sitcoms ever broke through in so many things with attitude and taste and language, you go back, *The Simpsons* probably made a billion dollars for Fox and let them do all the other things. These actors do deserve it. And as Harry Shearer said last Sunday on *Le Show*, "Thank you for all the kind telegrams and e-mails and letters," and however they sent them. I don't know exactly his words. But he said, "We will use the money better than Rupert Murdoch." He made like a pledge to his audience. So in essence, he was saying, even though we're making a lot of money, we're going to do things with it, and I know he secretly does give things. It's like they're putting down Bob Dylan for doing this great Victoria Secret commercial, which I think is amazing, because years ago he said, "Oh, someday I might do a commercial for underwear or something," as a joke, and thirty years later he does it. Now they're saying he might judge *American Idol* or something with Paul McCartney. I think it's great. I think all this stuff is great, while people are putting him down, because he's always done breakthrough stuff. Like I said, I've always been into him through the years, but there's music his that I don't

listen to. And it's the same with Miles Davis. Same with even Charles Lloyd. There's certain stuff I'll continue to listen to, and my library is made up of stuff if someone would say, "We need you to do a jazz show," I could do it. Or, "We need you to do an R & B show," I could do it. If someone wanted to do a sixties underground radio circa KPPC or circa early KMET, I could do it. By keeping all this happening in my mind, it's because I was given the freedom, it's the education I got in my early years and the way I continued to get into stuff. *Creative Radio Broadcasting* was a book I started to write in the late seventies. B. Mitchel Reed had a heart attack. We had this long phone call that I don't know how many hours, when he was in rehab, and he said— We basically got to the point where I wouldn't release personal stuff about him till both his sons turned thirty. He was afraid the heart attack was going to kill him and they wouldn't get bar mitzvahs. As it is, there wasn't money for their bar mitzvahs because he died before his fifty-seventh birthday. He died March 16th of 1983. So he died way too young.

CLINE

Speaking of the music again, and speaking of Bob Dylan and Victoria's Secret, one of the things, not only are a lot of these musicians still around, I mean, there's people like Stephen Stills, we talked about, David Crosby, Neil Young, these guys are all still around. Joni Mitchell is still around. You know, they look like older guys now. People, I don't think, gave much thought to this back when we were all younger and listened to the music. And also you're starting to hear a lot of that music used to advertise products on TV, cars and whatever. You hear Jimi Hendrix or you hear Led Zeppelin or you hear David Bowie. You hear all kinds of things. With all this in mind, where do you think the music is going these days?

ALVY

Let me go back to Los Angeles Valley College. This is around September 1966. I'm working at the Post Office, making really good money. I'm able to order albums from overseas if I want. I meet Larry Glass, who's hanging out at the radio station. We become tight immediately because of what we're

in in music. We basically make a little pact to get good music played on the radio. After it happened, we sort of sat down one day, because he would come down from Eureka and visit his mother in Ojai, and sometimes I would go out there and hang with them, that we accomplish what we've set out to do, really. Even with the fact that computers were choosing the music, there were so many rock music stations on the air, that we had succeeded. Now, if we had envisioned this thing with commercials, the thing I like— Now, you turn on *CSI* [*Crime Scene Investigation*], and you get the Who. Now, what do you get? You get a little bit of "Won't Get Fooled Again." Now, what happens, they do a spinoff which some people like, some people don't [*CSI: Miami*]. I think it's a well-written show, and I like David Caruso, man. That first year of *NYPD Blue*, they say, "Well, gee, he left. He should be punished because he never did anything good after that." Bullshit. I saw him in movies. I saw him on other TV shows. Then what do they do? They do another Who song in the beginning, which is cool. So you go from "Won't Get Fooled Again," you go to—

CLINE

I think that's the one this has "Won't Get Fooled Again." The first one is "Who Are You?"

ALVY

Yeah, the first one is "Who Are You?" that's what I meant. "Who Are You?" which *CSI*, they're trying to discover, then "Won't Get Fooled Again," and then you're in Miami and this whole thing. I dig that. Now, hearing certain things on commercials. The thing I did not like was Paul McCartney was able to buy Buddy Holly's publishing, and you knew that he would do good things with it. Michael Jackson bought the Beatles publishing, and right away he did bad things with it. Yoko Ono has done a lot of weird things. Now, I don't want to get into pro and con Yoko Ono. Personally, I do not feel that she did a good job respecting the music of John Lennon through the years in respect— I just feel it could have been done better. I don't want to get into all the details, because why put a lot of negativity out there? I think because she's alive she can do things now, and if she does one good thing,

that would be great. There's people still putting down Paul McCartney. He still appears at all these things. I think he's going to be at the Glastonbury Festival that they have at Stonehenge every year. I think it's great. I think his tour of America was great. He was doing Beatle songs, lot of great young musicians with him. I think it's great when Ringo Starr does tours. The one I like best I got to see in '97 where Dave Mason had to drop out, so you had— I think I already mentioned that one with—

CLINE

No.

ALVY

Oh, I didn't mention that? The concert was Humble Pie, and out of that we had Peter Frampton, and he did some of the best guitar work I'd ever seen. When he did his own little bit, doing his own songs, where he had to do the wah-wah stuff with his mouth, it wasn't that good. But he backed Gary Brooker, who did— I mentioned that, "A White Shade of Pale" and he did "Conquistador." We had Gary Brooker, we had— I'm lost again. We had Jack Bruce, and he did "White Room" and he did "Sunshine of Your Love." Then Simon Kirke was playing drums, who had been in Bad Company. But I guess he went into Free, so they did "All Right Now" with him singing. See, he was the second drummer, so when Ringo wanted to sing, he'd still be— But that show, to me, was amazing. I mean, he'd done other combination shows. Then the Bridge concerts that Neil Young does, he raises the money for the Bridge School. I don't know if stuff's going to start coming out, because it's so hard to get clearances with the different combinations of people he has. The Playboy Jazz Festival, I feel is still valid. I wish there were more jazz festivals, really. I mean occasionally there's reggae shows that keep reggae alive. I was fortunate to see Bob Marley, I said, Memorial Day weekend in '76 at Oakland, Paramount Theater. In the Paramount Theater around '79, he did two separate shows in one night at Paramount Northwest Theatre that I got to see. I got to see so many great musicians. Some are still alive, some aren't. Some are still valid. But if I were to do a radio show today— Let's say you call me up and

I've got to sit in for someone and do four hours, I could play whatever I want, the fact that I keep in touch with some television and very little radio, at least I know which songs—Most of the songs that are being overplayed as commercials, so if I were to play it on the air, I would play it in a very different way than I would play it if it hadn't been a commercial. If I really wanted to dissect a song and only a little bit is used, I'd say, "Here's what we're going to do. This is real familiar to you, if you haven't heard the commercial, this is used with such-and-such. Listen to every song." And this is what I tried to do, and I think I did it at the college station here in '97 for the sixteen weeks I only did two hours on the air on Tuesday. I called it "High Noon Tuesday," did *Rock with the Thin Man* and then Brunch with the Blues. "Listen to every song as if you're hearing it for the first time. And if you do that, you have a chance to understand the second level." Whenever we did a radio show, there were three levels. You could listen to it as if it was a jukebox and a group of songs. You could get high in whatever way you chose and listen to it on the next level, where the music you're being exposed to has more than one level so you can listen to something that you either had heard before or had never heard before and may never listen to. And because you're at that next level, you're now hearing the radio show on two levels. Then there's the third level that only the disc jockey can see in his third eye, and it may not be clear to him. He may be playing things and they may be flowing in a certain way, but he really doesn't know what's going on. But if you listen to everything as if you're hearing it for the first time, you now are hearing that third level. The first level is 2D, the second level is 3D, and the third level is 4D, which goes back to the time-space continuum, which I believe exists. What it does is it adds time. It takes length and width and then three-dimensional depth and adds time to it, and that's where trips come from. A trip, to me, is a group of segues, obviously, but going in a certain direction and having three levels going on. What's really cool, and it doesn't happen very often, the disc jockey who is playing things for you as a jukebox and is probably in the next consciousness

and is into the second level of 3D, he's probably high on pot or something, that's the way it was, actually at times sees the fourth dimension. The flow that he is doing or she is doing actually flashes the disc jockey to where the disc jockey has now reached another level. Any radio show that that disc jockey does after that, whether he's only playing it on the first level, 2D, of jukebox, group of songs, songs and sets and segues happen at the next level. If that actually happens, it's actually like a life-changing experience. And I don't mean it like it's like being born again. You're basically starting to see something that you haven't seen before. It's like if a young guitarist becomes this hotshot blues guitarist and becomes well known—and I think you know who I'm talking about; I think it was probably Jonny Lang—takes five years off and comes back as a mature musician, it's something that you wonder, "Well, what was this guy doing for five years?" He was playing music. What if this guy hasn't done an album for five years? He's still hopefully been playing music. A lot of them are. A lot of them continue to play music, and it doesn't get out. But once this happens to a disc jockey, you then learn a shorthand. You learn a way to do a radio show without wasting the audience's time. There's a substitution. You can substitute songs. You can do the same set every month but substitute different songs, and hopefully you're playing something new that just came out to turn the audience on to and hopefully you're playing something new that's available for the first time. Like maybe for the first time they've put out Albert King tracks that have never been out there, or B.B. King or Freddie King. I saw Cream so many different times that I can't really remember. I know that when he would do "Spoonful," at times it was almost like he was on that legendary crossroads that supposedly Robert Johnson sold his soul to the devil to and that maybe Eric Clapton sold his soul to. It's so weird that one human being wrote G-O-D on whatever they call the subways in England, and it's still quoted today that Clapton was called God. That's so bizarre, that one simple thing. I mean, people are remembered for various things. That's why a lot of artists who were known as just one-hit wonders could

continue to play, and a lot of the music they were playing is so valid because it's good music. You could go and be entertained and you're not being played bullshit. You're being played real music. It may not be hit music. It may not even be hip music, but it may be the next step for an artist that's going to continue to play. I, luckily, got to see John Prine only once here at Universal [Amphitheater] when he opened for Willie Nelson, and you know Willie loved him. Then he had the throat surgery, and thank God he lived. I know John Hiatt also had surgery and I got to see him several times, even got to see him with Little Village when he got together with Ry Cooder and Nick Lowe and the all-time great drummer who plays with everyone, Jim Keltner, who's still— Besides the Traveling Wilburys, he's one of those guys that can show up everywhere at anytime and is great. I guess Hal Blaine is known as doing that, too, with his people. So many great drummers, it's great that you're a drummer. Just listening to your music and not knowing exact what— What year were you born in?

CLINE

'56.

ALVY

Yeah, '56, that's right. Knowing that you're still going to discover people that you either didn't know exist or didn't know that they had done certain things because you just hadn't listened to them or they haven't been available on CD or someone hadn't— Or you're doing something else, you're playing music, so you can't listen to other things. So by having an open mind and mixing different instruments the way you do, it's great to look forward to that as you get older you could actually get better. You say, well, okay, that always happens with jazz musicians, or that always happens with blues musicians. I mean, John Lee Hooker might finally get an audience and then Bonnie Raitt and he might go out. Bonnie Raitt used to play with one of the all-time great slide guitarists, "Mississippi" Fred McDowell, who was a big influence on Bill Harkleroad, Zoot Horn Rollo, who is one of the greatest slide players that's still basically unknown. Because some people will put Lowell George up there and

they know it, and Bonnie Raitt was influenced by Lowell George. And you think who was Lowell George influenced by? Howlin' Wolf, who didn't play guitar that much, because he had Hubert Sumlin, who was one of the greatest all-time guitarists. Now finally I think there's some DVD out of Howlin' Wolf. So there's all these things that are still going on. And even the older people that are still playing music are still discovering music. They just had that taping of Willie Nelson and Friends at Wiltern [Theater] that's going to be on May 31st on Memorial Day here on USA network, I think, where Bob Dylan showed up and did "You Win Again" with him, and all these people showed up and did songs with him. They're not all these Willie Nelson songs, but that type of concert is so amazing and there should be more of them, and, thankfully, there are. They have to do it as a TV show. Some of the best music was played right after 9/11 at those benefit concerts because the musicians knew whatever they were doing, it had to be real. They just knew it had to be real, whatever they were doing, and there was very little—I saw very little phony music, even though some people were right on the line there. But it was so real and it was in a way where it might not happen again. That's why even if "Dr. Demento" was given a show in L.A., like he should be, and even if Jeff Gonzer, let's say, was given a show in L.A. like he should be—there's very few people left—there still wouldn't be a radio station consciousness. You really need a radio station 24/7 doing it constantly to really cause almost a revolution again. There's been so many blues revivals through the years, it blows me away, and they only seem to last one album or one concert tour by someone, or one thing. That's what spurred underground radio in the sixties. There was a blues revival. There wasn't necessarily a folk revival; there was a transformation of folk into folk-rock. It's not just playing longer songs on the radio. You might record a longer song on your album, but we might choose to ignore it and play other songs on the radio and just mention that there was a long song. At times you had to respect the audience by not playing the long songs, and then there were times when you just had to do it because it just had to get

out there. I always was conscious, as being “Cosmos” and talking about the music of the spheres, that whatever we were broadcasting was going out there, and people in other civilizations were going to eventually hear it, and then they are going to want the follow-ups. Now, with television, they’re lucky, because they got the golden age and now they’re getting the platinum age. As far as radio, they got the golden age, and instead of there being a platinum age, we got the head of the FCC, Newton Minnow, who said in the sixties that TV was a vast wasteland. Now radio is a vast wasteland. Everything on the air is filler for commercials. So many radio stations were hyped up in value that you can’t have a mom-and-pop radio station. They’re so valuable now that radio stations are so overvalued. They would affect the stock market now. It’s wrong. Media is controlled by so few people, and you cannot get on the air with very little money, which is almost un-American. You used to be able to do that and it’s such a waste. It’s such—

1.17. TAPE NUMBER: X, Side Two (May 7, 2004)

CLINE

We’re back. You’re saying it was such a waste.

ALVY

Yeah. For example, I mentioned we could do a live show, let’s say, Friday nights here at eleven-thirty, sort of like a *Saturday Night Live*, sort of like *Fridays*, with an incredible talent pool, access to an incredible amount of writers. Instead of doing the dress rehearsal, like *Saturday Night Live* does, followed by live eleven-thirty Eastern, we would do it live here at eight-thirty. The dress rehearsal would go live on the East Coast time, and then on the West Coast and Mountain Time we’d do a second live show at eleven-thirty. Now, you’d say that would be great. I’d say, well, gee, I’d love to have the Firesign Theater on. I’d love to have the Credibility Gap on. It would be great to have someone like Michael Richards come back, because he was on *Fridays*. It would be great to have people who used to be on *Saturday Night Live* come back that are good. It would be great to have someone like Lewis Black, who appears on the *Daily*

Show, and I think they're trying to get him into a sitcom, who's amazing. Now, all that's great, but let's say we were given that show. What if these people weren't available? What if Harry Shearer has to go to the film festival in Sweden to promote the film he directed [*Teddy Bear's Picnic*], or what if he has to get back to Spinal Tap? Or what Michael McKean is on Broadway? What if his wife [Annette O'Toole] is filming *Smallville* and he has to— So all those things are great, but where is the timing? It would be great, if you had a format like that, let's transfer it to radio. Let's say we started and just did it on radio. You'd be able to get someone, let's say Harry Shearer, to come in for four hours and play music and do satire. You could have George Carlin as a guest, but he wouldn't just talk; you'd play music as well. You'd turn him on to music. He'd turn you on to music. That's what we used to do. That would be something that could be done today. But having the TV show, it would be great, it would be amazing, but you wouldn't always be able to get the people. If you had a radio station 24/7, at any moment something could happen. The station could be taken over by the mayor if there's a terrorist problem, and we can be reaching people that don't listen to the radio. We had listeners at KPPC that would never show up on ratings, because they wouldn't answer their phone to strangers. They wouldn't let strangers in the door. They were hippies and they were outlaws. Why were they outlaws? They were breaking the law because they were smoking pot. They were smoking a weed. The fact that people had sold it to them is where the law comes in. They were outlaws. The rest of their life they were outlaws. They knew they were outlaws. The government was always down— The federal government is still down on them. California says doctors can prescribe medical marijuana. The federal government, up until recently, says no. Now a judge is getting involved and good things might happen. It's still ridiculous that you could get all kinds of opiates and all kinds of— You could get a drug where you have to call your doctor if your erection lasts over four hours, and they could advertise it on the Super Bowl and no one will say anything until Janet Jackson gives one

second of a black breast on TV that has this big star covering her nipple or something. I mean, all these drugs are out there. "Mother's Little Helper" by the *Rolling Stones* talked about that. There's so many great drug songs. We used to play a six-minute version of "Cocaine" by Dave Van Ronk of Greenwich Village. He was like the godfather to a lot of people. He lived to like age sixty-five, so you know that he wasn't using cocaine. There was the cocaine song that Eric Clapton did, the J.J. Cale song "Cocaine." But we would play that. We played a lot of drug songs. We played the original by Hoyt Axton, which is finally available on CD that Steppenwolf covered, "Goddamn the pusher man" ["The Pusher"], because that was the drug dealer. The dealer, like the Traffic song that Santana covered, "Dealer," ["dealer comes to town"] that's like marijuana. That's an herbal thing. That's a whole different thing, the whole rastaman vibration, the whole Bob Marley thing. Sure, smoking can damage your lungs, but it's a whole different thing. It's an herbal thing. It's a spiritual thing. The fact that you can't get that by prescription, my god, I mean, society is so screwed up. The fact that most of the people in prison are not there for any crime that's really hurt society, it's amazing. The drug population in prison has ruined prison. It's ruined prison for other prisoners. It's ruined the funding for educational programs. It's almost like prison is a way to train other— Not outlaws, but criminals. I mean, you smoke pot, you're an outlaw. You shoot someone with a gun, you're a criminal. The fact that the gangs in Los Angeles, there's so many of them, and this drive-by shooting thing and this recent sixteen-year-old who killed the sheriff thinking he would impress people, the gang members came out against it. What they should really come out with, if you're going to really get an initiation, it should be hand-to-hand combat. One Blood and one Crip should go hand in hand to see who's the best. If you can't do that, are you really a good gang member? If you have to shoot people at random to become a gang member, or if you have to go at people with violence against violence, are you really that good? You could do good. You could actually— The gangs in Los Angeles could be

good. Jerry Rubin, when he was killed crossing a street by mistake, he was trying to set up in South Central [Los Angeles] a way where people, instead of selling crack, could go door to door selling health food items that could not only give them income, it could change the consciousness of people, because they'd start eating this good food that's being sold to them by guys that could have been selling crack. So it was this great idea. It never happened, but it could have. I still feel that radio stations could do it. They could change a community. You could have these switchboards like we had, like the one Deirdre O'Donoghue put together, the KPPC and then the KMET switchboard, where you could call in whether you're thinking of committing suicide. You could get true information about drugs. You could give announcements like they said at Woodstock, "Don't try the brown acid." We used to make announcements like that when we'd ever hear of things if there was bad drugs out there. There's so many bad drugs out there, you really don't know what you're getting from people. There were a few people, like people trusted Stanley Owsley because he was this multimillionaire and he'd give a lot of stuff away and he'd come up with great acid. He'd give it to the Grateful Dead. He'd call it purple haze or names. So basically, you knew. But other stuff, you really didn't know the source. A lot of people knew dentists and invited them to these hip parties because they would bring the pure pharmaceutical cocaine. Now, people that used that didn't have to cut it with laxative bullshit or anything. They didn't have to cut it with anything. There's so much bullshit cut in coke, and they'd just use a very little of it, because that's all they would need, and they'd get the best coke high they'd had. So because of that, they didn't have to use that much, so they really didn't damage themselves, and the fact it was so pure and the fact that only certain people could get it, it was almost like you bring out the Courvoisier cognac only every six months for an event. When cocaine was like that, it was almost okay. But then the widespread use happened. I mean, it destroyed so many great minds. Richard Pryor wasn't the only great mind that got destroyed. I saw him do

three concerts in a row in Seattle in '79 that were some of the greatest shows I ever saw. Then he went here to the Terrace Theater in Long Beach and recorded that show, his live concert film [*Live in Concert*]. I got to see him put that together over three nights, and then I also got to see him do that film where he talked about the truth about how he set himself on fire when he was freebasing [*Live on Sunset Strip*]. So many great people were destroyed. A few people got the luck of the draw. David Crosby is one of them, with the liver transplant. Phil Lesh of the Grateful Dead is one of them. There's so many people, a lot of musicians, that actually understand their role, and younger people are learning from them and it's great. It would be great if there were more concert promoters. I mean, look, the Bottom Line is gone now in New York in the [Greenwich] Village, and for years that was a mainstay. The Troubadour here has gone through many changes, as has the Whiskey [a Go Go], and, I don't know, the Rainbow [Bar and Grill], it's thirty years. They didn't have a big celebration. The Whiskey did. The Whiskey had this great— I've got the calendar. They had posters. They put together these old posters, and they brought in a lot of the old groups and a lot of the new groups that wanted to play the Whiskey that never had. It was a great celebration there. Mario [Maglieri], I guess his son Mikeal is taking over. So there are things there, but, I don't know, that freedom, that sense of freedom. By being given total freedom, but by having the responsibility of the minds of your listeners and also the responsibility to the other people on the air, that you would do your homework, you would listen to the new music, you would continue to learn from the old music, you would put every free moment you had on the radio into something creative, whether it was listening to something you hadn't listened to from the beginning to the end so you could put things together better, talking to someone to get information that isn't going out there that may not even go out there unless you find out about it. When I was interviewing [Jerry] Garcia and [Bob] Weir and everyone, there was a problem out in Orange County, and I was announcing to people, "Don't go out

there. The authorities are going to close it down. They're going to kick people out. If you're on your way there, there's going to be gridlock. You're going to be busted for dope because they're going to search everyone. Do not go out there. And call KYMS in Santa Ana for more information." I had worked there and we had called them, so that was a way. KYMS' sister station was KPRI in San Diego, so we could get a message from KMPX, KSAN, KPPC, KMET, and then we could do like KYMS or KPRI or we could even go further and hit other stations. KOME started in San Jose. There were stations starting in Seattle. KZAM was a great station in Bellevue [Washington]. It's very similar to what a KCRW would be if it was twenty-four hours' music. They were playing a lot of great artists that we were able to do concerts with and whatever. There was this thing going on, and, like I said, I was one of the few people that was a native of Los Angeles that was involved in this. Luck of the draw that I got to the Monterey Pop Festival at that same moment that I could ask B. Mitchel Reed a question and become a friend and producer for him. The fact that all those things came together, that changed my life. I felt I let my generation down by not continuously being on the radio, because even if I was doing mediocre radio, it supposedly would be better than what everyone was doing because I could sneak things in. I could mention things in a certain way, and maybe if people would listen to a song as if they were hearing it for the first time, even if it was something that was being played all over day in and day out. The way we would put other music together and other ideas and the fact that they trusted us, the fact that we would listen— Ask anyone. How many people listen to their own radio station? Why? They know what they're going to play, and most of the personalities can't really be personalities because they can't— If they are being themselves, they're not musicologists. If they're musicologists being themselves, they're not being allowed to play the music they know. So I feel in a way I've let my generation down. But I also feel that being that I'm still alive, I can still contribute something in some way, whatever happens, what I'm doing on the

Internet, whether I'm talking to Alex Cline right now, which I think is an amazing experience. I also feel I'm letting down the UCLA Oral History Project because of— What did we do, five sessions? I feel that it's almost Sturgeon's law. I've almost given you 90 percent of what I said probably is crap, because I might have said 10 percent of really good stuff, but I know I wasted a lot of time because there's so much I could have added here if I go through books and mention people and stuff, people that should be looked into, but they can't. Hopefully this oral history will get people thinking. Maybe someone will get on the radio and mention B. Mitchel Reed or Tom Donahue or Les Carter, and maybe someone will call them and say, "I used to either listen to them" or, "I was on the air with them." Maybe the spark that happened back then, maybe some of the musicians that are still alive that have bad reputations, either because they should or because they shouldn't, will start becoming listened to as if they're the great old blues singers that someone will take out on tour with them because it may be their last time to see people. It's happening with rock now. At some point it would be great if I could mention ten current bands now that I think are great. I'm sure they're out there, but I don't pay that much attention to them because I don't have the time, literally. I don't have the time to listen to radio, so I don't really know if anyone's really doing good radio, other than Harry Shearer. I could read about it and I could hear about it. There's stuff on the Internet. I try and keep up with current music, like I just ordered the new Los Lobos, and I ordered the new Eric Clapton. I've always liked Eric through the years. I kind of think that maybe the Peter Green interpretations of Robert Johnson I might like better, but I don't really care. I have to be fluent with Eric Clapton because when he came up with that blues album back in 1994 [*From the Cradle*], I mean that was another blues revival. He did "Tore Down." He did a Freddie King song and all this. It was great. He had a little video that they showed. They had this listening party here at KSCA, the triple-A station. They had it at Warner Bros. for the new Neil Young at the time *Sleeps with Angels*. He was really incensed that

when Kurt Cobain killed himself that they were quoting his song, "Hey, Hey, My, My," "It's better to burn out than fade away," where Neil Young wasn't saying you should kill yourself, he was saying you should use all your creative energies right up to the end, was really what he was trying to say. So *Sleeps with Angels* was trying to get these Kurt Cobain fans and all these people out of the suicide thing and out of the depression and negativity that was surrounding Kurt Cobain, and still does. I don't know what to say about current things.

CLINE

It's okay. I think you have made a contribution, and here it is. I hope people read it, listen to it, and—

ALVY

Like you said, I could redo. I could redo 90 percent and be more concise and really get stuff on it. It would be great to turn people on to stuff. But like I said, if you listen to music every time as if you're hearing it for the first time, you'll hear different things. And that's why I can still listen to Dylan. I mean, it's great. I got the Victoria's Secret CD that they put out, where there's a different version of "Lovesick." You can only get the remix on it. Then there's a bunch of his other great songs. I got it free because I ordered something from Victoria's Secret. I ordered the least expensive thing, \$9.99. It was a heart necklace made of some sort of a— Not a stone, but a— That's a great gift for anyone, and I got the CD for free and I just paid for shipping. And I'm getting Victoria's Secret catalogs for the rest of my life. [Cline laughs.] Back when I was living in Santa Barbara, I bought a little bathrobe, one of these unisex bathrobes, the least expensive thing, and I got Victoria's Secret catalogs for eight years after that, so I didn't have to buy [inaudible].

CLINE

They were a lot more revealing in those days.

ALVY

Yeah, that's why I can continue to listen to Dylan songs. It's great now because you can listen to "The Times They Are A-Changin'" and it applies and it really doesn't apply because things are changed where he does the lyric, "Things have

changed, I used to care, but now things have changed.” I mean, it’s great, and I can still listen to both those songs over and over and get different things from it. A radio audience could do that, and I think it would be great. That’s why I’m afraid of this election. If Bush is elected again, it will be as if Clinton was never elected and the Firesign Theater didn’t get back together and there wasn’t a new hope, because a lot of the people out of the sixties just became active again because of Clinton. I was surprised he was elected. I think the whole sex thing just ruined— That whole year they tried to impeach him, they could have increased the security of the United States, and I don’t believe 9/11 would have happened. I believe Ralph Nader people would have realized who George Bush was and would have elected Al [Albert] Gore [Jr.], and I think Al Gore might have— I don’t know how good he would have been, but I think the people that were working for him in the Congress that works for him would hopefully change in a midterm election, that they would get things done. I would hope that things would have been different, but we really don’t know. Things may have been worse. You never know.

CLINE

You never know.

ALVY

Because he screwed it with the Telecom thing, the whole 1996. Now there’s one radio station ownership of twelve-hundred stations by Clear Channel. Live local radio is disappearing because of that, and that’s a big mistake. I don’t know if there’s any— Hopefully college radio will click, but who knows? Who knows? Thank you.

CLINE

Thanks for talking to me.

ALVY

UCLA, I’m glad I went there. I’m glad that people like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar are now touring, because he wrote a book [*Brothers in Arms*] about this World War II battalion that he had a lifelong friend who never told him he was in that battalion, so it’s great that people like Kareem Abdul-Jabbar are out there. He was one of my heroes.

CLINE

All right. Thank you very much.

ALVY

Thank you.

CLINE

We could obviously go on forever, but if nothing else, I have to leave.

ALVY

I appreciate all your help.

CLINE

Thanks a lot. [End of interview]

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