A TEI Project

Interview of

Contents

1. Transcript

1.1. Session 1 (December 5, 2006)

CLINE

> We're rolling, as we used to say. This is a purely digital device, so I'm not sure what it's doing. This is Alex Cline interviewing Jerry Moss at his office in Beverly Hills. It's our first session today, as of December 5, 2006. Good morning, Mr. Moss.

MOSS

> Good morning. Morning, Mr. Cline.

CLINE

> Thank you very much for sitting down and talking to us. As I was just explaining, not surprisingly, we always start at the beginning when we're doing a history of someone's life, so my first question for you, as we sort of begin this journey, is: where and when were you born?

MOSS

> I was born, I believe, in Upper Manhattan, in New York City, and that was on May the 8th, 1935.

CLINE

> OK. And who were your parents?

MOSS

> My parents were Irving and Rose Moss, and I was the second child; I have a brother [Fred Moss] that was -- is -- 8 1/2 years older than I am.

CLINE

Oh, a considerable age difference then.

MOSS

Yeah.

CLINE

Uh-huh. What do you know about your father's family and his background?

MOSS

I know a little bit, because my brother actually did some sort of a genealogy study, which brought certain things into focus. But my father was one of 11 children, and as the story goes, they mostly came from Baltimore. I never met his parents, because my father was one of the youngest of 11 children, and he was sort of almost 40 when he had me, so I didn't really meet a lot of his -- certainly, I didn't meet his parents. And what was interesting there is that after 11 children, my paternal grandfather supposedly left my grandmother. So he was never even discussed in our home. I'm not sure if my mother even met the man, but she always said, "We don't talk about it." One of those kind of houses. And I said, "Well, yeah." But even years later, I said to her, "What -- tell me what you know about Dad's family." We just -- we don't discuss it. And my father was not even around anymore. Anyway, so she was conditioned never to discuss, and he somehow is buried somewhere that nobody knows. I would say that the boys -- there were six girls and five boys in my father's family, and at a very early age, I was led to understand that the girls in the family didn't get along with the boys, and I never met really any of my six aunts.So that was that part of the family. And one other little story about this thing my brother turned up from someone that said that my grandfather wanted to live on sort of a royal basis, and all the royal families of those years supposedly had 12 children, and when his wife didn't want to have the 12th child, that's when he picked up and supposedly left. But that doesn't seem to be the kind of story that would sort of run in our family, but who knows? I don't know anything about these people. I got to know a couple of uncles fairly well; that was about it. My mother's side had two sisters and a brother, and I knew them extremely well. My grandparents on my mom's side lived up the block from us, so I got to know them fairly well.

CLINE

Oh, wow. And what else do you know then about your mother's family, where they may have originally come from or anything like that?

MOSS

They were, I think, either Russian -- Russian people, and came over shortly after the turn of the century; my mother was born in what was still Harlem, which was then sort of a Jewish kind of neighborhood. She grew up going to school, being a secretary for a little while, and then she met my dad, and that

was it; she really didn't work after that until my father passed away, and then she started working again.

CLINE

Was your brother able to find out anything about where your father's side of the family originally emigrated from?

MOSS

Yeah, I think it was somewhere almost in the same sort of region, maybe Lithuania, maybe sort of bordering on Poland somewhere. Definitely coming over -- I believe they were both born, as were my mother's side, over there. Again, it's something I could probably look up, because he did give me quite a -- I knew this about five years ago; I don't know it now. It's something I haven't committed to memory.

CLINE

Any sense of where the name "Moss" originally started, and how it may have changed?

MOSS

Yeah, I heard it was Moselowski for awhile, then it became Moss. Part of the family changed their name to Mosel, and the other half turned it into Moss. But I've never been able to corroborate that in any way, because my brother came up with a different name [Mosebowski], and I would suspect that his name was kind of correct.

CLINE

OK. So what did your father do then for a living?

MOSS

He was what they call sort of a floorwalker; he was a men's clothing salesman in a department store. He worked very long and hard hours, and that was his sort of career; he had a salary and then some commissions. And I would say we grew up on the sort of lower-middle class level: enough food on the table, certainly, and we did manage to take a vacation once a year, to go to the beach. But no car, you know; we lived in an apartment, rented. He was a terrific guy; I lost him when I was just 17. But he had a sense of humor, and a flair. Being a clothing salesman, he knew how to dress, obviously. And a hard-working guy with a bad back, so when he finished working, as I was entering my teens and becoming more active, he was sort of regressing toward the bed when he had a day off, and just try to rest his back, because he was on his feet all day; it was just the worst kind of gig for a guy like that. And yet he came out of the Depression, so those people were always clouded by the idea of, "Well, if I don't work, I'm not going to have food on the table." And they were very proud people. Even though he had brothers that were more successful than him, he would never ask them for a thing. So we came from proud stock. (laughter)

CLINE

And your mother didn't work, you said, while you were growing up.

MOSS

Right.

CLINE

What are your memories, when you were younger, of your brother, who of course would have been considerably older, and what your relationship with him was like?

MOSS

Well, it was pleasant, but like you say, we were so apart that -- you know, for example, when he was 17 years old, which made me about 8, he was drafted into the Navy, so he was away for a year and a half, and was basically stationed in different parts of the country, and then was literally on his way to the Pacific [Theater] to replace some people that had been dispatched, so to speak. When the war was over, he was in the Royal Hawaiian Hotel for $.25 a day. That's where he heard that the war was over, so in 1945. Then when he came back, we shared a room, but he was then sort of in a hurry to get through college, and we didn't do much together, needless to say. And then my dad passed away, and he was 26, I was 17. He was pretty much out of the house, he got married about a year or so afterwards, and then moved away. So it's kind of interesting; he lived in different places, so I didn't really see him much. With his family, he moved to Silver Springs, different -- working for department stores; he ended up almost in the same business as my dad, which is unbelievable.

CLINE

Interesting. What was his name?

MOSS

Fred Moss.

CLINE

OK. So as a youngster, then, who do you remember essentially playing with?

MOSS

I had lots of friends, you know, about five or six guys that were my age, and we played a lot of stickball, a lot of games. Cards, pitching pennies, marbles. Baseball fans, walked to Yankee Stadium, you know, lifelong Yankee fan from that. Police Athletic League, so $.25 a game. The egg salad sandwiches that were running through the paper bag. So I had some guys I hung out with in those years that kept me pretty active, and went to all the movies that we could go to, went to high school in DeWitt Clinton [High School] with a couple of them, and a few of them split off and went to a different school, but we always sort of met up. I'm still in touch with about -- two of them, you know; one of them lives in Northern California, San Francisco, and the other one lives in Florida, and we stay in touch.

CLINE

Wow, amazing.

MOSS

So those were pretty good -- I just remember being on the street all the time.

CLINE

So what street are we on right now, at this point?

MOSS

We're in the Bronx, we're on Echo Place, this sort of cul-de-sac that had a kind of downhill sort of end of street, and we used to play stickball, and of course the neighbors -- if a ball went in anybody's window, it was a big effort to try to climb up and ask them for the ball back, and most people wouldn't give it to you. And then there were the big guys on the block, where if they wanted to play on the street, they'd just take our little Spaldeen [pink rubber ball] and cut it in half and give it back to us, and that was their way of saying, "It's time for you guys to leave." So, you know. And in high school, I played -- I went to DeWitt Clinton High School, and I could pass the ball pretty good, really really well in some gym class, and the coach wanted me to try out of for the team, and I needed my parents' permission because I was sort of underage, and my father at that time said, "You're six feet tall, and you weigh 125 lbs -- I don't think this is the game for you." His exact words were, "They'll probably break you in half, and I don't think that's good for you, so I'm not going to sign this," and I couldn't really argue with him. So I ended up playing a little basketball, but then I got sick; I caught a touch of polio when I was about 14, 15, and that laid me out for a whole summer. Fortunately, I could handle penicillin, and I got back to life. But I didn't have my different shots that I used to have when I played basketball, so I didn't turn out to be that great a player. But I got to play senior basketball for DeWitt Clinton High School, and got to be senior vice-president, one of those things. So I had some level of popularity in high school.

CLINE

Of course. (laughter) Well, we'll back up to the earlier days. You're living on this cul-de-sac, you're playing games with your friends; your mother's staying at home, I guess. So what was your relationship like with your mother? It sounds like you're almost an only child kind of scenario here, home with your mom and going to school. What was that like for you?

MOSS

It was pretty comfortable. I mean, we got along sort of well. You know, I think early on, I had -- I was blessed with having certain dreams about things, certain aspirations, looking at movies, obviously, and trying to figure things out. And she was sort of old school, very conservative, but she never really inhibited me from anything, and I never really asked for much in the way of -- I would say clothing or goods or tickets; I never really asked her for anything, just a place to stay and my meals. And from my growing up time, I just remember being

out on the street and being home at 6:00. And it wasn't hard to keep that promise; some days I'd be a little later, some days I'd be a little earlier. And I was lucky, because I sort of did well in school, so I didn't cause any problems in that regard; she didn't have to come to school and talk to the teacher because I was getting into fights or not doing my lessons. I got bar mitzvah-ed, like I was supposed to get bar mitzvah-ed; my father was more sort of religious than my mom, but we kept basically a kosher house. But my mom would sort of make me ham sandwiches occasionally, because she knew that my palate was getting a little tired of the egg salad. So she would get the ham on the wax paper, wouldn't touch the plate, it would just go into a piece of bread somehow, and it would give me a taste of something else in school. It was our little secret, so to speak. So, you know, I developed an appetite for school and for stuff, and as I say, I had a relatively happy sort of childhood in that regard, unless, you know, May 13, 1952, when my dad, who was supposedly recovering from something, had a setback. I was rehearsing for a school play, actually, and the teacher pulled me aside and actually drove me home to tell me the news. So that's when life changed dramatically.

CLINE

Well, before we get there -- you said you did pretty well in school, and other than your interest in sports and the kind of thing you were doing on the street, what were some areas of interest you may have had in school, if any? Areas that you felt kind of drawn to, maybe.

MOSS

I would say that -- you know, I would join different sort of clubs, but mostly as a social thing. I realized I was very shy, and I tried to work on it, because I wanted -- even in those days, I wanted whatever piece of the action was mine, I wanted to get it. And I realized I'd have to be -- I'd have to speak, and speak up. So I joined certain clubs; in Clinton, I think, DeWitt Clinton, I may have joined the Student Court, different things like that, and then I got a little bit into the drama class, which was something for an all-boy high school. And the high school was a fantastic school, because it was about 1/3 black, 1/3 Puerto-Rican and Catholic, and then maybe 1/3 a bunch of Jewish guys. So we all kind of made it work somehow; very practical school. Rather a very well-run school. I mean, there were teachers there that I didn't like, but there were teachers I had a lot of respect for too.

CLINE

You kind of walked into my next question, which was: how would you describe your neighborhood growing up, in terms of who lived there, not just racially but in terms of the economic level, the kinds of businesses that may have been around -- what do you remember about that?

MOSS

Well, I remember we had, in our group, we had a so-called richer kid, whose family -- whose father owned a jewelry store in the outlying neighborhood, and they had a car, and they had a TV set. And we'd go up -- we'd be occasionally allowed to watch something in their living room, but they made sure we didn't dirty up their couches. And when he was like 16 or 17 or 18, he actually had a car by himself

CLINE

Wow. In New York.

MOSS

And so those were my first sort of rides in some friend's car. We'd just use subways if we ever went down to Manhattan, or went downtown which was an easy thing to do. Probably the greatest thing you could do, growing up in the Bronx, was just to get on the D Train, and you're down on Fifty-ninth Street and Sixth Avenue inside of half an hour, it's amazing. So my mom would take me to an occasional Broadway show. My dad would take me to a ballgame occasionally. The people I lived around, you know -- upstairs were the Kushners, and their oldest son was a cop, and their younger son used to terrorize the neighborhood because he was a rough kid. Fortunately he liked me, but my mother -- his name was Max Kushner -- my mother would get him to babysit me, if you can believe this, and the kid used to just tie me up, you know, do the most ridiculous things. Take a chair and put it over me and sit on the chair until, you know -- "Please, get me out of here." But fortunately, like I said, he liked me. Some other of my friends, he didn't like. But he wasn't a bad guy, and it was useful having a cop in the building, I guess. And downstairs were the O'Neills, and they argued a bit, and you could hear them. And then we had a very old couple as a neighbor right across the hall in the building. And we lived on the first floor of a walk-up, so the people that lived on the fourth or fifth floor -- and we had a landlady that was very nasty to a few of the people, and she tried to get people to move out so she could raise the rent, and to do that she wouldn't allow people to install refrigerators, and would insist that they carry ice up the stairs for an icebox, and these were old women, you could see them, but they couldn't leave this apartment, because it was cheap. So the building was in some kind of disrepair, but as I said, we managed; we lived in a two-bedroom, my parents and my brother and I. And when we -- when he studied for college -- he was on the GI Bill, he went to NYU [New York University] -- he used to put like a rope across the room with a blanket on it so I wouldn't be distracting him. So you can see, we didn't have a whole lot of contact in those days. Even when my big brother came back from the Navy, I didn't have a whole lot of time to get to know him, because he was busy trying to get on with something, as most of those veterans -- you know, they lost a couple of years, they were trying to catch up. The pressures of trying to get a

job and an education along with all those people. But he felt particularly pressured, I guess, from his -- coming from where he came from.

CLINE

You mentioned that you had African-Americans and Puerto Ricans and things at your high school. Was there any who lived in your neighborhood, or they just --

MOSS

Not in our immediate vicinity, but in the outlying areas. The immediate neighborhood was mostly white Caucasian, but of different religions. You know, Germans, Russians, Irish. A lot of Irish people.

CLINE

You said that you would occasionally take the subway into Manhattan, or I guess other parts of the city, different boroughs maybe. What was your impression of going to see the big city, so to speak? Going into Manhattan and doing things there?

MOSS

Well, it was just incredible. I sort of -- it was just an extension, though, of where I come from, only bigger. As I said, I lived really on the street, and walked a lot, and saw a lot of different things and people. In those days, people would talk to you more, or neighbors would tell you if you were doing something wrong -- "What are you doing that for, you bad kid?" -- this kind of stuff. You know, you were everybody's business. Your neighborhood was -- that was your village, so to speak. And because I was generally a pretty good kid, I didn't get in trouble a whole lot; I sort of just got through it. I didn't have any real difficulties making friends or keeping friends, except when I would have an accident, or playing with a rock and somehow the rock fell on my friend's head or something, and all the guys were angry at me because, you know, I made Bobby Jacobs' head bleed or something, and they were going to get even with me somehow. So my mom felt terrible about it, and she'd take me for a hot dog to make me feel better, until they became friends of mine again. So -- it was rather good-natured, rather innocent. We got into a few fights; a couple of them were -- one guy had a knife, and one guy had an iron bar. But we -- you know, I got into one fight in high school, and nothing much happened; it was just pushing and shoving. The guy I'm fighting all of the sudden looked at me and said, "I don't even remember what we're fighting about." (laughter)

CLINE

Right. (laughter) It seems like that's frequently the case.

MOSS

So we did a little pushing and shoving, and that was it. But -- so I sort of had a bit of a decent -- we didn't have any real hardship, other than the fact that we

really -- you know, I didn't really realize that we didn't have anything, because I had all that I ever needed. I had enough books, money for books. And I started working when I was 12 or 13, being a deliver boy or any way I could make a few extra bucks. In junior high school, I had the paper route; I literally picked up the newspapers and made a couple of bucks a day just making sure everybody got their Herald Tribune or something. So I was always looking for ways to make some extra income. Money -- I started -- you know, just to get to buy a shirt or something, or a ticket somewhere, I would have to work for that.

CLINE

I see. I was going to ask you, so did you have some kind of an allowance, and then this was on top of that? Or was this pretty much your income?

MOSS

I had a little bit of an allowance, but when I became like 14, 15, I pretty much was making my own. I worked for a florist, and delivered flowers. I'd always get lost, which was terrible, and I'd always get fired, but came the holidays, as a teenager, I'd apply to get a job as a messenger for some Manhattan companies, and I got an hourly wage. Manhattan was mostly on foot, just getting stuff around, or if I had to take a bus or a subway, I managed to do that right. It was when I had to go Brooklyn or something, when I had to go to Queens, I would just get horrendously lost. I mean, they'd pay me $3 a day and all the tips. One day I came home and I think I made $1.75, because I kept having to turn around and pay my own -- I couldn't ask them to pay the money to get lost. So not a good day, and got fired on top of it. But I was always trying to make a little extra money somewhere.

CLINE

You mentioned that sometimes you'd go to Broadway shows or things like that. What do you remember about possibly the kind of music you heard in the house growing up, if you heard any at all?

MOSS

I think the first Broadway show I went to was a musical; I think it was called "Texas, Little Darlin'." And I liked it, I thought it was amazing. As far as music was concerned, it's what I sort of heard on the radio. And what people in school were listening to. My first real -- you know, I liked but wasn't crazy about [Frank] Sinatra, because the crooning and the stuff seemed a little corny to me at the time. I think the first artist that I sort of liked was a guy named Johnny Ray, I don't know if you remember "The Little White Cloud that Cries," and "When Your Sweetheart Sends a Letter" of goodbye -- he was amazing. My mother was very fond of Arthur Godfrey. So we would listen to him, and he always had the music, and he had the Chordettes, and Julius LaRosa and those kinds of things.And I watched -- when we did get a TV, I watched [The] Ed Sullivan [Show]. And I think my first real connection -- because I never bought

any records; my money was not for that. That was a real extravagance. But when I listened to Alan Freed -- I don't know how old I was, I think I was in high school, so the early -- it could have been the early '50s -- might have been the early '50s, I'm not sure. But he played a song called "Earth Angel", by the Penguins. And he said he was going to play it every night at 8:00, and I always tuned in to hear that song. I loved that song. And then my brother one day bought an album, and it was Bing Crosby. "Going My Way," I remember that. He actually bought a record player. We didn't have a record player. And those albums, you remember, they came -- they were 45s. Not 45s, 40 -- 78s.

CLINE

78s, right. In an album.

MOSS

In an album thing. And quite amazing. So I was exposed to a bunch of music. And then when I was just a teenager, I think in high school still, we had a friend that was a gay man who dressed as a waitress to work a bar in the Village, and it was there where I first really heard some amazing music, mostly R&B songs. It was incredible. And this was again very innocent; we were just a bunch of kids, and I would see the most incredible 17-year-old women there that I'd never see in the Bronx. In the Bronx, as the word went -- there were no attractive women in the Bronx. As I was starting to understand, looking at TV, what is a woman supposed to look like? And none of those creatures were in the Bronx somehow, I never ran into them. But at these clubs, it was just incredible just to see it. And then the guy had a heartbreak; his mother found his outfits and threw them away, and we didn't go to that club anymore. But at least it was an amazing thing to see for about a six-month period, to go all the way downtown and see the way the Village worked. I think that happened just when I was about late 16, early 17. It might have happened all the way into my 18th year, I don't know.

CLINE

A crucial time hormonally anyway.

MOSS

Yeah, yeah. It was an interesting time.

CLINE

You said that you always had certain dreams and aspirations. What specifically might those have been? Or even generally, if you had a sense of what that meant to you then?

MOSS

Well, I think by the time -- once my father passed away and it was just me and my mom, really, and I saw something in my family, basically that how I really didn't want to be. They were very conservative; my father was rather conservative. He felt that we were Jews of a certain class that were limited in a

certain way. Though we never really discussed it, he -- or my brother tells me that he insisted my brother go to school and study -- "If you're going to go to college, learn a trade and be an accountant." I could never confirm this, my mother -- now, if my brother would have said -- or decided to go against him, I don't know what would have happened. "I don't want to be an accountant; I wanted to be an architect," as he claims he wanted to be -- well, maybe our father would have respected that. But supposedly, this is what he said, so. And the rest of the family was too; my uncle sold hats, you know; my one uncle was sort of a pharmacist, professional guy. I think most of my father's other brothers were in the clothing business.It was such a -- and I didn't want to do any of those things. And as I, you know, realized it was just my mom -- and on top of that, she had a sister that -- my Aunt Helen -- who had escaped -- I say escaped -- at an early age to come to California. And she was this -- married to an insurance salesman, a crazy guy, and they had what seemed to be an amazing life out here. You know, they went to the Cocoanut Grove -- this was in the '20s and '30s, this place was so wide open. And they had two daughters, they were both attractive at the time, and she would send me pictures of the girls -- because she would make trips to the East Coast, wearing these magnificent hats, to attend women's conferences at the White House, a delegate from California. So she was well-spoken without a trace of an accent; just a completely liberated woman, totally into civil rights, and -- fantastic. And used to talk to me, you know -- I'd get a little card from her every six months or something about California, and every year she would send me the L.A. [Los Angeles] Times Rose Bowl edition, just to show me what was just going on in California. And so I always -- hey, I can go there like Aunt Helen, it's not the end of the world; it's a place, and I know somebody there. And even as a teenager, when we did get TV or saw TV, put on the Rose Bowl, even before it was in color, you know, and the people there were wearing T-shirts, it's ridiculous! In New York, we're freezing our asses off, and it's sludgy and cold and dark and miserable, and look at it out there, it's incredible. And the women are wearing tee -- it's amazing; what am I doing here? So already that started the thing.But then like when I say, the big life change was probably when my dad passed away, because then it was my mom and I, and I realized that I had to take care of my mother in a way, but it was not going to be my life; I had to live my life. And that's when I started realizing I had to make money, and I didn't quite know where I was going, but it was going to be a totally different field than anything my family had ever seen. So I went to college; I picked a school, Brooklyn College, for a lot of reasons. Number one, it was a city college, it was cheap, and it was what we could handle. It was literally in those days $6 a semester, if you had the point grade average, and I did. I went there because I wanted to have a new experience, certainly. And even though it was a

hardship -- it was an hour and a half each way by subway -- each way! -- I'd heard they had a television department there; I was sort of interested in the burgeoning field of television. Basically, I got there, and they said, "Yes, we have a set." (laughter) That was that. And secondly, they had Air Force ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps], and I thought maybe I should learn how to fly. If I'm going to think about this service thing, maybe I should try to do something maybe a little differently. The flying didn't work, because I only really had one good eye, and they could never quite get the other eye up to snuff. So that didn't carry any mustard, you know. But then I started -- my greatest fun was in the summertime working in these resorts, starting off in the Catskills, and watching people have a good time. (laughter) Now that's a very interesting study.

CLINE

How did you get into that?

MOSS

Well, my brother had worked at a place, and he gave me the name of the head waiter. And my first year -- I was 18 -- actually, 17, because -- oh, no; that time I visited -- I was with my dad when I visited my brother working there. The first year I went up there, I was basically a bellhop, a kind of room service guy. And it was healthy, it was in Kent, Connecticut, and I had a few girl-things that did or didn't happen, I can't hardly remember. And then in college, this guy moved -- then when I was 19, I went to White Row, which was in White -- it was in the Catskill Mountains. And I was a children's waiter, which -- that was interesting.

CLINE

What does that mean?

MOSS

That means that I -- when the people brought their kids, they'd put them at a table, and I was supposed to serve them and take care of them. And that wasn't too bad until I burned my hand on a -- over a steaming coffee thing; I pushed the lever the wrong way in a hurry, and -- whew, came all over my hand, had a third-degree burn. So that was when I was 18, 19. But when I was 20 and 21, I got to a tremendous place called Banner Lodge, Moodus, Connecticut, where the waiters were all college guys, and we pooled our tips, and everybody got along pretty good. It was really a team kind of thing, and it was all single people, basically, although a few marrieds came up there. But it was single people, and the usual thing -- if there were more women than men, the waiters were supposed to work overtime and help these ladies out, and if there were more guys, then we were supposed to stay in our cabins and not be seen or heard from.So that was really fun, because that got all the sexual juices flowing, and it was just an exciting time. And I would make about $1,000 a

summer, which went a long ways in those days. And I really did notice people having fun, and, you know -- and then you realize, well, this is really life's ambition, is really to have fun. I mean, you know, it's to work and acquire things, but by and large, it's to have a good time, and to be with people that are going to allow you to have a good time. I just didn't want to be like the family and work hard and go home and complain and whatever that was. I wanted something different. I felt -- and looking at movies and TV shows, I thought it was -- somebody's doing it; somebody has to live that life. And like -- how do I figure out how to do this, you know? So from that experience, I think I really believed that I wanted to be involved in the entertainment business, because again, I got lucky and I waited on the entertainers' tables. And obviously, the other tables had the pressure of the single people, you know -- who am I going to see tonight, what am I going to do, so that obviously intrinsically had some pressure connected to it, even though there was some people that laughed their way through it and had a great time. The entertainers' table were relaxed people, they were funny, they were just after enjoying themselves. And I said, these are the kind of people I want to be around. And I don't know how, but I think television will do it. Maybe I'll try television.So just about the same time, while I was going to Brooklyn College, I played a little football at Brooklyn, through the House Plan Program -- didn't have much of a social life, because if I'm traveling that much during the day -- so I'd usually weekends find myself in Manhattan doing something. But I thought I could be in the advertising business; I thought that would be -- I was an English major, I was an art minor; I was trying to figure out the advertising business, until one day, I was at school -- it was a course curriculum, I had to find someone in an advertising agency to interview. And the people there were quite nice about it, and I got to interview a pretty highly-placed guy at the Grey Advertising. He was a really nice guy, and he explained what advertising really was, and advertising was -- maybe it's different today, but I don't think so -- it's the germ of an idea that goes through several departments, and sometimes you don't even recognize the original idea by the time it shows up, and that could be like nine months down the line, and maybe you've forgotten the idea, or it's not even yours anymore, and boom-boom-boom, how collaborative it is, unless you had reached such a high level that you do -- And, boy, that seemed really complicated to me at the time. (laughter) It involved a lot of political stuff; how well did I have to know somebody to do this and do that, and work your way up. Didn't seem to be a lot of fun. A lot of pressure seemed to be involved with this thing. So by the time I was a senior at Brooklyn, I really had no idea where I was -- what I was going to do, except that I again wanted to be in show business in some sort of way. So I tried interviewing with different TV stations; I went out with women whose

fathers were big TV producers to see if they could get something. But in the back of my mind, I realized I had to do an Army stint --

CLINE

Yeah, I'm waiting to ask this question, actually. If you were -- I was wondering if you were concerned about being drafted at this point, because it still is going on; we had the Korean War coming up.

MOSS

Yeah, the Korean War was sort of over, and this was now like -- I graduated from college in '57, so there was actually nothing really happening, and so it was either be drafted or basically enlist in the National Guard and do six months' active duty, and then you're on reserve for like seven years. So myself and two guys I grew up with, who are still miraculously the two guys I'm still in touch with -- volunteered for the National Guard; on February 8, 1958, we went to -- we were assigned to Fort Dix, New Jersey, in the height of winter, for basic training. And that was amazing, incredible -- great experience. And then after basic, I got shipped to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, as a company clerk. And -- because of my sort of drama background, I got into Special Services; I drove a colonel around. And I umpired some WAC [Women's Army Corps] ballgames, softball games, which was amazing; got threatened by quite a few of the players. (laughter)

CLINE

(laughter) Naturally.

MOSS

So I better be -- and experienced the South, which is a place I'd never been. Especially as a Jew in the South, which was also interesting. And got along with all kinds of people -- the Army, I still believe -- some kind of service is great for any young man, because it's first of all physically, it puts you in some kind of shape, and secondly, it lets you realize a little something about the country, and who Americans really are. And, man, it was amazing; even though I had at least my high school and college -- my high school more than my college, even -- to appreciate the neighborhoods and whatever it is, but meeting farm guys from New Jersey, guys that could never remember their serial number if it killed them, and standing there at attention with all this sweat running down -- just the disdain that my lieutenant had for college guys. (laughter) To put up with all the different prejudices, and yet deal with them all, I think is so important in the growth of a human being. Instead of growing up in some little cocoon, and then you're foisted on the world. And so the South was eye-opening.

CLINE

How?

MOSS

Well, we had cadre down there that had fought in the Korean War; we had -- as we had at Fort Dix, guys that took it very seriously, and very rough guys. And again, as I say, we weren't at war anywhere, and I thought being a six-monther, probably I won't get shipped into any area of great danger. But danger could come in the form of basic training or whatever, and it's funny, because when I got rotated out, they gave me another eye test, and they realized I was practically blind in one eye, and they said, "You know, I don't think you should have been in here in the first place."

CLINE

Right. That could have been your way out, if you'd been drafted.

MOSS

Yeah. So -- but as I say, the experience was something; it was really, really something. Now, prior to my going into the service, and while I was at Brooklyn College -- so stepping back a little bit -- I applied to be a page at NBC [National Broadcasting Company] and ABC [American Broadcasting Company]. And the amazing thing was, I got accepted at both places. And the guy at NBC really wanted me, but I thought there was so many people at NBC. And ABC wanted me as well, and their hours were a little bit easier, and there were not so many pages, and I thought I'd be noticed, and who knows where it would take me. And ABC was an upcoming network, and I worked -- at ABC, I worked a tremendous show there called the Omnibus Show, with Alistair Cooke. They had ballet, and they had -- it was a Sunday afternoon show; they had just every kind of cultural event in America, a sample on this show. And he was a very distinguished sort of guy, and had a tiny bit of a live audience -- I generally did a lot of my homework there. But it was quite a thing, working for ABC. And I met a couple of guys that ended up going on and becoming -- a lot of acting students did that as well, and Kier Dulay was one of my co-pages; he ended up in 2000 -- the [Stanley] Kubrick movie --

CLINE

2001 [: A Space Odyssey] --

MOSS

2001, and different other people I was starting to meet that had other aspirations -- mostly actors and actresses. And then I would run -- after I graduated, again trying to do something to keep myself going, because I knew any kind of job -- I worked a couple of movies in Greenwich Village with somebody I met at Banner Lodge, a director who -- a really terrific guy. So I got to know what it was like being a production assistant and working -- literally driving Vespas through Greenwich Village for a couple of things. And one of them actually got nominated for a short for an Academy Award, and the producer went but nobody else did; we chipped in to get him a tuxedo or something. So there were all these kind of things going on, and at the same

time, I thought, well, maybe commercial film, industrial movies would be my thing. And I got to meet a girl that worked there, and got friendly with her, and see what would happen if such and such -- and so all this time, I was living with my mother in the Bronx still, because again, the Army, and who knew what was happening, and she was comfortable in the Bronx; she had friends in the neighborhood, which were most important. And she was now working, she was working at -- she got a job as a receptionist at Esquire Magazine, so she was having her own little worldly experience, and meeting people from other nationalities, whatever. She was only 50, so -- today that's like a young person -- well, my dad passed away, so. But she wouldn't even have a cup of coffee with another guy; she never did, really. Again, that conservative. So at around this time, in the summer of '57, I took a job in Summer Stock, to learn that phase, in a place called Fitchburg, Massachusetts. And that was a 900-seat theatre, it was considered a grade-A theatre, and different stars came up there, but we did have a repertory company. And I was an apprentice; I got a couple of jobs acting here and there. I got paid $15 and a room, really. So I had a lot of chicken noodle soup that summer with Saltines as a meal about every day. And -- but again, another life experience that was hysterical. It was just amazing. And all this time, just picking up information. I was 22 years old. And late that summer, I got word that a friend of mine was getting married, and the wedding was in October or something. And I'd dated his soon-to-be wife, but whatever. This was one of the guys I grew up with, and I was invited to be an usher at this wedding. With all the festivities of the event -- you know, there's the rehearsal dinner, and then there's the wedding -- and the maid of honor at that time, who was in her -- she was 20, 21 years old, same age as the bride -- was going out with a recently separated or divorced older man of 36 or something. And he was at the rehearsal dinner, and we just started talking, and he needed somebody to talk to; obviously the guy was sort of completely out of -- here's a guy dressed extremely well, attractive cat, you know, very funny, and I was laughing at all the jokes. And this was a guy named Marvin Cane, who was at the time a music publisher, and had a small record company [Co-Ed Records] with a partner named George Paxton. And then the wedding came the next day, and you know, I'm up at the microphone, and I'm reading telegrams, and I think I sang a song with one of the other ushers, and danced with all the aunts and uncles, 'cause obviously I'd known the family fairly well, 'cause I'd grown up with this guy.Well, I sat down one time, and Marvin said to me, he says, "You'd make a great music man." And I said, "Well, what does a music man do?" And he says, "Well, we'll start you off at about $100 a week, and inside of a year and a half, you'd be making $300 a week." And I said, "Yeah, but what do I have to do for that?" He says, "Well, you start off going to radio stations and getting some records played, and then you learn the business, and we'll see

where we put you." I said, "Are you kind of offering me something?" He said, "Well, yeah; I think you'd be great at it." I said, "Well, I'm drunk now. Will you still be here when I wake up?" (laughter) He says, "Yeah, I think you got it; I think you can do this. I think you really have some talent for this." So, needless to say, I called him the next day. I said, "Look, I know I'm going into the service in February, or pretty soon," -- I didn't have a date -- "How about if I work for you for six weeks, and we'll find out if I like you, you like me..." He says, "No, no, no. Go in the service; get it over with. Call me when you get out." So I now had a goal, $100 a week. This was like a sign flashing at me, because that was really a ton of money in those days. That was more money than my father made, even there, the starting salary. I mean, guys started jobs for $30 a week in big companies, $40 a week.So I went in the service; I stayed -- I ended up -- that period of time, I was running a theatre for ABC Radio, so I was sort of a head page. In the theatre, I made an hourly wage, so I did OK. Supported myself again; obviously was able to give my mom a few bucks, whatever. Buy her a meal outside or something. And then I went in the Army. And I kept trying to call Marvin [Cane] and write Marvin, and he never returned my calls, never answered any of my notes or cards. I wrote him cards from South Carolina, you know -- nothing. No return, nothing. But I kept thinking, $100 a week, $100 a week. This was like a goal line for me, a big goal. So I got out of the Army in August of '58, and I was now 23. And he still wouldn't get back to me, so I remember that summer, I needed some money, so I worked the last three weeks of the summer at Banner Lodge, going back to being a waiter, just making about $100 a week or something. And -- anyway, he finally took my phone call one day, and I said, "Do you even remember who I am?" "Yeah, I remember you." I said, "Well..." He says, "C'mon down." So I went down there, and I saw him for the first time in almost a year, and he gave me a job. He started me at $75 a week, so my first step into the game was loaded with insincerity.

CLINE

(laughter) Well, that's good preparation.

MOSS

Yeah. Good preparation. And it was Election Day, 1958, November the 8 -- I'll never forget this -- lot of eights in my thing. And he sent me to Philadelphia with a record, and told me not to tell the distributor -- our distributor -- that I was in town, and just go to radio stations and see who was playing what, and if they were playing this record, and report back to him who was playing the record, who wasn't playing the record. So there I was, a total neophyte, on my way to Philly on the train. And I just remember that first day quite clearly, because as I say, I was a shy person, and here I'm asking people I never met before, on my own going to these radio stations, if they're playing the record,

not playing the record, what was going on. And it was really tough. I remember having dinner than night with a former waiter friend of mine who was going to dental school in Philadelphia, him and his wife, and I said, "Man, I can't wait to get out, this is ridiculous. This is not for me at all. This is so stupid, what I'm doing, to see if they're playing this silly record." And this was kind of doo-wop music, which was not my favorite kind of music to begin with.But I was making $75 a week, so, I mean, you can't blow that, but the job itself seems so funny and so strange, and everywhere I went, people say, "Where's your distributor? Why aren't you here with Herbie?" -- or Harold, or whatever their names were. I said, "I don't know. I'm just here." And I even had a check with me for some R&B [rhythm and blues] disc jockey. And reached him on the phone; he says, "Well, leave the check with so-and-so." I said, "No, no, no. I'm going to give you the check." He says, "What are you going to give me -- just leave it." I said, "No, I'm going to come by and give it to you." And I ended up being great friends with that guy; it was the great Georgie Woods, who turned out to be a great disc jockey. So anyway, I got the hang of it watching other promotion men work, and meeting guys, and one guy would come down and say, "Oh, you're with Marvin? Tell him I'm all over the record. Just tell him that, all right? All right, thanks."And then one guy -- he was very nice to me; he was a late-night guy, and said, "Why don't you watch me work?" I said, "Great." So he had a show called -- his name was Buddy Breeze, and of course he had a show called "Breezin' Along with the Breeze." And I watched the way the guy handled -- you know, I was in the studio for the first time, and watched the thing, boom boom boom. Then the guy was nice enough to drop me off at the train, and I said, "Man, this is great." He says, "Well, give Marvin my regards, and maybe someday there'll be a check in it for me," because in those days, payola was rampant. I said, "Look, thank you for -- at least treating me like a human being; I appreciate it. I'm sure I'll see you again." And then he, you know, in the meantime I'm checking with this girl who's working for a commercial film company and all this kind of thing, and what's going on there. So then I'm working New York stations and getting around, and then I went back to Philadelphia and I met Dick Clark, and pretty soon this little record I'm walking around with is starting to happen, and it's starting to happen big, and this record was called "Sixteen Candles", by the Crests. Got to #2 in the country. And people are now starting to like the record, they're welcoming me in; they're telling me they're playing the record, people that aren't getting paid are playing the record. It's one of those things that's happening. Then I started getting on a plane and flying to Pittsburgh and Cleveland, St. Louis -- first time I'd ever been on a plane; first time I'd ever stayed in a hotel. First time I'd ordered room service. "Hey, this is not bad."And I remember being in Cleveland, and calling my mother, seeing how she's doing. And she says, "By

the way, that girl called from the film company; that opening opened up, and if you want to be there by tomorrow, you can have that job." And I'm looking around, and we're celebrating my record, there's some pretty people around. "Well, Mom, I'll call her, but I'm not going to be there tomorrow; I'll stay on this trip." And obviously I didn't get that job. And I stuck around because Marvin was an intriguing guy; he was a tremendous mentor, and I learned so much about how to treat people from him, and how not to treat people from him. But he was very funny, and he was tough, too; he could hit people. And I worked in the Brill Building, which now is considered like a historical place. And I learned a lot about the intricacies in the music business, and how to do business from this small label and publishing company; I learned about publishing, and I got to meet Nat [King] Cole, and I got to meet Eddie Fischer, and Vic Damone, and the Ames brothers, and Burt Bacharach, I met there. And my salary started to go up. I got little raises here and there. I never traveled to California on the job, because that's where Marvin went; I never went to Florida, because that's where Marvin went. Barely went to Chicago, Marvin took care of the big towns. But Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Atlanta even, St. Louis. Cleveland, Pittsburgh. That was my sort of web. I mean, for a while, it was really enjoyable; I was really learning stuff and living fairly well. At this time, my mother heard that there was a building -- because by this time, I hardly saw my mom; I'd get home in time to sleep.

CLINE

Yeah, I was going to ask you what she thought of all this. What was her feeling on it?

MOSS

Well, she was happy because I was making money. And she didn't understand it at all. But -- and two things, two occurrences -- the friend who was -- who had gotten married, where I met Marvin -- his sister was married to a disc jockey, and the disc jockey, when I'd see him -- and this was before I got to be in the music business -- had the most terrible stories about what he thought of promotion men. They're a bunch of liars and drunks, and what do I -- you know, sharpies -- who cares about these people? And he was -- whatever. And then on my mother's side, she had a sister-in-law who had a brother who dabbled in these records, and actually had half a hit called "Short Shorts," [by the Royal Teens] I don't know if you remember that song.

CLINE

I had that single. (laughter)

MOSS

There you go. And he was a bit of a character and a feisty kind of a guy that you wanted to avoid, Leo Silver -- he was not a bad guy, I found out eventually, Leo was not a bad guy, but in that family, he was a character that

was strange. So nobody kind of understood what I was doing in all this, but I frankly had the benefit of a college education, where a lot of my associates and competitors did not, at this stage. And I kind of understood really what was sort of happening, that this was a burgeoning industry, and it was amateur sport all the way, but money was being made; some real money was being made, and value was being created. I just wished I liked the music better.

CLINE

Yeah. Well, this was actually -- you walked right into my question; you mentioned, for example, that you're pushing some music initially, you said it was like doo-wop music, whatever, you didn't really like. What did you like?

MOSS

Well, I was listening to Bobby Brookmeyer; by this time, I was like in jazz, I was visiting the clubs on Fifty-second Street. I went to Birdland a couple of times just to experience it, buy a beer and hear some music. R&B music was interesting to me. I mean, I liked "Earth Angel", so I did like some of this music. But after awhile, I looked around, you know, and as a promotion man, I was now, after a year and a half with Marvin -- and again, we're talking about money here, because it was important, this was the goal here -- and -- I'm looking at my clock...

CLINE

We're doing OK.

MOSS

I was making $140 a week, which was pretty good. But -- and I was 24 by this time, and had many acquaintances by this time; my friends were in the business, and I was going visiting black radio stations, and doing very well. And I was dealing with -- I told Marvin, "Look, I'll drop off records to the guys you're paying, but I'm not going to hang around with them, if you're paying them. I want to work with the guys that you're not paying. I'll show you how good I am, getting them to play the music." So I was making some pretty good connections there, because not a lot of people were -- had the brains to look after these people. And these are the growing -- these are the guys that are going to be the stars of radio in the next year. And it was happening, I was getting friendly with these people. But here I was, 24 years, making $140 a week; I'm ahead of -- the best promotion job was a guy named Tommy Valenti, who was promotion for RCA Victor Records; he was 45 years old, and he was making $175 a week, which was about all I could hope for. So here I am, in 20 years -- I'll work my ass off, and this is what I can hope to make. This is not good. And I don't know how long I could keep going all night and all day, because I did work all night and all day. There's always work to be done; there's always the midnight jockey who's going to be 3-6 (afternoons) the next month.

CLINE

And you had that $300 carrot dangled in front of you initially, too.

MOSS

Exactly. So I thought about California; I initially thought about getting out of the music business. A friend of mine, who I'd worked one of those little movies in Greenwich Village with, was going out to be a producer of a big TV series, and promised me I could be his assistant. And that would have been a great entry into the movie and film and tape business, and it was California, after awhile. And then a friend of mine said, "Well, you could be an agent of the Mars [Talent Agency] office like that," and I thought maybe being an agent would be a good place to take this experience and whatever. So that's when I thought hard and fast about California.

CLINE

OK. Just to finish up here today, so we can pick up from this point next time -- going through school, and going through college, with all the different diverse things that you've thought about that you might want to do, and the twists and turns of all that, were there any -- you mentioned there were some teachers you didn't like in your high school. Were there any particularly memorable or influential teachers that you had growing up?

MOSS

I had a playwrighting teacher in college, who was sort of a sad character but -- and -- but was sophisticated, for Brooklyn, and wrote a lot of books; his name was Bernard Grebanier, and wrote a lot of books. He's a bit sordid as well, but again, I didn't specifically have to admire him, but I took from people what I could get, without having to get deeply involved with them. A relationship with this guy would not have been healthy or good, but I did go to his house and sit with a group until it was time for all of us to leave; I didn't stick around. And I took a post-graduate playwrighting class with him, because I thought, "Well, let me learn something about this." I did some -- that's how I got into Summer -- because maybe theatre -- I was trying to examine every area of the entertainment field to see where I could hook up. And that was the only teacher, really. There was a philosophy teacher I liked. I wrote for the school newspaper, one of the school newspapers. But Brooklyn College, at that time, had just been rescued from being called "The Little Red Schoolhouse," and so they put a very conservative president in, who actually closed down the humor magazine, and that was where I was hoping to function. So it was a dry education. Strangely enough, the two friends I made from Brooklyn both ended up in the entertainment field. One of them was Sandy Baron, the comedian, who is no longer with us, and the other guy was a guy named Cousin Brucie, who is a big famous disc jockey in New York. I came along at an interesting time in our careers, who I just had lunch with in New York, so it was -- because

as I say, college was not a social thing for me; it was more like an education and you get on with it.

CLINE

Right. Speaking of the Little Red Schoolhouse, this was a time when -- you lived through the [Joseph] McCarthy era, you were a young adult. A lot was changing in the entertainment business because of that. It was pretty dark. What do you remember about that, that may have touched you personally, or what your feelings might have been about that, the atmosphere that you remember surrounding that at the time?

MOSS

Well, I think Edward R. Murrow was an early hero of mine, because I do remember his broadcasts from the war as a kid, nine and ten years old, I remember, "This is London," and hearing this incredible voice, and getting a TV set and watching his "See It Now," and those feature shows he used to have -- I loved Edward R. Murrow, and that's why I thought journalism might be an interesting field, get to somebody like that. And what he did to McCarthy was just brilliant and phenomenal, and I thought the movie [Good Night, and Good Luck] that George Clooney did was a pretty good movie on it. But the courage that he had, and the pull he had at that time, was tremendous to go up against us. And I mean, along in my earliest days, I loved [Franklin D.] Roosevelt; I remember as a kid going to school, in Hebrew school, and when Roosevelt died, and seeing people literally in the street just weeping, and to see what politics could do -- it was an interesting time to get some real emotion into a life, you know? To see who was really reaching me, so to speak, and how I always reacted to it. So my heroes would have been those kind of people, who were able to speak out and make a difference. And I remember as a page, when I voted for the first time in 1956 -- and of course, needless to say, I voted for Adlai Stevenson.

CLINE

Right. (laughter)

MOSS

And I'm serving all these big fat cats drinks as a page, sort of ushering people into this celebratory party for Dwight [D.] Eisenhower, you know? So -- and all these guys just fat and happy; their man got in, they won. So it was just -- it was very lucky to have, I think, the kind of childhood I had, because I saw so much for nothing. Just to have nothing and be able to see all that. And I'm just always feeling bad for kids today, because they're always -- they don't have the neighborhood anymore.

CLINE

That's true. That's true. Was the political culture in your family along those lines generally?

MOSS

Yeah, we loved Roosevelt; we loved Harry [S] Truman. Sort of understood Eisenhower, you know, 1952. And he was a decent guy, Eisenhower. Tried not to do too much. (laughter) Played a lot of golf.

CLINE

Right. And then when you were in the military, I have to assume you encountered some different points of view, politically or otherwise. What was that like for you, particularly being in the South at that point when you were there? You said it was pretty eye-opening.

MOSS

Well, pretty much -- for example, one time I remember standing at attention, morning attention, and standing straight at attention, the guy next to me just falls -- keels right over and falls right on his face, on concrete ground, and you could see he was knocked cold. And I sort of got out of position to help him, and the sergeant says, "Uh, I didn't dismiss you. You get back into attention. We're at attention here. This man, we'll take care of him in some time; you stay at attention, you remain in attention." Or, you know, the different penalties. I had a problem oversleeping sometimes, and because of it I'd always end up on KP [kitchen police]. And it's not that the sergeant didn't like me; I just didn't show up on time. And because of it, KP -- now I'm in the summertime in Fort Jackson, South Carolina; it's stifling hot, and I get the worst job, the grease pit. And I'm putting myself in front of the fan just to cool myself off from this -- you know, you're picking shit out of the grease pit -- I end up with pneumonia, so I'm stuck in the hospital for two weeks. And while I'm in the hospital, I'm taking pills to get out of there, I see guys flushing pills down the toilet just so they don't have to rejoin their units. You see the frustration, just guys' different angles of this thing. Career guys that are just sick and tired and hurting, and this is a peacetime army.

CLINE

Yeah, exactly. Interesting.

MOSS

So I mean, I could understand when Andy Rooney says on TV, I wish George [W.] Bush had been in the service so he could understand what he's sending these boys to do. I can imagine what this must be like; I've never seen combat, but I've talked to people that have, and what a horrendous situation it is. So, anyway.

CLINE

Well, you didn't have to do that. And we'll pick up next time, I want to ask you some more questions about the Brill Building, and then we'll get to your transition from New York to California, and the interesting direction that your life took at that point. OK, sound OK?

MOSS

OK. Well, thanks, Alex. Thank you.

CLINE

Thank you. [END OF Jerry Moss Session 1]

1.2. Session 2 (December 12, 2006)

CLINE

-- and away we go. Today is December 12, 2006. This is Alex Cline interviewing Jerry Moss at his office in Beverly Hills at Almo Sounds. Good morning.

MOSS

Good morning.

CLINE

We're going to first pick up from where we left off last time with a few follow-up questions related to what we were discussing. You talked a lot about how your father's [Irving Moss] death at your rather, I think, formative age of 17 was a big turning point in your life. And in fact, I think at one point you said it sort of changed everything dramatically. You said, and I quote, "Life changed dramatically." You described how that clearly affected your goals in life, probably how they related to your mother's [Rose Moss] life, she having to eventually go back to work, and sort of the direction things went from there. But I was wondering how that event affected you emotionally, particularly in light of how you might describe your relationship with your father, whom you said really worked very hard, rested a lot when he was at home. What was your relationship with your father like, and then how did his death affected you emotionally as a young man or as a teenager?

MOSS

Well, it was a bit of a shock, you know? As I might have mentioned, he always had problems with his back, and he was stuck in a very hard job, being on his feet all day. And also, the department store business being what it was, between Thanksgiving and Christmas you just never hardly saw him. Nights, Saturdays, Sundays sometimes -- he's working. I did get to know him fairly well; he did teach me how to play chess. He liked to play gin rummy, so maybe we played gin rummy a little bit too. He had a bit of a flair, when he was feeling good. He enjoyed a good kind of joke, a good laugh. And, you know, he kind of dressed with a bit of style, since he was in that business. Since he was, so to speak, at the time older -- nowadays it's kind of ridiculous, but he was like 40 when he had me, you know. We didn't wrestle too much as a father and son, but we did do some -- we did a bit of roughhousing, as they say. And I remember one time when I got a little too big for him, I probably hurt him a little bit, and I felt

really bad that I'd hurt, and that we probably wouldn't be wrestling again. And my mother kind of mistook the fact that I was unhappy in maybe the -- it was an interesting kind of way she took it, because that wasn't -- I wasn't being selfish; I was really sorry that he was hurting. I remember feeling really bad for him, and very sympathetic towards what was going on in his life, you know, even at an early age. I told you he was a proud man; he never accepted anything from anybody. And probably all of his brothers, or most of them, were in the same line in different areas that were a lot more successful than him, but still we plugged away and did what we were supposed to do. Occasionally we went out for a nice steak, and that was always a lot of fun for me, because I did realize I liked really good food at an early age, which was helpful certainly in the music business. And so, you know, I was going to DeWitt Clinton High School, and as I say at that time, an all-boy high school, and I was in the school play, he was happy for me. He had to -- and I possibly may not have mentioned this, but my father, at an early age, had rheumatic fever, which scarred his heart muscles. And in those days, if you had rheumatic fever, you weren't supposed to live a very long time. And so it's interesting to note that all of my uncles lived into their nineties, and he went at 56. So that didn't occur to me until probably later in life when I realized what he was stacked up against. But anyway, I was doing this play, and he was happy for me, and I visited him in the hospital, and I said I'm going to have a couple seats down front for you, and he said, "Great," something like that -- I could barely see him, because he was under some sort of a tent, I remember -- and he was in a veterans' hospital, because he had been in the First World War. And the initial problem was his prostate, it was causing him some pain, and he went in to try to get some sort of an adjustment made. So I don't know, this was 1952, and I'm not sure whether it was the beginnings of prostate cancer, we didn't know about that in those days or whatever. Anyway, his heart couldn't stand the -- whatever procedure was administered, and I got the phone call, or I got a teacher pulling me out of rehearsal and telling me my dad had passed. And I went home, and my mom was in deep grief, needless to say, and she already had some neighbors and relatives around her and helping her. It was a sad time.I sort of remember sitting shiva, you know, which is a Jewish thing where you're supposed to sit on boxes and grieve for about seven or eight days, and be with the family, and see what's happening, and just get over this period, this initial grief period. And I was at the time 17, you know -- I mean, I'd been to funerals and I sort of understood that all, but what occurred to me was, you know, be in this one room where you're on boxes and you're with the immediate family and everybody's pretty sad, and then you venture into another room, and there's members of the family that have been brought together by this event, and kind of happy they're seeing each other again. So you go from one place where

there's deep sadness into another place where people are actually laughing and having a pretty good time. And it's the juxtaposition of death, in a way; they weren't celebrating my father's death, they were just, you know, sorry to see you in an occasion like this, but isn't it great that we see each other? And so that left kind of an impression on me, that you better live while you can, because, I mean, grieving is a very short period, and then you've got to get on with it. So that's about where I was; he had a little bit of insurance, not much. So we had a cushion, somewhat, to get my mother adjusted to what she needed to do, and get me what I needed to do. My brother [Fred Moss], I believe -- he might have still been living with us, I'm not precisely sure; I think he might have been still with us. But I don't remember his involvement in the whole thing; it was just sort of me experiencing what I was experiencing, and my mom sort of. It was she who I was worried about, how she would deal with all this. Clearly, as she proved throughout her life, she was definitely a one-man woman; she lived to be 92 and didn't have a cup of coffee with another guy. So it was a tough one for her.

CLINE

Also, by way of follow-up questions, for the record, what were your elementary and junior high schools that you attended in the Bronx?

MOSS

P.S. 28 and Crestin Junior High [School].

CLINE

OK. And going forward a little bit, you mentioned that when you were thinking of going into advertising, that you were an English major and an art minor: what did you do in the way of art training, and how did you find your introduction into the art world, if there was any at that point?

MOSS

I went to some design classes. That sort of quote-"artists" of the school -- I liked them, they seemed interested in what they were trying to pull off. Visiting museums, and starting to get a fix of what it was. I was always curious about art, because in our living room, we had one sort of print over the couch; I remember it was a picture of a bridge or some old-time picture. And I always felt if I had any money at all, I was going to fill up every wall I had with something. Start with photographs, then get into posters, whatever. If I could afford a painting, I got it, and if I could afford more than one, let's just put them up there. So I just had a hunger to see more interesting things in the art world, and it at least provided, from a sight point of view, something extraordinary and different from what I was used to. And, you know, I had the benefit of Manhattan, you know; it was just a subway ride, a colossal experience every time, just to see the buildings and realize how small you were and how big

everything else was, and what you were sort of up against, in a way. So that was my taste into the art situation.

CLINE

What about your own training did you get, in the way of a taste of design, perhaps, or making art?

MOSS

I think I remember some little attempts at it. I mean, I passed the class, but at the time, nobody ever said, "Gee, that's amazing; you're the next [Ernst Ludwig] Kirchner," or something, you know.

CLINE

Yeah. You also touched on a few things, for example, a club downtown in the Village [Greenwich Village] that you mentioned visiting.

MOSS

Yeah, I'm trying to remember that club.

CLINE

And some time spent in the Catskills, and the connection there being girls. (laughter) How did you find your life going in terms of the opposite sex, so to speak? What was that like at that time, at that age, in your situation, meeting the female and having that experience, and especially going to an all-boys high school -- what was that like?

MOSS

Yeah, and an all-boy junior high.

CLINE

Oh, really? Wow.

MOSS

So my relationships with the opposite sex were kind of -- a little retarded; I mean that in the sense that I wasn't very quick at it. My brother didn't -- who was, as I say, so much older than I am, and didn't really have much to tell me on it. My father pretty much was more of a -- at least he made certain insinuations that I understood a little bit, but he never had the chance to talk to me, really. (laughter) And I sort of learned on the street, pretty much, what was going on. And I was still very shy, and it wasn't like I could ask a girl out on a date, because I really didn't -- I mean, I could take her to a movie, maybe, but I'd have to work pretty hard for her purchase price of the ticket. So I'd have to really -- so I was always sort of conscious of the cost, you know? I mean, it's sort of the old story of, you know -- I mean in a certain way, I used to think I'd get laid if I had a car, and then I got a car and I still didn't get laid, you know? And then if I got an apartment, well, that would help; then I got the apartment and it still didn't happen. And finally, when I just forgot about the whole thing, well, then it started to happen for me. And it's as simple as that.

CLINE

You also mentioned the basic training, the National Guard, going to the South, South Carolina, to be precise. And you said that was pretty eye-opening, and one of the things you mentioned was especially being a Jew in the South. Can you elaborate on that a bit, specifically?

MOSS

Yeah, just to go backwards, also as I mentioned, going to Brooklyn College, which is a coeducational school where most people would, you know, feather their nests, so to speak, in any kind of relationship or whatever. It was an hour and a half each way for me, so I surely wasn't going to go back there on a date, you know? So I perhaps took out maybe two girls in four years from Brooklyn College, and that had to be payoff day to do that, because it was -- So anyway, so I started a bit late and all that stuff, and probably am still a bit late, but I'm really happy where I am. But the point I'm making, in Columbia, South Carolina, in Fort Jackson, 1958 -- summer of '58 -- there were Jewish girls in the vicinity, and they would have parties for Jewish soldiers on a Friday night. And we were allowed, because they do recognize -- the services do recognize religious occupations and things -- we were allowed to leave the bunks, leave the premises of the base, leave the base on a Friday night, to attend these semi-religious situations. Friday night also happened to be -- I forget the name for it, but that's the night we were also supposed to clean our -- not our bunks, but our --

CLINE

The whole building?

MOSS

The building.

CLINE

The barracks?

MOSS

The barracks. Thank you. And so, you know, the fact that I didn't pitch on a Friday night didn't help me too much. But I was -- it was a challenge for me, I mean -- I enjoyed meeting a lot of different people there that quite honestly, one or two of which I still correspond with today, one of whom turned out to be a professional football player who recently wrote me a letter. So I just got along, you know? I managed to make this -- determined to get along with people, especially guys that I was working with, and God forbid fighting with. So they were surprised that I was Jewish, for some reason. I said, "Yeah, I am, I'm afraid, and I'm going to get a really nice sandwich somewhere, and I'm sorry you're not joining me." And so I'd meet some girls here and there, and whatever it was, and that was nice. But again, I was -- it was not the place to -- and I wasn't there for any length of time to do any real kind of damage, so to

speak. I did have a car down there, which was quite amazing, and I did have a couple of parking situations, but it wasn't much more than that.

CLINE

OK. I want to move into the beginnings of your work in the musical world as a promo man, going back to some of your discussions about that. Oh, wait, I have one question I wanted to ask you. Going back earlier, you mentioned very kind of glancingly that you suffered from, I think you said, a touch of polio, when you were around 14 or 15?

MOSS

Right.

CLINE

How did that affect you, or kind of affect your view of life? Because that took you totally out of commission for --

MOSS

For a whole summer, yeah. Well, I remember that my neck hurt, my knees hurt. I had a bit of a fever. And the doctor we had -- we went to one doctor, and he started giving me a pill that made me feel weaker, I think it was a sulphur pill of some kind, which they dispensed in those days. And then we called our local doctor, a guy named Dr. Cohen, who paid house visits for $2 or $3 or something. Just a great guy. And he gave me penicillin, and somehow this seemed to get me going to get my strength back. It reduced the fever, and I was able to recover. You know, and I don't have any -- thank God -- lasting stuff. I still have a touchy back from time to time, and I got a disc in my neck that's a bit out of whack, but I'm pretty grateful, at my age, that I've -- you know, I've been through a couple of surgeries, the usual thing, whatever, and prostate cancer. But the polio, fortunately, seemed to -- didn't leave too much of a mark. I can't say that, because supposedly as you get older, it supposedly regroups, so I don't want to in any way bring it even back. Cancel cancel, as they say. I was out of commission for that summer; I was a pretty good basketball player with the left hand, at that time. Took me a whole year to just get my strength to hit a foul shot. But by the time I was a senior in high school, I was at least playing basketball for the senior team, so I did regroup. I wasn't very good, but I was on the team, and occasionally used my elbows in some way to get close to the basket. But I don't remember two much of the games. But I was, like I say, senior VP, so maybe I was on there only because of political appointment. (laughter)

CLINE

But that was a scary thing at the time. I mean, were you afraid that things were going to be more dire than they were?

MOSS

Oh, yeah. Because one of my close friends at that time had a sister who had had polio, and she was left with a leg brace and great difficulty. So polio was a tremendous scare in those days. People have no idea, but it was just flagging neighborhoods, and people -- everybody knew somebody that was affected by it. And the [Jonas] Salk vaccine was just absolutely a godsend, it was -- at least in neighborhoods like mine, it was -- and I'm sure many other kinds of neighborhoods -- it was just a tremendous life-giving force. That was an amazing discovery. I mean, even later in life, my aunt's daughter had a child, a single mom, that she'd given the vaccine to, but she didn't take it, and she caught polio at the age of like 24, and eventually was reduced to a wheelchair for the rest of her life. It's just a horrible thing, this disease. So anyway, it did take its toll, and I came through it. And again, just to again realize that you better do what you will with the time that you have; it can just be taken away like that. [snaps fingers]

CLINE

So you became this promo man for Marvin Cane; this started at a wedding. What do you think it was that Mr. Cane saw in you that made him finger you as a likely promo guy to work for him?

MOSS

I think it was because I laughed at his jokes. (laughter) Totally. I may have been the one guy in the group that got him, you know, that appreciated him and understood him, and gave him somebody to talk to, in a situation which might have been hard for him to function at. As I say, he was an older guy, let's say he had 15 years on his date, who was the maid of honor, so that made him ancient in our group. And I think the fact that -- as simple as that; I just sort of was someone for him to at least hang out with a little bit. And once the wedding was over, I don't think he saw that girl much longer, really. I'll have to ask him whatever happened to that girl with him. But I think that was it, really. I mean, I was active, I was feeling my oats too by this time; I'd had a couple of summers away; I had a few experiences. Was just starting to -- you know, 21, 22, get into it. So I think that was really it.

CLINE

(laughter) OK. He sensed something.

MOSS

Oh, and I also sang a little doo-wop with a friend of mine, so then maybe he saw that I was somewhat aware of current musical attitudes and where that was going.

CLINE

So you've got this job, and it takes you to radio stations all around -- mostly the East Coast, different cities. You said the first time you'd been to these places, the first time you'd stayed in a hotel. You're going to radio stations: describe, if

you can, what a lot of these radio stations were like in those days. Particularly you mentioned you were going to black stations as well. What were these places and people like back then? Now we're talking the late '50s.

MOSS

Everything was wide open. Everybody was -- I remember mostly people who were really friendly, easy to get along with. I felt we were all in the same situation. I mean, some guys were getting paid; some guys weren't getting paid; some guys had more money to pay; some guys didn't. But I came off on the positive side of this, and as I say, maybe the benefit of a -- not to in any way deprecate anybody else's efforts -- but I thought I really -- you know, once I got into the groove of it, I had a real shot to make something happen; I could make friends with these people. And I realized that the only way I could work was to tell people the truth. I didn't have to -- and I felt that that was the commodity they needed the most. "You mean this record is happening somewhere else? Is it really?" I said, "Yeah; here's the chart. We're #8 in Pittsburg, and I think this record has a shot." "OK, we'll try it." This kind of thing. I mean, because the radio stations were all competing with each other. And when you got to the Dick Clarks or the Alan Freeds who were on TV, they wanted to play the hits, so you generally had to build up a record before they got it, or maybe it was the follow-up of something that they wanted to have first crack at. So you'd have to handle how you handed out these so-called "exclusives," you know, because you generally upset the competing disc jockey or television host, that he didn't get it, and you'd have to give him something else. So it was a question of balancing this thing, and yet having a very truthful relationship with these people, so they understood what you were about. And I loved -- the R&B [rhythm and blues] guys were playing music that I really liked. And they were all just trying to work hard and do well and, you know, promote shows or hops, so to speak, and make some extra money, and could I provide artists for those hops, or do anything to help promote these records. And as I say, even with the whole sense of payola that pervaded, you could get something done; you really could get a record going. But it was hard work; it was touring radio stations with the band, it was, if you will, having performers sing to groups of high school kids lip-syncing the record four feet away from their audience. That sort of thing that's kind of almost silly today, but would happen on a regular kind of basis, because how would they ever reproduce their record live? That was five, six years away; the Beatles sort of changed all that. But it was quite amazing. I just, as I say, made a -- and I met exciting people, you know, in the Brill Building, and people I've been friendly with for years and years, and great composers, people like Burt Bacharach, and people that stayed with me all my life. It was incredible. But yet, I just didn't know how I really fit into the whole thing as a future, because it seemed to me, the only guys that really made any

money were the owners of the companies, or big executives at Columbia [Records] or RCA [Records] or Decca [Records]. And money clearly was in the copyright, if you could write a song, if you could sing a song. That's where the eventual cash was going to go.

CLINE

Yeah. And it's still like that.

MOSS

And it's still like that. (laughter)

CLINE

But what about the racial issue? You know, you're cutting right through a whole cross-section of the country, both in terms of race and probably age as well, to some degree. This is before the Civil Rights Movement really takes off. Did that pose any unique sort of difficulties, or did it matter at all? What was your take?

MOSS

You know, I met Buddy Brown in Baltimore; he invited me to come to the Giants game, [New York] Giants-Baltimore Colts game, THE Baltimore-Giants [game] -- it's considered one of the great games of all time, and I was his guest. I met a guy named Sir Walter Raleigh in Pittsburg, that was his name -- I never really knew his real name, but that was his name, and I stayed in his house when I went to Pittsburg; I drove his car. Dr. Jive, who was a guy named Tommy Smalls, who had a huge following in -- he had a place called Smalls Paradise for a while up in Harlem, in New York, and had to get moved to LA to avoid the payola -- the bust to payola, he had to move and he came to LA; he stayed in my house for three weeks before he got his own place. I almost bought a club with him. I saw very little racial kind of strife where I was. The music business at that time was completely integrated. I mean, maybe down South, it was different, and I heard it was, insofar as the touring situation -- if you were on a bus carrying a lot of recording people that were doing these tours, and you go down South, sometimes the housing was difficult and unique. But I didn't -- I was offered actually the agency GAC, General Artists Corp[oration], which no longer exists, but they did a bunch of those tours and they offered me a job of tour manager, which would have made me more money, but it just would have put me in an area that I didn't see was a future for me, and then being like a head roadie, I didn't want to do that, worry where everybody was at night, and that's not my -- I didn't want that responsibility. So I heard that was difficult, perhaps, still in the South. But the thing that was so unique in those days -- Alan Freed would put a show on, you'd have black and white kids coming to that show. And the thing that upset America, basically, was the sight of black and white kids dancing together at his shows. That's why I believe he got busted. I mean, on the Dick Clark show [American Bandstand],

he was very careful to have white kids dance with white kids, black kids with black kids. But what was really happening is there was a combination of the races. Kids didn't feel the racial thing; they were just having fun, and they were attracted to other people, and so they danced with them. And the parents would worry, perhaps, but at that point, rock and roll was bringing people together. It wasn't a divisive force. I mean, things were much more integrated, in my opinion, in those days than they are today.

CLINE

Yeah, clearly.

MOSS

And I'm saddened by that. And it's all about a reaction, and then the counter-reaction, which is what always goes on. So I didn't feel that, and black DJs were a big part of my beginning, and I respected and really enjoyed everybody I ever met. And there were always guys that were difficult to get to know and everything, and refused to go out for that coffee because they would rather go to coffee with someone else; I could dig that. But if I needed to get to somebody, it was my challenge to get to them in the best way I could, you know? And so I was the kind of promotion man that remembered wifes' birthdays, you know; I remembered the names of the kids. I would be invited -- I would be the representative from the industry they'd invite to their homes. So -- that's not to say they wouldn't invite other guys to their homes, but these guys, all of them, black and white, became my friends; they were my -- they were who I was interested in series, who I'd drop into a radio station at 12, 1 in the morning, bring them a hamburger. It wasn't work for me in those days; i t was fun.

CLINE

Yeah. You had mentioned before, for example, that you met Dick Clark. What was he like back then, other than I guess quite young?

MOSS

He was quite young and very friendly, very nice. He had a manager named Tony at the time, who was his producer, so a lot of things which -- I remember once situation that was really funny, would -- every day we'd go through scheduling whatever it was, and getting an act on his show was a big deal, huge deal. And I'm only laughing because one time, we had the Crests, who had had the big hit "Sixteen Candles". And you know, when they record, they recorded for the TV show, everything very live. And I think at some point they were able to reinsert something, but the Crests was supposed to be in this sort of replica of a boat or rowboat, and the name of the song was "Six Nights a Week". And the camera was supposed to be on them, and they were going to be singing this song while sitting in a boat. And one of the guys, we couldn't find him, I don't know what happened -- they never got to the boat.

CLINE

Missed the boat, literally. (laughter)

MOSS

They missed the boat. And the song went on, and there's the camera, and there's no Crests in the boat. So, "Cut! Cut!" -- you know, one of these things, and I got a strange look or two, because I was usually pretty efficient, but I said, "Man, I don't know what happened to these guys." I trusted one guy, he had to run off and do something, but he'll be back -- he came back, got substantially yelled at, and came in. And the Crests were interesting because they were an interracial group. They were -- a white Italian singer, Johnny Mastro, who went on to do some other things. There was a Puerto Rican guy, a black guy -- it was an interesting group. Nice guys. Anyway, so it slipped up, and Dick didn't hold it against me too much, and whatever that was, whatever it cost to redo. So he -- you know, as I say, we didn't double-date or anything, but he was friendly, he greeted me when I showed him, and he knew my name, which was great, you know, for a kid who was 23. You could see he was going places.

CLINE

Yeah, that's for sure. So, first of all, what was the name of the small record label that Marvin Cane and George Paxton had that you were working for?

MOSS

That was called Co-Ed Records.

CLINE

OK. Here you are, all these people are working in the songwriting and publishing business here in the Brill Building, which of course becomes historic; at the time, I guess it was just where you went to work. You've mentioned Burt Bacharach -- who were some of the people you remember meeting or running into in that building when you would go there? I guess you were on the road a lot of the time, but who were some people in that business that you encountered, or maybe have some memorable experiences with, you know, who were working in that building back then?

MOSS

Well, our office was very interesting, because as a publish -- we were primarily a publishing company, and Marvin's partner was a guy named George Paxton, who had been a pretty successful bandleader. And George had great relationships with Perry Como, and Marvin had Nat [King] Cole, and Marvin had previously managed Vic Damone. Eddie Fisher, he knew quite well. It was part of that mid-'50s thing where those guys were incredibly important. And so if Perry Como did one of your songs, you were pretty assured of it being a pretty decent copyright. And in those days, sheet music really sold, you know; publishers did fairly well, because a piece of sheet music may retail for like $.49, but all it really was was a couple of pieces of paper. And it cost maybe

$.02 to produce, and you'd sell it wholesale for $.25, $.30. And then you'd pay the writer a percentage, a small -- whatever his percentage is of that. But you can make a quarter every piece of sheet music you sold. That was pretty amazing. Then you got the performances, and then you got the mechanics; the mechanicals were off of record sales. And publishers also got paid if, you know, there are instrumental versions of a particular song. After Perry Como had a hit, there was this version and that version, you know. It was a very successful business, publishing, and it still is; it's a great business, and I always enjoyed the creation of a song, and what happens to a song, years and years afterwards, 'cause you can hold onto a copyright a very, very long time. So these guys visited from time to time, so I met them. We also shared the office with a guy named Bill [William] Fix, who was the manager of the Ames Brothers, and was just a terrific guy. He friended me; he had a daughter my age or whatever it was, a son. He always -- "How are you, buddy? What's happening?" -- this kind of thing, tell me what's going on. He was really interested in what was happening. I got to know all the Ames Brothers fairly well. As a matter of fact, one of my first trips to California, they were playing in Palm Springs, I went to see them. They were very friendly to me, very sweet -- very nice guys. A guy named Ivan Mogul, who was a publisher down the hall who was sort of a competitor of Marvin's, he was always, "What's he doing, what's happening?" You know, these guys were -- a very interesting place, the Brill Building, because in that building, literally, you could get on the elevator on the first floor and start humming a tune, and then you'd see somebody pop out on the fourth floor, and by the time you got to the eighth floor, there was a lead sheet already of the tune you had hummed on the way up. It was -- so guys were very secure, and I went to recording sessions that -- where the Crests were recording, or different artists for Co-Ed Records were recording, and everything stopped when the coffee boy showed up. Don't let on to anything, because you literally recorded something, you got it out maybe the next day; it was that easy to get out a single record with a label on it. The process was, let the distributor see if there was any calls for the record quickly, and then you'd press it up and get it out there. It was a very quick, interesting kind of business that way. So I did get to meet Alan Freed, and meet these kind of people. And one of the most interesting things that happened was -- I had gone to school for two years at Brooklyn College with a guy named Bruce Meyerowitz, and we got to be real friendly, because Meyerowitz, Moss, we were always standing in back or in front of each other in these administration lines and applying for classes and things like that. And I stayed at Bruce's house; he was really probably my best friend at Brooklyn College first two years. And then Bruce got really tired of it, and decided he wasn't really much of a student, and he had this incredible voice, and he went to announcing school and became a DJ in

Bermuda for a year or so. And just as I was getting into the game and getting my chops together as a promotion man in New York, Bruce got a job as a newsperson reading the news at [radio station] WINS, which is 50,000 watts, the big radio station in New York that Alan Freed had inhabited for years, and now a very famous jockey named Murray the K had from 7:00 to 11:00 at night, and was the top jock in New York. I'd bring Bruce over to meet Marvin and meet my employer and this and that, and I'd say goodbye to Bruce and he'd be on his way, and then Marvin would just deride me to the whole staff and laugh at me and say, "Hey, you got the newsman here? How many records is he going to play? I hope you didn't charge that cup of coffee on your expense account, because he's a newsman; you want to spend time with newsmen, you're going to be in this business a short time. Every once in awhile, you know, the word "newsman" came up, and everybody would break out into gales of laughter. Well, as you would have it, the station got into a beef with Murray the K, and he took off. And who ended up with his 7:00 to 11:00 shot but my friend Bruce -- now called Morrow -- who soon became Cousin Brucie in New York, and I was the only guy he knew. So I just, you know, couldn't wait to get to the office in the morning to let Marvin know the news. And I was able to confront him with this, and it was like the first time I could really see that I was one up on him, that now people were celebrating me because I had the good fortune to know this guy, he was playing my records two and three times a night, and just introducing himself to other promotion people. And so Marvin and I had a better relationship, I think, a better understanding of each other after that, because I didn't hit him too hard, and I didn't leave to take a bigger job. So it was just sort of fun when those kind of things happen.

CLINE

Sure. You mentioned Burt Bacharach; he was another songwriter at this point in that domain. What are your memories of him way back when?

MOSS

Well, Burt and I were making about the same money; he was a piano player for the Ames Brothers, then he became -- well, he started being the piano player accompanist for Vic Damone, and that's how he met Marvin and he got into the Ames, learning his way. And just starting to write a song or two, picking up a writing partner. I don't know if he'd quite met Hal David yet, but he was writing with his brother Mack [David], he was writing different things with different people. So the accompanying part was tough on Burt, because it took him on the road a lot. But Burt loved the life, and we just got to be friends. It's just amazing how it all just came together. I mean, there were those kind of people -- I met pretty much everybody in the Brill Building at one time or another. The [Jerry] Lieber and [Mike] Stoller, those guys were doing what they were doing. It was such a -- the business at the time was so small, you know, so very small;

it was largely singles, and it was Perry Como still selling albums, and people were selling singles, going out on these funny little tours -- there really wasn't much of a substance to it.

CLINE

But very highly competitive.

MOSS

Very highly competitive, and there was Elvis [Presley], so there were those kind of big stars, Bill Haley and those kind of guys, and Johnny Ray. There were people coming up. But the public still had to deal with it, you know, the whole life of Elvis as you read about it and what happened -- the only year he was ever really on TV was 1956, you know? And what he had to go through, singing -- literally singing to a hound dog on the Steve Allen show as a joke, because nobody took it seriously. Everybody thought rock and roll was going to just fade out as a trend, you know? I met writers in the Brill Building in the years of '58 and '59 that said, "I'm saving my good songs, because this is going to be over in awhile, and then the good stuff will come back." Sure, buddy. Anyway, but I guess that touched me a little bit, because I was sort of getting a little tired of the music, and I thought maybe I could take what I learned and move it somewhere else, and that also had a hand with wanting to go to California.

CLINE

So how did that happen?

MOSS

Well, a couple of things. I worked in a couple of movies before I went in the Army with a guy named Everett Chambers, who initially was going to use me as his production assistant for a TV show in California, it was a show of John Cassavetes', and I was all pumped up for it, and then I read that Everett actually never -- I remember earlier, Everett had got the job, and I said, "Well, when do we leave?" He said, "Well, it's good news and bad news. I got the job, but John has his own nephew or something and he's going to do the job." But at least I kept in touch with Everett and asked him to see what was happening always on the West Coast. And then this guy Jimmy -- the Ames Brothers' manager, Bill Fix, fix me up with an interview with William Morris [Agency] on the West Coast to perhaps start off as an agent. And so with those two leads, basically, I came out here. And that was right before my 25th birthday, April of '60.

CLINE

OK. And you had Aunt Helen out here too.

MOSS

And I had my Aunt Helen, so I stayed with her. I think I came out in the wintertime, more like March. I took a week out here, beginning of March kind of thing, and then I came back after a week's vacation, and then I told Marvin I

was going to leave. And Marvin, bless his heart, he didn't want me to leave. He said, you know, "Don't go out there, it's a barbecue pit." A guy like Sid -- very effete songwriter, Sid Shaw, said to me, "What do you want to grow up to be? It's just a barbecue; there's nothing out there. You lose your brains out there; you'll screw your brains out. You'll have nothing at the end of this. You want to go for a vacation, fine, but this is where life is." People that -- and Marvin, every night he took me to dinner and he said, "You know, you're really making a mistake, kid." I said, "Look, I'm going to take a shot." I'm not even close to getting married; my mother was the hardest to prepare for it, because she thought she'd never see me again, and she was absolutely a mess of tears. I said, "Look, Mom --" and by that time, I had situated her back in the Bronx with some friends in the same building, and so commuting to work was easier -- because we'd had a year together in Manhattan, and that didn't work at all, really, because we never saw each other; I was out all night. And part of her job was to phone me in the morning and wake me up, and I'd have to walk from my cot, my couch, wherever I was sleeping, to the phone, and by the time I got there I was really upset to hear the phone ringing. And she would say to me, you know, "Do you know what you said to me this morning?" (laughter) So it was like one of those things. So we were not actually -- we were starting to outgrow each other a little bit. But I had to get her out of there, and I did, and we were lucky to get her into a nice place in the Bronx. And it was about seven years later I moved her to LA. So there I went; I went to California, you know.

CLINE

When you first came out here, what was your impression?

MOSS

Immediate, immediate love. Immediate climate thing. I just love the fact that the buildings are smaller, and everything was not so formidable; everything was not so much in your face. This was 1960 -- I got here right before the convention that nominated Robert Kennedy (says Robert but means John F. Kennedy) for President in the county of Los Angeles. Amazing times. So I just felt completely on an up; I got -- after -- oh, well, I stayed with my aunt for about six weeks. I went to the Morris office, I may have mentioned, for the interview, and they said they'd hire me and put me in their mailroom for $35 a week or something, and I said, "Look, I mean, I'm making $140 now. This ridiculous; can't you at least make me a secretary?" That gets -- that's an $80, I knew that was an $80 a week. "No, everybody here has to start in the mailroom." I said, "Well, thanks." So I couldn't do that. But then my friend Everett was out of work when I got out here; he was on the unemployment lines, so we'd stand next to each other in the unemployment line for a few weeks, trying to hook up with something. And then I looked up some music people and found out what was going on, and it turned out that an independent

promotion man in town had lost a couple of accounts, and I knew both those accounts; one was in Philadelphia, one was in New York. One was Jamie Guyden Records, which was Duane Eddy, and one was Bell Records, which had a lot of different stuff. And I called up, and I got those accounts. And all of the sudden, I was an independent promotion man. And one paid me $75 a week, and one paid me $100 a week. I had to pay my own expenses. But surreptitiously, I was in business for myself. It's an interesting thing, being in business for yourself. There's absolutely no continuity, besides what you make of it. So if you want to work 24 hours a day, you've got nobody but yourself to either congratulate you or thank you or pat you on the back. And there's no consistency; there's no weekly wage, because you're on your own. And some people have a hard time adjusting to that; they like to know they have a paycheck every week. And for me, with the kind of accounts that I had, I wouldn't get paid for weeks at a time. And then, you know, if I'd scream and cry and yell, then I'd get my money, and I'd open up the mailbox and there'd be like $1,200 in there, which was a ton of money. It'd be exciting; it would be fantastic. So I started working in California the same day that Alan Freed started out here, in a station called KDAY, which was a daytimer, which was the work he could get after being busted out in New York. And though Alan and I were not great friends in New York, because he was dealing with all the label owners and those big shots. I was one of the few guys in California who really understood who he was and who he had been. And we stuck pretty close to each other; we had dinner two or three nights a week and always checked in with each other. And he was a warm and generous man; I liked his wife a lot, they were very nice to me. And it was obvious that Alan really liked to drink, and, you know, I would understand that; I could drink, but I couldn't drink like him. And always when we went to dinner, I would start off having some kind of a sandwich in my little apartment, because by the time we ordered dinner, usually at Patsy's here, Damor, Villa Capri, which was on Highland [Avenue], it would probably be just like, Patsy would come out and say, "Alan, it's time we were closing; what do you want?" By 11:00, we'd probably get a steak or something. Anybody else that had come to dinner with us by that time was just gone. (laughter)

CLINE

Blotto. (laughter)

MOSS

Absolutely gone. But I was fine, because I'd sort of paced myself and understood this guy. It's interesting; I got to meet his son, Lance [Freed], when he was 14, and Lance went to UCLA, and when he was 19, we hired him as a college rep, and today, Lance is still running our old publishing company, Rondor Music, and it's quite amazing. He's a great kid, like my nephew, in a

way; he's just a great guy. So that relationship was very powerful for me, and it gave me some prominence, because I knew Alan Freed, and I could introduce people to him, and other promotion men, and made it easier for Alan to get into the music business and gave me a sort of prominence, as I say. So I picked up more accounts, and you know, all of the sudden, the music was starting to get interesting; Sam Cooke was in LA, and people like that; these songs started becoming a little more sophisticated, a little more interesting. And I was making money. One year, I think my first year out here, I made almost $30,000, which even with expenses out and traveling and dinners, it was a really good wage. And I really wasn't sure where it was going to take me. It was still -- is this what I'm doing in the future? But I worked it hard, I had other relationships; I kept in touch with other agents from the Morris office that I'd gotten to know, and socialized with those guys, and kept in touch with Everett to see what he was doing, he ended up producing Peyton Place or something, which was a very big show. So I stayed in touch, and it was all a question of where this was going to take me. But I love California, and I was back in New York a lot, so I did get to see my mom, I would say, three, four times a year, when different accounts would call me back on conventions; all the conventions were usually either in Atlantic City or Miami. And the business was starting to grow a little bit.

CLINE

Where were you living then?

MOSS

Well, I had a place on Lanewood [Avenue], I had an apartment on Lanewood the first couple of years, right after I moved out of my aunt's place with my first few checks. It was $125 a month, it was a single apartment; usually I slept in the thing -- I think it had a bar separating the kitchen and the so-called living room; I had my own parking place, which was, for a New Yorker, amazing. Unbelievable. Inside, underneath the building. The place had a swimming pool, you know? I mean, I thought I was in paradise. It was incredible. And strangely enough, it was two blocks away from the lot we were eventually to buy, Herb [Alpert] and I, at A&M records, which was the Chaplin [Studios] lot on La Brea [Avenue]; it was right up the block from La Brea. Right across the street was basically a music business hangout; it was a bar and a good restaurant, and it's where a lot of people went. Liberty Records was down the block, and I knew a lot of guys from Liberty Records, got to be friends with those guys. And the women -- like I say, the community was very welcoming to me, and the access in California was greater with the artists and performing people. I'd sit in on a Phil Spector session, just to be invited to hear the formation of these incredible musical riffs, and be in the studio, whereas as I say, my boss in New York would close to door to anybody walking in. California was wide open.

Producers were open about it. And the industry was more transparent, and it was just a lot easier to get around, by car and park -- you could park on Sunset Boulevard, if I was visiting KGFJ, which was the R&B station, which also housed a guy named Johnny Magnus who was a fantastic disc jockey at the time, with amazing taste. It was just easy; you just park and you walk in. You take a guy to lunch or dinner -- it was my life, it was fun.

CLINE

What about live music? What do you remember about what was going on here then, or what some of the venues might have been for that, and did you go to those? Did you hear a lot of live music at all?

MOSS

Well, I mean, the best live music was downtown, the California Club; see people like Johnny "Guitar" Watson. And I went to a lot of those clubs, the It Club, with -- when Tommy came out, Tommy Smalls, we'd hit those sort of clubs together and see what was what. We'd talk about buying the club together, you know, see what guys wanted. Hollywood Bowl, you know, the odd show. I don't even remember going to too much live entertainment, to tell you the truth, but if I did, it was downtown. Coconut Grove, take some DJs, Tony Bennett, or -- I worked for Kapp Records, so if Jane Morgan, who's since become Jerry Weintraub's wife, Jane Weintraub, who is a very important artist for Kapp Records was -- an artist I had playing there, I could bring DJs and charge it off or whatever. So the Cocoanut Grove was a huge place in those days. I remember taking my mom there when she visited. So it was before, you know, still before -- pre-Beatles, so still kind of quaint, in a way.

CLINE

Yeah, right. And before the scene on the Sunset Strip really started up.

MOSS

Right.

CLINE

And you mentioned these sessions you were able to sit in on; you mentioned Phil Spector. Start with Phil Spector; what were some of those sessions that you were able to see, and what were they like?

MOSS

Well, the "wall of sound" was a brand-new concept at that time. I mean, violins had been used in rock and roll records before, but it wasn't the fact that it was so gigantic, and to be able to plant a voice inside of all that. You know, you're working with two or three tracks; it wasn't like you had a 16-track or 32-track or 64-track, you know -- the way the guys record now, you can have a voice here and a fiddle here and, you know. In those days, you sort of had to mix while you were working. And it was just amazing, you know, what the guitar player was doing and what everybody's role was in this situation. We were both

distributed by Sid Talmadge, who was on Pico Boulevard, you know, the record distributors were on Pico Boulevard, and I would probably be on Pico Boulevard three mornings a week picking up sampled of records that my accounts had sent in, or seeing how talking to the salespeople about how a record was going, you know. And Phil's promotion man in those years was a guy named Sonny Bono. So we'd sort of sit in meetings together, occasionally date the same women, but I never got to Cher, I had nothing to do there. But they were tremendous.

CLINE

That was later in. (laughter)

MOSS

But Phil, you know, is just making these records, and they were -- you could really understand the power of the studio and where things were going; it wasn't just street corner stuff anymore, it was what really interesting producers were doing, and that transformed the business, and to become more of a producer thing. It was always -- you wanted the songs to be simpler because you wanted more and more people to sing them on corners and be able to get the sheet music and do that. But now it was getting more and more difficult to duplicate different sounds, because these producers were so into making great productions. And you could see the game changing somewhat. And he was very innovative, and he had just an immense talent.

CLINE

Did you meet any of the session musicians who became famous back them? I imagine a number of them not -- just but a few years later worked for you and Mr. Alpert eventually.

MOSS

Yeah -- well, yeah, we worked at Gold Star [Studios]; we used Larry Levine, who was Phil's -- was Phil's engineer. We produced -- "The Lonely Bull" was at Gold Star, a lot of the same guitar players, Tommy Tedesco and those guys. And Earl Palmer on the drums -- great players, the handful of amazing studio musicians that made tons and tons of hit records. And we eventually had a deal with Phil; Phil eventually was with A&M in 1969. And produced, by the way, our only top-ten record that year, which is saying something. And it's quite amazing; my other interesting -- I'm jumping ahead, but years later, I would say three or four years later when A&M was already established and we were putting out records, and I ran into Phil at our distributor in New York, I'd play one of our new records, and this guy'd say -- Sammy Weiss would say, "Yeah, that's good. Jerry, it's nice. Something's happening; I'll call you." One of those things. And then Phil would put on a record; he'd say, "Phil, I'll take 13,000 of this one, and I'll start with 6,500 of that one." And I'd sit there and I'd say, well, I can't blame him; I know those records are just going to move. And Phil gave

me a ride home in his limo and we chatted for awhile, and it was a nice moment. And realized, you know -- those trips made me realize we had to make better records, as simple as that. It's just -- if we're going to compete on that level, we better get hot; we better stretch out a little bit.

CLINE

Right. What was he like as a person back then?

MOSS

Phil was a character, always was a character. But he -- again, for people in the business, I didn't find him strange at all. He was quirky, but all geniuses, if you can call him that, and certainly you could call him that at that time, had something different about them. And we were starting to develop those kinds of people, and we allowed them their differences, in a way, allowed them their peculiarities. Because what do you do with a genius? You leave him alone. You don't expect them to completely conform to -- it's like any other game. So we were starting to develop these kinds of people, and they started taking over record companies and being their own bosses, and -- or at least partnering up with different people, and there were different phases. And these old labels that sort of just catered to picking up records by street corner people, and started finding it harder to exist in this environment.

CLINE

Yeah. So I know there's a little uncertainty about this, but how did you meet -- and when did you meet -- Herb Alpert then?

MOSS

Well, I believed I met Herb when he was still partners with Lou Adler -- well, I know I knew him during that period of time, and we'd run into each other from time to time, and we always had a word for each other -- "How you doing? What's going on?" And they were producers and arrangers, and they had produced like Jan & Dean, and had some success. And they were hired by a -- at one point, they were hired by an East Coast manufacturer to replicate -- in other words, cover -- early West Coast hits, and then ship them back to this guy, 'cause he had the East Coast wired. So a song like "Monster Mash", they would cover and then send it back to this guy, Larry, and he would have an East Coast version of "Monster Mash", sell a lot of records. So but then Larry supposedly didn't pay Herb and Lou, and so the money drained out so much, and -- you know, as I say, now Herb thinks we met during the time he was back there promoting one of those records Now, we might have, because I had a good friend that worked for this guy Larry and he might have introduced us. The more I'm thinking about it, it's a possibility; it was just a "hi," you now, whatever, because things were going pretty fast. But nevertheless, Herb and Lou decided to go their separate ways. They also had another partner called -- 'cause Herb -- it was called Herb B. Lou, and B. was the B. Mitchel Reed, who

was a very famous disc jockey and a great friend of all of ours, a great, great guy. And -- but when the payola thing happened, Mitch couldn't be involved in a record-production thing any longer, either overtly or covertly, so to speak. So he had -- then it was just Herb and Lou, and they got along and are still amazing, probably best friends. But Herbie was constantly being mentioned, how good looking he was, would he like to try something else, and decided this was the point that maybe he would be an actor. And he got a manager, and so he and Lou split up the partnership, and the way they split it up was that Lou got Jan & Dean, and Herbie got the two-track Ampex tape recorder. That literally was the division of assets. And Lou went on to have some hits eventually still with Jan & Dean, and the tape recorder became the main asset of A&M Records when we started in our little garage set-up, which was kind of funny. So anyway, once they sort of split up, and then, you know -- and I was friendly with both of them, but Herbie seemed to be a little more open to my set of jokes at the time, and often we'd sort of sit at his apartment, he was then married with a small child, and would just listen to records. You know, "Here's what I'm working on;" "I like this one;" "I'm not so sure about this one;" I got this..." And he was interested in the game. And then I'd hear what he was doing, and occasionally I'd hear his trumpet. Then sometimes we'd go out for an evening, and he'd sit in on a piano bar and play, and I'd try to pick up somebody, whatever it was, saying, "That guy's a friend of mine," and all this kind of thing. So it all kind of was very interesting, and I love the way he played horn, it was very different, very unique. And I, at the same time, I had been working with different other producers, because by this time I realized I had to get in the studio, I had to try something other than just promoting these things. All of the sudden, I started feeling -- you know, I was starting to live a very good life in LA for a young man; I had money, I had a car, I had an apartment -- and all of a sudden, I didn't really feel like going out at 2:00 in the morning to see the all-night guy, I had other things I wanted to do. I did want to relax a little bit more, and I realize that as good as these legs are, they're not going to last me another couple of years at the same pace, and I'm going to probably not be as effective. So I'd better, if I'm going to stay here, try something else. So I started a publishing company, and I started taking -- publishing copyrights in lieu of fees. In other words, give me the b-side of a song, and see what happens, because if the record's hot, the b-side'll mean a couple of cents to me per record. And getting to understand at least the mechanics of organizing a copyright and registering it and all this kind of stuff, which is a little technical, but not too serious. So -- and then I started producing records, investing and producing it with other people. And then, you know, make a record for $200, sell it for $400, you know, and keep a piece, keep a percentage point to different people, like Chess [Records] would buy a record

for me, or this guy would buy a record, or that, you know, and try one producing partner. And I had actually two guys that I produced records with; one was a country western guy, eventually became a country western comedian and disc jockey, and another guy was a big R&B producer. So I did have at least some connection with whatever it was.

CLINE

What were their names?

MOSS

One guy was Don Bowman, and another guy was Smith, I think his name was -- it could have been Jimmy Smith, but I'm not exactly certain. But I realized, those productions -- because those guys had their own sort of taste, and because I was coming in as the sort of newcomer, they were kind of running things; I really couldn't get a whole lot done. And so I made a record with an actor that was on one of the doctor shows, and Richard Chamberlain had done a hit record kind of three or four months earlier, and he was a doctor, and I figured --

CLINE

Dr. Kildare. (laughter)

MOSS

Yeah, one of those things; he had a hit record or something. And I thought the connection -- this guy could be a star someday, he was an attractive guy -- oh, he was married to Everett's ex-wife, so that's my connection there. And I knew her fairly well. So I made a record with him, and I used Herbie's trumpet as sort of an instrumental break in the record. And so Herb knew I was making this record, and then he played me a record he made using his son's name, Dore Alpert, and he'd recorded like two songs for RCA doing this as sort of a sideline while he was trying to act, he'd keep his hand in and make records as Dore Alpert. They were vocals primarily. But RCA had let him go, and he had made this record for spec. And his record, you know -- he said he had about $400 on his record, and I had about the same in mine, and by this time we were hanging out and getting along just as sort of friends. And we started thinking, well, what if? Let's put both these records on the same label, 50/50; you're the artist on this record so you should get something for being the artist, but after that, for whatever profit we have -- and whatever you wrote, you should have that to yourself, but the publishing should be 50/50. So we literally wrote out checks each for $100 and put it in a checking account, $200 in a checking account, to make up enough records, both of these records, to service them and see what was what. And we called the label Carnival Records, because everybody had names. And we used Carnival because that was the name of a Broadway show that was traveling.

CLINE

So the Dore Alpert song was "Tell It to the Birds", I guess?

MOSS

Yeah.

CLINE

And the other tune was "Love is Back in Style"?

MOSS

Yeah.

CLINE

Charlie Robinson. Who's that?

MOSS

He was the husband of --

CLINE

Oh, he's the doctor?

MOSS

He was the doctor and the actor. Nice guy whose career -- you know, he was a working actor for a lot of years; I don't know what's happened to Charlie. And after "Tell It to the Birds" happened a little bit, we were able to get everybody on the record in LA, get it on the radio, and then we serviced "Love is Back in Style", and nobody really liked it very much. And I remember Charlie's wife came to our little garage, and she was very unhappy with me. She was really angry. "You didn't do it for Charlie!" She was an angry manager, the first of many that I was going to meet. Managerial person, anyway. She's a nice lady, but she was really upset with me. I said, "Look, I tried. I just -- unfortunately, the first record got -- not unfortunately, but the first record got the action, and this record, they just didn't -- they didn't like it." So anyway, we went on from there.

CLINE

Yeah. And you had a garage as your operating base.

MOSS

Well, it was the garage in back of Herbie's house, and there was a piano, the two-track tape machine, and a phone with two lines on it. And a desk for me. And that's where we worked out of. And I at the time still had my independent business, so I would work other records. But primarily everybody knew "Tell It to the Birds" was my record, and when I finally got Bobby Dale, who was a very good friend of mine, an incredibly tasty guy, he was a great disc jockey on KFWB, to play the record after sitting with him and giving him all the reasons all night long, to finally him saying to me, "I got it, scooter. I got it." We'll get into it tomorrow. We ended up selling about 7-8,000 of the record in Southern California, which brought in a few thousands bucks, and got Wink Martindale, who was then an A&R man for Dot Records, to get interested enough in the record to offer us national distribution and give us $750 as a -- to buy the record for the United States with the exception of Southern California. Well,

the United States and the world, with the exception of Southern California, so we could keep our little record in LA, and he had the rights for the world. So we ended up with about $3-4,000 after everything was said and done, which was a fair amount of money, enough to get us so we actually produced something as a team for -- I think Laurie Records, I think a thing called Hello for the -- "Hooray for the Big Slow Train" [by the Diddley Oohs] or something, and made another couple of hundred bucks doing that.

CLINE

This is '62 still then?

MOSS

Yeah.

CLINE

How old were you guys then?

MOSS

About 27. And then one night, Herbie had come back from doing a casual, meaning he'd worked a bar mitzvah, with a guy named Sol Lake, who is a keyboard player, older guy. You know, the combination of instruments sometimes at a bar mitzvah is always kind of strange. And he started playing this melody on the piano, and it really was an intriguing melody, and another part of Herb's and my friendship was that we used to go to the bullfights together in Tijuana, and we started doing that like '61, and for me it was so fantastic, because I was a big reader of [Ernest] Hemingway, and I remember his articles in Look magazine about the great bullfighting mano y mano between [Luis Miguel] Dominguin and [Antonio] Ordonez. And so I was fascinated by bullfighting, and very desirous of travel, and here I was a two-hour car drive, basically, and I was in a foreign country. And I just loved it, and we became kind of bullfighting aficionados. I mean, we watched -- there was a bullfighting channel at that time on local TV, we'd go to some bullfights -- we were really sort of into it. And another thing that happened prior to that was that because I was familiar with what was hitting on the charts and doing things, there was a record that had happened about six months earlier called "Mexico" that was made by a bass player in Nashville [Bob Moore], a most important bass player, and his label wanted to do something for him. And they gave him this chance to make a round-the-world-type concept record. And one track he did, he did a song called "Mexico". And the rest of the songs, there was an Austrian song, there was a this song, a that song, but there was no follow-up to the record, and he didn't want to just make a follow-up, I'm told, to another Mexican record. And it was a mariachi sound, and it was a huge hit. I realized it wasn't a follow-up, and I realized there was some appetite for this music. And so I said to Herbie, I said, "We got to make -- this is the trumpet record. Let's make it a trumpet record." And he really got into it, and we made

this record, and we made up a band called the Tijuana Brass, and he liked it so much, he said, "Do you mind if I put my name on it?" And I said, "Of course." So the first label came out, Tijuana Brass featuring Herb Alpert. And I mean, Herbie played all the trumpets on the record, which was an amazing job, because ping-ponging all these sounds of a two or three-track tape recorder now. And the sound was incredible, and we went back to Tijuana to get the crowd noises; we literally had crowd noises recorded at the bullring by an engineer named Ted Keep that we were working with. And I remember when Herbie called Sol Lake to play for him on the phone his song, and Sol said, "What's that?" and he says, "Well, that's your song 'Twinkle Star', but it's now called 'The Lonely Bull'." And we published the song, Herb and I, it was our first -- because Sol was an ASCAP [American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers] writer, it was, I believe, an Almo [Music] copyright. And we put the record out on a new label, A&M, because by that time, we realized Carnival, they were not just one label but two that we ran into, there could have been many more, and we were stuck for the name of a label, so we figured we might as well go with our initials. It sounds strange in the beginning, but if it's good enough, it'll last. And so we called it A&M and devised this little logo with the trumpet in it and put the record out. And the rest, as they say, is why we're sitting here. (laughter)

CLINE

And that's a good place to end it for today. Obviously, that's a very large milestone, and we'll get more into what happened from that point on, because obviously everything happened from that point on. And I'm particularly going to be interested in wanting to know a little bit more about how something as unusual as that, if only because, if nothing else, instrumental music could become such a hugely popular musical experience in this country and beyond in the early '60s. It's unprecedented, really. So we'll pick that subject up next time we meet, and thank you for today.

MOSS

All right. Thank you, Alex. [END OF Jerry Moss Session Two]

1.3. Session 3 (February 6, 2007)

CLINE

All right. It's getting a reading. Today is Tuesday, February 6, 2007. It's a new year, been through the holidays, other events, and we are reconvening here at the Almo Sounds [Inc.] office in Beverly Hills with Jerry Moss; this is Alex Cline interviewing. Good morning again.

MOSS

Good morning.

CLINE

Thanks for making the time. We got up to the point of the very beginning of A&M Records last time, discussed the genesis of what became the hit record "The Lonely Bull", the early days of A&M being essentially you and Herb Alpert in Herb's garage with a phone line and a piano. And I did have a couple of follow-up questions about some of the material we covered last time before we get back into the chronology of the A&M story. One of the main things I wanted to get back to you, you mentioned in our last session a lot about Alan Freed, whom you got to know I guess pretty well during the time that he relocated here and was on [radio station] KDAY briefly, after his sort of unceremonious firing in New York after the payola scandal of 1960. I wanted to get onto this topic of it because for one thing, you intimated that you thought a lot of what happened with the payola scandal was not so much about payola but about some of the racial implications happening at that time in the earlier days of rock and roll, perhaps the current concern of parents, the concern of certain parties, people having a lot of fear of racial mixing and things at rock events, and the rise of rock and roll music I guess contributing to people's notions of teenage delinquency and things like that. And you were certainly right in the center of all this, working for somebody who is not only promoting records but trying to get them broadcast on the radio. First of all, I know this is sort of a big general question, but what was your take on the payola scandal and on the whole payola situation, which I realize was just business as usual back in those days, and particularly as it relates to what came after what is perceived as the change, but perhaps isn't really so different, in the wake of the payola scandal, and the significance of this in relation to the emerging rock and roll music at the time, which would have been -- this is the late '50s now.

MOSS

Oh, boy. That's a big question. I don't know if I mentioned it earlier, but I loved the guy I worked for in New York, the guy that sort of discovered me, Marvin Cane, I think I told you that. But I had it worked out with Marvin early on, when I realized what was going on, because I really wanted to see if I had what it took to make it in this business. And I asked, you know -- I'll deliver a record here and there to somebody he might have been "taking care of," but I only wanted to be associated with jocks [disc jockeys] that you didn't have to pay. And I thought I could get them to play my records -- first of all if they were good records is number one, then number two, because they appreciated the information I gave them about the music, and they appreciated the manner in which I presented our material, you know -- ego-filling stuff like that. So as I said earlier, I delivered some records to Alan Freed when he was a major star in New York, but I didn't really know him that well, I was in the studio and I watched the way he worked and I was fascinated by him, because he was so

huge. But I was the one guy in California when he came out here that understood that whole phenomenon, you know. And because he did -- he had met me, and perhaps remembered me out of some glimmer of his recollection, but we were two kindred souls, both out of New York and both basically starting on the same day. And I really dug the guy; I thought he had a great sense of humor about things, and was generally just really excited about music, he loved a good record. And he loved show business, he loved promoting artists and putting stage shows together; he was a natural at it. And he got friendly with all the promoters and friendly with the record company owners, and he would take them out to dinner, you know what I'm saying? It wasn't like just money for money's sake, he died broke, so it wasn't like he was stashing away a bunch of things. And on top of everything, I'm very beholden to him, because I met his son Lance [Freed] when he was 14, and Lance came to work for us; Lance was our first college rep at A&M. And then eventually worked his way up to being my assistant, so to speak, and then he got stolen away from me by our head of publishing to work for Chuck Kaye in our publishing area, and is now one of the greatest music publishers in the world, Rondor Publishing Company, ran that for years and years and years and still runs it, and it's now been annexed by Universal Music. So I've got, needless to say, great affection for Lance, and I'll always remember Alan. So I like those jocks. I like the fact that they like the music, and they got excited about it, and I don't remember any incident where anyone could buy a #1 record, that was just impossible. You can't buy your way into the public's emotional juggernaut; you have to earn your way there, you have to have something good. So buying or payola might have given you a head's up or a bit of a step up in getting on the radio to get heard, but it didn't ensure you were going to have a hit by any means. There's all kinds of payola; I mean, I don't have to elaborate to you, whether you're a contractor, whether you're a lobbyist, whether you're -- and they keep blaming the music business for wanting to exploit their materials in different and sundry ways. You know, this -- let's go to the Federal Communications Commission, you know, and let's remember a time when at least radio stations were competitive with each other, instead of all being owned today by maybe three people, where there is no competition, with these three people not just controlling music, but they control the thought of America. And that's just dangerous and terrible, and different administrations have allowed big media to grow and prosper, and I think this country's lost a lot of independent thought because of it.

CLINE

Right. And what about the racial component to this? I mean, outside from the fact that there's a certain sort of sign of the times, racially-speaking, there's also the scenario that involves ASCAP [American Society of Composers, Authors,

and Publishers] and BMI [Broadcast Music, Inc.], and the racial implications there. What do you remember about this whole thing unfolding, and what were your feelings about it at the time, especially when it hit the hearings and all that, and really big, scary stuff?

MOSS

Yeah, I don't remember, frankly, too much about it. The one recollection I have of all that time was that I was on the job about -- trying to think -- well, maybe a year or so, and there was a big convention in Miami -- I believe it was 1959 -- it could have been '58, but I believe it was -- Co-Ed Records, that was my company by this time, it had a couple of hits with a group called the Crests -- my first record, as I think I told you, was a big hit called "Sixteen Candles". And my boss, Marvin, took me to Miami; that was the first time we'd ever sort of even been on the road together, and we had separate situations and never really saw each other. (laughter) He had his own agendas and I had mine, but he just gave me -- and I saw a lot of jocks I knew down there at the time, and got to hang out with a few of them. But I was -- one day I got my newspaper in the morning, and it said on the front cover of the one newspaper, it said, "Booze, Broads, and Bribes." That was the headlines of the Miami Herald or whatever it was. And that really was the first public reckoning of what the music business could be. I mean, it was raunchy; it was hot down there. There were a lot of things going on, a lot of people around, a lot of girls, a lot of women. I mean, that was just a side of the game. And I'm sure when the sheet metal manufacturers had their convention, who's to say it wasn't the same women hanging around and going to parties? It's just that they keep nailing us. And rock and roll in that time was being attacked on almost every level; it's well-documented what Elvis Presley had to go through when he was exposed to television in 1956, and how the camera couldn't shoot below his hips, and one show he had to actually sing to a -- literally, to a hound dog, to make fun of him, basically, to make fun of what he did to smooth out what he was doing to the moms and dads out there. In fact, Elvis was a very respectful guy, and very well-mannered, for who he was and where he came from. He was a remarkable talent and a remarkable guy. It's -- I mean, now they're sort of celebrating 50 years, it's amazing, since those telecasts, and they're incredible, amazing things. So I mean -- people are always worried about their kids. I mean, that's it. Their kids are going to go to parties, and their kids are going to end up with different racial affiliations that they're not crazy about, and people are always asking the media or the entertainment business to help us raise our children. Please, put on clean shows; put on -- you know? But kids are always not going to be satisfied with that. Kids are curious; they want to know. And they have an energy and they have emotions, and they're going to seek and look for the interesting -- and that's part of youth. And we're still going through it today with the assail -- you

know, how rappers are assailed, you know, whatever it is. Rap is just a part of music; that's all it is. It's an expression of black music; black music has always been popular in this country. It's an American export, it's popular all over the world. At times, we've embraced it and said how great it was, and now we're assailing it because we don't like what it does to our so-called values. Well, kids are buying it, white kids are buying it, because they're getting something from it that they're not getting anywhere else. And the only thing I have about rap music, you know -- to me, it's a tremendous art form, but like every other art form, it gets boring sometimes. And that may be a lull in the business, or nothing great is out right now, and I'd go through that period when I was even running our own record company, where for six months, things -- I didn't hear anything I liked. And the next week, I got crazy about three different songs, and I couldn't get them out of my mind. So it's all part of life. And we've got to live together; we've got to get along.

CLINE

Yeah. What do you think, if anything, happened to popular music after the whole payola scandal thing happened? Any changes?

MOSS

Well, the only changes were that instead of like some poor disc jockeys getting $100 every once in awhile to fix their cars or something, the stations got the money. That's basically it; all these kind of promotions these stations do around Christmastime or the summertime, summertime promotion by the top-40 station in the market, and all these artists are asked to contribute their time, and the label has to pay for their production costs and the shipping of equipment and all these kind of things, and it's, you know -- to put on a show to make the station look like they're the greatest people in the world, giving this money to charity. Well, it's all these artists and record companies doing that, and they're actually being forced to do, because the station says, "Man, you don't come, we're not going to play your record." So the artist has to give up their performance possibilities in that market, especially if you play LA, and you do three songs -- well, you really can't play LA in a proper venue for another couple of months or so. So it becomes so much more expensive for the artist and the record companies, and the people that are making the money and the promotion dollars is the radio stations. So they get the payola. It is another form of payola. And it's totally unfair, because it only helps the big guys, because the big record companies, the big labels, can support such a practice; the little guy's stuck. If he's got one artist, and he doesn't deliver, he's shut out of the station altogether -- which I can say from experience; it happened to me when I had Almo Sounds, the follow-up label to A&M. Because I didn't have a lot of hot artists at the time, I was just growing the label, I had a lot of pressure to deliver the one or two acts we had. And you tell me if that's better than the old way.

CLINE

Right. Yeah, well, going back to the late '50s and early '60s, a time when teenagers had been sort of discovered to be this huge market, and 45s were now the sort of cheap and accessible way of reaching them, and the radio being the way for them to hear these records. And a lot of these records, at least originally, are being done by African-Americans. You touched on parental concerns: what, if anything, do you recall about the music itself changing as a result of these concerns? You know, the potential nicening, or smoothing over, as you put it -- do you remember, particularly in the early '60s -- how would you assess, through the music at that point, in the wake of all this media attention?

MOSS

Well, music, in the early '60s, we were starting to get into some wonderful, wonderfully-produced records, and I would say that people like Phil Spector, [Jerry] Lieber and [Mike] Stoller, guys like that were making some amazing records, with the Drifters and the Ronettes, putting rhythm and blues into a whole other category, using strings, creating real orchestrations, and having these voices really match the drama in the record. We started to hear some amazing production work, and great, great songs. I mean, it was just funny; in the late '50s, I'd run into guys, you know, songwriters that had had a couple hits, saying, "This rock and roll thing is going to pass; I'm saving my songs for when these guys are all gone." Well, they may still be saving them. But things didn't -- and I say, there was -- certain labels really got formed, where there used to be a new label every minute -- nowadays, certain labels took hold, you know? So great labels like Atlantic [Records] and -- well, I think about them, and in particular on the East Coast, who really set up from being really sort of a back room thing that Ahmet [Ertegen] and Jerry (inaudible) into becoming a real force in R&B, and making these records, and they have a lot of people copying them and doing the same thing. But things really changed, really, really changed, with the Beatles. Because here were four guys that made their own music and played it themselves. And that just wiped everything off the table, as far as I was concerned. They not only changed -- needless to say, they changed the music; they changed the world.

CLINE

Yeah, it was a whole new culture all over again.

MOSS

When these records started happening, '63 and '64, you know -- I mean, that was it. That was really it.

CLINE

But what I'm trying to do here is chronologically sort of sandwich the beginnings of the success of A&M between this period where the media

attention on popular music is so negative, I think, and the Beatles coming along and reviving and changing everything all over again, because here in 1962, when things start to really take off with the Tijuana Brass -- I guess what I'm trying to ask, maybe you don't know the answer, what the answer to this is, but what do you think characterized the music situation at that point that allowed something as unique as an instrumental pop record to become such a phenomenon?

MOSS

Well, number one, there had been other instrumental hits, you know, [Mr.] Acker Bilk, you know, "Standing on the Shore", and a record called "Mexico", which was Bob Moore, who was a bass player in Nashville, great musician. I don't know if I mentioned this earlier.

CLINE

Yeah, you did. We talked about the song, yeah.

MOSS

So -- and the fact that I knew a program director too helped, getting the record at least on the radio. And the reaction was tremendous, and that's always a great sign. So the game was wide open, so to speak, for a sound and for -- and also we'd had signposts, like I say, a company like Kapp Records, who was run by Dave Kapp, who had been an A&R guy for one of the major -- I think Decca [Records] or something -- that was an independent company that sold albums, which was unique. Archie Blyer had a company called Cadence Records in the '50s and the early '60s that I had worked for as an independent promotion man; he had the Everley Brothers, he had Andy Williams, he had the Chordettes. He sold albums sometimes. So men of taste were making records that were good records, and being able, professionally, to market them with albums and have a sales manager and have people other than just the promotion man and just distributors, which is what a lot of the earlier labels that were now starting to fall by the wayside. Because it took a little more than just a guy putting out a record, and giving a disc jockey $50 to make it happen. I would say that was a transitional thing. People were very open for new music, and the 45 was very successful in those days.

CLINE

So let's talk about the early days of A&M then. Now, we got to the point where you released this record, it becomes a hit. I presume at this point you were in the garage, and I'm thinking you had to have been outgrowing the garage pretty rapidly. What basically happened next, when this really started to take off? What did you have to do to respond to the success of this record?

MOSS

Well, we needed to get money to press them. We realized we had a record, and I was -- I didn't sort of have any money, really. But I did have a relationship,

and that was with a guy named Nate Duroff who owned a company called Monarch Manufacturing. And that was on Jefferson Boulevard here, and they were a pressing plant, basically. And I used to go pull records from Nate for my different accounts, you know; I was an independent promotion man and I got to know him some socially, and we just sort of got along. And when the time came for me to get pressings on the West Coast, Herbie and I decided I'd ask Nate, because I'd had a bit of a relationship with him. And Nate extended me $35,000 worth of credit, which amounted to 350,000 records, cost a dime apiece. And Herbie, whose family did have a little money, managed to sell some -- or put some stocks up for a loan, and he floated $35,000 worth of production on the East Coast with RCA. So here we had our 700,000 records, which is what we sold on "The Lonely Bull". And, you know, when the records came out, I called everyone I knew at the time, just to let them know it was my records. Not from an ego point of view, but if somebody was going to cover me, meaning a big company was going to come in and do our song with trumpets, I wanted them to know, you are doing it to me, so don't tell me you didn't know it was me that you were cutting out, basically. And we put together a patchwork of distributors, basically from my days at Co-Ed, I knew a few guys on the East Coast. And my friend Joe Smith at Warners [Warner Brothers Records] gave me a couple of other guys that Warners was doing business with. And in the meantime, I'd gotten calls from friends in the business that wanted to buy the record from me and put it out on someone else's label. A guy like Luther Dixon, who was at Scepter Records, which was a tremendous label also in New York, which had the Shirelles and some great artists, that I'd worked for as a promotion man. Luther, as a friend, said, "Man, I'd love to get that record for Scepter; what'll it take?" And I said -- and like I say, and Scepter was by and large almost an R&B sort of label, so this is again how transparent -- how the music flowed through, how integrated, in a way, I always thought the industry was at that time.

CLINE

Not as genre-restricted, I'd imagine.

MOSS

As it is today, exactly. I said, "Luther, this is my shot. I mean, Herbie and I have a pretty decent relationship; I think we can try something here. Thank you for your interest," and that was it. A guy from Motown [Records] called me; Tommy Smalls was -- "I think Motown would do good with this record, Jerry. Let me have this record. I can get you some money here." I said, "Look, I appreciate it," -- 'cause in those days, a record would start, and you'd get a couple thousand bucks and a couple of percentage point, but that's how you'd acquire records, how the bigger labels would get records -- I said, "I'm not interested in the producers job or promotion job -- this is my label; I think I can

do this." I had enough experience, three or four years in the game to see, you know -- these guys that were running these labels were not rocket scientists; they weren't inventing the cure for any important disease or anything, they were just guys that had some business sense and some taste, you know, and I thought we could do the same thing. So we functioned out of that garage, I think I mentioned we had two-line phone, we had a piano, we had a two-track tape recorder that Herbie had that he rehearsed a lot of stuff with, we saw occasional artists with. I kept a set of books on what we shipped and what paid, and anybody could look in the book -- I mean, I ran whatever the paper end of the business was, and also worked with Herbie at night coming up with some new tunes, making the album [The Lonely Bull]. And I don't know if I mentioned, but we managed to hold onto about 50 grand from the sale of the single. And Herb's dad and brother invested in five storefronts, real estate that we'd purchased, commercial real estate. That was our bedrock of support.

CLINE

Security.

MOSS

Security, so to speak. We had that piece of property. And we didn't take much out of the company; I think Herbie and I drew between $125 and $150 a week for a couple of years. He had a kid and a wife; I was single at the time. But it was enough for me to live on in those days. And we were working anyway, and obviously we had a lot of expenses, whatever, but we never took a lot of money in the early days out of the business; we always kept investing back in. And we put records together; we made an album that ended up -- you know, The Lonely Bull album ended up selling about 50,00 records in the first three or four months. The sound eventually got covered by the big labels for the album releases, so, you know, there was the Arena Brass that Epic [Records] put out, and all kinds of brass kind of things, pretty much could have exhausted the whole Tijuana Brass thing if we'd stopped at that point. But we didn't; we felt that this was a really good thing, and we could keep working this sound. And frankly, we had nothing else to do. We had other artists, we'd put out a record here, a record there. But we just kept working Tijuana Brass songs.

CLINE

And you told the story of how the song "The Lonely Bull" was created; how was the rest of the Tijuana Brass material at that point then composed and created?

MOSS

Well, we used, I would say, a mixture that carried on through most of the albums. We used original songs and we used standards. So you know, and the standards were interesting, because -- well, I always felt with any artist, it's interesting to hear how they handle a song you're familiar with, because then

you really can understand the style of an artist. And Herbie playing "Tangerine", for example, which is a great old song, I mean, just knocked me out. And fashion it as a Tijuana Brass record -- really showed, I think, the depths of frankly what an artist he was, what a trumpet player, what he got out of that tune, and how he could include it, make a bigger circle, what the Tijuana Brass could really do. So we made the second album, Volume 2, basically because our distributor in San Francisco was so hot with the Tijuana Brass that -- well, he said, "You make a record; I'll order 10,000 records." Now, 10,000 records in those days, probably, was maybe worth 20 grand to us. So we went out and made a record for ten grand. And eventually, that album ended up going platinum when Herbie -- the success was unbelievable. But that's how we kept going because we found pockets of interest. And as a record company, we tried to satisfy them. And in the meantime, try to expand -- always try to expand the sound itself. If -- you know, and breaking in on the East Coast was so important to us that finally Philadelphia got a record on the charts, you know, we got so many chances that by the time the third album, South of the Border, came out in '64, I believe, it ended up selling about 100,000 albums, and really being the darling of the so-called "easy listening" music, or occasional pop charts, or whatever it was, but the music kept building. Herbie had only -- by this time, as a performer, was only asked to play like some hops, you know, because it was difficult as an instrumentalist to do this. But we just kept working it.

CLINE

Yeah. And you used the word "style" -- the Tijuana Brass style was absolutely, as far as I can tell, original. I mean, here's this whole kind of Mexican ambiance, but it doesn't sound anything like what we think of as the traditional Mexican music. It's really its own aesthetic. And somehow, this style, aside from catching on and becoming popular, was something you could translate into sort of all these different musical areas. You mentioned standards; you mentioned sort of widening the circle, making the circle bigger. Is there a way you can sort of explain the source of the style; is this really just Herb's style? Not just his trumpet-playing, but his ear for how to arrange the context for his own trumpet playing, or was this something that was mutually kind of created collaboratively?

MOSS

Well, it was created collaboratively, I should say, because we realized that this particular sound was inspired by the mariachi. We, as you know, we were in Tijuana a lot together, and went to the bullfights, and did all that stuff. So that was the inspiration for the whole thing. But we wanted to take it -- remembering the inspiration, we wanted to take it further. And we took it as far as we could take it, you know, 15, 16 albums in a variety of things, and then

eventually it kind of probably exhausted Herbie, because we tried it every different way, and even tried a vocal, which got to be number one on the charts, because he was that big; "This Guy's in Love with You" came out in '68, and it was just amazing. I think he became -- when he became, say, free of the Tijuana Brass, certainly later in the '80s and '90s and even today. I mean, you know, the records we made later in the years at A&M, or, you know, he did albums with Hugh Masekela; he did many other experimentations to be a little freer in what he was doing, and records aren't -- he's made so much music, but we were trying to be as true as we could to the brass, because -- for as long as we could, too, for as long as it was viable, because it meant so much to so many people, and we didn't want to disappoint people, I think down at the bottom of it. And we wanted to give it the best we had. So the songs or the treatment or the arrangements -- all of the arrangements totally -- Herb, I mean, -- I would say, "I don't know if we need to do this or do that; guitar a little higher, or can you come in a little earlier," -- you know, the earlier records we made sort of together, but it was Herbie doing all the engineering, it was Herbie doing certainly all the playing, and certainly all the arrangements, and a lot of the writing. So it was just a very active period, and we were very alert to what the market is; we were building a company, and trying to get excited about what we were doing?

CLINE

Yeah. I have down here that it was in '64 that Herb was really persuaded to perform?

MOSS

Yeah. Oh, I would say also, I forgot to bring up -- so we were in the garage then, physically I'm talking about, 'til about January of '63. And then we actually talked this wonderful secretary/bookkeeper office giant lady --

CLINE

Is this Jolene Burton?

MOSS

This is Jolene Burton. And she worked at Liberty [Records] for years; I knew her because I knew some of the guys at Liberty, and I liked her, I met her on different social occasions and things like that, and she was a true professional, mature, terrific lady. And when I brought up the subject of maybe her coming to work for us, being our first employee. She was open to it, and I think we paid her $100 a week, which was a fair amount of money at the time. Maybe even more, I'm not sure. But we certainly needed to have her, because by this time, we were recording different artists, and we needed to move out of the garage, and we got an office at 8255 Sunset [Boulevard]. And Herbie and I shared an office in those days; it was a bit of a piano, and the Ampex tape recorder in the next room, so he could record in some kind of -- and there was an outer office

for Jolene. But she took care of the bookkeeping; she took care of ordering records from the plants; she took care of calling distributors -- she did amazing stuff for us, and filled a big hole. And then when -- I think either our fourth or fifth employee is when -- after "South of the Border" happened the way it happened, we realized we could use -- and we were starting to record other people, and we could see some kind of future with the Brass; we were really going to be in business at least another year or two. I went to England to try to convince my friend, our friend, Gil Friesen, to join us; he joined us, he came back in November of '64 to come with us, and go from there. And then we had another secretary -- so we had about five people for a little while, and that was it for -- 'til we really busted wide open, and then...

CLINE

And then, once you'd hired Jolene Burton, and she was taking care of a lot of the sort of donkey work, so to speak, what became your primary focus?

MOSS

Hearing new artists, taking the records we had, going out on the road, promoting them. Seeing distributors, strengthening our ties to our distribution people. Hitting a town a day, just seeing disc jockeys, seeing distributors, seeing who was open to us and who was closed because they had so many labels and so many lines, and I was [boring?], you know, what did I want to do that for? And come back, and I'd say, well, I've got to talk to Herbie about who we're going to change and who we're going to leave and who it didn't matter to anyway. I met this guy in Chicago I really liked, and he'll be in LA in a week or two and we should meet with him, because -- you know, and you get to meet people that you're going to associate with; you build a coterie of associates and friends, a network of people you can count on, really. And, you know, we had a great distributor in St. Louis for a lot of years who really took me in and introduced me to his family and got me to stay there. In St. Louis, he'd personally take me around radio stations. They were people -- you know, these guys were all small businessmen, but they got excited about records and about people too, we traded on that. It was a nice fraternity of people, a growing game. I remember the first time at a NARM [National Association of Record Merchandisers] convention, I forget when it was, but somebody said that we were approaching $1 billion in business, in recorded sales. This included everything, classical and everything, but -- wow, that was pretty amazing, you know?

CLINE

Wow. Indeed.

MOSS

This was sort of in the '70s sometimes.

CLINE

Yeah. Well, certainly popular music became a very big business in a short amount of time.

CLINE

So in '63, you guys signed some other acts to the label, and I'm not sure how many people remember who some of these people are. But I wanted to ask you about how these people wound up being signed to the label and what happened with them. A couple of names of artists are going to be familiar to anyone hearing this interview, but some of them may not be. George McCurn? What's the story with George McCurn? How did that happen?

MOSS

Oh, George McCurn was a fantastic character. He had this fantastic voice. And George was the bass in a group called the Soul Stirrers. And the Soul Stirrers were Sam Cooke's band for awhile, and Herbie had had experience writing a hit song, he wrote "Wonderful World" with Lou Adler and for Sam Cooke, obviously knew Sam's group, and he came into the office one day, and I liked him immediately, and I heard him sing a little bit, and just was knocked out by the voice. And we'd gotten a song somewhere from someone, I think the name of the tune was "When the Wind Blows in Chicago". And I remember it only because it was the first string section that I'd ever seen Herbie arrange or lead. I was actually thrilled to the bone to hear this incredible voice, and Herbie leading this small orchestra -- how strange, you know? It was thrilling, really thrilling. And it made me realize, wow, we're really happening. We're paying for all this, and it's incredible. So that's who George McCurn was. The record had some success; it wasn't an R&B record as it might have been, it didn't quite have that accent that it probably needed. And I remember sitting with an R&B jock all night one night in Chicago and working the sides, I said, "You know, the name Chicago's in the title; doesn't that give me some leverage here?" This is after I brought the guy a cheeseburger or something like that. And he said, "Man, I just don't know if this song rocks; I don't know if it does it for me. But I'll give it a shot; you're sitting here, why not, let's see what happens." And that's how easy it was. Put in the time, and you'll get at least a response. The guys were very fair to me. And so that was George McCurn. He was an exceptional human being.

CLINE

The next name I have here is Julius Wechter, which of course is the Baja Marimba Band. And this kind of leads me into the notion that will affect some of the other artists I'm going to mention, which is -- we were talking earlier about genre, and how you said things were kind of wide open. And when the Tijuana Brass became really successful, how much did you feel -- maybe you felt -- I didn't know if you felt any pressure or anything, but how much did you feel you had to kind of come up with a label identity, an artistic stamp, sort of a

sonic style that would be associated when people said A&M Records, would they imagine that this would be something more like the Tijuana Brass, or was it going to be something very diverse -- were these issues that you had to kind of consider when you were signing people?

MOSS

That came around, I think -- that sort of came up around '67, only because through these times, I was pretty much in the studio a lot of times with Herbie, and I was just working and loving it, basically. But then a lot of -- I couldn't not answer the phone, so I got out of the studio a bit, and decided I was going to sort of front these things. I was concerned we didn't have enough -- you had to be stupid not to realize the business was going into rock and roll in a heavy way, and I sort of liked the music, and acts like Buffalo Springfield, to me, was very exciting; I even tried to see what I could do to maybe -- but I was very late and it didn't happen. And we had -- Herbie and I hired -- once we broke wide open, pushing ahead to like '66, we moved on a lot.

CLINE

Right, and the music's changing a lot with it.

MOSS

And the music's changing, but we're still hot. And we hired what we thought was a really tasty A&R [artists and repertoire] guy, and he was a lovely man. But it was just a mistake. And he was with us for -- and he drove a hard bargain, he got a really good deal, and when we saw it not working, we said to him, "Can we please end this deal? We'll pay you --" He says, "Look, I just want to -- I don't want to just get let go. Please let me stay; you don't have to worry about giving me the percentages that you should give me, or my royalties or whatever." And in those years, I made deals for Burt Bacharach; we signed the Carpenters, going from '66 to '69. I mean, a lot of different artists in those days. We went to England, I signed -- made a deal with Denny Cordell and brought Joe Cocker eventually and people like that, the Island [Records] deals with Spooky Tooth and Jimmy Cliff...

CLINE

Right. We're going to get to all that.

MOSS

But I mean, all I'm saying is that we lost a step in LA because, quite honestly, I think this fellow didn't quite chase a lot of these earlier West Coast bands, and so our initial success at rock and roll, so to speak, came basically from England, you know, with the Procol Harum signing, and the Island Records stuff that I was able to bring in. So some of the expansion was all -- was good, and some of it wasn't so good.

CLINE

So some of these other -- well, let's go back to the Baja Marimba Band, kind of continuing the flavor --

MOSS

Right. Well, Julius I think went to high school with Herbie, and Herb had admired him so much as a musician, and he always felt that in high school, Julius was just incredible; he was already a complete pro. While guys were still tinkering with their instruments and learning their instruments, Julius was knockout time. And Julius as a marimba player and a xylophone player was unmatched; he was getting out of high school and already doing great session work. So we needed to find somehow a way to accommodate a great musician like Julius Wechter. And a great guy as well, by the way, so funny and easy to be around. And he and Herb really hit it off and were lifelong friends, needless to say, until Julius unfortunately passed away some years ago. But just a tremendous guy and a great contributor, but was on some of the earliest Tijuana Brass records. And then a song came along, I think called "Comin' In the Back Door" was the name of the tune, that really featured the perfect -- it wasn't a trumpet record; it was a marimba record. And so we sort of created this sound and we put out "Comin' In the Back Door" by the Baja Marimba Band, and the single hit the charts. So we created and album and a mystique, and they were, bless their hearts, another album band for us, a spin-off from the Tijuana Brass. We even put it on another label called Almo International, just so it wouldn't be competitive with the brass, just so stations could play them both without feeling they were giving A&M too much label time. So, and the Tijuana -- we had fun with the -- whereas the Brass were a little more serious in our approach, the Baja Marimba Band, because Julius was so much fun, and he wouldn't argue with this, but he was not a leading man type, which Herbie was, we could have humor. So we made it so that we had a Baja Marimba Band moustache-growing contest among our promotion people, who could -- everybody was growing facial hair anyway in those days, but -- and different contests, because everybody in the Baja Marimba Band, I think, had a moustache, except the drummer. We packaged them, they went on the road, and we sold albums with them. We put out about six or eight albums; I produced a bunch of them because Herb was busier doing something, I had a great time with these guys. And we got on the charts. I don't know if we ever had a gold album, but we sold like 200,000 copies, created a -- it was a nice band.

CLINE

Yeah. And a lot more people in America know what a marimba is because of it.

MOSS

Exactly. No doubt about it.

CLINE

Waylon Jennings.

MOSS

Ah, well. Waylon --

CLINE

A name we know.

MOSS

Yes. Yes. One of my good friends at that time was a guy that I even went into record production business with, his name was Don Bowman. And he started out as a disc jockey, and had a love of Texas. And we just got to be friends for a good number of years, made a record together, did a little something. But I realized that he was really a disc jockey and I was really a record person. Eventually, he became sort of a country comedian, Don did, had quite a career at that for awhile. Played Grand Ole Opry, did some stuff like that. But he called me one day, and he says, "Man, there's a guy that just came through here; he's got the most amazing voice. He's from -- he's living in Phoenix, Arizona, but you should really hear this guy." In walked Waylon Jennings. And Herbie and I loved Waylon Jennings; we made three singles with Waylon; I think I whistled on two of them and clapped my hands on one of them. He covered -- I think one of them was the cover of a Limelighters song; one was "Just to Satisfy You", which was a really good song that Waylon wrote. Anyway, I noticed one day that Bobby Bare, who was a big artist for RCA [Records], covered both sides. Very unusual. Put out a single, he didn't cover just the a-side, he covered both sides. So I knew that in Nashville, they were getting hip to Waylon Jennings. And sure enough, one day he came in and he said, "You boys have been so great to me, and I'm telling you, if -- whatever it takes, I want to repay you for putting my records out," he says, "but I tell you this -- I have to tell you this. I got the call every country boy dreams of: I got a call from Chet Atkins, and he wants me to come to Nashville, make a record for RCA." And we talked about it; Herbie and I went out and really got into this thing. We knew the guy was a star, but we knew also that Chet Atkins could do a lot more for Waylon Jennings at that time than we could have. And so we said, "All right, here's what we'll do. I'm going to go to Phoenix; I'll cut six more sides so we'll have an album with you, and then you go off and do your thing, man." He says, "Oh, you guys are the greatest." And he went on and became Waylon Jennings. I tell you, years and years later, I cut a -- I did a project called White Mansions that -- an English guy wrote a song about the American Civil War, a concept album, and I got Waylon and Jesse to do it, Waylon and Jesse Coulter, to come to London and record the record. And that was a thrill, working with him again. And he always dropped in, and he was just the greatest guy; just one of the great men of all time. And he's not with us anymore, but what an amazing character.

CLINE

And then Bob Regan and Lucille Starr, the Canadian Sweethearts. (laughter) A name we don't know.

MOSS

Yeah. I think we got this record from Canada -- they were Canadians, obviously. She had the most amazing voice, most amazing voice. We got this record from a Canadian distributor or something, put it out there. It was a huge record in Canada; I think it was called "Quand le soleil dit bonjour aux montagnes."

CLINE

Oh, French-Canadian.

MOSS

It was "When the Sun Says Good-day to the Mountains." And if my pronunciation is weird, it's because it was Canadian French. And of course, I immediately took the record to our French distributor, who laughed at her pronunciation, of course. So they said, "No, no, no. This record will not happen in France, sorry." But we made a couple of records with them; he was a remarkable guitar player, he won an award as the fastest guitar player in Canada. But they were our first Canadian act, and they sold some records for us. And they were nice people. And we made a couple of records; they were interesting.

CLINE

And then I guess the big signing, once things took off, was '65 with Sergio Mendes [and Brasil '66].

MOSS

Yeah, but before that I think we even had Claudine Longet.

CLINE

Oh, yeah.

MOSS

Who at that time was married to Andy Williams.

CLINE

Andy Williams, of course.

MOSS

We knew Andy's manager or something, or I saw her on the TV show, she had that sweet little voice, and at that time -- by that time, I think '65, we had Tommy the Puma, who was pretty good. And we had a gold album with Claudine; that was pretty nice. And we had Chris Montez early on as well. Herbie made a nice record, "The More I See You", that sold some; it was a good chart record. And I mean, all this sort of kept us going, kept first of all the 50 grand in place; we didn't have to sell the stores. And kept A&M moving, kept us active, kept our distributors a little busy about us, threats of a hit here, threats of a hit there, and music from all over the place. Right then, we

established we were open to almost any kind of genre, from Oopie, who is George McCurn's real kind of nickname, Oopie, to Waylon, to the Canadian Sweethearts. I mean, think about it; it's amazing. Plus I think we had signed Captain Beefheart around that time. So it's quite amazing. Don Van Vliet, whatever his name was.

CLINE

Don Van Vliet, yeah. Do you remember how that happened?

MOSS

He walked in, you know? We had an office, 8255; somehow somebody called and said this guy's coming over, and we said, "Yeah, sure, come on in," and we liked him. It was just amazing. And we also sometimes had misfires; they used to say in those days that you -- I mean, it was eventually disproved, but you couldn't make a really good R&B record on the West Coast. So we tried to -- we cut some records; we had a guy we worked with, I think a guy named Chester Pipkin, who we liked a lot. We made a bunch of records, and I forget what we called the label [Black Hand Drawn] -- it had something to do with a hand on the label or something. And the records weren't getting much of a spin, so on a trip back East I went to a distributor in Washington, DC -- the distributor's promotion man and I were pretty close -- I said, "Johnny, how come our R&B records aren't doing anything here?" He says, "C'mon." So he took me into his little cubicle, and one after another, he put an Atlantic record on the player. I said, "OK. I got it." (laughter) [Recreates a phone conversation] "Herbie, we ain't doing it. We're not making it; I don't think we can continue. So, sorry, Chester; we're going to pass." But they just didn't qualify, they just weren't of the same nature of these great records that this guy was playing for me, one after another.

CLINE

And you mentioned Gil Friesen -- is it true that he is one of the people who persuaded Herb to become more of a performer?

MOSS

Yeah, and he more or less oversaw that whole connection, the agency, the managers, you know, keeping it to a certain extent very professional, helping Herbie assemble a band that he could work with and recreate that sound with. So he came and got busy, sort of looked around and saw what he could really do; we were friends, and this is what he thought he could really do. He had experience in managing a guy called P.J. Proby in England, and so he'd had some experience in the management area. And he was just real helpful, he really understood that game. So it gave us another, certainly, kind of an interesting kind of window that we didn't have.

CLINE

You had mentioned earlier that during the period when you were just kind of getting together with Herb and collaborating that he'd been trying to make it as an actor; I guess he had been deemed good-looking enough to maybe warrant some of that kind of attention. How much do you think his appearance may have helped the popularity of the Tijuana Brass once he started performing? And his pictures were on the covers of these records, too.

MOSS

Well, I think it was -- of course it was a big help. My friends in the business couldn't believe it, because I never talked about Herbie; all we talked about is how hard we worked or whatever it was. But the guys on the East Coast, distributors used to make fun of me and say, "What, did you get some male model to pose for you? Come on, bring out the real trumpet player, the guy in the back room who did this." They couldn't believe that this guy, this attractive person, was capable of doing all these things. And I used that as sort of -- I never -- if we had an attractive artist, I'd sort of not present the face first, because -- this is something Herbie told me that he learned from Sam Cooke -- you see an attractive person doing something, close your eyes, because that's what's going to make it. What does he sound like? Don't be distracted by how good he or she looks. And I definitely have to do it vocally or sound-wise; the looks don't mean anything. I mean, the looks then came in handy, certainly, being on TV stuff. Some groups benefited by -- of course, the Beatles didn't look too bad either. But I think Herb's looks finished off the package, so to speak, rather well.

CLINE

And you said yourself that he was already someone who was talented at leading, so that obviously helped as well. How did things start to develop in terms of what was going on in the business, once Herb had to hit the road and become a performing artist?

MOSS

Well, I think that's the most spectacular part of this whole thing. When you think that we're taking a trumpet player, a musician -- OK, he has a few hit records, but how do you really become a star? It takes sometimes years of grooming on the road, and the ritual, and getting into it and figuring out what you're niche is and what things work, what things don't work. Well, with Herbie, it was almost overnight. He did -- once the Brass was formed, we did one support show for Dave Brubeck, I think; one support show for Johnny Mathis; and then one support for "King of the Road", Roger Miller. And that's it; he then headlined in major arenas, and drew mobs. I mean, we went back East -- again, how important it is to break in New York. Well, we played Basin Street East for two weeks, there were lines around the block. He headlined with George Carlin and Astrud Gilberto; I'll never forget those shows. Two shows

on the weekdays, three shows on the weekends. That's tough on a horn player. But I mean, lines around the block. Now, it had to be just more than the sound that was selling those tickets; it's one thing you're buying a record. And it was this thing that he had that people just dug. It's very -- that, to me, was very rare. Whatever tremendous success we appreciated and enjoyed and a label -- we worked hard, we had taste, we had this, we had that; we hired new people, that kind of thing. But Herbie's transformation from musician to star was absolutely incredible. That was really unique, for it to happen that fast. I mean, he got a call to play -- to do some charity event -- oh, this was much later, though, but it was in 1968, right after we'd had the hit "This Guy's In Love With You". And he did something at the Hollywood Bowl that I'll never forget as well. I think [Harry] Belafonte was on the show, [Barbra] Streisand, and [Bill] Cosby. And they each had, you know -- so Herbie was supposed to start the second act. He said, "I'm going to have to do something, I'm playing with these people." So he decided to -- "I'm going to come down -- I'm going to wear a white suit; I'm going to come down from the top of the Hollywood Bowl with a microphone, a hand mic," which not too much of that was done in 1968, a hand mic, trusting a hand mic, "and I'm going to sing "This Guy's In Love With You" on my way there." I said, "Herbie, remember that's the hit; don't people usually save the hit for the end?" He says, "No, no, no. I got to open big. This is --" I said, "Well, number one, physically," -- so I walked it with him, all the way -- just to see if time-wise, doing the song -- I saw time-wise, it takes three, three and a half minutes, whatever, to walk through the people and come all the way down, to physically walk -- I said, "Man, I think this starting to sound good." And I mean, it just knocked people out. People always remember Herbie in the white suit doing "This Guy's In" -- I mean, it's just exciting; it just created a nice -- a real -- now, you know, by this time he'd been performing -- this was 1968 already -- still, to have the aplomb, the wherewithal to pull off that thing; that's --

CLINE

And that's a serious technical challenge, especially back then, before there was wireless sophisticated monitor systems.

MOSS

Exactly.

CLINE

Wow. And going back to the success of Herb as a star, as a performer -- normally when people tour and perform, sales also go up. How'd that go?

MOSS

That went great. I think what we did was we put it all into the record. It was all a promotion for the record, because we were working with great musicians, we had to get really good people, people that not only could sort of play their asses

off onstage, but also be humorous, show up for gigs, and these road musicians take -- the good ones -- cost a lot of money, plus we had to take our own sound system, in those days, Herbie was probably the first guy to really worry about sound and how it was being heard live. And also, we wanted them to be comfortable; we didn't -- so we probably, as much as he was making on the road, or whatever he was doing, I mean, if we broke even more made a little bit of money, that was fine; there was no pressure. I mean, even when we did the three television specials, and got a lot of money to do them, it all went into production; it all went into how he was being presented. And then we made it on the records.

CLINE

Going back to '65, the Sergio Mendes signing, what was --

MOSS

That was huge.

CLINE

Yeah. A milestone. What do you remember about that, how that came about?

MOSS

I remember having a breakfast appointment with our distributor from Seattle, and it was going to be at the Hyatt -- it was called the "Riot House", the one on Sunset Boulevard

CLINE

Right, the Hyatt-Regency [Hotel].

MOSS

And that day, I'm driving, and I completely spaced the appointment, and I get to my office, and I get a call from this guy, and his name is Jerry Dennon. And he said, "You forgot about me. I just saw you driving by," because we were on 82 -- we were on Sunset Boulevard. I said, "Man, I'm so sorry. I'm really sorry, I'll be right there." So I got there, and we're having a thing, and I said, "What are you hearing, what do you like?" He says, "Look, I'm hearing that -- I don't know if you remember a band called Sergio Mendes and the Brasil 65, but Capitol [Records] let them go, and they've reformed, and there's a new band, and they're rehearsing at Georgy Hormel's." I said, "Really? Can I get in there?" He says, "Yeah, I'll make a phone call, no problem. They're looking for a deal." He said, "Do you know them?" I said, "I remember them; they had Wanda de Sah;" I remember hearing that Capitol kept Wanda de Sah and let him go. And now, I think I remember -- because I love Brazilian music -- the [Antonio Carlos] Jobim album that came out in '63 [Voce ainda nao ouviu nada] was -- I mean, the most amazing record; I think that was the summer of '63, that was just everything. That's the -- bossa-nova music to me was -- now, I forget whether I saw the band first and then I brought Herbie and Gil over, or I just brought Herbie and Gil. I have the tendency to believe I saw it first and came

back the next day with Herbie and Gil. And I just got crazy, absolutely crazy. And I wasn't the only one, because that day, Herbie offered to drive Lani [Hall] home, Lani was the lead singer who eventually became his wife. But they were just amazing. Such exciting music. As a keyboard player, Sergio never gets enough applause, as far as I'm concerned. I mean, in all the years I've known him, I don't think he's -- on songs he's played maybe a million times, he's always doing something different and interesting on the keyboard. And so here he was; it was him, three other musicians, and two beautiful women singing. What's not to like about that? (laughter) And we were able to get them on the label. Sergio had at the time a great relationship with Nesuhi Ertegen, and Atlantic wanted them unless we wanted them. But Nesuhi -- what we countered with basically was saying, "Look, we'll put you on the road with the Tijuana Brass, you'll be in front of audiences, and Herb will produce your first album," all which happened. And for me, it was an eye-opening situation, because I knew this band was just going to happen; I just knew they were great. And I just said yes to everything their lawyer asked for, which is perhaps the only time I've ever done that. It was my first so-called negotiation; it wasn't a negotiation, I just said yes, because I just had to have them. I came back and the A&R man I spoke about earlier that was working for us questioned the deal. I said, "Alan, I don't care about the deal; I just know we're going to have a platinum record with these people, it's not even a question in my mind." And this even before the record even started to get produced. Anyway, I ended up -- you know, the lawyer that I made the deal with on the other side, I ended up using him, going to him. His name was Abe Somer; Abe eventually became house counsel for A&M while he was still a partner at Mitchell Silverberg. But I met him on one other occasion, and I realized this guy really understood the business, he was really smart, and he had a passion, he really had a passion for what he was doing, and I needed to have somebody like that, because I realized I wasn't the greatest. I mean, I learned to be fairly good at it, but I needed help, because I realized you just can't say yes to everything. And -- but the point is, once we had Sergio, and he got successful in those years with Brasil '66. And that package on the road just gave our label such a look and a feel that it really gave us the bedrock of what A&M could be, and made me feel that, wow, we really are now a full-fledged label; we can do anything.

CLINE

Like buying A&M Studios in 1966.

MOSS

Well, like buying A&M Studios in 1966, exactly. For $1 million.

CLINE

How is your time looking?

MOSS

I have a 1:30 lunch, so.

CLINE

OK. So we have a little more time.

MOSS

Yeah.

CLINE

How did the decision come about to acquire the studios for $1 million? Formerly Charlie Chaplin's old haunt.

MOSS

We had great success at 8255 [Sunset Boulevard], in the sense that we were now blowing out -- meaning we had a lot of success. 1966 was first of all an unbelievable year; we hired a sales manager, I hired a head of publishing, I hired a head of promotion; I had all the people I wanted to get to be with us. We now reached a point where we had the money to propel a really good organization. And we hired the A&R guy. So we fulfilled all these sort of functions, and they needed offices. So at 8255, we were lucky, because that top floor, we kept going until finally we had taken over the whole top floor, and we needed another place. So the question was, were we going to rent office space somewhere, go to a building where there was an elevator, you had to go up, or get our own spot; LA was still, in the '60s, kind of -- you could build your own building, there was vacant holes on Sunset Boulevard. Did we want to build a building? And somebody then walked in and said, "The Chaplin lot." And I said -- and fortunately, I'd been to it; I'd actually went to see a Red Skelton Show there, because I loved Red Skelton, and he had had the Red Skelton Show there in the early '60s. So I'd visited, I'd been on the lot. And then Perry Mason was shot there. But that was going off the air, Perry Mason was a TV show I was told only required three sound stages, because that's all it had. And the new style was five sound stages, so the lot was just a little too small for a continuing series with CBS, and they had to get rid of it. And we got it for $1 million. All that real estate on Sunset and La Brea, which is the center of everything; a lot of the music business was right on top on Hollywood Boulevard. KFWB, Liberty Records was right around the corner. A lot of places were on Sunset and Gower [Street], all those --

CLINE

And then of course Capitol Records.

MOSS

Capitol Records was on Vine Street. So it was in the neighborhood. So there we were; we bought this lot, we -- and then we got Herbie's brother Dave [David Alpert] to come with us, who was a contractor and a builder by trade, and he took over the whole management of the physical facility, security, all that kind of stuff; he took care of all that, he was fantastic, just great, so we didn't have to

be overly concerned about what was going on and be distracted by it. We walked down there with about 30 people, padlocked a few of the buildings, and went to work, it was amazing.

CLINE

Especially when you think of -- you know, we're talking about like a five-year period here; that's a substantial ride. And you mentioned in '67, when you started branching out more into the rock & roll field, largely with British acts; you also struck a deal with CTI Records?

MOSS

Yeah, that was exciting.

CLINE

Creed Taylor's jazz label. And one thing I think I will end with: there was a Hollywood Palace and an artists' show in '67 as well. What do you remember about that, and who performed? How did that go down?

MOSS

I think it was a Liza Minelli thing, wasn't it?

CLINE

Yeah, I'm trying to remember; in my notes here I don't have that, but I remember reading somewhere that it was Liza Minelli involved --

MOSS

It was a fantastic show, because I think Wes Montgomery was on it.

CLINE

From CTI Records.

MOSS

CTI Records, and I believe Sergio -- I'm not sure. I mean, I think Herbie was on it. It was an interesting show; it was just -- I'd signed Liza in '66, '67; she was an interesting -- and I'd seen her in Paris at the Olympia, and she just knocked me out as a 19 year old kid. And I thought I could make a hit record with her; I wasn't that successful, we did make about two or three records. She's a great artist, great person. And, you know, it was a different part of show business, because she was part of Vegas already, part of Broadway; she was a cult figure. She was quite a good -- she tried, she really tried, just couldn't -- you know, some people you just couldn't make a hit with.

CLINE

And you mentioned Burt Bacharach; he goes back to your Brill Building days.

MOSS

Burt was amazing. He -- what an incredible contributor to my life he's been. Burt was -- he'd been making records at Liberty -- no, it was Kapp, he was on Kapp Records, and he had a -- what do you call that -- a clause in the contract relating to -- a key executive clause, key man cause, with a particular executive at Kapp Records, and that man was let go or he left. And so Burt was free to

leave. And at the time, we had just done "Casino Royale", the instrumental in Casino Royale [the movie], and we had a bit of a hit with it, that Burt had written for the movie. And like I say, we were friends, and I said, "Man, make your records over here. Come on." So he did Reach Out, and as he said subsequently -- Burt is such a professional, if he doesn't get three songs on a three-hour session date, he gets -- because he uses a lot of musicians, and it does get costly. But quite honestly, we didn't care. We just wanted him to make the best record he could make, and Reach Out, his first album for us -- I mean, he had a lot of fun making the record, but more than that, I mean, the record was a bunch of his -- other versions of hits that he'd already made with Dionne Warwick, or -- you know, we couldn't use Dionne because she was on Scepter, but we got Burt. And this record came out, and so much fun because -- I think we put out about 15,000 to start with, and he and his sidekick, who was sort of his road manager, would say to me, "Jerry, how are we going to -- people can't even find the record." I said, "Look, I want people to bite for this record; I want them to look for it for a day or two. I want the distributor to get aware of the record; I want him to order because he wants the record, he needs the record, not because we're piling records on them for some -- he said, "Yeah, but 15,000 --" I said, "Just trust me. They'll --" I didn't say trust me, 'cause -- well, maybe I did; I hate saying trust me. My wife says, "Don't ever say trust me." It doesn't work for her. But anyway -- well, and that record ended up going platinum, and then started a series of records from him that just ended up being amazing and international, just -- sold in Italy and sold in -- he became such a fulfilling artist for us in every way. And in those days, you know, he called me and he said, "Look, I just did the music for a movie; it's a Western, but it's going to be good, I think; it's Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." He said, "I got about nine minutes of music in here, but if I could stretch it out to about 25, would you put the record out, would you put out an album?" I said, "Sure." No brainer. Well, of course we couldn't use -- I think he got -- I think we got to use the hit record of "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head". But there were other themes in the movie; Burt was just -- there was a period in American music when everything Burt did was amazing, and we may not have gotten the full force of that, because he did do it for other artists and other labels. But what he did for us in that period was just awesome, we had four or five platinum records with him, and always a pleasure to work with. And don't forget, we had "Close To You", and all the Carpenter hits, and Herbie's record, "This Guy's In Love With You"; so many incredible -- Bacharach-[Hal] David -- songs.

CLINE

Right. Absolutely. What I want to get into next time is the -- finally following up on some of this, and talking about the Carpenters a bit, and -- but I want to get into the changing face of popular music that also changed the face of A&M

Records that you alluded to earlier, with signing some of these British bands, like (inaudible) and you mentioned Joe Cocker, The Move, and the non-British, Lee Michaels, and some current and really innovative, important rock acts with -- obviously, you made some big differences in the way perhaps A&M Records was perceived by everyone, especially in the years through '67 and '69, some of these really pretty amazing rock bands and things, while continuing with people like Burt Bacharach and the Carpenters. So does this seem like a good place to stop?

MOSS

Yeah. Great.

CLINE

We'll pick up next time.

MOSS

All right. Thank you.

CLINE

Thank you. [END OF Jerry Moss Session Three]

1.4. Session 4 (February 13, 2007)

CLINE

All right, it's working. Today is February 13, 2007. This is Alex Cline interviewing Jerry Moss, once again at his office at Almo Sounds, Inc., here in Beverly Hills. Good morning.

MOSS

Good morning.

CLINE

We were off-tape just discussing the Grammy Awards, which was a couple of nights ago. Mr. Moss and Herb Alpert received a special Grammy, icons of the music industry. Well-deserved. And of course, the music business has changed tremendously since the time period that we're going to be discussing today. And as this interview concludes, we'll be getting more of your take on the changes in the music industry and in popular culture. Starting today with some follow-up questions on the last session, which got us up to the mid to late -- the beginning of the later '60s. I think the last subject we discussed was the signing of Sergio Mendes and Brasil '66, and Burt Bacharach. So today, one of the things I wanted to ask you, and I meant to ask you in the last session, and we just didn't get to it, was: a little bit more about what was happening in your life outside the company during this time. One of the things that you mentioned in the last session regarding the relationship between you and Herb Alpert in the business was that especially when you started, you characterized Herb as having, for example, a wife and kids, and you didn't, and in some ways this sort

of freed you up, perhaps, to think of or to approach the whole thing in maybe a looser way, maybe you had less pressure or fewer expectations as to outcome. But I wondered what was happening in your personal life, if anything notable, during the period of around the beginning and the developing popularity of the Tijuana Brass and the growth of A&M Records during the early to mid-'60s.

MOSS

Well, on the personal side, I'd started seeing a lady I really liked around 1963, and in 1965, we actually got married.

CLINE

Oh. (laughter) And what was her name?

MOSS

Her name was Sandra, and Sandra had a -- when we met, she had a six-year-old boy child [Ron], and when we got married, he was eight, and by the time he was 11, I formally adopted him. And just a great kid. In about a month from now, we're going to celebrate his 50th birthday, which is quite amazing. He's a music man; he's the executive vice-president of my former publishing company, Rondor Music, and having fun. Doing a real good job, and handling himself really well. So I'm really happy; Ronnie's had some ups and downs in his life, but he seems to be on a good course now, and he's doing good. So I'm really pleased.

CLINE

So he's working with Lance Freed?

MOSS

Yeah, he's right -- he and Lance are running Rondor; it's amazing. And it was Lance's idea to bring him in the music publishing area. And it really worked. So those two guys are working very well together, as I understand. So that's good. So I was married to Sandra, and we bought a house in Coldwater Canyon; $50,000, $5,000 down. And quite a nice place, and Sandra and Ron and I moved in sort of around June of '65. And while we were in that house, we had a little girl named Jennifer; she was born in -- she's adopted, she was born in '68. And a son named Harrison, but he came a little later, he came in '70, and by that time we were out of that house. Success had propelled us to larger quarters, so to speak, and we moved on. But it was a nice house; we lived there about two, three years, and had a lot of fun there. Lot of parties; after every Tijuana Brass show, there was always a party in our house.

CLINE

Oh, you were the host.

MOSS

In those days, it was wide open; people could come in, strangers -- you know, it was the '60s, who cared? If you weren't morbid, you were welcome. That's sort

of the way it was for awhile in the '60s, until a few events -- many things changed drastically.

CLINE

Especially the [Charles] Manson thing.

MOSS

The Manson thing changed pretty much every kind of social happening; everybody started all of the sudden to be very wary of who was around. That was sort of a scary time, actually.

CLINE

Yeah, and we're going to talk more about it.

MOSS

And really sad. Really sad. Basically, everybody I knew people that were affected drastically by it. It was just sad. So that was sort of my personal life, you know? Married life agreed with me; I ballooned up to about 215 lbs. (laughter) And decided I'd better quit this ice cream thing and all the good food at home and get back to reality, which I tried to do. But everything seemed like it was going along, it was operating and doing well. In 1966, I think -- I don't know if we discussed buying the [Charlie] Chaplin lot, which really started a whole other kind of function of our record company, and how much fun that lot was to work in, and driving onto it every day and seeing people. So life was kind of interesting; the nation was dealing with the war and dealing with the assassinations of some of the major people.

CLINE

This is exactly what I want to talk about, so let me stop you, if I can, and back up. Around the time that A&M Records was just starting it, it was still in the [John F.] Kennedy years, and of course, one of the things that people kind of wonder is where they were when they learned of the assassination of President Kennedy. What do you remember about that? What were your feelings?

MOSS

Well, I remember being in the office at 8255 Sunset [Boulevard] in November of 1963, and just being absolutely devastated. I mean, I just really admired the guy; I thought finally we had a young President, obviously an attractive wife [Jacqueline Kennedy] who was the great face of America. A learned man, someone who was not afraid to express his opinion, and put forth these opinions in such a reasonable and exciting way. And to hear that he was just gunned down in Texas just absolutely -- very depressing. Sandra happened to call, and I said, "You've got to come over here." I remember the two of us -- I think Herbie was with us -- just going somewhere and just watching the TV set all day, I think some restaurant, bar, something like that. Just sitting at a table and feeling very bad.

CLINE

And one of the things before we pursue that further is chronologically-speaking, you mentioned how one of the things that really changed everything in the music business, especially in popular music, your field, was the arrival of the Beatles as a major force in popular music. You've said a little bit about it, the impact of four guys playing their own music on their own instruments, having clearly something original to say in the realm of popular music, rock and roll. If there's any more that you can sort of add to your feeling upon -- especially first hearing the Beatles, and maybe if you can describe if you had any interest in any of the other sort of British bands and things that followed that really helped change the face of rock and roll and popular music, bands like the Rolling Stones, for example, or any of the other developments after.

MOSS

Well, I not only dug the Beatles, I was a huge fan, you know; I was interested in every piece of magazine copy, I wanted to know about these guys. I watched avidly on the Ed Sullivan Show when they performed; I watched the British invasion, wanting, waiting, hoping to get into part of it. I just -- I sort of -- I don't know, I guess I was a closet Anglophile, and I just always loved British movies; I just loved what Britain kind of stood for, in a way. Winston Churchill was a hero of mine; I loved his speeches and how he stuck to his guns, and how England persevered during the Great War [World War II], and read stories about it, and was a great fan of it. And so in 1964, I actually went on my first trip to London. Someone was interested in the Tijuana Brass -- it was an incredible trip, really. Someone was interested in the Tijuana Brass in Europe, and I felt I should make a trip and go over and just see it and get into it, and just see these people that supposedly wanted us. And also it was to hook up with Gil Friesen, who was a friend of ours who had been working in England managing this P. J. Proby, an American working in England, and to say that I think it was ripe and time for him to join us in our company, because we were at least thinking we can afford another salary, and the Tijuana Brass was starting to look like we were going to sell some albums, and would he care to join us? We had written letters back and forth to each other, something people don't do anymore, but it seemed like he seemed to express an interest to do so, and it was good to see him again; he was a friend of mine, we were promotion men together, it was good to see him. And so I went over there, and I think I stayed at some hotel, and I hadn't arranged -- one little thing, my entrance to London was -- I hadn't arranged for a trip, or once I arrived in London at the airport, all right, how do I get to my hotel? And cabs didn't seem to be around, and some guy was driving a bus, an empty bus, he said, "I'll give you a ride." And it was a fairly long ride, if you've ever been to London, the airport into London is 45 minutes, at least.

CLINE

Which airport was it, do you remember?

MOSS

It must have been Heathrow [Airport]. I took a Lufthansa [Airlines] over there, only because Jolene's husband worked for Lufthansa, and I got a bit of a deal on a ticket. Jolene [Burton] was our office manager by that time. So me flying to London on a German aircraft was really strange also. But quite amazing. So anyway, this guy in the bus, and he's telling me about London and all this kind of thing, and we got to my hotel, the guy was amazing, and I wanted to give him a five-pound note, I changed some money at the airport. And he says, [adopts English accent] "I can't take that, sir. That's five pounds, I can't do that! Nothing, please." I said, "Wow, what a country. Unbelievable." I thanked him as much as I could and got out. And so then I spent about three or four nights in England, and had some fun with Gil, and met P. J. again, and got a little sense of the British rock and roll thing; we went to a few clubs, and I saw a Beatle here and there. Ringo [Starr] was partying somewhere, and a few of the London scene people. But -- and visited Pye Records, who was interested in the Tijuana Brass, and I think they had released "The Lonely Bull", and I had met these people sort of at a convention or something, but now I reconnected there and met the people. Lou Benjamin was the managing director of Pye, and he was a tough bird, he just was. But I figured this is where the enthusiasm is, and I decided early in the game to go where the enthusiasm was when it came to licensees, people who really wanted to be with us rather than me trying to sell somebody. And Pye Records was it. And I visited other places, like EMI [Records] and Decca [Records] and had lunch somewhere and did this and did that. I mean, I worked pretty much all day to see what the whole game was in England, and I enjoyed every part of meeting people and getting into it. And Pye Records was associated with a company called Vogue Records in those days, which was a French company. And so I made appointments to see the people in Vogue Records. So I went to Paris, and I went to -- let's see, I went to Paris, I went to Rome, and I went to Cologne, Germany, which was where Vogue was situated. And the trip was amazing for me; Gil came with me to Paris, and we spent a couple of days in Paris at the Meurice Hotel, which was a fantastic hotel; it was occupied by the German Gestapo during the war, and I was able to take a better room than Gil took, because he was working as a manager, he wasn't making that much. And I only took the room for two or three nights or something.And one day, as I remember, we were having lunch at one of those outdoor cafes, and we ran into somebody we knew, and I got to know, obviously, a lot better, and that was Rod McKuen, the great songwriter. And he said, "How long are you staying in Paris?" I said, "Well, I'm leaving tomorrow." He says, "No, you have to stay longer, Jacques Brel is performing at the [Paris] Olympia, and he's doing a couple of my songs. But having said

that, you've got to stay to see him; he's just the greatest performer." And I said, "All right," so I checked out of my hotel and checked into some little room off the -- close to the Olympia so I could just walk there. And Jacques Brel -- and Gil had to go back, so we split, but we had agreed by that time that he was going to come back and join us, which was a great, satisfying part of my trip. And I told him the salary was not going to be great, but we were starting out, this kind of thing, and he bought the whole thing; I think he was getting -- P. J. was acting up and doing some not very agreeable things over there. But we now knew what rock and roll people were capable of, so that was interesting anyway. But not dwelling on P. J. But Brel as a performer was absolutely incredible. And everything was in French; I just sat there by myself and was enthralled by it. And the whole feeling of the Olympia, how excited the French audiences would get about things that he did, and what a consummate performer he was. A particular song called "Les Arnants [de Coeur]", which was written by -- "The Lovers" -- which was written by McKuen. It just went over brilliantly, and I can understand why Rod was certainly so excited. Subsequently, I ended up buying the song, and buying the catalogue. But I mean, I would say that seeing that at that time helped me understand how valuable copyrights were, and how much you can transfer them around the world, and what relevance they had to different artists in different places; it was an incredible thing. But the Olympia was the place that I always just remembered as a sort of -- where I really got to understand a few things about international life and business and art; it wasn't all just what happened in America was important, it was what happened somewhere else was important too. And from there I went on to Paris, and from Paris, they offered me $10,000 in Vogue Records for four years, and they wanted France, Germany, Italy. I think the Italian was a different label, but it was also kind of associated. But -- and Italy, and it was like doing the body of Europe for $10,000 for four years. As far as I was concerned -- I said, "Now, let me get this right. I sign the contract; I get 10 grand, right?" And then they said yes. And you know, you're speaking -- at this time, in 1964, not everybody spoke English, and if they did speak English, it was kind of a stilted English; the international business was just really a small part of what these people did, they had their own catalogues and their own sales, they didn't -- this was before CBS [Columbia Broadcasting Service] had a major company over there, or Warners [Warner Bros. Records] even thought about it; everybody kind of licensed songs and records. So there wasn't a big -- a lot of English spoken. When you talked to people, it was rather halting, and you kind of understood. But I spoke a little French, I got by here and there. And I said, "OK, probably we'll do this deal. I want to talk to my partner about it, whatever it is, and we'll see a contract," and they had an American lawyer that was going to get in touch with me on my return.But I

thought I'd go to Cologne and see what their German operation was like. And I went to Cologne on the train for a day, all these things were a day or two, maybe, and met a guy named -- his name was Larry Yaskiel, Y-A-S-K-I-E-L. And he was a British guy, and for some reason he was living and working in Germany, he spoke fluent German, and knew every one of my records. I mean, everything, from the Canadian Sweethearts to this one, that one, all my -- all the Chester Pipkin records, the -- certainly Herb Alpert, was enthralled with Herb, whatever. I mean, this is what you were looking for if you were going to make a deal with somebody, somebody that seemed to -- whether he was putting me on or whatever it was, it was exciting for me to go to a place like Cologne, Germany, for the first time, and somebody was familiar with every record we were putting out of our garage and our little office on Sunset Boulevard. So I was completely excited then about being with Vogue and being with Larry. And then I went to Italy, and that was amazing; I could never get to see the guy that was running the company, even though I'd met him at a convention and he seemed excited or enthusiastic or interested to make a deal; he was always busy, and it was raining a lot. And I remember going to the Vatican and just having an amazing experience just walking around that place, just to get the feel of that place; I don't know if you've ever -- it's just awesome.

CLINE

Yeah. Monumental, literally.

MOSS

Literally. (laughter) And meeting some nice Italians and having some nice experiences in Italy and coming home. And Gil said he'd be there in two or three weeks and then we'd get into stuff. And when I got back, I'm getting this call from a lawyer in New York that's sending me the contract on the Vogue Records, which I had supposedly agreed to. And I said, "No, no, no; it doesn't say anything about the $10,000," because I felt, well, I made the trip, and I made money on the trip; at least I got ten grand to bring home. Because I told Herbie; I called him and I said, "Hey, I think I got ten grand from these people. You know, as I said, we were not selling gangs of records; our last hit was in 1962, "The Lonely Bull", and the rest of the stuff was just chart stuff. I mean, we could feel the build-up in America, but, you know, ten grand is ten grand, as they say. And the American lawyer said, "Oh, no, no; there's a misunderstanding. If you sell $10,000 worth of material within four years, we'll give you another $10,000 advance. But you have to sell $10,000 first, so there is no advance," basically. I said, "Well..." I mean, I wasn't very -- to tell him to -- the last of the expressions ends with the word "you," you know? (laughter) I just thought that was so underhanded that I wouldn't want to have anything to do with this company, because I was led to believe something entirely different. And it was then that I started thinking, you know, we're working with a

particular lawyer that's a great guy, but I'm not getting any help in the negotiating factor, and who to look out for factor -- I need somebody just a tiny bit more worldly and a little more passionate. And we weren't ready to get with somebody like that, because certainly we didn't have the money to attract anybody like that. So I came back, and I communicated to this guy Larry that, "Sorry, I couldn't make the deal, but let's stay in touch, please; I enjoyed meeting you and I'm sorry we're not going to be doing any business, because I'm looking for some advance if I'm making a deal. If I'm giving up rights, I want something for it." He understood, bing bing bing, and we just kept in touch. And so we don't have to make too much of it later on in 1969, when we started our company in England, I hired Larry Yaskiel to run it. And Larry Yaskiel, for what it's worth, he turned -- he got a little bit unstable. But in the two or three years he ran the company, he did sign Supertramp, and he did sign an artist called Rick Wakeman for the label, who eventually got great fame in Yes, but also as a solo artist. So that connection was very interesting from that little trip to Cologne, as I say, and oftentimes the people you meet and have instincts about do pop up along the way, and sometimes they're helpful and sometimes they're not, but Larry definitely contributed. So anyway, pushing on from there -- maybe we better wait for another question and go from there.

CLINE

OK. I wanted to ask you, speaking of different markets, here you are, your big hit records are the Tijuana Brass, and this is essentially sort of Mexican-flavored pop music, but it isn't made by Mexicans. I wondered if you had any sense of what kind of response you were getting in the Latin American or the Spanish-speaking public. I mean, this was obviously before that was a big market, certainly like it is now. But did you have any sense of what people in the Spanish-speaking communities of the US were thinking or responding to, in relation to the Tijuana Brass' music and their popularity? Or the Baja Marimba Band, for that matter?

MOSS

Right. I think we made a real attempt at being part of the Latin music scene. I mean, Herbie did speak a little Spanish; we went to Tijuana a couple of times to be celebrated with the mayor there, and took pictures. We tried not to make it like we were taking something from them and using it and not giving anything back; I think we started making major contributions, or somewhat major, to a school down there, to make it feel like we were part of the community, in a sense. I don't believe the music, in its earlier sense, took off down there, only because mariachi was so prevalent, they got tons of mariachi bands, certain acts that competed with us on a real ethnic level that we just couldn't compete with. They were touring and playing and appearing throughout Mexico or Latin America. But we did get distribution of the records, and we sold a fair amount.

CLINE

OK. And then another market, you signed Waylon Jennings, and I wondered, considering the fact that you had something like the Tijuana Brass on one hand and something like Waylon Jennings on the other, how successful were you at finding the audience for these different types of artists and reaching that market, so to speak, because they're so different.

MOSS

Well, I think radio was wide open. Radio had different slots, so radio had like sort of easy listening or good music, or middle of the road, as they called it, and then there was top-40, which was very definitely for buying singles and hits. It had eclectic jazz stations; Johnny Magnus was on [radio station] KGFJ here, who had a tremendous show. Great people, great guy. Wonderful taste. And so you had these radio personalities that you could go to for almost every part of music to get a little exposure, to help you kind of define your artist, and to see if they got a reaction. They'd answer phones, they'd answer what the audience liked, the mail and stuff. People responded, they had radio stations, their favorite people they listened to day, day out, while they were doing housework or driving their cars, and you could get a reaction. So let's say we could do Waylon -- now, we didn't record as a country artist; we weren't looking to make so-called "country" records; we probably were trying to make sort of country-tinged pop records. So we would take a record like the Limelighters' "Four Strong Winds" -- I don't know if you know the tune, but it's just a great song that they had a bit of a hit with, and we were hoping to make even a greater hit with Waylon, and that was maybe one of the songs I was whistling on or clapping hands on the recording. And as I say, it was just a good record that wasn't a hit. So we would try to get people used to Waylon's voice, because we knew that with artists, if you didn't have a hit right away, that didn't mean you didn't have a hit artist. If you believed in him, and we believed that his voice was that unique and special, eventually we'd find the right song for him. We just believed that; I think from the beginning we believed that. And sometimes you'd make a record, and it just was a failure; the artist wasn't fun in the studio, didn't have a good time, and whatever your vision for him was, it just didn't work out; it's best that he tries somewhere else. We just had a good idea but it didn't work. But sometimes it didn't work, but it was our fault; we didn't get the right song for him. And Waylon was definitely one of those kind of artists. I mean, we knew he was -- he just had that kind of a voice. And he was a special individual. He was a star, there was no way around it.

CLINE

So you're a part of a partnership with somebody who's obviously a very trained musician. How would you describe the dynamic between the two of you, you and Herb Alpert, at this point when you're working in the studio? For example,

you're going into the studio, you're working with musicians -- maybe you can sort of describe the dynamic here. Were there things you learned from Herb on the musical side, and were there things he maybe learned from you on the business side, or did you start to kind of become synergistic on -- what was your comfort level dealing with musicians after awhile in the studio, producing?

MOSS

Well, I had, you know -- obviously ultimate respect for all these people Herbie hired -- Herb hired for sessions that we had just exquisite players; guys that you got great feeling from. On some of the earliest records, we had people like Leon Russell, who could -- wasn't really a great reader of music, as I remember, but his feel on a keyboard was just amazing, what he could do.

CLINE

"The Wrecking Crew".

MOSS

And he could do that, and also Phil Spector used Leon as well; Leon was a big studio favorite before he became Leon Russell.

CLINE

Right, right. Part of the Wrecking Crew, so-called.

MOSS

Well, amazing. I mean, the Mad Dogs and the Englishman tour with Joe Cocker.

CLINE

We're going to get to that one too.

MOSS

Yeah, we'll get to that. So these guys were all just incredible players. What I was trying to do in the studio, and what Herbie and I were both after, was something different. You know, let's start with a base of what's right, musically, and then how do we create something a little different here that'll be interesting on the radio. We take it home and we can hear it again and again and again and it's not going to bore us to death. And that's how we looked at making records; always looking for something unique, something maybe that nobody's done before, somebody that maybe somebody did it before and overlooked it, didn't work on it better. And so we didn't contrive things; we wanted these things to take place naturally, and we wanted to have things -- but we always started with the idea that something had to be musically sort of correct, you know, and then took it to the next stage. And in that area, we were really together. And sometimes we'd come up with things that were just laughable, we just cracked up; that's what recording's all about, having a really good time. And just discard it, because it was so funny. But other times, you just get a hook on something that just kept coming back and coming back and becoming more and more

interesting the more you heard it. I always listened to records a lot, particular records. I wasn't a one-time -- because you miss a record, miss some of the nuance in a record, if you just play it once. But at the same time, I realized that you have to have something on that record that when you play it once, you want to hear it again. And that's what we try to do, make them as interesting as we possibly could, and to get the most out of the artist that we were producing. That was the philosophy throughout.

CLINE

And you found that you and Herb tended to agree most of the time?

MOSS

Yeah, I don't think -- if ever there was a music opinion, his opinion would certainly be more important than mine. But if I really felt strongly about something, we'd really hash it out, sit and talk about it, and see what was up. But I don't remember in all that time that I could ever think about -- and there would be certain records, in those days, certain singles came up; should we buy this record, should we not buy this record -- that kind of thing. And in those cases, maybe we disagreed; I don't know if we bought this record, this says the right things about us as a label. OK, that's a good reason. And a record that we could have had that might have been a moneymaking record for us was a record like "Louie Louie", by the Kingsmen. That was offered to us, and we sort of turned it down. Now it's one of the classic records of all time, but that happens. And along the way, there were different artists that he would say, "I don't get this guy," "I do, and if you feel it, you should go." And we always had sort of enough in the bank to take that shot, so neither one of us felt that we didn't get a shot. If you wanted to sign somebody, if you wanted to make a symphony record, make a symphony record. And that was the basis of our partnership, and that's what made it work. The chance to fail, so to speak, without a big hassle.

CLINE

And how would you describe what had to be the constant balance between doing things that you enjoyed or that pleased yourselves versus trying to find that thing that would please everyone else, and therefore become a hit record?

MOSS

Well, we found the balance. And we also -- obviously, every label has to have hits, and we both realized the value of hits; that's the stuff that paid for every one of those other things, we weren't just experimenting; we needed big stars and big artists, once we committed to having a full-fledged label.

CLINE

One of the things I wanted to touch on as well, as we're heading into the mid-'60s: another side of making a hit record -- in 1967, the Tijuana Brass album, Whipped Cream and Other Delights --

MOSS

Was that '66 or '67?

CLINE

I had it down as '67, but maybe my information isn't accurate; I don't know. But I did want to bring it up specifically because it's amazing how many people, even that I work with, when they find out or hearing about I'm interviewing you, and your involvement in A&M Records, how many people mention that record, because of the cover. Because you're making a product that's also, by now, as albums are starting to become more viable, as far as something that people are buying, it's also something that people are looking at, and something that the visuals are going to help sell as well. And everybody remembers that cover, probably especially some of us who were pre-teens, males, during that time. What -- is there a story behind that?

MOSS

Oh, yeah, yeah. Great story. After -- I think during the time we were building up the label, you know -- we certainly got along with our distributors fairly well, our independent distributors; these were the independent businessmen that we assigned as our distributors, who were handling a lot of other record companies -- and you always wanted to spend a lot of time and effort to get to know these guys, and one of the greatest guys was a guy named Henry Hildebrand in New Orleans, who was our distributor down there. And obviously New Orleans wasn't a huge market, but we always used to have a lot of fun visiting Henry; I mean, I was on the road a lot in those days, and if I'd have a regional meeting of southwestern distributors, it would always be in New Orleans, because everybody wanted to go there too. And Henry was just a great guy, and very outspoken and liked us. And so one day, I would say in this period you're referring to, we get a record called "Whipped Cream" from him, came from some group in New Orleans, and he said, "I think this is a great record, and you guys should pick it up." And we tried to, we liked it; it was sort of a horn record. And the guy didn't want to sell the record. And I said, "Henry, just please explain to him that if he doesn't sell the record, we like it well enough that we might cover it." And he says, "Well," he says, I told him that, and he says, "Go ahead." So we did. And that company owned the publishing, whatever it was, but we made Whipped Cream, by Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, and it ended up being top 40, nationally top 40, and it did fairly well. And it was time to, you know, for Herb to do another follow-up album after South of the Border. Now, South of the Border, by this time, had done over 100,000 copies, which was a pretty good album in those days. So we realized, we really had a band. And I remember saying to Herbie, and this was sort of, I guess, my concept, was, let's do -- I like concept records. Why don't we do an album called Whipped Cream and Other Delights? Think about all the foods and stuff and potions and whatever, "Love Potion #9", you know. So he says,

"That's a great idea; let's go." So one of the first records that we came to was a song called "Taste of Honey". And we made "Love Potion #9", and we made this one and that one, and all the tracks on that album are kind of familiar now to the people. And now it became time to make the cover, and our art director at that time was a guy named Peter Whorf, and we discussed the cover with him, and he said, "I have a great idea," and he wanted to show it to us. And what happened was, a model named Dolores, her name was at that time Erickson, and we all knew Dolores, because she had been a girlfriend of Gil's. And she actually introduced me to Sandra, my wife at that time. And she was visiting, by this time she'd left and met another guy, really. What we didn't know was that she was three months pregnant, and therefore rather voluptuous, more than we remembered Dolores to be. And he showed us pictures of Dolores covered in whipped cream, and very fetchingly portrayed, as I must say. And we just loved it; the question was, will it get past the censors or whatever? And he made it so that it just about did. And that cover on that album was just incredible. It passed every test for the mid-'60s. And she looked beautiful. And man, that -- the cover -- the sleeve just got up in every disc jockey's window and everything, and out of that concept came, perhaps, the breakaway record for the Tijuana Brass, which was "A Taste of Honey". And I remember we put out "A Taste of Honey" with what I thought was a hit called -- we cut it with a song called "Third Man Theme", a b-side of a movie that was pretty popular in those days, the Third Man. And I thought Third Man was the hit, and I'm working Third Man, and all of the sudden, Phoenix calls up, our distributor in Phoenix, says, "I don't know what to tell you, but the disc jockey here just went on the other side, and the phones are lighting up. So I think you boys are on the wrong side." Next day, phone call from Detroit. "Uh, Jerry, I think you may be a little mistaken here. I mean, we're working our asses off on 'Third Man Theme', but everybody's telling me it's 'Taste of Honey'." So I said, "You know what? It's 'Taste of Honey'." So we turned over the record and really went after it, and it was a huge hit. And it was the record of the year; that's what we got our first Grammys for, as producers.

CLINE

And people are still talking about that album cover, all these years later.

MOSS

No, I mean, I was in Kentucky -- I think it was last month or something, I was in some barn, and I'm walking past the office where people are working, and with brook-mares and all this kind of thing, and some guy says, "Mr. Moss, I just wanted to let you know that I was about 12 years old when your record of Whipped Cream and Other Delights came out, and I have to tell you, it changed my life." I said, "For the better, I hope." He says, "Oh, yes. Everything's fine."

CLINE

Yup. That's about how old I was; I remember it well. My dad had the record. I looked at it for extended periods. Very evocative.

MOSS

She was -- it was beautifully done.

CLINE

And now, of course, the popular music culture is going through a lot of sort of accelerated changes along with the culture altogether in this country and in the world. And I wondered if for example you had any memories in connection with the -- taking place in the Monterey Pop Festival, which is '67, and became such a major landmark in popular music from that point on. I mean, I imagine at this point you're very heavily just embroiled in your record company duties and things, but I wondered if you had any awareness of what was happening in that sort of wing of the popular music culture.

MOSS

Well, I saw it developing, because as I say, I was a Beatle fanatic by that time, and I thought the Mamas and the Papas were incredible, so I was familiar with the bands.

CLINE

Right. And there's a Lou Adler connection, of course.

MOSS

Yeah, we knew Lou. And "Eve of Destruction" by that time he'd produced, a Barry McGuire record, which is an incredible record. And I knew who the Who were, and [Jimi] Hendrix, and certainly Otis Redding, through their -- Otis Redding pop records were incredible. "Try a Little Tenderness", I don't know if you've ever heard that record. Amazing record. And we went to the Pop -- we went to Monterey, where, you know -- and we had, at that time, Derek Taylor, who was the Beatle press officer, was working for us.

CLINE

Oh, OK. And he was a major figure in that...

MOSS

Oh, my God, he was hysterical. He was one of the great men; he was one of the greatest people. Because he had taken a break from the Beatles for some reason; they had stopped touring, and they got [simple?], and right before Apple [Records] summoned him back, when they formed Apple Records, he went back there. And that's another few stories. But for about a year or so, Derek worked on our lot, and he was just the most charming, most engaging guy. So fantastic. And he was the head of press at the festival. And so we'd go to some of the meetings that Derek held, and of course, crack up, and I took my wife with me, and I think we went with another friend, and his wife, Teddy Feigin, I think, and his wife Judy, who were with us. And we just had a great time; we went to all the nighttime shows, and we decided maybe to pass on the

daytime stuff just to hang out in the woods and see Monterey and how beautiful it was. But we walked through the grounds, you know, and it was like the first time you'd go to these festivals, and see all the beauty of the people, and how great -- everybody sort of peace and love and flowers, what it was really, and how incredible it was. I mean, absolutely beautiful women, nice people -- obviously the smell of marijuana was everywhere. But in those days, I think that was the extent of what the drugs were. And everybody was just comfortable and happy and laughing and really into the music in such a beautiful way. And the shows at night were amazing. I mean, seeing Otis Redding -- I even got a glimpse of Big Brother [and the Holding Company] and Janis Joplin one afternoon, and the Who, and Hendrix. I think it was Hendrix, Hendrix played there, didn't he?

CLINE

Yeah, that's when he lit his guitar on fire.

MOSS

Yeah. I mean, and obviously it occurred to me that, man, A&M doesn't have anybody on this show. And this ain't right; this is definitely not right. And by that time, we had signed a couple of people. You know, some people were interesting; we signed -- I think an important signing, but he didn't make it to the festival -- a kid named Lee Michaels, who was pretty good, who performed just keyboard and drums (Lee Michaels' first A&M album was called Carnival of Life). --

CLINE

Right, with Frosty.

MOSS

With Frosty. And it really wasn't a show 'til Frosty's hands got bloody, 'cause he played his drums so hard. And it was an amazing thing, and we had Phil Ochs on the label at that time, who we liked very much. Anyway, it was just a realization to me that I'd better get busy; this was crazy that we didn't have somebody. So I went to England and I got us somebody; simple as that. So in Woodstock, in '69, we were there, with --

CLINE

OK, we're getting there too. And how much of this culture then sort of may have started to be adopted by people down here like you, who are in the music business -- what sort of changes did you start to see in the culture, so to speak? In the style, in what your areas of interest may have been, since things were changing pretty fast by then?

MOSS

Well, the point was as a business, I thought we were tipped kind of the other way; we were not -- the underground had now become popular; the FM stations that were playing the Doors and these kind of people just took over, you know,

and the Doors were so major here in LA, and such an incredible band. And, you know, and they were coming out of the woodwork, these bands, and you had to be careful because some of them were really talented, and some weren't. And everybody -- you couldn't sign everybody that had a guitar and long hair, that was kind of ridiculous. And that's when I started having to discern where the talent was, and who was producing these things, and how to align myself with -- so we weren't making huge mistakes. And we trusted our own guts, Herbie and I, on how the music sounded. And I started buying finished records from England, which helped, because you could buy a record and just put it out in America, so that got you immediately on the radio, so to speak.And I think artists went where their friends went; they went where other artists they like went. So when somebody like -- when we started promoting heavily an artist like Lee Michaels, they could say, "Well, man, these guys are into it. They're serious about this; this is not a fly-by-night artist, this is a serious guy. He has an audience." Or Phil Ochs, who was on the protest singer kind of side, but the folk area, at least, were expecting Phil. Poor man's [Bob] Dylan, whatever; he was a sympathetic artist, Phil, he was a great guy, an amazing guy. Through these beginnings, in a certain way -- we got meet Joan Baez, we got to meet other people that could perhaps get us over that hump. And the English side, we were wide open; we signed Procol Harum right after, you know, "A Whiter Shade of Pale". So we released their first album after "Whiter Shade", which was "Homburg" and some great, great tracks, gave us credibility. And then in '69 when we had our own label over their in England, then it was easier because we could sign acts that we could release throughout the whole world.

CLINE

Did your sort of sense of taste, your sense of, perhaps, fashion, start to change around this time? What do you remember about the sort of people in the business? I know there started to become a time when people in the business started to resemble the artists they were handling more -- that may have been a little bit later. But what do you remember about that?

MOSS

Well, I remember obviously the amazing growth of hair. (laughter) And the love and music and flowers that came forth out of LA. I mean, in those days, if we'd -- there was an English pub on Sunset, and any time there was an English musician or manager visiting, we'd go to lunch there. And on the way, we'd pick up a hitchhiker, just to see what was happening, what was going, take him part of the way. You know, where you from, what music you're hearing. Just kids; that's how free and easy it was, and how open and how relaxed everything sort of was. I Love You, Alice B. Toklas, Peter Sellers; that was a brilliant movie at the time, I think it described it really well. But drugs were everything; I think if most people were, that I knew, probably had a hit or two; they were

able to not let it take over their life, but it was a stimulation of sorts. So it was -- what do they call it? -- a relaxing experience or whatever. But I would say that people did change, and the ones that couldn't stay in control of it sort of lost out; they became kind of sad, really, because they went on to mostly heavier stuff as it came along, and it became not very positive. But the people that are able to keep their drugs intact, I think, benefited tremendously by that altered state. And all I can say is that the manner in which it transformed everybody, I think mostly was sort of in a way positive, because it moved the generation along; it exacerbated, perhaps, the sadness of the war that we were then involved with in Vietnam, and it really did set the artists apart from the administration, certainly, at that time, because no -- every artist, anybody, any musician, could see how ridiculous this war was, and the amount of life and lives we're killing and affecting in a war that, you know, wasn't endangering America in any way. So unfortunately, it has incredible similarities with what we're doing today in Iraq. But same sadness, same sense. So maybe the -- and then the Kent State [University] killings were -- these National Guard guys with rifles can shoot students; that shows you how sad and serious this stuff is. And the difference between people.

CLINE

A lot of fear. Your office, before you moved to the old Charlie Chaplin lot, was on Sunset Boulevard, right in the heart of things. The Sunset Strip became the real center for the kind of popular music that was escalating at that point. And what do you remember, if anything, about the scene on the Sunset Strip, some of the venues, and of course, the riots that kind of chilled -- had a chilling effect on that scene eventually?

MOSS

It was a happening thing. There was something going on every night; there was a great club, disco, called the Factory, that friends of mine owned, and I got great seats, great tables, to see Ike and Tina Turner [Revue] really up close. Some great acts that they were able to get performing there. It was a really big place, and literally, it was a place to check in and you'd see people you knew. It was a lot of fun; it was owned by Paul Newman and my friend Dick Donner, Anthony Newley -- about eight or nine guys that chipped in, and -- Ron Buck ran the place, and always got a great heads-up. By that time, I was married, so I didn't participate in the rest of the fun that was going on, but my wife and I had a pretty good time there whenever we went. So I was privy to that kind of excitement and fun, and as I say, as a married person, it was somewhat limiting, but it was what was going on and that's what we did. So the Strip was happening; I was doing a lot of going out and seeing things, and we were getting ourselves in shape for what we were about to do.

CLINE

Where else were you going to see things then?

MOSS

London, New York --

CLINE

Well, just here in LA. I mean, what venues -- you mentioned the Factory...

MOSS

Well, the Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium] was a big place, and obviously the Troubadour. The Troubadour was huge. I mean, eventually everything almost had to emanate from there. You know, one night Carole King, next night Elton John, next night James Taylor. You know, I mean, it was just a happening place. The fellow that ran it --

CLINE

Doug Weston.

MOSS

Doug Weston was pretty smart, business-wise; he'd ask for options on people when he took them, because he realized how important his place was. I remember Phil Ochs playing there and getting me onstage and asking me some funny questions, just to get the audience to get involved in what he was trying to do. Sitting next to Yul Brenner one night. It just attracted every kind of people. I remember a bomb scare when Carole [King] was playing there, standing in line with people outside waiting to go on. I think Cat Stevens played there and just knocked down the house. It was just enthralling, the people that were coming through. And everybody that was anybody wanted to play there, because that was where -- and from there, you usually got -- spread your wings and went to the Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium], which was a perfect venue, you know, 2,200, whatever, 2,500 -- very acoustically sound; a great, great place to play. Then Lou Adler opened up the Roxy, and that became another place to go, until he booked the Rocky Horror Show, which ran for quite a long time, which meant everybody had to go back and be nice to Doug Weston again.

CLINE

What about the Whisky A Go Go, or...?

MOSS

And the Whisky was great for the rougher bands, and I remember almost losing an eardrum to Lee Michaels there one night. Just incredible; him hitting a note that I thought was going to take the top of my head off. So amazing, 'cause yesterday morning I was at the Whisky A Go Go --

CLINE

Oh, was this the Police thing?

MOSS

The Police thing [what was billed as the official rehearsal/press conference for the thirtieth anniversary tour/reunion of the Police], and it was just incredible. It was -- if I may even come close to touching their hem, as they say -- it was Beatle-esque, in a way. I mean, there was a line around the block of people. The Whisky now is all festival seating; everybody stands everywhere. I used to remember a little booth I used to have their when I went there; you could even get a meal, half-decent, a beer and everything, just sit and watch people, or sit up on your seat and see everybody. And they performed beautifully, and answered questions, funny and charming, and Sting is in amazing shape. Man, his voice is as good as it ever was. Powerful energy. And hearing those songs again played like that -- it's just incredible. But -- so the Whisky was always the place to go. And then, I think sometime later, well later, it was Madame Wong's. That was in the '80s, '70s. That was a punk club.

CLINE

Late '70s, right.

MOSS

Yeah.

CLINE

Yeah. And what about the riots?

MOSS

Well, I remember being in one.

CLINE

Oh, really? (laughter)

MOSS

And I don't remember being -- you know, I had to move with the crowd, and then find a store to go into or something, and just get out of the way. I don't remember being gassed or anything like that. I guess maybe I wasn't in any of the serious ones. But eventually, it stopped people from -- again, a certain level of freedom there, and the place became very policed, and you had to really watch it. Again, a good thing, got too nice and got screwed up.

CLINE

Right. Too many people congregating near where people don't want them to be congregating.

MOSS

Yeah, and eventually you sort of lose track of what the people that are living there want to have in their neighborhood, and what their rights are, after all, and what the store people, the people that have invested in facilities, in the neighborhood, and what their rights are. And all of the sudden, it's not just about you anymore.

CLINE

Right. And especially in a city that it's so hard to find any kind of center. It's kind of sad when one sort of develops, and...

MOSS

Yeah. We lose it.

CLINE

You lose it, exactly. There are so many things that I want to cover, and I don't want to get you into time trouble. As you started to move with the culture on the label, you developed this relationship with Denny Cordell; you started signing these English bands. What was your sense of the identity of the label changing, and therefore what perhaps public or audience perception of the label was as it changing? Or maybe what also were some of the artist perceptions of the label initially, since I think probably everybody thought of A&M as the Tijuana Brass' label?

MOSS

I think the earlier -- you know, when I was to England in the '60s, I think '66 or '67, I got a call from my mentor [Marvin Cane], my former boss who worked with Howie Richman in New York, who had an affiliate in London. And that affiliate had signed Procol Harum, that's how we had gotten -- and Denny, who worked -- a guy named David Platz. And you know, Marvin calls, says, "Hey, Jerry, I don't know what you're doing out there, but if you want anything in England, there's this thing available, and I think you should look into it." And that's how I got overseas, and the door was opened for me to see Platz and Denny. And I have to say that a trip before then, I had been to England, and I discovered a band that I really liked over there that I wanted to bring to America, and that band was Traffic. And I'd made a deal with the guy at Island Records --

CLINE

Chris Blackwell?

MOSS

No, it was his partner [Graeme Goodall] at the time. And I was all by myself, and I made this deal for $2,500 a side, meaning 25, 2,000, whatever it was, meaning that for an LP, it would have been about 25 grand, or even less. And then I got home to America, and I had this just incredible flu, I just was really sick, and I thought -- you know, I'd shaken hands with this guy on a deal; I didn't think there was anything to worry about. Anyway, when I got out of bed, I was sad to learn that this guy turned around and made a bigger deal with United Artist Records, and I lost Traffic. And I said to myself, this is never going to happen to me again. I'm going to get a lawyer that's going to travel with me, and I'll make the deal there, and I'll come home and I'll know I got something. I'm not afraid of expressing my opinion and putting my money up, but I don't want to come home and worry if I got a deal or not. And I got Abe

Somer to be our attorney, and I met Abe through Chuck Kaye, who was -- well, I met Abe first, because he represented Sergio.

CLINE

Right, right. You mentioned that last time.

MOSS

And then I met him the second time when I asked Chuck Kaye to run our publishing company; Herbie and I decided we were going to go for, like I told you, the best guys we could get. And Chuck wanted to bring along a lawyer to discuss his deal, which was very unusual in those days, because -- the deal was you got a salary and you figured out your expenses, and either you got a car or you didn't get a car, whatever the thing was -- what are you giving me a lawyer for? So he wanted security, and it was the first employee contract I ever made. Prior to that, I mean, nobody had a contract. And within the conversation, you know, Abe asked me if I was interested -- this was in 1966, again, after our great success, and we realized we were already buying the lot, making these moves. But Abe asked me if I was interested in selling the company, and I said, "How can you ask me that? I'm talking to Chuck Kaye; you think I want to go..." -- because he had a client that was interested in acquiring us. Anyway, Chuck said, "Do you mind if Abe helps me run Rondor Music?" And I said, "No, that's a good idea, I think, to bring in a different attorney," because at the time, we were still working with the other attorney. And I saw the passion Abe had for the game and how smart he was, and I liked the way he worked. It was in January of '67 that I said, "Would you like to handle the whole company?" And that involved being my lawyer as well as Chuck's. And he was thrilled; it was great. So then I started traveling with Abe, and my next trip to London, I took Abe, and we sat and negotiated the Denny Cordell/David Platz thing thoroughly and clearly, and Abe drafted papers in London -- usually a week we spent there at a time. But we were able to stay up all night; he had people in different rooms typing and doing stuff. And we had signed contracts when we got home. We had release dates, what we could expect; I didn't have to be concerned over somebody else showing up, or Ahmet [Ertegen] or Mo [Ostin], or -- because that's what happened, because people were making the rounds. And then I met Chris Blackwell, and he wasn't even partners with this guy anymore. And became really friends with Chris; Chris was very open and just a kindred spirit. We had independent companies, and the way it would work, times when we would go to London, we'd go right to Chris' house, basically put my bags there, and then we'd just go on to see all the acts that were playing. It was late '60s; London was like a fairyland. Man, they had the Roundhouse, they had this place, different clubs, different people. The visuals were starting to come into play. So it was Chris and Denny, and if we had a minute we'd watch some 16-mm film or something, and different Americans that were over

there, artists at the time, we'd congregate and just hang out and talk about stuff. Bill Wyman for the [Rolling] Stones, or -- who was this wonderful guy -- Neil -- Nilsson Schmilsson --

CLINE

Oh, Harry Nilsson?

MOSS

Harry Nilsson was over there, living there; it was just so much fun running into Harry, because we'd known him from the earliest days at A&M. I mean, such kindred spirits, all looking for great music and how to promote it, and how to do something with it. And I mean, I was open and I was lucky enough to receive whatever Chris was offering, whatever he had that he was about to bring to America, I was able to put it on our label and make the deal with him. So I got Spooky Tooth, Jimmy Cliff, so many other --

CLINE

Fairport Convention --

MOSS

Fairport Convention, with Sandy Denny.

CLINE

Free...

MOSS

Free was amazing, Tons of Sobs.

CLINE

Humble Pie.

MOSS

Well, Humble Pie, that was a whole other chapter.

CLINE

That was a separate -- oh, I see --

MOSS

But Free was incredible, "All Right Now" put us right there with -- you know. And the acts would come to America, and we'd go out of our way to take really good care of them. And so when it became clear that the artists' needs were paramount with us, that put us on the map. So then when I would compete with other labels for rock acts, so to speak, we were always considered, because we first of all delivered on these Island acts, and Procol Harum had good words to say, and we were always asking these musicians who they liked. At dinner, you know, we were always with them. In those days, when artists toured, they hung out at the record company. This is before they got to know Brad Pitt or something, you know what I'm saying? They were there, and you'd say -- they'd have their favorite records, and you'd sit and play and listen and learn something. It was fantastic; it was just a fantastic time. And my meetings in my office would -- my secretary heard music playing, she'd know that my next

appointment was going to have to wait, because I was hearing something. And it was great doing that stuff; it was a fantastic time.

CLINE

Do you remember some of the people you saw when you were in London, for example, at some of these venues? You mentioned the Roundhouse and some of these places -- I don't know if the Marquee Club was happening --

MOSS

Well, once we saw what was happened, I saw that we -- to be an international company, we had to have our own company in London. In the mid to late '60s, my relationship with Pye Records was coming apart, only because Lou -- they also had Warner Brothers, and Warner Brothers was getting first shot at what Pye was signing. So the Kinks, for example, which is a band I really loved, went to Warner Brothers. We didn't even get a shot at them. And I was very upset with Lou Benjamin for -- you know, "Why couldn't you at least see if I was interested?" [imitates Benjamin's delivery, accent and all] "Well, you know, Jerry, they were here," you know. And by this time, Abe and I were so angry at Lou for a lot of different reasons that when he took us to lunch in London, he used to have to hire a hotel room because he didn't want to be in a restaurant and get yelled at in front of a lot of people that he knew. So in '69, we still had some ways to go in our contract with Pye, and I said I want a distribution deal. I want to run my own show here. Pressing and distribution, meaning we'll order the records, I'm going to have an office in London; we'll order the records, they'll be in charge of it, you'll distribute them, and you'll make -- you'll get a royalty and I'll get the whole thing. And when I realized in England that the manufacturers only allow the retailers a 5% return -- in other words, 95% of your shipping was cash. I said, "This is a great business. Unbelievable business." Because it was then up to the retailer to discard returns as he felt, usually in terms of discounted sales or whatever it was. But it wasn't our job to take back, unless we heavily consigned a record on a promotional level -- that was the business. So that's when I started our own company in England, and that's when probably our relationship with people like Chris and Island slipped a little bit, because now I was sort of in competition with him, and that great period was sort of over. We talked about uniting in some way; we talked about our companies getting together, but it was really tough, because he was of a certain mentality, and so were we, you know. But I'll always have just an incredible feeling -- you know, one of the last acts I got from Chris Blackwell was Cat Stevens. Always have a great spot in my heart for him.

CLINE

Yeah. Very competitive picture you're painting. I also want to ask you, since we were talking about these rock bands and things, and I want to get a little bit

more into that, along with -- you've mentioned Phil Ochs; you mentioned Lee Michaels and Procol Harum, and you just kind of slightly touched on Joe Cocker -- this is at the time in '67, Joe Cocker was signed. What do you remember about your first experience hearing Joe Cocker; how did that go then?

MOSS

Well, I remember Denny being really excited, and Denny was a close buddy. He was truly a -- I mean, I say this because we started out being incredible friends, and he was a great contributor to the label, and at -- and he taught me so much. And Denny was considerably younger; I think he was like ten years younger than I was, and Denny's history in the business was such that we're very close, and then he and Leon, at the last minute, after we had kind of thought he was going to come with us with that label, they got swayed away somewhere else and they went somewhere else. So then Denny and I became competitors, which I was hoping we wouldn't have to be. And they had Blue Thumb [Records] -- was it Blue Thumb? -- no, Shelter.

CLINE

Shelter Records, yeah.

MOSS

And then after that -- not to jump forward, but Denny left the business altogether to be a horse trainer in Ireland for ten years. And then Chris Blackwell actually got him back to produce the Melissa Etheridge great record that put her over the top. I mean, he was a magnificent producer. And then we got to be friends again, and then Denny passed away. But so Denny called me at that time to let me know that he'd just discovered somebody he thought was just going to be amazing, and that was Joe Cocker. And then he sent me a record called "Marjorine" that was just incredible. And it was Joe singing mostly almost falsetto; he went to go up a range. And we released the record as a single just to put it out. By this time, we were familiar with underground people, and had press and publicity, and people in the art department that were totally geared in. And we distributed the record, and it got a decent turn as a sound, people would put it on, we released it as a single. And Denny was making this record in England, and he put together a record that had everybody like Steve Winwood, Jimmy Page -- the most amazing British musicians, because they respected him so much. And we put out just an amazing record, first Joe Cocker record [With a Little Help from My Friends], and it got -- it must have sold 3-400,000; I think maybe the record eventually went gold. But we knew we had just a spectacular artist. And he was the most -- it's so hard for me to believe that this guy is still not in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Can you imagine that? Joe Cocker? What a seminal and incredible artist. The greatest white blues singer ever; there's just nobody even close. I mean, he was

real, Joe Cocker could never sing -- in his prime, and he's still doing pretty good, as we sit here today in 2007, he's still amazing; I saw him recently -- he could not -- it was impossible for him to sing out of time or out of tune, and with incredible power, the most amazing power. When he appeared here with the Grease Band, in his earliest days, Chris Stainton, who was his boyhood friend, on keyboard, and Henry McCullough on guitar, and those people -- he was such a formidable presence, monster presence. And he was so articulate in his conversation, in his manner, in whatever he did. He was actually just somebody you wanted to hang out with. He was a tremendously attractive guy, and he just had this air about him that -- you know, he was a pipe-fitter from Sheffield, England, and yet he had this vocabulary that was so charming and so fantastic. And we had a very successful first album, and we literally -- the company really turned in 1969 on Joe Cocker, and it was that -- we threw everything behind him, everybody that sort of worked for us kind of understood that. We had released another record, I think it was in '69 or '70, that was also incredibly important; it was Crime of the Century by Supertramp. And that was a homegrown; that was our record for the world. We only had Cocker originally for US and Canada.

CLINE

And certainly his appearance at Woodstock and then in the film [Woodstock] put him over the top. And I now you have an appointment, so I guess we're going to have to continue a fair amount of this in the next session, but you said you were at Woodstock telling me about what was originally "Three Days of Peace and Music", and I remember it. And like Monterey Pop but in a totally different way, and by now the music business is big; some artists were really made at Woodstock, when it became known as Woodstock.

MOSS

We went to Woodstock, Abe and I and a couple of other coworkers, and we were meeting Denny there, because Joe was playing there. And we went to Grossinger's [Catskill Resort], checking into Grossinger's which was a famous hotel in the mountains, so to speak, in the area, and quickly discovered that the roads to Woodstock were impassable, unless you wanted to walk there. And it was about 20 miles from Grossinger's, so we had almost given up hope of getting in there. And then Denny called, and he said he's coming in with a helicopter. I said, "Man, that's fantastic." He says, "So wait for us, and then we'll head in." And a couple of us believed him, couple of us didn't and went to play tennis. Abe and I stuck around, and pretty soon this little bird kept coming down from the sky, and we jumped on, and went to Woodstock just for a look-through, because this was the day before Joe was going to appear. But we got off the helicopter, walked around; it was a sunny day, it was pretty nice, pretty amazing. Half a million people, at least. Nude swimming -- not me, but people

-- everybody very uninhibited. And you know, different businesses, people selling things, people whatever; food was hard to come by. There weren't a lot of toilets available. But backstage, people put together a pretty nice set-up, with the platforms and the stages and the different -- they invested a lot in the staging, and because I guess somebody had made a deal for the film earlier on. So there was some investment in Woodstock. And as I say, the artists' quarters were kind of interesting. There was at least an area and some food back there for the people to participate in, and there were bathrooms -- you know, for the artists, it wasn't bad. And we sort of looked around and said, "Man, this is pretty nice, pretty wild. I can't wait to come back with Joe." So we took the helicopter back. The next day, Denny said he'd be back, and we told our people it was great, hang in. And again, they got distracted and they didn't, so Abe and I just stuck around. And this time, the helicopter was carrying in medical supplies and whatever it is, every helicopter was used, because now there were certain accidents there and people needed help and whatever it was. And the helicopter came and took us in, and he said, "Look, whatever happens, at 4:30 is my last trip, if you want to get out of there, you have to meet me at 4:30, and if you don't, I'm afraid I can't guarantee anything after that." And so we said, "Fine,4:30, meet you on the hill," wherever we were. And we got out of there, and quickly we ran into Joe, the truck had gotten through somehow over the night -- it took them hours and hours and hours, but the truck carrying Joe Cocker and the Grease Band arrived. And we hung out with them for the show, and everything of course took longer. And pretty soon, it was Joe Cocker onstage with the Grease Band, and we were right onstage; there we were looking out at half a million people. And I saw Joan Baez, she was on the other side; she was then pregnant with her child. And here was Joe just killing the people, absolutely in great form, as displayed in the film, and absolutely enjoying the circumstance so well. And we were so into it; it was just fantastic. It's everything, every place you want to be, if you're a music person and you're right there watching the crowd reaction, watching this whole thing. And I'm looking at my watch, and it's 4:15, and the guys are looking at me, Abe is looking at me and Denny, and I said, man, are we kidding ourselves? We're not going anywhere. We're staying; I don't care what it is, we'll get out of here somewhere, but I'm not leaving this. This is ridiculous. And from a distance, I could see this gigantic cloud showing up. Amazing, you could literally see it; it was in front of you. And as soon as Joe finished this incredible performance, this cloud erupted. By this time, it was about 5:30, and it poured, absolutely poured. And I remember helping Joanie into -- there was a elevator backstage to go down -- helping her into an elevator, and Abe and I and Denny making a run, and Joe, down the elevator, and Joanie got taken care of by some people, and then we took off. And Abe and I are running around, and there's some of

these vans, so we knock on a door and we get welcomed into this van by some kids from San Francisco and Detroit that had driven down, and you know, we meet everybody, and somebody passes something around, and some girl's keeping a diary, this one's keeping this, but the kids were so nice, so sweet, talking about their experience at Woodstock, how great it was, what it took for them to get there. And we look out the window, and Denny's wandering around outside, and we bring him in; some girl becomes immediately smitten with Denny, and the accent and his anaconda boots or something, and so she starts writing him a poem...Anyway, we're having this amazing time, and we're there for a couple of hours, at least, and the rain starts letting up, and you know, we figure, well, it's about 7:00, it's dark, but let's -- you know, from the weather outside, it's dark -- but let's take a shot; maybe there's a helicopter, maybe there ain't, but we've sort of outlived our welcome here; it's getting pretty close in this van. And we step outside, and there's Joe just wandering around, looking around for us. So the four of us just kind of go to this ledge where the helicopter was landing, and it was our day, because just as we get there, this thing drops right down. And we're full of mud, we're full of the water, we're drenched, obviously, because there's still -- a little bit of rain is pouring down. But we're so thrilled and happy about -- what an experience. And get back on the helicopter, drops us off at Grossinger's; Denny gets a shower and he has to leave -- not Denny, but Joe gets a shower; he has to leave because he's got a gig in New York that night, and he made contact with somebody that he'd better find a way back to New York, because the truck had already left. And we change clothes and go to dinner at Grossinger's at about 9:00, and we're hungry, we hadn't eaten all day, and now we're dry and feeling amazing, and we sit at this table and the waiter says, "Uh, wait a minute, you have to leave a seat in between." And we said, "What are you talking about?" And the guy says, "Well, tonight is single's night." So we had to sit and have some strange women sitting with us to finish our evening. Unbelievable. Because in the Catskills, they did a lot of those promotions; single's weekends and -- that's how people met each other. But what an amazing ending to just an incredible day.

CLINE

Amazing indeed. And an amazing sort of trajectory from, say, Monterey Pop in '67, in two years to Woodstock in '69. And in a sense, from '67 to '69, from peace, love, and flowers, to the country on fire.

MOSS

Yeah. Well, they call -- that's the day the hippies died, and all that kind of -- they had mock funerals for the hippie, where up until then it was flower power.

CLINE

What was your sense, if any, of things changing in the culture at that point, despite the elation of seeing Joe Cocker and stuff? Anything?

MOSS

Well, the country was, I think, by that time, certainly determined to end the war in Vietnam in some way; [Richard M.] Nixon had been elected in '68 with a program to end the war, and I think -- I think the thing I have against him is the war didn't end 'til 1975. And if you see the Vietnam monument [Vietnam Veterans Memorial], which when you see it in Washington, DC -- I don't know if you've ever seen it, but I mean, it has every soldier that died, 50,000 of them, from 1958 to 1975. That's how long we were involved in Vietnam. Just disgraceful, just absolutely emotionally draining to see that. And so I think the country by this time -- I mean, we lost Bobby [Robert F.] Kennedy, we lost Martin Luther King [Jr.] -- the country in 1969, it was divided, it was simply divided. And all I can say is my side, at least, was finding some joy and comfort in the music we were making. It was supporting the politics, and it was supporting the passions and the emotions of how people felt, and I was proud to be a part of it.

CLINE

And the other side of it, as far as A&M Records goes, I guess we'll get to in the next session, and that's things like the Carpenters, which is a whole other --

MOSS

They were signed in '69 as well, as was Humble Pie.

CLINE

And Humble Pie, the Flying Burrito Brothers; we'll have to get to them next time, although just let me ask lastly -- you mentioned when we were talking about Denny Cordell and then when you were talking about Chris Blackwell, and I mentioned Humble Pie and you said that was a different sort of set of circumstances, not part of the Island Records thing --

MOSS

No, they were --

CLINE

How did you get Humble Pie?

MOSS

Humble Pie was Andrew [Loog] Oldham --

CLINE

Oh, yeah, the former Stones guy.

MOSS

Yeah, he had a great label in England called -- he had the Small Faces, and for awhile his label [Immediate Records] was competing with the Beatles, even; the Small Faces were huge. Small Faces had Steve Marriott --

CLINE

Right. Later in Humble Pie.

MOSS

And they had Humble Pie. And he also had a band called the Nice.

CLINE

Oh, yeah. Keith Emerson.

MOSS

Emerson, which was eventually Emerson, Lake, and Palmer. And we knew we had to -- '69, our office opened in England, and I had to have an international signing, because I would say -- all we had at that time was -- I had these beautiful English artists for America and Canada, but that's where my rights ended. And other than that, I had American artists for the rest of the world, but none of them had caught on yet. I mean, how was I going to excite Germany unless I had an English artist? How was I going to get an advance out of Germany unless I got somebody really good? And we believed that Humble Pie was the act. It had Marriott, who was a monster showman, and Peter Frampton, who was a beautiful kid who was 19 years old and played immense guitar, and a couple of other guys that were -- Greg Ridley, who had been in Spooky Tooth, and Jerry --

CLINE

Shirley.

MOSS

Jerry Shirley, amazing. So we wanted the band. And they were managed by a guy who I believe was a former Animal, Chas Chandler.

CLINE

Oh, Chas Chandler, right.

MOSS

And Chas had, I think, a relationship with Ahmet, because every time I thought we'd made a deal, Ahmet came back and came in higher, to the point where we eventually ended up making a deal with -- it was our most expensive deal, by far; it cost us about a $400,000 guarantee, which in 1969 was huge. Now, years and years and years later, Ahmet, at some party -- I mean, this is like three years ago, and we're talking in 2007 -- Ahmed, who I have the greatest admiration, and I mourn his passing, because he was just a great man, and wonderful to me whenever I saw him -- he said to me, just offhand at a party, he says, "What did you ever pay for Humble Pie?" He says, "Man, I had that band for $25,000, and the last I heard, it was going for hundreds of thousands of dollars. What did you ever pay for them?" And I told him, "Ahmet, you cost me a $400,000 advance on that band." And obviously, I got the money back, but it just -- the way it went in those days. And finally, we came up with, I guess, so much money that even Ahmet decided not to go any further. But he did end up with Emerson, Lake, and Palmer, so he got the other band. But anyway, that was it.

CLINE

Wow. Interesting. OK, well, we're going to have to continue this; clearly, we're going to be doing a number of sessions, because we're only now still at 1969.

MOSS

Yeah, I'm sorry; I'm sorry I'm so...

CLINE

No, this is what we want. We like this. OK, thank you very much.

MOSS

Thank you.

1.5. Session 5 (March 8, 2007)

CLINE

OK. Today is March 8, 2007. This is Alex Cline interviewing Jerry Moss at the Almo Sounds office in Beverly Hills once again. This is our fifth session. Good morning again.

MOSS

Good morning.

CLINE

We left off last time talking about the late '60s; I think actually the last topic that we covered was the signing of Humble Pie, and the follow-up to that, many, many years later, with Ahmet Ertegun and you on the cost of that signing. I have some follow-up questions about this period, before we go into the '70s. First of all, one of the things that I think is one of the hallmarks of this period that we haven't really discussed in any depth yet is the beginning of what at the time would have been called FM underground rock radio, a very large change in the way popular music was being programmed and brought to people in the listening audience. Certainly a lot different from AM top 40. And you being a veteran of the radio biz, I wondered what you remembered about the beginnings of rock music on the FM band, and particularly if you have any memories about the first underground FM station here in this area, which was [radio station] KPPC, emanating from Pasadena, starting in the late '60s. And this, of course, is going to bring in a pretty large personality who I also know is a close friend of Herb Alpert's, that's B. Mitchel Reed.

MOSS

Well, the end of the '60s, basically -- I discussed, I think, Monterey, and what Monterey Pop [Festival] meant, and I think I discussed even Woodstock. Basically, it meant that the Tijuana Brass was basically not the force that it had been for us, and even Sergio [Mendes] had sort of cooled off a little bit, and we definitely needed, if we were going to survive, to get into this new -- well, to get into rock and roll in a big way; it wasn't new, it was just really, really coming on. And that, you know, in 1969 we opened a company in Canada. we

opened a company in England, published -- even though it was a down year, we also bought a very important publishing catalogue: we bought the Beach Boys catalogue for our publishing catalogue. And we eventually, like 30 years later, if you can believe this, had a lawsuit over it, but at the time, we paid the highest price for the one that was out there, and we bought it from the Beach Boys' father, Murray Wilson. But that turned out to be a cornerstone of our publishing operation. So 1969, in essence, was a very active kind of year, because as I say, we released the first Joe Cocker record; we had the signing of Humble Pie; English company; Toronto, Canadian company, publishing company. So we were active, and we did some good things. And built some nice bridges, so to speak. I became aware of FM radio because one of the guys that I was -- I can't say close to, but friendly with -- I mean, we had a nice, interesting relationship -- was Tom Donahue. And when he was a disc jockey on the main pop station in San Francisco, he was always a dinner -- you know, I'd go up there and always have dinner with him and Bobby Mitchell, who were just amazing guys, just incredible talents on the radio. People that, as entertainers, you could admire, because as a disc jockey, they brought so much into that booth, so funny, so sometimes dark, and so perfectly San Franciscan. And literate, you know, and all the stuff about how they treated promotion people, which is rather funny, in a way; I always got a great humor out of it. And I think I might have mentioned in an earlier thing, I know those guys from the time I came to California in '60, I was a promotion man, and I got this great client, which was Scepter Records. And four days after they gave me the account, so to speak, San Francisco came in with this huge order for a Shirelles record, so I looked like I was King Kong. In fact, it was Tom and Bobby playing the hell out of this record without even my knowledge. And then when I went up to San Francisco and I was the Scepter [Records] guy, I literally paid for every meal for them that we ever went out with from then on it, because they thought I was just the luckiest guy in the world, which of course I am. So anyway, and Tom and Bobby were interesting people; I went to my first horse race with them as well, so there's a connection there. And so they told me, Donahue, and it was written about, when they opened the first FM station up there --

CLINE

Right, [radio station] KMPX.

MOSS

-- how it all worked; they opened in some sort of far-off garage with a very weak signal, and they started playing the Doors and great music like that, and all of the sudden, the phone lit up, saying, "Are you guys for real? My God, would you accept some records; would you play some of my records? I'd love to --" you know, and people were starting to come down and contribute and bring them food, and they celebrated them in such a -- of course it was

monstrously important. And that was the underground, and that's what really came up at Monterey, the emergence of the underground.So I'd already gone into what reactions I'd had to Monterey, but -- so in '69, I wasn't very close to the LA station, because by that time, we had promotion people that were into it and in contact, but I was very much in pretty good contact with Donahue during the time he had the San Francisco station, and we talk to him, what's happening, how's it going, what's looking great, anything new come in that might be available for us to look at, you know. I'd always try to find new bands through disc jockeys and through artists, because they were there; they saw what was happening. An artist like Peter Frampton who was on the road all the time, I would have a meal with him and say, "Who've you played with? Who's been interesting?" And he would mention some baby bands somewhere in the Midwest or here or there; I'd call, get the manager on the phone, get a tape in. And, you know, it was always very interesting to hear what was going on out there. Nothing like being on the road, but the second best thing, at least keeping in touch with people that had been. So that was basically my involvement with it, to understand the importance of it.

CLINE

Do you remember listening to [radio station] KPPC at all when it was -- I mean, it didn't last very long; it was gone by the early '70s.

MOSS

Yeah. I'm sure I tuned in, but I also was also very connected at that time with what Bill Drake was doing here, and Bill Drake had [radio station] KHJ, and come 19- -- and Bill is an amazing sort of guy, I think was one of the great programmers. In those days, the things that made radio so interesting is that it was competitive, and all you were is able to own like seven major stations, AM and FM. Seven AMs and seven FMs. I don't think you were allowed to own a television station in the same market; you certainly couldn't own a newspaper in the same market you got a radio -- so in a certain way, the public was protected from somebody assembling all these thought-processing venues. Absolutely ridiculous-todays world.

CLINE

Yeah, the opposite.

MOSS

There are three guys that own everything. That's what the FCC [Federal Communications Commission]and basically big media means. But in those -- so and Drake made it very clear that he wasn't going to deal with promotion men; he was only going to deal and talk to presidents of record companies. Needless to say, Bill and I had a memorable series of drinks -- Bill liked to drink; I kind of have a pretty good constitution to drink, I like to drink too, on occasion. And we hit it off. Bill and his wife became very friendly with me and

my wife at that time, and he was the man in town, very simply. Because KHJ was responding to these records that were being played all over the country, he was smart enough to realize the importance of bands like the Doors and people like that. But I'll never forget walking into his station with the Tapestry album [by Carole King], and unbelievably, he went on three tracks. That was very unusual; usually you picked a song that maybe might go on and be a hit. Well, he went on three of them, so you can imagine the impetus of that -- on all his seven stations, basically, because he was just in love with this record, and of course the record was the record of the year. He picked it. When it came to a Carpenters album, single, and we had some relationship because they did a picture from the soundtrack, and then we'd picked -- she'd done a Leon Russell song called "Superstar". So I said, "We'll let Bill decide what's the single, because if it's 'Bless the Beasts and the Children', well, then, OK. Let's go with what radio thinks." Well, he picked "Superstar", and of course it went to number one. He was a vital guy at that time, and I was -- I never take advantage of the relationship, I never would, but if I thought I had something really good -- and if he didn't like it, that's cool, but I could get to him, and that's always the best thing with anybody in radio or newspaper, whatever it is, at least you can run it by them; if they don't like it, OK. I'll see what happens in other markets, and if it's working, I'll get back to you. That was always my style of promotion. Never pressure, never -- but if it was a hit somewhere and you were late, I would tell you: "You're late, and the other station's going on it tomorrow, so you decide." And in those days, radio stations didn't want to be late, because then somebody else would pick up on it. It was a competitive thing and it was exciting. So that's what my '69, '70 period was like, and Bill broke "Wild World", which was Cat Stevens. And that was close, because somebody'd covered the song and was going to maybe get their version on the radio, and once Bill went on the Cat Stevens version, we were pretty much -- and though it wasn't a huge hit, it was like a top 20 record, it really broke it, so that when [Tea for the] Tillerman came out, it was just so much easier, because we already built that plateau. So in those days, it was about developing artists, and not being that crazy if the record didn't go all the way or something. You always felt, "Well, the road dates are improving, they're making more money on the road; the next record, which will be in a year, hopefully, will be a better record and we can move from there." And it generally was; it generally worked out like that, that you could see -- and it generally took sometimes a third album when somebody really kind of got it all together and broke through, and got their graphics together, got their look together, got their show together. And the ones that happened at first, they did well too, in a lot of cases. So it was a viable game, it was an interesting business.

CLINE

Yeah. And of course, part of what was happening at this point, even on AM radio, is people started playing album tracks, not so much on a 45 [r.p.m. single]s. And I guess B. Mitchel Reed was one of the really veteran DJs kind of campaigning for this. He was briefly on KPPC before going to what became KMET after -- in the new realm of FM rock radio at the time, which before that had been, I guess, mainly audiophile, sort of stereo fanatic sorts of stuff.

MOSS

Well, he was a great man, Mitch. I got very friendly with him. At the same, he had a very strong relationship with Herb and with Lou Adler, Herb's previous partner. But he was always a guy I could go to at [radio station] KFWB, and, you know, was -- he played "Tell It to the Birds" when it came out, our first sort of record together, Herb's and mine, gave me some support there, and just a great man. And when he moved to New York for awhile to take over -- I think it was MCA Radio in New York or something, and he got to be number one in New York for a couple of years, and then I think his personal life brought him back to LA. He was just a great man who we lost much too soon. He was just one of the cool guys.

CLINE

What else do you remember about radio stations during this competitive period? Some of the other stations in LA that you were dealing with, and what set them apart from one another? Talking about still the late '60s.

MOSS

Well, I'm trying to think -- I don't know if [radio station] KRLA was still operating.

CLINE

Yeah, they went out probably some time close to the period we're talking about. I remember them.

MOSS

Yeah. I used to take trips out to Pasadena. It was KFWB and then it became KHJ for a long time, long, long time.

CLINE

"Boss Radio".

MOSS

"Boss Radio". And that was just the important station, and they would -- because FM was rather important in this town, they would -- Bill was clever enough to play enough popular sort of FM tracks, which made this like a music happening place. So on a signal like that, you could hear some great music. They would play the [Rolling] Stones; they would play the Beatles; they'd play Led Zeppelin if they thought there was a track that meant something, they'd play it for three weeks or four weeks, at least give it a shot. He was really an exceptional programmer, and that was really what I remember about radio back

then, because that's what I was personally involved it. But at this point, I had a great promotion man named Charlie Minor -- there's another guy, rest in peace -- but Charlie, every one in awhile, you know -- having been a promotion man, I would try to set it up for Charlie in a certain way, and he was so much better than I was; he was a tireless worker and just a lot of fun; I can't tell you how many nights I'd run into Charlie Minor, the aspect of Charlie Minor, after he became our national promotion director out at some club with out 18, 20 people in tow, the two councilmen, a couple of guys that park cars, three program directors, four Laker girls, always just having the greatest time, obviously on our credit card. But he was just remarkable, just absolutely remarkable. And every once in awhile, he'd come back to me say, "Boss, I need some help; you've got to call some guys for me." And of course, I'd go up to his office and call some guys, see if that would help, help bring it about.

CLINE

And KHJ extended its reach into television with some teen dance shows and things, locally anyway, Boss City and the Groovy Show. What do you remember about the emergence of this sort of music -- we're talking about the late '60s now -- onto mainstream television, including people like [The] Ed Sullivan [Show] and the Smothers Brothers [Comedy Hour]?

MOSS

Well, there were shows that were OK, rock and roll bands, and by this time we were, in the '70s, by this time we were sort of steeped in rock and roll, with the exception of maybe the Carpenters, Captain and Tennille, things like -- so whatever, the promotion of the Carpenters was widespread, and they were pop. And they sold million and millions of records, millions of records. They had a couple of albums that sold over 5 million. So they weren't just single things. So they went on Bob Hope, they did all those shows; they went on -- of course they were on [The] Ed Sullivan [Show], they were on this, they were on that. But for rock acts, there were just a couple of things on TV that they could even do. Most rock acts wouldn't be caught near a TV set, because it was so hokey, and it still is, it's so cheesy, really. I mean, nowadays you have public television and things like that that try to present the artist as they like to be presented, which is great, but in those days, it required an emcee having some banal conversation with [Mick] Jagger or something -- it just didn't work. And quite honestly, I thought, you know, in a couple of cases, I think some of our artists might have been hurt by doing too much TV. For example, Peter Frampton, after his huge album in '76, actually hosted the American Music Awards, which really -- you know, the thing about rock is it's sort of dark and mysterious; you don't have to see people that close up, just get their music and let your emotions and imagination carry you. And Peter's a charming guy, and what they were trying, he and his manager, were trying to do was, I think, make a short cut into

movies or whatever it was, and trying to show the many dimensions of Peter, which I can understand. But I don't think it helped his rock fans; it looks like he might have sold out a little quicker -- of course, today, it's different. In those days --

CLINE

Since MTV [Music Television], that's all different.

MOSS

-- get away from TV. Rock and roll? Never. So it would be these quasi-rock bands, Three Dog Night, for example, that could double, and play things like that. But mostly, they were first-time groups that are trying to get off this -- disco, maybe, a band or two, some of the glam rock guys would get on, because they weren't sort of sincere anyway, they had props and stuff. We didn't pay that much attention. Dick Clark, I think, still had [American] Bandstand, which was good, whatever it was, but we didn't -- we paid much more attention as a label to live shows, because with the live shows is where you really saw how the fans would react, to not just the artist but certain songs. And so if we're in the process of picking a second or third single off an album, well, what does the crowd like? What's getting the reaction out there? And that really, to me -- how the artist comported themselves on a stage, is it working, is what we're doing working, is the campaign working. Go to a record store, visit your distributors -- at that time, we still were distributed by independent people -- get as much information... So if they did local TV or pass through or whatever they did, that's fine. Most likely, we wanted rock bands to do radio shows, drop in on a disc jockey at 12:00 to help him pick his material in a show to let the fans know he was a human being, he had a pulse, and work radio stations in that way. But TV? Don't have to do.

CLINE

Wow. I just was thinking about to remembering seeing bands like Jefferson Airplane and some of these bands when they were just becoming hot on shows like the Smothers Brothers[Comedy Hour] and [The] Dick Cavett [Show] and things like that, which is --

MOSS

Yeah, yeah, because those were interesting shows. Smothers Brothers was a highly-rated show, and they wanted to get acts like that; that was a good show to do, providing you had a band that could contain itself. And Airplane, for awhile, before they got to be a serious band, was like a showbiz band, in a way. Very flamboyant, very slick. And they did it both ways; they made serious music, and then they made those incredible records. Big fan of hers [Grace Slick]; she's amazing.

CLINE

One of the things I wanted to ask you too, when we're in the late '60s, A&M studios opened, and this leads me into something I wanted to ask you about, since you worked in the studio with a lot of the acts and a lot of projects. What can you say about the changes in recording technology, from the time you started the label to the period we're in now, where we're getting into more and more multi-track recording capability, and a lot of innovation in the area of recording technology? How did things start to change in the studio, the way you remember it?

MOSS

Well, we -- when we bought the [A&M Records] lot, we definitely went -- Herb felt very definitely we should be in the studio business, because we should be a music company. And all I can say is that Herb was chiefly responsible, because he had the real knowledge about working in studios and what they're supposed to be, and he understood engineers -- and he had it all; he had the technical knowledge, because he was a musician, firstly, and producer, and arranger, and he also had the feel of things, who felt good in a studio with an artist, who didn't. So we never made any money out of our studios, because we always wanted to be the best, and be able to offer our clients the most modern equipment. And when you do that, and you're also selective on who you have, and you also want to have an artist-oriented platform. You really don't make a lot of money; we were just trying to break even, basically. We were trying not to lose, and if we had a successful year in the studio, well, that would be just amazing, because Herbie would take that cash and just invest it right back in the latest real estate. It was -- and then when we, in the '80s, brought Jimmy Iovine and Shelly Yakus to the fold to really modernize our place and make it -- because it had sort of come down a little bit. And they made it into something else again, a great place to operate from. I always deferred to whatever Herb felt like to do in the studio, because I thought they were something real, something breathing; we employed a great staff, great place to operate. We had everybody from U2 to Bruce [Springsteen], a Beatle or two; people were meeting the different Beatles at different times, working on our studios. Phil Spector, when he was with us in '69, worked out of our studios. Because we had Larry Levine, who -- he built the sound at Gold Star [Studios], and Larry was now our chief engineer, and he contributed tremendously to everything we did. He also made most of the Tijuana Brass records. So we had a history with almost everybody. Henry Lewy made Joni Mitchell's records in Studio C, must have made eight or ten of them there, and Joni would be camped out, it'd just be a lot of fun to talk to and be around. One of the most incredible, prolific artists I think ever existed. So we had the benefit of watching famous people walk on our lot, have a chat with them, talk to them. And as you know, "We Are the World" was produced and recorded on our

sound stage. So what we wanted to do was have a facility that was artist-friendly, always artist-friendly. And frankly, that cost money, it just did, to make things comfortable for people, and have extra staff to accommodate these people. It was really interesting, I tell you this story, and I think it happened -- oh, my God, in the '70s at some point, maybe toward getting into '80, '81 or something, but we had Barry White with us at one time, great guy. Really great guy. And at one point in the '80s, Russian rock was happening. A Russian producer was visiting the different labels, and he had the best Russian rock group at that time. So obviously, we wanted to be first in signing Russian rock, because we liked the band; we heard the tapes and we liked the band. So the guy came over, and he spoke in sort of halting English, and I said, "Well, look, why don't we take a walk around the lot?" -- which is what I do with a lot of people; you get a feel of the place, what the artists do here, how it functions, how it works. "Yeah, OK, let's go." So we -- first place I went was in the sound stage, and who's there was Barry walking out, and he's with Michael Jackson, who was very impressive-looking in those days. The biggest star in the world. So I said, "Hey, Yupki," or whatever his name was, "I'd like you to meet Barry White and Michael Jackson." And they said, "Nice meeting you," they were very -- they were great. And anyway, I said -- and then the guy thanked me, and we kept walking. Anyway, they ended up signing with Columbia [Records]. I said, well, who the hell did he introduce them to? I introduced them to Michael Jackson, for Christ's sake. Anyway, nothing happened to the band anyway, but the point I'm making is, we could impress people from time to time with who showed up on that lot, so that was the way it worked.

CLINE

And clearly, as the business got bigger and the technology got better, it must have been just a whole different experience to be in the studio, compared to those early records that you guys were making. Is there just kind of a concise way you can contrast the sort of old technology, the old studio experience, versus what came later?

MOSS

Oh, yeah, yeah. Most of the time you spent in the studios -- I'm saying in the '60s -- you were hearing music. After that, you got into mixing, because the boards became so complex. I remember when we got a 16-track board. Well, the early Tijuana Brass records were 3-track records, maybe 4. So the mixing aspect, who's playing with whom, is already decided. The drum and the bass, or you want to keep... Now, 16-track, you have -- everybody's got their -- some musicians even had three tracks, two tracks. They're playing here, there's a mic up here, how do you get that -- the sound, and then all of the sudden these special sounds started emanating, so it became a little more complex. And the mixing process because a longer process, and sessions took longer to get set up.

And so the spontaneity, as it will -- and I think the biggest job of the good producer and the good engineer was to keep it hot, keep spontaneity while the band was still feeling not tired of something. And oftentimes, if you used a great musician with a particular vocalist, let's say, they would get ahold the track on the second take, second or third take, where they were still enthusiastic. And then if you wanted a live sound, my God, by the eighth or ninth thing, maybe the vocalist is better, but the band's bored. And what do you do? And it takes a really good producer to really get that and then start recording -- "Look, let's the keep the track, you come back tonight, OK, and you do the vocal, and we'll take our time and not worry about, but I want to let these guys go; they already did their deal." So that was an interesting aspect of it.

CLINE

Different experience.

MOSS

But again, by the -- I would say by the -- I was in the studio all the time with Herbie, let's say, the first six, seven albums. After that, the phone calls, I had to leave, I'd come back. So I spent less and less time making records. My name was on fewer and fewer records, because I just didn't have the time.

CLINE

Right, right. Before we get into some of the really crucial artists that were making records for you in the early '70s, by '69 and into '70 we're seeing the music become extremely large, very popular, big rock festivals are now commonplace; we go from the idealistic high of Monterey Pop and into Woodstock, and of course to Altamont, where things get pretty dark. And we start to see a lot of the biggest stars in the music dying at very early ages. What do you remember about your feelings at that time, as things were -- and I mentioned last time, there was a lot of anger and violence in the nation at that point, politically, and what were your feelings about the direction of things at that point, or maybe your concerns?

MOSS

I didn't go to Altamont; I read about it. I didn't have a band there, so. And I wasn't that curious -- I knew it was going to be -- the Stones were playing, I knew it was going to be a horrendous mob thing, so I just chose not to go. The drugs were getting stronger and weirder, and people were getting hurt by them. The marijuana was always an easier way to go, but then of course it got into different strains of acid and PCPs and whatever, cocaine certainly. And it started really hurting people and getting people crazy. And you saw it in certain friends of yours that just weren't coping very well, and becoming strangely addicted to the point where it was really affecting their lives. Not keeping a job anymore. Sad. At the same time, there was the euphoria of continuing, the

people that were able to control their use and enjoy their highs. But you sort of saw some people that weren't surviving this. The [Vietnam] War was still getting people crazy; the war lasted 'til '75, really. That was getting -- at least everybody was now in the same boat wanting this thing to be over with, but it took that long. Those were my memories about those -- that particular area, in regard to the question I think you asked -- I don't know if I fully answered --

CLINE

Well, the culture is changing; certainly the drugs are changing, which you mentioned. Many people I've talked to about this period have commented on particularly the escalation in cocaine use, and the effect that had on -- for example, not just the artists, but people in radio, and people who were behind the scenes. Is there any more you can say about that from your perspective and your experience?

MOSS

Yeah, I mean, at first the drug use was hysterical and fun just like -- you know, your accountant or something; one day he'd be a crew-cut guy; a month later, he's got a huge moustache and sprouting afros. Clothing changed altogether. And that was fun, that part of it was fun, when people could kind of appreciate an altered state. But when you couldn't -- when you were out of control, and either driving or doing important things and loaded out of your mind, it's just not a good thing. So like I say, I saw people get really hurt by it. And that was the first sort of twinge of that situation.

CLINE

Starting in the late '60s and reflective of the just massive popularity of the Tijuana Brass and Herb Alpert, there was a string of very sort of illustrious appearances that I don't know if you were a part of at all, but things like the -- playing at the White House for President [Lyndon B.] Johnson --

MOSS

I was there.

CLINE

OK, and the President of Mexico [Gustavo] Diaz [Ordaz].

MOSS

Yeah.

CLINE

(laughter) What was that like?

MOSS

Well, that was fantastic. I'm sure Herb would have his own version of it; he was up close, I was -- I got into pictures, certainly, with the President, and then the guys -- I think it was just that -- I know that one of the President's daughters was a huge fan at the time, so that was great. And Herb did the show and spoke Spanish. There was a point as he was speaking -- only Herbie could pull this off

-- and he starts talking in Spanish, and then he hit a gap. I said, "Oh, my God, he forgot the word." And I saw the President of Mexico kind of touching his bow tie or something, and then Herbie came out and says, [Spanish - sus otros de la velente?] and he finished like this, and everybody went, "Ahh." And he just did it again, just knocked it out. So there was just a tiny bit of -- but he played his ass off, and everybody liked it, and it was a lot of fun.

CLINE

And what about the command performance for Queen Elizabeth [II] at the London Palladium in '69.

MOSS

I was there as well, yeah. (laughter) That was great fun. I remember taking our Australian licensee as a date, my date, Fred Marks, just a lot of fun. Again, I didn't get close to the Queen or anything like that, but I'd met the Queen Mum at some other time. That was a great show, fantastic show.

CLINE

And there are a couple more that I'll get to as we get into the '70s here.

MOSS

There was one event I think Herbie played -- was it press conference, or some press, Washington Press, and Gil Friesen and I were also there, and we decided we would follow Hubert [H.] Humphrey, who at that time was vice-president, who was a great guy, just to see what it would be like when you work -- and he went to every suite, he had sort of something in his hand; it wasn't real alcohol, it must have been -- maybe it was a highball that he'd always put down after taking a sip or whatever -- but he knew everybody's name. "How's that son of yours, Henry?" You know, that kind of stuff. "Well, sir, he's doing well, and he's back in school." "Oh, isn't that great. Well, give Martha my best." You know, that kind of a guy, with great warmth, great fortitude. He hit the L. A. [Los Angeles] Times room, the New York Times, and he was welcome; he just knew everybody. Just a great guy who would have been an amazing President if he had won in '68, just an incredibly generous -- just a rugged kind of man, you know. Just all of his stuff in the right place; you could see the way the press dug him and was interested in him and all that stuff. Now, maybe it was a different time, and they're all full of bullshit. They pretend to be the same way nowadays, but somehow, I don't think so.

CLINE

Yeah. There's a definition of a Washington insider; knows everybody and everything. Amazing. So some of the really key artists at this point I want to talk more about. One, as we are still sort of in the late '60s, one that maybe didn't develop in the way that maybe the promise indicated, the Flying Burrito Brothers. That was sort of a supergroup of sorts. What do you remember about

what happened with the Burrito Brothers? They never made a significant record.

MOSS

Well, Gram [Parsons] was, boy, as talented as they come. I mean, anybody that was even close to him wanted to be associated with him; he was a Byrd, for awhile, which is an amazing group, and then Chris Hillman came with him. And we actually got to meet these guys because of our art department; Wilkes and -- I guess Wilkes, Tom Wilkes, and we had a great photographer, a Guy Webster, because we hired -- we got the guys that were Monterey's art department, Monterey Pop, we just hired them, took the whole package. Decided to get a hipper art department and start moving. And they delivered; they introduced us to the Burritos. And of course we signed them. I remember during the signing that Gram couldn't even -- and I'm sad to say this -- he couldn't light his own cigarette, he had to have somebody light his cigarette, because he was just kind of a little wired, you know? But my God, he was passionate, and you'd think, "Please, God, let this drug-taking get somebody that can maybe control it," because he's a genius; the guy was amazing. And the other guys were incredible too, it was an amazing -- "Sneaky" Pete Kleinow on the pedal steel [guitar] Chris, who just I think recently passed away. This other guy Chris, and Chris Hillman, and -- phenomenal, phenomenal group, and you know, the record -- we knew if we had them for three albums, three four records, we'd break them, and if they had the discipline and the stamina to perform on the road. And they just couldn't do that; they just couldn't do it. Chris had too many guys that were willing to get high with him -- not Chris, but Gram. And they were famous people; going to hang out with the Stones one weekend, or hang out here, or do this there. And I'm not saying anybody's to blame, I'm not blaming anybody, it's just the times, and everybody thought we were going to live forever, and what the hell, it's just an evening, and I'll get back on the road tomorrow. And -- but you know, clearly you look at a success, at a band like the Eagles, and we had two shots at it; we had it with them, and we had the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, we thought, were also that genre that were gonna... They had a different problem, but... But the Burritos were special, and it's great to see that their memory is revered, and that album in our catalogue can still ring up sales, that people are still interested in them and still get off on it.

CLINE

And of course, around this time, as part of the Island Records deal, Cat Stevens, someone we haven't talked much about yet; you mentioned breaking his -- him breaking with "Wild World" and Tea for the Tillerman becoming really big, something I remember distinctly myself. What were your feelings then? I mean, you've got a lot of interesting people, and he seems to stand out, a totally

different kind of artist from some of these rock bands that you were getting from your English connection.

MOSS

He was remarkable in the sense that he was the whole package. He, in those days, experimented, but everything was under control, at least it seemed to be. He had discipline about performing, and he was just a magician onstage. Here's a guy that could tour with one other guitar player and just kill people. He'd get standing ovations in the middle of songs. I'm serious, on "Father and Son", people just kept going and getting up and down, because that song, if you know that song -- So he was the whole package, he just was. And he was totally charming, somebody you could again hang out with, hear who he liked as musicians, what we was listening to. And he was totally in the music business because he'd been a pop star in England earlier on, so he had another look at it, so he was -- when he was 16, 17, he was having hit records. This was different; this was a hit career. He was a monstrous artist, and so many fans. And, you know, a lot of nice women that he, whatever, bring around, and we were really sort of close with Steve, as we called him then, because he was sort of half-Greek, my wife at that time was half-Greek, so she'd make a little kind of food for him. As they say, record -- and I mean this, but artists used to hang out a little bit more. Come in town to discuss their new album or play a tape, two or three days, you'd have dinner, you'd have lunch, come to the house, come to the beach, whatever. It's before, all of a sudden it was hip to either -- Brad Pitt was throwing a party and you had to be there, because Vanity Fair was going to cover it. It was before this sort of '90s kind of thing happened.

CLINE

More of a society thing.

MOSS

Yeah. And all of the sudden, record companies became -- "Oh, well, I don't want to seem like I'm too close to my record company; what could be further from my interests? I'll let the manager deal with it."

CLINE

You have people to do that stuff.

MOSS

Yeah. "I have people to do that. I want to be the hot movie guy," you know. So -- who'd promise them he'd be on their video, of course, and never show up. Anyway, so there were certain artists that we spent a lot of time with, and he happened to be one of them. I just got a nice note from him on this latest record of his, An Other Cup, that he did as Yusuf [Islam], which is a nice record. I just feel -- you know, and I was explaining it to somebody, because he hasn't recorded in 30 years -- and he was an artist that clearly could have lasted. Like George Bressans, you know, in France, or these kind of artists that just sort of,

you know, stay with you; country artists get older, Willie Nelson, he could have --

CLINE

Joni Mitchell.

MOSS

Pardon me? Or Joni Mitchell. He could have done that, and his audience would have aged with him, and some albums would have sold more, some would have -- you always would have had one song that was kind of interesting. But when you don't perform for 30 years, all of the sudden you do sound different. And since he's got obviously to pay attention to his religion, he can only sing with a certain level of passion. So the voice sounds a little weaker, and that's what this album sounds like. But it is Cat Stevens, it's the sound. But so, he was just remarkable, and it was a time I was the closest with Chris Blackwell, who is still a friend of mine, but at that time we were very, very close, because he was with him when he was mostly recording in England, and "How's it going off?" "Wait 'til you hear this," you know. And so we'd come over there and spend -- I'd be in England every six weeks just to hear stuff, and it was great.

CLINE

This is of course something that was already mentioned this morning, the time you guys signed the Carpenters, it was something -- it was very securely in the pop realm as you mentioned, but absolutely huge, something that also then made a connection with one of your other artists, Burt Bacharach; definitely stands in contrast to some of the other artists signed at that point, say Humble Pie or Spooky Tooth or whatever. What do you remember about the signing of the Carpenters, and the one question I want to ask for sure is, did you guys have an inkling of just how huge they were likely to become when they were signed?

MOSS

The Carpenters was really Herb's discovery. Somebody threw a tape over the gate, literally, of them winning the Battle of the Bands at Hollywood Bowl, local Battle of the Bands.

CLINE

I remember that, yeah.

MOSS

And whoever picked it up got it to Herbie. And the next thing I knew is he was using the sound stage to have a live audition. And I heard the tape, and it was definitely not what we were in the process of signing, but Herbie really was into this. And so certainly I was supportive. And they came to the sound stage, and we had invited pretty much all of our staff, everybody just came to the stage to see -- because Herbie really wanted people to see them. And they got on stage, and it's Karen [Carpenter] playing drums, there was a cute girl playing maracas or something who was dating Richard [Carpenter] or something at the

time. And the band. And Herbie was thrilled, and you had to be knocked out with Karen, just because to sing the way she did, and play drums, you know -- anybody with any sense. And even though their look put people off -- by this time, everybody had the long hair, and the -- "What's up, man? Oh, my God, wow, the '50s, yeah!" I mean, just all those lines. But Herbie got on the stage after they performed, and he said, "We're going to sign these guys to A&M Records," and the band's like, "Wow," and he says, "And I want to say, this is the kind of music I'm just proud to have on A&M; I want everybody here to know that." And everybody said, "Yeah. Right on, man. Let's go." So basically, yeah, I made the deal with them and we hired this guy Jack Daugherty as a producer, and Herb was very much in touch with what they were doing, and the art department, who I told you was from the Monterey guys, did not make a great album cover of them; that kind of slipped by. And the first album was called Offering, and it was with Karen and Richard, and it wasn't -- they tried -- they couldn't put a pop cover together, so they put together something that they thought was a little bit of both, and it just didn't work. And what the album was most of their songs with one cover called "Ticket To Ride", a Beatles song. And but they had all the original stuff -- "Mr. Gooder", and a lot of different songs that Richard had written. And the one single we came out with was "Ticket To Ride", and it did -- got to be national top 50, it made a dent. Enough to know that we had something, and we were going to definitely make another record. Always in those days, how did the first record do, and... And they toured, they went out, they had a great discipline to doing that, and whatever dates they could get, I got them dates in a charity circuit, and they played at a Cher thing and Johnny Carson saw them, and different things like that -- for free, of course, but we would pay expenses. Because they were eager, they were 19 and 21; Karen was 19 when we signed them. So yeah, let's go, let's do it, let's get out there. And so they were dedicated to becoming something and living their dream. And then Herbie got them -- he was playing with a song called "Close To You", and he gave them the song, told Jack how he thought it should go, and I remember calling Burt, who was with Hal David at the time, and Burt was as I say a close friend, and by that time a successful artist, and I said, "You guys got a minute? I want you to hear something," -- and on the phone, because you'd play records on the phone -- "I want you to hear something," and it was like, "Wow," you know? Unbelievable. And I took that record to Drake, Bill, and it was like, "Right on."

CLINE

Right. No-brainer.

MOSS

No-brainer. And they were just huge, absolutely huge, and at that time -- to show you the way the synchronicity of the lot worked, at that time we had, you

know, publishing company was on the lot, and we had two guys named Paul Williams and Roger Nichols, and they had developed a song that they had written as a commercial for a bank, and they developed it into a real song, and it was called, "We've Only Just Begun," and that went on the album, and that became a follow-up; it was -- that song was so big, it sold a million copies of sheet music, which you can imagine -- because every band, every graduation, every wedding --

CLINE

Yeah. Every wedding, yeah, exactly.

MOSS

So huge, and eventually I went back and I -- you know, by this time, they were album-selling artists, and at some point between I think the second and the third record, I changed the cover on the first album, and I got a better cover, and I called the album Ticket To Ride, just to get that unhappy one off the shelf.

CLINE

Right, which is now probably worth a lot of money. (laughter)

MOSS

Yeah, it could be. But I'm sure that that first album ended up selling almost a million records anyway. And I say this about the Carpenters, in all fairness, our English managing director, 'cause the Carpenters were huge in England, used to say to every act he signed, "You have to thank the Carpenters, because they're making this signing -- they're making the money for us to sign you." Everybody always had a lot of respect for the Carpenters.

CLINE

That's how it works. Supertramp, you mentioned in one of our sessions how they got signed. And of course, eventually they turned out to be quite a gold mine as well.

MOSS

Oh, boy. Supertramp sent us a couple of records that I didn't release; they were signed by Larry, I told you, and they sent us a couple of records with interesting covers, but I just didn't think they were right yet for America. And then I had a drink one night, or a dinner with Terry Ellis who was on Chrysalis [Records], who built Chrysalis with his partner at the time, Chris Wright. And he was telling me how great they were, and I had this feeling that I'd better see what's up with these guys. So on a trip to England, they were making a new record, and they were using a new producer, and Derek Green told me they were -- you better hear this. So I went to England and I heard Crime of the Century. I mean, it was like [opens his arms wide while looking heavenward, smiling] thank you, Lord. Thank you for giving us this record, for giving us, somehow, the luck that you'd be able to have a record like this, because it was awesome. They used sound like nobody had at the time. The songs were

unbelievable. And I couldn't wait to introduce this album and this band to America. It was like, so much fun. So the first problem was the fact that they'd never toured in America, of course. And because they had so much equipment to reproduce this sound, they couldn't be an opening act; they had to be the main act. So I said, "Well, no problem." So I was able to go to see Frank Barcelona, who I believe had the best agency at that time, who represented Humble Pie and I knew it was right on, I said, "Look, I want them to play like 2,500-seaters, like Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium], those kind of things, across the country. And I'll pay whatever means, we'll get the album out in front, I guarantee you'll have some audience doing it, but I want the promoters to know that in each market, I owe them one; I'll do whatever I can do work with them, I'll help them with advertising on future bands, but they've got to headline, they simply must headline. And we released the album, and in Canada it was monster the minute it came out; for some reason, it just hit Canada. So the initial dates in Montreal and Toronto were oversold, no problem headlining. But certain dates in the Midwest didn't sell, and one or two places had to cancel, they just had to cancel; they just didn't want to embarrass the band and whatever. And it's weird, but those particular markets never quite picked up on Supertramp, and every market that struggled through and -- by the time they came to Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium], sold out, no problem. But certain markets were half full or whatever, they ended up being Supertramp markets. But I think a market like Detroit was always a tough market; Detroit was a little heavier rock, and these guys were a little finer. But Crime of the Century did not have a defining track, but as an album, it easily went gold and platinum, and we knew we had a real super-band, internationally. And they were great guys. They were a joy to work with; eventually our head of A&R in England went to be their manager, so it was completely family -- Dave Margereson was like family. The guys became friends of ours, and the saddest thing is that they eventually broke up, Roger [Hodgson] and Rick [Davies] broke up, and they didn't have to do that. They could have kept on going. So there's a lot of Supertramp in A&M's history; they in 1979, after I needed to borrow some money -- but that's another story -- they gave us Breakfast in America, which was the biggest album of the year, and sold a million albums in France, they were our international business. They were just so important to us in so many ways.

CLINE

Yeah, there's a lot to cover here, I want to try to get through it fairly quickly, if we can --

MOSS

It was tough getting through '69, it was a major year.

CLINE

Yeah, well, there's a lot even after that, too. One of the things I wanted to ask you is, as now you've got the Carpenters, and you've told this story of Herb's belief in them, and his desire to see the label really get behind them, despite the fact that at this point, it seems like people are probably a lot more invested in signing hip rock acts and things.

MOSS

Well, don't forget, we were the label that brought you the Carpenters and Cheech and Chong. (laughter)

CLINE

Yeah. Well, see, there you go. And this is what I'm saying, and then you've got -- the Tijuana Brass is still in existence at this point; they don't stop doing things 'til the mid-'70s. How could you describe sort of the identity of A&M Records at this point? It's so eclectic, and yet it seems to maybe somewhat mysteriously hold together as this -- something that I think through many people's perspective is described as a very sort of family-like environment, and something where people seem to work as a team and pull together, despite all this artistic diversity. How do you see -- what artists do you see ascending as the Tijuana Brass are starting to maybe lose a little bit of relevance in the pop market as the '70s start to take hold?

MOSS

Well, we started the '70s with three super-artists, I'd call them: obviously the Carpenters, Carole King on Ode [Records]--

CLINE

Right. You made that deal with Ode with Lou Adler.

MOSS

-- made with Lou Adler (inaudible), and Cat Stevens. Those were our three-prong to start the '70s with. That was pretty good. And at the same time, we had Humble Pie, we had Joe Cocker, we had some pretty good rock acts coming up, Supertramp certainly. I would say, you know, it was our taste, and also our sense of competitiveness, because we were competing with some pretty major labels that were willing to pay more for acts than we were. Warner Brothers [Records] was hiring our people; they were paying more for certain people we had. So occasionally, we stretched out with some of our key people, they became stockholders, because we just couldn't pay them the salaries that other people paid them. Clive Davis was at that time active and getting around. These were good, sharp guys we were competing with. Ahmet was king of the hill. But we managed to have hits when we needed them; we were not driven by profit. We had to have enough money to survive, so we had to watch the money, but the money came in sort of in windfalls, if like we had two big albums a year. Well, we'd generally have a pretty good windfall, and we'd give bigger bonuses; we usually gave pretty good bonuses out, so people knew that

if they kind of stuck with us, and we were successful, they'd benefit. And if we weren't successful, they still do pretty good. We're not going to get crazy -- I mean, the '70s were just sort of an interesting period of experimental and all kinds of different kinds of records, and huge fun.

CLINE

Yeah, I mean, you've got -- after awhile in the '70s, you have, for example, the Brothers Johnson, the Tubes, Chuck Mangione, the Ozark Mountain Daredevils you mentioned, Gato Barbieri. And one thing I want to mention that we haven't gotten to, in the early '70s -- and you mentioned Joe Cocker, the Mad Dogs and Englishmen project, which was not just a double album, it was a film, how did that happen?

MOSS

Which we paid for.

CLINE

Yeah. That's -- how did that -- what was the genesis of that project? I know you were executive producer on that.

MOSS

Well, Joe was the artist that we turned the company on, in 1969, as I say, as far as records released, he had the talent and the stamina, you know, to just perform and be one of the greatest artists there is. It's still amazing to me he's still not in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; he's the greatest white blues singer by far that ever lived, and he's still doing it. And we just decided to throw the company's resources behind him. And so the first album [With a Little Help from My Friends] was very successful; Denny Cordell produced it, he had Jimmy Page, he had [Steve] Winwood, he had all these great people playing within England and doing it, and Denny always -- he was a marvelous producer, and he always thought -- he always put himself a little down as a producer, and he always felt because he wasn't a musician, he could only produce one album with an artist, then the second album, take the artist another step, he would have to have a co-producer that was a musician. And it was interesting and understandable, and the second album, he used Leon Russell. And the second album, just called Joe -- again, called Joe Cocker, because we didn't know what to call it -- was very effective, "The Letter" was in that, all that hot stuff, "Delta Lady"; Leon was just coming up and Joe was brilliant. And then we decided to tour, and the genesis of it was on our sound stage again. And these musicians would show up, and people all over the neighborhood would show up, and the staff would go in there and they wouldn't be seen for hours, and the music that was coming out of there was unbelievable; they erected a stage and they'd play stuff, and by this time, the band was 10, 12 pieces, and the choral group was Rita Coolidge, and some of the most beautiful women, unbelievable. Saxophone player, Keyes --

CLINE

Yeah, Bobby Keyes.

MOSS

Bobby Keyes and Jimmy Page, Jimmy Keyes on -- Jimmy [Jim Price]-- trumpet.

CLINE

Oh, I'm blanking on his name.

MOSS

Yeah, because he eventually produced the comeback record for -- anyway, it was amazing, and Dee Anthony was the manager, and Barcelona was the booking. And they're going on tour, and the tour, I guess, made up Mad Dogs and Englishmen, that was it, it was perfect. And we decided, let's film it. Woodstock had already happened and was a successful movie, and some theatres had converted to the sound to be able to play the music from Woodstock properly. Let's make a movie, see what's up, because we sensed it was going to be huge. And we got Pierre Adidge and Bob [Robert] Abel to film it, go on the road -- Pierre was on the road with them. And it was a major undertaking; I went on the road a little bit, saw a bit, rented a plane, the whole thing, to carry guys, DC-3s to schlep whatever equipment was in those things. And I remember when they played the Fillmore East, and it was a critical thing, because we could only film and record like only two or three or four shows, the rest of it would be background sound, because we were filming like a documentary, so you know, I negotiated with Bill Graham, he got a point or something, he was extracting whatever, his business, and Bill was a friend of mine so I'm not going to say anything. But I said to Denny, "You're doing four shows, two nights at the Fillmore, what shows should we film and what shows should we record?" He says, "I think the second show of the first night." I said, "OK." Well, that night was just sort of an amazing night for me. I think I was -- first part of the night, I went to a Phil Ochs concert at Carnegie Hall, and there was a bomb scare. And then he came out, and Phil was a great guy, and did this thing he did in the gold lamé suit like Elvis, and started doing Elvis songs. And the audience was so infuriated, because they wanted to hear war protest songs. So it was like a revolt, and then the power went off. And Phil, give the power to the people -- it was just horrendous. And I'm sitting with a guy, I'm sitting with a couple of guys, the Chicago Seven, Jerry --

CLINE

Rubin --

MOSS

-- Rubin, and this and that, we're having -- we're drinking brandy, and the fans outside want their money back; it was just horrendous. And somehow I teamed up with Quincy Jones, and we went downtown; I said, "Come on downtown,

we're doing the Cocker thing." So then Cocker comes onstage -- this is late, you know, it's a midnight show or something. Place is packed, unbelievable. And we got the cameras, we got the sound, and they come onstage, and a guy that comes onstage with them -- because this band, this was a band that couldn't say no, Joe never said no; Joe would say yes to anything, he's just -- everybody was agreeable, everybody was having too good a time to say no to anything. And this kid Pollard, you know --

CLINE

Oh, Michael J. Pollard.

MOSS

Michael J. Pollard, who was feeling really good. And somebody gave him a tambourine. And he's playing tambourine, and the band is just completely out of whack. One tambourine onstage will do that. You've got 12 people looking for a beat, and you've got a tambourine that's, you know.

CLINE

All over the place.

MOSS

And Quincy's saying to me, "Man, that band is just searching, they're not finding it; you've got to do something." And I kept hoping, you know, from where I was sitting, and finally, finally, Leon threw his top hat at Pollard in a playful kind of way, and we got backstage the word that you've got to get this guy offstage. So somehow, a couple of guys came and embraced him in a friendly way, and just took him out of there. Leon got his hat back. And we were able to get like four good songs out of that, because it took them the rest of the show to find a groove.

CLINE

Sure, to recover, yeah.

MOSS

And they were great songs, and it was incredible. But we got the rest of the stuff pretty much in Santa Monica Civic and a couple of other shows. But the end of that story was quite amazing. The film itself sort of halfway through started taking on the sense of, what are we really looking at? The interesting parts were interesting, but all of the sudden, we became -- are we going to report on the drug-taking, are we going to really make a documentary here of somebody we really care about? What are we going to divulge? And we eventually, in the final summing up, decided, let's make this just a promotion piece and forget about being hurtful in some way that anybody that was participating in this tour could feel bad about our having put this movie out. And they came back off the tour completely exhausted, and Joe vamoosed; he just went into the inkwell, literally. He went off to England, and we didn't see him again for a year or two. And Denny and Leon were bored with the music.

And they listened -- they said, "I know you want an album, but man, we're tired of it." And this meant we had to negotiate a little bit, whatever that was, but it still -- and fortunately, I remembered that a guy named Glyn Johns was in town, and Glyn was just a top engineer and producer, one of the greatest producers in England, and I knew Denny respected him. I said, "Look, I'll tell you what. What if Glyn gets hold of the tapes, does a rough mix, because he knows Joe, and see what he says and see what he does, and then tell me if you want to put the record out." Because these were days that if they didn't really want a record out, we wouldn't have put a record out. However much we invested, we were an artist-friendly place; you had to like the stuff. Because we couldn't have Denny or Joe say, "Well, they put a record out; we didn't like the record," -- that would have been horrible. And Glen, as a master, mixed a side a night, meaning five or six tracks a night, and came out with a two-record set, and presented them to Denny and Leon. At that time -- this was summer of 1970 -- I was taking my family to the south of France for our first big vacation; we were going to be two months over there. And I left it to Gil; I said, "Just cable me," because in 1970 there's no email, I said, "Just cable me, and let me know if it's no album, if it's one album, or if it's a two-record set. Let me know." And I was over there about two, three days, and I get a cable, and it says, "Have a great summer. Denny and Leon liked the whole thing; it's going to be a two-record set. Congratulations." And then I got a copy of the record sent over, and man, it was -- and that was my summer of '70; I listened to that and Close To You, the Close To You album which had just been released. So that album was everything to us, that two-record set, because we had the album for the world, so I could -- because it was the soundtrack to the movie, because I only had Joe originally just for US and Canada, but with the soundtrack -- so I was able to get Joe Cocker on A&M in France, Joe Cocker on A&M in Germany, and it meant a lot to us as a label, to be able to have Mad Dogs and Englishmen was a huge point of pride.

CLINE

Yeah. As we near the end of our time here, in '71 --

MOSS

You got some -- it's only --

CLINE

-- you received the Gavin Award for your work in the record biz. Is there anything you want to say about that, or is --

MOSS

Surprise, surprise. (laughter) I knew Bill [Gavin] very well, and he was a great man, and not that that meant anything to my getting the award, but I guess it was -- I'm happy our success reflected in certain awards being given out, that's all I can say.

CLINE

And what was happening at this point -- you mentioned a family vacation, as we're in the '70s now, with your personal life: how are things going, and what are some of the other things you're maybe doing or interested in other than A&M Records project?

MOSS

Well, I bought my first -- Herbie and I bought a racehorse with Nate Duroff, the guy that pressed our records, claiming some horses, we had some fun just getting in the racing business, but that was a once-in-awhile thing; we owned two or three horses at a time, or one horse, because you only buy a horse, and then you keep running it and claiming race until somebody else claims it. So the level of success of a horse is the level of what prices you're putting on him. If he runs good, you'll go higher; if he runs not so good, you run him lower. So about 1970 was the year I did that, and yeah, I had -- we'd adopted a little girl, so we took her to the south of France, Cap Ferrat, unbelievable, fantastic time. Dream come true. I was 35 and living in this incredible villa, and we just had a lot of fun, it was just a great time in my life. And I was getting letters and cables; I came back for a ten-day period in the middle of the summer to pick up my older son and a friend of his and do some work on the lot, so I never had the whole two months away, and then took them back for another three weeks kind of thing. And it was just a great time, and the end of the summer, we came home and we adopted a little boy, so we were picking up family.

CLINE

Yeah. How many by that time?

MOSS

There were now -- now we were a family of five, which is about it, that's where it stayed.

CLINE

And we mentioned the Ode Records agreement, Lou Adler. You also eventually, in '73, had a distribution arrangement with Dark Horse Records, George Harrison's label. So you guys seem to be serious players at this point, despite your independent status.

MOSS

Yeah, I thought that came a little later, maybe '74.

CLINE

Oh, really? It says '73.

MOSS

Maybe, maybe. Yeah, we -- I mean, the George Harrison thing was something really, really amazing. Let me talk about George, because he's gone now, and sort of sad in a big way, but they talk about -- we first heard that he was going to do his own label, and I'm a huge Beatle fan. And I'd met George at different

times before 1973, and we seem to get along OK, and I liked him. And I was interested in doing the Dark Horse label thing. Obviously, it needed some refinement, but I was interested in what it meant, because it meant we'd eventually have George's records on that label, along with certain artists that he'd personally found, and if not produced, at least sanctioned the production of. So I spent some time with his lawyer in New York, and then I went to England to see him, basically, on one trip to England, see the company, but always to see George. So I got his number and left word that I'd call him, and I was doing some work, A&M work at that time in England, and by this time, I'd always hired a car when I was over there, because it'd just make the quick stops, and not have to wait for taxis, and be able to take people somewhere. It was just a bigger expense, but something I had to have. And I'd let my car go, because it was pouring rain, and by this time, it was about 1:00in the morning,12:30. And the phone rings. "Hello? Is that Jerry?" (laughter) "Yeah, George, how are you?" "What are you doing now?" I said, "Well, I'm just here; it's the end of the day. What are you up to?" He says, "Well, I'm just in the studio wondering if you want to come by." I said, "Well, where might you be?" He says, "I'm in my place, Henley-on-Thames. Friar Park, have you heard of it?" I said, "I think I have; I know that's where you live. Let me see if I can get a car and get out there; what kind of directions do you have?" "Well, just get to the pub in the middle of the street, it's a main street, and then you make a right turn," -- he didn't seem to think it would be a big job. I said, "All right, give me what, an hour?" He says, "Yeah, yeah, it'll take you about 45 minutes to get here." So I manage to get a car from downstairs, I'm at the Dorchester [Hotel] at the time, which is the place I usually stay, and off we go in the pouring rain to Friar Park. And I'm excited; I'm going to see a Beatle, for Christ's sake. We had a little trouble finding the place, but I did manage to find the pub, and I saw somebody stumbling out in the rain; I got out and said, "Excuse me, man, you know where Friar Park is?" He says, "George's place?" I said, "Yeah, yeah." He says, "Well, you just make a right here, go where the big gate is, just go right on in." So through the darkness, I see there's a huge gate open, and there's a house beyond the gate. So we get in, and it's dark, of course; I start ringing the bell. And I'm out in the rain, I'm waiting for the lights to go on somewhere, and nothing happens. So I keep ringing the bell, and then I see the top window of the house, and lights go on, somebody says, "'Oo is it?" By this time, it's like 1:15 1:30 in the morning. I said, "It's..." -- never did my name ever sound more ridiculous -- "It's Jerry Moss." And then they said, "'Oo?" And I said, you know, I yelled my name out again, and they said, "So?" And I said, "I'm here to see George," and they said, "Well, then go on then." And I noticed that there's a road ahead of us. And that road went on for, oh, at least three-quarters of a mile, because there's just these great woods, and then in the darkness and in the

rain, you see what looked like a great chateau. And Friar Park, which I eventually got to see in the light, it was built by a very eccentric Englishman, so that's why George obviously picked it. And it was this incredible place; it was built on a lake, he had an underground lake in this house. And I was ushered into his -- you know, he answered the door without a whole lot of whatever; I entered into his recording studio, which was obviously sumptuous. And I literally trembled for two hours, talking to a Beatle. And we ended up talking 'til day broke, and worked out the semblance of a deal. Explained that we really wanted to have him, he knew a lot about A&M and knew some of the musicians that we had, all this kind of thing. And he came to LA, we helped him buy a house, our real estate people helped him, and we got to be -- I mean, really friendly, to the point of dropping off books for each other, leaving notes under our doors. It was a bit nocturnal, but I didn't mind, because I liked staying up late anyway; I'm not an early man, I'm a late guy. And one time, there was some situation happened at the studio, and he left me a track to listen to, and he had been spending a lot of time recording, and then I got a call when I got home from something: "Call George immediately." I called George, and I said, "What's up? I like that song that you left me, and I started talking about." He said, "No, I'm calling you to let you know that your night watchman threatened to shoot my ass off. And that would not be good." I said, "No, George, it would not be good." So from that day on, we took weapons out of the hands of the guards, took -- can you imagine? Because George didn't stop when the guy asked him to stop; he said, "I'm going to shoot you in the ass?" Can you imagine if -- "Beatle Shot at A&M" -- unbelievable. And we had a remarkable relationship; George met his wife at our studio, Olivia [Arias Harrison] worked in our studio. So we had connection there. The problem was his business manager, perhaps, didn't like maybe how close I was getting to George, and his name was Denis O'Brien, and he was a bad guy who eventually took George for a lot of money. I could say allegedly, I don't know if it was proven, but clearly -- and that's another long story. But the more open I'd be with George and Denis, I'd see things coming back that I didn't like. Like he would hire somebody to work close to George in a situation that I told him was not a good person to have. I was close enough -- and yet he hired them, which -- why would you do that, unless you were not helping?

CLINE

Not acting in the best interests, yeah.

MOSS

You know, our lot was one big happy family; why do you want to get somebody that I know isn't crazy about me, for whatever the reason? It was a family member; it was my wife's sister, who she was having a battle with at the time. And then tell her I didn't want her there. I mean, this is getting into family

stuff that's so weird and strange -- why do that? And then George started hitting the road, and then it was this guy making the record and this guy making decisions, and this guy running up a huge tab that we were paying for, and the records weren't very good. And it got to the point where I couldn't root for this project any more, even though George had charmed a great many people on our lot to do extra work for that label, and Dark Horse, and we created the whole image for him, and all this kind of thing, and I got to know George and visit Friar Park a lot, and Ravi Shankar and that whole thing -- this guy, if he was going to keep this guy who by this time was not happy with me or happy with us, we were not going anywhere. So I went to George's house, and I said, "Look, George, I have to be really honest with you, and this hurts a lot: your new album, your album that came in, I have not listened to it. And the way things are going, I don't think this is the place for you anymore. I can't work with Denis; you're on the road a lot, you're not helping me with Denis; it's just costing us a fortune, and I don't want this to affect your career. One thing, you're the producer of Dark Horse Records, whatever it is, but I don't want -- I'm too much of a friend of yours to want this to affect your actual career. And I think it could, and so I think what we should do is have some situation where we have a way to get our money back, because I don't think our deal involved this guy and what he's been doing, and I don't think it's that much and I think we can do that, and why don't we end as friends, and you should take this record and your manager and go somewhere else, 'cause it's affecting the whole A&M relationship. And with that, I guess he got advice from his manager, and they ran off to Warner Brothers, and they were going to release this record on Warner Brothers, without accommodating us or anything --

CLINE

Right, or compensating.

MOSS

And we had to sue them. So eventually, the judge said, "I'm not putting the record out, but somebody should make a deal outside of this courtroom, and work this out." And we did, we got a certain amount of record, and we did that. And then some years later in Maui, George and I got together and worked it out, to the point where he and I always had a pretty good relationship. And Olivia's always been very friendly toward me, and Dhani [Harrison], the kid, has just been great. But -- and eventually, I was maybe the first guy to warn him about Denis, who ten years later, maybe 15 years later, really cooked him, really took him for maybe $40 million. Had him sign different things, and then vanished. And that was maybe one of the worst experiences I ever had in the game, just having to break off a relationship with somebody. And if we were a bigger company, perhaps I could have let it slide, but it was just not our nature, it was just -- I mean, we were artist-friendly, but we weren't manager-friendly

to the point where I was going to let somebody just take advantage of us, and start getting our people to act against what we wanted to have done; we were one happy family, and I felt the fabric of our company changing, because George was an important guy, and this guy was orchestrating something that wasn't healthy. So I'm very sad that our relationship with George ended, because he was just a great guy. But I just couldn't work with all of it.

CLINE

It's amazing how one person can wreak that much havoc.

MOSS

Yeah. And as I say, if we were a big company, "So its a million bucks, or two million bucks, whatever, you've got George; shut up and deal. But we felt strongly that we'd been taken advantage of in a certain way.

CLINE

Coming up on 1:00 here. I did want to mention that among the things that happened in the '70s, you released a Joan Baez record, your first quadraphonic record, Come From The Shadows. And we'll wait to get to the 1977 Sex Pistols almost-signing, and other things in the late '70s. I do want to go back to these huge Tijuana Brass concert events in the early '70s; I want to ask you if you were at any of these. Or at least, one of them in particular, which is in '74, the Tijuana Brass, I presume, it says Herb Alpert gave a free concert at Camp Pendleton [U.S. Marine Base] for thousands of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees. Do you remember this?

MOSS

I wasn't there. No, I don't remember that, actually.

CLINE

You weren't there for that. OK, I'll have to talk to Herb about that.

MOSS

Was it the Tijuana Brass? I don't think it was --

CLINE

It just says Alpert.

MOSS

Alpert. Yeah, I think it was Herbie, because I think he stopped performing as the Tijuana Brass after the '60s.

CLINE

'75 is the last Tijuana Brass record, up until when they rekindled it in the '80s. Coney Island. And just to close out today, then, what do you -- what can you say about the winding down and eventually demise of the Tijuana Brass in the face of what's happening musically and on the label in the mid-'70s?

MOSS

Well, I think the Tijuana Brass was always, you know, the bedrock of the company, and that's how we built A&M, actually, was with the proceeds of the

Tijuana Brass, and Herb's involvement with that. I think after '69, Herbie basically took a break. And, you know, just really thought about things for awhile; I think he even stopped playing the horn for a little bit, and really had some questions, and shortly after that, he and his wife at that time separated. So he needed that time just to readjust and get focused because the four previous years were just so incredible that -- you know, it's the story of, well, what do you do when you get everything you ever dreamed about? I mean, my God, he was the number-one artist in the world for awhile, for a long awhile. He had -- in America, I know that there was us and Simon & Garfunkel, and Simon & Garfunkel didn't sell out in the South as good as we did. We had the whole country, was so incredible. And then he had the big hit in '68 with a vocal, "This Guy's In Love With You", another Bacharach song. So he needed some time, so I don't -- I don't believe -- I don't remember the Brass ever reassembling again after that; he might have played performances, and we might have put out certain records, and offers kept coming in maybe from Vegas and places like that, and I guess if he wanted to continue to perform as the Tijuana Brass, there was certainly ample opportunities to do so, even if the records didn't sell as much. [Las] Vegas would have -- those kind of -- but he didn't want to do that, he really didn't see himself as being a member of the Tijuana Brass for the rest of his life. So he made other records, and put out Tijuana Brass records; he produced Gato Barbieri, he produced some very important other artists, took a hand in the Carpenters' production, and hung out at the lot and did a lot of amazing things with the studio and whatever. And I think he started being an artist, developing his other art, and doing stuff. So I think the demise of the Tijuana Brass became, through Herb's reentry, so to speak, as a musician and producer, and performer only when it really felt right. And that was fine with us; again, we operated on a very natural kind of level, and you have to do what feels good to you. That's the only way it's going to really work. So there weren't any big headlines about it; it just went its way. And then of course in 1979, he made "Rise", just as Herb Alpert, and it was a huge record he had. Number one.

CLINE

Yeah. Maybe this is more a question for him, but being in a position like that, especially when he starts producing people who are essentially jazz artists, and people who he clearly has respect for as a fellow musician -- Gato Barbieri, Pete Jolly starts making records for A&M -- what do you remember, if anything, about musicians, maybe jazz musicians, and maybe somewhat desperate jazz musicians wanting a deal, wanting to hit Herb up for some help?

MOSS

Well, he had -- he was such a consummate - and is such a consummate musician that musicians have incredible respect for him. I always found that to

be the case. So -- and he was always so supportive; he didn't produce Chuck Mangione, for example, but they got along beautifully, and he was always very supportive of Chuck. And Chuck was huge for us; Feels So Good, it's so funny 'cause I was just watching TV, there was something about the Bee Gees on TV yesterday, because it's 30 years since Saturday Night Fever. And Chuck Mangione was number two to Saturday Night Fever for like four weeks on the Billboard chart. That's pretty amazing; Saturday Night Fever was such a monster record, and here's a jazz album, flugelhorn player, you know, on A&M, number two. So we enjoyed great success with a lot of these people, and I think A&M was just a place that Herbie and I could live our lives, and some years would be a little more productive than other years, and some days would be better than other days; whatever it was, we knew we had that sort of canvas to work on. So it was exciting.

CLINE

Well, next time, as we get out of the '70s, as we get into the late '70s, the Police, and relationships with IRS Records, and a business sort of reclassification, restructuring, and we'll talk about how maybe that affected your job, your activities. And anything else that I can think of to follow up what we talked about today, but I think that'll do it for now. Sound OK?

MOSS

Sounds OK.

CLINE

OK. (laughter) Thanks a lot.

MOSS

Thank you. [END OF FILE moss.jerry.5.03.08.2007]

1.6. Session 6 (March 15, 2007)

CLINE

-- we'll blast off. We're on. Today is March 15, 2007. This is Alex Cline interviewing Jerry Moss once again at his office in Beverly Hills, Almo Sounds. Good morning.

MOSS

Morning.

CLINE

Last time we were talking about the '70s, and finishing up with the late '60s; we got into a lot of material relating to the changes in the music industry and the music itself as we get out of the '60s into the '70s, and today we're going to move through the '70s and into the '80s, since for some reason, people tend to think in terms of decades, it seems at least a fairly convenient way to look at things. One question I have by way of a follow-up that I meant to ask last that

we talked a little bit about in an early session that takes us back to the end of the '60s is the effect that the [Charles] Manson murders had on the scene here in Los Angeles, the scene that you would have been familiar with, in terms of the industry here. What do you remember about the effect that that had on the sort of social and artistic thing here in Los Angeles in '69?

MOSS

Well, it basically ended it for awhile. I heard the news about the murders -- I was up visiting a friend, we were up in Lake Arrowhead, and somebody called from LA and told us about what happened. We were so just brought down by that information, you know. I mean, everybody I knew somebody that was in that house that night. Jay Sebring was a very popular guy; he was -- I couldn't say he was a friend of mine, but I did know him. And you know, the other people were socially engaged with a lot of other different people that I'd known, nice people, and they got slaughtered, just horribly slaughtered. Now, prior to that, I mean -- this was the end of the '60s, and my God, flower power was at a beautiful peak, our doors were open. I literally remember, you know, even when the Tijuana Brass performed in LA, I'd usually have a party at my house, and literally, my front door was wide open. People came in off the street that I didn't know, and they were greeted and treated to a drink or some food. And usually, they were entertaining and fun. I'm sure it was no different than how everybody else comported themselves in those days. Strangers were a kick. Welcome, what do you do? What's happening? What kind of music do you like? So once the murders took place, that all just absolutely changed. All of a sudden, this -- "Who are you bringing to the party? I don't know that person, who is it? What can you tell me about her or him?" Everybody got nervous, and then we didn't know who even did these terrible things for awhile, so it really got people nuts. And then of course, the Manson people, and that sad group. I mean, it just changed everything, so I can tell you that it was the first of the great changes toward the end of the so-called flower generation, to a point.

CLINE

Yeah. Other people have expressed their even deeper dismay that the person and the people behind this were what the nation perceived as hippies, which made it even worse.

MOSS

Well, yeah. The fact that they entered the house really to find a record producer that had sort of turned him down or something, or whatever --

CLINE

Yeah, this is one of things I wondered --

MOSS

-- which is a guy I knew fairly well at the time, Mike [Terry Melcher (not Mike)] whatever his name, I'm sorry, I'm losing -- it was Doris Day's kid Mike, who was a record producer, a pretty good producer in those days. So therefore, it kind of brought a record biz context --

CLINE

Right, that's what I was about to ask about.

MOSS

-- into the thing as well. My God, now I better be careful about whose tape I turn down. It did cross your mind; I'd better be -- explain everything and see where we're getting tapes -- you know, it just got everybody nuts, and disturbed deeply, the fact that somebody could actually do that, take a life like that, and destroy a beautiful woman like that who was carrying a child. And so it made everybody nervous.

CLINE

Yeah. And also, as we get into the '70s, a lot of the artists themselves start relocating, moving into Topanga Canyon in large numbers, farther away from things, out of the Hollywood Hills and into other hills. And the music itself starts taking on a different flavor; this is when things got quote "mellow" unquote, to a large degree. What if any memories do you have about sort of that scene changing, and things becoming sort of more decentralized, not as close to where all the action was here in the Hollywood area where the industry was?

MOSS

I think on some A&R treks, I must have visited a few of those places. Mostly we did sort of business on the [A&M Records] lot, people coming in and playing things. I mean, our place was a real easy place to, I think, enter, and find someone that you were going to play a tape for that was going to eventually bring it to me, or if they liked it, you know. We had a pretty decent filtering system; I mean, we missed out on a lot of things like most record companies, one guy didn't like it and it missed the next step, something like that. But we were pretty wide open.

CLINE

I was in fact going to ask if you remember anything, any artists or situations that would be like the one that got away, something that just slipped through the cracks, like I know it happens.

MOSS

Well, I remember that I once read a Bruce Springsteen biography, and on one of the pages was a letter reprinted from an A&M rejection notice. (laughter) And I won't name the A&R director it was written to, 'cause I -- needless to say, I don't think I ever got to hear it. And it might have been in a raw state, but it wasn't very presentable either. But he took great pride in sending out this

rejection notice. I've seen him, and I've actually never mentioned that to him, but I think I probably should at some point. He'd get a big kick out of it.

CLINE

Were there any people, either during this period or others, that just seemed like everything was going their way, just seemed potentially huge, and then just absolutely never delivered, that stand out in your mind?

MOSS

Well, like I say, I think we went through the promise of certain bands, the feelings I had of what certain people could be if they worked hard, and if obviously all the inspiration, all the creative sparks were flowing in the right direction. And then certain people hanging in and making a real career out of it, just through grit and determination and hard work. Some people that I might not have thought were the greatest thing creatively would hack out a hit or two and develop a following on the road and create a great living for themselves, and then have the eye to associate with someone really talented and make something happen from that one-on-one thing; make a four or a five out of it. And other people, where success came so easy with a great first album, and then discord in the group, and -- I mean, a group like -- take the Ozark Mountain Daredevils; I mean, just an amazing band, really, when we heard it; they literally came from the Ozarks, they were all college boys, University of Missouri, bright, talented, all lived in a rural section; we visited their homes. Great, great guys. When we signed the band, there were six of them, and there were four writers, and practically four lead singers, which is a problem. It's difficult, and you thought, "Well, I guess we'll just sort this out," because there were hits out of those people. "Never Get To Heaven If You Don't Raise A Little Hell" [actually "If You Want to Get to Heaven"], and "Jackie Blue" -- and the Eagles themselves have different lead singer and never found it to be too difficult, but the problem with the Dares, as they call themselves, is they were so good-natured, they'd let anybody get up onstage with them. And all of the sudden, you go see a show one night, and there's nine people onstage. (laughter) Then you'd turn around and there's 11 people. "What are they doing here?" "Well, their spirit is so great, man." "Yeah, but they're not allowing the audience to hear who you guys are, and they're diffusing something here." And all of the sudden, it's just one big mass of sound, and then -- who are you, really? And then one or two guys left the band, the guys that were their sort of spiritual kind of foundations, and you know, the rest of them just kept on performing as the Dares, but their records were less interesting. Things like that. And they were vastly talented people that I think, had they mingled a little differently, and thought a little more of themselves, frankly, were a little more selfish, could have structured something that would have lasted a lot longer.

And the [Flying] Burrito [Brother]s was another case where I think Greg was -- what's his name --

CLINE

Gram [Parsons].

MOSS

Gram, pardon me, was -- he just had a drug problem, and it affected everyone. And watching the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this year, they listed some people that passed away, and "Sneaky" Pete Kleinow was one that left us this year. What a brilliant player, nice guy, would have -- I mean, believed in that band, would have been there for years. And was, performed as a Burrito for many years in the different configurations after Gram left. But my God, he was into it, and it shows you, one guy's instability, so to speak, however brilliant -- it takes hard work and discipline to be a band. Even the hot guys have to go through a lot of turmoil and stress and hard work, reading Andy Summers' book [One Train Later] recently, the guitar player for the Police, and just brilliantly written, should be a textbook in a music school.

CLINE

Required reading.

MOSS

Required reading on what you go through as a musician just to try to land somewhere with a foursome that gets along and continues to produce good things. And that is a hard way to go.

CLINE

Yeah, we're going to get to the Police pretty soon here. Any acts that you just really didn't think had it, that you really didn't get behind, but maybe others did, that turned out to wind up huge that really maybe surprised you?

MOSS

You know, I don't think so, because even though -- you know, I'd sign an act, let's say, like Phil Ochs, for example, who I liked a lot as a person; I really appreciated him and enjoyed him, he was more than a so-called protest singer. And I sort of knew that I wanted to have people like Phil Ochs on our label. But in my heart, I believed he had a huge record inside of him. And I sort of believe that about almost everybody. I mean, when I heard Janet Jackson's record of Control, I said to the A&R guy, John McClain, I said, "Man, that record is going to sell two million records." He said, "Oh, get --" I said, "Man, two million at least." It sold seven million. So I think I believed that whether it was because of them or whatever I could, in a sort of weird, imperialistic way, kind of help them with, support them with, that we were going to go to the top. And that's what my commitment was to almost every artist. So I wasn't that surprised when somebody sold a lot of records. We had to have big hits, or else we couldn't have survived, you know.

CLINE

You mentioned when you took your first big family vacation that the things you were listen to were the Mad Dogs and Englishmen project of Joe Cocker's, and Close To You by the Carpenters. And one of the things I wanted to ask you about last time and I didn't get around to was particularly, considering your work, which requires that you listen to a lot of music, a lot of artists that are signed or potentially signed to A&M, and because of the amazing diversity of those artists and the diversity of the music that was going on at this point, now we're into the '70s, there's a lot going on, from something like the Carpenters to mellow rock to disco to heavy metal, whatever.

MOSS

Punk.

CLINE

Yeah. Funk and later --

MOSS

Punk.

CLINE

-- punk, yeah. Oh, did you say punk or funk -- yeah, as you get into the late '70s, we get into punk, which I'm also kind of building up to. What were your particular personal musical tastes at the time? Were there things that you really liked to listen to that were just really kind of up your street that maybe weren't even on A&M or had nothing to do with A&M that was just your --

MOSS

You know, I would, in those days, driving around, I would listen to the radio, and I'd hear other people's records. But I would rarely, unless somebody gave me a record -- except for the Beatles, of course, that was the '60s -- eh, '70s, partly -- but I was so busy listening to our own people, and it wasn't just the one listen; I had to listen a lot to get the real essence of what they were doing. I didn't want to just have a reaction to one listen, because I -- you know, 'cause sometimes you're not paying real attention, you've got other things on your mind, you've got other stuff happening: I wanted to hear that record over and over, that LP, so the whole side of the LP. Maybe there was a single track that we were neglecting who had hit potential. Maybe there was something, if it was a pre-release thing, certainly maybe there was something I could change that I could hear that wasn't -- you know, I didn't hear the guitar enough, or I thought the rhythm track was low, and it was affecting the song, or I couldn't hear the words on a particular song. There were all these elements of a record that you only hear -- you only get by hearing it over a couple of times. So I had speakers in my shower; I had -- my bathroom was hooked up, you know; everywhere in the house there was either a ghetto blaster or something that I could -- 'cause at the time, I had a family now and stuff, and I would have them sit and listen

with me. (laughter) It was just... So there was really no time to hear something out of the blue, unless I was at someone else's house and they wanted me to listen to something. You know, I'll never forget having a stack of those kind of records once, and my wife was asleep, and I remember just listening to the LPs dropping, as they did in those days, and I'm listening to some records, and they're our records, and I'm not hearing stuff that's not exciting me at all. And you go through those periods where something's just not working. And all of the sudden, I'm hearing this thing that sounds just fantastic, incredible, and I'm saying, "Wow, who is this? What is this record that we're going to be able to put out?" Well, it was the beginning track -- it was Billie Jean by Michael Jackson, and because Quincy made it or something, somebody slipped a demo to me, and I just included it. (laughter) "Oh, Jesus. No, it's not mine, but it's going to be huge." But that feeling, that elation when you hear a record. I mean, to tell you an example, another example that was -- Quincy produced the Brothers Johnson for us --

CLINE

Right, speaking of funk.

MOSS

And I was not that aware of what was going in the studio, nothing. I was traveling; we had hired an A&R man, and English A&R man to work in New York, a guy named John Anthony, I think his name was. Terrific guy, he was in LA, and we were hanging out in my office, we had dinner, we came back to the office, listened to some records, and I put on the Brothers Johnson first record. I mean, Get the Funk Out of My Face, unbelievable record. Quincy produced like four albums, and they were all platinum records. They were huge. And that was -- you know, you get those kind of nice surprises every one in awhile, where a guy comes in from the studio with a record, and you're like, "Wow!" So I think we, like the public, Herbie [Herb Alpert] and I together, just waiting to be turned on. And if we could help it, in some sort of a, like I say, structural or support way, we would try offer our $.02. We didn't just -- you know, some labels just put out records. We didn't do that; we tried to get something different, something -- often we did, but sometimes we'd say, "OK, can you change this?" or, "I don't hear any track on this record that anybody'd be remotely interested in," which is hard to tell an artist. "Would you like to go in and do three more sides; would you like a collaborator on a side, maybe have somebody help you write a song? Just your head's too into this; the albums are -- the tempo's the same, there's nothing that'll keep somebody wanting to put this record back on the turntable." And some people would listen to us, and some people would say, "I don't agree with you, and my contract says you're going to put --" "OK, all right."

CLINE

And you never know when it was even worse before, when that was the best they could get out of it.

MOSS

Right.

CLINE

I was going to ask you how this -- all this listening, and your job affected your family life -- I mean, clearly you're still listening a lot at home. How much time did you have to spend at the office, going to shows, being invested in all that sort of activity when you had a family?

MOSS

In the '70s, a tremendous amount of time, because the competition was really fierce; I was really competing with some great people, whether it was Ahmet [Ertegen] or Mo [Ostin] or Clive [Davis] or all these famous names. And I had -- we were an independent company; I couldn't really afford two bad years in a row. (laughter) I didn't have the resources these guys had, so I had to be quick; I had to be there early, 'cause if I got into a bidding contest, I would probably lose. As I did, quite often. I think I told you that story about Ahmet with Humble Pie. So we had to be there early, get out point across, make sure the group felt good about us and wanted us and believed in us. And A&M, I do believe, spent more individually on each act that we signed than anyone else; we just had to. We had to show we can do it, and we were, in a certain executive's own words, a little more artist-orientated than other labels; we caused other labels to be artist-orientated, I believe. And I was just reminded of that by Jimmy Iovine, who gave us a beautiful toast at our recent Grammy thing, said, "Your label was the first one that treated artists that way." It was a real artist-friendly label. So -- because we had to compete in different ways, and so a band came to town, not only usually did I go to the show, but I usually took them out to dinner afterwards. That place next to the Troubadour, what was it [Dan Tana's]--

CLINE

Oh, yeah, I know the one you mean.

MOSS

Yeah.

CLINE

I can't think of it now; I don't even know if it's still there.

MOSS

It's there. It's doing great. You can't get in still, but they serve dinner 'til 1:00 or so.

CLINE

Right, right. I was never able to afford to eat there back then. (laughter)

MOSS

But, you know, sitting around with the band, talk about the show, and like I say, who they'd seen on the road, what's going on in their lives. And I was interested; those were my guys. I remember we had a party at a friend's house, some band, I invited them to come down to my wine cellar and pick out some bottles. It was amazing, just watching these guys just drink some Bordeaux out of the bottle. Unbelievable. Unbelievable. So, you know, I was there, and it was -- it wasn't easy, I mean, I had an older son that was interested, and I could take him once in awhile, and he's still in the music business, my son Ronnie. But my other kids were young. And I had to get to know the artist because of just those very things, if I wanted to ask them to change something, or think of something, or do something a little different. When it came to [Peter] Frampton on the live thing, after he left Humble Pie, we put out three, four records, I think, of just Peter Frampton, Frampton's Camel. And slowly, he was building up a following, but I saw how huge he was in Detroit and San Francisco, those were big record-making towns. And I said, "Man, it's you; it's not so much the records, but why don't we do a live album?" And they cut a live album [Frampton Comes Alive], and I went to New York and I heard it, and Peter will tell you this; I said, "Well, where's the second side?" He said, "Do you want two sides?" I said, "Yeah. You're stretching these songs brilliantly; it needs more than one record." So he took about a month and made another record, and I could do that because I knew Peter, I would go see him on the road if I had a chance and drop in, and he knew I was on his side. It wasn't like I was some guy demanding things; I would take his records whenever he gave them to me. So that's how we competed; that's the only way we were able to be successful. And my family life [answer?] did suffer. But we did go away, when we went to France or we went to Hawaii, we did go on pretty -- I think the kind of vacations that they remember to this day.

CLINE

Yeah. Well, that's good. I'm glad you brought up Peter Frampton, because I was going to hit that topic today, and clearly the record you just mentioned, which turned out to be one of the biggest-selling records ever --

MOSS

Yeah. That was so exciting.

CLINE

And I'm also glad you mentioned, some of your competitors -- you mentioned Mo Ostin and Clive Davis and some of these people, because this is also a time -- we're in the '70s now -- as the --

MOSS

Well, I should mention [David] Geffen as well.

CLINE

Well, this is where I'm going. We're on the same track here; I was going to say, people like David Geffen not only are heavy players in this world; they become celebrities themselves. It's a time when rock industry moguls also become celebrities, which seems a bit of a stark contrast to your approach. And of course, you had Herb Alpert sort of as the face of the label, but is there anything you would want to say about that as it affects your personal approach to your job at that time?

MOSS

I never really functioned well with a lot of publicity or press. I don't know what to say, really. I'm not a good, exciting story, really. I mean, I am, what I created and what we have and what we made is quite a beautiful thing to look back on, but I'm certainly not -- I never had a press agent that just worried about me, for example, where some of these other guys might have, in their organizations, found people to just help them along. Also, I pretty much had designs in the record business. David, my God, has already thought about Broadway and thought about movies -- he had a bigger vision, and he certainly is a very successful guy. But as a competitor in the record business, he was fierce. I'll tell you one tiny little story: I remember there was a band I was after, and I wanted the manager to call me and let me know what was going to happen; our offer was on the table. Are you going to come with A&M, are you going to come with this one -- got three people after them or something; it's usually the way it worked out. And I was at a flock of meetings that day for some -- had people waiting, I was always late, always involved with managers and whatever, meetings and artists. The phone rang -- I was passing through; I just went out to get a breath of air and talk to some people in the waiting room -- and my secretary, who would usually have said, "Well, he's in meetings, I can't disturb him now; please let him call..." -- She happened to mention, "So-and-so's on the phone," which happened to be the manager of the group that I was competing with. So I said, "Oh, I'll take it, I'll take that call." So I took the call, and the first thing the guy said to me -- the manager said, "See, now David Geffen said you'd be too busy to talk to me." (laughter) "I'll be so happy to tell him I got you on the phone, and by the way, we're going to sign with you."

CLINE

Oh wow, interesting.

MOSS

And the group never was enormous, but they were a good band, they made a lot of records. I think they're still around in some way, and I certainly don't want to --

CLINE

Who is this?

MOSS

I think it was a band called -- it wasn't Soul Asylum, but it was a name like that.

CLINE

Oh, OK. I don't know who that would be.

MOSS

But it was like a nice band. Interesting approach. I could look it up or something. But anyway, so he would play those mind games with you, you know what I'm saying? And that's the way they compete, which is fine. I'm not criticizing. It's good when you say -- 'cause that's the line I used to give to people if they were with CBS or with Warner [Bros. Records]; I said, "Man, there's so many artists on those labels: where do you fit in? Who do you talk to? You talked to Mo today; are you going to talk to him tomorrow? You'll talk to somebody else." So all these little ways that you compete in a friendly business, so to speak.

CLINE

In the late '60s and into the early to mid-'70s, speaking of somebody who sort of went the total opposite direction of the person who used to be, at one time, East Coast counterpart at a booking agency, Geffen being the kind of East Coast counterpart -- did you ever run into Todd Schiffman when he was booking rock acts here in LA?

MOSS

No. I know the name; I just -- I guess somebody else.

CLINE

He dropped out of the business after the mid-'70s, but he was -- if not the first, one of the first people to actually work for a booking agency and book rock bands, which at the time they didn't want to have anything to do with -- in fact, he was booking them on the sly, because if his boss found out, he would have been furious, I guess. And I guess --

MOSS:

I remember mostly a guy like Frank Barcelona, who had bands that other agencies used to make fun of. And Frank came home from a trip, and he was thrilled because he signed The Who and Cream, in one day. Think about it. He signed those two bands in one day, and all the guys said, "Who the -- wait a minute, Frank. Let me get this right: you signed The Who? What's The Who, man, what's that? Are they going to compete with Tony Bennett?" And meanwhile, they became two of the biggest -- and Frank, I remember Frank being a bit of pioneer.

CLINE

Well, these are English bands; Todd would have been doing West Coast American bands. And -- like The Doors and Janis Joplin are two of his close

associates. But working for booking agencies, who at the time are really only interested in Harry Belafonte and Jimmy Durante. Victor Borge --

MOSS

That took a long -- that took a while to --

CLINE

It's amazing. People forget these things, and it's just what's great about this being history now, so we can talk about them. As we get into the '70s now, one of the things that I wanted to ask you about is a few more of these artists that are signed to the label -- we mentioned Peter Frampton, and he's come up a lot; we haven't talked about a couple of other big selling artists yet. In the rock realm, Styx -- I don't know if there's anything you want to say about the signing of Styx and what that did for you.

MOSS

Well, that was largely A&R-based; we had an A&R guy who was on them, got me into it early, so therefore got me to the lawyer that represented them early, they were on a spin-off label of RCA [Records], and it was one of those things where they thought they were off the label, the spin-off label didn't think they were off the label, and I needed to get some real legal background, because I certainly didn't want to get sued or try to barge in on somebody else's contract. And we decided that we should go for this, because this was a band that already was selling records; they were already a touring band. And they were sort of a lyrical rock and roll band, which we sort of didn't have -- guys that can sing and write songs. And we got them, and they were the kings of the Midwest.

CLINE

Right, exactly. Well, they're from the Midwest, right?

MOSS

Chicago. And I usually for years, maybe at least three or four years, every year when their record -- they made a record a year, all the way from Grand Illusion, which was an amazing record; first side of Grand Illusion, that type of rock and roll is one of the -- "Sail away, come sail away," these kind of songs with big production, and Dennis DeYoung's amazing voice. And then you had counterpoint with Tommy Shaw; "[Too Much] Time On My Hands," "Blue-Collar Man (Long Nights)," I mean -- amazing songs for that period, and presented beautifully. And we'd go to Chicago, Harold Childs and I, who was my national promotion man at the time, have dinner with the guys and sit and hear the record, get amazing and feel great, and discuss when it's released and what's happening, how soon will you guys be -- the manager was there, he already had planned a tour. A very good manager, British guy, I forget his name right now. Terrific guy that I met; I think he was previously with Procol Harum or something like that. Really good manager. And then go out and sell 3 million records. And needless to say, the coasts, the reviews were not good.

And [Robert] Hilburn once in The Times just gave them a terrible review, and it wasn't fair. The audience was going nuts, and they just wouldn't give them a shot. They weren't that cerebral kind of band I know he liked. Wasn't John Prine; it wasn't Kris Kristofferson; wasn't [Bob] Dylan.

CLINE

And it wasn't Bruce Springsteen.

MOSS

And it wasn't Springsteen. So I think that was at a time when I banned Robert from any A&M shows for awhile. (laughter) What did it mean to him anyway? But I said, "Forget it; you're not coming to any more A&M shows. I'm not going to send you any tickets. It's ridiculous." Anyway, we made up eventually, but they always just groused about the reviews in LA and in New York. I tried hard; our publicity people -- we had Styx days, this kind of day, that kind of -- in the meantime, they sold a gang of records for us; they were a powerful, powerful band. They didn't tour that well overseas, unfortunately, because they were already a huge band by the time they got overseas, and this is a very interesting point: whoever had them beforehand should have sent them overseas to start, so at least they would have had a sort of -- you're playing 500-seats overseas, OK; well, you're only playing 1,200-seats in America, so not that big a difference. But when you're playing stadiums, you know -- by the time you're playing sheds and stadiums and 20,000-seat halls, and you have to go back to Germany to play in front of 1,000 people, and most of them are servicemen that we're filling up the hall with, they get a little lonesome for some Chicago food. And therefore, they didn't go overseas that much; we didn't have a lot of international success with them. I mean, we'd have hits, but not big success.

CLINE

Another act that fits more into the pop realm, since as we get into the '80s, and the Carpenters are still going strong, still selling records...

MOSS

Well, the Carpenters really -- the first five, six years of the '70s, they were --

CLINE

Right, but I mean, they're still around, they're still making records.

MOSS

They're still around, they're still making records, off and on.

CLINE

They're still on TV doing Christmas specials, that kind of stuff.

MOSS

Yeah, but by this time, Karen was getting a little sick; she left us in '83.

CLINE

Right. While we're on that topic, is there anything you want to say about the sort of decline of the Carpenters? Because Richard had his problems, too.

MOSS

I think that, again, critics, whatever, they buck the trend; they were the most amazing act, pop-wise. The White House, the Bob Hope show, whatever. Millions and millions of records, her voice stands alone. I think there was a trip -- I came back from France, I don't know if I mentioned this, and I saw them in Las Vegas; did that come up at all in our...

CLINE

No.

MOSS

Anyway, she -- I was shocked; I hadn't seen them in a few months performing, and then I'd been away, and I came home; i wanted to definitely check in with them. And I was shocked by her appearance; she was gaunt, thin. Didn't really look -- she seemed not to -- she was singing all right, but there was just no energy there. And I went backstage, and I said, "What's up? What's --" 'cause some bands -- this is trick every record guy knows: you go early to see an artist backstage, and then you're there, and then you don't have to go back later or something. But with them, I wanted to hang around and talk to them after the show, because sometimes talking to an artist before a show, their heads are into something else. And all Richard and the manager that was there, and at the time, Karen had a friend, she was seeing somebody, or was befriending somebody, I don't know how close they were, but he was also a record guy.

CLINE

I think I know who you're referring to.

MOSS

Pardon me?

CLINE

I think I may know who you're referring to.

MOSS

Yeah, she was seeing Terry Ellis a little bit at the time.

CLINE

Oh, OK. Not who I was thinking of.

MOSS

Who was, as I say, a nice guy; I always had a good relationship with Terry. Anyway, I said, "Well, what's up?" And they said, "Well, we're leaving in a week for like a three-week tour of Japan." I said, "She can't go out, she can't leave; she's got to see somebody." And they said, "Yeah, but we've got to do this tour for Tats," -- Tats [Tatsuo] Nagashima was the big promoter over there. I said, "I'll talk to Tats. She can't go; she just can't go." So I told -- called him, one of the greatest men I've ever met; a real great, amazing friend -- said, "Tats,

this is the situation. She's really sick. I mean, I don't know what it is yet," -- at this time, I didn't know about anorexia, this, that, or -- maybe in the back of the mind, I heard this, but I said, "Man, she's so thin I don't know how she can walk onstage. You have to take my word for it. And she can't tour; she just can't come. And I want you to know that whatever the economic feedback of this is, I'll pay it." I'm speaking for the label; I know Herbie would join me in this. This is a decision I know I can make for the both of us, because we love Karen, we love what they did for us. And so when I said I'd pay for whatever losses, he was about to take on, he just called me a son of a bitch and he wouldn't talk to me again. And I knew that he was cool with it. I called him back, and a week later, I said, "Is everything OK?" "Yeah, yeah, yeah." I said, "Really. I want to know how much it cost." And Richard -- and Karen, I think -- really appreciated the gesture, because clearly, they needed to regroup and figure something out. And the manager was shocked that I could just pull that off, to cancel that tour, because they were huge in Japan; this was not a 500-seater tour. This was monster time. "Yesterday, Once More" is played as many times as the Japanese National Anthem. To this day, in Japan. Seriously. It's like that melody is in the fabric of the country. And I got no bill from Tats. No bill. And as many times as I asked for it -- and I told Richard, "By the way, this gesture has cost me zero cents." I was very upfront with him: "Not a dime. Not a dime." And about a year later, they regrouped; she put on some weight, they came back again. And they were about to go back to Japan and redo the tour. And I said, "Look, Richard. I've been telling you: Tats has never charged me for any losses, nothing. But clearly, he's had some. And if I ask him how many free nights you'd have to play to make up for those losses, will you do it?" And he says, "Absolutely." So I asked Tats upfront: I said, "Look. Come on, this is me now. How many nights would they have to do to make up for what losses you've suffered." He said, "Look, I think two nights would do it. Two shows." So I told that to Richard, and I said, "Would you do two shows for no money, just to make up for what Tats lost." And he said -- it was so funny; he says, "Two hours? Two hours for Tats? Of course we'd do that." And I called him back, and they worked it out. But the point was, that was one way again of our label looking out for somebody, I think -- I would say that. And we were working with a promoter, certainly, and wasn't going to sue me; he wasn't going to -- I mean, I knew who I was dealing with. This was one of the great guys. So that kind of thing.

CLINE

And then obviously, when we get into the early '80s, it's over. But the act that I'm going to ask about is The Captain and Tennille, another pop act that cranked out some hits before you -- what was the story with The Captain and Tennille?

MOSS

Captain and Tennille was an act that was clearly A&R -- our A&R department came up with it; I was given a finished record, record was put out, and immediately went to number one. (laughter) It was one of those things I had literally nothing to do with it except support them as much as I could. And the album did extremely well; this wasn't just like a one-hit kind of wonder; they worked and produced some wonderful songs on that first album [Love Will Keep Us Together]; I think they had songs like "I Write The Songs" -- that song is now associated somehow with Barry Manilow --

CLINE

Barry Manilow, right.

MOSS

-- but he didn't write that song; it was written by [Bruce Johnston]. And I think Toni Tennille's version was just phenomenal. And then another song, "Come In From The Rain", which is a really great song. Great songs, done beautifully, and the album was a big -- and that single ["Love Will Keep Us Together"] was the top single of the year. And somehow, they always felt a little second to the Carpenters, in a certain way. There's a husband and wife and a brother and sister, pop thing, and clearly, they were more successful that year than the Carpenters were; I think by the time -- well, maybe not, that was 1975; the Carpenters were still pretty successful. But it was a beautiful record and very successful; we were happy to have them and it. They played themselves out and left the label and sort of made some complaints, I guess. But while they were there, I think we treated them as well as we could, and we appreciated having them.

CLINE

So now as you have these big arena-rock acts like Styx, and art-rock acts like Supertramp, and pop acts like Carpenters and Captain and Tennille, as we head towards the later '70s; a musical reaction to all of this starts to happen, which is punk. And there's a famous scenario that unfolds: the Sex Pistols near-signing, or very brief signing, like one of these very brief marriages kind of a thing. If you can, can you set the stage for this, and describe what was going on with the attempt to sign the Sex Pistols? Was this '77 -- I don't remember what year this was.

MOSS

I think it was '77, '78.

CLINE

'77 -- yeah. Anyway, it was the late '70s.

MOSS

Late '70s. Well, before -- I mean, to set the scene, before the Sex Pistols, there was IRS Records.

CLINE

Oh, yeah. I have that down here too, right. OK.

MOSS

And we had a relationship -- a really good relationship -- with Miles Copeland, and his brothers, Stewart [Copeland] and Ian [Copeland]. And we took on IRS Records, and basically I took them on to help us get introduced to punk music, because rock was getting a bit grand -- there was also glam rock at the time that we didn't have a lot to do with. But a lot of hair bands and those kinds of things.

CLINE

Right, and disco still.

MOSS

Yeah. And we didn't have a lot to do with -- I mean, we had a few dance records, but. So in came punk, and I sort of liked punk; I sort of enjoyed the immediacy of it, the rawness of it. And I like music to be simpler; I prefer three- and four-piece bands that I can hear every instrument. But I like good songs too, and punk suffered a little bit from that. Punks were sort of the raving segment of the population, same as rap music, in a way; the unhappiness, the discontent. So that was, at that stage, it was punk music. So we're familiar with the Buzzcocks and the Cramps, bands like that that were punk records. At the same time, IRS had the earliest records of REM, and lest we never forget, the Go-Go's, which was huge. First album was a monster album. That was a little punk, in a way; that was five girls, it was amazing.

CLINE

Right. Back to the basics.

MOSS

Right. So we were kind of familiar with that, and then we heard that -- we'd been following in England that EMI [Records] had to get off -- to pay off the Sex Pistols to get them off the label, because they were rude, or something. And then I heard from our managing director in England, Derek Green, who's just a great guy, and really a very close friend of mine at the time, because I'd been going to England so often, and he would come over, and I would be in England more often than I'd be in New York. And he was interested in them, and I said, "Are you really -- can you handle these guys?" "Yeah, yeah, man." And they sent me a record of "God Save the Queen", and I remember putting that record on in my office at A&M, and Herbie came running in -- there was a little bathroom that separated us, and then it was his office. And he came, he said, "Man, what is that? That's fantastic." (laughter)

MOSS:

Now, who would have thought that, right? This is great. It's just amazing energy on this record. I said, "It's the Sex Pistols; you know about them?" He

says, "Yeah, but that's amazing." So I said, "Well, we're trying to sign them." So pretty soon, Malcolm Maclaren, and his lawyer named Fisher, I think his name was, came to the lot, and I and my basically business affairs guy made a deal. Checked with Derek, checked through, because this was his deal, but they were talking to me. Anyway, we signed them, literally signed them, and then the English office did the thing of -- usual A&M thing of inviting the band over in some form celebrating, whether it's a glass of champagne or going out to lunch or something, and they sort of misbehaved; they were a little rowdy, to say the least. It seems; I wasn't there. The reports are certainly -- I remember being a little cloudy. And then the next night, or the night or two after that, they seemed to have an altercation with an engineer friend of Derek's, and they hurt him; they beat him up or something, one of them beat him up. And Derek felt that he was already tired of these guys, and in his own words, he couldn't root for them anymore. And I said, "Look, you don't have to have them in the office anymore; in all fairness, they're signed; we just put out the record. It doesn't make us look very good -- it makes us look like EMI if -- we're different; we have to be different about --" He says, "Yeah, but you said, if you can't root for them, let's get it over when we get it over." And so we got out of the deal. And it wasn't -- didn't make us look all that good, but by the same token, we had to keep ourselves intact.

CLINE

Right, right. Be true to yourselves.

MOSS

And I gave you the incident of the George Harrison thing with the business manager, and we had to be on guard a little bit, because we thought we had something special, and if we didn't protect it, that feeling, that buzz, and we let sort of -- let's put it this way, "un-complementary forces" into that, it might have affected our whole operation. And I wanted our people to be happy and feel good about what they're doing, so I of course supported Derek.

CLINE

Wow. Well, you were compensated in other ways around the same time through a similar avenue; you've got the Police --

MOSS

Well, that was just the most amazing thing, and Derek did sign the Police; Miles brought them in. It's so interesting; he heard "Roxanne" and thought there was something there, and even though -- I think by that time -- I'm trying to remember whether IRS was still with us; I think they were still with us. I'm not sure. Because we were with them about six years, and then they moved on to MCA. We just -- I'd added so many people on the administration side that it was putting a lot of pressure on them to have pop hits. And if they didn't have pop hits, then it was just a very costly venture. So anyway, Miles brought the

Police in and we signed them and he'd decided, "Let's not ask for a big advance; let's just get a good deal," and he got one. And these were the hardest-working guys in show business, as they say. They'd get in a van and just play. And basically, they started getting a little success in England, but it was their eventual success here that really busted them wide open. It was just thrilling; I'll never forget the first time I heard "Roxanne". I said, "So these -- so this is the Police. Wow." 'Cause I had been on the road with an act or two, and the record caught up with me, I think, in New York; I think mid-show, between shows at CBGB's, I got somebody to put the record on. And I was on the stage, I remember, talking to someone, and this sound came on, and it was the Police. Can you imagine hearing that through those kind of speakers?

CLINE

Yeah, (inaudible), yeah.

MOSS

Just incredible. So...

CLINE

And the rest, as they say, is history. (laughter)

MOSS

Yeah, the rest is history. And reading Andy's book recently, and hearing of the fortunate way that those three guys actually ended up together. Which was very vital, even though Sting is the brilliant songwriter and the guy with the charisma and the amazing voice and this great star -- he needed Andy's guitar to write against and to perform with. That's what lifted him. Because he was in the Police for two years without Andy, and they weren't going too many directions; they weren't going. And -- just amazing.

CLINE

And fortunate to have one of the best drummers around.

MOSS

Yeah. I mean, Stewart was the visionary that created the band.

CLINE

Right. And you mentioned that the Go-Go's came through the IRS connection around the same time. A local band. (laughter) What can you say about this sort of shift in direction in popular music that's happening now? And we talked about the impetus of the punk thing. Now there's a sudden wave of bands coming that are sort of more back-to-the-basics, almost a garage-band sort of mentality, and at the same time, in some ways more of a return to a basic pop sensibility, simple catchy songs, while of course all of these other trends are still going. What were your feelings about the direction music was taking as we head into the '80s when this is happening?

MOSS

Well, I was feeling very excited. Certainly we had the Police, so we had, in my way of thinking, a monster band, and a band that was traveling all over the world. So that was double fun for me, because we had had tremendous now worldwide acceptance with a few of our artists, namely Supertramp, and now, being in Paris in like '79, with Breakfast in America selling a million copies in France, and going to see the Police play a little punk club in there, and their album around 200,000 -- A&M was making things happen, which was really exciting. On a world level. I felt we were in pretty good shape; we were getting some nice bands. I think one artist at that time that was just incredible was Joe Jackson. I mean, there isn't many albums that A&M ever put out as good as Night & Day. I mean, that was "Steppin' Out", and those records, those songs -- I mean, he was in a groove at that point that was extraordinary; he'd come out of the punk phase to write an album like that, it was (inaudible) produced, David Kershenbaum, you know. Just an amazing record. Huge record, brilliantly produced worldwide. So we were getting artists for the period, and coming into this phase, I think, really healthy. I think England was starting -- they did sign Squeeze, which was an interesting band; we had some other people developing over there and in America -- I felt we were doing pretty good.

CLINE

At the same time, in '79, I guess it's perceived that the whole industry was in a slump.

MOSS

It happened, like, you know they have these landfills that just sort of evaporate and a sinkhole develops? Well, that's what developed in like 1978, '79. We were -- the industry was in a phase where -- firstly, the independent distributor was starting to get phased out, and the major companies had succeeded -- companies like CBS at that time, which were so incredibly competitive, on a merchandising/retail level that would give retailers tremendous discounts that we couldn't possibly try to keep up with. But they did it, basically, to get independent companies out of the business. So they'd buy the whole Tower [Records] store, and you could hardly get your records in. If you had hits, course you went in there, but -- and that's why I say, we were lucky that we always had something to sell, at least, or our catalogue was interesting. But -- so then what was happening is, people would ship records, and independent distributors, some of them didn't let you go into their warehouse to see your inventory. And I think I -- I don't know if I mentioned, but you know, when the Chicago distributor goes out of business owing us $700,000, that's a huge amount of money to us at that time. And then New Orleans, and then Texas, and then LA. And I saw it happening, and fortunately, I thought about it, and I went to a friend of mine who knew the guy from RCA, because I thought RCA

could use us for distribution; they needed a hit kind of company like ours. And we made a deal, and I got some money fro RCA to move over there for our national distribution. Three-year deal. And guaranteed our accounts receivable. And for me, it was like unbelievable freedom, because I didn't have to worry about getting paid anymore. In the old days, I'd have to make stops along the way, and get a plane, and go to see five distributions in three days, and schmoozed these guys, and beg, and get paid, and get a $200,000 check here, and $100,000 check here, because we had to pay our dog; we had to feed our dog, it's like -- So here comes RCA. Now, because of our company's reputation, I had to make every record good, meaning, everything that we'd shipped, either I wanted to get paid for, or you can bring it back. So at the time, we had an accounts receivable of about $32 million, and our own people who were in charge of the distribution of our records, said that was at least 60-65% good, meaning that I could expect $16-17 million, maybe. Well, it turned out they were far off, and I only got about 15% maybe in cash. And the rest of it, all in records.

CLINE

Returns.

MOSS

So we lost about $18 million that year, which of course was ridiculous, so we had to go and get some money from the bank. This was a bank that we had done business with, First Interstate Bank here, for years and years and years, all through the hit periods of whatever, Tijuana Brass and all that stuff, and we need to borrow $10 million. And they insisted we put our houses up, personal houses up as collateral for the loan; they wouldn't even take company stock, A&M stock. And we did that, and we were in the office signing these papers, the girls going around for signatures, says, "Which one of you guys is Herb Alpert?" She had Herb's signature in her hand. And I said, "Man, if I ever get well again, all these people -- I'm going to leave this bank; I'm going to make sure I never do business like this again." And we got the loan, and fortunately that year, a Supertramp album, a Styx album, Herb Alpert album of "Rise" -- saved us. Because they were with RCA, and new money. We threatened to leave the bank, and our main business guy says, "Well, they're the perfect size for you, and whatever;" I said, "Well, you've got to fire the president. I don't want to work with the president." And they did. They fired the president. So at least we got some --

CLINE

Right. That bank's not around anymore.

MOSS

They got chewed up by Wells Fargo [Bank]. They got consumed by Wells Fargo, so probably those businesses practices -- but, "Which one of you guys is

Herb Alpert?" That was amazing. After all those years of being with the bank, when you need them, the story is, when you need money -- when you don't need it, they're just waving cash at you. But when you need it, boy. People should know that.

CLINE

Yeah. Little like insurance.

MOSS

It's very, very tough.

CLINE

I don't -- while we're on the business side, I don't want to neglect that in '75, Jolene Burton becomes -- I guess you could say elevated in stature, and you open a financial center for the label in '77.

MOSS

Yeah. Tom Bradley came, everything.

CLINE

Really?

MOSS

Yeah. The mayor of the city.

CLINE

OK. What can you say about that? What are your memories of this development?

MOSS

We got an interesting architect who built a nice-looking building; we bought property down the block, which is where we eventually put our publishing company, went into a former porn movie theater, x-rated movie theater; it was on the corner of I think De Longpre [Avenue] and La Brea [Avenue]. And we built structures, we built buildings; Dave [David] Alpert, who's Herb's brother, presided over the building of these things with an architect, and we built the financial building; we used to have some receptions on the roof, parties looking at the Hollywood sign, all that stuff. And Jolene was our -- again, first woman vice-president maybe in the whole record business, and she was given the opportunity and the job to do just that, just be in charge of our financial side. And she tried very hard and worked very hard. She was great.

CLINE

And the building, I guess, was often referred to as the Jolene Burton building. (laughter)

MOSS

Yeah. Jolene's building, yeah.

CLINE

I don't imagine she ever guessed that things would wind up in that way when she was first hired, when she was the only employee. (laughter)

MOSS

Right. No, it was an amazing thing. As I say, she worked very hard for us, and I have nothing but respect and admiration for what she did.

CLINE

As we have now weathered the financial sinkhole and the egregious practices of First Interstate Bank, as we get into the early '80s, three consecutive years of interesting items here. One is that in '81, A&M Films is founded.

MOSS

Right.

CLINE

What inspired this development, that you remember?

MOSS

Gil Friesen, you know, basically thought we should have something to do in the movie business, and basically what we were was a development company, and we had played around with a movie idea in the '60s, in the late '60s: that was a complete flop. We lost our money and closed it down. I have -- somewhere, there's three headlines in Hollywood Reporter: A&M plans film; A&M sets budget, bing bing bing, with this guy and that guy; the next one, A&M closes film -- it was funny. (laughter) But Gil made us believe that we could -- this could be a worthwhile enterprise, and he had some ideas about. In truth, our first movie was Breakfast Club; we discovered John Hughes -- not discovered him, but gave him a director's gig. And because we ended up with the soundtrack to the Breakfast Club, and developed the song called "Don't You Forget About Me", which Simple Minds -- got a huge kind of response, a band from Virgin in England, we got. And the next movie was Birdy, which is another interesting film. So --

CLINE

A favorite of mine, by the way.

MOSS

Oh, great! Beautiful. It was two actors --

CLINE

Matthew Modine and Nicholas Cage --

MOSS

Nick Cage.

MOSS

-- when they were young, very young. So -- and we got relationships with directors and people like that, and got to meet people and know people. But it was hard to make money as a developmental company, because you only got paid after the profits. The way they account in the movie business, you just --

CLINE

Yeah, it's a big mystery.

MOSS

It's unbelievable. It's really unbelievable. But we did get residual effect, and like I said, we had soundtracks, and we started putting soundtracks together; we had a soundtrack to Good Morning--

CLINE

Vietnam.

MOSS

-- Vietnam. We ended up having a Louis Armstrong on our label, which was, "It's A Wonderful World." So these kind of events, to have these kinds of records emanating from pictures that we're involved with -- and they were brilliant, beautiful records -- it was great. And even though I don't think we ever made any money as a so-called A&M Films -- as a matter of fact, I know we didn't make any money -- but there were other residual benefits. And it caused to meet a different range of people and get our eyes out of the box and see what would happen. But we were conservative at it, and fortunately, we never put $3 million into a movie, 'cause that's a way to lose a lot of money very quickly if you do that. And we still stayed primarily in music operation, with records and publishing.

CLINE

And I also wanted to mention that even though this is going back to the late '70s, after what appears to be some sort of a reclassification or reshuffling of the business structure of the label, and in the acquisition of IRS, and all these things are happening, you also started a jazz subsidiary, A&M Horizon.

MOSS

Right.

CLINE

Not likely to be a hit record-maker or a money-maker -- what do you remember about A&M Horizon and the impetus behind that?

MOSS

Well, I think Herbie's interest was always towards jazz, he's a huge jazz enthusiast. And we had been successful with Chuck Mangione, and we had had the CTI [Records] series with Creed Taylor; we had Wes Montgomery, the great Wes Montgomery. Herbie Mann, Paul Desmond. Over the years -- pardon me?

CLINE

Hubert Laws.

MOSS

Hubert -- yeah, I mean, over the years, we had peripherally, and exotically, had these jazz greats. I remember one guy was asking as -- Mort, this guy Mort; I forget his last name. But he was the manager of Simon & Garfunkel at the time, but a great friend of Paul Desmond's. And I remember at one point in the '70s,

we wanted to sign Paul -- this was after the CTI experience -- and he says, "Paul, we'll sign with you on one condition." And I said, "What's that, Mort?" He says, "Well, we will fly -- and I will fly to LA, but you have to take us to lunch at Canter's Deli." (laughter) I said, "It's a hard one, man, but it's a done deal. Let's do it." And here these guys come out here, Paul with the sunglasses, such a cool guy, and a nice guy who left us much too early. And so we want to develop something. And also, it was not the acquisition of IRS; IRS eventually left us. We kept the catalogue, but they went off to the school, off to MCA, because their lawyer and Miles felt they could do better elsewhere.So we got Horizon because primarily Tommy Li Puma was available again, and we liked him; he'd produced for us before, and Tommy was a great guy. Unfortunately, he came in at the wrong time; Horizon started just as we were realizing we were in a funk, we were in a bad place. And I wondered -- and so he made one or two records; I think he made a Brenda Russell record, which was great, and one or two others, and then we had to let Tommy go; we had to really start cutting back on some of these kind of feel-good expenses, and he was one of the ones. He went on to get all kinds of Grammys, and remains a great friend of both Herb's and mine. And it turned out, Horizon was sort of a thing because it sort of pissed off Quincy. Quincy, as I'm told -- I thought he was happy, but he wasn't and that sort of turned the screw in him, and he decided, "Maybe I'd better get out of here, because if they're giving somebody else the chance at that, and not giving it to me, maybe I should move on." That's when he decided to change his work pattern, and that's when he went over to Warner Brothers, and met Steve Ross, and started producing TV shows, started making -- moved on to his great --

CLINE

Yeah, trajectory.

MOSS

-- success cube, you know. So Horizon was sort of a funny label, at the time. Well-intentioned, and yet it backfired. But yet, I mean --

CLINE

Bad timing.

MOSS

-- Quincy couldn't have accomplished what he's accomplished since then by being with us, because we didn't have a television network, we didn't have a movie studio. And certain people had to move on.

CLINE

Bad timing, maybe. In '82, you started a Latin division. What do you remember about how that started and where that went?

MOSS

Again, we made some great records; again, Herb, I think, wanted mostly to do that, it was a way of maybe reaching out to Latin America, to -- internationally, and to make some use of our Latin know-how. We ran into a producer, an executive we really liked; those people have since gone on to great fame and fortune elsewhere. But again, the problem was that we'd make records in America, and even though they were relatively conservatively produced, they were expensive. And in Mexico, they would cost one-quarter as much as they cost in Los Angeles. Now, my question was, where were the Latin fans for these records going to buy them from? If they can get them from somewhere else in Latin America much cheaper than having to buy them from us -- So I remember that as being -- the price differentiation, the difference was a big deal. And eventually, again, we had to cut our losses, basically. With some regrets, because we liked all the people, but we felt -- and I tell you, Lani Hall, I think, won -- Herb's wife -- won a Grammy [Award] for a record [Es Facil Amar] she'd cut for that market. Brilliant record; beautiful record. So she got to be very well-known down there for her work and her recordings. So we had a lot going for us, but for some reason, economically, it just didn't hold up.

CLINE

And then the following year, in '83, Windham Hill Records is a new addition to A&M's music perspective.

MOSS

Well, that was a tremendous thing. The thing that I think that I would like to just bring up was the advent of the CD [compact disc].

CLINE

Yes. And I actually have that here too. In fact -- yeah, OK.

MOSS

I believe in '81, I went to Athens, Greece, invited by Billboard Magazine; they had one of these conventions, international conventions -- the launch of the CD. And I went, and Bob Summer from RCA [Records] went; Chris Wright of Chrysalis Records, Terry Ellis' partner at that time. And we all went, had a great time in Athens, amazing. But the CD was introduced by Sony [Corporation] and [Koninklijke] Phillips [Electronics N.V.]. One sound carrier for the whole industry. And though I was concerned at the time, that made it easier to tape and to steal music, to me, it was incredible. No more did we have to create inventories. We didn't have cassette -- I mean, we still had cassette, but we didn't have four-track and eight-track and reel-to-reel and all these different entities. And I just started to get capacity as much as I could to try to recreate A&M's catalogue on CDs. And to me, the CD was what took the business and put it into a whole other framework. If you asked what A&M Records was worth in like -- and we were a good label -- was worth as an entity at the end of the '70s, and see what we were worth at the end of the '80s, I mean

-- ridiculously more, in a certain way -- it was because of the profitability of the CD. The music industry really got profitable when the CD happened. That's not to say we didn't make money in the '70s or whatever, but nothing like the amount -- here you were retailing, wholesaling a product for $10, and the public was willing to pay $16, $18 for it.

CLINE

To replace things they may have already had.

MOSS

Exactly, because no skips or bumps, boom-boom-boom, I still have a feeling and question whether the analog CD -- the CD is as good as the analog LP, because to me, the LP sound was beautiful. Rich and warm and full, whereas the CD tended to be a little too clean for me, a little too thin on top. But eventually, the producers of CDs got to understand that and make rich-sounding CDs as well. So here we had a product that we could sell for $10; the artist realized it was experimental, so the artist allowed us to take a package deduction, because they were going to get a higher royalty anyway from the bigger sale price. Everybody was happy, and the record companies made a ton of money. So we could venture into other things, and because we had a distribution system, we could take on other labels, like a Windham Hill. And distribute the label, offer Windham Hill enough of a royalty that they would be happy, and assure them they were going to get paid as well, so they didn't have to go through distributions and worry about stuff, and we would appoint people to work their product, and they gave us some interesting stuff, and we ended up doing very well with Windham Hill for a long period of time.

CLINE

Right, particular George Winston's stuff. I have here that in fact in '87, you issued your first promo CDs, promotional CDs. So there's a few years there before it gets to that level. But clearly, that means that by then, that's the standard, that's what people are listening to. And by the time we're in the mid-'80s here, when you have among acts like Bryan Adams and the Human League and Amy Grant, '86, Janet Jackson, you mentioned Control. Anything --

MOSS

Well, Human League was amazing. I bought that record ["Don't You Want Me Baby?"] from Richard Branson. And we had -- just to show you, it's just so serendipitous, so I say. We flew to England on the Concorde -- I'm trying to remember if -- no, we didn't take a dog; sometimes we flew to Europe and took Ani's dog. But anyway -- couldn't get it into England anyway. But so we flew to England, and there was a monster storm. We were the last plane to land at Heathrow [Airport] for three days. We got out of the plane, and we got to Derek's house because the Police were going to be on Top of the Pops, and then we were going to go meet them or something, have dinner or something. And

we just barely got to Derek's house, the storm was so great, in time to relax, have a drink, watch the Police and schmooze and talk, how are you and what's going on, bang bang. Meanwhile, the Police then perform, and we're talking, and the show is still going on, and we're sitting there hearing, "(singing) Don't you want me baby? Don't you want me, oh-h?" And I'm hearing this tune; I said, "That's an amazing record. Whose record is that?" And Derek says, "I don't know." So the next day, I'm at the hotel, and I go immediately to buy the record, only to find out it's like number three already in England, and it's by Human League, and it's a Virgin [Records] record. So I immediately call Branson, because obviously I've had UB40 with him; I've had Simple Minds -- we're used to doing business. And I say, "Richard, have you already made a deal on this for the states?" And he says, "Well, kind of, but --" (phone ringing)

CLINE

Do you need to take this?

MOSS

Not really. I'll get through with this, and then we'll take a break. I've got a horse running, so we have to watch it on TV.

CLINE

Oh, oh. We can stop now if you want.

MOSS

I'll finish this last story.

CLINE

Finish the Human League thing, ok.

MOSS

So anyway, he says, "Well, yeah, I sort of have this deal in America, but they don't believe it's a hit over there. You think it's going to be a hit over there?" I said, "That's a monster. It's just -- let me have this record. If you have any questions, just let me have this record." And we went -- he lived in a houseboat at that time, you know Richard. And he says, "All right, well, you got it. You have it. So I think we still had a handshake, or -- I don't know how we got the contracts, but I said, "Look, if I fax you a contract," -- or however we got the contracts over, I left with a signed agreement, because that's what I wanted to do when I was in England, because I'd gotten burned a few years earlier. And you know, I got a video, 'cause videos were now big, MTV [Music Television] and everything. And it turned out to be a huge record. And just for fun, I gave my wife a gold single on that one, for agreeing, I guess, with my great taste, and understanding why we had such a big hit.

CLINE

OK. We're going to pause this. [END OF SESSION SIX moss.jerry.6.03.15.2007]

1.7. Session 7 (April 3, 2007)

CLINE

OK. Today is April 3, 2007. This is Alex Cline interviewing Mr. Jerry Moss at Almo Sounds in Beverly Hills for our seventh session. Good morning.

MOSS

Good morning.

CLINE

We're getting into the homestretch, a phrase that would be very familiar to you. In fact, last time we kind of knocked off unexpectedly early, because one of Mr. Moss' horses were racing at what would have been the end of our session; it turned out to be a good thing, actually.

MOSS

We won. We actually won.

CLINE

(laughter) Yeah. We had ended with the story of the acquisition of the Human League, what turned out to be a hit not just in England, but here. "Don't You Want Me, Baby?" But before we get back into the '80s, I had a couple of '70s-related questions that I didn't cover last time that I want to ask about. One of them is that you made some sort of business changes as far as, I think, administrative roles and things, positions in the company, starting in the mid-'70s. Gil Friesen became the president of A&M Records, there was a little bit of a reshuffling of roles, and I wanted to know what the thinking was behind this, and how this affected not just the label but particularly your role in the label. It turned out to be right before the big industry slump in 1979.

MOSS

Well, in -- by the time the '70s sort of emerged, I was sort of mostly involved with the acquisition of talent and the making of the records. That's what I consider to be -- and keeping the artists and managers and producers happy. That was my primary gig. Gil Friesen was administrating the company really well, and he was also pretty much responsible for the look of the company, which was very important to us, our graphics, our copywriters, and our advertising -- we're very special, and went very far in causing us to be considered a rather unique label. And I felt always that to be successful, we had to be different, and that graphic look, and the time we spent with our art department and our other creative services just added to that. Bob Fead, at that point, was really involved with distribution, and so he was responsible for the distribution, selling, and the marketing of the records. And then we had some definite marketing people. But I thought that Gil could use the title of president in a good way, because he could speak a little more for the company without having to make it look like he had to talk to me or whatever that was, because

we talked on the major things anyway, we were close friends in operating this thing. And Herbie [Herb Alpert] was very much in line with this as well, and it freed me from having to answer certain administrative questions that Gil was more qualified to answer anyway. So when other so-called labels were -- and people running them were rising to that chairman level, I figured, what the hell, I'll be chairman; it doesn't really matter. I always felt that my handshake, Jerry Moss, A&M, was -- it said it all, as far as I was concerned, and I represented the label in what I did and how I felt. So that's how we just pretty much resolved it.

CLINE

OK. And leading up to that slump, was there any kind of impact as far as that went, or was it just basically your titles that changed?

MOSS

Titles changed, allowed me to -- you know, at that time I was still obviously concerned about distribution, but I tried to help Bob, I tried to help Charlie Minor, who was our promotion -- I think he was with us still at that time -- as much as I could, but we had good people in those days, and it was fun to be part of it.

CLINE

And you certainly weathered the storm, so to speak.

MOSS

We were lucky. We had some good records, that was what did it.

CLINE

And this was a time when there was a lot of new energy coming into the popular music field, especially in the rock field, punk and things like that were happening; we talked a bit about that. You had the Police at this point; you had an arrangement with IRS Records. I wanted to ask you two things related to that. One is, by now, already, through the '70s, FM rock radio becomes the venue. And FM rock radio already becomes very formatted as well, and it actually posed perhaps an interesting challenge for some of this newer music that didn't fit into this format to get heard. What do you remember about what was happening in radio at the time, and how some of this newer music was able to reach the audience, other than through concerts, through broadcasting?

MOSS

Well, I think by this time we were just making records for this form of radio. And you know, we had FM promotion people, we had AM promotion people; we were trying to make records really for these formats. And every major outlet was covered by us in a really major sense; we had promotion men all over the country, we had college reps, we had an office in New York City, an office in Toronto, and Canada was very important in breaking a few records, because we had Canadian artists as well. I'm not sure if Bryan Adams was with us at that

time, but it sort of all kind of came to a nice flow, in a way. And when punk happened, I was excited by punk, as was Herbie; I told you our experience with the Sex Pistols. And I wanted to get us involved with punk, because we were starting to relax too much, quite frankly, in our success with the records we were having, but I saw a change happening that I thought was good for us. And the fact that I liked about punk was that it was fresh, it was new, it was simple, and it was less expensive to produce, and rock records were starting to get very expensive. The hardest was spending long times in the studio, and it was starting to get very orchestrated, and it was losing a little freedom. And punk frankly came in to me as sort of like a breath of fresh air. I'm not being critical of any bands or groups or forms of music, but everything was getting very expensive. And this was a good thing, I thought. So that's what I liked about IRS, and what I always liked about Miles; he was sort of a new, innovative kind of guy. And he brought us through IRS some very interesting acts, including R.E.M. and the Go-Go's.

CLINE

Right, both of whom became quite successful. The other thing I wanted to ask relating to this is this new breath of fresh air, as you put it, also stimulated the music scene everywhere, but certainly here in Los Angeles. There were a lot more bands and there were a lot more venues. What do you remember, if anything, about some of the changes in the venues around town, some of the new venues, and maybe some of the things that you remember about that scene kind of beginning to explode as the late '70s are happening?

MOSS

Well, I remember Madame Wong's.

CLINE

The original one in Chinatown?

MOSS

No, the other one --

CLINE

Or the one in Santa Monica?

MOSS

-- in Santa Monica. And as somebody said rather sarcastically, only in LA could you have a punk club with valet parking. (laughter)

CLINE

Right, in what was kind of an Elizabeth-style restaurant building on top of it.

MOSS

Yeah, and it was a great club, just a fantastic club, and she [Esther Wong] was a wonderful woman. She was a big racetrack enthusiast, so I used to run into her at the racetrack occasionally. She was just a terrific lady, and the acts played there, it was a very comfortable sort of club, for the music, and a lot of

room to talk to a band afterward, and get to see people. I really liked that; I liked certainly the Troubadour, kept working the Roxy, the Whisky [A Go Go]; I mean, these were the circuit. And the Santa Monica Civic [Auditorium] was a fantastic venue. I think it's still being used, but certainly not to the level.

CLINE

Yeah, they're not using it for rock gigs anymore; I don't know if there's -- the city got some trouble behind that, or what happened.

MOSS

It was a perfect venue.

CLINE

It was, yeah.

MOSS

It was intimate, it was cool; it was usually the first step after an artist broke through the club scene to play a venue like that. And it was so comfortable and so great; I'll never forget Cat Stevens out there, or Joe Cocker's Mad Dogs [and Englishmen] out there. Just an absolutely perfect venue. So I was out just about every night. There was always something to see. Now, with the IRS thing, I was curious; I wanted to bring our people and get them into this punk thing. And it was just a lot of fun, that's all I can say. And then the crash happened, and we had to cut back.

CLINE

Well, one of the things that also happened, as we head farther into this period, that we only touched on briefly last time, that clearly revolutionized everything was MTV [Music Television]. The suddenly almost critical importance of the rock video, and clearly this was a time when MTV was really almost exclusively about that, which is certainly not true anymore. What do you remember about how this changed the way you had to do business in order to promote your artists and their work?

MOSS

Well, there were two major changes, really. One was MTV, and the second was the CD [compact disc]. And to discuss MTV first, there were certain acts that were absolutely perfect for MTV, and in its early days, it was a fantastic outlet for photogenic bands. And certainly we had one with the Police. And again, being in business for ourselves, and having to deal with costs all the time, the Police could make the most charming videos for $20 grand, if that much. I mean, I remember "Don't Stand So Close To Me", and how simple it was -- I mean, all they did was put graduation robes over their underwear and did just one take of something that was just absolutely memorable. So those -- when MTV was playing those kinds of videos, it was charming and it was fantastic and it was interesting and innovating, and to me very fresh. But when the bigger labels, as usual, started to put more money into videos, and give so-

called more quality film, you know, then it amped up the cost of everything again. And this is what I believe the major labels kept doing to try to undermine the middle-sized labels or the smaller labels, and literally put them out of business. Same thing was true of the CDs, because they were basically the manufacturers of the CDs, and it was very hard for me to get production actual capacity of CDs; I'd have to write it into some of my foreign contracts that I'd have a million CDs that I could draw on from overseas to ship to America for processing, because it was not an easy commodity to come by when they started the CD business, and I tried to convert our catalogue almost immediately to CD, because I knew we had a very good catalogue. And the CD, you know, just exploded the value of record companies, because we could charge three and four times more, wholesale, for the product, same information; the artists were excited about the new technology, therefore they were allowing us to take some packaging deductions. And so the result was that record companies became extremely profitable, extremely profitable with hits. I mean, the hits became exponentially bigger, more rewarding. So there were literally two explosions: the MTV one and the CD one. Now, for awhile you were selling a certain amount of LPs, and then, wow, the CDs just started to just take over. There was some concern about sound, because most people, record producers, will tell you they were very sorry to see the LP leave, because there was a certain deepness and warmth of sound on an LP that a CD just couldn't achieve. But eventually, producers started working with it and trying to create with it. There was eventually some satisfaction there with the sound producers. The CD really made the business for those people; I mean, from the '80s until say the mid to late '90s, and made it what it could have been, so to speak, before other technology came in and just really took over.

CLINE

Right. Although now, of course, you also incurred the cost of making all these videos. What do you think the impact of what became a requirement of videomaking was on bands, to use your term, who were less photogenic, and now suddenly have to be seen close up, so to speak?

MOSS

I mean, we just have to spend more money. I mean, it would be -- we'd need an idea; it wasn't like the performance -- they couldn't just stand in a studio and do their song; we'd have to get a beautiful girl involved somewhere, and somebody interesting to look at, a fashion thing or a statement; you'd have to figure out some other angle to do this. And quite honestly, that spawned a lot of really interesting videos, because just watching groups perform became a little boring. So the thought processes that went into making videos became interesting and exciting, and different video directors became more popular and used. And again, that became a really interesting aspect, and Gil Friesen had a lot to do

with choosing these producers and film makers. For example, it was his idea, when we finally got into a Janet Jackson thing, somebody like that who was just very attractive and could dance and sing, she was like a musical star -- when we came out with Rhythm Nation [1814], we came out with a film; we spent about $700,000, which at the time was a ton of money, on essentially making like a 20-minute film, which encompassed three real videos of the three first singles that we were releasing from the album. And it turned out to be a brilliant way to go, because if they wanted the 20-minute package, they had it, but we could piece it out, and didn't have to -- Janet could go on the road and not have to worry about getting back to do anything, so now you can do the road thing and we'll do the videos and we'll tell you when they're coming, and she was happy with that and excited about the film, and she liked -- of course she approved who the film director was, and as I say, it became a source of -- I mean, in a way, the record business grew up; a lot of people would call it a real exciting aspect of the record game that we could have that adjunct; in certain ways you could even -- certain artists could even sell VHS packages of their videos; it became another kind of insulary market. Never a big one for us, but with Janet, we probably sold more than anybody else, maybe Janet and the Police. And the other acts made it on their performances still; they went out there and performed, and occasionally we'd come up with a song or a video that meant something, and try to get MTV to play it.

CLINE

Right. Yeah, we're going to get to Janet Jackson today in a little more depth. I also wanted to point out that around this time, for one thing, one of the things that I don't want to leave out is that in '84, there was actually a new Tijuana Brass album released called Bullish, along with a tour and live performances. So that aspect returns. So I guess Mr. Alpert came out of his period of sort of refocusing, and also redefining the sound of the music, updating it. What do you remember about what was happening with the label more on the pop side, even though at this point, clearly most of the attention is going on the rock acts, people like the Police and people like Janet Jackson, eventually.

MOSS

Styx, Supertramp.

CLINE

Right. What is happening in the '80s now on the pop side of things? The sound that really established the label to begin with.

MOSS

Well, we were putting out some pretty good jazz records too. Gato Barbieri, and...

CLINE

Stan Getz eventually too.

MOSS

Stan Getz, eventually. Chuck Mangione I think was still with us.

CLINE

Right. Huge.

MOSS

And I guess Herbie responded to his fans, you know, that said, "Come on, give me another -- we'd love to hear the Tijuana Brass again, maybe a current version." And he tried to summon it up and do that and go out on tour and try to make it happen; I think he went back to England. And I mean, the tours were successful, the fans dug it; everybody was into it. I just don't know how many records we actually sold from it. But in every sense of it, it was maybe the last ball in the pocket; let's take a shot and see if we can rekindle this thing, because too many people are calling up wanting it; let me see if I can do it for them.

CLINE

Yeah. Unfortunately, the early '80s also are marked by the tragic early death of Karen Carpenter. You told a little bit about going to see the Carpenters in Las Vegas, and how concerned you became seeing Karen Carpenter's condition. What was your reaction to the news of her death, or what was your awareness of what was happening at the time?

MOSS

It was a bit of a shock, because she had been in the hospital in New York; I'd gone to see her, I think I did. She was one of those people that always sent you a note or something; she appreciated any gesture. She was just a great lady in that regard, in every regard, really. So thoughtful. And everybody told me she was getting better. You didn't want to pry; you didn't want to get too personal. But I'd always ask, "How's Karen? What's happening?" And at this point, she had been making a record with Phil Ramone in New York; she was trying to -- this was maybe a year or two earlier -- and we wanted to let her do the record, not interfere too much. It was a record we chose not to release, quite honestly, when we sort of heard it. We explained to Phil, we explained to her. Anyway, we thought she was getting better; we really -- and then she just died, she just died. And I remember the funeral very well and how sad we all were; it was just a terrible thing.

CLINE

I also wanted to get into the fact that when we're getting into the '80s again, in '87 you celebrated A&M's 25th anniversary on the lot. Are there any memories or stories you want to share about that?

MOSS

Well, it was a monumental thing, really, to have something like that going for 25 years, to even think about it, it was quite remarkable. Independent company, no outside money, to employ that many people, make that many records, make

a living, a good living, out of this whole thing, was something that I couldn't have even dreamed of, to tell you the truth. And it was a culmination of just an amazing time; I think again Gil and his staff produced a really nice presentation for Herbie and myself, and Russ Solomon spoke; Jan Wenner, I think, spoke. I think at that point -- I'm trying to remember this guy that was the head of Columbia Pictures [David Puttnam] at the time, it was sort of a Rocky kind of guy I had worked with on a couple of soundtracks, and we were friends. I wish I could remember his name now. He made Chariots of Fire; he was a pretty terrific guy. Anyway -- well, if he didn't make it, he bought it... Anyway, so we had a nice outpouring of interest from different -- you know, we tried to make it a cultured event, brought all of our representatives in from overseas, everybody was sort of there; all of our label affiliates, people that had been good to the label. And it was just a great three, four-day event. We usually had a convention every year anyway to bring people in and give them a dose of the lot, because the lot was the heart of the whole thing. Everybody needed to get recharged, and that was the way we sort of got hold of people. So all our road people, everybody sort of came in. In the early '70s, we usually had picnics and things like that around this; the A&M picnic was quite a thing for a few years. And then we realized with people not doing drugs anymore, the picnics weren't as much fun. (laughter) And perhaps we should do something else, be a little more businesslike, so to speak. So anyway, it was quite a moment, and we put out a book called The First 25 Years, which I'm sure you've seen. And it was a nice piece of work; it was again new bios, new stuff, new pictures. And I still hear about that book today, people have it around. My former bookkeeper, who is now living in and operating a bed and breakfast somewhere in Oregon with her husband, says to me that everybody looks at that 25 year book of A&M; that's the most read piece in her library (laughter) up in Oregon, so you can imagine. It's all -- it's out there; I guess it's somewhat historical, and it's sort of interesting.

CLINE

Right, and I think furthers that family feeling that seems to be associated with the label. And this is a time, in terms of the artists that were happening on the label, this is when Janet Jackson has become quite large in your catalogue.

MOSS

I had Joe Jackson too.

CLINE

And Joe Jackson, yeah. Jacksons everywhere.

MOSS

Fantastic Joe Jackson.

CLINE

Yeah. I can tell you're a fan of Joe Jackson. That's great. Yeah, first with Control, which got mentioned briefly last time, the amazing production of Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. I think you told an anecdote that was related to something else about first hearing what had resulted from those sessions. Maybe you can elaborate on your feelings upon hearing what happened with Janet Jackson's early efforts for the label.

MOSS

Well, Janet was signed by our A&R [artist and repertoire] director at the time, David Kerschenbaum. And he signed her through her production company, which was run by the father, Joe Jackson. And when we signed Janet, she was 15 years old. So you obviously needed the father's approval. And she at the time was doing some television work; she was on, I think, a show called Diff'rent Strokes, or making appearances here and there. She was a nice kid, really sweet, very nice. Joe would usually arrange the production of the records, and they were nice records, sweet; they sold enough for us to want to keep on making records. She made two records, I believe. And other people wanted to get involved with her, because they wanted to work with talent; they realized she had a tremendous amount of talent. And I remember we had an A&R man who wanted to go see her while she was doing either a movie or a TV show in another town, and I said, OK, you can visit her, whatever, explain your ideas. Because by this time, she was getting to be 16, 17, whatever. And I remember being in Hawaii on a holiday, and the phone rings -- it's Christmas vacation -- and it's Joe, and he's really upset.

CLINE

Oh, no. (laughter)

MOSS

And he says, "You cannot send an A&R man to see my daughter." I said, "Joe, I mean, he's just going to discuss some material." He says, "I don't care what he's going to do. She's underage; I don't want anybody visiting her, and you're going to have to stop it, or I'm going to sue you; I'm going to --" I said, "Joe, relax. He's not going anywhere, OK. Take it easy, it's not a problem." I call the guy up and say, "Look, I'll explain to you when I see you, but you're not going anywhere; you're not going to go see her." "Oh, OK. All right." So that was the way it was with Janet, until we -- Jordan Harris, who became our -- not head of A&R, very important A&R guy for us, hired a guy named John McClain to come with us. Now, John McClain grew up with the Jacksons; John McClain knew Joe Jackson very well. I believe that John's father and Joe had been friends. And John McClain was just one funny amazing guy; he just really was. And he got to see Janet, because like he said, he changed her diapers. So when it came time to get -- maybe try something new with Janet, we were talking about and I said, "Look, though Clarence Avant, I know Jimmy and Terry, and

maybe you should try that, see if that works." And because John knew Joe so well, we were able to pull this off. And she was 18 when she made a record called Control, and it was the control, it was all about the control her father was exerting on this sweet kid; I love Janet. Anyway, they made this record, and I remember taking it with me to Hawaii, I went back there through the Christmas of '84, '85, and I just couldn't stop playing this record, this was the most amazing record. And I said to John at the time -- and I guess that's where the anecdote that you heard -- I said, "Man, this record's going to sell at least two million records." And he looked at me and he says, "Really?" I said, "Yeah, it's got hits, it's got everything. This is a fantastic record, I can't tell you how knocked out I am over this record." What did it sell, seven million records or something, just a monster record. And then, what does she do, obvious? She made her statement clear, she's an absolutely enormous artist in the year of 1985; she decides she doesn't want to work anymore with her dad. And this sort of makes our contract kind of void at this point, and so I said, "Look, you just can't do this; this'll make us look ridiculous. You've got to try us for one more record, at least one." And at the time, there was family problems, because her mother [Katherine Jackson] and father looked like they might separate. So at the negotiation, we had everybody in the room, and I remember making this with our business affairs guy, we had her attorney, we had her mother's attorney, we had the father's attorney, and we the attorney representing Jimmy and Terry. Between everybody, it took us I would say a couple of million bucks of advance, enough to make a record called Rhythm Nation. So we got our follow-up, and it was tremendously successful. And after that, we just couldn't hold her. By this time, Virgin [Record]'s offering her $12 million a record. And I tried, and again, I just couldn't come up with that kind of money for one artist. That was an A&R budget for five years, in a certain way, for us. So -- well, perhaps not five, but at least three. But the point I'm making, you just can't give that much money to one artist when you're used to operating on a certain level. It's like I used to say, A&M is not a kibbutz, but you have a sort of formula on how you can deal with people. We would have given her a much higher royalty, but that wasn't in the cards; they really wanted -- so they went and left. But I've always had a great feeling for her, and whenever I do see her and we run into her, she's always very sweet to us. She's a great lady, just a great lady.

CLINE

And obviously, this is opinion, but I think many people agree, you guys wound up with her two best records anyway. (laughter)

MOSS

Well, I think we had a little more fire going. We really dug her; she was really part of us. And again, you know, what Michael [Jackson] was doing -- she had so much pressure in her life, and to withstand all that and go out and perform

and be great and do that stuff, I thought was just remarkable. She was so strong and powerful. I've got nothing but good things to say about her.

CLINE

And her work, among others, also because of MTV, made for a lot more work for dancers, which is an interesting sort of side effect of the whole --

MOSS

Yeah. Well, also the Thriller video had something to do with it too.

CLINE

Right, of course.

MOSS

But Michael and her sort of did that. But she was -- for a female, she was an amazing dancer.

CLINE

How many singing, dancing young women with little headset microphones have followed? Countless. (laughter)

MOSS

Exactly.

CLINE

And one thing I wanted to ask, in relation to Janet Jackson and the business side that you just described, in following the anniversary bash, it really isn't many years later that the label winds up being sold to Polygram. At the point of the anniversary, and going through these negotiations, the talk of these astronomical sums of money to keep an artist, was there any thought in anyone's mind at this point about possibly moving on, or selling the label, or making that kind of a change? Or did that happen later?

MOSS

Well, we had one really nice man from [Walt] Disney [Company], terrific guy [Frank Wells] oh, God, I feel bad I don't remember his name right now, it doesn't come to mind; I remember the guy quite clearly, it was -- he was the guy that came in with [Michael] Eisner, and who passed away in a skiing -- helicopter skiing accident.

CLINE

Right. I can't remember his name either.

MOSS

Great guy, just an amazing guy, who I knew slightly and who came over a couple of times and was interested in doing something with yes. At the time, I said, "You know, I want to do a 25-year thing first; I want to be around for 25, and then maybe we can talk some more." And then he unfortunately -- I'm not sure when he had the accident, but it was -- but I don't think Disney was ever thought of, only because their reputation was to buy kind of low, and by this time, when we did resolve to sell, which was in '89, I had reached a point where

-- who would really be interested? Who can we really help get bigger? And we didn't sell the company to just take the money and move on. What we sold for was to make the company bigger, because we were now reaching certain constraints within the industry. The licensing deals that kept us alive -- I mean, just to speak in money terms, we were getting advances of like -- just for rent now, when I say rent, meaning they could lease the label for three years, or maybe three and a half, depending on how they recoup the money, but we were getting advances of like $45 million from major labels in Europe. I mean, CBS gave us that much money in the early '80s, we got that much money from Polygram in the mid-'80s, and we earned way back for them; they made a ton of money, and they were very happy with us. And Polygram was just like RCA when we had domestic distribution problems, we made them stronger, I felt we made Polygram much stronger when we joined them in Europe, because they had all this great distribution and we had the software, we had the stuff, we had the Police and the Supertramp and Bryan [Adams], we had these great, wonderful artists. So -- and we had a wonderful working relationship with the Polygram people, and I in particular with a guy named David Fine, who when it came time to sell the thing, we thought, "Let's put a price on this thing, what we want; aim high, if we get it, we get it." And we told Polygram we would think about doing this, because they started -- people were starting to acquire labels at this time, the whole -- Island [Records] had sold, and this one had sold -- I think the last one to go was Geffen [Records], actually. But it was gone with a year or so, everything, these labels are going, and everybody thought it was the right time to do this. And the other thing that was happening as well, along with these licensing deals sort of going away, because these big labels were now saying, "Why am I giving $45 million to a competitor? Screw 'em; I'd rather put the money into my own artists' A&R repertoire, and I'll take my shots." So that money was going to be not around. Secondly, artists were wanting more money; the Janet Jackson $12 million deal was not unique. There were other artists -- [Bruce] Springsteen's deals and this one's deals, and these big labels were just writing these checks, and I couldn't write those checks. I needed a bigger backup to do that. So it was the time to sell our thing and work for people and get a good deal and profit incentives and all that kind of thing, and Polygram seemed like the place to go from there. I know Capitol [Records] might have been interested, they could have used some help in those days. They ended up buying Virgin. So we came up with this figure of $500 million, long story short, and in one form or another, they did it. And then eventually, to my own chagrin, the first year I started reforming the company making it a little -- you know, I didn't want to affect any shareholders, and I wanted to make sure that everybody got their piece of the 500 or whatever was left from it. But then I started asking a few people to leave that I really had respect for,

but I thought I wanted to start something a little different, a little harder-edged. We were getting a little too comfortable again. Made some changes, and I had a great year in '91.

CLINE

Right. I was going to ask what your feelings were; you made this big change, and then you have a great year in '91.

MOSS

Yeah, so much so that we won a big bonus from the company that was given rather grudgingly, because David Fine isn't there anymore. At 61, he's made to retire, which was the retirement age, which I had no knowledge of. Can you imagine that? So they make him -- he's around, but he's now serving on all their boards and things like that, and this other guy pops up --

CLINE

Alain Levy.

MOSS

-- who wasn't laughing at my jokes, you know. (laughter) And all of the sudden, he starts doing things at A&M around my back. This corporate way of doing things, like of the sudden, it starts with your secretary not getting invited to company events, and the president of the company, who I sort of made president, doesn't show up at the poker games anymore. Just the way it goes, and all of the sudden, he says, "Well, you were good in my past, but I'm looking after my future my now," and it gets pretty cold.

CLINE

Gradually freezing you out.

MOSS

So I wanted to go on, but it just was impossible.

CLINE

But you had put material in the contract to try to ensure that things wouldn't be furthered in the style that you had started so that that would not be endangered, and clearly things started to change pretty quickly.

MOSS

Yeah. Under this new guy, what he was doing was who was now his name hit the company with what he was doing was really despicable. Different artifacts, different deals to make settlements, they'd give away certain records in our catalogue. Things that were close to me and I would never have done; I'd rather have given them money than given away Lee -- there was a dispute with -- Lee Michaels, one of our first major early artists, and his manager, his old manager was being ornery and argumentative and wanted a lot of money for it, and he would have accepted just the album, and that's how they settled the deal. Gave him the album. And I would never have agreed to that; the catalogue was so important to me, everything. I turned down deals where I was just leasing

records for a period of time, I just didn't believe in it; I believed they had to be on A&M for life. So there are all these terrible things going on, Herbie and I, and so they had to settle it, and we asked for some more money to do that, and so we took the money and had to leave.

CLINE

Right. So it didn't turn out the way you'd hoped at all.

MOSS

Not at all. Not at all.

CLINE

OK. I want to ask, by way of following that up, since clearly it's been awhile since that happened. What were your feelings about the way the industry seemed to be headed at that point? You mentioned that the sale of all these labels, these big companies swallowing up other big companies, and eventually things turning out to be, really if you looked at it, not even closely -- there are really only a few companies even in the game.

MOSS

Yeah, we were back to the four and five companies again, which is where I came from. In the '50s, there was Decca, Capitol, Columbia, and RCA. And then came the little smattering of all these hundreds of little labels, which were fantastic and great, and what you ended up with was four labels; you ended up with Warner [Music Group], [The] EMI [Group], BMG [Bertelsmann Music Group], and Sony [Music]. So you went back to the four labels again. And because of the expense of making records now, the videos now costing a million bucks; you get an artist and their manager in there; hey, we can get this director, this great film director to do this video, and he only wants 250 for Christ's sake. So how do you compete with that? And unfortunately, MTV went with a lot of the most expensive ones, for so-called quality of production. So it became tougher and more expensive to promote an act, and then the FCC [Federal Communication Commission] passed this rule where big media could own radio stations. So Clear Channel now has 1,200 radio stations; three guys own all the radio stations. And you have to be big to deal with big; it's not an easy thing to get through the door of a major corporation when you're -- you know, you've three artists on your label, even as good as they are. So it got more expensive; the end result was, everything became more expensive, and therefore those four major companies bankrolled everything. I mean, there were a few independents; Zomba [Label Group] did well, but Zomba was always sort of owned 20% by BMG and that's how those guys just ended up making an amazing amount of money, because one year they just had a lot of hits. But they were always aligned with someone, but not a lot of new companies floating around.

CLINE

What were your feelings, if any, about the impact on the actual music when all this starts happening? Anything noticeable or not?

MOSS

Well, the one thing that happened that broke out of all this was rap. With the Interscope [Records] label, and what Jimmy did, Jimmy Iovine and Ted Fields and John McClain, who those are the three guys that built Interscope, and they came out with rap, and they found Dr. Dre, who's a stone-cold genius, and developed some amazing acts. Now rap's become terribly expensive; a million-dollar video in rap is not unusual. So people break through from time to time, but there hasn't been a -- the only new breakthrough now is the technology, and that's made everything really soft, because it's -- well, you see, taken the CD as a profit vessel and removed it almost completely. I mean, still certain CDs sell, but it's not what it was.

CLINE

And in the meantime, radio continued in its sort of classic rock format with almost no changes whatsoever. And with the exception of the growing popularity of rap and hip hop which kind of took over a lot of what used to be the R&B [rhythm and blues] market --

MOSS

Well, it used to be -- there used to be trends; there was disco and there was glam rock and there was punk, and with all this you had R&B, and you had different sort of categories, and not so many trends lately.

CLINE

Yeah, but a lot more categories.

MOSS

Pardon me?

CLINE

But a lot more categories. The Grammys keep inventing more categories.

MOSS

A lot more categories, but it's sort of not a big deal anymore, it just does music -- well, as I said earlier, people don't listen to music the way they used to, and even though there's some tremendous music out there -- it's so funny, I went to a political event Sunday night, my wife and I went and heard Jackson Brown, and he was performing for Barbara Boxer and Jim Webb, senator from Virginia, at an event, and he had two girls singing with him, and one was absolutely startling, just fantastic. And some lady came over to me who I knew and said, "Jerry, I bet 20 years ago, if you would have heard that girl you would have gone up and signed her." I said, "Absolutely right." She was absolutely startling, she was so fantastic. And the songs Jackson wrote were amazing; I just hope they're heard more. If they were on a record today, they'd be on every

FM station. If what we have today is what we had -- where you had a real thing to pass along.

CLINE

Yeah, an actual artifact.

MOSS

I still believe it can still happen.

CLINE

An actual artifact you think will stick around.

MOSS

Yeah, not just a digital signal.

CLINE

I also, since you actually walked right into the area I wanted to talk about, which is during this whole period, and it's something we haven't really talked about much, is your non-musical, non-business activities; you're involved in various philanthropic concerns, and at some point, it appears that you become an art collector as well, at least judging by the office here. I know you mentioned that you developed an interest in art early, when you're still in New York going to school. Let's talk about the philanthropic activities first. Among other things, I have information here that tells me that in '86, you and Herb received the Spirit of Light award from the City of Hope and established a research fellowship at the City of Hope National Medical Center in the Beckman Research Institute. And you've mentioned also political activities at times, that's come up. Can you describe some of the areas that you're particularly interested in supporting and why?

MOSS

Well, I think we've always been interested in education, and obviously in medical research. So when the City of Hope asked Herb and I to be their honorees one year, we said yeah, OK, of course. It was a pleasant thing, and we've done it for other people, and we've been longtime supporters of cities or -- Communities and Schools, it's called. And it was run by Bill Milliken, who's done an amazing job of trying to reduce the dropout rate among students in difficult ghetto areas, high schools and things like that. So I believe a large part of what I do, and I'm sure what Herb does, is very much concerned with the education of people that can't seem to get one on their own, so scholarships, even putting up buildings, if that what it takes. And certainly to give back something -- you know the old story, give back something to the community. I mean, it's sizeable, but it's nothing that -- I mean, I know there's people with a lot more than I have that give a lot less, but still, I don't think what Herbie and I did, for example, with Special Olympics, where Jimmy and Bobby [Robert Sargent] Shriver [III] and Vicki Iovine came to see us and asked if we'd put out a special Christmas album. And I said, well, of course, and we won't take

anything, just get our money back from distribution, but no percentages, nothing like that, just give all the money. Well, that gesture, which really -- yeah, we could have made some money from it, certainly, but we felt the gesture was so honest, really, the way of the approach and the whole thing, and subsequent records been released by A&M -- of course, eventually Polygram did take their percentage, but those six or seven records that were produced by Bobby and Jimmy and everybody supposedly have made almost $100 million for the Special Olympics, which is incredible, just that simple gesture. So I feel proud that I've been a part of that and participate in the celebration of it; it was something we all did.

CLINE

And what about the art?

MOSS

Well, you know, I grew up as a kid, we had one sort of -- not that I was complaining, but we had one sort of little print over our couch in the living room, and that was it. And I always said that if I ever get any money, I'm going to fill up every wall I have with something. And we've picked up some things where we're sort of -- my wife and I are happy we have different kinds of art, a few nice pictures, and every once in awhile we sell something just to give us a kick on something we might have bought years ago, and lend the picture to a museum or something. But in this town of really amazing collections, we're sort of out there somewhere.

CLINE

And of course, then there's the horses.

MOSS

Yeah, well --

CLINE

That's continued.

MOSS

That is a passion that we sort of picked up, and again it came through the record business; I don't know if I'd ever mentioned that story. If you go back to the beginning of the days of A&M, the guy that really helped me the most, certainly with the exception of my partner, was the guy Nate Duroff, who extended me $35,000 in credit when I needed to make copies of "The Lonely Bull" to sell them, when I didn't have the $35,000. And A&M stayed with Monarch Pressing for years and years and years, and so -- I would say those days were so amazing, in a certain way, and just to explain it to anybody listening on this tape some day in the future, that Herbie and I could make a record at night and take the master over to Monarch, and they would press records, and the next night, they would go over and hear a test pressing of a 45, and listen to the test pressing with their quality control guy, who eventually we

hired -- a guy named Marv Bornstein -- to be our quality control guy at A&M. And we would be up, 2:00, 3:00 4:00 in the morning, thinking of ways to improve the record just from a technical side, make this record sound better, and come back the next night and the next night, and finally approve a test pressing. And then take that test pressing and go to a radio station and get somebody to play it maybe in the middle of the night so we could hear it our cars to see if that sound was really the kind of sound we were looking for. And it only took like a matter of days or a week, that kind of split second -- I mean, nowadays, you have to program a record like six months in advance of when you're going to release a record; in the country [music] market, you have to do that. The spontaneity was so incredible. And then if you didn't like the record, or some guy took it around, in two weeks you knew if you had a record or not. And [Wallach's] Music City used to be located on the corner of --

CLINE

Sunset and Vine, was it?

MOSS

-- Sunset [Boulevard] and Vine [Street], and they'd catalogue the records, and on the back of the sheet where the 45s were, you could see when they ordered and how many they ordered to replace what they had in there. So you could go at the end of an afternoon and see how many records were sold at the end of a 24-hour period. Count them.

CLINE

Plus, you could go listen to them there as well.

MOSS

You could listen to them as well, and the store clerks were really knowledgeable about music. But I could call Herbie and say, "Man, we sold eight records yesterday!" "Really? No kidding?" "Yeah, eight records out of Music City." I mean, all I'm saying is that kind of spontaneity and that kind of excitement over very little things, seemingly modest events, were very part of that thing. And Monarch Pressing and Nate had a lot to do with it, so therefore I got to see Nate a bit at Industry Advance and all that kind of thing. And like one day, I noticed Nate was spending a bit of time at the racetrack, and I thought it was great that he was getting that kind of relaxation, he deserved it. And he called me up, he says, "Hey, you've got to get in this." I said, "Well, what do you mean?" He says, "Well, we're claiming horses with George." George Hartstone had been a distributor who had sold his business, got some money for it, actually got some money for it; didn't keep the paper and sold the stock and got some money. And decided to do what he wanted to do, which was just be around horses. Yale [University] graduate, this is the way he wanted to do that. So he started training at San Anita, and what new people entering the sport do is they claim horses; it's the lowest rung of the ladder, so

to speak. It's a way of putting a value on different horses, but it's interesting, in that you can enter a horse in a claiming race, and you can lose your horse; somebody can actually buy the horse. So that prevents you from putting a very qualified horse into a cheap race just for a purse, because if you do that, you can lose the horse, if that's what you want to do. Anyway, I said, "Nate, I can't just buy a horse. I've been to the track a couple of times, I like it, but I'm very busy; I can't even think about taking time and doing this." So months went by, something like that, and then Nate had a slight stroke, and I went to see him with a balloon in my hand or something, and said, "Nate, is there anything we can do for you?" And he says, "Yeah. When I get out of here, you can buy a horse." So sure enough, Nate got out of the hospital; Herb and I and Nate bought a horse called Angel Tune, (inaudible) name, that George claimed for $12,500. And we each owned a third, and Angel Tune then ran for 15, nobody claimed her, she got third. Then he ran her for $20,000, and she won. Still got the picture there. Herbie and I thought we knew everything we needed to know about horseracing. Easy game. And then we had some success claiming horses with George, and then actually our friend Burt Bacharach, who was already owned some nice horses, said, "You guys shouldn't be claiming, you should buy a horse," and this and that. So we bought one, which was more expensive that 12.5; didn't run so good. So then we sort of dropped it and got out of it for awhile. And then I came back in a way, and Herbie was sort of not doing that at the time, so I sort of got into it, and then got with a trainer named Bobby Frankel, who we were pretty close to for about ten years, my new -- my wife at that time and I and Bobby, and we had some nice horses and we had some fun. And I got into this whole thing, and Bobby and I when we split up with Bobby, and got with Charlie Whitingham for awhile, some -- and then got some young horses with a guy named Brian Mayberry, and said, "Boy, one day I want to win the Derby." Lo and behold, we happened to breed a horse that won it. And this Saturday, his kid brother is going to be running in the San Anita Derby, so if he wins, we'll go to the Kentucky Derby again. If he doesn't, we're not going to go, because it's a tough race, you've got to have a really tough horse to do that.

CLINE

Wow. Amazing.

MOSS

Amazing. Only in America, huh?

CLINE

Yeah. And during the '90s, now, you have this arrangement where you were still working at A&M, and that didn't go the way you wanted. How can you describe some of the things that happened in your life around that time, and the changes that happened? Obviously, your whole -- the whole picture of your

work life went through a sudden kind of trauma. What was happening in your life during that period, if there's things that you feel comfortable sharing?

MOSS

Well, '93 probably was the most difficult year, when you think of only three years before, we made this great score, and went out on a tremendous burst of excitement. And the world seems to be your oyster, you know, just amazing. And by '93, I was told I had prostate cancer; I was leaving A&M, which was very difficult; my mother was dying; my wife and I had caught a flu that absolutely floored us for weeks at a time, and because I was just trying to get out of bed and do certain things, I'd come home and go right back to bed. We were rebuilding our house, and that was fraught with problems, so we were living in a nice apartment, really, in Century City, with thoughts of just putting a big towel over this place we were building, 'cause it was always just fraught -- it took us four years to redo our home.

CLINE

Wow. Where was this?

MOSS

In what they call Bel-Air. Anyway, we ended up being happy with it, but at the time, this was right into the cycle of stuff. And I had a restaurant as well that I had invested in Santa Monica, that was sort of -- I brought Chow's over, Mr. Chow was my investment; we were partners with Michael, and that seemed to eventually go very well. I don't own any piece of it anymore, but we did well with that. So I thought I knew something about restaurants, so I had this idea about gourmet healthy food, and my wife and I were enthusiastic about this place setting up in Santa Monica, but it developed all kinds of problems, and I just couldn't get out there. From La Brea[Avenue] to Santa Monica was just this huge kind of 45-minute trip, especially in traffic. So all these things were sort of going on, and it was just a tough year. And I wanted to have the surgery to get rid of the cancer, and you're supposed to -- when you're having surgery, you're supposed to contribute your own blood, so if they need infusion -- in those days, they were worried about AIDS, they still are obviously worried about AIDS -- but because of the flu, I was so anemic, I couldn't even give my own blood. So it got delayed, and kept getting kind of delayed. And anyway, the year of '93 -- I still consider it '93 -- just when I was supposed to go to the hospital, I was due in to the operating room around 6:30, 7:00 in the morning on January, I believe, 17th -- earthquake. (laughter)

CLINE

Oh, yeah, that's right.

MOSS

At 4:30 in the morning, we're shaking like this in this apartment. I'm hearing every dish, every glass is just crashing. The two dogs we had have their claws

buried in the back of my leg; I'm in bed with my wife with my arm over her. Anyway, first thing I call is my doctor, and he says, "I don't think we're doing any elective surgery today," so I had to wait another five days, whatever, and then my wife got the logarithms together, and same thing, we went back in, and touch wood I'm still here. But so that's when my life started to actually -- you know, after the cancer and the surgery, everything changes after that, because once you get through something like that, certain other things just don't matter. And then I tried the record business with Almo Sounds, we had a couple of nice records and nice bands, but it was very hard for me to operate; I couldn't hire anybody that had worked for Polygram, so it was a total learning curve for me to have to get to know other people and do certain things. And I got some nice people, and we had a pretty good time. And then I was with Geffen for awhile, and then we had to leave Geffen, so I had to get a whole new set-up of guys, and eventually I ended up with Interscope, who are great people, again, Jimmy and Ted and Tom Wally, in this case, but I was only in it 50% of the time, and I was going to the track -- it was a different kind of operation. It was from that that I realized the business just is different now, it really is different, and it's time for me and Herbie to maybe, as businessmen, leave the stage, and that's when we decided to sell our publishing company [Rondor Music], which we did in 2000.

CLINE

How would you -- if you could define it, and even though we've gotten a pretty good picture, how would you define the change that you saw? What was different about the industry at that point?

MOSS

Well, I started to understand the technology. I went down to San Diego to see mp3, and the flexibility of borrowing files and all that kind of thing, and college students getting sued by record companies, and I, you know, unless they found something patented where you couldn't download or you couldn't -- I mean, musicians weren't getting paid, and I just didn't see this thing being solved in a very quick time. And our publishing company had offices all over the world, and it had a lot of weight; it had over 100 people working for it. I mean, obviously we needed a strong back room, because we needed royalties and services and things like that. I just saw the business changing, and I just didn't want -- I saw it as a young people's business, and I still think it is.

CLINE

What inspired you to go -- you and Herb -- back into the record business, the record label business, when you did with Almo Sounds?

MOSS

I just felt that I didn't get all of it yet. I healed in Hawaii, looked out at the water every day, and I said, "What should I do, water?" (laughter) And the

water answered back, "Make some more records, if that's what you want to do." So I found a group called Garbage, and they were pretty big for awhile. Ozomatli and Gillian Welch, and a girl called Imogene Heap from England, that -- it's so funny, was nominated for Best New Artist this year, nine years after we made her first record.

CLINE

Naturally. (laughter)

MOSS

She was great, she's a great girl. So I'm still excited by music. Like I say, what I heard on Sunday night from Jackson Brown knocked me out. And I always will be. And we're still distributing Herb's records, and we're still selling Almo Sounds music, because even though we stopped making records, we're still very much involved with it, so I still have certain things I'm very interested in promoting in a certain way. And my partner continues to be excited and involved and capable of coming up with something great, so I want to be there.

CLINE

What have been your feelings about watching, you might say, sort of the reactionary response to this large corporate musical development? More bands that at least start out independently, some people just absolutely forging their own path and doing their own production of their own music and doing it their way, sort of in defiance of all this, some people getting somewhere with it, and eventually, of course, I suppose, getting swallowed up by it, and others continuing to do what they do anyway. How do you feel about that? I mean, it seems like that's always going to happen.

MOSS

Well, I think that's sort of -- I mean, again, I think it's a great business for a 22, 23 year old that's consumed by music. A lot of ways to sell music, whether it's a single track or CDs that you can burn, compile, recouple things, get permission obviously to do that. Form components. I think music is a great commodity; I think somebody came out with the idea -- I certainly don't claim originality -- and that is that each label should offer a service, sign on for $15 a month, and take whatever you want from the record company, and keep on paying the $10 a month or $15 a month for continuing to -- maybe have some sort of -- "This is all you can get this month; you can only get --" -- say you can buy, for $15 you can buy 30 tracks or 40 tracks or even 50 tracks a month, so to speak, so it's cheaper than the dollar-a-track. And, you know, if record companies can pick up a couple of million people a month, as the record clubs used to do -- hell, that's $30 million a month just in subscription people; certainly pays your bills. I mean, it's just said that so many people were employed by the music business and they loved the music business, middle income people, people that were getting paid as A&R men, in their '40s -- what

do they do now? How do you reproduce those salaries? So it's tough; it was a fat business for awhile, and you could make a lot of money doing it. And you still can, but it's just less available.

CLINE

You and Herb have certainly been recognized, and there is a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Grammy trustees in '97, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame last year, and another Grammy this year. A lot of people have said a lot of nice things. What is your feeling, in light of all this, about what your and Herb's contribution has been to popular music in the last 40 years or so?

MOSS

You know, it's interesting. Jimmy Iovine spoke at our recent Grammy event and brought out something that I didn't really consider, and what he said was that A&M was the first label to treat artists in a really good way, in the sense that we really made our place available to them; our lot was someplace very special. They could walk into different executives' offices and function in there and talk to people, see how their records were doing. And we kind of -- Herbie and I just took this as our natural way of doing business, we had an open way of doing business. And therefore you're welcome, do whatever you like. Talk to them. It makes it a lot easier for you to talk to the source of the sales department than for me to sit in on a meeting with the sales guy and get very serious. And if you have a problem, and you want to yell at the sales guy, he knows he's -- this is an artist-orientated company; he's not going to argue back. And he said we were the first to do that, and once we did it, it changed the game, it changed the industry, and other people felt they had to do that. So I felt good hearing that, obviously, 'cause Jimmy would know; before he became head of Interscope and sort of a mogul in his own right, he was an engineer and a producer of some note. So -- and I think also the fact that we had so many different forms of music, Herbie and I -- as I have different forms of art in my house; I'm affected by a lot of interesting things, and I can't differentiate; if something's exciting to me, I don't care what genre it's supposed to be. And also, I like hit records too. It's one thing, you can be as interested as you like, but you've got to -- hits do pay the bills, and so I do believe we had to pay a certain attention to commercialism in some form, or we don't have enough money to open our door. So I think we were all -- you know, we -- in art, I like strong images, and in music I like things that move me. And I think most people emotionally respond to music, and I know when I respond to music, and I can't get a tune out of my head, I know that there's something in that song or in that artist that people will buy. I feel really good about what we've done; I don't think we had to screw anybody to get there. Herbie and I were not corrupt people. And I feel OK, I feel like I was put, by some chance, in a situation to be

somebody of responsibility, and I think I exercised that responsibility fairly well, and I had a lot of fun doing it. So lucky me.

CLINE

Yeah. What were your feelings about the fate of the lot?

MOSS

Well, it was bought by the [Jim] Henson Company; Polygram trashed it. That company really fell apart; I thought that when Universal bought Polygram -- I think it was in '99 or something -- the company had had six years without our leadership, and it had lost so much money, and the lot was so down. I mean, I saw Mike Cotton the other day -- Mike Cotton is the percussionist with a band called The Tubes -- and he was also, he and the drummer, Prairie Prince also, great artists, and they were the ones that drew the A&M logo all across the lot on our record sleeve logo. And it was remarkable, from different angles, they had this incredible panorama of A&M on the labels spinning sort of around the sound stage building. And right after I left, Polygram came under the new leadership, and painted it all in white paint. What a despicable thing to do. Take something like that and just trash it, for no reason. Didn't need any maintenance. What were you trying to say? "We're a business company now," right? What does that mean, without those amazing touches that were our history? So once Polygram left, that toxic event happened -- it's interesting to note that the guy that did end up running the company had it sold out from under him, when Phillips sold Polygram to Universal [Music Group], he wasn't even involved; he had to hear about it in the papers or something.

CLINE

Wow. And it's also interesting to note that they lost money during those years; it was not succeeding.

MOSS

Yeah. And they got -- but for what it's worth, Edgar Bronfman paid something like $9.something billion for all of Polygram, and you have to think that that is an amazing price, considering four years later what it was worth, what the record companies were worth. Amazing. So anyway, the lot is now with the Jim Henson company, and Jim is no longer with us, but his kids run it. And I met Brian [Henson], who now has my office, and he operates it in like sort of a creative studio. The recording studio is still called, in the trade, the A&M studio, and I've been in it since; a friend of mine, Bob Ezrin took me through it; they offer sometimes office space to studio producers. And the rest of the offices, they give to screenwriters and producers, young people starting to come up. So it's in good hands.

CLINE

So all this time later, here we are today -- how would you define or explain the relationship with Herb Alpert, and what makes it work?

MOSS

He's my brother, you know. He's just somebody that was generous to me when I came to California and I met him, and a hysterically funny man, immensely talented. Wonderful feelings, absolutely the best feelings. Huge heart, and incredible taste. What can I say? I've learned so much from the guy, and it's the essential element of a partnership, you know, one and one equals at least nine. Doesn't have to equal two or even two and a half, what two people coming from maybe different ends of a spectrum can accomplish is quite amazing. I think in a lot of partnerships, people make the mistake of two guys maybe coming from the same place. If both people come from sales, it's really kind of difficult, because what are they offering each other? One guy is going to be better than the other guy, and then what does the other guy do, and how does that work? But Herbie always came from the music side and I came from the promotion sides, and so he taught me about music, so I could function within it, and -- oh, man, he allowed me to express myself in it. And I hopefully taught him, or gave him a little sense of security, about the business. So it was just his birthday, and we're together 45 years on a handshake, and it's just amazing, we're still partners.

CLINE

Amazing indeed. Something you've mentioned a few times in the course of this interview, and it came up again today when you were talking about Alain Levy coming in from Polygram, that he didn't laugh at your jokes. You've mentioned many times the element of humor and the compatibility of people's senses of humor in the business, and the kind of connections and relationships that seem to develop out of that. Is there something you can say about the importance, or relative importance of sense of humor, a common sense of humor, as it pertains to business and artistic relationships?

MOSS

Well, I think musicians as a whole are a very funny group of people. I mean, they see things and hear things on a whole different line of -- you know, their sense of tempo is really, really exciting and interesting, and it's just -- you know, Herbie has always, to me, just been a very funny person, and his asides or his comments sometimes just can floor me. And it is that way with certain people, I mean -- So I think the fact that you can hear things a different way or see things a different way, that what you're seeing may not really be what you're seeing, or what you're hearing may not really be what you're hearing, and don't give it just one shot, give it a little more time than that, and don't be so quick to make a judgement, unless it's enthusiastic. But take your time, relax with it. Close your eyes. So yeah, I think a sense of humor is desperately important. People need to laugh more today. And not just laugh at somebody, but be a little cleverer than that; I think all the humor on TV is sort of at

somebody or at somebody's misfortune, and I don't think that's very clever or unique, just to pick on people and laugh on them, and unfortunately, I think that's what television humor is today. And that's what we're getting, the cheese of American Idol.

CLINE

I was afraid to bring up American Idol.

MOSS

Oh, my God, just a cheesy show. That's not to say that some of those people aren't talented, but when I see all these people in a small Southern town rooting and cheering for somebody that's in one of the finals or something, you want to say them, "People, get a job. Get a life. This guy ain't worth it." You like him, you care about him, but with the posters and the banners? Come on. We're fighting a war, for Christ's sake, that we didn't want to even think about. We're fighting a war on television somewhere, and nobody cares about all that stuff there.

CLINE

Yeah. 60-some million people voting.

MOSS

Yeah. Incredible. How many people vote in our elections?

CLINE

Yeah. Exactly. Where -- do you have a sense of where you think -- what's happening, where you think that the American public is these days when it comes to not just music but pop culture and what's going on?

MOSS

We're unfortunately in a very divided country right now, and I think we have to question our system and how it all works. There's no doubt that our President [George W. Bush] has lost the confidence of the people, and yet he's still our President. He's still got two years in office to do some incredible damage. We have ships and maneuvers in Iranian -- right outside of Iranian waters. Isn't this being provocative? Why are we doing that? If we're sending National Guard people back to Iraq with third tours of duty -- National Guard people -- what kind of Army does he have to support any other war he's going to get us into? It's so dangerous. And he's still able to do these dangerous things. And he's getting more bunker mentality as his administration becomes just ripped apart by the insincerity of it. It's so sad; he's clearly -- he's just blatantly the worst President I've ever lived through. I can't imagine anything being any worse.

CLINE

Indeed. And a couple more things here. Looking back on your achievements at A&M, and also your own personal enjoyment of music and your sincere interest in it, what stands out for you as things that not only maybe have been your favorites over the years, but things that you still would want to hear now,

that you think really hold up as something very valuable, and perhaps inspiring, in terms of musical output?

MOSS

Well, I'll just say that every time my wife and I are shopping, and we hear an A&M song in the store or something like that, she always says that's a signal to buy. (laughter) And it comes from the old days being, "Well, if they're playing our song, that means that somewhere, we're making some money, so why don't we spend a little?" She's an amazing woman, my wife, and has all kinds of ways of looking at things that have taught me a lot as well. I think we put out some good records; I think they're standing the test of time. I'm excited, I'm going to go see the opening of the Police show up in Vancouver on May 28th. That band has sold out Dodger Stadium in 15 minutes. And I see people I recorded with, and it's always great fun hearing that music again, and being reminded of where I was at a particular time. And the memories are all good, you know? They're all pretty good.

CLINE

Don't want to mention any favorites?

MOSS

Well, I guess my -- I mean, I do; Joe Cocker was a big favorite of mine; I think he was a major artist for us, and being onstage with him at Woodstock was extraordinary, it was an absolutely extraordinary experience. Sergio Mendes, just -- what a great friend and great supporter, Sting, and Stewart and Andy but Sting's just been great to us in every way. Somebody like Cat Stevens or Yusuf [Islam], what an amazing talent. Joe Jackson. The Supertramp guys were just amazing guys, I got to know them very well. [Peter] Frampton. Amazing kid, Frampton. And so many others; Richard and Karen [Carpenter], and Joni, those years. So much fun. Just been, you know -- the Styx guys are hysterical, just so funny. Humble Pie, and the different managers over the years; the fights and the this and the that, the negotiations and the -- it's just been... And the European trips, going all over the world and seeing your music in Japan -- amazing. Amazing. So I got nothing but good feelings and great memories. Denny Cordell and Blackwell and those guys. Dee Anthony, Miles Copeland. People that have really contributed. So -- and like I say, I only ran into a couple of really, really bad people. I was lucky. And they both affected me adversely, business-wise, but I'm glad I cut short my relationship with them. So you got a couple of bad apples in a whole bunch, that's not so much. And we were always strong enough to continue -- that was what the 25 year thing was, that people came and people went, and different other companies came in and just hired our people, just gave them more money and they left, and we'd have to replace them and train them, you know. And you know, a lot of the people in our company had stock, and I wanted all of them to get the benefit of all that, and

they did. The ones that stayed; if you didn't stay, you had to sell your stock to us, which -- Derek Green, who ran our company in England for 15 years, fantastic guy -- well, 12 as A&M and 3 years in publishing -- but just a great guy, but unfortunately, didn't hang around for the end. He left in '84 or '85. So all these people did so much to help us and everything, so I have a great feeling for them all.

CLINE

You mentioned that you survived cancer and that changes your perspective; some things just don't matter. What matters now?

MOSS

Well, what matters is I'm not going to be stressed out by something anybody says. I'm more -- I care more about what my wife thinks, and what my family thinks, and what my partner thinks, and my friends, than anything. Frustrated as I am with sometimes the politics or my work on the California Horseracing Board -- I mean, I can only do so much. I can't really change the world as one time I thought I could. And I need some time to reflect and enjoy myself, and I don't have to feel guilty about that. (laughter) So hopefully I've still got a few more years, and I hope to make them as productive as I can.

CLINE

Yeah. You've stayed in the LA area --

MOSS

Just partially. (laughter)

CLINE

What are your feelings about this city, now that you've been here so long?

MOSS

I just love it. I just love the place. For me, it's got everything, it's been really good to me. The weather's incredible; the opportunities are amazing. People are interesting. But it's fun to go to New York; we've got a place there. And it's fun to go to Maui and walk the beach; that's amazing. Fun to go up to Friday Harbor for the woods in Washington. And then we do a lot of other traveling, so, you know. I like getting to Kentucky. It's fun; we're lucky we can do this. But LA's great; it's been an amazing place.

CLINE

And you and Herb -- I say with an amount of gratitude, elected to donate your A&M records materials and historical documents to UCLA, to the Music Library special collections [Archive of Popular American Music] there. What inspired that move?

MOSS

(laughter) The interesting --

CLINE

That's not a common thing to see.

MOSS

Yeah, well, it's interesting in the sense that I got involved with UCLA through basically -- well, I have been contributing in one form or another to UCLA for a number of years, first the urology department [Department of Urology] with my friend Rick Ehrlich, and then from there, different other aspects of it. And the Mo and Evelyn Ostin asked Anne and I to join them as co-chairmen for this Royce Hall resurrection; it had been damaged in the earthquake, and miraculously, we were able to put together a great show that had Don Henley and Paul Simon and Stevie Wonder headlining. It was a knockout, just a great evening. So much so that then Danny [Daniel] Newman, a great guy, said, "Well, we can't let you leave; we've got to put you on a board or something." So I joined the Board of Arts & Architecture, and from Danny Newman to Chris Waterman, whatever. But in the meantime, we were able to pull some things out of A&M that Polygram didn't take; we sort of accumulated pictures, mostly, some stuff. Took what we could, what was ours, really, our personal stuff. Something that wasn't of value to them. And then we moved it to Rondor, the publishing company, and then after that, we had to sell that building, we sold the publishing company and everything, then everything went over to Herb's place in Santa Monica, he's got a studio and a gallery there, and offices for his foundation [Herb Alpert Foundation] there. And piles of these things were just stacking up, literally, in the garage there. And he called me one day, and he said, "You know, I'm about to call -- you've taken what you want; do you want to have one more look, because I'm going to maybe call the garbage dump and just get them to clear all this out, we just don't have room for it." I said, "Wait, I have an idea. Wait a second." And I said, "What do you think, if I call UCLA, and they might be interested, would you mind if they came and looked at it?" "No, that's great." So I call Laura Parker, who at that time was Dan Newman's assistant, and she said, "Don't throw anything away. I'm bringing some people over." And she did, and that's how we got to have this archive thing at UCLA, and it's just been great.

CLINE

Yeah, absolutely. Certainly helped me. (laughter)

MOSS

Well, good. (laughter)

CLINE

Well, I remembered a lot of it myself, which helped too.

MOSS

Yeah, it was good.

CLINE

Well, I appreciate that. I wish more people would do that. And while we're on here, since this is now part of the historical record, and of course will be part of the archive, is there anything you want to say or add to this interview?

MOSS

I think you covered it great; I think you've done an amazing job, really. I appreciate everything you've done to look up and create these interesting kind of questions that have gotten me really thinking. I didn't know I was going to get this deeply involved, quite honestly, in a lot of stuff. So I thank you for my catharsis, so to speak. I don't know; I think people hearing this in the years ahead will think of maybe a time that was a little more gentle, a little more innocent, when people had a little more room to flex their ideas and try some stuff, and get a score every once in awhile. And to never stop trying, because there's always going to be room for great ideas and good thoughts. So I want to thank you for everything you've come up with, and thank the listener for going this far. And God bless everybody.

CLINE

Well, thank you so much for talking to us, and sharing so much of your life and work. We appreciate it.

MOSS

You're welcome, certainly. [END OF moss.jerry.7.04.03.2007 END OF INTERVIEW]
