

FRAN LAWRENCE

May 24, 1996

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Mame Warren,
interviewer

Warren: This is Mame Warren. Today is May 24, 1996. I'm in Charlottesville, Virginia, with Fran Lawrence. I've been sent here by your old friend Bob Huntley, which I'm sure you find very amusing.

Lawrence: Right. Right.

Warren: What exactly was your position in May of 1970?

Lawrence: I had been elected student body president for the next year, and I'm going to guess that that election must have been mid-April. I had recently been elected.

Warren: So you were a junior at this point?

Lawrence: Right. Although it was my third junior year.

Warren: Oh, now, let's step back. Let's get some background here. How did that happen?

Lawrence: I started Washington and Lee. You know I was there ten years.

Warren: No, I don't know that. This is great.

Lawrence: Maybe I should be just one of the long-termers. I started Washington and Lee in late August-September, late August, because I played freshman football, of 1965. I very quickly adopted Lexington. My first summer I stayed in Lexington, worked in a restaurant in town.

Warren: Which one?

Lawrence: It was then Neo's House of Beef. It was tied in with the Neofotis family. They owned the College Inn Restaurant, which is now I think a bakery or something.

For many years it was one of the student main college-related places, and they also opened a House of Beef at the Holiday Inn, because the property belonged to Steve Neofotis and had been called Stevesville, and it was a motel there. They opened up a restaurant there and then they sold it to the Holiday Inn.

Warren: Did it have any relation to Steve's Diner?

Lawrence: It was, in fact, Steve Neofotis' father who had Steve's Diner, and he brought it from New England or New York or somewhere in the thirties, I'm told. Steve Neofotis had Steve's Diner and the motel where the Holiday Inn is now, called Stevesville Motel, and his son, who was Pete Neofotis, married a woman of Italian background, who was Marie Antoinette Delecio [phonetic], and the two of them opened the College Inn. So there was a time when there was the Southern Inn owned by also a Greek family. I can't think of their name. Macheras. The Macherases owned the Southern Inn, and down the street the College Inn was owned by the Neofotises. The third generation, George Neofotis, is still in and out of Lexington, lives part of the year in Florida and part of the year in Lexington.

Warren: I'd love to find a picture of Steve's Diner.

Lawrence: He probably has one. That certainly is something that should be there, because it was open twenty-four hours in its heyday, and it was closed by the time I got there, so it was really a fifties' place.

Warren: A lot of people have been talking about it. That's a great clue. Thank you.

Lawrence: So I stayed the summer, worked at Neo's House of Beef, which was the upscale steakhouse. Then my sophomore year, I actually opened a coffeehouse and a couple of things, you know, that year.

Warren: Where was that?

Lawrence: The coffeehouse was initially in the basement of the Mayflower Hotel, which is now the nursing home or adult home. Then it moved to the location where Freddy Goodheart has his secondhand store. It was called the Ship's Hold, and it was, I

guess, the first coffeehouse in Lexington. It was open off and on from about August through February of 1966-'67.

Then that next summer I stayed in Lexington. No, that next summer I left Lexington and went to work in New York, and then I came back and was injured playing football in what was my normal junior year, and I left in the fall and hitchhiked around the country and went ahead and took the second semester off. Then I came back the next year and finished the first semester of my junior year, got sick the second semester, so I took that off. So I had come back then in January of 1970 to do the second semester of my junior year. I had stayed in Lexington that summer, I guess.

So that's how I got back on campus in January of '70, elected in April of '70.

Warren: Because you were the most senior person around. [Laughter]

Lawrence: Actually, the interesting thing, I guess, is that I think that the student body had become more—I was more likely to have been elected in the spring of '70 than I would have been in the spring of '68.

Warren: Why?

Lawrence: Because the student body had become marginally more liberal. I had been probably a perfectly normal freshman, played football, and my sophomore year, opening the coffeehouse and not being active in a fraternity, at the time it was before the word "hippie" had been coined, but there was a kind of New Left or a kind of intellectual crowd, that crowd ate at the Paramount, which was owned by—actually it may have been owned by Ted Macheras, who was the son of the Macheras from Southern Inn.

So there was kind of a group of English teachers and philosophy teachers and other people who identified themselves as out of the mainstream, or liberal, or whatever. They tended to be involved in theater, and somewhat scornful of the fraternity system. By virtue of having this coffeehouse and not being active in a fraternity, I was viewed as a liberal, I guess, although I still played some football and

stuff. It was never perfect. The study body was much more conservative than I was, even though I was probably, as best, a moderate liberal.

Warren: So that was an interesting transition period of Washington and Lee.

Lawrence: Yes, yes.

Warren: Can we talk about that change in the fraternity life, the change in dress, all of that?

Lawrence: Can we, or did you?

Warren: Please.

Lawrence: Sure. Mario Savio and the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley, I think, was 1964, and it certainly was no effect that I saw at all in '65-'66. I was on the student body Executive Committee, I was elected in the spring of my freshman year, and the Executive Committee is a twelve-member body that runs the student body.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Lawrence: The student body has been for many years run by an Executive Committee of twelve students, I think ten undergraduates, two from each undergraduate class, that's eight, one from the Law School is nine, and the three officers, president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer of the student body is twelve. It has been both the judicial and the legislative body of the student body, so the same twelve people are the Honor Committee. I believe that is still true.

So I ran in the spring of my freshman year and was elected to the Executive Committee, one of the two sophomores, so during this year that we were in transition and I was in transition personally, too, sort of becoming more liberalized or radicalized, whatever you want to call it, I was on the student government at the same time. The student government was probably more conservative than I was.

But that student government actually did two things. One is that it actually elected to discontinue Fancy Dress, and that was because it had become unpopular. I think that it was dry, I believe, on campus. It had become kind of viewed, I think, like a

high school dance at the high school gym, really. You'd get dressed up and go to this dance and then go somewhere else and have your parties. It was a time when dressing up formally was in low esteem, so we actually killed it.

Warren: Did you attend Fancy Dress as a freshman?

Lawrence: I think there was a Fancy Dress when I was a freshman. I'd have to check on it. I'm not certain of that. I can't remember whether we killed it – the Executive Committee actually convened in the spring of '66, and whether that's something we did in the spring of '66, well, that still would have been for '66-'67, so the answer is I think there was a Fancy Dress my freshman year, and I remember Fancy Dress weekend because it snowed like mad, but I don't remember going to Fancy Dress. It may be that we used it as a party weekend and we didn't go to Fancy Dress, but there were fraternity parties. That's probably what did happen. In any event, it was clear that the Fancy Dress Ball itself really had virtually no support, so that was killed.

This was pretty much a relatively conservative Executive Committee, and the Executive Committee of twelve students, that's a process which is not going to pick the lunatic fringe, so this was fundamentally a conservative Executive Committee on the Fancy Dress. We weren't trying to be radical.

We also voted to end traditional dress, but this was also not really a radical move; it was a move in response to an increased unwillingness to do it. When I visited the Washington and Lee campus in the spring of 1965, on a weekend tour, I was actually a Baker Scholar. Baker and Lee Scholars were full scholarships, which I, parenthetically, lost because I ran this coffeehouse and let my grades go to hell. So it was a total disaster economically. I lost my coffeehouse and I lost my scholarship.

That weekend, the campus was all plastered with signs that said – I can't remember the guy's name, and it's back there, it was "Free John Smith" posters all over the campus, because John Smith had been assimilated almost out of school. *The Assimilation Committee would ticket you if you didn't wear a coat and tie. Now, there probably*

had been a time before the mid-sixties when people wore coats and ties completely voluntarily. There may not have been a time, either. In other words, I'm not sure it was ever that Golden Era. But by 1963-'64, the student body, at least one guy said, "I ain't wearing a coat and tie, and I have a right not to." So he got ticketed, ticketed, ticketed, and they finally ended up suspending him from school. That was too much. That was one of the first thing that kind of radicalized the students. Even normal people thought, "This is getting a little out of control here. We're going to actually throw a guy out of school for not wearing a coat and tie?"

So faced with that, by the spring of when I was elected, so either after I was elected in April, or next fall, fall of '66-67, our Executive Committee voted to make traditional dress voluntary. But that didn't mean that overnight that people stopped wearing coats and ties, but that was certainly a chink in the beginning of the end of traditional dress.

Warren: How long did it take?

Lawrence: Well, it took until May of '70, in my memory, but I'm not certain, and that's because what happened, one of the things that happened in May of '70 is that one of the most dramatic changes was the way people dressed, and that all occurred in about a week and a half. So that was an interesting byproduct of that.

So by '66-'67, there was some awareness. There was some concern about the conservatism of Washington and Lee. There was the thought that there was some kind of more probing – nonconformism, I guess. Other people thought you need to be more diverse or you needed to have freedom to express yourself in different ways.

A person that no one would tell you to talk to probably from the administration just because he still kind of pisses them off, I think, is Henry Schloss. He came back last spring and he was actually not renewed, as a follow-up to May of '70 in part because he really became committed to some of the feelings and beliefs of a new generation or the new liberalism or whatever. I'm still grasping for a characterization of that. He was an English professor, and I think Washington and Lee would say he spent less and less

time teaching English and more and more time trying to corrupt young minds. He's a nice guy and very articulate, and I can't remember, I think he was there as early as '66-'67, but I'm not certain.

If you want to get some more, he was certainly part of the New Left and the people who ate at the Paramount Inn, which is now Harbf's. And other persons who ate there, Mario Pellicciaro; Harry Pemberton; Little Bob Huntley, occasionally; Dabney Stuart, some; Herman Taylor; Henry Schloss, of course. Then students that are of note, a couple of interesting students who were a little ahead of me and every bit and probably fundamentally more conservative, both football players, William Sledge from Alabama, and Brian Kendrick, who is a minister now connected to Bowman Gray School of Medicine in North Carolina. Brian Kendrick was the captain of the football team in 1966-67, or '67-68, and became very radicalized at Washington and Lee, surprisingly. He was from somewhere in South Carolina. William Sledge was from Alabama. Bobby Brickhouse was a journalist here in Charlottesville, was also part of that thing. They had a cabin called Innisfree, where they lived, that was a center of kind of a new party where people went, who decided to no longer belong to fraternities. These were not NuFus. Do you know what NuFus are?

Warren: No.

Lawrence: Non-fraternity. Washington and Lee was so overwhelmingly fraternity, like 85 or 88 percent, in the mid-sixties, there was a small group that never belonged to fraternities, and they were NuFus, non-fraternity. Some did that out of philosophy and probably did it because they couldn't get into fraternities they wanted to or didn't get in any fraternities at all. But by '66-67, and moving into the later seventies, more and more people who had been in fraternities or never been in fraternities did things away from the fraternities. I think the membership may not have changed much, but it was a more significant group.

So that was beginning to happen. The Dress Code was becoming more relaxed. There was some noise about—I was trying to think. I don't remember any kind of movement to open up the dorms. The dorms, still you couldn't have women, although they may have been called girls then.

Warren: My guess is that they were.

Lawrence: My daughter is a senior in high school and plays a lot of sports. We were at Heritage High School. A funny girl/woman thing is that Heritage High School, looking at the banners—it's in Lynchburg, their boys, it's lots of boys—Boys Champion, Women's Champion, Boys Champion, Girls Champion. It's very interesting. And never Men's. Women more than Girls. But often Girls. I guess high school is actually boys and girls.

So we were into '66-'67.

Warren: Let me just ask you on the conventional dress. I'm curious.

Lawrence: Traditional dress.

Warren: Actually, the older people call it conventional dress. A generation before you calls it conventional dress.

Lawrence: Of course they would, because it was conventional, and for us it was traditional.

Warren: I'm glad you're making that distinction, because I've never heard anybody say that. It makes sense to me, because I'm of your generation.

Was there anything going on in the classes? Would seniors be holding on to their ties for dear life, and freshmen coming in being more casual, or did it sort of wave its way through the whole student body?

Lawrence: My sense is that it probably—I don't know the answer to that. I don't know. I guess it had to be that the core of the people who ate at the Paramount—and that's the only center that I can remember, and you may hear about that as you talk to other people who were there then, that they were upper classmen who had started out in a

more traditional route, but I guess that would have to be, they would have been leaders, and they were leaders, Brian Kendrick and a fellow named Roger Brown was another guy that played music, who was in that group.

Another person who was a year or two ahead of me, Don Baker, who is also tied into this era, in '66-67, he and his roommate, whose name I can't remember, had an art gallery on Jefferson Street, down at the bottom there, which became later a Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, right at the bottom.

Warren: East Washington.

Lawrence: East Washington called And Agamemnon Dead. So actually that year we had the coffeehouse part of the time, that I had up on – by then it was in the school year. After November, I guess it was there on Jefferson Street, where Freddy Goodheart's is, and Agamemnon Dead with its art gallery, and they'd have parties. And Innisfree, which was a cabin out at this farm out Thornhill Road, [sic Ross Road] were places where the intelligentsia or the New Left or whatever – it were not hippies, so it would have been beatniks, I guess, as people characterized us in derogatory – and there was a group of people who sort of were whatever. So that was not a force.

Then we go into '66-67, '67-68. All I remember about that, Lee McLaughlin was still football coach, and I played football in the fall of '67-68, and got hurt. I came to see Lee McLaughlin in like the first of December, because I was in a hospital in northern Virginia for a couple of weeks, getting an operation on my chest, and I went to see Lee and I said, "Coach, I'm going to go ahead and just take off the rest of this semester, because I can't catch up, and I'm going to take off next semester and go ahead and travel a little bit, and I'll come back next fall."

He said, "Well, you have a good time now, but don't you come home psychedelic." [Laughter] "Don't you come home psychedellic." So the word psychedelic had hit by the fall of '67, I guess. Then I left and didn't come back 'til April.

But I remember that year my roommate and I had strange stuff in our apartment – you know, sort of purple wall hangings and stuffed animals, and dayglo paint was on the campus by then, and peace signs were around a little bit. So although my roommate actually stayed in a fraternity and I stayed, I think, a social member, but there was more a presence of weirdness, different, and more apartments tended to be sort of funky and hippie-like. And marijuana was there by – marijuana actually was there by the fall of – it may have been there in '65-66, but I was not aware of it, and I was not aware of it in – there was certainly some there by '66-67, and after '67, I went to Long Island and worked, and that was where I saw people being introduced to it. I'll talk about what I saw around me.

So by the fall of '67-68, marijuana was back. The funny thing about that was – this is probably true – the first semester of '67-68, people smoked marijuana in the fraternity houses. Okay? After dinner you'd have a cup of coffee and smoke a marijuana joint. I'm going to guess by the spring semester of '68, it was a \$50 fine if you smoked in a fraternity house, and by the first semester of '68-'69, my guess is that you got thrown out of a fraternity. What happened was, when it first came, nobody even knew what it was, kind of, and by the fall an awareness of it being around was there, where the fraternities were beginning to get concerned that they would get in trouble if they let people smoke there, and by the next year it had become kind of a capital offense. In fact, people didn't smoke it in fraternity houses anymore.

Warren: Something that happened in there is a change of administrations. Did the transition from Cole to Huntley have anything to do with it?

Lawrence: No, I don't remember that being the case. I remember thinking that Cole assisted in the intellectualizing of the campus, because at least by reputation he stood for an aggressive improvement of the faculty. I think that's what he's been – by myth, anyway, he came in and was destined to fail, because Francis Pendleton Gaines had been so charming and attractive and was so well loved, so he didn't know it, poor baby, he wasn't going to be there very long. But he came in and his emphasis was on faculty, and he may have actually hired Henry Schloss, for instance, or been involved in that.

He felt like our faculty had gotten very complacent. At least I thought he was bringing people in, and that may have helped move the campus into the twentieth century. Radicalization is probably too strong a word. Modernization is probably a more appropriate word.

So I remember when Bob first came in, Bob ascended so quickly in one year at the law school, teach, dean, president of the university, well thought of, popular at the very beginning. He was young, attractive, and Evelyn had young kids. So I mean, my sense is that he was always popular. I always liked him, so I'm not sure that I would have any other sense about him.

So we were talking about marijuana and the rules and stuff like that. I think that was just natural evolution. It was something that nobody knew about and it didn't make a difference, and then it became more prevalent and they had to outlaw it, and it went underground. So that probably contributed, that marijuana was identified with the hippie movement, and probably by now the word "hippie" had been coined in '67-'68. But the '68 stuff that happened at other places, nothing happened at Washington and Lee. There were some things, *Up Against the Ivy Wall*. Weren't there some strikes in the spring of '68?

Warren: '69, in Paris.

Lawrence: No, something happened in '68. I think they sat-in at Columbia. I think the book *Up Against the Ivy Wall* actually came out sometime in '68-'64-'68.

Warren: You're right.

Lawrence: So for the life of me, I can't remember. I traveled, came back to Lexington in April of '68. I actually started off working in Miami Beach, with short hair, ended up coming back with kind of reasonably long hair, although I didn't look like a hippie, but I guess I looked different, and I grew a mustache that year, and I've kept it ever since then.

I came back in the fall of '68. I don't have any huge memories of that first semester of '68 into '69. I know that there continued to be more people dropping out of fraternities, that there was a group of people that lived in town, in apartments over Woody's Chevrolet, over top of where the White Front grocery store is. There were a number of guys, and I know names: Marty Mullins, Pete Edgars, Clint Palmer. *These guys are all in the class of '70. That class had a little more diversity and more kind of liberal people and people with alternate lifestyles.*

There were a couple of bands on campus. One of the other interesting things – I meant to say this – in the '67-68 school year, the fall of '67, which was when the first new band came, it had been traditionally soul music or that kind of music, both white and black bands, but soul music basically.

Our fraternity brought down a band from Long Island called the Moof, and it was longhairs. Actually, the lead guitarist, the lead guy, was actually a paraplegic who played a mean guitar. They helped him onto this high stool, and he was wild. They all had long hair down to their shoulders and they had a strobe light, and they played this [demonstrates]. We had to bring them up the whole weekend because we brought them down from Long Island, so Friday night at our fraternity, there were a fair number of people there. Saturday night, half the campus was there to see what this band was doing. That was another little thing that was happening.

Warren: Which fraternity were you in?

Lawrence: Phi Kappa Psi from Washington, across from the police station.

Warren: A convenient place. [Laughter]

Lawrence: Actually, Phi Psi tended to be a northern fraternity, despite William Sledge and Brian Kendrick and Roger Brown and these people who were from the South, who were part of this sort of first New Left movement, I guess the northern kids were always a little more likely to be liberal, at least less likely conservative. So the Phi Psi House was pretty much mostly northern kids. I was from Alexandria, and we had a

couple of other Virginians and one kid from Alabama, and otherwise New Jersey, New York.

Then I got sick in the spring of '69 and stayed out of school and didn't come back to school until January of '70, so I'm not quite sure what the campus was like in the fall of '69. I do know that my class left there pretty much unchanged. In other words, the class of '69 is very different from the class of '70-'71-'72-'73, because all these things didn't happen, and although there were certainly some movement, there was some liberalization and some radicalization and some increasingly diversity and whatever it is to be radical. Radical is too strong a word, but in that direction.

There was some of that in the class of '69, but for the most part, the class of '69 graduated without what—because they missed the spring of '70. The spring of '70 was certainly a huge event, and it changed the classes for the next few years. The class of '69 hadn't been affected by that.

Warren: Before we make that big transition, another thing that happened in that time period, I believe, is the first couple of black students arrived on campus.

Lawrence: Yes.

Warren: Were you aware of that happening?

Lawrence: Yes, yes.

Warren: What occurred then?

Lawrence: Not much. I mean, to me it wasn't much. I actually had a date with a black woman at a party in—must have been '67-'68. '65-66? '66-'67. No, it was '66-'67. So there were black students at the women's colleges. She went to Randolph-Macon. So there must have been black guys in my class. I think the black kids entered in the fall of '65, but I can't, for the life of me, recall who the ones in my class were. Walter—actually, Phi Psi had a black—

Warren: Walter Blake?

Lawrence: Yes. Walter Blake was a Phi Psi, but he must have been at least two years. He must not have come until the fall of '67, I don't think, and there were black kids before him. There were black kids before him, but I can't remember. Johnny Morrison – is he a law student, do you know?

Warren: I think law.

Lawrence: I think so, too. I remember we had some Orientals and some Hispanics. Jorge Estrada was in my class; he was from South America. Benazuma [phonetic] was the class behind me; he had some Asian-American background. But it was pretty skinny, let me tell you. *I think that we, meaning the liberals, were pleased that there were some blacks there, and I don't remember there being any event about it. My attending a party with a black date, one person said something. One person said that they were glad that I had gone to a party with a black date, and one other person said some kind of funky remark, but otherwise it was a non-event. But this was in a group of people who made it a point to be liberal. I don't know what that tells you.*

So I don't remember that as having any cultural significance, because it was a very small number of people. You'd have to ask. I don't know what it was like for them. Walter was probably the person I knew the best, and he's real charming and very comfortable in any setting, so I don't know that he would – his experiences wouldn't be as bad as some might be.

So then I don't know what happened first semester of '69, so then we're into the spring of '70, and the digression started with I could not have been elected student body president in the spring of '68 for all the reasons I've just told you. I remember actually thinking that Washington and Lee didn't really like me. Maybe that's too strong a word, but that they would have been more pleased – some of the administration would have been just as pleased that I wasn't there, and I think probably everybody who was involved in the Paramount Inn, And Agamemnon Dead, Innisfree. Another group was the first performance in the Lime Kiln was in the summer of '66.

Warren: Really?

Lawrence: Yes.

Warren: I didn't know that.

Lawrence: It had its anniversary. Maybe it was '67, because it'd be thirty this year, and it's done twenty-five. I'm not quite sure when it did it twenty-five. So it may have been the next summer. But Don Baker was involved in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and I played because the wonderful old man that was supposed to play Agamemnon, was supposed to play ancient Aegeas, got sick at the last minute, so I actually played ancient Aegeas, so I performed in that. That was in the summer.

Staying in the summer was something that had never happened to Washington and Lee. The first summer I stayed there, there was something like five students in town. As the campus became more radicalized, more people stayed there. It became more of a community.

And also another thing that happened in '67 or '68 was tomato farmers or some people from California picked Lexington as a place to come to, and one was Jim and Nancy Galloway. He was actually a professor at the University of Virginia. And that had an effect. So they kind of bought a farm or rented a farm and opened up a health food store on the Main Street, where the nice inn is, I think, which then became Mata McGuire's restaurant, and now is the very elegant Willson-Walker House. That was originally California Health Food Restaurant in about '68-'69.

Warren: Did that last thirty seconds?

Lawrence: No, it lasted a while and then it evolved into Mata McGuire took it over and it was still kind of a little bit of a —

Warren: I thought it had been Jabo's before that.

Lawrence: It had been Snooky's Town Inn first.

Warren: Where was Jabo's?

Lawrence: I don't know.

Warren: That was before your time?

Lawrence: Yes. When I was there, it was Snooky's Town Inn, the Willson-Walker House at the hotel across the street was the Liquid Lunch, but it was Doc's. Liquid Lunch, they called it. Then across the street was the College Inn. Around the corner was the Paramount Inn, where Harb's is. Down the street, nice was a Southern Inn. That's about it.

So spring of '70. And, of course, increasingly – don't underestimate the power of Vietnam. I got a physical notice in September of '66 to show up for a physical and had to go to northern Virginia for a physical, and then I actually got drafted in April of '69. By the time I had this virus in my heart lining, I was actually in bed, so I couldn't go. But that just gives you a sense about – there was something going on here also. The screws were getting turned. If I got a physical in September or October of '66 and then actually drafted, I mean, *drafted*, I mean "Show up tomorrow to be sworn in," it wasn't a physical or anything, I was in the army in April of '69, that was happening to other people, too. So that certainly did begin to fan the flames of the anti-war movement.

Warren: How was that beginning to happen to people who I presume would have student deferments?

Lawrence: I think the deferments began to fall away. The deferments were certainly there. I got deferred as a student when I went for my physical in September/October of '66. Okay. But by '69, the student deferments were, I think, gone. Then the lottery system came in. By then I was out of it because of health problems, so I never paid much attention to that. But I think the lottery must have come in after the spring of '69, because I don't remember having any awareness of the lottery. I just got drafted. So then after that, you didn't have deferments, but you had a number, and you were more or less likely depending on what your number was.

So then I came back. When I came back in January, we were in a big house across from Col Alto, with five or six different people, and the mixture of people, probably two of the five were still active in their fraternities, three weren't. So there

was more mixture of fraternity/non-fraternity, although some fraternities were still pretty conservative.

I don't remember much until it all occurred in May, although I know that Jeff Gingold, who was the most articulate leader of the anti-war movement on campus, had a presence throughout the winter and spring of '70, and there were other things going on. There certainly was an anti-war group at Washington and Lee. I was not a part of that. They had gone past me. They were more liberal and more radical than I was. I was sort of a Democrat. I have sort of liberal leanings, but moderate liberal, and there were more people who by now had moved – certainly there was a significant number of people who had longer hair now and who looked like hippies, and they were more of a presence on campus, but I can't tell you percentage-wise. Still a minority and still this sense that I had that neither me nor they were particularly welcome. It may have been just paranoia. No, it's not paranoia. Washington and Lee really was, and still has to worry about that, still needs to reach out, I think, to people that are more diverse. But anyway.

So then – bang – I guess we're to May. The specifics I can remember. I had been elected student body president, and Jerry Rubin and William Kunstler were speaking here at the University Hall.

Warren: Here in Charlottesville.

Lawrence: Charlottesville. Kent State. Yes. You'll have to check this. *I can't remember whether it was serendipitous or whether Kent State occurred the day they spoke or the day before they spoke, but probably thirty or forty students from Washington and Lee came over to the University Hall to listen to them. There had been picketing. There had been picketing up and down the Colonnade before the Kunstler speech, but it was really very few people and they stood out like a sore thumb.*

Warren: *Picketing for what?*

Lawrence: *Picketing against the war. So as early as mid-April, there was a group of avid anti-war people, I would say very few in number, under twenty.*

Warren: *And what were they hoping to achieve by picketing Washington and Lee?*

Lawrence: *I don't know whether the concept of the student strike had occurred or not before Kent State. I think it had, maybe, so they wanted to go out on strike in protest against the war. I remember walking in front of what was then the business school, which was the building on the left, the old library, and the first building, the far left building of the Colonnade, was the business school.*

Warren: *Newcomb?*

Lawrence: *Newcomb. I remember seeing the guys in front of Newcomb Hall. Maybe they picked Newcomb Hall because that was the most conservative group of students who were in the business school. They were a very small number of people, like three or four of them picketing in shifts.*

So anyway, whether Kent State occurred or whether Kunstler/Rubin occurred, Kunstler was unbelievably effective, unbelievably effective. The only thing that kept Virginia from being burned to the ground that night, I think, was that Rubin followed Kunstler. Kunstler had the crowd in a lather. Rubin just aimlessly strolled around and talked and cussed for thirty-five minutes, and he couldn't have hired to have done a better job of dissipating all this angst.

So after the thing was over, I was on the floor, and off to the side of one podium was maybe, I'm going to say, between fifteen and thirty Washington and Lee students, and somebody was in the middle of them saying something like, "We're going to join in solidarity with our brothers and sisters of the University of Virginia and go out and march on the campus," meaning in Charlottesville. Somebody came to me. This was the first thing I'd seen. Somebody came and said, "We've got to do something about this. We're all going to go do some stupid stuff here if somebody doesn't stop us," in essence saying, "Help me help myself."

So I said something. I got over there and said, "This doesn't make any sense. We go to Washington and Lee. We don't go to school here. If you have some problems, have a colloquy or

whatever. The place to do it is Lexington, not down here on the streets of Charlottesville at night. That's crazy. Go to Lexington and you guys can meet and do whatever you want to do." And that worked.

Warren: Let me turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

Lawrence: This was a first, you know. Actually, I'd had some confrontations in relation to CORE and I've had a few confrontations with people in the street, but I never, before or after, dealt with mob issues than I had here, and this was less so, but a little bit. This group of people was actually ready to have some other idea, and they weren't really into this. They were a little bit worked up, but not to the point that I felt any concern or fear for myself or anybody else, but it just was a bad idea. I feared if they got up there to Virginia, who knew what would happen.

So actually I had this great sense of being Jack J____. Now that I live in Charlottesville, I know who he is, but I didn't then. I knew of Paul Revere. That this was certainly going to be in Lexington the next day. You'll just have to figure out when he spoke. I can't tell you when it was. I just can't. I can't believe they could have gotten us that worked out if Kent State hadn't already happened. So I think it had already happened like the day before, although the speech had been scheduled for a long time.

Warren: Kent State happened because of the invasion of Cambodia.

Lawrence: I know.

Warren: So that was why Kent State was so worked up. So everybody was worked up.

Lawrence: I know they were. But then what happened at Kent State worked us up even more. I think we got worked up by Kent State more than Cambodia, but I'm not certain. I know that there had been some things at Virginia earlier that spring, like out on the lawn with foaming stuff, and Virginia had a higher presence of this anti-war stuff than Washington and Lee did.

Warren: We're doing this for posterity. Let's explain what Kent State means.

Lawrence: Kent State is that four students were shot dead by the National Guard. It meant that somebody actually fired on students. From the standpoint of the student perspective, it was beyond the pale that they had killed students, that "they," meaning the government, had actually killed students who were basically just protesting because of this crime of expanding the war into Cambodia. I think that the students felt at Kent State, and we felt, that even the people who were sort of just on the fringe – and I would describe myself as being opposed to the war, but not adamantly, and maybe as a function of not being drafted, although I don't know. Somebody will have to figure out what role that plays. But I'm more of a moderate. I'm not a radical. Radicalism I've never really been very fond of. I'm a rational person.

But anyway, I was opposed to the war, I thought it was a bad idea, I thought we shouldn't be there. I was not pro-Communist, nor was I even a socialist, and I suppose there were some people who were opposed to the war because they basically thought that the North Vietnamese system offered more hope to the country than capitalism did, or than those people, those robber barons that ran South Vietnam. But mine was more, it was a bad war, it was a bad idea. People were dying for basically no really good reason.

Warren: Did you have a sense that there were people who were that radical at Washington and Lee?

Lawrence: Some, yeah. I think probably the first group was. They may well have identified themselves as Communists or socialists. Certainly socialists. My guess is that that small group really would have identified – Jeff Gingold would probably call himself a socialist, even though he had been a Republican once and I think he's Republican again. So I think there were some that they would have said that they were.

So the Cambodian thing was an expansion of the war, it just seemed, and it seemed to fly in the face of what the students were saying, mostly, "This is a bad war." So not only was it an expansion of the war, but it was a kick in our face, as was the

shooting of students. It had become very personal at that point, and it kept being a factor in what happened, I think. It was disrespectful of us, and, of course, we thought that we knew what we were doing, and we did.

So anyway, so Kent State occurred and we had this sort of extra impetus coming from Charlottesville. I was so much in the middle of that, I don't know that I helped create the problem as opposed to solve the problem, but my belief was that the kids who had been at that speech were excited enough that they would have a dramatic effect in Lexington.

I felt strongly enough about it that when I got back to Lexington, I actually went to see Bob Huntley, and I believe that that meeting at two o'clock in the morning involved "Swede" Hendberg, Bob Huntley, myself, and Staman Ogilvie said he was there, and I think he probably was. He was the student body senior Executive Committee member-elect, and he'd been on student government the whole time. He's in the class of '71. He was back for reunion.

I said at this meeting that I felt like it was my belief that there would be increasing – that we had to deal with the issue, that the student body was going to become increasingly concerned about what was happening, and I felt like these students who were listening to this speech were gravely concerned about the situation, meaning the war. Kent State had happened by then, and the expansion of the war into Cambodia. And we needed a response to that.

My belief is that I did that out of a sense that they had a right to be heard. I may have just been a rat. I mean, I may have been just ratting out, you know. I always was a little uncomfortable with my position. I was in support of the students, but also I felt like I had some responsibility as an elected official or as a to-be elected official, so I guess I viewed myself as a facilitator to what needed to happen, but I didn't want it to get out of control. That was an uncomfortable position to be in, I think.

Nonetheless, somehow we had a plan to actually open up the next morning a student forum, a kind of free-wheeling student forum that was not associated with either the student leadership or the university leadership. I don't know whether we decided on that that night or whether it came the next morning, but Gates Shaw was a fifth-year student there then, he

decided he wanted to go into something different, so he came a fifth year to take English courses, I believe. He was from Alabama, and his father was an industrialist in Birmingham or Tuscaloosa or something. He was well thought of. He was thought of as being kind of a – he'd been a conservative southern boy. He would become more liberalized and more radical, and kind of had long hair, and everybody liked him.

So he installed himself, or we installed him, in the Student Center, which was then called the Cockpit, like at ten o'clock the next morning, and somehow with an open forum on the situation, and people went in there in tens and twenties and thirties and fifties and sixties, and met for twelve hours. I can't tell you how they got there or who told them to go there or whether there were signs or whether it was word of mouth. I can't remember whether they ended up being a steering committee or whether it was banged out among this sort of open town hall participatory democracy or whatever you want to call it.

That same night – I think this is what happened, that same night there was a faculty meeting. This was the day after Jerry Rubin, so Kent State had happened. It happened either the day of Jerry Rubin or the day before that, because it wouldn't have moved that fast. So the faculty met from seven to eleven o'clock on that night. Bob Huntley knows about that meeting. Bob Murray, Murph, the university proctor, knows about it, because he actually – and I think, although I'm wrong, I think that they did this deal on the faculty. The faculty was still mixed, had those liberal people in it, but had conservatives, and they were damned if they were going to let the students tell them what to do.

Bob Huntley felt very strongly that they needed to permit the students to withdraw, take an incomplete, go to Washington, do whatever they wanted to do, express their concern about the grave situation in the country, and that's what Jeff Gingold, as a representative of the left, had said he wanted to have – the ability to leave school and not have it penalized.

So this meeting lasted for at least four hours, and I remember coming into it with "Swede" Henberg and making some brief remarks to the faculty. I can't remember what I said. I remember — I swear I remember, or maybe it's my imagination — that Murph came in at some point and called Huntley out, and showed him a gun. All right? This is just one of those asides. It's like it will never be proven or not proven unless Murph remembers it. I think he found the gun somewhere, and I always thought that he had showed it to Bob in a not-too-subtle way, so that some of the faculty got a flash on it.

Anyway, Bob got the vote. You'll just have to ask. I don't know where I came with that. It's just fixed in my memory. And it worked. It probably wasn't intentional, but Bob really wanted the faculty to go along with this closing. He felt it was important he was right. I mean, he basically did a masterful job of getting the students out without closing the place down, and he got favorable editorials and all. They had banged Edgar Shannon, who was the president of Virginia, because he caved in to the students.

Anyway, so what happened was the faculty voted to let you withdraw. I've got the statement in the materials, and so does Frank Parsons. If he can't find them, I can find them, that talks about it. A letter was sent to all the parents. That's in the stuff, too, saying, "Here's what we're doing." A couple of letters were sent home.

So unfortunately, about the same time, the Cockpit participatory democracy, led by Gates Shaw, came up with a resolution that basically closed the school down. It closed the school down, but it was, "If you want to go to school, you can still go to school," which meant the school was closed down, but it went on. So if you wanted to go — because the second part of it was a compromise. It was like some of these things they're doing in Washington now, you know. To make it more palatable, we had to close the school down, because that was the only way to make a statement from Washington and Lee. It would make a difference in a conservative school like Washington and Lee could close down in protest to the policy of the United States

Government, and anything less than closing down wouldn't make a statement. But we didn't want to take the kids that didn't care away from class, so we're going to have them go to class at the same time.

Warren: So where was the faculty in all this? Did the faculty continue to go into the classrooms in case students wanted to come?

Lawrence: No, no, that never happened. The faculty voted at eleven o'clock to do the "You can leave school," and that's all they ever did. The same evening, the students came up with the "Let's close it down." All right?

That participatory proposal became a ballot that was held either the next day or the next day. Okay? And so we voted. We had a forum outside in front of Lee Chapel, I think, to debate – I think there were two forums. One of them was to debate the issue of shutting down or not, and open microphone. I remember I did some remarks, other people did remarks, and we had this. Okay? And it voted 99 percent to close it down. I mean, who wouldn't vote for that, right?

So my sense was that the campus was becoming a little more – the clothing was changing a little bit, but it hadn't dramatically changed, because the real event was that this went to the faculty, the faculty met that night, or whatever, sequentially, the same meeting again, and they just reaffirmed. They did not vote to close the university down; they just reaffirmed the thing they had already done, which was, "You can drop out of students and take an incomplete, take your exams next September."

That result came at about, I'm going to say, 7:30 or 8:00 at night. It must have been a late evening faculty meeting. By 9:30 at night, there were 600 to 700 students in Evans Dining Hall, better than half the student body, maybe even, seven-twelfths of the student body. I mean, lined up, full. Full.

Gates Shaw was there; I was there; "Swede" Henberg might have been there; Staman Ogilvie was there. I don't guess "Swede" was there. "Swede" actually was uncomfortable with playing a high-profile role. He was actually [unclear]. He was the

active student body president. He kind of kept a lower profile. Staman Ogilvie and I were higher profile with this, Staman because he was interesting, as always.

Staman was very conservative, but he had got in the middle of this and handled himself well. Actually, he was interested and he was concerned about it. He radicalized. He didn't like the war. He'd be an interesting person to talk to, because there wasn't a liberal bone in his body then or now, but he still was active in the student stuff there, and I'd be interested to know why. He may tell you.

So anyway, that was the second time. That was probably the scariest thing of the whole thing. Gates couldn't get them. Staman talked to them, Gates talked to them, and finally, actually – and I'm tooting my own horn here, but I guess maybe my memory's contorted, but I actually remember thinking of a scheme. When I say "scheme," I mean a device that would keep this from becoming a nightmare. What they wanted to do was they wanted to hit the campus, take over buildings, do something, and I think somebody – I believe I talked to Bob Huntley, somebody, and there were rumors of people coming. By then the rumor mill was working, and there were rumors about state troopers, that there was 150 state troopers at the motel down the road, and Lexington police officers and Rockbridge County sheriffs. We thought if the students were on the campus that night, there would be somebody killed, and that was a realistic thought, because somebody had been killed at Kent State. Murph may have said to some of us this.

But anyway, so I gave a speech that said, "We don't need to do this now. We can get them in their pocketbook. We can strike, too, so what we'll do is we won't register." It was registration for classes. "We'll bring the students to its knees by not registering for classes, not paying the fees for next year," two or three different things that seemed like a plan. That was enough of a plan that people found it acceptable, and it dissipated. Everybody went home.

The other thing was that, "Tomorrow morning, starting at nine o'clock, we're going to have open microphone on campus and take whatever needs to be done." So nobody did take over the campus. Everybody went home.

Then the next morning – but mad. This night, these people, that was the radicalization. There were pre-med students there, there were business students there, who were furious that the faculty had, basically in a two-hour meeting or an evening, just said, "You guys are all full of crap. You're all full of crap. We're not going to do that. It's crazy. We have no respect for you." They had no respect for our judgment. They had no respect for what we had worked so hard to do, what we had voted overwhelmingly.

So it was a students' rights issue and a respect issue. That was the instant bell-bottom trousers. That twenty-four-hour period was a complete change in the appearance of the Washington and Lee campus, as I remember it, and the people that were in the Evans Dining Room were so surprising in terms of where they had been. If you polled probably, three hundred of them had been radicalized by the faculty's action, by the vote, by the mature student process of open forum and adoption of resolution, by consensus, by putting on the docket, by voting in an orderly and lawful manner, and respectfully for delivering it to the faculty and having them go [spits]. That just blew these people out.

So it was amazing, and that was the clothing change. The whole campus, within two or three days after that, looked entirely different. I mean, nobody would think of wearing coat and tie. If you wore a coat and tie after that night, you made a huge statement: you were saying, "I want nothing to do with you other 60, 70, 80 percent of the university, or 90 percent of the university." I mean, most people would either duck it, so if you wore a coat and tie – the ones who wore coats and ties were the ones who became the monographers or the monoliths on the right, and there were some of those who wrote, and some of those are in the materials, too, who

wrote the other view. There were some people who made a point of wearing a coat and tie, but there were very few.

So the next day, we were all set up on the front lawn at ten o'clock, and the microphone was open. This was the analogy to the French Revolution, is that the experience of the people, the leaders who had carried the student body to that point – and I was identified as one of those – we might as well have been dead. In other words, all the leadership – Gates Shaw, myself, "Swede" to some extent – although "Swede" had stayed away from it – Staman Ogilvie – who were perceived as leading student government into this vote, and who had been crushed by the vote, it was like we were dead.

In the French Revolution, of course, they would have guillotined us. I was studying the French Revolution at the time. I remember it was a wonderful analogy of events outstripping themselves, and radicalization, and Lafayette, who was kind of a moderate leader, you know. They didn't kill him, by they went right by him, and the next level, they killed them. So we were executed, we were guillotined that morning. You could see it.

But nonetheless, we spoke, and I remember saying something, that, "We can't close the student –" By then Huntley and I had met again, and Huntley called me over, as only he could do, and we had more meetings. He, in the clearest possible terms, said that if Washington and Lee closed down, it would never reopen, which is probably a little overstated. [Laughter] But what did I know? Even though it was another year, I was twenty-two instead of twenty-one, I was still – and I believed that we could not do anything else that would be helpful. But he certainly helped me come to the conclusion, although I'm not sure I had any influence at all at this point, probably didn't.

So I said, in essence, "We can't close the place down," sort of acknowledging that that may be Judas-like.

"Swede" said something. Actually, somebody told me last week that we went and got Bob Huntley, and I think Jeff Spence said this. I don't remember that, but

maybe we did. And went over there. He said he remembered going over to see Bob Huntley and saying, "You need to come speak to the students," and some safety issues, and we assured him he was safe. You'll have to ask him about that. He did speak to them, whether he was scheduled to speak or whether we went and got him. He came and spoke and gave a very good speech, although I'm not sure they listened to him much either. Actually, Jeff Gingold probably, as much as anybody.

So now we've got the open microphone. Okay. We guillotined the leaders. Huntley's done the best he can, but even though he's young, he's way older than us. At that point, the 700 people along were ripe for the picking, probably. Then C. Turner, who was this funny funky guy, read a poem, because he was all worried about he could feel violence in the air, and he read a poem on "Let's not be violent. Love your neighbor," and all.

Then Jeff Gingold said – and he's a wonderful speaker, still is, was then, is now – he got to the microphone and he could have [growls], and instead, he said, "Eh, we got ours. What are you guys bitching about? If you care, get in your cars, withdraw from school, and let's go to Washington. And if you don't care, go back to classes. But what else do you need? Goodbye. I'm going to Washington."

And that was pretty much the end of it. The Free University was in place. A number of students took incomplete. I did, just because I felt like I needed to do that. I didn't go to Washington, but I got involved in the Free University, and we were the Strike headquarters for the South, and there were telephone calls back and forth, and there was a newsletter published almost every day. I'll get all this for you.

The Free University had a schedule, and everybody had meetings, and we can see the subjects of them. I remember going to a Free University meeting of a guy from Cambodia who explained how disastrous the invasion was to his country, it basically was the beginning of the whole "Killing Fields" thing. It broke up the – they had this

kind of tenuous relationship amongst the various political groups there, and it blew it all up. Whether it's true or not, I don't know.

Staman Ogilvie reminded me, within a week or so, we were out at Twin Falls. A number of student leaders just happened to "coincidentally" be out there, drinking beer and laying in the sun. But some people left, some went to Washington. A lot of people got involved with the Free University. As I said, the campus looked entirely different from then, in May, until – I mean, it wasn't that much longer, three more weeks of class, two more weeks of class.

Warren: Let me ask you a couple of wrap-up questions. Did reunions happen during all this?

Lawrence: Yes, reunions happened right in the middle of it.

Warren: Tell me about that.

Lawrence: I remember them being there, and I remember engaging a number of them in discussion. There may have been a panel of some kind. I don't remember more than that. I remember it was interesting. Some were pissed about it, but some were actually kind of interested in it.

Warren: To jump ahead, you just have had the twenty-fifth anniversary of this whole event.

Lawrence: Right.

Warren: Those people who were there who had their twenty-fifth anniversary, were now back for their fiftieth anniversary. At the event that happened last year, was there any interchange?

Lawrence: No, no. I hadn't thought of that. I hadn't thought of that. I remember some small discussion of it. You know, there's probably tapes of that.

Warren: Yes, I've listened to them.

Lawrence: I don't remember. I remember it was interesting that they were there, and I can't tell you which day they were there. You'd have to look at the materials to put that

together. If you want to do a follow-up, you can. I remember having some talks with them. There may have been some institutionalized things going on. I think it was after the heat. In other words, it was after this day I described to you, where the open microphone was sort of the end of it. So it must have been that next weekend. This may have been Wednesday or Thursday. Things were still popping.

Warren: I bet the Alumni Office was loving what you were doing. [Laughter]

Lawrence: Yeah.

Warren: Then the ultimate follow-up question is, what happened the next fall? How did the year end, and then what happened?

Lawrence: The next fall, it drizzled out. Free University went to the end of the year. The people returned in the fall. It was not a remarkable—I was student government president. We created the University Council then, and we created two organizations, one that lasted until like two years ago, the University Council of Students, which took away the power from Student Affairs Committee and put it into a bigger group of students and faculty. So there was some changes in student participation at government level. We actually had a constitutional convention and adopted a resolution for a new form of government, with a Senate and all, which was voted down. So we had a constitutional convention to actually replace the Executive Committee, and the student body voted it down, probably correctly, because it was too unwieldy.

The University Council was actually formed to become more powerful than the Student Affairs Committee, which had been eight or nine faculty members and two students. The University Council was equally students and faculty.

The dress code, the campus continued to be diverse, more diverse in appearance. The dress code continued into the next year, for the most part.

Warren: Did the Assimilation Committee just die?

Lawrence: Gone, gone. It had been gone. It had been gone since '66-'67. It had been gone that whole time.

You can look at a yearbook, if you look at the yearbook for that year. Lawrence McConnell – my picture as president of the student body is in a chair with a cigarette, the most horrible picture, hanging out of my mouth, and Lawrence McConnell, who's now the editor of the newspaper here in town, actually took the picture. He was a conservative and I was a liberal, although we were friendly, but he'd kind of get at me and I'd get at him in a playful way. Anyway, he showed me the picture. He said, "I need your permission, because this is such a bad picture, to run this as the student body president picture." Of course, I felt like it was perfect to do that, because I was still into this kind of needed to change things. So anyway, you look at the picture of me in that yearbook, and I wish now, twenty-five years later, that it was a better picture.

[Laughter]

Warren: Is he a source of photographs of this time period?

Lawrence: I guess he should be. But wouldn't they be in the yearbook?

Warren: Yearbook doesn't help me; I need original prints.

Lawrence: He might be. He was editor of the yearbook. Lawrence McConnell. He's now the publisher of the *Daily Progress*.

And the student government was even, to a man, it was more liberal than it had ever been before, even though many of them were elected as conservatives. So we tried to expand student participation. That was key. And *in loco parentis* was rolled back. The faculty was also given more liberal rules. I can't tell you what they were, but that was changing all the time. There were no notable events that I can recall. It was certainly a more open community, I thought.

The issue of fraternity membership or not became increasingly irrelevant, both ways. In other words, you could be in one or not be in one. There was a time when being in one was a statement that you didn't believe in back to the New Left and the Paramount. You couldn't eat at the Paramount if you still were active in a fraternity. That was my sense. It was more open.

It was a good year. My memory is it was a great year in terms of comfortable. Now, maybe the conservative students felt that they were getting banged on that year, but certainly those of us who felt like we had been more liberal felt more welcome than we ever had before.

Warren: I know you need to run. I could keep talking to you for another hour or two.

Lawrence: If you have follow-ups or whatever, I'd be glad to do them. I'm sorry. This changed my schedule, and I thought I was going to be already set an hour.

Warren: After I go back and listen to this, I may call you to try to schedule another one.

Lawrence: Please. And find those materials. If you don't have them, I'll get them for you. Because actually I spanned – then I stayed, but I didn't really stay in touch. I got married in '72. I left school to be a carpenter. So that tells you how much – when I graduated, I went to Wyoming to be a carpenter. It seemed perfectly normal.

Warren: You and a lot of other W&L grads. [Laughter]

Lawrence: I know. I know. So anyway, I stayed in town more and more. There were lots of changes.

Warren: You came back for law school, though?

Lawrence: Yes.

Warren: All right. I'll be back.

Lawrence: Okay. So I was there from 1965 to '75, and actually my great compliment, I got a little bit of an ovation from buildings and grounds when I graduated as a law student, and I was carried in the *Lexington News—Gazette*, as a local.

The other funny thing that happened when I was a senior in law school, my wife and I were at a local 7-11 store and I was buying some beer and I got carded. The woman, who looked to me to be in her mid-forties, I gave her my ID and she said, "Fran Lawrence. You can't be Fran Lawrence. I dated Fran Lawrence when I was a senior in high school." So when I was a freshman in '65, she was a senior in high students, and

this was now ten years later. She was twenty-eight and had worked hard and had three or four kids, right, so she looked much older than I did.

Warren: And you're still fooling around being a student. [Laughter]

Lawrence: That's right. [Laughter]

Warren: Thank you, Fran.

Lawrence: You're welcome.

[End of interview]