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Maxine Gordon (MG): This is interview 179 for the Bronx African History Project, Maxine Gordon interviewing Don Schlitten in his home in Kingsbridge, which is in the Bronx. So thank you very much, I had to put that on the interview. Are you born in the Bronx?

Don Schlitten (DS): Born in the Bronx, Bronx Maternity Hospital. I've been in the Bronx my entire life and various places. But for 33 years I've always lived in the Bronx.

MG: And where did you go to school?

DS: In the Bronx. [laughs] P.S. 26.

MG: Oh good, where's that.

DS: Junior high school eighty - - P.S. 26 was on West Bernside and West of University Avenue. It's probably a prison now or something [laughs]. Then I went to Junior High School 82 which was on McClellan Road and Tremont Avenue. And then I luckily passed the test for the high school [inaudible]. That's where I started for 4 years which sort of confirmed what I was going to do with my life. I got in as an art student, but I already discovered jazz, so I was a very confused person. When I got into high school I was 13 years old - -

MG: Oh, wow.

DS: - - so it began my schizophrenic existence because I didn't know if I wanted to be a musician or an artists. So hear I was studying art in high school and thinking about playing my saxophone. And the beautiful thing about that school, especially at that time, it was only about 4 or 5 years old at that time. Was that all the kids from all walks of life were there for one purpose only, and that was to study music or art. So it was a very, very,

for me anyway, because I was a wise ass, I mean I really didn't take advantage of anything, except I was there. But all those kids had that togetherness feeling, whether you liked - - of course nobody liked jazz and jazz was sinful. A couple of chums of mine, I guess about second or third year of school, we decided to write an article about jazz for the school newspaper and do a jazz concert. And the other person was a Dixie Land person and I was a Bebop person. However, the principal of the school, refused to allow jazz, it was sinful, he would not allow it to be played in the school - -

MG: What year was this?

DS: Oh this was the '40's. I graduated in '49 so this must have been '46 or so. And for me, that was the peak period of my life [laughs], 1946 you know, because I was digging all the music and all the music is happening then. Anyways, that was high school, continuously confused, I went to music school to keep up with my schizophrenia. So I've always gone back and forth, back and forth and what I ended up doing, which is interesting and I guess that is what saved me from the nut house, is that I combined my love for music and my love for art by producing records and by being a photographer. So I combined my music and my art and that's how I made my system. However, in 1945 when I entered high school, I had already discovered this music and I was always looking for ways and people to share it with. And I would stop a black person on the bus and try to talk to them about something and they thought I was crazy.

MG: [laughs]

DS: I figured everybody who was black has got to dig this music.

MG: Yeah right.

DS: Okay? So, and then I was doing this number, I think it was on the trolley car or on the bus when I was coming home from school, [inaudible] on 135th Street and from where I lived I would have to take a bus to Amsterdam Avenue or a trolley car and then [inaudible]. And the trolley car up Amsterdam Avenue to 135th Street.

MG: what part of the Bronx was that, where you were living, what part is that?

DS: West of University Avenue.

MG: Was it called the West Bronx?

DS: Yeah.

MG: Is that a Jewish neighborhood? A mixed neighborhood?

DS: The area was Jewish. That's all there was. Everything was a Jewish neighborhood, an Irish neighborhood, [inaudible] whatever it is. Burnside, I guess you would say was parallel to Tremont or Fordham Road. It was going boom, boom, boom, like that. And Univeristy would have been the other way. So you had Third Avenue, Southern Boulevard, the Grand Concourse, Jerome Avenue, University Avenue, okay?

MG: Okay.

DS: One time coming home on the trolley or the bus, I was trying to talk to somebody about a new record I had just bought. I mean I was [inaudible] to talk to somebody and I mentioned the name Don Byers. So this kid that I was talking too said leave me alone with your Don Byers, I don't even know what you're talking about. And this other guy was standing by, he was an Armenian. It was all mixed, it was great. He said don't you put down Don Byers, I played drums with him last week at the Deuces. And he was a [inaudible] guy, you know. And we got to be friendly and it seems that he came from this

section of Prospect Avenue. And he said if you really wanna hear some good stuff, go to the 845.

MG: Oh!

DS: So that's how that came about. So I was 14 years old when I first went to the 845 club.

MG: On a Sunday?

DS: Well, being 14 years old, I couldn't really hang out very late at night. And it was a [inaudible] from where I was.

MG: How'd you get to Prospect from where you lived?

DS: Probably two trolley cars or two buses, whatever it took, which was a lot, but I had to do it, and I did it.

MG: You went to a Sunday Matinee?

DS: Yeah.

MG: What kind of neighborhood is that over there then? It's like a commercial neighborhood?

DS: Well, it's interesting because all the ads that I see for the 845 Club make it sound like it was a big auditorium or a big place with big bands and stuff like that. But when I went to 845 Club it was just a bar.

MG: Right, exactly.

DS: So I think there was a bar downstairs of the big hall. So - -

MG: Well there never was a big hall, I think - -

DS: - - it was too small to have a big band.

MG: - - what people have told me was you came in and there was the bar.

DS: Yeah.

MG: But in the back was a larger room, like a night club.

DS: Maybe they closed off part of it - -

MG: Well the jam central would be in the front, when you come in. Was that true?

DS: That's probably what it was, yeah.

MG: Do you recall what side the bar was on?

DS: [laughs]

MG: And what side the bandstand was on.

DS: The band stand would have had to have been in the back if I recall. But you know after so many years - -

MG: But it was small?

DS: - - so many places - -

MG: I know, I know.

DS: - - they all look alike. This one's on the right side, this one's on the left side.

MG: You know, I'm trying to picture because I don't have any interior photos. But it was a small place.

DS: I remember it being small. I remember it being small. And what I remember most about it, in addition to seeing - - I remember certain people that I saw in there. I couldn't tell you how well they played or not. The only one I remember playing was Lockjaw because he was doing his act with the [inaudible] you know. [imitates horn] wiping his forehead as he played, that I remember. But I don't remember - - I remember certain

names that I went to see. And I remember seeing them and being impressed because you know, its childhood heroes and all that stuff. I also remember next door, there was an eye glass store, an optometrist or whatever it was and I bought myself dark glasses. My first pair of dark glasses, you know, so I could be hip. That I remember from the 845.

MG: Who'd you go with?

DS: Myself.

MG: You'd go by yourself?

DS: Oh yeah. I didn't know anybody who wanted to go with me. If I would talk a buddy into going to hear this music with me, it may have been once or twice. And then, I would figure maybe about 1947 or '48, I had found a kindred spirit in school, he was a trumpet player. So we went a couple of times together. But at the beginning I went pretty much by myself.

MG: Anybody in your family interested in jazz?

DS: No.

MG: So did they think that was odd?

DS: Yeah, well, I guess my parents thought I could be doing worse things, you know, then digging music. And as long as I came back on time and I didn't look too much, like a [inaudible] as my mother would say, I guess I was alright.

MG: [laughs]

DS: I was quite young at the time. I remember it was nineteen - - I went to Carnegie Hall midnight Woody Herman concert. I was 13 years old, I sat at the last row in the balcony. But as long as I could get back by 12 o'clock I was okay.

MG: Did you start collecting records then?

DS: Yeah.

MG: The 78's?

DS: Oh yeah.

MG: And where would you buy them?

DS: Oh, that's an interesting story. You're always looking for a place where you can find these things and I discovered a store on the Grand Concourse called Abbotts. And it was a radio store. They sold radios, before television and stuff like that. And he had records. And at that time, being in a hip Jewish neighborhood in the '40's, you would have the remnant of what I would call the pink people.

MG: Yeah, right.

DS: Therefore, if he was selling records, he would have Continental, Ash, Disc, and some of the major labels. So my first records were Mary Lou Williams. You know, the first thing I did was write - - I still have [inaudible] from eight by ten of her - -

MG: You still have it?

DS: Yeah I still have it.

MG: Wow.

DS: And the Continental Sides with [inaudible], Bird, and all those people. And then eventually he got in the Gills with Dizzy and Bird and then eventually he got in the RCA 52nd street album. He also has [inaudible], I bought my first Kinko Trio records there and all that stuff.

MG: wow.

DS: However, then when I started to go downtown to go to the movies and see the stage shows, I got off at 42nd street and Times Square, there was a, they call it the arcade. I don't know what it is now. It was the Arcade music store.

MG: Right.

DS: And in the window were Savoy records. Tenor sax albums on [inaudible] and all that stuff. And by that time I was a nut for the sound of the tenor sax so that's where I started to buy those records. And then after a while when you started reading the magazines you realize that there's another store here or another store there and already I was a record junkie so if there was a record store I would look there just in case. You know, I did all that kind of stuff. So this is how I grew up and - -

MG: How did you make the money to buy the 78's?

DS: Did you ever see [inaudible]?

MG: [laughs]

DS: Remember the last line in the movie?

MG: No, what is it?

DS: "How do you get by?" "I steal."

MG: [laughs]

DS: And after a while - -

MG: Your mother gave you the money right?

DS: No, my mother wouldn't give me the money. After a while I would save up or I would do little odd jobs you know.

MG: right, right.

DS: when I was going to music school I was doing music copping, I made a few bucks -

-

MG: Oh you did - -

DS: I did all the - - you know, all kinds - -

MG: Did you work gigs playing tenor?

DS: A couple, yes. A couple yes. Not very good.

MG: Still have a tenor?

DS: Oh yeah.

MG: Still play?

DS: Well, you wouldn't believe this. My grandson is 19. When he was 2 years old, he visited us, you know, to come spend the week with us, Christmas week or whatever it is. And I had just gotten my horn overhauled and ready to roll. After all these years I'm finally going to start practicing again and start playing my horn. So I took it out and I said you wanna hear pops play? So the kid like stares at me right. So I take out the horn and I start blowing a few notes. And he starts screaming, "stop, stop, too big and too loud!" I put the horn away and never took it out [laughs].

MG: Oh you're kidding!

DS: Not because of that. It's just a funny story. But anyway I have not played and I haven't taken pictures for years either because my eyes are all messed up.

MG: Oh.

DS: So I have all these frustrating things in my closet. Anyway that's a sad story, it has nothing to do with this.

MG: No, no sad stories.

DS: [laughs]

MG: So the - - about the Bronx. In the letter that you wrote which was so interesting, you said you went to the 845 in 1946 on some Sundays right? And then you said, "I do remember the King Cole backup singer whose name was Bob Harvel," where?

DS: I don't know. I can't answer where I heard him. But I did hear him. And because I was a King Cole freak, he left an impression.

MG: Yeah, yeah.

DS: And obviously, after so many years I remembered his name and I remembered and commented in the paper. But I cannot tell you where I saw him.

MG: Uh, huh. Did you ever go to the Blue Morocco or Freddie's - -

DS: No - -

MG: - - on Boston Road?

DS: No.

MG: No, okay. Good cuz - -

DS: At that time I had gone downtown.

MG: You started going downtown.

DS: For a lot of different reasons.

MG: What do you mean?

DS: Well, the music that I wanted to hear was there. It was easier to get to - -

MG: It was easier to get to 52nd street then to get to across the Bronx?

DS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And also what was happening when I started to play, we were having jam sessions and joints in the Bronx. So I was spending a lot of time doing that, not looking to hear music at night, unless it was something really special. Like when, I guess this was '48 [inaudible], Miles and Lee Konitz, and Dre Muligan. [inaudible names] played the Red Mill in on [inaudible] - -

MG: Yeah, yeah - -

DS: - - on Sunday afternoons.

MG: - - and where was that? What was this Red Mill Inn?

DS: It's on 170th and Jerome. It's not there anymore.

MG: No, I know. But what kind of place was it, the Red Mill? A club?

DS: A bar I guess a big bar, a club, whatever you wanna call it.

MG: I haven't heard too much - -

DS: No, it was the one and only time.

MG: - - about the Red Mill. One and only time?

DS: Because you had a lot of guys - - now you remember Morty Oz?

MG: Sure. Oh what happened to Morty Oz?!

DS: Well he - -

MG: Whatever happened to him?

DS: Died.

MG: Died?

DS: Everybody dies you know.

MG: No I know but what - -

DS: Last year he died.

MG: No kidding.

DS: So anyway, he used to be involved with some other guy named Charlie Lister and some other people and they would run - -

MG: Yeah!

DS: - - they would run sessions on Sunday afternoon at different places. They weren't involved in this one. But there were people like that, really great jazz band who were doing this. And sometimes it would be like a one shot, nobody would come and that would be the end of it.

MG: [laughs]

DS: But lunatics like me would remember.

MG: You know who did the gigs at Club 845 [inaudible], you were too young to know?

DS: No, but - -

MG: It says [inaudible] but have you ever heard that name?

DS: - - there was this guy named Johnny Jackson - -

MG: Have you ever heard of that person?

DS: No, no.

MG: But that must be the same kind of thing, of these guys who - -

DS: If you'd see the same name all the time, you'd think that he was working there.

MG: Uh huh.

DS: If you see different names at different places you'd assume that these were one shots.

MG: Did you ever do promoting gigs, or were you always on the recording side?

DS: No I never did promoting. I mean I did help certain cats get gigs, but - - and I mean Max Gordon used to call me a manager because I encouraged him to hire Sonny [inaudible], but I wasn't anybody's manager. It's the last thing in the world I would wanna do.

MG: Right, oh please, yes. Who would want that. Morty, wow - - I've been thinking about him because he gave Dexter these binoculars and then it had a label on the binoculars that said Morty Photographer on it.

DS: He labeled every - - he put a label on everything.

MG: Oh that was something he did.

DS: And he needed attention badly [laughs].

MG: So the other day I happened to see that label, I still have the binoculars, and I thought gosh I wonder where that man went, I bet he's, you know, anyway. It's interesting. Was he from the Bronx?

DS: Yeah.

MG: he was? He grew up with you?

DS: Not with me but he was from the Bronx. He was probably more toward that section of the Bronx than I was. I think he grew up in Soundview which is much much, I don't know where it is in terms of Morrisania, but it's certainly closer to Morrisania than Burnside Avenue is.

MG: So, okay, that's about the Red Mill. And then tell me - - can you tell me something about the Tremont Terrace?

DS: Oh these were just pl - -

MG: I don't know anything about that.

DS: - - these are just places that - -

MG: I know but - -

DS: - - somebody said okay, let's have a session. And they would promote it on Sunday afternoon and go - -

MG: So Sunday afternoon is the time - -

DS: At least in my life - -

MG: Me too.

DS: - - at that age, okay. Then there was Sunday afternoons downtown at the Troubadour and places like that. So I started to go there, it was easier. I guess the musicians who were playing downtown were more well known or hipper or better than some of the ones in the Bronx. However, the interesting thing about the Bronx business was that it encouraged a lot of young cats to play. Like Allan Eager lived on the Grand Concourse.

MG: Oh yeah?

DS: Yeah. So you would go to these places and you would find like 5 Jews and 5 Italians, they're all playing like Allan Eager.

MG: [laughs]

DS: You know what I mean? And that's, that's - - it was like it was in the air, all the stuff. It was just in the air. And everybody knew everybody and it was just happening. And then everybody started chasing the man and we started to grow up and grow older and OD [laughs] and whatever you wanna call it and everything changed.

MG: Yeah. When was that do you think?

DS: In the late '40's.

MG: Late '40's. It started changing?

DS: Oh yeah.

MG: And what was this Hardey's Bar?

DS: Hardey's Bar is one of those places - -

MG: Is that the same spelling as John Hardey?

DS: Yeah same spelling, but had nothing to do with it. It was just a bar where in the back

-- I guess in the old days bard had a place for a social hall --

MG: Yeah, right.

DS: Okay. So if you found a place in a hip neighborhood and they had a back room that was a social hall, more than likely they had a beat up piano. So I said look man you're not doing anything, we'll give you \$10. And you get 10 guys to chip in 50 cents or whatever it is and you had a place to play.

MG: Wow.

DS: So Hardey's Bar was one of those places.

MG: Do you remember where it was.

DS: I do not.

MG: Okay, but you remember the name.

DS: I remember, I know we went one night to play -- we were like the junior group. So we were playing and then we were finished, came on the senior group- Jackie McClean, [inaudible] and those people. You know, they were like the seniors at this time. We were like the children.

MG: Wow.

DS: Different memories, you know.

MG: Oh it's great. That's very, very good. What about, who else would be like local to the Bronx. Would you say Tina Brooks was like local?

DS: Yeah he's from the Bronx but he's from the other, he's from the [inaudible] section.

Which is Soundview or Morrisania - -

MG: Lyman Place. It's in Morrisania.

DS: I mean I don't know the exact place.

MG: Elmo was from Lyman Place. And then Nelly Monk's family lived on Lyman Place.

So there's a lot of stuff - - Maxine Sullivan is over there.

DS: Right, [inaudible], right.

MG: Uh huh, right. So did you know Tina?

DS: No, never met her.

MG: Did you know Oliver Beener?

DS: No I didn't, but interestingly enough the first time I took photographs, I took photographs I believe at Morris High School, wherever the hell that was - -

MG: Yeah, sure. [laughs] Morrisania

DS: - - and standing behind it was Oliver Beener, I remember that.

MG: They had a concert there?

DS: Yeah.

MG: In Morris High School?

DS: I believe so, and there was another concert - - the reason why I say it was Morris High School - -

MG: When would that have been?

DS: '56.

MG: [inaudible]

DS: Because there was another concert there with - - and the only reason I say Morris High School because its in a cockamamie book and they have in parentheses "Morris High School." Otherwise - -

MG: Well we can recognize it because it's a very, very beautiful auditorium in Morris high school.

DS: You wouldn't recognize. How would you - -

MG: It's the same.

DS: The stage and the curtain - -

MG: Oh, oh, oh it doesn't show you, oh okay, okay.

DS: Yeah. And I took pictures of Lou Donaldson - -

MG: [laughs] Yeah, well, it could be anywhere.

DS: - - a black background, it could be from the Newport Jazz Festival for all we know.

MG: Oh I see. You don't recall?

DS: No but I remember it was Oliver Beener. And also Gigi [inaudible] and [inaudible] Sulliman, and Julia Newl.

MG: Yeah!

DS: You know Julia?

MG: Right sure.

DS: Well he might remember that.

MG: Yeah.

DS: Julia will - - I'm a very good friend of Julia's. I've been seeing him for hundreds of years. Very close at one time. He might be able to fill you in.

MG: Uh, huh. His name keeps coming up but he's - -

DS: But I don't know if he's still alive or not you know.

MG: He lives in I think D.C. or - -

DS: No he's been living in Queens the last 10 years.

MG: [inaudible]

DS: You're worse than me [laughs].

MG: You sure? 10 years, what's ten years? Was he in D.C.?

DS: He was. He was working for the Smithsonian. But he came and lived in Queens for a long time now.

MG: He's also - - he's one of those people where they say he's reluctant to talk. Was he ever?

DS: Well - -

MG: Would there be some reason if I asked him and he'd say I don't wanna talk about it?

DS: That's true. But you know why - -

MG: I know.

DS: - - because a lot of people ask questions that are really like prodding and not really interested in the music but are more interested in what it's gonna look like if they come up with this information.

MG: Yeah right.

DS: So they get to be a pain in the ass.

MG: Yeah, right, right. Maybe he got burned - - what did they tell us? I can't even remember but you know. He did something he talked about and then they [inaudible] it and it was wrong and he got mad, and I don't know. But anyway, his name keeps coming up.

DS: Well if you can reach him you tell him that I suggested you for - -

MG: Okay that might help. You've been in touch?

DS: - - it might help him hang up.

MG: [laughs]. I don't care. I'm gonna try to reach him.

DS: No, I haven't been in touch with him for years. He's not - - he's a very private person.

MG: Right.

DS: And of course we're not talking about - - old people.

MG: Old, yeah! Eighties. He's gotta be in his eighties.

DS: You don't know how they feel. Maybe they're assholes or whatever, you know. You just don't know.

MG: Oh please, I know.

DS: And the jazz writer or whatever you wanna call them, those people don't care about that.

MG: No.

DS: They really don't. They're totally insensitive to the music and the people.

MG: [inaudible] But yeah, we know. Please, we know. But Oliver Beener, his name keeps coming up also.

DS: But he's from a - - well check with Lou Donaldson.

MG: Yeah, no I will talk to Lou. But you know Lou's wife died, so.

DS: Yeah I know, that's what I was just gonna say. Maybe he needs some time.

MG: Yeah, well I didn't wanna - - but I was talking to him before and then he said you know - - so I am gonna call him. So okay, let me ask you about this that you said in the letter. Some of the many jazz musicians from the Bronx, would have to include Benny Harris. Now you mean from the Bronx, born and raised in the Bronx or lived in the Bronx?

DS: He lived in the Bronx in the '40's during that period. And he was one of the heavyweight users in the neighborhood and - -

MG: What neighborhood?

DS: Whatever neighborhood he lived in [laughs].

MG: Oh, uh huh.

DS: And his mother lived there because - -

MG: Yeah, oh?

DS: - - because, Allan Agar used to say the he and [inaudible] used to go and stay
Benny's mother's house - -

MG: Okay, good. Thank you.

DS: And you know, all those cats were doing the same thing. [inaudible] that he was
there. That doesn't mean that there's any living relation left - -

MG: Uh huh. But its something to pursue.

DS: Yeah.

MG: I'd like to.

DS: It's a possibility. This is remote from which I thought about. Nobody seems to know
about it, but I recollect that somewhere in the early '50's they opened or tried to open a
music store in the Bronx. And I remember the name, I remember Kenny Durham and I
remember cats telling me yeah, this is happening over there. We can blow a little. And
then it never happened. But I do remember, at least I think I remember Symphony Sid
talking about it in between [inaudible]. But that's something to look into too.

MG: Okay.

DS: That might be interesting. But as anybody would know, when you were dealing with
hose cats at that time, they couldn't possibly have a music school [laughs] you know.
You couldn't go but 2 days. But anyway, it's worth, you know, checking - -

MG: Yeah, asking around. What about Henry [inaudible]? You think he lived on
Prospect?

DS: I know he lived on Prospect.

MG: you know he lived on Prospect.

MG: You know, on a tour, when I go with people from the neighborhood which I go often because - - something very interesting is everybody remembers everything differently. You know that there's no two - -

DS: Of course, of course.

MG: But on Lyman Place, which is a small street, smaller than your little street, people always that him and Redalan live over here.

DS: Oh yeah?

MG: And they remember he had this big Cadillac. And there's stories about him coming home and you know, so I wanted to look further into that too. Tina Brooks, we know he lived, he was from the Bronx. People from the Bronx claim Tina Brooks and Oliver Beener.

DS: Okay.

MG: But people who grew up with them who went more on the straight path and succeeded in class blame them for everybody getting hooked in the Bronx.

DS: Can't blame anybody - -

MG: Yeah well, of course. We know that's you know. But I mean they were in high school and they became drug addicts and then everybody became drug addicts. So its like you know - -

DS: when somebody says that to me, goodbye, I don't have to talk to you anymore. You're an idiot [laughs].

MG: But there is a tendency when you do this kind of history to always talk about the success stories. Always talk about the people who made it and got the big jobs and they

became famous and you had Colin Powell on you know, he comes from Morrisania, so you know - -

DS: Well, he's a disgrace.

MG: - - yeah, a disgrace to Morrisania. But then on the other side, and I always say, you know - - what I've been telling them there is there's more to this story about a neighborhood and about people from a neighborhood and musicians - - somebody who becomes a jazz musician, that is a success story. You know, that is a great thing to be and these people worked hard, and they have very short lives, but it doesn't mean we're forgetting them, so - -

DS: They're more important, as far as I'm concerned because they created the environment.

MG: Exactly. So in part of this study that they're doing, if I pulled together these essays - - do you wanna write something? Are you writing? - - No, Okay.

DS: I'll tell you, you can write it.

MG: Okay, I'll use your computer. But what

I want to do is write about Tina Brooks and Oliver Beener because I feel in this jazz history or in this history in the music we love that you never hear about Sonny Clark.

You never hear about Butch Warren. You know what I mean? If we don't do anything about Billy Higgins, you know, it's - - their names just become like who? So - -

DS: Well, with time everybody will be in that category, you know - -

MG: well it's not just 5 famous people that created this music [laughs] and you know - -

DS: But in time, you know, they may not even care about the music. [inaudible] this section of history is moving very fast, and its moving very fast down the toilet. So I don't know how much of it we can save and for how long. But I guess all we can do is keep trying.

MG: Well if we can make sure that there is information available, and this is my idea.

Okay, we can't make them go to it but you know - -

DS: We gotta do what we believe is right, that's - -

MG: Okay. And I just feel like nobody can say oh I never heard about Tina Brooks. No, you can hear about him, you know what I mean? So - -

DS: They could go and buy his record.

MG: wouldn't that be nice?

DS: I mean that's what people say. I said who's stopping you from buying the record.

MG: Right!

DS: Well, I didn't know it was available. I said, bullshit. I said, when I was a kid I would research every single jazz record that was put out and decide then and there whether I wanted to hear it or not.

MG: Did you look at the reviews to decide [inaudible]? What did you do?

DS: I looked at the reviews not because I wanted to know what somebody thought was good or what was bad, but whether it existed or not. And then I'd find out for myself.

Like when a movie - - you can't believe what a guy says about a movie, whether it's good or bad. So that's what I would do. There's no excuse not to. If you really love the music, that's your responsibility.

MG: right.

DS: And when critics tell you, oh I didn't know that was out, then you're not doing your job.

MG: So did you read the jazz magazines?

DS: Oh sure, sure. I remember reading [inaudible] who gave Bird's record a B- and C+. And when you read that, then you know for sure - -

MG: [inaudible]

DS: - - that these guys are full of shit. Because one of the things I enjoyed aside from the music, which got to me, were the cats. I mean I enjoyed their company. You know, why you're you living in the Bronx? Why don't you come downtown? I said because I like living with people. Call me middle class, call me a [inaudible], call me what you like. I like living with people. I like the lady down the street who's got her rolled up stockings and is watering the lawn. I'd rather her than some prissy broad from the mid-west. I mean I like it better. It makes me feel more comfortable. Anyway.

MG: What about Edmund Hall?

DS: Edmund Hall lived in the Bronx.

MG: Okay.

DS: In fact, I don't know if you know Jeff Atterton was a long time jazz fan. He lives up here now. He's old and quite sick. I shouldn't say old, we're all old. Anyway, he called me one day and I was out of breath. He said, what's the matter. I said, oh I'm bust shoveling because you know when it snows [inaudible] shoveling. And he said,

remember Edmund Hall, Don. And every time it snows and it shovels I think of Edmund Hall - -

MG: You think of Edmund Hall?

DS: - - because he got a heart attack shoveling snow.

MG: Oh my God.

DS: [laughs]

MG: And died.

DS: Yeah. A little house and he was shoveling snow. And if you don't shovel properly it can affect you. And it affected him. So whenever I hear the name Edmund Hall I think of that.

MG: Wow. Where'd he live?

DS: [laughs] Someplace in - -

MG: In the Bronx. But you know he lived in the Bronx?

DS: Yes.

MG: Uh huh, but you never went there?

DS: No.

MG: Okay well we know he lived in the Bronx. Sam Most?

DS: Sam Most lived in the Bronx too. I don't know where he lived.

MG: Okay.

DS: California - - see somebody like Sam Most is living in California now for 40 years.

But he grew up - -

MG: But he - - okay, but that's good. I didn't know that. So I need to know that - -

DS: Stan was - -

MG: Stan we know, okay. Stan we know and the other one who lived in the same neighborhood as Stan, became the big clothing designer or whatever.

DS: Ralph Loren? No he lived in another part of the Bronx. Ralph Loren was further North.

MG: Oh.

DS: He was more near Moshilu.

MG: Where was Stan Getts?

DS: Getts was probably around 170th street someplace.

MG: Oh.

DS: He was more down home.

MG: Alan [inaudible] - -

DS: [laughs] These cats were on the road when they were 13 - -

MG: Yeah right.

DS: - - but we [inaudible] - -

MG: But they grew up in the Bronx.

DS: Yeah. I mean he claims the Bronx. I mean - -

MG: Yeah, yeah.

DS: - - one of his great tunes was the Bronx Blues you know.

MG: right.

DS: Alan Eager lived on the Grand Concourse.

MG: What kind of family was Alan Eager from?

DS: Alan Eager's family, I guess you would say they were better than most because the Grand Concourse was I think [inaudible] - -

MG: Yeah, right.

DS: - - and his parents I think owned a hotel up in the mountains. And ever once in a while, he would go up there and bring some of his buddies up there.

MG: [laughs]

DS: You know, to recuperate. And if you happened to be in the mountains at that time, you could have gone to a session and seen Alan and Red Rodney and you know, whoever was there at the time.

MG: Did you know him well?

DS: Who Red?

MG: No Alan.

DS: No not very well.

MG: I knew Red Rodney very well.

MG: You did?

DS: Oh very well.

MG: Yeah, Red, mmm hmm. I was in touch with his wife's sister.

DS: Which one?

MG: The last one, remember? They moved to Florida or something.

DS: Yeah. [inaudible]

MG: Yeah, he's an interesting guy, very interesting guy. And continue to where he lived.

DS: He lived on White Plains Road. Because I remember coming home late once from a club and he was coming from a gala. And it was weird to see a musician go that far uptown, you know, so naturally you're curious about it.

MG: Uh, huh. And so, then you said in here Aaron Sacs, Lou Donaldson, Billy Taylor still live in the Bronx. Billy, of course, I know, and Lou. And Aaron Sacs?

DS: Aaron Sacs lives someplace in Riverdale.

MG: Oh yeah?

DS: Yeah. And he also was from the Bronx.

MG: How old is he?

DS: Old.

MG: Old.

DS: 75 or 80. Everybody's - - if I'm 74 and I'm like a year younger than my contemporaries, I would imagine that all these cats are at least 80 or pushing 80.

[inaudible] - -

MG: Do you have - - are you friendly with any of the musicians that lived or live in the Bronx?

DS: To be perfectly honest I'm not friendly with anybody anymore.

MG: [laughs]

DS: I've become a very antisocial person.

MG: Is it - - I mean that's new though right? In the last years?

DS: Well it had to be new because I couldn't have done what I did if I was antisocial - -

MG: Are you still in touch with Barry Harris?

DS: Yeah, I saw Barry a couple of weeks ago.

MG: Because I know you were very close with Barry and all those [inaudible].

DS: Yeah.

MG: Barry never lived in the Bronx?

DS: No.

MG: and when did you start going to clubs downtown? How old?

DS: [laughs] As soon as I could. I would say late 40's, early 50's. And then when I started to go to music school in 1949, which was in Brooklyn, then I began looking for places to play. So eventually, jazz moved from Broadway and 52nd and moved down to the Village. So I was going down to the Village, digging the stuff from there.

MG: and when you had sessions in the Bronx where would they be?

DS: The Tremont Tower, like we were talking out before. That was one of those places. We'd go in and rent the back room and - -

MG: And who were the other people that you played with?

DS: Nobody you'd know about.

MG: Nobody who became a professional?

DS: No, every once in a while somebody would come around that may have become more well known, you know and he was like a star [inaudible]. One of the cats who came by and played the bass, he once played [laughs] with Alan Eager or once played with Buddy Rich or something like that, and therefore he was a star you know.

MG: but did any of those guys continue to be musicians even though they didn't become famous or they didn't record but they were working musicians?

DS: some may have become club [inaudible]. Some may have OD'ed. Some may have retired, become [inaudible]. I really don't know.

MG: You don't know.

DS: I don't know. And some duded became fans, you know, they became fans or whatever. And some of them I may not know if I sat down next to them on a bus at this point in history.

MG: Have you noticed that in jazz, the people who played early were thinking about trying to be musicians and become average bands, tried to find a way like you did, to try and be around the music and around the musicians and to have this life in jazz.

DS: some, some guys. And I would say some - - later on, you found the new people, which I'm sure you know who I'm talking about. They're really just using it for their own hands. They're not really into it because they have - - it's like a musician. He has to play. He has to play this music.

MG: Or like they said, who would choose this life [laughs], you have to do it.

DS: You gotta do it. You gotta eat and you gotta play this music. Now, if you're gonna do - - if you're gonna become involved in this music, you've got to become involved in the music because you've got to become involved in the music. Most of these other people are involved in it because they see a way of making a dollar.

MG: Yeah.

DS: Just like today's musician. He's not there because he's got to be, he got there because he figured it's a way to make money.

MG: right, right.

DS: you know I knew - - this happened some years back. Whenever I would call guys for a session, they'd say, "Who's on? I'll be there." And then one day I called a [inaudible] session—"How much?"

MG: Right, right.

DS: And that's the end, finished, goodbye.

MG: right.

DS: I'd say why should I pay you more than I pay him? Who the hell are you. I said that's not what we are supposed to be about. We're supposed to be about the music. But of course nobody buys the records so maybe they're right I'm wrong. But anyway, that's the way it went down.

MG: Do you think that they had jazz in the Bronx into the '50's and '60's?

DS: It may have been - -

MG: But not hat you - -

DS: - - it may not have been the people I wanted to see - -

MG: Right, right.

DS: - - so therefore I didn't go. Now if I wanted - - if I was following, let's say [inaudible] Alan Eager. Alan Eager's playing the Tremont Terrace this week with 5 Jewish saxophone players, okay? I'm gonna go there. And next week he's gonna be playing at the Troubadour downtown, I'm gonna go there. So if somebody else is playing at the Tremont Terrace, I'm not gonna go.

MG: you followed the artists rather than the - -

DS: Or whatever. Because the artist in those days, they were the music. And in truth they still are, aren't they?

MG: but then there were certain clubs or certain sessions - - like you could go to club 845, it didn't - - you knew that if you went on a Sunday there would be somebody you would wanna hear. It didn't matter - - you were going to the session not to the - -

DS: Well at that time jazz musicians were a breed unto themselves and they were all good for one reason or another. And that changed when somebody became a star or somebody had to bring in their charts and somebody was bringing in their brother-in-law. Then it was all different.

MG: So in that period in the '40's, if they had a session, would you say that everybody was good? I mean, everybody was on a level that you didn't see later?

DS: Well, I would have to say that when one looks back at things like that, they look back as part of a very beautiful romance - -

MG: Yeah.

DS: - - and they only have good thoughts.

MG: Right.

DS: Okay, so - -

MG: so everything from '46-'49 was - -

DS: Just about. Just about. At least, you know, I'm sure that wasn't the case. But it was exciting, especially if you're young and you're seeing these people for the first time. And if you think about it, they weren't that much older than I was. So it was different. There's no way to really describe it.

MG: did you ever hear Dexter in Club 845?

DS: Oh yeah.

MG: Oh you did? Oh tell me.

DS: [laughs] I don't know what I remember - -

MG: What you recall.

DS: - - he was one of those people that I saw. And I remember the most important and the most mind-boggling session that I ever saw was at the Lincoln Square Center. And it was a welcome home party for the Billy [inaudible] band, okay? So it was Gene Ammonds, Sonny Stith, Dexter, Leo Parker, Art Lakey, [inaudible], and Sarah Vaughn, and Charlie Ventura. However, I don't know who was supposed to play, but Monk played piano and John Simmons played bass.

MG: wow.

DS: So Ventura couldn't make the gig, so he sent in a sub. He sent in Don Baez.

MG: Oh my God [laughs].

DS: Dexter showed up five to seven. The session was from 3 to 7 or one of those things. So at 5 to 7, very, you know, for certain people - - for Dexter, you know, not only because of the way he played but he was also a good character, you know? And he knew it. At 5 to 7 just before everybody's packing up, the curtains parted and Dexter sticks out [laughs] says hello, and whoever's running the session says, "Dexter's here, he's a little late, but he'll be here next week." So next week he played I believe with Jimmy Jones, John Levy, and Denver [inaudible], and Hotlips Page, and I think Charlie Ventura was on that one too. But that first one with all those cats. Because what happened was this stage

was about so high. And there were chairs all around and I took my chair and I put it right up so that the stage was here right where I'm sitting, there was the stage. It was right up there. And John Simmons was sweating on to me, okay?

MG: [laughs]

DS: And it was, by that time, everybody moved up front so it was like packed to the front, and you were like part of it. It was like you were right there. And it was happened, and those cats were playing. I'll never forget that experience.

MG: How old were you?

DS: 1947, I guess I was 15.

MG: wow.

DS: And also, I think he mentioned this in something I read. Jackie McClean was there. I think that's the one where Dex asked him for a dollar?

MG: Maybe.

DS: Okay, because I was standing there with my Woolworth's shades, trying to be hip, and along comes this fellow who was about my age and he's standing with his buddy. And I was by myself as usual, I was the lonely [laughs]. And he said look at this little kid driving up here. And I'm saying to myself, who's he to put me down, you know? And then it was like a few months later that I went to a concert at City College, and a friend of mine was playing piano with a band, with Sam Mose, by the way. And the other band, opposite them was Richie Palor's band with [inaudible] Jackie McClean - -

MG: Jackie.

DS: I recognized him.

MG: Mmm, hmm. I like that . So do you think there was anything particularly different about the Bronx or - -

[END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A] [BEGINNING OF TAPE 2 SIDE B]

MG: Tape 2, okay. About the Bronx.

DS: What was happening, at least in the section of the Bronx that all this was happening had to do with the people living in the Bronx who were mainly Jewish people whose children grew up listening to dance bands, Count Bassie, which means Lester Young. And this was a major, major turn on for a lot of young cats who wanted to play music, who wanted to be saxophone players.

MG: did you hear Count Bassie on the records or did you see him in person?

DS: On the radio.

MG: On the radio, okay.

DS: However, when you're old enough, when you're 10 years old or 12 years old, you can start going down to Broadway theatres and seeing the bands. So needless to say, that was part of my growing up.

MG: you heard Duke Ellington, you heard Count Bassie?

DS: Oh yeah.

MG: Uh huh, okay. In Manhattan?

DS: Strand Theatre.

MG: In the Apollo? Oh in the Strand.

DS: Strand theatre. I didn't go to the Apollo till much later. But I went to the - - Strand had all the hip bands. Lionel Hampton and all those guys and Woody Hermann, all those people.

MG: did you go by yourself?

DS: Most of the time.

MG: That's so interesting.

DS: Yeah.

MG: I mean, that's kind of a recurring thing, the loner.

DS: Yeah, yeah.

MG: You're not the only person I talk to that - -

DS: Oh I know that.

MG: - - was the jazz loner.

DS: I know.

MG: sometimes they have like one friend you know.

DS: Once in a while you talk somebody into going. I know I went to see somebody in the building that I lived in, a kid. His mother - - his father never was home, I don't think I saw his father. His father was like much older than his mother, one of those kind of things. Now that you look back on it you can probably come up with a great story. But at any rate. And his mother was an incessant smoker, and she wanted to go to the movies. So she was gonna take him downtown to the movies to the Capitol Theatre. So she said, "Do you wanna go to?" And I said sure. So the dreg of it was that she had to sit in the

balcony because she was a heavy smoker. But we went to the Capitol Theatre and they had "The Thin Man Comes Home."

MG: Oh I rented that.

DS: and on stage, Benny Carter's band and most importantly, and most excitingly, the Kinko Trio. And when the stage began to rise, this is 1944, the stage began to rise, and you hear these 3 cats playing straight from [inaudible]. I mean, I'm telling you this now, I'm getting a chill.

MG: Wow.

DS: I swear to God, I'm getting a chill. And that's how it went. And when you get those chills, your life is changed.

MG: Was that the first time you heard live - -

DS: That's the first time the Kinko Trio was in New York.

MG: - - was that the first time that you heard like a live band that gave you that feeling?

DS: Oh no, I had gone to theatres before. But the first time I heard the Kinko Trio, that did me on. That really did me in. But I had always gone to see Lionel Hampton at the Strand. And Louie Prima was a particular favorite of mine.

MG: Oh yeah, good.

DS: And then when I was - - I think when I was Bar Mitzvahed my father said what do you wanna do for your Bar Mitzvah? And I said I want to go to the aquarium which was once the [inaudible] bar, or whatever it was. So he said okay and he took my sister and myself, my sister is four years younger than me, to the aquarium to see Louie Armstrong's big band which probably contained our mayor.

MG: Yeah right.

DS: I didn't know it at the time, I just knew - -

MG: What year? Are you 13, let's see. Forty - -

DS: '45.

MG: Could be.

DS: I'm sure it was.

MG: I can look it up but I think you're right. So this kind of feeling that comes over you, have you noticed how you can remember every detail of those certain moments when you hear a band or you hear this music that - -

DS: Well, I don't know if everybody can. I mean, I'm crazy. I think I can be sometimes -
-

MG: No, no, no. I've noticed it.

DS: Well, you're crazy too [laughs].

MG: Well thank you so much [laughs]. Well we like that, we want to be crazy.

DS: Yeah, well. I guess these are traumatic moments in your life.

MG: Or dramatic, yeah.

DS: I like traumatic [laugh].

MG: [laughs] Traumatic. But I mean you know, because I have my Art Blakey moments. We all have our moment. I don't know if this is true of other people and other music and other art or whatever, because I only know about this in particular, this music. But when you talk to people about that - - Dexter had his moment when his father took him to hear Duke Ellington, you heard the story, you know, and he's 7. And he said that's what I

want to - - I want to be what they are. He didn't even know what it was. But he never forgot that. He never forgot what they were wearing. He never forgot the way the curtain opened - - seven years old [inaudible]. And you know, Cedar Walton was saying we all have our Duke Ellington moment. He said if you ask every musician when's the first time you heard Duke Ellington, in that moment there, you know. And so it's very interesting. And also that gives us some kind of bond around this music. It's very - - it's hard to explain to people because like you say, they think you're crazy but of course we care - -

DS: But what's important, and I have to say this, that the particular time that we're talking about, this particular time in my life, there was Charlie Parker.

MG: Yeah.

DS: And that is like a mind shattering - - and I mean, if you have any kind of sensitivity, that's it.

MG: So when's the first time you heard Charlie Parker?

DS: On record or in person?

MG: Person.

DS: It was either at the- I don't remember when - - it was either at the Three Deuces or it was at the Hotel Diplomat which was a wild session there. It was Dizzy and Bird and Bill Harris and Lenny Cristiano, Chubby Jackson, and Stan Levy in one band.

MG: Wow.

DS: It was a dance. I don't know if anybody was dancing [laughs] but that was that. And also there was the Christmas concert at Carnegie. I don't remember which was the first time I saw Bird. But it's weird, my remembrance of Bird, in addition to the music,

changed my life, because then I had to [inaudible] to the Village every Sunday night at the open door. But the first time, I saw him at the Hotel Diplomat. I had gone with this kid from school and I wanted to impress him, this kid, you know. So we're sitting around, the music is stopped, and people are wandering around or leaving, and Bird is wandering around, he's going about carrying his horn. So I wanted to be a big shot. So I said, "Hey Bird." And he comes over and says "Hey man how you doing?"

MG: [laughs]

DS: And he shakes my hand and scares the shit out of me. And so that I always remember. And the last time I saw him was at Birdland, that fateful weekend, you know, before he went with Art Blakey and Mingus and all those cats. And he kept - - I was just standing there. And this is years later. I mean I bumped into him at times but we didn't really hang out or anything like that. And he comes up to me and says, "How do you do man, I'm Charlie Parker." And then he turned around and he came back again and he did that to me. So the first time I saw him, he introduced himself to me, and the last time I saw him he introduced himself to me.

MG: Wow.

DS: And I always thought that was a very strange occurrence.

MG: Right.

DS: You know. Anyway, memories.

MG: That's nice. That's very, very, very, very nice.

DS: What else do you need to know?

MG: Well, I need to know a lot of things about the Bronx. But it's starting to fill in. It's starting to fill in because - - you see the club 845, the ja - - if we talk about jazz in the Bronx, we talk about Sunday afternoon sessions.

DS: For me anyway.

MG: For everybody because during the week, the club was a completely other thing. They had shows, they had chorus girls. They had other things.

DS: Right, right.

MG: And I've noticed that with jazz, that that happens. That the club might be a commercial club during the week, but then somebody, like you said, somebody says, why don't you put, you know, and then you can make the bar and we'll take the door and so -
-

DS: What Joe Seagle's been doing for a hundred years in Chicago.

MG: Exactly, that's exactly right.

DS: That's what cats were doing all over New York at the time.

MG: And he continues to do that.

DS: Yeah.

MG: And he has a big cruise coming up for his 80th birthday. Very interesting. Very, very interesting this thing about the Bronx.

DS: Now there's one person - - I'm trying to think of people from the Bronx that you might wanna talk to. And I have to be honest, and I don't wanna be depressive, but I don't know whether some of these people are - -

MG: are living or dead, yes, we find that to be a problem.

DS: - - If you find Freddie Groover, he might have a lot of stories for you.

MG: Oh yeah? Okay, who is that?

DS: Freddie Groover?

MG: Yeah, tell me.

DS: He's a drummer.

MG: Oh see, I didn't know that.

DS: I have a telephone number for him.

MG: Okay.

DS: In California.

MG: Okay.

DS: I'll give it to you for a start and if that's no good or if you have a problem, I think you can get to him through Terry Gibbs - -

MG: Oh, okay.

DS: - - who comes from Brooklyn. But Freddie's a Bronx person and he was like a man about town in the Bronx.

MG: Oh good, yeah. That's what I'd like, to talk to a man about - - let me ask you something - -

DS: Now one more thing - -

MG: Okay.

DS: - - one of the people whose name appears a lot on the 845 is Hal Stein.

MG: Yeah.

DS: Hal Stein, at that time was probably about 15 years old too, he was like a child protégé. Okay, now he recently contacted, after all these years, Ira [inaudible]. So if you could get his number from Ira - -

MG: Okay.

DS: - - maybe he has some remembrances of the 845 club.

MG: Oh that'd be great.

DS: Maybe, I don't know. You know, not everybody remembers you know?

MG: Yeah. What about - - I just wanna - - I'm not gonna drag this out but I wanted to ask you about [inaudible]. You made this remark about the Jewish and the Italian tenor players, which we know there were many and they were very good. But did the black groups play only black groups and the white groups were only white groups or did they play together? And what about the audience? So tell me about the racial thing in the Bronx.

DS: Oh it was always mixed.

MG: Always mixed?

DS: Always mixed.

MG: Okay.

DS: Yeah it was always mixed, at least to my experience. Now as far as the bands were always mixed, you know. Or sometimes one way more than the other. Let's be realistic, most of the good bass players were black or whatever, you know, I mean, all of those things are true. But I don't think anybody thought about it. Either you can play or you can't play. In my world, nobody ever thought those thoughts.

MG: But would there be like - -

DS: [inaudible].

MG: But I want people to understand this. So we want to be clear about this. Would there be gigs where there would be all white gigs, all white musicians?

DS: Could be. There could be.

MG: Mmm, hmm. And an all white audience?

DS: no, not my experience.

MG: No? The audience was always mixed in the Bronx?

DS: There was always jazz fans.

MG: Jazz fans.

DS: Jazz fans. Perios. Now it could be all - - the band might be all 5 white cats or 5 black cats because they all went to the same connection. But - -

MG: [laughs]

DS: It has nothing to do with the music. Either play or you can't play.

MG: Right.

DS: That's the bottom line.

MG: and like the audience in the 845 for the matinee, what could you - - could you remember the audience? Because you must remember, because you were a kid.

DS: I don't remember too many people there [laughs].

MG: Uh, huh. Wasn't too crowded?

DS: No. I remember quite empty.

MG: but would be - -

DS: And I think if you wanted to get specific about it, I would say it was more of a black neighborhood than a white neighborhood.

MG: Uh, huh.

DS: I think now maybe it's a Spanish neighborhood. I'm not sure, I'm not into that stuff because that was never part of what I did. I went because - - I either went because there was good dope or good music, otherwise it didn't mean anything to me.

MG: [laughs]. And it would be in the late '40's when the young guys start to overdose and that was a big problem with the - -

DS: Well at least to my - - I was starting to see this happen. That doesn't mean it didn't happen before, and it certainly happened after.

MG: No. It happened after but I think that was kind of the beginning cuz - -

DS: Well - -

MG: It kind of thinned.

DS: - - I was hanging out with messed up people, I don't know. Anything is possible.

And it could have just been my experience with these 5 people that made me think it was happening all over, you don't know. You don't really know. And of course, it's all in retrospect now, years later.

MG: right, exactly.

DS: We are talking about a long time ago. And I don't even know how I'm remembering all of this stuff.

MG: But you are - - your memories of the Bronx are quite positive right? You have good memories of the Bronx right?

DS: Uhhh, yeah, I think so.

MG: and you stayed when you - - I mean, you never left the Bronx? You didn't move to Manhattan?

DS: No.

MG: You stayed in the Bronx?

DS: No. I traveled a lot, you know. But I never left the Bronx. See that's how I could live the way I lived because I've - - if I was gonna go when I was 21 years old and get an apartment in Manhattan, I could never afforded - - I could never have lived long enough to afford the way I'm living now.

MG: right.

DS: I couldn't have my books, couldn't have my records, couldn't have started Zanadu, couldn't have done - - couldn't have had the lifestyle that I have. Which is not like fancy - -

MG: [laughs] I know you love [inaudible].

DS: - - but I'm true to myself and I never cheated anybody. And I did what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to be part of music. I made a dent in the music. I produced records that I think are of lasting value. If nobody else does, that's their loss. I've taken some very good pictures. If nobody wants to look at them, that's their loss. And that's how it is. Or as a famous Rabbi once said, fuck em.

MG: [laugh] Oh, that's a great ending. Okay, I'm turning this off [laughs].