

Interview with: Donald Hinchey and Jack Diffley

Marist College

Poughkeepsie, NY

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Interviewees: Donald Hinchey and Jack Diffley

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Marist College (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.)

Summary: In this interview, Gus Nolan and Jan Stivers interview Marist alums Donald Hinchey and Jack Diffley. They explore both of their lifetimes, including being in grammar school together, their time at Marist, and their life experiences afterwards that have kept them so connected to the school.

(00:00:02) Gus Nolan: Well, today is Tuesday, the 25th day in April, and we're delighted to have two Marist people of years gone by here with us today to tell us a little bit about what they experienced at Marist and then after Marist, and why they are willing still to come and talk with us about Marist <laugh>. So, I'm going to start with you, Don, and say a few things like a four part, an introduction, your early years, and then high school and, grade school and high school, college, and then life, and what you think about what you learned or what you didn't learn, and what we should change. Really, that's the last part of this that's most important. Why are we doing it? What can we do to see if we can improve the situation here at Marist? Okay. With that, I want to start saying a few words. Where were you born and the family and brothers and sisters and stuff?

(00:01:03) Donald Hinchey: I was born in Queens. I'm the youngest of six children, five boys and a girl.

(00:01:09) GN: Uh-huh <affirmative>.

(00:01:10) DH: I went to St. Thomas the Apostle in Woodhaven and, then went to Christ the King High School.

(00:01:19) GN: Okay. We won't get out of that. Let's stay in grade school a little bit. Well, even before that, the family, are you, you said you're the youngest of six?

(00:01:32) DH: Correct.

(00:01:33) GN: Okay. Are they all still with us? Some have passed on?

(00:01:36) **DH:** No, my oldest brother and my oldest, my sister was the second oldest. They both passed.

(00:01:41) **GN:** I see. And are you still in touch with the rest of them, or are they separated or?

(00:01:45) **DH:** Oh no, we're, we keep in touch. We're not people who talk to each other every week or on any kind of regular basis, but when we get together, we have a good time.

(00:01:55) **GN:** Yeah. Well, <laugh>, that's the way it should be, the way I feel. I'm pretty much the same way. I'm one of eight and, I'm number four. So, but half of them have gone to their eternal reward. I should be where they lead, no one wants me near the Garden of the Devil, so I'm staying around for a bit. Let's talk about grade school. In grade school, what kind of life was it? Tedious? A lot of fun? Friends?

(00:02:26) **DH:** Well, I never was much of a student, but I, fortunately I was intelligent enough to pretty much breeze through everything I was doing. So, you know.

(00:02:35) **GN:** Yeah, that's something I couldn't understand. You, graduated with a 95 average or something like that. You can always go where you want, but, you didn't have much use for books and reading and doing it?

(00:02:46) **DH:** No, I was, you know, basically would get by on my good looks and intelligence.

(00:02:51) **GN:** Yeah. I can see that <laugh>

(00:02:54) **DH:** One of two is better.

(00:02:56) **GN:** There are those who would disagree, but nevertheless, I'll go along with it. How about other activities? Did you do anything in terms of well, let's say the arts, choir, drama, anything like that?

(00:03:08) **DH:** Well, I was in the choir when--

(00:03:10) **Jack Diffley:** <laugh>

(00:03:12) **DH:** <laugh> I was in the choir--

(00:03:13) **GN:** A voice from the past.

(00:03:14) **DH:** I was in the choir at one point, and I got thrown out of that. Because I was not a, I was always in trouble somewhere along the line.

(00:03:21) **JD:** You were.

(00:03:22) **DH:** And I played a lot of sports, CYO sports and, you know.

(00:03:28) **GN:** Okay. Moving on to high school.

(00:03:33) **DH:** Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>,

(00:03:33) **GN:** In high school, Marist had just opened Christ the King. You were one of the first classes there. What was your reaction with going to a school with brothers or teachers, main teachers?

(00:03:50) **DH:** I didn't have a problem with it, of course. Yeah. The Marist brothers, as I've said, the Marist brothers that we had in Christ the King were basically young guys.

(00:03:59) GN: Yeah.

(00:04:00) DH: They were fresh out of college. I saw Pat Murphy here at the reunion, and he was my freshman math teacher.

(00:04:10) GN: I see.

(00:04:10) DH: And, he also was the coach of the, soccer, of the, track team.

(00:04:15) GN: I see.

(00:04:16) DH: And I, he, they had an intramural track meet and, you know, and a field day. And, and I ran a half mile in two minutes, something seconds, and--

(00:04:28) GN: Oh, really?

(00:04:28) DH: And instantaneously was drafted by Pat to go run track, which I did for a year.

(00:04:34) GN: You try four minute miles? You give it a good stab at that <Laugh>?

(00:04:38) DH: No, no. I was, never, I did not like track at all. In fact, I used to run the medley relay.

(00:04:46) GN: I see.

(00:04:46) DH: And, the half mile was the opening lap. So, I would do that, and I would just count the places and said, ah, if I hand off in third place, I'll be okay today, you know, brother will be happy with me.

(00:05:01) GN: Yeah.

(00:05:02) DH: So, I really, I never ran track with the idea of winning it. I was always saying, ah, if I go do this, I didn't, I had no desire to be, you know, a good runner.

(00:05:13) GN: Yeah. I'll go on from there to, saying, well, oh, how about the summers? Did you have any jobs in the summers or through the year? Or how did you spend free time?

(00:05:29) DH: <laugh>, do you really want to know?

(00:05:32) JD: Get you in trouble.

(00:05:32) DH: Getting you in trouble.

(00:05:33) GN: I'm going to talk about that later. There's a subject here that's just on the verge of we shouldn't bring it up.

(00:05:40) DH: But, no, the first real job I had was, I guess after I graduated high school, I worked in the summer in a steel factory, in Brooklyn. And,

(00:05:52) JD: Was it S-T-E-A-L?

(00:05:53) DH: S-T. <laugh> Yeah. Double E.

(00:05:57) JD: Oh, double E.

(00:05:59) DH: Yeah. I was, we were, I was in a factory where we galvanized pipe and I ran the section, you know, they would load all the pipes on the third floor, and they would come down

and go through a whole bunch of acids and, other kinds of solutions, cleaning solutions, and, before they went in the galvanizing tank. And I ran that section, it was like eight tubs of--

[\(00:06:21\)](#) **GN:** How old were you?

[\(00:06:23\)](#) **DH:** I was eighteen. Nineteen.

[\(00:06:24\)](#) **GN:** Eighteen at that time.

[\(00:06:25\)](#) **DH:** Yeah. And, the big thing about it is that, you know, you got goggles on and, and a t-shirt and jeans and the solutions used to splash on you, and it would just rot your clothes away.

[\(00:06:37\)](#) **GN:** No after effects, you didn't have cancer? As far as we know <laugh>? You got this far.

[\(00:06:42\)](#) **DH:** Well I've had skin cancer. But I haven't had anything, well I had prostate cancer too, but.

[\(00:06:47\)](#) **GN:** Okay.

[\(00:06:47\)](#) **DH:** Other than that, I've lived this long,

[\(00:06:50\)](#) **GN:** You had kind of wild days in high school, it seems to me. Yeah. If I can put it mildly.

[\(00:06:57\)](#) **DH:** I got in a few battles.

(00:06:59) GN: Yeah, I understand that. Some brother showed you a knife and said, where I come from, <laugh>

(00:07:04) GN: <laugh> Brother Juan.

(00:07:05) GN: Yes. Here's how we settle it, and somehow you got changed. You kind of, settled down a little bit, it seems to me. Didn't you go to Appalachia somewhere or maybe that was later on in college?

(00:07:18) DH: That was in college, yes. I was, it was during, sophomore year, I guess it was. Yeah.

(00:07:23) GN: Yeah. Let's move from high school to college. How did you make that transfer? I mean, you were kind of struggling, or were you not in high school? I mean, the family was not very well off, well you were satisfied, I suppose.

(00:07:40) DH: Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

(00:07:41) GN: And to make the move to go to a college like Marist, that's going to be a little costly, wouldn't it?

(00:07:48) DH: Well, fortunately, you know, when my mother, you know, we never, I didn't, we never even talked about it. I just went to, you know--

(00:07:56) GN: Single mother.

(00:07:57) DH: The expenses, never worried about it. She sacrificed and got me through it, you know.

(00:08:00) GN: I see

(00:08:01) DH: We, at one point my mother had, my two brothers were in ForDHam. My sister was at St. Joseph's College in Brooklyn. My other brother was in St. John's University, and two of us were in high school, and never took a loan that I know of.

(00:08:18) GN: Oh, wow.

(00:08:18) DH: She just found a way to pay.

(00:08:20) GN: Wow. That's, I listen to that myself. But I mean, it seems a kind of captivating story just in itself. So, you do come to Marist and, you're going to stay a few years here, aren't you? You, did you go all four years?

(00:08:41) DH: I, yeah, I went all four. I think I, later on, my freshman year, I basically, my first semester especially, I just was going home all the time.

(00:08:52) GN: Yes.

(00:08:53) DH: I didn't--

(00:08:54) GN: You had an interest at home.

(00:08:54) DH: Yeah.

(00:08:55) GN: You had friends to go see. Yeah.

(00:08:57) DH: Yes, we did a number of good things together.

(00:09:02) GN: Yeah. You told me they were not the salt of the earth.

(00:09:04) DH: No, they were not. <laugh> Stevie--

(00:09:05) GN: I won't go there.

(00:09:08) JD: I know the whole list.

(00:09:09) DH: You know the whole list.

(00:09:10) GN: Is the Guy Charlie involved in this?

(00:09:13) DH: Well, Charlie was our good friend who came, who did, came, went to Novitiate with Jack.

(00:09:18) GN: Oh, I see.

(00:09:20) JD: We all actually, were, since we were eight years old, say in grammar school.

(00:09:24) GN: Yes. Okay. I just, going back home, you know, from Marist on the weekends, that was the first year here. And it was typical. And then there's a big changeover, somehow or other you had a holiday weekend or something, and you kind of came to your senses and said, you know, I--

(00:09:45) DH: Well, coming into the New Year's of, what was it, 1968, going into New Year's Eve in 1967 going into '68, I took some drugs and whatnot, <laugh>, and we, I was, you know, I was, I remember I was in, a place in Long Beach, a bar in Long Beach, Action House or

something like that. And, I was, in a drug induced space, and I was just basically in the corner by myself just doing nothing. And I said, what am I doing here?

(00:10:16) GN: Yeah.

(00:10:16) DH: And I kind of changed my life after that. Yeah.

(00:10:18) GN: Okay.

(00:10:19) DH: I came back to Marist and I didn't go home anymore on the weekends. I stayed up here and became part of the community.

(00:10:25) GN: Right, okay. Moving on. Now, somehow or other, you got interested in math and you did pretty well in math, is that right?

(00:10:35) DH: Well, my mother was a math teacher.

(00:10:37) GN: Oh.

(00:10:38) DH: So I kind of inherited her ability.

(00:10:40) GN: Okay.

(00:10:41) DH: Unlike some of my, some of my siblings didn't, but, you know, I did.

(00:10:44) GN: Yeah, and so, that's <laugh> That's good to know. The Marist, experience then, in terms of getting your courses and so on, when you graduate from Marist, what's the first job you get? You were teaching?

(00:11:03) **DH:** Well, I, my first real job was teaching, but the year after I graduated, I was still dodging the draft.

(00:11:11) **GN:** Oh, I meant to ask about that. Yeah. Well, were you one selected, did you have the number system?

(00:11:16) **DH:** Yes, we were, I was number eleven. I missed the top ten, but, yeah, it was tough <laugh>. Don't ask him for his number.

(00:11:22) **GN:** <laugh>, Did they keep coming after you to see if what you were doing was the right thing?

(00:11:27) **DH:** Well, they were trying to get me and, story of how I got out of it. I had filed for a CO, I had filed for all kinds of things to, get out of the draft. And so I was sent my, as soon as I, before I even graduated, I got a notice to--

(00:11:46) **GN:** Come to the draft board?

(00:11:47) **DH:** Come to, for my physical. So I, the day came and I didn't, I was supposed to be going into Brooklyn, was was a Fort Hamilton in Bay Ridge there. And, so the day of, I was supposed to be in Bay Ridge. I walked into the draft board here in Poughkeepsie and said, I'm supposed to take my physical today down in Brooklyn, but I can't do it because I'm living here right now. So they gave me papers to transfer, and they sent me down there, and, then they, I got a call, I got a notice to appear up here to, for my physical, so I walked in, I walked into the draft board in Jamaica, Queens, and said, I'm supposed to go to take my physical today up in Poughkeepsie or Albany.

(00:12:33) GN: <laugh>.

(00:12:34) DH: I can't do it. So I played this game with them all the time.

(00:12:36) GN: Where did you learn this game?

(00:12:38) DH: I just, it was natural.

(00:12:40) GN: So you were a smart guy.

(00:12:41) DH: Deceit was natural.

(00:12:41) GN: <laugh>

(00:12:45) DH: So then I finally got it, and I had to go to my physical, and I, so my woman who was my wife was in, you know, was a biology major and whatnot. She gave me some stuff to take that made me look like a diabetic. So I remember I'm driving down the Belt Parkway, and I'm, I have like six of these things, and I'm guzzling them down as I'm going, trying to look like a diabetic. And, needless to say, I went to the physical, and I, they didn't catch up to that. But when they did do, they gave me a hearing test, and the hearing test they gave me was the exact test that I took when I worked in that factory.

(00:13:28) GN: Oh, yes, yeah.

(00:13:29) DH: So I knew how to fail it.

(00:13:31) GN: Yeah.

(00:13:32) **DH:** So I failed the hearing test. So then I had to redo it. And, I redid it and I kind of, you know, it is kind of, you had to hit the button when you hear the sound and you let the button up. So I was trying to graph right on top of the other, and the button stuck on me. And you never saw a guy in so much panic, like trying to get this button unstuck, because I didn't want to pass this test. Anyway, I got the last doctor, and, they said, you know, the doctor looked at everything and he was like, looking through my papers and he said, boy, your ears are really F-ed up. And I had the presence of mind. I didn't plan to say, excuse me, sir. And then he looked up at me and talked to me, and he said, if I was you, I'd get to a doctor fast. And so that got me out of the draft.

(00:14:17) **GN:** Why didn't you want join the, didn't you want to go to Vietnam and get shot?

(00:14:21) **DH:** Yeah. Vietnam was a, you know, a political war, wasn't it?

(00:14:24) **GN:** I know. I had friends who went to Canada, you know, Marist Brothers, for a period of time. And then that's where they wound up, you know, avoiding the ultimate, you know, eventually finding yourself flying over to, be a target with someone else. Okay. Let's go back now to, your career. You get an advanced degree in math teaching, right?

(00:14:52) **DH:** Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

(00:14:53) **GN:** And, did you like teaching? It seems to me that you only two or three years in that field.

(00:15:01) **DH:** I taught for six years in public schools.

(00:15:04) **GN:** You did?

(00:15:05) **DH:** Well, three in Catholic and three in public. Yeah. And, I liked it, I loved the performance part of teaching. I love to put up five performances a day, <laugh>, you know, that was feeding my ego and everything. What I didn't like was that I had to take home--

(00:15:20) **GN:** These papers.

(00:15:22) **DH:** All this work to do every day. And I was coaching all teams at time, so I was very good friends with all the phys ed guys, and they didn't do a thing. And yet they got the same money I did. So, that kind of said to myself, there's something wrong with this system.

(00:15:38) **GN:** Yeah.

(00:15:38) **DH:** And, then like I had said, the, my wife's father had passed away and her mother was, you know, basically Looney Toons in a sense. You remember her Jack?

(00:15:52) **JD:** I remember both of them. Yep.

(00:15:53) **DH:** And, so we decided that we would, I wanted to leave teaching and she, we had to basically take care of her mother, because she was an only child. And, we wound up going back to Queens.

(00:16:07) **GN:** I see. Alright. How did you get into the banking business?

(00:16:12) **DH:** It was a freak <laugh>. I never was, I always tell people I was never a banker. I basically was a real estate guy, real estate property management. But, what happened was I was looking for a systems job, a systems analyst job, because of my math background.

(00:16:28) **GN:** Uh huh <affirmative>.

(00:16:29) **DH:** And, they, through a connection with one of my brothers, I got a job at, European American Bank. And, it was supposed to be a system, they sold it as systems job, but I was basically a glorified purchasing agent.

(00:16:45) **GN:** Nice. That was in New York City or in Queens?

(00:16:46) **DH:** It's in Long Island. Westbury.

(00:16:49) **GN:** Okay.

(00:16:50) **DH:** So I, but fortunately they saw that I had some talent and they started giving me special projects and things, and then the real estate department had some problems because of guys were taking money under the table and all this kind of nonsense as you would expect. And, they asked me to go in there and try to, you know, learn it, and, which I did and, a little, in a little while I was head of the department and started, you know, that way.

(00:17:19) **GN:** It seems as a big, at least when reading your own account that I have of you, is that, there was a situation of the sale of a property. I don't know who you're with at the time, and you were able to, you know, kind of take a chance on it and say, let's go for the fifty thousand rather than, keep arguing this.

(00:17:39) **DH:** Yeah. We were in a, we were selling a building which was pretty prestigious right outside Roosevelt Field, 600 Old Country Road. And it was, you know, the chairman of the bank had decided he, it had been Franklin National Bank's headquarters, and EAB had taken over Franklin National. So they wanted to get, the chairman at the time wanted to get rid of it because he was hiding money all over the place.

(00:18:06) GN: <laugh>

(00:18:07) DH: So he, we wound up, we put the thing up a bid, and we took the first bid, and that fell through. And so we had a second one, and he wanted it done by the end of the year. And this was like October sometime. We sat down at the negotiation table, and, there was something that the buyer wanted in the contract that the, our attorneys were telling us, you don't want to do that.

(00:18:32) GN: No. I see.

(00:18:33) DH: So the, EVP at the time, who was there, he's emptied the room out and took me and said, you know, what do you think? And so I told him, you know, if we give them this, first of all, I don't think what they're asking for is going to happen.

(00:18:49) GN: Oh, okay.

(00:18:50) DH: Secondly, if it does happen, it's only going to cost us about fifty grand to fix. And then, and, you know, you're talking about a, you know, twenty million something million dollars building.

(00:19:00) GN: Okay. And proportionately, they would you know, exchange,

(00:19:03) DH: It was a, to me, it was a no brainer. And, and the EVP called everybody back in the room and said, give them what they want. And, that's it. And then, so I said, oh, my opinion is respected, you know? Yeah.

(00:19:19) GN: Yeah, very good. Moving on, maybe because you are in the VP position of the bank that you became rather involved in community activities, you, various organizations you belonged to. It says that, you know,

(00:19:36) DH: Well I, you know, I belonged to local, you know, community, associations and things like that. I also,

(00:19:45) JD: Chamber of Commerce.

(00:19:46) DH: What?

(00:19:46) JD: Chamber of Commerce?

(00:19:47) DH: No, no. But I, you know, and I was president. I was on the board. I belong to still to this day, the Douglaston Club. I always say John McEnroe and I learned how to play tennis in the same place.

(00:20:01) GN: Yeah. Okay. Just move ahead a little bit. What got you back into so much interest in Marist? You've been around here for a couple of years now. I mean, in the past, well, with the '70, '72 reunions, was there always this kind of fondness of the place? Or did you, you know, how would you,

(00:20:25) DH: Well, I made a lot of good friends here.

(00:20:27) GN: Oh.

(00:20:28) DH: And, you know, I played on the football team, and we had a very successful senior year.

(00:20:36) **GN**: Oh, you mentioned the Mooney Brothers someplace in here.

(00:20:39) **DH**: Well, that was in the Appalachian Club.

(00:20:41) **GN**: Brendan, and, yeah.

(00:20:42) **DH**: Yes.

(00:20:43) **GN**: They weren't twins, were they?

(00:20:44) **DH**: Yes, they were.

(00:20:45) **GN**: Oh, they were twins. Yeah.

(00:20:47) **DH**: They will tell you the story where, I forget which one of them, Brendan or, one of them was the president of the, of our class. And the sophomore class was hazing us. And they kidnapped. But they kidnapped the wrong brother.

(00:21:06) **GN**: <laugh>.

(00:21:10) **DH**: So that's, they left him, you know, in his underwear or something. Some place down in Westchester or something.

(00:21:15) **GN**: Oh, way out down there. Disgraceful.

(00:21:18) **DH**: Was it Terry or Brendan, who was it?

(00:21:20) **JS**: I think Terry was the class president, and Brendan was kidnapped <laugh>.

(00:21:23) GN: Yeah. Alright. Looking back now, tell me this, would you say Marist was worth the investment? An investment in terms of time, money, benefit, you know, are all those things, because later on they're going to say, look, Wall Street Journal has an article, 56 percent of the people say, college is not necessary. You can have a healthy, successful life without going to college. Would you buy that?

(00:21:58) DH: Well, for me personally, the, you know, in one sense it saved my life. It took me off the streets.

(00:22:05) GN: Okay.

(00:22:05) DH: And then--

(00:22:07) GN: You're not the only one, I think a number of people have found that, but, you talk. Go ahead.

(00:22:11) DH: Yeah. The, and, you know, I, my freshman year, of course tuition and board for the year was two thousand dollars. And, you know, it increased a little bit, but for under ten thousand dollars for all four years, and I could go out and get a job for ten thousand dollars without any problem, was it worth it in that sense? Yes. Plus it, you know, my experiences especially, you know, I think I, in there, I talked about the football team. We were, you know, I, didn't know what I was doing when I started playing football.

(00:22:47) GN: But he did <laugh>.

(00:22:50) DH: Him? No he didn't know. He could throw a football. He couldn't play football.

(00:22:53) GN: He could kick it too. We'll talk about that later when we get to O'Reilly <laugh>. Do you have, talk about just two or three classes. Did you have George Sommer or did you have Don Drennen, or did you have Schroeder or any of those involved, are any of those names familiar?

(00:23:13) DH: Yeah some, they're familiar, but they, I never had them.

(00:23:16) GN: I see.

(00:23:16) DH: Did you say Drennen?

(00:23:19) GN: Yeah. D.A. Drennen?

(00:23:19) DH: Yeah. He, I took two classes with him. Obviously the--

(00:23:24) GN: You didn't have to.

(00:23:25) DH: I know, but I enjoyed him. He taught philosophy to the, you know, entry philosophy to all the sophomores.

(00:23:34) GN: Yeah.

(00:23:35) DH: And, the, because he thought everybody else, they weren't, anybody coming through didn't know anything. So, when, by the time they got to his upper level courses, they didn't know anything. So he, you know, said, this year I'm teaching all of them <laugh>. And he would, he was very amusing. He would, he would have his, little--

(00:23:50) GN: Oh, he was just talk.

(00:23:52) **DH:** Oh, he had a microphone, hooked up the way they do today. And he went on the stage in the theater and he taught, you know, and he would, you know like Johnny Carson coming out.

(00:24:04) **GN:** <laugh> He, but he, yeah.

(00:24:05) **DH:** And then, I took him for philosophy of religion. Which was kind of fascinating. Because at the same time, I took a course with, what was the guy's name? A brother, a short brother. And now I'm calling somebody short.

(00:24:23) **GN:** Joseph Belanger?

(00:24:26) **DH:** No. Flanigan. Brother Flanigan, I think.

(00:24:29) **GN:** Oh. Yeah, yeah.

(00:24:31) **DH:** He taught Mariology.

(00:24:34) **GN:** I see.

(00:24:34) **DH:** So it was kind of a good contrast, in listening to Drennen and listening to Flanigan <laugh> on their philosophies of religion.

(00:24:43) **GN:** I'm happy to hear you say that about Drennen because my experience, I was in the dorms at one time, and there used to be a Drennen burning book at the end of the year, they took his books and they burned it. They were, you know, one year he gave everybody a "C". Another year, gave everybody an "A", you know, it was just a matter of, it would depend on how he felt at the time. But, he was a scholar. I mean, he had something to say and he wrote. And so

if the students didn't appreciate it, that was their fault. You know? I think that's kind of, I'm talking too much. This is a reaction to what you're saying, but I didn't know you would've liked Drennen, you know?

(00:25:21) **DH:** Yeah. Not many people did.

(00:25:24) **GN:** <laugh> That's him.

(00:25:24) **DH:** I enjoyed him. He was an interesting guy. And I also had Linus Foy for math.

(00:25:28) **GN:** You had Linus Foy? Oh, wow. That's different.

(00:25:31) **DH:** Well, like, my story about Linus Foy, you know, Linus Foy I was taking an evening class, like 6:30. And I, you know, during football season we practiced and then had to eat. I never made his class.

(00:25:44) **GN:** Oh.

(00:25:44) **DH:** But I kept up on the side. I kept up with Bob Mayerhoffer who used to help me out, I could keep up. Anyway, football season ended and I came into class and I had my work. And I put it on his desk. He took the papers, he looks at them and he says, Don Hinchey, he says, you are a defensive end?

(00:26:02) **GN:** <laugh>

(00:26:04) **DH:** So it was, I said, this guy follows me, <laugh>.

(00:26:08) **GN:** Yeah. Was he president at the time?

(00:26:10) **DH:** Oh, yeah.

(00:26:11) **GN:** Oh, well, that's okay. He was aware of what was going on.

(00:26:15) **DH:** Oh, he certainly was.

(00:26:16) **GN:** Yeah. Okay. If you had a chance to talk to the president, Kevin, of this place, what would you say to him about something here that you think should be changed? Something exactly, don't let this go. Oh, this is something we don't have, we should have. Well, what should be changed?

(00:26:40) **DH:** Well, in the last, you know, last couple years ago, I guess when Murray was leaving, he put out the, diversity--

(00:26:48) **GN:** Yeah. Try to increase equality--

(00:26:54) **DH:** Equality, equity reports and whatnot. I think Marist, you know, and it, he talked about, in the report, they talked about things like, you know, the black professors who got tenure. And I said, that's insulting. Because what, why do you want to, they obviously are good professors. Why do, what's the difference if they were black, white, Hispanic or whatever the case may be? You know, why do you want to try to sell that?

(00:27:22) **GN:** Yeah. Yeah.

(00:27:22) **DH:** And then he also talked about things in there, you know, like black fraternities.

(00:27:32) **GN:** Black one teaching.

(00:27:33) **DH:** We, never had fraternities, or, that's one of the good things about Marist, that there was no sectioning off the people.

(00:27:40) **GN:** Okay.

(00:27:40) **DH:** And why do you want to do, why would you want to do that?

(00:27:43) **GN:** Yeah.

(00:27:43) **DH:** And, yeah. So if, in fact I wrote a letter to Weinman, and stated these kind of views and he got back to me. We never, we, I just exchanged one with him. He exchanged some views with me. But, you know, if you asked me what I would've told him, I'd go to that one and say, listen, Marist has something to offer to people. You don't have to, you know, sugarcoat everything and try to make every, you know, this, you know, the atmosphere we're in today where everybody has their own little niche and they want be specialized. You know, we separate people by race, religion, and we shouldn't be, especially because now, you know, with intermarriage of all of these different segments, everybody's going to be in another fifty, one hundred years. Everybody's going to be mixed race. There's not going to be no such thing as racial problems anymore. I mean, even Jack's son married a black woman. So, it happens everywhere. And it's the way, of the world. And we shouldn't be emphasizing our differences so much as we should be saying, we have a good thing here. You want to come? <Laugh>

(00:28:56) **GN:** What surprises me is since, you know, we talked about Christ the King being a new school, and the young faculty and so on. When you came here, we weren't very old either.

(00:29:06) **DH:** No.

(00:29:06) GN: You know, and after life, did you feel you got a fair education as compared to some other people who went to Siena, or went to ForDHam, or went to, any of the famous big colleges?

(00:29:23) DH: There were good points and bad points to the education I got. I wasn't, you know, I wasn't much of a student. I skipped a lot of classes. I, you know--

(00:29:31) GN: You played football with the help.

(00:29:32) DH: Some of it was my own fault. But I, yeah, I enjoyed my time here.

(00:29:41) GN: Okay. That's, that would be the next question. What was the glue that kept you here? I mean, you were never thought of leaving and going someplace else?

(00:29:49) DH: No.

(00:29:50) GN: Or did you?

(00:29:50) DH: No.

(00:29:52) GN: Okay. And, is there anything I didn't ask that maybe I should have asked you?

(00:30:00) DH: I don't know. I could spin a yarn here and there if you want. Give me a topic. I'll give you an anecdote. You know, <laugh>.

(00:30:07) GN: Yeah. Okay. Well, I just said, you know, if there's something we should add that we didn't, we don't have in terms of, intramurals is it open enough to, do the students get a fair

shake of the facilities, the ball fields and the gym and so on? Or is it reserved pretty much for the athletes?

[\(00:30:28\)](#) **DH:** Well, we had the cardboard gym, that is now a dormitory. That was--

[\(00:30:35\)](#) **GN:** I was here for that. Yes.

[\(00:30:36\)](#) **DH:** Yeah. That, that's what we had for a gym. And then, and we laid the sod in gym class for Leonidoff Field, back in my freshman year. And, the lower, you know, football team we used to practice on a rock garden in the back.

[\(00:30:53\)](#) **GN:** Were you a Viking or were you a Red Fox?

[\(00:30:54\)](#) **DH:** Yes, I was a Viking.

[\(00:30:55\)](#) **GN:** You were Viking. You know why you were a Viking?

[\(00:30:58\)](#) **DH:** Excuse me?

[\(00:30:59\)](#) **GN:** Do you know why you were a Viking?

[\(00:31:01\)](#) **DH:** Because we weren't a varsity sport.

[\(00:31:05\)](#) **GN:** Well, why did they call you the Vikings?

[\(00:31:09\)](#) **DH:** I don't, know.

(00:31:10) GN: Because a college was going out of business and we bought all their uniforms, <laugh>, and on which were the Vikings. And we became the Vikings <laugh> until such time we could afford our own uniforms, and then suddenly we became the Red Foxes.

(00:31:23) DH: Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>.

(00:31:24) GN: So that's, unfortunately it's true <laugh>, you know, but, that's how poor we were. And managed to get through, those years to what I think now is a pretty stable one. And they push the wall, you think is looking into it. You think Marist has a good future?

(00:31:43) DH: I hope so, because I love the place.

(00:31:45) GN: Oh, okay. Alright.

(00:31:47) DH: You know, I enjoy coming here a couple times a year. I come, I try to get to a football game every year.

(00:31:52) GN: Okay.

(00:31:52) DH: I try to, you know.

(00:31:55) GN: Oh, one other point. Talk about football. Did you organize something? Was there a, who's the professional football player now from Marist?

(00:32:06) DH: There's, there were two of them. A kicker, Myers. And, there was another defensive lineman. Yeah.

(00:32:15) GN: It was just, I thought he was interviewed someplace. I thought in one of the, I never met him, but I thought I saw it in the Marist news. He was at some event or other, you know. Unfortunately his picture's not up on the wall. You go over there and they got, who's the six foot seven guy?

(00:32:36) DH: Rik Smits.

(00:32:37) GN: Yeah. And, you know, great. And then the girls sports, that's another thing.

(00:32:43) DH: Yeah. Very true.

(00:32:44) GN: Especially the girls sports, basketball, you know, they have gone full steam ahead. Okay. Let's just say, thank you so much, Don for this. And let me turn the microphone over to the, friend over here. I forget his name. I think it's Jack, but I'm not quite sure.

(00:33:02) JD: Oh boy. <laugh>.

(00:33:03) GN: <laugh>. Okay. What I'm about to ask you is pretty much the same thing, but there will be different answers, I hope.

(00:33:12) JD: Oh, there will be. Yeah.

(00:33:13) GN: <laugh> Because, it's a, you're entirely, as friendly as you are, you're as different as I think you could be. You know, you're tall, you're short, you're gray, you have no hair. <laugh> and, virtually. And, we'll, go with you know. But, from the beginning, Jack, where do we go, born where, and family?

(00:33:39) **JD:** Well, family, I have, I'm the oldest of three boys. I'm the tallest of the three boys. We were all athletes. We all grew up playing baseball and basketball. My youngest brother in particular is a professional golfer. He's the head pro down in Pelham Manor, and in the Hall of Fame at St. John's University. He also went to Christ the King, but he was ten years behind us.

(00:34:05) **GN:** Ten years behind you. I see. Okay. How about that growing up period?

(00:34:12) **JD:** Yeah.

(00:34:14) **GN:** Because of the activity, the family must have been pretty much united and you all knew what each of them were doing.

(00:34:19) **JD:** Yep.

(00:34:19) **GN:** So closely knit. Still closely knit?

(00:34:22) **JD:** No, because we just, you know, life happens.

(00:34:27) **GN:** Yes.

(00:34:27) **JD:** I have a family. My brother Pat's eleven months younger than me, so we're like Irish twins and we played ball together because we were in the same age group and it was doubled up. And, you know, he, went off and he had his friends and I had mine, unfortunately.

(00:34:44) **GN:** Yeah.

(00:34:44) **JD:** But I didn't get into as much trouble as Mr. Hinchey did.

(00:34:47) **GN:** <laugh>.

(00:34:49) **JD:** <laugh> And, Michael, the youngest one. He, you know, I left home when I was seventeen when I went to Marist Novitiate.

(00:34:56) **GN:** Yeah. Well, you're jumping ahead a little bit. Stay in grammar school. Through the grammar school years was it just sports? Choir, drama or anything?

(00:35:06) **JD:** Choir. Yeah. I was in the choir, but I didn't get thrown out. I, actually they had me sing solo at a concert.

(00:35:13) **GN:** Did you?

(00:35:14) **JD:** Yeah. I had a high voice, you know, before the voice changed. Mr. Gavigan, right? Wasn't that the guy? And, you know, after that, grammar school was pretty much a lot of fun, you know, I enjoyed it. I was a pretty good student. Though, you know, my parents, my mother in particular was on top of us.

(00:35:33) **GN:** I see.

(00:35:33) **JD:** With the schoolwork. And, you know, my father worked full time.

(00:35:38) **GN:** And you're living where at this time?

(00:35:41) **JD:** In WoodHaven.

(00:35:41) **GN:** Oh, WoodHaven.

(00:35:43) **JD:** Yeah. We, WoodHaven guy, St. Thomas Apostle.

(00:35:46) GN: Okay. And then onto Christ the King High School. The four years there. Was it this Brother Aiden who took you out of Christ the King to Esopus? What was the connection there?

(00:36:01) JD: The, I actually, we had played basketball and we passed Coldspring coming up. And I said to him that, that's Don. I said that, the juniorate was here. Richie Ames, who he knew and was also in my year at Marist Novitiate, he went there in high school. And there's a couple other people. So we played them in basketball when I was, I think a freshman at Christ the King. And as, what got me up here more were the Marist Brothers. They were, you know, young group, good guys, regular guys, I didn't know Don Kelly until our senior year when he taught me in math twelve. But, we became very good friends back then.

(00:36:45) GN: Did you know about Esopus? Where did you meet him?

(00:36:48) JD: I met him at Christ the King.

(00:36:49) GN: Oh, you did?

(00:36:50) JD: Yeah. We went to Esopus, why did we go up there? I don't think we really had--

(00:36:58) DH: We took our junior retreat or something.

(00:37:00) JD: The, I don't remember going there for the, for a retreat. We may have, to the mansion, more than likely.

(00:37:07) GN: We did live there for a whole year or two.

(00:37:09) JD: A year and a half.

(00:37:10) GN: Year and a half.

(00:37:11) JD: Yeah. My freshman year, and then half my sophomore year. And Bill Francis, Bill Levine?

(00:37:17) GN: Yeah.

(00:37:17) JD: He was my guy. Phil Robert had another group.

(00:37:22) GN: I see.

(00:37:22) JD: Binsky?

(00:37:24) GN: Yeah.

(00:37:24) JD: He had a group, and was it Leo?

(00:37:27) GN: Yeah, Leo yeah.

(00:37:27) JD: Leo was the fourth one right? That was the fourth. That was after Brother Sigmund had,

(00:37:32) GN: Great head start kind of guy. He's a very smart guy.

(00:37:35) JD: Yeah.

(00:37:35) GN: Yeah. He was probably, well, Bill Levine and he probably had some other, and then I was, not the brightest father there. They kept Leo on the side to teach English and drive the bus and, you know, keep people happy.

(00:37:51) **JD:** We had a lot of athletes in that class. You know, especially from Christ the King. We had, McClinchey, myself, Charlie Bosterna, who were, who was the friend? Well he was, that's okay.

(00:38:10) **GN:** Again, have to keep you focused on this machine and him <laugh>, leave him out of it. We heard enough from him already. So, but it will fill in some of the spots if you are, actually lost. But I want to go to Esopus just for the couple of experiences that you might have had there. Like, did you ever go to Camp Marist?

(00:38:34) **JD:** I did. The summer of sixty-eight. I worked there. Actually. We all went up there, from Esopus to--

(00:38:40) **GN:** It was in June.

(00:38:41) **JD:** Put the dock in and--

(00:38:42) **GN:** It was cold. Putting the dock into the water.

(00:38:44) **JD:** It was. Yeah.

(00:38:45) **GN:** John () was, kind of supervising it. Okay. And, so you had that experience.

(00:38:54) **JD:** Yeah, that was great.

(00:38:56) **GN:** And then, so far as life in Esopus, it was quite a difference from high school life in terms of--

(00:39:05) **JD:** It was.

[\(00:39:05\)](#) **GN:** You think now, oh, you know, there's no telephones for those guys. Always. Even in those days, you didn't have to work. You just got up and went to meals. Okay. You had your, recreational periods. Okay. The thing my brothers couldn't get over that we had Wednesday afternoon off because you went to school Saturday morning. And if it rained on Wednesday, we went to school and we took off Thursday afternoon. You know, so nothing was wrong. That was my experience of growing up in the same situation that you're talking about.

[\(00:39:44\)](#) **JD:** I found, because you get, once you go there and you have to get psychological testing and all the other stuff, and, but going there, you pretty much were told what to do. When to eat, when to sleep, when to work. And your life was kind of controlled. You didn't have to think too much. But we had a great group of guys. We had a, you know, enjoyable time. And it was also during the changeover to the ecumenical council. Yes. When we went from black suits to where you can, you know, you can wear whatever you want, or.

[\(00:40:18\)](#) **GN:** The Roman collar even was not used after that period of time. So that's there. Then the work periods, I mean, you like Saturday afternoon work periods, do you remember some of those?

[\(00:40:35\)](#) **JD:** I got a great work period. I was cutting the grass, so the tractor was my ride. This is my, this is the first year. And I go and sit on the tractor and something stings me and I get up off the seat and it was a wasp, and the, damn thing flew away. And I was like. And so I had the stinger in my butt and I hate to tell you who took it out, but it was, it wasn't him. It was Brother Sigmund.

[\(00:41:07\)](#) **GN:** Oh woah. Yeah.

(00:41:09) **JD**: <laugh>.

(00:41:10) **GN**: Well, there you go. He was a lovable guy if you'd get to know him <laugh>.

(00:41:15) **JD**: <laugh>. Yeah. Oh, we have a story with Charlie Bosterna. And Charlie was a big track star in high school. And you know, he came up with, and we grew up with us and one of our friends. And you took turns sitting with Brother Sigmund.

(00:41:29) **GN**: Yes.

(00:41:29) **JD**: With that bell, you know.

(00:41:31) **GN**: Yeah.

(00:41:31) **JD**: You had to be quiet and, so Charlie says to somebody at that table, can you pass the swole burgers? It was salisbury steak, right? But it was known as swole burgers that Jimmy knew to cook.

(00:41:50) **GN**: The names of different things. That's what, yeah.

(00:41:51) **JD**: So <laugh>, so Brother Sigmund goes, "Excuse me, Mr. Bosterna?" And he goes, yeah? He goes, "what did you call them?" "Swole burgers." "What are they?" Swole burgers, swole burgers, swole burgers. And we're all dying because, you know, he didn't know any better. He thought they were called swole burgers <laugh>.

(00:42:09) **GN**: Yeah. And he answered the question you wanted to know.

(00:42:11) **JD**: Yeah, how many times are you going to answer that?

(00:42:15) GN: Okay, alright. When you leave Esopus, you go to Marist College.

(00:42:21) JD: Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> for another year.

(00:42:23) GN: For another year. And then, at Marist, what are you taking? What are you studying?

(00:42:30) JD: Oh boy. You know, originally I wanted to be a teacher and, I wanted to study American Studies.

(00:42:36) GN: I see.

(00:42:37) JD: And I made a big mistake of going into advanced composition with, what was the Brother's name? He used to always eat standing up because he said it was good. You know, you remember little things like this. Anyhow, I couldn't write a children's book, never mind advanced composition. And I had a guy, Warren, that was his last name, Warren Flynn? Does that sound right? But, he was trying to guide me through. But I was just, I'm not a writer. Yeah. Okay. You know, actually I wasn't a good student.

(00:43:08) GN: You made a stab at it anyway.

(00:43:09) JD: Yeah. You know, and I was like, oh man, when am I going to get out of here? <Laugh>.

(00:43:14) GN: What were the best courses you took at Marist?

(00:43:18) JD: Hmm.

(00:43:20) GN: Math? <laugh>

(00:43:22) JD: Math was computer science in the beginning. And it was the most boring thing I've ever seen in my life. It was all, you know, ones and zeros. And I was like, what? There weren't a lot of good, see, I was okay. When I was at Marist Novitiate. Yeah. I had guidance. But when I left and went out on my own.

(00:43:40) GN: Yeah.

(00:43:41) JD: It was good time Charlie. You know, I had a good time, a lot of fun. And my father said to me, after a while, "You don't seem to be, you know, doing that great in college. Do you want to work?" And I said, "yeah, that'd be great". Because I'm the oldest of, of three. He didn't have any money and he's got the other two. And so, I left, he got a job for me at, with local one, elevator constructors where I wound up working at the World Trade Center.

(00:44:15) GN: Oh. Why should the bar business hurt? Where were you with him?

(00:44:20) JD: The bar business was after that.

(00:44:22) GN: Oh, the bar was after that.

(00:44:24) JD: Yeah.

(00:44:26) GN: Okay. Go back to the Trade Center. How, what year was that about? Do you remember?

(00:44:31) JD: I, the summer of sixty-nine, sixty-eight. I worked with the, Local 40 Iron Workers, Stevens Tower, which was on the side of, next to Fox, the Fox building. And that was

going up, those four buildings, the town life building, the Exxon building. They were all still not up. They were still in the ground. And I worked there, Terry Mackle, I think we mentioned. And I worked there for the summer and, I loved it. I've always been mechanical. And they said to me, go back to college. Do not come back here because you're not going to have a job. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I came back to college for that, the fall of sixty-nine mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And, that's when my father presented to me like, you know, we can get you with the elevator constructors. So I guess the trade center was on about the ninth floor, tenth floor at the time, the South Tower. And I stayed there, for four years and--

[\(00:45:32\)](#) GN: Really?

[\(00:45:33\)](#) JD: Yeah.

[\(00:45:33\)](#) GN: Did, was Otis involved in that?

[\(00:45:36\)](#) JD: Yeah, that was Otis.

[\(00:45:38\)](#) GN: They were. Okay. And you actually installed, I don't know, is there cables or what?

[\(00:45:45\)](#) JD: I installed everything. I unloaded a lot of stuff from the trucks. How many elevators were in each tower?

[\(00:45:53\)](#) GN: Oh.

[\(00:45:56\)](#) JD: Take a guess? There was, remember it was built three buildings on top of each other. So.

(00:46:03) GN: Oh, yeah. Well, the elevators were not continuous, were they?

(00:46:06) JD: No. Well there were a couple, but that was to the roof. There were 99 elevators in each building.

(00:46:13) GN: Oh yeah.

(00:46:13) JD: People were like, what? I say, yep. Because you had the main floor, then you had all of the local banks. Then you had forty-four was the sky lobby. And then you had all the local banks. Then you had seventy-seven on the other side, and then you had all locals. So, when you add them all up. And you know, I don't know if you want me to go down that road of being there during the attacks in 9/11 because, I was out of that business. Or do you want me to go back to the box? I have, I was there during the attacks. I saw people jump.

(00:46:49) GN: Really?

(00:46:50) JD: Yeah. I saw the second plane, when it hit the big ball of flame that came out. I was standing on Broadway and Cortlandt right up the block from Century 21.

(00:46:59) GN: Wow.

(00:46:59) JD: And we all just went, "Oh my God". And you know, I went back to my office, but I could write a book.

(00:47:06) GN: That was the second one, or the first one that hit?

(00:47:08) JD: Second one. The first one, I was on the phone to suppliers in New Jersey.

(00:47:12) GN: I see.

(00:47:13) JD: And I couldn't see it because 1 Liberty Plaza was blocking my view. I was at 150 Broadway, 165, across the street was 1 Liberty Plaza, which is a fifty-four story building. And the Brookfield Properties owners are good friends of mine. Good customers. And I heard something hit, it sounded like a truck going over a steel plate on the ground, you know that rumble?

(00:47:37) GN: Yeah.

(00:47:37) JD: And I went, "what the F was that?" and this guy was on the phone with, he says, "what?". I go, "I just heard the most God awful sound". And then I see papers on fire flying. And I said, "Oh my God. Something just blew up". I didn't know it was a plane. Blew up with the Trade Center. So that's when I went downstairs and, stood on the corner and South Tower was still standing, you know, and you know, you see some of the facade falling off and then you realize the people jumping.

(00:48:09) GN: You were really lucky to get out there, huh?

(00:48:10) JD: Yeah, well, yeah. I was, lucky. But, you know, I'm kind of, I try to find ways of doing things. And like a dope I went back to my office. Yeah. I was on the nineteenth floor of the building and, there were three other guys up there. So, they're talking, they're saying there was a plane that hit and I went, "what?". Listening to *Imus in the Morning* there were no other businesses because we had different offices there. And they said that, "yeah, the guy said the plane hit it". And I said, "that was a plane that just blew up in the South Tower". So, you know, now we're standing there and they're going, "what are we going to do"? And you hear the rumble

when the South Tower fell, it was the second one to be hit but the first one to fall. And I'm looking out that window and there's Chase Plaza, which is a sixty-story building. It's another big, and all you see is smoke coming up from the street. And I'm thinking, somebody just hit Chase Plaza. Let's get out of here. So we go down to the lobby, and we took the elevator, which they tell you never to do when it's this type of, we get to the lobby. And we stand in the lobby and in comes a fireman covered in this soot.

[\(00:49:24\)](#) GN: Yeah.

[\(00:49:25\)](#) JD: He tells us we can't go out. You're going to, you can't breathe out there. So we went down to the basement and this guy, Kenny Wallace, whose son was on the news, he was a court officer and an EMT. He died. Something hit him as he was saving people. And Kenny's grandson actually rang the bell that year on New Year's with Rudy Giuliani. But Kenny was a big smoker. And I was with him, Scott Cohen, and this guy Danny. And he goes to me, "tell me this isn't", he goes, "you worked there". He goes, "tell me this isn't asbestos". I go, "the whole thing's asbestos". Mario de Bono sprayed every piece of steel in that building with asbestos. And so, we did walk out and we walked through the cloud, but, you know, nothing really happened to me because from construction, I always had this type of handkerchief.

[\(00:50:22\)](#) GN: Ah, oh.

[\(00:50:23\)](#) JD: I tie it around, add a hat and sunglasses, and walked. Walked through the cloud. And walk over towards the, East River, the FDR drive. Yeah. And a lot of things happen. And as we get to the Brooklyn Bridge, this ramp's going up and we start walking up the ramp and everybody stops. And they're looking that way. And I turn, and there's the north tower coming

down. And in the foreground is city hall. And it was just so eerie with the big antenna that was on top. And so we said, we're not going over the bridge <laugh>, you know. So we wound up underneath hanging out, waiting for, I don't know what, but traffic's bumper to bumper going by, the seafood place down near the fish market. And there's a city truck van. So Dan goes over and he says, "Hey, where are you going, uptown?" "Yeah. Come on in." So the four of us get in. These guys lived in Brooklyn, I'm in Queens. So we dropped them off by the Williamsburg Bridge, and then we're going up First Avenue. And I'm talking to Stan, who went to Mater Christi, and we played basketball against each other in high school. <laugh>. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. He went to St. Francis Prep and he played, you remember Mike and Joe McDermott?

[\(00:51:41\)](#) **DH:** Sure.

[\(00:51:43\)](#) **JD:** He played with them. And, you know, so we had a big conversation going, we get by the Midtown Tunnel and the cops, you know, got everything blocked off. So he says to me, if they ask, he worked for the City Transit. I said, okay. They, didn't. So he told him he's got to go over to, Queens. The mayor wants him over there to. Went through, another guy stops us. "Where you guys going, Queens"? A whole bunch of people come down and get in the van and we drop them off on the expressway on our way home. So that was pretty much that story. They get back to the trade center when the new buildings were going up. So I installed elevators in there. I was there doing the attacks. And my business is valves, mitral valve and actuation automation. Mm-Hmm. We did a number of those buildings, the sales of the valves in there, you know, so it was kind of, full circle.

[\(00:52:40\)](#) **GN:** Yeah.

(00:52:41) **JD**: My life. And now I'm, I'm waiting for the World Trade Center, the victim compensation fund because I've had five different skin cancers. Well, two different skin cancers, but I've had mohs surgery. And that became one of the cancers. And I'm listening to the radio one night and I hear, "If you had basal cell or squamous, you qualify as having cancer from..." So I had to get witnesses too, which was fine. And reports, and I had, I still had my lease that I had siGNed for my business at the building. I don't know why I kept it, but I did. And, you know, it's, they've now called the witnesses Tommy Damsel and my partner Peter, that, you know.

(00:53:27) **GN**: Yeah.

(00:53:28) **JD**: And he's eighty years old. We knew people then, we still know people. So, they've now contacted the witnesses. Because they tell me twelve to eighteen months, I'm in the fourteenth month. And it could be anywhere from ninety to two hundred thousand tax-free. So, you know, and I said, oh, by the way, and the law firm Slater Slater and Schumer or whatever it is on the island. I said, oh, by the way, I've gotten two more skin cancers the way I needed mohs surgery on my earlobe up here, my cheek I had nine stitches. Yeah. And he, and they said, well, you know, unless we start all over again, you know, you can't. You've got to leave it alone. It's been submitted. I said, all right, let's let it go. And, we'll see, but.

(00:54:14) **GN**: Yeah, I just, that morning, I was giving communion at Vassar hospital, and they said the, a plane went into the towers. I said, I remember in high school a plane went into the Empire State Building. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> <laugh>. You know, and it was, it was nothing. I mean, it got hit on the eightieth floors or something, and, you know, it was, I said, it happens now. Little did I know. You know, and then, the expression "the tower fell". I just

thought it was the radio tower up at the top. You know, not the whole thing. That was just, well, I must admit, I didn't think we were going to get into this story.

(00:54:58) **JD**: It's hard not to, once I start <laugh>.

(00:55:00) **GN**: There's few people that can tell it like you tell it. I mean, that's, yeah. Have you done it more officially someplace?

(00:55:08) **JD**: I've thought of going to the museum and telling the story, but I just, I have never been to the pools.

(00:55:16) **GN**: Oh, I see. Okay

(00:55:17) **JD**: I know people who, you know, I've been to the top of the observatory for One World Trade Center, the new one, for my wife's birthday. The kids competed, with my youngest guy in particular. He wanted to do something different from going to dinner in every restaurant you want in Long Island area. So he hooked, he sets everything up for, and I'm like, am I going to get anxious when I go down there? I wasn't sure how I was going to react to going up that high. Because I was, I landed the last two elevator machines on the South Tower that were twenty-five tons each. A crane took them two and a half hours to bring up. So I'm, so we're up there and it's like unbelievable. We were there at Sunset. It was, what a great experience. And I'm talking to the family. That's that building that's there, this one's there. And this guy's next to me. He's, and he's English. And he's going, excuse me, how do you know so much about this? I said, well, I worked down here for years and I worked with these buildings as far as industrial products that they needed. So that had been, you know, I said, oh yeah, I could probably give a class on this stuff. But I've thought of, going there, but I just, I didn't.

(00:56:30) GN: You'd be emotional.

(00:56:31) JD: It's tough because I lost, two people I knew. Well, one real well was John Griffin, who was an inch taller than me. And he always said that <laugh>. He ran one New York Plaza. He was the engineer, chief engineer before he, and he got that job as general manager at the Trade Center. Six weeks. He worked for Larry Silverstein. And he always said to me, you know, Jack, I love big guys. You know what, big guys, big hands, big feet. I go, yeah. He goes, they wear big gloves and big shoes because, just coming <laugh>, you know, everybody else comes up with different ideas about that. But, yeah, it was unpleasant.

(00:57:15) GN: Well, we're here at Marist and this story is just, overwhelming from what I thought was going to be part of our business here today. Although I will come back to one thing. Can we get back to your present business? Is it still operating the elevator business?

(00:57:34) JD: Well, Otis is operating, that was my first seven, that's when I, that's what I did after I left Marist.

(00:57:41) GN: I see.

(00:57:42) JD: I went right down to the trade center. I still know a lot of people. I wound up being the general foreman's helper all the time because they like big guys. They used call me Lurch. You know, from there I did <laugh> and we, you know, I was pretty much done with the most of the heavy work. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So he had asked me if I'd work with a friend of his on Long Island doing hydraulic elevators. Like you have here, two floors, three floors tops. I'm at the Holiday Inn in Westbury. And there was another, I guess it was a hotel or motel across the street, the Island Inn, which was very popular over there. And I'm working on doors in the

lobby and my mechanic is downstairs and, you know, there's a cop there and he's, people are leaving.

[\(00:58:29\)](#) **JD:** And I go, what's up? He goes, oh. We just, you know, have a little issue, but you know, you can stay, you can stay here working out walks. Telly Savalas Mm-Hmm.

<affirmative> remember him from Kojak? He walks out because he was filming Kojak. And he goes across the street to the Island Inn to have a few drinks. And I'm like, I go to the cop. I go, what's the deal? He goes, oh, it's a bomb scare. But you know, we're okay. You know, and as I'm talking to him, I look down the hall and there's a group of people coming in the back door, and it's Elvis Presley.

[\(00:58:59\)](#) **GN:** Oh.

[\(00:58:59\)](#) **JD:** They snuck him in for his last concert at Nassau Coliseum. And I found out from all the other workers that, yeah, they snuck in Elvis Presley, I said that's what it was, geez. So, oh, stories. I worked with Stony Brook University in the Health and Science Center. They had two small towers. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And, you know, but I was the only helper at that point. I still didn't have a union card after seven years because it was just frozen. And business was slow. So I decided to leave and go into the bar business with my brother Pat.

[\(00:59:31\)](#) **GN:** Uh huh <affirmative>.

[\(00:59:32\)](#) **JD:** And being WoodHaven guys. And, you know, I know his nieces, his nephews.

[\(00:59:41\)](#) **GN:** They drink occasionally?

(00:59:43) **JD**: Yeah. Occasionally. You had, actually, what the hell was the kid's name? He was a big, big drinker. He had a problem, the family itself. But we had a business that was there. Because we did all the sports. We ran the leagues. We were always in victory field and basketball leagues and softball leagues and so on. So Pat said, you know, we could probably have a real good business. So we did. And it was a little too good because we were overwhelmed. And I had worked at Poor Richard's Pub by St. John's University and you know, it's, I, you think you know what bar business is, oh no. So I did that for fourteen years and, didn't expect to be there for fourteen, but I wound up having, some major surgery on my back.

(01:00:30) **GN**: Running the bar business, was your brother really, was it co-ownership, or did you help or what?

(01:00:39) **JD**: Yes, it was a corporation.

(01:00:41) **GN**: Oh, you were.

(01:00:42) **JD**: And we were fifty-fifty. He decided to get out. And, I stayed, and oh man. It just dawned on me. My partner at the end was a fellow named John McCann. Do you remember Tom McCann and Mark Moran?

(01:01:01) **GN**: Yeah. Mark Moran of everybody.

(01:01:03) **JD**: Yeah. And Tom McCann was his buddy. And Tom went to Christ the King. He was a year ahead of us.

(01:01:08) **GN**: Yeah.

[\(01:01:09\)](#) **JD**: This was Tom's brother.

[\(01:01:11\)](#) **GN**: Yeah.

[\(01:01:11\)](#) **JD**: He went to Bishop Loughlin, where my brother went. Pat didn't expect to be in it so long, but when I had back surgery, I had, an acute herniated disc and I was paralyzed from my waist down. I was thirty-two, so it was in '82. So I had to, get emergency surgery and so on. I said, what am I going to do now? I can't do elevators with this back. And so on. So life went on and, you know, the bar business, it was pretty good, easier with two people running it than one. But we had problems with, cocaine.

[\(01:01:45\)](#) **GN**: Oh, okay.

[\(01:01:46\)](#) **JD**: John Gotti Jr's people. And, well the whole area was just flooded with it.

[\(01:01:51\)](#) **GN**: Wow.

[\(01:01:51\)](#) **JD**: And you try to control it, and you know.

[\(01:01:54\)](#) **GN**: Yeah.

[\(01:01:55\)](#) **JD**: You can't. So eventually I realized that I needed to get out of this business. And I wound up, I knew a guy who was in the valve business and said, hey, come on. Why don't you work for us? You know, you got the personality to do sales. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I did. I walked in Manhattan, drew up the streets, what buildings I'd been to. Then you could go and see the chief engineer without security bothering you. And little by little from, 2001 January

9th, we started, oh no, I was doing that ten years before that. Jesus, I've been around this a long time. So I had built a business, I built a client base.

[\(01:02:35\)](#) **GN:** You had to build it or does it come automatically?

[\(01:02:38\)](#) **JD:** I had to get the customers, I had to go out to the buildings and see the chief engineer, which is a local ninety-four operating engineer, which is very popular. There's a couple of people around, I think who went to Marist too, who were operating. It's a good union job to have because they just run the HVAC for the buildings.

[\(01:02:58\)](#) **GN:** I see.

[\(01:02:58\)](#) **JD:** So I'm with the company called T & A Valve. And Tom Kush was the owner. His cousin's my, one of my best friends because he was a sheet metal worker at the trade center, and we became very close. So he told me that, his cousin was stealing. And I work full commission from day one. I got three little kids. I have no salary. I'm going to have a draw. And one day I wound up making more money than the owners did because I did more sales than they did my commissions. And they weren't happy about that. So, you know, little by little they sold the business. You know, I had no promises, but I could go anywhere, any plumbing house because I had a customer base.

[\(01:03:40\)](#) **GN:** Yeah.

[\(01:03:40\)](#) **JD:** And that's what happened. Peter Walden, who kind of hired me there, he paid them to be a partner. He wasn't a stockholder. So it was kind of like I said, Pete, you with the big

contractors, me with the end users, I said we could have a good business. So we did that with hardly any money. And, everybody wanted us to succeed because they knew us, you know.

[\(01:04:05\)](#) GN: Yeah, it seems to me that, you use the expression, you're a happy go lucky guy, someplace in your writing, you know?

[\(01:04:14\)](#) JD: Yeah.

[\(01:04:14\)](#) GN: And I was saying to myself, when you're telling these stories, you just seem to have the disposition to be able to make friends with and invite people and trust you. I think that's probably part of, I mean, you're big enough to be able to steal, but I don't think you'd do that too readily. You know? And so that part of it is, you mentioned Mark Moran I had told a story with him. I was studying, I was going to the library in New York I had to do, I was doing my thesis. And on that train down, I left my wallet on the seat. I got off, it's only in Times Square, oh it's Grand Central, that I realized. Who's coming down the elevator but Mark Moran <laugh>, and I go Mark how are you, so we sit down and I said, Mark, do you have ten dollars? I have to be able to get home. You know, I said, this is really the truth. You know? So he gave it to me. And so, later on he died sometime later I remember this.

[\(01:05:15\)](#) JD: He was, a postal, he worked for the post office. In my neighborhood.

[\(01:05:20\)](#) GN: Oh yeah? And that's, you know, it's, so many of those names you mention just come back to me as we talk here now.

[\(01:05:28\)](#) JD: Yeah, Mark was a real character. Bobby Horde, The Hawk. Right. That was, quite a crew. But Mark was, he married one of the Hanna girls. Janice Hanna?

(01:05:40) **DH:** Yeah, that sounds right.

(01:05:40) **JD:** She had a twin, did he marry Janice herself or?

(01:05:44) **DH:** I don't know.

(01:05:44) **GN:** Yeah, but he--

(01:05:46) **DH:** You're the one with the names.

(01:05:47) **JD:** Yeah. But he wound up, he was married and then got divorced because she got preGNant and it wasn't by him.

(01:05:54) **GN:** Oh, so that's a reason, <laugh> yeah.

(01:05:55) **JD:** You know.

(01:05:56) **GN:** How about the draft? Did you have a problem with the draft?

(01:05:58) **JD:** No. I had a, 223 was my number.

(01:06:02) **GN:** Oh, okay. You really lucked out <laugh>.

(01:06:04) **JD:** I did. And that was also my badge number at the Trade Center. It was 223. Yeah.

(01:06:10) **GN:** There's something about that.

(01:06:11) **JD:** I, yeah, I know. I like that. Yeah. Plus I don't know if they would've gotten me. I have, I can only see out of one eye. I have amblyopia in my right eye was born with.

(01:06:22) GN: Oh, okay. So, well, I'm going to ask Jan to say, do you have anything you want to ask this young man before he leaves us today? <laugh> this story has just been, I'm lost for words. It seldom happens. But, you know how it is.

(01:06:42) JS: I would ask, since you've been back to Marist right? In February, I think it was. For a basketball game, right?

(01:06:49) JD: Yeah, the Siena game.

(01:06:51) JS: Had you been back to Marist previously?

(01:06:55) JD: No, I haven't. But my two nieces have been, they're recent graduates, it was Bridget Sharon and Kelly Sharon. They're my sister-in-law's daughters. And, they did well, they were good students. Bridget's now an attorney. And Kelly is, <laugh> she's so funny. She works for FanDuel, not in the gambling end, but on the computer end. And she's met a guy that she's, you know, and it's like, they're, they loved it.

(01:07:27) JS: That's great. And what did you think when you came back for the first time?

(01:07:30) JD: Well, we, I shouldn't say that. We used to come up in the summers for, Don Kelly would have his family parties. On the 4th of July.

(01:07:37) GN: Yeah, right.

(01:07:38) JS: I've heard about those.

(01:07:41) **JD:** I'm married to a Kelly who's not related to him, but that didn't mean, he goes, you're still family. I said, thanks, Don. So we were always invited. And we'd have a big party down here. And this was when Don was drinking, you know?

(01:07:55) **GN:** Yes.

(01:07:55) **JD:** But he was pretty good. But you know, about that he was very well organized. He knew he can count on me for anything. And he had, his cousins were the Doyle's? Was there a Doyle from your year? Our year?

(01:08:07) **GN:** There's Doyle funeral people here, but I don't know.

(01:08:10) **JS:** The Doyle's from '75, the class of '75.

(01:08:12) **JD:** Yeah. There were Doyle's here though. They had a boat. So they'd come up and, you know, take the kids for rides and I'd jump in the Hudson trying to figure out which way the current was going so I didn't get pulled away too far <laugh>. But his cousins would be in one of the townhouses because these other dorms were not here. Yeah. And, you know, that kind of ended. And then, you know, Don wound up out in Detroit for a while and, he had an eight hundred number I could get ahold of him for, because he had to get cleaned up, I guess.

(01:08:43) **GN:** Are you going to put elevators in the Dyson building here? Do you see that as a contract for you <laugh>?

(01:08:47) **JD:** <laugh> No, I'm done. I'm done with them. They got so much competition, but I went from that to the bar business, to now I do the industrial valves on automation, which I've done for thirty years. And I sold my half to my son Peter, who's doing a great job with it. Kevin's

an attorney. We're in his office in New Hyde Park. And my daughter Megan is down in Dallas, which we were down recently for Easter. And she's a senior interior desiGNER. She's done, she started teaching. And, you know, she went to Queens College, got, she was always a good kid. Mary Louis Academy she went to. You know, a lot of friends from there, and she wound up teaching fourth grade and one of the, mothers was blaming her for her son not doing well, and started cursing at her outside.

[\(01:09:41\)](#) GN: Oh, really?

[\(01:09:41\)](#) JD: And, you know, and we could have done something about it.

[\(01:09:45\)](#) GN: Yeah.

[\(01:09:45\)](#) JD: Because MonsiGNor Al LoPinto, who was the CEO and president of Brooklyn and Queens Catholic Charities is a personal friend. He's married all of us. He's buried our parents. Al's, you know, we could've said something, but he's got enough things on his plate. So she wound up, but she was going for her master's at that point. And she goes, you know what? I don't want to teach. I said, okay. She goes, I want to go to New York School of Interior DesiGN, which happens to be one of the top schools in the country for it. And she, won the Ethan Allen Award and graduated with honors, and she was looking for jobs. But her husband was an IT guy. And still is for a major hedge fund, a Fortress hedge fund. And Cliff, went to Molloy. His mother, Joanie Ivy was an administrator in the, in Molloy. And, you know, and my son Kevin went to Molloy. Megan wanted to go. And we were like, you're going, you're going to an all girl's school. You're not going to Malloy <laugh>. So anyhow, Cliff Ivy married Megan. They both wanted to get out of the City. Cliff got an offer to run the Fortress hedge fund IT down in

Dallas. And they were thrilled. Megan had a few things going on, trying to get a job. Didn't. And now she's got a wonderful job with a top, you know, fledgling company called Player Dimensions. And she's good. She's getting some of her stuff published and, we're happy for her. And she has her first grandson, a little reDHheaded kid.

(01:11:22) GN: Oh, good. Oh, Don, really come again, bring him too. You don't let her stay away too long. You know, I mean, it is good to, <laugh>.

(01:11:31) JD: <laugh>, the only reason I got asked to come up was because Cotton couldn't make it. Right? Nash?

(01:11:39) DH: Yeah. He said, yeah he was going someplace.

(01:11:40) JD: Florida. He was going to Florida. So he called me up and I said, sure. I haven't been up there in a long time. And then I see Ann, who was next to Don Kelly's office. Right? And he's saying hi to him. And I turn around and I go, Ann, I remember you. You were the first girls.

(01:12:02) JS: Oh Anne Mattheus.

(01:12:03) DH: Yeah.

(01:12:04) JS: Anne Bernado Mattheus.

(01:12:05) JD: Yeah.

(01:12:06) DH: I mean, I wasn't with him who was--

(01:12:07) JS: No, but from the computer science and math department.

(01:12:08) JD: But yeah, he was, you were in front of me. So, you know, she's looking at me and I go, you and the girls had the sixth floor in Leo, and I was on the fourth. And I went up in the elevator, you weren't allowed out, but I held the doors open and I said, any four girls want to go out on a date? You know? And we, me and my friends went downstairs and four girls came. Ann wasn't one of them, but she goes, I don't remember that. I go, well, that's where I met Deirdre Cunningham. And she goes, oh, Dee Dee. Yeah. She's no longer here either, but you know, I said, yeah, you know, it's, Tom Stanford. I don't if you remember him here.

(01:12:44) GN: Yeah.

(01:12:45) JD: Tom was a good singer. And we used to spend Friday nights with a bottle of Schaefer and peanuts. That's all we could afford. <laugh>. We couldn't get this. Wow. But now Gogo O'Reilly, remember Frank's Steiner?

(01:13:00) GN: Yes. I was going to say do you remember the jury?

(01:13:03) JD: Oh yeah.

(01:13:05) GN: Okay.

(01:13:06) JD: My car keys were stolen from there, from Curry? Curran? Curran, who, his uncle was the brother at the gate house at the novitiate.

(01:13:18) GN: Curtain.

(01:13:18) JD: Curtain.

(01:13:21) GN: Yeah.

(01:13:21) JD: He, I have my, he took keys--or he took my coat. He took my whole coat--and I had the car up here with my friend. I'm like, oh my God. So somebody drove me home. My father goes, ah, you should have called. I have a hide a key, yeah now you tell me. So anyhow, I got them back. Because Tommy Stanford delivered them to me. He goes, yeah, Kurt had... That's what they were doing, stealing peacoats. But, what was I going to say about O'Reilly?

(01:13:52) GN: You met him in New York while he passed, or?

(01:13:54) JD: Yeah, no, we were on 6th Avenue outside the Fox Building. And he was coming to work and I was going down and, we both had sunglasses on. And he walked by and I went, yo, Gogo. And he goes, I haven't heard that in a while, <laugh>. And I go, Jack Diffley. He goes, hey, Diff, how are you? He goes, he never calls anybody by their first name. So we're talking, I told him I still, you know, hang out with you and so on. We had a few laughs, but.

(01:14:19) GN: I wonder if he'll go back to Fox now that the fox that you looking for, <laugh>?

(01:14:23) JD: No, I listen to him every Monday to Thursday. He's on WABC radio.

(01:14:29) GN: I see.

(01:14:30) JD: I like his politics, but I don't like his embellishments of his athleticism.

(01:14:35) GN: Uh huh <affirmative>.

(01:14:35) JD: Because he wasn't that good of an athlete as far as I was concerned. <laugh>.

(01:14:41) GN: Yeah. Well, I'm going to have to say, I have to bring this session to a halt only because I have to go for lunch. And so do you, maybe, I don't know, whatever the case may be, but, I want to thank both of you guys for coming. And you are really a unique piece of, treasure to this archive business. I've never had anybody who could talk about 9/11 as you did. And, I think you're going to be touched not too far in the future for war because, it's an unbelievable account. And your historical view of, conversion as you went through is very telling to all the lives of the saints. Here's a young guy who, once, you know, he had to be oh fifteen, I think he was, and then finally, oh, he had his first () fifteen. Wherever the hell it was. But, suddenly we, you know, we have guys who can speak so nicely of Marist. Okay. That's it. Thank you.

(01:15:46) JD: All righty, Gus. Good. Been a pleasure. But don't get me started, because I can go all day.

(01:15:56) DH: I know.

(01:15:56) JD: <laugh> I know you know.

(01:15:58) GN: Yeah. Well, it's worthwhile listening to, I mean, I, people come in here and they say nothing <laugh>, and not really, I mean, because we, let's see the time, is there enough?

END OF INTERVIEW