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Oral history interview with Robert C. Joy,
1979 May 4

Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Robert Carlton Joy on May 4, 1979. The interview took place in Houston, Texas, and was conducted by Sandra Curtis Levy for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The Archives of American Art has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: This is Sandra Curtis speaking with Mr. Robert Joy, in his home at 11319 Piney Point Circle, on May 4, 1979. And I thought to begin with today, Mr. Joy, maybe what we should do is discuss some of your early beginnings in art, and what made you take that direction, and devote your life to art, and your early studies, and that sort of thing.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, I've recounted this a number of times, and very easy. My first pang of wanting to achieve something was when my father took a—who worked in a bank, back in Erie, Pennsylvania—took a drawing that my brother had done—my brother was senior by two and a half years—took his drawing down to show his cohorts at the bank. And I was just—oh, my jealousy just killed me. And so from then on, I tried my damndest. For years after that, a number of years, my brother surpassed me, but I kept working harder, and I finally surpassed him.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: How old were you then?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, five.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Very young.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah. I was impressed, because I had an uncle who made his livelihood, all his life, as an artist, commercial artist, and my grandmother's house was filled full of charcoal drawings he'd made under a private teacher, and of cast drawings, and ears of dried corn, this kind of thing. Very much—it was in my family. It was in the air. And I had a great-great-aunt who did magnificent bird drawings, and she made me furious as the dickens, better than I was when I was a little kid. I mean—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Did she do them professionally?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, no, no. Oh, no. She did—a little woman [laughs] down in the hills of Pennsylvania. [00:02:00] Small community. Very unsophisticated bunch of people. Fine people, but unsophisticated. She just did it for fun, like some women made quilts. But the main point of my early life was that I showed talent, and everybody ooh-ed and aah-ed about them, and they put my brother's and my drawings up on the walls of our bedroom, showed everybody. It became important. As I recall, no one in my family every questioned whether I'd make a living. This is of utmost importance. So many children are asked all the time, "Well, how are you going to eat?" No, everybody said, "How wonderful he can draw." Took it for granted—if you're any good, you're going to eat, some way or other. So this is what I cherish above all. Then, also, my father interest—again, my father would come home from the bank, and I'd hear him telling mother how he went, at lunchtime, to see an exhibit at our little library in our town, the traveling exhibit. Maybe it was the National Academy. And just go into ecstasies over it, you see, and then I had to do something that would make my dad like me. You know, it's—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: To compete with the exhibition?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah. And this kind of thing. So and then, one of the greatest things was, when I was, oh, seventh, eighth grades, because I drew a lot and showed a little bit of talent, they put me in the upper—upper senior art classes, with all the senior kids. And so, I guess I was spoiled a little bit. But I had art all during my high school, and a couple years previous to that. The important thing was that, for the four years of high school, I had four hours every day.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: That's incredible.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: You see, it was an experimental school in Pennsylvania, and all the officials, from Harrisburg and from Philadelphia, would come up and watch us. [00:04:06] We painted portraits, we drew portraits, in charcoal and pencil, did figure sketching. We'd go out and do landscape—regular art school training.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: What was the name of the school?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: It was the Academy High School, Erie, Pennsylvania. It was a trade school. Some kids took plumbing, and automobile repair, drafting. Different trades. Machines. They put me in machine shop first, for two weeks, and I raised hell and got out of that, and they put me in a printing class, and after two weeks of that, I said, "Uh-uh [negative], I want to go in the art class." So they—I landed there. But we were blessed with a very wonderful teacher, who had gone to Pennsylvania Academy, and he did a lot of fine arts, and landscapes, and so forth. He belonged very much to the Edward Redfield/Willard Metcalf school. Are you familiar with them?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: So that's what I was—a child has to learn. He was able to give us a regular art school training, and all during high school, you see. Fantastic. So that's where I was fortunate. And then he advised me to go to—in fact, he raised a couple hundred dollars so I could—for my first year. Can you imagine going to school for \$100?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Not anymore.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Huh? And no, I think my stepfather paid for my tuition that first year, and I lived on \$200.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Well, he must have had a lot of faith in you if you—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: What?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: —if your art teacher himself raised the money for you to live on, he must have had a great deal of—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: He got a couple [inaudible] you see. A hundred dollars each to the things. Oh, yeah. [00:06:00] Well, he had faith in me, because when I was 15, he took me on a painting trip up to Gloucester, Massachusetts, it was just the two of us. He sent his wife and child home for the summer, and took me along. That's the faith he had in me. And that—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: How long was that trip?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, a couple months. We went up to Gloucester and painted all the boats and the rocks and stuff. Bass Rocks. We met a lot of the—George Elmer Browne. A lot of the—corny artists, but they were famous artists at the time. We met them running around out there. That meant a whole lot to me.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Tell me your teacher's name again?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: George Ericson. George M. Ericson. He's better known, nationally, as Eugene Iverd. He did a million—a lot of covers for *Saturday Evening Post*. In fact, he began—he did the first sketches for those covers, and ideas, when we were on that trip, and I posed for him. Subsequently, the rest of high school, the next couple years, I helped him select models and did a lot of posing for him and these things, so I was very familiar with it, this relationship. He did human interest things. Not like Rockwell, but maybe a dozen or two dozen kids fishing and flying kites. And just very corny, human interest things that sell. He was rather big league. He was a fine man. But at art school, we—in the first week, I got out of the antique class. You understand what the antique class is?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: You were studying the antiquities?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Drawing casts.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Roman and Greek? Oh, drawing casts.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Drawing casts. I worked my head off when the first teacher came, who was supposed to have been the star [laughs] antique draftsman in his day, Daniel Garber. [00:08:05] A landscape painter. When he came on Wednesday night—we started on Monday morning—I had three finished drawings for him, you see? He was very much impressed. He said, "Kid, how would you like to get in the painting class?" I said, "Wow. Gosh." And there were very few people that had a chance to do that. They didn't work that hard, and hadn't drawn that much. So I did that, and two weeks from there, we heard that the summer school of the academy was open, so I went out there my first year, Chester Springs, and painted landscapes. They had a big barn for studio. Oh, it was out of this world. I've never seen a better studio. That was a great first year. Then I managed to make a remark and got somebody kicked out of—off the faculty. So I left and went back into town for less than a year. I went less than two years at the academy. There, I met my—reason I'm down in Texas is I met my first wife there. She was a student. We were married. I got into photography, commercial photography, working

for the teacher that I managed to have kicked out. [Laughs.] He liked what I said, so instead of being an enemy, he hired me when he got going in photography.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: That's very nice.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I worked there about three, four years, doing photography. When I was 22, the Depression hit, and I decided I wanted to get back to painting. My high school art teacher came down and saw me and said, "Go down and think it over, anyway, for a year or so." And here I am.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: After thinking it over for a year.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, and—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Your wife is originally Texan, then?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, yeah. She was born in Fort Worth, and lived in Houston. We had—we were absolutely stone broke and had nothing through the first nine, 10, 12 months. [00:10:05] We lived with her father and mother on a little pecan farm for a while. I worked on the farm. Then, when Mr. Chillman at the art museum came and saw my paintings, he asked me if I would let him have a one-man show. He was desperate. Had no money for shows. And so, here's a new blood in town, so I said yeah. I wrote my mother for \$30 to make—get some lumber, and I made some frames. Made about 20-22 frames, and had a one-man show.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Where was—did the museum have the first building then?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, the first building.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: So it was in the first building?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: This is what's called, now, Gallery B, the gallery towards Rice, in the corner, and the little ones back there where the Old Masters are. And I had—Gallery C was my gallery. That, and the little gallery, for my one-man show.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Do you remember what year this was?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Thirty-three, I think. Nineteen thirty-three. During that show, two elderly ladies—and they weren't elder—they were to me then—I guess they were—asked me if—said, "Young man, would you teach us?" I said, "Hell yeah." [Laughs.] Not having anything, no job or anything. My wife and sister-in-law went and found a garage—upstairs in a garage, where they had north windows, and we rented that—I've forgotten, some nominal sum. So I had these two students, and managed to get more students. [00:12:01] And so that helped out a little bit. Then, that summer, Chillman had heard that I had success with the students, so he asked me to come and fill in at the art museum, when the other teachers had gone on vacation. So I had a lot of success there, and so then he asked me to come on in the fall. That's why I got teaching, you see. Somehow or other, I attracted students because of enthusiasm and energy.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: How long had the museum art school been open?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, I think about four years.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: So you were one of the very early—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, four or five years.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: —teachers—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Frederick Brown was there teaching, and Evelyne Bessell, and then I arrived. I've forgotten who—I think Freddy Brown went back over to France, which he always did, to paint landscapes. And that's why I took over. My classroom, that first summer, was down where the children's gallery is now, in the corner. Had good north windows and so forth. So then, in the meantime, while I'm doing that, someone suggested that I do some department store advertising. So I practiced two weeks, and my photography helped me. I had done fashion photography, so I practiced two weeks, went down, and first day, got a couple jobs. Offer at Sakowitz, and then also at Foley's. I took Foley's.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: What did you do for them? Ad layouts and that sort of thing?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, ad layouts. I did the whole damn works, layout and everything. I'd do a dress ad, for \$2. [00:14:00] And to be sure that they had one that was satisfactory, I gave them three drawings to choose from.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Three drawings for \$2?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: For \$2. Three drawings. In photography, if we had an order for one photography, we'd submit 10. Finished photograph, see. Oftentimes, end up here, the big agency would buy a number of them, so that was a good lesson. I remembered that. Anyway, I started that. I did wash drawings. I didn't know how to do—I never heard of benday, and pen and ink. It was just something foreign. So they said, "We don't know whether we can get this reproduced or not." They'd never done it in Houston. This is—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: This is for newspapers?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: For newspaper. They had this little screen on wax paper. They'd paste on to get the tones, gray tones, and they did pen and ink sketches. I wanted to do the wash drawings I'd seen Aaron [ph] do in *Vogue* and stuff like that. They said, "Well, send it over and see what can happen." Well, fortunately, the engraver at the *Houston Post* had—worked in St. Louis, and he had done this kind of thing, and he was tickled just to see something new come in. So he stayed up all night long and found a way to reproduce it. So I had a job, just on the strength of that darn, that darn engraver. We made a bit of noise. We finally got in the weekly ad services all over the country. The *Metro Ad Index*, I think it was called, and several others. They'd pick out the best ads, the cream of the crop of each week. I used to get in there all the time. Oh, boy, that made Foley Brothers sit up and take notice, yeah. And then, in the meantime, I'm teaching at the art museum all the time I'm working at Foley Brothers. After a few years, though, I decided that I really had to support my family, so I quit the teaching because it was so, so—[00:16:08]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: —time-consuming?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Well, it didn't pay anything, and I could make more money commercially. So I did. Went down, and just did—oh, it just about killed me. But I did get the boss, George S. Cohen, of great fame in Houston, him to let me come to work at 10 o'clock in the morning, on those mornings when I didn't have extra work to do. That way, I'd go out and paint a landscape before I went to work. And that went on for a couple of years. Finally, my first student came and told me, said, "Bob, so-and-so is leaving the faculty at the art museum. Here's your chance to get back to teaching." So I quit the commercial business completely, and went out there to teaching, at what I knew would be, oh, half or less an income. I wanted to get back to painting. That took a lot of guts.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Sure did.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: And that took a—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: By now, how many children do you have?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Huh, then? Two. My wife said, "You do what you want to do." She felt like she had brought me down here to Texas and got me in this predicament, and therefore, she had to go along [laughs]. But before I—before that, in order to get a raise, I had gone to St. Louis, and lined up three jobs in one day up there. The only—that and the other day. I've only spent two days of my life looking for work.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Looking for—that's incredible.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Isn't that something? I could have been art director of the biggest store up there, and one at the second store, and art director of the largest chain shoe store in the country. I came back and told the boys down there I was leaving, and so they gave me about a \$1000-a-year raise, which, in those days, was a hell of a lot of a raise. [00:18:01] So then, finally, when I told them I was going to quit and go back to teaching, this shoe company up in St. Louis heard—this is several years later—and they sat down there, and they kept raising the money to get me up there to be art director for all their chain. I said, "No, no, no." I wanted to paint. Finally, the guy said, "Well, I believe you." It was a great financial beating that I took.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: A lot of courage. It took a lot of courage.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah. Then I went back out there and taught and worked hard. I guess, all together, I taught for maybe 12 years, 13 years, at the museum.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Who were the other instructors there during the time you were there?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Well, the first one was Frederick Brown. Frederick Brown and Evelyne Bessell. Then Ruth Hewlett came along. I think that's about all.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Really, that time—it was before Lowell Collins came along?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, my God, Lowell was a punk kid in high school. He used to come to my Saturday

morning classes. [Laughs.]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: He said he started taking classes early at the museum.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, yeah. I've never allowed Lowell to grow up. He's still a punk kid [laughs] as far as I'm concerned. Oh, yes, it was long before that. There were just four of us. I think, finally, Catherine Brown [ph] got—Catherine Senoff [ph] Brown. Do you know Catherine?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Very well.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah. Fine person. I think she had something to do out there. She taught children's classes, I don't know. But oh, hell. Rosalind Curtis [ph], who was teaching up in—she was in my class before—when I quit, before I went to the army.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: What other students do you remember, who have made names for themselves?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Jack Flanagan, who is as good as anybody, I'd say, not only in the country, but the world, in restorations and conservation. [00:20:02] Oh, and a number of students—I taught a good deal of advertising art, because I had gotten into this wash drawing and stuff. And I had them—at one time, I had five or six—well, all the stores had my students. I can't remember the girl's name, but there's one artist in town who still does commercial art, whose wife and children have a gallery, and they've sold them. William Nearum [ph]. Bill Nearum was a very good student. He didn't have a hell of a lot of artistic taste, but a lot of ability. Then there's a boy named Johnny Gross [ph], who was a monitor. He is a commercial artist over in Austin. George Shackelford [ph]. Don't know whether you've heard of him or not, but I recommended him for a job at the University of Houston, and he had tenure, and he taught out there a couple years ago. The new modern way kind of made it uncomfortable for him, so he went back to West Columbia. I haven't seen George now in several years. He made quite a mark, and was one of the top teachers out there for many years. Oh, Lord, many years. Let's see. Of course, my daughter is [laughs] my daughter had less actual criticism from me than any of those other students, but being around the house and hearing my first wife, hearing her mother, and we'd talk about paintings. She gained a lot from that. Also from my books.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Sure. She was living in it.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: She used to go to bed with my Rembrandt book. [00:22:01] I asked her one day if she would—why she didn't try some abstractions. See, I did. I painted a lot of abstractions, non-objective things. She said, "Daddy," she said, "if that's all there was to painting," she said, I wouldn't be interested in it." She said, "But I like this *Rembrandt's World* thing." That's odd, now, for a young person. Of course, she never had any formal schooling. She never even finished high school. We let her quit, to paint. Don't ever sell her short. She'll curl your hair.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I'm sure.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Very well-read and well-educated.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: And now has a big following of—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Has her own following. Then, of course, my present wife was a student. That's—first met her out there. Oh, and Natasha Roshen [ph] was in my class. Have you heard of Natasha?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Mm-mm [negative].

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, boy, she's—wow. [Laughs.] She dances, and sings, and she writes books, and illustrates, and paints portraits, and a little bit of everything.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: [Inaudible] lady.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: And she's a model. The epitome of Narcissus. A very beautiful woman. And she met my wife out there. They became friends—my present wife. But I hardly paid any attention to them at the time. I was so busy. When you're working 18 hours a day, you don't look right or left. [Laughs.] She—Lucille showed great talent. I've probably been able to—she's a better painter than Shackelford, actually. Outside of my daughter, Lucille has achieved more.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: And Lucille is your wife?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, wife. See that little—see that little boy—did the flowers here. [00:24:00] I'm not saying that just to boost Lucille up. But so—because good students are very few and far between, Sandra.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I know. In that many years at the museum, I'm sure you saw a lot. What happened—why did you leave the museum?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Well, because Uncle Sam breathed down my neck and said he wanted me to be a soldier boy. [Laughs.] So I became an anti-tanker.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Where did that take you? Were you allowed to stay in Houston? Because you had a family.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: No, I was at the Belgian Bulge. They had—I had begun doing portraits all this time. I was doing commercial work on the side, teaching, and doing portraits. I was very busy. The first time I was drafted, I went down to the draft board and said, "Look, can I have two weeks deferment?" I was doing portraits of—two portraits, of Russell Jolly's [ph] daughter, and Dr. Peterson's [ph] daughters. I said, "Look, because it's important to me, because this will be the only money I'll have to leave my family." It was \$2,000 or \$3,000, all the time I was going to be gone. Whether I'd get my tail shot off or not, we didn't know. They said, "Well, we can't give you two weeks. We'll give you a month." So again, I finished my work. At the end of the month, I didn't hear from them, and I waited another week, and no. So I went down. They said, they looked at my records and said, "You're too old now." Said, "This is wonderful." So now I'm out of the art museum, and I had a lot of portraits. I had no desire to go back to teaching. Then the Belgian Bulge came along about 10 months later, and they took everybody that was warm, and they—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: They decided that you weren't—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: —they sent me a notice and said, "In two weeks, be ready." [00:26:01] I went down and had a second physical, and went. I went to the—before I was finished training, the war ended in Europe. So I was sent to the Philippines, and then, from there, had to surrender. A week later, I got pulled up.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Wow.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I was not sent to a combat team. I don't know why. But they looked at my background, and they needed an artist in the [inaudible] headquarters, public relations office, to compile a history of the Pacific War. It was fun.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Wow. Some job.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: And an advertising man from Chicago wrote the copy, and I did the layouts, and had enlargements made, and cut them to pieces, and mortised them in together, and made nice—to keep from going crazy. It was supposed to have been MacArthur's personal property. Underneath the pictures, I wrote notes to little Arthur, MacArthur's son. [Laughs.] "Arthur, keep your grubby hands off this album." And I understand it's at the Smithsonian. That's what they—every time I got mad and wanted to go to a combat team, because they imposed on me, the officers did, they told me, "Oh, this is very important what you're doing. It's going to be in the Smithsonian, probably." Hell, it doesn't matter if it's Smithsonian or not, but they—I just hated to be over there and leave a family.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I'll have to look it up.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Huh?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I'll have to have—look it up.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, through the war, and I did it, oh, a year and a half, a year. Anyway, it was fun. Then when I came back, I had a lot of portraits waiting for me. I think, as I remember, about 34 commissions. I never was able to rub them out. [00:28:00] I couldn't. Once or twice, I tried to do them quickly so I could make some money and get ahead. No way. I used to tell my wife, and she would agree, that if I had \$100,000, which I will never have, or come close to, I would work on a portrait until \$100,000 was exhausted. I keep doing the portrait over. That's been my—that's my disease, and my main attribute, I think. Both—contradictory, but it's both. I finally did the portrait. Then my clients raised my fees for me. I never had the guts to do it. I've always been a ninny about money, I think because my father was in the stocks and bonds business before he died, in 1921, and a year or two after he died, his company went broke. Horribly broke. The executives had cheated and misled the public, and everybody lost everything. My grandfather had taken over my father's accounts, and about killed him, too. So I've always felt that—I've always had an aversion to money. I'm glad I did. It's a hell of a job to make your way around with the \$400 here in Houston with that attitude. [Laughs.] You're surrounded by it, you see. And not only surrounded by it; you are hurt by it. I almost get a contempt for a lot of these people that are so money-hungry, and denied themselves all the pretty things of life just to make a fortune. It's been difficult, but I've done it. [00:30:01] I've alienated a lot of people, and lost a lot of work.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: But you've done a lot.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Huh? I've done a lot.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: You've painted the most important people in Houston.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I've done a lot, yeah. I've had my share. I've had my share, and I told my wife not long ago, if I didn't get any more commissions and had to live on Social Security—because I've never been able to get ahead. See, really have—I have equity in this house, yes.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: It's a wonderful house.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: And the property itself, without the house, is worth a lot. But that's the only equity I have. I've never been able to get ahead. I got ahead once, to go to Europe. Thank God I did. But as I told Lucille long ago, I said, "I don't care if I starve now and have to commit suicide. And end life that way." I'm still happy with what I've done. With my integrity, and my integrity, and what it stood for. Maybe I am a corny portrait painter, but I've done it as well as I—I've tried to do it as well as I could. I've never cut any corners, that I knew of. So I'm happy that way.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Absolutely. That's the most important, after all.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I'm irritated terribly by all our friends who say, "Oh, come on. Why don't you go to Europe this year with us?" Well, can't afford it. They won't believe it.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: So you went to Europe once?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Just once.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: When was that?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Couple years ago. And oh, brother, if I'd only been there 20 years ago, 25 years ago, aye yi yi. [Laugh.] I just can't understand. I can't understand the obsession that people have with all the contemporary type of things being done. I mean, the Frankenthals and the—they're good and everything, but my gosh, the attempt—they don't—she doesn't—no one tries to do anything anymore. [00:32:05] My Lord, when you go over and you see the huge things—talk about heroic sizes. They're always talking about Rothko's heroic sizes, and Frankenthaler's, and Dorothy Hood's heroic sizes. Great God, have you ever seen a Tintoretto? [Laughs.] And not only one, but a whole damn room, and the ceiling, and another floor up above it, the school of Rocco. Oh, good God, these are painters. No one tries anything anymore. Our standards have gone way down. We just don't demand anything—as much of ourselves any more. I think the reason to Rothkos and [inaudible] maybe that's the best that's being done. We're in an age of mediocrity, maybe, and maybe that's just—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: —what we're turning out?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Well, it's become very difficult for most artists to—everything having changed, because the Europeans had the churches, patrons, and sponsors, and now it's become the museum more than anything, it seems. So people—very few artists—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: You can't depend on the museums.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: No, but I mean—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Depending on the art dealers, and the old—I remember, once, an artist in New York came and visited the art museum when I was still teaching there, and he said that—we saw a little exhibition of drawings out on the wall. One by Ernest—I always said "Feen," but maybe it's not. F-I-E-N-E. Do you know the name? Ernest Fiene. He was, oh, in the '20s, '30s, about the time of Grant Wood and them. He was one of the artists. This fellow said he knew them well, and said he had been ruined, particularly by a dealer. I said, "How do you mean?" He said, "He had success, and the dealer sold his paintings and drawings one year, everything, you see. So when he got some money, and filled with great courage, he went out and made strides and got into something a little bit different. He brought them back and showed them to the dealer. [00:34:00] The dealer said, 'Uh-uh [negative].'"

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: They won't sell.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: "I want them like the ones you had last year." This is what's happened to David Adickes and all these people that keep grinding them out, one after another, all alike. In fact, David even, as you

probably know, nice kid and everything. He used to date Allison. I was one of the first ones to promote David Adickes in town. Nina Cullinan and I, one night—the first time he showed at the Art League, and Nina asked me, "Robert, is there any new blood?" I said, "Yeah, a young man named Adickes." She saw him, said yes. We promoted him, talked about him to everybody. He sold a number of them.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Yeah, he's done all right.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah. In a few days, he came and called on me. He wanted to see who this old duffer was who—older man was who was so nice to him and everything. I gave him advice, and naturally, the advice would be to live like I have. Get off in the corner and paint, and don't—I specifically told him, "Don't kowtow to that contemporary art crowd." I said, "They'll wine and dine you, make a big deal out of you, and then someone else—another David Adickes will come along, and they'll drop you and get him, and you're on shaky ground. Just go off in the corner. You have a lot of talent. Paint, and don't worry what anyone says, and stay out of the limelight," blah, blah, blah, blah. [Laughs.] And be honest—be true to your—he did everything I told him not to do, and made a hell of a lot of money at it see, and very successful. I often laugh about it. That's interesting, to think I was one of the first ones that, so—I'm not a complete dodo and old fogey, you see, that—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: No, for sure not.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: As I told Eleanor recently, said, "Don't worry. When the new fine—new modern contemporary artist comes along, real high caliber, don't you kid yourself. Bob Joy will be able to see it just as soon as anyone else."

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Of course.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Even though I raised hell with Rothko and Oldenburg and all these guys, because it's just simply of a lower stature. [00:36:04]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: What do you feel—a personal philosophy about, say, in make—in painting a painting, do you feel—do you believe that the painting, the finished product, is essentially the direction you're taking, or is it the process of painting the painting that means more to you? I mean, there are some artists who feel that the process is more important than the product.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, that's taken over a lot in the last few years, and that's where you get this Abstract Expressionism. That's good therapy. You see, that's for sick people. [Laughs.] I may be sick, but I don't know it. Oh, no. To me, the ecstasy of a painting is having established a problem, and come as close as you can to solving it. That's where the essence is. Creating something where there's a great unity in that painting which didn't exist in the world before. I don't care about the—subject matter means nothing. Whether it looks like the person in a portrait means nothing. It's whether the abstract movement, organization, has been solved, and to a finality that can never be moved. For instance, Uccello, *Battle of San Romano*, you saw in my dresser, I look at it every damn day. Every spear is in its anointed place.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Absolutely.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: It's like the universe. Everything belongs. This is the essence of Cézanne. Cézanne didn't give a damn about subject matter. In fact, I wish he had. I wish Cézanne had only had—hadn't been quite so much of a dodo and a lug-head. I wish he could have had more of a picture sense, heroic picture sense. My God, imagine Claude Lorrain with—Claude Lorrain's heroic, epic quality in landscape, with—these were views of the god, you see. [00:38:05] If Cézanne had only come along and redone that, oh, boy, it would kind of end painting, you see? Because to me, Cézanne had the greatest artistic integrity of any artist that ever lived. Actually, he never put anything in the canvas unless it was necessary to relate to something else. But there was a lot of thing—I never will understand, when Cézanne did all those dark figure painting, why in the hell did he work on a white ground? Why didn't he tone the canvas, like Goya? Any nitwit would [laughs] know to do that. Because he never could get rid of the white spots. The minute he did, it all went eh. It all just—I've tried. I've tried to use Cézanne's method on—years ago, when you work on a white ground, and do a real dark painting and oh, man. One is out in the studio. Finally, I was astonished. When the canvas got all covered, it just took a nosedive. Dead. See? Because everything depended upon the little squirminess of these—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: —white lines?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: —little white, unfinished parts. There's only so far you can carry a painting in that condition. I had to go and repaint, and re-accent everything, and keep on. That's why those figure paintings of his out in the Cézanne show were so dumb. They're not good. They're too high on the canvas, and you never know—you never know, until all those little white things are all covered up, whether your figure is too high on the canvas, or over too far.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Hmm. I hadn't thought about that.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Ah-ha-ha. See, because they become—they compensate for something. So all those old men are way up too high in the canvas. Their hands are way out too far up the edge, and it was hollow in the middle. They had no belly button, no guts in the middle. [00:40:00] Do you remember it now? All the interests all around there, just hollow, emptiness in the middle, and that's because of the procedure.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: How do you proceed?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Hmm?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: When you're doing a portrait, what's your procedure?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Uh. Well, my—how am I doing, all right?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Great. Fabulous.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: When I was a youngster, way before I was married, up in Newville, Pennsylvania—I spent a summer and a winter up there—they used to make fun of me, the older artists. I got into the village sketch class. That's an art community, and I got into the village sketch class because I'd sweep up and do things like that. Didn't have any money to pay the models. I'd pose a model, and monitor, and kind of ran the joint. All these older artists up there would see my paintings, and they'd ridicule me. They'd say, "Old Joy—what Joy does, he paints in the rhythm first, and then he keeps thickening the rhythm. We all wonder, how does he know when the rhythm is thick enough?" [Laughs.] Well, this is Cézanne's procedure. You follow now, see? Because I looked hard at Cézanne when I was a young man. I still do. This is the stuff. You start off with a few of the main gestures. Whenever Cézanne would quit for the day, the painting was a unit already. He always had control of it. I use a toned canvas when I start a portrait. I do begin with those salient points. And then—these things that you have to have. In portraiture, it has to look like mama. Not important, but in order to bring it into the world, it's only important there. [00:42:00] Then you alter other things. The hands, and the positions, and just the accents and the lighting, in order to make that particular head have more emphasis. But one more—I've said that it didn't matter whether it looked like him or not, but there is an importance that no one has ever mentioned. I've never read it in portrait painting. That's why it appeals to me. When you try to get that particular likeness, and try to find lines—in other words, each head has to push him forward [ph], doesn't it? It either shoots up, or it presses down, or it moves in a certain direction. It has a song, it seems. When you try to find the rest of the canvas, other angles, accents, and stuff, to amplify that, and make it stronger, you see—without altering the looks of the person. See, you can't make blue eyes brown, because they wouldn't—it doesn't come—they won't buy it. But you have to find—so the discipline there, and makes you discover new ways of composing and organizing. That's a very profound thing. Don't ever forget that, you see?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I'm sure.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: You see, each person requires a whole new kind of a—it may not be apparent. It's a very subtle thing. But so.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: That's right. It was like—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: You see? I've never read this, never heard any artist talk about it and everything. You don't just put a figure up there, and a face on it, like they used to, the early American itinerant painters. They come around with a body all painted, and put mama—no, no, no. You have to find—and I found—also, I found out, sometimes, that a woman's hair—for instance, I can alter the hair to make it coincide with my background and other abstract push-and-pulls. [00:44:02] People don't know it. They accept it, because it belongs, and looks good, because it's the only hairdo that could be in that painting.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: And it works.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Where do you learn that? You learn that from Albrecht Durer's self-portrait. You know the one with the black-and-white striped hat with a tassel hanging down? Have some fun sometime, put a piece of plastic over a print of that, and shorten the tassel just a half-inch. [Laughs.] The whole picture just goes haywire. Everything just ordained. Just like that Uccello one there, like the Carpaccio postcard over there.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Carpaccio was an interesting one. There's an interesting story—you probably know it—about David, his *Madame Récamier*, I think. Uh she was—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I hate him.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: —she was—well, probably his favorite portrait was that one of her reclining. It didn't sell, because he showed it to her before it was completely finished, and her hair didn't work with the color

composition, he felt, so he made it lighter and redder, and she didn't want it, because she was brunette. The very ones that we find the loosest and easiest is because he never really finished that painting, and yet she didn't approve, because he changed it.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Lucille had been taking a course with David Brower. Do you know David?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I know David.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: She's wild about him. Probably the only knowledgeable man [laughs] she's ever come across in town.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Yeah, he's—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I mean, he isn't limited. Mostly, the young people that age are limited. They only see the last 15 years, 20 years, 25 years. But no, he has a broad view of way back, and knows about Giotto, for instance. What led us up to that? See, I'm getting tired.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: We were just talking about changings in portraiture and things, and Carpaccio, and David Brower, and how paintings have to be—the order is ordained to make them work. [00:46:09]

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah. Well, it will come to me in a moment. This is a good man, this David. She got into another course that she's going to take from him. I want to have him out some night.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I think he's leaving shortly for Europe.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, really?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: At the end of the season.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Well, next year. I'll be here next year, I hope [knocks on wood]. But thereby hangs a tail, and see the position of—I claim to understand all that's going on. I don't understand a lot of the symbolism. For instance, Dorothy Hood will title her pictures a lot of crazy stuff. I don't think she knows what the hell she's talking about either. Do you understand what she means?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Well, I don't know the titles. No, she's really in the subconscious—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, boy, some of the most outlandish titles, to make you think she's a very mystic—and where she's just an ordinary painter. Nice person, you see? [Laughs.] Painters aren't that special. They aren't that precious. They shouldn't—they aren't. They're no different than people in other businesses that are outstanding. They're just human beings. When artists begin to take themselves seriously, that's when I [inaudible] out. [Laughs.]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Yeah, but—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Take your work seriously, but not the image of yourself.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Right. For anyone, in what they do, I think that's good advice.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Otherwise, you get the big head, and you get way misled. I know, one time, I was doing a portrait of one of the most prominent families in town, two little girls, and the mother I had known for years. She had been—a student with someone else, with Evelyne Bessell at the art museum when she was 15 years old. [00:48:02] I've seen her at a lot of parties and things. I was painting these girls, and she says, "Mr. Joy, that's a wonderful thing." She said, "You know, there's no one else in the country like you, and probably in the world." Well, you know what I did? It's embarrassing. I shouldn't tell you on this damn tape. I blush. I blush inside to think of it. I'm getting all hot on the back of my neck. I threw down my brush and my paint rag, and I said, "My God, Mary, don't you dare ever tell anybody that. That's a dangerous thing to say."

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Well, there is something, you see. I think people do admire people with talent, and with—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, but they go overboard. Gosh, they go overboard—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: —but even there are people with talent who don't have the courage of their convictions to go ahead like you did, and live your whole life doing what you believed in doing, and sacrificing money or position because you followed what you believed to be true. That's an integrity and a talent, a combination that does—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Of that I'm proud, but you don't—you never—I've never told anyone else this, about

being proud of my integrity, and not being a money-grubber, and not being a prostitute in the world. A lot of people think I am a prostitute, because they think I'm fabulously wealthy because of the fees I get. But you spoil it if you start bragging on it. For instance, George Cohen, out at the Cohen House at Rice, he told me that—when he was posing for me, said, "The only real charity is that which is anonymous."

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: True.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: So you don't brag on these things. But I'm on the defensive here. You belong to the young school and everything, so I'm defending. I've suddenly realized that I think of myself with your group, actually, see, as a young group. [00:50:00] I remember how we used to feel about the older artists. We used to snicker at them, make fun of them at art school. There's one old fellow who painted these dreamy cows in front of a sunset and stuff. Somebody Poor. Not Henry Varnum Poor, but another Poor. Oh, the magnificent man, big white beard, and he had a class in composition, of all things. [Laughs.] The one thing he didn't know a goddamn thing about. The kids would get up, and they'd actually throw paper wads at him.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Really?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: He'd stand up there and take it. Oh, it just—I went to his class once. I couldn't go back, because it hurt me. I remember. I remember that hurt, you see? So what I do, to avoid that with all the young people, when they think I'm not hip, [laughs] I just avoid them.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Right. Well, everybody has differences of opinion, and different approaches, different perceptions, but I don't—I think—I believe—I would like to believe—that people have a better sense of history now than to make fun, or to—I don't know. Maybe—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: You see, I'm getting a kick in the teeth every once in a while. I was reared on Childe Hassam. When I was 15, my grandmother, who reared me from 14 on, through high school, gave me—for Christmas gave me four or five books, little paperback books, on art, which was always oh—what a treasure in those days. One was on Robert Henri, Childe Hassam, John Singer Sargent. You can see a lot of influence in my work by John Singer Sargent. I'll never forget him. Whistler, and Abbott H. Thayer, who was a rather inconsequential painter. Every once in a while, I'll go back and I'll see—I know in New York, the last few years back, in one of the galleries, saw a great big painting of Childe Hassam, of a woman sitting on a porch and everything. [00:52:12] Oh, boy. Because in the meantime, I had gotten to think he was kind of a dodo. I couldn't see Childe Hassam for Van Gogh, from which he stemmed. Childe Hassam was static and dead compared to Van Gogh, and Van Gogh, my god. Just ran all over the place. It knocked you off your feet, with the movement and the spirit and the vitality. This particular one was damn good. Every once in a while, I'll see a Childe Hassam that's—I'm astonished. Another man which I wouldn't look at much in my school days that I see over at Meredith Long Gallery once in a while, and another friend of mine, a client, and friend, Frank Mashow [ph], Frank [inaudible] Mashow. They own a couple of them, landscapes. And now I'm nuts about John L. Twachtman. No, is it John W. Twachtman? He's one of the early painters, along with Childe Hassam. They're very abstract. But when I was in school days, I needed something harder, more severe, like Cézanne, say, or those severe landscapes of Perrot [ph]. Not the pretty ones, but the ones of buildings hard as a rock, and stuff like that. More hardboiled. I couldn't see Twachtman and Childe Hassam for a number of years there. Now it's a pleasant surprise to go back and say, my god, they had something after all. Not of the greatest, but there was something there. There's something there. Every once in a while, I'll see a Sargent that is surprisingly good. Mostly no. I know the [National] Portrait Gallery in London—you've been there? [00:54:04]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Wasn't that portrait gallery—to me, that was one of the biggest disappointments in my life. I don't remember seeing a single portrait in there that I thought was great.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Portraiture is a very tough problem. When you talk about setting a problem for yourself, you're dealing with the wishes of the client, and everyone—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: No, no, no. You see, that's what everyone says, and that's a very small part of it.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Well, it would have to be, to make it rewarding for you as an artist. But it would have to enter in the degree to which, you know—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: That's a discipline. It's like, if you're an architect and I have you design a house for me, the house has to be a certain size, be a certain place, within a certain—of course, the trouble with architecture, it has a price range connected with it, which makes it an imperfect art. I love to tell my architect friends, if they would—if you want to drive an architect absolutely insane, crazy, raving, would be to tell them that you want him to make a building, an edifice—create an edifice, anywhere in the world, any place, any size, any cost, any purpose, looks like anything he wants to. He'd go crazy. He wouldn't know where to start. He has no discipline,

se? That's why I like portrait painting. You have a starting point, something, definitely, that sends you, and that you get excited about, and that you make all these things whirl around it to bring it out. There can't be—music can be abstract, yes, but painting can't be totally removed from the world, and the psychological thing, you see. Even music has that. God, I heard—they don't play enough Sibelius, do you notice, on Clef [ph]?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I don't—I wouldn't know that. [00:56:00]

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: You wouldn't? I listen six, eight hours a day, to clef long [ph] [inaudible] music. I'm wild about Sibelius. He's the only one whose symphonies aren't ass-backward.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Hmm. I'll have to listen to him.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Beethoven establishes a—see, here, I am shooting off now. Presumptuous of me to become a music critic. Beethoven establishes a theme, a couple big, beautiful themes. Then he proceeds, through the four movements, to obliterate them, and mutilate them, and then he comes out with something, and finally the thing grinds to an end, the big flair. Sibelius starts off with chaos, and as it goes along, all these threads begin to make sense. Finally, the last movement is the seventh symphony. Oh, god, what triumph. Tremendous triumph. Just exultation of the greatest. A music critic.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: No, it's—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: This is my own obser—I've never written anything on music. I get bored by art criticism and music criticism. Awfully boring. The only book I ever spent a lot of time with was Albert Barnes. You know it?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Hmm. No, I don't.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: He has a big collection in Merion, Pennsylvania. You've heard of him?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Yeah.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: He was just starting off when I was a kid up there. When I first taught—I wrote to him one summer. My wife and I, first wife and I, and three students, wanted to take a trip to see galleries, to Washington and New York. We wanted to go to see the Barnes Foundation. Well, my lord, I wrote to Barnes. He said, "No, it's only open to students." Very eccentric fellow. So I wrote again, got the same answer back. Wrote again. Finally, he wrote and said, "On a certain date"—no, he said, "When you arrive in the East, wire me, and let's see what can be done." [00:58:07] So I did. Got to New York and wired, and we were there, and so we said, "Two days from now, we'll arrive at nine o'clock in the morning." We went down to Philadelphia, and this suburb there. He sat at the desk himself. Opened it up himself. It was closed for the summer. But oh, boy, what a wonderful collection. Anyhow, he had—John Dewey, the philosopher, was one of his disciplines and ascetics, and a lot of other people. Had quite a gathering. He wrote a number of books, and this one was *The Art in Painting*. In it, he has an analysis of paintings, Renoirs and Cézannes and things, you see. It was interesting. He gave just a couple lines to Sargent. [Laughs.] But that's the only appointed book, as a youngster, that really appealed to me. He had approached it in a very intellectual way, and it takes a chapter in line, color, composition, and all these things. There may be others that are better. I don't know. Anyway, it interested me. I saw a book of Tolstoy's. You're nuts about Tolstoy, aren't you? Ever read his book, *What is Art?*

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: No, I never read it.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: [Laughs.] Oh, don't. I got it at the library one day, and finally I clutched it in my chest, and I ran home with it, and I think, my lord, now, the great master, the great author, now he will elucidate everything. Judas Priest. His examples of what art was were the worst kind of illustration. The very kind of thing that the communists are doing now. Just everyday life, peasants and—no conception. No conception. I think Bernard Shaw did—I think Bernard Shaw was a good all-around critic. [01:00:00] Much more, really, sophisticated and intellectual than Tolstoy.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Tell me, Mr. Joy, about how many portraits do you paint a year? How many commissions do you do?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: You'd be surprised how few. Three, four. I get on them, and oh, I know, sometimes, I work six months. If I get something from photographs, where the photographs are horrible and I can't stand to have my name on it, I'll start over two or three, four times. Maybe work six months, and then drop the whole thing, get on to something else. When you take six months out of your yearly income—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: That's a lot.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: You're a little bit dead, yeah. I do this many times. I don't do over. Nowadays, my fees have gotten larger. I do three, four. Sometimes five. In the years back, I had a lot of work. Certain things would

conspire. For instance, if someone comes from out of town, they stay at one of the hotels, and pose every day, morning and afternoon, I can get rid of them in a hurry. It's really an orgy then. Oh, boy, it's wonderful just to hit that thing. You never get enough time on people. I don't try to push it. I'm afraid, I'm afraid—because I can tell, when I go and see other portraits that other people have done, and when I see the portraits in the museums around, I can tell which ones are the corner-cutters and everything. I'm so damn afraid of that, I think I'll fall over backwards.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: To keep from being a corner-cutter?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah. A lot of people—my wife tells me a lot of people criticize me, saying I overwork things. [01:02:00] The usual painter of the last 50 years, in doing figure painting, portrait painting, they'll stop short of photography. They have a photographic realism. I've always said that—and my teachers would, in my charcoal drawings, they'd say, "Why don't you simplify it?" My answer always was, "I'm just a kid now." Seventeen. They'd say well, why can't I make it simple by controlling the modeling? As if it weren't there, you see. With the majority of art—my students, and lot of professional artists, they stop short of that and leave a sketchy thing. They don't quite get involved, because the minute they try to get involved and go beyond—and it gets—there will be a light that sticks out too much, or shadow too much, and the whole thing gets jumpy—you probably have the experience. Not a lot of control. All right. You learn then—you learn from Velasco to—and Hals [ph]—go ahead and do another quick sketch over that underpainting, and then another sketch on top of that, and another on top. Each time, you throw off balance, and it gets controlled, and all the tones take their places, and belongs. This is the way it's done. Most of them won't take the time to build up the thing. Rembrandt, my god. You ever look closely to Rembrandt? Sit down and look at it against the light. From here, do you see how it reflects? Can you see where the paint's embossed way out? He had a hell of a time with it. The temple with the light on it. He changed it many times.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Oh, yeah, and if you look at his engravings, how many states he did in the darkness and light.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It doesn't all come off beautifully, so you have to dig for it. There's a certain amount of groping.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: It's a treasure, and you have to find it and make it. [01:04:00]

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: The ecstasy is in that battle. That's the fun.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Once the battle is over, how do you feel about your finished product?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I hate them. A lot of my paintings, I've never gone back to see. I'm afraid to.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Oh, for Pete's sake.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I'm not even sure that they're hanging on the wall. For instance, a few years ago I saw [inaudible] Worth had died. I saw Linville Worth [ph] part of the country club. She's sitting down, incapacitated. I went up and I said, "Well, I miss that man." She said, "I know. I do, too. Very fond of him," she said, "but I'm indebted to you. That portrait you did of him is hanging on my library wall." Well, it's still there, where it was at the beginning. I didn't know. I was afraid to ever ask. It's that way. Then, Sandra, I must say that, the many times I go back and see them, I'm delightfully surprised. They're better than I thought they were. It's quite a sense of pleasure and relief. You can't help but be—I'm not the only one. I'm sure—it takes pretty much of a narcissist and a nitwit to think everything they do is great. That's sick. That's sick. But you have the confidence, well you say, "I missed it this time," so next time, you try to clarify and correct the particular pickle you got into, predicament, in the painting. You try to avoid over-modeling. I used to over-model everything. Way at the last, I'd have to repaint the whole thing and lighten it up. I was so afraid I wasn't—I was going to be a corner-cutter and not get any tone, any modeling in the thing. I'd overdo, you see. For instance, I abhor that Bellows portrait out at the art museum. You know the Bellows with the blue and just a mask-like face that's one tone? [01:06:05] [Laughs.] It's not that easy. So much more going on there. It's a poster. It's a poster painting, something you do for easy reproduction. That's horrible to say this about George Bellows. God forgive me. [Laughs.] That's presumptuous, but it's so. I used to over-model all the time, and finally I saw Allison, in her little studio next to me, years ago. She had her picture that she was doing on the floor, underneath the skylight. There's no light on at all, and working on it down there. I said, "Allison, what in the hell are you doing? Get it up on the easel where you can see it." "Daddy," she said, "you're always talking about over-modeling. I put it down here, and I'll be able to tell whether mine's over-modeled or not." She learned from my diseases. Think it's a good idea, and so I still do that all the time. You put it down in a very dark area, and make it—that's why I'm delighted with that canvas over yonder. That's a dark wall over there, but it doesn't need any more light. It comes out of it, you see? It radiates itself. This is what you do from one picture to picture. You try to not repeat and rest on your laurels. You try to correct what you disliked so intensely about the previous one. It's a lot more serious—it isn't just a bunch of tinted faces. The majority of artists are contemptuous of portrait painters. I know they are, because I

used to be. I used to say you couldn't—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: A good portrait—I think most people would appreciate the fact that if you can paint a good portrait, you should be able to paint anything.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I used to tell people that—in fact, after I did the first couple commissions, I refused to take any commissions, and I wouldn't do them. I said, "No, it's not art." Then I started doing these non-objective things, and I finally did this. This little girl in the striped thing over that way, you see, and I found out that I could make that sashay up and down there more surely than I could in a non-objective painting. [01:08:10]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Every painting works abstractly anyway. It is an abstraction.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Has to. Otherwise, it's not a painting. David Parsons—you know David, don't you?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Right.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah, nice guy. He made the remark one time—we were arguing that the—when I saw him at the Russian show. He was arguing with somebody, and he backed me up and he said, "Vermeer was just as contemporary as anything else." It's a good thought. I never quite went that far before. But it's contemporary in the fact that it's a unit, and ageless. Belongs nowhere. That's why I've never been able to understand art historians. You're—all you art historians [laughs] always talking about—David Brower talks about the artist reflecting the age in which they lived.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Usually they don't just reflect it. They see into the future, I feel. Artists are almost the barometer of the society.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: To me, it's the second-rate artist, and the third-rate, and the mediocre who reflect the age in which they live. They're the ones who kowtow and have the superficial aspects of the techniques of the time, and the styles of the time and everything. All the great artists. Hell, I could get along any time.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Yeah, that's true.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Hmm?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I think that's true. Good art should be timeless.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Lucille comes home and tells me that David Brower keeps talking about this, and she's learning a lot about just the history, the politics, of these countries and everything. She said it's—and he's made her think it's kind of important. I said, "Lucille, remember this. Art history, talking about a lot of those dodos, artists, you can't ignore. [01:10:00] You have to talk about them. They aren't much good. So you bring in the history part in order to make a lecture out of it, and make people—something people can understand, and they're getting." But you don't—to me, if I was going to teach art history, I wouldn't teach the chronological order of everything. I'd get together a bunch of paintings up there, or great big prints or slides, and analyze them. Now, here, so-and-so put this in there to counteract that. That, to me, is what—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: You have to be able to see that.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Because that's the handwriting. That's the difference. That's individuality. Not subject matter, or technique, or color or anything. It's the manner in which you compose. It's interesting that—I have a landscape in the bedroom of—a very Cézanne-ish thing, with trees and all, and a big pyramid. I used to have it hanging there, in the middle, and that little one, and this one on the other side, and it was interesting to see everyone had the same structure, without my knowing it. That was when I discovered what individuality is, and how each artist doesn't know he's individual. Did you realize that?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Oh, I'm sure that must be true.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: No, they would think, "Oh, my god, I'm so ordinary and everything, but so-and-so over here is very original." For instance, the pole cat—a skunk, the most individual animal in the world. It doesn't know it. [They laugh.] See? So this dawned on me. But when I had the three paintings hanging up there, it occurred to me one day that each one had the same thrust, and building up into pyramids, and then branching out and back, over again, and the same tossing. I was aware of the fact, well, I do have something that's my own, and I don't have to worry about it. It's innate. It's innate. [01:12:00] But the minute you start to calculate—now, you as a young painter—the minute you start to calculate, well, I'm going to do so-and-so in order to be individual, you're dead.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: It doesn't work. No, you have to trust that inner truth.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Follow your nose. Yeah, follow your nose.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Yeah, Emerson, *Self-Reliance*. I read that over and over, too. Yeah.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: These are important things in a painter. So many painters today have concocted a style. The artist's subject matter type of thing.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Something works. Sometimes, like you say, something sells. I'm not belittling Barnett Newman, because I think he did some beautiful sculpture and great paintings, but he striped canvasses for 20-some-odd years.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Now, that's sick.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: It's a different approach to—you really would have—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: He had—I don't want to be risqué or anything, [laughs] but a lot of those guys either have—like Oldenburg has a brother-in-law up in some big museum, the Guggenheim or someplace. Well, hell, he can't miss. He's going to get promoted. I have some artist friends in New York who have been sleeping—forgive this—with a lot of these rich dilettantes, Mrs. Guggenheim and a lot of them, you see? And they get promoted way beyond their merits. It's sad, but a lot of this goes on, you see?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I think that's art history—like you said, none of us have lived long enough to see it, but like you say, a Rembrandt is timeless, and will be appreciated by anyone, anytime, and it will be interesting to—it would be interesting if we could see what art, from our particular period, will become as time—as far as meaningful to the future centuries, as Rembrandt is to ours, still. If you could go back and—did you have any one particular favorite portrait, or something that you remember that's more outstanding than others that you've done?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: That I've done?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Any problem that you've confronted and felt you really successfully mastered? [01:14:02]

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh, I've always liked the one I did of Audrey Cushman [ph], the one in that black Dior suit, with the carnation down on the table. That was a very quiet—it was very austere. Audrey was austere. Very austere woman. Hardly ever moved faster than this, and talked like this. They're the ones that had the Cushman Gallery. I like the way that built up. I was, then, very fond of the Italian primitives, very much. Paliolo [ph] and Bellini, and Gentile—Gentilly [ph], is it?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Gentilly.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Gentilly, Bellini, Adoge [ph]. I've always loved—to me, it had a little bit of that, only more and more 3-D. I never did like Bellini's—the flatness of it. It looked like a person was cut off in half here, and one half in Boston. It had the same austerity. I loved Albrecht Durer's austerity, his portraits.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: And then using black like that. Of course, the Spanish giving us black as a real color to use. It's difficult to paint with black, I've heard, and make it work.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: That old woman in my bedroom was—I used black in those days. The Cushman girl, I did not use black. I haven't used black in portraits in years. You don't need it. Nothing is ever that black. Even—who was it? Wayman Adams would use ultramarine and alizarin crimson for his dark darks. Judas Priest. That's blacker than black, and it's awful. Puts holes, and it drags everything else down with it. [01:16:02] Puts holes in the canvas, whereas the shadows have a lot of light going over it and coloring the air, and a lot of luminosity. They're warm. Those shadows are warm. Were you ever taught that in painting classes?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Oh, yes, indeed.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: And cool halftones?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: And if you painted with black, it was like, you better have a good reason for using black.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: No, but did they talk about the warm shadow, the cool halftone, and the warm lights, and the cool highlights again?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Right.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Where was this?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Oh at Rice. I took some classes there.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Who was the teacher that told you this?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Bob Camblin was one of the teachers there.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Who?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Bob Camblin, and Joe Tate. Joe Tate used to talk a lot about shadows and lights. He's a young Cal—he's now back in California.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: This is rare. I was not taught this at the academy. I just thought of this.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: They just made us look. Just made us look at it. Then even Catherine Banerjee [ph] spoke about—would point things out like that in her lectures, especially.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I remember I was very pleased. I had this—Jimmy Chillman took this to send around, some exhibition one time. It was back there. I remember Catherine was sitting at the desk, and it was there waiting for me, come to get it. She never said much to me about my painting. She said, "Bob, that's a good painting." I was pleased that—Catherine was very modern. I didn't know if they were. That's what I miss in abstractions—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Yeah, of course you do.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: —is that luminous, wet sensation of the underneath shadows. Then, when the light hits on a halftone, it's cool. It has an opacity, and then the light there is opaque. It's that difference between wet and dry, transparent and opaque, that you don't get in abstractions. I always—ooh, I always want to get a glass of water or something to—they make it so dry-looking. [01:18:06]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: When you use oil and watercolor, with their own innate transparencies, the quality and transparency—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Watercolor?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Of watercolor and oil, too. When you think of Van Eyck, because he was sort of the first person really using oil and understanding the technical possibilities with the transparencies innate in the medium.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Didn't Van Eyck use egg oil tempera first under painting, and then glazed oils over, I think?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I don't know, I'll have to check.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I think so. That's why oil painting came. That's why I've always thought oil painting came into being that way, so then they could blend. Oh, hell, all those old fellows, they found out that rose madder was fugitive. So they'd have to—if they wanted to have a purple robe, they would paint it blue-grays, and highlights, and varnish it, lock it up, and glaze the rose madder over it, let it dry, and varnish over that, so it's in there, so it can't eat at the other pigments. Oh, God, what a laborious and—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Did you ever read *Techniques of Medieval Painting*? It's a wonderful book about the difficulties artists used to have in medieval times, running their own colors, or creating their own colors, and that very thing you're talking about, how they would have a tendency to change and darken, or lose their color. It was a whole—I mean, now we go to the art supply store and get your tube of oil.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Well, you still can misuse them, lady. [Laughs.]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Oh, I know. I know. I'm seeing it, and I bet it.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: That means nothing. That simply means—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: It just is easier.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: —that they aren't as bad as we all thought they were. No, the book on technique—the two of them—that I learned a lot from, after I quit and went back to teaching, I just read cover-to-cover and ate it up, was Max Doerner. [01:20:03] You know Max Doerner's book on technique?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: No, I don't.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: And in the back, he analyzes a technique, a procedure, of Rubens and Greco, and different men. It's interesting. Then another one, more recent than Doerner—Doerner is way before the war, and probably written in early '30s, late '20s—is Ralph Mayer. *The Artist and His Pigments*. Tells you how to grind colors, how to make gesso, and how to do everything, and has a list of the colors, what's bad about them, what's good about them, and the chemical quality of them. For instance, there's a yellow that I had to just stumble on. One time, years ago, I went to New York and happened to look at some paint. I saw this new yellow, and I bought a Naples yellow. You ever use it? I'd never been told about it. When I get home—I bought a couple tubes. Very heavy. It had lead antimonate. I brought it home. That's when I was teaching at the university, in the early '50s. God, I never heard of it before. That's Naples up there. It's a beautiful yellow. It's a warm yellow, and very powerful. So I looked it up in the Ralph Mayer book, and oh, yeah, that's what Rubens used, Naples yellow. And it will mix with dark colors, without graying on you, even though it's real light. Much lighter than zinc or any of those. Lighter than [inaudible]. It won't gray. But the trouble is, there's only one manufacturer in the country that makes a real Naples yellow.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Who's that?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: That's Permanent Pigments. It says in the back, "lead antimonate." [01:22:03] All the rest of them make it out of cadmium and yellow ochre and white. And so the minute you put it in the dark colors, it simply grays it, but the white—no good at all. Complete loss. A lot of people buy it because it looks like flesh. But oh, Naples, Naples is a great color.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: You taught at the University of Houston?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Yeah.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: How long did you teach there?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Oh brother. About three—just part-time—three years. I did it as a lark. They asked me to—they had asked me, years ago, to go out and teach. I looked at their army barracks, with neon lights all over the ceiling, and I couldn't operate in a place like that, no light. I'd be dead. So I told them I couldn't do it. I said, "I recommend someone." That's when I recommended Shackelford. Then, a few years later—Bernie—Lowell Collins, one time, when he was studying out there, Lowell brought Bernie Lammo [ph] over to my studio to see about something. That way, I got to know Lammo. Then, a few years later, he became chairman, and he asked me again to teach. So out of friendship with him, I thought I'd just do it as a lark, get back and see if I couldn't get in touch with young people again.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: What years were those?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Fifty-two, ['5]3, and ['5]4, probably around there. Just part-time. I was supposed to be a big-shot and come once a month. The classes go on twice a week. The models would pose. I'd come in and give great criticism. And it was supposed to be an advanced class in portrait, and great god in heaven, I'd get in there and the boogers couldn't draw, they couldn't model. So I began coming twice a month. [01:24:00] And then that wasn't enough, so I began coming three times, and four times. I began going twice a week, every time that they—and I told them I'd go and teach without ever asking them how much they were going to pay me. Now, that's rare, isn't it? [Laughs.]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I'd say.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I just never knew. Until finally, the first year, the bookkeeper sent me a note and said, "Mr. Joy, please pick up your checks. You're throwing our bookkeeping out of whack." I wasn't rich or anything. I was embarrassed. I was afraid to see how little it was, and it was damn little. It was horrible. So I kept on. Finally, after the third year, after it dawned on me it was costing me a lot of money, the time I was giving to it out there—and the other classes in the school were not producing draftsmen. They hadn't started early enough. The kids waited until your age, until they got way out of high school and got into college before they said, "Oh, I'm going to take art." Well, that's too late. They should start at 12 and 14, like I had the opportunity. That way, you learn to draw without knowing it.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Like speaking another language.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: It just becomes second nature. You just draw. That's what Allison did, my Allison. She can draw like a son-of-a-gun. So, I realized it was costing me a lot of money, and then, at this time, our dear Roy Cullen was chairman of the board out there, and he got Joe McCarthy—you've heard of Joe McCarthy, the senator from Michigan that was so anti-communist?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Of course.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: That McCarthy? Well, that was in his heyday. He got McCarthy down here to speak to with Sanderson O'Dey [ph] and everything with the great anti-communists, and here old Joy's in there discussing socialism with my students. [01:26:06] But no one ever said a word to him. All the other teachers—what I didn't like, they were scared to death.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Of course. Most people are.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: The climate was awful. Subsequently—I shouldn't put this on the tape, because the Cullen family are very prominent now. The Agnes Cullen Foundation that are simply giving pictures out there. The University of Houston commissioned me to do a picture of Mr. Cullen. Right at the time he was pulling this stuff, I heard he got up in a meeting, where some famous speaker came down, and the whole assembly got up and said, "You don't know a damn thing of what you're talking about." One of the board of directors told me this. I was afraid to have him in my studio. Thought we'd clash. He'd mention those two guys, and I'd go right up to the ceiling. So I never went after it. Some years later, when General Bruce was president, the head of secretaries called me and said, "Mr. Joy, we see you have a commission to do this portrait. What's the status of it?" I told them why. I said, "Well, I couldn't—I was afraid to have the guy in the studio, because he'd mentioned McCarthy, Joe McCarthy, and Fulton Lewis Jr., and a few things like that, and I thought I'd go right up to the ceiling." They said, "Okay." Oh, the secretary said, "Maybe it was your job to enlighten him and educate him." I said, "Not I," and so I hung down, so that was the end of that. Then, in the meantime, I did young Isaac Arnold, a portrait of him and his wife. Charming couple. I told him, I said, "You all watch your Ps and Qs. Someday, you'll be in that board out there. You'll find your way up." They were worried about climbing up, because the Cullens were—he was kind of a roustabout, and looked down on years ago. [01:28:07] I said, "Don't you worry. Your time will come." Surely, it has come. Anyway, they finally commissioned me to do it, in photograph. I never got around to it. Finally, one day Isaac came and asked for the pictures back, and so I'll never get to do what I think would make a wonderful portrait. He had a rock-like face. Have you ever seen a portrait of him?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: No, I haven't.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Had a rock-like face. Not as handsome as Sibelius. Ever see Sibelius, with bald head and—oh, inscrutable face, just like a hunk of rock, and that's the way this man was. Make a good painting. The reason I never did it the second time was because there was one photograph I asked for, and they never got it to me. It was a standing photograph that Gettings [ph] had done. I could have done a great job. So that was—that ended that.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: You've had a variety of—a very successful career, and you're highly respected, and you —

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Well, I never did mention the fact that—way at the beginning, when I was 13 years old, I was a sign painter. I went to work in a sign shop after school.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Oh, that's amazing.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: That's why I never got to go out and play football or baseball and track, which I was nuts about.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: How long did you paint signs?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: About four years. I stayed there for about a year and a half at the sign shop, and I finally took a couple clients away from the boss and had my own business. [Laughs.]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Incredible.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I had the largest office building in town. It was about a 12-story building. I did all the lettering on the doors, you know? And when the tenants would change. No matter what, I'd work at night, one, two o'clock in the morning. But even then, I was—my father's death and the defunct stock and bond company affected me then. I did not have the guts to go and collect for my sign work. [01:30:02]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Oh, dear. Do they still owe you? [Laughs.]

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: No, my grandmother got the bill, and my grandmother go and collect. So this is a genuine sickness. But I don't know. I'm glad of it, and I am gracious. There are enough asses running around, making a jillion dollars, worrying about it. [Laughs.] But no, but that sign thing, that was something. And you know, that has been—I've used that. When I did photography, I used to have to paint posters to put in the background, to set up—for Camel cigarette photographs, and opera posters and stuff like that. Well, I used that.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: You could do it all.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: When I was in the army, I got out of a lot of dirty work by painting the officers' names on their helmets on off-hours. That got me out of the dirty work, you see, when I did that. I did a lot of training posters when I was in the army.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: What happened to your early work? Do you still have some of it?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Just that one in there of the old woman, and that landscape. I have a roll of my early work, of landscapes. But my high school stuff—oh, gee, you saw the old man. There's an old man in there, holding a cane. That was high school, and I was 15. All my paintings, I left with my grandmother. I stayed down in Philadelphia and got married, and left them with her. God knows what she did with them. My uncle, out in California—he's dead now—he had one or two things. He had—they're both pictures I'm dying to have, that I did when I was 15, up in Gloucester. My mother has a few. But a whole lot of them, I think my grandmother gave to friends. [01:32:00] The academy, the Pennsylvania Academy, should still have some charcoal drawings, cast drawings, the first ones I did. They asked for them, to show other students and stuff. Then I burned a jillion things here, some years ago.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: That's always—

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Built a big fire out in the backyard. One landscape that somebody came and asked me for it afterwards, after I had burned it. They wanted to buy it. It was—I had two of them. One was of the esplanade, where the Mecom Fountain is now. There used to be a sunken garden of flowers, and I painted it with the museum in the background. When all those trees are real small and everything. I think I burned it up. I did one of—just beyond there, of the little live oak trees going out Main Street. Very Cézanne-ish. I was frightened [ph] very much by Cézanne and Van Gogh, Gauguin. And I burned it up. I don't know why. I ran out of gas on it. I finally got up to the light greens, and I didn't have any room to make the sky lighter. So that always worried me, the years that I had it. Just out of tone. I've had the same difficulty—that's one of the great difficulties of mine, is to get that sky up there and relate it to the trees, without the trees looking like they all have a lot of yellow-green dust on them. But Jimmy Chillman liked it. He had it hanging in the art museum for a long time.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: You shouldn't have burned it. Those always make me cry, when I heard people—Botticelli, and you, people who burn things.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: It was sort of [inaudible] landscape.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: I guess most artists do cull and destroy works that they don't want, necessarily.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: They get mad and disgusted. [01:34:00]

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Well, don't get mad anymore.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I'm glad to have—see, that old woman back there, and this one, Amina [ph], my wife—my new wife has had those restored by Flanagan. Oh yeah, you can float that in the bathtub and it won't hurt it. It's got Plexiglas in the back.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: He knows how to do it.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Hmm?

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: He does know how to do it. Well, I appreciate your time, Mr. Joy. I've enjoyed it immensely.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Well, I hope I didn't gabber too much.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: We're coming to the end of the tape, or we'd go on even longer.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: Everybody says I go around jouncing at the barn, and I try not to get too excited. I used a couple profane words once in a while. I did very well today.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: You did. The enthusiasm is wonderful.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: I'm usually very, very profane. But I'm glad to have a chance to put this—say how deeply interested I am in structure of a painting.

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Well, that's—without structure, there is no painting.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: For instance, one of my very first commissions was of Captain James A. Baker. He was the first chairman of the board of Rice, head of Baker Botts Firm, and all the Bakers running around now. One of

my first commissions, in photograph. But I did get a chance to see him. I went down, to his big office room, about this big, and his desk was way down at the end. It had one chair out in the middle of the room. "Sit down, young man." So I sat down, and he looked at his papers for about 10 minutes. "Well, now, what can I do for you?" It dawned on me, he didn't know why I was there. He wasn't supposed to know the portrait was being done. Anyhow, I forgot to see what color his eyes were. Scared the life out of me. I had one of my lady friends, garden club women, call Baker's daughter to find out if they have blue eyes. Anyway, in doing, I put bookshelves behind him, and books. [01:36:00] And would you believe that I had him posing like this, with a book in his hand, à la portrait of Belar [ph] by Cézanne, and books back here like the other portrait. [Laughs.] He did two of them [inaudible]. I noticed, when I did those books, that he had a funny look to his face. And so I finally found that I had the horizontals of the books, and the way they hit his head were changing his expression. Now, this is interesting. Changing his expression. And so I had to alter them and change them down, and move them, until it made him—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Stand out?

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: —came out. Otherwise, your gaze went from him over to here. You can do that. You can —by the way you can pose and the way you organize a portrait—

SANDRA CURTIS LEVY: Absolutely.

ROBERT CARLTON JOY: —you can—

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]