



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Paul Cadmus,  
1988 March 22-May 5

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 tape-recorded interview with Paul Cadmus on March 22, 1988. The interview took place in Weston, Connecticut, and was conducted by Judd Tully for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Interview

JUDD TULLY: Tell me something about your childhood. You were born in Manhattan?

PAUL CADMUS: I was born in Manhattan. I think born at home. I don't think I was born in a hospital. I think that the doctor who delivered me was my uncle by marriage. He was Dr. Brown Morgan.

JUDD TULLY: Were you the youngest child?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I'm the oldest. It's just myself and my sister. I was born on December 17, 1904. My sister was born two years later. We were the only ones. We were very, very poor. My father earned a living by being a commercial lithographer. He wanted to be an artist, a painter, but he was foiled. As I say, he had to make a living to support his family. We were so poor that I suffered from malnutrition. Maybe that was the diet, too. I don't know. I had rickets as a child, which is hardly ever heard of nowadays. Ever hear of it?

JUDD TULLY: Yes. What does that do to you?

PAUL CADMUS: It does some awful thing to the bones. I've never had a good chest. My chest has always been rather weak. It's one reason why I think I draw such beautiful chests on other people. [chuckles] Like good pecs - I don't like body-building things, but anyway, that was one of . . . I was rather a sickly child, but I survived. In fact, I've survived quite a long time.

JUDD TULLY: Quite well, yes.

PAUL CADMUS: I'm eighty-three now. And without any terrible illnesses either, after childhood. I was born on 103rd Street and Amsterdam Avenue. I think -- as I say -- I was born in the house. I'm not sure of that.

JUDD TULLY: And would that be one of those brownstones?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, no. A tenement. A horrible tenement. We lived with lots of bedbugs and cockroaches. I didn't have a really happy household or childhood. My mother and father quarreled quite a lot. She was a very devout Catholic and he called himself an atheist. I don't know whether he was really that extreme, but he believed in the principles of someone named Ingersoll, who was well-known at the time. He used to accuse Mother of giving all his money to the priests. She didn't have much to give, but anyway . . . Of course, we went to church on Sundays.

JUDD TULLY: Including your father?

PAUL CADMUS: No. He didn't go. No, no, no. My sister and I do remember that there was almost always some quarrel at mealtimes, usually about religion, I suppose. I don't remember much of it very well, which may be because I didn't enjoy it very much. My sister remembers it very well, actually.

JUDD TULLY: Now your sister's name is . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Fidelma.

JUDD TULLY: Where does that come from?

PAUL CADMUS: That was from my grandmother on my mother's side. My grandfather was from San Sebastian. He was Basque. My grandmother was . . . I'm not sure whether she was entirely Cuban or whether she was a mixture of Cuban and Spanish, but she was from Cuba. I think she was from Havana. On my father's side, we were old Dutch/English/American, so it was Revolutionary War and that sort of thing.

JUDD TULLY: Quite a cross-section.

PAUL CADMUS: It's very similar to George Tooker's, actually. George Tooker had a mother who was part, I think, Cuban and Mexican and Spanish, and his father was English/Dutch/American. Very similar to me.

JUDD TULLY: Now your mother's name . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Was Maria Latasa.

JUDD TULLY: How did they meet? Do you know?

PAUL CADMUS: In art school. In the National Academy of Design. I forget who they were students of. In fact, I don't know that I did know. I may have known, but I've forgotten. I know that later on, after Mother was married, and after I was a growing child -- I don't know how old -- she took up studying again under Joseph Pennell. Then later on I studied with him at the Art Students League. Just for two semesters I think it was at the Art Students League, after I left the National Academy of Design where I had been for six years.

JUDD TULLY: I don't know if we're jumping ahead, but you were a teenager when you started at the National Academy or younger?

PAUL CADMUS: I think I was fourteen when I left high school to go to art school.

JUDD TULLY: Where did you go to high school?

PAUL CADMUS: Something called Townsend Terrace. Part of City College, I think it is. It's right across the street from where the Lewisohn Stadium was. I think I only went there one, maybe two, terms. I wasn't a dropout, because I sort of flew from there to the National Academy of Design, but I gave up all whatever you call legitimate school study.

JUDD TULLY: So what was that like? You and you sister growing up in this -- I imagine -- like a small railroad flat type of place?

PAUL CADMUS: It was a railroad flat. Yes. We were there for how long? Let's see. We moved from there when I was about seven. This is all very approximate, because my sense of time is all wrong. Probably when I was about seven or eight, we moved to 152nd Street and Convent Avenue, which was a much nicer place. We sort of came up in the world a bit. It wasn't a tenement. It was an apartment house, but not a loathsome one, which the first one was.

JUDD TULLY: What was that a result of? I mean coming up in the world?

PAUL CADMUS: Because Father made a little more money. He was with the same firm for a great many years. I think it was called Cary Lithographic Company on Horatio Street. They designed posters and advertisements and things like that.

JUDD TULLY: So he did the actual art work?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I think he did the art work and maybe hired other artists. I'm not sure, but . . . .

JUDD TULLY: So when did you start? It must have been since both your father and mother . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, I was drawing always. No, I don't have the drawing. I gave it to Lincoln [Kirstein]. I had one I did when I was two-and-a-half. I have one here that I did when I was four-and-a-half. I always wrote the day when I did them how old I was on the drawing. I have piles of my childhood drawings. They don't show any unusual talent, I don't think, although this one here is what I call my de Kooning period. It looks very much like a de Kooning. I've never done anything closer to de Kooning than I did then.

JUDD TULLY: I can imagine. So do you remember something like a story or from when you were very young of drawing?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I was always drawing. I mean, I was encouraged to draw. I was given crayons and all the usual things. The first encouragement I had other than my family, which always encouraged me, was in public school. There was a teacher who was quite not an undistinguished artist by any means. His name was William Starkweather. In fact, there is a Starkweather museum down in Virginia, I think it is, or Carolina, somewhere down there. He was a very accomplished painter. I don't think he ever became an academician or anything as far as I know, but he encouraged me very much when I studied with him in the public school. I went to public school on, I think it was, 156th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue. I can't remember if it was Public School 96 or 56. The art classes I liked best, of course, and I did best. I did all right in English and things I liked, but in mathematics I was terrible. I kept failing all the time. I failed twice in Algebra when I went to high school. That was one of the things that made me quit school and go to art school. And Mother wanted me to start early, too.

JUDD TULLY: So it was more, say, your mother or your father who encouraged you?

PAUL CADMUS: I think Father would have preferred me to have a more business-like basis -- maybe even going to college. I don't know. But Mother seemed to have the say in any case and he didn't seem to object, but she was more the guiding spirit.

JUDD TULLY: And did this Starkweather -- you were making . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Just the usual. Even then I was just boats and ocean liners and the little exercises they would give you in a school of drawing -- a comb and a cube and that sort of thing. But he realized I had talent or at least he thought I did -- [chuckles] -- and was very encouraging. Then, as I say, when I got into high school I was still in short pants. I was not a grownup.

JUDD TULLY: This was in the late 'teens by this time?

PAUL CADMUS: I was still fourteen, so it would have to have been in 1918 or 1919. I had a very good teacher in the antique class, as it was called. It was Charles Hinton who had been a pupil of Gerome's.

JUDD TULLY: That's something.

PAUL CADMUS: I think that maybe Mother and Father even studied with him when they were in art school. I'm not sure of that. As Eakins was also a pupil of Gerome's.

JUDD TULLY: Was that a big change for you personally when you made that . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: We also moved back to the original tenement we came from because Mother wanted us to be within walking distance of the art school. She didn't want us to have to take elevated trains, so we moved back to this horrible place. Which was too bad, because we weren't considered . . . . Because my sister went in the end to art school, probably about two or three years later than I did. That same school. I can't remember how long I was in the antique class. It was the usual amount of time before we graduated -- were old enough to go into the life class. Not old enough, but accomplished enough.

JUDD TULLY: So in that sense it was a sort of classical training before they let you see a live model?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: You would use these plaster casts?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. The plaster casts which we used to do very careful charcoal renderings of. I remember also that there was a little peephole which we could look into the life class and see the models posing there, which we used to do quite often. [both chuckle] Before we were grownup enough. We shouldn't be seeing those things yet, but we did.

JUDD TULLY: It sounds like almost a sacrifice in terms that your mother wanted you and Fidelma to be close to . . . to make it convenient for you. I mean, to give up this more comfortable apartment.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. She did everything for the children. She was a very devoted mother.

JUDD TULLY: Did that strike you as unusual at that time or did your friends . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I guess she spoiled us in a way. She spoiled us, because she thought life was going to be difficult, so she would often bring us our breakfast in bed as children. We were able to make up for it sometime later on, when she was ill and older. Then we would bring her her breakfast in bed and things like that. But I remember how spoiled we were in that she would bring me cocoa in the morning and if it had scum on it I would make her take it back and get rid of the film on the top. [laughter] Terrible child.

JUDD TULLY: So there was really no doubt, in your mind, anyway, about . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Of being loved? No.

JUDD TULLY: No. I mean in terms of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Of being an artist? No. It was just taken for granted.

JUDD TULLY: Now did you have friends that were also interested in art?

PAUL CADMUS: Father had artist friends. He was a member of the New York Water Color Society. He was not completely unknown. He used to exhibit in the regular exhibitions and things like that.

JUDD TULLY: Sorry. His first name?

PAUL CADMUS: Was Egbert. They were both not terribly young for children. Mother was, I think, thirty-three and Father was thirty-two or something like that when I was born. Around that age, anyway. I can't remember what year they got married. That's not important. I mean, I was born at the correct time. I wasn't born prematurely or anything.

JUDD TULLY: It sounded very romantic. The idea that they would meet in this art class.

PAUL CADMUS: I guess it was. He was handsome and Mother was quite lovely looking too. I guess it was love. Mother had come down in the world. They had been quite rich when they were young. My grandfather, I think, was an importer -- I'm not sure. But they had a very elaborate house on Rumson Road in Rumson, New Jersey. Then when Mother was born, she was born very soon after they first landed in this country when they came over from Spain, I think it was. They lived on 11 East 9th Street. That's where she was born and her various sisters and brothers. But then they lost all their money, and my mother's twin sister had to take a job. She became a private secretary in the days when not many women did typing and things like that. She looked exactly like my mother. You couldn't tell the difference for many years. As they got older they changed. My mother died when she was quite young -- in her fifties -- and her twin sister lived to be eighty-something. So genes are not everything. Her twin sister never married.

JUDD TULLY: What was the regimen like at the National Academy?

PAUL CADMUS: I would go there every morning and come back every afternoon. I would be there all day. I think it was all day. It may have started part-time. I'm not sure. I don't remember that. It's hard to imagine I was doing casts all day long. Of course, we would go to lectures and things like that, too. Lectures on anatomy and lectures on composition.

JUDD TULLY: Where was it located at that time?

PAUL CADMUS: 109th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. See, we lived at 103rd just off Amsterdam, so we were always within walking distance.

JUDD TULLY: Did you play a lot in the parks around?

PAUL CADMUS: I played with the local children. I was never very good. I had a tendency to be bullied because I was not very good. Mother, too, didn't dress us the way most other children were dressed. I mean, I had to wear white stockings whereas other boys wore black stockings. It was very embarrassing.

JUDD TULLY: Was that just because of her taste or she wanted to make you look different?

PAUL CADMUS: I think she wanted us to be more refined most of the time. I think that was probably it.

JUDD TULLY: So this would be what? At the end of World War I, pretty much, when you were going to the National Academy?

PAUL CADMUS: I remember the sinking of the Lusitania. I think that was 1915, but I'm not sure. I remember reading about that and seeing the headlines, but I don't know whether I was in school at that moment. I wouldn't have been. No, I wouldn't have been old enough to be in school then. Life seemed fairly uneventful and not very memorable, but of course I loved school and I loved being in the art classes after the antique class. I don't remember disliking the antique class, but it must have been kind of boring. But, as soon as I got into life classes, I began to enjoy it much more. I studied with an awful lot of people who have since become quite well known. At the time two of the Soyer brothers were there. Maybe even three. I'm not sure of that.

JUDD TULLY: It's quite possible. Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: I remember Raphael very well, but I don't remember the others.

JUDD TULLY: As classmates?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. And there was Byron Browne, who also became quite well known. And Robert Philip, Luigi Lucioni. I suppose there were others, but I can't think of them at the moment.

JUDD TULLY: So you spent two years?

PAUL CADMUS: At the Academy. I spent six years altogether.

JUDD TULLY: And that's more or less full-time regimen?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. And I did well. I mean, I won prizes and I . . . . One of the things I liked best was being part

of the etching class. I did a lot of drypoints and etching. Tried all the various media. I did soft ground etching, aquatints. Some of these things surface every once in a while. People still find things, and I have to identify them and say they are not fakes, but I don't have copies of many of those things myself. I think when I was still in my teens I was elected to the Brooklyn Society of Etchers. It was the big etching society at the time. It was the most important one in the country. I think I was still in my teens. I think the chronology is probably in Lincoln's book. I think that's probably more or less accurate.

JUDD TULLY: When you say Lincoln, you are referring to your brother-in-law?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes, Lincoln Kirstein. I get sick of myself. I've got to stop for a minute.

JUDD TULLY: Sure.

PAUL CADMUS: I just bore myself. That's all. [chuckles]

[BREAK IN TAPE]

JUDD TULLY: Sometimes just trying to imagine something about what Manhattan was like in those days and you mentioned the Soyer Brothers and Byron Browne. It seemed like there was a lot going on about the New York art sort of growing into something.

PAUL CADMUS: Mostly we had rather old-fashioned teachers, and their work was considered rather old-fashioned. I stayed with Charles Curran who used to do girls on tops on hills and Francis C. Jones and Ivan Olinski. Then at one period -- I think maybe later on -- Charles Hawthorne came in and he was a great . . .

JUDD TULLY: Still at the Academy?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Although I never studied with Charles Hawthorne, I used to go and watch his demonstrations. In fact, in that little painting over there of that apple tree I was trying to work like Charles Hawthorne. I was working with a palette knife. The portrait above of me is by Luigi Lucioni. It was done while I was . . . I guess I was still at the Academy at the time. No, I guess I had already left the Academy at that time.

JUDD TULLY: And you're in a rather distinctive-looking, almost turquoise colored, tie.

PAUL CADMUS: I remember it was a white tie. I dyed it with Tintex or something like that.

JUDD TULLY: Because you were somewhat on the poor side, you were somewhat inventive with your clothes, too?

PAUL CADMUS: Probably. My sister used to dress really quite outrageously in hand-me-downs. But they were very Bohemian and quite lovely, but they were often ridiculed because they weren't the way other children dressed. She would wear evening dresses to the school. The other girls didn't wear an evening dress.

JUDD TULLY: And she was also quite striking, wasn't she?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes, she was. Fidelma was very beautiful.

JUDD TULLY: So you were living at home and going to the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Going to school. I was always reading. I never was lazy. I didn't go to public school until I was almost seven years old. I didn't go to school early, but I already knew how to read and write and was quite far along. I didn't have to start in the early grades. I was pushed right up to the higher grades. I don't remember having had any formal lessons from my parents, but evidently they encouraged me.

JUDD TULLY: So you started at seven because you were sickly or they just never got around to . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No. They didn't want to send me to school because, I think, they thought I would catch a lot of children's diseases. That was sort of protective on Mother's part probably. I guess that was the reason. Maybe she thought I would be influenced by the wrong types and things like that. I remember the only sexual advice my mother ever gave me. She said, "Don't ever accept a ride if anybody offers you a ride because they'll take you home and strap you to a bed and abuse you."

JUDD TULLY: Oh, God! [both laugh] So, how did you take that?

PAUL CADMUS: I thought it sounded rather interesting, I guess. [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: Because it usually never goes past "just don't ever accept a ride or candy from strangers" or

something.

PAUL CADMUS: These were in the days when I would walk to the Academy.

JUDD TULLY: And so what led you to leave? Was the program finished when you left there?

PAUL CADMUS: There was really no finishing. I mean, I could have gone and stayed on because the tuition was something ridiculous like twenty-five dollars a year or something like that. I think I could have gone on, but maybe I thought it was time for me to begin to try to earn a living. I did get a few jobs. I did a few drypoints for the New York Herald Tribune. I remember I did one of Woodrow Wilson. I think I did one of Eugene O'Neill. I'm not sure about Eugene. I know I did one of Woodrow Wilson. From photographs, of course. And several little jobs like that. Then I began looking for work. My chronology is terrible. Oh! And then after the Academy I went to the Art Students League for, I think, two years. I studied lithography with Charles Locke and I studied etching. Mostly it was printing my old etchings -- my drypoints -- with Joseph Pennell. He taught me how he printed. Then I guess it was after the Art Students League that I began to look for work. I took samples of my etchings and whatever I had to an advertising agency. It was called the Blackman Company. It was on 42nd Street. And I was given a job. It was the only time I ever applied for a job, I think, and the only one I ever had. I was just a layout man. I didn't do much original art work. I was given occasional -- what they called "original" art -- to do. I would do drawings of sneakers and a few rather little Art Deco drawings that still have in my scrapbook. But I thought that I only wanted to work . . . I don't remember whether I started working full time or whether I just started working a half a day, because I thought I would keep up my more serious work. I rented a little studio in 23rd Street and tried to work there half a day and go to the advertising agency the other half. But somehow or other I found that either didn't work -- that I wasn't able to work just that part-time -- or maybe I even wanted to earn more money. I don't know. But then I began working full-time. Altogether I think I was in the advertising agency less than two years. I'm not sure. But I earned quite a lot of money and I was able to save up enough to go to Europe with Jared French. We met at the art school. We met at the Art Students League and we decided that we wanted to be artists and we would go to . . . he'd been to Europe. I'd never been. We wanted to be artists, and maybe we should live in some inexpensive place and work and work, which we did. We took a tanker from Hoboken in October, 1931. I think it was October. It might have been September. I think it was eleven days crossing. It was rather a bad trip, because we couldn't be outdoors very much because it was so rough and the waves would go right over the flat part of the tanker. We were the only passengers, Jerry and I. And the food was awful. We ate with the crew, not with the captain, but we ate with some of the officers. I do remember in the morning when we'd wake up, the cockroaches would be laying all alongside of us to keep warm. I remember at breakfast the officers opening their biscuits and things to see whether they were raisins or cockroaches baked in them. But I loved the trip in any case. It was very exciting. We landed at Le Havre and went to Paris.

JUDD TULLY: So you would be now . . . ? If this was 19--?

PAUL CADMUS: This was 1931.

JUDD TULLY: So you were in your late twenties?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. As I was born in December, I always seem a little older than I really am because, in 1931, I wasn't quite . . . Arithmetic . . . I can't do that much arithmetic.

JUDD TULLY: So here you are. You spent practically your whole life in New York City?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. We had little vacations in the summertime in boarding houses.

JUDD TULLY: On the seashore?

PAUL CADMUS: Near the seashore. Not on the seashore, I don't think. We went to Oceanic on the Shrewsbury river a couple of summers. Not whole summers, maybe a month in the country. My father worked in the city and would come down on weekends and paint. Mother was terribly neurotic and always frightened to death of fire and things like that. The first thing she would do when we got to a boardinghouse was to get out a rope and attach it to a radiator so we could climb out the window in case of a fire. We probably would have fallen and broken our necks, but anyway . . .

JUDD TULLY: Did you have that at home, too?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't think we had ropes, but we had fire escapes, of course. I remember how . . . I think I may have mentioned this in the film that David Sutherland did -- when we would go downtown to see relatives from 152nd Street (that's where we were living then) there would be the trolley ride from the base of 125th Street up to 137th, I think it was. But we always go off the trolley at the bottom of the hill and walked up the hill in case the trolley slid down the hill. And then take another trolley and go home that way.

JUDD TULLY: Because of your mother's fear?

PAUL CADMUS: Because of Mother's fear. She never was in a subway. Ever. She was really afraid of all forms of travel. Even the boat to Oceanic was very frightening for her.

JUDD TULLY: But it didn't seem particularly to rub off on you -- taking off on a tanker. By the way, by the time you went to Europe, had you left home in that sense?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, by that time, no. My father had remarried. My mother died, and we moved from this horrid tenement into quite a nice apartment on 95th Street on which I paid part of the rent because by this time I was working at the advertising agency and earning quite a good salary.

JUDD TULLY: Any idea of amount at that time?

PAUL CADMUS: I think the apartment was less than a hundred dollars a month, but it was three bedrooms, I think. My sister and I and my father lived there. Then he met someone whom he married while we were still there. I didn't like her. She seemed very sweet, but it was mostly a sugar coating. Underneath she was not sweet at all. We didn't think so, anyway. And she didn't get along with my sister either. It was at this period that I decided to escape to Europe, leaving my sister there with my father and my stepmother, who'd moved in by that time.

JUDD TULLY: I just wanted to go back for a second. Your mother, she got sick?

PAUL CADMUS: She got something that would have been curable nowadays with antibiotics. It was inflammation of the lining of the heart. Septoendocarditis, I think it's called.

JUDD TULLY: Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: You've heard of it?

JUDD TULLY: Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: Anyway, she died out at one of my father's relatives. I guess at my grandmother's house. I guess she died there out in Bloomfield, New Jersey.

JUDD TULLY: Were you there?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. She died in the hospital. But we were visiting there when she was taken sick and she was taken to a hospital nearby. I forget whether it was in Glen Ridge or somewhere around there.

JUDD TULLY: And, as you said, she was young. She was in her fifties.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I don't remember the exact date, but just partly worn out by nerves.

JUDD TULLY: What kind of impact did that have on you?

PAUL CADMUS: It was very upsetting, of course. She was the one I loved. I didn't really love my father, I would say. In fact, I used to often wish I could push him out the window, but I was afraid I would be caught. [both laugh]

JUDD TULLY: What floor were you on?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, far enough up.

JUDD TULLY: Far enough to make an impact. [laughter] The fact that he was an artist didn't really make that great a . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Oh no. That didn't.

JUDD TULLY: So what was it that you kind of didn't . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know. I thought he was too puritanical, I suppose. And also I suppose he wanted me to be . . . I don't know. I really don't know. It was partly too that I didn't think he treated my mother well. And I do remember he used to threaten suicide quite often. I remember once . . . I don't know why I'm telling all these things. It has nothing to do with art history. I remember once when we came home, we found this suicide note. Mother knew where he kept his revolver and he hadn't taken his revolver with him, so we took the revolver and went for a walk along the Harlem River near High Bridge. This is when we were living at 155th Street, I think. I'm not sure where we were living. We took a walk and threw the revolver in the river. When we got back to the



house, Father was back home and I don't think the suicide was mentioned again, but . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Did he miss his revolver?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know. I never heard if there was any mention of that again.

JUDD TULLY: Was he in World War I?

PAUL CADMUS: No, he wasn't.

JUDD TULLY: But he had a gun in the house?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I don't know how he happened to have it.

JUDD TULLY: So ultimately then, in a way, after your mother died, it was fairly soon after that that you decided to pick up . . .

PAUL CADMUS: That we moved to 95th Street. I lived there for a year or so while working at the advertising agency.

JUDD TULLY: How much do you think you were making at the ad agency?

PAUL CADMUS: I can't really remember. I can't quite remember my salary. In fact, I don't remember it at all, but I remember it was a good salary. And the times when I did original art work for them and things like that, sometimes I would make as much as nearly five hundred dollars a week, which was a lot. But that was not very frequently, you know, but I always made over a hundred and sometimes I'd make quite a lot more. But I was also very extravagant in those days and liked to wear the best clothes.

JUDD TULLY: Where would you go? You would go shopping and pick up . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I would shop at Trippler's, which was a very fancy store at the time.

JUDD TULLY: Would you describe some outfit you were wearing at the time?

PAUL CADMUS: They weren't outrageous, although I think I wore spats when lots of people didn't wear spats. I sometimes wore a derby too, or a homburg. I fancied myself as rather elegant. And of course always gloves and things like that. I had a tuxedo and tails and things which . . . . I don't know how often I used them, but I had them.

JUDD TULLY: So you would wear normally to the office . . . ? You would wear a suit?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. And a tie. Very respectable. It was in the Chanin Building where I worked by this time. My first office was in the Wurlitzer Building, I think. Then it moved to the Chanin Building right across the street from the Commodore Hotel. They often used to have sketch classes at night. My fellow workers and I would hire a model and have a sketch class. They all had artistic leanings, but they were always too busy making money to think of ever giving it up to be serious artists.

JUDD TULLY: And you were thinking about that all the time?

PAUL CADMUS: No, I don't think I was. I think it wasn't until I met Jerry, who persuaded me that I had ability. I think that I used to think that I . . . .

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

JUDD TULLY: Now Jerry -- of course -- is Jared French?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: So the two of you met at the Art Students League?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: At the Art Students League it wasn't so much that you were taking painting classes?

PAUL CADMUS: It was lithography and etching. I even tried a little bit of engraving, but it was mostly lithography. It was to learn another medium really. And the printing of the etching which was done on . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Because that was primary on your mind of what you wanted to . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, yes. I had had a certain success as an etcher. As I say, I belonged to the Brooklyn Society of Etchers and I exhibited there and I won prizes or honorable mentions or something. And I exhibited at the National Academy. Not the school, but the real Academy shows.

JUDD TULLY: So whoever might have been teaching at the Art Students League in terms of painters must have been pretty well known at that time in the late Twenties.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, yes, they were, but I wasn't influenced by any of them.

JUDD TULLY: But it wasn't something that you wanted to do?

PAUL CADMUS: No. It was really just graphic arts at that time that I was interested in.

JUDD TULLY: Because I've pushed you back a little bit, how did Jerry . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Jerry had studied with Boardman Robinson at the Art Student's League, and he was very much influenced by him. He began teaching me what he'd learned from Boardman Robinson. Never before I met Jerry -- in fact, I didn't when I first met him either, but -- I had never done anything but work directly from life. I did a portrait of Jerry, which is in Lincoln's book. I think it's Jerry reading Ulysses in bed.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. Bare-chested with the book folded over?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I did that while I was still working in the advertising agency.

JUDD TULLY: Now Ulysses -- That must have been a . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: One of the early copies. Yes. Somebody had smuggled it over and given it to me. In fact, I think it was Luigi Lucioni who brought it to me from Europe.

JUDD TULLY: This was a book that was obviously banned.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, you couldn't buy it, no.

JUDD TULLY: Before the Supreme Court decision.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh no. Banned for quite a while, I think.

JUDD TULLY: You must have been quite sophisticated to even be aware . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, I was a great reader. I had read everything by the time I went to high school, probably. I used to go to secondhand book stores and buy everything of Dickens and Thackeray and all the classics. Ruskin. In fact, I had quite a little library of terribly cheap little five- and ten-cent books. Of course earlier than that, I had started reading the usual boys' books from the library. I also was an opera buff, too, in those days. I used to go stand at the opera house while I was still at the advertising agency.

JUDD TULLY: Where would the opera have been at that time?

PAUL CADMUS: The Metropolitan Opera was at 39th Street and Broadway. I used to go frequently.

JUDD TULLY: And you had studied piano?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. First, my mother taught me how to play the piano and then my aunt, who had done more . . . she gave me some lessons. Then I studied with quite a good teacher who was connected with the Virgil Clavier School of Teaching -- a Mr. Jewett, who was a Quaker, I think. Charming old man and a very good teacher. I never was terribly expert, because I never practiced enough. I loved to read music, and I learned to read music very easily. Do you play, too?

JUDD TULLY: I studied it as a child and never kept it up and lost it, but I like to listen to it.

PAUL CADMUS: I still play a little. I usually play almost every day a little bit. Like most people smoke cigarettes. By the way, do you smoke? I didn't offer you an ashtray.

JUDD TULLY: No, I'm fine. I do on occasion. I think I picked up the habit from my father, who used to smoke maybe one cigarette a day.

PAUL CADMUS: It's not a very bad habit.

JUDD TULLY: No. Luckily. Just getting back for a minute, your childhood just sounds like this incredibly intensive

kind of feeding of literature and music.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, there was. We were all interested in all those things. My father used to sing, too, some. I think he used to read to us, too, quite a lot, when he had time and he wasn't too tired.

JUDD TULLY: What kind of impression did Ulysses make on you when you read it? Do you remember?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I really don't remember, except that, of course, I was impressed to be reading Ulysses. [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: You knew it was contraband.

PAUL CADMUS: And knowing, I understood quite a lot of it. And of course looking forward especially to the Molly Bloom part, naturally.

JUDD TULLY: So when you left with Jared on this tanker and you had more or less said goodbye to your sister, were you leaving, saying . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: We expected to be gone a year or two. We were seen off by my father and my stepmother and my sister. And maybe an aunt. I don't remember now. But one reason I do remember my father being there because there was a boat lying across from us where it was docked. It was a white boat, but the water reflected on it made it look absolutely blue. A bright blue. I remember my father saying to his wife, "What color is that boat, Bennie?" She said, "It's a white boat of course." But he said, "No, it isn't. It's blue. Can't you see it?" She said, "No. I know it's a white boat." He said, "But it's blue because it's reflecting the water." So anyway he gave her a little lesson in watercolor painting at that point. I'll show you some of his watercolors afterwards.

JUDD TULLY: Okay. And her name was Bennie?

PAUL CADMUS: Her real name was Benaldine Nobel. She had been married before. I think they were happy. Anyway, you've docked me in Paris. I think I'm in Paris by now.

JUDD TULLY: Right. I have to apologize for pushing you back and forth across the ocean.

PAUL CADMUS: No, it's good, because it makes me think of things I wouldn't have thought of otherwise.

JUDD TULLY: So for the first time you land in France. Now, do either one of you know how to speak any French?

PAUL CADMUS: We both knew a little bit. In fact, Jerry knew quite a lot. In fact, as a present for me, he had translated Gide's *Cordon* because it wasn't translated into English at the time. So we planned to go see Andre Gide when we were in France and take his translation to him.

JUDD TULLY: Was Gide living in Paris?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: So how did you get to Paris? You took a train?

PAUL CADMUS: We took the train from Le Havre to Paris and we'd been recommended a cheap little hotel. It had fleas, but it didn't have bedbugs, anyway. I think it was called the Grand Hotel Bisson. It was right on the Seine. I can't remember how long we stayed there -- whether it was ten days, a week, two weeks. But of course we had to see all the pictures, and we had to go to museums.

JUDD TULLY: What kind of impact did that have on you?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, a great deal. I bought masses of reproductions at the time. Then, shortly after that, because we wanted to get settled before the winter came in, we thought of the Balearic Islands because we knew it was supposed to be cheap there, and the peseta was ridiculously low in value so we went to Chartres. We stayed in Chartres I think a week, while I learned to ride a bicycle. I had never been on a bicycle before.

JUDD TULLY: Really? [chuckles]

PAUL CADMUS: No. That's quite old to start learning.

JUDD TULLY: I'm just laughing because I know you rode your bike across Europe, right?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes, I did.

JUDD TULLY: So this was very quick training?

PAUL CADMUS: It was. We started off after about a week. Those bicycles were something, like seven or eight speeds. One of those rather heavy touring bicycles -- not cyclists' bicycles. We took a little knapsack on the front of the thing, a little backpack, I think, on our backs, sent most of our luggage by train. I can't remember how far we sent it, whether we sent it to Madrid or whether we sent it to Alicante where we . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Oh, Alicante. I was there this past summer.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, you were? I can't imagine what it's like now. Is it all built up?

JUDD TULLY: Yes. Terribly.

PAUL CADMUS: Like Marbella and Torremolinas and those places are?

JUDD TULLY: Yes. It's kind of rampantly developed with little regard for what must have been a beautiful place.

PAUL CADMUS: It was. It was a lovely place.

JUDD TULLY: The beach was very nice.

PAUL CADMUS: Crowded, I suppose?

JUDD TULLY: It wasn't too bad. We were there early in June, but Alicante was an interesting little stop there.

PAUL CADMUS: So, after about a week in Chartres, I was considered expert enough to start bicycling down to Spain. Usually the back roads the trucks and things whip [past] and I often would fall off, but didn't fall off until after the truck had passed and then I'd fall down. But I never fell down badly. I never hurt myself. Then we lived on salami and bread and wine and cheese and grapes and things like that. And staying at cheap little hotels, too. We didn't just spend the night in the fields or anything like that. One of our goals which we went to was Montauban to see the Ingres Museum.

JUDD TULLY: Were you familiar with him at that point?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, yes. I was familiar with all the great artists at that time.

JUDD TULLY: Was that from reproductions?

PAUL CADMUS: Reproductions and the Metropolitan Museum.

JUDD TULLY: That's what I hadn't asked you. Did you spend . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, I used to go to the museum a great deal. Even when I was very young, I used to buy what was called Medici prints, I think. I would send to Boston for them and buy these prints. My tastes in those days ran to Alma-Tadema and the Pre-Raphaelites -- Rossetti and Mary Jones.

JUDD TULLY: So this tour was aimed at seeing pictures as well?

PAUL CADMUS: It was aimed at seeing pictures and to get to the Spanish coast to go to the Balearic Islands.

JUDD TULLY: But weren't you riding up and down mountains and things?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, yes. We did that.

JUDD TULLY: Wasn't this rather extraordinarily hair-raising for someone who had never been on a bicycle before?

PAUL CADMUS: I got quite used to it quite quickly. In fact, I used to often outdistance Jerry on the . . . . We would do a hundred and twenty-five kilometers a day.

JUDD TULLY: Wow! That's very respectable. Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: I can't remember all the cities we visited. I probably have in my little journals which I kept at the time. I kept a terribly detailed account of expenses. I'd write down everything. Newspapers, a glass of wine here, and things like that. We both had just enough money that we thought would last, could last, us for two years.

JUDD TULLY: How much was that? Do you remember?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't think there was much over two thousand dollars we each had.

JUDD TULLY: Apiece?

PAUL CADMUS: Something like that. Yes, I do remember some things. I remember riding in hailstorms and things like that on the bicycle. It was really golfball-size hailstones falling on my . . . I think it was my bare head. Maybe I had a bare head at the time. Maybe I was that French by then. I remember coming to one little town. I can't remember what it was called. I don't remember the name of it, but we tried the only hotel. There was nothing there. Dreary little place. We stopped and spoke to a woman on a bridge. She spoke only Esperanto. I mean she did speak French, but she preferred trying to speak Esperanto. We managed to communicate, and she invited us to come to her place, where she had a lovely library and she said she'd find us a place to sleep that night. I remember her getting up on the ladder. She seemed very old to us, but she probably wasn't more than sixty, I suppose. I remember her climbing a ladder to get a book off the shelf and then talking about Josephine Baker and doing an imitation of her up on the ladder. Anyway, she introduced us to her gentleman friend.

JUDD TULLY: Did that shock you when she was doing the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No. It was very cute. I wasn't easily shocked by this time. I was quite, as you say, sophisticated. At least I thought I was. She found us a place at a peasant's house anyway. A miserable place. I remember the bed that they gave Jerry and me to sleep on was like a hammock. You couldn't but roll down into the middle of it. But before we went to bed, I remember we had dinner with the farmer's wife. I remember it was a rabbit stew and it made Jerry deathly ill. It didn't make me sick, but . . . I do remember before going to bed the farmer tried to make a pass at me and it was rather difficult. [laughter]

JUDD TULLY: This setting is really beginning to sound quite surreal. Where was this exactly?

PAUL CADMUS: I'm not sure if the town was called Vienne or Vienne was just the name of the province. A dreary part of France in any case. Shortly after that we landed up in Biarritz and spent a night or two there and then went on to San Sabastian to look up some of my Spanish relatives. Getting over to San Sebastian from the French border was one of the rather more mountainous parts, I think. I think that was one of them, I'm not sure. But anyway, we got there. We stayed in San Sebastian and I went and looked up my relative. I happened to run into her -- I didn't call ahead of time. I just happened to bump into her downstairs in the rather elaborate apartment house where she lived. She wasn't at all pleased to see this wandervogel-type appearing and wasn't very friendly, as I remember. I'm not sure whether she invited us to come to see her or not. I really don't remember that, but anyway I was not encouraged and the friendship was not developed. I remember her name because it was so strange to think of a female Jesus. It's Jesusa. She was one of my grandfather's relatives. She was the Basque side of the family.

JUDD TULLY: And when you say you bumped into her, you knew by her looks or . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I can't remember how we identified ourselves. Or maybe I rang her doorbell and she saw me ringing it. I can't remember, but I do remember meeting down in the vestibule of the house. I don't remember anything further -- whether we were invited for a meal or something or not. I don't remember that. Then, from there we went on to Burgos and that was one of the worst parts of the trip. Very mountainous and there was a snowstorm on the way. But we got there somehow or other. Then, when we got to Burgos, we decided we would take train from there on. We would put our bicycles on a train. We didn't bicycle the rest of the way. We stopped at various places. Maybe we didn't. We went on to Madrid and stayed there for quite a while at a little pensione that did have bedbugs.

JUDD TULLY: Which are fearsome creatures. They bite.

PAUL CADMUS: I know. You've probably never seen one in your life.

JUDD TULLY: Oh, I have. Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: Most Americans haven't. The only other ones I met in Europe was in Colmar, which is a lively, clean town too. Of course, in Madrid we went to the Prado a great deal, and we went to see the Goyas in various churches. From Madrid we went to Toledo and saw the El Grecos there which I was very much impressed by.

JUDD TULLY: So you went to that terrific . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: The Martinas and the Maricio which I loved, and The Burial of Count Orgazo.

JUDD TULLY: Were both of you then with your sketchbooks and were you making studies or were you moving too fast?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't think I used a sketchbook much at that time. I don't remember making sketches then. I don't think we did. I don't remember doing any sketching on our trip. Then, after seeing everything we could . . . . In fact they had bullfights even in Madrid which I -- at least one -- which I was supposed to enjoy. Having read Hemingway . . . I guess I had read Hemingway by then -- I mean about the bullfights. Anyway I supposedly

appreciated the cape work and all that sort of thing. And the disemboweling of the horses. I think we went directly to Alicante. We decided to try Ibiza and we stayed there a fairly short time and didn't quite like it. I don't know why we didn't. It was a beautiful place. But we went on to Majorca and stayed in Palma. Not Baspalmas -- that's the Canary Islands. Then we stayed there for a while in a pension and began looking around for a place to live. And we took train trips and things. We tried Soliere and Foryensa and Deya. We liked Deya very much except it was on the north coast, I think. In any case it had a very short daylight. The mountains hid the sun very quickly. Robert Graves was there at the time. We used to see him in the hotel where he stayed. He seemed like a very unpleasant man. He didn't want to meet anyone obviously and didn't want any admirers. He was there with Laura Riding at the time. We looked at houses in these various towns. Then tried the town of Puerta de Andraitx (?) and we stayed at a pension there. And had looked around and found a little apartment on the harbor that we rented for several months. There I did my first painting that was not directly from life. It was a self-portrait, which was from life, but I invented the background of a naked woman coming out of the next apartment and being surprised at seeing me there with my shaving material on the little terrace. That was my first attempt at composing a picture.

JUDD TULLY: And this is after you had traveled for . . . how long would that have been?

PAUL CADMUS: I think we arrived there in early December, but I'm not sure of the date.

JUDD TULLY: So a few months on the road then?

PAUL CADMUS: It was at least a month. Maybe it was two months. Not more than two, I don't think, because we were very anxious to get settled and get to work. We were buying masses of reproductions all the time at every museum we went to, to take with us.

JUDD TULLY: How did this composition come about? That's also reproduced in the . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: I think that one's reproduced. We found this little apartment. It was a single floor house which had about I think three apartments all facing the harbor. Lovely sun, lovely climate. And it was very cheap. I can't remember what it was. But we found something much cheaper on the other side of the harbor -- another little apartment which was five dollars a month. Two-fifty each. It had just a charcoal stove. But it had its own little toilet. It didn't have a bathroom. You had to take sponge baths and things like that. But it had a lovely view of the harbor -- the fishing boats outside. I did a painting of the fishing boats from the window. When the sun was out, it was lovely, but I got chilblains, as one often does in Europe. I don't know . . . I got chilblains once in Florence, too.

JUDD TULLY: What is that?

PAUL CADMUS: It's a kind of minor frostbite, but it's terribly painful. It nearly drives you crazy. It's almost always in the toes and sometimes in the fingers and things like that. Americans never get it except when they're in the Mediterranean or something. You don't get it in cold countries, because they know how to keep warm. They don't have tile floors and . . . .

JUDD TULLY: I see. So you were standing, probably on . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. We were living in a house without any carpets or anything like that. But in the good weather all winter long we were able to walk to little coves and go swimming, which we did. Anyway, we settled down in this little town which, I think, was about twenty-five kilometers from Palma, where we used to buy our art supplies. We would probably both bicycle in and buy our art supplies and our drawing papers. Unfortunately, in those days I liked drawing on newsprint, which is terrible paper. People used to use newsprint. It's a lovely texture to work on, actually. I enjoyed it, but things have begun to crumble and turn yellow, of course. We didn't know anything about acid-free things in those days. We should have, but we didn't. I did keep very elaborate accounts of what our expenses were. I remember one month my total expenses, which included some art supplies, not very many that month, and going to an occasional cafe for an aperitif, was eleven dollars for the whole month. But the average was about twenty-five dollars a month. Some months more, some less.

JUDD TULLY: In terms of your expenses, were you both trying to be as economical . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Trying to make our money last.

JUDD TULLY: So you wouldn't go to a cafe?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, we really weren't extravagant, I must say. We lived mostly on eggs and onions and fresh tomatoes and fresh figs and fresh produce and things like that. We didn't even buy fish, which was rather odd, because the fish always came in the market. But maybe it's partly because our stove was so inadequate. We nearly did asphyxiate ourselves one night using the carbon in our stove with the windows closed. We both got

terrible headaches, but realized and opened the windows in time.

JUDD TULLY: So the language was Spanish, or was it Catalan?

PAUL CADMUS: They spoke Majorcan, which is a little different from Catalan. It's little different from the Catalan. They all understood Spanish, but they didn't speak the purest Spanish. Neither did we, of course.

JUDD TULLY: But you could get by?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I did quite well. Actually as a child I had spoken Spanish, but I soon lost it because Father didn't speak it.

JUDD TULLY: Oh, of course. From your mother?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. We used to speak Spanish quite a lot when I was a very little child, but I forgot it all. I did also while I was going to National Academy of Fine Art. I did go to night high school and studied Spanish and French. In fact I think altogether I had about five years of French. Of course, school French is not the same thing as the French you knew in Europe. but we were able to get along in Spanish and in French.

JUDD TULLY: This would be a small fishing village?

PAUL CADMUS: A very small fishing village. There were a few expatriates there. English almost entirely. One or two Americans.

JUDD TULLY: And how were you treated by the local [people]?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, very well. I mean they liked us and we were very friendly with them and got them to pose for us. Then we would usually meet the foreigners that came to visit. Somehow or other we would pick them up or they would pick us up. I remember at the pensione across the way Arthur Waley and his lady friend came and stayed. I remember him on the balcony one day talking to his friend and saying, "Oh yes. Two Americans live down there." I can't remember. He said something not very complimentary about us. I can't remember what it was but he noticed us. In fact, we used to see him and his lady friend walking down this little stony gorge that led to the cove where we swam. They'd both be stark naked and carrying their clothes.

JUDD TULLY: This is Arthur . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Waley. He's the one that translated The Tale of the Genji. His lady friend was a great translator too. She translated Ithios Labo. Her name was Beryl Disoti.

JUDD TULLY: And so did you take that as . . . . Whatever it was. Was it sort of a snobbish sort of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. "Oh, don't pay any attention to them. They're just a couple of Americans," you know. But we did have a very nice, retired, English maiden lady who in England had run a tea shop. She used to make lovely marmalade and scones and have us to tea and we'd fill up there. I remember other English couples too that would stay there a at times and we got to know them all. I remember a couple of American couples that came and lived there for a while. One that I became quite friendly with was a . . . . They had done the Atlantic crossing in their little, I think it was a thirty-foot boat, but it might have been less. I'm not sure. They had come over from Austin, I think it was. She was Argentine and he was a Bostonian. His name was Crowley, and he was one of the earlier crossings in a little sailboat. They arrived in the port there. We saw quite a lot of them. I did drawings of them. By this time of course we were working steadily -- drawing, painting. We were really very conscientious about working. We would take a walk every day. Go and swim if the weather was good. Then, after having been there about a year, we decided we were going to do a tour of the island on our bicycles, which we did. Then, after that, we decided we wanted to go to the Continent and see all the museums in Italy, and France, and Spain and so forth. So we took our bicycles on the boat and went to Barcelona. Then from there we took our bicycles by train to France. We sold our bicycles in Lyons and then went to museums all over. We went down to Rome. We went to Orvieto, which was one of the great experiences, to see the Signorellis.

JUDD TULLY: In the cathedral there?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. They were one of Boardman Robinson's great recommendations. By this time we knew them in reproduction very well too, when I was already trying to be influenced by them. I don't know how much we went over Italy, but we did go to the big cities. Then we did Vienna, and Munich, and Berlin. I don't know whether we got to London. I don't remember whether we did London or not. I don't remember that. I would have to look at my little journals, maybe, and find out.

JUDD TULLY: Did you correspond with . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I did a lot of letter writing to friends here in America and to my sister.

JUDD TULLY: What were the reports like that you were getting back? This was during the Depression.

PAUL CADMUS: Actually while we were living in Majorca, my sister and my aunt -- my mother's twin sister -- came over to visit us. They stayed at the pensione next door. We didn't have room for them. Shortly after that, my sister had a nervous breakdown and left my father and stepmother and lived with my aunt.

JUDD TULLY: In?

PAUL CADMUS: In New York.

PAUL CADMUS: After all this trip . . . . I can't remember what we didn't see and what we did see. It was so much and of course always museums everywhere. Then we went back to Majorca and resumed our work there and continued working until, I think it was September, 1933. By that time we were down to -- I think I had two hundred dollars left. I don't remember what Jerry had. But we were very low and decided to come back to America.

JUDD TULLY: Now by this time you had really for the first time kind of evolved a way of working?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: I mean as an artist?

PAUL CADMUS: I painted some of my best known pictures there. I did the YMCA Locker Room there, the Bicyclists, the first of the sailors pictures, Shore Leave, it was called.

JUDD TULLY: Was that one, by the way . . . . Had you seen sailors?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, sure. When I lived on 152nd Street, I used to go to Riverside Drive all the time and watch the goings-on, which amused me a great deal.

JUDD TULLY: So here you were in Europe for two years?

PAUL CADMUS: Nearly two years by this time.

JUDD TULLY: And your life had probably changed more or sort of in a different direction?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, definitely painting was the important thing. Painting and drawing.

JUDD TULLY: And what did you imagine yourself doing?

PAUL CADMUS: We'd been sent reproductions of things like Edward Laning's paintings, Reginald Marsh's paintings. Things that were happening in America there at the time. That kind of what is sometimes called "Regional" art. I was already painting those things in Majorca. I painted very few Majorcan subjects actually. Most of my paintings were things I remembered from America, like the Locker Room and the Sailors Night, the Shore Leave painting. I was working just in oil paints in those days. So we packed up all our things and, looking like ladies . . . they don't mention bag men, do they?

JUDD TULLY: Not too often.

PAUL CADMUS: [chuckles] Bag gentlemen, I suppose?

JUDD TULLY: Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: We bought passage on the President Harding, I think it was, which sailed from either Cherbourg or Le Havre. I can't remember which. No. I think it was Le Havre. The whole passage all the way from Majorca they paid for us to come by boat from Majorca to Barcelona, a night in Barcelona, by train to Paris, a night in Paris, and train to Le Havre and the trans-Atlantic crossing was seventy-five dollars. The whole trip from Majorca to New York City. Of course, it was third class, but we did have a cabin to ourselves -- a cabin meant for four. It was very rough crossing, I remember. Neither Jerry nor I ever got seasick, fortunately.

JUDD TULLY: What was his work like at the time? Were you sounding boards for one another?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. Very much. He did some very interesting paintings there. I don't know how many of them have survived. I know that Monroe Wheeler owns one that he bought of stonecutters. They cut tufa with saws. It was a very soft stone. It's the kind of stone they built the Parma Cathedral of. It hardens with age after it's exposed to the air, but it's a very beautiful color. He did very interesting paintings at the time, but I don't



know how many of them survived. Then when we did get back I stayed with my aunt for a while. My sister was in Bloomingdale's [Hospital] at White Plains because of her nervous breakdown. She was getting over it and I would go to see her. But very shortly after we got back I applied for the WPA (PWAP) and got on it, I guess, by showing my paintings or giving my credentials (whatever they were), and Jerry got on too. We both got on the Project. While on the Project, I did just two paintings. I did The Fleet's In, and I did Greenwich Village Cafeteria. Each one of them took quite a while, but I think I only worked on that Project for, say, three or four months, maybe. I'm just guessing about the time. The salary, I think, was thirty-two dollars a week. I'm not sure. It was somewhere around there. On that I was able to save money and I think I contributed a little bit to my sister's hospital things, too, even. Still living very simply. I found an apartment at 54 Morton Street for forty-five dollars a month. Jerry at the time was living out with his family in Rutherford, New Jersey, but he came in and I think he painted with me in New York. He worked on quite a few paintings for the Project, too. I don't remember whether he worked on it longer than I did or not. I'm not sure. Maybe the Project even ended after that time. In any case, I did these two paintings and The Fleet's In was chosen as one of the paintings to be sent to an exhibition of the WPA [PWAP] paintings at the Corcoran in Washington. That's when I got my start. That's when the Admiral made the fuss -- when the exhibition opened. Fortunately, I had had the painting photographed before it was sent down, so I was able to give photographs to the press when they came to see me when the scandal broke. So I was all on the front pages and that was the best piece of luck an artist could ever have had. Fortunately, I was able to back it up later on with paintings that were not inferior, let's say.

JUDD TULLY: Now that painting -- The Fleet's In -- did you have any idea it was controversial?

PAUL CADMUS: No. It didn't seem so to me at all. No more controversial than the Shore Leave one, which I had done. It hadn't been exhibited, of course, but I just thought it was an aspect of daily life that I had seen. Absolutely truthful, I thought.

JUDD TULLY: And you had seen over time . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I had seen similar things. Perhaps I made the people uglier than they were, and I certainly probably put them into tighter clothes than they sometimes wore. I always loved the nude and I probably tried to make . . . .

[END OF SESSION]  
[SESSION 2, APRIL 7, 1988]

JUDD TULLY: Last time -- two weeks ago, on the second side of the tape when the tape ran out, you were just starting to talk about the -- as you put it -- scandal of The Fleet's In. You described it as one of the two paintings that you completed since you were hired by the WPA [PWAP]. The other one -- was that Greenwich Village?

PAUL CADMUS: Greenwich Village Cafeteria.

JUDD TULLY: And you were just starting to say -- in terms of the composition -- that perhaps you made the clothes a little bit tighter than they were in real life, but that you had always loved the nude in terms of painting.

PAUL CADMUS: That's where we stopped.

JUDD TULLY: That would be -- I guess -- 1934?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. That's one of the dates I remember. It was just shortly after I got back from Europe.

JUDD TULLY: And you would be then what?

PAUL CADMUS: I'd be about thirty. Being born in December, it's a little hard sometimes. I'm twenty-nine when I would be thirty. I don't know how to do that much arithmetic. I don't remember exactly what month it was in 1934, but there were plenty of frontline articles about it, and photographs of me, and photographs of the painting, and indignant letters from maybe men, and letters supporting me. And mail from fellow artists, which was very nice. Thomas Benton wanted to know what he could do for me. And John Sloan. I'm not sure about that. All of which I've saved. I've got them somewhere, but in no order in boxes. Eilshemius wrote to me and told me I was a good artist. [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: You had mentioned Marsden Hartley.

PAUL CADMUS: And Marsden Hartley. I think it was because of The Fleet's In painting that I first heard from him.

JUDD TULLY: Did this just throw you for a loop?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, yes. It rather alarmed me at first because I did get threats on the phone too, people going to come and beat me up -- sailors and things like that. For a little while, I kind of hid. I didn't go to my

apartment. I stayed at my aunt's apartment for a few days. I didn't realize how important it was for my further career. Fortunately, I had other work to back it up.

JUDD TULLY: What do you think it was that -- either from your vantage point now or what you were feeling then - - that got people so riled up?

PAUL CADMUS: I showed what they thought was a disgraceful aspect of our Armed Forces. I mean the sailors were human beings who went around with prostitutes and behaved drunkenly, and they didn't want that mentioned. They only wanted them known as heroes and -- well, goody-goodies is what they wanted sailors to be. Which they're not. I mean they weren't in those days, anyway.

JUDD TULLY: But I mean when you made that painting -- as we talked last time -- that this was from memories that you yourself had in one way or another over the years?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes it was. As I said, the first sailor painting I did I did in Majorca entirely from memory of what I had seen on Riverside Drive, which is where the fleet used to dock, about 96th Street and around there.

JUDD TULLY: And that would be Shore Leave?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Several years later, I did another one called Sailors and Floosies, which was the same setting. Riverside Drive again. That caused a rumpus, too. It was taken off the walls of the show in California, but the director put it back in again. Then the painting I did shortly after both of the two paintings I did for the WPA [PWAP], I did one on my own of Coney Island and that caused another rumpus. The Coney Island Association threatened all sorts of things. Nothing ever happened except publicity for me. It was good for me.

JUDD TULLY: Had that been the first time you were in the paper in terms of being mentioned as a painter, as an artist?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I exhibited when I was very young, and I had been mentioned in articles on group exhibitions at the National Academy shows and the Brooklyn Society of Etchers, but I'd never had any real public appreciation, if you want to call it that, or attention.

JUDD TULLY: Would the Coney Island have been . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: That was about 1935, I think, or 1936. I'm not sure. That was the year afterward.

JUDD TULLY: And how did that painting come about in terms of subject matter? What was the story behind it?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I used to like to go to Coney Island and watch the people. It was another chance to see more not quite nudes, but near nudes. Also people just having a good time, just disporting themselves and being rowdy and vulgar and funny.

JUDD TULLY: And you would go make sketches?

PAUL CADMUS: I used to sketch from life in those days. I'd sneak little sketches because you didn't want to be caught drawing these characters. They mightn't have liked it. I don't know. But one was much more open in those days about sketching from life in subways and things like that. Nowadays I'd be afraid to do it; I'd be afraid I'd get a knife in me. But in those days artists used to. Reginald Marsh always worked in the subways, always carried a sketchbook with him. Wherever he was, as a matter of fact. If he were talking to you, he'd be drawing you. He wouldn't just talk.

JUDD TULLY: And were you and Marsh acquaintances?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I don't quite know when I met him. It was shortly after that, though.

JUDD TULLY: After that painting?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I didn't know him before I went to Europe. I knew very few, a few of the artists before then. I knew Edward Laning, but most of my artist friends were made after, except those I had gotten to know in art school.

JUDD TULLY: Let me just do this. I had meant to ask you last time when you were talking about your really formative years at the National Academy and that you had mentioned some of the Soyer brothers, Raphael and . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Raphael and Moses, I think.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. I was just wondering if you had any memory of the first time either seeing them, or working with them, or noticing their work, or if they particularly stood out, or if it was just a classmate kind of thing?

PAUL CADMUS: No, I don't. They were just classmates. I don't remember their work particularly. In fact they were there before I was there, and I think maybe they weren't there very long before they left when I came into the life classes. I do remember Luigi Lucioni very well. He was the monitor of the class.

JUDD TULLY: Is that the artist who did your portrait that's here?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: And was also your channel to the Ulysses?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. He was a friend and he brought me that book. That was before I went to Europe he brought me Ulysses.

JUDD TULLY: Because I'm just getting a sense of really before you went to Europe in terms of your world . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It wasn't particularly an art world before that. Luigi I knew from art school, but most of my friends in those days were sort of connected with the advertising agency that I had worked with.

JUDD TULLY: So now you had on the heels of, say, The Fleet's In and then the Coney Island picture in a whole other kind of -- not necessary national -- uproar which . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No. They also made big articles in Sunday papers and things like that. I don't know whether you would want to see a scrapbook of some of the early things. Whether it would be of any interest to you.

JUDD TULLY: That would be interesting. Sure.

PAUL CADMUS: I'll show it to you. I used to keep clippings all the time and nowadays I just stick them in boxes.

JUDD TULLY: Now what was Jared French's impression of this sudden, almost overnight fame?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I doubt that he was envious. I don't know. I never saw any signs of envy.

JUDD TULLY: Was he amused by it?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, we were amused by it too. I don't think we realized how important it would be for my future career, but it just seemed like a passing thing. But it didn't pass that quickly, because my work was noticed afterward. And it wasn't long after that that I got another government job for the Treasury Relief Art Project, which was designing murals for post offices. I can't remember the exact year, but those are in the chronology and things like that. I did designs for the Port Washington Post Office, which were not accepted. Did I mention this last time?

JUDD TULLY: No, you didn't.

PAUL CADMUS: They considered them too, a little bit too caricature-ish or making fun of commuters. They were sort of commuter life and suburban life. In fact they were called Aspects of Suburban Life. But the heads of the project -- Mrs. [Alice] Sharkey was one of them -- I don't know who had the ultimate say -- but they decided that they were interesting enough to have me execute these panels half size just as easel pictures. One of them is in the present show at the Midtown Galleries of paintings for post offices. The Smithsonian has some of the others and a private collector has another one. It was returned to me as being -- I think I said it was unfit for a federal building. So they allocated these later on to the American Embassy in Ottawa, and they were placed in the billiard room there. As I say, one of them was returned to me as being unfit and maybe I would give them something else at some other time in exchange for it -- which I never did. [laughter]

JUDD TULLY: Just speaking of that in terms of your work in a way almost being censored in a certain way or attempt to.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. It certainly was censorship. It didn't quite work because there were photographs available and . . . .

JUDD TULLY: It sort of backfired in a certain way.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. If they hadn't attempted censorship, I wouldn't have been noticed perhaps. I might have been noticed by a few people, but not . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Because in Lincoln Kirstein's book on you there's mention of The Fleet's In and that it wound up in something called the Alibi?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. The Alibi -- a private club in Washington. Which was I think a Democratic club -- for Democrats. Not democratic, but for Democrats. They kept it over their fireplace for years. In fact it was very hard to ever get it exhibited. Finally it was allowed to be shown in my retrospective show in 1981, I think. That was the first it had been seen by the public ever since it disappeared. It was in rather poor condition by this time. There had been too much fireplace smoke or something. But it was beautifully restored by some Washington restorer. Now it's in, I think, the Naval Historical Museum. I don't know the exact name of the museum in Washington.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. That's also in the book.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. The facts are almost all in the book, and they are quite accurate.

JUDD TULLY: So when you came back then and you were in the WPA and it was still the Depression and more or less you were making enough money because you apparently were living quite modestly.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh very. I was living on the little salary I made and occasional sales from paintings, but they were very inexpensive in those days too.

JUDD TULLY: And the ones you did sell, was that just you doing that yourself?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Before I joined the Midtown Galleries, which I joined in 1937. But I had sold some etchings and things like that and drawings at the Downtown Gallery and Kraushaar's and Weyhe's in New York.

JUDD TULLY: A curator that I bumped into at the Met . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Paul Cummings, perhaps?

JUDD TULLY: No.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh he's not at the Met?

JUDD TULLY: David Kiehl?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know him.

JUDD TULLY: Anyway, he . . . . You did a print also or some kind of print of The Fleet's In at some point?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. In 1934. The same year. I guess it was 1934. I decided to make an etching from the photograph I had of the painting because I knew that, even if they suppressed the painting, they couldn't suppress the etching and it began to sell right away. It originally sold for nine dollars a print, but now they're quite rare.

JUDD TULLY: In any way that you remember, did that action by the Navy anger you?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't remember being angry at all -- no. I suppose I was a little bit indignant. I mean I thought I was being suppressed or censored, but I don't remember being outraged or anything like that. I guess I just took it as a matter of course that people were censored.

JUDD TULLY: But by making a print at least you were able to sort of make that available to . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I was very glad to be able to do that. In fact, I made etchings of a lot of my paintings. I made one of The Coney Island, I made one of Shore Leave, and The Bicyclists which I had done in Majorca. I went to the Art Students League to print them. I printed a few of them there, but then mostly after that I had a New York printer do them for me rather than printing my own.

JUDD TULLY: Do you remember what the size . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: They were small editions. They were small etchings -- never very large -- and the editions were usually about fifty prints. Later on, in 1970-something -- I saved my plates -- I made a second edition of some of my [paintings], which are printed in a portfolio.

JUDD TULLY: So by this time were you being identified in that kind of Social Realistic realm?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes, I was. I think I was called a Social Realist. I think that was the usual. I don't think the word "Regionalist" came in until later. I don't think I was particularly Regionalist anyway.

JUDD TULLY: Did that category sit well with you or did you care?

PAUL CADMUS: I never cared what category I was placed in as long as I was mentioned. I liked to be mentioned. Very seldom was I mentioned favorably by critics. There were a few. Royal Cortissoz wrote nicely about me and Henry McBride was very enthusiastic about my drawings.

JUDD TULLY: And McBride was then writing for . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: The New York Sun, I guess it was.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. That must have been the New York Sun and Cortissoz was . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Cortissoz was The Tribune.

JUDD TULLY: Let's say that those panels that you were doing for the Port Washington Station -- Aspects of Suburban Life -- there was on one hand a tremendous amount of humor in it, but yet the kind of observation that you'd almost think of in a different way, almost like Hogarth.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I admired Hogarth very much. Well, I guess there's a certain amount of satire, too. I suppose I was always critical of what I thought was ugliness in our daily life. I think I said something about my painting as being moral, but I don't know that I really cared much about morals really, now that I think of it. I think it was more just the ugliness of life that interested me and repelled me when I wasn't thinking of the beauty. But they never seemed to get into the same pictures.

JUDD TULLY: You mean that kind of juxtaposition?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: Could you go into that a little bit more? What you mean by that?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, when I did pictures that I thought were beautiful, they usually were of rather beautiful people or the people I thought were beautiful and were not satirical -- perhaps they were idealized, perhaps they were a bit sentimental. I'm not sure about that. But they were my other interest, although I don't think I began to do much of that sort of thing until several years later.

JUDD TULLY: Again, going backwards, while you were still in Europe, in Majorca, you were doing your first paintings that seemed to be sort of forerunners of this style.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: And one very strong one was a YMCA Locker Room.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Which was slightly reminiscent of the days when I went to the YMCA and exercised after work.

JUDD TULLY: Where would that have been?

PAUL CADMUS: On 63rd. It's still there. I used to swim there and do moderate exercise. Mostly just for swimming, actually, on the way home from work. That painting does combine rather good-looking people also with corpulent ones.

JUDD TULLY: And so in a way you kind of changed that later in terms of you focused more on . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: The beautiful aspects of the handsome people.

JUDD TULLY: You mentioned it before certainly, but in terms of your use of memory as opposed to looking at something directly from life, here you were on what must have been an exotic place.

PAUL CADMUS: It was certainly wonderful.

JUDD TULLY: A beautiful spot. A million miles away from Manhattan certainly and yet you had this in mind because you were working up this . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: And trying to paint things that I knew from experience rather than what I was just seeing at that time. Although I did some local pictures of local scenes too at that point. Majorcan views and Majorcan . . . not very much though. I used to have a lot of the local people pose for me for drawing. Then Jared French always posed for me, and I always posed for him for his pictures, but we turned ourselves into anything that we . . . maybe I mentioned this before, that when he did a tempera painting, a gouache painting, I guess, of a scene

from Petronius of Trimalchio's feast, I remember I posed for a blonde Negress, among other things. And I turned him into a little child for a painting I did of Majorcan fishermen. We were drawing all the time when we weren't painting.

JUDD TULLY: Were you a good model?

PAUL CADMUS: I posed carefully. Yes, I was a good model. I was patient. That's all that's required to be a good model. I've had people pose for me who were much better models than I was, in that they would let their legs go to sleep rather than disturb the pose and be quite miserable for the sake of the artist, but I wasn't that noble.

JUDD TULLY: So when you came back to New York you had really developed your powers of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: That style of painting, anyway, which was influenced by Signorelli and Mantegna. At least I hoped it was. I mean I tried to be. I've always liked to be influenced by other artists, because I think if one has any originality, it can't be suppressed. It doesn't make any difference how hard you try to imitate, you can't succeed.

JUDD TULLY: Now in the mid-to-late 1930's, where we seem to be, you did another big . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I had another mural commission. This was another project. I don't think it was connected with the WPA. I'm not sure. It was not a relief project in any case. You were paid a fixed sum to do a mural. I was given the job of doing quite a large mural for one end of a parcel post building in Richmond, Virginia. Jared French was given the opposite wall. I submitted sketches for that and the first sketch I submitted was really quite inappropriate. I feel as though I've said this before, but . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Not to me. No.

PAUL CADMUS: Maybe not on this tape. The first sketch I submitted couldn't have been more inappropriate, I realized, but didn't think of it at the time. I wanted a dramatic subject and I chose the burning of Richmond. Naturally Richmond didn't want that. So then I chose the subject of Pocahontas and John Smith. Then there were two side panels on the same wall. Sir Walter Raleigh was on one side and a Byrd on the other side. I can't remember which Byrd that was. If it was William Byrd of Virginia I don't know. They were rather boring people in historical costumes. But even Pocahontas caused a fuss amongst the powers that commissioned the mural because apparently a fox skin that I had covering one of the Indians that was about to behead John Smith . . . the head of the fox was right over the genitals of the Indian, and they thought it was suggestive. I don't remember thinking it was suggestive when I did it. It just seemed where a fox's head would be. So I had to make it a fox's tail instead. That was the only fuss that I had about that mural. There was a little worry about perhaps too many nudes in the picture. I used friends as models. Lincoln Kirstein posed for one of the Indians. Jared French -- looking rather like Jared French -- was Captain John Smith and my sister posed for Pocahontas.

JUDD TULLY: And she was sort of half nude or . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: But I made that up. She didn't pose for me half nude. We're not that kind of family. People were not as undressed in those days as they are nowadays.

JUDD TULLY: I was going to ask you about your sister again. By this time was she . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I met Lincoln in 1937, just before I had my first one-man show at the Midtown. He may have met my sister around that time anyway. They were engaged for three or four years before they were married.

JUDD TULLY: So was she better by time in terms of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, she was well then. She recovered from her breakdown.

JUDD TULLY: Where did you execute? Were these done directly on . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No. They were done on canvas in the studio. Jared and I shared a floor of a building on St. Luke's Place. To do the murals, we had got permission from our landlady to build a skylight in the center which had no windows at all in the center part. So we had a skylight built in the center of the thing to do our murals. We had a large -- I don't suppose you would call it an easel, because it was much too big to be an easel -- but a large construction made to hold the canvas stretched out. On one side was my mural and the other side his mural. We'd take turns working on our murals. He had trouble with his subject matter too. The first time he did the soldiers being surprised by the enemy when they were bathing in a stream. Rather like Michelangelo's Battle of Caccina in which he had all the soldiers surprised bathing. But they objected to the nudity of that so he did . . . Putnam's Raiders? I've forgotten the name of his mural. But he had an interview down in Richmond before he did the mural and I remember one of the people he saw said, "Please, Mr. French, do not bring up anything of the late unpleasantness," meaning the Civil War.

JUDD TULLY: Do you remember how you did the research for that mural or where you got the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I just read all I could find in the library and things like that. I don't suppose there was anything very authentic about my costumes. I looked at paintings done of Indians at the time, but I wasn't interested in the historical side of it. I was just interested in the drama or the legend, it may even be. I don't know how true the story of Pocahontas is. Whether she did throw herself in front of the executioner.

JUDD TULLY: And so between these commissions and still working for the WPA, you were making paintings?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I was doing them.

JUDD TULLY: How did you get to the point where you were connected with Midtown?

PAUL CADMUS: After The Fleet's In episode, I was sort of always invited to the Whitney Museum annuals or biennials -- I think they were annuals in those days.

JUDD TULLY: Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: And my work was usually shown and usually was commented on by the critics -- often unfavorably as being disgusting and bringing up the sordid aspects of things in life. One of the paintings I did was Seeing the New Year In, which was a wild Greenwich Village party.

JUDD TULLY: That was the one where you are in the picture . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It really isn't. I have felt that way at times.

JUDD TULLY: Your head is kind of buried in your hands?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Too much liquor and that sort of thing. I've felt that way, but it wasn't meant to look like me or anything like that.

JUDD TULLY: If I remember right about that picture, there was also a reproduction on the wall of the Van Gogh . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, it was a typical Greenwich Village apartment. Or a combination of Greenwich Village apartments.

JUDD TULLY: And were your friends also in that one?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I used other friends. I'm not going to say who they are, though.

JUDD TULLY: Still sensitive then?

PAUL CADMUS: They might be. I don't know. But they were almost all thought of and changed somewhat. I never wanted them to be actual likenesses, but I think some people did recognize themselves. I think by that time I was working in a different medium. I'd given up just straight oil paint and was working in what's called the mixed technique in which I was being influenced by Kenneth Hayes Miller. I used to go to these tea parties. I was influenced by Reginald Marsh, too, because he was working in the mixed technique too which was a combination of oil and tempera. So Seeing the New Year In I think may have been one of the earlier paintings I did in that medium, in any case.

JUDD TULLY: And what did the change from oil wind up doing to you?

PAUL CADMUS: It was a slightly freer medium and more painterly. I was also being influenced by the painters that Kenneth Hayes Miller admired most at that time, which were Rubens and Titian. At least I was trying to be more in that tradition rather than in the Italian fresco style. But that didn't last terribly long. The paintings for the Treasury Relief Art Project for the Port Washington murals were also done in the mixed technique. Then the last painting I did in the mixed technique was done for Life magazine of the Herrin massacre. That caused controversy too out there. It wasn't a sort of a national controversy, but the people out there didn't like it at all.

JUDD TULLY: Out there being . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Where Herrin and Carbondale and places out in that. . . . I went out to Illinois to see the people and look at where the happenings had occurred, although I didn't follow anything very carefully. I think some of the people in the massacre were killed in a graveyard. At least I used the graveyard as the place for the scene I used for my painting. It was commissioned by Life magazine for the reproduction rights. They weren't buying the painting. They were commissioning quite a few American artists at the time. I remember Fletcher Martin was

one. Edward Laning was another. I don't remember who they all were, but they gave us a choice of subjects and that was the one I chose. Again, because of my horror of violence. Not because I like violence, but because of my loathing of it. In a way, exposing the horrors of violence.

JUDD TULLY: And so Life then . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: And then Life never did reproduce it. I think more or less at the time Life magazine was trying to court labor and labor unfortunately was the aggressor in this case. They showed the strikebreakers. But then I had the painting and I had the experience of doing it. Then after that painting I switched to the straight egg tempera technique, which I've mostly followed every since.

JUDD TULLY: And again what led you to that?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, it was partly because Jared French was . . . . I don't know how he first got into it. Whether it was from reading about it or . . . . We did have a friend, Alfonso Ossorio, who later became a very well-known avant-garde painter -- had been studying with Daniel Thompson or York -- I'm not sure who it was -- at Yale learning the technique, and he gave us some help working in the medium. But mostly it was learned from Daniel Thompson's book on egg tempera painting. Then when I found that medium, I loved it so much I didn't really want to use anything else.

JUDD TULLY: What was it about the medium that . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Its delicacy and its linear quality and the freshness of its color. The fact that it doesn't darken as oil painting does. And that so many of the paintings I admired most -- Italian paintings -- were done in that style, in that technique. As a medium it's particularly suited to a rather small scale work and my work got smaller and smaller about that time. It required panels rather than canvas, so it was much easier to work on a smaller scale.

JUDD TULLY: I was going to say it seems almost like you went in the opposite way, as a lot of art seems to be done now in terms of that you were making pretty large paintings earlier on.

PAUL CADMUS: Moderately large. It never was very large except for the mural. Also my work got tighter, whereas artists generally loosen up rather than . . . .

JUDD TULLY: So your kind of formal qualities and also your facility at rendering something increased, it would seem.

PAUL CADMUS: It did.

JUDD TULLY: You wanted to what?

PAUL CADMUS: I think my earlier work was much more straight-forward and rather more naive, I think. It became much more refined and sophisticated.

JUDD TULLY: Can you think of a painting that really in a way epitomizes that change or you felt that you were really beginning to . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, right from the start it sort of changed, although the first few paintings I did were beach scenes -- influenced by my visits to Fire Island, of course. Because the Frenches always used to rent places in a little town called Saltaire on Fire Island.

JUDD TULLY: This would be Jared French's parents?

PAUL CADMUS: No. He and his wife. He married in 1937, I think. Margaret French was a fellow student at the Art Students League while we were there. Not when I was studying at the League, but when I was working. Yes. Yes, when I was in the etching class, he met Margaret there then.

JUDD TULLY: And so when you mentioned that place on St. Luke's Place you were living there?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. It was a full floor. Rent was fifty-five dollars a month to begin with. Overlooking the playground, which also became subject matter too. I think we changed every once in a while. One of us had the north side and one of us had the south side to work in.

JUDD TULLY: So did that change much when . . . ? Because you were living on what? Morton?

PAUL CADMUS: I lived on Morton Street for just two years. Yes.

JUDD TULLY: And then you followed the move to . . . ?



PAUL CADMUS: Then we went to St. Luke's Place after that.

[END OF TAPE 2, SIDE A]

JUDD TULLY: Paul Cadmus just brought out a large scrapbook of some clippings, and I'm flipping through it. There are some drawings. This must have been when you were a student. 1914? August 9th from the New York Tribune?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know if one of my works is there or is it?

JUDD TULLY: Yes, there is. Paul Cadmus, Hillside Cottage, Oceanic, New Jersey.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. We used to go there. It was a boarding house we would go to in the summertime.

JUDD TULLY: So even at that tender age you were at work and getting recognition?

PAUL CADMUS: I suppose you'd call it that.

JUDD TULLY: You're quoted at the beginning of this article which is headlined. "Today We'll Be Landscape Artists" -- quote -- "I'm going to be a marine painter when I get big," writes Paul Cadmus, "And sister is to be a portrait painter." "Paul is nine years old and his sister -- Fidelma -- is seven. The drawing of a little boy at the seashore we received seemed to indicate that others of you might someday be marine artists." That's great. This is a notice of your etchings and lithographs at a place called The Blue Mask in New Hope, Pennsylvania.

PAUL CADMUS: That was my first little one-man show, I guess. It was a restaurant in New Hope.

JUDD TULLY: More clippings from the New York Sun.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, in the days when I was still a student at the National Academy of Design, I guess.

JUDD TULLY: And there's a review from November 22nd, which is datelined "New Hope Etchings and Lithographs by Paul Cadmus." It says here, "Paul Cadmus was a favorite pupil of the late Joseph Pennell. Cadmus, however, is indebted chiefly to his own rare talent for the technical achievements of his prints and to his own temperament for their appreciative and contemplative flavor." Here begins the major media of circa 1934. That's just about fifty-four years ago almost. New York Times headline, "Bans CWA Picture As Insult To Navy." "Swanson Bars Cadmus Study From Exhibit But Holds It." "Is Right Artistic?" The Fleet's In. CWA artist. I wonder what that stands for?

PAUL CADMUS: I think the PWAP was a branch of the CWA. Civil Works?

JUDD TULLY: Oh, right.

PAUL CADMUS: I don't remember what those initials stood for.

JUDD TULLY: Anyway, "As the painting was done by Paul Cadmus and sent to the Navy by CWA, Assistant Secretary Henry L. Roosevelt who personally supervised its removal said later, 'It's out of sight and will continue to be out of sight.'" We have pages and pages of . . . There's a photograph of you.

PAUL CADMUS: That's from the front page of the Times.

JUDD TULLY: April 19, 1934 from the New York World Telegram.

PAUL CADMUS: Civil Works Administration?

JUDD TULLY: Yes. That must be it.

PAUL CADMUS: And there are pages and pages of that.

JUDD TULLY: This is not just a one-day shot. This seems to be going on. Now we're already into . . .

PAUL CADMUS: This I mentioned in the film that was done about me regarding this. When I received this scrawled on it -- it's rather by an indignant . . .

JUDD TULLY: Oh, yes. I see here down at the bottom it's scratched, "Is this a sample of Communist/Jew culture?"

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: You're described here as a "moral moron with distorted imagination. Pick your brains up out of the

gutter." That must have been scary.

PAUL CADMUS: It was. Getting threatening phone calls too. It was scary. It kept on for quite a while and then was taken up by The New Yorker and a couple of weeklies.

JUDD TULLY: Newsweek, Art Digest, The Literary Digest, The Washington Post. The American Weekly with a giant headline "Mr. Cadmus's painting makes him famous overnight." "A poor new York artist out of work and living on a dole from the government paints a picture that starts nationwide comment." I shouldn't really be hogging the tape, but this is really something.

PAUL CADMUS: I was just paid for doing a cigarette ad for posing as an artist -- making an etching.

JUDD TULLY: It's actually a cigar?

PAUL CADMUS: It is actually a cigar -- yes.

JUDD TULLY: "Admiration" it's called.

PAUL CADMUS: Admiration Cigar.

JUDD TULLY: Did you ever smoke an Admiration cigar?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I've never smoked a cigar, ever. [chuckles]

JUDD TULLY: A painting I saw at the Metropolitan Museum just a couple of weeks ago was also done in the mixed . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Mixed technique. Yes. That was one of the earlier paintings in mixed technique.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. And it's dated, I guess, 1935. And you were saying something to me off the tape that this wasn't really the way they gilded . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Oh no. I made it up entirely. I think they use sponges. I just wanted a composition of figures and again with a nude, or near-nude in it.

JUDD TULLY: And who is this figure?

PAUL CADMUS: Jerry posed for everything, including the little black boy.

JUDD TULLY: I see. Which you just kind of changed the features?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I mean I didn't work on the painting from anybody posing. I made drawings, you see, and turned these drawings into the people I wanted.

JUDD TULLY: I get the feeling that there's always a literary flavor.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Literature has always meant a lot to me, and I know that years later I'd been reading Virginia Woolf's letters. She had to write an essay on Walter Sickert, and she described him as a literary painter and she wondered if he objected to that. Sickert said, "Oh no. All decent painters are literary painters."

JUDD TULLY: Do you subscribe to that thought?

PAUL CADMUS: Pretty much. In fact I think a lot of the greatest painting is really an illustration for literature. The literature usually was the bible or the New Testament. Giotto's paintings are illustration or storytelling. In fact, most Italian art was storytelling.

JUDD TULLY: Because you seem to almost be developing these characters with their own personalities and putting them on [canvas]. In terms of some of these . . . you know, the Coney Island. All of those pictures from that time.

PAUL CADMUS: I always thought of them as individuals. But types too. I mean I didn't want people that were just sort of isolated individuals.

JUDD TULLY: How were you recruited by Midtown? How did that association begin?

PAUL CADMUS: I just took my work there one day -- a portfolio of my drawings and photographs of my paintings -- and they took me in as one of their artists. I can't remember what year I first approached them. But then in 1937 I thought and they thought it was time for a one man show. It was a great surprise what a huge public it

brought. All a result, I suppose, of my publicity for The Fleet's In. I think they said there was something like seven thousand people there in one day. Or maybe it was for the whole show. I don't remember.

JUDD TULLY: Where were they located then?

PAUL CADMUS: It was located between 57th and 58th on Madison Avenue. There used to be a store called Bonnier's and it was on the top floor of the same building that Bonnier's was.

JUDD TULLY: Was that one of the galleries that you regularly went to see exhibitions or was that . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I probably did. I don't remember because they showed a lot of artists I knew like William Palmer and Isabel Bishop. Anyhow, I've been with them ever since. For fifty-something years.

JUDD TULLY: It's extraordinary.

PAUL CADMUS: It is. Well, Isabel Bishop stayed with them always. And William Palmer did. Which speaks very well for the gallery.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. So was that first show a critical/financial success? How would you describe . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know that the reviews were particularly complimentary, but it was a success certainly from the standpoint of attendance. And I sold enough. I mean I wasn't any . . . . And the prices were very low in those days, of course.

JUDD TULLY: The WPA was still going strong?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I guess it was over by then. I don't remember the date of the Pocahontas mural, but I think probably my government commissions were over by then. They lent things to the show. The Aspects of Suburban Life were lent for the exhibition.

JUDD TULLY: That was the same year I think you mentioned that Jared French married?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: And you had your studio on . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: St. Luke's Place. I was there for twenty-five years.

JUDD TULLY: What was your routine like? What was your day like?

PAUL CADMUS: It was mostly working and playing the piano. Taking walks. Some sociability. I can't remember anything else outstanding about it.

JUDD TULLY: Did your artist-friends' circle widen at that point when you became connected with Midtown?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't think that had anything to do with widening the circle. Of course, getting to know Lincoln Kirstein enlarged the circle of my friends a great deal. Shortly after that, he bought several things before my show opened, and then I think it was the next year he commissioned me to do a ballet for him. He commissioned one from Jerry French too. Then of course through him I met all sorts of people.

JUDD TULLY: What was your first contact with him?

PAUL CADMUS: An artist named Charles Rain brought him to see me because Lincoln had mentioned to Charles that he liked my work that he had seen in reproduction or something. That was my first meeting with him. It wasn't very long after that that Andy Warhol came to see me too. Or maybe . . . . It was still at St. Luke's Place. Maybe it was some years later somebody brought him to see me, and he bought some things of mine before he was well-known.

JUDD TULLY: So that must have been in the Fifties?

PAUL CADMUS: That was later. But it was before he was well known. He was doing those Miller shoe ads at the time.

JUDD TULLY: It doesn't sound like it was much of a struggle for you other than the actual making of the work to get publicity, to get galleries, to get people to commission you and . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: No. I was very lucky that way. I always was working either towards an exhibition or to take my work to the gallery. I did do a few commissions for friends, but otherwise I did just exactly what I wanted. And

the Midtown never made any stipulations about what I should do or how much I should do. I just gave them the things as I did them.

JUDD TULLY: What was going on as this country got closer to getting involved in World War II and the WPA kind of ending? What happened then with you?

PAUL CADMUS: I was able to get out of being in the war partly because I had a hernia and I was classified 4-F. So I never had to be in the Army. I wouldn't have made a very good soldier. I would have been quite useless.

JUDD TULLY: And again that would be reflective of -- as you described earlier -- your horror of violence in terms of your . . .

PAUL CADMUS: I wouldn't have had the courage to be a pacifist, I'm sure, although I believed in it.

JUDD TULLY: Your association then with Lincoln, who later became your brother-in-law -- did you introduce your sister to Lincoln?

PAUL CADMUS: I think he met her at a party where I was at. It was probably with Glenway Wescott and George Platt Lynes. I think that's where he first met her. I'm not sure. It was very shortly after he met her that he told me he wanted to marry her.

JUDD TULLY: Very dramatic romance, then?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. In fact I do remember I said, "But Lincoln, you don't know her yet." I said "Wait a while and see." And he said, "No. I know what I want." But I said, "Just get to know her first before you say anything." Because I was afraid he might want to change his mind or something and it might be very difficult. But no. And he invited her out to dinner and took her to the Plaza very shortly afterwards for dinner and asked her right then and there to marry him when he had seen very little of her actually.

JUDD TULLY: What was his personality like? What did he seem like to you coming . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Dynamic, of course, and extremely cultured, and knowledgeable. Knew everything about art, and everything about ballet, and about literature.

JUDD TULLY: You've mentioned that you were an opera buff and that you would go to standing room at the old Met when it was on 39th Street. Did you have a similar interest in dance?

PAUL CADMUS: No. Before I met Lincoln I don't think so, but then I had access to rehearsal rooms and performances and things like that. Of course then again it was a chance to see people who were as near nude as you could be on the stage -- in tights.

JUDD TULLY: The rehearsal rooms must have been an ideal arena for you?

PAUL CADMUS: It was. I loved it and I did several. Only two paintings that I did in rehearsal rooms? Anyway I did only two paintings -- Arabesque and one called Reflection. Both very small tempera paintings.

JUDD TULLY: This Arabesque is . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: About seven inches by seven inches or nine by nine. Something like that. I can't do centimeters.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. This book does have only centimeters, which I guess is very European. Did that experience move you away from this so-called Social Realism?

PAUL CADMUS: Perhaps it did. I don't think there's anything unrealistic about ballet school. It's a beautiful aspect of life.

JUDD TULLY: So you were in a way swinging more directly to this notion of beauty, of beautiful bodies, of youth, of grace, and all of that?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. But then more or less about that time. No, that was by 1945 I started doing the Seven Deadly Sins took, which had nothing to do with beauty. It just had to do with sin and the recognition of the fact that all of us have all of these sins in us. Very seldom to the extent of their being deadly.

JUDD TULLY: The sins that you're depicting certainly seem . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: As deadly as I could make them.

JUDD TULLY: Was this something you were thinking of for a long time?

PAUL CADMUS: I had been thinking about it for quite a while. I also wanted to do what I considered an important subject. Even though I suppose it is a religious subject in a way, I didn't think of it as that. These sins exist in every society, and every religion, [and] every culture.

JUDD TULLY: How did that develop? Did you make sketches?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I made masses of sketches. I had made notebooks and things gathering material about what other people had written about the sins. What other painters had painted the deadly sins -- like Giotto and Breughel and Bosch and people like that.

JUDD TULLY: Were these exhibited closely after . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: After I finished them, the Midtown had a show, which was really based on the seven deadly sins. It was the main part of the show. I think there were plenty of other things in the show too, but that was the focus of the show.

JUDD TULLY: And what was the reaction?

PAUL CADMUS: The reactions to that were unpleasant. People didn't like them.

JUDD TULLY: And they must have been shocked because when you look at it it doesn't immediately tell you Paul Cadmus.

PAUL CADMUS: Maybe. I don't know. I guess they just thought it was more of my controversial nature. As I've always said, I never tried to be controversial. It just seems that people took it that way.

JUDD TULLY: The dates of these paintings are sort of at the tail end of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: They were about 1945 to 1949 I did them.

JUDD TULLY: So right at the tail end of the war. Were you limited in terms of materials during the war or anything like that?

PAUL CADMUS: No. There was a certain amount of rationing, I think, but I don't remember any great deprivation. I remember we had to block our skylight out.

JUDD TULLY: The one that you had built?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. We had to black out our windows too at night on account of possible air raids which of course never materialized.

JUDD TULLY: How did you block out your skylight? Did you patch it up?

PAUL CADMUS: I bought a great big black cloth and had it made so that we could pull it open in the daytime.

JUDD TULLY: That was a lot better idea than a lot of places which were literally just blacked out.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, we had to work there.

JUDD TULLY: At this point in time you're not quite ready, but you're getting ready for another European trip?

PAUL CADMUS: Let's see. I didn't go to Europe again until 1949.

JUDD TULLY: So was this sort of as a culmination of the . . . ? This was a major, major . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It was a major project for me. Yes.

JUDD TULLY: Were you getting tired of New York City?

PAUL CADMUS: No. It wasn't a long trip to Europe. It was just two months, perhaps at the most. I traveled with George Tooker on that trip.

JUDD TULLY: Tooker . . . tell me, how did you meet him?

PAUL CADMUS: I met him because I used to go to sketch class with him at the Art Students League. He and I both had a friend, Bridget Chisolm. She introduced us and we became good friends. I did influence him too. He was studying with Reginald Marsh at the time, but working in Reggie's style of egg tempera painting, which was a freer style. I guess both Jerry and I influenced him in our direction anyway, in our kind of egg tempera

painting.

JUDD TULLY: How would the difference be? The way that you just characterized Marsh's style and that technique?

PAUL CADMUS: He also used the whole egg and we just used the egg yolk, which was a slower medium and more precise. So when we went to Europe, we went to see all the museums, of course, which is what I always traveled for. I never traveled just for the sake of travel. I like scenery and that sort of thing, but I would never travel just to see the Grand Canyon because there are no paintings there. [laughs] I mean I would like to see it, but I would rather go to a museum.

JUDD TULLY: Could you describe your egg tempera technique?

PAUL CADMUS: One can do it by talking, but really demonstration is the only way to do it. And to read about it. Anybody who wants to learn how to do it should read Daniel Thompson's book on the practice and technique of tempera painting. But I think it wouldn't be useful in the tape, I don't think. I mean you use a fresh egg and you use dry pigment and you mix them and you add a certain amount of water and apply it to a gesso surface. That's the basic, but how you go into all that would have to demonstrate really rather than . . .

JUDD TULLY: Maybe I'll bring a videotape the next time.

PAUL CADMUS: Okay. I do a demonstration on the film that was done on me.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. I'm trying to get a sense of your exhibiting regularly at Midtown and it seems that you're living off your work.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I've always done that. After I left the advertising agency, I've never had to do any other work. Living very modestly most of the time. I get less and less modest as I get older and the prices go up.

JUDD TULLY: This next cycle of paintings -- at least the ones I'm thinking of that seem to come from that period again of being in Europe -- was that a very rich . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It always is whenever I go over. It's sort of a renewal.

JUDD TULLY: Would these Seven Deadly Sins that you did from 1945 to 1949 represent some kind of punctuation of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I would think so -- yes. I've thought often of doing the seven cardinal virtues, but they don't seem interesting enough and they're not interesting in other artists either that I've seen. Giotto's virtues are not nearly as interesting as his sins. In fact I can never remember what the cardinal virtues are. I know it starts with faith, hope, and charity, I think. I'm not sure of that even. But there's prudence and fortitude and things like that.

JUDD TULLY: I think I might have maybe cut you off a while back when you had mentioned, maybe stemming from that Coney Island thing, but that your introduction to Saltaire . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: The summers in Saltaire was a great influence. Hyatt Mayor described Jared French and myself -- and I think that included George Tooker -- as the Fire Island School of Painting. It was idyllic.

JUDD TULLY: Again, did it kind of approximate in certain ways Majorca?

PAUL CADMUS: No, I don't think so. It was just air, sea. Also it suits the egg tempera style very much because it's very high keyed, bright, whereas woods and things are not as good subject matter, I think, for egg tempera painting.

JUDD TULLY: Because, looking at least at reproductions here of one called Fences from 1946 and another called Point of view from 1945 and just looking at that arrangement of those . . . I don't know what you call them.

PAUL CADMUS: Snow fences or hurricane fences is what they're called. I think they're snow fences.

JUDD TULLY: I think that's right. And the way they kind of lean into the dunes and from the wind and all of that. In a way, in terms of the world picture at that point, maybe people were more used to seeing . . . If there was a beach there would be all these miles of barbed wire, or just a totally different . . .

PAUL CADMUS: There wasn't that at Fire Island or at Nantucket, where I went too. It was an escape from war.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. As you say -- idyllic and not . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Time for reading, for meditation, for health. There is a satirical painting of Fire Island. It's based on Ocean Beach. We used to walk to Ocean Beach. We did a lot of walking. We would think nothing of walking eleven miles in each direction. Twenty-two miles all together to go and see what Cherry Grove looked like, for instance. It's all there on hard sand. It's wonderful.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. I've walked along . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: That stretch? Or part of it?

JUDD TULLY: Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: You mentioned what?

JUDD TULLY: Robin's Rest. What was the satirical one?

PAUL CADMUS: That's this one. That was showing the comical aspects of Fire Island life. It's nothing like Saltaire which was a rather bourgeois community.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. This looks a little bit down at the heels.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I made it worse than it was.

JUDD TULLY: So Fantasia?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. On a Theme by Dr. S. Dr. S. was Dr. Sheldon who wrote two books called The Varieties of Physique and The Varieties of Temperament. He was a Harvard man and Aldus Huxley called his book the "most profound attempt to classify man." He was based on a German . . . . I don't know what the word for it is now at the moment. Named Kretschmar. I met Dr. Sheldon once at Isabel Bishop's, and he was very pleased about the painting. He was amused by it. Sheldon's Varieties of Physique and the Varieties of Temperament. The three basic ones -- the ectomorph, endomorph, and mesomorph. Those are the three physiques, the physical attributes. And the three temperamental ones are cerebrotonial, viscerotonial, and somatotonial, I think is the other one.

JUDD TULLY: Absolutely wild picture.

PAUL CADMUS: It's a very little one, you know.

JUDD TULLY: Where is this picture?

PAUL CADMUS: It's in the Whitney Museum.

JUDD TULLY: In the permanent collection?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. They show it every once in a while.

JUDD TULLY: Just looking again. This is from the book and this David Bourdon comment from the Village voice, where he's talking about Magic Realism.

PAUL CADMUS: I don't remember what he said.

JUDD TULLY: I guess again like that -- if that's a label -- Magic Realism . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes, it was.

JUDD TULLY: For you again does that feel . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: My work was shown in the Magic Realist show that Lincoln organized at the [Modern] museum. But I think Alfred Barr got the word "magic realism" from the German. There was a German school of painting that -- I think it's a literal translation of the German school of painting. But later on Lincoln used the term "Symbolic Realism," which I think was much more appropriate. There's never been one label that seems to quite fit. Or I move from one label to another. I don't know.

JUDD TULLY: Do you feel that?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes I do. I've been called a Surrealist, which I don't think I am, but there have been Surrealistic aspects at times. And there have been Magic Realist aspects and Symbolic aspects. Straightforward Realism. Very seldom Naturalism. But I can't toss these names around with any authority. And then of course E. M. Forster was a big influence later on, too.

JUDD TULLY: From his writings?

PAUL CADMUS: From his writings first, and I got to know him too. That was a commission -- that one there -- but they were friends of mine.

JUDD TULLY: This is the Lloyd and Barbara Wescott?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: I wanted to maybe perhaps when we make the break of when you go to Europe and that would be maybe another section and then the paintings that followed from that. But the one I did want to ask you about that is before . . . . I hope this isn't too back and forth.

PAUL CADMUS: It doesn't bother me.

JUDD TULLY: But Conversation Piece is a painting that I think is really . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Those were three friends I met through Lincoln, who became great friends of mine -- Glenway Wescott, George Platt Lynes, and Monroe Wheeler. That shows their little house in Clinton, New Jersey, which later was turned into a reservoir. The whole area was flooded over.

JUDD TULLY: And they were evicted or whatever they do when the government condemns land?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: Again this seems like an idyllic setting . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: It was. And friendship.

JUDD TULLY: Art, intellect.

PAUL CADMUS: I did a great many drawings at that time. I did drawings of all of them and portrait drawings. Through them I met a lot of literary people too, of course. Katherine Anne Porter, for instance. I also drew their house.

JUDD TULLY: Between the city you would always kind of find . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: On the weekends in the country, yes. I never had any place of my own.

JUDD TULLY: Last time after we talked you were showing me some photographs. A number of them must have been of course by . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: George Lynes. Yes, he did a lot of photographs of me and Jerry and of all his friends.

JUDD TULLY: So you felt part of an artistic community? Or you didn't exactly think of it that way?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I never thought of it that way. Just the people who came into my life and became a part of my life. I don't think it was any special clique, but I suppose maybe there was. I don't think so though.

JUDD TULLY: Because this one point in the book anyway that you never really had to -- or chose to be -- one of a kind of like a hired gun in terms of making portrait machines?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I couldn't have.

JUDD TULLY: What about the playground, which maybe fits in more to your home?

PAUL CADMUS: That was influenced by the St. Luke's Place. I looked out on a playground. It wasn't a sordid looking playground like this. I walked all over the Village -- East Village, the Italian section, everywhere. And I wanted to show in a way how distressing the life was for the people who [lived there]. There was supposed to be a playground, but there was an awful lot of sordidness and squalor about the whole atmosphere. There wasn't much light. There was just little areas where people could play.

JUDD TULLY: It almost could be a precursor to something like West Side Story.

PAUL CADMUS: I think actually that Jerry Robbins told me he was influenced by me in doing his ballet Fancy Free. I don't know about West Side Story. Not by me, but my work, I mean.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. Of course. But the major figures in the foreground and the way they're various poses and



belligerent and kind of sensual and sort of aggressive -- lots of different emotions. And then again further back where you're actually peering into these windows of this tenement.

PAUL CADMUS: Partly burned out it is.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. Partly burned out or maybe even bombed out.

PAUL CADMUS: I think burned out rather than bombed. Bombing didn't enter my life.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. So you have a woman washing a window in lingerie. It's pretty scary in a certain [way].

PAUL CADMUS: Well, certain aspects of New York are scary.

JUDD TULLY: And you deliberately wanted to show that?

PAUL CADMUS: Of course. And I did include a church in there too.

JUDD TULLY: With the clothesline going into the . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: In front of it.

JUDD TULLY: This was an important picture for you. Was it?

PAUL CADMUS: I guess so. I don't know. At least I thought it was when I was doing it.

JUDD TULLY: Has that changed much over time in terms of how you respond to your own work?

PAUL CADMUS: I know sometimes I do things that I consider slight -- what I consider in-between pictures. I just want to keep working. If I don't have any particular project I would just do something rather simple. In fact I've done still-lives that way.

JUDD TULLY: So this next -- well, there are two -- the What I Believe and the one that you dedicate to E. M. Forster. This would sort of follow . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Getting to know him. Not only getting to know his work, but . . . . I knew his work all along. I first read A Passage to India. Jared French read it to me, I guess. We read it together in Majorca. Then I got to know all his work and became a fan of his. Margaret French sent him packages during the war of fancy food and things like that you couldn't get in England. And then the correspondence ensued and she mentioned me in one of the letters and he said he'd seen my work reproduced and was interested in it. So I wrote to him and sent him packages of food too. Then he came to visit us when he came to this country. Visited us in Provincetown. Stayed at St. Luke's Place on two visits. Then we saw him again when we were staying in Italy and in Paris. And then I went to Cambridge and stayed with him. I stayed in his flat in London when I was there. He became a good friend.

JUDD TULLY: Now this essay that he wrote . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: What I Believe -- yes.

JUDD TULLY: That really struck a chord with you?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. It's become my -- you wouldn't say gospel . . . .

[ END OF INTERVIEW II ]  
[SESSION 3, APRIL 21, 1988]

JUDD TULLY: When we stopped, I had asked you about the scale of ambition in this picture -- what I believe -- and you had talked about your friends really and your closest circle in a way in the painting. You've mentioned it before, but you're not that keen on having someone sitting directly . . . . At this point in time, you were more or less using your faculties of memory . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: And imagination. Conceptual things. I would like to do portrait drawings of friends and things like that, but otherwise I was not interested in working directly . . . . Except occasional still-lives, which I thought of sort of like practicing the piano -- sort of technical exercises.

JUDD TULLY: So by the late Forties you had been exhibiting regularly at the Midtown Gallery?

PAUL CADMUS: Regularly is not quite the word. I think there's eleven years between two of my exhibitions, just because I didn't produce a great deal and I also traveled a lot. I was in Europe quite a lot.

JUDD TULLY: Is this in the early Fifties that you're talking about?

PAUL CADMUS: In the Fifties and Sixties, I guess.

JUDD TULLY: Why don't we go to that? So you were traveling to Europe both as vacation and study?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, in 1949 I went over with George Tooker, but that was just to get reacquainted with Europe. Just to travel and visit and almost entirely to cities that had museums. We didn't travel just for sightseeing.

JUDD TULLY: Would this be again on rather a spartan mode?

PAUL CADMUS: That was fairly spartan, yes, because neither George nor I had much money.

JUDD TULLY: And Europe . . . this would be in the aftermath of the great war?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. 1949. There was still a lot of evidence of what that lady in Virginia called the "late unpleasantness."

JUDD TULLY: Referring to our great War Between the States or however they describe it?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. That was only a two or month trip. That was 1949. Then, I think it was in 1950, I went over to Florence to live for a year and a half. Don't trust my dates. Look things up.

JUDD TULLY: Did you go by yourself at this point?

PAUL CADMUS: Jared and Margaret French took an apartment on one side of the Arno and I had an apartment and studio on the other side of the Arno.

JUDD TULLY: And where exactly was your studio?

PAUL CADMUS: My studio had a wonderful view of the Uffizi and of the Piazza Vecchio and the Duomo and Giotto's campanile. From a little terrace I had a view of San Miniato. It was a fine studio on the top floor of a palazzo, miserably cold in winter. It had inadequate heating. I got chilblains. In summer it was miserably hot and the water didn't run. The only way I could get water was getting up at two in the morning and turning the faucet on and let it dribble into a little tin tub that I used as a bathtub. But it was not a cheap apartment. It was an elegant apartment, but the facilities were not very grand.

JUDD TULLY: And how did you manage? At this point when you made the decision that you were going to spend time in Italy and you wanted to . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Paint. I was going to work there. I did. I painted. What paintings did I do while I was there or did I do mostly preparations for paintings? I'm not sure. I painted while I was there, but I can't remember whether I started *Night in Bologna* there or *Bar Italia*. I don't remember which ones I did while actually there. I did lots of drawings in preparations for paintings. I can't remember which paintings I did. I know that both Jared and Margaret French rented a ville in Beaulieu, France for the months of December, January, and February I think it was. I can't remember quite whether that was the year I was living in Florence. I guess it was. And I went there for three months and I painted while I was there too. I did a painting called *The Nap* while I was there. Perhaps I did the painting called *The Bicyclists* too. At least it was started there. I don't know whether I finished it there or not.

JUDD TULLY: When you left New York, you had your place on St. Luke's Place?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes.

JUDD TULLY: Did anyone take it over? Did you sublet it?

PAUL CADMUS: No. We never sublet. We just let E. M. Forster use it when he was there. He used it twice when he was in this country.

JUDD TULLY: And this time around for you in Europe in Florence, you just wanted to go back to Europe to recharge yourself?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, it was partly that the Frenches wanted to be there, too, and I wanted to be where they were. Of course I love Italy, and I was very glad of the opportunity of being there. We tried to settle in Rome, but we couldn't find places that suited, so we settled for Florence which I didn't like as much.

JUDD TULLY: So the three of you in a way were inseparable?

PAUL CADMUS: Quite. I had dinner with them most nights. They would have dinner with me, or we would go out to restaurants together. We didn't share studios or anything in Florence. Jerry had a separate studio and Margaret worked in the apartment in Via del Canetto on their side of the Arno.

JUDD TULLY: The painting that you mentioned a moment ago -- Bar Italia -- when that later was exhibited . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: At the Midtown. And I think also at the Whitney, but I'm not sure about that.

JUDD TULLY: I came across something. In a way I think it's a kind of silly comment, but she's very well known for full reams of silly comments, but -- Emily Genauer -- she characterized the paintings something like as one of the most repulsive pictures that she had seen in years or something like this.

PAUL CADMUS: [laughter] She often said things like that about me.

JUDD TULLY: What is it about the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: What makes it disgusting?

JUDD TULLY: Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, there are some rather unattractive people in the picture. In fact I think I exposed a lot of the foibles of Italians and of Americans in Italy in that painting -- including myself. I appear in the picture too. I often included myself as a small part of the picture.

JUDD TULLY: Where are you in this one?

PAUL CADMUS: I'm on the balustrade there behind the cafe.

JUDD TULLY: And you seem to be almost looking at the scene in a bit of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I'm looking at the scene and I'm probably also looking at the character sitting on the wall.

JUDD TULLY: In the background, is that San Gimignano -- those towers?

PAUL CADMUS: I combined a lot of Italian memorabilia in one picture. It's sort of a combination of Florence, Rome, Venice. It's not any one city. That's why I called it "Italia" rather than Bar Venezia, or Bar Roma, or anything like that. It's really what I learned about Italy living in Italy.

JUDD TULLY: Again, you made a distinction between paintings that you consider sort of pursuing ideals of beauty and other paintings that show the seamier side?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. This was the more satirical, the more Hogarthian or whatever. I don't know what you want to call it, but it's about the foibles. They're not necessarily evil people, a lot of these.

JUDD TULLY: In the detail, at least, it comes out clear, but you have one table with . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: With an American family.

JUDD TULLY: Right. And one guy seems to be just taking a picture of the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Obviously the father.

JUDD TULLY: Kind of bald-headed with a polka-dot shirt.

PAUL CADMUS: And the mother is looking in her phrase book trying to deal with the waiter. Obviously the girl and the boy in the family are terribly bored by the whole trip.

JUDD TULLY: And at this table next to them in this . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: There's a group of gays.

JUDD TULLY: Very kind of strong contrast in terms of . . . you seem to have two very distinct worlds rubbing shoulders.

PAUL CADMUS: There are three aspects in the cafe, too. There's that group, there's the American group, and there's an Italian group on the right.

JUDD TULLY: Oh, I see. Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: Being annoyed by a beggar girl, with probably a false bandage on her head.

JUDD TULLY: So for you this was the world that you . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: That I saw in Italy to a great extent. I spent a lot of time in cafes in Europe.

JUDD TULLY: Drawing?

PAUL CADMUS: No. Looking. I very seldom drew. And I would make notes when I would come home. I tried to do types, not just individuals. Of course they turned into individuals in the paintings. They could only be one person in the painting, but . . .

JUDD TULLY: Was there a reason why you didn't make sketches directly there? Were you not comfortable?

PAUL CADMUS: I'm not comfortable making sketches. I want to be more anonymous. I want to be more invisible. I would love to be invisible quite often, but it's not possible. I haven't learned how.

JUDD TULLY: To have that power of observation?

PAUL CADMUS: To be able to stare without being rude.

JUDD TULLY: So this picture also has quite a long gestation?

PAUL CADMUS: Very long, yes. A lot of my pictures did.

JUDD TULLY: This one is dated, by the way, 1952 to 1955.

PAUL CADMUS: It started in Italy then, I guess. Well, I don't know. I can't remember whether I actually started the painting or just the drawings in Italy. I don't remember. But that probably doesn't count the period for the preliminary drawings. It just counts the actual painting. And of course not working entirely on that picture. Probably working on other things at the same time. Not necessarily paintings, maybe drawings, but doing other work.

JUDD TULLY: Could you have been working on another painting as well?

PAUL CADMUS: I very seldom worked on more than one painting at a time. I don't think I ever did in fact.

JUDD TULLY: And once you came back to work, say, on Bar Italia in New York . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I think I worked on it in Vermont as I remember. I'm not sure of that either. My memory isn't terribly good.

JUDD TULLY: But it would be -- in terms of if you're creating these people that seem . . . like that man that you're mentioning with the sort of . . .

PAUL CADMUS: I think the slang word for him is a "marcetta." It's a hustler.

JUDD TULLY: And he's seated on this -- as you call it -- balustrade.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. There's supposed to be a street behind the cafe where people are walking by. There's no such bar. I invented the whole bar, as I invented the sculpture and I invented the architecture.

JUDD TULLY: And the graffiti as well?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I didn't invent most of the graffiti, so those are graffiti I probably copied out from seeing on the walls in Italy. Some of them are very dated. Some of them have the names of bicyclists who were very unpopular at the time. Of course there's the "Yankee go home" or something like that. Or "Americans go home."

JUDD TULLY: Yes. "Go away, Americans."

PAUL CADMUS: That was very common.

JUDD TULLY: And you have a hammer and sickle.

PAUL CADMUS: Those are all things I saw. I didn't have to invent the graffiti.

JUDD TULLY: And once you were away from that scene and you couldn't go back to that particular cafe or whether it was a series of cafes that you incorporated . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. A sort of conglomeration of cafes. I would like to think that this is the essence of what I wanted to say about that aspect of Italy if not all of Italy. Some parts of Italy are so beautiful that I have never been able to think of doing it.

JUDD TULLY: But once removed from there, did you ever have trouble evoking that?

PAUL CADMUS: No.

JUDD TULLY: It was etched in your [mind]?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I think so.

JUDD TULLY: You must have an incredible memory for . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Although I wouldn't want to do an Italian subject now without going back to Italy. I couldn't do the same. I couldn't be that far away from it.

JUDD TULLY: Once that year and a half I think you said -- that you were -- in Italy?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Living in Florence, with little side trips into Germany and Austria and Paris and London. But I was based in Florence at the time.

JUDD TULLY: And it must have been inexpensive to live there or was it expensive? How did it compare to New York and how did you manage?

PAUL CADMUS: It was not that expensive. The food was very cheap, and the lira was very devalued at the time. It was affordable.

JUDD TULLY: Were you relying then on savings?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Savings and then of course I was still at the Midtown Galleries and I would get payments every once in a while. I wasn't just living on my capital.

JUDD TULLY: Was that from sales that they would pay you?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I was never paid any other way except by my percentage of the sales.

JUDD TULLY: Were you at that point satisfied with what was happening with your life?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. Very happy.

JUDD TULLY: Was this a very happy time?

PAUL CADMUS: I think of most of my times as being happy.

JUDD TULLY: You were doing exactly what you wanted?

PAUL CADMUS: Some times were a little lonelier than others, I suppose -- I don't know -- but mostly happy, with some slight depressions here and there. I'm a nature that does get unreasonable depressions once in a while. I have no reason to be depressed ever, really.

JUDD TULLY: But when that happens, though, do you let yourself know that's what is happening or does it just sort of take over?

PAUL CADMUS: I'm afraid I just waste time then and do more reading than I should and less work. It doesn't last long. I was even depressed this morning for no particular reason. I couldn't accomplish anything so I just read.

JUDD TULLY: Relating to your work then?

PAUL CADMUS: No. Newspapers, magazines, books. Unimportant chores. Writing checks.

JUDD TULLY: The gamut?

PAUL CADMUS: Killing time.

JUDD TULLY: Now the Frenches eventually more or less became expatriates?

PAUL CADMUS: Not until I think around 1960 they decided to go to live in Rome. That's when they sold their

house on St. Luke's Place in New York and I moved to Brooklyn Heights -- Remsen Street.

JUDD TULLY: So they owned that place that you had been . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: They eventually bought the building. At first they just owned two floors and other members of the corporation . . . it was called the Five St. Luke's Corporation. In fact, the Polar explorer Stephenson owned the basement apartment. Jerry and Margaret owned the parlor floor and then the middle floor was owned by other people -- people named Ben Frank -- and the top floor was also owned by Jerry and Margaret and I rented my share of that for a studio.

JUDD TULLY: And so when they left . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Eventually they sold the house. I think they sold it before they left for Europe.

JUDD TULLY: And then you had to move?

PAUL CADMUS: And then I moved to Remsen Street in Brooklyn.

JUDD TULLY: What kind of place was that?

PAUL CADMUS: It was a lovely studio. In fact it was the nicest studio I've had up until I moved out here. On the top floor with studio windows on the front. I've always lived on top floors with plenty of light, even though I never had a real studio. We did have a studio in the middle. When we built the skylight in St. Luke's Place, we had a real studio there.

JUDD TULLY: Was that tough for you to make that transition -- because you were so accustomed to it -- to getting into a new workspace or was it a kind of a liberating feeling?

PAUL CADMUS: I adjusted very quickly, whatever it was. I've always adjusted quite easily to whatever comes along.

JUDD TULLY: It seems that you get down to work quickly. For instance this sojourn in Italy for a year and a half and then you developed a whole body of work out of that experience. You mentioned The Bicyclists.

PAUL CADMUS: That was the French experience. That was from a short sojourn in Brittany with the Frenches. They were living in a hotel, and I had a little studio nearby.

JUDD TULLY: So they liked to move around?

PAUL CADMUS: I think Jerry is the one that likes to move around. I think Margaret would like to have been more settled, but she always did what Jerry wanted.

JUDD TULLY: From Bar Italia, another one which I think is also very powerful . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: That's my favorite picture -- Night in Bologna.

JUDD TULLY: This comes a bit later. This is already . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: What is the date? You tell me.

JUDD TULLY: 1958.

PAUL CADMUS: I hadn't yet moved to Brooklyn. I was working at St. Luke's Place at the time and I worked also in the little house that Jared and Margaret French had in Vermont near their house, which I used as my place when they were in Hartland, Vermont. The same town that George Tooker moved to.

JUDD TULLY: At about that same time?

PAUL CADMUS: He moved there a little later.

JUDD TULLY: Why is this picture your favorite?

PAUL CADMUS: It's partly because it's unlike my other pictures. It's because it's a quiet picture, and most of my pictures are really rather noisy pictures full of movement. This one is a simple theme -- a little triangle -- in a scene of great architecture, of spacious architecture, in any case. I love Bologna. Bologna was one of my favorite cities in Italy visually. I don't think I would want to live there. The climate wasn't particularly good, but it was a lively city, where Florence was not. Florence was rather dead city. Everything closed up around nine o'clock at night. Actually the idea for the picture did not come to me in Bologna. It came to me in Cremona when I was

sitting in an outdoor cafe there. A slightly similar architecture with great arches and no colonnades exactly, but . . .

JUDD TULLY: So this again, the architecture of it, is . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Made up. We took a lot of snapshots in Bologna, which were useful to me in creating my own architecture, but I invented the whole scene.

JUDD TULLY: In terms of the quiet it shows in the foreground . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: An Italian soldier. Some people think it's an American soldier, but it's meant to be an Italian soldier.

JUDD TULLY: As you say, it's a triangle.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. It is a triangle, and I utilize the colors and the three of the seven deadly sins of lust and envy and avarice.

JUDD TULLY: How did they break down into the sins?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, the soldier is obviously interested in the girl who's walking by who may or may not be a prostitute. She seems interested in the American tourist, and the tourist is obviously interested in the soldier. The three different lights . . . there's a red light on the soldier, a green light on the tourist, and a golden light on the girl.

JUDD TULLY: Is this more or less a self-portrait? It doesn't look like you.

PAUL CADMUS: No. It doesn't look anything like me. I've had that feeling, but it's not meant to be a self-portrait. I don't look nearly as wimpish as that, I must say.

JUDD TULLY: No. I haven't seen this picture in real life.

PAUL CADMUS: It's in Washington no. It's in the National Collection.

JUDD TULLY: So it's sort of hard to sense, although the suitcase by the . . .

PAUL CADMUS: That's to show he's a tourist. That he's not a native of the place.

JUDD TULLY: Then it goes way back in terms of deep space.

PAUL CADMUS: I think it shows my love of Bologna, among other things . . . I mean about the arcades or colonnades or whatever they're called.

JUDD TULLY: And there's something very haunting about the picture.

PAUL CADMUS: I hope so. It's also a picture in which my usual crosshatching is not nearly as prominent as it . . . which is something that Jerry persuaded me to try to do. Try a picture without all that crosshatching. And I did. But I don't think I stuck with it. I think my style went back to my natural crosshatching. If I could save only one picture, I think I would save that one. And it's not typical either.

JUDD TULLY: So before when you were referring to "when we were in Bologna," you were talking about . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, Jerry and Margaret and I would sometimes go there for concerts and spend a day there. Sometimes we'd stay overnight there and things like that. But Jerry and I went there and took snapshots at night of different parts of the city to help me with my architectural perspective.

JUDD TULLY: So this was a deliberate . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, it was very planned, of course.

JUDD TULLY: Was he working on . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: He was working on his own work. He wasn't interested in the subject. He didn't use Bologna at all in his work. This was for my picture.

JUDD TULLY: So now we're talking about from . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: This would be about 19 -- I can't remember.

JUDD TULLY: Just saying in terms of when you first met Jerry and started to be . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: That would be 1929.

JUDD TULLY: To say, now, which must be sometime in the 1950's.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. It was in the Fifties, probably -- or late Forties or something like that.

JUDD TULLY: It seems you in a way feed off each other or bounce off.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, we influence each other. I don't know how much I've influenced Jerry, but I know he has influenced me a great deal.

JUDD TULLY: Because maybe I'm making this too much, but I was thinking of . . . not as dire consequences of course, but something like Van Gogh and . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: And his brother?

JUDD TULLY: No. Gauguin, when they were talking, looking at each other's work, and saying . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: I hadn't thought of that.

JUDD TULLY: "I don't like that color. Try something else."

PAUL CADMUS: I didn't know they did influence each other so much. They did?

JUDD TULLY: A short time.

PAUL CADMUS: Of course Jerry always saw my work in progress and would give suggestions and I would give suggestions to him.

JUDD TULLY: In the car you had mentioned -- again, on the way over -- that you were wondering if we were going to wrap things up, and I said, "Well, we're only in the 1940's."

PAUL CADMUS: "Dispose of me," is what I said. [laughs] Or "Dismiss me." I don't know which.

JUDD TULLY: But it seems that in your painting career, which spans fifty . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: My painting career began in 1933. Not that I exhibited paintings in 1933, but I was making the paintings since been exhibited and sold and by which I'm known in many cases.

JUDD TULLY: You seem to be saying that you thought it was more interesting in terms of a story or from the earlier work or the earlier times.

PAUL CADMUS: I think things calm down a bit as you get older. I think the earlier years are more adventurous. As one gets into middle age and then old age -- I remember a remark that Cecil Beaton once said when he was sixty-five and somebody took some photographs of him. When he saw them, he didn't like them at all. He said, "I suppose I have to accept the fact that I am approaching middle age." [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: Did you ever meet him?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, yes. Through Lincoln, of course.

JUDD TULLY: There's a large exhibition . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: I know. I haven't seen it.

JUDD TULLY: It's very good. To me, it's kind of staggering the range of literary lights, artists . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: I've been around so long. [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: But, I mean, lots of people have been around so long, but I don't think so many have had that close . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Perhaps it's all through Lincoln, who knows everyone. Many more people than he wants to know, actually. A lot of them are not friends of mine. A lot of the people I've met certainly wouldn't remember me. I've met T. S. Eliot. I've met Isak Dinesen. I've met Dorothy Parker. Somerset Maugham.



JUDD TULLY: Name some more of them. That sounds good. Dorothy Parker?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Those are the ones that just came into my head at the moment, but they wouldn't remember me. I met them at parties and things like that. They're not friends or acquaintances. I moved in circles where they were and I was on the fringes on the circles, I guess.

JUDD TULLY: We've gone on kind of a double track of talking chronologically in a way about your paintings and these are because on your work you spent, yet you haven't produced a tremendous number of paintings.

PAUL CADMUS: Very, very small amount. A hundred and something pictures is . . . .

JUDD TULLY: It seems that in a way the adventures, as you were more adventurous or when you went away . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I was more sociable then, of course, than since I moved to the country in 1975, I think it was. I've been here thirteen years.

JUDD TULLY: But your life, your friends, all of that kind of marinated in a way into the pictures. It seems that you've managed somehow to put your . . . like this picture Night in Bologna.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, almost all my pictures relate to my life, I suppose. They relate to what I've seen, even if they're not part of my own active life, they are to my visual life. The E. M. Forster painting of course, What I Believe, was entirely made up. There's no such place, but there are those people.

JUDD TULLY: No. Yes, of course.

PAUL CADMUS: And of course there's no such place as that part of Bologna, and there's no such place of that Bar Italia. Nor is the subway, which came quite a bit later there. Although it was based on the Fourteenth Street subway, it was not the fourteenth Street subway. It's an essence of the worst of all the subways in New York.

Well, after coming back from Florence and everything, I suppose I did a painting called Sunday Sun. It's influenced by the fact that we used to use our roof in St. Luke's Place, which was not like this at all. But I was thinking how desperate so many people are for a little bit of sun in the midst of New York skyscrapers and apartment houses and how they seek the little bit there is. This shows a young couple with the Sunday newspaper surrounded by the dirt and grit and smoke of a New York roof.

JUDD TULLY: It's a claustrophobic . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: It is rather claustrophobic. I myself don't have any feelings of claustrophobia, but I can see how people would, living in New York.

JUDD TULLY: So this [was] intentional?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, yes. I made it as cramped as I could

JUDD TULLY: And each time that you came back to the city did you feel that Manhattan . . . ?

[END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE A]

JUDD TULLY: We've just taken a little break and I was saying that you were sort of pooh-poohing the idea that you're an influence, but you were just saying that you get fan mail and . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I do get a great deal of fan mail. I mean I have boxes and boxes and cartons of them which I will tell Jon to give to the Archives of American Art someday. A lot of it is rubbish. A lot of it is just for silly autographs, too -- some of which I answer and some of which I don't. But I've had some very serious young artists write to me who have been influenced by me. And I have had people stop me on the street who say they've been influenced by me, but after they've seen the film that was done about me. So I guess I have influenced some people. I can't think of many who have given me credit for it except George Tooker. [chuckles]

JUDD TULLY: Would you say that Tooker and French were the two -- in terms of artists -- that you've had the most . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't think I've had as much influence on Jerry as he's had on me. But George Tooker I think I've influenced and I think Jerry French has influenced him too. I've been influenced by George Tooker since I've known him, too. I've tried to be influenced, but he has mysterious qualities that I can't emulate.

JUDD TULLY: On the last page of this book, of Lincoln Kirstein's book on you, there are some quotes. One of them you're quoted as, "I think an artist has to accept his limitations. In a way they're his trademark. I've gotten used

to mine. I had better have gotten used to them by this time."

PAUL CADMUS: That was a quote from the film that was done.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. So what does that mean? What kind of limitations?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, my limitations are that I only like the kind of painting that is in what I call our tradition. I mean, it's not our tradition, but it's a tradition that we would like to be connected with. Those are the only paintings I really like. I can admire other paintings. Bold. Henry James once described New York City as a big, bad, bold beauty and I think some pictures are big, bad, bold beauties, but I don't care for them. My limitations are that I'm interested in delicacy and refinement. Especially in technique. I mean, especially in handling of paint. I don't like anything that's coarsely done. I can appreciate Van Gogh whose painting is coarse . . . there's no doubt about it. It's wonderful, but I don't love it as I love Ingres, as I love Poussin, as I love the Italian Renaissance painters. Signorelli, who is my great favorite, of course, is a rather bold painter because . . . but he was a Fresco painter. I don't care for his oils particularly. My limitations I think are quite obvious. A lot of people would think I'm a very limited artist.

JUDD TULLY: How, though?

PAUL CADMUS: [chuckles] I think it's so clear. I think every artist is limited to his own style. My subject matter is not as limited as some artists, I think. I think there's more variety in the pictures I've done. I can't remember how I said that. I think I was doing a little exhibition of how a painting is done in the movie when I said that. But I don't know how I can explain it any more clearly than that I am limited. Then I went on from that too to explain that most artists do have limitations . I think perhaps Tolstoy had very few, but certainly Ronald Firbank . . . . They probably didn't continue that quote in the book, but it's in the movie -- and Ronald Firbank was limited to his limitations. And the fact was, it was very hard to criticize Ronald Firbank. I think Forster in an essay said, "You can't break a butterfly on a Catherine wheel. It's just too delicate."

JUDD TULLY: What a great image.

PAUL CADMUS: I'm not a butterfly, but I'm not comparing myself.

JUDD TULLY: It seems from *The Fleet's In to Aspects of Suburban Life*, quite a few of your pictures cover not only history?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't say I'm losing the subject matter exactly although it's mostly things that I've seen. I guess the *Aspects of Suburban Life* were to a great extent invented. I had seen photographs of golfers and things like that, but I had never seen a golf match at that time. I did see one polo match before I did the polo spill. But I also looked at newspaper clippings and saw polo.

JUDD TULLY: Maybe in terms of maybe where we are for today just again on this -- I think -- novelistic sort of depth in terms of what you've approached in terms of your work. This painting of the homage . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: To Reynaldo Hahn. Yes. It's called *La R? Nuit*. It's a set of waltzes that Reynaldo Hahn wrote for two pianos that Jerry and I used to play. We both play the piano and we had two pianos at one time in St. Luke's Place. Although we were never accomplished musicians, we could read through music and enjoy it. He was a composer. Partly because he was a friend of Marcel Proust's he interested me [and] his life interested me.

JUDD TULLY: So they were contemporaries? Proust and . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, [yes]. In fact I think that Reynaldo Hahn and Proust were lovers. I think in the beginning. In fact I think the novel *Jean Santeuil* was apparently all about himself and to a great extent about himself and Reynaldo Hahn. I've played a lot of his music and since that in years later I've accompanied Jon Andersson when he sings these songs. It's really just a tribute to a musician I admired so much. I don't think he's one of the greatest. It has nothing to do with that. It's just that his life and his style appeal to me. It's rather salon music in a way, but there were mysterious aspects of his life, too, which is symbolized by the satyr. It wasn't what would be called an exactly innocent life, but he was an important musician in France and he was largely responsible for the revival of the interest in Mozart in France. He was a great conductor apparently too.

JUDD TULLY: How did you find out about him? Through the music first?

PAUL CADMUS: I've always gone to music stores and bought music. In fact I've had sheet music of his ever since I was in my teens, probably. There used to be a secondhand bookstore on 57th Street. Now they are just apartment houses there on 59th Street and Central Park South where I used to go and buy lots of secondhand music. I've bought music ever since I was a child. I used to go to Woolworth's and buy music.

JUDD TULLY: So again, in terms of this . . . it is an homage?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes, it is.

JUDD TULLY: So it represents a long cycle of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Admiration for him.

JUDD TULLY: And the satyr . . . ? You have him on these grand steps.

PAUL CADMUS: I know that he composed some of his music sitting in the Tuilleries. This is not supposed to be the Tuilleries. But he also was a great society man. He went out into grand society. In the background there's a statue of the young Mozart. He wrote an operetta with Sasha Guitry called Mozart, which was a great success. Yvonne Prataugh starred in it and Sasha Guitry starred in it. Also some of the sheet music that's floating away in the air is, I think, is labeled with the names of songs that [he] composed. Le Riche , which was one of them.

JUDD TULLY: From the reproduction I can't really see that, but it does have the wonderful trompe l'oeil.

PAUL CADMUS: That's another one of my favorite pictures.

JUDD TULLY: So the composer is seated . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: On a sort of terrace and either near a chateau or in a park writing his music and being inspired by his two influences -- the ethereal spirit and the satyr life. Not a hairy satyr, but a very salon satyr. An elegant satyr.

JUDD TULLY: And the ethereal?

PAUL CADMUS: The ethereal I was thinking somewhat of a Tiffany vase as I used that kind of nacreous color on the aerial figure in a twilight scene.

JUDD TULLY: Kissing the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Composer.

JUDD TULLY: And that's the moment of inspiration?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. He was a remarkable composer. Some of his best known songs he wrote when he was seventeen years old. He was Venezuelan, but he lived in Paris most of his life.

JUDD TULLY: And this picture was painted in Brooklyn? It's 1963.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. It must have been in Brooklyn then. Yes, it was painted in Brooklyn. But I would occasionally travel, too. I've been to Paris quite a few times and I would make sketches of the kinds of chairs they use in the little paris. I've always been fascinated by steps. I've always wanted to [do] paintings with steps in them. I don't know that I've done many, but I've often wanted to do one with great rows of steps like the back of the San . . . which is the church in Florence? I can't remember its name at the moment, but it has wonderful series of steps, as if they could be used symbolically perhaps.

JUDD TULLY: So the paintings not only physically take a long time, but in terms of their . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. Thinking of them, I've thought of them often for years. In fact I take notes. I have little notebooks in which I've labeled rather roughly, "Pictures to be Perhaps." I started making notes like that in Majorca. The Deadly Sins I made notes for long before I ever started to paint them.

JUDD TULLY: Because again that has a really literary ring. I mean as a novelist would collect material and study and do research on things if that character or if that scene was going to involve . . .

PAUL CADMUS: I've often thought of my pictures as being like novels or short stories sometimes.

JUDD TULLY: Where is this picture?

PAUL CADMUS: Lincoln bought it. My brother-in-law owns it.

JUDD TULLY: This was exhibited in the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I think it was in the Whitney. I'm not sure of that. It may not be. The Whitney got too advanced for me, and I haven't been in their annuals for some time. But I don't remember whether that was shown there or not. I think it was.

JUDD TULLY: Well, they changed their direction, let's say.

PAUL CADMUS: They certainly have.

JUDD TULLY: Whether it's advanced or . . .

PAUL CADMUS: What's called a more avant-garde.

[END OF SESSION]  
[SESSION 4, MAY 5, 1988]

JUDD TULLY: I think this is our fourth meeting here.

PAUL CADMUS: Fourth and last, I hope. [chuckles]

JUDD TULLY: You just heard Paul Cadmus say he is anticipating that this is our last session for the Archives of American Art. While on the topic, last time, because of some technical problem, the early part of the interview when I was asking you . . . . Anyway, I have to repeat again, and one of the things was Margaret French's maiden name.

PAUL CADMUS: Was Margaret Hoening.

JUDD TULLY: Along that same track, when Juliana Force at the Whitney apparently was the one who chose the paintings Greenwich Village Cafeteria?

PAUL CADMUS: I'm not sure that she was the only one who chose it, but the paintings were sent from our studio, I think, right to the Whitney Museum. She may have had a committee, too. Maybe Lloyd Goodrich was on it. I don't know who else was on the committee, but it was from there that the choice was made to send to the Corcoran show in Washington.

JUDD TULLY: And at that point in time did you have any personal contact with her?

PAUL CADMUS: Not before that, no. We became somewhat friends. I guess we became good friends over the years because I exhibited with the Whitney.

PAUL CADMUS: What was she like?

JUDD TULLY: She was very dynamic. Very forceful, like her name. Loved antiques -- which doesn't go with contemporary art necessarily, but she had a beautiful apartment up on top of the museum there decorated by Bruce Butterfield, I think his name was.

JUDD TULLY: And we're speaking about the building on 8th Street?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. In fact I think he designed the front door too -- which is still there.

JUDD TULLY: You made a comment last time that was lost that she seemed to be somewhat upset at the amount of publicity.

PAUL CADMUS: After a while. Not at first. But she thought it dragged on too long, I guess. I don't know whether she thought I was fomenting the publicity or not. In any case, I guess she wanted to quiet it down and forget about it.

JUDD TULLY: Was the atmosphere in those days . . . and we're talking about at this time . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: 1934.

JUDD TULLY: Was the atmosphere at the Whitney very open in terms of artists being able to have access to the curator?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know how they arranged it. Who they invited and that sort of thing, but there were usually parties after the opening and some of the favorite artists were invited up to her place afterwards. Which got to be quite boisterous at times. People fell down the stairs on the way home and things like that.

JUDD TULLY: Were you part of that group?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I often was invited. One always hoped one would be.

JUDD TULLY: Who else among your contemporaries were around?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, Jared French and Margaret would be invited to that. Guy Pene du Bois was almost always there. Ernest Fiene, Adolf Dehn, I think Peter Blume. I'm not sure. There have been so many parties it's hard to remember who was at every one.

JUDD TULLY: I'm sure. And Goodrich was someone that seemed to be also very much . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: He seemed to like my work particularly, yes. I don't know whether he was one of the directors at that time or not. Whether he came in later I can't remember. Also Hermon More was another one of the directors who was also favorable to my work.

JUDD TULLY: And you're represented in their permanent collection.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. One was just a drawing called To the lynching and the other is a painting called Fantasia on a Theme by Dr. S.

JUDD TULLY: Which we have talked about and relating to Fire Island, which would maybe be a good transition point. Again just catching up from last time, when we were driving from the train station to your house you were talking about Margaret French, Leica Cameras and how the three of you . . . the Frenches and yourself . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh. Did that part get messed up?

JUDD TULLY: Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, we first met Margaret in 1934, I think it was. I was going to the Art Students League to print etchings and we became friends. She had a Leica camera and she began taking pictures of us in the subway and to circuses we'd go to. And then, when we went to Fire Island in 1937 for the first time, we all were using the same camera and taking pictures with it. Our pictures were so much alike in a way that years later, when they began to be shown publicly, we invented the name PAJAMA. The first initials of my name (Paul), the first initials of Jared (JA) and Margaret (MA). So we became PAJAMA. Which Jerry got rather sick of later on. The reason we did this was so often we couldn't tell who had taken which picture unless sometimes by the subject matter.

JUDD TULLY: You were saying that you did your own printing.

PAUL CADMUS: Jerry usually did the printing with the enlarger and I did the acid work, the hypo and the washing of the prints.

JUDD TULLY: And then did you make enough prints so that you would all have your copies?

PAUL CADMUS: Not necessarily. We just did some favorites at times. In fact, I'm lacking a great many of some of the best pictures. I think Jerry kept a fairly complete file of the pictures. They're probably in storage somewhere in New York, I'm sure. Pictures not only of Fire Island, but of our trips to Europe and of various friends too.

JUDD TULLY: You showed me some of the Fire Island pictures. Again, that seemed to work in so perfectly in a way with the style, with your painting, and what you were developing, and the space, and the light, and all that beauty.

PAUL CADMUS: The "blank skies" and clarity of the seashore. Very seldom did we do woods or interiors. Occasionally, though.

JUDD TULLY: You had spoken once before that someone -- and I was curious who -- had dubbed the three of you as the "Fire Island School?"

PAUL CADMUS: Hyatt Mayor, who was the curator of prints at the Metropolitan Museum and a wonderful writer too. He wrote about art. He just called us that offhand. I don't know that he ever mentioned it in print.

JUDD TULLY: I'm just kind of jumping along to fill in these little gaps. When you were commissioned to do the sets for Filling Station, you first met Virgil Thomson. What was Thomson like to collaborate with?

PAUL CADMUS: Quite inspirational. He was very assured. He knew exactly what he wanted. In fact, a lot of the ideas of the ballet were his, really, rather than the choreographer's. Although the original libretto was by Lincoln and originally it was called "Bombs in the Icebox" which became an entirely different . . . I still have some costume sketches that I did for "Bombs in the Icebox." I don't know how it metamorphosed into Filling Station, but I think that the original plan was not to have a happy ending. I think there was a holdup at the filling station, and I think that the rich girl got bumped off. But I think Virgil's idea was that, as they were carrying her off to a sort of funeral march, she suddenly revived. She begins to sit up as they're carrying her off. So I think that was his idea to put a happy ending on it, and it suited the ballet much better than a sad ending would have.

JUDD TULLY: He does have this reputation as this great -- possibly genius, I don't know -- or great wit.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. He was witty and sassy.

JUDD TULLY: So it was fun to be . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, it's always fun to be with Virgil. He's rather outrageous at times. I remember going to a performance at Stratford of some play. No, it may have been his opera -- The Mother of Us All or something -- that they did there. There was some mistake on the stage, and he suddenly spoke very loud, "What's that little bastard doing on the stage?" [both laugh] Then he was famous for falling asleep too. He would fall asleep and then wake up.

JUDD TULLY: Would this be during performances or at parties?

PAUL CADMUS: At parties. At performances too. You would see him asleep in performances that he reviewed the next day in the Herald Tribune. But he evidently heard enough to be able to write a very good review. There was a party when he fell asleep. I think Ned Rorem recounts this -- it's not mine -- in one of his diaries, that Virgil was asleep and the conversation had been going on. He woke up and said, "What were you talking about?" And they said, "Beethoven." And he said, "First rate! First rate!" and fell asleep again. [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: When you mentioned the Herald Tribune, did you know Edwin Denby?

PAUL CADMUS: Very slightly. In fact I knew most famous people very slightly because I never pursued famous people. Both famous people and rich people generally speaking didn't . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Well, you yourself were . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh no. Not really. I had a certain mild reputation because of the scandal of The Fleet's In, but I wasn't famous.

JUDD TULLY: The painting that comes to mind is What I Believe.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, E. M. Forster. He did become a very close friend, and he was someone I did pursue because I loved his work. I sought him out and then we became very good friends and I loved him very much. He was a wonderful friend. But generally speaking, I prefer the powerless people to powerful people, so I never pursued most of the famous people I met, although I met a lot of them. But if they didn't make an effort towards me, I made no effort towards them.

JUDD TULLY: How about another writer? What about Isherwood?

PAUL CADMUS: I knew him quite well, yes. I met him through Lincoln, and we had many of the same interests. I saw quite a lot of him before he went to California, but not much afterwards.

JUDD TULLY: And he's one of the people in . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I included him in the painting of What I Believe as an ascetic, which was one of E. M. Forster's aristocrats, although he preferred people to be less ascetic himself. At that time Christopher was being ascetic. He certainly wasn't all the time, but he was very interested in the Minatta [?] movement and his swamis and things at that point.

JUDD TULLY: So in the painting you have him as he . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: He's seeming to walk along in a crowd with praying.

JUDD TULLY: Actually from when I was viewing the film, . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: *Enfant Terrible* at 80, which David Sutherland made.

JUDD TULLY: Right. And there is one point where you're sitting at what's described as your . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: My mother's desk.

JUDD TULLY: And you're reading some correspondence from Forster. You had sent him some photographs of paintings that you had done and he was responding. Would you say that Forster would be one of the major influences on you in terms of aesthetics?

PAUL CADMUS: I would think so. It was in the way of subject matter really to a great extent. Not in the way I painted or anything. He had no influence in that way, but what he thought, I thought. Or at least I was

influenced. No, I thought anyway, and we both had rather similar feelings about the importance of friendship and violence and so forth.

JUDD TULLY: He had asked a question in one of these letters because he must have seen a reproduction of the Herrin Massacre, but he said something about the "godawful" something violence of the cemetery. I'm badly paraphrasing.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. He wanted to know what it was about.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. And we talked last time about how Life magazine had commissioned you.

PAUL CADMUS: Life magazine had commissioned artists to do paintings.

JUDD TULLY: From what you've said before that, you abhor violence and the whole idea of bloodshed. That painting was pretty much just a gory . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It certainly was. It's because of my hatred of violence that I had to do it, really. Although I haven't been interested in other violent artists. Caravaggio was a very violent, murderous character.

JUDD TULLY: Was it in Rome that you first saw Caravaggio?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know when I first became conscious of him, but I've liked his work for a long, long time. I can't remember when it began. I mean I liked him long before I did that painting of David and Goliath, which is an homage to Caravaggio, of course.

JUDD TULLY: And that's probably the Seventies or something?

PAUL CADMUS: It was begun in the Sixties. I don't remember the final date of the painting.

JUDD TULLY: The David and Goliath by Caravaggio which is in Rome at the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: There are several versions of that, yes. There's one in the Borghese, I think, and there's one in the Doria. There are several versions of the same painting. It's of course in reverse because it's as if in a mirror.

JUDD TULLY: And have you used that device a lot -- the mirror?

PAUL CADMUS: The device? I don't think I've consciously . . . . In that one I did. I used it consciously as a device. Of course I've used the mirror a lot because I've done a lot of self-portraits.

JUDD TULLY: That's more what I meant.

PAUL CADMUS: And I've done a great deal of posing for myself using the mirror. If I have a hand to do, I very seldom ask anybody else to pose for the hand. I would pose for the hand myself. Often the left hand, the right hands are all mixed up and I have to reverse them.

JUDD TULLY: What is it about Caravaggio's work that appealed to you or that you find powerful?

PAUL CADMUS: I suppose his interest in low life in a way, and also his rather exotic-looking youths that he painted for his cardinal patrons and things liked that. I haven't seen the movie about Caravaggio, but I'm not that interested. I've read an awful lot of books about him. And Berenson -- when he wrote a book about Caravaggio, mentioned me in it. I think it was a rather frivolous mention, but he mentioned one of my paintings as being influenced by Caravaggio long before I did the homage to Caravaggio. In fact it was the Greenwich Village Cafeteria painting that he reproduced in the book.

JUDD TULLY: Which is extraordinarily because Berenson rarely . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Mentioned contemporary artists.

JUDD TULLY: Let alone anyone alive and kicking.

PAUL CADMUS: I guess I was kicking. [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: Did that shock you?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I was amused and pleased, of course, even though it was a frivolous mention. He didn't take me terribly serious, I don't think, as a follower of Caravaggio.

JUDD TULLY: Because I think for a long time the work of Caravaggio was really just unknown. I mean it wasn't

that it was unknown . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: No, but it wasn't as popular as it has become in recent years. The whole period has become more popular -- I mean the Seventeenth Century painting.

JUDD TULLY: Was that a time you would have liked to [have] experienced?

PAUL CADMUS: I've never thought of being in any other time than my own. I think my own was good enough. And there are disadvantages in every period. I'm sure I wouldn't have liked the dirt and the squalor of Caravaggio's environment. No. I've never wanted to be in any other period. I wouldn't particularly like to be in the next period. The more nuclear it gets, the less I like it.

JUDD TULLY: You're talking about now? Today?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Today and what's coming.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. How do you see that?

PAUL CADMUS: I see it rather hopelessly. I see it as not very encouraging. But who knows?

JUDD TULLY: And that still fits in again with What I Believe, of the Forster painting. I mean not that it had a profound impact on you or the correspondence between the way you viewed the world and the way Forster did seems to still be something that you . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Very much so.

JUDD TULLY: First, let me ask you and then I'll go back to when we stopped the last item on the tape -- the part that did come out fine. The other thing that we really missed was you told an anecdote of a dinner that took place here with W. H. Auden and your brother-in-law.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Well, it was a rather foolish little anecdote, but it shows a little bit of how Auden could behave. I started it, I think, by telling about where we were to meet. We were to meet at Lincoln's house on 19th Street and drive out to the country here in Weston for the weekend. We picked up Lincoln at his house, myself, Jon Anderssen, Daniel Maloney and Auden. Before we started out, Lincoln said, "Now I want our roles to be understood before we start. I am to be the host, Wystan is to be the guest, and Danny is to be the court jester." On the way out Wystan was doing the daily crossword puzzle, which he always did. Occasionally he would ask a question, "Now what could this mean?" and Danny would suggest something. Wystan would rather crossly say, "Well, if you don't know, don't say!" And we arrived and had lunch. I prepared it. And after lunch, I said, "We always take a nap after lunch here in the country." And Wystan said, "Mother never allowed me to take a nap," and then "Mother never allowed us to take a nap." I think he was speaking of himself and his brother too. But anyhow, we did, and about four o'clock I heard sounds in the kitchen so I got up to see what was happening and Wystan said, "I'm making myself some tea." I said, "Oh, Lincoln always has tea at five o'clock." And he said, "Five o'clock is my time." And he said, "There's no cream in the refrigerator." I said, "Oh, yes, there is." He said, "No, there isn't. I looked." Well, anyway I looked in the refrigerator and I found it and gave it to him. Then I began to prepare dinner which was one of his favorites. It was rib roast. Wystan's regime was to have one martini at six o'clock, a second martini at six-thirty, and dinner at seven. He had the first martini, and he was preparing to have the second martini, I guess, when I announced that dinner wouldn't be ready by seven o'clock. I'm afraid it would be at least fifteen minutes late, and Wystan said, "How much did that rib roast weigh?" And I said, "Eleven pounds." He said, "I could have told you to put it in sooner." He was quite cross. But anyway so he had to have an extra martini while he waited for dinner, and then we went into the dining room when it was ready. Lincoln had the candles lit and Wystan said what we think was, "What's this nigger lighting?" I thought later possibly he could have said, "niggardly lighting" or "meager lighting," but Lincoln doesn't think so. He thinks he said "Nigger" lighting. I'm not sure. In any case, Lincoln said he liked it that way, so that's the way it was. The dinner was all right. The beef was done the way he [Auden] liked it and it was sliced I think the way he liked it. Then, after dinner, he shortly after went up to bed, took a bottle of vodka up with him, and had his bubble bath which he did every night, I guess.

JUDD TULLY: This was a man of definite . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Habits. Oh yes. I think it was Lincoln who once said he didn't wear a watch and Wystan said, "How can you tell who you are if you don't know what time it is?"

JUDD TULLY: Would this have been towards the end of his life?

PAUL CADMUS: I would imagine he lived about ten years more. I'm not sure exactly. I'm not sure of the year. I would think it was around 1968 -- something like that. I don't know what year he died.



JUDD TULLY: But it was around in the period when you had this dinner. And of course by this time you would know Auden?

PAUL CADMUS: I knew him quite well. Yes. He was living in Cornelia Street at the time. I used to stop in at Cornelia Street and see him there. He always kept his martinis ready-mixed in the refrigerator so he didn't have to add the ice to them. Make them more potent.

JUDD TULLY: I read somewhere or perhaps it was even in that film he said that of your paintings . . .

PAUL CADMUS: The Seven Deadly Sins. He said the one that could not be painted was pride. He said the only way to do pride was to make a frame just like the others and put a mirror in it. Because everyone I suppose is a victim of pride. He said my painting of pride really was vanity rather than pride. I don't really agree with him there. I think it's more than just vanity. There was vanity in it too as there often is in pride.

JUDD TULLY: It was more his own personality that really couldn't accept the idea that you could somehow visualize that?

PAUL CADMUS: He didn't think it could be visualized.

JUDD TULLY: Would that have been the more negative or critical thing he would have said about your work?

PAUL CADMUS: It's the only one I've heard.

JUDD TULLY: Because he was a fan of yours?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know whether he was that, but he certainly didn't mind it. I don't know whether he was a fan. He once suggested that I give him one of my erotic drawings and he said I could roll it up and send it in a magazine to Italy, which I didn't want to do. I didn't want to roll up one of my good drawings.

JUDD TULLY: So he didn't have any of your work?

PAUL CADMUS: Not that I know of. No.

JUDD TULLY: Did he have an art collection?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't think so. He was interested in an artist named Roger Baker. I think Roger drew him, and Christopher's friend Don Bachardy did a drawing of Wylan too. I never drew him, but he would have been a wonderful subject.

JUDD TULLY: Was that because you didn't want to really broach it or it just didn't come up?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I really generally didn't like to draw people that weren't young and beautiful. Those are my favorite subjects.

JUDD TULLY: Where we left off last time is after your European trips in the Fifties. The Frenches had sold the place on St. Luke's and you moved to Remsen Street in Brooklyn. That's about where we are chronologically going to the present. I think at the end of the last tape I was in the middle of a question, and I didn't follow it through on the other side. You had been talking about that very claustrophobic painting of Sunday Sun. I was asking you when you came back from these beautiful places, whether it would be Fire Island or it could have been in the country or Brittany or someplace beautiful and you came back to New York, did you find the city to be a kind of disturbing place? An ugly place?

PAUL CADMUS: I didn't think of it as beautiful, but I found it rather inspiring as subject matter. I always have loved walking in the streets and seeing the people -- what Wylan used to call "the lower orders." That always fascinated me -- to watch them, to observe them. I didn't want to know them.

JUDD TULLY: This seems to be a perfect spot, speaking of lower orders and downright subterranean, the Fourteenth Street and your . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Subway Symphony.

JUDD TULLY: Which I would describe as a tour de force of that lower order, as you say.

PAUL CADMUS: The subway was a kind of inferno in a way -- or a limbo in any case.

JUDD TULLY: How did that evolve?

PAUL CADMUS: Because I love watching people in the subway. Did I mention somewhere that [Richard] Leakey -

- the team Leakey and his wife discovered the remains of Neanderthal men and things like that -- said that if a Neanderthal were dressed in contemporary clothes he would pass un-noticed in the New York subway? I've seen things in the New York subway that fit that description very well. I was always interested in everyone I saw in the subway. I often wished that I had done what John Sloan did. He did paintings of nudes in the subway, nudes in butcher shops, nudes in everyday life walking the streets. I've often thought of these people I saw -- how I would love to undress them and do them in the nude. But if I couldn't do them in the nude, it was fun to paint them in their clothes.

JUDD TULLY: You said prior to this that when you were working, for instance, on Bar Italia and you spent a lot of time sitting in these cafes that you weren't making sketches.

PAUL CADMUS: No, I didn't.

JUDD TULLY: You waited until you were home or back or you stored them in your memory?

PAUL CADMUS: Until I could make an essence out of what I knew about these various . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Was that the same approach you took . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: In the subway one? Yes. In the early years when I first came back to this country, I did used to sketch in the subway like Reginald Marsh. Later on, it got more and more dangerous to work in the subway. People were furious if they saw you sketching them and were likely to attack you. I remember once seeing someone in the subway on a platform. I was looking at him because it was a type I was interested in. I don't remember exactly what he was like. He was very Germanic-looking and he looked a little bit like Hauptmann, in the Lindbergh baby kidnapping. And he kept shouting at me, "You're Hitler! You're Hitler!" and I was afraid he was going to push me off the platform. It was the time of the sinking of one of the great German battleships. At the time I did have a crew cut, which didn't make me very Hitler-like looking.

JUDD TULLY: You certainly didn't have a little mustache.

PAUL CADMUS: No. I wasn't a Hitler type. But I was very afraid of drawing people in the subway after that.

JUDD TULLY: When you moved to Brooklyn you had described it a little bit last time as being on the top floor?

PAUL CADMUS: On Remsen Street. It was a lovely studio. It was the first good studio I had with north light. I used to take the subway all the time to get to the city, and that's why I was inspired. Of course the subway has always been inspirational. It was inspirational for Marsh and a lot of other artists. It was not an original idea. My treatment of it was different.

JUDD TULLY: How long was this marinating? What made you take on such a large painting to say that you were going to capture this . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: How does one know what one chooses or what chooses one? I had been thinking of it for years. In fact I haven't stopped thinking of doing a subway picture. I still make notes about doing another one. Quite a different one, but I probably won't. It's too much of an ambition.

JUDD TULLY: How would it be different?

PAUL CADMUS: Fewer figures. I wouldn't try to do such a panoramic thing. Nor would I concentrate entirely on the ugliness of the subway.

JUDD TULLY: Because one of the things it seems that maybe could mark the transition -- and maybe not. I don't know. It's a question. But from St. Luke's Place, to Brooklyn, and then to here actually which is where we are right now -- but you had made a point sometime back that you made a decision that what you wanted to paint or what you wanted to go after was beauty. In a way the subway picture was the last . . . aside from the Seven Deadly Sins, which is even something else and much earlier -- it seems that you went back into this biting kind of satire -- as you say, Hogarthian. Not talking about the subway, but you were maybe going back and forth between painting beauty. Then, when did you say, "I'm going to really nail this . . . ?"

PAUL CADMUS: It had been on my mind for so long. I've spent so much of my life in the subway. I did do another satirical painting just two or three years ago, but it was influenced by a Japanese print. It was one called See No Evil, Speak No Evil, Etc.

JUDD TULLY: Was it in your last show?

PAUL CADMUS: It was the show before last, though.

JUDD TULLY: In 1983, I guess?

PAUL CADMUS: I guess it was. Don't ask me about dates. I'm hopeless.

JUDD TULLY: One of the things that fascinates me about this subway painting -- someone in another time could look at it and it would be almost like an anthropologist or archaeologist discovering a tomb.

PAUL CADMUS: Many of the things have become very dated. The pregnant hippie girl with probably her husband or her lover with the peace symbol.

JUDD TULLY: What is the book that he's holding?

PAUL CADMUS: Every Man's Picasso.

JUDD TULLY: The Gold Edition or something? Where does that come from?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I think every man was taking up Picasso at the time . It's my own publication. There is no such book.

JUDD TULLY: I've noticed in many pictures you have an anchor to the current time -- to a newspaper headline. It's probably invented.

PAUL CADMUS: Usually invented. Yes.

JUDD TULLY: Something that gives you information in a pointed way.

PAUL CADMUS: Are there any newspapers in this? Obviously there are some. I can't remember what they say on them or anything.

JUDD TULLY: With this reproduction you would almost need a magnifying glass to look at different things.

PAUL CADMUS: You haven't seen the original painting?

JUDD TULLY: No.

PAUL CADMUS: It's at the Midtown Galleries, I think. They could probably show it to you.

JUDD TULLY: I would like to see it.

PAUL CADMUS: They could bring it out to you. It's big, you know. I guess it's the largest painting outside of a mural that I've done.

JUDD TULLY: So it's not in any collection?

PAUL CADMUS: No, it isn't. No one has desired to have it in his or her home.

JUDD TULLY: How do you explain that?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, it's not a pleasant subject, although I thought that maybe Russia should buy it and have it in their own subway to show the difference between a Moscow subway and an American subway. That's not a very patriotic idea, I guess, but it would show the contrast. However, Moscow hasn't bought it. No one has yet.

JUDD TULLY: Is that disturbing to you?

PAUL CADMUS: No. Things sometimes take years to sell. Doesn't bother me at all. I mean I would love to have it sold while I could enjoy the money, but . . . .

JUDD TULLY: The dates here say 1975 to 1976.

PAUL CADMUS: That's for the actual painting. It's not for any of the preliminary work.

JUDD TULLY: So we're talking about . . . in terms of preliminary work . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I started it in Brooklyn long before I moved out here. In fact, I moved the painting out here unfinished and continued it out here.

JUDD TULLY: And it's an acrylic?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. It was such a large painting, I really didn't feel like doing it in egg tempera.

JUDD TULLY: And was the transition an awkward . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No. The David and Goliath was also an acrylic. Those are two rather large paintings, and I was able to treat it very much as if it were egg tempera, but I prefer egg tempera. And also I didn't want to do them on panels, which are so heavy, and egg tempera is not really as good on canvas. It's more easily damaged.

JUDD TULLY: Was the first picture that you did in Brooklyn -- a study for David and Goliath? Would that make sense?

PAUL CADMUS: Very likely. I started drawing for David and Goliath before I moved to Brooklyn.

JUDD TULLY: And David in the picture is Jon Andersson, right?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I started plans for the picture long before I knew Jon, but then when he came along, I put him in the picture.

JUDD TULLY: How did you two meet, by the way?

PAUL CADMUS: We were introduced by a friend in Nantucket.

JUDD TULLY: And he has been in many . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, he's posed for everything I've done ever since. Male, female, child, everything.

[END OF TAPE FOUR, SIDE A]

JUDD TULLY: So you met Jon in . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: 1964.

JUDD TULLY: And Nantucket was a place that you had been . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, I had often visited Nantucket. In fact, I went there as a child with my father, and we had a very good friend there who I often visited, too.

JUDD TULLY: So Jon has been, as you were describing -- in terms of you using your imagination and memory -- but has been a central figure?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, yes. That's a good way to put it. [laughs] Very tactful way. Oh yes, very important in my life.

JUDD TULLY: Because in the film it really brought out a certain connection as when you were sitting at the piano playing the music of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh. Rod Stewart's song?

JUDD TULLY: No. Reynaldo Hahn and Jon was singing. And he is a singer?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Now he's a cabaret singer.

JUDD TULLY: But that connection between the two of you was a part that I hadn't seen before because we'd been talking here.

PAUL CADMUS: And Jon hasn't happened to be here. He's usually in New York.

JUDD TULLY: So this period of this transition to Brooklyn before you moved here was -- could you say -- dominated by the David and Goliath and the Subway?

PAUL CADMUS: Those were the major pictures I did there, yes. In those years I lived in Brooklyn. I guess other pictures were done there -- I'm sure they were -- but I can't remember which ones they were. One could tell by the dates. All along I've been doing drawings and things too.

JUDD TULLY: Of course. I don't mean to repeat the question, but you had a comment kind of tongue-in-cheek about how you thought your earlier life was more interesting or more things were happening.

PAUL CADMUS: That youth is more interesting than middle age or old age is one sure thing. I still think so. I would love to be young again, but . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Other than being in the Seventeenth century, you would just prefer to be young again?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I wouldn't mind living my whole life over again, just as it was. I mean, I would like to improve some things, but I would be satisfied to do it as it was too.

JUDD TULLY: What would you have improved?

PAUL CADMUS: I would have liked to have maybe not been as poor at times and not had to worry about money as much. I would like to have been a little bit smarter in some of my relationships, perhaps. One could think of plenty of things. Even so, it was good enough. I would like to do it over again.

JUDD TULLY: When the Frenches had made their decision and moved to Rome permanently, did you visit them a lot and did you go over and stay with them in Rome?

PAUL CADMUS: Not after they moved their permanently. I would visit them when I went to Rome, but just briefly. I never stayed very long in Rome.

JUDD TULLY: So did the friendship by distance kind of get . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It hasn't crumbled or anything, no. It's been kept up by correspondence all along regularly. But propinquity does make relationships easier to maintain. At least you can see each other much more often. Letter writing doesn't take the place of visiting. There should be much more letter writing than there is -- much less telephoning and things like that, I don't like.

JUDD TULLY: I think that correspondence is almost an exhausted or almost an endangered species.

PAUL CADMUS: It is. It's partly because most Americans don't have decent handwriting; they don't know how to spell.

JUDD TULLY: Have people said to you or has there been a lot of curiosity about your abandonment of this Hogarthian way?

PAUL CADMUS: I think people would like for me to do more of the satirical things, but if I don't happen to feel satirical about things at the present, I'm not going to do it. In fact, on a telephone conversation just a few days ago from California -- I'm having a show there at the moment in Beverly Hills of things lent by the Midtown Gallery to another gallery there -- the owner of the gallery asked me if I would consider doing a commission. Someone wanted a painting of a satirical subject, and I didn't want to take it. I don't ever take commissions anyway, unless they happen to be friends of mine.

JUDD TULLY: Was it the wrong approach? Did that get you upset?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, any approach would be wrong to do a commission. There's no good approach about doing a commission.

JUDD TULLY: Because then you'd feel that you were being slighted?

PAUL CADMUS: No. Because I have to do what they want rather than what I want, I think. And if I'm not in the mood for doing it, I don't want to do it either.

JUDD TULLY: What is the gallery, by the way?

PAUL CADMUS: It's called the Louis Newman Galleries in Beverly Hills. They had a show of mine there two years ago and it seemed to go very well, so now they're having another. This time it's just drawings. There are no paintings in the show.

JUDD TULLY: When we were driving up, you had said that Midtown had called you, I think yesterday, to tell you that they had gotten a call about the Pocahontas?

PAUL CADMUS: The rediscovery of Pocahontas. Of its whereabouts, in any case. And that they're going to restore it and place it in some public building -- perhaps in the Smithsonian or perhaps in Philadelphia, I think they suggested. Why I don't know. I suppose they found it in a warehouse rolled up or something like that.

JUDD TULLY: How long had it been missing?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know. I don't know when it was taken off the walls of the parcel post building in Richmond where it was designed for. On the opposite wall was Jerry French's painting, which I don't know whether they've found that too and whether they're going to restore that too or not. It should be restored. Especially his.

JUDD TULLY: Was this time a new stage in your life -- when you moved to Brooklyn, and your relationship with

Jon Andersson?

PAUL CADMUS: I had already moved to Brooklyn before I met Jon.

JUDD TULLY: So the subject matter has been more of . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: More middle aged? [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: I don't know. Do you feel that way?

PAUL CADMUS: Perhaps it's a little more placid. A little bit less worried, perhaps. I'm still very much concerned with what's going on in the world. In fact, the See No Evil, Speak No Evil painting shows that.

JUDD TULLY: It seems like you're really taking what you had talked about -- a decision, it seemed almost -- and you said something about wanting to shove people's faces in both . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: The pleasant and unpleasant. People shouldn't think everything is lovely. I still . . . . Even in a painting like the last painting I've done, like The House that Jack Built. He's living in a house that's about to be consumed -- the little box that he's living in. We all are in a way boxed in our lives and the outside world is always threatening us.

JUDD TULLY: Consumed by flames?

PAUL CADMUS: It's a kind of nuclear disaster, perhaps. There is still some blue sky up above. It's still not hopeless.

JUDD TULLY: Again, it's a disturbing [picture]. It's a beautiful [picture]. It's almost like it's double-edged.

PAUL CADMUS: It does contain the idea of beauty and that man could be perfected, I suppose. Could be a perfectible thing if he wanted to be, but there are all these outside elements threatening us always.

JUDD TULLY: I think it was the March issue of Art in America -- maybe April -- of this year -- 1988 -- the first review in the back of the book was of your show at the Midtown, your most recent show, and the reproduction was of The House that Jack Built and the reviewer -- Jonathan Weinberg, was it?

PAUL CADMUS: Is that's who [it was]?

JUDD TULLY: He really made this . . . again you've made comments about critics -- that he did seem to make this rather strong pitch that this was a very strong work and that somehow -- I don't know -- you had gone what?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't think he quite approved of the fact that I somewhat made fun of contemporary art by having the figure in a red, blue, yellow and green color field painting that was crumbling actually. The painting was crumbling. I think a lot of that will happen to a lot . . . to that kind of painting. Some reviewer wrote about Schnabel that, "If God had meant for Schnabel's paintings to last, he wouldn't have invented gravity."

JUDD TULLY: Yes. That's a good one. That must be Robert Hughes maybe?

PAUL CADMUS: Robert Hughes maybe said that. I don't know. I don't think it was. I think it was an English reviewer, but I'm not sure.

JUDD TULLY: But in terms of your painting and in terms of your making in a sense a quotation from current or just recently contemporary art, that's a post-Modernist kind of gesture of quoting, which you've always done in terms of the Adonis.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, Venus and Adonis way back then. Yes.

JUDD TULLY: When you had the god with the tennis racket.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, Adonis was immortal, actually. He wasn't a god. But Venus was the goddess.

JUDD TULLY: Let's get this straight.

PAUL CADMUS: He was just a very beautiful mortal.

JUDD TULLY: Yes. But that picture -- The House That Jack Built -- seemed to be almost an amalgam of the two things.

PAUL CADMUS: Of beauty and ugliness perhaps of beauty and horror. Perhaps it is.

JUDD TULLY: How did that gestate?

PAUL CADMUS: That's one thing an artist never knows. You just wait and see and suddenly I had the idea of doing it. It might have happened as I lay in bed. It might have been even a dream. Who knows? It may have been inspiration. Where the idea comes from, I don't know.

JUDD TULLY: Do you believe in inspiration?

PAUL CADMUS: I believe in working without it. Going ahead and working and if it comes, it comes. I'm a great believer in waiting.

JUDD TULLY: In relation to, say, other works or paintings, you've said that if there was one painting you would say or if you had to choose one it would be . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: The Night in Bologna one.

JUDD TULLY: But in terms of this one, The House That Jack Built, which I guess . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No. It's not in the book.

JUDD TULLY: It's 1984, possibly.

PAUL CADMUS: Which one?

JUDD TULLY: The House That Jack Built.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh no. It's more recent than that. It's 1987.

JUDD TULLY: How do you rank that one?

PAUL CADMUS: That's hard to tell now. I still think it would be Night in Bologna, because Night in Bologna is not as typical of my work, I think, as any of my other pictures. That's probably one reason why I like it best.

JUDD TULLY: I don't mean to have picked one over the other, but I mean just in terms of when you finished that painting of The House That Jack Built, did you feel . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I felt that I had done one of my best ones. I'm never quite satisfied when I finish a picture, but I was more satisfied than usual.

JUDD TULLY: Because it seemed to me that painting seemed to include everything in a certain way that you had done.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, let's hope the next one will do the same.

JUDD TULLY: What is the next one?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't talk about the pictures. It would discourage . . . .

JUDD TULLY: Completion?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I think so. It's pretty much in my head, but it hasn't gotten onto paper yet even.

JUDD TULLY: Again -- and I don't mean to go over the same ground, but . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It's all right if you want to go over it. [chuckles]

JUDD TULLY: But the kind of literary nature or the way a novelist or a short story writer works on a story idea or how it progresses. There seems to be a stronger connection with you and that process, which seems almost more of a literary process. That it's your formulating of the idea.

PAUL CADMUS: Before it's born, I think it's often literary before it becomes visual. Although I think the visual things have maybe been in my head all along and then the seed is planted and it becomes visual and it begins to grow perhaps.

JUDD TULLY: Because when you were talking about Jared French and you would go and take photographs at night in Bologna?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, of course I already had the plans for the painting underway for that. Drawings for it

probably.

JUDD TULLY: Just that idea of it slowly evolving.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, I certainly believe in slowness. I don't believe in violence even in painting -- I mean, doing a painting in a burst of enthusiasm and that sort of thing. In fact Degas said somewhere about how calculated all his work was. People thought it was spontaneous, but it wasn't. He said he didn't like spontaneity at all. In fact I think I wrote that quote in my commonplace book. I don't know the exact quote, but I have it somewhere.

JUDD TULLY: Well, in the film you made this wonderful metaphor of how you considered your brushstroke was more like heartbeats. And then you were saying that other painters ranged from heart attacks or strokes or . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: They're on roller coasters, and I'm right on the ground watching, more like a worm or a mouse than something on a roller coaster.

JUDD TULLY: Just in chronological terms, the years in Brooklyn . . . ? What made you make that decision to go from . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: From Brooklyn rather than New York?

JUDD TULLY: No. I'm saying from Brooklyn to Connecticut.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh. I think an offer to build a house for me here. Jon loves gardening. He loved the idea of having a greenhouse. There's peacefulness about the country that was pleasing to an old person. How old was I when we moved here? We moved here in 197\_. Earlier than that because I've been here twelve years so that would make it about 1976, I've been here twelve years anyway, so I was not young twelve years ago.

JUDD TULLY: You closed up the studio there?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. And moved out here. I had been coming out here for years -- weekends visiting Lincoln -- so I knew the country well and liked it.

JUDD TULLY: Was there a pressure on you at the time in terms of the situation in Brooklyn?

PAUL CADMUS: No.

JUDD TULLY: It was fine?

PAUL CADMUS: No. No pressure at all. Almost everybody I suppose gets the idea at some point in his life that he wants to live in the country. It sometimes happens when you're younger and sometimes it happens later.

JUDD TULLY: I never asked you, by the way, about Fidelma, your sister. What happened to her? We sort of left off.

PAUL CADMUS: She was out here most of the time. I can't remember what year it was, but she spent most of her time out here. First it was just summers and then she spent the year out here until she became incapacitated and had to go to a nursing home.

JUDD TULLY: Is she still alive?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I see her every week.

JUDD TULLY: I didn't know that.

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. I saw her just yesterday. I go every week. She's mentally all right, but completely crippled. She can't walk or anything like that.

JUDD TULLY: But you can talk to her?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes.

JUDD TULLY: So you've maintained close . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. Very close.

JUDD TULLY: That's good. I'm just really curious about . . . you have such a good memory of, let's say, starting off on this European adventure the first time, this bicycle trip and all this stuff -- and it's very clear about first really making your own paintings and making money as an illustrator. Can you see a change in your work when



you look at it today?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh, I think my earlier work was much more naive than my present work, but much more forthright in a way. Sophistication has crept in. There are qualities in the early work that are lacking in the newer work perhaps, but there are qualities in the newer work that were lacking in the earlier work. One develops, one hopes. Perhaps it isn't all progress. There are slopes and there are hollows and peaks.

JUDD TULLY: There are a lot of tremendous artists in history who have done some of the greatest work when they were quite old.

PAUL CADMUS: I know. So they say. Generally speaking, I don't like the works of the artists when they were older as much as their youthful works. I don't like late Titian as much as early Titian, for instance. Ingres was an exception. I think his late work was just as good as his early work, if not better. Poussin's late works were just as good as his early works too.

JUDD TULLY: And you have a close affinity to Ingres?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I mean he's one of my favorites. He might not see any affinity, but I feel it. I would like to feel that I had.

JUDD TULLY: I think you quoted him in the film too in terms of anatomy and you didn't have to . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes, I did. He didn't think you had to know the names of muscle. You didn't have to dissect to know about anatomy. You just had to draw them. A lot of people don't agree with that.

JUDD TULLY: You made a very funny comment in the film about . . . you were drawing Jon and you were also sitting, which kind of amazed me. You were sitting cross-legged on the floor. Not to push any of this what great shape you appear to be in, but I don't think there are that many . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: Well, I still sit on the floor.

JUDD TULLY: Yes, but cross-legged in sort of the Yoga-like position?

PAUL CADMUS: Not quite Yoga. No. I can't do the lotus position. [laughs]

JUDD TULLY: Not a lotus position, but in that frame. But you were saying that you still had to count the ribs?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. I don't really know now whether we have twelve or thirteen. But I draw what I see. I didn't want to give him an extra rib.

JUDD TULLY: Again, maybe I'm trying to tie up perhaps some loose ends, but earlier on you were -- in say the Coney Island scenes. the Aspects of Suburban Life -- you never really were that keen on having the person right in front of you or you made it impossible, because you couldn't really do that on Brighton Beach or wherever. You said it was physically impossible, but more recent works -- with Jon, for instance, as a model, you have gone . . . .

PAUL CADMUS: I don't try to make likenesses, actually. In drawing sometimes I do and sometimes I try to disguise the fact that Jon is my regular model, because I think people might get sick of seeing the same model all the time. So sometimes I give him dark hair. Sometimes I disguise him in other ways. I like the conceptual idea of art much better than just the reproduction of what I see. For doing a portrait drawing, I would like to have them out with me all the time.

JUDD TULLY: But again, on that conceptual sense, that's where you more feel that's where you want to be?

PAUL CADMUS: For a painting I want the thing to be an essence or a compilation. Not just a single point in time or episode. If I do a hippie in the subway painting, I want it to be as much like all hippies as possible. Not just one hippie I might have seen or knew or met.

JUDD TULLY: You're made some points, I think, in the talks we've had that you've never been a visiting professor of art. It's not an area -- being a teacher -- that you . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I've never wanted to. I've advised friends. I've given criticisms to friends and things like that, but I've never wanted to teach. I'm glad that I didn't have expensive tastes, so that I would have to earn a lot of money to teach. And luckily I don't have children to have to support. Just myself, and my tastes are fairly modest.

JUDD TULLY: I would maybe frame it this way, but when you gave George Tooker advice, what would you say to

him to pursue what he wanted to do?

PAUL CADMUS: I wanted him to be as much like himself as he could be, but I also thought that the egg tempera technique suited him very much, and it apparently has. He's never wanted to leave the egg yolk technique because he did work with egg tempera before with Reginald Marsh.

JUDD TULLY: What would you tell an artist today?

PAUL CADMUS: I've usually just criticized little things here and there. I mean, "I think this shape might not be right here" or "Perhaps you want more color there" or little things like that. I don't think I've tried to influence people to be like me, and I don't think they are. There are people probably who don't see the difference between my work and Jerry French's, but I think they'd be not very bright if they didn't see the difference.

JUDD TULLY: In terms of experience, you had a rather extraordinary education of just with the National Academy, for instance.

PAUL CADMUS: Well, my education has all been towards art. After just one year in high school, it's all been what I learned in art school and all my reading and everything else has all been on my own. Whatever I've learned that way.

JUDD TULLY: In a way I'm fascinated still because I know a number of artists. At some point or another, they stop working or they stop trying to . . . and I'm talking about either as they get older or just for one reason or another . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Or maybe lack of energy perhaps, or maybe they've said all they have to say.

JUDD TULLY: But you haven't?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't feel I have.

JUDD TULLY: What makes it that you're still formulating and . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: While my eyes are working and my hands are working, there's so much I want to do. I feast with my eyes. If I had to give up any of the organs I have, whatever they are, I would give up my eyes last of all.

JUDD TULLY: So your vision is very . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: My vision is good . It's not twenty-twenty, but it's good vision.

JUDD TULLY: So when you paint, when you draw, do you wear glasses?

PAUL CADMUS: No.

JUDD TULLY: You don't wear glasses at all?

PAUL CADMUS: I do, if I'm doing an etching -- working with something very fine -- I will sometimes use a magnifying glass, but I don't for general drawing. I never do for a painting.

JUDD TULLY: Just getting back a minute to The House That Jack Built -- you were, in a way, making a statement that, for instance, color field painting or a certain type of contemporary work a) wasn't going to last long and b) it might as well go up in flames. That you don't really have much . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I'm very limited. I keep saying that over and over again. I said it in the movie. I only like delicate, precise work. I can see the virtues of other things, but I don't care for it and I'm not terribly interested and I don't waste much of my time looking at it. I don't like oversize paintings. I don't see any need for these monstrous proportions except for murals or for bank buildings or for backgrounds at cocktail parties where people don't really have to look at the painting. If it goes well with the hostess's gown, that's fine.

JUDD TULLY: Before, I was making this awkward analogy between Jared French and yourself and Gauguin and Van Gogh, because you made this comment about Bar Italia in that Jared French had said to you something to the effect about cross-hatching to cut it out. Then you said with some mirth that you didn't really follow his advice beyond that.

PAUL CADMUS: The Night in Bologna painting.

JUDD TULLY: I'm sorry, the Night in Bologna painting. I just thought that when you said that were you saying that you wanted to change your . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I didn't particularly want to, but I like . . . of course a lot of painters I admire never used cross-hatching. Ingres's surfaces were very smooth. For instance, when Jerry worked in egg tempera, he would fill a big area quite loosely and then fill in the little interstices and things, which make it smooth. Whereas I would do the whole area with cross-hatching over and over again -- great big areas -- which was much slower, but somehow cross-hatching seemed to come naturally to me and I couldn't escape it. Even if I liked the idea of giving it up, I really couldn't.

JUDD TULLY: It's something that's part of you. And that comes from . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: That was influenced by Signorelli in the first place, but he did a lot of cross-hatching in his frescoes. That may have been where I started working with cross-hatching. I can't say it is ingrained. It was learned about that time. In my earlier paintings -- YMCA Locker Room and Shore Leave -- there was very little cross-hatching. I followed the form with circular brush strokes, as if working with cylinders. Arms and legs had a tendency to look like cylinders rather than arms and legs at times. But then after I saw Signorelli, I guess that's when I began to build up more of my cross-hatching.

JUDD TULLY: You saw Signorelli then after your first trip to Italy.

PAUL CADMUS: I knew him by reproduction before then.

JUDD TULLY: But you were saying when you saw it in the real . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh yes. It was about 1932 when I went around Europe.

JUDD TULLY: If anyone could possibly say if one thing has influenced you in terms of your art or your life . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Oh I think it's Jerry French who was the greatest influence.

JUDD TULLY: What quality did he have that he was able to . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: [Tape illegible]

JUDD TULLY: I keep coming back to that image of Jared French, bare-chested, with a copy of Ulysses across his chest.

PAUL CADMUS: In one of the first years I met him, practically.

JUDD TULLY: It says so much just in terms of the literature, the avant-garde really, the European . . .

PAUL CADMUS: It's really just a straightforward portrait of a young man. Straightforward? I suppose there's nothing really called straightforward of somebody in bed.

JUDD TULLY: It's interesting because Jared French -- for whatever reason -- isn't well-known. If somebody was looking at this later and saying Jared French . . .

PAUL CADMUS: He should be better known, but as I say, Jerry's work deserves success, but Jerry himself did not deserve it because he didn't work for it. I mean, you have to be around when your work is being shown and you have to show your work. He didn't do that. It will be. There's more and more interest in it all the time. His prices go up in auction rooms and things like that. It turns out that he wants things and can't get them.

JUDD TULLY: How about your work? Is it the same in terms of the demand? There's a waiting list for your work? Could you say that?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know that I would quite say that. There is for my drawings, but not for the paintings. The paintings are so few paintings and therefore not many people can afford them. Of course, I'm not in the category of the painters that get millions.

JUDD TULLY: The four million-plus category, you're not . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No, I'm not there. It took Van Gogh quite a while to get to be to the fifty-three million category, too. In fact, I don't think he sold any in his lifetime. Maybe a few.

JUDD TULLY: One, I think, very shortly before he died. Something like that. We'll go to the end of the tape and maybe the tape will run out at some inopportune time, but do you feel happy with the transition from . . . has your work changed from the city to the . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I think it has been influenced, I suppose, but I probably would have been influenced anyway if I

had lived in the city. It's all matter of development, I suppose. I don't want to be stationary. I don't want my work to be the same now as it was twenty years ago. I try not to repeat too often. Of course, I do so few paintings, it's easier not to repeat. If I did one painting a week, I suppose there would have to be more [repetitions].

JUDD TULLY: You've had something like -- at least I would say -- nine solo shows at Midtown?

PAUL CADMUS: Probably over the years. I haven't counted either. Some of them were just drawing shows and some of them only had one or two paintings.

JUDD TULLY: That of course doesn't include shows at other places? Museums? Group shows? Et cetera?

PAUL CADMUS: No.

JUDD TULLY: But in terms of your what you describe as slowness . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I've only done a few over a hundred paintings in my whole life. Hundreds and hundreds of drawings of course. Thousands, maybe. I don't know. I don't believe in overproduction. I think I said that in the movie too.

JUDD TULLY: It's interesting in the sense we could tell someone who was interested in your work to go to -- aside from looking up things written about you -- they could go see this Sutherland -- right?

PAUL CADMUS: David Sutherland.

JUDD TULLY: David Sutherland film that apparently is an award-winning [film].

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. It's won quite a few awards, I think. I noticed it's going to be shown at the Whitney in Stamford this coming week, I think.

JUDD TULLY: This might sound like a strange question, but do you think you've gotten what you deserve or want? It must be very difficult. You have this rather extraordinary territory that you've covered and you know -- like you say -- that you never really went towards the powerful or the rich whatever. But how do you feel about how the world . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I think I get what I deserve. I think perhaps my work deserves more recognition than it has, but it's not in a tradition that's been very popular for a great many years. Even if there is a sort of a comeback of figural painting, very little of the figural painting is very good I think nowadays. It's also rather coarse and brutal and still rather Expressionist. So it's not a popular kind of painting, so perhaps I get just what I deserve. I don't want to do something different just to be popular.

JUDD TULLY: I'm kind of curious about it but, for instance, the Whitney, which showed your work consistently, has purchased your work, and yet . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It hasn't shown my work in recent years.

JUDD TULLY: No, but not in recent years. And yet it would seem that you would be the ideal subject for retrospective in New York City -- a place that you grew up in. Is it politics?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know. Well, maybe they are just not particularly fond of that kind of painting. I don't know. My retrospective moved around, and it got as far as the Hudson River Museum, but never did get to New York City -- Manhattan, in any case.

JUDD TULLY: Right. Yonkers? The Hudson River Museum.

PAUL CADMUS: That's as near as it got to Manhattan.

JUDD TULLY: Do you think that's political?

PAUL CADMUS: Well, it's not the popular kind of painting really. It might be more popular with the public if it had a chance at it, but the painting that is popular nowadays is work that has been built up by galleries, by dealers and it still is that way, I think. I mean George Tooker's work all sells, but he only does two or three paintings a year. Three or four at the most.

JUDD TULLY: Did that make you angry when . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I don't get angry. [chuckles] No! They can do what they like. What difference does it make to me? I don't need more money than I have. I mean I could enjoy more if I had it.

JUDD TULLY: No. I was just thinking because just looking back -- if we are looking for some sort of comparison -- but I think with Raphael Soyer, there was a show at least at the Cooper Union.

[END OF TAPE FOUR, SIDE B]

JUDD TULLY: We were discussing your traveling retrospective that went as far as the Hudson River Museum. It didn't come into New York. I was making a quick analogy to someone like Raphael Soyer. But the question today of contemporary museum venues -- of why Paul Cadmus was not in New York, where he developed as an artist and has shown for fifty years in a gallery, and Midtown Gallery is still going. Is just that the way the fortunes . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't think it has anything to do with politics. It may have just to do with the taste of the director [of the Whitney Museum]. I don't think it's anything political. I don't think people have anything against me that way. I don't think it's the fact of the homosexual element in my work, the erotic element in my works. That might have had some influence against it. I don't know. Who knows? But I don't feel a sense of persecution or neglect.

JUDD TULLY: Your friends, for instance. Did Lincoln Kirstein say something in the book about that?

PAUL CADMUS: Did he? I don't know.

JUDD TULLY: For instance, just as an example, I can't imagine that in 1988 -- or maybe I could . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It might be. I don't know. Perhaps it [the homosexual element] may bother some trustees. Although some of the most popular artists are well known, like David Hockney and Francis Bacon, too. It doesn't prevent their being shown.

JUDD TULLY: But I mean if we were going to take that and maybe it's not . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: It may not have anything to do with it.

JUDD TULLY: Maybe it's not germane, but do you think there could be a certain kind of prejudice that there are too many male figures?

PAUL CADMUS: Possibly. I don't know. I really don't know. But I think it's just not a popular kind of painting. It's not trendy, that's one sure thing.

JUDD TULLY: Because it gets back to Caravaggio -- two years ago, having this grand show at the Metropolitan after this long period and this film that you mentioned that I believe -- the film on his life and sort of the contemporary settings. I think it's of interest that an artist like yourself has a body of work that covers at least . . . ?

PAUL CADMUS: Of course, also my work is not very easily available. It's owned privately and in museums. It's hard to assemble a show. It's not as easy as an artist who does a lot of work. It's much easier to have one-man shows of other people.

JUDD TULLY: I did notice in terms of the collection, there's a very long list of museums and foundations. What is Abraham Lincoln High School? What is that?

PAUL CADMUS: I don't know if it still exists or not. It probably does. It was a public school that was building an art collection, for some reason.

JUDD TULLY: In Brooklyn. Sure.

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. And they had an award-giving occasion and I exhibited my painting and it was chosen by them. An unimportant painting, but it was in the very early years. About the time of the WPA and things like that. It was a Majorcan picture.

JUDD TULLY: Do you see that as the most artistic or the most powerfully artistic period in your trip to Majorca? Like the self-portrait you did on the terrace?

PAUL CADMUS: Not those. No. I think not until I did the Sailors and Floosies, Shore Leave and the YMCA Locker Room and The Bicyclists. That was when I really began to be my own self, I think, rather than just an academically-trained painter. Also the Majorcan Fisherman, which was the first elaborate composition that I attempted.

JUDD TULLY: And no one had to tell you that you had arrived?

PAUL CADMUS: I didn't know I had arrived. I never have arrived. I've just kept on arriving. I still keep on arriving, I think. I don't know. I don't think I have arrived yet.

JUDD TULLY: In terms of being yourself?

PAUL CADMUS: I think those were the first ones that were more me than anything I had done before. If there's any advantage to being more me. [chuckles] I say on this program about Ingres saying, "People say my paintings are not right for the times" or something like that. But then he says, "Can I help it if the times are wrong? If I'm the only one that's right, it's all right." He indicated if he was right that was all that mattered to him. The rest of the world was wrong. It was a rather arrogant thing to say, but . . . [chuckles]

JUDD TULLY: But as an artist you have to believe in yourself. I mean you believe in what you're doing and to hell with the rest of it. You hadn't said that?

PAUL CADMUS: No. I wish I knew Ingres's exact words, because he put it better. I've collected all these little snippets and things that I keep in my commonplace book, but I can't quote them without looking them up.

JUDD TULLY: Could you explain a little bit about the commonplace book?

PAUL CADMUS: It's a book in which I keep quotations of little things I see in the articles, things I find from books. In fact, I can bring it out and show it to you. Why don't you turn that thing off for a moment and I'll show you the book.

JUDD TULLY: Yes.

PAUL CADMUS: You mentioned the Degas one earlier. What he said was, [reading] "No art was ever less spontaneous than mine. What I do is a result of reflection and study of the great masters. Of inspiration, spontaneity, temperament, I know nothing."

JUDD TULLY: And these are entries you made in longhand in this kind of oversized folio?

PAUL CADMUS: Yes. Well, it's a book somebody gave me to sketch in, but I didn't think it was good enough quality paper to work on. In fact Lincoln gave me this book. Here's a quote from Eakins that I just came across recently. He said, [reading] "My honors are misunderstanding, persecution and neglect -- enhanced because unsought." [chuckles] Oh, there are wonderful quotations in here. You should see these. Of course they are really snippets. There are no very long thoughts.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Last updated... October 6, 2003