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Oral history interview with James Goodman,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with James Goodman on 2009 September 10. The interview took place at Goodman's home in New York, NY, and was conducted by James McElhinney for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Patricia H. Tompkins reviewed the transcript in 2018. Her corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This is James McElhinney, speaking with James Goodman at his home on Central Park West in New York City on Thursday, the tenth day of September 2009.

JAMES GOODMAN: So far, so good. [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So far we're—we haven't asked or answered any questions yet. But one of the questions I like to ask is, can you remember or recall the first time you were aware of being in the presence of a work of art?

JAMES GOODMAN: Yes, I can. I lived in Buffalo, New York, at that time, which is over 50 years ago. And we had a great museum called the Albright-Knox that was there. At that time it was probably Albright. And I was always just very interested in art. How should I say—it was the kind of thing that, sort of, gave me a breath of fresh air.

At that time I was in the vending business, which was not that interesting from my point of view. However, it was very interesting because you had places like DuPont and things like flowline vending, which was brand new, which I was—since I was a salesman for this, it was a very interesting experience.

So what really happened—you know, I would sometimes drive up to Canada and look at the galleries there. And the first time I walked into a gallery—you know, in a pair of what I call khakis, an old, torn sweater—into a fancy gallery in Toronto, not very much attention was paid to me, because when I asked a question—how much was a work of art—no one wanted to talk to me. But finally, someone came out and did that.

And what I was interested in, I was attracted to an alabaster sculpture by Barbara Hepworth at the time, which I ended up purchasing for the great amount of \$500, which was a lot of money, but it wasn't very much at that time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Is it a small piece?

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, I'll show it to you. I still have it. I have my first work of art that I ever bought. And I found—why didn't they talk to me? You know, all that—then I realized that everyone had a tie and a jacket on and I looked like, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A painter. [Laughs.]

JAMES GOODMAN: Either a painter, or a tourist, or whatever. And they certainly were not going to pay any attention to me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Not a buyer.

JAMES GOODMAN: We'll put it that way. Not a buyer.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, you didn't seem like a prospect.

JAMES GOODMAN: But I did make a friend with the person who did sell me the Hepworth. I mean, he was just a salesman who worked there. But it was amazing to me. I mean, it was a very beautiful gallery. I forget the street in Toronto. The name of it was Laing Gallery, and it was a well-known gallery. I just happened to pick that gallery out because—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: L-A-N-G, Lang?

JAMES GOODMAN: L-A-I-N-G.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I-N-G.

JAMES GOODMAN: So that was my beginning, how we should say, collecting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: When you were a child, did you receive any encouragement from your parents? Were they interested in art?

JAMES GOODMAN: No one was encouraging. No one encouraged me. And I will confess, I never even had an art history course in college. Never. This was—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Where did you go to school?

JAMES GOODMAN: I went to the University of Buffalo, School of Retailing. So I have a pretty good background of salesmanship.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: However, saying that, I realized—during this time I was also involved in the Pepsi-Cola Company, in the vending business. And let me jump from the child to where it all really began, okay? Since the business that I was about to begin, or that I was in, was about to be purchased by, at that time, called Automatic Retailers Association. It was a big vending company. And they were going to want a noncompeting contract if I left or anything like that.

And the president of the Pepsi-Cola Company was a friend of mine who—in Buffalo, the one in Buffalo—and I was, sort of, a really interesting person for him because I managed to put out vending machines all over the city, because, you know, I was from the city. Everyone knew me. And so that worked out well. So he said, "Why don't we go to the Pepsi-Cola convention?" which was being held in Atlantic City.

"Yeah, okay." Well, at that time—I think it was Joan Crawford and Alfred Steele, or whatever—this was supposed to be a very interesting convention. However, when they got up there—[inaudible]—they were—this would have flavors. Remember, I was in the bottling business. They were going to have flavors. Then I realized that this was not for me because it was bad enough just bringing in the one flavor. This was before cans were even invented, so it's a long time ago.

So I'm in the elevator of the Traymore Hotel, and I'm mumbling to myself after that. [Interviewer laughs.] I said, "This is not for me." And the door—believe it, the elevator door opened in the basement. I'd pressed the wrong button. And there I was; there was a little gallery right there. It was called D Contemporary Paintings, and it was Terry Dintenfass, from that time—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who later ended up—

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. Well, she was in Atlantic City. So I sat there for practically the whole day, and we chatted and everything. And she said—she saw my real interest in the arts—"Why don't you open a gallery in Buffalo? There's nothing up there." I said, "Well, that's a little bit difficult. I don't know too much." "I'll help you."

Well, you know, when I got back to Buffalo I, sort of, checked up on her, and she was well known in the gallery business. I was pretty naïve at that time. I'll be very honest with you, very naïve. She said, "I'll meet you, and we'll go around and get paintings for you. You have to find the place to exhibit these."

So I didn't have any space or anything, so I went to this place called the Park Lane, which was, believe it or not, like the Carlyle here in New York. And again, I knew the person who owned it. I told him what I wanted to do and that I would really like one of his banquet rooms to have a show. And he looked at me, like, why? And I said, "Well, you can get a lot of people in here. They're all going to come down to the bar. They're all going to drink and they're all going to have dinner, et cetera, because I'm going to really attract an interesting crowd." He said, "Okay."

So now I have the room. I don't have the paintings yet, but what to do? That's where I was at. So I got in touch with various people in Buffalo at that time—the person who led the theatre—local, you know, the theatre. I contacted someone who was very involved with the aesthetic of hanging. He also was the critic at the time of the Buffalo evening news at the time. And so now I had, again, on the basis of those—now I have everything but the paintings. I've got a place with this, and we're going to do this and we're going to run it.

So now I have to—this is two months down the road that we're going to open this. So I contacted the newspapers. Both art critics at that time were totally interested because this was—there was nothing, you know, commercial in Buffalo, and they had this great museum. So I have everything now but the paintings, okay?

I knew that Charles Burchfield lived in the area, so I picked up the phone and I called him. I told him what I was going to do. He said, "Well, of course, I'll give you—you know, go see my dealer, John Clancy, in New York, and we'll give you a painting. Of course." Now I had my first painting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That was a Burchfield?

JAMES GOODMAN: That was a Burchfield. Right, that was the first thing I was able to do. Okay, so I get in my station wagon. You know, time passes. Everyone's getting very excited now. I don't have a mailing list. I don't have paintings. I don't have anything, you know? But I'm doing this by the seat of my pants, really.

And so I drive down to New York, where I'm supposed to meet Terry Dintenfass at the ACA Gallery, which at that time was Herman Baron, who was the owner of it. When I arrived, I said, "I'm here; where's Terry?" He looked at me and said, "Oh, she's in Atlantic City." I said, "No, she's not in Atlantic City because she's supposed to meet me here." He says—[inaudible]. Points to the telephone, "Call her." Sure enough, that's where she was. "Oh, was I supposed to meet you?" You know, that was months ago.

Well, I was pretty not—how should I say it? I wasn't too happy at all at this point. What to do? That's the question, what to do? Well, a collector in Buffalo, who was also a friend, told me I should go see Edith Halpert. You know, tell her what you were doing and maybe she would help you, something like that.

So I walked myself over to Edith Halpert, and I told her what I was going to do, and I asked her, "Could I borrow a painting?" Because I already had a Burchfield. I told her that I had a little difficulty with the person that was going to help me. I didn't mention her name. I just didn't want to even go there. And she said, "Fine, I'll be happy to give you a John Marin." I said, "Well, that's great."

You know, I mean, I knew about who the painters were. Don't misunderstand. It's not that I didn't have an education in art. I didn't have classes, but I know all the—you know, I was very much involved in museum-going and things like that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So even as a kid, you were interested in the Albright Gallery?

JAMES GOODMAN: I was interested in the Albright. I was always interested in, you know, reading the magazines, even.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, like *ARTnews*, or—

JAMES GOODMAN: *ARTnews* or *Arts Magazine*.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: *Arts Magazine*.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay? And then she said to me, "Go see Charles Allen and maybe he'll give you a Jack Levine, or something like that. Tell him that I suggested it." I thanked her very much. I organized a pickup of the Marin. I went over to Madison Avenue and walked up the stairs to where Charles Allen was.

I ring the bell, and this man opens the door and says, "What do you want?" Just like that. I said, "I'm here." "We're not open." I said, "Well, Edith Halpert sent me." "Oh, come on in." [They laugh.] So he gave me a painting. He gave me a Jack Levine after my discussion of what I was doing and everything.

And I all of a sudden realized what a magical name that Edith Halpert is. So I went up and down the street, started telling everybody—you know, each time getting the painting and everything, and each time adding that so-and-so was helping me. So I put together a very interesting American show. This was totally American.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And who was in the show?

JAMES GOODMAN: If I recall, [Philip] Evergood, Jack Levine, Marin, Burchfield—it's a long time ago. I have to—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Highlights.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, well, I'm—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And what year was this?

JAMES GOODMAN: It was 50 years ago.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: 'Fifty-nine?

JAMES GOODMAN: Nineteen fifty-nine.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow.

JAMES GOODMAN: And you know, I have records and if you really want to know that, we'll make a note of it. Because I have records. We have pretty good records, okay, that we go back that far.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you weren't handling any of the people that you handle now, like the [Willem] de Kooning or the—

JAMES GOODMAN: No. [Negative.] That was—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It was all just—

JAMES GOODMAN: It was strictly American, very—what we'd say, figurative. And I borrowed a couple of paintings in Buffalo from various people who had works of art that they loaned me for this.

So, okay, I went back down to New York. I went to see Leo Castelli, even though I didn't—you know, I told him what I was doing and I said—you know, he was always a very nice person, and he said to me—I said to him, "Leo, I don't have a mailing list." He said, "Well, why don't I give you mine?" [Laughs.] Just like that, okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There's a secure man, not worried about losing business.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, that's right. Then there was another dealer at the time named Wally [Walter] Reese, who had an American gallery, who ended up working for the print gallery—I can't remember the person who backed him—Mr. Cohn. It turned out to be a very big gallery. I told him the same. He said, "Take my mailing list."

Everyone said, you know—look, at that time, this was a unique thing to do. This was, I would say, it was almost unheard of. I mean, when I went to pick up the paintings, half of them didn't—you know, I mean, I wanted to get receipts, and they didn't even know about this. This was a long time ago, okay? Sure, I got a receipt from Edith Halpert.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: But all these—I did get—you know, I said, "I need a receipt." Okay, and then I told them that I was picking them up in the station wagon which I had. Well, I came down with a station wagon, and I made all these stops, picked up this group of the works of art. And I drove back to Buffalo, and we sent out invitations all over the country from all the mailing lists and everything I had. And the newspapers picked it up, and they really gave me very good coverage.

And I remember the owner of the hotel coming up. We had taken down every fixture in his room. You know, every [inaudible] fixture they had for up on the wall and everything. He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "We'll put them all back. Don't worry."

Anyway, it turned out to be a big success. I had lots of people. We sold some paintings, and I realized that this is what I was going to do. And that's how I started. And obviously, New York was the place where I got my material. I started going down to New York, and I met certain people at that time.

Over the years, I had a Burchfield drawing show. You know, no one even asked for drawings, so there —troves of drawings—so we had a wonderful show at very inexpensive prices because at that time no one was interested in spending a lot of money for art. So I now—I'm a little bit ahead of my time because when I say I had a show, I realized I had to get space.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, I had to get space. All right, I mean, everything was very fine and everything when I did, but I didn't have a gallery at that time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How long was the exhibition up at the hotel?

JAMES GOODMAN: At the hotel? Thursday through Monday, five days.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow. Like a trade show.

JAMES GOODMAN: Like a trade show, exactly. Like a trade show.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Not like a month-long exhibition at a gallery.

JAMES GOODMAN: No. After all, he wanted his rooms back as quickly as possible. This was really over a weekend and before; a Thursday, and it ended on Monday.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Just out of curiosity, you advertised it?

JAMES GOODMAN: Correct.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There was a reception?

JAMES GOODMAN: There was a reception. People did go and drink [laughs] at the bar.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At the bar, so the hotel made money.

JAMES GOODMAN: They were very happy about it, okay? And so now it's time to get space, because I now have ideas what to do. So I go back to Park Lane. I say, "Don't you have any space that you're not using or anything I could rent from you?" He looked at me and said, "Yeah, I got something next to the telephone operator. It's a small room." In length, it was the size of this room, okay? I said, "I'll take it." He says, "I don't know what to charge you." I said, "Well, something to be reasonable because, I mean, I'm starting a new business." He said, "How's \$75 a month?" I said, "That's great." [Laughs.] I now have space in a very fancy location.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you're saying it's in the Park Lane, which is a—

JAMES GOODMAN: A hotel. It was a hotel and apartment house. And they also had a very good restaurant. And so it was centrally located and not downtown, but where everyone goes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So we're imagining it's like one of the modern hotels here in New York, like the Carlyle or the Hilton or whoever, that have concessions.

JAMES GOODMAN: Oh, the Carlyle—it was that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It was that at that time.

JAMES GOODMAN: At that level, with the Hilton. It was a Carlyle where—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It was a five-star hotel. Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: I mean, it was very lucky to do this, okay? It had a separate entrance to where the apartments were.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So was it off of the lobby, so that a person entering the hotel in the public areas would—

JAMES GOODMAN: Right off the lobby, or people coming to visit the people—it wasn't a hotel. It was an apartment, basically, apartments.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I see. But a residential hotel, like the Barclay in Philadelphia.

JAMES GOODMAN: Yeah, right. Very, very fancy. So anyway, so I turned this little space into a gallery. So what did I do? As I said, I went down and I had a Burchfield show. And at that time, you know, I would make all these trips to New York and I would visit all sorts of people. I visited Mrs. [E. B.] Saidenberg and I visited Klaus Perls and I visited Ms. [Antoinette] Kraushaar.

And my favorite was, we would always visit Allan Stone, who really—how should I say—he helped me a lot. Anyway, so everyone was willing to, you know, be cooperative with me and do this kind of thing, having this show. I had a Calder show with Pace [Gallery]—not Pace, I'm sorry, with Perls. And it went from me to Donald Morris in Detroit and then to Richard Gray.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In Chicago.

JAMES GOODMAN: In Chicago. So we fixed up this whole thing and they were happy to—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you become one of these New York outposts in the regions.

JAMES GOODMAN: Correct, yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And you're saying that at the time you opened your gallery in 1959, that there were essentially no real galleries in Buffalo.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's correct.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, there had to have been frame shops that hung a few pictures there, but no real galleries.

JAMES GOODMAN: No, what I call real galleries. In fact, there was just no real galleries at the time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Why do you suppose so many of the dealers in New York were so eager to help a go-getter

like you?

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right, a young guy like me. One thing, I always had what I consider a very nice manner. I was never—I was just very, I was a friendly person, and people just took to me. And the Perls were very helpful, you know, when I told them what I was doing. And Mrs. Saidenberg, she also was very helpful. She said, "I'll help you. We'll give you a play show," and blah, blah, or something like that. And then she recommended me for—which was brand new, was the Art Dealers Association.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, wonderful.

JAMES GOODMAN: So therefore, I became a unique person. I got into the Art Dealers Association right at the beginning. They were happy to have someone from Buffalo.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So do you attribute that to your years selling Pepsi and honing your skills as a salesman that you went from selling pop to Jim Goodman?

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right. That's what I did, and I did a very good job. As I told you, I mentioned before, Allan Stone—can I, excuse me—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, let's just—

JAMES GOODMAN: Just turn it off for a second.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Let's just hit this button here.

[END TRACK 1.]

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, and like you said, I sold myself. I sold myself up and down the street.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you became an outpost for the New York art scene.

JAMES GOODMAN: I also became, in my early thing, a runner—what I call a runner—because, why? Before I go into—because I would get something from Ms. Kraushaar.and—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

JAMES GOODMAN: My base of operation was Hirschl & Adler, who were very kind to me and everything. And I would walk in there; they would say, "What do you got?" And I'd tell them. "How much?" And I would sell it. I didn't even get it back to Buffalo.

I mean, this—you know, this, to me, was an incredible observation, is the word. Those things don't really happen, do they? Why would this person buy this, and somebody eight blocks away or 10 blocks away, and they don't know that this was even available, kind of thing? And I parked that in my mind.

And I, as I said, I went to Allan Stone and I said, "Allan, I've done this, I've done this, what can you—you know." "Why don't you do a de Kooning drawing show?" And I said, "Allan, that's great, who's going to give me the de Koonings?" He said, "You're looking at him. Well, how many do you need?"

So I got myself 20 de Kooning drawings from Allan and I put on a show, and I advertised and everything. And my phone rings off the hook. It absolutely rings off—this is the first de Kooning drawing show ever. I didn't realize that. It's even in the book. [Laughs.] Ever. "Yeah, I'm going to fly up;" this and that. You know, and things like that. You know, I sold a couple drawings and, really, people flew in from New York. You know, at that time, I got inquiries from a couple museums. So that was a very successful show.

Now, in my—as I said, in my travels and everything, I decided it was time to go to Europe because I hadn't been to Europe. So I took my family, kids; my brother lived in Geneva at the time. He was with the World Health Organization, so he wasn't there, so he let me have his apartment in Geneva. And I went there and I went to London. I introduced myself. I went to various other places and introduced myself. I made a kind of a contact the first time. And it was a good experience for me because I also now met some European dealers.

Well, there was a dealer in Geneva who was very helpful. And he sends me a catalog in New York and I—this is when I get back and everything. You know, I'm compressing eight or 10 years, okay. And I see that in his catalog, he has everything priced.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Almost like an auction catalog.

JAMES GOODMAN: But what he's selling it for. That's the difference, okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. Not estimates but actual—

JAMES GOODMAN: Not estimates—actual.

JAMES MCELHINNEY:—asking prices.

JAMES GOODMAN: And I said, "My God, no one has ever done this here, so why don't I produce a catalog?" Which I did. I got various works of art from all over. You know, by this time, everyone will give me anything I want pretty well, believe it or not.

And I send out this catalog with the prices and, again, the phone rings off—all the museums now. They never have been—I sold probably a third of the catalog to museums. Now, remember, the prices were from \$500 at that time—maybe \$10,000, okay. And I realized that I had something really unique.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Let me ask you about that. It seems, as you're talking, I think somebody reading this, the transcript, in the future, might wonder if the pricing at this point in time was sort of a mystery and that people would have to go to the galleries and kind of find out what the real price was.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, no one put a price on anything.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Apart from auction results.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's correct. Like you said, no one would send out a catalog with prices in it except this man in Geneva—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So this idea of transparency, it's like—

JAMES GOODMAN: And I was transparent. And it worked, okay. Not only did it work, all right, because now I started sending these catalogs out. Now it's time to go back to Europe again. My brother was there so this time, I went to [Leslie] Waddington, and now I've sort of established myself because of this catalog. And we became friendly and, "What can I do for you?" And I told him, and he said, "Well, let me send you some things on consignment. You don't have to buy them." I says, "Great." So I made a contact there.

Went to Paris, so where would one go to Paris in Paris? You would go to Galerie Louise Leiris. [Daniel-Henry] Kahnweiler was alive. Again, I did my homework with Mr. Kahnweiler, so he actually saw me, and he said, "What can I do for you," figuring that I was going to say, "I'd like Picasso," and things like that, and that he would tell me that Mrs. Saitenberg was the representative of Picasso in America.

I said, "You know, I'm very interested in sculpture that you represent by the name of [Manuel] Manolo, a Spanish sculptor." His eyes lit up. No one in all the years [laughs] ever came looking for Manolo.

And all of a sudden, he calls—and all of a sudden, bronzes—everything starts to appear. And I said, "I'd like to do a show." He said, "Fine, I'd be happy to do it; you'll have to buy a percentage." I said, "That's fine." I mean, these things were priced very inexpensively at the time, even for then, because no one wanted them.

So I had this show, and I put out a catalog and I sent it out to all this list. And I get a call from Joe [Joseph] Hirshhorn. At that time, it was Abe [Abram] Lerner who was the—he said, "What are these? What is this?" And I told him that I had these unique sculptures. And he said, "Well, I'm sure Joe would be interested in it. How much are they?" [inaudible] I guess I had four of them. He said, "Well, if he buys all four, how much?" I gave him a little discount. There wasn't that—anyways, he bought all four sculptures.

Well, let me tell you, when Kahnweiler heard that I sold the four sculptures to Hirshhorn, my star rose there. My star rose there because I had a very successful show.

Okay, so now it's time—Geneva again. A gallery I know of called Galerie Beyeler in Basel, so I drove up with my two kids—my two young kids—and I went to see Mr. [Ernst] Beyeler. Again, everyone was happy to see me. They all saw this little catalog, you know, so they knew that I was real.

Mr. Beyeler at that point had just bought the G. David Thompson collection with all the [Paul] Klees and all the [Alberto] Giacomettis. So he took me over to his warehouse, okay, and he showed me some smaller things, like de Kooning drawings, from the G. David Thompson collection: [inaudible], works on paper. Just a wonderful assortment of things that I sell.

So I said, "I'd like to take this, this, this," and it was a big thing. So we go back to his office—and this is a very important thing because he's adding it up. And I said, "Mr. Beyeler, I would like you to send all this to me on consignment." On consignment.

No one ever asked him at that time to send anything like—always with cash. He looked at me. He said, "What?" I said, "Well, these are the things that I would really like, but I don't have the money to pay for all this, but I certainly know that I can sell all of these things."

And—[laughs]—I could see his mind going. He said, "Okay, we'll do this, all right." Again, I had made a good impression. My son at this point was dressed up and everything. So he took a chance. And that was an absolutely incredible, unique situation for me, absolutely.

[Side conversation.]

[END TRACK 2.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Are we rolling again? Okay, transcriber will ignore banter.

JAMES GOODMAN: All right, so again, Mr. Beyeler was very pleased. I sold all the things he sent me, and we became a very good source for each other. That was important because by this time I was—you know, I knew everything, more and more and more. So now, I'm not too happy in Buffalo, okay?

No one from Buffalo is that into—I sold Burchfields to a couple clients. I had a couple very good clients for Burchfield. In fact, the Burchfield-Penney; I created the Penney collection for Burchfield. And I managed to do this, again, on a business way, so that Burchfield would get money every single month.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Could you talk about that a little bit, how that worked? The Burchfield, Burchfield-Penney?

JAMES GOODMAN: Sure. I had the collector Charles Penney, who came in when I'd had a Burchfield drawing show, and he bought three drawings. And he really decided that he wanted to collect Burchfield. So I organized with John Clancy. I said, "Look, this is a really good client," and he gave me some transparencies at the time.

And Mr. Penney picked out two, okay. And I said, "Look, he can't pay for them right now. But he'll pay X dollars a month, X dollars a month, which I will always send you." And he said, "Fine." You know, at that time, they all did it. They all did it. That was fine. I mean, that's how they sold expensive art—\$25, \$35,000 art, \$40,000 art—that way.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Installments.

JAMES GOODMAN: Installments. So I, you know, I was very friendly with Burchfield, and he had painted a picture for me, which I bought—we had lunch and we went home—it was called the *Golden Dream* [1959]. And you know, it was a great relationship that I had with Burchfield. You know, I feel that I am—how should I say it? Stuck, in a way, in Buffalo, even though I'm doing—but it's all the New York people, everything—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And European.

JAMES GOODMAN: And Europeans and everything. Hardly anyone from Buffalo is interested.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Really? So after being open for 10 years at this point, was it—

JAMES GOODMAN: Seven years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay. Still the locals are not that interested.

JAMES GOODMAN: They're not interested. They never even came to see all these shows, the callers and this—that includes the museum. That includes the Albright, because they were too busy in New York.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How about other, you know, regions, like Rochester, Cleveland? Canadians?

JAMES GOODMAN: Occasionally, I got someone from Rochester, a director who came to see me. You know, he bought something off the—out of those little catalogs, and then we became friendly. And he came in and everything, occasionally, and he bought something. But that was it. That was totally it.

I never saw—the Albright was never interested. No one was interested, so by this time I said, "Look, I am coming to New York in one year." So I said this to the wife, I said this to the kids and everything, "We're moving to New York, all right? But I'll give you a year here to make, whatever, you know." And that's basically what I did.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And this was what year, 1966?

JAMES GOODMAN: No, it would be in—I think it was more like, I started in '59. It was '66, '67, '68.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: '66, '67, yeah. Well, before we leave Buffalo, could you talk a little about the physical

operation of the gallery? I mean, it was a space in a hotel.

JAMES GOODMAN: This size. You know, very small.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How did you appoint it? Were there spotlights, track lights?

JAMES GOODMAN: You know, with the same thing, with lights. And I had a little place where you could sit in and make your phone calls and a little bit of a space for what we call—for works of art.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Storage, yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: Storage. Okay, but I mean, it was really simple. At that time, my mother-in-law lived up on the fifth floor, so I sometimes would go up to her place and show a painting and things like that. And I guess what did it—I received a letter from, I don't know who it was, but they were packaging a Henry Moore show. They wondered if I would like it. You know, a big show. [Laughs.]

I had this little space. I mean, this was really a shock to me when I had to explain to them, no, I couldn't do it and my space wouldn't be big enough, et cetera, et cetera. But I realized I was beginning to have a reputation out of Buffalo, in Europe, as well as—so I am now going to New York.

I had calls from certain dealers in New York who said, "What do you want to come down here for?" You know, and by this time I knew everyone up there. They said, "You have—really, you're a big success in a small pond." And I told them, "I want to be a success in the big pond, okay? I'll be a small success in the big pond." They all laughed and everything. And I decided it was time to go.

I left, all right, not before causing a few problems by telling everyone why I'm leaving. And the newspaper published it [laughs] and all of a sudden, I had the—the University of Buffalo, okay, no, we'll give you space; don't leave. I said, "It's all too late. No one ever came to see me, or whatever at the time, so why should I now stay," and that kind of thing. So I now had to go—you know, in this year, I had to get an apartment. And you know, really, make a big, big change.

Now I, again—a move to New York is a big deal. I just said, well, we're just going to pick up—then I found out you've got to find an apartment. And I have two young kids, so they have to be in the right school and district, which was, you know, P.S. 6. It was up in the '70s or '80s or whatever. Both my children, at that time, were going to private schools here in Buffalo.

So I showed up in August. I found an apartment up on 86th Street, right across the street from Allan Stone: eight and a half rooms. It was perfect for what I was going to—so you can do it by appointment only at this time.

So I started going to look for schools for my kids. And you know, in August or September, they all looked at me like, "Don't you realize we pick out the next year of kids sometimes in February or March?" And, well, I said, "They're all very good students." "We'll put them on a waiting list." Dalton put them on a waiting list.

And I went up to Lincoln [School] at that time, which was up on 116th Street between Central Park West and—it was a school up there which was very good. And I got an interview with the director. And he was so impressed with my oldest daughter that he said, "Well, I'll make room for her, but there's no room for your son. Next year, all right?"

Well, I mean, I guess I did an impossible thing, I didn't even—you know, I told you, I didn't even think about this kind of thing. I didn't realize that this is how the system worked. And so one went into the private school; the other one went to P.S. 6. The teacher for P.S. 6 says, "Get him out of here. He's bored. He's obviously been to—." I said, "Next, year he'll be in a different school." So these were the personal problems one had to work out as well, okay? And it all did work out because here I was in New York, right across from Allan Stone.

Meanwhile, I had made some incredible connections over all these years. Now, when Beyeler came to town, he would come see me: "What do you have?" So I found, you know, at that time it wasn't hard to find Picassos and things like that. So I found a group of things and everything and we had a very good relationship. I was a very good source for him, just as he would—I could have anything, at this time, in his gallery, which has very helpful to me.

And okay, now I'm here. Now comes another part of what I think is interesting because I meet my current wife—my current wife; we won't go into the other thing, okay? And so we had been coming out to Bridgehampton. At that time, I had a house at Southampton. And so we're in the supermarket. I see this guy and young lady. I said, "Hey, that's Roy Lichtenstein." I went up and introduced myself. "I'm out here a fair amount, we can get together." Anyway, we became very good friends, as you can see. [Laughs.]

Then comes a situation where I was very involved with Roy and his work and everything. And I thought we have

the best collection, my wife and I, of drawings besides what the estate has. And so he always—we're very friendly, he was also a good friend, and he also made sure I always had work to sell. In fact, as Leo [Castelli] started to decline, there was all this—I used to—I got Roy Lichtenstein his first show at Beyeler. And he really appreciated it.

Anyway, as you know, Leo became very difficult and toward the end, very honestly, I was selling the paintings for Leo. Roy would give them and he'd say, "You sell them." And so that's how we became such—I became—everyone calls me now for Lichtensteins. Anything to do with Lichtenstein because I still have a good relationship.

And I know—I used to go there during the summer. I used to have lunch with him. He used to make lunch, and I used to watch him paint, and I used to ask all the questions and everything. And because he was a down-to-earth person, he answered them all, and told me how and why he was doing this and everything. That, to me, was an incredible experience.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Was it like the relationship you had had earlier with Charles Burchfield?

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, yes, that was—except Burchfield was not as open as that. I would go out there and I would look at—he'd say, "Come out and see what I'm doing." So I would do that with Burchfield, but he wasn't that kind of open because it was a different thing.

But he appreciated what I did because of that—I made his life livable. That he never had to worry again for getting—having enough money. So he was able to paint, and that's why those last paintings were so incredible because there was no pressure on him to—financial pressure.

But this was just a different—Roy didn't need anything, really. We were just friends.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, right.

JAMES GOODMAN: But it was terrific that he did that for me. So I learned about his work, his painting, everything, that ordinarily I don't think I would have had that experience with an artist because of—so, when he passed on—[sighs]—that was a—I couldn't go to the studio for over a year and everything. It was very complicated.

Anyway, so all right, now, here we are. Roy has passed on 10 years now. And I'm still here doing things and everything. I moved from 86th Street to a gallery on Madison Avenue, so I became public.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So the evolution of business from the time you left the employment of Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company and had opened your space in the Park Lane Hotel in Buffalo, which, were you employing any help at that time?

JAMES GOODMAN: We used to have one person that used to come in part-time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And who was that? Is it anyone who—?

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, at that time, my wife would come in part-time, and then there was a young lady by the name of Sally Ruben who would come in part-time. It wasn't that much. I mean, I was doing—I hate to say it, I was doing most of it. No one from Buffalo was coming then.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, how did you learn how to do the hanging and lighting of exhibitions? Just the technical operations?

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, believe it or not, I did the best of—my friend from the theater kept doing that, and my wife had a pretty good eye. I still don't—I don't hang or light at all, [interviewer laughs] whatever I do, now. I have an art person who does that for me and someone who has an incredible eye. I mean, of course, I don't like that [inaudible].

I have an incredible eye. My eye apparently, as Roy said to people, "He can walk into an exhibition and pick the best painting out. Period." Which was a great compliment—so that all—that was all part of it, that I also had an eye along with my business experience, which really was a really terrific thing. And now, as I said, I meanwhile became president of the Art Dealers Association.

You have to tell me, where else do you want me to go?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I mean, just trying to answer a lot of questions just looking at the details of operations, you talked about acquiring your inventory, acquiring mailing lists and contacts. It was all easy; you were sort of affable, persuasive, attractive and—

JAMES GOODMAN: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY:—personable and were able to gain the trust of people easily and then was able to also sell the work. It was not only being able to—right.

JAMES GOODMAN: Yeah, that's correct. I was able to sell the work. I used to get—clients used to give me things, or I would do that thing—I would run from one place to get something and sell it to a dealer in New York and—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you've occupied almost every imaginable sales task in the art world.

JAMES GOODMAN: That is correct.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Sort of a beater or a runner, a finder, a—

JAMES GOODMAN: A seller—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A seller, a consigner, an owner, a collector. So apart from Roy Lichtenstein and Charles—

JAMES GOODMAN: Burchfield.

JAMES MCELHINNEY:—Burchfield, were there any other artists with whom you had close relationships?

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, I always had relationships with, like, Chuck Close, Larry Rivers, you know, all these people peripherally. I mean, most artists, de Kooning was out of the country; I went out, I saw him.

I never, with the European artists, had a relationship with them because I never spent that much time in Europe. But I managed to get an incredible group of dealers and collectors from Europe to buy from me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So when you moved to New York and moved into the rooms—the apartment on 86th Street, how did you operate as a dealer there? Did you have a room that was a dedicated—

JAMES GOODMAN: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It was just your home?

JAMES GOODMAN: Just my home. And I got another apartment in the building on the second floor that I turned into a gallery.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And how did that work? Did you hire an architect or anyone to help you organize it?

JAMES GOODMAN: I did nothing. I told you, I was very simple; no architects, no anything, just an eight-and-a-half-room apartment which we put art in, because I always looked at art as [inaudible] and not the architectural stuff that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, so you were never inspired to sort of create this theatrical sort of space in order to present your inventory.

JAMES GOODMAN: I never had a theatrical space. Then I moved to—as I said, I moved to Madison Avenue—1020 Madison Avenue. As a space became available there, I decided it was time to leave—[inaudible].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A public, like, a walk-in, gallery.

JAMES GOODMAN: A public, walk-in gallery. And I really had some great experiences on Madison Avenue. [Telephone rings.]

[END DISC 1.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Does it say mic recording?

JAMES GOODMAN: Yeah.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah. Just watch those bars and make sure they're—okay. This is James McElhinney speaking with James Goodman at his home in New York City on Wednesday, the 16th day of September, 2009. Hello again.

JAMES GOODMAN: Hello.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Just to sort of attempt to catch up on a couple of the details from our last conversation, I

asked who the artists were in your first exhibition at the hotel up in Buffalo and you gave me a name—a painter named Drumlevitch.

JAMES GOODMAN: Seymour Drumlevitch.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Seymour Drumlevitch. D-R-U-M-E-L-V-I-T-C-H.

JAMES GOODMAN: Who, at that time, was exhibiting with Martha Jackson.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He was with Martha Jackson. And any other artists you recall? In your inaugural show?

JAMES GOODMAN: I think that's pretty well what we went for. It was, you know, a small show, and sometimes there was more than one picture and things like that, so—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And he was the highlight of your opening show.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The other thing you want—

JAMES GOODMAN: I mean he was highlighted in a local group.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of the local group.

JAMES GOODMAN: Group, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of the local group. And you were talking about when you became the head of the Art Dealers Association.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, that was in 1994 for—my first term was 1994 to 1997. This was during—a sort of what we call a recession in the art market. It was also the beginning of difficulty for Sotheby's and Christie's. And I woke up one day and there is a big article by Carol Vogel, who was the—who still is—the critic of the *New York Times*, on the front page, of how a group of art dealers—prominent art dealers—are going to be indicted because of what we call malpractice—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Unethical practices?

JAMES GOODMAN: Unethical practices. And you know, this was sort of a shock to me, of course, as my first important—what I call important—situation with the Art Dealers Association. So I discussed, you know, with—since I was the president and Gil Edelson was the attorney at the time and he still is. What should we do because most of this is just hearsay—not true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It was, in essence, a gossip piece.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, that's right. It was effort to take anything away from the two auction houses of misdoings.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Ah, smokescreen.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. It was a real smokescreen. So I, at that time, I decided that we needed someone who really could handle this kind of situation, that was the public relations for the Art Dealers Association.

So I went to Mr. Rubenstein, who still is very important, and I told him what our situation was, and he gave me some really—what I feel—important professional advice—[Coughs.] Excuse me. The first thing he said, "When a newspaper calls you, don't take the call. Call them back, so that you can absolutely, what we say, handle your thoughts in a such way that there's not going to be any kind of mistakes."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You'll be completely prepared.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: To tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what you told them.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, exactly. So frankly, that's what we did. And meanwhile, you know, everyone was—this was during the recession of the art world in 1994.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, the last large one. The last large one, right.

JAMES GOODMAN: Last large one, okay. And it was real news at the time, and of course it was all about the auction houses, which came out very shortly after. And that did—nothing really did happen with indictments against prominent dealers.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But auction house officials were jailed, actually.

JAMES GOODMAN: That was the beginning of what we call—not a very pleasant situation in the art world for the auction houses.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Were you personally acquainted with either Anthony Tennant or Arthur Taubman or—or any of the principals involved?

JAMES GOODMAN: I was not—well, I knew—what's her name? I forgot her name. The one who—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, yes, yes.

JAMES GOODMAN: Who ended up taking the rap, but at home.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At home, she had, you know, the Martha Stewart—

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, she was—I forgot her name—it's terrible, you see what happens after—anyway, meanwhile, we still remembered Mr. Taubman, who unfortunately had to go to jail over this, which I thought was ridiculous, but they had to make an example out of someone, and they couldn't do it with Mr. Tennant because he was in Europe.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In Europe and in England, the laws are different that, actually what they did, meeting occasionally to have a breakfast and be collegial, would have been perhaps unethical in England but not illegal.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: And thank you. [Laughs.] Well, it's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I—

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, all right. No, no, so anyway—so that was my first big experience in the Art Dealers Association. And then in my term, I just decided to sort of open up the Art Dealers Association to more art dealers and things like that and not just to make them into the—what we call—continue the group of what we call—of heavy hitters or the main—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The inner circle, the sort of—

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, the main circle.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Star chamber, the, you know—

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. I wanted to bring it down to more open, which I did. That was one of the things I did do.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: More like the U.N. instead of the G-8.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, exactly.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: More inclusive. Well, that was quite a baptism of fire. I mean—

JAMES GOODMAN: But at that time, there wasn't very much to what we say to do in the art world because it was just like today, very quiet. So I was able to give them plenty of time. In fact, every day, I was over there and changing things and doing things, and it was really quite an experience.

And I think it was a great thing for the Art Dealers Association and a great thing for me—both. And as you know, the Art Dealers Association has expanded enormously since that and is very important to the art world today, in my opinion. But getting back to me and everything, at this time, I have just now opened, during this time, a gallery on Madison Avenue.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's where we ended the conversation last time, right.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay and right now, I'm in the midst of a recession and I'm now public. So in the beginning of this time—this was just before—at that time, Parke-Bernet was still there and Sotheby's had just taken over—it

was just before they moved.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Over to York Avenue?

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. And so I had the fortunate timing of—before they moved, to have an enormous group of people come into my gallery because—the auctions—because I was less than a block away. So that really helped me in the beginning of establishing—at my public—you know, my public face instead of a private face.

And I was like a miniature auction house that during the time, I was able to supply many dealers and museums—everyone who came in with works of art, they never even really—I shouldn't say never. I mean they weren't aware of me, okay? Most of the people weren't aware of me.

And they became aware of me because I had a window on Madison Avenue, where I was, and I would put objects like—like—had [Josef] Albers or [Fernando] Botero or various artists in there. And I've realized that this was quite important because I was up on the fourth floor, and when people passed by, they would see this and they would come and visit me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: What was your address?

JAMES GOODMAN: I was 1018 Madison Avenue. I think 1018—or 1020, I'd have to check for you. But it was two doors away from Klaus Perls, that I know, all right? I was two doors away. I was very pleased with my space, and I really managed to do some very, what I call, important shows. The main one was Roy Lichtenstein's drawing show [1984].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Your good friend.

JAMES GOODMAN: Which was quite a hit, and it was certainly a great experience, because he never had a drawing show in America and that was the first one, and I went to Leo Castelli at the time and told him that—I think this was my twentieth anniversary of this—in business for like 20 years. And I said I'd like to do that, and Roy had said, "If Leo says okay, I'll do it. Otherwise, I'm not going to do it."

But Leo—well, Leo—listen, a lot of dealers would not have said that, you know, would not have said "Great idea, go ahead. I'll be very cooperative." And it was a very, very special show that was—I managed at the time to have drawings that really no one had seen and because he rarely sold his drawings to anyone. I mean, that was sort of a private trove. And I managed to sell a very important drawing to the Museum of Modern—museum and—Museum of Modern Art and as well as the Whitney. And by doing this, I introduced the drawing curator to Roy Lichtenstein.

They did not know each other, and up from that came a very important drawing show at the Museum of Modern Art, which I was very pleased because of my show, that show happened. And it was really a very exciting time—even though there was very little, what we say—business, but I managed to keep my head above water, so—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it went against, I guess, the popular view of drawing as being counter-commercial, that nobody can sell drawings. They need paintings or sculpture. They need major works of art, you know, the view that drawings are somehow a private thing—a preparatory thing, subordinate.

But in a lot of the people I've interviewed, Richard Gray, Eugene Thaw—there's a deep interest and a deep kind of a pride in the appreciation of drawing. And so you know, you were going, it seems to me, against sort of commercial wisdom to do this show, and it doesn't surprise me, really, that Leo Castelli would agree, because he probably wasn't trying to sell them himself.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's absolutely true. He never did sell any drawings. But after that, he became—[they laugh].

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you gave him an idea.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: "Why didn't I think of that?"

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right. He became interested. That's very true. I found that Roy Lichtenstein's drawings were very spontaneous, and therefore, you could really find out a lot about him from the drawings compared to the paintings, which I find were very—I don't want to use the word "cold," but were a kind of a—I don't know the exact word—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: They had a certain rigor of presentation that was—

JAMES GOODMAN: That's a better way to put it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Was very strict and very, very transparent, whereas the drawings were more spontaneous and empirical and maybe even whimsical at times, which is not what anyone would expect because he was appropriating kind of the mechanical language of, you know, the comic strip—the dots and the hard outlines.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's true, but this was in the '70s, after—you know, I mean—at this time, it was in the '90s. So it's way past that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, after all of that.

JAMES GOODMAN: After all that. But I realized what a great painter he was. That's all, from his drawings. Not just from being around him, I realized that this was an important—just like de Kooning. Just like de Kooning. I mean it's the same kind of—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, he was a great draftsman. De Kooning was a great draftsman.

JAMES GOODMAN: Sorry?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: He was a great draftsman.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. And it became too—out in the Hamptons, you had a lot of the great painters there during the summer as well as, now, during the winter, for some of them, because Roy has lived in Southampton just the way de Kooning lived in East Hampton. Anyhow, that was just one of my great experiences of being on the street, because I've also been a very private person. And this was a real experience of opening the gallery to the public, and I also moved from that into—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In our conversation last week, you talked about, sort of, how you've rounded up all this inventory from all of these New York dealers and had a show—but—

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, but that was when I was in Buffalo.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, when you were in Buffalo, and then how you came to New York and you sort of operated out of your apartment, how you were sort of a runner and a go-getter. And now, you're actually going public. So did you hire a designer, or did you have a vision or anything for the space or—

JAMES GOODMAN: My vision, okay? I had no designer. There was just me, my wife, and it was, again, a sort of a small gallery, but I didn't design it. I mean I had above me, at, you know, the Cornell [Estate -PT]—at that time, it was Castelli, Feigen, and Corcoran, who handled the [Cornell Estate -PT]. They had a gallery right above me, and I guess they used a designer, but I never did.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, how did you organize the space? You came and you signed the lease.

JAMES GOODMAN: I signed the lease.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You got an empty room. You got a key to the bathroom out in the hallway. I mean, how did it work? How did, you know, how did the gallery work for you as a workspace?

JAMES GOODMAN: I, very honestly, painted it white. [They laugh.] We painted it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's an excellent choice of color.

JAMES GOODMAN: Excellent choice in color. Believe it or not, I didn't make any kind of changes. There was the front gallery, there was my office, and then there was a place for inventory. It was not a big—as I said—a big situation as it is today. And I winged it—I just winged it, okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Hung your own shows?

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right. And then I was very—again—very successful in doing it. When we did the Lichtenstein show, Roy came. You know, he was helpful with how we did it, how we hung it and things like that. I find [?] other principles [principals?] that using other people who were very good at it, hanging and things like that.

Even today, I have an art handler who hangs my show, but he's very good and I make very few changes. It's not

that I just say, "Go do this." I'm able to—how do I say—give someone, one, the opportunity and also the mechanics of hanging is not an easy thing. I always admire Arne Glimcher, who hangs all his own shows—from Pace [Gallery]. He's one of the most incredible people to do something like this and I—you know, I admire that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So in essence, you learned how to be your own designer.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, that's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Your own exhibition designer.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's what I was. I was my own designer just like I was my own designer when I first started in Buffalo. You know, I did this—how you say—on instinct. It was really, I did it on instinct.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The early aviators would say, by the seat of your pants.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, so—but if you will, try to give us a picture of the human dynamics of the business. There was yourself, obviously.

JAMES GOODMAN: Oh, there was myself.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And who was helping you?

JAMES GOODMAN: And there was my assistant, who still is there. And she's been there for 30-some-odd years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And who is that?

JAMES GOODMAN: Patricia Tompkins. At that time, she handled the desk when I was doing this. My wife, who was absolutely incredible, has an also an incredible eye—and she was also very helpful in—as a team, make sure that the gallery looked like a gallery should be, because I tend to be—how do you say—overcrowded on my desk, if you—so if one would see my desk, you couldn't believe that this [laughs]—how I could even find things, okay? But—so I did have this kind of assistance and I—even in my gallery today, it's great—when I moved to 57th Street, which was down the road. I don't mean to jump from Madison Avenue to 57th Street—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, we'll get there eventually.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. There, you know, at 57th Street, I did hire an architect to do the gallery. On the other hand, I didn't know about architects and things like that. I really didn't. I didn't even think—you know, it was the painting that counted, the picture, and how it looks. And I really—at the time, when I think about it, that's all that mattered to me was the way the gallery looked from the art that was hanging on the wall. So this was also a unique situation, too, because as I did a—on Madison Avenue, I did a Steinberg show.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Saul Steinberg.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, Saul Steinberg show. And as I said, I used a window, and everyone—the owner of the building, which by the way, I paid rent for the window, okay? The owner of the building decided he would like to join me there, okay, because—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In the window?

JAMES GOODMAN: In the window.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, dear. [Laughs.]

JAMES GOODMAN: Because he was hearing that I was being so successful from the window. So I had a Steinberg back on the wall and a Persian rug next to it. Next thing I know, I have Saul Steinberg: "What are you doing? How can you put my work next to a Persian rug?"

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.] News travels fast.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, he passed by.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of course.

JAMES GOODMAN: You know, he passed by and he came up and he went—I said, "Don't want it there? I'll be happy to take it out." You know, and you know, that's all. So that was, as I said, I was—it was not a show under his auspices.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: But everyone accepted me when I did all these kind of shows because I was very good at it, and it helped whatever artist it was that I was doing. It helped him, and, you know, it was a kind of—a wonderful situation for me because I learned a lot, and I remember Mr. Beyeler saying to me, "Look, I want you to do a Botero show because I have all these Boteros—and I have all these Boteros, and I think you would be very successful with the show."

And I didn't even—you know, I said, "Well, okay." And it was really interesting because—so he sent me the whole—my first show of Botero—the whole thing. Every single of them—I didn't even know Botero lived down the street—[they laugh]—on Park Avenue, at 79th Street, which he still has an apartment. And you know, I put, you know, a watercolor in the window, and it was like a magnet. People just came up.

I mean I was—the show wasn't even hung and people were coming into see the show. Well, needless to say, it was a very successful show, and that was the beginning of my relationship with Botero, who came. Now, he came down—he was very pleased to see something like that, and he was also helpful along the way. I'm still very friendly with him.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: With Steinberg, were you dealing, again, with another dealer?

JAMES GOODMAN: No, this was just—as I said—this was secondary market.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: All secondary-market stuff?

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. So 57th Street was a different world than uptown at that time.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How would you compare them?

JAMES GOODMAN: At that time, it was totally—I mean, it was like two different—two different places. I mean really different places. Like, the people at 57th Street weren't interested in the people on Madison Avenue and vice versa.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, like, except maybe at the Fuller Building where they intersect, there's a kind of—

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, that—they intersected there, but when I moved there, that was—that was the world's best-kept secret, 57th Street, from my point of view. When I moved to 57th Street and I had—I built a gallery at that time. And I'm still at 57th Street, where I have the original built gallery. And I've been there for over 20-some-odd years now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How would you characterize the Madison Avenue environment from that down on 57th Street?

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, when I said it was a best-kept secret, I—you know, at that time, on Saturdays, was—it was a day that everyone would travel up and down the avenue, collectors. They started at 57th Street, which I never figured out and I would get them toward the end of the day when they had already bought whatever they bought on the way, and now that I was at 57th Street, I got the collector in the beginning.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I see.

JAMES GOODMAN: And that was a really—you know, they started with me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So it wasn't just—

JAMES GOODMAN: So therefore, my business practically doubled.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Wow. So it wasn't just a matter of smaller, more intimate spaces, the idea that Madison Avenue is somehow, you know, the shopping area for Park Avenue, that it's time—it's how people did the itinerary every day.

JAMES GOODMAN: That it was—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's interesting.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's the interesting part of it—it was the itinerary. Well, I mean, and that was one of the reasons that the galleries in 57th Street were so successful, because that's where the people—really, that's where it all starts. So more and more people went down to 57th Street.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: They'd start on 57th Street.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Why do you think?

JAMES GOODMAN: Easier? I don't know. I mean, it's the same thing today, except 57th Street isn't so exciting anymore, nor is the Madison Avenue—they all went to Chelsea, and that's where it all was for X-years until just now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Recently—until now, it's basically closing down, yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: 'Til recently, okay? Where you'd find all the collectors were down in Chelsea, just like all the collectors were at 57th Street.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But a lot of people complain about—

JAMES GOODMAN: Can't wait to get up the elevators on 57th Street.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of course.

JAMES GOODMAN: And I was fortunate because I had eight elevators. So—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's a big building, yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right. So there was no waiting.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's a great lobby, too, in that building—great lobby. So if you have to wait, it's okay. You'd have a lot of things to enjoy about that lobby.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's correct. No, but I'm just saying—it's known as traffic. Here, we go with the merchandise and it's—it's location, location, location. But I didn't know about that because I was very happy up at Madison Avenue, and I didn't know about 57th Street and the dynamics. I just didn't, because I spent all my time uptown.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you started out as a sales guy working for Pepsi. You were not necessarily in, you know, the marketing mindset. So you had to learn how to do that as well as being—

JAMES GOODMAN: I really learned, okay. Once I got to 57th Street, I flourished, okay? I—you know, I became a real, what I call, a success. I mean, I was a success on Madison Avenue, but that became a real success for me that I—you know, I was able to function very well and do things that I never could do.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So why do you think, as you move from sort of one model to the next, each one being a little more expansive, a little more complicated. Why do you think that with each step, you were able to survive, adapt, and flourish?

JAMES GOODMAN: I'm thinking about this answer and I'm going to say because I'm a merchant, okay? As well as art dealer. I'm a merchant, and I realized what I had on 57th Street. And I never realized that 57th Street was like what was happening when—for all the years I was on Madison Avenue—until I got there.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So there's an art to being a merchant.

JAMES GOODMAN: Oh, yes.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So are your heroes, in a way, those who include, you know, someone selling axes off the back of a covered wagon on the prairie or only—

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, let's put it this way—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Highly refined—

JAMES GOODMAN: No, no. Believe it—I'm a hero to many of the smaller dealers in other towns, in other cities.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's your roots. Those are your roots.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, and not only the roots that I'm talking about—Detroit, down in Miami and all—all these people that I have met during this time have been impressed with what I have done.

And I have always—you know, the way people gave me things to—on consignment, I would work with all these

dealers all over; would network. And they knew that they could buy or they could consign from me. And it was—it became—I became—toward the later part of my gallery experience, the way they were when I first started when I went into a gallery and they gave me an itinerary.

I was always very happy to work with the younger dealer, as I am still today. However, when I say younger dealer, I'm out—unfortunately, not involved in the—what we call, the very contemporary things. However, I am, in a way, because I am part-owner of a gallery down in Chelsea, which up to this time was very successful and now is struggling like every other—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Everybody.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. But I was never that involved with the very new—with the very new. I became involved with what I really knew, both in the Impressionist, Modern, and in the American, you know; as I always say, the classic artists of the 20th century—American as well, which included de Kooning and all these people. And I was first—gallery—excuse me, I've got—this one—these—the—[Telephone rings.]

[END TRACK 1.]

[Side conversation.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, we had to stop the tape for a moment to allow Mr. Goodman to take a phone call. So you were talking about what you had been exhibiting, and I was about to ask whether your choosing to show this particular kind of art had to do with your own taste—

JAMES GOODMAN: Yes. [Affirmative.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That, that is your taste.

JAMES GOODMAN: That is so. And I also had some very good clients who I had carried over from Buffalo that were from Pennsylvania or various other—and what really became interesting for me were these clients when I was up in—on Madison Avenue. At that time, one of them said, you know, he had Jasper Johns paintings. He said, "I'm going to sell my Jasper Johns paintings; do you want to sell them?"

I said, "Of course I want to sell them," you know. Of course! He said, "I want a million dollars." You know, picked a number out of the sky—a million dollars for the painting. Okay. [Laughs.] Well, that was, at the time, more than what Jasper Johns was getting, okay.

So I took an ad in *Art+Auction* and—a full-page ad, "Jasper Johns, et cetera, et cetera." And I started getting calls. And they asked me the price, and I said, "Well, it's a \$1,200,000." Because I knew that I'd have to give a percentage off, and my client was not going to take anything less than a million dollars, and I knew it was overpriced.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you surcharged the discount?

JAMES GOODMAN: I surcharged the discount, exactly. Well, first I get a call from Leo Castelli—[laughs]—at the time. "Just what are you doing? What are you doing?" I said, "What, Leo?" He said— the price of Jasper Johns isn't that kind of, you know, he has not reached that peak at this time. And I said, "Well, Leo, I don't want to, how should I say, upset you, but this is what the client wants."

"Oh, I never should have sold the painting to him, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera." It was this thing. The next call was from Jasper Johns. He was, at the time when I did this—you know, he was just surprised. He didn't say, this is wrong or anything, you know. He just was very surprised that that's what I was asking.

Because he asked, so I told him. Of course—[laughs]—after I sold the painting, very quickly after, to, at that time, a Swedish dealer, who sold it to someone—he had a client for it. So that was the beginning of the getting very, very good paintings because then the word got around that I could sell something like this. And so then, you know, I got de Kooning and I got—you know, it was always on the—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you could set a new benchmark for artists—well-known artists.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. And you know, I had—and this is jumping back to 57th Street. When I first did a show, I had—I think my first show was with Kelly and various painters of—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Ellsworth Kelly, yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, Ellsworth Kelly, who was very helpful. He loaned me a painting. Aggie [Agnes] Gund loaned me—this was my opening show—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: On 57th Street.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, loaned me a Jasper Johns. And, let's see, I got a de Kooning from Allan Stone. You know, I did just what I did in Buffalo. And it was a big success because Aggie came and loved it. She bought the Kelly—early Kelly I had. And so Ellsworth was very pleased that went there, and that kind of thing. And that's how those things happened. And I don't want to boast about it, but it was being intelligent on what I did.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And being a creative merchant.

JAMES GOODMAN: Thank you. I was being creative, in my way. And that's how I've always operated. I'm still creative.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, this is another question that I had a little earlier in the conversation that, you know, the conversation evolved along another path, is that I think we all know people who were able to rise to a certain level, and then they find a niche or they find a scale of operations that works for them. And then if they try to expand, then they hit a brick wall and they have to either resume their earlier habits or they have to close.

But in your case, it seems like every step you took, you adapted; you sort of studied the landscape and you adapted, and you looked at it almost as a clean slate, like, okay, this is a new deal; I've got to approach things in a new way. Is that true?

JAMES GOODMAN: That is true to a certain extent.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: In the operational sense.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, however, I did use all what I had learned along the way. I mean, I was fortunate enough, at this time, when I did—started to do all these things—that I had a reputation of, "Hey, if you give him a painting, you get paid, okay. He sells it; you get paid. Otherwise, it comes back." I mean, I had that reputation. "No, you don't have to wait for your money. As soon as he gets paid, you get paid." All right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: So I was able to use this ability to get paintings from the European people, like Beyeler, who would give me anything I wanted. And I also managed to find for Beyeler incredible paintings for him for his gallery. So he was a great client as well as a supplier.

Leslie Waddington, who, you know, became a very good friend—he also, same thing. He used to come and buy things from me. I was his first stop because he always knew that I had things that were very, very—how should I say it—that were very good for him to buy, that he could sell.

I also used his facilities—I mean, like, Waddington—because at that time, I remember him handling—you know, he handled a lot of very fine English artists as well as [Barry] Flanagan, at the time. And if I needed a large Flanagan for a client, I called him, and I was able to get one, because that was before Kasmin—you know, this was before Kasmin, who opened a gallery along the way downtown—became the New York representative. There was no New York representative.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You're talking about Paul Kasmin?

JAMES GOODMAN: Yes, talking about Paul Kasmin, whose father I knew well from London. And Paul has been very successful now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's a good gallery.

JAMES GOODMAN: It's a very good gallery. But as soon as he became the representative of Flanagan, I had to go to him to get Flanagans for clients of mine.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, I guess I'm just curious because everybody—or, I should say, a lot of people, when they are studying the life and the career of a successful person, want to know what was their formula, what was their secret to success.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, my formula was honesty. It was my main formula [laughs] in this business. And that I would give confidence to people who gave me paintings that they didn't have to worry about them. You know, that's always—I don't think I've ever signed a, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A contract.

JAMES GOODMAN: A contract. I've never had a contract. And I've never had people, you know, who've given me

many million dollars—a painting that's worth many million dollars, want a contract from me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: At the same time, anytime that you make a deal, everybody gets paid right away.

JAMES GOODMAN: That is correct.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And so a lot of—some of the recent scandals and follies that have occurred in the art world are all about people robbing Peter to pay Paul and, sort of, carrying a debt for too long or confusing accounts and all of that.

JAMES GOODMAN: No, never confused accounts. And I always explained to these young people who ask me, okay, along the way—just like I'm doing here—"What do you do?" I said, "Make sure that when you sell a client's painting, the first thing that happens, they get paid. Not that you use their money to buy something, okay?" And the other—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. Or to pay your rent or anything.

JAMES GOODMAN: Or pay your rent or whatever. Or, as I also say, "You never—because you sold a painting and haven't been paid for it, you never should buy on accounts receivable until you get that money because many things can happen." And that's part of my thinking. I don't buy on accounts receivable. I understand that, you know, I can sell a painting for a lot of money one day and four days later, I can't pay for it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you're saying don't spend the money until you have it. And that, in essence, to spend money that you expect to have in an hour or a day is gambling, not doing business.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's correct. I'm very conservative. I've been very conservative all through my life. I'm not like some other dealers who are successful at doing that. I can't. I like to sleep at night.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Telephone rings.] Okay, you have another phone call.

[END DISC 2.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Good, okay. We're resuming the conversation after an exciting cell-phone call, but a brief one.

JAMES GOODMAN: Very brief. It was my daughter, so I can call her back.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So that's very sage advice, very sound advice.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, it is sound advice and I have always been this way that I have been very—I've always lived within my means on this kind of situation with the art business. You can make—you know, in today's market, if you buy something, you can make a real big mistake and you're out of business, okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Not only out of business, but you can ruin a reputation very easily and never again be able to resume the business.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, that's true, okay? And if you check around everyone here, they've only got good things to say to me—about me, I should say—if you check around because, "Oh, he's terrific. He's honest. He's one of the few honest dealers." I think most of the dealers are honest.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think so too.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, most of them—but it's just that the reputation of one or two bad ones caused—they tarnished the whole group. They tarnished the whole group, which is—everyone says, "Oh, look at [Lawrence] Salander. You know, this is terrible." I said, "Yes, it's terrible. Those things happen." But "Oh, I wouldn't trust now"—I mean, look, he was very honest. I said, "Look, when you give things to people, you should make sure that they're safe and things like that."

I have clients who give me expensive paintings. They call me: "Have you done anything? Are you doing anything? You still have the—you know, where is the painting? Have you shipped the painting?" You know, this is an asset for some of these people, okay? This is just not a work of art; this is an asset that you have. And I treat these paintings as an asset of the client.

To me, they're not assets. But they are, okay? I mean, I buy a painting because I like a painting, not because it may go up or whatever. And that's always been my thing for all the years that I've been doing this. If I see something I like, I buy it.

You know, if I'm collecting—I'm a collector as well. And I always tell any collector who comes here that I just want you to know there's really nothing for sale in this house. Or if I'm about to sell something, let me tell you, it comes out of the house or whatever. It's something that I want to sell for whatever reason I have.

But it doesn't—once it's here, it's not for sale. You know, a lot of people operate their gallery, they take things home and when their client comes, it's available. There are a lot of—I don't do that. I mean, I've never done that. I'm not saying that that's wrong or right or whatever. It's just, I make it very clear when they walk through the door, nothing is for sale.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So your attitude is, to paraphrase a current ad campaign, "value is value, but taste is priceless."

JAMES GOODMAN: Taste is priceless. And you know, people understand that because what happens especially because I have a lot of Lichtenstein material, this makes it, "Oh, don't you want to sell this or order this or that?" You know, collectors are interested.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who were some of the most memorable collectors that you've worked with over the years? Or colorful, or—

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, I've worked with a lot of colorful ones, like Joe Hirshhorn.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: You know, I always thought that he was the most impressive of all my collectors because of what he really did for the art world. I mean, he saved so many dealers because he would come in and say, "Okay, I'll buy this," during the tough times, where the dealers were on their last—and he came and he saved them.

And people used to say, "Oh, he's terrible because he wanted such a low price," or whatever. I always considered him as a spectacular person who saved an enormous amount of people in the business's life. And he had a tough reputation, okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And well known.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, well known, but very tough.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: I mean, he was a tough buyer. But, as I said, that was one. I've had many that are simple. They're not well known or things like that, but they're people who I've known over the years, and I don't really want to go through names at this point, okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's fine.

JAMES GOODMAN: And I will tell you that—I will give you one instance of Mr. Beyeler, who has always been a very close friend, as well as a real supporter of mine—when I was on Madison Avenue, there was a collector who was selling a Pollack. And I went to look at it. And I called him up and I said to him, "Look, there's a Pollock, blah, blah." He said, "How much is it?" You know, he's in Switzerland and I'm here. I'm this dealer that is on Madison Avenue, okay? And he said, "Well, buy it for me." I said, "Well, it's over a million dollars." So we settled what it was, plus a commission for me. And he said, "Just go buy it for me."

Before I was able to go buy it for him, my banker calls me—who I was also very friendly with. He says, "What's going on?" I said, "What do you mean?" He says, "In your account there's a million such-and-such dollars." The money was there before I even did it. Now, how many people would do something like that? Think about that. You know, that's when a million dollars was—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A million dollars.

JAMES GOODMAN: A real million dollars. Think about that, okay? That's the kind of trust he had in me, that I wasn't going to go off, take his million dollars and run away.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: Which is really, you know—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So he wired it into your account.

JAMES GOODMAN: That was wired into my account before I even had a chance to go buy the painting, okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Amazing.

JAMES GOODMAN: And he bought it on my say-so, on my eye. He didn't buy it—send me a photo or anything like that.

I used to sell him a lot of important paintings, and I was very careful of what I sold to him. I had this Matisse painting—this big, beautiful—except for one thing. The nose just caught your eye and it was a real—how should I say—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A dissonant note?

JAMES GOODMAN: It just bothered me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It didn't work for you, yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, it didn't work for me. So I had sent him a transparency and I said—and he said, "Okay, send it to me; I'm going to buy this." [Telephone rings.] And I said, "Look in the mirror," so there was a reflection, "and look at the nose. How is this worth over a million dollars?" And I just—he said, "Oh my God." I said, "Why should I send you the picture, you pay for it both ways and everything?"

"And then, fine, you're not going to buy it because of the"—so I wasn't like many people, who would have sent him the picture, let him find it. I just wanted to point it out right in the beginning. And that's basically what I'm saying, how I have worked through the whole thing.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Could you share any stories about, perhaps, your interactions with museums or curators? Any memorable—

JAMES GOODMAN: No. I really don't because I don't want to go there. I really don't.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's all right. That's fine. I just had to ask.

JAMES GOODMAN: No, I'm just telling you. I've had good experiences and I've had some pretty terrible experiences. It became very political. And it was just something that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But you preferred to deal with people—to deal with private rather than institutional collectors.

JAMES GOODMAN: That is absolutely right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay. Well, that's illuminating enough. [Laughs.]

JAMES GOODMAN: And I'm always happy—you know, and I'll tell you that I get calls from the museums all the time: "Would I do appraisals," and all sorts of things like that for them, or, "Did you sell that at one time? We're checking the provenance." And we're very good because we have incredible records.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, let's talk about that a little bit, the operations of the gallery, again. At what point did you start keeping detailed records of the work that you had in inventory or sold?

JAMES GOODMAN: Right from the beginning I kept it. And usually, I wanted to photograph it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So there was a photograph—

JAMES GOODMAN: Usually.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: A description, dimensions.

JAMES GOODMAN: Once I got to New York, there was a photo—definitely, everything was photographed. I remember Tom Hess, who came in one day—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: *ARTnews* editor?

JAMES GOODMAN: At that time. And he was doing a thing on de Kooning. And he asked, "Could I see your—do you have any photographs of de Kooning or paintings or so over at Winthrop?" And when I brought out this extraordinary group of photographs—of paintings, drawings, sculptures—he couldn't believe it. He said, "There's a photograph of everything!" I said, "That's right." I said, "Nothing that comes in here—it all gets photographed."

He couldn't believe it because he said, "I can't get that kind of a thing out of Allan Stone; I can't get that things out of whoever the dealer for de Kooning at that time." They didn't do it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Who took the photographs?

JAMES GOODMAN: John Schiff, who was a great photographer at that time. I just used him for everything. I mean, most of them were black and white, okay? But I used him—and he was a great photographer of art.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. So these were the kind of images that could do double duty also for publicity.

JAMES GOODMAN: Absolutely. And not only that but—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And record-keeping.

JAMES GOODMAN: Record-keeping and I always—I can't tell you how many times that I have been able to go there, as I now have—as it becomes available, I have a photograph of it immediately from many—you know. And therefore, it's easier to sell whatever, and people are really, you know, shocked that I have this photo because we keep them all.

My saddest experience was that I had—I was very involved with Charles Burchfield as I told you—[inaudible, cross-talk]—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, you told us this last week and that—

JAMES GOODMAN: And that Ms. Kraushaar lost all my photographs of all my drawings. I had duplicates of most of them but not all of them. To me, that is a cornerstone of having a gallery. It's being able to have this information at hand and to use it for resale. I mean, I've sold a painting two, three times over and over and when it comes back out—[inaudible, cross-talk]—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It comes back and it goes out again.

JAMES GOODMAN: And I have the photograph, I have all the provenance and everything. And that's really important.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right. So you'd say to a young dealer who has a—or a young person who wants to open a gallery, one of the first things you have to do apart from being honest, pay right away, don't mingle accounts, and keep really good records.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's absolutely right. That is the keystone.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The keystone.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right, the keystone is keeping good records. Just like we were able to pick out Drumlevitch. I could go—you know, these little catalogs I sent out to you, I could also show you those. I'm sure we'd have records of every one of them. That's 30, 40 years old.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, that's impressive. So do you now hire a registrar? Do you now employ a registrar at your gallery?

JAMES GOODMAN: We employ—the registrar of our gallery usually is the person at the desk. We train them—we train every one of those young ladies who come—short periods, long periods or whatever—to be registrars.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And her name?

JAMES GOODMAN: This one's name is Shira [Schwarz], and I'm not sure of her last name.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Shira. And how did you find her?

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, I mean, they come—they all come for jobs. And then we train them. Some stay longer than the others, and therefore, it's a constant trainer. We have a person by the name of Tiffany Matula, who has been with me for nine years. She oversees these people and makes sure that they are doing this properly and everything. It's not easy. Anyone who interns for us, and we get an enormous amount of people inquiring—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That was my next question.

JAMES GOODMAN: They come in here, and by the time they leave, they get all this information of filing photographs. Or if they're not doing anything, I tell them, "Go through the old photographs, see what we've sold, see what this is all about—art."

And I've had some pretty interesting interns who—they all want to come back, but usually they go on. During the summer, we had an intern from Milan, Italy; the year before—you know, they just come for a month. That's just for a month, okay.

And they all—how do they find us? It's word of mouth. And Patsy, as I said, she also—she said she lost her job to the Internet. She used to place people all over town, because people would come to her, everyone knows. And they still call her, but there's something on the Internet. It's not my thing so I stay out of it.

It's interesting, you see. I'm not all-encompassing. I don't want to know these little things. I just don't. My brain at this point is full of things that I can go back—you know, someone will bring me a picture and, "Oh, yeah, I sold that in 1958." That's difficult. Now, I'm starting to lose a little bit of that as I turn—you know, as I grow older.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you're 80, you said, so.

JAMES GOODMAN: Yeah, well, so? [They laugh.] So? I'm not trying to lose my—you know, but it's very hard. I forget, you know? But the difference is that if I forget, I have records, okay? I have records.

I mean, usually, I can, say, tell you who I sold the picture to. But if I don't, I have records. And that's, as I said, very important. And it's been very helpful to me.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Have you ever gone to Basel or an art fair and stumbled into a person who was an intern in your gallery or used to work in your gallery?

JAMES GOODMAN: No.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Has anybody else?

JAMES GOODMAN: No, but I do go to Basel, or I used to go to Basel and I used to be called "the bench dealer" at the time when I went to Basel because I would take transparencies and things to sell.

Even Beyeler thought it was very funny, but you know. I used to sell at that time from the bench, because someone painted "James Goodman Gallery" on a bench out at a show—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.]

JAMES GOODMAN: And it stayed there for three years in Basel. They paint every fourth year. [Laughs.] So I sat there—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you would hang out on a bench with a bunch of transparencies?

JAMES GOODMAN: I would hang out on a bench. My favorite story is I had Ernst Beyeler there and put it in *ARTnews*.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It's funny.

JAMES GOODMAN: At Basel—something, whatever it was. No, no, I mean, it was different then. It was different then. I mean, there were the kind of—it was kind of a situation where people were friendly and there was a different kind—this has become a very, very kind of business where you've got to watch currency, you've got to watch this, you've got to watch that, and it's more corporate. I still run a shop, from my point of view—a shop. It's casual. People are dressed casually. They're not dressed in suits.

I remember when I first came to 57th Street how my wife said to me, "You can't just show up in jeans and a sports shirt; you've got to wear a jacket." I said, "A jacket? You're kidding." "And a tie," she said. "A tie you're not going to get me to do, but I'll wear the jacket for the—you know, because I can always take it off." And that's how it is. I always take it off.

I'm very casual. I'll show up places you wouldn't show up dressed the way I am, but that's one thing I have in common with Allan Stone. We didn't care. As you can see, I wear sneakers now because, why? Because I have bad feet from orthotics and things like that. I'll go to a wedding in a pair of sneakers. That doesn't go over very well, all right, so I finally got a black—I finally on my 80th birthday broke down and bought a pair of black sneakers so it's not—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, they've got all kinds of sneakers now.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. But I'm just saying, this is a—we've always been a down-home kind of place. Therefore, people would come and they would spend hours, and I said, "You want to make a phone call? Make a phone call." You know, I had dealers from all over the world using my phone. They knew they could without feeling—

you said, I said, "Forget it. whatever it is, if you use your credit card, fine; if you don't, it's okay with me." And no one really took advantage that I can think of, maybe one or two over the years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you brought those values with you. So you know, we could say you could—

JAMES GOODMAN: I brought those down-home values as a gallery.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, you take the kid out of Buffalo, but you can't take the Buffalo out of the kid.

JAMES GOODMAN: Out of the kid, right. Okay? And I never let—as I said, I never let my ego get in the way. And I still haven't.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it's clear, in everything that you've said, that your focus was always on the art and the client. And even being very adamant about saying that you pay the client first—you know, if you have a consigner, you pay them right way.

JAMES GOODMAN: You make sure that the client gets paid. And boy, that has always been a mantra.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Even if you're eating cold pizza for a month, you pay the client.

JAMES GOODMAN: You pay the client. You do not use his money, period. End of thing. You just cannot use his money.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Do you think that some of these kinds of dodgy practices evolved because there were, in some cases, dealers, collectors, collector-dealers playing different schemes that were less straightforward than —

JAMES GOODMAN: I'm not too involved in knowing why, really, about this.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right.

JAMES GOODMAN: However, all I'm saying to you is that it's so important, okay. I also have a bank line that I can—you know, I can get money from the bank any time I want because at this point in my life, I never—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you've established—

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. All right? But there no necessity to play—even if you have a bank line, there's no necessity to play with someone else's money, okay? That's not in the way we do things. Unfortunately, as people try to overexpand, or expand, they start to go from Peter to Paul.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Just to cut corners.

JAMES GOODMAN: And it's to cut corners. It's just better not to expand. Now, there are some people who do that, that are successful in doing it, no problem.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But it's risky. It's gambling, essentially, you're saying.

JAMES GOODMAN: Are you a gambler, right. I mean, very honestly, I will go and gamble once a year and take X dollars and take it to go to a casino. But when I lose it, that's it. I'm out. Or if I win it, that's it. I win it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, that's, you know, the price of entertainment, or, you know, the reward of entertainment.

JAMES GOODMAN: That is correct. I once did this and I spent the whole day. They sent a car for a friend of mine who was a gambler. And they sent a car; they gave him a hotel room and the whole thing. And then we were going to go back that night, which we did and everything. And the whole day cost me \$40, the whole day. I mean, really, gambling—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.] Meals and all, yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: I had meals; I had a room. I had, what do you call it, a limo, both ways. But I only take a certain amount to—I'm not a gambler. I've not been a gambler in my business, either. People will say, "Oh, yes you are. You just came in and did all sorts of things." I had all the confidence that, that wasn't a gamble.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But even if you speak to a gambler—I knew a lawyer years ago who was a very skilled card counter and was not welcome in a lot of places, had to always go someplace new. But it was a sport to him. But

he told me that he didn't really have a system, except he lived within his own formula.

So he would play to win X amount, or he would play for a particular amount of time. And whichever happened first—X amount of winnings, X amount of losses, or X amount of time—he would quit. That was it. He'd, like, hit any one of those three events and that would be it for the day. And it could start again. Yeah, right.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay, but you have to be focused to do something like that.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: There's a discipline to gambling, too.

JAMES GOODMAN: Focus and discipline, focus and discipline.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So the problem is if a person is not working within safe practices, in terms of business, they're probably not working within safe gambling practices either.

JAMES GOODMAN: That is correct. And I've always said, I've always been in this kind of situation, where I never step—as I said, I'm very conservative. Some people say, "Well, you're too conservative. You could have been the world's richest art dealer." I said, "I don't care. I'm happy when I'm done."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: You're who you are.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's correct.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But do you think that a lot of the negativity that's now being heaped on the art world by people who are unhappy with, you know, the collapse of their investments—

JAMES GOODMAN: You don't sell paintings as an investment. When people come in, I said, "Look," I say, "it *may* rise, okay? But it can fall, too. So don't buy it if you're buying this—don't come to me and say, am I going to make—don't come in here and say to me, am I going to make 10 or 15 percent a month?" Are you kidding? I don't do anything.

Or, you know, "Will this increase in value 20 percent in a year?" I said, "Look, I can't." I said, "One, I'm not a seer. Two, if you're buying a painting, this is not a stock market." But a lot of people speculate.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But stocks rise and fall too.

JAMES GOODMAN: But a lot of people speculate, and that's what happened in the contemporary market.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, it's gambling, in other words.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, that's right. The first ones—whenever there's a downturn in the art or in anything, the first ones that are gone are the speculators, okay? They're the first ones that are out of there. I don't speculate. I just don't do that. I'd rather not do anything.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, you lead with your taste, as you've stated.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. Well, I'm just saying, in my personal life as well, I'm conservative. Okay? I don't live over my means. I do what I want to do up to a point.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Have you ever been tempted to move more towards representing living artists? Has that ever tempted you?

JAMES GOODMAN: In Buffalo, I did that in the gallery. I represented Drumlevitch and I represented his wife, who I can't remember. Her name was Harriet Greif. That was the other one that—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Harriet?

JAMES GOODMAN: Greif, G-R-E-I-F. After 50 years, that's pretty good. And those were the two at the beginning, and I had nothing but problems representing them, okay? I'd never think of representing an artist—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: [Laughs.] What were they? What were they?

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, I mean, "You're not doing this right." What do you mean? I put this in a show, I shipped it for them and we sold it. "Why should you get a commission? I've got the show." I said, "Am I representing you?" You know, it was that kind of thing. It was small. At that time, every dollar counted.

The other one I had was Harvey Breveman, who was very successful up in Buffalo. Anything he painted, I sold, okay? The Albright-Knox, what was it—you know, they had a little gallery where they came to New York and

borrowed things, you know. They wanted to do a show of his, okay? So they went directly to him, all right? He did the show!

I mean, I find out—you know, this is after I sell everything, you know. And I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Well, it will be all right." And I said, "Why didn't you just, say, go see me?" "Well, they wouldn't do it." Okay, so that's—those are my experiences.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Another one of those experiences with a museum of art.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, that's one of my experiences with artists a few times.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Artists, too.

JAMES GOODMAN: So when I came here—so that was really implanted in my mind, because I had a lot of people, you know, who wanted to show their work and things. And I just don't do it. I mean, the only—I guess the only artist I represent here, even now, is Bruce McCall, who's done covers for the *New Yorker* and who's a very good friend. And we've done some shows and we sell his covers every year, but they're not expensive and everyone likes them.

So that's the only thing—and that's strictly—and unfortunately, he was going to have a show the week after nine eleven [9/11], all right. "Should I cancel it?" I said, "No, you don't cancel anything, okay. You have it. You do it. You have to go on with life, you know." And we had an opening and a dinner after.

Everyone came to dinner. I mean, I thought, you know, no one was going to come. It was a successful opening because people wanted to do something after 9/11. They didn't want to just sit, and they were willing to go out and do something, which was really very important.

And where did I learn that? I was in Chicago when Kennedy was assassinated, okay. And it was on a Friday. And you know, I was in shock and everything, and a dealer there, a good friend of mine, was Bud Holland [B.C. Holland], who, at one time, was a very good dealer. He's deceased now.

And I said, "Bud, you know." He said, "I'm going to the gallery." I said, "How can you go in the gallery in this instance?" He said, "Because, you know, in tragedy, people want sometimes to come out, and they will talk about it and I'll be there and things, and it's good." And that's why he did it, okay.

But right or wrong, I mean, that's where I learned, you know, you don't want to—I mean, if it was on 9/11, obviously, it would have been cancelled. But it was the week after 9/11. We were all in a terrible, what do you call, state. Next time we had a show there at the time, for his opening, there was a hurricane coming. [They laugh.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The guy's got great timing.

JAMES GOODMAN: They said that everyone should, you know, go home; no one should go out. Anyways, we opened that day. We had a big crowd. [Laughs.] He had a big crowd. And I remember, again, we had dinner after, and I told my wife, "You better cut—you know, you're expecting 75 people; you better just say 30, maybe." We had 80 people here! So we had to fuss around.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And you had Rudy Giuliani at the opening?

JAMES GOODMAN: No, he was the one who said, "Go home." [Laughs.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Oh, he was the one! Well, he did, right? He went home; everybody else came to James Goodman Gallery.

JAMES GOODMAN: That was—I mean, that's a funny experience, okay. Just shows you that sometimes, those are the things that happen in life.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: If you don't show up, it won't happen.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's true.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So what is the gallery organization like now? There's you, obviously, and—

JAMES GOODMAN: There's myself, my wife—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Your wife.

JAMES GOODMAN: There's my original lady who sat at the desk for—she's there 35 years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Patsy.

JAMES GOODMAN: Patsy, there 35 years.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And you ever prepared, and you have an art handler?

JAMES GOODMAN: We have an art handler. We have a registrar lady who answers the phone. And let's see, I also have Tiffany, who is also a salesperson and takes a lot of pressure off of me, because she has the patience of a saint.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So she oversees the registrar and the receptionist and the art handler and—

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, no, not the art handler; just the—and she sells. She sells.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So the receptionist is kind of her assistant, in other words, or that she oversees—

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, you could say kind of, but she—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But she sells work.

JAMES GOODMAN: She sells work and takes enormous pressure off of me. I'd rather say, "Go see Tiffany." I don't have patience. I used to have enormous patience, all right? You say, "How do you adjust and how do you—what are the things that you do later?" Well, over the years, I've lost my patience. I really have. With collectors, with things like that. So I, in a nice way, I've sort of pushed all this toward Tiffany, and she's great with it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: How did you find her, or how did she find you?

JAMES GOODMAN: Same thing—she was looking for a job, you know, and I sensed she was really good, you know. So she's been there nine years now.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So was she out of the business world or an artist or an art historian?

JAMES GOODMAN: She's an artist. She's an artist.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: An artist? Okay.

JAMES GOODMAN: And she still wants to be an artist, so—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's great.

JAMES GOODMAN: So she's on a four-day week.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, that leaves a few days to make art, yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: Just like the registrar—I mean, not the registrar—just like Patsy, who now only works four days a week, you know.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: That's good.

JAMES GOODMAN: Yeah. That's how we function now. It's not—we're not a full—I mean, I'm no longer open on Saturdays. "Why," you're going to say. The change that has happened in the art world over the last 15 years was that they all went to Chelsea, you know. During—there was a period where, at 57th Street, which I enjoyed and everything, but I didn't have the problem where people stood in line to get up—you know, on Saturdays. Well, you don't stand in line anymore. There's hardly anyone who comes in. And finally, I said, "Let's not even be open on Saturdays."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: What do you foresee the future of the art world? Let's just start with the geography of the gallery districts in New York—57th, Madison—

JAMES GOODMAN: I think it's going to be more and more global—global, not—it won't have anything—the Internet is already making great strides in the art world. I sell—I have a Web site and everything and you can't believe—I sell from the Web site to all over the world, this kind of art, all right?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: High-end art.

JAMES GOODMAN: High-end art, okay. You can't just depend upon the Web site, but more and more, it's

becoming the way the fax machine was. Remember when the fax machine—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Of course.

JAMES GOODMAN: And then after that, the computer. I get instant answers anytime now. I got instant answers with the fax machine, and I got instant answers with the telephone.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Have you digitized all those great records you keep, or a lot of them?

JAMES GOODMAN: A lot of them, yes. We're backed up on computers. I mean, it's always—I mean, I feel like a dinosaur. I don't know anything about a computer.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So are you tempted to hire an archivist just to get, you know, like, everything up to speed with—

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, it's all up to speed, except what's in the files, and that's in—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I mean, electronic—yeah.

JAMES GOODMAN: Except, that's in the warehouse—a lot of it's in the warehouse. We have a warehouse where we keep art and things like that, and old records and things like that, and a computer. No, I don't think we're doing all that. I really don't. I mean, it's interesting. Again, perhaps I don't consider myself such a thing that I have to do that. I have an interesting gallery, but I don't have artists, okay.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So your new archives, though, are all electronic?

JAMES GOODMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

JAMES MCELHINNEY: And when did you start that? When did you go from paper to electronic files?

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, we still have paper files.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Okay.

JAMES GOODMAN: We still have—I have to—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So you do two. You do—

JAMES GOODMAN: We use both. I have to have paper, okay. I have to have paper that I can put on my desk and that I can come back to. They took the computer out of my office because I—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: It was a paperweight, right? [Laughs.]

JAMES GOODMAN: It was in the way of—I know. When I say in the way, it never got turned on. And finally, I said, "Just get this thing out of here." I mean, I have a computer here, which I use. And there's a computer in the back, which my kids use. And it always amazes me that—how the young—and I said when I have trouble with—I have a grand-nephew that lives down the street.

And when I have trouble with my computer, I call him up and he walks me through how to fix this, all right—how to fix it. And I'm always proud when, after he walks me through it, I've fixed it, all right. And he said, "I'll come over." "No, no, I want to try to learn how to do this." So it's a problem, but you have to be computerized today. You have to realize that we're in a global, global, global world.

And is the change—I mean, and you live and learn. I mean, look at Pace, who opened this incredible gallery in Beijing—I mean, just incredible, okay? Well, they've learned they can't sell Western paintings there, so all they're going to do is sell Chinese paintings there. But that's not why they went there. They went there to sell Western paintings, okay, and can't do it!

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, the tastes are quite different, aren't they?

JAMES GOODMAN: The world is different. I mean, it's amazing that people in Korea, China, various—they like someone like [Andy] Warhol, all right? They like someone like [Salvador] Dali and [Marc] Chagall and things like that. This is an international thing.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Right, certain artists—

JAMES GOODMAN: But I mean, the Chinese artists who became so successful here, and are no longer still successful because of this—it's all to do about speculation, okay. That was pure speculation with the artists. Of

course, some Chinese artists will be very famous. Don't misunderstand.

You know, when I was in Buffalo, Bob Goodnough came to town for a lecture. Robert Goodnough is an artist and I've known him for years and things like that. But in his lecture, he gave—he said something that I always, always remembered, okay. "Whatever movement," he said, "whether it's Pop Art, Abstract Expression, Color Field, whatever—the top—the very top of that movement will always survive."

JAMES MCELHINNEY: The leaders, not the followers.

JAMES GOODMAN: Right. And it's really the truth, I guess. I don't know. I mean, if you follow it along the way, there's still the Pop artists. There's like half a dozen that are still—I always looked at that as an interesting, how should I say, interesting observation.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: I think it's true, because at the end of the day, movements, at least as they were understood in the 20th century, really were sort of aping, you know, the political trends that were occurring around the world—the revolutions, the nationalist and post-imperial experiments in China and Europe. So the artists wanted to connect themselves with that kind of vision of progress, so one thing begets another. But I think today—I don't know if you agree—but it just seems like that's all kind of fallen apart, as a construct, and it's become much more open.

JAMES GOODMAN: Correct, because all—there have been so many movements and it's been so globalized, when before, it wasn't so globalized.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Everybody's a movement.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right. That is exactly right.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: So that's, you know, the lesson there. What are your own plans for the future?

JAMES GOODMAN: My own plan is just work as long as I can. I'm going to renew my lease for another couple years and then I will see. I can always do this by appointment only, but I like the activity. It really depends upon my health. I mean, my health is just fine, but you've got to start, when you reach this age, to think about, you know. I won't retire. I don't know what the word *retire* means, okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, that's a wonderful thing, I think—not retirement, but just working until you can't work anymore.

JAMES GOODMAN: I had two brothers that retired along the way, and they only survived two or three years after their retirement.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This is something one hears a lot—that if you retire from certain lines of work, you're asking for trouble, or an early grave.

JAMES GOODMAN: But when you're at this age, it's no longer early. From however—everyone says, "Listen, your 80 is like 60 today." Yeah, you can go to 95—

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Yeah, 100 is the new 80, right.

JAMES GOODMAN: That's right. Okay, so that's part of it. And I look at it—I get up in the morning and I really enjoy what I'm doing, still, okay? And that's a hard thing to achieve in anything else one does.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, if someone were to name a library after you or a museum and they were to hew some words of yours on, you know, the wall as one enters its doors, what would you want those words to be?

JAMES GOODMAN: I guess honesty—you know, I don't know. Come on. No one's going to name a museum after me, number one. And number two, I gave you my principles of how I operate and everything, and that's how I live as well. I'm not—as I said to you, I never intended to be the richest art dealer in the world. I'm happy where I am.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: But you enjoy your work.

JAMES GOODMAN: From morning until night, still, okay? And I meant to tell you, I never worked Saturdays, by the way, with my kids and everything. I always—family first. It's always been family first. Still is, as you can see, the phone—the two times that we were interrupted were always my kids calling me. Even, one's 52 and one is in the 20s; they still call. And my 48-year-old—we went to the baseball game last night. He's back on his way to California. So there we are.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Great.

JAMES GOODMAN: Okay?

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, thank you very much. It's been a great conversation for me.

JAMES GOODMAN: Well, thank you very much for, you know—as I said, this invitation fell through the cracks, and I found it on that desk after I was forced to clean it, okay? And I said, "Oh my God, this is something I should do." And that's why I've done it.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Well, I'm glad that you did. I'm happy to have this conversation and I'm sure the archives are happy to have this conversation.

JAMES GOODMAN: It's my pleasure. And thank you very much.

JAMES MCELHINNEY: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]