Occupying the Tea Party
The Rise of Contemporary Libertarian Culture in the United States

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Occupying the Tea Party:
The Rise of Contemporary Libertarian Culture
in the United States

Volume II

Alfred Christopher Cardone
PhD in American Studies Research
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Appendix A- Tea Party Interviews

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<tr>
<td>Name: Danny Panzella</td>
<td>Assigned designation: Interviewee Tea Party 1</td>
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<td>Date: 30 August 2012</td>
<td>Location: Vietnam Veterans Plaza, New York City</td>
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AC: We’ll start with a little bit of background about the Staten Island Tea Party Patriots. Just sell me about the movement in your own words basically. What do you think is, what it means, and what it does?

DP: The Tea Party in general or my group?

AC: Your group.

DP: Well, we’re kind of like, I use the term Tea Party kind of loosely, we are more libertarian than the mainstream or what has become the mainstream Tea Party. As far as grassroots organizing, we mainly, the things we do, hand out information. We do what we call street actions. So, we’ll have sign waves. During the presidential campaign, we did Ron Paul sign waves. We will hand out DVDs and flyers. The philosophy is basically that politics is really just- it’s a venue to connect with people who are already active. Most people in politics are activists in some form or another- so what I would say is the long hanging fruit. So we’re looking to connect with people who are already active and spread the message of liberty that way. It’s kind of like you’re getting more bang for your buck. Rather than converting ordinary citizens who may or may not get involved. Obviously, I’m willing to spread the message of liberty to anyone who is willing to listen and to some people who aren’t willing to listen (laughing). But, our group in particular, we try to focus on people that are already active. They may not be open to the message or to our politics, but that’s the idea- so that they can kind of see the value to it. That way, we can convert them into instant activists of liberty.

AC: Ok. Is there a particular group that you target or do you go with a blanket everyone involved?

DP: Yea. Anyone that’s involved. I mean, I’m pretty disappointed in the Tea Party movement because they started out, you know- it’s an older movement first of all. I’m, you know, the youngest, towards the younger side in my mid-thirties. It’s an older movement. Really, voting is the only tool the use for their “activism.” They go to a rally for an hour and wave signs and flags and then it’s over until November. I got really excited when Occupy
popped up. And I started Occupy the Fed, which was a kind of a sub-working group of Occupy, to educate people- you know, obviously Occupy is more of a “leftist” movement and we thought it was important to not shun them, or ignore them, or just be critical of them. But we went in, infiltrated if you want to say that, to spread the message about free markets, to make them understand that our economy is already essentially planned. It’s essentially planned by Wall Street itself. By calling for more regulation, you are giving the fox the keys to the hen house. So that’s what we did through Occupy the Fed, to try and spread the message about the Federal Reserve and its relationship with Wall Street and the government. Yea, that’s basically, like you know, the methods we tend to use. We’ll go to CPAC, we’ll go to the DNC, the RNC, I’ve got people down there right now at the RNC, spreading the word about the NDAA, which is an important issue. And, yea, we will take different tactics and different messages depending on which group we are talking to. So, I just recently did a raw milk and lemonade freedom day in DC. We’re actually going to do one in Union Square, hopefully in a couple of weeks. Basically, it’s about legalizing raw milk and, I am sure you have heard about the crack-down on lemonade stands (laughing)? Kid’s without permits?

AC: Yea.

DP: The raw milk kind of appeals to, you know, healthy food fanatics, people who eat organic, vegans, so it kind of tends to be more left-leaning people, as opposed to free markets, which mostly the right would appreciate that. So, we both from that angle talk to somebody on the right.

AC: Ok. You told me a lot right there. What would you consider to be the inspiration for your organization?

DP: What would be- I would say probably, kind of the core is- Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” That’s kind of like our core and the non-aggression principle. The idea that you never initiate force against another person else unless it’s in direct self-defense. So the government violates the non-aggression principle…. I mean really everything it does is based on force.

AC: How do people join your organization?

DP: Most of the people are-most of the people, I would say, get recruited through when we do a street action. Somebody will like the message and be excited that there’s other people, most of the time they’re already on to the message, already libertarians. But certainly, we have converted quite a few people who were mainstream, what I would call neo-conservatives, who then became more libertarian, if not libertarians.

AC: You were going into- how you are the youngest person in your organization...
DP: I am not the youngest person in my organization. I meant in the overall Tea Party movement.

AC: Ok.

DP: My group tends to be young, but it does range.

AC: Ok, so I was going to go into demographics, dynamics, relationships within the organization, and what kind of hierarchy you have.

DP: None. I mean, essentially myself and maybe a handful of others are kind of leaders and just in the sense that we take the most action. So people tend to view us a leaders but there’s no real structure. There’s no government.

AC: Ok. And it’s generally more young people, but there is variation?

DP: Yea, I mean, we have one of our more active members, Tina, is in her- I don’t want to be insulting- but I am guessing that she must be in her late 40s or her early 50s. So, I mean, we have people that are even older, in their 70s. Captain Tom is in his 70s. I mean he’s not that active, but he supports financially stuff like that.

AC: Ok, that comes to another good question. How do you fund your organization?

DP: We self-fund it. If we need to make a flyer or a glossy about a particular issue, we generally kind of fund raise and generally the older people in the movement, in the group, will donate the most.

AC: So that kind of gives you a little bit of independence, but then again a little bit of limitation because of money?

DP: Yea, sure. This is real grassroots. We have no real sponsorship.

AC: Ok. What do you find are effective tools for organizing and for getting your message out?

DP: Facebook.

AC: Facebook?

DP: Yea. Facebook, Meetup.com. Those are probably the two main tools.

AC: Social media, things like that?

DP: Yea. Those are really the two most powerful ones that we find effective. Everybody is addicted to Facebook. So, we try and use it for something good instead of nonsense.
AC: Do you find it- Well, you were saying before that you were mainly dealing with people who are active, but do you find it hard, when you do try and get to the general public, do you find it difficult to get your message to them?

DP: I think that- I came from sales. For myself, and this is what I try and impress on the rest of the group, what I learned in the sales business is listen to people, listen to their concerns, listen to where they are coming from, and then you’ll know what approach to take with them. So, what I was saying before when I was at Occupy, one of the, one of the main objections at Occupy was that- they’re more of, they want bigger government to control and make sure no one is victimized. It’s a noble idea and it doesn’t work because the only tool government has is violence. So, what I found is that with Occupiers, they tend to be pacifists, peace activists, anti-war. If I explain to them the non-aggression principle, and then applied it to government, a lot of times people would go off and realize that conflict of “Yea, I want this entity to protect everyone, but at the same time if I empower it with violence to protect me it could also oppress me with it, that violence as well.” So, if you take that tactic of tailoring your message to who you are talking to, you get a lot better results. Even if you not making conversions, you’re planting seeds and at least people are listening and people are engaged and their not, you know, just dismissing you. Yea, certainly there are people when you have a Gadsden Flag here on the street, someone is going to walk by and to them, from the main stream media, that is a symbol of racism, bigotry, anti-gay, whatever it is, whatever they associate it with. Anti-Obama, so therefore racist. Then they dismiss you as they walk by, but hopefully if you have to chance to actually engage them, you can breakthrough their objections.

AC: Do you cooperate with any organizations now? Are you alone or are there other groups?

DP: Yea. We work with everybody. I mean, I myself am probably involved in 10 to 15 organizations. So any issue I agree with, I will jump on. So, for like Lemonade Freedom.com, who I did the thing In DC for and we are going to do one in Union Square. We partnered with Raw Milk Freedom Riders, they’re called and they’re a raw milk freedom group. I am also the chair of the Libertarian Party on Staten Island. So, we work a lot with the Libertarian Party. Ron Paul, grassroots, groups that are dedicated to the Ron Paul campaign, that we’ve worked with. PROP is another one. If you want to consider Occupy a group. PROP is a Police Reform Organization Project. So that is working stop “stop and frisk” as a violation of the fourth amendment. So yeah, it’s lots of them. We’re very- even it’s a leftist group, if it’s something that we agree with, like the soda ban was another thing. I don’t know if you would consider that leftist, it was mostly the unions fighting that. I don’t care. If I agree with the issue, then I will get involved, because to me the most important thing to me is the relationships that I am developing. Because I can develop a relationship with a leftist on an issue like being pro-peace- are you familiar with Ron Paul’s foreign positions, Libertarian positions?
AC: Yea.

DP: That war basically bankrupts the country? So it’s a fiscal issue. So, I can agree on a leftist on war and form a relationship, and then be able to have a relationship to preach about other issues as well. So, for me, it’s all about the networking and the forming of relationships. That’s really how through the message. And that’s something I really try to impress on the rest of the group.

AC: Earlier we were talking about Ron Paul at the convention and he kind of had trouble with that, and I was mentioning how the media didn’t the coverage that they didn’t give everyone else. Do you feel that your organization is correctly portrayed in the media? I know probably that it doesn’t get as much attention, but do you think Libertarians in general, people who do similar things to you, do you think they have the right portrayal in the media-the main stream media?

DP: No. Main stream media is controlled by fiver corporations. Those five corporations are all top Wall Street firms- crony capitalists. So they have no interest in portraying anyone in the right light. It always has to be within a control paradigm. So generally, they will generally latch on to any straw man. So, for the Tea Party in particular, the Tea Party is racists because they are anti-Obama. Well, they may and there are racists within the Tea Party, but the Tea Party movement is anti-socialist. I would argue George Bush was a socialist. Actually, I would make the argument that all government is socialist (laughing). They latch onto the straw man. They do it to the left as well. The left gets marginalized in the same way. So, it’s within that control paradigm of how you accept it and generally they use straw men and I’ve- you know if I want to say media savvy, if that’s something to be proud of- I’ve done a lot of media, especially on Fox, when the Tea Party first started. I was giving my congressman- I’m a loud mouth, you know (laughing)? So, I will be outside there office every day will a bullhorn (laughing). Fox had me on a couple of times when I got involved at Occupy. Judge Napolitano had me as his correspondent for a couple of episodes. So, I mean I have done some media with them and so I have learned first-hand how they are steering the conversation. The corporations are not interested in libertarianism, because libertarianism gives everybody a fair shot in the free market. They want to control the free market so that they are the only ones that can compete.

AC: Ok. That’s the background of your work there and your organization. Now, I am just going to go into- terminology that’s relevant to my research and ask what it means to you.

DP: Ok.

AC: When I say “populism,” what comes to your mind?

DP: To me, populism is just citizens, grassroots, citizens, getting involved in politics or whatever the issue is.
AC: Ok. Congress- what’s the first thing that comes to mind?

DP: Congress?? Corruption.

AC: You touched on it a little bit. Grassroots campaign, grassroots organization- what do you consider them to be and how important are they?

DP: If you have- it’s the most important. The grassroots is the most powerful thing, the citizens are the most powerful thing in this country, in our form of government, which is why the media and those crony capitalists work so hard to keep people from being involved and if they do get involved, to get involved in a way that leaves them alone. So get involved in the Democratic or Republican Parties, spin a wheel in the tug of war that no one can win. So it keeps you busy while they continue to do their thing or get involved in some sort of straw man argument. Social issues-vote on social issues, that kind of stuff. The grassroots has a lot of power and they don’t know it. They don’t know it and I feel that we are such-the reason why I go after the low hanging fruit, the people that are already involved in politics, is because I feel like we are in such a desperate situation that we don’t really have time to waste.

AC: Ok. A very related topic- “We the People.” What should it be, what is it, and what do you think it is?

DP: Well it should refer to the grassroots. What it actually in reality refers to is a certain class. It’s a small class of people that have any power in this country and it’s not the voters. It’s not the voters, it’s the lobby class. You know, Stalin said, “It doesn’t matter who you vote for because we count your votes.” Right?

AC: I remember that quote.

DP: So, it’s no less true. I don’t believe it’s any less true in the United States. You’ve got a lot of the voting outsourced to private corporations, many of them are owned by military contractors, who are in turn owned by Wall Street. So, in essence they are owned by those same crony capitalist media. With the Ron Paul campaign, we have seen so much fraud. I mean, total counties that were just left out-were not counted. Entire counties that Ron Paul won and they just ignored them and didn’t tally the vote! They were caught, but they mainstream media doesn’t cover it. Mainstream media covers voter fraud when they’re claiming that illegal aliens go and vote when they’re not supposed to. They won’t cover the fraud of those who are counting the votes. They they’re whole gig is up. So, we’ll whip up the racists who won’t want Mexicans or any immigrants who want a piece of the American dream. See, I am less concerned with citizenship status than why are you here? If you are here to take part in the American dream, then why shouldn’t you have the vote? If you are living and working here? You may not be “a legal citizen,” but many of those laws are racists and class driven in and of themselves. You have to own property in Mexico to come here legally. Only the wealthiest- that excludes a whole class of people and that’s the
majority. You force them into a situation where they have to come here illegally or live in a narco-terrorist state. It’s impossible to come here legally unless you’re wealthy. I think those are unconstitutional laws and I don’t think we have any obligation to follow them. So what’s the big deal if a couple of illegals come, if it’s even happening, if a couple of illegals vote and they are not supposed to? Are they that interested? (laughing) That’s even a straw man because the Mexicans are even more affair of what a show the left-right paradigm. I mean, they do it in their country too. It’s a false two party system. It’s really just one big cartel owned party and they believe that. So I don’t even think they would want to come here and vote because they know it is a fraud.

AC: Ok. That leads very well into my next one. Do you believe that Americans should be responsible, i.e. they should have the right to decide their own fate and accept responsibility for their own actions for themselves, for their country, civil society, economy?

DP: I believe that everyone is responsible for themselves. You are responsible for your government in the capacity that you participate. So most people don’t participate and therefore they don’t have any responsibility- Wait. Maybe that’s not true. Maybe there is a responsibility in the fact that they don’t participate. I don’t know. I haven’t really formed my philosophy on that yet. (laughing) I mean, that could be argued. Philosophically, that could be argued. If I don’t stop a crime that I see happening, am I responsible for that crime? Can I stop it? Do I have the tools to stop it? I certainly can’t stop the United States government from killing people all over the planet with drones, bombing weddings, that kind of stuff. I have no power to stop that.

AC: And as a collective body? As Americans, let’s say.

DP: No, I don’t believe in collectivisms.

AC: No collectivisms.

DP: Yea. Collectivism is the enemy of freedom.

AC: What are your opinions of the founding fathers, the beginning of the country the tradition-orientated focus? Which the Tea Party is portrayed to have.

DP: Yea, I don’t think that the Tea Party gets the founding fathers. I think that they get the sanitized, maybe media mainstream version, of the founders. My opinion of the founders-they weren’t any different from Wall Street today. They were looking to- maybe I shouldn’t go that far. That might be a little strong. The founding fathers were the ruling class of the time. They weren’t grassroots, like I’m grassroots.

AC: Ok.

DP: They didn’t come from nothing. These were wealthy educated men, who wanted freedom from the King, but, if you read the constitution, there is plenty of tyranny in the
Constitution. I mean, the bill of rights is great, it’s a great start and it’s based on thousands of years of libertarian or liberty philosophy. But the Bill of Rights can be suspended because the President feels like it because there is an emergency or whatever it is. And I am talking even then. John Adams had people thrown in jail for criticizing him.

AC: The Whiskey Rebellion after the revolution.

DP: Yea. So, there was tyranny from the beginning. So, I don’t idolize them the way a lot of the Tea Party kind of idolizes them because they don’t really know about history. They just kind of know the general thing. They fought for control so they could have control. Yes, we benefit, even today, we benefit from the bill of rights and we benefit from some of the things that they did. George Washington could have set himself up as a monarch, but he was smarter than that. I think he understood that people need to believe that…- I know there is a quote, but I don’t remember it. Something to the effect that the people, you have to make them love their slavery or believe that they’re free. That’s what it is. “There is none so hopelessly enslaved than he who believes he is free.” I think that’s what democracy is- an illusion of freedom. It’s an illusion of choice. You vote for Pepsi or Coke, but they’re both dictators. But, hey, you chose that dictator. Any loss of freedom is your own fault. That’s why- you know, in that sense I don’t believe in being responsible because.... Then again, people are responsible to educate themselves, so- If you don’t know what the founders stood for, if you don’t know what’s really in the constitution, if you don’t know what’s really happening in the world, it’s your own fault because your too busy watching television or because your too busy working two jobs to chase blame or whatever it is. Whatever your distraction is...

AC: On the flip side, how would you define progress today?

DP: Progress..

AC: How would envision the United States progressing?

DP: By the way, I’ve Thomas Jefferson tattooed on my arm. So... I mean he’s my favorite of the founders, even though, you know, the man owned other human beings.

AC: Yea, he’s definitely the most fascinating. He was a walking enigma, I always thought. He said all these things and then he had- I don’t know. I have read some of his work and as he gets older, you can see that he’s more- there’s guilt there somewhere.

DP: Yea.

AC: He’s definitely trying to reconcile something.

DP: Yea. Plus, none of us are perfect, we all have fault, hypocrites. And I guess at the time owning another human being wasn’t as offensive as it is now- not that I am justifying or making excuses for it. Obviously....- I don’t know. So, what was the?
AC: Progress.

DP: Oh, how would I define progress?

AC: Yes, how would you define progress?

DP: See, I don’t believe- I kind of started earlier saying this that politics is kind of like a forum to just meet people and network. I don’t believe in any solution in the political world or in government. That’s socialism- that you believe government can solve problems for you, that’s socialism. That’s something that the Tea Party fails to understand. I had a discussion-in the very beginning I was at a party and this guy was a Fox News watcher. By that, I mean he had a very superficial idea of conservatism and what the Tea Party was. “I’m a Tea Partier, blah, blah, blah.” Then he was a teacher, so he has a pension subsidized by tax payers. I said, “That’s socialism.” “Well, you can’t touch my pension.” So, well, what is progress to me? So there is no answer in politics. This is more of a spiritual thing. Liberty is a spiritual issue. So, that’s why being the change you want in the world is such an important concept. For me, it’s about, and the message that I try to spread is, if you are changing yourself and becoming more free- I mean you can be a freeman living in a jail cell, right? It’s a spiritual state of being. We spread that message and people are become freeing themselves spiritually. Liberty will follow, you know? It will manifest itself in the physical. Government will change because the people changed. I would argue that if people freed themselves spiritually, government would end, it will no longer be needed. Now, obviously, that’s very utopian and I don’t believe that will really ever happen, at least on a grand scale. I would like to see us go back to a “wild west” scenario, where the federal government didn’t have much power. It didn’t have the reach to get into small towns and municipalities. They basically ran themselves. Government was decentralized, people were a whole lot freer, and things were not really that “wild.” They use that to scare us into wanting a strong government. We’ve got fear Al-Qaida, we’ve got to fear all these things, so that a strong central government can keep us safe. The “wild west” was not really that wild. You know? There was no police force. You had militias- the adult males in the community were the police force. The sheriff was elected by the people, it was someone you knew. There was no corruption. He’s not going- it’s not like there was no corruption but it was less likely that if we are all taking turns being the sheriff, whatever the term- two years- and we’re all from the same community and all have the same values, we care about each other because we are all neighbors. When a criminal comes to town and violates someone’s property rights, we form up a posse and say, “Come on guys. Let’s get together and deal with this threat.” That’s the way- I mean, I would call that constitutional. Constitutional homeland security.

AC: Ok. That leads very well into another question I have here. Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics? You were just talking about spirituality, spiritual liberty...

DP: Yea.
AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion? By civil religion, I mean that something is sacred in civil society, sacrosanct, whether it be the constitution, or liberty, or an office, or an institution, etc.

DP: No, institutions- I don’t like institutions. I like voluntary associations, based on shared values. So, is there something sacrosanct? Yes. Human rights- what the constitution, the founding documents refer to as God-given rights. Civil rights is a kind of water downed term, to make people believe that those rights come from government, which means that they can be revoked. It’s social engineering. Using terms like civil rights is social engineering. So, human rights are sacrosanct- self-ownership, I own myself, I own my body, and I own my time and labor, and anything that I trade for those things. So, if I trade my time and labor for a home, a piece of property, that property belongs to me. I have the right to protect myself, my family, and my property. That’s sacrosanct. I have the right to defend against any violations of that. So that basically is where the non-aggression principle comes in. I won’t aggress against your property, don’t aggress against mine. There won’t be any problem.

AC: If you go further with that, do you think ethics matter in civil society, politics, things like that?

DP: I think that the non-aggression principle is the highest morality. Yes, absolutely. I mean, different philosophers have said it different ways. Jesus says “love everyone as you love yourself.” If you treat everyone the way you want to be treated, the golden rule, you won’t violate their property rights, you won’t violate their human rights. That’s really what Jesus was talking about. I think it really is just that simple. If everyone operated in love, we wouldn’t need a government. That doesn’t mean you have to have the emotion of love. I don’t know that man over here, but I am not going to go up and take his Walkman. I don’t love him, but I am going to treat him as I want to be treated and not attack him.

AC: Brotherly love then?

DP: What’s that?

AC: I think people call that “brotherly love.”

DP: Yea, right.

AC: Ok, then on from that- fairness. How would you define it? Does it exist? Should it exist?

DP: Fairness? Fairness…. I mean to me it again all comes down to property rights. That really, and my body be the ultimate property-the self-ownership principle- fairness is all dictated on that. You can mediate any dispute if you use that as your guide. Did you aggress against someone? Then that’s not fair and you have to make restitution for it.

AC: Ok.
DP: But, I don’t believe in revenge. Revenge is just egotism. So, reparation, not revenge.

AC: Ok. To change gears a little bit, to go a different way, what is your opinion of globalization today? How would you define it?

DP: Globalization... How would I define globalization? I think that globalization is a financial-you’re using kind of a financial vehicle to create global markets as a way to create a control grid. It’s a control grid that has been developing for decades and decades, if not hundreds of years. So by globalizing- they’re literally getting everyone on the grid. Money is just a mode of control. It’s just a leash. So, as long as you’re participating in the global financial system, the economy, whatever scale, you’re on the grid and you’re under their control. Their being the governors. So, I definitely believe we are heading towards world government, but I think it’s financial government. I don’t know that there’ll be an anti-Christ dictator that will be recognizable in that sense, you know? That everyone will worship one dictator. I don’t know. I would think it more likely that the one world dictator would be a board of governors (laughing)- a financial CEO and his board of directors, you know, that will control the financial market. They already do through the different international settlement, the World Bank, all these monolithic institutions. They basically already do and I think they just continue to centralize. I think that’s what we saw in 2008-the centralization of economic power, probably like we haven’t seen in a long time. At least a hundred years. That’s essentially what happened. They socialized these alleged losses, they’re really just paper losses they socialized, but it took real money out of our pockets and out of future generations pockets. So, they socialized that wealth up to a few Wall Street companies, who then used that money to consolidate and buy out other companies.

AC: Ok.

DP: It’s being done on a global scale as well, in every country. All these, one by one, they are going into meltdowns. I don’t think the United States is done. Even the Obama administration admits- came out with a report that these is going to be another collapse in 2013. It’s very quiet. You don’t hear the media talking about it, but they came out with a report.

AC: You have the euro crisis, which could instigate it as well.

DP: Yea

AC: Connected to that-outsourcing. Do you see that as a problem or as a transition?

DP: That was the beginning. NAFTA and GATT, the exporting of jobs out of the country, that’s how you know where they are going next, where the locus class is going next- China and India. They’re going to suck them dry too. It may take them a hundred years too, but they’ll do it. They’ll exploit them for everything that they can and then they’ll move on. That’s how they keep control-by keeping us as poor as possible. The writings of these
people have you ever read “Superclass” by David Rothkopf? Great book. This guy Rothkopf is an asshole, but he describes very succinctly who the “superclass” is. He argues its about 6,000 people. It’s not everyone who is wealthy, like Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton is not very wealthy in the grand scheme of things, but he pulls a lot of political power. He would be considered a member of the superclass. The CEO of Chick-fil-A is billionaire but he doesn’t have a lot of clout politically. He doesn’t use his wealth like George Soros does. So George Soros would be a member of the “superclass” while Chick-fil-A guy isn’t. So, he goes through the criteria of how to identify the “superclass” – and I lost my train of thought.

AC: Outsourcing.

DP: Outsourcing. So, yea, that’s what a lot of them write about- the fact that we consume 25% of the world’s resources but are only 5% of the world’s population. They use the Green Movement, the environmental movement as an excuse to lower the standard of living in the United States, saying “It’s not fair,” to the rest of the world. “If Americans lower their standards a little bit, the rest of the world can up their standards.” But, they’re never going to do that. They just want the rest of the world to be destitute, so they can control.

AC: Ok.

DP: One of the things I like to people when they say I am a conspiracy theorist, I say that somewhere on the planet lives the descendant of Julius Caesar. My guess is that he is probably a globalist banker. (laughing) You know, those blood lines exist. The Queen of England is not a figure head. She’s a trillionaire. She controls markets. She and her Dutch cousin control the shares of the top three oil companies. That’s not a figurehead.

AC: No. Ok, to go further with that, what actually worries you the most about the current state of the country?

DP: What worries me the most? Economic collapse. People are not- we are so dependent on government, both in the sense of entitlements and the sense of how they plan the economy, that without it we can’t feed ourselves. Literally, we can’t feed ourselves. I try to grow as much of my own food as possible. I have chickens. I have stored food. I have a year’s worth of stored food. I mean, it’s not much, but I’m going to last a little bit longer that some of my neighbors will. I am actually working on some projects now to build community gardens. So, hopefully that will help alleviate that and at least get people thinking that way. Training people to garden and grow food so the community will start to think towards a preparedness direction. I think that is going to be a main thing. If people can’t eat, they will go crazy. Then forget about it, the crime. That’s what the system wants. The system wants us to go nuts and attack each other so they’ll have an excuse to clamp down. That’s what all the legislation is about. The NDAA and all the suspensions of the- the Patriot Act- basically making it piece by piece a permanent law instead of emergency powers. It’s not for Al-Qaida, it’s for us. It’s in case for an economic collapse, if things go to
hell. They can lock it down. That’s why the NYPD looks like- Do you live in New York? Long Island?

AC: No, I used to. I live now overseas in Europe.

DP: Oh, ok.

AC: But I did. I grew up for 18 years on Long Island.

DP: That’s why the NYPD looks like a military force now. They look no different from our army. Black uniforms.

AC: Huge change from what I remember. They didn’t carry automatic weapons on the subway, that’s for sure. (Laughing)

DP: Yea, what are you going to do with an automatic weapon on a subway? Are you going to open fire with a machine guy and kill everybody on the subway? It makes no sense. It’s just for intimidation. That’s what really pisses me off. That’s what I’ve said to cops when I see them. I’m like, “What are you going to do with that damn thing? You can’t use that. It’s just bullshit.” Then the shooting at the Empire State Building- all the people were shot by the cops. Then the mayor is still going to use it for gun control. “Control your guns, your army!” Did you hear that he said that?

AC: No.

DP: “The NYPD is my army.” That’s what I’m most worried about- collapse leading to a totalitarian police state and it doesn’t matter if it’s Obama or Romney in the White House.

AC: Ok, we talked about social media beforehand- how do you view that with privacy?

DP: It’s a good point. I don’t like it. I use it and I have a lot of information on the grid, so to speak. I’m trying to move in a direction where that is not so much the case. It’s definitely a concern for me. Facebook’s first major investor was a known CIA investment firm, whatever you want to call it. It’s obvious to me that you don’t need a warrant to get information if it’s all on Facebook and Google. It’s public, Facebook, and Google has the relationship with the NSA. We know that they are sharing the information and it’s probably the pentagon designing these algorithms. They are probably using tax payer money to develop the algorithms that Google and Facebook profit off of privately. So, it’s another form of socialism.

AC: How do you see your organization developing into the future?

DP: I mean, I see it getting bigger and bigger. It started out with just a hand full of us and I am really happy to see it’s people who really care about liberty and not just kind of these, you know, what the main stream Tea Party is. I guess you’re always going to have the 80/20 rule. The 20% is always going to do the work. So I guess it kind of sucks but I am kind of
glad to see that my group is that kind of hard core, active- and they understand the issues. They are and do actively to endeavor in life. It’s real. It’s not just “I hate Obama because he’s a closet Muslim-Marxist.” If you really look at his policies, they’re no different from George Bush. Aside from the rhetoric in his speeches, yeah I think he intentionally uses Marxist rhetoric, but he is nothing close to a Marxist.

AC: I agree with that.

DP: He’s a crony capitalist (laughing). They should love him. They should love him. The Tea Party, if you just put a George Bush mask on him, they’d love everything he is doing. I don’t see where their criticisms are. But just because he uses, and that’s how dumb they are and are not paying attention. They’re half paying attention to what Fox News, corporate controlled media, is telling them. “He’s a Marxist, he hates America, he wants to fundamentally destroy America.” Yea, he does- in the sense that he will give all control to Wall Street.

AC: I think I saw an article in the Financial Times where most of the world’s corporations support him, instead of supporting Mitt Romney, which I thought was interesting.

DP: Yea, I believe it. I thought I saw that Romney was getting more Goldman money and Goldman money always picks the president. I don’t know if that is a conspiracy or are they paying analysts to tell them where the probability lies, so that is where they should invest their time. I would tend to believe that it is a conspiracy. (laughing) Either way, It’s irrelevant because they’ve always picked the president and right now I believe that Goldman is giving their money to Romney. That’s an interesting sign to me. If that’s the case, that says to me that their accelerating. I mean, Obama did a lot of shit really fast. So it seems to me that they are accelerating the agenda, which makes me nervous. Especially living in a metropolis.

AC: What do you see as major roadblocks for your organization in the future? What do you think will hinder your actions in the future?

DP: I don’t see anything hindering the message. I think the biggest hindrance is people’s unwillingness. I think the system intentionally exhausts people, so they are unwilling to listen or get involved. “Oh, it’s just too confusing. It’s all corrupt, it doesn’t matter what you do. You have no personal power.” These are the messages they are constantly downloading from the media. I think that is the biggest obstacle to spreading the message. People just- it’s the 80/20 rule. 80% are just followers. It’s just kind of their natural personality type for whatever reason that is. 20% are doers and they will take action and get angry and stand up for people’s rights. That is the greatest hindrance is that 80% just don’t want to wake up.

AC: What would you say is the greatest impact that the Staten Island Tea Party Patriots have made so far?
DP: Biggest impact. I would measure impact in a kind of evangel-What’s the word?

AC: Evangelical way?

DP: Yea, kind of how you would measure evangelism-how many converts. We have a great convergence rate. That is our most-because it’s a ripple effect. I create one activist, then he creates two, then he creates three. So that is probably our best impact. I mean, we’ve done things that have gotten media attention. We were involved in the campaign against Al Gore’s propaganda. We got him to cancel his book tour; we harassed him at every book signing until he gave up his book tour. That was a fun one that I like to brag about. He owns lots of- I mean he is openly involved in carbon trading, but there are some real crony capitalist deals where he bought a company for like 75 million bucks, I forgot the name of it. But they are manufacturing the new smart readers and a month later they got a 500 million dollar energy contract. So come on. I walked up to him and said, “Will you sign my book?” Then I am describing the deal and I say, “This is crony capitalism.” He just smiled and have a nice day, he didn’t respond. But we hit him over and over at every book signing he went to, in conjunction with other activists in other cities, and after the third or fourth one he cancelled the tour. (laughing) Awesome. We got a lot of media coverage on that.

AC: You did?

DP: In Chicago, they got a lot of coverage. We didn’t in New York.

AC: What are some of the other organizations, these ones that you mentioned earlier that you worked with in Chicago? Were they Tea Party organizations or something different?

DP: Well, like other Ron Paul groups all over the country. The Libertarian Party, libertarian groups. We were just in Tampa. I MCed the Ron Paul fest. It was a grassroots event. In one sense, celebrating Ron Paul’s legacy, career and in another sense thanking god that he is finally retiring. A lot of feel that Ron Paul, as much as he was able to spread the message and he absolutely was, at the same time he was leading people into a sort of false paradigm, however you want to describe it, where people were getting involved in the Republican Party thinking that that was going to change something. “Register Republican so we can vote Ron Paul in the primary. Let’s take back the Republican Party.” Bottom line: you can take back- you can all become involved in the Republican Party, but until you’re the wealth of the Koch Brothers or George Soros, you’re not going to do anything. You’re not going to change the corporation that is the Republican Party. So that is a little frustrating, that even people in the Liberty Movement fall for this shit and get distracted. Now the distraction is over. Ron Paul will now retire and become an educator. I am sure he is going to do a lot of speeches, which is great and pump people up but he won’t be distracting. He still going to be calling support for his son in the Republican Party-Ran Paul- but it will be less so because people don’t like Rand Paul. The Liberty Movement doesn’t like Rand Paul, at least the
hardcore ones. So it won’t be as bad and people will start accepting that, the people involved in the Ron Paul campaign will become turn to more important activism.

AC: You were saying before that you were loosely tied to the Tea Party movement. What made you decide to choose that name, the Tea Party Patriots?

DP: Well, this is kind of a growing experience for me, you know? I wasn’t a libertarian in 2007. So, George W. Bush got on television in November, right before they started the bailouts, October or November, whenever it was in 2007 and said that we need to suspend capitalism to save it. I said, “What?! What did he just say?!” I was like, “No, that’s not right.” And I wasn’t really politically active before that. It was really that statement I can say that was a wake-up for me. At the same time my mom was passing away and this is why I said, especially for me but I believe it to be universally true, that liberty is a spiritual- it’s a spiritual state of being. Losing my mom to cancer, and she was very young- she was 54, laid me bare. I was empty and I was willing to let go of all my preconceived notions. Before that, I thought George W. Bush was the greatest president ever. He was awesome. I was a Republican and a conservative, whatever that meant to me. I was a Fox News conservative. Whatever they said, I was like, “Right on, yeah. Get Bin Laden and Al-Qaida and all that. No matter how much money you need to do it, do it.” Then I woke up and with my mom passing I just let go of it all, I didn’t care about anything. I was able to my ideology and my philosophy. Really, my life philosophy, I was able to rebuild it from the ground up, from scratch. I think that is why my transformation was so quick. I was a mainstream Tea Partier in the very beginning of the Tea Party. I was actually involved with another Tea Party, who wouldn’t tolerate my shift into libertarianism. They were strict neo-conservatives and they were like, as I continued- as I’m showing them the philosophies that I’m discovering, they’re like, “No, I don’t know where you’re going.” So I ended up splitting ways and starting my own group, but I was, I started out kind of mainstream Tea Partier and moved into that direction.

AC: I can understand what you are saying because I went through a very similar experience. My father died of cancer at age 50 from smoking and, oh boy. Especially from something like smoking- the tobacco companies and everything.

DP: Well, I really feel that it was the pharmaceuticals that killed my mother. She breast cancer ten years ago and beat it and then it came back. I think it was chemo that killed her this time. You know?

AC: You mentioned that you formed a group in Occupy Wall Street. What is your general sense of that movement, or group, if you don’t want to call it a movement?

DP: I think that Occupy is the next logical step that I would have liked the Tea Party to have taken. Civil disobedience is something the Tea Party doesn’t understand. It doesn’t recognize this legacy of civil disobedience that the founders left for us, that our country was
built on civil disobedience. Henry David Thoreau is one of my favorite people to read now. I think that if the Tea Party hadn’t been coopted by the corporate media, it would have continued and hopefully would have become Occupy, in the sense of getting into the street. Yea, Occupy has a hodge-podge of retarded, violent, collectivist,- and by violent, I mean government violent- ideology. It’s totally backward, but these are people who are willing to sleep in the rain for a cause. So that’s exciting that people are getting out into the street. I’m kind of sad that Occupy has kind of died now, it has been coopted too. It’s not dead. It’s in hiding. They’re in their little groups doing bullshit now. I guess that any movement like that- the unions get involved, companies, and they have to push it back into that box, either the left box or the right box. But Occupy was exciting for that very reason. These people were so passionate on the streets. Now if we could only get them to see the ideology, the philosophical problems- now you’ve got instant mega-activists. It’s exciting. I think we made some good progress but, it’s…

AC: Would you be willing to continue, like you said you did a working group within the movement, would you be, if they come back or start something new-

DP: Yeah! I mean, I’m waiting. I unfortunately have a two-year old now, so I really don’t have the time to put into that I would like. But basically I put up a lot of events. I just did the raw milk in DC, we’re going to do one in Union Square, and we’re doing an “End the Fed” on September 22 in front of the New York Fed. We’re actually going to do it in every city. I just did “Paul Fest” and I’m doing a “Liberty Fest” in October in New York City where we bring speakers from all over the country. So I’m doing events because it’s easier to do with a baby because I am basically a stay-at-home dad at the moment. So just logistically, it’s much easier to focus on those types of things, but…

AC: That’s all the questions I have.
AC: Ok, first question. It’s really easy, straightforward. Tell me about your organization in your own words.

ML: The Brooklyn Tea Party started a couple years ago. I think it just got together from a couple of loosely organized- it started off from as a couple of protests. I wasn’t involved at the time, so I am not sure as to who, how, or what, but one day I saw on a street post somewhere in this area an invitation “Come join us” at a Tea Party meeting. So I went just to see what is was about and it kind of got interesting. So I came to subsequent meetings and I got involved- at some point I decided to start a website for them. I do the website and I maintain it. I always wanted to overhaul it and make it more modern. It is just the template and I put it up quickly and I can’t seem to find the time to really put it together. Anyway, right now I got to know Joseph Hayon. You know, he’s running for office, he ran for office a few times. He sort of got things organized and at some point he took control. He was given at some point- the original guy who started it wasn’t even from Brooklyn, so he wasn’t interested in keeping up with the things that it took to run it. So at that point, Joseph was left at the helm. I don’t know if he was so thrilled about it, but he has been keeping things going. It’s loosely organized. At one point we discussing putting by-laws together but it didn’t make sense because we are very loosely organized. Cartrell Gore is our Vice President. He’s a conservative not from this area, but he’s in the Conservative Party. He’s an African American. He served I guess at one point in the military, but I don’t remember what it was exactly. When he comes to the meetings, he sits there with Joseph and they chair the meetings. Everyone has their own point of view. No one’s point of view is exactly like anyone else’s.

AC: Would you there’s a common mission in the group or is it a place for people to debate?

ML: That’s true. It depends on who comes to the meeting. If a lot of the people coming are just interested in venting and getting their frustrations out, that’s what happens. I, personally, don’t like that when it happens, when people just come to vent. I think there is more that you can do and I think Joseph is also of the same persuasion. There so much more that you can do and accomplish- if you channel your energy, your drive in getting something practical done. I think we are on the same page as far as that goes. There are members who pitch when it comes to putting together petitions and things like that.

AC: Ok. What would you say is the inspiration of the group? What’s your inspiration, the inspiration of the group?
ML: Right, I was looking at the Jeremiad. I can’t say - I am talking from a personal perspective now - I can’t 100% say that is describes what motivates people, but it’s similar in concept to that. Question is do you want to go into that now or later in the interview? I don’t know.

AC: No, you can go into right now. Basically, what makes you want to do this?

ML: Sure. Well, I’ve asked myself the question. “Why am I doing this? Why am I getting involved? Does it really pay for me to do it?” Joseph is a political science major and another person who ran before him for the state senate. He got way more of the vote than he expected to, but he was only 19 at the time and was also a political science major. He was and still is in the middle of his studies. So he’s not even - but I’m not a political science major. I dabbled in it, I took a few classes sometimes, but I majored in computer science. That’s what I’m really doing right now. I am not here in politics as a career. That’s why I am asking myself “Why am I getting involved? What’s the reason?” I think it comes from - there is a drive somewhere inside me to see, on a very immediate level - What it really is, and you mentioned people feel disconnected from their politicians, in a way it’s somewhat true. But when I thought about it, it really comes done to this: the freedoms that we have are dependent essentially on personal responsibility. Where somebody leaves off or slacks off on what they need to do, the government takes over. So, the government isn’t the problem, it’s the person in the mirror that’s the problem. It’s not so much the government, the government is only there to step in where you leave off and you slack off on your personal obligations and responsibilities to let say support yourself, make a living, be lawful, be responsible, be morally prudent. If someone just decide today “I’m going to go on a robbery today, shoplift today,” what’s going to happen is the government is going to step over, the police are going to have to come in, they’re going to have to take care of the problem and you will probably find yourself behind bars. So, that’s definitely a very simple example. Another example would be where you, if works both ways, but it you don’t support yourself, if your capable of going out an earning a living, capable of making money, and you don’t do that and you just take it easy and you just say ok, the government is going to have to step in because you can’t pay your bills, you can’t pay your grocery bills. The government is going to have to- it doesn’t have to- but that’s what’s going to happen, because... And it works on a communal level as well. If, as a community people, don’t take care of each other and don’t feel an obligation to take care of each other, then who has to take care of the people who are disabled, elderly, or can’t take care of themselves? They can’t take care of themselves or support themselves. So the government’s got to step in because if no one is willing to the job, whose got to do the job? Well, you can’t just let people rot, you know? You can’t do that.

AC: Ok. I like the person in mirror quote. That was a good one.

ML: Well, that’s what it is.
AC: Yea, it’s true. It puts it- it’s very clear when you said it. Going from that, have you heard other people from your movement speak the same way? Is this why other people are joining the movement? And, if they don’t spontaneously join, do you recruit?

ML: We don’t really recruit. Maybe we should. We discussed at one point trying to recruit. It’s too loosely organized to- we have set up some sort of membership thing, obligations that you have to do as a member. Right now, you just come to the meeting, you vote on an initiative...

AC: Open door group?

ML: Yes, that’s what it is now. At least, members from other Tea Parties come by and they participate sometimes. Candidates that we have supported have come to meetings as elected officials. It really began a lot as a support group for candidates who were running, there were a whole bunch of candidates who came by, and, if they lost, it was also a support group and after they won, we would never hear from them again (laughing).

AC: That leads into another question I have. You were saying other Tea Party groups come to your meetings sometimes. Do you have coalitions or cooperate with other groups or do you work kind of on your own?

ML: Well, Joseph has basically set the agenda for being “Let’s focus on Brooklyn, let’s focus on our district, our immediate area, district.” He’s running, so there is a lot of focus on let’s do what we have to do. Although during the primaries we did endorse Santorum. (unintelligible) That was something else anyways.

AC: Do you work with other groups in Brooklyn itself or are you on your own?

ML: Well, groups did come by at one of the campaigns to help, other groups came to pitch in.

AC: Would you say there is an opposition that you face here to any of your- you said you work with the campaigns, you help officials get elected. Do you have a main opposition or are there any other groups that spread a message that contrary to yours? Is there any opposition that you face?

ML: Not that I am aware of. We are pretty low profile. We’re not out in the streets. At one point there were some protests, sporadic, standing on the corner with signs. I don’t think it was very effective. (Laughing)

AC: Ok. It’s fine. I was just checking. Demographics of your group- is it mainly young people, older people? Mixed? You were saying that one of your- your Vice President was African American, obviously you are Jewish.
ML: It’s really quite a - there are immigrant Russians, elderly, young. There’s a very young guy, he’s probably not all there, but he likes to come to the meetings and he’s probably the youngest guy. There are middle age people. People who are ex-communists- I am not exactly sure why they keep coming, but I guess they are sort of repentant or maybe they are just trying to find out more about what we do.

AC: That’s really interesting actually. There are actually ex-Communists in the group? Do they speak in the meetings?

ML: Yep.

AC: What are the points that they bring up?

ML: One of the people who is- there are all kinds of- they’re interesting, but he is always talking about how the communists took over Russia. He is always talking about, although my guess it that he has sort of seen the light.

AC: Ok. So they are repentant communists then?

ML: I don’t know if they are, but they claim to be.

AC: Ok.

ML: There is someone else whose parents were communists. The 50’s I’m talking about.

AC: You were talking about the problems with protests with the boards, do you find it hard to engage the public?

ML: What do you mean?

AC: Well, you said you run a low profile organization, but when you do try and promote your group, if you promote your group, to people in Brooklyn, do you find people receptive to your ideas, not receptive, hostile, kind of ambivalent?

ML: The only feedback I really get is from what the people give me on the website or when we are campaigning door to door. The people who come to the website are really searching for Tea Parties, so they are usually interested in how to join or in what they can do? So I don’t normally receive negative feedback. When we are campaigning, they are for the candidate or they’re not. The Tea Party usually doesn’t come up.

AC: What would you say are the most effective tools you use for organizing?

ML: It’s been emailing people, calling them up and saying there’s a meeting and come by.
AC: Ok. Now I am just going ask you a couple of questions, kind of word game really. I’ll say something and you tell me the first thing that comes to your mind. So when I ask you, when I say Populism, what’s the image that comes to your mind?

ML: Populist- I really don’t know. It sounds like popular. I’ve seen the term. It’s like in the twenties or a hundred years ago. I’m not sure what it’s about.

AC: An old history group is basically what comes to your mind?

ML: Yea, something to do with parties, but I don’t exactly what it was about. Although, I used to be very interested in history, I still am.

AC: That’s fine. Congress.

ML: Congress?

AC: Yes

ML: I can think of- What comes to mind?

AC: Yes. What’s your image of Congress?

ML: A group of people getting together, passing laws.

AC: Ok. Grassroots campaign, grassroots movement- What does that mean to you and are they important?

ML: Absolutely. The most important thing is again you yourself. If you yourself and the person next to you, the first thing you’ve got to do is convince the person next to you that “this is something to do and why not do this and get involved?” At a very basic level, very local and not, not top-down level, but on a basic person to person level, networking, getting involved and doing things that could and would, should be done.

AC: Connected to that: “We the people.” What do you think that is today?

ML: “We the People,” that’s- the Constitution starts with “We the People.” I guess some people take it to me that it’s an organization of people, people in general want to get together and do the right thing.

AC: Is that what it means to you?

ML: Are you talking about in reference to the Constitution?
AC: Yes, well, I mean the phrase and the Constitution. Do you think it’s supposed to be all inclusive, things like that, your opinion of what it all means today? If you don’t have anything, it’s ok.

ML: No.

AC: Ok. I think you’ve already answered this, but I will ask it again just to make sure. Do you believe Americans are responsible, i.e. have the right to determine their fate and also the responsibility of their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

ML: Say it slower.

AC: Sorry. Do you believe Americans are responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual lives? That they have the right to determine their own fates without interference, but they are also responsible to do it as well. They shouldn’t depend on others unless necessary, absolutely necessary.

ML: Where personal responsibility ends, government responsibility begins. It works both ways. Sometimes if the government doesn’t get involved and steps out, like with Welfare reform, they decided that if you don’t work we are not obligated to support you. And then you had people getting off of welfare in droves and droves and went to work. It was signed by Clinton, a Democrat, yet promised to do it and did it. It really made a big difference because the government stepped back. People were compelled to take responsibility for themselves. It was advertised, there was a big ceremony, the White House. The people kind of took it. “Ok, the government is going to step out, we’ve got to roll up our sleeves and we got to get to work.” It did definitely make a big difference. Sometimes it works that way as well. But we’re people-

You see, this is actually a very unique situation because people can actually elect and choose, the majority, who is going to represent them, which is unique. It’s not a new thing, it’s happened before, but not on this scale. If people take responsibility for themselves, that’s what it’s all about. They’re going to elect those people, it’s their responsibility, those who will have to step back and say, “We’re going to let you do what you need to do.” It can work the other way too. If people say, “I can’t help myself, the decks are stacked against me, I’m no good, I’m a failure, the government is the only answer that can help me,” well then they are going to vote for a politician who is going to say, “Yea, elect me and I’ll dole it out,” which is a lot of what goes on here. It’s to be expected.

AC: You said before where personal responsibility ends, that’s where government steps in. Do you have a set where that line should be drawn or is it flexible where it can oscillate back and forth?
ML: Obviously, the best situation is where the government has to interfere the least. But where there are situations like riots and high crime or all kinds or organized crime, you can have all situations where people are not- and that’s human nature. People are not going to be perfect angels. It’s a necessary, even if it’s evil, it’s a necessary evil. Anarchy is not a good idea. It’s terrible because human nature is the way it is. There has to be. It’s got to be there. Obviously, how much and how little depends a lot on how grown up people are and what their moral compass is because people will do things if they can get away with it. That’s not right. Just because you can get away with it, doesn’t mean it’s right.

AC: Ok. The founding fathers: What is your image of them?

ML: Yea, Franklin, Washington, all the guys on the bills and the coins. They were, I think, strongly influenced by Puritan thinking. They were strongly influenced- they definitely had a lot of self-reliance and if you see the quotes attributed to them. Franklin has common sense and down to earth- kind of like the wise old man. That’s not to say that they were wonderful, perfect people. They were just as human as most other people are.

AC: Then, you mentioned before about a moral code. Would you consider ethics to be an important part of politics?

ML: Definitely. It’s the same thing. If the people who are elected aren’t responsible with their power and they just abuse their power, that’s one of the worst forms of abuse. That’s one of the key elements for any system to survive for any amount of time.

AC: I’ll take it one step further. Do you think a civil religion exists in politics and society and, if it doesn’t, do you think it should?

ML: Civil religion- you mean a national religion?

AC: Yea, that’s one way of putting it. What I am saying is something in society or something in politics that is held sacred, whether it be- here’s an example: the presidency. You can the presidency is a sacred institution or you can say the Constitution is a sacred document, but it has no connection to- it’s not nationalism per se or it’s not connected to any sacred religions. It’s something independent, something that people hold- very, very important in civil life.

ML: I am not sure where you are going.

AC: Let me give you an example. You can equate, by making a comparison- there is an author in the 1960’s that came up with this idea of civil religion in the United States. You could say that when the presidency made speeches, they always made references to God, this nation is blessed, that kind of thing, it gives the civic nature of our society a religious nature to it. I think it was de Tocqueville who said that “American citizenry is like God. Everything originates from
them, everything is decided by them, and everything is destroyed by them.” That would represent a civil religion as well.

ML: I don’t think that is anyway connected to reality. De Tocqueville stated that is?

AC: What de Tocqueville said?

ML: Yes.

AC: Do you think civil religion is in any way connected to reality?

ML: Civil religion, you probably mean a value system? Is that what you mean?

AC: You could say that. A value system is the most sacred part of our civil society, our ethics, things like that.

ML: I think what you might be getting at, tell me if I’m right, is that there is a basic moral system that things are based on? Is that it?

AC: Well, if that’s what it is for you, that’s fine. There is no set civil religion. There’s-

ML: There is no civil religion.

AC: Well, there you go. Do you not believe it exists then?

ML: Not on a civil level. There is an awareness. On every dollar bill it says, “In God we trust.” Does that mean there is a civil religion that believes in God? That’s not what it is. It’s individuals that decide. That’s where personal freedom, like a said before, when you have people taking responsibility for that and saying, “I believe in God watching me. I can’t do things that I would normally do because there is a form of recompense, that he will see me.” Obviously, if someone is watching you all the time, you are not going to go shoplifting if you can get away with it.

AC: Let me make it clear for you. What you said there was really good. There is no “God” in, watching over you in the United States, I think they can equate the American government to God.

ML: I can’t understand how that can be.

AC: Ok. Fine.

ML: No, it’s certainly not- you can’t equate the government to God. Then anyone can get up and say they are God. And people have. Ok?

AC: Exactly. Yea.
ML: And they died and they were eating by bugs and that’s they end of the story. (Laughing)

AC: That’s fine. It’s just something going around in civil discourse now.

ML: You can’t take any entity and consider it to be God. A group of people can’t govern and say they are God. It’s just not- they can, but they would find themselves in a hospital, doctors with white coats, medication, that sort of thing.

AC: Ok. Fine. Progress- how would you define progress in society?

ML: That’s a good question. There has been progress over the past millenniums throughout the world. You had Indians and barbarians and you had people running around the woods. As things have gone on, you’ve seen slowly, it started with the Roman Empire that eventually came under Christianity and that eventually sort of spread out to most of the world. Then you have the other religions as well. Both systems did sort of organize things around, more or less, the same idea. You do have this slow progress towards a system where people do have personal responsibility. You can’t just throw a tomahawk or scalp them just because you don’t like them. That’s the steady development that’s been going very slowly, more slowly for people to even see because they don’t live that long.

AC: How would you define progress today? What would you consider to be progress from what we are today?

ML: Progress in the short term, in the immediate sense?

AC: We can do both, we can do short or what you mean to be long term.

ML: By progress, if you mean by development of technology, that sort of thing?

AC: Sure, if you want to take it that way. I was thinking more in general.

ML: Progress in general. Sometimes there has been regress and not progress. There’s been a breakdown in the fabric in society. It certainly happened in the 60’s and there has been that trend for a while. Some people today define progress as the advancement of liberal ideas and agendas- equal rights, various different types of whatever you want to call it. I’m not talking about- I am not sure that is what you had in mind. There are people who define progress as being- you know freeing themselves from shackles, of religion and morality. People do define that as progress. Well, we’ve progressed. Yesterday we were living in fear of God and today we are free to do as we want to do. I don’t know.

AC: I am asking you what you consider to be- it’s not important what I or someone else thinks. I am asking what you think.
ML: So, I would consider progress- it’s too undefined to say what it is. With progress, you have to determine what is progress and what is not progress. Some people thought communism was progress. They thought that was the new future. Communism would be it. New system, the new way. We all know the rest of the story.

AC: Yep, you’re right. To focus the question a little bit more so can get a better grasp, because you said progress can be many things. What would you say for the United States, for Brooklyn- what would you consider to be a good path to the future?

ML: Definitely, a good path to the future would be to go in reverse a little, because we have sort of gotten off the tight track, we gotten off to where the government has been taking over a lot. To some extent, it has to go in reverse. I think a lot of people have voiced that opinion and it makes a lot of sense. There’s no need at this point for more government whether its economic or whatever it might be.

AC: Last question connected to this- fairness: Would you say it’s possible and, if it is, how would you define it?

ML: Fairness?

AC: How would I? I guess fairness would be everyone treated equally, everyone having equal respect for other people.

ML: Everyone having equal respect for other people meaning?

AC: Meaning that you are a human being, everyone here is a human being, everyone here would be treated equally by everyone. For me that would be what fairness is.

ML: Right. And how would that translate into something practical.

AC: I don’t know. The question is-

ML: Looking at people in a different way, say that I am not going to what?

AC: It means, I understand that you- you are a person. I cannot steal your property, I cannot hurt you, but on the other hand, in doing that, I feel like you are doing the same thing toward me.

ML: Oh, certainly, I think that makes a lot of sense.
AC: Ok, globalization- How would you define that? Is it a positive or negative thing?

ML: Globalization.. There is, you are talking about economic wise?

AC: It’s mainly what globalization- when I say globalization, it’s what comes to your-

ML: -What comes to your mind. Free trade, cooperation between nations, coalitions of nations to patrol the high seas to make sure that pirates don’t get to people, things that are- nations get together and cooperate with one another.

AC: Social media vs. privacy- Do you think it’s invasive of privacy? Do you think protections should be put for it?

ML: Yea. Personally, I don’t like social media. I don’t maintain any accounts on social media. I think it’s, in general, better to avoid interaction that you don’t need. That’s my personal opinion. Because, I am sure you know and I know people who have gotten hooked on social media, so that they don’t meet people face to face anymore. I don’t think it is a trend that will last for the long term. I think like other fads it will come and go.

AC: Outsourcing- do you see it as a problem or as a transition to a new economy?

ML: Outsourcing is a little bit of a symptom, not so much a problem. There are several needs for outsourcing. One of them is when you outsource something, you are giving it to them at a cheaper price. That’s a symptom, that’s because somebody doesn’t want to do it a cheaper price locally. And that’s perfectly fine because that’s the only way people can operate. If you want to be protectionist, you’ll end up with the 30’s situation- you know, the 1930’s, protectionism, and it stifled the economy to a large extent. It doesn’t hurt to have freedom of trade and the freedom to hire people. If I want to hire someone, I can always go on e-lance and hire someone from India to do it. That’s always- and they always do a nice job. And that’s called outsourcing. I am not using the guy on the corner. Sometimes I might want to, but if he is very expensive it can pay to do that. Also, there are different time zones. People can have service 24 hours. You can only have so many hours here, whereas if you go to someone in India they can respond at midnight.

AC: Yea. Ok. What would you say is- what worries you the most about the state of the economy today?

ML: The state of the economy today-What worries me the most about it today? I am not worried.

AC: You’re not worried? Ok.

ML: I’m concerned, but not worried.
AC: You don’t buy into the claims that we are in big trouble with the economy.

ML: We are potentially in big trouble. Again, unless we go into reverse, we can- there is a large cliff ahead. (laughing)

AC: With your group, your organization- do you envision any roadblocks in the future- the continued survival of you group, the evolution of your group?

ML: No.

AC: No, you think your future is pretty good?

ML: Either things will grow or stay the same or something else will happen. It’s not something that I am thinking about, but I am just saying that I would like, we would like to get more active and get things done. It’s not something that- again politics is something that I dabbled in. It’s more of a hobby for me.

AC: Sure.

ML: It’s not full time essentially. I try not to.

AC: Yea, I was just trying to- your said your focus right now is on Brooklyn. There is no future plan to go to Staten Island or Manhattan?

ML: Staten Island has its own.

AC: Yea. Ok. Do you think your organization is making an impact?

ML: It certainly has been. It certainly has been.

AC: Last question. There are other movement going on, other organizations in New York very similar to your own, with different ideologies. One would be the Occupy Wall Street movement at Zuccotti Park. What is your opinion of that movement?

ML: My opinion is that I don’t think it really is a movement. It’s a sponsored movement.

AC: A sponsored movement. Ok, anything else?

ML: Is there anything else?

AC: No, I was just wondering if you were finished with that question.

End.
AC: Ok, we’ll start right now. So, my first question is tell me about your movement in your own words.

JS: The Tea Party, which I am affiliated with, I would describe it to someone who is not familiar with it as a movement of people: to a majority it was defined as “taxed enough already.” Americans who were upset with taxes, that was one issue that stems off into a bunch of other issues. My opinion is the people of the Tea Party have banded together not only to voice their opinions but attempt to do something about the problems that they see within the United States, and even for some abroad. It might not just stop within our own country.

AC: Yes, I don’t know if you’ve seen it or not, but I’ve seen in the Guardian that the UK is starting its own Tea Party.

JS: Oh really?

AC: Yes, which is the greatest of ironies - the Tea Party that was against Britain has now started up in the UK (laughing).

JS: (Laughing) Yea, that’s- you know any time when I see people getting involved in something, it sparks some enthusiasm within me, even if it’s something I don’t agree with- at least someone is doing something.

AC: Yea, I know. I understand. Ok, great. I guess my next question would be is what do you consider to be an inspiration to your organization?

JS: Numbers.

AC: Numbers?

JS: Yes. When I can go into a town that I live in- I live in Grants Pass, Oregon. That’s roughly 35,000, give or take a few, 70,000 in the country. I can go to the town courthouse for the “Tax Day Tea Party” and see thousands of people there, it’s very inspiring.

AC: Ok. Then, my next question would be why would you say people are joining your movement?
JS: My perception of why I see growth or people joining our movement would be our government is growing at a rate, which is steadily causing concern for the demise of individual liberties. People are outraged, they are looking for a movement like the Tea Party. I can give a specific example. The stimulus: The first, the second stimulus packages were bailing out banks, businesses. I am forced to give money to the government, if I don’t I go to jail. Taxes, constitutional or not is beside the point. If you don’t pay them, you go to jail. I don’t agree with the way the government spends the money that we give them. In my opinion, that’s taxation without representation. I think that will be a big reason why people are joining.

AC: To just backtrack to what you said was the inspiration, what you just said sounds similar to, well, other Tea Party members that I have interviewed and I’ve actually seen the videos of your discussion with Occupy members on- what was it- I don’t know. It was on YouTube, it was with Evelyn. I forgot what the show was called.

JS: Oh, her show.

AC: Maybe it wasn’t her show, but there was- excuse me?

JS: It was Jeff Golden’s show. It’s called Immense Possibilities

AC: Yes. Yes, that’s it. I saw that you were associated with Wake Up America as well. My question is would your Tea Party specifically be more libertarian in influence? Is it more social conservative?

JS: I would say it is more of your spoon fed Republican. (Laughing)

AC: Ok (Laughing)

JS: The majority of the people that are active in the American community are the elderly. Your youthful activism tends to lean more towards the left. In that community, we do have a lot of libertarian minded people, but the people I dealt with at Wake Up America, the majority of them would be Republican.

AC: Ok. I guess you just answered my question about demographics. (Laughing)

JS: The libertarian mentality is growing. I’d say it’s the fastest growing political affiliation in this community and abroad.

AC: Ok. Did you see any Ron Paul activism in your group? Any strong association with the Liberty Movement?

JS: Yes, absolutely. There’s two counties in Southern Oregon. The furthest one south is Jackson County, and just east of Jackson County is Klamath. I was the Ron Paul coordinator for
both of the those counties. So, I promoted Ron Paul heavily within Wake Up American and, I think through education and discussion about the Constitution, that’s what we did. It was basically a Constitution study group. We did get a little active in local politics but through understanding our past and what direction we have headed into, I think the Ron Paul ideology resonates with a lot of people today.

AC: Yea, I know. I have been seeing that as well. Yea, he seems incredibly popular.

JS: Through social networking, the internet has been huge for Ron Paul. Kicked some butt online. Too bad he didn’t have that much support nationally.

AC: Well, it seems that he had more support than people are willing to give him credit for because of all the rigging with the votes and the convention itself was a shame.

JS: Right.

AC: Yep, ok. My next question would be how do you describe the relationships and dynamics between members within the movement? What would you say is the hierarchy of the organization?

JS: I don’t see a hierarchy. For me personally, if you want to get down to the nitty-gritty, you have the Koch Brothers, the Fox News Network, Murdoch, there’s a bunch of different ideas behind where the influence came from.

AC: Ah, when I say movement, I’m sorry, I meant within your group in Oregon. You don’t have to go into the whole Tea Party itself. I mean, when I was going back to why people join your movement, I meant your organization specifically in Oregon.

JS: I just think there is a general disgust where our country is headed. It’s not what people want to see and more people are willing to do something about it.

AC: Ok. And then coming back to the relationship within your organization in Oregon itself? I don’t know if your still active or not, but, if you not, what was it?

JS: The relationship was- The Tea Party, you don’t get a card that says, “You’re a member of the Tea Party.” From my experience, it has been Tax Day, April 15, we all meet at the courthouse and that’s generally every county across the state, usually across the country. That’s one specific day each year dedicated to a Tea Party gathering. There have been other days. For our group, we met once every other week. We discussed the Constitution, local politics. We tried to keep it to local politics. It’s hard to do that, especially now with everything that is going on. There was a general understanding that you have to crawl before you walk, walk before you
run. We can’t fix problems on a national level if we can’t even begin to address problems locally. So, that is what our organization does.

AC: Ok, sounds good. What would you say is your most effective tool for organizing?

JS: Knowledge. Communication- you know, the ability to communicate and reach other people. It’s critically essential. You have to have a goal, a plan. You have to have structure within whatever organization it is that you belong to. I think of those, the most important tool is communication.

AC: Ok. Do you find it hard to engage the public? Do you find it hard to communicate with the public?

JS: That’s a “catch-22” for me. It is initially. For me, four years ago, I couldn’t tell you one amendment from the Constitution. I was caught in the daily grind. I had family, work, and when I didn’t have that it was all about planning- if I had time to do that. So, mentally, when I am talking to someone who’s not as involved as I am, I kind of have to take myself back to four years ago- 2008 for me. So-maybe going back five. I have to take myself back there mentally because I am so dedicated and so into what I do that it sometimes turns people off. People don’t understand or not as involved. Communicating with the public- it can be difficult. You have to know who you are addressing, what their hot spots are. I’ve been engaging, that’s one of the reasons why I have been conversing with the Occupy movement, with people across the political divide to understand the opposition so I can communicate better with them. In my opinion, when you take main stream media and politicians out of the conversation, it’s amazing how much in common who with people, especially today.

AC: Yea. I agree with that completely. Then, you were just talking about talking with your opposition, do you cooperate with any other organization in your activities. I know probably Wake-Up is different from the Tea Party, they’re not intertwined. Are there specific organizations that you work with often?

JS: Yea, I work for a newspaper. I am an investigative reporter. We’re affiliated with many different groups. Personally, on a local level, I try to keep it as local as possible, Wake-Up America, I am one of three people that speak at every Wake-Up America meeting. We have a minors association. That’s a group of minors that meet once or twice a month I think. There are some other meetings, like the 9-12 group that basically stemmed off of Glenn Beck’s talk show. I know a lot of the people that attend that group and they’re basically more of the Constitution minded group. I’ve been to some of their meetings. Americans for Prosperity, that’s a national movement. There’s a movement, it is mostly comprised of sheriffs, county sheriffs, it was sparked from a movement called Defending Rural America. It started in northern California and what it is a bunch of sheriffs who have banded together to support the
Constitution, I would have to say, from an encroaching federal government. We’ve got a lot of federal lands here in Oregon and in California. A lot of what we can do with our land on the county level is regulated through federal government, which is something the sheriffs, they are the chief law enforcers in the counties- there are a lot of political issues arising today that is causing concern today for the public and our sheriffs’ departments, whether it’s funding, funding for our local government, sheriffs’ departments, our economy, locally. We have a ton of natural resources that we haven’t tapped into. That’s Defending Rural American and it’s a growing movement. You are hearing what you want to hear from these sheriffs. As far as seeing what you want to see, that is yet to be. I have been to those meeting. I have been to the opposition- Occupy Wall Street. I know the founder of Medford and Ashland- those are the two cities south of where I live. I know Ben Playfair, he’s moved to Portland, but he was accredited with the Occupy Ashland group. I have done a lot of work with them. Jackson County Local Action Committee- Jeff Golden is a part of that as well as Immense Possibilities. He’s a former commissioner of Jackson County, which is just south of where I am at. A lot of people say, “Beware, watch out for this guy. His intentions aren’t pure.” I see it completely different. I see someone who wants to create a conversation between the left and the right and bring us to neutral ground. I am all for that. The mainstream media has painted an ugly picture of both sides that has created tunnel vision for each. There is really no “left” or “right” on many issues. Yea, there are a lot of things that we might not agree on, but there are many things that we do. We try to focus on that and bring that about. I credit Jeff Golden with that. Reuniting America- the reason why I got started in all of this is Joseph McCormick. Have you heard of him?

AC: No, I haven’t.

JS: Ok. He is- he hosts these work groups and I don’t know if he is doing them anymore. He took a break from them. He was a ranger in the army. He ran in Georgia for political office- whether as a Representative or Congress-. He gave a class to Al Gore. He has pretty heavy credentials. Anyway, I have never met anybody who has the ability to bring to completely different political ideologies together and eventually see on the same page. He is the reason why I am doing what I am doing today. Had I not gone to his workshop, I would have been the guy whose anti-CNN, anti-Left wing, anti-you know.

AC: Yea.

JS: That would’ve been my mentality. He’s single-handedly, through his workshop, he’s educated me and take me to a level personally that I don’t think there’s one person that I could thank more than him today, as far as my political background goes. That’s about it for the groups.
AC: Ok. Joseph McCormick sounds interesting. I would like to talk to him.

JS: He has a fiancée or wife—he’s out of Seattle. He got so caught up in politics that I think it was kind of like a cancer to him. That’s how he saw it. It was consuming him. I can understand that. (Laughing) It can get a little overwhelming at times. So, I think he took a step back, but I still see him communicating with someone on Facebook. I know many people who talk to him. If I can get you in touch with, I will.

AC: Great. You touched on this before. The media—how do think they are portraying your organization, the Tea Party, grassroots movements in general?

JS: It depends on the media. I have to say that CNN is our opposition. Fox would be our spotlight. (Laughing) For the Occupy movement, it’s vice versa. The media, it’s pretty clear to me, but to many other people it’s not. People are spoon-fed what they see on TV and that’s where I take myself back to four years ago. You have to understand what it’s like to not be so involved. You’ve got a lot of influence coming in financially from the Republican establishment behind FoxNews. You’ve got a lot of financial influence coming from the Democratic establishment behind CNN. So you are going to see ultimately what they want you to see. The mainstream media has done a great job of it. That’s what they do. It’s not like me—one little guy in a small community in southern Oregon that’s dumping billions and billions of dollars into worldwide news. The worldwide leader is CNN. You know? (Inaudible)

AC: Yea, I know. Definitely. Well, ok. Where does most of your funding come from? Are you independently funded through members of your organization or do you get it from somewhere else?

JS: Donations.

AC: Donations?

JS: Through our organization, yea. We don’t usually— we have to pay a small fee for the building where we usually have our meetings. Other than that, we have a guy that works for Fran’s bakery— it’s a bakery. He will bring donuts. We have people supplying coffee. There’s not a whole lot of funding needed. It’s bring your Constitution and an open mind. That’s it.

AC: Ok. Where do you find most of your support comes from?

JS: Our support comes from, I’d say, for the Tea Party it’s the Republican Party. You are going to see a lot of support. The more people look into things, the more people educate themselves, we will have a more diverse— I mean Taxed Enough Already doesn’t just apply to Republicans. Disgust with government growth and our liberties, our Constitutional rights being trampled on, that doesn’t just pertain to Republicans. The Libertarian Party, and now that I have been
dealing with Occupy- there are many people from all political divides, affiliations that can relate. But most of our support, yea, it would be a Republican packed group.

AC: Ok. Now I am just going to change gears here a little bit. I am going to ask you certain questions and you will just tell me what comes to your mind or what came to your mind when you read them. So the first one would be “populism,” what does it mean to you?

JS: Like your political beliefs, ideology. My political philosophy. I have to say, for me, populism is less government, more freedom.

AC: Congress. What comes to your mind?

JS: Congress?

AC: Yes. (laughing)

JS: Filibuster (laughing)

AC: (Laughing) Ok. A grassroots campaign, what does it mean to you?

JS: I looked into this one. For me, it would be a movement initiated through the solidarity of the community.

AC: Ok. That’s a good answer. How important are they?

JS: Very. People are the life blood of this country.

AC: To go from there, what does “we the people” mean to you?

JS: We the people, every citizen of the United States, maybe in its original context it refers to the founders of our country. For me it means every US citizen.

AC: Do you believe that Americans should be responsible for their civil society, economy and individual lives, that they should be free to decide what to do and accept responsibility for their actions?

JS: Absolutely. I think Americans mostly have become as a nation grown children. Many people are looking for a free ride, something for nothing. They want someone else to fix our problems and pay our debt, decide our fate. Responsibility, especially at a personal level, is something that is becoming a rarity today. Personal accountability.

AC: Ok. You mentioned the” founding fathers” before. What’s your opinion of them and do you have a special opinion for Thomas Jefferson too?

JS: He’s number one.
AC: Number one?

JS: Yep.

AC: Everyone always likes Thomas Jefferson. He’s the number one of everyone.

JS: He’s the author of the Declaration, he’s a skilled writer. I love a lot of his quotes, especially with how they resonate today. How could someone from the 1700s say something that is so relevant to what’s going on today? My favorite quote though out of all the founding fathers is Benjamin Franklin’s quote. He said, “those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, is neither in liberty or safety.” I pulled a quote from Thomas Jefferson too, which is very relevant to today I believe. “The banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies.”

AC: I know. Definitely. Everyone I interview loves Thomas Jefferson. I met someone who had quotes tattooed to him arm. It was pretty moving. (laughing)

JS: That’s a founder that you’ll find for people from both the left and right.

AC: Exactly. That’s right.

JS: They both can relate to him.

AC: Ok. How would you define progress today?

JS: Oh boy, its mixed emotions. Overall, if I can sum it up in one word, I would say uncertain. If I could some it up in one word: uncertain. Overall, for me, this is what I do. It’s uplifting. Social media sparked a movement among many of the youth. Touching back to Ron Paul’s campaign, if you look at the 18-25 demographic, the young demographic, there is a lot of people who would have said he was going to be the next president. He based the vote on the youth. It was very uplifting for me, as far as progress was concerned. People are becoming more attuned with the political agendas of both. It’s not just the Republicans vs. the Democrats, the mentality out there is that they are all one in the same. It’s the people vs. the government. The general knowledge of that is becoming a lot more understood. I talk to people that don’t do what I do as much and I have to back up a bit and then there are many times that I don’t. I wear my Ron Paul shirt out and about and people say “I love that guy.” It creates a good conversation. It’s uplifting to see that progress in society today.

AC: It’s incredible how he has attracted so much attention. Ok. Progress or tradition: what would you consider as more important? Both are very important. For me, tradition. We must know our past to know where we are headed, to understand how to structure for our future. I think we are out of touch with morals as a society, the moral fiber. I am not saying that you
have to believe in God or go to church, morals don’t have to be biblically founded. The golden rule: do on to others as you would have them do onto you. Although that is a biblical principle, it is something that is commonly understood by people who might not believe in God. I think morals are a big thing. Tradition- I would take tradition over progress any day of the week. Little respect in society today. Children are turning against their parents, there are broken families. Charity, this is important to me, charity has become commonly understood as a role the government should play and not the people. I think it’s the people’s job to give charity, not the governments.

AC: Ok. To go into more of what you said right there, do you think that ethics matter in politics?

JS: Absolutely. They do matter. I was doing some research. It’s funny. You could fault just about anyone. Everybody has done something, maybe not as a political group. A lot of people think Bill Clinton was a good president but they don’t agree with his marital actions. (Laughing) We can go back to Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson had slaves and supposedly fathered the child of one of his slaves. It’s not just today, it’s never ending. Ethics play a big role in politics. No one is perfect, we have to understand that. At the end of the day, we all have our faults, but in politics, it’s who does the best, who is the best person for the job.

AC: Ok. Now, this is a very loaded question and most people look at me and say, “What do you mean?” Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

JS: I did look this up. (Laughing)

AC: (Laughing)

JS: I think when it fits certain politicians agendas, absolutely. I am not going to say that I am for Mitt Romney or for Obama. I am going to say that Romney is the king of the flip floppers. (laughing) When you are addressing a crowd that you know is a God-fearing crowd and you use “God Bless You” and then you see him addressing a room full of college students and you don’t even hear hint the word of God because that is not popular with that perspective. That’s how I view civil religion in politics. Only when it benefits you, when it is beneficial to you is it used in politics. I don’t know anyone who is a diehard Christian, but what they are preaching- this what you shall do, you shall pray for forgiveness- it’s not popular amongst the masses today.

AC: Ok. Fairness- how would you define fairness in society? Do you think such a thing exists?

JS: Fairness in society is simply living the Golden Rule. Do onto others as they do unto to you. Does it exist in society, no. I think anyone can say that society is not fair. There are many
different examples. Personal accountability, libertarian principles, they create as much fairness as possible in society. You will never have a utopia. Fairness in society, no I don’t think it exists.

AC: Are you more concerned with domestic affairs or foreign or are they both important?

JS: Both are important, but I am 100% more concerned with domestic, especially right now. I don’t think as a country we can fix other people’s problems when we have our own problems. It’s overwhelming. The national debt, unemployment rates- there are so many things going on in our own country, yet we are trying to police the world. We are out there promoting democracy to countries that have been at war since their founding. It’s never ending. That’s a whole other topic right there. Foreign policy, to a certain extent, is important. We’ve got to know who our allies are and who our enemies are. With technology today- weapons of mass destruction- there are reasons today to have foreign policy, but to the extent that the United States has today I would say is absurd in my opinion. I am more for domestic. You’ve got to crawl before you can walk.

AC: That makes a lot of sense. Now we are going to go into another set of questions. It’s more about globalization. How would you define globalization and what is your opinion of it?

JS: The elites pushing their agendas on the masses. One world order is something I struggle with. I don’t put a lot of thought or time into it. It kind of reflects my influence on what I do locally. You can’t touch national problems until you fix local problems. Globalization to me is something that will never be fixed. I think in the end people come back to their roots. It’s good to have diversity, I am 100% for diversity. I am for the golden rule. But I think globalization- there are too many diverse cultures out there for us to just get along. That’s my belief.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

JS: Huge. It affects everything that I do. The internet, Facebook, communicating by iPhones, it’s great. I am an investigative reporter, I don’t know what I would do without an iPhone. (Laughing) Being able to see people who you are talking to, just like you and I right are today. I can download my email. Modern technology is huge for the simple fact of communication. It’s amazing what’s out there. I went to a website today of a friend of mine, my friend is an attorney, and the site was called copblock.org. It goes around the country and it’s also actually worldwide, in the UK there are two CopBlock organizations. They film police officers just to keep them accountable. They get there scanners out and they chase the calls and they film everything they can. It’s pretty inspiring, technology.

AC: Definitely. Ok, we touched on this a little bit, but what worries you the most about the current state of the country?
JS: The moral fiber.

AC: Ok. Then what is your opinion, going back to technology, what is your opinion of social media vs. privacy?

JS: It seems like today- let’s say in the beginning, no one knew anything about you, that’s why social media was created. Today, people know too much about you, so people are trying to- I don’t have a Facebook page because if there are some things that I want to share with somebody, I’ll share them with the person I want to share them with. I think I wouldn’t consider it an adverse effect, I would just say there is so much information out there it’s inevitable. Eventually everything is going to be at the push of a button, but I find it kind of funny how it reflects. Social media was created and it has done exactly what it was created for to such an extent that people wish it wasn’t even there. I have so many friends who say, “Oh, I deleted my Facebook account.” I go, “Oh, good for you.” (Laughing)

AC: (Laughing). Ok, what would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

JS: Positive changes: awareness, communication, general knowledge, the 18-25 demographic, the Ron Paul supporters- I think that is a very positive influence, especially moving forward. To see the numbers backing the ideologies that I firmly believe in, that’s very positive for me.

AC: Ok. Then what would you consider to be negative changes?

JS: Corruption in government (laughing) loss of our Constitutional rights, our judicial system- it’s something I fight against every day. You get charged with a crime and in some instances you aren’t able to have a jury trial. They knock it down to an infraction, and then it isn’t considered a crime. The laws of our Constitution write this, and people don’t know this as much because not too many people even says. You have to know it to understand it. It’s getting worse because children aren’t being taught in school like the way I was taught in school. If you don’t know something, how can you lose it if you never knew you had it? Those are the negative changes and the biggest negative change of all would be complicit Americans. The people who don’t do anything, I tell the majority of people to look in the mirror to see where the problem lies or where the root of the problem is. Not enough people care. There are so few people abusing so many people’s rights, but yet nobody cares enough to do anything about it. When we pulled away from Great Britain, King Georg, people gave up their families, their livelihood, women and children were raped and pillaged. The stakes were much worse than just a roof over your head. And that’s what people are concerned with today. I can’t fault them completely for it, but if they want to know where the problem lies, I say go look in the mirror.
AC: Yea, definitely. Outsourcing, do you see it as a serious problem or just a transition to a new economy?

JS: Mixed emotions on that. I mean, especially today with unemployment rates where they’re at, I am an advocate for free enterprise but I am also an advocate for keeping our country strong. More laws and regulations, I don’t want to say that is the excuse for the perceived idea of what is behind outsourcing. More taxes, more laws, more regulation. Then I have a conversation with somebody on the opposite end of the spectrum and say, “What about cheaper labor overseas? More money for the 1%?” They both make sense to me. In the end, the power lies within the people again. I think people have the power through boycotting. You don’t like what Walmart stands for, don’t shop there. In the end, the ultimate effect is going to be from the people.

AC: Again, like you were saying with looking in the mirror. Ok, then how do you envision the United States maintaining its competiveness in the world economy?

JS: I’m optimistic. I think we will always be number one. I think we are leaders of the free world. Until the day people can’t afford to put groceries in their food cart, I think we will remain leader of the free world. I can say we’ve doubled our national debt in the last four years, I can focus on so many negatives, but still, at the end of the day, my belief is that we are much better off than most other countries.

AC: How do you see your organization and, if you want, the Tea Party, developing into the future?

JS: It could go either way. I see it right now as the Tea Party today has kind of died down, similar to Occupy Wall Street. Both movements have become a mute topic. What I’ve seen is a lot of the Tea Party groups have spun off into sub-groups. I get the same feedback from the Occupy groups. They’ve gone off and done their own little agendas. When I went to Wake-Up America from the Tea Party, if Obama is reelected you will see a resurgence of Tea Party activism. I think if Romney gets elected, I don’t think you’ll see a lot of Tea Party stuff, you’ll see Occupy. That’s just my personal opinion. Yea.

AC: What improvements do you think can be made to the Tea Party or to your organization?

JS: What I’m doing. If somebody is active in the Tea Party, don’t just stick with what FoxNews has to say. Don’t just suck that in as the gospel. Be open minded, reach across the political spectrum. Get out there and try and have diverse conversations. Try to understand, if not for you own knowledge, understand where your opposition is coming from. There are some people I talked to from the left and I shake my head at some of the things they say and some other things they say, I say, “I couldn’t agree with you more.” We need to figure out what we
can do together because obviously this “left vs. right,” Republican vs. Democrat” thing hasn’t gotten us anywhere except filibuster Congress.

AC: Yea, definitely. Do you think, I personally don’t see it, but do you see the Tea Party turning into a separate party itself?

JS: I don’t. I think a third party- that touches upon, we’re talking about Republican, Democrat, third party growth- you’re going to see the Libertarian Party grow more and more. I think it is the fastest growing party in the United States. I think it will continue to grow.

AC: What do you see as roadblocks for your organization and Tea Party in general in the future?

S: Roadblocks in my opinion would be the trampling of our Constitutional rights. The National Defense Authorization Act, the ability to detain Americans without due process is unheard of but it happens. Censorship, all of those internet censorship bills and government and the dependency on growth. Our government is steadily growing, it’s getting bigger and bigger. The dependency upon government- welfare, food stamps, unemployment, all of these subsidies-the government can’t sustain the people forever. It’s the people that need to sustain themselves. Those are some roadblocks. Even the Tea Party has members that are on some form of welfare. It’s a roadblock.

AC: Ok. What would be your estimation concerning the impact of the Tea Party on the country?

JS: The optimism I have with the Tea Party I am involved in, give lead to a complete adherence of our founding principles, our constitution, our moral fiber of our country. I understand that the Constitution was a document that was written two hundred plus years ago. Yea, it didn’t address fully automatic weapons, I understand that there are things today that weren’t addressed back then, but it’s a living document. If you don’t like something in it or you want to add something to it or take away something from it, you amend it. That’s why we have amendments. That’s what I would like to see, a strict adherence to the founding principles of this country instead of the complete opposite, which is what wherever we are rapidly heading towards today. I always say revolution or resolution, that’s eventually what will happen. It’s sad because I get frustrated at times, it consumes you at times. There are few things to be thankful for and be happy about, but there are many things that can get you upset. You have to take a step back sometimes. The revolution end of things, when I get flustered I say, “This country, the world in general, is so far gone that, especially the United States, that you need to either denounce your citizenship or becoming a doomsday prepper because the masses just don’t get it.” That’s me being pessimistic, it’s my cup half empty, but inevitably it’s either resolution or revolution. The Tea Party is pushing for the resolution end of things. I am not anti-government, I am anti-corruption in government and there is a difference there. I support
a lot of our good government. That’s where a lot of people get the wrong perspective on the Tea Party, they think we are just a bunch of anarchists, and you couldn’t get further from the truth on that.

AC: Ok, well that’s a good summary of what you do. I just have a couple of other questions. You mentioned the Libertarian Party, what is your opinion of the Liberty movement itself?

JS: It’s a movement that is growing. Yea, go back to Ron Paul, the 18-35 demographics, the statistics don’t lie, what I see doesn’t lie. You’ve got tons of kids fresh out of college that can’t get jobs and are stuck with student loan debt that’s $100,000+. There’s a lot of frustration out there and people want a lot of answers. Our educated youth are looking to social networking, looking online, looking for all these ways to communicate, and it all falls back on liberty. It’s a great thing and it’s a movement that’s growing. Yea.

AC: Then, and this is a very loaded term- anarchism. It’s a huge umbrella, I like to use left-libertarianism. Do you know what it is?

JS: Anti-government?

AC: It’s basically like normal libertarianism, but it allows some notion of collectivism, in the sense that they believe collectives do exist, but it doesn’t mean we don’t have to necessarily form collectives. And there are some things that are owned by everyone, like natural resources, things like that.

JS: Yea, we had a guy who was arrested, correct me is I am getting off the subject, for holding water. He was taking, from what I gather, from Season Creek, and was holding that in a man-made pond. It’s in an area that gets a lot of fires, there are a lot of fires. Anyway the country told him he couldn’t keep the water there any longer. Although he let the firefighters fight forest fires, he had it for years. He eventually got arrested because in Oregon the state owns the water. What about the people who have solar panels, are we stealing from the state because we are taking sunlight to generate power? Where do you draw the line? To me, that reflect upon the anarchy part of things. For me libertarians are comprised of both the left and the right. I think it is the more extreme of the left and the more extreme of the right that perceive it. That is what comprises libertarianism. My opinion of them- an anarchist is to me someone that just lost all faith in our government, complete faith in our government and that’s revolution time. We have a majority like that, I am not like that. I don’t support that. Libertarianism, I do support. I think our government role has exceeded what I think it should be and I am all for government but I am also for less government. Does that answer your question?
AC: Yes. What you were talking about with the man and the water and the solar panels, that is basically what the essence of what left-libertarianism is. It’s this idea that we communally own the sun, so we can all gather its rays and you can’t tax us for it or penalize us for having power. With the water, that man may have been very extreme in his interpretation but that is generally the idea. Then you have had dealing with both of these ideologies in your organization-working with Occupy and the Tea Party?

JS: Pretty much, yea.

AC: My last question would be can you describe the experience you had cooperating with Occupy and the NDAA and other issues like that?

JS: The experience I’ve had- I look at an experience as what was the outcome that was generated from that experience. I’ve yet to see anything. You know? I’ve seen a lot of angry people hold up a sign and right on! That’s inspiring, but what changed from that? We took over the house, the Republicans took over the house, and the Democrats still have the senate. I’m still twiddling my thumbs and it’s four years later. The knowledge, the general awareness- that’s a good thing. I don’t see a whole lot of change, I see a lot more knowledge, but I still have yet to see the change that I am looking for.

Comments after interview that I would like to use:

JS: The Tea Party- it’s a strange thing. There are a lot of people out there that I normally wouldn’t associate with. There are a lot of like-minded people in the Tea Party that I absolutely love. It’s unfortunate that in every movement, there are going to be some bad apples. At the end of the day, I signed on with a lot of the ideals that are behind Occupy and, obviously the Tea Party. I’m part of the Tea Party, but I consider myself part of the Occupy movement too today. Big business, big banks, you know, there is a reason for all of us to connect because our liberties are at stake, or what’s left of our liberties.
**Transcription**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization: Houston Tea Party</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong> Craig Burkholder</td>
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<td><strong>Assigned designation:</strong> Tea Party 4</td>
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<td><strong>Date:</strong> 2 January 2013</td>
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<td><strong>Location:</strong> Houston, Texas- via Facebook</td>
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AC: Tell me about your movement in your own words.

CB: This is not my movement per say, it is a movement of lovers of liberty. Basically, we are a diverse group of people that recognize that government gets in the way and erodes freedom, where it was designed (in the case of the U.S.) to defend freedom.

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration to your organization?

CB: I think the Founding Fathers as a whole would be the best representation of inspiration for us. Nobody is perfect, but we were all born with inherent rights that should not be limited. They recognized this and tried to design a system that would perpetuate that belief.

AC: Why are people joining your movement?

CB: They are tired of being told who they are, what they can do with what they earn, and they see the gradual erosion of individual liberties.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join your movement?

CB: We do not actively recruit, but we do hold conversations, through the web and face to face, with individuals. The message speaks for itself. There is no official membership or organization. That leads to bias, corruption, and focused agendas. We merely want to return to an idea that liberty is a right of all people. Anyone can like our page, but disrespectful people will be banned. Not opposing views, just disrespect. It is more common that "members" are in fact friends. Existing or new.

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

CB: Very diverse. Across the spectrum. We have no focus on specific demographics and are open to anyone. I can personally name folks that are white, black, Hispanic, Asian, middle eastern, etc. The only requirement is a love for liberty. Period.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

CB: Friends through our common beliefs. People argue, but in the end, we all recognize that we have more in common than we do differences.
AC: What would be the hierarchy of the organizations?

CB: No hierarchy. No leadership to be co-opted. Only grassroots dissemination of information to be used as desired.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?

CB: Electronic communication. All forms.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

CB: No. I liken it to evangelizing. You tell someone your beliefs and your logic behind it. They can choose to accept it or reject it. No harm, no foul.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

CB: Many. As long as they are in line with our beliefs, we will promote their causes through our network.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

CB: Laziness. On our own part, unwillingness to devote time and effort to the cause, and on the part of others, an unwillingness to accept the responsibility of what liberty really means. Self-governance and responsibility for your own actions are not traits that are easily accepted by those who have never been held responsible in the past. In a literal sense, our opposition is the move towards totalitarianism. It is literally the opposite of liberty.

AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?

CB: Negatively. Our ideas are marginalized consistently.

AC: Where does the funding come from?

CB: Individuals contribute to what they want to when they can. If someone wants to organize an event, it is their responsibility to find or provide that funding.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

CB: We believe the politicians work for us, so we tell them what we think is best for us. If they choose to comply, they earn our support and a mutually beneficial relationship develops. If they do not, we throw our full force behind removing them from office. No single party, group, or label is entitled to our support, and we do not expect or accept the same.

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?
CB: We tend to not adhere to labels such as "commoners" or "elite". We recognize that labels place undue restraints on anyone given that label, which tends to become a fallacy in itself. Liberty for ALL, not just the lower/middle class. A truly free society will not blame or punish any group, but will instead value each individual based on their personal merits.

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

CB: Personally, a sad distortion of what it should be. Many of us believe that it could have a valid function, while others in our organization believe in a complete elimination of all forms of government.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

CB: Organized, funded, and executed by people not directly involved with or benefiting from victory.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

CB: Vital. As citizens, we have avoided our duty to be involved in politics for far too long. This avoidance is why we are where we are today.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

CB: Every citizen, not the State.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

CB: Absolutely. This is the core of our belief system.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

CB: Intelligent, imperfect beings with a tremendous amount of foresight.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

CB: Truly free markets, elimination of tyranny. When people are able to use free will, without restrictions, progress will occur naturally. Politicians are incapable of determining what is best for individuals.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

CB: Neither. Both. Either way, it should be a natural occurrence. After all, traditions were once new.
AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

CB: Absolutely. They potential for corruption is extremely high in politics.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

CB: I do, but I think for most politicians it is purely ritualistic and holds no true meaning for them.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?

CB: Voluntaryism. It does on the small scale, and can on the large scale.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

CB: Domestic. A failing homeland will defeat an army faster than any perceived external threat.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

CB: I detest it. I define it as a move toward a one world economy/currency and government. The larger the government, the greater the tyranny.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

CB: It is our main form of communication.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

CB: The state of the economy. A devalued currency coinciding with a large reduction in production/demand would lead to a deep depression that would potentially lead to the adoption of a non-sovereign currency. I believe that move would be leveraged to eliminate all sovereignty.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

CB: Social media is not mandatory. If you don't like the lack of privacy, stop using it. If the concern were great enough, the market would demand a more privacy conscious alternative.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

CB: The internet as a tool for instant communication on a global scale and the and the rise of Individualism.

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?
CB: Bank bailouts, the rise of the Military Industrial Complex, devaluing of almost every currency in the world, GMO's, just to name a few.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

CB: I think it is a problem when it is incentivized. If that is what the market demands, then it should happen. When it is encouraged through tax breaks/shelters, it is very dangerous.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competitiveness in the world economy?

CB: We need to return to a free market with a refocusing on manufacturing and agriculture. We currently consume more than we produce, and that is not a sustainable scenario.

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

CB: People will recognize that they have unwittingly supported totalitarianism in the past and will recognize that liberty is the best path.

AC: What improvements do you think can be made to your movement?

CB: A better understanding of what we are up against and better methods to convey our message.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

CB: Possibly. Or as a powerful force in either party.

AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?

CB: The government and media coordinating a disinformation campaign.

AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

CB: I believe we are overdue for an Individualist Renaissance.

AC: What is your opinion of the Occupy Movement?

CB: I support their right to expression and actually attended early local events to show my solidarity. I disassociated myself when I saw a definite political agenda that did not coincide with my own.

AC: What is your opinion of anarchism (anarcho-capitalism, voluntarism, anarcho-syndicalism),left-libertarianism, and the Liberty Movement (Ron Paul)?
CB: I think Anarchism is a goal, but not yet a viable solution with the state of humanity as a whole at this moment in time. I think left-libertarianism is an oxymoron. How am I free if I am compelled to share the product of my efforts? The initiation of force is the only tool of the state, and is the only way to force compliance of mandates. I highly respect Ron Paul and his ability to motivate millions of Americans to once again become concerned with their own individual liberties.

AC: Have you had dealings with any in your organization?

CB: We have members of all of those schools of thought in our group.
AC: Tell me about your movement in your own words.

AD: The movement is about civil rights and freedom of speech.

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration to your organization?

AD: The United States Constitution.

AC: Why are people joining your movement?

AD: They are against war, wasteful spending, and corporations being considered people.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join your movement?

AD: No

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

AD: It was active a year ago but since then it hasn't been active at all (in Cedar Rapids).

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

AD: Everyone is an equal with a voice that matters

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?

AD: The ability to move information quickly (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter).

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

AD: No

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

AD: No

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

AD: I don't know who would fit this description.
AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?
AD: The media has destroyed the original intent and turned the public on it.
AC: Where does the funding come from?
AD: No funding
AC: Where is political support coming from?
AD: No political support
AC: What does “populism” mean to you?
AD: To side with the people against the elite.
AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?
AD: Candidates who tried to win me over
AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?
AD: Something similar to what Ron Paul had here. A grassroots campaign doesn't have to be motivated by corporate money it motivates itself based on principle and ideals.
AC: How important are grassroots movements?
AD: Very
AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?
AD: "We the People" to me, means the people who are not the government.
AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?
AD: Absolutely.
AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially –
AD: love Thomas Jefferson
AC: How would you define progress in society today?
AD: Progress in today's society is defined by so many people so differently but I can't define it because I haven't seen any growth or movement in the right direction since before President Bush took office.
AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?
AD: Tradition
AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?
AD: Yes
AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?
AD: I don't know
AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?
AD: Fairness? What's that?
AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?
AD: Both equally.
AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”
AD: One world government, one world currency, policies created by the United Nations.
AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?
AD: I use the computer and internet daily.
AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?
AD: Economics and the ignition of a Civil War.
AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?
AD: There is no privacy in social media
AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?
AD: There are none
AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?
AD: War, war, and more war
AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?
AD: Serious problem that causes resentment because people have lost their jobs and eventually will lose everything else.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competiveness in the world economy?

AD: No

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

AD: I don't

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

AD: No

AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?

AD: The two party system

AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

AD: Very little positive impact with the negative publicity the media has given it.

AC: What is your opinion of anarchism (any types) ,left-libertarianism, and the Liberty Movement (Ron Paul)?

AD: Love Ron Paul and if that makes me an anarchist so be it!

AC: Have you had dealings with any in your organization?

AD: What do you mean? I was kicked out of the Republican Central Committee for not supporting Romney!
AC: Tell me about your movement in your own words.

MC: The movement that I find myself involved with is not a movement of an individual, or group thereof, but a movement of an idea. The idea is human liberty and we are only beginning to discover the value of the creative energy unleashed by humans given a proper environment. As our understanding grows we continue to reevaluate old assumptions built upon the necessity of authority and continue to see the flaws that persistently create recurring problems for society, and we push to educate and inform people that loosening controls is nothing to be feared, but is the only way forward.

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration to your organization?

MC: There are a great number of people and events that could be looked upon as inspiration. Given his intimacy with the organization, I’ll mention Dr. Ron Paul. I don’t include him here because of any direct accomplishment he had as a member of Congress, but as a shining example of how powerful the idea of liberty can be. Utilizing the election process as a microphone to the public, Dr. Paul has sparked a fire in the minds of many Americans and we continue to see that influence in our everyday lives. The fact that one man can have such an impact provides hope that change truly is possible.

AC: Why are people joining your movement?

MC: People are joining the movement because they are waking up to problems present within the current system. They’re joining because old beliefs no longer seem to hold water, and we see a way forward. People are joining because they believe liberty and freedom are at the heart of civilization’s progress. People are joining now because the current system has begun to show stress fractures and we can all see it.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join your movement?

MC: Spreading ideas is always a form of recruitment. Every way we communicate ideas, we try and leave open means for people to contact us in return. We have engaged in more traditional recruiting campaigns. My personal experience with this was on college campuses. In these experiences we simply attempted to garner as much attention as possible, while being available to answer questions, and always promoted a gathering that was coming up in the near future.
AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

MC: The members of our group range through most all demographics consistent with our surrounding population. With my exposure to the on campus element, the larger portion was youth, and I would surmise that youth would be a trend that could be fairly used to label our general demographics.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

MC: Generally speaking members carry a friendly relationship and we attempted to create an environment where everyone could be friends outside of any sort of official business.

AC: What would be the hierarchy of the organizations?

MC: A traditional hierarchical organization certainly existed, though I must say, from the ground level, capability seemed to dictate authority more than any other factor. This is to be expected considering the voluntary nature of the organization. Given this orders were impossible to enforce, but someone who had a good report with the group and an idea for action was usually listened to.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?

MC: Given the efficacy and efficiency of modern mass communication systems, e.g. Facebook, it may come as a surprise that our most successful tool was still traditional email, with the use of mass emailing tools such as mailchimp.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

MC: I’m not positive what this question is intended to ask. As individuals, competency in engaging the public varies. As a group it can be a challenge as, generally speaking, people aren’t interested in the political or philosophical issues we wished to communicate about. But this should be taken with a grain of salt as gauging success in this arena depends upon your goals and expectations.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

MC: I personally cooperate with several.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.
MC: My opposition is the idea that people need to be controlled to provide stable civilization, the idea that freedom is dangerous. This idea is at the root of many philosophies and political paradigms, and as such my opposition is many.

AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?

MC: I believe the media is generally ill informed and that they pander to the bases of the two traditional political parties. In their defense though, the movement does not put forth an ideologically pure message. This is because the movement means different things to different people, and personally I’m quite satisfied with this result. While this can be an obstacle for those outside the movement who have use for simple labels, I think the competition of ideas internally strengthens the people involved.

AC: Where does the funding come from?

MC: Funding was rarely in the form of cash, but rather in the form of propaganda. Whether in the form of signs, pamphlets or other literature, buttons, or cozies, it came from a national outlet, to the state apparatus, and eventually was syphoned down to local outfits. Anything beyond that was generally handled in a ‘pass the hat around’ type of tradition.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

MC: I’m not sure how exactly to identify ‘political support’ but in terms of our two party system, it seems our group tends to move within Republican circles more than democratic ones.

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

MC: Generally a political movement pitting a loosely defined ‘people’ against an equally loosely defined ‘elite’

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

MC: A pompous room of human beings tasked with deciding what other human beings ought to be allowed to do, and with how to spend the resources built by others for goals justified under the ‘common good.’

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

MC: A campaign aimed at inspiring individuals to act autonomously on collectively felt anxieties.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?
MC: I believe they are very important due to the fact that they are the only way forward not requiring individual ideas to be embodied through the exercise of power over others. As I see the decentralization of power as the avatar of progress, this form of movement must have a critical role to play.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

MC: ‘We the people’ is a presumptuous phrasing indicating an individual, or a small group of individuals, desire to make a pronouncement regarding their feelings on a subject, while attempting to insinuate that their pronouncement is necessarily valid for a wider, nondescriptive group of people.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

MC: I don’t simply believe we should be, but that we are responsible for our civil society, our economy, and most clearly our individual lives. As it is the action of individuals that shape the appearance of civil society and the economy, and it is clear that individuals also bear the consequences of these appearances it is unequivocally clear that such fall under our responsibilities.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

MC: The founding fathers were men accomplished in the literary arts, and there is much to be gained from their insights. However, much in the tradition of the men they supposedly denounced, they were also men interested in gaining power and influence over others. As such, they are not to be viewed as righteous angels as some historians would have us believe, but neither were they the most despicable of tyrants, but fall somewhere between extremes. Thus we should garner from them what we can with a careful eye not to buy into everything they were simply because of their status.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

MC: Progress can be viewed as the enhancement of overall productive capacity, as a narrowing of the difference between what is produced and what is demanded, as the increase in people’s ability to freely interact, exchange, and cooperate with other individuals in mutually beneficial ways.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

MC: This question is one that is not possible to respond to directly as it must be handled on a case by case basis. Consider this statement: ‘It is important to maintain a tradition of personal
liberty in order to foster the creative energy necessary for progress.’ Here progress is identified as the goal, but is enabled by a tradition. Thus both sit as equal parts of a successful equation. Also one must be careful as not all things identified as ‘tradition’ or ‘progress’ are necessarily apart of these groups.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

MC: This question is ambiguous as it can be taken to mean one of two things. Either ‘Do ethics currently play a role in the political arena?’ or ‘Ought ethical concerns be a consideration for political interplay.’ In response I shall say that I do not find ethics to be a grave enough consideration in politics today. I find that unethical behavior is a widespread problem within the political structure. This conversation needs to be dragged out much further as we first should have to agree on what is meant by ‘ethics’ before this conversation could be truly meaningful, however to me the use of power against an unwilling person is itself unethical, and thus is necessarily apart of politics.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

MC: I should say that I have not given this concept a great deal of thought, but that I would think that something identifiable as a civil religion exists. I believe that in the exploration of the fact that people generally unthinkingly identify the rules dictated by government as ethical and the breaking of these rules as unethical one would find similarities to religious adherence.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?

MC: Reading between the lines of this question a little I’ll say that I do not believe in an equal societal starting point for all individuals. People are naturally endowed with different strengths and weaknesses and that these differences are a key to our strength. As everyone is dealt a different hand to begin life it should come as no surprise that some begin better off than others. However if fairness is to exist in society, it shall exist in the form of equal opportunity to put your natural resources to use. People are to be equally free to try to make the most of what they are given.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

MC: Both of are equivalent concern. Domestic policy is more directly felt by the denizens of this country, and can thus be inflated in importance, but my interest is in how policy affects the standings of human beings. Notice this interest does not confine viewership to being within a set of arbitrarily created boundaries, and thus policies that spread mayhem abroad retain the same importance as those that would spread mayhem domestically.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”
MC: My belief is that globalization is the apparent growth of the interconnectedness of the various regions of the world. It is perceived as a blurring of the differences between the borders we have assigned around the world. My opinion of globalization is that it is an overvalued concept. We have always been a global economy and connected to the last man. Economic successes around the world do not threaten American welfare as is commonly believed, and economic failures around the world are not good for Americans either. If someone in China creates a new process that allows more gadgets to be produced there, American consumers benefit even if an American company that produces gadgets suffers for the competition. I believe the concept of globalization has reached its current height because of the growth of communication technologies and an increase in the knowledge of the happenings around the world. In short we are seeing a perceptual change, not a physical one.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

MC: Technology has played a large role as individuals are now able to relatively easily reach a massive audience, which has allowed for the osmosis of ideas to proceed at an unprecedented rate.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

MC: Narrowing to a single issue is difficult to do, but if I must attempt it I will say my biggest concern is the unprecedented allowance for quick and at times unilateral decisions to further our nation’s empire building.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

MC: I believe that a contract is placed between social media providers and their users that should be upheld. Users cannot be unrealistic with their expectations as they are willingly placing information onto public servers to be used in a public way. However providers need to be open regarding their intended uses of this information. If such intentions are known, then users can make their own decision as to whether or not to place their information in the hands of these providers.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

MC: The largest positive change I have seen is the growth in the understanding of liberty and the appearance of several public figures and groups that seek to increase awareness further.

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

MC: Negative changes are the continued growth in the size of the government and its continued interference with the methods of the market.
AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

MC: I do not believe outsourcing is a serious problem. Any labor within the United States that is freed up by outsourcing can be transitioned to fields within the States that are more competitive. Human labor is always scarce and thus can be put to use. Outsourcing is merely the market finding the most efficient way to put scarce resources to use, and thus should be seen as a positive to American consumers.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competiveness in the world economy?

MC: I do not believe attempting to look at a country's economy as an aggregate bears as much utility as is commonly believed. To more accurately answer your question, yes I believe that individual firms within the borders of the United States will continue to be competitive. Going forward the arenas that we are competitive within will change. Consider the example of the Surgeon, who is not only very capable at performing surgery, but is quite proficient at cleaning up after himself. While it might make sense for him to perform both roles, economically he gets paid a much higher wage performing surgery than cleaning. Thus he may outsource cleaning to another person who does so more slowly, yet the surgeon will still gain economically as he can spend more time on his greater wage earning role. Replace the surgeon with the United States and it becomes clear that the simple transference of jobs overseas is not necessarily a negative.

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

MC: I believe buried in the ideology of the movement is a concept that will allow for progress. As such, it only makes sense that over a long enough time frame, the concepts we promote must see further integration within society. I expect old misconceptions to fade slowly, and be replaced with a better means for humans to interact and flourish.

AC: What improvements do you think can be made to your movement?

MC: More focus on continued and lifelong learning. Not one member understands all that Liberty really means, and continued scholarship is necessary.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

MC: The tea party exists as a subset of the Republican Party but could conceivably break away as its own third party. The libertarian party currently exists and could conceivably grow to a large enough size to impact elections. However, no I do not think that such is likely within the architecture of American politics. I also do not believe that success will be achieved within the offices of government.
AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?

MC: The most serious roadblock is those that currently hold authority, and those that rely on the gifts of these men. Men do not relinquish authority easily and any reduction in the size of government will be hard fought.

AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

MC: I believe the impact is already beyond estimation. The growth of the idea has escalated quickly and every day I am surprised by a new source for information, or a new group that has formed to promote our ideas.

AC: What is your opinion of Occupy?

MC: I believe Occupy is a mostly reactionary movement with little consensus on what problems exist and what solutions would be.

AC: What is your opinion of anarchism (any types),left-libertarianism, and the Liberty Movement (Ron Paul)?

MC: I have a high opinion of anarchism. I follow the Austro-libertarian tradition myself and would fit somewhere within the blanket of Anarcho-capitalism.

AC: Have you had dealings with any in your organization?

MC: As a self-identified anarchist, I must answer yes to this question.
AC: My first question would be just to tell me about the Tea Party WDC in your own words.

LM: I started going to Tea Party WDC in the spring of 2009. It was one of the first Tea Party’s in front of the White House. I grew up here in DC. Although, I moved to Virginia to buy a house and to start a business. DC has terrible schools, government monopoly schools and has destroyed its small business environment because of all the cronyism and corruption. I was naturally inclined toward the Tea Party because I grew up here and I saw both parties engaging in destructive behavior that is economically destroying our country and eliminating our freedoms. Our first big Tea Party was July 4, you can google me on YouTube and see these speeches. It was very successful. I continued to have Tea Parties around the Washington metropolitan area and worked with the Tea Party Patriots, the Tea Party Express, Americans for Prosperity, and a whole bunch of other groups. Because I grew up here, I already knew a lot of people in the conservative movement. I had already been going to CPAC, which is a gathering of conservatives here in Washington, D.C. I have friends in the movement. I would choose leaders in Arlington Virginia to pick up political training. I networked with Tea Partiers in Virginia, Maryland, and, before too long, the rest of the United States. It’s very helpful because the people who are doing the over-spending are in the states. So, you have to address the problems on a local, state, and federal level.

AC: What would you consider to be the inspiration to your organization?

LM: I retreated once and I won’t retreat again in terms of fleeing, fleeing bad government. I was dispossessed of my home because it was the responsible thing to do for my daughter and myself. I would like to see Washington, D.C. revive itself and the only way to do that is to cut off the federal funding. Washington, D.C. used to be a pretty vibrant place. Right after World War II, there was a cut in military spending and for the first time, Washington, D.C. went through a nine year recession, but the rest of the country thrived because the government wasn’t spending. The private sector was able to breath enough and was in the shoes of industries that (inaudible). I would love to see us cut government, some definitive layoffs in government of those involved in crony capitalism. If you look back at Calvin Coolidge when he cut government by twenty five percent, what happens is people are able to keep their own money and build capital and in 18 months you see a resurgence in employment in terms of places that have lost jobs. If left alone, it can lead to full employment because we are that productive.
AC: Can you just expand on what you mean by crony capitalism?

LM: Crony capitalism comes in many forms. I read *The Law* by Frédéric Bastiat, and it was very helpful in identifying crony capitalism. So it could be tariffs, trade regulations, direct subsidies in the form of government loans, tax credits. It can be a regulation that mandates a certain product from one business. It can be damaging competitors and not yourself. We are seeing that with Dodd-Frank right now, it’s destroying smaller banks. That eliminates competition and the big protected banks have less incentive to serve the public by means of being profitable and then live of the government “teat,” if you will, to make their own “profits.”

AC: Would you include the patent system in the title of crony capitalism?

LM: I am not a patent attorney, but we do have the PTO here. It’s an independent industry. It’s also self-supporting, or was until Obama started bleeding it of money. If you were more independent, I think they would probably work harder to get patents approved faster, if they weren’t blend and have restrictions increased. It depends. You have to look carefully and each and every deal. Somebody buying a patent because they are able to financially injure an entrepreneur so much that they have no option but to sell the assets they have… I am not a patent attorney so I can’t tell you how the system is misused or how well it works. But I have talked to patent attorneys in the area and they feel that it’s the best that we can have at this time.

AC: It’s ok. Some people I have talked have included in crony capitalism patents.

LM: You mean in terms of property rights?

AC: Yes- having a patent on a product limits what people can do with it. They can’t open up their own business because they own the rights to that. I was just wondering what your opinion was.

LM: It depends. A lot of patents have been bought so they don’t get to market. You have to look at the contract deeper. Are they hurting the entrepreneur because they are destroying community banks and they can’t get funding? Are they keeping interest rates low so entrepreneurs can’t build up capital fast enough? There are all sorts of ways to destroy capital formation, entrepreneurship, and innovation. It’s not just the patent and trade mark offices. I am all for property rights. Unfortunately, protectionism is a party of crony capitalism and it comes in many forms.

AC: Do you recruit? Why do people join your movement, how do they join your movement?

LM: Mostly it because of conversations that I have. I build it up person to person. 8,000 people online through Facebook, another couple thousand people through other various websites. It’s
talking to people directly here and in the Washington metropolitan area about legislation. I am fortunate to be able to do it a lot. There are meetings every Wednesday about what is going on Capitol Hill. We have had representatives from both the House and the Senate come and review legislation. If I can’t do this alone, none of us can. We all work together to some degree or another. It’s sort of like the free market in getting people to focus on the right thing at the right time. Everybody has a lot of demands and pressure. I’m not giving up and I am going to keep working on it.

AC: What would you say is your most effective tools for organizing?

LM: Through Facebook and email.

AC: Do you find it difficult to engage the public? Like when you said you were giving those speeches at Tea Party fests in Washington DC.

LM: I always got positive feedback. I live inside the beltway. So, if I went inside a coffee shop and sat down and talked to government employees, those who receive government subsidies as cronies, free rent people, unemployment, that might become unpleasant because they have so much invested, whether it’s their livelihood or more immediate needs. They don’t want to think about the damage that they are doing.

AC: Are there other organizations that cooperate with and what would you consider to be your opposition?

LM: The opposition is progressivism, big government. You have several different classes of people. There’s the uninformed. You hope you can inform them and get them engaged. There are those who are quasi-informed and it’s a matter of getting their attention so they can focus. Then there are those who are invested. There’s the liberal media that is funded by government, tax payers dollars. The cronies of course, they’re the ones that really determine our primary candidates because they can throw our money at it against us. Unions- anyone who has an anti-competitive advantage. You have a huge amount of pension and social security benefits that are underfunded. There’s the fraud of promising everything and not being able to deliver. You have to be aware.

AC: Ok, are there any organizations that you cooperate with?

LM: Yea, I have probably just cooperated with everybody, whether it was just writing up a letter in support. Americans for Prosperity, Tea Party, FreedomWorks, Tea Party Patriots, Tea Party Express, I am sure Americans for Tax Reform, but I am sure I am not mentioning everybody. Then there are local groups, but I am pretty much- I like to see what’s going on everywhere and help people everywhere.
AC: You were just mentioning the media beforehand. How do you see the media handling, maybe not your’ specifically, but the Tea Party in general?

LM: Oh they like to characterize them- I would submit that they like to do anything but discuss factual issues. They’ll pick on superficial stuff that distract people from the subject matter. By and large they are untrue. We see people as individuals and they see them as groups. I have to respond not so much to the attack but the underlining issue, which is their vision of seeing people as groups instead of as individuals.

AC: You were just mentioning superficial things, what do you mean?

LM: Race, creed, color. These things don’t necessarily represent what an individual believes, does, or thinks. I think the left is actually racist when they talk about things. They project what they believe unto others in order to distract. They use manipulation as opposed to creating a narrative instead of discussing issues. That is something conservatives actually need to get better at, tapping into an issue. Why it’s important for there to be only state and local officials (inaudible). Why is it for a single parent in terms of her economic ability to not only have her child but also successfully and prosperously raise them? That’s an ideal. Why is it important for women to prefer marriage over being a single parent in a free market? And why is that healthier for a man and a woman? Why is the family unit in the free market a competitive advantage? Why is getting along as a family a competitive advantage in a free market?

AC: I think you have given me a good background on your organization. I am going to play a little word game now. I am going to say a word and you just tell me what you think of it. We’ll start with populism- what does that mean to you?

LM: Populism would be Huckabee, evangelicalism. Or Rick Santorum. He’s taken on a pro-life status, which means he is perfectly willing to negotiate on the pro-life position for government spending. It’s a contradiction and big government does in fact kill. You look at how much funding there is for Planned Parenthood. They murdered nine hundred thousand unborn children last year. What did Rick Santorum get when he decided they would fund Planned Parenthood? He got access to education, which is not even a federal responsibility. So that is unconstitutional in that he requested- he’s an enabler if you will. They say they are faith based men, but it’s taking the trappings of religion to appear more sincere and meaningful. It’s anti-faith actually because it’s destroying the church.

AC: Ok. Congress, what comes to your mind then?

LM: Completely out of control.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign for you and how important are they?
LM: Absolutely important. There are so many different types of places. When I say that, I mean that it isn’t limited to conservative places. We have got to meet people, we have to meet them where they are and hopefully bring them forward.

AC: What does “we the people” mean to you?

LM: Well, it means a republic where the government is limited to writing the rules of the market and enforcing those rules so that we the people can lead, whether it is through international relationships or personal and commercial relationships to economic development of the local, state, and federal.

AC: Do you believe that Americans should be responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

LM: Of course. Absolutely. I think that’s one of the reason why on my website it says pretty much the same thing.

AC: What are your opinion of the founding fathers, with special attention to Thomas Jefferson?

LM: Well, actually, while I am fond of him, James Madison is my favorite. That is because he did his homework on how to write the Constitution. He understood the danger of democracy. He wanted to avoid the errors of past philosophers. He wanted it to endure over centuries. He really worked hard to produce that argument and had full arguments with this brethren to persuade them.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

LM: In a free market, progress comes a lot faster. So the problems we are plagued with, in a free market, we would overcome them faster. There would be more growth and improvement in living standards. So progress is getting rid of government. Unfortunately, progressives, or that term progressive, is actually regressive because it is centralizing power and it impoverishes society.

AC: Progress and tradition: do you think one is more important than the other of are they both equally important?

LM: I think in a free market, people have a tendency to go with what works. So, that is why I think tradition is more of a resource in a free market because people understand that the consequences for failing to do something are much greater. Moral behavior is more likely to be rewarded in a free market, just like bad behavior- well you have to take the consequences yourself.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?
LM: When government gets so big that they don’t have to answer to the public, then no. That is when you get Caligula, Stalin, and Hitler and Mussolini. They didn’t do alone of course, they had an oligarchy that had no limits put upon it. If we had a limited, competition government, then, yes, ethics would matter. There wouldn’t be a plundering position to seek. So, more often I think you would have more merit worthy people rise up to become politicians, more civilian duty versus an ambition for power.

AC: Would you say there is a civil religion in politics or society today?

LM: I would say liberalism is a form of a religion. And humanism is a fad religion.

AC: When you refer to liberalism, do you mean classic liberalism?

LM: No. Present liberalism has its own belief. Liberalism doesn’t believe in god. It believes in itself, but it still has a religious fervor to it, driven by emotion and not by reason, whereas classical liberals see things through pure reason. It’s different. The fanaticism, I more often see it on the left as opposed to the right.

AC: How would you define fairness in society? Does such a thing exist? Can it exist?

LM: Well, I do use the word fair. I use the word just as the ambition for society, which means if you do something that you are responsible for, then you should pay the consequences. When you do something productive, then you should be rewarded for it. Although, there aren’t guaranteed profits in a market system and you do have the ability to fail. I think when people are diligent, work hard, and meet a need in society, then they actually and rightly be rewarded.

AC: I am just going to change gears. I will be more of the same thing, but about globalization and a changing world we live in now. What is your opinion of globalization and how would you define it?

LM: I travelled a lot as a kid. Globalization takes many forms. I have lots of friends abroad. You know Facebook and modern technology allows you to stay in contact. Globalism, to me through a friend that I helped become a citizen, she went back to Africa and started her own cave, a wine cellar basically. There was a lot of import/export activity between the United States and the Côte d’Ivoire. So, we have lots of goods coming from everywhere in the world and the communities engage in their own country. Of course, they are communicating with their family, “Oh we have this really cool thing, you know, X Y Z. Are you interest in trying it out?” “Here is your birthday present, an iPhone.” So people are getting introduced to goods coming out from America on a more personal level and from there come up with entrepreneurial ideas about selling cell phones on Africa so that fisherman can find out who will buy their fish for the best price before they decide which port they can go to. People can find
ways to communicate across country lines. Knowledge is power and it creates economic opportunities that people are looking for, especially in less developed nations.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem or do you think it is just an transition to a new economy?

LM: I think it is a little bit of both. You have mechanization in manufacturing but we also have some anti-competitive spending going on. All they have to do is cut off all the federal funding to crony capitalism in Michigan and that would force Detroit to privatize all public schools and only fund the poor to any accredited school. So people could organize themselves really quickly and open up over the summer schools that are more oriented towards students because now they have to compete to not only get students to apply, but also keep students. Of course, if they do that, no upper class or wealthy people would be paying directly to schools for their children. So everyone would have more of interest, more accountability, in that scenario. If you just have the bare bones regulation and oversight, you would have a renaissance occurring in Detroit. That place would be swarming with investment because it does have some infrastructure and the cost to bring it up to speed would be diminished. You have to clear up all that regulation it has like from knocking down houses, but property rights have to be respected. If you incentivize it to people to sell their properties and to get out more to other communities that are now presented, you will find that people will find the financing and they will start and the community will rebuild in a very short time. Better yet, you will have dysfunctional groups of people breaking up because they don’t have to be co-dependent anymore. The people in Detroit won’t be held hostage by government anymore. You are financially coerced to use the public school systems instead of a school that would benefit your child.

AC: How do you envision the United State maintaining its competiveness in the world economy? I think you pretty much just said it.

LM: End unconstitutional federal spending and the return the responsibility to the individual. One of the visions I just spoke about with someone is, I am a small business woman in insurance- what they would prefer is, they would prefer that I pay them the value of the benefits I give them than seek out products in the market. That would require the state to eliminate the mandates in health insurance so they could pick what is perfect for them and their family. They should be able to save their own money for unemployment, for disability, or for market instability. There should be a (inaudible) path so they are not incentivized to put their money where they don’t necessarily need to at that time. By allowing people to spend their money in the way they wish, this allows them to better leverage their situation. What this means is that states will have to take back the responsibility to regulate their labor markets. Virginia can say, “Well, we are going to have the minimum wage at USD 5 an hour.” That way, teenagers can start being affordable again. There is a fair amount of the time where people
shouldn’t bother going to college. It used to be before the federal funding of college tuition, businesses would give internally training and go on to run the business without having gone to college or get a college degree through a business who would pay for it. So, there are all sorts of tracks in life that the federal government gets in the way of and states should have the right to say “You as an individual have to save for unemployment. You have to put this percentage of your wages aside, but you can put more, so you don’t have to have it taken out of your pay check anymore.”

AC: OK. Just to go a little bit on what you said with Facebook before, what is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

LM: I have 5000+ friends and another 600+ followers and I leave my feed open. I don’t let anyone do anything inappropriate, I have rules on my page. I have become cautious about publishing private information. I think people can do whatever they want with their own information and if put it out there, they have to accept the consequences.

AC: How do you see the Tea Party developing in the future?

LM: Well, I try to think that it will grow its audience, its reach. For me, it’s a lot of reading, where society is going, trends, how to confront it, formulate a strategy. I think the best way to get it out there is talking in the same direction. And to put pressure on politicians to do the same. You have to build a grassroots movement from the bottom up, which includes kids at an early age- teach them about it and give them the controls they need to take the fight because this is going to be multi-generational. That should be the Tea Party’s mission, as well as my own. We tried to stop Obamcare and now we are trying to dismantle it piece by piece. The same with Dodd-Frank. The derivative portion of it was probably necessary concerning regulation but that’s about ten percent of the bill and the ninety percent needs to be repealed entirely. It’s destroying the banking industry. Often times the law makers aren’t even reading the legislation.

AC: I remember that with the Patriot Act.

LM: The communities have been working on the debt ceiling for months now. You’re competing with the cronies and they’re using our money against us. The top yell louder than the person on the street. I guess we are a lot of Davids and I can only hope that we have more Davids to fight this Goliath because the Leviathan is quite literally destroying our nation. I think people tend to more go along with things than fight them. That’s the number one reason why we all jumped into it, because now is the time to fight it. This is just our time.

AC: What improvements do you think can be made to the Tea Party?
LM: We could get a lot more money (laughing). Raise money, we need millions and millions of dollars. By and large, it is being done through people’s charitable activity. It’s a charitable activity because there is no guarantee that we will get what we need, which is freedom. It would certainly improve my personal situation because if we have more people who are prosperous, there are more clients.

AC: What do you see as roadblocks?

LM: Congressmen are baby boomers. Things are going to get rougher, a lot quicker. Every time congress kicks the can down the road, there are fewer people psychologically willing to fight back if you will. People tend to get demoralized and apathetic. That’s our biggest challenge: keeping people engaged. Articulating what we need even if there is a lot of cynicism about Washington DC in the general population.

AC: I just have a few more questions left. It’s just basically if you have heard these types of philosophies. One of them is anarcho-capitalism.

LM: I would imagine. It sounds like limited government.

AC: It’s actually a form of anarchism. I don’t know if you have ever heard of Alex Jones?

LM: He is an adrenaline fear junkie. I don’t know all about this, but I do know that if you limit government and all the federal spending, you have to remove the regulation. So I don’t know what anarcho-capitalism means unfortunately.

AC: OK. The next group is voluntarism and agorism?

LM: Well, the free market is voluntary.

AC: Ok. Have you ever heard of or dealt with anyone who is a follower of left-libertarianism?

LM: Are you talking about the people who want to expand government coverage to gay marriage?

AC: No, left-libertarians are pretty much classic libertarians but they hold that some things cannot be privately owned. They should be free and open to all people, not through the government but not privately- things like the ocean, air, the sun, some even go with natural resources.

LM: Here is my thinking on that. It is preferable that things are privately owned and that government just regulates the laws of the market. But I believe in borders, borders are healthy because they create competition. Competing states in Europe, for example, is healthier than a centralized state in Europe.
AC: Ok. Then my next movement is the Liberty Movement with Ron Paul. I saw your blog post.

LM: Yea, I was basically sexually molested by a TSA officer at the airport. I went to the presidential primary debate in Florida. After 9/11, I didn’t question how much they were spending in the military. Then I met some people in the military and learned a lot, including how the structure works and what they’re spending. After the molestation - I am insurance so I understand the risk and the balance of risk vs reward. In a government monopoly system is not the answer. The answer is the free market, cut off all subsidies to the airlines, and return responsibility back to the airlines. You allow passengers to pay for the full price of security. What you will find is that they will be rapidly less (inaudible) with regards to how they treat passengers. It made me realize that they fear of attack could be corrupted just like anything else. If you look at the DoD, you see how much non-military, non-strategic spending is in there. It has to do with cronyism and political money laundering.

AC: Ok. The last group is the Occupy group. What is your opinion of them?

LM: I see them as individuals, not as a group. There are all sorts of people in there, just like the Tea Party. I had a great interview with an Occupy guy. There are a lot of people who want to live like they want to live, but in a free market they have to accept the consequences of their choices. I can say, “You shouldn’t smoke this drug, you shouldn’t sleep around. It isn’t good for your health, but I am not going to make you do it.” If they get sick though, they will have to live with that. I am kind of a “tough luck” kind of person.
AC: Tell me about your movement in your own words.

CG: The movement was started by Ron Paul's supporters in December of 2007 when they tossed tea boxes in the harbors and had a huge event in Boston. The three lynchpin issues were, End the Fed, End the Illegal Wars, and Restore Personal Freedoms per the Constitution.

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration to your organization?

CG: Ron Paul, the father of the tea party.

AC: Why are people joining your movement?

CG: They understand our government has gone astray.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join your movement?

CG: Yes we ask people to get our eBlast and to join a local group. They sign up on the website at nhtheapartycoalition.org

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

CG: We have libertarians, conservatives, and social conservatives in the movement, but it is NOT a social conservative movement per se.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

CG: Some disagree with others on certain things, but there is so much to agree upon that those things are irrelevant.

AC: What would be the hierarchy of the organizations?

CG: The tea party is a movement and there is no hierarchy. Each group who supports the Coalition in NH is their own entity. They have joined the Coalition so as to better work together on events and issues.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?
CG: Mailing lists, cell phones, and websites.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

CG: Not at all.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

CG: Only those within NH. We do NOT have national representation despite FAKE Tea Party groups claiming to represent us in DC. We do NOT now nor have we ever taken funding. No one in DC started this group or funds it now.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

CG: Progressives and GOP Neocons, namely groups like TPP, TPE, TPN, theteaparty.net, FW, etc.

AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?

CG: Totally wrong. They think it started in 2009, they think it is an arm of the GOP, they think it is funded. IT IS NONE of those things.

AC: Where does the funding come from?

CG: There is NO funding.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

CG: The people.

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

CG: Politics from the people.

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

CG: Useless and owned by special interests, some foreign!

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

CG: A candidate that is not promoted by the establishment forces in DC.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

CG: Very important.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?
CG: Government from bottom up not top down.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

CG: Yes.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

CG: Mostly favorable.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

CG: We are going backward.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

CG: Progress as I said, is sometimes going backward.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

CG: Very much so.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

CG: Yes.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?

CG: Nothing in life is fair. Your destiny is based partly on birth, luck, hard work, or combination thereof.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

CG: Both equally, since one affects the other.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

CG: Globalization is the adaptation of international laws, not always in our best interests. We consider it mostly illegal.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

CG: A huge role in reaching out to the other states who run independent tea party coalitions.
AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

CG: Shipping our money to overseas banks while claiming to help the people... raising taxes.. and more interventionism.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

CG: Sometimes social media goes too far. You should not have to fill out a form to join a group that is more intrusive than what you need to vote!

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

CG: There are no 'poor' people in this country. Everyone has running water and electricity, unlike other countries.

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

CG: Too many people dependent on government, government taken over by shadowy or foreign forces that have no accountability.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

CG: Serious problem.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competitiveness in the world economy?

CG: More freedom for businesses!

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

CG: Will just get stronger.

AC: What improvements do your think can be made to your movement?

CG: More people need to know the issues.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

CG: Absolutely NOT.

AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?

CG: The establishment runs both parties.. and a third never gets a chance, so one party is going to have to reform.
AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

CG: We are the new founding fathers and will return to the constitution. We will be the Paul Reveres of our times.

AC: What is your opinion of Occupy?

CG: Occupy is an imported revolution from Serbia, aided and abetted by our own CIA for the purpose of destabilizing countries they want to transform to world socialism. See our piece on it here: http://www.nhteapartycoalition.org/tea/2012/03/20/soros-cia-behind-imported-revolutions/ Hopefully all the videos still work. They are sometimes pulled. Occupy had money for tents, micas, books, food, right from the start, and refused to march on Soros' residence a few streets away in NYC. They claim to be for the 99% but they are doing the bidding of the global elites to bring in the 'new world order'. They are demanding socialism and worst of all they are violent criminals.

AC: What is your opinion of anarchism (any types), left-libertarianism, and the Liberty Movement (Ron Paul)?

CG: Anarchism is good for some things. To me, a libertarian cannot by definition be on the left. And the liberty movement (Ron Paul) IS THE REAL TEAPARTY.

AC: What is your opinion of the Maker Movement and “3D” printing?

CG: I have never heard of that Maker Movement and 3D Printing I Have not seen yet but heard about it. Not sure what it has to do with tea party.

AC: Have you had dealings with any in your organization?

CG: No.. nothing.
Appendix B- Occupy Interviews

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Organization: Occupy Wall Street- NYCGA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name: Drew Hornbein</td>
<td>Assigned designation: Interviewee OWS 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date: 29 August 2012</td>
<td>Location: Zuccotti Park, New York City</td>
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<td>Running time of interview: 1 hour 7 mins 53 secs</td>
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AC: Ok... So opening question would be, just tell me about your organization in your own words. I have read websites, things like that, but just let me know how you see the organization.

DH: Ok, The organization is a cooperative effort between a number of people, groups, and other existing organizations that work together under a common cause that is in a constant state of being defined.

AC: Ok.

DH: It’s pretty much completely flat apart from you know social hierarchy..

AC: Ok.

DH: And there is no board of directors, no central planning committee.

AC: Ok.

DH: Its more of a chapter based organization where there is many chapters across the country and the world, and also even in the same city there are many chapters which overlap. And those chapters are made up of smaller units that are groups that surround their common cause or purpose or just friends that know each other. And I would call Occupy the network infrastructure of all these different autonomous individual units.

AC: Ok. Would you say that there, you were saying that the common cause is constantly being defined, but would you say that there is kinda of an overall mission within Occupy Wall Street?

DH: No. It changes with every person that you are going to speak to. I see a common mission, which is usurping the infrastructure of coercion and control that has been taken by the extremely wealthy and delivering it so that the people are in charge of the levers of power. My personal view is that that comes through the revival of the commons, especially in terms of technology. I think that free-libre open source technology, technology that is built by the people for the people that can be used however anyone wants it, and that is free, as in gratis,
libre, as in freedom, and open, as in transparent that extends to all aspects of society. We as humans on this earth are slowly retaking all the stuff that has been lost, some of the stuff we’ve never owned, some of the stuff that has been taken from over the past century, yay..

AC: Ok. That leads well into my next question. What would you consider to be the inspiration of the original, the beginning of the movement? Was there an inspiration or was it a common, just a spark?

DH: Yeah, I think it was just a spark. It was something that resonated. The idea of the 99% is what resonated. That we are all being screwed and we are all on the same team and there is one common enemy and that is the tiny kabal of hugely overpowered moneyed interests that have managed to take power from people or hold power from people.

AC: Would you say that there is any inspiration of past examples that inspire Occupy Wall Street, that you model your organization after, or take ideas from?

DH: I mean, anarchism has a huge role in the movement. I don’t subscribe to isms. I think that they are outdated. Talking about Marx, any of these, I am not college educated, I didn’t read these book. When people tell me about, them they make sense. But at the same time it makes sense on a philosophical level, but on a practical level we are in a completely unchartered territory. And so I think anarchism, the idea that they are no rules, why should one person have authority over anyone else, is a core principle, which leads into why should these people have power over us because they have an enormous amount of money. Why should certain people’s voices speak louder in what should be a republic? Why do our representatives seem to value the input of the few over the many. I think that the root of that comes into the powerlessness, people feel powerless, it feels like nothing can be done.

AC: Ok. You were saying that there is an overriding belief that no one should have authority over anyone else. How….. I am just trying to form this question correctly. What would you consider to be a good framework for organizing law and order, society?

DH: I was introduced to something called market anarchism. And the way I came to this, I work with people in Occupy who come from Ron Paul, early Tea Party, libertarian backgrounds, which if you watch the media, that doesn’t make any sense. The narrative is that the Tea Party is here and the Occupy movement here. But, the libertarian principles of open free markets I think is a sound one. Where it isn’t that business is completely unregulated, but that the communities regulate themselves. And that these networks of autonomous communities are able to make decisions on their own that don’t need centralized authority, centralized power, and don’t require coercion from a top-down perspective. That people have the ability to do what is right and just and do not what they are told what is right or just, or what someone on the other side of the country thinks is right and just does not matter for someone over here.
And so, for me, it isn’t that there are police, there are ways of maintaining law and order, but we give up more by operating under this false sense of security that these police officers- what are they doing? What are they protecting? Are they keeping the peace? They aren’t doing their proposed role anyway and it is much more harm than good coming from them. Stability comes from communities. Ownership comes from communities. And when people take ownership and exercise their autonomy and their community’s autonomy they will come up with the best solutions for keeping themselves, maintaining order, just like we had for thousands and thousands of years in pre-history.

AC: Ok. That leads very well into another question as well. You were just saying the reasons why you were involved in Occupy Wall Street. Do you hear from other people why they join, what their reasons for getting involved in your organization?

DH: I’d say mainly because...

AC: Is there usually a common theme or does everyone have their own individual reasons?

DH: I mean everyone has their own individual reasons. I became an activist because I am worried about our economic system and how it impacts the biosphere and that all the other issues really don’t matter to me because if we don’t have an earth that can sustain human life, what do we have? But you know, lots of people, their passion is social justice, mine is environmental justice, others are very drawn economic justice, so I would say justice is at the core of everything. Because one leads to the other. If I get my environmental justice, that requires there to be social and economic justice. So these three pillars have to be done in tandem. And it all centers around justice, equality, what is morally right beyond any sort of religious dogma, social dogma, what is truly just? And finding that, examining that, and constantly reexamining it. It’s almost like people have all their issues and at the core we realize that all of our grievances are all connected. And that at the heart of what is wrong is Wall Street, be it, it’s very true. The physical location, the banks are all in mid-town, but it’s this idea to the entire globe, Wall Street, the stock exchange, that area is the central hub of how everything else goes terribly wrong.

AC: Ok. OK… I guess my next question would be what are your most effective tools of organizing are? You were saying before you have a transparent communication network, what others tools would you say are useful in getting your message out?

DH: I would say the most effective tool in order, openness, transparency, and honestly. Not playing bullshit games that people are so used to. And then number two is definitely hypertext transfer protocol, the basis of internet communication. To be able to push information across a network has been phenomenal. We don’t even use it that effectively, but it primes people. When I can see a video from a family in Iran, that makes me question like, why do all these
leaders of my country want to be at war, why is any of this happening? You begin to question, subvert the powers of control.

AC: With that in mind, with the communications you mentioned earlier, do you find it hard to engage the public, to get them active in your organization, to get together and mobilize?

DH: There is an enormous space, in the ladder of engagement is very difficult. A non-centralized body has a hard time coordinated things. Do be on top of things you have to invest a lot of time and people don’t have that time. And then we are also up against, it is very difficult to change the behavior of people online, checking a website can be difficult. And the entire psyche of our culture is one of a consumer culture where if a product doesn’t work exactly as we expect it we... screw it, you move on to the next one. We aren’t a society as much of participation. Here is something that I think is great. People say Occupy Wall Street is great, but they don’t understand they have to go in and make the fight, that they have to put the sweat in to build on it. It is just going to be handed to them. They can’t just say I support you, I am going to click a button, I am going to come out to a rally once, and then you guys go off and make it happen. And I think that has been systematically done over the past century, people don’t want to come for many reasons. People can’t because they feel have to maintain a job, they have to scrape by pay-check to pay-check, they are completely distracted by business as usual by all the nifty glam things like shopping, trips, I need a car, I need to climb this imaginary social ladder to achieve this unattainable American dream. And then there’s the people who actually are attaining the American dream, the immigrants that are coming here, the lower classes who are making their way up and think that there’s no ceiling. But the ceiling is getting lower and lower and its pushing the middle class down and the people that are rising up are not rising up to anything particularly good. And it’s hard to communicate that and it’s hard to make a lot of, to get, to say that the food you are eating is poisoned. It’s terrible, unethical, it’s bad for you, but then it’s the cheapest solution. So without alternatives in place or solutions it is very hard to bring people in. If we could buy food and provide shelter for people, it would be no problem. We would have an enormous organization. But when you play the games of the real world while trying to figure to circumvent it, its taxing.

AC: I can imagine. You mentioned the American dream. How would you define the American dream?

DH: As it currently is?

AC: Well, tell me how you think it currently is and then how it should be?

DH: Well, I think that the American dream is that you will get to a point where other people will do your work. In a very cynical fashion, its, the dream is being a slave owner. I want to have a car, cheap gas, a big house, good food, and I don’t care where it comes from because I am going
to work really hard and earn the right to contribute less to society to the point where I have someone taking care of money so that my money is making money off my money. And I don’t have to worry about anything and I can just go and buy cars and clothes and shop and do whatever I want. But really that all revolves around the idea of freedom. I want to be free from having to worry about the toil of having to going to work every day, having to paying the damn bills, not having enough money at the end of the week to go out to see the movies. And I think the American Dream is like “you are one step away from it, you are almost out of it, one more year and you’ll be set and you want have to worry about this stuff.” I think it is more and more bullshit. You know, most of the people that are involved are college graduates, with eight years of schooling, who have gone and everyone told them you have to, from sixth grade, you have to get ready for college, you have to pass these tests, you have to do all this stuff, you have to make sure your grades are good and that you work really hard and that you study. Then you get there, you study so hard and you get to the top of your class and then you get out of college and there is nothing there. Your liberal arts degree didn’t really—there are no jobs, no one gives a fuck. And I’d be pissed off.

AC: So then what do you think the American Dream should be or do you think there should be an American dream?

DH: To me, what is America? An imaginary distinction on a piece of land. Its- you know, I believe in freedom. You want to be free, then you need to be free. But being free isn’t easy. Being free is a lot of work. There are a number of people who are, you know, free and it’s a shit life to really be free. I think that we should have the opportunity to pursue that. To make our own mistakes, to screw-up, and I should be free to have a health clinic, to run a health clinic to help people. I should be free to burn any plant I want and inhale the smoke. I should be free to print my own money and run my own currency, why the fuck not?

AC: You mentioned the organization having college graduates with eight year degrees, what would you describe the main demographic breakdown of the group to be? Because you hear on TV, you always hear how it’s spoiled rich kids who have no idea what they are taking about. Is that true?

DH: The demographic is completely irrelevant. Depending on where you look, yeah you have a number of privileged white kinds, and they definitely take up a majority of air time, because that is what privilege does. It makes you comfortable standing up and speaking. And it’s neither here or there, it needs to be constantly self-reflected on. I have to think that I am a white straight man who is fairly tall. I have an enormous amount of privilege automatically assigned to me. And people don’t check that a lot. But the demographic is, I have met people in little tiny towns up in Vermont who are self-professed Occupiers who are older, we would expect the old hippies, but there are right wingers. Its immensely diverse. And I think that the people to some
level get it and have the luxury to dive into it. And then there’s other people and varying degrees of people getting it. Whatever it is. I think that the idea of demographics is a fading idea, as if all-24-35 year olds thought the same. It’s the wrong vertical to be comparing people, it permeates every single race, gender, class, sexual orientation, the whole shebang.

AC: Ok. What would you consider to be your opposition?

DH: Cynicism. There’s a cynic like me, who says the world is already doomed. The scientists have been warning us for 50 years and everything they said would happen is happening. And a lot of it ahead of schedule. And even if we were to shut down all the machines right down this second, it doesn’t fucking matter? So why should I bother with this? Why don’t I carve out a little niche for myself and retreat and just say screw it. So there is that sort of cynicism. Then there’s the cynicism of well, the bully is too powerful. If you were that kind of cynic and you look around, there are 40 people here and just as many police officers standing around. How can these people do anything? They smell bad. Fuck them. They can’t do anything. And then there’s the cynic that knows how fucked up shit is, the on-air specialists analysts- on MSNBC that knows the person they are interviewing or talking about, or they know that it’s all bullshit but they are like this is the way things are and this is just how the game is played and so I am going to continue to play that game. So I think cynicism...

AC: Ok. And what would you say is your main form of political support or are you all in this on your own?

DH: What do you mean?

AC: Do you have any... are there any organizations, groups, individuals, outside Occupy Wall Street that give support, funding, or going on air saying this movement has merit and people should listen to it?

DH: Pretty much anyone who picked up the 99%, is throwing some kind of support. But there is no, how do you plug in a union or a political organization into another organization that has no center. Occupy Rhode Island could be completely funded by the Democratic Party while Occupy Santa Cruz is completely supported by the Libertarian movement there. I have no idea. All these people come from somewhere. I am one of the few exceptions in that I was just out there doing free-lance consulting having an easy life and then I dove into this. I think the vast majority of individuals come from organizations they see as ineffective. They come from the institutional left or former political organizing or labor organizing and sometimes they continue doing that. Lots of times people have just been laid off. Or plenty people came from organizing for Obama.

AC: OK. Well then, to go into another section, what does populism mean to you?
DH: Populism?

AC: When you hear the word Populism, what is your first...

DH: I don’t know. Like..

AC: You have no idea?

DH: No

AC: You have no opinion?

DH: No

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

DH: A bunch of old white men, half of who are millionaires. The most powerful institution on the planet that acts like it is there job to get nothing done.

AC: Ok. How would you define a grassroots campaign, movement, organization?

DH: Something owned and operated by the people it seeks to empower.

AC: Do you believe they are important, grassroots organizations?

DH: Absolutely. I think it’s the only way to get shit done. Once you get to a place where you institutionalize and the bureaucracy builds up, you can’t operate. I think that, you know, these institutions, these monolithic institutions, are so pathetically ineffective. The massiveness is all they have going for it. There’s no substance and the grassroots are the ones with substance. And it’s a constant, grassroots organizations are swallowed up by the bigger institutions until all the life has been sucked out. And then it starts a new.

AC: What does “we the people” mean to you?

DH: “We the people?” It harkens back to the Americans. The first things that pops to mind is a bunch of Americans standing around a town hall. The Norman Rockwell painting. But, I’d like it to be the immigrants and the poor, and the uneducated-un-classically educated- that space its older people, white people, the space in my mind. That isn’t really the people, that isn’t an accurate cross section of the country. Langstan Hughes has a poem about “America never was and the promise of America is yet to be delivered.” That’s how I think about Populism. This idea that everybody preaches but nobody practices.
AC: Do you believe that and American should be responsible (i.e.: have the right to decide their own fate and accept responsibility) for the actions of their society and individual actions? I mean, we went into a little bit beforehand, with freedom.

DH: Yeah. Absolutely. I mean; one of the biggest problems is that people can’t exercise power or their responsibility. So, a school teacher can’t discipline a child, a principal can’t discipline a school teacher. On the flip side, these cops can come over and shoot me in the fucking head and it would be a very different story if it were someone else. It’s a certain kind of insanity. People can’t make decisions. Even like you and me. There are things you think. Am I going to get sued for doing this? You can’t take any autonomous actions because we set the system up for safety and accountability, but no one is accountable and no is empowered to make decisions on anything. I think it should be that way. I think it should be you make decision, and set it up so that it’s obvious who is making the decisions and how the decisions are being made and allow equal access to become someone who makes the decisions, which is very much not the case.

AC: What are your opinions of the founding fathers, the origins of the country, Thomas Jefferson?

DH: White land-owning, slave owners. They did a great thing for the aristocracy at the time. But they didn’t change- our revolution was so un-revolutionary. But what they did, they created a story and narrative, I don’t know about other places, but here it’s a free country, I can do this, it’s a free country. And even if that isn’t really the case, the fact that every person, that’s in the back of their head, in their psyche, the life blood of America, a very powerful thing. We have that sort of narrative to fall back on, a goal to achieve, this is what should be. And when it isn’t, people are like this doesn’t match up with this narrative of America. So obviously something has to change. It is a driving force for action.

AC: How would you define progress in society?

DH: Progress ..... I guess progress is rejoining the circle of life.

AC: What does that mean?

DH: That’s operating in a manner that is sustainable, so that we can develop.

AC: Sustainable development?

DH: Sustainable development, but just like living in a way so that you can pursue- all these buildings here, the stone ones are so intricately done and beautifully done. And when you compare the windows and doors to this one over here...this is what progress is considered. We build these massive skyscrapers but there is no artistry in it, no time was put in it because it was
done in such a way the most profitable. The least amount of – maximize the work. Really, progress is where work is in harmony with life and that your work is your life and love what you do. That seems more Progressive to me.

AC: We have progress and we have tradition. Do you think one is more important than the other or are they both equal?

DH: Traditions are a complicated thing. They can inform progress but it can also stand in the way of progress. And I think that we are in a state where its progress for progresses sake. Its growth, everything is about growth. We have to continue growing the economy. Actually I was talking to someone the other day who still plays SimCity. And SimCity doesn’t allow you to create a sustainable city. It has to continue growing or you lose the game. And the idea, the traditions of sitting around a camp fire singing are, tradition is something to be respected, analyzed and reconfigured and modeled upon and to guide progress. And when one gets away from the other that’s when you run into problems.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics and in society?

DH: Yes. I think ethics is the key ingredient missing from everything. And it’s been systematically removed. You know, I felt like I lived a very ethical life, yet to do the work I did, could be used unethically. I used to make websites for medical subsidiaries that helped educate doctors how to run trainings for other doctors on how to sell certain prescription medicine. And it’s like I’d become so far removed from the unethical behavior that I get this false sense that I live ethically. Like, I ride my bike, I recycle, I have a garden, but I still feeding into the machine that at its core is unethical. And if everyone really looked at the ethics of what they did, we would be in a much different situation. But we are giving so many outs. So many of the people that do the high frequency trading or the programmers who write the stuff or the speech writer who writes the speech or directs the attack ad- they’re able to remove themselves from the ethical behavior. Because I am not the one saying the speech, I just wrote it. I’m not the one, you know, committing the atrocities, I am just paying my taxes.

AC: Would you say a civil religion, an idea that- the United States, the constitution, its institutions, the offices themselves are holy- exists in the United States? Something sacred? Like citizenship itself?

DH: No, I think that holding anything sacred is dangerous. You know, the way we hold the founding fathers with such sacred light. You know Columbus is sacred and the first thing he did when he came to the new world is “hey these guys would make really great slaves.” You can see it in the religions. The Christians hold sacred the bible, but holding it more sacred than why, than people’s lives, you run into some extreme issues with that kind of stuff. So, I think that anything sacred, that we can’t do away with this because it has been around- I mean, it’s even
happening in Occupy Wall Street. We have, we created documents and now we are beginning
to think of those documents as sacred. And it isn’t something that’s open to interpretation, for
review. Maybe we need to demolish some of the institutions and documents and give way from
that sacred line of thinking because it can very easily trap us. So, yeah, I don’t think anything
should be held sacred. A part from what I suppose is human life.

AC: Ok. You’ve touched upon it with everything you have said, but maybe it would nice just to
round it up. How would you define fairness in society? Do you think it exists today? Do you
think it is possible to exist in the future?

DH: No. Fairness does not exist. But, working in Occupy Wall Street has definitely taught me a
lot about what it means to be fair. Fairness and equality and equitable ownership is
complicated. Occupy Wall Street tried to be fair by saying, “Anyone is welcome. Anyone can
come in and all our voices are exactly the same.” And that doesn’t work because it allows
agent-provocateurs to come in and allows people who are just crazy or people that don’t want
to work together or can’t work together to disrupt and derail. So I have come to the conclusion,
fairness is something – the door is open to everyone and it’s clear how to achieve what
everyone else achieves but it’s not anyway guaranteed. And that line of thinking that can
definitely be warped and there’s that very right wing like, “You’re poor because you’re not
working hard enough.” But you’re because the system is set up against you and once you start
going under , it’s almost impossible to resurface because the system isn’t fair. Fairness is
something – maybe it’s never attainable, but it’s something that always has to be at the core.
“Is this fair what we are doing?” “Is it fair?” “How can we make it more fair?” That idea of
continually check in on yourself, like I was saying about privilege, it’s not fair that when I speak,
people are more susceptible to believe things that I say simply because of the way I look and
carry myself. I didn’t set up a world where that was how things were, but I benefit from it. I
have to be checking myself.

AC: What is your opinion on globalization today? How would you define it?

DH: Globalization is today, as it stands, using inequality to one’s advantage. True globalization
would mean freedom of people to determine their own destinies and how they want to interact
with the rest of the world. But it’s complicated. Right now, I am going to have a company in the
Caymans that will do my accounting, I will have my factories in South Africa, I am going to have
my distribution centers in America and I am going to pay taxes in Switzerland. It’s the
construction of false borders, barriers and the destruction of other barriers to create a situation
in which the people in power can have the best of both worlds. They can have their cake and
eat it too. True globalization would be that information is free and travel is unrestricted and if I
want to sell hand carved widgets to people in Turkey, I can do that. That’s the wonderful thing
about globalization. Everyone is connected. We’re one node away from any other person. You
don’t have to go through a huge media conglomerate to see pictures of another land. The earth is becoming flat and the horizon is shrinking and there is no distinction between here and there, which has its own problems. There’s no lag time between any two people, or its becoming less and less.

AC: Ok. Do you think outsourcing is a major problem today or is it just a transition stage?

DH: I think it’s a side effect of a large, more broken system. The analogy I always think about is we extract oil from Canada or Venezuela, we refine it Mexico or Texas, we turn the rest of the plastic and send it China, and in China, they extrude the plastic into little brats dolls which are then shipped across the sea in giant freighters that are burning gasoline, to then be distributed across the United States to giant stores, that then sell it. Then it’s sold, used and in the same week, thrown away and then it ends up in a land fill for all eternity. So, the globalization portion of it is just that the fact is running a factory in China makes more sense than running a factory in the location where the product is going to be sold. It’s a symptom of the insanity that is our economy.

AC: Social media, what is your opinion of that with privacy?

DH: I think that- When you say social media, it comes down to Facebook, Twitter, and that it’s all hypertext transfer. It’s something that is owned not by the people, but by small groups of people. That’s a major problem. It’s a strange problem because it’s not that Google or Facebook are nefarious in anyway. It’s not that they have nefarious intents with the data , but it’s that social networking, while it’s an incredible means of connecting people and it’s done more for the free flow of information than anything in the history of the world, but that’s coupled with the fact that everyone using it is the product. That stems from the fact that we don’t own the means of production. We don’t own our information. My life is part of Facebook’s social graph. Every connection I have is a product that Facebook sells and it’s not that selling that information is wrong, but that I am not....-

AC: You aren’t authorizing?

DH: I am not free to do anything with it. I am free not to use Facebook, but at a certain point my social graph- it’s inescapable that it ends up there. All my friends are on it and they are sharing their pictures and I am in it. All of a sudden I am being drawn into something without my consent. The information is not,- technically I’ve signed the terms and conditions, but it isn’t fair. It’s the larger problem I was getting at before. We are not producers, we are consumers. If we’re producing our own technology, then we would be in control of the information. That’s where the big distinction between like a Facebook and Wikipedia. Wikipedia is the people taking control of knowledge. I call it the most successful and direct action in the history of everything. It is the people, we the people, taking ownership over all the world’s information,
all the history, everything, we’ve done it. The technology is there. We need to own the network. It extends beyond the social graph and social network, but the actual network the bits and bytes fly across are not owned by us. They could be, then it goes back to the money interest don’t want that to be the case. The idea that we have wire connections is absurd. The public airwaves could carry the broadband signal. We could have networks that are independently owned by communities. It’s not that it’s hard or impossible. It’s just that it isn’t good for business, the businesses that have attained their power.

AC: Just about future outlook of the organization, how do you see the organization developing in the future?

DH: I have no idea. It could be gone in six months. There could be nothing left of it. But it’s almost like where does a mist go? It’s never been a thing. It was always just a network of individuals. The Occupy brand name almost, is just a way for me- I equate a lot it to the Christian fish. You know the story when two Christians would meet, one of them would draw one half and the other completed it? That’s essentially all it is. “Hey, I’m an activist. I’m in the movement. Are you in the movement? Are we in the movement? Ok. Let’s-“ it’s a starting point for people. That’s what it will continue to be, even if it doesn’t have a website or have meetings. The connections have been made, the people are there, shits happening.

AC: To go into that, do you see the movement- are there any goals to develop the movement further into something more structured, like a new type of political party?

DH: Some people might have those goals. The organization is incapable of having those goals. Occupy Wall Street can have those goals, but does that mean Occupy New Jersey has the same goal? Definitely not. To me, it’s more like,... the goal is to become better at being a node in the network. The goal is to have a goal. How do we come to the point where we can have goals? We tried general assemblies and for the most part they’ve failed and now maybe is that Occupy becomes a tool to organize municipal governments. We start running consensus-based decision making. What does that mean Occupy is something- you can’t unhinge it from all the people that make it up and all the different beliefs and ideas they have. When you begin to unhinge it from that, it becomes not Occupy anymore and something else.

AC: How would you measure the impact the organization or you actions have made so far? Do you believe you have made an impact, at least here in New York, with your actions?

DH: It depends on how you define impact. We never set out any goals to achieve, so how can we achieve goals we never set. But, it’s been more about acknowledgement. That fact that I hear people talking about capitalism as a bad thing, that’s an enormous- I don’t know if I would call it a victory, but I see in a sorts of things. I was watching a presentation from the W3 working groups, assembly, something like that- W3 does internet standardization. They are changing the
way they are acting and a lot of it comes from Occupy. The guy said Occupy does stuff like this and we’ve decided that we are going to do something similar. I think the impact is so hard to quantify. Me personally, I am never going to go back to working in a 9-5 job. I am definitely not going to be doing work- I want to do work that promotes and furthers social justice. All my time and energy for the rest of my life is going to be spent doing that. What kind of impact is that going to have and how many people are like me, who have been empowered? How many people have been empowered to think critically about the system and the state? To think critically about the police and the power structures? How many people have begun to think critically of banking and regulatory agencies? I think the effect is immeasurable and it’s going to play out over years and years to come. But then at the same time, when there is the next big upheaval, we’ve already figured out all this stuff. We’ve got, figured out how to do effective communications. We figured out how to- I can sit down with 50 people and come to a clear decision. I can organize enormous amounts of people quickly and effectively. I can empower other people to do the same thing. How do you judge that? If I teach someone in my neighborhood-here’s how to run a consensus-based meeting where you have 50 people sitting in a circle and everyone gets a chance to speak and you come to a conclusion about something. It’s these very powerful but very hard to define skills and ideas that are going to permeate a large portion of people and that are to continue to radiate out and reverberate back into institutions. So, there are people in 350.org or the Democratic Party, or in unions- the unions are in for a surprise over the next couple of years in that their membership is going to start organizing outside the leadership. What happens when you drop a work-press, buddy-press social network into a union? You can all talk directly to each other. It’s not like one branch has to bring something to the top to have it brought down. You can directly do it. So it’s like what is the effect of the internet? It’s this ever-evolving impossible to measure thing. It could be the stuff that’s happening, the stuff that comes up Occupy, could be pretty bad. We have a group called Debt Strike. The idea of everyone with debt not paying debt- it’s terrifying what would happen. It’s like everyone woke up and realized that they could just collapse the economy if they work together. It’s going to be interesting to see where this all goes.

AC: That would be really interesting. Ok, just two more questions. Earlier on you were saying about right-wing part of Occupy Wall Street, Libertarian influence, things like that- what would be your opinion of the Tea Party?

DH: The Tea Party is confusing to me. Back when they were coming around, I was like- “Look at them! That guy had a gun at a rally. What a bunch of crazy old white people talking about taking their country back.” But then being on the inside- I was in this park every single day during the occupation- at then you look out and you reflect on it and you hear what people think about it and you are like wow, you just have no idea. Journalists are for the most part incapable of conveying the truth. It’s not necessarily nefarious. In a 24-hour news cycle, you
have to find, research, and then report on a story in a span of a day. How can you have any substance to any of it? It’s an effect of a corrupt system. But like, I look at the Tea Party now, and I think I got a taste of their fringes. I saw their fringes, then I saw-I talked to former Tea Party activists and they said it was completely stolen. The Koch Brothers just swept it away. Now it’s just another thing. You don’t see Occupy booking huge convention centers.

AC: There is no Occupy Wall Street Express.

DH: Exactly. This is what a grassroots organization looks like when it is completely hollowed out and turned into a zombie of what it once was. And all the people that were in there, there is definitely, on the right, there is definitely cognitive dissidence around-theys talk about freedom and they don’t talk about equality. And you can’t have one without the other. I can’t be free if anyone else is not free. There is cognitive dissidence in Occupy as well. You can’t have communism without these motherfuckers (pointing at police). You can’t force everyone to live in a communal life style. That’s impossible. This park is as much ours as it is anyone else’s. There are lots of things you nit-pick all the way through and the more I realize is like if I were on the outside looking in, the narrative I’d have about Occupy could be completely different. That could change the way I look at the Tea Party. I think that Occupy, the Tea Party, the Libertarians, the radical left, and the Freedom movements are just so close together that the idea that Occupy is the counterweight of the Tea Party, Occupy is the democratic version of the Tea Party is absurd. The Democrats and Republicans are right here, next to each other and we’re way over here, next to each other. It’s like what I said about the demographic verticals before. The party verticals don’t- the two dimensional left and right doesn’t appreciate the complexity of people’s political views. I have a lot of very right wing ideas, but at the same I’ve a lot of left and center ideas. I can’t be the only person with a complex political and moral process to what I think. Most people are probably just as complex. Even the real simple seeming Tea Party, this person is just an old dumb fart, you just don’t know. I see it as, if the Tea Party is going to win or Occupy is going to win, we’re going to win together and not apart.

AC: Ok. The last question, leading from that. Has there been any kind of form of communication or cooperation between certain elements of the Tea Party, whatever is left over after being hollowed out, and the organization here? Do you foresee any possible future collaboration with them?

DH: I think we will get to that point. There’s definitely been like “Occupy and the Tea Party sit down and realize they have a lot in common.” Stories like that pop up all the time. There are plenty of right-wing Libertarians Tea Partiers in Occupy. They’re definitely a minority, but they’re there. They bring it back to their friends. They’re like “Guys, it’s the same shit.” You know, the Tea Party is upset about government, we’re upset about corporations, and government and corporations are so tightly coiled together. One corrupts the other. It’s really
like both movements are on the mark and the closer we get to acknowledging that it’s the filthy rich-it doesn’t matter their religion, their affiliation. I was watching something by Cornell West and he was like, “The Republicans are governing for the oligarchy and the Democrats are governing, both, for the oligarchy.” So, it’s like two different flavors of oligarchy and then it’s which team do you want to support? It’s like people fighting over kings. “My king is the best king. No my king is the best king.” But you’re both enslaved. What are you fighting over? I think it’s inevitable. It’s going to have to dawn on people. I think it’s going to dawn on people in interesting ways. I think it was an anti-fracking thing. There was a piece of land out in Jersey and all these super left-wing radicals, radical leftists were out, but so was the NRA. It was like two groups that would NEVER talk to each. They would never work together and here they are at the same action. That’s how it’s going to come about. I want to protect the environment because I live on the environment or I hunt to get food and I want to preserve the environment. And the other side wants to preserve the environment, they may not agree with hunting, but it’s like I would much rather have someone hunting deer than poisoning the land. It’s going to be tough. We are so conditioned to be, “I am so right. I just get it? I fucking get it.” And these idiots (pointing at police) and the media? Jesus Christ, they’re just like “You know what the Tea Party said about you?” “Hey, Tea Party. You know what Occupy did?” Of course, you have the real bad guy coaxing both sides and be like “Hey this guy talked about your mom the other day. You should beat him up. Oh look, he is beating one of your people up” While they are stealing from both of us. We are so conditioned to think we are right and the fucking leftists don’t have all the answers. The leftists have shitty econ- “Oh, we’ll all just live in peace and harmony.” No, we won’t. You need to have contracts and we are going to have to have reputations. And the right is like “Well if we just let the market be free, nothing bad will ever happen.” No, have you seen child labor? Of course you can’t just trust people. We have to find balance. Everything is out of balance. Life out of balance. Everything is so fucking out of balance. And you compensate. You’re like, it’s so out of balance so we need to go way over to the other side. The other team, they see it out of balance in a different way and they want to go way over to the other side. Once those two start coming together and meeting in the middle, and I am not talking about the left and right middle, but acknowledging their shared commonalities between things and acknowledging that they don’t have all the answers. I think that’s going to be huge.

AC: Ok. Thanks
AC: Ok. The first question is: tell me about Occupy Wall Street in your own words basically. I have seen the website, but it would nice to hear it from your own perspective.

MD: Well, I have been studying it from a disciplinary perspective as well. It became a dissertation project for me as well. In November I started recognizing that there was- I was teaching a course “Campaigns and Revolutions” and I was also TA-ing for a course called “Foundations in Rhetorical Theory” and so it was interesting how those two courses collided or coincided, so to speak, during the same semester that this event- September 17- was happening. So I quickly became interested in what the rhetoric- because I study rhetoric- what the rhetoric of the movement was all about, not just what some of the catch phrases were, the messages, but how is it that these messages are trying to be disseminated or articulated and what is going on here and can we determine what is going on by people’s presence and certain spaces and the kinds of issues they are speaking into.

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration for the movement? Do you think that they draw an example from somewhere?

MD: I think that it’s a culmination of sorts. Yes, there’s been historical precedence, stretching as far back as 5th century BC, Athens, with the rise of democracy, the revolutions, the revolts that were taking place as a consequence of these wealthy elites taking the land of landowners and- I won’t get too far into rhetoric. But the historical precedence, they’ve certainly been there. And I think they have taken what has been effective, whether consciously or unconsciously, I think you end up resorting to the same tactics independent of your acknowledgement or recognition of different ways that social movements have been molded in the past. Obviously there is a pneumatic sort of function of “Occupy” and that’s been really inspirational to watch. To see how that term has been picked up and the word itself has precedence that may have relevancy that goes back to (unintelligible)...I think I kind of circled around the question. I am not sure if I answered it. What is the question again?

AC: No, no. What would you say is the inspiration for the movement? Do you see them emulating an example, drawing an example? You said Athens, for instance.

MD: Oh, right. The historical precedence, but I think also there is an element of what it means- the way that society and history and technology has evolved- that facilitated this sort of
instantaneous communication. Scholars have studied this for a while and it’s been sort of a point of inquiry. Has in drawn us farther apart or closer to one another? I think that this is symbolic in many ways of the desire and the need to gather as a community in public spaces. You have independent communes in Italy and a couple of other communes that have popped up because I think there is a sort of human drive to be part of communities that haven’t been as present in the last ten, twenty years, at least. For me, I’d say that’s true. I think part of the inspiration is drawn from the people in the spaces themselves. People are inspired by the kinds of things they are bringing to these spaces and so it kind of grows out of that.

AC: Ok. Why would you say that- We were just saying that people feed off each other, are kind of inspired by people joining the movement- what do you think brings people to Occupy Wall Street? Do they have one common theme or are they all individual reasons that differ?

DM: Well, I think it spoke to a common calling of sorts. People have recognized for a while that there are crimes and atrocities and an intellectual, spiritual, economic poverty in the world that extends beyond famine and your typical ways of defining poverty. That’s of course we are so privileged in so many ways. But, where am I going with this? Yeah, I think we have reached I think a threshold. People have felt that. At least that’s how I make sense of it. I feel you can speak about this movement in the same way you can talk about being in a subway. And you can the wind of the train coming before you see the train on the tracks. So, you can feel the way before you can catch it. I think there is a collective awakening going on. Whether or not we have created it because we are talking about it is another issue entirely. But I think a lot of people are getting to a point, reaching a threshold where they are working, they want to work, and, it’s not that they don’t want to work, but the outlets of the work that they are capable of are not there. We’re recognizing that so many- To speak a little of relationships between countries, to speak little of relationships with one another, are becoming weakened because of the kinds because of the way that we have to work. When there is a way for labor and value to be redefined and to actually work at what we’re good at and in a way that the structures or outlets for those energies and resources are not there yet. A little abstract (laughing).

AC: I think I understand. I like your analogy of the wind before the train. It evokes something...- it’s just the beginning and there is something more to come afterwards.

MD: They’re just ahead of the curve in some ways. People have been brought here for different reasons but I think that- The idea of a kindred spirit or a common spirit has played a huge role here too. You have such a mix of people but you have people that have been drawn to this because of the kinds of people that are here and the kinds of things that they are trying to draw attention to in a way that is organic. I suppose that is an over-used term, but that is grassroots.
AC: Ok. How do people join the movement? I take it there is no recruitment or anything like that?

MD: Right.

AC: So do people just come?

MD: Sometimes that has played a part. Sometimes you stumble into it at times or you get caught in its crosshairs other times. Certainly, social media has played a huge role in that in getting the word out and drawing attention to the kinds of activities and events and sites and observations that have been going on. That is both an advantage and disadvantage because, certainly, if you don’t have access to electronic media then... But at the same time, people have gravitated to these spaces and places at times. So there is a magnetic quality and it speaks in so many different fields and I think it is a conversation that people have been wanting to have but haven’t had the opportunity. So Occupy for me, whether or not was organic or constructed or created by a bunch of intelligent people that we haven’t necessarily seen at the surface of things just yet, it’s provided that very outlet for people to take ownership over, to occupy spaces that they’ve been wanting to. So this has been an opportunity to show up.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics within the movement itself? Between members? I know that it is famous for its flat hierarchy, its flat organizational structure, if you want to go more into that.

MD: So, I expected to find more of a structure when I came here and I am still somewhat more convinced that there is some organizational structure than is on the surface. Again, but that could be my naïve idealistic aspirations. I don’t want to say expectations, but- yeah, I expected for there to be more structure. But, it’s out of place from where you would expect it to be at considering what it is that it’s doing, which is facilitating dialogue and discussions-genuine dialogue about, you know, “Shits messed up and we’re not talking about this.” Sometimes that is the most important thing, it’s just to broach the subject, just to raise the topic or the idea or the frustration or the grievance or the values, or the belief and to start discussing that in these sorts of spaces. So, there are kind of some key players and you have that on different levels. You have occupiers who are occupy the steps of the church, which are both a symbolic act and one of necessity. Because the churches traditionally..

AC: At Trinity?

MD: Yeah, in particular. They used to house the.. I can’t find the word I am looking for right now.. to provide help to those who need it the most. So there are those people who are the movers and shakers, for lack of a better word, and the followers, who want to be told what to do, and the ones who really want to take charge. Everyone is coming from so many walks of
life, which is kind of a beautiful Segway into “all roads lead to Wall Street” kind of thing as well. So people are bringing all their experiences and their training, whether they are from an academic or disciplinary manner. I think that sort of people start listening to one another naturally. If you have a good idea, you can test it out in these waters, but there have certainly been complaints that there are people who have dominated the conversation. That’s how ideas work though. You get a lot of momentum or force behind something and if it’s not necessarily going, or you don’t believe it’s serving the best interests of the group, it has so much momentum behind it already it’s kind of hard to shut done. It’s coming along though in terms of organization. I think it’s going to take some time because when you get a bunch of people from all walks of life convening in these spaces and trying to speak into issues they can relate to but are so, coming at it from so many different ways, it takes a lot of energy and patience to let everyone speak and recognize the importance of that. At the same time, no one has the right time to jump into a conversation and say, “No, this is...” People have their opinions and then exercise your expertise on a subject when it becomes necessary to do so. For some people, its- sorry it’s the last thing I will say.

AC: It’s ok.

MD: Having attended some of the general assemblies, I think this might be some of the only opportunities that some people have had, who haven’t gone to college, who haven’t had jobs where the attention is on them, where they had the opportunity to talk about something and give their two cents. So a lot of people, who have never experienced that, they can get...

AC: Emotional?

MD: Yes, exactly. Precisely. So that takes a little navigating, sophisticated navigation to let them know that their opinion is wanted and important but to reign in, you know- We can have these conversations elsewhere. This will not be your only opportunity to talk about this. You know?

AC: I understand. Ok. Just to go into what you were saying about people coming from different places, are you saying viewpoints, different social backgrounds, different political ideologies, things like that?

MD: Yea, everything and all. We are coming from different environments and I think environment plays a key. So whether you’ve been situated in an academic environment or you come from-and that is going to intersect with, as much as we don’t want to acknowledge this, social classes. So you can be in the “academy.” You can be getting a PhD, but come from this lower-middle class or lower class or upper class. You have no idea. There are all sorts of environmental factors at work that you can’t necessarily anticipate. I mean, people have these beautiful stories that have brought them here, coming from different environments, different
groups, different organizations, different trainings or backgrounds. We have all been sort of, not taught, but exposed to a way of thinking that in order to continue that line of thinking and provide resources for ourselves, we have to continue to think like that in order to put bread on the table. It’s very difficult to take a step back and go, “Woah,” and actually keep the foundations and go up on top of that in a new way and step outside of our experience. Yea. Sorry (laughing).

AC: No, that’s very good. Do you find it hard for Occupy to engage the public? To communicate your ideas to the public? Since I am sure it is hard to communicate your ideas within the organization, but to develop some sort of message for people outside to see who you are and what you stand for?

MD: Right, that is certainly a difficulty because there are so many reasons that have brought people here. They Occupy what they do for various reasons and they want to draw attention to those causes. Even if people share the same causes or the same fight, they are not going to be speaking about it the same way because their target audience- it could be the academy, it could be the state, it could be the corporation, it could be the church, it could be a number of direct audiences. The wording and the rhetoric, it becomes very difficult when you are trying to articulate, to speak into that message that covers the totality- in the most general sense, what is this all about, and then address the specific issues that have brought people here. It’s what I have been trying to do myself (laughing) with moderate success at times. But it is very difficult to address what it is because you don’t want to be a spokesperson for the movement as a totality. Then, again, sometimes that is necessary depending on what your audience is because so many people have different idea of what this is really about. It is still such a burgeoning movement. It’s still in its beginning stages. I think a lot of people have clear glimpses of “this is what this is” and then it somewhat fades and I suppose that is natural. Then you have the mainstream media and it’s difficult to get that message out there because on the surface of things, yes there is disorganization. There are people screaming and yelling and it’s know pretty, you know? This is not a pretty movement. That doesn’t mean it can’t be, but it hasn’t been or at least that is the side that the mainstream media is showing and there are some beautiful sides to this and it is almost negligent journalism to really not try to see all sides of the story. If you do have that much control over framing people’s perceptions, bringing to light the beautiful side, even if they are small and glimmering and ephemeral, that’s important too. I don’t necessarily feel that you see that as frequently as could be seen. To answer your question, yeah getting our mission out is definitely an issue and not only that, the message, but how do you disseminate what time is appropriate, what medium to use, twitter? When we were making observations of what’s going on, do you twitter that immediately? Is it important to take a step back and sit with it a while? There’s all different types of strategies, and not even strategies but tendencies, people’s personalities and trainings, to speak into things a certain
way that conflict with each other. You see such a wide spectrum of messaging means. But that should say something as well. That there is such a spectrum and it’s not one-sided.

AC: Ok. In Occupy Wall Street, do you have other organizations you can cooperate with that are outside of Occupy Wall Street? I know that Occupy Wall Street is an umbrella a little bit for several sub groups but are there organizations outside the umbrella that are sympathetic to Occupy? Protest together?

MD: I am hoping so. For me, since I have one foot in academia and one foot out at this point because I am on a one year sabbatical and I am also studying it while it’s...- it’s kind of weird to have been in a program and- from studying the movement from a distance and now I am out on the streets. I have been reaching out to academia from a distance. I think academia should be- it’s just so- there is definitely an interest here. I think that, especially for my discipline, I have been reaching out for the rhetoric community and I have been trying to show its utility. Where am I going with this? Right, I found in my experience I had to reach out to organizations, but I never thought that I would because of the relevancy of my dissertation project and how it is that this occupation came into being. But I had to reach out to organizations that I didn’t think I would, but I believe in the importance of that message so much that you have to reach out. You start your own ways of reaching out to demonstrate, to reveal what this movement may be about because there are certain organizations.. are so hard (laughing).. Yeah, I had to fire a couple of flares and I am going to be a new one in the next couple of days. That is what is has felt like, firing flares. It’s a distress in a way because there are lives at stake.

AC: Ok. On the contrary, what would you consider to be the opposition to Occupy Wall Street? What do you think tries to prevent your message from coming out?

MD: Sometimes it’s Occupy itself. Sometimes we are our own worst enemy because the fervor and the spirit that we have for the possibility and potential of what this could be or signify and because of the different ways we’ve become accustomed to speaking into that, it sometimes puts us at a disadvantage. I know when I came here and witnessed my first mass movement, the March protest march, there were people in the movement who got arrested and legitimately should have because of their behaviors and actions. Just being part of the movement doesn’t give you a free ride. Because it’s so early the number thing... It’s almost like you want more numbers rather than condemning behaviors you just... Anyway, sometimes it’s the movement itself. Other times, yea, the police, but they’re witnessing, in their defense I suppose or to give two sides of the same coin, they’re witnessing a bunch of behaviors that’s run a potential risk to themselves or to other members and people. I do believe there is a difference between legitimate and illegitimate arrest and sometimes the arrests are totally unwarranted. But sometimes they are and they full animosity between two groups and that sort of escalates. That becomes an issue main stream media, not doing as intense
investigations as they could. .... I am trying to think of any others that come to mind. I mean, the outsiders that just don’t take- they are in these groups and they go to church and they this is who we are all about and they see people homeless in the street and don’t take, just look at them in disgust rather than have a conversation. Those are the people who-they automatically judge, “I know what this,” without spending a single time asking people or having a conversation. They’ve already made up their mind as to what this is all about, without ever having enquired or having a conversation.

AC: Ok, well, I think you’ve given a good background to the organization. I am just going to ask several questions that are for your interpretation. The first one would be, what does populism mean to you? When you hear that word, what comes to your mind?

MD: That’s a good question. That’s one of my weakest points. It’s not-an article I recently read in a of rhetoric inquiry course on populist reason. That came to mind. That was my first exposure-I guess what first comes to mind is the idea that what is popular and the status quo as the indicator of what things should be I suppose. (Laughing)

AC: It’s whatever you think it is. There is no right or wrong answer. What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

MD: Congress…. An image, a room. That’s what comes to mind. I haven’t spent my due diligence either listening in to as many speeches. Enough, enough, but it’s the perception of politicians speaking about it or the main stream media then just decides to cover politicians who are talking about Congress. You know? It’s always like a hearsay sort of thing. I don’t feel like the Congress ever address the public or does that ever fall within their realm of possibilities. I don’t know.

AC: Ok.

MD: But a gathering too. That word I know is important when a Congress is a body of delegates, so to speak, that serve a very important function. But any system or organizational body can become corrupted because of its history.

AC: Ok. What does a grassroots campaign, organization, movement mean to you?

MD: It means- there is a directional flow that seems to be happening from the bottom-up so to speak. Where it is organized in more local communities where they don’t have the support of organizational bodies. They come together for a cause and a purpose independent of any kind of organization they might belong to. It emerged in a space between everyday activities or as a consequence of them perhaps.

AC: What does “We the people,” the phrase from the Constitution mean to you?
MD: We the people? It should mean that the people that it supposed to serve- Ok let me rewind. It’s the population of the people. It’s just that. It is... just that. We the people. The people for me is just that.

AC: The whole population? Everyone?

MD: In its isolation? Yes, it means just that. But in the context of the Constitution, it would mean the people that existed... The writers are speaking on behalf of the people that saw themselves as such- as the people and the inhabitants of that location and space that they were also occupying and trying to defend and preserve certain liberties. The people, just that.

AC: Ok. You said it should represent the people in the country?

MD: Right.

AC: What do you think it actually means?

MD: Well, now it seems to have become the people who are stakeholders- the definition of “We the people”- but, mm.. Maybe that started the wrong way to phrase that. The people who have become vested with the power who represent the people. So, it’s the representatives and what they feel is in the best interest of the people without having any kind of legitimate connection to various bodies and peoples they are supposed to represent. So it is seems to be more of a privileging of how vague the people are to be than how the people actually are.

AC: Ok. Do you believe Americans should be responsible, i.e.: the right to decide their own fate and accept responsibility for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

MD: That they should be able to or that they should accept responsibility?

AC: Well, give me both. Do you think they should be able to and do you think they should?

MD: I keep seeing a beginning and an end. Yea, you would think that in a more perfect world- I won’t say a perfect world because that would be undesirable and stagnant and there would be no change or revolution or progress- but in a more perfect world or in simply the world that we began defending and speaking into. That is why it is so important. Yea, should and should be able to take responsibility for their actions. Expertise is still needed, but I think there is a way to make it, both things happen. It doesn’t have to be mutually exclusive, like “Ok, we’re just going to be totally hands off and you guys do it,” although I think there would be quite a lot of brilliance that would rise to the top. But I still think there’s still a need for foundational bases and that there is a way to use the foundations of a previous structure and building something new on top of that without dismantling everything. Not all has to crumble in order to begin
anew. But, yea, I think people have a natural tendency, desire to help their fellow man and, yea. I think I would be more emphasis on the individual to what is right and in the best interest of himself and his...

AC: Ok. I know this is going to seem weird, but opinion of the “founding fathers,” the beginnings of the country- what images does it evoke? It is nostalgia, reverence for tradition, is it hypocrisy, any of those things? Is it something different?

MD: I mean, I think it is a combination of all that you had in general. It’s more of a respect for having, to have been able to anticipate it perhaps and draw something into existence through legislation or through writing of it. I mean that is one of the greatest... yea. It’s funny how through documentation, how writing, how rhetoric, can function to create a constitution. I mean that word in the abstract manner- the constitution, the configuration of an entire nation. As for my perceptions of them, I have a general respect, but of course that is how history is written. Only after so much time has passed, when we start rethinking things, do we learn about the reality of whose these people were and that they weren’t perfect people either, but it takes all types of shit to get things done and all kinds of characters to do it. Yea.

AC: So, basically a more realistic approach then?

MD: I think so.

AC: You see it for what it is. They did something important but they weren’t perfect.

MD: Right. There’s a kind of reverence that gets built up around that because of how it functions in everyday society and how that has spread out into all different kinds of fields and what it stands for, the power. Yea.

AC: Ok. How do you define progress? What would be progress today?

MD: Ooo... Learning from mistakes and having the courage and tenacity and resources, ability to carry on- to try another way. But that’s being hindered in many ways because we are afraid of- I think the powers that be are afraid of what might happen if they lose the hold. I mean, we fight with that on individual levels every day and I think there is a lot to be learned from what we consider to be progress on an individual level, the small daily, every day accomplishments that we could then transfer to larger ways of bringing progress. But learning from the everyday, even if that goes against what you normally believe to be true and that takes a lot of resilience and faith at times to be able to recognize progress when you see and not to mistake progress for- what’s another word for it- succession maybe? Just because things advance doesn’t meaning that they are necessarily advancing in the right direction. That’s something very different from progress.
AC: Ok. So advancement doesn’t mean necessarily progress?

MD: Right. Because if you goal is to get to a certain top of a mountain and if you take the wrong- this is ridiculous metaphor- yea, you can take a path and it can take you to the jagged side. I don’t know. I think you see where I am going with this. Sorry.

AC: It’s fine. It’s fine. Ok. You have tradition and you have progress. Do you think one is more important or are they equal?

MD: Well, that’s a peculiar question to ask a rhetorician because they are kind of one in the same in many ways because we are- the only reason why, well, not the only reason why, but one of the reasons why we have persisted as a discipline for so long is, yes, there is a tradition behind it but it’s motivated by the fact that it is an art, a skill, and, as such, it constantly adapts along with the present. So it is always contingent on the unfolding of every moment. New words come into being, new technologies, new ways of framing events, new events, new artists, new musicians, whatever. So the language changes and so rhetoric has to figure out-it’s a natural thing. It advances with the unfolding of the present. Right, so there is a way though to both preserve, and have tradition and have progress at the same time. I think in some ways the more you progress, if the traditions or the foundations keep emerging even when you are making progress, I think that is a pretty good position to be at where you understand how that tradition came into being and why it is a tradition in the first place, because of the progress you are making. I have a special appreciation for tradition, a new found appreciation for tradition because of when I got to a place where I had to start thinking about things differently for the sake of my own development and other reasons. It’s the further I got, the more appreciation I had for tradition and I don’t think they’re mutually exclusive. The tradition is-as rhetoric is to contest at times- is not about passing a set of values or cultural norms from one generation to the next. It is about questioning those norms and trying to understand how those norms came into being. It constantly puts you in a place where you are moving along (laughing).

AC: That’s good. Would you say ethics in politics, in civic matters is important?

MD: YES. Capital YES. You can underline that, underscore it, bold it. Put a little glitter on it. Anything you need to do. Ethos, ethos, ethos. Yes. It’s huge. It is. It should be the reason why people get elected and nominated to positions. It’s because of their character, because of who they are as people and what they’ve done instead of having certain connections to people. You can still have connections to people and have an outstanding character, but that is something that should speak. You can make mistakes, all people make mistakes, but it’s how you respond to it and what you’ve done after and the entirety of it. I don’t think it’s fair either to point out little blips along the way. If those blips are frequent and they never learn from them or change their- then it is something to take into consideration. But it, yea. Yes.
AC: That’s good. Ok, to take it one step further, would you say that there is a civil religion that exists in politics today in the United States, which is a belief in the sacredness in certain sectors of civil life, whether it be the Constitution, the presidency, Congress, citizenship, things like that?

MD: I think that’s coming to a head in many, ways especially here in Occupy perhaps, as a way of being in the world with one another. I think that- what civil religion is there? That’s a good one. It’s funny, because the world common goes back to commune and that’s of course riddled with all religious connotations. But that is essentially what you are seeing here. It’s what it means for people to gather in a social mass in common with one another and to find areas of commonality to see that we are not so very different or removed from one another as we might be trained to believe that we are. So I see that being with one another, the way that people are with one another, appreciate the little ever day things. It’s become a pretty powerful movement. Music. Music comes to mind too. The way that music is evolving and how it draws- it’s sharing a common experience. I mean, we can think of music in different ways. “Music to my ears,” it’s true in so many different ways.

AC: How would you decide fairness in society? Do you think it exists? Do you think it is possible to exist?

MD: Fairness... So we are talking about a justice fairness or fairness as in fair facedness? Things being fair weather?

AC: Yes, we are looking more into the social, justice side. Social justice, equity, however you define fairness in society, amongst people, government, politics, economics.

MD: Ok. I think there are some noble ideals to strive for. I think that it’s certainly possible and perhaps setting it as an ideal is the best we can do because if we want to provide for the same freedoms- equal opportunities was never going to be equal unless- wiped clean and everybody is starting from exactly the same place at the same time, you know? Is that going to happen? Again, should it or do we want to? Probably not. That would be weird. But I think that it should be strived for and to find ways to create a fair environment, as possible. I am not sure if it’s realistic. I don’t know. I think it can be.

AC: Ok. We’ll change gears now. Globalization: How would you define it today and what is your opinion of it?

MD: I think that is has finally become a little bit more multidirectional where it’s flowing from different directions. It’s not just America going into these different countries. That’s been really unfortunate to watch how these communities, these foreign communities, have picked up something and they- it’s exciting and it’s new and at the same time that inspires a new way.
It’s all about progress and at the same time, there is so much cultural richness and like America goes in there and ruins that. The globalism now, I hear it being spoken of in a much more positive way. When I was studying as an undergraduate especially, that was an evil word. It was fighting against globalism and now it’s almost a welcome word- a little bit more. It is about transnational flows of information, music, art, and that sort of thing. It’s more multidirectional. I feel like it is being integrated- it’s funny how we see it manifesting in different ways. We don’t see as much of a presence perhaps in the buildings here, but it’s in the arts. It’s integrated into the arts first.

AC: Ok. What do you think about outsourcing? Do you think it’s a serious problem for the country or a new step to a new economy rather?

MD: It depends on what products and services are being outsourced I suppose. I think that it depends on what the product or service is. For some reason, textile production comes to mind. If it is something that there’s not only an expertise or industry that already exists and being able to use that in an ethical way that doesn’t compromise the citizens- I was recently informed that there is a town in China that produces only porcelain toilets and, again, I should fact check, but all they do is according to this informant, was making these toilets. They grow themselves off these. That’s all this city is about. That’s what that city is about. But if it’s causing people to jump to their deaths, it’s not a good thing. Outsourcing... I wish I knew a little more about that. I guess I would just stick to depending on what it is and how that outsourcing- is it people from the outside approaching people from the inside or are they being forced to working for something that they can’t back out of it. Is it depriving them of the same privileges that we have an expectance set for ourselves, if so, that is wrong. There are plenty of people in the country that I am sure would, another opportunity to work for, to keep labor local, that’s what it’s about. There are reasons for keeping things local, whether it’s the foods you eat or the clothes you buy, that sort of thing. Because it reduces the quality of the product, when things are done at the expense of the dollar, cheaper to produce. Millions of avocado and eventually you can’t remember what an avocado tastes like. Anyway, that’s all I got.

AC: Ok. It’s whatever your opinion is. You mentioned before about twitter, getting messages out- what role has modern technology played in Occupy Wall Street with its actions, activities, displaying it’s message? What is its role?

MD: So, the quickness and the immediacy of the medium is important. It’s quick dissemination of the message, even if it’s not entirely accurate, even if it there’s always going to be conditions by people, like how they frame it. Sometimes just knowing that something is happening, independent of how it’s being framed is important to know. It’s almost like a dispatching, getting the information out there., throwing attention to what’s going on. You don’t get things reported by some of the organizations that should and it’s a very citizenry oriented group. A lot
of them on the ground and to have that coverage, to hear what’s going on, so it’s not just after
the fact, like “Oh, this is what happened,” no. Twitter, real time, streaming communication. The
immediacy, seeing as it is unfolding, is a huge role and there is a sort of meta-message there, but that’s another story. But, certainly twitter has played a huge story, not only in the
organization of the movement in finding one another, the hash-tags, the community topos or
topoi, to use a rhetorical term, and being able to locate people who are speaking into these
same things and using the same language. You get to see the evolution of the movement and
that is cool to watch too. On Facebook, I have been trying to post things as they unfold
because, if nothing else, you get pretty accurate pinpoints of what was going on at that time.
Here’s the time of the discussion. It will take some calling and processing to maybe to figure
out that pattern, but there has certainly been one. And that’s kind of cool to see, the evolution
of how the language has changed and how the matters shifted. To have that kind of visibility
brought to the movement has been key and will continue to be key.

AC: Ok. Playing on that, what is your opinion on social media vs. privacy? Do you think there
are privacy issues need to be resolved?

MD: That is a good question and it’s one I think about often. In some ways, it’s one of those
things that- I don’t know, it goes both ways. If on one hand you don’t have anything to hide
why do you care about who uses it or for what reasons. But as I have learned on Twitter,
running multiple accounts, there are some things that are specific to a specific audience,
whether it’s a group of close friends or colleagues exploring an experimental mode and you
don’t want to put it out there because that is the nature of the experiment, it has to be done
isolation, and I get that. Or whether it would be a loved one that you are addressing to that
particular person, you don’t want that necessarily to be disseminated to publics or reach
publics that you don’t have intent for it to be reached. It’s difficult because I haven’t gotten to
a point where it’s become a huge concern. In fact, I have been more so that if they have this
ability, why aren’t they using these capabilities to not just find the bad guys, but find the good
guys too. You know? Where’s that police squad? I don’t know. There is a lot that information is
going to tell us one day or could- I don’t know. It’s really complicated and I am not sure if I
have...

AC: No, no. I think you gave your opinion quite well. Ok.. I ‘ll come to the winding down part
now. How do you see the organization developing in the future? What do you think it’s future
directions is going to be?

MD: I am optimistic about it because, again, I think that a lot of people that are here have been
in many ways been ahead of the curve in many ways. They’ve sensed a visceral sensing of
something is going one, that they’ve been responding to it, kind of like (unintelligible)... There’s
a lot of relationships between tweeting and epidictic behavior. Anyway, right, some things just
take time to catch on and that’s no fault of anyone really. We’re working with pretty powerful structures that have been around for a very long time and it takes a lot for them to be seen in the light for what they really are or for there to be enough momentum to crumble down and sometimes that is a good thing, but those foundations are so hard to shake or those structures are so hard to bring down. But they should be able to be brought down. I don’t think any structure is impenetrable or should be. I see this catching on, as evidence of you taking these notes right now and that we are having this conversation-

AC: A year later after this movement started...

MD: Exactly. This is a dissertation project for me too. The fact that you can build an entire dissertation around these kind of questions and events and movement, I think that’s huge.

AC: I agree. I think you’re right.

MD: Time will tell though.

AC: Exactly. Do you see the organization developing into more of a party structure?

MD: God, I hope not. Party.... No, I think it might lead to a different party system but I don’t think it will lead to an Occupy Party because it’s beyond that at this point. It’s about rethinking the idea of party perhaps and finding different ways to protect the liberties and freedoms and justice and all those ideals that the founding fathers had spoken into so eloquently. Sorry...

(human-microphone of Occupy)

AC: It’s interesting. I have never seen it live.

MD: Really?

AC: No, I have been in Europe since it started.

MD: Wow. You haven’t seen any there?

AC: Well, no. I live in Belgium actually and, no, I haven’t seen any Belgian ones.

MD: This is very small considering..

AC: I have seen on YouTube the park being full.

MD: Yeah. You could do just articles on the mic-check, on what it means, the call and response, and how that’s both productive and unproductive because you start mindlessly repeating what that person is saying, not really processing the information, which is what we are resisting. You know- the unthinking, the unquestioning, the perception of information, which we see with kids watching television. In some ways that could be a good thing, but
content is not variable and the content - it doesn't cover a wide range of ways of being and thinking. Yea, we are going to turn into mindless drones, but yet there is still hope. I am not going to condemn TV entirely because it serves a function. But again, it's the message your putting on it. There are ways to make television more sophisticated and less of, you know....

AC: Ok. What do you see as roadblocks?

MD: Roadblocks?

AC: Problems for the movement as it goes on.

MD: Organizations that already exist that should have given what it is that they represent as organizations that they are. Not having an interest or not working with these groups and I think there needs to be outreach from both sides to give. There are ideas even within the movement that are rising to the top. It's very difficult to get those ideas out there and sometimes even this audience can't understand them or should they. So, organizations that already exist, working with and finding these- You know working hand in hand or side by side, because it will make the country better if we reinject a sort of ethos because most of the people that I have met have at least that- character and ideas. There are exceptions and there will have to be. But road blocks- not being taken seriously or given the time of day.

AC: Do you have specific groups in mind that you’re talking about?

MD: Yea, I’m thinking about the think tank groups and here, and I am a little bias because I am a part of it and I hope to be way more involved. I have only been a recipient of conversations since March, but that’s part of the reason why I am occupying what I am because of the kind of potential, the types of ideas generated at the certain intersection of certain places and spaces and times because of the unique combination of elements. Anyway, there’s ideas here. There are so seeds for plants we haven’t seen in a very long time that have a lot of potential in multiple fields. And I am not just talking about academics, but mathematics, quantum physics, mechanics, and what we are learning in this movement has applicability to different organizations and communities. Trying to find a way of getting these ideas from here to there has been one of the things guiding my efforts and will continue to guide them because I know a lot of people are fed up. It’s a matter of getting the ideas and the energy and the resources and the fodder and the seeds into the environment where they can actually grow because even ideas you have in academia and arise because of academia still might not be the right place for that. That's very frustrating when you’re constantly producing, generating these ideas that could be picked up by disciplines but aren't because of the communication, the channels are not even there yet. It makes me smile.
AC: Ok. I have two last questions. To go into what you were talking about working with other groups, what is your opinion of the Tea Party organizations?

MD: I have known at this point. I don’t know at all, enough, anything about them. I couldn’t even tell you what they stand for. Maybe that’s an answer enough. I don’t know. I have a lot of things occupying my time and attention and that hasn’t come up as a blip enough to be something I have researched or looked into.

AC: Ok. Have you heard from anyone in the organization, in Occupy Wall Street, about any particular working groups with them, cooperation, joint protests, things like that?

MD: Let’s see. There’s labor unions. I know that there is a lot of labor unions they work alongside of. I know the labor unions have been generous enough to give us space, physical space to hold our meetings in. So they have worked with them. It’s weird that you don’t see Greenpeace, or maybe there are connections and again, you have to keep in mind that I have been here a month and all that energy and time has gone into planning for S17. So I don’t know much about the connections that lie outside of that. There are definitely groups, I have spoken with a couple of environmental organization—not as big as Greenpeace but that have come and wanted to know more. There are bodies and people that we could symbiotically exist. They could use our momentum, energy, people and space that these people have carved out.

AC: Ok. Perfect. That’s the end of my questions.
AC: My first question is actually tell me what the organization is for you.

SW: What Occupy is to me— it’s for right now people, it’s about in the same way the state of the world. I really feel a connection with a lot people here. It’s a deep and violent experience about being human and living on this earth and what we have to do to affect some sort of change. At the same time, since I got here in December, I worked with housing. I’ve slept in churches. I’ve talked to homeless people. I’ve worked in a People’s Think Tank. What that is, is having conversations with people on various subjects and we want them to talk about the world they want to see. I’ve been in a lot of working groups, but my experience here is just to work with people, to try and bring them into a better world, to progress. Because we can’t rely on the government, we can’t rely on corporations. All we can rely on is ourselves. I think that Occupy Wall Street hasn’t done a very good job on relying on ourselves because we are so— we live in this world too and it’s hard because we all have to live and we all have to survive and we have to (unintelligible) feed ourselves. It’s hard to be part of this collective when we are so individualistic. We’re so worried about ourselves.

AC: I think you went into a little bit, but what would you consider to be an inspiration to the group?

SW: Inspiration for this group, in my perspective, is let your actions be your truth. If people believe in something that much they should get out and speak up and act upon those truths where ever they may be. I think that is inspirational— what Occupy is. There are a lot of issues. I could say from the planet, eco issues, to the debt issues, to the stop and frisk issues— all those things, if you feel passionate about those things, you should get up and speak up. Get into the streets or organize people to be against it. That is the main thing that Occupy is about.

AC: Why are people joining Occupy Wall Street or why are they coming to these meetings? How do they find it or is it too big of a question to ask? Does everyone come for different reasons?

SW: Everyone has their own reasons to be here. For me, it was essentially about (unintelligible) Troy Davis, with him being killed last year in August in Georgia and how that came to. It was essentially, when that happened, when the state of Georgia, in my eyes, murdered him, I lost faith in government. How could— we’re told to vote, we’re told that by voting we going be
putting people in office who are going to stand up for us. And these sages in court, you know, are supposed to have our best interests at heart. (unintelligible) We have no protection. We have none. All we have is our bodies and minds (unintelligible). And me coming here is me saying that I can’t count on government, I can’t count on business. All I can do is count on my fellow man to help me. It’s difficult. It’s difficult when we have this society that’s telling us that “no, you can do if you work harder.” It’s very, very difficult to get people to see that it’s not - it maybe for some, but it’s not true for everyone.

AC: Ok, what would you say is the most effective tool Occupy uses for organizing?

AC: I think I asked, “What are the most effective tools that you use for organizing.”

SW: I think that’s a complex question. We can organize ourselves. We have (unintelligible), Facebook, cellphones, so it’s easy to get three hundred people to action. But, to get the greater community to organize, it’s difficult. The message is so broad, I think it’s kind of intimidating to people. At the point it gets intimidating to people, it’s normal to fall back on easy. That’s oversimplifying. I really- the organizing to the greater community, it has to be done, which I think we haven’t done a great job. I mean, we’re out in the communities in town squares. We’re out in the communities. We occupy our homes. Just today, I was at an action for some workers at (name of business, not clear, Hot something). 23 workers had lost their jobs on Friday. We were on the upper-east side and, the community there, talking to them about how these workers make from $7.25 to $9.00 an hour. All they wanted was a $1.00 per hour raise and the occasion time that the owner took away from them two years ago. But actually talking to those people and to those communities, they really get it. The people here don’t know the people on the east side, most of them are millionaires, and they really got it. That’s what we have to do, like organize in those communities and I don’t think we have done that good of a job yet.

AC: Cooperation- do you cooperate with groups outside Occupy Wall Street? I know Occupy Wall Street is more of an umbrella with lots of groups underneath it, but are there, I don’t know, union groups, eco groups, community organizers, religious groups?

SW: I know the pastor of the church we’re at right now, Judson Memorial. I talk to a lot of ministers. I’ve worked for unions. I am a labor organizer. I talk to a lot of labor unions, I have contacts there. I try to get them out there. A lot of labor unions, they understand what we’re trying to do. I just think that there needs to be some sort of collaboration somehow and that needs to be hammered out. That’s a difficult conversation to even have. How can we work better with progressive or the institutional left? How can we work with them? I don’t have an answer.

SW: No.

AC: No?

SW: I don’t. I can’t speak for everyone, but I don’t. Only on the street, when I’m doing outreach, because I like to do that. We have long conversations, I’m a pretty much a pleasant person. So, I hear a lot of libertarian or more conservative thoughts, which, I come from a conservative background, some of that ideology resonates with me. But I, a lot of it doesn’t work. It just takes time to have these conversations with other people. All in all, I don’t have a voice or I don’t really go to those conservative meeting. I would love to know where some are so I could go and talk to people, but I just don’t know;

AC: What would you describe as the opposition of Occupy Wall Street?

SW: The opposition- I think the opposition- I could only- I look at it as two oppositions: one from a labor perspective and one from like a psychological perspective. The labor perspective is: in any sort of labor dispute you have the company, the people who work there, and the state or the government. Normally what happens is when there is a dispute, the workers are against the owner or the corporation and what normally ends up happening is you have the state or government taking the side of the corporation. Time and time again. What normally I think you have the whole mechanism, you have the media driving. You get the media backing the corporation because when the workers get into a scuffle, the police come in. The police have to come in and subdue the workers that are against the business. They never tell why the business or the workers have the issue. That’s the conflict. You have the government who are the people, but are against the people who have the side of the state, which is absurd, but the government has the side of the corporations. Then you have more of like a psychological issue. I totally look at that from a religious perspective. I know you talked about the-

AC: The Jeremiad.

SW: -from the Jeremiad perspective, but I like to look at it from a different perspective. I come from a religious background. I tend to think now that God made us in his image. God made us in his image and the Garden of Eden was somewhere where he didn’t want us to be. If he made us in his image he made us to seek out knowledge and to seek out greater truth about ourselves and what it means to be human. That apple, that fruit was essentially a way to get us to look deeper. What we are doing know is, society and culture has told us to try to get back to the Garden of Eden, to get the nice house, to get the nice cars, to be an individual, to essentially be safe. I don’t think that’s what life’s about. Life’s about trying to look deeper and to connect
with others. God didn’t want that for us. He wanted life to be difficult and we are trying to make it easier. The only way we could make it easier, for all of us, is if we made it more difficult and even that is a paradox, right? If we work our way down, if we get to help each other, then I think we will be able to bring all of us up together. When a few people have the Garden of Eden, the rest of us are essentially living in a Hell. A lot of us are. Those are the issues.

AC: Ok. Now were are going to go into a word game. I am going to say a phrase or a word and you’re going to tell me what it means to you or what pops into your head. Ok - Populism.

SW: Large amounts of people who agree with a certain tenant or idea.

AC: Ok, Congress.

SW: A group of people who we put into office that are supposed to have, that are supposed to speak for us, which they normally don’t.

AC: Grassroots campaign- what do they mean to you and are they important?

SW: Well, I think a grassroots campaigns are extremely important. If you get a group of people who feel the same way as you do, and you want to make some sort of significant change in the nation or state you live in, then you should get those people together, do outreach, try to convince others of your perspective and what the things you want to do can bring about some sort of change. That is essentially what a grassroots campaign is to me.

AC: Ok. What does the phrase “we the people” me to you?

SW: “We the people,” to me, is essentially all of us standing up for ourselves and each other, for whatever we stand for. Meaning you know, be it war or peace, the economy whatever. All of us with one voice standing up for something.

AC: Do you believe that Americans are responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual being and also have the right to be responsible.

SW: Can you say that again?

AC: Do you believe Americans have the right to be responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual well-being.

SW: Well, sure.

AC: Another way to put it is, can they be?

SW: As individuals, I don’t think so because it takes everyone to make society work. It’s hard for me to think that individuals are capable of doing this on their own.
AC: Your opinion of the original- what they call the founding fathers, the guys who started the country.

SW: My opinion is- that’s so-

AC: (laughing) Speechless?

SW: There are so many things that they did, they did good things, they did bad things. At that point, I was 3/5 of a man, you know?

AC: Yea.

SW: So, I’m a black man. I’m 3/5 of a man. How is that right? Women didn’t have the right to vote.

AC: Or to really own property.

SW: Right. You know, that 3/5 compromise wasn’t their fault. That was afterwards, after the Articles of Confederation in 1787. Anyways, I really don’t have an opinion. Any good or bad things, I am pretty neutral. I mean, we are here. The Constitution, they created this document, this living document. We have the ability to change that document. It’s up to us to do that. They set it up in a way that it could be changed. We just haven’t done enough.

AC: Ok. Ethics- do you think they matter in politics?

SW: Yea. I think so.

AC: You talked about the sacred religion, but do you believe a civil religion exists in politics today?

SW: A civil what?

AC: A civil religion? Are you familiar with the concept?

SW: No?

AC: Civil religion, it’s separate from scared religion like Christianity, Judaism, or…. yea. It’s the whole idea that you hold something in civil life sacred and you equate to something in the sacred religion. So you can say the fact that on the dollar it says “one nation under God,” it doesn’t mean that we are one nation under the Christian God because it never says Christ or anything like that. It’s just saying we are a blessed nation. It’s the whole idea that the United States itself is sacred or the Constitution is sacred or the president, the office of the president, is sacred. It doesn’t have to necessarily be any of those things, but it could be something within our civic culture that everyone holds very important.
SW: That’s important in government?

AC: Yea, something that everyone holds with esteem and value.

SW: I can’t say that. Some people don’t hold that construct and I can’t say that- I don’t think it’s that important. I will leave it open to that people really don’t hold that perspective. I’ll say that, for our movement.

AC: That’s fine. A little bit before, you were talking about working towards progress. How would you define that?

SW: Working towards progress is challenging the status quo. To me, that is what being a radical is. I think if you’re challenging, we are constantly challenging the status quo, then we’re on our way to progress, because progress is never ending.

AC: Never ending?

SW: Yea, Progress is never ending. I work for a labor union and our goal is to organize. That’s my job and there are always people that need to be organized. It’s never ending. For me, the way I even see that, people within labor unions, they become conservative in the fact that they are not fighting as hard as they need or they are not doing things that are transformative. They’re not fighting against fracking or stop and frisk or any of these issues outside of clicking in union cards. So progress to me is being more than your meaning to exist as like an institution or even yourself. If you’re just eating, you’re working, your family is taken care of, putting a roof over their head, you care about your immediate family, you’re not doing much for the world because you’re taking care of yourself. That’s not progress, that’s playing conservative. Progress is looking outside of yourself, feeling like a superego.

AC: Ok, now I am just going to shift again to more questions regarding globalization. Pretty much, how would you define that? What is your opinion?

SW: I think globalization to me is laissez-faire economy across the globe. Corporations are able to go and hire people where ever they want to hire around the globe at whatever wages they want to hire them at. You have also the government or the state that’s complicit and they open the borders to allow that to happen.

AC: Ok. Outsourcing- do you believe it’s a problem or a transition to a new economy?

SW: Well, I think it’s a problem and I think it also is transitioning us into a different type of economy. More precarious, yea, you create a precarious workforce.

AC: What do you think will be the end result, the intended end result of outsourcing?
SW: Well, I think the intended- oh man, I forgot- you know, I am not even going to go there (laughing). The intended result is lower wages across the globe, to me. Or maybe even, I talked to be in Cato, (unintelligible), who send jobs overseas. The workers, they would be fighting for better wages. They would bring wages up to levels where Americans or where or minimum wage is. That brings about fairness that way, but what it does to a country like ours who send their jobs and leave people without work. It demolishes the country, demolishes the base.

AC: You just mentioned about demolishing the economy. What worries you the most about the economy?

SW: In the case, I am a labor organizer, I was just telling you I was outside of a picketing for the last three days at a business where workers wanted to make more money. These corporations, they take the jobs, send them overseas or just lock the workers out. Workers have no rights at all. These corporations are, since they are able to put our jobs anywhere they want all over the world, they don’t really care about this country, they just care about capital. They are putting capital above labor and it’s the complete opposite. Money is made through labor and they have lost sight of that.

AC: Social media vs. privacy- do you think social media is threatening privacy and is there a- do you think there is a larger privacy problem in general?

SW: Sure, I mean, I really don’t worry. I think there are privacy issues but I don’t really worry that much about it. There are a lot of things going on.

AC: I’m just (unintelligible). How do you see Occupy Wall Street in the future? Do you see it-

SW: Hold on, let me get this door. How do I see Occupy? I think it’s going to go as far as the collective will of greater wants it. This is a true people’s movement and if the people don’t want it- That’s my honest belief. You know the people around the country and the world (unintelligible). Right now, we’re at a point where- it’s on us but it’s also on the greater society. We should be asking the questions to get them thinking about it, but if there not responding, then maybe it needs to get worse or needs to get to a point where society realizes....that something seriously is wrong here. Hopefully the repercussions won’t be violent. Right now, I just don’t know if people are ready to- people’s eyes are just not that open. I don’t see it. It’s fear, I don’t know.

AC: I think you just mentioned about the roadblock issue, I was going to ask about roadblocks. You think people aren’t engaging enough?

SW: I don’t think people are engaged enough, but there’s always two things. There is never one answer. People are not engaging, we might not be putting it out there for them to engage.
AC: How would estimate the impact of Occupy?

SW: I’m a critic. I’ve been here nine months. Maybe I’m not looking outside the bubble of OWS, but I don’t think we’ve done much. But that’s just my perspective. We’ve done a lot, but we haven’t done- maybe I have high expectations. Maybe I thought we could have brought at least some tax on the 1%, to simply tax them more so we would be able to afford better schools. Or even stop wars, so that we could build better infrastructure. I don’t think that we’ve done that at all and we haven’t gotten money out of politics.

AC: Well, looking at that list, that’s a lot to do in one year. (Laughing)

SW: Sure. The conversation is- people aren’t even- Of course special interest groups have been trying this for years, but at its core, the easiest thing we could be doing is going into communities and asking them “What type of world would you like to see? How can we help you bring about this type of world?” We haven’t done that good of a job doing that.

AC: Last two question, you have spoken about your conservative background, the fact that you haven’t spoken to any conservative groups. What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

SW: I think that they’re very- I think the Tea Party is very individualistic. I don’t look at life that way. I look at life that we all helped each other get here, good or bad. We helped each other. If we did it by ourselves, then we should all be ashamed of ourselves. I guess we should all be ashamed of ourselves either way, if we did ourselves or if we did it together. But I look at it as we did it together and we should fix it together. It seems like a way for Tea Partiers to fix these issues is to look to oneself, which is- I think it’s a falsehood. False life.

AC: And do you see any possibility of OWS and the Tea Party, any Tea Party group, cooperating?

SW: The future is unseen. I don’t know. I don’t think it could happen, but the future, nothing is written.
AC: Basically, I just wanted to go into first, just tell me what happened, how it started, and you said the organization is dormant— if there are any plans for the future?

LS: (audio problems)... With my background primarily in communications, we formed committees. I primarily took care of the website and setting up the communications base with our email server and google calendar so people would know what's going on and helped with the structures of the committees and how they interrelated with each other. I'm kind of a gofer person. I also helped put together some events. We had various people in our organization that were doing these different roles. We had a general assembly where everything had to be approved by consensus. Then we got some authority to do things from the GA, so there was a little more autonomy to move and do things by committees. They focus on a variety of issues. We had over 400 people come to the Occupy first gathering on October 5. I was on the tag end of planning coming into it. There was the student group Prometheus involved and many organizations for justice and peace came on board. We had Peter Buckley there as one of the speakers. There is video from that event and I could dig it up for you if you wanted it or were interested in having it.

AC: That would be great if you could send it to me, but in your own time— no rush.

LS: Sure. So I am trying to be concise with the structure and the way things were run. Like I said, we did everything we could to build awareness. We did a lot of actions of various types to bring about awareness to some of the unfairness that was going on and make the public more aware. We had flyers posted all over town. We were very vibrant and active for quite a while. Jeff Golden, who was a past commissioner, contacted me one day and asked if I would be willing to be on a panel to represent the Occupy point of view with a couple of Tea Party people. I said I would be willing but I wouldn’t be speaking as an official spokesperson— just as a person in the organization. Then I wanted to— he clarified that he didn’t want a combative situation but a collaborative, how can we get along, discussion. I had been referred to him by Rich Rody who is the leader of Occupy Ashland in Medford, which is a couple of cities over. I worked with Rich Rody helping build signs and doing protests for peace and justice type of issues. So, I said ok and I came together with two people from the Tea Party and then Ben Clayfair, who was the primary organization from Occupy Medford, joined us as well to make it a foursome. I made the suggestion before we went into the studio to film that we have breakfast together, so we can get to know each other. That was key and I still believe it’s key to all
successful communication to get to know one another at a personal level—talking about your families, work, sports, what have you. Some form of human connection. We instantly warmed up to each other, there was no defensiveness at all. By the time we got into the studio and started talking, Jeff was a very good panel facilitator. His show is called Immense Possibilities, which I believe I sent you a link to. If I didn’t, I will send you a link.

AC: Yea, I have actually seen it on YouTube, the videos, and I spoke with Evelyn about it as well. I think she was the one who put it together as well.

LS: Yes. Well, she didn’t put together the first one, she put together the second one.

AC: The second one, alright.

LS: Yep, and I believe we had a very successful discussion because all four of us truly wanted to find a way of working together and have a constructive conversation together. All four of us were personally already oriented that way. From there, I really wanted to find a way to start working together. Evan Lasley, who is in Occupy Ashland and one of our main leader, he and I were going, “Yea, that would be great.” I started visiting quite a bit Wake Up America Road River, who they would self-identify as a self-conglomeration of Conservatives, Tea Party Libertarians, Constitutionalists, Republicans, across the board mishmash of demographics from that area. It is mostly rural out there, where Ashland is more of a liberal suburbia homes community and tourist town. There was quite a difference in the cultures and societal norms and of course ideology—speaking generally of course. I had lived in Cotwood, California for seven years out in the woods in a very rural area when I was 28. It was an extremely conservative area, where as I am from southern California. In those seven years, I really—when in Rome, do as the Romans do. I took on the cultural norms out of respect. It’s common sense and you get along with the folks. I have always been of that ideology without giving up my own personal beliefs. I am very open minded and I can see you aren’t necessarily giving up your tenants by being able to see things from a different perspective and just respectively do as many of those norms as you can without sacrificing what is dear to you. With that being said, I wandered over to Wake Up America and started visiting. Joseph Snook is one of the leaders and who was one of the people I was on the panel with, he and I were already really good friends. I introduced myself the first time to them because I believe in transparency. I didn’t want them to find out later. I wanted them to know right off the bat who I was. I said I am from Occupy Ashland and right of the bat everybody kind of went “Ughhh.” (Laughing) Instead of being intimidated by it, I expected it. So, I laughed and went, “Yeeaaa…” They started to have a dialogue with me. People kinda bounced questions off me. They wanted to know what I thought of the flag burning in Oakland. I said, “I can’t speak for somebody else in that organization, none of us can.” Then I said, “As you know, in your own Tea Party you have been criticized for individuals who have done things you may not be upholding yourself.” So far as
burning, I said, “For myself personally it isn’t something that I would do and I know that the members in our Ashland Occupy wouldn’t be inclined to do that. That isn’t a norm for us.” That put them at ease. I kind of kidded with them. I have long blond hair and I kind of flipped my hair and said, “And I am a flaming liberal.” Just kind of laughing. But they warmed up to me. They realized that-I told them that I was there to learn. “That’s what I am there for and I am looking for ways that we might work together in a collaborative way.” I said, “It’s an exploration on how that might be possible.”

AC: Ok.

LS: So, that in a nutshell, about six weeks later I found the opportunity in a video the Jeff Merkley (?) put out, a senator from this area, where he had taken a stance against the National Authorization... no, the National Defense Authorization Act (the NDAA). In section 10:22, where it allowed for unlimited detention and that it was very ambiguous language concerning what was a belligerent act. That was enough common ground that is was an easy thing to come and talk to them about in both groups- in Occupy and Wake-Up America. Everyone on both sides went (inaudible). So it went very quickly. Both sides went, “Yea, we’ll come together and protest that.” So I got my sign making stuff, I got the other speakers. We had other people like David Webb, who was the chair for the Libertarians in Medford. He believes in second amendment rights and he carries a sidearm on his side. He’s a Pastor Rocky Mountain Soldier and a young man. He was there. I forget what he was dressed like but I think he was more rugged style attire and he had his sidearm. It was quite striking visual in that we had people from Peace and Justice, with their peace signs standing next to each other. Of course, we had Tea Party and Occupy right next to each other with signs and it was beautiful because all the speakers got up. The primary concern from where they were coming from was why we needed to reverse this action. They all spoke accurately and passionately to it. The other incredible thing that happened was this incredible bond took place. People were hugging each other and speaking to each other and they liked each other. From that point of view, it was 100% a success. They no longer viewed each other as being an idiot or being unreasonable or extremist. They started to see that, you know, if you can find a way to talk to each and especially if they have something that they can see that is an instantaneous common ground, there’s no reason we can’t work together. The other thing that I found when I went over to Wake Up America and Occupy, it’s really comical, is that they would come up to me and treat me like an ambassador and say “Now, if you could just tell them that we need them to do blah, blah.”

AC: (Laughing)

LS: I would laugh. I would say, “I understand what you are saying.” I would never say that I agree. I would always stay impartial. I would say, “I understand what you are saying. I get it,
but how do I make that simple to them?” They would try and think about it for a moment and then say, “Blah, blah, blah.” Then I would say, “Do you really think that issue is really going to fly with them?” “Do you think there is common ground and that it would be an easy sell?” Then they would say, “No.” So, then I would say, “Let’s try and concentrate on things that we are pretty sure that we could work with. Let’s start there and keep it simple and easy to do. We can all stay unstressed.” So, everybody had that attitude. The sad part that I saw was that all of them, and this is my own personal opinion and it doesn’t mean this is what happened, my perspective.

AC: OK

LS: But when I was in both Occupy and Wake-Up America, I think people came out with a bang and were ready to go on a lot of stuff. They thought it was going to happen. I don’t think they were prepared for the long haul.

AC: Yea.

LS: Just, going every week and realize that we were talking about slow gains, whatever they might be. Also, there was a casting to be done, putting the organizations together, and I think people just went, “Uhhh, you know, this just isn’t going anywhere.” I know that within Occupy that we had a little bit of an internal difficulties and people weren’t ready for some of the discord that was there and the personalities and temperaments. I think that put a lot of people off. I think a lot of the time there are these expectations that there won’t be internal strife, that things will go quickly, and if things tend to not go well, then people go “Ehhh.. I would rather be doing something else.” Or they go looking for this other perfect group. Anyways, our numbers started diminishing and for myself, I got sick and I had been playing a really major role in some of the committees, communications, the website, all sorts of stuff. At that point, we had a couple of people offer to take over some sorts of stuff, but it didn’t quite work right. I just didn’t have the energy level to continue. It took me four weeks to get back into the group again and by that time it just kind of dissolved. I am not saying that I was instrumental in tearing apart the organization, I’m just saying that I don’t know what happened. In four weeks, it just kind of went “poof.”

AC: Yea.

LS: The positive thing is that all those people, mostly young people but a lot of younger people as well, those people all went on to be highly involved in some niche activism, you know-activity. Now we have multiple organizations targeting specific things. From that perspective, Occupy was 100% a success- not only in bringing awareness, in coming together with the Tea Party, but then going on and moving other mountains. They are still alive and well and those that found their niche or are lying dormant- that’s how I view it. Lying dormant. It’s ripe for the
next thing that happens. We have a complete membership list to where we can call upon people again. And I think the same thing is true for Wake Up American too. We’re all kind of waiting and seeing on what’s next. From there I have been working on kind of pulling together a trans partisan coalition. I have been talking to complete strangers where every I go. I have an amiable disposition and a skill for it. I can start a conversation with someone and go, “You know, blah, blah, blah. So what I am trying to do is pull the other into a trans partisan coalition, blah, blah, blah.” (Laughing) I am not pushing. I am just putting it out there and they go, “Really?”They will start talking about the things that are important to them.

AC: Yea.

LS: You know? What it does is give people hope. We could work together and I am finding that there’s a real interest there even though I know they won’t jump forwards and go, “You know, I want to be a part of that.” They are on the sidelines. It is going to take a while to find Tea people to go, “Oh my god, I have been waiting for this. Yes, I can work with you,” and also have the calm disposition and deliberation and diplomacy to be able to create a core group of people who can model behaviors. I have talked to a couple of psychologists, counselors, who can come in and work with us to teach us skills because I don’t have that, those skills. I just have this intuitive common sense. “Oo, better not step on that land mine,” and being polite.

AC: Yea.

LS: I am kind of grounded, just don’t offend somebody and if someone pushes your trigger, don’t respond, back up. I am looking to build something very carefully this time and I have been on the phone talking to Joan, oh the name escapes me. It’s in the email there. Anyway, she started MoveOn.org, also Living Room Discussions and one other group Moms Rising. I talked to her on the phone last night, we had a great conversation. She said it was all a big experiment and just encouraged me to go for it. If there are any materials on the site, Living Conversations, that I could use, whatever. Try to make it work. I have been running around talking to a variety of folks, compiling a list of conservative folks that I talk to that are calm and some of the other qualities I mentioned. I have their email addresses and phone numbers and I am just kind of waiting until we have enough of a mass to work with. People who would commit to get together every couple of weeks and work on this so that it isn’t- I think the weekly thing stresses everyone out. It has to be relaxing, there has to be food.. (Laughing)

AC: (Laughing)

LS: Everyone is calm. Make it fun, relaxed and no pressure on anybody to accomplish anything, just see where it evolves to. Anyway, that’s it in a nutshell.
AC: Ok. I just have a couple of questions just from what you were saying. With the Occupy group- you said there were several different subsections of the movement itself. Could you go into what- can you characterize some of those groups? Were there anarchists? Were there anarcho-syndicalists? Were there socialists? Were there Libertarians within Occupy?

LS: Anything you could think of, they were there. In both groups.

AC: Ok. Were there some groups more willing to cooperate with the Libertarians?

LS: Wait a second, I just want to finish.

AC: Oh, sorry.

LS: We didn’t have anyone who was a neo-Nazi, you know?

AC: Yea.

LS: Everybody I met, no matter how they labeled themselves were sweet nice people.

AC: Ok.

LS: I never say anyone who had hostile or inappropriate behavior- in either group.

AC: Ok. Were there any particular groups within Occupy that were more willing to with Wake-Up, the libertarians in Wake-Up or was it generally a group thing?

LS: It was a general group thing. In fact, all that was done in pre-planning was- there were some concerns from some members of both groups that they would be co-opted by the other side. I just found this humorous and we treated it with humor. We reassured them and said, “Don’t worry, no one is going to change groups or mixing together won’t contaminate ideas. We tried to make light that we were trying to talk to each other. We were there, warm bodies, to gather and show the media that, to all of our local leaders and Evelyn filming, that the Tea Party and Occupy could come together and work on an issue in agreement. One of the last things that Joe, I, and Evan were telling our groups is that, “Just don’t open your mouth.” (Laughing)

AC: (Laughing)

LS: “And if someone says something, don’t talk back. Bite your tongue. Let it go because this is so big and so important.” What we found was really quite the opposite. Everybody came together and was thrilled to be talking to one another. People had wonderful discussions with each other. It was very, very positive and I didn’t see one person at that rally who went into a negative statement. Everybody was hugging each other. They were so happy that we were
standing together and showing America and showing, you know, the forces that be that made this NDAA thing that we weren’t taken. So, it was very positive.

AC: Ok. After the meetings and people getting to know the other sides, did you see- I guess it would have been hard for you to see in Wake-Up- but did you see in Occupy, some Occupy members go, “Wow, they actually have a valid point about government.” And did you see anything in Wake-Up with them saying, “Wow, Occupy members, they are kind of right about corporations and crony capitalism.” Did you see any acceptance of the “opposing” side’s ideas?

LS: It didn’t really get off the ground because we came together and then we went back into our separate groups. Then, after that, like I said, things started to dwindle after that. The second part was that there was a tendency to focus back on, in both groups, on their pet issues as opposed to the collaborative efforts. It kind of left it up to Joe, I, and Evan. Then we had our second meeting with Immense Possibilities with Ron Lee was the other member where we did an interaction. At that point, all of us were so busy in our personal lives that we were all struggling with how to do more of the collaboration. For one thing, geographical distance- it’s a five minute drive. It really limited us because of so many responsibilities in so many ways and we didn’t have another key issue to tackle like the NDAA. So, I think that’s what really started to limit us, even though we continued visiting each other and keeping up good report. Joseph Snook was coming to the New Day Network, which was a network of mostly “progressive” news groups and introducing himself. The biggest thing we accomplished was the tone and the attitude stopped. I was over at Wake Up America and one of their members- and I use the word members loosely because anyone can walk into these meetings and we would consider them a member- but a guy spoke up and he made some criticisms against the left. He was talking pretty virulent. He said some things like “We need ‘red’ meat to chew on. Blah, blah, blah.” It was quite insightful talk. It was instantly- Joseph Snook’s Dad and Snook, who is a leader in that group and who is a journalist as well, Joseph, he stood up and his presence is quite formidable. He’s a man you just don’t mess with. He stood up very politely and diplomatically without offending this man- basically said that this rhetoric was inappropriate. I think he would have done that anyway, but I think especially because I and Evan Lasley were there, we were like, “Oh my gosh,” because it was more poignant. The beauty of it was that the members there, you heard them murmuring, “Yea, that wasn’t ok.” The culture had changed to the point that it was no longer ok to slander or make rude remarks about “lefties.” There was similar thing in the Occupy side, in that I never saw anyone making any critical or derogatory remarks about Tea Party people. There was a difference in attitude now that we had come together and become friends.
AC: Then, do you see yourself being more amiable to the Tea Party’s and Wake Up’s message? And could you just go into— you said you weren’t that ideological— but, what your political beliefs were before Occupy started?

LS: Am I more amiable? It depends on what they are talking about. I might start from the ideal perfect society in Linda-land isn’t as important to me as finding a way for us all coming to something that we can all accept. I mean, today, I just had a really good conversation with a conservative fundamentalist Christian who is against abortion after the point of conception period. It was so pleasant to be able and sit there and have a wonderful conversation. The first thing that I told was that I was not interested in trying to sell you on my ideas. I am interested in what you think. What I noticed is that automatically it was ok for us to have a discussion. We were so careful with each other. What I boiled down to was the values that I hold, she holds. Basically for myself, personally, this was personal, but personally I wouldn’t feel comfortable with having an abortion past two months, after three months because who knows what science knows and doesn’t know and how valid data is or isn’t. I said these things are always up for question and we should question them, but I am under the impression that an embryo, yes it will respond if you poke it but the brain isn’t connected in such a way that it feels pain in the sense of suffering. So, my attitude is if you don’t know what hit you, you wouldn’t experience anything negative or suffering and I could live with that. Sure, it is my preference that every kid gets born, but for myself personally, I don’t feel comfortable forcing an unwanted pregnancy on a person. Regardless of what your ideological or religious values, I wouldn’t want someone to push their values and structures on me. Therefore, I don’t believe I can push them onto someone else. It’s just too personal and I don’t necessarily think that our founding fathers intended for that kind of centrist control. That is one of the things that the Tea Party talks a lot about- the central government not having control, everybody having the right to freedom. I think this falls under the freedom of religion clause, in that the only argument you can come up with is one based on the authority of the bible. I said you are going to have a hard sell making that to people who don’t consider the bible an authoritarian source. When discussing that point of view, as opposed to right or wrong, I find that conversations flow very, very well. So I can bring up my point of view with in that. I am not trying to tell the other person their wrong. I am trying to find a compromise. So I said maybe we might be able to find, unless someone’s life is in danger, maybe we can cut it off at five months or something like that. Maybe people will go along with that. You kind of have the attitude that, “Do your amniotic check before then. Figure out you don’t want to have the pregnancy before that. “ In other words, you have plenty of time to get rid of an unwanted pregnancy, but in the case that there is extenuating circumstances that aren’t considered criminal or dangerous- She started going, “Yea, that would be better than what we got now.” So maybe we need to chip away at what we might find acceptable because it can benefit both sides. Anyway, I’m rambling. I am trying to give an example.
AC: Yea.

LS: You can have personal conversations and express your viewpoint, but it is incredibly important to do within the framework of how to present a discussion that is non-threatening, where you take the right-wrong aspect out of it. You just say, “I feel strongly about this because...” and then you can talk about value of the framework that is being delivered rather than an absolutist, “I’m right, you’re wrong,” reactionary thing that dissolves into emotionalism. Then you look at each other and say, “That was a great conversation. Thank you for helping me understand your viewpoint there.

AC: Ok. I have one more question about the Occupy movement and one about another adjacent movement. Is there an Occupy the Fed movement there?

LS: Is there an Occupy the what?

AC: The Fed, the Federal Reserve.

LS: Is it a key issue?

AC: Well, yea. Is there a sub-group within your movement? Is there an End the Fed somewhere in Oregon?

LS: I’m sure there is. Am I up on it, no. I don’t know who is doing that work. I would have to google. (Recorder problem) We talked about in our group and some of our approaches. I think it was $16 billion the Fed gave out of the reserve and they didn’t even consult with Congress. Congress didn’t even know about it. I was only after they were audited they found out about it. Yes, that was a big issue for us. I think we could have easily taken that one to the Tea Party and gotten along quite nicely. That’s why I am hoping- right now I am in “Move to Amend Jackson County,” I’m on the steering committee with that organization- right we’re talking about that we truly want to be a trans partisan organization and to do that we need conservatives on our steering committee. Here we are, a bunch of progressives who started the whole thing, running around the whole thing looking in the bushes for conservatives. (Laughing)

AC: (Laughing) Comical, you know? We’re hoping to, Evan Lasley is again head of the outreach committee and I am on that one and Andy (inaudible) and Chris (inaudible) and a few other people are on it, who are all bumping heads together going, “How are we going to do this?”

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

LS: Helping the causes of and rallying the common people to stop monopolies of power over them – building a middle class without extreme wealth to unduly control the people, building a society with genuine opportunity, a safety net to protect the vulnerable, one without poverty.
AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

LS: Gridlock and obstruction, congress people needing to ‘pay back favors’ for the funding they have to take to run for office. That money (funding) decides election outcomes.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

LS: One that is usually started by, and heavily supported by ordinary citizens.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

LS: Very – no real change of significance can happen without the ordinary citizen involved (as opposed to apathy)

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

LS: Flesh and blood citizens, not artificial entities (corporations, unions, non-profits) that have now been given ‘personhood’ status under the constitution by the Roberts SCOTUS.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives? Yes (the question is a little unclear – in that the opposite would be to be irresponsible).

LS: If you mean the question to be should our society via our government help provide for the elderly, uplift the poor, educate and provide pathways for healthcare for all.....yes – live and let the rest die or suffer isn’t my idea of an ideal way to exist (survival of the ‘fittest’).

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially.

LS: Jefferson is a big topic, but, his stance of states’ rights, smaller government, personal liberty, staying out of war – I can agree with those tenets, but, there’s a lot involved with these things on a case by case basis. In a modern complex society of millions of people, some centralization (desegregation, regulating wall st/banking, etc) is needed to insure the principals we as Americans supposedly uphold (such as fairness). ‘Obamacare’ or Roe vs Wade would be some examples of those cases that provide protection for all (everyone now has healthcare as a right that they pay as they can with no one excluded or terminated from coverage, not a privilege of wealth. Regarding abortion, that it’s a personal decision – that ‘centralized decision’ insures that states can’t usurp freedom over one’s own body) – I lean toward an all for one and one for all centralized provision for protecting the vulnerable (such as social security and Medicare where all pay in), but, with local control as much as possible over things such as school programs (classes and teaching materials) and still receive federal funding regardless of performance (so that there is equal quality of education in provision with maximum control of community parents of curriculum). Complicated subject that would take pages to expound on.
AC: How would you define progress in society today?

LS: I think we have a severe decline in quality of education, access to higher education and jobs which has taken the American progress in reverse with more folks poorer and with less opportunity. Since the 80’s (after WWII we had high taxation on corporations and the wealthy – up to 90% that maintained a strong middle class, good schools, housing and jobs – in the 80’s taxation was substantially decreased and continued to decrease, jobs shipped overseas, unfunded wars, deregulation of banking/wall st) we’ve not been progressing (although Clinton had us in the black) we’ve seen a sharp increase of multinational wealthy control and ignorance of misinformed masses that allows its control. To me that’s not progress.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

LS: They are both important – to be defined by each person we should all respect or tolerate each person’s preferences in tradition – however, when one forces cultural preferences (religion or uneducated bias as examples – global warming being a hoax, that evolution doesn’t exist – a lack of education being replaced by ‘belief’ to be a decider to replace rational deduction_ – it’s serious when there are severe repercussions because of poor decision making because of people with ‘preferences’ holding them to be facts. Traditions have their place and should be respected as preferences, but, they should not be factors in matters of serious outcomes – you need documented facts.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

LS: Yes – and that’s why we’re truly in the mess we’re in because of a lack of ethics not only in politics, but, our media – money can buy ethics. Citizens United ruling (unlimited, undisclosed money in super PACs) has sealed our fate of government by the highest bidder unless we overturn this.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

LS: Yes, the left has the ‘I am my brother’s keeper’ mantra and the right has ‘Personal responsibility’ (although this is coming from fundamental religious base).

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?

LS: Depending on which civil religious view will come a different ‘fairness’ doctrine.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

LS: Both equally as they are directly tied together; the one affects the other – like the shipping of jobs overseas. Or that we bombed Iraq when there were no weapons of mass destruction, but, there was money to be made via military contracts – and young people who can’t afford
college become soldiers hoping to get benefits that get them a college education. Everything is inter related.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

LS: Multinational conglomerates running governments by buying access to them, running military sales, controlling labor (in the U.S. outsourcing) as well as controlling the banking systems, resources, etc.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

LS: Online abilities to communicate via website. Facebook, email newsletters. As a developer I can collect information via forms/polls and put into query databases.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

LS: The corporate control of our media and the death of accurate, documented journalism. Talking heads to propagate propaganda to intentionally misinform is truly frightening as too many citizens believe at face value what they are told if it’s on TV, radio, or print. Tying in with that is the lack of education and civic involvement (it’s not taught in the schools and too many citizens are not actively seeking out documented facts, just taking in what they want to relate to and believe).

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

LS: They (the government and the social media) have your information. Should it be that way? No, but, wiretapping and scanning emails shouldn’t be legal either, but, we passed that line a long time ago.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

LS: Education in civics, analytical research & critical thinking starting in grammar school with community service requirements for graduation. If people were educated properly, it would be hard to control them in the manner they are being manipulated via the media and they would be active in controlling their government process from local to federal level.

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

LS: A complete takeover of SCOTUS by corporate interests which is where I believe we are now with the Robert’s court sharply divided ruling on Citizens United. This would create control of an entire branch of our government by multinational handlers. I think it is serious for any control of government in the 3 branches to not be balanced and working in collaboration – instead it is ‘winner take all’ and this time the players involved are coming from a global control
mandate (although they have half of our nation’s people unaware). The administration we have right now has serious concerns in the advisors Obama has around him as well, but, at least the judges that would be appointed by him to SCOTUS will not blatantly play to the multinational agenda.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

LS: Yes, we’re being flattened into the agenda of cheap labor.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competitiveness in the world economy?

LS: Romney will take us to the table of multinational corporate interests. Obama needs to have a democratic congress to get competitive plans for higher education in technologies and energy alternatives in place, to close loopholes and taxation for the multinational corporations and bring jobs home.

AC: What is your opinion of the libertarianism?

LS: I think they make many good points.

AC: What is your opinion of anarchism/left-libertarianism?

LS: I think they also make many good points, but, I believe that in both cases (rugged individualism expressed in both anarchism and libertarianism – an every person for themselves and least amount of government - that I would disagree with both that instead, if we work together collaboratively (locally, state and nationally) that we thereby build a cooperative, beneficial society at all levels while maximizing individual rights. This working together would be our government – we would run it and make it as large or small as we decide it should be. Withdrawing from government – just everyone take care of themselves would create a demise in forward progress in all areas – we increase the abilities we individually have to advance ourselves and our nation if we work together collaboratively.

AC: Have you had dealing with either or both ideologies?

LS: Yes, I’ve worked with both groups Occupy Ashland Oregon (had anarchists) and Wake Up America (libertarians).
AC: Ok, then, I’ll start with the first question and it’s just tell me basically, I guess I can’t say organization, but your activism in your own words. Just tell me what you do and what it means.

EL: Um, Back before Occupy began, I was a student organizer. I worked tried to get students with disabilities to get better access on campus at the university I was going to. Eventually, we became more involved based on campus environmental issues. We started to want to see something broader. We stated to attend city council meetings and our country commissioner. Actually, understanding what role could be played by us. We got to know our local representatives better. So all of this led to us getting connected to a lot of groups in the valley. They were are splintered, although a lot of them were talking about having common goals and getting together. They weren’t doing that at all though. So, we pulled together with the Occupy protests. We were working already on trying to bring those groups together, in the first part, but the timing of Occupy was wonderful in that- It was really easy all of them to sign on board. Then we had our initial demonstrations, we had some mayors involved, our local representatives, and some people who are going to be senators for Congress. It sort of started from there. Now, I am a member of the board of directors of Peak House, which is the oldest social justice organization here in the valley I believe. It’s been around for thirty years. It was originally founded in 70 or 71 around nuclear free zones, out of the peace movement. They got very involved in Occupy and recruited me onto their board. So, from that, I have been active In that. I have joined some commissions for the city of Ashland. I have been sort of feeling my out into actually understanding how to work in the non-profit and through government and trying to take some of my experiences with Occupy and learn from other areas where I wasn’t as experienced. I wanted more experience outside normal channels. For me, locally, I am focused on specific issues. The vision, of course, is linking up so we can address national issues. I saw that what was needed, what I could do at the local level- People what some alternative at the national level. A lot of people had had a lot of hope with Obama in 2008 and other people were very turned off by him. But a lot of people had hope because he spoke about being beyond bi-partisanship, addressing the financial crisis, taking bold measures and we certainly didn’t get any bold measures and we have gotten obstructionism from the other side. And up to the election, which is in a couple of days, that has been where we’ve been. And, everybody meet, is talking about this election, which everyone is. Nobody is really that inspired, even the people behind Obama. There are those diehards that still work on his campaign, but a lot of the others who were involved in Occupy and sort of have gotten their expectations higher.
They don’t necessarily blame Obama, but they are just more interested in what he can do for us.

AC: Ok

EL: And I don’t think there were many who would say that back in 2008. There were people, but I think- Even for myself, I was 15 at the time and I worked on his campaign. That really got me into politics in some ways. I am thankful for that experience, but afterwards I got much more involved independently.

AC: OK, then my next question would be what do you consider to be the inspiration for these movements that you are in? Occupy, the peace movement that you are involved in now, the Obama supporters you were just talking about ...

EL: Inspiration... You know I think it depends on a certain extent. There are different set of ways that people approach it. There were people who were organizers in Occupy that I would characterize it as a search for community. Not only the political idea for having a stronger community which is able to make decisions together better, to more involved in the democratic process, but there is also beyond the mere result, beyond the mere political goal of having a functional system, the organizers I knew were more driven by a more secular religious sense. It meant a lot to them personally. People working together I think. I think when we saw 80, 100, 200 people coming together and I was facilitating some General Assemblies, you sort of are learning as you go to channel all this energy that the people have in a decision or a motion. On the one hand it can be extremely frustrating or deficient, but ultimately is comes out, you have some results. It somehow moves forward. You have 80, 100, 200 people participating. It’s a sense that- it’s hard now to walk across the street to get know your neighbor. It feels now that you are limited in how you relate to your community. Even in just the normal ways you are involved in politics, you see this dichotomy in terms of even locally. You have people coming to a city council or something that they are saying they have these issues that they are trying to deal with. People really don’t interact with government anymore. There is no town hall format. There is no real rigorous dialogue that’s healthy. That is the inspiration for the people in our group. We were already looking for that dialogue. We were trying to get people together, large groups debating, and educating each other and learning from each other. We were inspired by the students we got involved. Occupy for us, was just an extension of that.

AC: OK, What would you say is the main reason that people are joining Occupy and these other movements and how did they do it?

EL: I think the reason is-

AC: I mean, you were saying before about community.
EL: Yep. I think that is a major aspect. I think also people can be driven to participate simply because they- I think a lot of has to come down to national politics. To wealth and inequality. We are slowing moving as country in a direction- essentially we are a foundation to a house of cards. You know, it varies. There are those who have the leftist view that we were always an empire and our position is to be a bully or a facilitator at the international level that basically plays the cop. Obama’s recent pivot to Asia is one example in order for us to be the one to resolve disputes in a region that is developing rapidly. So there is a sense that, in a broad sense, that we are an empire in decline, which is, even for those on the right, there is this sort of fear that something has gone wrong. The problem is educating people to why that happened and it’s difficult. There are different ways to approach this. It’s academic. You can talk about credit default swaps. The financial market. We tried to. Some people we go back to the Fed and how the Fed was the problem and that money was the problem, which we tried to get away from, but I think people- The main thing about Occupy is people got it. It wasn’t that conflicted. There’s people making bets essentially because there is no regulation, meaningful regulation. It inflated prices and pushed things up until the illusion was real. It was false growth. It was not real. It was fabricated from above. The problem is that we have become so dependent on those things, that structure that we couldn’t let them fail. I think people want more than that. They want more decisive action and safe guard it. Somehow, that didn’t happen. So they still have that sense of difficulty with it. So the second part of your question of how do people get involved and what I have seen is a really splintering off of the movement into different approaches and the people who are in the movement don’t have a problem with that. That is, the people in our assembly, who are now running for office at various different levels. We’re more networked, we are interacting more with people at different levels. We have a Democrat who is running for congress here. I originally met here through Occupy, prior to knowing whether she was running for office. That was very interesting. She came, was there for a while, go to demonstrations, and eventually after a couple of weeks, she announced that she was running for Congress. So there is a candidate aspect to it as well. I think people are doubtful of it and are still questioning that. But the important thing is some individuals have taken the initiative to run with it, to become candidates with those values. Although, as an organization, Occupy is not focused on that electoral aspect, I think most people generally are going to support those candidates. There are the resolutions. So we have a resolution against corporate personhood, which is on our ballot for the city of Ashland. We also have other groups working at the state level working with that and the State Bank Proposal, which focuses on the empowering the State of Oregon to invest in its own agriculture and become less dependent on the larger banks. We have different proposals like that we are involved in and it’s taking time. You learn, I think, initially you had the sense that this demonstration would immediately cause some churning in the system, but now we are focusing on individual policies. The hope is that it will carry the momentum and channel the energy into specific goals.
AC: What would you say the demographics of the group were? Was it really diverse or was it the stereotypical media portrayal of spoiled rich kids kind of thing?

EL: I think- 50 percent was actually the older population. 50s, 60s, the baby boomer generation. There were a lot of older people involved, I found. Then a small percentage of younger people. Then again, you probably had that phenomena everywhere, is that the sense was that very few students were involved, but the ones that were involved were in “leadership” positions. I noticed that in Portland, Los Angeles, and other places. Then you had the presences in the streets- transients and street kids, and more long term homeless people, which was a very different group. They tended to be an older generation. The social conflict that happened was primary between the transients and other members. The students would try to play the mediating role between them. That was what I saw.

AC: Ok. It’s interesting what you say about the older generations because I visited New York City and right before S17 for Occupy Wall Street. I went to one of the meetings where they were planning the one anniversary. And yeah, 50 percent of them were these old hippies. It was completely not what they portrayed as. And most of them were having trouble economically or they didn’t have a job and were quite angry. It was interesting and they were very welcoming people. And there was, I forgot his name, his first name was Bill but I can’t remember his last name, he was a big spokesman. He was wary of press and researchers being there, but they eventually let me stay. Afterwards some came up to me and apologized and were very nice. It was an interesting experience.

EL: That is interesting.

AC: Yeah, but ok. Sorry?

EL: Yeah, well I found that very interesting as well. Initially, when I was organizing October 6, which was in solidarity with the occupation in Washington, D.C.,- we didn’t know that we would sort of be labeled Occupy and the whole thing would come under that banner. We began that night and I really didn’t know who was going to show up. I talked to the mayor, who was going to come out and speak because I knew him from early organizing. Our local representatives were going to speak. But about an hour before the demonstration I was like looking around and thinking, “Where is everyone? What is going on?” Really, in less than an hour, there was 400 people, it seemed like, in Ashland, which is a town of 20,000. That’s pretty impressive.

AC: Yeah, it is. Ok, then, what would be your best of more effective tools for organizing and did you find it hard to engage the public?

EL: The most effective tools for organizing- You know when we took on, our best sort of tactic was to coalition with other organizations that were more established. It really had to do with
how far you could network your message out. I find that, sometimes the traditional means—there can be circumstances where the traditional means of propagating a message can apply, but in this sort of setting we found that it was much more successful to reach people who were already involved, people who had some change of listening to the message. That also meant churches or other groups that had some sense of community, that were established in some sense that way. We found that that was the most effective approach to get to the public. When it came to dealing with the public other ways, I say that our most effective action was our Move Your Money campaign that we had early on. I found that we printed so many fliers about that and they were everywhere. Sometimes it seemed that everyone in the entire valley knew. I would walk around campus but not only was it posted everywhere, but all the student groups knew about it. I stated to do anecdotes with mathematic professors that “They had gone into their big bang chase,” or another one. A good amount of them had move their retirement money into local credit unions. I am not sure about numbers on the valley as a whole, but I found that people from all different classes, including people who were insurance agents, multi-millionaires, who wanted to participate in that campaign. It was a very accessible action.

AC: Ok. You mentioned the groups that already existed that you worked with and arranged Occupy around. Could you just go into who they were and afterwards describe what you would consider to be your opposition?

EL: Among the already existing groups there were the Jobs with Justice and Oregon Action Group. A lot of those sort of... you know you have the union support groups and social justice groups. They don’t tend to be focused on a single thing. They aren’t necessarily driving a career agenda. So the people who are involved in their local chapters are willing to become involved in different issues. That’s what we found. Peace House was involved early on. They did the most consistent homeless meals in Ashland. We also found the more social justice oriented churches were willing to become involved. The Unitarians, people within the Methodist faith, and people who were Buddhist were interested. Really our co-sponsoring agents though were supported by, also KFKQ, which was a local radio station. Initially it was those local media, advocacy groups and churches. But the organization that was able to pull it all together was a student group because most of those groups were not that interactive. For our opposition, we never had any sort of organized opposition. There were individuals who walked by and said “Why don’t you have a job?” or “Why don’t you take a bath?” or something like that, I don’t know. I don’t remember exactly, but something along those lines. Anyway, a couple days into our occupation of the downtown plaza in Ashland, I remember we had veterans come out and we had a famous poet here in the valley come out. He was reading poetry. I remember a lot of the members of the police were standing off in the distance looking at the speakers of the day. I remember a lot of good conversations going on that day. Basically, the police the first night, we didn’t see them patrolling or coming and watching us or anything
like that on the first night. Basically, we didn’t have any initial communications, that wasn’t always the case though. Basically, they left us completely alone on the first night in respect of what we were doing. Because we had reached out to the police several weeks before hand and because we had liaisons, they asked us if we were going to camp. We didn’t really answer that but they were glad that we could show a good faith effort not to surprise them with that fact that this was going to happen. Once they came down and actually saw what it was, the first couple of days they took a very hands-off approach and basically took the perspective of, you know, freedom of speech and assembly. I would expect in some other cities more of an opposition, but the very good example here, even amongst the police that I had a lot of good conversations with them. Even in local support.

AC: Ok. Then how would, what would you say to how the media portrays Occupy, Occupy Ashland?

EL: In Ashland, we were, by our local media, we were portrayed pretty well, which was good. When everyone showed up, it was clear that it was a large slice of the population of Ashland, and a lot of respected people involved. The media from that point had to take it seriously. But when it was at the more regional level, with travelling journalists, I know with many of them, when you talk about the mainstream perspective about Occupy Wall Street, I think there was something of that sense that it was a youth movement, anarchists who were violent or problematic. It’s interesting to look, even at the popular media, with the Dark Knight Rises, the Batman movie, there was a lot of debate about that. Basically, looking at Dickens and looking at Tale of Two Cities, they were thinking in that sort of mode. Thinking about Occupy Wall Street taking over Manhattan, or something like that, which of course is a caricature, but it shows it became popular in the media to fear. The fear of what it would look like. Especially since Occupy was trying to point out that we don’t have effective means to participate in the normal democratic process, but we aren’t saying that we know directly what the fruition of that process would look like. We are looking at potential ways to change the system, but at the same time we experimented with various forms of consensus and building a mini-community. That was its beauty for a moment, it reflected a miniature community for a moment.

AC: Yeah, it did.

EL: That was part of its power. You could look at it and say, “They are feeding each other, they have a library, you can just show up and become a part of that.” But, you have to deal with that though, because they tried to approach it as people have didn’t have jobs, or people who were lazy and just wanted to sit around. They want more welfare or something like that. Certainly any more regional news or local news tended focus more on- actually the Move Your Money campaign, the local news was basically endorsing it and supporting and talking about it
as an actual success. Naturally, that fit in with the ideas of the community. We saw things like that.

AC: Ok. Just to switch gears a little bit, we will play a little word association. I will say a word and you just tell me what it means for you. So, when I say populism, what does that mean to you?

EL: People’s power.

AC: People power, ok. When I mention Congress, what comes to mind?

EL: 10% approval rating.

AC: 10% approval rating. Ok, grassroots campaign, what is that and how important do you think they are?

EL: Hmm. Organizing at a neighborhood level. Getting people to know each other on a one-one level to organize into something bigger.

AC: And do you find it important?

EL: I think it is important. We have to keep the vision in mind that we are dealing with national political issues. A part of that process I just making sure that- the idea that Occupy wants to build a sense of community, build communications structures that we now have at a local and state level, which are not simply limited by some sort of interest group or a non-profit or a 501C4 or any of those specific institutions. We are something different in that we had to build. We couldn’t just co-op some other institution. We had to learn that on our own. A now we have more of that structure. We had to move one individual at a time, one community at a time, that’s a grassroots campaign.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

EL: We the People….. It means the whole of the nation. It means no minority within the country, it doesn’t refer to that, it doesn’t have a sort of limitation. I actual was reading George Washington’s Farewell Address and he mentions that the most important thing to remember is that we have to bind the whole nation together no matter what disagreements. To have that view to not let special interests, parties divide people form the central goal of people concerning governing. That is what I think it means. From the moment that people are tied very much to their party but are also disappointed in it, you get this division. You see much more division that in demographics on government. It’s very dangerous if we don’t that vision again of “We the People” including everyone, whether you are “left-wing” or “right-wing.” You can’t have a conversation about big government or small government, any of those terms, let
us set them aside from real problems in America. The real social divisions- it’s repeating the history of the Civil War. You have the populations that agree with each other are more concentrated in certain areas. It’s scary. It’s not healthy. It’s the result of people being around people they agree with and then, that’s leading to massive problems in basic government like passing budgets.

AC: Yea. You just mentioned George Washington. What are your opinions of the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson particularly?

EL: Well, I think the Revolution, the American Revolution, was quick clearly about the sovereignty in terms of this area, which we call nation, to be independent not only of the British but the British corporations and all of the sort of financial ways we were associated with them. I see the founding fathers attempting to form, answering a series a difficult set of questions regarding pragmatism versus ideals. Reading their letter back and forth with each other, you get the sense that they are very conscious of the fact that the intentions that they make could have a tremendous effect of the future of the nation. I remember at one point, Alexander Hamilton was talking about freedom of religion. He was talking about supporting the idea of institutionalizing Christianity and to what extent are we going to have other religions. Then Madison says, “I can imagine a future in which our nation is much enlarged and we have a different groups of people. We could imagine them as Americans in that time, but they would be Americans then.” So, I think there was some sort of vision in the sense of thinking about the future and what could happen. Ultimately I think they made clear, even in Washington’s Farewell address, the Constitution is not a fixed document and is something that changes to reflect the best practices of government and the nation has to learn from its fundamental eras. If our system has some fundamental problems, we may need to find a Constitutional way to prevent those problems. The Constitution is a changing document, but also we have to look to posterity. Those changes we want to do have to hit to the core of those important issues. I think Thomas Jefferson was clear in tying up those comments on the banks and fighting the moneyed interests. I think there was a certain understanding even at that stage that the threat the democracy, the threat to “We the People,” can come as much from private institutions monopolizing power as much as government. Of course the right likes to emphasize that the government can become oppressive and the left can of course focus on the private market. We need to see that when one side changes, it changes the other. If corporations have a monopoly, a relative monopoly over law makers and they have the most money to influence campaigns- all these myriad of things, there is all of the corruption, the plutocracy, you want to talk about Larry Summers and other people, very much the defenders of bailing out the banks, it’s a cronyism on certain levels, but the points speak for themselves. When the private or public sectors over reach without a legitimate source or a support frame of the people, then it corrupts the other side. I think this is what we have seen. The expansion of corporate power,
basically has been concurrent with the inability or loss of ability to govern. The difficulty is that people lose faith in government. You have to convince people that government is worth something defending. The problem is just how- how do you build legitimate government?

AC: Ok, following from that, I think it’s pretty, I think you inferred this a couple of times. Do you think Americans should be responsible for their civil society, economy, individual lives? I mean by that is, do they have the right to decide their own fate in the future and accept responsibility for those actions?

EL: I think-

AC: Individually and collectively, if that makes it easier?

EL: Like individual versus collective freedom?

AC: Well, what I am really asking about are citizens, Americans specifically, are they the ones that are really should decide how the country looks from the individual to the collective or should they rely on others, elites, to guide them, shape things and follow their lead?

EL: I think, any government will have the influence of experts or policy makers, or people who have specific knowledge of a certain country or something like that. And of course you could include that in how a democracy works, which is to say how can citizens guide the fate of their country. It’s a question of education, it’s a question of how people understand their own Constitution, how people understand their own responsibilities to their government. It asks a lot of citizens to be educated on a range of issues that they need to be informed on if they want to maintain an influence in the future. That is sort of compounded by the fact that American is a country sort of everywhere in the world and has interests all over the world and military all over the world. It’s difficult. You hear about Somalia or you hear about Libya or you hear about Algeria or special operation forces in Jordan and you have trade deals with China. Most American don’t know very much about those countries. That’s the difficulty. We have the internet, we have all these meanings of delivering that knowledge, the question is will we be able to use that access to understand the new world that we are in. I know there is various research that takes the pessimistic view in that people won’t do it because it’s too abstract, too far away from them. You will get some parts of the population involved but you won’t get a meaningful majority. But I really think that depends on where American goes in the next 5 or 10 years. I think there a couple of different things that could happen. There is the possibility of a fiscal cliff or some sort of devaluing of the dollar, which up now has not happened. You have all these governments around the world which are- the only reason they are being sustained is the faith of investors in other currencies. All it takes is for that sentiment to shift somewhat. If investors begin to lose faith in the dollar and believe it’s too risky and that our political system
is too broken, that will dramatically change the reality on the ground, the way America sees itself.

AC: Ok.

EL: I think a crisis presents dangers, but also opportunities. That’s always a question. Politicians always end up saying that. I think a crisis can go deeper than that. It’s not a - we are not in the sort of a crisis where the people who are politicians are going to be able to meet it, they are going to be blamed for it. They need to find ways to change it on their own. I see in each movement that are taking place now tests runs for a larger possible movement. Because of our position in the world, we have been able to halt the financial crisis that we were in. But I don’t think the root of that problem has been addressed. So it’s a matter of time for when that is coming to a head. It’s possible, next term, if Obama wins, he could enact reforms that would be enough not to go back into a crisis, but I think that’s still a question. Even in that situation it’s still a question because Congress could decide not to participate with him and we could have another loss on our credit rating. The first time people were surprised, but if it happens again I think people will begin to take it seriously.

AC: Yea, I agree. Ok. You started to go into it in the last question. How would you define progress in society today?

EL: I think progress is very difficult to define. I think you can have progress on a level of standard of living and other economic factors without actually having real progress in society. I think we saw that in a broad scale the past years, after World War II. How American and Europe acted. We saw this incredible boom in American and rejuvenation in Europe because of the Marshall Plan and the recovery effort. But it was interesting, you saw these reactions in the 1960s in France and the different movements in America expressing a lack of fulfillment in consumerist societies. So I think from their perspective we seemed to be living better but we weren’t making progress. Somewhere fundamentally their lives weren’t that much more meaningful because of that wealth. The issue is what was the result of the movements, that situation in France, and ultimately they didn’t achieve any meaningful reform other than that the anti-consumerist attitude got incorporated back into marketing itself. So you get these sort of things that you are sold these things while absolving your guilt. You buy a cappuccino from Starbucks and they say they are donating this much money to a girl in Guatemala. It’s not really important but it gives you the illusion that something is getting done. When talking to the baby boomer generation in the movement, there is a sense that they didn’t achieve what they were after. They didn’t understand what happened in that period and why. I think progress means now, it has to mean justice in some broader sense. You notice in this year’s presidential election, in the debates, there is no talk of poverty, there is no talk about the incredible prison population in the US, there is no talk about any of these long term problems. The most
amazing thing is climate change. The fact that in all of the debates, no one talked about. Sandy certainly got everyone’s attention.

AC: Yea, at the convention Romney snickered at it.

EL: Right. He joked that Obama could lower the sea tides. There is a sense that we are facing problems, whether it is the financial system, or if you look at the revolutions in the Middle East and now natural disasters, if those things are going to continue, which most likely they will, you will see a destabilization of populations that need to reconstruct and deal with those problems creatively. It won’t be able to solve these problems through administrative means. Like in Europe, the Eurozone is doing everything it can do to prevent collapse. All its doing every time Greece, Ireland, or Spain reaches that point where they seem to have more problems, they put it off as long as they can and then infuses them with money so that- Ultimately, it just continues. People say, “Ah, we made it through the worst of the crisis,” and it’s still not true and people continue to say it. It’s as if they don’t understand why the crisis is happening or the fact you have sovereign countries and their debt that are completely subject to financial markets. And they can be speculated on and they are speculated on. And the US could be in that situation as well. Although, investors seem to be hedging that the US doesn’t. So, progress has to be defined on a scale that it hasn’t been before. You can’t solve- the major problems we are facing like the financial markets and climate change or- if you take just those two- it’s also true of intellectual property, biogenetics, and a whole bunch of other issues are coming out, we can’t just fundamentally solve them at a national level. If you are talking about a global flow of capital, it can’t be regulated without some form of cooperation between national governments. Otherwise, they are going to go off and find the country with the lowest wages and they are going to there to make it as cheaply as possible. We need partnership. Whether it’s here, Europe, or China, democracy is a fleeting tradition. I don’t think it means we should be pessimistic though. There are a lot of opportunities, even in China. There is a very strong movement to fundamentally change the party’s role. We don’t know when that will happen but we know there are people there and they are trying. I remember watching this roundtable about Egyptian revolutionaries. They were discussing the issue of Islamists assembly and trying to figure out how to get a civil law. You had a lot of liberals drop out of the assembly because discussion of Sharia law and the fact they couldn’t come to a compromise. They felt that the assembly wasn’t representative. It’s difficult. I heard about Egyptian organizers being asked about the United States and they very much differentiated between the government of the United States and the people. They talked about Wisconsin and Occupy Wall Street and those things they thought meant hope for us. It was an interesting cycle. The movements that are happening everywhere give each other hope at that level. It would seem that we don’t necessarily understand each other but I think as you have the movement develop at look at Egypt and have a sense of commonality that you didn’t see before. That is sort of the
power of a global movement. Now there is a communications network in Occupy are linked through Spain, Greece, Egypt and China. I am tied into that network. Interesting that we have that, but what we do with it is still up in the air.

AC: Then to play on this, do you think ethics matter in politics?

EL: That’s a good question. I think to a certain extent. It depends. The question is there has to be ethical standards within the law. Ultimately, the problem with viewing the law from the standpoint of morality, you can get into that situation where you are looking at the financial system and say there are a couple of bad thinkers. You just need to have more ethical thinkers, and the system will work better. Or you could say we have unethical politicians and we need to replace them with more ethical politicians. That’s not really the issue. The question is regulation and norms. Ultimately it’s a matter of the laws. What is the law, what does it allow them to do? People say bankers have always been greedy, why does that change now? There is no point in blaming individuals for the problem. In America, people bought the mortgages. They got the loans. Everyone got involved in that process. The real issue is how do we prevent that systemic risk? And how do we get all those special interests out of the political decision making process? From one side it is a problem, it’s a problem of influence and conflict of interests, and those sort of conflicts. But what we are talking about is changing the laws and changing the norms. And when we talk about changing the norms, maybe that is more a matter of ethics. A matter of expecting certain things of politicians and having a sense in society that when they break accepted conventions this is not accepted. I don’t think we have enough of that in society today, we don’t have a social mechanism, a standard of behavior at least. We are so disappointed and we expect to be disappointed by language in politics. And the process of marketing, everyone is selling themselves with a product and they have statisticians who tell them what they need to do to win a district. Yes, I think that this is unethical. But while there are unethical people here and there, there is clearly something is wrong with the law. Something is wrong with what we allowing to take place. We need some fundamental limitations so that whether you are ethical or unethical, there is a limit to what you can do.

AC: Ok. Beforehand, you mentioned a secular religion. My question is do you think there is a civil religion in society today?

EL: Civil religion?

AC: Yes.

EL: You mean civil religion in the sense- in which sense?

AC: Ok.
EL: Like choosing civil society or general-

AC: No, no. Civil society. Have you read any of Robert Bellah’s work?

EL: Robert Bellah? No.

AC: Ok. It’s this whole idea - it doesn’t have to be with Christianity, but in the United States, it often is. It’s equating some part of Christian life with civic life. It doesn’t mean that the United States is a theocratic state but- here is a line from de Tocqueville. US citizenry is god-like. Everything comes from them, everything ends with them, and everything originates from them. That would be an example of a civil religion. I was wondering if you thought there is one that exists in the United States.

EL: Civil religion. I have to think about that for a moment.

AC: OK, we can move on to other questions and come back to it when you have thought about it. I am just going to change gears a little bit again. Globalization- what is your opinion of it today and how do you define it?

EL: Hmm. Globalization for me is connected to the opening up of markets for free trade abroad. It’s a movement, if you look at the last 50 years, Europe recovering, the United States rising. Then you have tremendous growth both in Japan against the Dawes plan and then generally in China after the Cultural Revolution. You have that sort of examples of rapid growth. Incredibly rapid growth. Interconnectedness of markets, so I see globalization on the one hand as the development of interdependence between markets and the development of markets where they previously hadn’t existed. Very tricky questions, asking what I think of globalization. For me at a certain level, is the globalization of the better distribution of products and tracking methods, so the market can track products. There is some of that, a development which takes place, certainly without any sort of limits. When we see third world nations or developing nations react to globalization- globalization is one of those words that the United States could use against any sort of nation that doesn’t want to open up its economy completely because there is a problem of scale. You have competition between countries, but of course the companies that are very well-developed from the developed world are going to out-compete. We saw this with NAFTA and Wal-Mart in Mexico, but you also this pattern when Latin America countries would have revolutions against dictators, which would were backed by the United States. Then you had that issue of nationalization, nationalizing a resource in order to have it in use for the population. So, that is a question a sovereignty, a question of self-determination if you want to go back to President Wilson. Yet, our reaction to that from the standpoint of globalization is that you have to keep free markets open and if you don’t, you are corrupting the system or you’re tyrannical and fighting an accepted norm. I think the scariest thing for globalization is the countries that were, were, benefiting from globalization were...
willing to defend their ability to reach new markets against the wishes of various peoples. I don’t think that we need to go back. I don’t think it’s a matter of going back to national industries. The world has been globalizing since 1400, at least. Just in the sense that there have been relatively interconnected markets. It’s just a matter of understanding there has to be a relationship between the domestic resources a country has and meeting the needs of the population. We can’t pursue, it’s not healthy to pursue those open market just without end. It’s very much the American model of the firm, in the sense that you don’t take account of any of the other stakeholders in the process. Your ultimate aim is to create profit for shareholders at the expenses of any of the other real stakeholders in the process. I think that’s a very dangerous assumption and globalization has to be really separated from that. And we need to introduce other ways to determine our judgments, not simply just free market expansion but also to respect the wishes of the local population and consider what is in their best interests as well.

AC: Then, what would you say about outsourcing? Would you say it’s a serious problem or a transition to a new economy?

EL: I think there’s been a lot of questions about- since China has the potential to be a reserve currency and especially concerning their excessive state controls, strong state apparatus, that’s not possible at this stage. I think in the next ten years, if they want to, they can become a regional currency of some kind. That’s assuming that they don’t get into any conflicts with their neighbors. If you talk about the US economy, there is a dual issue with outsourcing. One is we are seeing a pattern like in any other empire, like the British, initially the free market globalizing system worked best for us because we were on top, and the last 50 years were a record of that. But now we are at this place where, it’s very strange to see it, you have this defense that other countries have to open their markets so that we can come in and now that we are in a crisis, now that we aren’t as productive or competitive necessarily as the rest of the world, now you have these considerations to go back to some sort of (unintelligible). I think it is entirely possible that we will enforce some sort of protectionism. Outsourcing for me is just a part of the structure of the system in the sense when we don’t limit at all corporate charters in the way we used to when the country was founded. There were limitations on corporate charters, it had to get approved by state legislatures. It had to operate within certain constraints. There were specific guards against the abuse of the public, which it was there to work on behalf of. If there was a violation to the public, it was very simple to revoke corporate charters and they did. Now, that’s completely impossible to do. Corporations act on a scale that they’re accountable to no one. I see that as a problem within the structure of our business model in the way we accept the relationship between the government and market. Again, though, that is something we can address if we take the steps to address that problem. It depends upon China as well. It depends on China but we don’t want to do anything to force them into a
situation. Currently I am working on a paper for a grand strategy class that is focused on American-Chinese relations. Right now we don’t want to block any money to China on any level. We feel now that they are in a stronger position where they can take a stand and because of their history with imperialism over the last century, which they refer to as the century of humiliation after the opening of doors. Now they are a strong country coming up and they have instability at home but... It’s sort of the same thing with Iran. The worst thing you could do now is, when they have domestic instability, is to make ourselves the target as the enemy. That will allow them to rally the people and say “Do you want the Americans to making decisions about your like?” Even the people who are against their own government, what’s happening with the torturing in China or the crackdown in Iran, they are going to think, “Well, they aren’t the Americans.” So, as far as outsourcing is concerned, it’s just part of the system.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities with Occupy and other movements?

EL: Played a good amount. Facebook, twitter- twitter wasn’t as essential here certainly because I think when you look at social movements in Iran or Egypt, there were certain censorship which led to a focus upon twitter as one of the last resorts for that sort of communication. In American, the use of Twitter is much, much less. I think the number is about 1/3 of America. Facebook in general seems to have more elements, whether it’s- What I saw was a huge proliferation in groups and pages and events. In the first couple of months of Occupy, I was networked immediately with Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Everything. When there was a solidarity or an event being planned that was big I heard about. Then when you have 20, 30, or 40 people checking that and come back to general assembly, we would always catch come piece of the data that some of us would miss. It became an incredible source of data to know what everyone else was doing. The result was an amazing level of coordination in the first couple of months.

AC: Ok, now I am just going to shift to the future outlook of Occupy and your other activities in your other groups. Where do you see these movements developing into the future?

EL: I think that they will move in the direction of some form of – I think the issue that if you look at the issue of how change will take place in the United States, I think it will require action by a state by state level and that sort of corresponds to the federated structure. If you look at that, what we will need to see, I think we will see it, that the federal government gets into a position that it’s thrown into a deeper crisis, if you have questions about the dollar and the fiscal cliff and it reverberates- you have a destabilizing of that system, you may see again the burden of the federal government shifting back down to the states. My hope lies in that probably having the states turn towards the federal government and resolving together for a deeper solution. Even thought that hasn’t happened in our history, I think that’s the direction
we’re heading towards. You can already see it when you look into the case like in Montana corporate spending law, which was revoked by the Supreme court, it was summarily dismissed. Then you see the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals might be coming in against that. You see it on marijuana legalization, they are all already creating a level of discrepancy between the federal government and public opinion. So, I think that will ultimately be the major question. States are already having a difficult time surviving, but if things start getting worse I know representatives who would turn to the federal level and say, “We can’t do this on our own, we need fundamental changes in our tax code, financial system.” We need to deal with it in a way the federal government is not currently. That would be the hope. The states would band together and find a solution. I think that also ties into the potential of the right and the left coming together because from that partnership liberals would be more understanding of it because it would overcome that dichotomy of liberals defending the federal government. You would have the potential of putting the federal government on a new basis without antagonizing those two groups.

AC: How would you estimate the impact so far of your movements?

EL: I think it’s made everyone American aware about wealth and inequality. I don’t think it has been successful in transferring that into broad action. But I think there is a paradox at the root of why that has happened. To participate in national politics, especially in the party format, it requires a large, in order to be successful, it requires a large amount of money. So then there is, for activists, there is an incentive to turn to the local level and state level to begin organizing. But then it is very difficult to motivate people to move from that level to the federal level. We know that what we need is legislation, laws at the federal level, we need changes there, because, if you look at any state budget, they don’t have the room, the power to rectify their own problems. So I feel critical of Occupy from that side. There was also problems with our decision making process, consensus, attitudes that weren’t really commensurate with reality of how we can most practically organized ourselves. Nevertheless, it wasn’t something that we haven’t seen in America for a very long time, which is a movement that attacked wealth disparity and that aspect of class- you know it’s funny because you aren’t supposed to say that word in the United States. It brought class into the conversation. In fact it influenced very much the presidential conversation, not that either parties were necessarily representative. But Obama certainly tried to capture that sense of injustice. He would always frame it as trying to get the rich to pay a little bit more. You saw that Obama tried to put the blame on individuals and not on structural problems, like BP oil spill. He blamed BP and attacked them for being bad, but they won. It wasn’t BP’s fault. It could have any other larger oil company because they were all acting on the same flawed procedures. It doesn’t make any sense to blame BP. Again, it’s a matter of law, not ethics.
AC: Also with the banks. He blames specific banks and people, but not the institutions. He pays lip service but he doesn’t go into detail about it.

EL: Yep. I think he’s afraid of- I think he is in a terribly difficult position. Obviously, he has to counter this racial arguments, it’s incredible to hear it about him. He also set the standards for himself very high, that ended up biting him because he wanted to be this post-partisan figure. It turned out Hilary Clinton’s view of things was a bit more accurate in that the Republicans were not going to be willing to negotiate on certain things. To make up for his domestic failures, he became supportive of this militarism of Bush. The drones, counterterrorism. It’s strange because he went in to counter that and didn’t see that he would have to play that card. He didn’t want anyone to doubt his vigor on foreign policy. They saw that as a card that could be played. So he tried to cut them off beforehand, which alienated his base.

AC: That’s all the questions that I have on your experience and opinions. I just have a few questions on my theories about new populism. You gave me your ideas in the email there. What’s interesting to me specifically about the Tea Party and Occupy is this anti-statism and anti-corporatism stance that both have. From in the interviews I have had in New York and Oregon, there is a real strong agreement on both sides that, like you said as well, there is a shared blamed about who is responsible for this- whether its government or privates corporations, banking, financial institutions. The Fed is an emblem for this because it has a foot in both worlds. You wrote a little bit about libertarians in your email. I wonder what your opinion is about the Liberty Movement, internet libertarians, Ron Paul, even the fiasco at the Republican Convention. What is your take on this?

EL: I think there is- I see a danger with Ron Paul. What is interesting is that Ron Paul has won over some supporters from the left, which is really strange. On a whole host of policies he does not agree with them. It just shows to the extent that when people hear a particular candidate say that they’re against war or against the expansion of the military, and for civil rights, obviously wire taping and all that, people hear those things, “God if we can only get those things back we could have more of the power to have an actually debate about other issues.” So Ron Paul’s success and how fervent his libertarian supporters were, like those who were involved in his campaign in Oregon, were really pushing him. Even for people, which seemed arrogant a little bit, if you are a liberal you can disagree with his other policies but until we change the basic coordinates of constitutional rights- the problem with that argument is that the position that regulation is the enemy, it could potentially result in the loss of power for the federal government but also- no meaningful reforms on powerful corporations or big unions over the political process. I wonder- I think he points towards a possible future agreement. I think it was fascinating at the Republican Convention. I mean they are so staged. It’s refreshing when there is that form of disagreement when there is a desire on the part of a group to move
it in a different direction. But what we saw wasn’t enough Americans, Republicans in that case, to move it in that direction. Certainly, you have the extremes with a greater change of disagreement at conventions. You have the example of Teddy Roosevelt at his split forming the Progressive Party in 1912 that cost Taft the election. You have those sort of examples that its surprise, with how alienated people are today and the low approval of congress, there is not more action with parties to break that sort of platform. That just goes to show how locked down the existing institutions and money have over the process. Americans are just very tired of that and there is a sense of defeat about that, especially in the middle. On the left, there was an upsurge with Obama, but it some ways it had a negative effect in that people had placed a lot of hope in him instead of in a social movement. So on Tuesday it will be very interesting how much people fall in line with Obama out of the fear of what Romney will be like or will they be more principled and vote for third parties. There are relatively good ballot access for a number of independent parties. You see people like Gary Johnson who has the potential to rock the boat in swing states. Then you have Jill Stein and Rocky Anderson. I think those candidates, if we encounter a deeper crisis, I think those candidates may be potentially be led into a new coalition or party. I think this thing we that can see from the left and the right- if we could have the Green Party and the libertarians and the justice party and the others agree, I know they have done it in other countries, agree on the basic platform on certain principles. And run on that slate to change those specific things and other policy matters have to be addressed only after those fundamental reforms. That’s something you see, that natural solidarity. We have plenty of examples of the Green Party and libertarians going together to convention debates and get arrested outside because they are not allowed in. There is an interest, even for all the third parties, to be against money in politics because that is the real thing that prevents them from getting their message out. If they were able to get their message out, I think you find that an incredible amount of Americans agree with what they are saying.

AC: Yea, I think the left is going through an identity crisis right now. I think they’re just completely rudderless. But I will get to that in a second. To go back to these libertarians, have you seen any of these internet libertarians or that’s what people call them? Adam Kokesh, Stefan Molyneux, those guys?

EL: I haven’t heard of either. What sort of-

AC: They mainly identify with the Liberty Movement, constitutionalism, anarcho-capitalism, things like that.

EL: Yea, I have seen those people. They tend to be associated with Ron Paul, certainly. There are a couple of people like that in this valley. The anarcho-capitalism thing is an interesting reaction. I have noticed a certain degree of opportunism. I know some libertarians who are
more Constitution oriented and not so radically anti-government as the anarcho-capitalists. Those are the people, if there is an opportunity to build a coalition between people of the left and the right, those are the people who can build, partner with those on the left who are on the same level of intensity. You have the coincidence with opposites. You have these leftist anti-statists and then you have these anarcho-capitalists. Because of their hatred for authority, or even hatred of law because even it comes down to the far left, like hating the police, but this extolling of violence. Now you have these far-right people who tend to agree. They both have that type of attitude to work outside the system, to not participate, but I don’t think that is a sizeable majority though. I don’t think that is representative of a large population here though. I think that it is the responsibility of the more moderate left and right to hold to our principles and to have the state operate justly. You have those people to prevent turning into despair and anti-statism. A lot of the people I know, especially on the left, are in a sort of identity crisis, very disturbed about the way the country is going or feel a great deal of hope.

AC: I agree with you about the extreme libertarians. They are like zealots. Whenever I see a debate with them, it is not a debate to learn, it’s a debate to- it’s very one-sided. They are there to say “No you are wrong, this is our idea. You can have your idea, but it is still wrong.” That I find not helpful. However, I agree with you again that the more moderate libertarians that subscribe to their ideology but just don’t go as far, they seem be a good platform for agreement for people on the left. That brings me now to the other side, the anarchists, which I think is inappropriate. Have you heard the term left-libertarianism before?

EL: Yes, I think that is appropriate.

AC: Yea, then you have the Chomsky idea of anarcho-syndicalism. What was your experience in Occupy with them?

EL: In the more urban centers, they seemed to be more intellectual. In many cases, when there was a breakdown in the General Assembly with regards to functionality, it was due to conflict between the majority group of an older population, the reasonable majority, and the shrill anarchists, left-libertarians. Basically procedural bullshit. That was the most disappointing thing about Occupy, the procedural bullshit. The extent that people went about different rules and laws instead of focusing on goals. In Portland, that seemed to have had an impact. Occupy (?) ended up being shut down by the moderators, which was a group of 3,000-4,000 people maybe. It ended up being shut down because it evolved into this attack between anarchist who were involved and the rest of the organizers. That was another thing. The whole irony was that the anarchists who were afraid of saboteurs became the saboteurs themselves. Just in the matter of practicality. In the major urban centers, they had more of an influence there than they did here in Ashland and Medford. But I think that was just due to the smaller
populations. It only takes a very small number of anarchists or left-libertarians to throw the consensus process of its rocker.

AC: But do you think that their ideologies or philosophies have merit at least, maybe not taken to zealot like proportions, but do you think that this classic libertarian and left libertarian have potential?

EL: I think it, I don’t think you can come to terms with, I don’t think you can understand how globalization has become a norm, I would say, to an extent that which basic financial transaction rely on an incredible degree of organization and structure. If you want to take away, for me, reduce the power of the state in that way and its relationship to the system, you are not going to lose that complexity. The issue is are governments going to be democratic, accountable? Can we remake the democratic character? That’s the question, not that the state as such is completely overpowering. My understanding is that the state has a role to play in that. I can agree with them that the entire framework for fighting terrorism is quickly slipping into this authoritarian model. You have these grand juries against citizens and drones attacking innocent civilians, including Americans. You have this whole extra-judicial structure that is frightening, and it’s not being utilized. That is part of where they are wrong, is the hysteria that they have. Currently the laws are not being utilized on any mass scale. You can be an American and go about your life without being in any danger, but they have a tremendous amount of fear against the federal government. You have anarchists in Portland, it seems that it wasn’t even related to what they were doing, but they had this anarchist literature that they are being put before the grand juries now. That’s part of the hysteria. Libertarians can’t do much about what they see going on around them. They turn towards paranoia.

AC: Ok. That’s pretty much all of my questions.
AC: Tell me about your movement in your own words.

SD: The Occupy movement was initiated (in my opinion) in effort to giving a voice to people who feel they’ve been silenced by political corruption, greed, corporate influence via the economy, American gov’t & on individuals who are not getting wage based support via salary and healthcare. Occupy allows individuals to participate in creating real change locally (mostly) and nationally (solidarity group events).

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration to your organization?

SD: The EFFORT that is implemented by many diverse individuals. Young, old, various races, various political and religious backgrounds who come together to enact on changing a broken system. When you see diverse people who at one time, could not hold a simple debate on an issue, somehow can come together to make the world a better place.

AC: Why are people joining your movement?

SD: I feel that people join because they've been oppressed for years such as myself. Far too long, we’ve been silenced by the power that comes from our gov’t. As silly as it sounds, our issues have and continue to fall on deaf ears in local and national gov’t.

AC: Do you recruit?

SD: No. We don’t generally recruit.

AC: How do people join your movement?

SD: You will find that many joined Occupy Houston without being tied to any other organization. However, we have several who have linked into Occupy Houston already being attached to another group which we all work together. Linking to other groups has been very beneficial to Occupy Houston alone.

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

SD: Houston is a huge city, the 4th largest in the nation. It’s been difficult in gaining members at times because Houston is so spread out. In the beginning, we occupied a park across the street from city hall which was perfect because several corp businesses and local govt were at our
disposal while occupying. Today, we’ve spread out because we’ve learned to do various activities throughout the city that makes it easier for others to get involved.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

SD: The greatest thing we have again is diversity. I will use that term often. It was assumed that Occupy Houston (and the Occupy movement) was set up by and for the younger generation, fresh out of college, etc. That wasn’t true. I’ve been out of college for 15-years. We’ve learned to respect others who do not or may not align with our own individual thinking.

AC: What would be the hierarchy of the organizations?

SD: We do not believe in hierarchy. We allow our voices and opinions be that. But no one person or group is hierarchical to the other.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?

SD: Communication and acceptance.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

SD: They feed on engaging the public. That is the point which is to make people aware of circumstances or to educate others on particular issues, concerns or an easier way to get around the broken system we live in.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

SD: I work with Food Not Bombs which feeds the homeless 4-times a week in downtown Houston.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

SD: Aside from media which I’ll answer below, I would like to say that the opposition is anyone who works relentlessly to shut down our First Amendment. Those individuals usually head these large corporations who’ve intentionally forced and called upon our law enforcement to infiltrate, harass and scare members of Occupy. We’ve even got local political leaders (my opinion) such as Mayor Annise Parker who is formally an activist for Gay & Lesbian Rights who constantly lied to the media where it concerned Occupy Houston which only muffled our efforts.

AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?
SD: Media has played a key role in brainwashing members of society. For example, when Occupy Houston first began, media expressed several times that the movement consisted of a bunch of free loading, lazy, young, hippy, drug using individuals. In fact, several times the media distorted the truth when we participated in interviews with the media. It was certainly biased for the most part and generally not in our favor. Spanish media seemed to support us more than local headlining media.

AC: Where does the funding come from?

SD: In the beginning, we utilized a “We Pay” account which people could donate funds to assist us. We also gained a lot of physical donations of items to be used at the park when we were there. Today, I do not think much, if any money is donated. If there is an event or issue we need to handle, we generally would hold a fundraiser.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

SD: In the beginning, a rep for Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee came out to Occupy Houston and spoke of her support for our movement. That rep was “boo’d” off the steps. This because Lee didn’t make it out herself. In Occupy Houston, for the most part, you will find more Green Party, Independent type thinking. I cannot specifically claim that we have political support per say. We are the ones who feel that the political system is corrupt and when you speak out on that, it’s been met with law enforcement harassment, etc. Politicians have certainly not been happy about Occupy or Occupy Houston. Emails that were once passed around citing Homeland Security surveillance on several of us would prove we don’t have political support because it’s generally politicians who call for Homeland Security to activate their doings.

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

SD: Disgust. Since Citizens United was passed, we’ve seen a huge shift in Congress that generally adheres to corporate interest rather than the citizens of the U.S.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

SD: I am still trying to decide on that one.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

SD: I think it is imperative in creating real change that’s beneficial to the people.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

SD: It means a lot to me! That is why I am fighting so hard. We the People have been ignored and put off by our own govt. Our govt seems to have forgotten that it’s We the People who
make this country great. Since the govt has acted on their own accord, we now see the state of the country which is not doing well at this time.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

SD: Yes. As long as they've been told the truth of the circumstance. Not played by a biased media, etc.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

SD: Undecided at this time. I’m still learning a lot. I can respect what our founding fathers incited however the way this country was taken-or stolen, is not something I support.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

SD: I do not see any. I see it getting worse. I can say that a key effort in the Occupy movement which includes Occupy Houston, is that we made many question their loyalty to a 2-party system. We’ve brought in question the real motives of our leaders. That is progress however it needs to stick.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

SD: Progress. I believe in traditional values however society is changing. Tradition cannot always work in an ever-changing society.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

SD: I think it’s one of the most important values that should constantly be held! If our leaders and people in general utilized ethics, I think the country would be in a much better circumstance.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

SD: Religion and politics do not go hand in hand. In my opinion, it's like oil and water. Sure we can claim to be a Christian nation while injecting a death row inmate or cutting off social services to a family in need, and many claim that the above is necessary however that is not “Christ like” in my perspective.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society?

SD: Being fair would require people to be open minded. Society lacks that.

AC: Does just a thing exist?
SD: Not today.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

SD: Both. As a human race, I believe that everyone should not be oppressed, fooled, slaved, etc. There is cause and effect for everything. America tends to unfairly activate affairs that need not be there.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

SD: Having the ability to record on my phone has been a huge plus. When officers would harass members, it was recorded. Also having the ability to update Facebook with the on-goings of the movement and events has proved a huge help.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

SD: There have been laws and executive orders that have been signed that appears to be looking to oppress Americans as a whole. A New World Order is generally thought of as a conspiracy but if one takes a look at recent laws passed by Congress and our President, it is evident that our govt is up to something. I see govt control and a dismantling of our Constitution playing out right now, turning the country into a police state.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

SD: Social media has helped us dramatically. It’s how we learned of the Arab Spring. I always say this... if you don’t want people to know your private life, then do not post your life on social media.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

SD: Women’s Rights, Civil Rights & internet.

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

SD: Citizens United, the internet, not closing tax loopholes.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

SD: It’s a serious problem because it causes the economy to lose jobs. While it might create jobs in other countries, it’s a known fact that those jobs are held with slave wages on those abroad. Just as there are workers, engineers, etc, abroad, we have those very same people in the United States who could use these jobs which would put money back into our economy. But corporations are looking to save money. They know the American worker won’t work for $10 a
day, they ship jobs overseas that effects job loss while recording record breaking profits and are not taxed for it.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competitiveness in the world economy?

SD: Putting jobs back in America. Build the companies in our country. Make a better product! For example, I refuse to buy an American made car. Without fail, American made cars will fail an individual more times than not. While Japanese cars have been known to last decades, you generally don’t see Ford Escorts from a decade or two, on the road. Reports came in a couple years ago where American car buyers were complaining that before they could pay off their vehicle (average of 3-5 year in payments) the car would require major auto work. A consumer is left to decide whether to pay for the auto work or purchase another car because the value of the car diminishes dramatically because they are not quality cars. We have the ability to match Japanese cars. Why we cannot do it is beyond me. This is the same for several American made products. Today, it’s whatever is cheapest by product which hurts our country.

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

SD: I believe that we’ve built our strengths. We’re tackling several local issues that needed attention. I see us progressing as a support system and a sounding board for people who are generally ignored for example, the homeless. Mayor Parker has made it illegal to feed more than 5 people on public property. This attacks the homeless mainly. Occupy Houston worked feverishly in giving a voice to the homeless and fought the city over this law which is still being fought through today as lawsuits are being filed, etc. I see it doing what it was meant to do: give people a voice again.

AC: What improvements do your think can be made to your movement?

SD: Well, we’re doing quite a bit as is. If anything, I would like for our name to get out there more. Many are surprised to learn that there is still an Occupy Houston movement. Media is not interested in us so we do our best to communicate our efforts via social media. I feel we could do better than just using social media.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

SD: I personally do not align with a particular party. I don’t see it turning into a 3rd party either. For the most part, it’s about waking people up to what is really happening in society. Making an educated decision politically is key.

AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?
SD: Obama signed off on the NDAA. He also signed the HR 347 which both of these bills remove our First Amendment Rights. Congress has tried to pass a law that would remove our internet rights, giving our govt the right to monitor our usage. Control efforts are being passed in Congress. If these bills continue and society continues to ignore it, I can see our country turning into a 1941 Germany or even Russia. Great countries have fallen. America is not invincible.

AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

SD: I had hoped for better but again, media plays a powerful tool in all this. I do think we played an excellent role in the November elections. We made people stop and think on whether a two party system was legitimate. The Green Party is more known because occupiers nationwide implemented many conversations about the GP. GP had also moved forward is showing great support for Occupy. Today people continued to be surprised when they learn Occupy is still alive. I think that speaks in volumes on how we’re impacting the country. Out local and national govt surely did a good job in trying to diminish the movement via force of the police and evictions of the public space.

AC: What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

SD: The core of what I learned does indicate that they aligned their desires to the same as Occupy. But unlike Occupy, the Tea Party allowed political influence into their movement and had a profound effect on their movement. Today I am personally not a fan of the national Tea Party because key individuals, for example, Sarah Palin, attached herself to the Tea Party. We’re seeing a rise of politicians who need not be in office. They are not concerned with the people, but concerned of special interest, money, or anything that would benefit them personally, more so, power. I’ve met some Tea Party activist who hold true to their core meaning but I personally feel their image has been skewed by political agenda.

AC: What is your opinion of anarchism (any types) ,left-libertarianism, and the Liberty Movement (Ron Paul)?

SD: Because there is so much corruption politically, I am unable to believe in any particular party or politician. I always hoped there would be that one individual who would stand out above the rest and not fall off the cliff with the other leaders. But even Ron Paul has fallen off the cliff a few times. I do believe that some form of anarchy is important in gaining the attention of the nation but that would have to be done on a mass scale and done in a way that we’re able to physically protect ourselves from the police brutality we’d face. It’s trying to get people on massive levels that is truly difficult.

AC: Have you had dealings with any in your organization?
SD: Anarchist, yes. And they’d take a bullet for the occupiers. We also had several Ron Paul supporters which I respect their opinions concerning his stance. I just don’t think his stance is enough and I feel for him because no one (politically) seems to listen to what he has to say. For the most part, I think in the Occupy Movement, you’re going to find independent thinking. Not independent politically but one who claims none, who’s fed up, etc.
AC: Tell me about your movement in your own words.

JS: It is a movement of the people by the people, just in realistic terms. For instance, consensus is used when making collective decisions instead of using traditional models like monarchy or patriarchy.

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration to your organization?

JS: The most inspiring thing to me is the knowledge that life can be far better in experience for all humankind and everything else on this Earth including it.

AC: Why are people joining your movement?

JS: Shit's fucked up and bullshit in all areas of life, people identify with that message and use it as an identifier with the Occupy movement.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join your movement?

JS: People join Occupy through just showing up. We don't, actively, recruit.

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

JS: The demographics consists of ages ranging from 3 - 89, pretty evenly split amongst male and female and ethnically diverse.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

JS: Most people share pretty common underlying principles like access to food, shelter and water but there is a mix of ways people feel we ought to pursue these issues, until recently during the National Occupy Gathering in Philadelphia last July when we collectively drafted a vision of the future as seen by the movement.

AC: What would be the hierarchy of the organizations?

JS: All organizing is done horizontally not top down.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?
JS: Online social mediums, email, face-to-face.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

JS: No.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

JS: Yes.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

JS: Opposition looks like anything that tries to suppress and/or invalidate the voices of people.

AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?

JS: The media is one-sided. Pro-capitalism and control.

AC: Where does the funding come from?

JS: Mostly grassroots donations have helped to fund Occupy.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

JS: Political support comes from any politician working to help achieve aims that benefit the majority of humans instead of the privileged few.

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

JS: Something popular at a particular time.

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

JS: Government arm of the Central Banking system.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

JS: A campaign organized by local individuals or those from abroad who use collective resources to achieve a social aim.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

JS: The people who have and continue to make this country a relevant trading partner in the world.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?
JS: Yes. When given the tools to do such a thing.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

JS: What did they find? Thomas Jefferson I don't think would have called himself a founding father.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

JS: Social norms moving away from suppression, and perceived freedom to people actually experiencing what it is to be free.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

JS: Progress is a way to show the outmoded-ness of tradition.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

JS: Politics don't matter, ethics has nothing to do with coercing and tricking entire human populations.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

JS: Yes, capitalism.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?

JS: Everyone having the chance to reach their full potential as humans. Now, that does not exist.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

JS: Both, equally.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

JS: Globalization with profit in mind is more of the same. Globalization with the interest of all the worlds people in mind is OK with me, as long as there is no leader.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

JS: It has kept us connected, informed and relevant.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

JS: People’s inability to think for themselves.
AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

JS: Information is free to everyone.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

JS: Technological advances, and a greater number of people learned in the area of corruption within our "leadership".

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

JS: Fewer and fewer freedoms.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

JS: It is corporately selfish practice and strictly about greater profits.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competiveness in the world economy?

JS: It ought to stop competing and start mass cooperating.

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

JS: More sustainability solutions for the lives of others and assisting with the development of a trans-formative culture that helps to lead humanity in a direction of abundant living for all.

AC: What improvements do your think can be made to your movement?

JS: More training equipping people with effective organizing, communication and problem-solving skills.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

JS: No.

AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?

JS: Martial law.

AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

JS: Huge.
AC: What is your opinion of the Tea Party?
JS: Useful but not vital.
AC: What is your opinion of anarchism (any types), left-libertarianism, and the Liberty Movement (Ron Paul)?
JS: Helpful in the moving of people in the direction of a more egalitarian way of life for humans.
AC: Have you had dealings with any in your organization?
JS: Yes.
AC: Ok. Basically, I am going to go into a few questions now about Occupy Dubuque, ok?

JL: Ok.

AC: Tell me about your organization in your own words.

JL: It started off as a grassroots movement, not as an Occupy Wall Street movement in solidarity with them. Sort of fell apart, fizzled out. I am trying to get some activism started up again. I have been trying to do that ever since.

AC: What would you consider as the inspiration for your organization?

JL: Just the idea of fairness, people at the top not deciding everything for you. Economics, you know. They pretty much control the flow of money and who is rich or poor. And I just see that as wrong and pretty much everyone agrees with me in Occupy.

AC: Would you say that is why people are joining your movement or this there another reason?

JL: Everybody has their own reason. I don’t want to speak for others. I feel that a lot of people want economic equality of some kind. Some people have different definitions. Some people are socialists or capitalists and I really don’t care about that. I just want to get the corruption out and let the cards fall where they may.

AC: What are your most effective tools for organizing?

JL: Honestly, personal connections, followed by social media. That will probably change over time, but who knows? Trying to rebuild the group. There is a little bit of a civil war going on.

AC: I noticed that. I have done a little research into the Dubuque area. And I noticed that there are two Occupy Dubuques.

JL: Are you talking about another Facebook page?

AC: Yea, kind of.

JL: Ok, that was created some time ago. I don’t know what that is even about. There is a group Occupy Dubuque, and that is what I have. It’s not too active. At the time we didn’t want to make a page, so we made that instead. I didn’t want to confuse people with multiple pages.
AC: Do you find it hard to engage the public about Occupy and what you do?

JL: Absolutely. When the energy was there, when the movement first started, it wasn’t terribly hard, but there were a lot of misconceptions. A lot of people saying they liked the ideal. Now, it is extremely difficult.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organizations?

JL: If we happen to agree on an issue and they have a plan of action and we have a plan of action, then there is no reason not to cooperate with them other than the members not wanting to, I don’t see why we shouldn’t. We have in the past. So, it’s just reasonable to allow cooperation with people.

AC: What would you consider to be your opposition or the group that is blocking you, or an idea that is blocking you?

JL: That’s a tough one. There’s a lot of people who believe that they are our enemies and a lot of people in our organization that believe that they are the enemy, but my own personal opinion are the corporate elitists that profit from the system and drain it. I don’t know if you know the plot the FBI know about to assassinate the leaders of Occupy.

AC: No, I didn’t.

JL: Ok. I’ll send you the page. It mentions corporations and government organizations. Our opposition is pretty much everyone named in that video. If I had to name opposition, yea, it would be the FBI, corporations.

AC: To tie into that, how do you think the media is portraying Occupy in general?

JL: Oh very poorly. They proved it in the first week of the Occupy protests. Thousands of people protesting on Wall Street and the media blacked it out. I mean I question how genuine they are when they do something like that.

AC: I went to speak to people in New York City about the one year anniversary and I saw the planning and effort that went into it and afterwards I saw the report on it, there was nothing really. When they did say something they said it was “lame,” but I have seen videos of it and I saw very much to the contrary.

JL: The same corporations we are protesting against pretty much own the media. So it’s not in the media’s best interest to report something good on Occupy. You have to follow the money.

AC: Where do you find political support? If you need funding, where do you get it from?
JL: We really have no funding. In early Occupy, before I tried to bring it back, we did a “pass the hat.” I would imagine in the future it would be just people volunteering for stuff. I don’t see why we would need money really other than through passing the hat or volunteerism.

AC: Ok. Now we are pretty much going to go into a word game. I will say something to you and you tell me what you think of it. So my first one is populism. What does that mean to you?

JL: Can you repeat? I didn’t hear you.

AC: Populism. Sorry. What does that mean to you?

JL: Not sure. You mean like something being popular?

AC: No, the political term populism. Have you heard it before?

JL: I have, but it is just a thing on the news.

AC: Ok.

JL: I actually am not familiar with the term. I apologize.

AC: It’s ok. That’s fine. What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?


AC: (Laugh) Ok. You mentioned grassroots before. What is a grassroots campaign for you?

JL: A grassroots campaign is where people actually believe something that don’t start with big organizations. They get up and get something done or trying.

Loss of connection

JL: We got cut off there.

AC: Yea, I think we lost connection. Yea, we were talking about grassroots movements.

JL: It can anyone, everyday people who get together for anything, it doesn’t have to be anything necessarily that political. A grassroots campaign can form around a single issue to help get it through or they can meet for an ideology and they usually evolve into something else.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

JL: I believe that they are vital for the existence of our republic.
AC: Ok. What does “We the People” mean to you?

JL: “We the People” as in all people and not just the people in this country, citizens. It refers to all people.

AC: Do you believe Americans should have the right and the responsibility to decide their own fate and accept the responsibility for those actions?

JL: Yes, but also at the same time I do not want to do harm. I understand people think of this as a safety net sort of thing. I personally think they are unconstitutional but I wouldn’t want them taken away either because I don’t want to do harm to anyone honestly. I would like to do just things to improve economic conditions where people are motivated to move off.

AC: Ok. What are your opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially?

JL: They had a lot of good ideas but there is a lot I disagree with. They fought for something they believed in. They did own slaves but I understand at the time it was normal. I didn’t live then so I can’t judge them on that really. I can’t judge them as people but their actions were pretty amazing. I know a war had to be fought but it was probably necessary for the country to be born. The king was obviously very repressive and they had to do what they did.

AC: Ok. How would you define progress in society?

JL: That’s an interesting question. I would define progress as not losing rights- whether they be political, economic, or civil rights. The people maintaining the functions of government, however people define it. Of course medicine moving forward, technology moving forward. Civil discourse, news ideas to move society in a good direction.

AC: Ok, what would you find more important- progress or tradition?

JL: It depends on how people define it. I would say progress.

AC: You don’t have to choose, you can say both.

JL: Ok, then I would say both. It really depends on what people see as progress and what they see as tradition. It’s a question of opinion.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

JL: I think they should but at the moment it doesn’t seem to. I think it should though. In an ideal world, it would be almost everything that mattered.

AC: Ok. Would you say there is a civil religion in politics today?
JL: A civil religion?

AC: Yes, do you understand the concept?

JL: I would say yes on that.

AC: What would say that civil religion is?

JL: Statism.

AC: Ok. How would you define fairness in society?

JL: Fairness? Not hurting anybody. We should at least stop doing it. We have too many laws where people aren’t harming others, but it’s still illegal, that includes theft of knowledge. I believe that’s a huge part of Occupy, but that’s my personal opinion. You should be allowed to become what you want to be as long as you aren’t harming others or infringing on their rights.

AC: Ok. Just to go into something else- about globalization and the future. How would you define globalization and what is your opinion of it?

JL: Globalization- I pretty much define it as a centralized authority and power, which I am very much against. You know, the old phrase “absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Much of globalization is happening through force, like interventionism, so I don’t really agree with it at all. It’s just people with ulterior motives hiding behind a potentially good purpose.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a problem or a transition to a new economy?

JL: Um, it depends on why the outsourcing is happening. I am kind of a free market type of person. I know a lot of people are confused in Occupy about me being in it. Like I said at the beginning, my main concern is the corruption that creates economic instability. That’s an interesting question. It really depends on why it happens. If it depends on bad decisions, that’s not good for the people. If it is happening naturally- I generally believe markets with have the answer. Usually it is a problem the government did or someone has manufactured that has led to the outsourcing.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

JL: Um, I wouldn’t have been in Occupy if I didn’t have a smartphone. I know it is stereotypical. I didn’t need a computer. It was an all in one thing. I could call people, text, organize. It was a useful tool. The internet is probably the greatest thing to happen to people’s freedom. There was a little issue with Israel and Gaza. Potentially, Gaza was declared the winner because Twitter ultimately won it for them. Basically, it showed opinion shifting towards Gaza away from Israel, which was a huge shock. I mean, I thought it would be a little bit, but Gaza was ten
times more popular. It was obvious, people shouldn’t be killing other people and taking their land. Technology is a wonderful thing when used properly. When it isn’t used properly, like with drones to bomb innocent people, that’s when I have big issues with it. It’s the people using it with bad purposes. It’s not the technology saying, “Hey, let’s go bomb some people today.” Technology can be a good-bad thing.

AC: Well building on that, what is your opinion on social media versus privacy?

JL: Internet should not be regulated by government. I am pretty extreme about this. People should keep their privacy on the internet because when you let that go, you open up another can of worms. They will continue to take rights, not just on the internet for privacy. We have a Patriot Act right now. The government could be listening in on this conversation right now.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competitiveness in the world economy?

JL: Oh, they absolutely will not. Not with the Federal Reserve private bank running the show. The recent quantitative easing 4 to infinity plus quantitative easing 3 to infinity, they basically print the money with bonds and securities, but the money will not touch the middle class. We will have the delayed reaction of inflation. With more money in the system, prices will go up, but people will have the same amount of money or less in the middle class.

AC: How do you see Occupy developing in the future?

JL: I think it’s going to become localized. That’s what I am doing here. Help out local communities like Occupy Sandy relief, which was really helpful. They helped a lot of people. That was amazing what they did.

AC: I talked to people in New York who told me it was amazing.

JL: That sort of thing gives me faith in humanity.

AC: Now you were saying you were restarting the one in Dubuque, what improvements do you think you can make or need to be made?

JL: Um, that’s an interesting question. Well, we need to be able to help the community, etcetera. People need to understand the differences between one another. People need to own up to things. I was pretty laid back the first time. I really don’t like to- I went to every protest and meeting, gave my ideas, helped out where I could, but I didn’t really voluntary for anything else. People were not asking people to volunteer for stuff, not using social media the correct way, well, yes and not on that, but there was not a lot of division in the group. There
were different political ideas that didn’t affect what Occupy actually did but it divided people anyway that was rather silly.

AC: I think you just mentioned one roadblock but do you think there are any other roadblocks in the future for Occupy?

JL: Basically, energy. Just fizzling out. There’s not much right now. Just not getting enough energy behind the group, that’s the biggest problem.

AC: Ok. I am going to go into some other questions now. You said that you were a free market supporter and that I might be surprised to hear that. Actually, I am not, I am glad to hear that because it falls into my next round of questions. My first question is what is your opinion of the Tea Party?

JL: Um, they started from the same ideas that we did in a way. The people who think that the Tea Party started from this and that, I think it was more about the bailouts. Occupy was too in a way. We just had different ideas, different solutions to it. Different groups had different things and went their separate ways with it, but honestly, with bailouts for example, we just don’t want them. We can agree on that. Regulations, some of the Tea Party want to limit regulations, some don’t want them at all, them some people in Occupy want regulations to protect and think it is the answer to the government and corporate influence. The same goals, but different answers for it. We have our differences with some other groups like the Tea Party, but we are more similar than we think, at least I think.

AC: Ok. Um, How do you feel about the varieties of anarchism- anarcho-capitalism, anarcho-syndicalism, agorism, voluntarism, etc.?

JL: Honestly, I am kind of an anarchist myself. I don’t think society is ready for it, but ideally I wouldn’t want government. I would hope people would move toward it, but it probably won’t happen in my life time so I won’t worry too much about it. It’s a good thing. I think people who aren’t statists, they will be the first ones to point out when the government is going too far for something. When it does and when people start listening to them, that will be great. “Maybe this Patriot Act goes too far.” Stuff like that.

AC: Ok, to take it one step further, what are your feelings about libertarianism and left-libertarianism?

JL: That’s a good question. I have been politically close to them recently. I keep evolving my views, I changed to the culture of anarchy pretty recently in the past half year. I agree with them. They get a lot of stuff right, in my opinion. Of course a lot of stuff will be opinion. There is a joke, “what is the difference between a libertarian and an anarchist? Six months.”
AC: (Laughing) That’s a good joke.

JL: Yea, it is. The left side of libertarianism, anarchism, they really aren’t that different from the other libertarianism, but there’s other political ideas. I believe Gary Johnson would be the libertarian left, like abortion- not sure if I should say this. Might be televised.

AC: It won’t be and your identity will be kept confidential.

JL: Thank you. Makes me want to say a little more. They have their ideas, I have mine. But I believe in the same things that they do, I used to believe some more.

AC: Ok. That’s good. The liberty movement with Ron Paul?

JL: Oh, well. I voted for Ron Paul as President. So, I am pretty much a part of it. I am in a lot of organizations for future action. I think it is one of the best movements in America right now. I’d like to say I am a part of it now. They get a lot of things right. There are differences. I am an anarchist, and they aren’t quite that. Ron Paul isn’t, as far as I know. It’s an amazing movement. It was sparked by a man who was honest in Congress in all places for twenty plus years. I don’t know too many people who I can say that about. I like Dennis Kucinich too, not as much, but close. He has been honest as well.

AC: What were your feelings about the Republican convention?

JL: (Laughing). It was a complete hoax and sham. They basically stripped states of their liberty candidate delegates. The states they did in it, they had the leadership. Like Iowa, the Ron Paul people had A.J. Spiker that protected them from having their delegates stripped. It was just a big sham.

AC: What I thought was awful was what they did to Maine.

JL: That was disgusting. Yea, I watched it live. I turned it off and walked away.

AC: Even if you’re not a supporter of Ron Paul, it was a terrible moment for democracy.

JL: Yea, I had a conversation with someone who didn’t like Ron Paul too much, but he thought it was absolutely disgusting what happened. He is a Republican for a reason. He believes in a republic. Anyway, it was destroying the Republican form of government, the caucus, the convention process.

AC: Ok. I have another question. Your development into anarchism, your association with libertarianism- did that develop once you joined Occupy or were you like that before you joined?
JL: I was a hardcore liberal before I joined Occupy- oddly enough. My cousin, ran for state senate and Ron Paul ran for President- they are the big reason for my change in political views than Occupy itself or the “We are the99%” movement that spread through shortly after. One of the things that I had no idea what it was about was the Audit and the End of the Federal Reserve. I was like what is the Federal Reserve? Then I was like, “ok, now I see why they want to do it.” So then others were like, “so you must be a Ron Paul supporter?” I said, “Who’s Ron Paul?” (laughing) Then, of course, my cousin late ran for office taught me quite a bit and influence my views. That was a big reason why I pushed this way. And then I started to, I was already thinking a lot, but started to change my views on my own upon hearing arguments and concepts I had never heard before.

AC: Then I have one final question. Can you tell me, if you can from your experience, can you tell me about the Occupy-Tea Party cooperation that existed in Dubuque?

JL: What happened was one of our organizer, our leader at the time, she talked with a member of the Tea Party. There was this red camera issue. They saw it as big brother creeping in. We were pretty much all against it. There were one or two objections overall, but they decided to pursue this issue with the Tea Party. We gathered petitions and then we went to the city council. Then someone who was representing both of us asked to be recognized by the mayor, following all the rules. The issue of the camera can up. He chose not to recognize them. We did a little protest and we held up signs saying “Stop Red Light Cameras.” It scared the city council because they had never been opposed like that before. They thought it was just the Tea Party and then they talked to me and a couple of other people and they went, “Oh wait, Occupy?! You’re with the left, your with us.” And we said, “No, we are with the Tea Party on this.” That really scared them and eventually the issue got tabled because they were running for reelection. Not that is saved them. (Laughed) I was going to make darn sure of that.

AC: Was there anything else afterward? Because I saw in the news that there was a CPAC as well.

JL: Yes. There was one thing. We decided to endorse the “Elect a New Congress” petition. The petition itself was pretty simple. It would solve all the problems we were discussing in Occupy. Congress would assume back all the powers it gave out to the Fed and end the Federal Reserve as we know it. The Tea Party also endorsed that same position. I wouldn’t call it cooperation because we didn’t talk about it. I attended Tea Party meetings to see if they would talk about it and I missed the one where they actually did. I like a lot of people in the local Tea Party- good people.
AC: Tell me about your movement/activism in your own words.

JP: I BELONG TO SEVERAL MOVEMENTS, SO TO SPEAK. THERE IS OCCUPY CEDAR RAPIDS, WHICH IS A GRASS ROOTS MOVEMENT THAT CAME ALONG AFTER OCCUPY WALLSTREET. OUR CEDAR RAPIDS MOVEMENT IS UNIQUE IN THE MANNER OF WE HAVE LEGAL RIGHTS TO BE ON THE LAND IN WHICH WE PROTEST ABOUT SEVERAL DIFFERENT THINGS BOTH ON A LOCAL, NATIONAL AND WORLDWIDE SCALE. THE MAIN GOAL IS NOT ONLY BE SELF AWARE AND EDUCATED IN THE SUBJECTS THAT MATTER TO US BUT ALSO TO BE ACTIVE IN THEM.

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration?

JP: I HAVE MANY INSPIRATIONS IN GENERAL, BUT HOWEVER; THE MAIN REASON OR WHOM IS THE MAIN REASON IS DR. RON PAUL. HES MADE THOUSANDS OF US AWARE OF HOW WE MUST ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN OUR ROLE AS A CITIZEN EVEN IF WE ARE NOT AN ELECTED OFFICIAL.

AC: Why are people joining your movement/activism?

JP: THE MAIN REASON I THINK PEOPLE ARE JOINING IS BECAUSE OF TYRANT BEHAVIOR NOT ONLY BY MY GOVERNMENT BUT ALL AROUND THE WORLD WE ARE SEEING THE VERY SAME KIND OF TREATMENT BY ALL GOVERNMENTS THAT ARE SUPPOSE TO BE FOR THE PEOPLE AND BY THE PEOPLE, BUT THAT ISN'T THE CASE AS WE SPEAK TODAY.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join?

JP: IN OUR OCCUPY EVERYONE IS FREE TO JOIN, HAVE YOU BE A COP, JUDGE, STUDENT, ARTIST OR ATHLETE ANYONE CAN AND THERE IS NO RANKS OR ANY PARTICULAR HEIRARCHY.

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

JP: THERE IS NO PARTICULAR RACE, SEX OR BELIEF OF OUR MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE. EVERYONE RESPECTS EACH OTHERS DIFFERENCES AND IF EVEN BETTER ADOPTS OTHERS CORE BELIEFS TO BETTER ONES SELF.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?
JP: EVERYONE IS PRETTY GOOD WITH ONE ANOTHER HERE, WE ARE ALL PRETTY SPIRITUAL PEOPLE IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING AND KNOW THAT WE ARE HERE TO BETTER ONE’S SELF AND NOT CREATE ANY NEGATIVE OUTPUT.

AC: What would be the hierarchy of the organizations?

JP: THERE IS NO HIERARCHY HOWEVER EACH PERSON HAS THEIR OWNS GIFTS; THEY MAY BE BETTER SPOKEN OR WRITTEN ... IT’S A FREE SPEECH THING AS WELL AS ACTIONS, YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?

JP: PERSISTANCE I’D SAY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL. YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW THROUGH NO MATTER HOW SMALL OR TEDIOUS IT MAY SEEM. PRESENTATION IS ANOTHER, YOU MUST COME ACROSS AS YOU HAVE EDUCATED YOURSELF OTHERWISE YOU WILL BE CALLED OUT IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

JP: IT REALLY DEPENDS ON WHAT THE SUBJECT IS, MOST PEOPLE LIVE IN A CANDY COATED BUBBLE AND THEY DON’T LIKE IT POPPED. SO WE HAVE TO EITHER ADD SHOCK VALUE TO IT OR WRAP IT UP IN A NICE WARM BLANKET AND FEED IT LITTLE BITS AT A TIME.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

JP: YES WE DO. MOST PEOPLE BELONG TO SOME SOCIAL CLUB OF SOME KIND OF MANNER AND WITH THAT WE CROSS OVER AND MERGE THESE GROUPS AS EACH ONE HAS UNIQUE QUALITIES THAT ARE OF VALUE IN SOME MANNER.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

JP: THIS IS A VERY HARD QUESTION TO ANSWER AS I HAVE MANY PASSIONS FROM ANIMAL ABUSE TO HUMAN ABUSE. MAINLY I FIGHT FOR RIGHTS OF LIFE NO MATTER HOW SMALL OR BIG IT IS LIFE IS EQUAL, NO MATTER WHERE IT IS TOO.

AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?

JP: THE MEDIA SELDOM DOES ANY JUSTICE AS THEY ARE THE ONES THAT WE OPPOSE. THEY ARE PART OF THE 1% TYRANTS SO WE PAY THEM NO MIND AND SEEK ALTERNATIVE MEDIA SOURCES.

AC: Where does the funding come from?
JP: WE HAVE NO DIRECT SOURCES OF FUNDS. OUR FUNDS COME FROM PEOPLE THAT TYPICALLY ENJOY WHAT WE ARE DOING TO MAKE OTHERS AWARE OF THE THINGS WE COVER, WE MAINLY GO WITHOUT USUALLY THOUGH. WE ARE IN A POOR STATE SO TO SPEAK TO DEPEND ON PEOPLE.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

JP: ITS COMING FROM MANY WALKS OF LIFE THAT BELIEVE IN OUR RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES AND WANT THEM TO REMAIN INTACT.

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

JP: IT’S THE 99%; ITS US THAT DON’T TYPICALLY HAVE; WITHOUT MEANS.

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

JP: CORRUPT AND OUTDATED.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

JP: IT IS THE VOICES OF THE PEOPLE. TO ME IT IS THE POOR CHILD THAT WENT WITHOUT AND NOW IS AN ADULT AND WANTS THE THINGS THEY DIDN’T HAVE AS A CHILD AND KNOWS THOSE THINGS ARE OF VALUE.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

JP: VERY IMPORTANT. ON A SCALE OF 1-10 IT’S A FIRM 10

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

JP: IT MEANS EVERYONE, NO MATTER YOUR AGE, SEX OR RELIGION YOU HAVE THAT GOD GIVEN RIGHT TO BE WHO YOU ARE AND BE PROTECTED WHILST DOING SO.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

JP: WITHOUT A DOUBT I DO. HOWEVER TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ITS NOT ALL OF US HENCE 1% AND 99%

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

JP: TO ME THEY WERE PURE GENIUS, ESPECIALLY MR. JEFFERSON. WITHOUT THEM AND WHAT THEY HAD WRITTEN WED BE EVEN MORE REALIZED SLAVES.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?
JP: IT'S KIND OF LIKE YEN AND YANG, THERE IS GOOD AND BAD IN IT... WE CAN'T IGNORE EITHER OF THEM BUT IT'S HOW WE USE BOTH THAT REALLY TRULY COUNTS.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

JP: PROGRESS IS, YOU CAN HAVE A 500 YEAR OLD TRADITION THAT IS TERRIBLE.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

JP: YES THEY DO, VERY MUCH SO AND MOST SEEM TO SELL THEIR ETHICS WHEN THEY SIGN THE DOTTED LINE...

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

JP: TO ME THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH ANY KIND OF RELIGION BEING IN POLITICS. PERIOD!

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?

JP: I REALLY DON'T THINK IT EXISTS, ITS MORE LIKE TIME AND OPPORTUNITY... GET THE RIGHT OF BOTH AND ITS PRETTY DARN FAIR.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

JP: I AM VERY MUCH SO. I ACTIVELY WATCH HOW CERTAIN GOVERNMENTS ACT AND TREAT OTHERS.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

JP: ITS ALMOST THE YEN AND YANG THEORY ONCE MORE. THERE IS GOOD AND BAD IN EVERYTHING. AS HUMANS WE MUST EMBODY OURSELVES WITH A GOOD, STRONG MORAL CODE AND BE A MORE SELFLESS RACE IN ORDER FOR IT TO EVEN WORK 1% OF THE TIME.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

JP: ON A DAILY BASIS ITS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME, IM ONLINE DAILY READING AND EDUCATING MYSELF NOT ONLY IN MY OWN TRADE BUT IN ADDITION TO THE WHAT'S WHAT AND WHO'S WHOS..

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

JP: IT'S ABOUT HOW EACH PERSON SHALL BE TREATED. I THINK WITHIN US ALL THERE IS A GOOD PERSON WHO JUST WANTS TO SURVIVE AND GET ALONG. I CERTAINLY HOPE THAT IS.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?
JP: I DO NOT LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA AT ALL. I THINK EVERYONE SHOULD BE RESPECTED EVEN IF THEY ARE IN THE SOCIAL LIME LIGHT.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

JP: ALTERNATIVE ENERGY, COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCES.

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

JP: POLLUTION, MORE DEADLY DESEASES AND THE ROLES OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

JP: VERY MUCH SO. I MEAN I FEEL FOR PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES NEEDING WORK AND WHATNOT BUT TO WHAT DEGREE ARE THEY GIVEN THOSE JOBS AND AT WHAT RATE? AND WHEN IS IT JUSTIFIED TO TAKE FROM THOSE WHOM DEPENDED ON THOSE SAID JOBS RIGHT HERE.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competiveness in the world economy?

JP: RIGHT NOW THERE IS NO CURE BUT TO DUMP IT OUT AND THEN REFILL IT. WE NEED TO UNPLUG AND RESET.

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

JP: ITS HARD TO SAY. IT REALLY DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS. WE ARE NOT AN ORGANIZED MOVEMENT SO IT REALLY DEPENDS ON INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN ORDER FOR IT TO SUCCEED.

AC: What improvements do your think can be made to your movement?

JP: PEOPLES PERCEPTION OF WHAT WE ARE AND WHAT WE ARE HERE TO DO. THE FIRST THING PEOPLE DO WHEN THEY DON’T UNDERSTAND OR DISBELIEVE IS TO LASH OUT SO TO SPEAK.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

JP: WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT. I AM PROUD TO SAY I’M LIBERTARIAN AND STAND BEHIND IT 100% THANKS TO RON PAUL.

AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?
JP: GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION AND LACK OF FUNDS TO DO THE THINGS THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO SUCCEED AS A WHOLE...ITS NOT CHEAP GOING TOWN TO TOWN...

AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

AC: IM HOPING THAT IS A VERY BIG ONE, ONE THAT CANNOT BE SWEPT UNDER THE RUG AND IGNORED NO LONGER.

AC: What is your opinion of the Occupy Movement?

JP: FOR THE MOST PART SOMEWHAT GOOD. EACH OCCUPY IS DIFFERENT AND HAS DIFFERENT REASONS WHY THOSE MOVEMENTS IN EACH CITY WAS AROUND. OURS WAS PRETTY MUCH THE ONLY AND AT LEAST THE VERY FIRST LEGAL ONE TO EXIST.

AC: What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

JP: I HAVE FRIENDS THAT IN THE TEA PARTY, IM NOT THOUGH SO MY OPINION IS OF NOT MUCH VALUE IN THAT.

AC: Have you had dealing with either or both?

JP: YES I HAVE, AS STATED ALTHOUGH I’M A TEA PARTY MEMBER AND OUR OCCUPY ISNT ACTIVE RIGHT NOW, BUT SOON ENOUGH IT WILL BE BACK TO COVER OTHER LOCAL ISSUES.
AC: Basically me about Occupy DC in your own words.

MF: Ok. Actually there were two Occupations in Washington. And we were called Occupy Washington DC. Because we started organizing an Occupation in April 2011. It came out of direct action we had done in front of the White House in December. It was a coalition of organizations that did that. I came into it from the health care movement. I was trying to show the link between the various social movements and that we needed to join together.

AC: I just have a question. You said April 2011?

MF: Right.

AC: So, you pre-date the Zuccotti Park one?

KZ: We started organizing in April.

MF: We started organizing.

KZ: We started occupying in –

MF: In October

KZ: In October. We started working on it and go public with it in June with the website getting people to sign up.

MF: So we had done between December and April a lot of meetings. We were figuring out what were our next steps. We were tired of symbolic action. We recognized all the groups working for social change were running into the same obstacles. None of us single issue organization were going to get anywhere against the powers we were up against. We did a kind of test run action in New York in April where we brought people together from 17 different organizations; organized a rally against Bank of America saying, “We pay our taxes, why don’t you?” “This is what we want our money going to, not to bankers.” We created a little town that had free education and all type of stuff. That worked really well. So that’s why we decided to go forward with the Occupation. Spent six months organizing it.
KZ: We were in touch with the Egyptians and the Spanish. We went to Wisconsin to check the Wisconsin uprising. We got a lot of different sources of motivation.

MF: We had one hundred organizers around the country working on this. There were 50 of us that had regular working groups to take on various aspects about the occupation. And then we had state coordinators in 36 states organizing to bring people to DC because we were organizing what we thought would be a national occupation in Freedom Plaza, which is the same as Liberty Square and the same as Tahir Square, other places. Then we heard about Occupy Wall Street and we were excited about that. It just felt like all the groups that we were talking to had the same conversations that we were having. So it kind of felt like this was this moment in time.

KZ: Like the Egyptian revolt, Arab Spring. Various protests against Republican governors.

MF: And Democrat governors.

KZ: That’s right. So we were thinking that same stuff. We were talking about the same conversation. Even before Adbusters had announced Occupy Wall Street in July, people were before that doing the same thing.

MF: Occupy Wall Street had been meeting for a while before they announced in July as well. So there was kind of this parallel. We endorsed them, they endorsed us. We had a solidarity statement. We were up there on the first day of Zuccotti Park. A number of organizers in New York went to their GA for four days. None of knew though if this was going to work. Like we were thinking that we were going to put everything into this and if the time is right, people will show up. If not, we will have to organize again. We knew from people we talked to in Egypt, that this came through many attempts, trying to get people mobilized. And we didn’t expect things to happen on the first try.

KZ: We knew we had enough people involved. We had 1000 people signed up. We had 100 different organizations endorsing it. So we did have enough people involved. We did have some 100s that tried to stay overnight to Occupy Freedom Plaza. So it was a success at some level. So our approach was do it, and whatever happens, build on it.

MF: Right. So, it was great. Zuccotti really tipped something. A lot of our state organizers decided not to come to DC because they started to stay home and organize local occupations. And we completely supported that and kept in touch with them. I did weekly conference calls with state organizers before we did the occupation. We kept doing every two weeks conference calls to check up on one another to see how things were going. So that was an exciting moment. What we really – we did a lot of work in addition to the organizing. We read books, we had retreats. We had so many conference calls. I mean, this was like every waking
hour. We stayed up late every night working on this. And we saw the occupation as a first step in what we thought needs to be done, which is building a broad base independent, non-violent movement for real social transformation. We are not trying to reform the system, we need a system that works. We need a new Constitution, we need a real democracy in this country, we need to reduce the wealth divide. That’s what we are looking at. How do we build this mass movement for real change. And our tag line was: “Human needs, not corporate needs.” That’s what it boils down to. People asked, “What is your demand?” and that is a whole other area that we can talk about but it all boils down to end corporate (un intelligible)

AC: I don’t understand why people kept asking what your demands were. I thought it was pretty obvious.

KZ: They didn’t want to understand it.

MF: That was an attempt by the corporate media to undermine us. One in many ways in how they try to do that. And of course we knew from our studies that you can’t make a demand until you have a certain level of power. You have to start with a very broad base. The Civil Rights movement- we want the right to vote- you can’t make a demand until you have the power to back it up.

AC: Ok. You mentioned Spain and Egypt. I am sure they would be an inspiration, but do you have a specific inspiration for your organization.

MF: A specific inspiration? I guess-

KZ: Frustration.

MF: (laughing)

AC: (laughing) Frustration? Ok.

KZ: The only reason why I say this is because a lot of the people who organized this have been doing activist work on various issues for a long time. We wanted to find a way to be effective. We’re tired of doing protests in front of the White House and the symbolic arrests. Big deal. In December of 2010 we had 130 plus people people-named events. Chris Hedges was one.

MF: Daniel Ellsberg, Ray McGovern is another.

KZ: Brilliant, important, good people. So we did that- 130 plus arrest in the snow, but what does it accomplish? So we wanted to find more effective ways. There was real frustration with trying to change a really hard to change system.
MF: We had worked together a lot during the health reform process. I was a congressional fellow for Physicians for a National Health Program. That whole process- we came to a log-jam in that and had to engage in non-violent civil resistance in that process to get any attention. Yes, we did make some progress on advancing the single payer platform.

KZ: But they tried to shut it down completely. They didn’t want to discuss because they know a single payer Medicare-for-all type of system on every issue-

MF: Was superior

KZ: So they didn’t want the discussion. We tried the traditional methods of phone calls and emails.

MF: Oh yea. We had been lobbying for months.

KZ: We tried to get included in the hearings and they wouldn’t include us. So we showed up at one of the Senate Finance Hearing Committees- 8 of us. Doctor activist, labor activist, homeless activist- one by one we stood up and demanded a seat at the table. That was covered on CSPAN. It was a long drawn out process. We sat in the middle of the room in the center of row with lobbyists on both sides of us. So, they get us out. We tried to make a minute personal statement. We were arrested. It really got people active. The next week there was a series of 20 arrest, 6 doctors who were arrested. We finally did get Margaret to testify at the hearings. We got Bernie Sanders reading a single parable on the floor. Almost got one to the floor of the House to substitute for one of Obama’s bills. They tried to keep us out and we got to both floors of both houses. We learned from that that resistance does work.

MF: We learned that that was key.

KZ: We weren’t going to get anywhere without resistance.

MF: Chris Hedges too. He got arrested in the action in December with us. We are meeting with him and talking with him a lot. His experience around the world with being part of great times of social change. He said we had to build a culture of resistance. That was the other piece of our occupation.

KZ: In December 2010 we talked about a culture of resistance. In fact, the day after that protest-

MF: Was the day the Tunisian protest-

KZ: The day the guy in Tunisia burned himself. It was a coincidence. So before that, we were talking about a culture of resistance. We didn’t know what that culture of resistance would lead to then. We didn’t know it would lead to Occupy. The next day Tunisia happened. Then
Egypt, then Spain, then the whole world just kind of unfolded and it looked like we weren’t going anywhere.

MF: We were really inspired- Spain of course was in May- we were inspired by their occupations and their general assembly structures. So we went into communication with them about how they did what they were doing. But Egypt, we did a solidarity statement with them in May and we skyped with some Egyptian revolutionaries and we thought, what are we going to have to talk about? What could we pledge solidarity to and it turned out there was so much. So we put out this statement.

KZ: Human rights, sustainable economy-

MF: Foreign intervention

KZ: Foreign intervention and there was one more other thing. We came up with four topics-

MF: Real elections-

KZ: Real democracy. So, we put out a joint statement. We tried to have different people. A doctor from there, lawyer, doctor, activist, activist student, student, ethnic minority. I think we had people who represented different groups of people signing on together. That’s on the Occupy Washington, D.C. website.

AC: Ok. My next question would be then do you find that there is a common theme in why people are joining Occupy?

KZ: It’s interesting. You know when we started Occupy, as we were working through it, people sent us their reasons for joining. And some people wrote amazing things. I think any kind of protest throughout history comes from real grievances of the time. Lost jobs, foreclosure of houses, student debt, private health care and wanting to kill yourself with it. You know.

MF: Military

KZ: Military. People have their real grievances with the system. Whether it’s the founding of the United States or the Populist Movement, that’s where the voice is. It’s always a corrupted dysfunctional government not responding to people’s needs. That’s why it’s going to continue because the government is still not responding to people’s needs.

MF: Yea. I think there was a sense- people came for different reasons- but there was a sense that with more and more people recognizing that it was the system that was corrupted and not our individual fault, that we didn’t work hard enough or that we didn’t have health insurance or we weren’t smart. Whatever. There was a “system” problem.
KZ: The other thing related to that is that people began to realize that their issues, whether it was healthcare, climate change, or war, their issues were running against the same barrier. Corporate power. Concentrated wealth making the system into something that we didn’t want.

MF: We protested the Chamber of Commerce a lot. We shut them down a lot. Every day we went there it was a different issue. For example, “Today we are here because of the military industrial complex. Today we are here because of policy towards oil prices.” They only had two entrances to this huge building. So it was very easy to shut it down. They had these huge wooden castle doors. So we had a great video of the president of the Veterans for Peace who was a former naval commander banging on the wood doors with the metal rings.

KZ: The police wouldn’t arrest us.

MF: Yea, security asked the police to arrest us but they were like “uff.” There were thirty different police stations in the metropolitan area.

KZ: Thirty different police stations in DC.

MF: But they were with us. We would talk to them. We made it a point at night, we would make the rounds around the plaza to make sure everything was cool. And we would chat with the police about why we were there and some of them would stay and listen. Some would come by during the day and drop off money in our donation box. So eventually DC has pulled the police off and put the Department of Homeland Security on us.

KZ: It got worse down the road. We had been out there too long.

MF: Things had changed from a more activist population to a more homeless or people with real struggles.

KZ: Mental illness, addiction.

MF: It became more difficult. We tried to close it down earlier, but the whole wave of Occupy sites made it not possible. It just wasn’t possible.

AC: Ok. What would you say are your most effective tools for organizing?

KZ: It’s interesting. There are different ones. Our strategy is to go out on two paths. It’s “go out and stop the machine, make a new world.” It’s kind of a positive-negative thing. “Stop the machine” is about protest and some people are turned on by that. That is what they are into. But a lot of other people are turned on by the positive. Building our own world and satisfying our needs. So, you need to have multiple tools and multiple paths. I think making our own world is more important, if also less glamorous, making that transformation. That is what is going to throw people off. I think what is frustrating about getting people involved is there is
not path to victory. If we do this, we’ll win. If we could say that, we could draw in a lot more people. People look at the system and they see it is very strange and very hard to change. They say, “Ehh, I’ll just live my life.” I think our biggest challenge is developing a path to success.

MF: We first went out to activists. Initially we reached out to activists and said this is what we are doing. Then we went to people that were well known. Then people heard about that and they started writing about it. We were getting a lot of media.

KZ: The positive thing about Occupy was when you finally got people together and that they weren’t alone, I thought that was powerful as well. I always wanted that kind of movement. That reaffirmation was key. If you could get people to say, “Wow, we aren’t alone...” Then we started to have an impact. We started to see some successes. That’s what kept it going.

AC: I really like that “Stop the machine, create a new world phrase.” It kind of fits Occupy quite well. With creating a new world, can you go more into what you mean about that?

MF: Sure, it means creating systems outside the corporate systems that exists today, replace those systems. One of our projects that go hand in hand with this is called “It’s our economy.” It’s a non-profit whose purpose is to educate and mobilize people to democratize economic institutions. Public banking, moving your money into community banks, credit unions, various types of cooperatives. It is actually quite broad. There are people making land trusts for to permit affordable housing. Local investing - public energy or investment in renewable energies. All these things. We picked this because it is a nice big umbrella for this things to fit under.

KZ: We see the end result of all this if we succeed is economic democracy, which is what Margaret just described, where people have more control over their homes and economic lives, and more control of the direction of their local and national economy-

MF: And benefit from it, like public investment.

KZ: Economic democracy and the second thing is participatory government. Where people are not just voting but participating in the decision making. There will still be representative government, of course, but there will be much more participation. The Venezuelan model of community councils, the US model of participatory budgets - where you have people making decisions about where money goes. Not advising, but deciding.

MF: Doing the work of researching and making proposals.

KZ: So participatory democracy and economic democracy is how we see the end result. On our website, we have a description of economic democracy.
MF: And we have a weekly newsletter we publish. That summarizes various things.

AC: The next thing is you were talking about getting involved and how if you could tell them this how we succeed, they would do it - do you find it difficult to engage the public, to get them motivated to join you?

MF: There was a lot happening. It was hard, after the physical occupations had been dismantled, it was hard to get people to come together in one area. People were one of two things, they were just exhausted or had gone into working groups and were very focused on their working groups. You have to think that this movement is a fairly young movement and these are long term problems. So things became a little difficult at a time, but there is a lot happening. You can see it on the Occupy Washington, D.C. website and there are so many actions happening that it is hard to keep up with them. So like Occupying corporate headquarters, we just posted direct action at a fashion show during the New York fashion week, drone protests. So there is so much happening, but people are looking for some sort of direction too.

KZ: We don't have the media on our side. They don't tell what is going on. And if they were with us, you would see the whole country in revolt. They would move against foreclosures, tuitions rising, school closings, climate change, drones, war, there are so many issues that people are standing up on. But they don't know each other. They feel alone and small. If the media was covering it, they would feel that they were part of a big movement. That is what we are trying to get across to people. There is one thing that Occupy did show. We can change the system. At the peak of Occupy we had a few hundred thousand people involved. That's small. Out of a country of three hundred million, that is like .1%. Imagine if you get one percent, three million people. If we had one percent, wholly cow, we would be shaking the foundation.

MF: We scared them. That's why they put those provisions in the NDAA.

KZ: And with ten percent of the people.. And I don't think those are unachievable goals.

MF: Over time.

KZ: So we have to get across to people what we did with a small amount of people and if we had one percent, we would have a gigantic impact.

MF: We have three main projects we work on. So in addition to Occupy Washington, D.C., we also send out a weekly newsletter across the nation to let people know all these good things that are happening and we try to put in a little strategy there and some suggestions.
KZ: This is to twelve thousand people. These are key activist types. These are leaders in the activist community and I have no doubt that they tell other people about it. We try and relate that this is an ongoing movement.

MF: Our third thing is our media project called “Clearing the FOG.” FOG stands for Forces Of Greed. And we have articles that go with that. We have a show, each week we make a show. We stream our show in DC. But it is an audio stream and video stream and we store them in podcasts. What we are trying to do and what other are trying to do is get the truth out there as well. People need to be aware and that is why we call it clearing the fog. Building alternative media and alternative institutions, seeing that their struggles are connected and becoming more strategic, looking for leverage points. So we see action as, really strong action, as a way of getting that message out there. Like the tar sands blockade? We went down there to participate.

KZ: In Texas.

AC: OK. You were just talking about the media. I think you might be right that “they” are scared of you because in my research I have come across a “Night of the Long Knives” on the 30 January. Apparently across the country, a whole group of occupations were shut down on that weekend, which is suspicious.

KZ: Coincidence, right? We know they were having national congress calls. They were discussing how through the Freedom of Information act more and more documents were coming out that we report on the Occupy site. You will see a bunch of documents that show infiltration and the work they were doing, coordinated to shut us down. You’re right. There was a coordinated effort to shut us down. At a certain point. They let us go on for a while and then they decided it was time to shut it down.

AC: Ok. With the media- you said that they don’t tell the truth. How do you see them portraying your organization, Occupy?

MF: They try to marginalize you. They try to make the actions you are doing are ineffective. They make it look like you don’t know what you are doing.

KZ: Or what you stand for. They will focus on police conflicts rather than on our issues or on our strategies. We did an interview with the Washington Post about what our goals are and where we want to go.

MF: We spent hours with these reporters.

KZ: And then they report that “there are rats of freedom plaza.”
MF: (Laughing) There were rats on Freedom Plaza beforehand.

KZ: Rats in the Washington, D.C. area are pretty common.

MF: In fact, I think there were fewer rats on Freedom Plaza than beforehand because we were cleaning it.

KZ: They wanted to ignore, to undermine, or destroy.

MF: They came to inspect the kitchen on site. The health department came and gave it 98/100.

KZ: They were shocked how good our kitchen was.

MF: They docked us the points because we had a bag of recycling that wasn’t taken care of yet.

KZ: Everything else was perfect.

MF: The other thing that was reported was the relationships that developed on Freedom Plaza.

KZ: Oh god.

MF: Hello? (laughing) We are a political movement here.

AC: Yea, they did the same thing in New York with the sanitary thing. They complained that it was dirty, it was a mess. Then they cleaned it with vinegar I think and it had never been cleaner. It was the cleanest in all of New York City afterwards. It made the city even more angry because they wanted to get rid of them it seemed.

MF: Yea, we scrubbed the kitchen every evening.

KZ: Again, as Occupy lasted too long, legitimate problems arose that they could focus on. Homelessness, mental illness, addiction, violence - it was all coming down to us. So we had to deal with it and it didn’t make it easy. We would say to the police that this guy isn’t with us-

MF: About the ones causing trouble.

KZ: And then the police wouldn’t do anything. He was there legally.

AC: I had heard reports about the police sending this type of person to the site. Is this true?

MF: I wouldn’t be surprised.

KZ: I heard about it in New York, so I wouldn’t be surprised if it happened in DC.

MF: Actually, there was one person who we removed from the site and he called the police to allow him back on. (Laughing) So yea, the media is always trying to undermine us.
KZ: To undermine their attempts to ignore and undermine us, we listed on our website all the independent media outlets who were trying to cover us. They also put on our webpage how citizen media works and how you could be the media, how you hook your phone into the TV network, how you can write blogs to get the word out. That is part of your job. So we organized that to show to the corporate media that if they ignored or lied about us there would be other people telling the truth. They would lose credibility if they reported falsely. That was our strategy for dealing with the corporate media. It worked initially.

MF: At the beginning they were extremely good.

KZ: I remember asking “why was the media being so good to us.” It was because we were all the 99%. All this conglomeration of media makes our jobs insecure, they underpay us, they cut our health care, they can replace us, so we’re with you.

MF: We did a hearing at Freedom Plaza and CSPAN covered us. The people there said that “they were so with us.” We did a protest afterward inside the Chamber of Commerce at a luncheon. We had people register for it.

KZ: There were health insurance executives there.

MF: Right, and we did a mic check and our camera person messed up and didn’t video tape it. But CSPAN did a beautiful video of it and followed us through the protest.

KZ: They knew where we were coming from.

AC: Ok. I am now going to go into a bit of a word game. I am going to say something and you can tell me what it means to you. The first one would be populism.

KZ: People. People power.

MF: Politics in the interest of the people.

AC: Here’s a good one. Congress.

KZ: Corrupt. (Laughing)

MF: Dysfunctional.

KZ: Out of touch.

MF: Psychopathic. It really is. The time we spent with congress, you really notice it is a pathological place. Everybody has lied to each other, playing games.

AC: Ok. A grassroots movement campaign.
KZ: It’s what makes change. It always has and you won’t get anywhere without it.

AC: What does “we the people” mean to you?

KZ: Aspiration. We hope to have it someday. Right now it’s a myth, but it can be a vision for what we want to be.

AC: Do you believe Americans have the right and the responsibility to decide the fate of their civil society?

KZ: Every human being does. We have to seize that right it the government has taken it away.

AC: What are your feelings about the founding fathers and I will single out Thomas Jefferson for special attention?

MF: We just wrote an article that had a lot about the founding fathers in it. We had a mixed response. Some people were like, “You nailed it!” and others were like, “They weren’t like that way.”

KZ: I think that the founding fathers were, as we described in the article, excellent politicians.

MF: There was another word we used for them as well.

KZ: They were the wealthiest people at the time. Major property owners, major slave owners, big merchants, big lawyers. They kind of invented democracy. So it is unfinished now and we need to complete it. I think the constitution at the time may have been the best around but it is no longer true. When Justice Ginsburg talked to the Egyptians about what constitution model to adopt, she said don’t take the American model. There are better out there. South Africa, Venezuela, Iceland. The founding fathers were protecting their property interests first-

MF: From an excess of democracy.

KZ: From an excess of democracy.

MF: They just felt that their interests and democracy could coexist.

KZ: So there is a lot of work to be done still.

MF: And we need to get the truth out. There is this notion of the Constitution...

KZ: See, there is this- the Constitution is like the Bible. You can’t criticize it. So when you start to look at history from a different point of view, like from property rights, the right to own slaves, it starts to get pretty uncomfortable.
AC: Ok. By you mentioning the Bible leads well into another question. Civil religion- do you think there is one in politics today?

KZ: I think for the actual mainstream government, the market system is a type of civil religion. If you look at all the solutions Obama puts forward to issues of the day, they are all market based solutions. Healthcare means parity within the insurance industry. Banking collapse means build the banks up, strengthen them, reinforce them instead of public banks and national banks. Every issue you pick on, it’s corporatized. So when you come to the mainstream government, it is very much a civil religion of corporatism. I don’t think that is amongst the people. If you look at what the people want, they are against it. We wrote an article on the Occupy website entitled “We stand with the Majority,” which had polls on what Americans think on a dozen of issues. On all of them, the majority agreed with us and was very populist.

MF: It was a supermajority.

KZ: There were two-thirds. They were with us. They opposed corporate power. While the dominant civil religion is corporatism, the undercurrent is opposed to it.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

KZ: It should.

MF: That would be good too. (laughing)

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

KZ: You know, it’s hard to tell when you are in the middle of it. It’s hard to say this where we start. There is frustration in how slow changes comes but it was probably true during the Civil Rights movement and they probably felt the same way. “We had to do all this just so we could ride in the front of the bus?” I mean, it was tough slow progress. I suspect it was the same with Solidarity in Poland. So it’s kind of hard to see it when you are in the middle of it. But I do believe we are in a transformational time. And I think when we look back in ten years’ time, we will say, “Wow. I can’t believe all that happened.” That is where we are and it’s hard to see right now.

AC: Then with progress and tradition- do you think one is more important than the other?

KZ: I don’t think there is a versus. I think there can be synergy between the two.

AC: That is equally valid as well.
KZ: That is what we were trying to get across in the “Coop and Community Work” article in the Curl book. We were trying to get across to people that the image of the man working on his own, making it on his own, was not the full image of American history. In fact, a lot of our history is full of mutual aid and mutual dependence. Communal work, coop work, community work - this was all happening throughout history. So we were trying to get this across to people that what we were talking about today, mutual aid, non-hierarchy, direct democracy, is consistent with a lot of American history.

MF: We were trying to show that is was part of the American DNA. We were trying to get that idea across to people.

KZ: People were uncomfortable with contradiction. It made them feel more comfortable when they discovered it was compatible with their traditions.

MF: This is who we are.

KZ: So we wanted to show it to them. This populist past- this is who we are. We wouldn’t exist without it.

AC: Ok. Globalization- what is your opinion of it and how would you define it?

MF: Globalization is the next step up for corporate power. When we started to let capital move more freely across borders and we developed these international bodies, IMF and WTO, they have just been giving more power to these transnational corporations. So we have been- Chris Hedges talks about the United States being a victim of a corporate coup- we have often talked about that too and how there was a real coup attempt in the 1930s against FDR but it failed. They probably went from that to something more subtle. We see this new trade deal, the TransPacific Partnership, that the Obama administration is negotiating to consolidate transnational power so that they have more power than governments. They will be able to sue nations on matters like environmental law and there will be this race to the bottom. It was interesting when we were in Texas with the tar sands, which was the epitome of a transnational corporation coming to the United States bullying people, taking their land. We drove straight from Baltimore to Texas, 22-24 hour drive. We arrived just when they were starting a new tree sit.

KZ: They do this so they can stop the pipeline.

MF: They put two people up in each of these trees where the safety line is rigged. Hundreds of feet around these trees. If the police touched one of these lines, the safety net would be dumped and all these people would die. It was a sticky situation for the police, but when they finally got them down and arrested them they found out that the company was building on
public land and hand no permit. And now the new thing, is that they found holes (by
photographing inside) inside the pipes. And an engineer stated that those holes will leak a lot.
We are talking about water reservoirs for ten million people. We are talking about as well as
destroying our agriculture. So anyone, that is the epitome.

KZ: On the other side though, is that there is more mass communication. We can talk to the
Egyptians fast and learn about their ideas. There is now a series of global revolts going on now.
Occupy is part of a global revolt. Obviously in Europe, the Middle East- even in Asia. China has
revolts all the time now. There is a global revolt that we are a part of. There is also the 15
February, the global anniversary of 30 million people around the world trying to stop the Iraq
war. You go back to the late 1990s with the anti-trade movement, opposition to the World
Bank, opposition to globalization. That was a global movement. Seattle was just one part. The
WTO has been stopped every time it meets. They have protests. So, globalization, trade has
resulted in corporate power outstripping national governments, you have these transnational
corporations but you don’t have transnational governments. So they can go to one country to
another to get slave labor. So, globalization is giving to corporations more power than
governments, but it is also giving civil society a chance to communicate in ways against this
global neoliberalism.

MF: It was one of my favorite quotes out of the Egyptian solidarity statement that got some
media attention in Egypt. One of the statements was “We are going to have to conduct our
affairs from civil society to civil society and not government to government.” And recently in
New York, at the Cooper Union- it was founded as a free university and it was supposed to be
always a free university. They are trying to charge tuition now. Well, there was a student
movement came down to New York to help them organize. There were these beautiful red
streamers on top of the building with Occupy declaring solidarity with that movement.

KZ: There are a lot of students energized.

MF: It’s very international. We worked with someone in the student movement and he was
just in Bangkok.

AC: Then going on with the transnational corporation comments- outsourcing. Do you see it as
a problem or as a transition to a new economy?

KZ: You know, outsourcing has drawn a lot of attention, but what has really hurt the economy
is the technological advances that have increased productivity at the expense of workers.
Workers are not needed as much. That has created more loss of jobs that is credited for.
Outsourcing is a problem but is a symptom of a bigger problem- poverty. And if we don’t solve
that reality of people leaving on one or two dollars a day, there are going to be problems for a
long time. It might be a part of transition to a new economy but it is also about treating people
unfairly. In the United States, it’s about a race to the bottom. It is definitely a downward trend. We are getting a smaller percentage of the GDP ever in our history. Poverty is at a record high. The wealth of the so-called recovery, one twenty one percent, one hundred and twenty one percent, went to the top. Not a hundred percent, more than a hundred percent because the incomes of everyone else went down and they are taking that too.

MF: I hope that this is not a transition to a new economy. I would like to see an economy with a guaranteed national salary, public investment in infrastructure as a way to bring return back to the public, where we see shorter work hours, and where people get to engage in more fulfilling work than they have right now. I am not happy about the direction of the economy.

AC: What worries you the most in the world and in the United States?

KZ: That’s a tough list.

MF: Climate change.

KZ: Climate change is huge. It is such a mix of crisis situations that picking one out is unfair. The wealth divide is the worst it’s ever been, climate change is serious, people are dying from a lack of health care, poverty is at record highs. To pick one thing...

MF: Security of water..

KZ: It’s really corporate power that’s the problem. And this concentrated wealth of corporate power.

AC: Now I am going to switch to your vision of the future. How do you see Occupy evolving?

MF: I guess we are in a transformation phase now. What we are trying to do is work on a strategy process. We see ourselves evolving as a source of information on how people can learn to get organized, practice non-violent resistance, how to hook into the resistance community but also how to hook into the community that is building alternative systems. So we are really trying to help people connect and get them understand what our vision is and our grand strategy. We are doing a strategy retreat in a couple of weeks. We are bringing together people from across the nation, different backgrounds and we are going to do an intense strategy session. Decide what’s the next step.

KZ: I see in the future that it might not be the name Occupy. Not sure about that. But who knows? It’s a pretty good brand, it has done pretty well. I think what we will see in the future a linking of issues, no more single issues. We are going to be seeing people working under a common strategic framework. There was a lot of confusion about that in Occupy. We didn’t have a common strategic framework. When we have those things, we will be able to pull
people together from different movements underneath that type of structure. So we want to find a way to keep the diversity and creativity of lots of different people involved. We also want to find a way to link people so develop solidarity and realize we are all part of one big effort. We never saw ourselves as just an occupation in DC, we saw ourselves as much more. We saw it as a national effort. DC is a very hard community to organize because of racial divisions, it is a very government city (people are afraid to lose their jobs, their security clearances, that crap), it is a lobbyist city (lots of lobbyists who aren’t interested in this), and you got non-profits connected to the Democratic Party who work hard in that structure. DC is not going to be the center of that revolution. Transformation is going to happen from outside DC and DC will be the last to experience it, to recognize it.

MF: I think what Occupy is doing now and is pretty amazing is that people are discovering their power. They are resisting and going further with it. They are demanding they have homes to live in. Occupying public schools when they try to shut them down. I think we will see more of that- people taking ownership of buildings and structures.

KZ: I do see more and more unity, solidarity, and common vision and strategic structuring.

AC: What I thought was impressive was Occupy Sandy and how they were more efficient than FEMA.

MF: We had on our website Occupy feeding the FEMA workers.

KZ: They are going through a new phase in trying to help businesses started. Cooperatives. They are doing real long term work to organize the community to resist what they expect to come, which is big money coming in and buying everything to remake it into a corporate town. There is a lot of things happening with Sandy.

AC: You were talking a little bit about what you would like to change. What improvements do you think can be made with Occupy?

KZ: It is important to understand that occupying public spaces is only a tactic. We are not going to win this transformation from a corporate government to a people’s government through that one tactic. The most successful use of that tactic is not in a three month or six month occupation but in a two or three week occupation. You get the benefit of the occupation, get people together, show what you stand for, draw the public and the media in for a discussion of politics, but you don’t stay longer than you need to. Then you go back to that strategic community and come back a year later and do another two three week occupation. I think it is important to use that tactic correctly and that is one thing that they didn’t do. The tactic became the focus. You spent all that time keeping the encampment going, raising money to
buy food, taking care of people, focusing inwardly instead of building links outwardly. That was the major mistake.

MF: I think too that there was this whole fear about leadership and you have to find the right balance about creating a system in which no one feels marginalized, that you allow for the creativity of ideas and the diversity of ideas, but that you not allow people to come in an divide and not disrupt what you are trying to do. That was one thing that we were so impressed at the tar sands blockade direct action weekend. They did things we wished we had in Occupy. They had a very clear community agreement, you know, you need to agree to these things or we are going to ask you not to participate. They were very intelligent in how they went around organizing on a need to know basis. At the same time, they left a lot of room for creativity and influence in what they were going to do. I think there were better ways to organize than we did at Occupy. I think it was a learning experience and a lot of the occupations were infiltrated. That is something we need to be aware in that we won’t be able to prevent infiltration but we need to know how to decrease the effects.

KZ: Infiltration is the American way. When it comes to political action. There were articles on our Occupy site that talk about the history of infiltration and political movements going back to the last century. We didn’t come prepared for that event though on the first day of Zuccotti we saw undercover cops going into Zuccotti. When we left Zuccotti, in Baltimore, we parked our car we saw a van, unmarked van, two guys with knapsacks and jeans and in the front seats were two cops.

MF: We took pictures.

KZ: They were undercover and they went into the park again. We had undercover people in our first week in Occupy Washington, DC who cause us to get into conflict that led to pepper spray. There were infiltrators from right wing groups.

MF: One of the first nights where we were facing arrest and mass eviction, a group of organizers talking about what to do, we had a secret service guy listen to us in a polo shirt. We were like, “Hello! We know you’re there.”

KZ: I don’t think infiltration was well handled there.

AC: Do you envision any serious roadblocks in the future?

KZ: In addition to what we already talked about (laughing), the result of Occupy, the government has put in place laws, regulation, techniques, that will make it harder for us in the future. The NDAA scares a lot of people amongst us. Laws against public demonstrations in
various cities. I think the experience of Occupy also taught our opponents in law enforcement. So we have a more educated opposition.

MF: We just have more militarization of our police force doing joint military training. There was one last night in DC, February 13. They were doing one in Chicago in a public school where they would shoot blanks in the hallway so students would learn the sound of gun fire. This whole thing on the West Coast where they shot innocent people because they were in a pick-up truck of the same color.

KZ: It’s a very powerful oligarch we are dealing with here. There is a lot of money they are taking. It is not going to give up its power without a struggle. So it’s a challenge.

AC: Ok. I just have a couple of quick questions left. This is a loaded one. What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

KZ: Co-opted.

MF: They came out of legitimate concerns. Economic concerns.

KZ: They had a lot of the same economic insecurities that Occupy members had. They make the mistake analysis of blaming government and not corporate government. They think corporations are the solution not the problem. But I think the Tea Party has been very much coopted by the Republican Party. It was much more easily corrupted that Occupy because their philosophy on less government and pro-business is consistent with Republican philosophy. They fit better in the Republican Party. Our anti-Wall Street, anti-corporate power is not consistent with the Democratic Party. Obama has appointed so many Wall Streeters and he is not stopping in his second term. We don’t fit well into their party as well as the Tea Party fits into the Republican Party.

MF: (Laughing) They tried. Occupy the Vote.

KZ: They can be allies in a sense because they come out about economic frustration and they see the reality of corporate power. If we can show them that, they can be allies.

AC: Loosely connected to this or, depending how you see it, heavily connected to this- the Liberty movement with Ron Paul, how do you guys see that?

KZ: We had Ron Paul people at Freedom Plaza and of course we agree with them on empire issues. They are very opposed to intervention and we are opposed to empire. Government spying, transparency- there is an overarching agreement. But I think their view that the market is the solution is very inconsistent with what most Occupiers think. So I think there is a big difference of opinion there.
AC: Connected to the liberty movement, I have come across a new type of libertarianism, or maybe not so new. It’s called left-libertarianism? Have you heard of it?

KZ: Yep.

AC: What do you think of it?

KZ: It’s an interesting mix. They have all the issues I just listed. When I ran for office in 2006 for US Senate, I was running for the Libertarian and Populist Party. So, I know there is overlap. We find where we can work together and then we work together. When we can’t, we can’t. I think left-libertarians are more open to our views. I think a lot of them are young people trying to figure out politics. As they see more of the impact of corporatism they will recognize that Wall Street domination, when I say Wall Street, I mean big business, corporate domination is the biggest problem.

AC: The last question I have and you probably have come across it in Occupy, is anarchism, any type- what is your opinion on it?

MF: Well, we worked well with anarchists on Freedom Plaza. They understood that we knew...

KZ: Anarchism. (Laughing)

MF: We knew that just because you don’t have a hierarchy doesn’t mean you don’t have structure that you follow. That was a pretty natural meld with direct democracy, anarchism. Some of them had some great skills that were very helpful. There were some in the Black Bloc contingent that were just anti-strategy and that didn’t work and the really area of conflict. We think that strategy is in important. We also think a lot of Black Bloc was just infiltration.

KZ: Anarchism is a viable long term political ideology. It doesn’t trust leadership. I think there is a lot of validity to that. There is of course a part of that group that doesn’t want to think about where we want to go and how we are going to get there. They are just going to go out and do property destruction or look for conflict with the police. That’s not very productive. It’s counterproductive.
AC: You just told me about the academy. What would you say are the other things that you do with Occupy New England?

RH: One of the biggest things we are doing right now is supporting Occupy Sandy. We’re sending donations, supplies there. I haven’t personally been able to get down there, but I have donated money, raised funds, and have a bunch of contacts who have all gone down. That’s probably the biggest impact we have had in a while. We have this mutual aid, we have been helping people out, helping stay in their homes, helping them stay warm— that’s pretty much all. We were doing that before the government was there doing anything.

AC: I was able to visit the Occupy Wall Street site, and I got to talk to one of them. He was just telling me about Occupy Sandy as well. He said what they were doing there, how they were being more of help than the government, just like what you said.

RH: Normal people are recognizing that we had a better capacity to help people. What was great was waking and seeing how the National Guard was taking advice and training from Occupy Sandy coordinators.

AC: That’s pretty impressive. What would you consider to be your inspiration for Occupy New England and yourself?

RH: Well, it kind of started with rage. It was outrage at how little our government was doing in the face of bank bailouts and runaway spending on political campaigns. It just looks like our government isn’t taking anything seriously. We as citizens want to have a tool, a voice and when the entity that is supposed to speaking for us isn’t, it was up to us to start getting out speaking literally for ourselves.

AC: How would you describe the demographics of Occupy New England?

RH: New England- I wouldn’t say it’s rich spoiled kids, but it’s horribly- well maybe not horribly, overwhelmingly white that are involved with it. We just had that discussion. We haven’t done that well to engage minorities in that discussion. Part of that is that they usually have their own groups and organizations. I guess we are probably not that interesting to their needs and wants of activism. We are going to try and engage more in minority communities, begin with churches. Demographics for New England- from what I have seen is working class people. There were a lot of homeless people. There was a lot of maybe mentally deranged people that
were never listened to or respected or taken care of. A lot of those people were there. Mostly just working class people at this point. Even most of the people who didn’t have jobs when it started have jobs now. We are now busy but we still come together under this banner to try and make change and add value to our lives and the people that we know.

AC: I saw you speaking at the PorcFest at YouTube last year. You were talking about the press and how unfair they were. Do you find hard to engage the public via the media.

RH: It’s not so much that we are having issues engaging the public. It all depends on who we want to reach. If we want to reach like the mass of the whole country, we probably won’t be able to do that because the mass media has a monopoly on that. When it comes to reaching out to local communities and local issues, we are pretty effective at that. We get out to the community and start talking about things, Facebook, Twitter, and talk about things. We have in a way replaced the local media because we are able to give a response the media is able to get out to events. People are tuning into Twitter now...

(Problems with Dictaphone)

AC: Where do you find your political support coming from? You were saying local communities before, but is there anything else?

RH: For me, I get political support just from people I know. More social activism in the past, now I have different friends who introduced me to city officials. I go through a number of social circles. Most of our political support, as far as New Hampshire, has pretty much dried up mostly because of the great split in July. There was a little bit a falling out between Occupiers in New Hampshire.

AC: What exactly happened?

RH: There was a lot of disrespect in talking to each other. Then, it boiled down to one of the main points of contact was not respecting the process and was trying to do things unilaterally, which is normally ok. No one made a big deal of it in the past, but people decided now was the time to put our foot down. We blocked him from admin access. There was a huge heated debate about that. Then guns got into the debate. A state wide assembly was called. In the state of New Hampshire, everyone has the right to open carry anywhere. Until recently, we even had the right to openly carry in the halls of the state house. There was one person who wanted to make sure that all the guns would stay home, even though guns hadn’t been involved in our movement since the beginning, before I even got involved. They just were never out, never showed up, but somebody made a point that guns should never show up. That turned into a flame war over second amendment rights. All these things, people were just acting disrespectful to each other. Only three people showed up with guns and they weren’t
Free Staters, they were more Republican crowd or Tea Partiers. They were good people, friends of mine but they were being hot heads. It just gave the person who we were just going to ban admin access the political advantage to split the group up. To create a “left” vs the “right” and for those of us who stayed in the group, we were there because we thought it wasn’t right to silence any voice. So we got banned, our access banned once we reinstated this individual. People even asked me, “Do you want to ban them all?” I said, “No, that wouldn’t be right.” An hour later, we found out we were banned from admin access. So it became a fight with the Facebook Admin access crowd. They had seventy five hundred followers on there. It was kind of a big deal at that time, but now, not so much. It still is because people on their side acted like jerks, people on our side acted like jerks, nobody was listening to each other. Even to this day, we can’t sit in the same room without someone bringing it up. It was an embarrassing mess that got a lot of press coverage for some reason. And made everyone else in New England really nervous. A good majority of us got passed it and have started to work together again. This convergence coming up is the first big action since then and we have people who were the initiator’s of the split have declined to take part. They don’t want to drag the name of their organization through the mud by standing next to Free Staters. All right, whatever you want to do. And I went around and contacted their organizations anyway. (Laughing) We had people filling out forms and saying they would like to participate, it would foolish not to just because there is an opposing viewpoint. That’s pretty encouraging to see.

AC: This leads well into the next set of questions that I have. It basically a sort of word game, where I say something and you tell me what comes into your head. The first one is populism.

RH: Populism means that the solution to any problem you could ever have is and has been around you.

AC: Congress.

RH: The opposite of progress. (Laughing)

AC: A grassroots campaign?

RH: A media buzz word.

AC: My next question would be how important are they? I guess not that important. (laughing)

RH: Yea, if they were real, I would be truly all for them. But I would never call anything that I do grassroots. That word doesn’t mean anything anymore.

AC: What does we the people mean to you?

RH: The human race to me. In Constitutional terms, it would be the citizens of this country.
AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

RH: Yes. People need to take more responsibility for their lives. They need to see how what we do has consequences and also see how we do it to participate better.

AC: You’re opinion of the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially?

RH: Well, brilliant, but that was a different time too.

AC: You said the Congress was the opposite of progress. How would you define progress in society?

RH: Progress would be the solving of people’s problems without taking several months to decide to solve it and then taking four months to get funding, then taking ten years to solve it. I am beginning to see the business of government is staying in business instead of solving problems. They make a career out of making problems continuing. Because, why would you need government if you don’t have problems? Why would you need charities if you don’t have problems?

AC: Progress or tradition, what do you think is more important?

RH: Progress. I gave up on tradition. Tradition is nice but if we stuck with tradition we would never get off this planet by the time the sun explodes. Then nothing we ever did would matter.

AC: Ok. Ethics- do you think it matters in politics or should matter in politics?

RH: It matters because when people find out you have been mis-stepping, you are going to be pissing off a lot of people. I mean you could probably get away with small little violations. That’s fine. When you are an unethical person and an opportunist, get the hell out of my government. Why are you representing me?

AC: Fairness, how would you define and do you think it exists or can exist?

RH: Fairness- It is up to the participants. So you can choose to set all the fairness you want, but I don’t think it’s a standard. I am not sure if it ever could be a standard unless there were four people left on the planet with a robot deciding what they did. (Laughing) I think at some point the robot would catch on to the fact they don’t need us.

AC: Globalization- how would you define it and what is your opinion?

RH: Globalization in the capitalist terms is probably exploiting all the resources of the earth, being able to do business anywhere on the planet, getting access to resources and information
anywhere on the planet. Globalism in the sense I myself would use it is the expansion of the internet and our capability to communicate with anyone on the planet instantly. That is proving itself our next step in the evolution in humanity. The ability of everyone to have face to face time.

AC: Modern technology- how important is it in your activities?

RH: I couldn’t do what I do without it. I would not be able to reach the people I am reaching. I wouldn’t be able to coordinate. We just don’t have the capability of reaching out in the time we do on that scale without technology today. Could we replace it today if all technology went out the window today? Yes. That’s because all the people are connected to the internet instead of being in cafes or bars or wherever people went to talk communally and discuss things.

AC: Social media and privacy and whether there is a balance?

RH: There is no privacy on social media. If you want privacy, your best bet is to write a letter and send it through the post office. As far as the internet is concerned, anything you do or say is public record, even if you think you are having a private conversation, all of that can be accessed by a company. All of that is the property of the company, the product of the company you are using. All that can be accessed by the government at a moment’s notice.

AC: Outsourcing- do you see it as a serious problem or a transition to a new economy?

RH: It’s a serious short term problem. I can see the good in it; the good in mixing our economy with other nations. Although it looks like we are sending work to slave shops, but it we are also sending work to India and they are doing highly specialized work. They are bringing people out of poverty. As far as the biggest problem we see that the economy based on consumer spending and everyone is sending their jobs overseas, we have fewer and fewer people making a livable wage and they have less money to consume. They are consuming less. When that happens, that is going to bring our entire economy down. I am hoping that investors and economist and companies are starting to see that if you want to sell your products at a profitable rate, there is no greener pasture than the United States. We just buy everything without thinking about it. We go into debt just to purchase a mattress. We are consumers, that is what we do as a country. They won’t be able to sell their products overseas for the same amount money that they can here and for the same amount of profit. In order to stay up, we need to get people employed to have more disposable income.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the United States?
RH: Well, if with giant populous movements like the Tea Party and Occupy, there is still a majority of Americans that are apathetic. They just stay at home and watch TV. Every four years they will vote for someone to rule their nation for the next four years. They probably won’t do any research one their own and go back to sleep after they vote because it’s someone else’s problem to take care of the business society instead of realizing it is the business of everyone to pay attention to that.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its position or competitiveness in the world economy?

RH: At this point, I don’t think we are going to keep it and I don’t think we will get it back for a couple of generations. Not at least until we start educating our students again and maximizing their potential, giving people the ability innovate, and focus on a larger broader plan instead of this narrowmindedness that we have seen come out of our country. People in business and government have such short-sightedness.

AC: How do you see Occupy New England developing in the future?

RH: Well I am hoping to see after this fourth regional convergence and the activism academy I am hoping to run, I am going to see them start participating in their local governments and get into positions where they can change the system from within. Also, we will have to have the same people get out and rabble rose still. We’ve all managed to get together and connect together more than previous generations have. So I am thinking as we progress what is left of our movement, the diehards, as they get more involved with their local government and school boards making changes, we will see a progression in what our government will do by listening to us. We might even see people make their way all the way to the top with the ideas we hashed out. All these places we converged at and got these ideas out.

AC: What improvements do you think need to be made to Occupy New England?

RH: We need to connect more, to get our message out more to people who are not online, some of the older folks. They don’t understand how to use it. We need to be able to make impacts and be able to advertise those impacts. We can show up and march all day, but we need to start doing things that engage everybody, even people who aren’t political or are activists need to say “That is a really great idea. I am glad you guys are doing that. I would love to get behind this project.” I think Strike Debt was the best faction, group we had with everyday citizens because everybody has debt. They are seeing this brilliant idea that you can buy distressed debt for a dollar and wipe it clean. I don’t think people had any idea that you could do that, they thought it was just certain groups who could legally purchase debt and make those harassing phone calls to you. We have kind of opened the door to people to say “I
don’t have to be harassed anymore. There is this group that is helping. It actually has a real solution.”

AC: What do you see as roadblocks in the future?

RH: Ego. Definitely. There are people trying to become famous through Occupy. There are people who also are out here because they are using the group for their own agendas or organizations instead of being part of the solution. They want to dominate the conversation and take all this fresh blood and drag them into their organization.

AC: Then how would you estimate the impact of Occupy New England and Occupy in general?

RH: Right now, we’re kind of do some maintenance mode. Let’s do some training, get out to the community. We are able to meet up in massive numbers still. We like to give organizations a photo op to show that there is still mass indignation in the streets. So we are still a pretty helpful to in being able to push agendas, like environmental agendas. We can make a big impact in showing mass numbers, but our biggest impact is helping communities and helping each other. That is the most valuable thing we have right now. As far as Occupy in general, I am not going to say it’s our fault, I have a feeling you can correlate the message of Occupy to the 2012 election. The president harped in on our language. He tried to mask it a little bit, but he harped in on it and I think it helped him get elected. That, and Mitt Romney sucks at running a campaign. I would say when he came to New Hampshire for the primary, we shut them down. Anytime the Republican candidates tried to speak, we shut them down. When all those candidates came in, especially the ones who would say the fruitiest or ridiculous things, we would hog the spotlight from them. All this money that they were spending on the campaign couldn’t match the power of a bunch of people coming in screaming. That was pretty impactful. And a lot of fun. (laughing)

AC: Ok. I just have a couple of quick questions. You mentioned you had some friends in the Tea Party. What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

RH: I haven’t been out to see a rally in a while. The second amendment rallies have gotten a lot of people out. I mean, when it first started, I was really excited about it. I was excited about people taking responsibility and getting signs out and it was something that hadn’t happened in my generation. Then when I saw that FoxNews was getting involved and signs saying “Honk if I am paying your mortgage,” it was like, great, people attacking people instead of people attacking actually the heart of the problem, which was our governments relationship with corporations. So I kind of gave up on them for a while. Then our New Hampshire Tea Party person, the one person who runs the Twitter feed, I tried to make friends with her but she drives me nuts. She is a tin foil hat wearing person. My other Tea Party friends said, “Yea, don’t work with her.” (laughing) I’m glad I wasn’t the only one that thinks she’s nuts.
AC: Ok. Then, anarchism. Any type- what is your opinion of it?

RH: It is a beautiful ideal. But it is an ideal.

AC: Being in New Hampshire, I am sure you can go into depth on this. Libertarianism- any type.

RH: Well, my philosophy before I became politically active was “do whatever you want as long as you aren’t harming anyone else.” So my philosophy kind of syncs up with libertarian principles. A bit of realistic libertarian principles- not libertarian anarchism. I believe that if we erase all government, something else will pop up in its place. It’s kind of hard to do away with all government because it’s an effective tool when used properly.

AC: Then, the Liberty Movement with Ron Paul.

RH: My friend used to be the head of the Libertarian Party in New Hampshire. I also had friends in Occupy trying to promote Ron Paul. I like how he got everyone interested in the Constitution and constitutional law. He was able to get people excited and energized. The only thing I didn’t like was that he ran as a Republican. I think he would have gotten more support if he ran independently. It was surprising that he ran at all. But he has an army now. He can mobilize people. If anything, that’s just something people need to pay attention. He was able to get so many people out on the cheap. They found the most innovative ways to fund raise and to get the word out through social media. I would dare say that was a “grassroots movement.” If anything, Ron Paul has tons of tons of followers. He is politically powerful. Even if he is not in government, he continue to be influential and through his son Rand, although he doesn’t seem to share the same respect. I still think he is going to be pretty influential.
Appendix C- Independent Libertarians

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<tr>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Organization: The Tea Party Occupy Connection Chronicle</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name: Evelyn Messinger</td>
<td>Assigned designation: Interviewee Independent 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date: 10 October 2012</td>
<td>Location: California, USA- via Skype</td>
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AC: So, my first question is tell me about what you are trying to do and about the movements themselves in your own words.

EM: Aha. So first off, you’re an American it sounds like? Right?

AC: Yes I am. I’m originally from New York.

EM: Ok. Let’s see. You know, it’s interesting you see because currently I think any connections between Occupy and the Tea Party aren’t working well. Oops. I am going to turn my audio down because I am hearing myself back. (Unintelligible).

AC: I can hear you. It’s fine.

EM: Ok, Maybe you can turn yours down because I am hearing myself back.

AC: Ok, hold on.

EM: Just a little.

AC: How about now?

EM: Yea, I think that’s better. Is it ok for you?

AC: That’s fine, I can hear you.

EM: I mean the interesting that happened is… I don’t know, did you see the Pinterest page that I made?

AC: No, I haven’t. I can look at it later though.

EM: Ok, because I started, I think it was last January, I think that was when it was, but I started to collect examples of the Occupy and Tea Party meeting each other. It seemed like a good way to just collect a list of urls where people were reporting on “you know, oh, the Occupy and Tea
Party people did this together.” I think it was last November. So, I put in a google search, Occupy and Tea Party, and I would look at what would come up every day. I found a lot of situations where they connected to each other in various ways. So sometimes it was just—there would be a meeting, an attempt by people in a given city or town would— it was usually one person, either a Tea Party or an Occupy person, would reach out to the people on the other side and say, “We share a lot, let’s meet.” And they would. There was some local TV coverage, sometimes a panel discussion that local TV could generate or cover. There was at least one, MSNBC did a google plus meeting with three Occupy and three Tea Party. Sometimes there was joint demonstrations with one or two issues always seem at the heart of it. I don’t know if you’ve heard this the NDAA?

AC: Yea, I’ve seen this protests in Oregon for instance.

EM: In Oregon, well that’s the one we were involved in, we started it.

AC: Ok.

EM: NDAA basically is the National Defense Authorization Act Obama signed on January 1, 2012 I think it was or on December 31, 2011. I don’t know which, but anyway people could be—Americans could be arrested for suspected terrorist activity. Basically, you know, it wasn’t made clear what would happen to them. So basically they could be put in Guantanamo. Obama said, “We won’t really do this.” (unintelligible) So anyway, that was something that both sides agreed was not good.

AC: Yea.

EM: So, that generated some protest. The one in Oregon that we were involved in but then there was also another on the same day- there was one in Worcester, Massachusetts on the same day about the same topic.

AC: Yea, I’ve seen that one too.

EM: OK, on the same day, or the day before or after I can’t remember, there was something in Washington called the CPAC, which is the Conservative Political Action Committee’s meeting, kind of like a convention of conservative political activists. The Occupy people were outside protesting it. It quite a remarkable little video, I happen to know the person who made the video. A conservative comes out and says that we’re kind of the same and the next thing you know they are off having a beer together. Drinking beers together. That was pretty amazing. I will send you the Pinterest and you will see it.

AC: Ok.
EM: Then there were other things like this intermittently. So I kept this list of them. (unintelligible) a TV show, but it didn’t come out to well for various reasons that are difficult to explain. So it never aired and it isn’t really finished anyway. The interesting thing that happened was the minute the election started to rev up, the general election next month?

AC: Yea.

EM: But it really started to rev up in January or February, the activity started to dry up and disappear. In my google searches, instead of Tea Party meets Occupy, there was all this usual partisan screaming at each other instead.

AC: Yea.

EM: So, suddenly I realized that, which is that if you only have two choices for who to vote for, once all of that revs up, you are going to gravitate to your side and that is exactly, I think, what happened. The pull, the grab of the partisan fight just drew-“so you and I might see that we have something in common but we have a lot more that we don’t have.” (unintelligible) So I going to move to my side and vote for somebody and when you know who you are going to vote for the conservative or the liberal or whatever you kind of in your mind begin some kind of spin a bunch of reasons why you are going to hate the other side.

AC: Yea.

EM: For me, also when the spring came and they tried to start up Occupy again and they completely failed, that was sort of the end. You can’t even call it Occupy and Tea Party anymore because there’s no such thing as Occupy.

AC: Yea.

EM: So, I don’t know if that is helpful for you or not.

AC: Yea, I know. I went to New York and talked to both. I met people in Occupy Wall Street and some Tea Party groups and it was right before the Occupy anniversary. Yea- I mean there was one Tea Party that was more Libertarian and the other was more social conservative, which was interesting to see the dichotomy between the two. The social conservative seemed to be more toeing the line with the Republican Party, but the Libertarian one seemed more energetic, more pugnacious. For Occupy, they were just completely absorbed in S17.

EM: In what?

AC: The anniversary, the one year anniversary?

EM: Oh, ok.
AC: So, the answers I got from Occupy were they were still there.

EM: When was this?

AC: It was in the beginning of September. First week of September.

EM: Ok.

AC: Labor Day. They were basically there, but trying to figure out what to do next.

EM: Yea, well, we saw where that went to.

AC: Yea, exactly.

EM: So, I don’t know if this blows your theory.

AC: No, no, no. Not at all actually. Let me see some other questions I have here for you that you might be able to help me with because what I am seeing is something- I think something is happening below the surface that people aren’t seeing very well. Did you hear anything about the Dubuque, Iowa for instance?

EM: Maybe.

AC: Because there was a strong alliance between the two sides. In fact the Congressman from there said he was a representative of both sides actually.

EM: Uh.. He was partly Libertarian right? Ron Paul person?

AC: Yea, that’s pretty much where I am going to go with this. The question I have for you is in your experience did you see a growing alliance between traditional Libertarians and Anarchists or Left Libertarians?

EM: Ok, it was interesting because in Oregon, you know when we went up there a bunch of the Occupy people, (unintelligible) it was a relatively small group of Occupy. It’s interesting area of Southern Oregon. There’s generally more super conservative types, but there happens to be one town. So there’s these three towns. One is Grants Pass. It’s the northern most. Then the middle is Medford and then just south of that is Ashland, Oregon.

AC: Ok.

EM: Ashland Oregon is right on the border, but what it is- they have always had the Shakespeare Festival for years. It sounds like I am drifting off but I’m not really.

AC: Ok.
EM: Just so you understand the dynamic of this place. So, it’s a cute little town. It’s right across the border from California. It’s a giant tourist place.

AC: Ok.

EM: This festival every summer brought lots of people to Ashland and then they go “What a sweet little town, let’s retire here.” Whatever. It ends up being a super liberal town. Organic food things, yoga, all that kind of things. So, it’s an outpost of Liberalism in an otherwise very conservative region. So you have this extremely liberal town of Ashland and you have an extremely conservative town called Grants Pass and in between them you have this small city Medford. So it is sort of half and half and Medford also has a university.

AC: Yea.

EM: The University of Oregon-Medford. Something like that. So you have a mix in Medford. This is an unusual configuration because usually a whole region is one or the other.

AC: Yea.

EM: But I think it is because of the proximity of these two extreme points of view that people were able to generate a dialogue. You know?

AC: Yea.

EM: In this area, because, people know each other. Here, I live in Northern California and everyone I know is liberal (unintelligible) something about the geography and the circumstances of that region is what created this. So, what was interesting was that a lot of the young Occupiers, and these were mostly college kids in Medford, were Ron Paul enthusiasts. I do think that people tend to think that this is not that unusual. There’s that you have found Occupy supporters who would have supported Ron Paul. He is sort of a crossover figure. I mean, Ron Paul is against whatever both sides are against.

AC: Yea.

EM: So to the point at which radical leftists, Anarchists you called them, and reactionary conservatives meet and fill that space. I don’t know what happened. Some of the Occupiers said they were going to vote for Ron Paul.

AC: Yea.

EM: They were registered, change their party affiliation, or whatever. You know where that led to.
EM: So we did do the conventions on a somewhat different project. At the Republican convention, a gigantic garrafle, or what you want to call it-

AC: Yea, I saw that. The Libertarians were quite upset about that.

EM: Yea. Rules got changed so that Ron Paul ended up being deep sixed from the whole thing and they were very upset. But the whole structure of US politics is such that.... (unintelligible). I don't whether in the past if, maybe you can tell me this, the peculiar structure of the American political system makes it so (unintelligible)... large groups of disaffected people. (unintelligible)

AC: Yea. What I find interesting about the Ron Paul, Libertarian thing, it is how they- I mean, with Anarchism, I would say it is an extreme form if Libertarianism but on the left side. I have read the theories about Left-Libertarianism as well, and they seem to balance each other out quite well actually. Now, what I find interesting is that both side can- it seems that it is developing into an anti-corporatist movement actually.

EM: Well, the righties wouldn't say that. From my experience now, the conservatives that we worked with there were had their own little organization there called... what's it called? I can't, I'll have to look it up but it's Libertarianism in the extreme.

AC: Yea.

EM: And they wouldn't say that their corporate at all. I mean, what is always looks to me like is this...

AC: Oh no. They're with Occupy as an anti-corporatist movement.

EM: You know, the right and left- Occupy would agree with you when you say anti-corporate, it's the conservatives that would (unintelligible) I think I figured this out. Politicians and corporations are completely together now in different ways. When liberals see that, they see the evil corporations and when the conservatives see this, they see the evil government.

AC: Yea.

EM: So (large unintelligible part, transmission too poor for recording). For the conservatives, it's all about taxes...

AC: I think I lost you, hold on.

EM: (unintelligible)
AC: Hold on. I am just going to mute my microphone and turn it back on. Can you hear me now?

EM: (unintelligible)

AC: Ok. I am just going to call again because you are a bit choppy. I am just going to call you again.

Calling again

EM: Hi, can you hear me?

AC: Yes, I can hear you better now. Ok. Yea, I know what you are saying about the taxes. The Libertarian organization in Oregon- they were social conservatives as well, we they?

EM: Um, I think it crossed the line. Some of them were. It’s called Wake-Up America.

AC: Yea, I’ve done a little research, but I would really like to get in touch with some people in Oregon, but they have been “incommunicado” with me. (Laugh)

EM: Oh yeah?

AC: Yeah. I tried contact Occupy Ashland, Medford. What was his name? Some of the guys from Wake Up and none of them have replied back.

EM: The Occupy Ashland people didn’t?

AC: No.

EM: Hmm. Well, you know, I can get you in touch with both sides. Whether they reply, I don’t know. I think they will. I mean there is an unusual – I think you have this geographical situation that’s strange there, but another thing that was interesting there was ... there was some years ago a guy named Joseph...I can’t remember his last name, but it will come to me.

AC: Yea.

EM: He was a Washington-he worked for a PAC, I don’t know. He was a big conservative.

AC: Yea.

EM: Who had a big spiritual revelation that the left and right had to stop fighting. So he started something called the Trans-partisan Movement. Have you heard of this?

AC: Yes, I have.
EM: Ok. McCormick, that was his name. Joseph McCormick.

AC: Actually, I think I have heard of that name.

EM: He lived in Ashland, or somewhere in that region, and these meetings. The whole thing was kind of- I had been part of that for years because it always seemed to be- I come from the left but I have always been curious about the other side. He had meetings in which a man, who was part of this group, attended these meetings and had a big revelation as well. He was an political activist on the right. So, Joseph McCormick disappeared in many ways, but this guy kept this vision and has been trying to bring his side into the dialogue and that is how it came about. There is also a facilitator in the area and the two of them kind of teamed up and that’s how they started to have these discussions across the divide. So, I can give you all these people’s names and I can recommend that they speak with you. For purely academic reasons, I think they will be fine with that.

AC: Yes, because I personally tried to contact Ron Lee, Linda Sturgeon, then Occupy Ashland, Occupy Medford,-

EM: Yea, Linda is the one and it isn’t Ron Lee on the other side. He was one of our people, but he wouldn’t necessarily... It’s umm-It’s really funny because I don’t know. I see his face but... So his name isn’t coming to me, but I will send you his information. And I can introduce you to both of them. I think if I do that, tell them what it is and maybe you could send me a paragraph.

AC: Sure.

EM: Maybe you already did. Just send, “I’m doing my thesis on x.” I think you sent me that but I don’t think the words you sent me were that clear.

AC: What I can do is actually look through some of my old work and presentations I’ve done over here and send that over to you so they can see it as well. If they see- I’ve written essays and papers for presentations at universities and conferences speaking about this. Maybe if they see that, they will get a better idea of what I am talking about.

EM: Ah yes, his name is Joe Snook.

AC: Yea, I have seen him too.

EM: Did you try and contact him?

AC: No, because I really didn’t have a contact for him.
EM: Ok, he’s the one who really believes in reaching across even though he is very committed to his conservative ideals. He’s a big- both he and Ron- are big Ron Paul supporters. But Joe would be the one most likely to be willing to talk to you.

AC: That’s great.

EM: Linda will too. I am really surprised that she didn’t answer, but who knows with her. She’s kind of all over the place.

AC: (Laughs) Well, she may not have seen my message. I don’t know. But, yes, when I was in New York, one of the Tea Party that I contacted, the Staten Island Tea Party Patriots, they were heavily Libertarian, surprisingly so. But they also participated in Occupy. I thought that was kind of interesting. They were very interested, very big in Occupy the Fed, End the Fed. Is there anything like that in Oregon?

EM: Well, they want to shut the Fed down. One difference between the left and the right is relatively small. Do you shut the fed entirely, the Ron Paul way, or do you change it via regulation. Everybody is upset about the banks. The banks are getting off, but that goes beyond Occupy and Tea Party. People across the spectrum are upset about that kind of stuff.

AC: Yes, exactly. Basically what I am looking at is that area that Occupy the Fed and End the Fed area- wherever you have that, you have the possibility of a crossover of the two movements happening. You have people, like I saw in New York, where you have people in both organizations that are kind of working together. A couple of the Occupy people I talked to they were quite- one was very eco-oriented, that was his big concern. But some of the stuff he said to me sounded quite Libertarian as well. He was talking about free trade, why can’t I trade across the globe without having any interferences, contracts are the basis of civilization, you can’t just go on trust with people, and it was anarchism, but with a Libertarian flavor to it. So I just want to exam this more and see how deep this goes- to see if an anti-corporatist movement is developing amongst the people working together.

EM: Well, like I say, they don’t see it as corporate per se.

AC: Yea.

EM: The terminology really matters.

AC: Well, I think the Libertarians use the term crony capitalism.

EM: Yes, crony capitalism and that is a good name for the problem. You know, when you get down to what to do about it, they have two very different solutions. So I think that is part of the reason why- what we found and what anyone, I’ll just send you the Pinterest page by the
way, it’s a collection where you will see lots of names you could contact. It’s all on that page, all across the country who have done this.

AC: Great.

EM: What we found was that you can’t bring up – you have to focus the discussion very narrowly on specific subjects. Basically two topics which are the banks got off and then personal freedom. On these two issues, you get a lot of agreement. Otherwise, the minute you move, then again- what I could do is show you, when I saw on TV, we shot this conversation that didn’t come out very well. You’ll see a link to an earlier conversation that’s on the Pinterest page. You can watch that show.

AC: I saw something on YouTube. It was a discussion between all the groups in Oregon.

EM: Yea, well maybe- I don’t think it was the one I did. But it could have been. It was very funky looking. They did meet and talk numerous times and I have posted some of them on that page. It’s just- I don’t know what your goal is. This must have happened in the past too. I mean, I think back in the 60s, the left was on the left, but a lot of what they were saying could have been said on the far right as well.

AC: Yea, I think- What I am also trying to do is show how they carry over a tradition left by the Populists , not so much the Progressives, but the Populists, even in Occupy. You had workers, new industrial workers in the late 19th century who were working alongside traditional farmers, representing the “left” and “right” of their own era. They actually came together under the Populist Movement. So that is why I am really interested in this Occupy the Fed and End the Fed stuff to see how far it will go.

EM: It’s interesting. A guy told me that he wanted to do, it’s a long story so I won’t go into it, but he’s registered at a URL called uniters.org with the idea, that really struck a chord with me, because I have been sitting here thinking what I named this thing “Tea Party/Occupy Connection,” the name doesn’t work anymore. So when he said “uniters” I thought that is a better way to frame this.

AC: That’s actually really interesting that you have this because do you know the “Great Dictator” by Charlie Chaplin?

EM: Yea, I don’t think I ever saw it, but I have heard of it.

AC: Ok. There is a clip that is very key to what I am doing. He talks about a passage from St. Luke in the Bible saying, “God is within people and they have the power to make change” and things like that. It goes into my idea about the Puritans and this whole idea of self-determination. What’s funny is that the Tea Party and Occupy are both using this same clip on
their websites. The big thing that he says in it is, “Soldiers, in the Name of Democracy, Let Us All Unite!” That is why the uniters.org is interesting.

EM: Yea, I think so too. It’s in my mind to get back to, but I don’t know when or how I am going to do that. Just reframing it as- I mean, there are so many fronts, ongoing struggles, that so many people can see that there is more that we agree on then they disagree on. When you get down to it- about the dysfunction in the system currently. Yet it’s very difficult to overcome- you know, I’ve been thinking about this, writing about this a lot. There’s more-both the political system and the media system have a huge investment and a conflict of position. So, it’s not just the workforce of we are a party we want you on our side, but beyond that you have the media, which is how everybody can relate to everything politically today. We don’t get the town square speeches anymore. It also has a huge investment and conflict as well because that is what sells. So there is this tremendous confluence of forces working together, well, unlikely working together on purpose, but because they come together to keep things divided. One interesting thing about the Pinterest page when you look at the different links on there, when these meeting made the news, it was interesting how the media framed it. The only way I would know that somebody in St. Louis had a meeting is that it was online, someone would report about it. Usually it would be the local newspaper. It was so unusual and so under the radar that this narrative had been- there was no great narrative. Therefore, the reporter would very often say, “They agreed on this, they agreed on this, and they agreed on that.” But if I am pretty sure if these things had continued- the narrative is everything. That’s what it define what it means. You know what I mean?

AC: Yea.

EM: There’s one link on there to MSNBC Google Plus Hang Out that MSNBC did online, as I told you they had three conservatives and three liberals, three Tea Partiers and three Occupiers. You know how Google Plus Hang Out works?

AC: No, I don’t.

EM: You’ll see it, towards the bottom as it happened early on. Basically, it’s a group video chat. So instead of me seeing you and you seeing me only, it was a screen, like the one I am seeing you on now, where they will be a bar across the bottom with ten other faces on it. Up to ten people participating at once. If one of them talks they pop up on the screen. Basically you can have a video chat with 10 people at a time. Like I said, they had three and three, then the moderator. In that case, as it was done by the mainstream media, it was all about where they disagree, not agreed. So, anytime they started to get closer to issues that they agreed on, the moderator would change the subject. Not because he was against agreement, but because that isn’t interesting to them.
AC: Definitely. The other thing I’ve learned is the one thing that unites them is they really don’t like the media.

EM: Who?

AC: Both sides. Both sides feel that they are being misjudged. All the stuff I am finding is online, none of it is in newspapers or anything like that. Or if it is in newspapers, they discuss together and then it doesn’t work out in the end.

EM: That’s why it’s interesting to see in the coverage of these meetings, when they were happening, that because the narrative had not been formed by media and it was local reporters, they were more likely to be positive about these meetings. That was unusual and it was mostly like I said, what is the news value? If it were happening in every city and town in America, nobody would be covering it as new because where is the news? It’s just a thing that happens. Because it was unusual, the news hook was they weren’t fighting. That was the news, but when you get to large media scale outlet, them not fighting wasn’t interesting, them fighting was interesting. He would say, “How do you feel about abortion?” How do you feel about every divisive- the wedge issues? That was what the moderator kept pointing them to. Then he would get them to disagree with each other and then move on to another subject they disagreed about. I understand, but it does present a challenge if there is some impulse to work together, which is the only thing that is going to solve the problems-people deciding to agree on something. Our whole political system is moving in the opposite direction. This election, there will be more people on the extremes that are more unwilling to compromise. That is how people are getting elected now.

AC: Yea, no-definitely. The other thing I found interesting about my interviews in New York is that I asked them all the same question. I asked “What do you consider to be your opposition?” They never said the other party. Occupy never said Tea Party and Tea Party never said Occupy.

EM: And yet, if you search the Tea Party and Occupy on Google right now, you’ll find a million blog posts saying stuff about each other. “Oh, this Occupier was a pedophile.” “Oh, how come they never clean up?” “They leave a big mess, and we don’t.” “We never break the law, and they do.” So it depends on who you talk to.

AC: Yea, definitely. No, I don’t see the social conservatives and the former communists/socialists working together. I just don’t. I don’t even see the social conservatives working well with the Libertarians in the end. I am finding that to be quite true because the Libertarians I interview in New York were saying critical things about the Tea Party itself.
EM: Hmm, yes. Well, true believers never. Yea, I don’t know. Part of thing is- One thing I wrote about is, I should send you this, is specifically about this. The Whitman Blog- you probably didn’t see this. The people who crossed over and were willing to talk to the other side, probably had more in common with the people they were talking to on the other side than with the rest of their movement. So you have a person who is comfortable with social conservatives (unintelligible). The emergence of Ron Paul is pretty significant because he is a figure that crosses over to these two, that big boundary.

AC: Yea. The more I read about it, the more I find that the Republicans are dumb. They should have run that guy. They would have won. Foreign policy, with the banks, the government programs that both sides really hate- he would have... Obviously he’s anti-corporate stance is not very good for the Republican Party, so I can see why they didn’t run him.

EM: That’s part of it. But the other part is, if you play it out in your head, had Ron Paul been run as a Republican- First of all, it’s easy or don’t know too much about, it’s not too hard not to like Ron Paul. He’s against war, he’s against the Fed, but you drill down and you find out he is against everything a bunch of stuff you are for.

AC: Yes. His stances on Social Security, Medicare, Health Care are, for the left, a little bit hard to take.

EM: Yes, so he might have pulled in some people from the left, but for the most part he would have been a very divisive for the mainstream. He’s too much.

AC: Yea, I know. And I am working on a way to explain that. You have Ron Paul Libertarians, the very pure ones, Milton Friedman, and on the other side you have the Anarchists. Somewhere in between you have to have a balance between the two. That’s what I am trying to find.

EM: Well, anarchists- I have never understood anarchists. I just don’t get it.

AC: I never did either until I actually spoke to them. I was like, this is a terrible name for your philosophy because it doesn’t describe what you are talking about. It’s pretty much Libertarianism with a community effort attached to it. So it means, no one tries to impose their will on anyone that way but they also try to work together as a community, as opposed to Libertarians who are very, very individualists, very self-centered philosophy.

EM: Yea, I don’t know. But whatever the anarchists say, they have these guys walking down the streets bashing in windows, store front windows, and in the end that is extremely self-defeating and could very well be what defeated Occupy.
AC: Yes, I wouldn’t even call those guys anarchists in the end anyway. I think those guys are hoodlums.

EM: Yea, but they all them.

AC: Yes, that’s true. That’s the whole point. They have no system of governance in their organization. When I was there, there was an overwhelming agreement that the General Assembly didn’t work. And they were trying to move on from the General Assembly and kind of get to something that was more streamlined. They said that there was these crazies who would monopolize the conversation for hours on end and, in principal, you couldn’t stop them. You could even have people come and sabotage it, someone would just keep talking like a filibuster. It was a disaster they said.

EM: That’s interesting to hear because one of things that went wrong with Occupy was the preoccupation, intoxication with process. In fact one of our Occupiers hear in Southern Oregon was interested in- his interest was finding some way to define democracy someway beyond representative democracy. So then you get all hung up in the process. The content becomes secondary. It’s interesting, I remember reading about Martin Luther King, apparently when they did those marches on Washington, there was already the beginnings of the Black Power movement. Maybe before the big march on Washington, I am not sure, they realized before they started that if anybody started something violent, doing anything violent, if it wasn’t totally peaceful, they were going to lose. So they really, really, worked hard to get those people to either not show up or to contain them. You have a figure like Martin Luther King who had moral authority and could say, “No, you’re not going to go out there and beat anybody up, break any windows. A movement needs to have enough moral authority and has to make a decision-yes, we are going to peaceful, no we’re not going to break windows and somebody has to impose that. Which was exactly the opposite and I saw the same thing happen in the early 90s- there was the anti-globalization movements.

AC: Yea, the Seattle protests.

EM: It was a big thing. Especially in Europe, I was doing work there then, and it was a big thing. But they also had this- they didn’t believe that they should stop the anarchists. Same exact thing happened. The movement became known as violent and it killed it.
AC: Tell me about your movement/activism in your own words.

RT: The movement is multifaceted. I label myself as a Libertarian and Participate in the Libertarian Party, still participating in the system by voting in elections etc. But in the 'Liberty Movement' there are libertarians (limited government), anarchists (no government), minarchists (same as libertarians I believe), Anarcho Capitalists (anarchists that propose everything can be provided from the free market) voluntaryists (those who think all human interaction should be voluntary interaction). Most if not all people in the Liberty Movement are a mixture of these things with the dividing line being between minarchists and anarchists.

AC: Why are people joining your movement/activism?

RT: I think people are joining because they see where government is taking this country and they are embracing personal responsibility.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join?

RT: I tried to 'recruit' by getting people to vote for Gary Johnson. There is no organized way to join, its not a centralized movement, although I am a member of the Libertarian Party.

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

RT: From my experience and data from my page it is mostly white males with a large percentage of white females in the movement. It is not popular in the Black community at all and I don't know about any others. That is why I created my page African Americans for Libertarianism to spread the ideology in the black community.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

RT: Friendly with its squabbles on particulars. Really between minarchists and anarchists and pro-choice libertarians and pro-life libertarians.

AC: What would be the hierarchy of the organizations?
RT: Really no hierarchy that I know of, but on Facebook more respect is given to those who are seasoned, pages that have been around a long time with a large following, and people who attended Mises University are given a lot of respect it seems.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?

RT: Social media. Facebook, twitter, etc.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

RT: Not at all.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

RT: I pretty much work alone, I am new to all of this and haven't really expanded that much. So can't really answer.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

RT: The opposition are Statist, and I don't mean that as saying those for 'State's Rights' (I'm for States rights). Statist are those who think individuals should give up some or most of their rights to the State, government, an authority, in order to be protected or taken care of, or those who want to use the power of the State to oppress people. Republicans, Democrats, Socialists (I mean socialists that want to have a socialist government, I myself am a socialists but believe it should be voluntary (voluntaryism)) communists fascists, and those who want to use religion to control.

AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?

RT: In a negative view because they are a part of the system of State power.

AC: Where does the funding come from?

RT: It is grassroots mostly but the Koch brothers do fund the CATO institute and they took over and funded the Tea party. I am not a fan of the Koch family.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

RT: Individuals and liberty minded republicans. Not a lot of democrats have become a part of this movement I don't think.

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

RT: The idea that the people should hold the power not a small group of elites.
AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

RT: An archaic model that needs to be remodeled. Full of dinosaurs.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

RT: Grassroots means feet on the ground door to door campaigning, no corporate sponsors just people.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

RT: I say VERY important.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

RT: Well, 'We the people' in the constitution doesn't mean the population, it meant the States that got together to make the federal constitution. Each state represented its own people though.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

RT: Yes, you and only you should be responsible for yourself.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

RT: I don't view them as heroes really. Most were slave owning elites who wanted to be free of Britain to make their own government. Thomas Jefferson was OK and I liked him just because he was an Anti Federalists. He did own slaves but from what I know he was nice to them and freed them upon his death? I may be wrong not sure.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

RT: Not sure how to answer this. But I think most people think of progress as creating more 'progressive' laws to 'protect' people, even though they should realize that the opposite is true.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

RT: Progress meaning moving forward and looking for new ideas to make society better. I'm not a fan of tradition.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

RT: I think they should.
AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

RT: Not sure how to answer this.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?

RT: On one hand there is fairness because life isn't fair for everyone equally. On the other hand society is not fair because we are not in a free market and government picks and chooses the winners.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

RT: Both equally, once we scale back our foreign policy to treat all nations fairly unless they do something to us then I'll focus more on domestic issues. But our foreign policy effects our domestic issues.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

RT: Globalization is the world moving closer and closer to one centralized system of economy, meaning less competition and a worse economy overall.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

RT: A huge role, I was born and raised in it. I don't think I would be as knowledgeable about the liberty movement or active in it without it.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

RT: What worries me most is that over the last 75 years the government has brainwashed people into thinking we NEED government to help us and protect us and that we could not survive without out it. Like with universal healthcare, I challenge proponents of it to answer a simple question. If universal healthcare is so good why don't all the people who are for it donate into a non-profit organization and run it like a health insurance company and help those in need and to disengage from the corrupt health insurance companies? I never get an answer, all I get is “That won't happen we need government to pass it as a law so everyone can be covered then you won't have to worry about anything.” meaning a removal of personal responsibility.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

RT: My opinion is if you want something to be private don't post it or take a digital copy of it.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?
RT: I'm not sure because I've only been politically aware the last 4 years. Statistically the world is less violent.

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

RT: More government. The EU seems to be moving towards a single State.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

RT: It wouldn't be a problem if it happened naturally. But since government has kept corporate taxes at the same level for 20 years and the rest of the world lowered theirs it is only natural that capital and investment will move to the lower tax countries since dozens of countries have near the industrial technology if not capacity of the US.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competiveness in the world economy?

RT: The only way I see it is lowering the corp tax rate at either the same or below the average level (I say end it) other than that we will fail to remain competitive.

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

RT: I see it gaining momentum but sadly it won't be on the main stage until things get worse.

AC: What improvements do you think can be made to your movement?

RT: More coherent and focused.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

RT: There already is the Libertarian party and I can only hope it can see more success in the future. But only if its stops focusing on presidential elections and puts more resources in local and city and state elections then congressional and presidential.

AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?

RT: A serious roadblock I see happening right now are neo conservatives (right wing hawks and statists) claiming the libertarian title to appeal to fringe voters but hurting real libertarians with their actions.

AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

RT: I cannot say but hope we grow and convince more people to take up liberty and personal responsibility.
AC: What is your opinion of the Occupy Movement?

RT: I used to like them but I don't know if they even know what they want. They don't like corporate influencing the government so they want the government to regulate... it? Themselves? They are liberals who are peaceful true, but ultimately want to give up rights to the State.

AC: What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

RT: The Tea party I heard started off good but was hijacked but the Koch brothers and other Neo conservatives which hurt all libertarians and anarchists.

AC: Have you had dealing with either or both?

RT: No.
Transcription

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organization: Blue Ridge Free State Project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Chase Rachels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigned designation: Independent 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date: 13 December 2012</td>
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<td>Location: Asheville, North Carolina, USA- via Facebook</td>
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AC: Tell me about your movement/activism in your own words.

CR: Our movement is one which advocates exclusively voluntary human interaction and universalizes the condemnation of any *initiation* of force (Non-Aggression Principle) and recognizes the principle of Self-Ownership...i.e. that every individual owns him/herself exclusively. Individualism, peace, and private property is our mantra.

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration?

CR: Truth, logic, and the universal applicability of ethical maxims.

AC: Why are people joining your movement/activism?

CR: Because they wish to rid themselves of their cognitive dissonance. Our “political” philosophy if you will is the only consistent and practically actionable one that serves to avoid and not generate conflict between competing interests.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join?

CR: In reference to the philosophy there are no barriers to entry. To accept prohibitions on theft, assault, rape, murder, and fraud requires no membership dues. However there are organizations which have been formed to spread the tenets of our Voluntaryist/Anarcho-Capitalist philosophy. The one I am personally apart of is known as the “Blue Ridge Liberty Project” ([www.brlp.org](http://www.brlp.org)). This organization only requires people to accept the Non-Aggression Principle as true and universal to join. No membership dues are required.

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

CR: Well admittedly the libertarian community as a whole tends to be comprised of a majority of white males. However, due to our dual focus on peaceful parenting and voluntaryism, the Blue Ridge Liberty Project has a larger presence of females than many other libertarian organizations. It must be said, however, that any demographic configuration that manifests is in no way deliberate. We do not discriminate people based on their color or sex, only on their beliefs, philosophy, and actions.
AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

CR: Well amongst each other we tend to be quite inquisitive and skeptical, so you will often find us debating on some of the finer points of our philosophy. It has been my experience that the libertarian and especially the voluntaryist/anarcho-capitalist community is one filled with critical thinkers, and as such a refinement of our beliefs and philosophy as they apply to hypothetical situations is ongoing and pervades our “members” interactions.

AC: What would be the hierarchy of the organizations?

CR: The only semblance of hierarchy in the Blue Ridge Liberty Project is the founders are the ultimate decision makers when it comes to allocating the resources our project has accrued. However this is only done after receiving input from our members and considering the viability of any given suggestion. As any other organization would be motivated in a free society, it is in our personal best interest to please our members with the events we conduct as this will help ensure the maintenance and growth of our organization and the values we espouse.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?

CR: I would have to say social networking absolutely. With the advent of sites like Facebook we are able to find others who share similar interests and goals. Furthermore, we are able to communicate our values and philosophy to those who are not yet considering themselves to fall within the libertarian crowd.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

CR: If by “they” you are referring to the voluntaryist community then the answer is absolutely not. We are the loud and enthusiastic minority. Once you have learned a scarcely known truth, it’s your compulsion to share it with the world.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

CR: Absolutely! Though we are a very Laissez-Faire Capitalist promoting group of individuals we will ally ourselves with other Socialists let’s say to condemn war and civil liberty infringements. We will also align ourselves with traditional republicans to protect property rights and gun ownership along with barring the government from conducting economic policy.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

CR: The opposition is anyone who believes the initiation of force is a proper means of solving complex social problems (Taxation being the initiation of force all Nation-States are privy to).
AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?

CR: I believe there is a strong neglect of the libertarian and especially the voluntaryist movement in the media. However when libertarian ideas are reflected upon they are portrayed as radical, idealistic, callus, and selfish. The irony is some of these accusations are held to be true within our community, with the difference being we associate a positive stigma with them as opposed to a negative one. For instance we believe we are “extreme” because we tend to be absolute in our beliefs...namely the prohibition of all force initiation against ones person or property.

AC: Where does the funding come from?

CR: The funding from our organization comes through donations of grass root supporters. All of our funding is voluntary. Unlike any publicly funded entity.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

CR: Other truth Seekers.

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

CR: To be honest when I think of “populism” I think of collectivistic philosophies which tend to run counter to libertarian thought. I focus on the individual, regardless of the will of the majority. Justice is not always popular, as evidence by our current societal configuration, thus I don’t want to leave the determination of what is just or unjust to the whimsical majority. I would rather determine what is just or unjust through the rigorous and thorough application of logic. In terms of ethics, what is true for one person is true for all persons.

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

CR: Incompetent demagoguing sociopaths.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

CR: One whose support is completely voluntary in all capacities.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

CR: All good movements are grassroots but not all grassroots movements are good. To me grass roots, as mentioned above, are ones which are completely supported through voluntary means. Occupy wall street, for instance, is a ‘bad’ grassroots for movement, as they call for the very entity which has ultimately caused their grievances to inject itself further into personal affairs to relieve us of said grievances.
AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

CR: It means I am a presumptuous prick, who wishes to speak for others without their will and further to assume that their beliefs or desires are unanimous or unanimous ‘enough’. The very concept of a particular concept being unanimous ‘enough’ to be imposed upon all, even the few dissenters, is egregious in my eyes. We the people seems like the type of rhetoric that precedes a sort of justification for a Social Contract. If it hasn’t been made clear already, we as a movement reject the idea of social contract. We believe all contracts require all parties involved to unanimously concur and accept the terms set there within before they may be binding.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

CR: Anyone person is only responsible for his individual actions and obligations. No one has a positive obligation, only negative ones...i.e. to not molest the property or persons of others.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

CR: Inconsistent with the application and recital of libertarian philosophy. However he seems to be most in line with libertarian ideals of all the founding fathers and presidents.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

CR: The degree to which we refuse to initiate force against others.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

CR: Progress of course, tradition is not necessarily principally based. Progress entails a progressively wider application of ethical principles.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

CR: Ethics matter in everything.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

CR: Yes, Statism is the most destructive and insidious religion that ever will and ever has existed. Statism being the idea that the State is necessary or even effective at solving complex social problems.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?
CR: Fairness is the absolute respect of property rights. Property only legitimately being obtained through means of Original Appropriation (first user) or voluntary contractual exchange. The idea doesn’t exist in empirical reality no more than the scientific method does. However both the scientific method and ethics are valid.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

CR: I am concerned with all the activities undergone by the state be they local or abroad. Everything the state does is necessarily more destructive and costly than otherwise would be in a free society. This is because resources in a free society are allocated based on what is most profitable, and what is most profitable by definition adds the most value to society and the economy. When the state allocates resources it has no pricing mechanism by which to measure the value or disutility of any of its expenditures of resources, therefore any action it takes must necessarily be destructive or at least less efficient than the free market.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

CR: I define globalization as the ever increasing aligning of current nation-states. I am firmly against any growth of the state, because I am against the State’s existence itself.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

CR: It has greatly facilitated our activities. The internet is a prime example of the free market of ideas in action, and as we are able to contrast the ideas of libertarianism and true capitalism with those of statism, corporatism, and socialism it becomes more clear which is superior.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

CR: Severe malinvestment and by extension the inevitable economic collapse that will come, as all malinvestment must eventually be liquidated.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

CR: There is no independent right to privacy. All rights are derivatives of property rights. You have no independent right to privacy in my home, nor do I in my own home. However you are not to trespass on my property without my consent. When we grant rights to privacy and speech we generate a conflict between rights. For instance if Bob came to my house and I had a no cursing policy and lo and behold Bob curses then both of our rights cannot coexist. Either I must concede my property rights to his “freed of speech” to say what he wants in my house, or he must concede his freedom of speech to my property rights when I kick him out. Rights and liberties cannot conflict. Once we allow for a system of thought that permits conflict, then
everything becomes arbitrary. I must add however, that anyone may say whatever they desire on their own property, or with the permission of the owner of the property you are currently in.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

CR: Internet and a decrease in violent crime

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

CR: Growth of the State in all capacities. The Welfare and Warfare and Police State have all grown substantially.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

CR: “Outsourcing” is not inherently bad. The way in which the term is being used is not compatible with my philosophy anyways. I do not recognize the sovereignty of a nation-state, but only that of the individual. Jobs being “outsourced” to China affects me no differently than those same jobs being “outsourced” to my neighbor. The myth of mercantilism and economic protectionism is big can of worms that would take a lot of space to do justice on, however suffice it to say that failing companies equal a freeing up of resources which may be utilized to their comparative advantage. This is always a good thing.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competiveness in the world economy?

CR: This question is largely irrelevant to me. Comparing the economies of various nation-states is like determining the lesser of evils, not a game I enjoy participating in. I will say this, the states which increase their intervention domestically or abroad will tend to do worse economically and vice versa.

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

CR: I see it growing, I must or else what am I doing?

AC: What improvements do your think can be made to your movement?

CR: STOP TRYING TO INFILTRATE THE STATE AND SHRINK IT FROM WITHIN. There is no winning a rigged game, and any attempts to only drain us of the precious little resources we have access to. The opportunity costs are too high to attempt to shrink the mafia from within.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?
CR: No I do not. Voluntaryism/Anarcho-Capitalism are anarchist philosophies. As such, any political party that would form under the precepts of these philosophies would be akin to an oxy-moronic joke.

AC: What do you envision as serious roadblocks in the future?


AC: What is your estimation concerning the impact the movements will have on the country?

CR: I can only hope that it will serve to enlighten enough people to be able to form a community based on these principles which may insulate us from the looming economic collapse and subsequent totalitarian state. Hopefully we can form a viable voluntaryist enclave until the state has imploded.

AC: What is your opinion of the Occupy Movement?

CR: Tragic. The grievances they espouse tend to be legitimate however the solutions they call for (more government intervention/regulation) will only serve to exacerbate the very issues they are concerned over. Giving the government more power with which banks and corporations can buy through lobbying is not the answer to “corporate” exploitation. It is only the coercive power bought from the State which allows these entities to be exploitative in the first place.

AC: What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

CR: Another tragedy. A movement starting off in the right direction which was ultimately co-opted by neo-conservatives. Also the solutions are misguided. Reducing the size of the state ought not be the goal, but its elimination. We do not try to merely reduce cancer we try to eliminate it! Besides a small state just precedes a large one, as the revenue created and garnered through a small state will swell the state’s coughers…and don’t expect a refund from the surplus. This money will be spent and used as collateral to borrow from future unwitting generations.

AC: Have you had dealings with either or both?

CR: With both. With the tea party I have attempted to show them the inconsistency and impotency of the constitution with the principles of property and non-aggression and with the occupiers I have tried to display to them the violence inherent with ANY and ALL state action to include attempts to regulate businesses as well as the distinction between corporatism and capitalism.
JB: You could sit down and we did have people all come to a consensus about efficiency and renewable energy. There is low hanging fruit. You may want to use dialogue to facilitate the process to go deeper. Normally these conversations are a piece of the puzzle. They create first of all relationships. You discover that these people you have been characterizing as not so bright or mean, you know, all these generalizations, and that they are just good people. At that point all of a sudden you can have a much more meaningful and civil conversation. That’s the core of what Living Room Conversations is doing. Its creating those conversations, hoping—I have a conservative partner Amanda (?)—we’re hoping to become a resource for all sorts of organizations. And this is open source, so anyone can use this what we got up. We really need to do the next version of the website. We’re working on it. All the indicators are really very exciting and encouraging. It’s good news in that it’s all very encouraging, the challenge is it’s taking us longer to get the resources needed to, enable—Ultimately we want to have an online version to the virtuous cycle where you are community building. For example, if you’ve had hundreds of conversations about energy and you have right-left agreement again and again and again concerning certain forms of efficiency and certain forms—growing renewables, it would give leadership the kind of go ahead they need apparently to act in a more aggressive fashion. There is a great deal of opportunity, and I am hoping that we are able to realize it.

AC: I just have a question: Is it ok if I record this? What I will do is record it and type up a transcript and sent it to you so that you can see it.

JB: Yea, sure.

AC: Great. Let’s see. That sounds— I like the idea of open source, the community network is very close to what I am doing. I am doing it with everything. Investigating the Maker Movement, things like that, the open industrial innovation. But another question I have is what is your experience with working with the Tea Party and Occupy?

JB: My experience with the Tea Party has been with Mark— I have spoken with a couple of people— but it’s been mostly with the leadership. Mark— I haven’t even met yet but we have had conversations over the past couple of years. But we will meet in January because we are co-hosting a conversation at my house.
AC: And have you come across in the Living Room Conversations any libertarian groups or on
the other side, I hate using this word, anarchist groups. But you know, leftist groups that are
very hostile to government and corporate America?

JB: I know a lot of libertarians. I know- I am not sure I know a lot of people I would associate
with, describe as an anarchist.

AC: Yes, anarchist is such a weird term. You could technically say that libertarians are
anarchists in a certain way. That is why I said I hate that term.

JB: They would never say that.

AC: Well, some of them do actually. Some say they are anarcho-capitalists. I don’t know if you
have come across that term.

JB: I think I have once.

AC: Yea, they are the die-hard Ron Paul people. What has been your experience with the
libertarian groups.

JB: I have libertarian friends, they are not groups.

AC: Sorry. Libertarian friends.

JB: Some of their viewpoints I do agree with, but it doesn’t change the fact that I like them.

AC: Definitely I had a libertarian roommate at university for three years, so I liked him as well. I
completely understand what you are saying there. Ok, and so you haven’t had much work with
Occupy?

JB: No. MoveOn has worked with Occupy but that’s not Living Room Conversations.

AC: Ok, do you see yourself reaching out to them? Like you did with the Tea Party Patriots?

JB: Yes. Basically we are making the Living Room Conversations material open to everyone.
We’re hoping that as many different groups as possible will take advantage of it.

AC: Have you had a chance to look at the questions I sent you?

JB: I have had a chance to look at them. Feel free to ask. I don’t know if I will have the correct
answers to them. I can ask any questions you have now.

AC: Sure. I will just go on to the specific questions. When I say populism, what does that mean
to you?
JB: For me it’s about having average people feel like they are more in control of their government or what’s going on.

AC: Ok. How about Congress? What do you think of when I say that?

JB: When you say -?

AC: Congress.

JB: Congress? I think about the poor people. It’s a pretty miserable place to be. (laughing) That’s about all I think about Congress. It seems like an awful, awful thing to do right now.

AC: It’s one of the hardest organs of government to work for now.

JB: I mean there are many things I think about when I hear Congress. I know their popularity is really low. It’s just basically that standard partisan politics has become dysfunctional. Our Living Room Conversations is an attempt to empower leaders that want to be more functional to do so.

AC: Ok. Going from there, what is a grassroots campaign for you?

JB: Grassroots are a kind of a core of what should be power. The more we can have power, the regular folks, the better. Corporate power has gotten out of control. I mean, this crony capitalism is something that right and left will talk about at the grassroots level.

AC: That I have heard much about, I agree.

JB: I think across the board, people recognize that- some people are more focused on government and others are more focused on the corporations and their part in it. It’s so interwoven, it’s kind of irrelevant. It’s both.

AC: Ok. What does “We the People” mean to you?

JB: In reference to the founding fathers, it means the guys. White guys. But it has become to mean, I hope, I believe, all of us. I take it as a Populist statement.

AC: Do you believe that Americans should be responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

JB: Trying to think of any way I would not think so. I can’t come up with one.

AC: Do you think they should have the right to decide but also accept the responsibility for what happens in life?
JB: You know, the simple answer is yes to a question like that. People have a way of defining things differently. So in the way that I define it, yes.

AC: Ok. That's an honest answer. You mentioned the founding fathers before. What is your opinion of them, with Thomas Jefferson being the stand out one?

JB: They did an amazing time for the time and place they lived in.

AC: Do you have any opinion on the popularity of Thomas Jefferson?

JB: Not particularly. It’s to see people have a sense of history.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

JB: Progress is when people have life that’s good for them, their family, their whole community. That’s what I am looking for. That what I call grassroots. I am not sure what more there is to say about that. I think once a reporter asked me, “What’s your vision for the future?” Star Trek actually has a fabulously optimistic vision for the future. Everybody is valued, has their basic needs met, and is able to meet the best potential they have.

AC: I laugh because you are not the first person to have said that actually. In fact, many people use references to Star Trek in my interviews. One big one was PorcFest. It’s a festival in New Hampshire of libertarians and anti-government people. They claim themselves to be the Vulcans of the United States. Their logical, rational and they don’t need any pandering. (Laughing)

JB: Think about what they have done in creating that?

AC: Yea. I own a lot of the series. I know what you are saying. Progress or tradition- do you think one is more important than the other or are they on equal standing?

JB: I don’t think I can answer that.

AC: Do you ethics matters in politics?

JB: Profoundly, yes. It is the heart of good politics.

AC: Would you say there is a civil religion in politics today?

JB: Civil religion- yea, I don’t understand that question.

AC: There are several ways to define civil religion. The one way I am using was done, I don’t know if you have heard of him, by Robert Bellah. He’s actually out in California. He came up with this idea of taking Christian references and putting it into American dialogue. Not meaning
that you are blending Christianity with government or American society. It’s more like you’re using references to makes things sacred in American society. They just use the vocabulary and there is something sacred about the institutions or the country itself.

JB: I honestly don’t think about this that much. It strikes me as- it’s just not my field. I am trying to get people to focus on the places where we find common ground. I think that is where we have to start. I would choose not to go there.

AC: Fairness in society- how would you define it and do you think it exists or it will ever exist?

JB: I am a second child. Eldest children think life is fair, second children know it’s not. But we should strive to make fairness as much as we can.

AC: Ok. Is there any sort of concept you would use to label fairness? Or do you think it is taken on a case by case basis?

JB: Well, I think I have a certain notion of what’s fair and I know there will be people who would disagree with me. So, you can get people- there are basic concepts of fairness for everyone that are good and helpful. No doubt we will find that there are some exceptions.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How would you define it?

JB: Globalization is really changing how world works and we have not adapted to it in a way that is fully good for people yet. I am hoping very much that we could do more collaborative problem solving- the open goal of Living Room Conversations. Meeting the needs of as many people as can be met.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities? I am think it’s huge, but I just wanted to hear it.

JB: Oh yea. Absolutely. MoveOn started because the internet allowed people to connect in a way that they had never connected before. Now, with Living Room Conversations, this ability to connect and share information, to share, work collaboratively together, both offline and online, will help us turn into a transformative moment. It’s possible. I am hopeful. You never know.

AC: You were talking about climate change before. What worries you about the current state of the country?

JB: In the US, we are no longer sharing the same narrative, whether it comes to climate change or when it comes to all sort of things. So when we can no longer agree on the same facts, it becomes very difficult to make good decisions together. I think we are making decisions that
are harmful to ourselves and the future of the country, and the world. Sometimes we make good decisions, but not as many as we need to. We need to have a better average on this.

AC: Ok. Going back to modern technology- Social media. How would you balance that with privacy? Do you have an opinion on that?

JB: I am glad there are people looking out for privacy issues on social media. It’s not my field or expertise, but I am quite convinced that I don’t want the corporations to be in control of this world any more. (Laughing)

AC: Ok. What would you consider to be positive and negative changes over the past three decades?

JB: The positive changes is the increasing engagement. I think people are getting involved in politics means you care about your community? That’s good. What’s bad is that we have a more divided community. We have separated ourselves in so many ways. I think that is very dangerous.

AC: Outsourcing and the whole deindustrialization- do you think it’s a problem or just a transition into a new economy?

JB: I think we haven’t figured out our economy yet. One of the things I am working on is what our work force should look like, what the structure of work should look like. This is part of “The Mob’s Rising” piece. You got Joan Williams, I think one of the best thinkers in this area. She wrote a book about how we fundamentally have a managerial class that works fifty, sixty, seventy hours a week. Then we have a working class that’s working forty hours a week, if they’re lucky. Many times though it is three 20 hour a week jobs and barely subsistent. I think we have to have really transformative thinking on how people should be making a living. We don’t want create an ever more divided society between the haves and the have nots. That’s not healthy society. That’s bad for us.

AC: Then how would you envision that United States growing in the modern economy? How do you expect it to adapt?

JB: I am hoping that by contributing to a healthier dialogue between people it will grow healthier. The divide between those who have done well and those who haven’t is growing and has grown for better than a decade. I think we need to turn that around.

AC: Then I just have a couple of specific questions about your specific Living Room Conversations dialogue. Do you find it hard to engage the public?
JB: Living Room Conversations- the most challenging part, the early adaptive phase, we did the pilot project- very successful- the most challenging part at this time it getting people to say yes to cohost. Fewer people have good friends that are other. It makes people very anxious to have honest conversations across the partisan line. We have gotten used to being so, just hanging out with our own tribe. And tribalism is destructive to a sense of having a United State of America. The “united” is getting lost.

AC: Is there any kind of coverage of Living Room Conversations? Is it biased, is it positive, is it negative, is it neutral?

JB: I would say that there is very little coverage. Can’t say it’s good or bad. I wish I could. I am hoping that next year, when Mark and I have our conversation, it will create some coverage. At this point, I can’t respond.
AC: Tell me about your movement/activism in your own words.

NT: My activism is mainly based around Internet activism on Facebook. In my area it is fairly rural and so I don’t have access to any likeminded friends to hang out with, nor are there too many people around here to talk to. So the Internet is how I get access to people all over the place. I interact with people in Canada, the United States, England mainly, but also Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Argentina. There is certainly an international flavor to what is going on. It is a feeling of something that transcends national or state borders. It is a sense of something bigger and broader, a shared humanity. In fact, a lot of the stuff that is put up on Facebook for example speaks to a sense of love.

This one captures exactly this sentiment:

![Image of text: NO BORDERS NO NATION JUST PEOPLE]

AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration?

NT: One of the things that I think is important to note is that many radicals and anarchists suffer from a feeling of being marginalized. Sometimes they will get depressed even to the point of
being suicidal. I remember one time I posted a paper to my Facebook wall on why anarchists and other radicals get diagnosed so often with some sort of “psychiatric disorder” and/or drugged. It got so many responses. I remember that night because one of my Facebook friends who is just like me philosophically came out and told me how he is always so depressed. One of my other friends, who is just like me, in Denmark got put through hell by his high school for expressing his views. He got kicked off as Student Council president even though he was elected; he was persecuted for it. This one from Facebook illustrates it. The anarchist is the “black sheep” but sees the truth; the masses are the “sheep” going to be led to slaughter.

So I think if you want to know what inspires me, it is seeing my friends going through the same suffering, the same feeling of being marginalized and rejected, and depressed. It is the shared feeling of being ridiculed and not taken seriously. But it is also the feeling of solidarity, that we are all courageous enough to stick with this despite all of these negative things. I know from my own experience that I get most of my support and encouragement from my likeminded friends. It is almost in a way a paradox. We are all ardent individualistic anarchists in our mindset, yet we kind stick together in a way. So there is still a sense of community and belonging even among such radically individualistic individuals. So my friends are my inspiration for their courage and for their unwavering commitment.

AC: Why are people joining your movement/activism?

NT: I would say that people are joining because of social media, the internet, google, skype and YouTube videos. I remember posting this one on my Facebook wall a few days ago and it got a ton of responses.
I think that Facebook is really turning so many people into political radicals. It is how we meet. Often, some people will just ask me about stuff and then I can explain/answer questions. Every so often I find out that I have some “secret” followers.

AC: Do you recruit? How do people join?

NT: I know that my friends in North Carolina have some sort of Liberty Project down there and they have asked me many times to go live down there with them. They also have a webpage and Facebook activity. Personally, I don’t like the idea of “belonging” to any group. It feels way too formal. I like the more informal and personal approach.

AC: Can you tell me about the demographics of your organization?

NT: I would say that most everyone is fairly young. The youngest I know of is 16. Many are teenagers really. I have found that they are very bright and articulate. I suspect that many libertarians and anarchists are among the more gifted among the teenagers. I think that some of them have a bit of the same problem that gay teens have: “coming out of the closet” and telling their parents. I remember when I first met one of them, Jacob, I think he is still in 11th grade. I do remember one of the first things he told me was that he was afraid to tell his parents that he had decided to become an anarchist. Another one of my friends who is around this age, Eric, is also an anarcho-capitalist. He told me about his “secret” decision to become an atheist, but I am not allowed to tell anyone because he doesn’t want his parents or friends to find out. So he pretends and he keeps going to church. I would say mainly teenagers and early
20 year olds and some of us older 30 somethings like me! There are some older ones as well: I have a few friends who are probably in their 50s—they have kids who are like 11 years. But I would say that the bias is clearly toward the younger. I used to teach some freshmen/sophomore level undergraduate classes. Let me tell you about a difference I have noticed between your “typical” teenager/early 20s young adult and the “anarchist/libertarian” teenager/early 20 year olds. One of the most common complaints I got teaching the “typicals” was this: too much reading. Most of these freshmen/sophomores want the teacher to just email them the answer. They want the PowerPoint slide bullet point lazy way of doing things. With the “libertarian/anarchist” teenagers/early 20s I see the complete OPPOSITE. They are very much into reading books. I know because I will send them pdf books and they will write back: thanks for being a friend that sends me cool things like this. I have gotten that on a few occasions. They also discuss books and ideas. I can tell that they are among the brightest and most well-read people. Moreover, these are hard-core books. Many of them will read books such as *Conceived in Liberty* or *Man, Economy, and State with Power and Market*. These are serious scholarly books and are very long. *Conceived in Liberty* is around 1,600 pages long. *MES with P and M* is around 1,200 pages.

AC: How would you describe the relationship and dynamics between members within the movement?

NT: I think that the whole point of the movement is to have no hierarchy. Let me give you an example from one book that is quite popular among left-libertarians. Just a few days ago, I sent a copy to one of my friends, Jakob, and he mentioned to me that it was a “wonderful read” (so he didn’t need a copy from me). James C Scott’s book *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* has this memorable line that I think captures the essence of the mindset of libertarians: “The huge literature on state-making, contemporary and historic, pays virtually no attention to its obverse: the history of deliberate and reactive statelessness. This is the history of those who got away, and state-making cannot be understood apart from it. This is also what makes this an anarchist history.” The whole point is to “escape” the hierarchy of the State apparatus; the rulers versus ruling dichotomy. The last thing you would expect to see is people wanting to replace one ruling class (the state) with another. This has always been an issue with revolutionary movements, and something they worry about happening. For example, in Hans-Hermann Hoppe’s book *Democracy: The God that Failed,* (274, n 11) he writes:

> Political revolutions do not often accomplish anything of genuine value; their one undoubted effect is simply to throw out one gang of thieves and put in another....Even the American colonies gained little by their revolt in 1776. For twenty-five years after the
Revolution they were in far worse condition as free states than they would have been as colonies. Their government was more expensive, more inefficient, more dishonest, and more tyrannical. It was only the gradual material progress of the country that saved them from starvation and collapse, and that material progress was due, not to the virtues of their new government, but to the lavishness of nature. Under the British hoof they would have got on as well, and probably a great deal better.

In other words, there is a worry that one hierarchy, one ruling class, one state, will just get replaced by another. So a lot of thinking goes into the question of how to defeat the hierarchy and then replace it with nothing. Referring back to Scott’s book, he spends a lot of time talking about state prevention and state evasion tactics. Finally, let me share with you something that really explains how I got into all of this. I saw this posted on Facebook and it really meant a lot to me. The question asked is simply “why should you be allowed to rule over me?”

Another example of this is the line used: “Neither Master nor Slave.” So with this mindset, I know that I and my friends would never accept a ruler or a hierarchy imposed on us.

AC: What are the most effective tools for organizing?

NT: There is a saying that goes something like this. What is the best way to make an atheist? Get him to read the Bible because the Bible is the best recruiting tool for atheism when it is properly read. I think that the government is actually the best organizing tool. It is deliberately creating a wedge between the “average person” and the corporate/bureaucratic privileged ruling group. People are starting to wake up to the fact that the Federal Reserve System is out to rob them. There is, however, an interesting split over why people oppose the Fed. People such as myself come from the Ron Paul Austrian School wing and see the Fed as a manipulator of money, which causes economic depressions. We see the wealth transfer effect of new money creation—that is why we see a small privileged group versus the masses. The privileged group gets richer; the rest get poorer. There is also, however, a more traditional populist wing
that does not like “private.” This seems to be their complaint: that the Fed is “privately owned”; consequently, they seem to want to go back to the idea of the Federal government printing up a lot of money. It is the old idea of inflating ones way out of massive debt. The best way to see this difference is to compare the works of Gary North with those of Ellen Brown.

AC: Do they find it hard to engage the public?

NT: Hahaha! Well, I would say that libertarians and anarchists are their own worst enemies. They tend to fight among themselves. If you don’t believe me, go check out the mutualist Facebook page. I remember one time posting a comment there. Someone saw my black and gold flag (anarcho-capitalist) colors and called me a “fascist.” Sometimes it gets down the level of reading death threats. So I am not sure if “engaging the public” is the biggest problem. I think one of the biggest problems is getting some sort of internal harmony among the factions. Sometimes you will hear the idea of “anarchist without adjectives” throw around in order to try to find some sort of “common ground.” I like that idea.

AC: Do you cooperate with any other organization?

NT: Yes, of course. It is all about networking.

AC: Describe what you consider to be your opposition.

NT: The simple answer is: “the Establishment.” This is the ruling class.

AC: How do you view the media portraying the movement?

NT: Take this recent Glenn Beck supposed “conversion” to libertarianism. It is complete bullshit and my friends talked about it a lot. This is one of my favorites because it is exactly how Ron Paul supporters are traduced by people like Beck. Notice how libertarians are slandered. If you support Ron Paul then you must be a “lunatic” or a “terrorist supporter.” It is complete nonsense. As I said, libertarians are well read. They discuss issues such as monetary policy, ethics, natural law, philosophy, etc. They are certainly not “lunatics.” As for terrorists, the Rothbardian style anarchists that I hang out with are all against the use of violence. They talk about the “non-aggression principle” incessantly. This is also sometimes slandered by people who try to say that we only care about protecting “property” as if our concern about peace is just so that I can have lots of material stuff—so I can protect the “rich.” But again, most of the people are young and NOT rich. I am certainly not rich. One of the things that does get stressed is the importance of raising the young NON-VIOLENTLY. The concern is not just about “property rights,” it is also very much about raising a new generation of children who are not inculcated with physical violence (spanking, belts, child abuse etc.)
AC: Where does the funding come from?

NT: There really is no funding. I know that my buddy Chase makes YouTube videos about germane topics such as “where will the roads come from” and he asks for donations. A lot of it is done through “bootstrapping.” For example, almost all of the books can be downloaded for free at the Mises Institute. YouTube videos are not very expensive to make. Get a web cam. A little bit of editing.

AC: Where is political support coming from?

NT: It would be the Ron Paul/Gary Johnson movement. But let’s be brutally honest, the mindset of young agorists and anarcho-capitalists is this: we will never win this through the political system. To be fair, some do vote; some don’t. There is definitely a bit of a split there. Most of us started out as Ron Paul supporters. He truly is the “gate way” drug for young libertarians. I know this is true for me as well as my friends. Some think it is alright to vote for him (or Gary Johnson) while others think that voting—even for a libertarian candidate—is wrong. You can see why we just will not win through voting if many of the ardent supporters won’t vote. It goes back to an idea of the individualistic anarchists that says that voting is a form of aggression. It means that you don’t really own your property; your property an seized by the 50.1% that votes against you. An important work often mentioned when it comes to the vote/don’t vote debate is Lysander Spooner’s No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority. He famously says “the ostensible supporters of the Constitution, like the ostensible supporters of most other governments, are made up of three classes: knaves...dupes....and a class who have some appreciation of the evils of government, but either do not see how to get rid of them, or do not
choose to so far sacrifice their private interests as to give themselves seriously and earnestly to
the work of making a change.

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

NT: I think that among agorists such as myself, “populism” is a term that has been distorted and
misused in conventional interpretations of American History. One of the things that is taught is
the importance of revisionist history. One of the most important historians in this tradition is
Gabriel Kolko. For example, one of the most important books I would say is his The Triumph of
Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916. On the back cover he
summarizes his thesis. Notice that the primary concern is this: corporate power uses the
movement of “progressivism” in order to consolidate power and shut down free market
competition.

_The Triumph of Conservatism_ is one of the most influential and important works of modern
American history. This bold reinterpretation of the Progressive Era develops a startling
thesis: that the dominant tendency in business after the turn of the century was toward
competition and economic decentralization, not toward concentration and monopoly; and
that, unable to halt this trend by their own means, the leaders of big business—and _not_ the
political reformers—became the chief initiators of the era’s “progressive” regulatory laws.
Thus, “progressivism” was a profoundly conservative effort to maintain existing political and
social relations in a new economic context.

Kolko’s name and his work get mentioned a lot in the libertarian revisionist history. Off the top
of the head, I remember hearing about Kolko’s work from Murray N Rothbard’s book against
the Federal Reserve System. The concern boils down to this: the Federal Reserve System is a
cartelization device, an enemy to free competition, choice, and hence liberty. In other words,
the Federal Reserve System represents an alliance of corporate power with government power.
It is a suppression of the market mechanism of competition and decentralization of economic
power. The Federal Government is a tool being used to protect the New York City bankers from
the competition that did exist circa 1870-1890 period.

Morgan and Wall Street were, without a doubt, very powerful factors in the American
economy. But had the complete centralization of capital been the dominant fact of the
financial structure at the beginning of this century [i.e., early 1900s], the proliferation of
new entries into most industries and the failure of the merger movement to establish
industrial control would be inexplicable. For central finance would have withheld funds
from undesirable competitors. Clearly, a much more complex situation existed, and the
extent of this complexity has not been fully appreciated. The crucial fact of the financial
structure at the beginning of this century was the relative decrease in New York’s
financial significance and the rise of many alternate sources of substantial financial power. (Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism*, 140)

In other words: the Progressive Era became the “conspiracy” of the New York bankers to protect themselves from all of this competition, to effectively “lock in the elites.” The Progressive Era is a corporate-banker take-over of the economy and the crushing of the free market ideas. (Although even prior to this, circa 1860, we already see some movement away from laissez-faire, for example the National Currency Acts 1863-1865 I believe). Think of the Iron Law of Oligarchy; ideally the elites should circulate, i.e., they should change due to competition, entrepreneurial innovation etc. This banking example speaks to the new geographical competition coming out of Chicago and St. Louis. Also there were dangerous competition forces coming from all the smaller banks. Maybe the best quote I can give you that relates the Progressive Era to the modern anti-Federal Reserve movement (end the fed!) is also from Kolko’s book *The Triumph of Conservatism*, p. 235, bold emphasis mine:

> After all, as [A. Barton] Hepburn put it: The measure recognizes and adopts the principles of a central bank. Indeed, if it works out as the sponsors of the law hope, it will make all incorporated banks together joint owners of a central dominating power.

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

NT: In a nutshell: two sides of the same coin. Maybe the best example of this is for me to allude to a paper by Roderick T Long entitled *Can We Escape the Ruling Class*. The ruling class is portrayed as having different factions. The Democrats are broadly perceived to be the “bureaucratic” or “political” class, while the Republicans are broadly perceived to be the “plutocratic” or “corporate” class. In other words, Congress does not represent the interests of “the people”; rather, Congress represents different factional interests within the ruling class.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

NT: My first reaction is that this is a nonsensical question because it assumes the existence of a collective “we.” Ludwig von Mises, Ron Paul’s hero, mentions the epistemological problem in what the question asks. Mises, in his book *The Ultimate Foundation of Economic Science: An Essay on Method*, effectively argues that there is no such thing as society; there is no such thing as “we.” In the sciences of human action the most conspicuous instance of this fallacy [of hypostatization] is the way in which the term society is employed by various schools of pseudo-science. There is no harm in employing the term to signify the cooperation of individuals united in endeavors to attain definite ends. It is a definite aspect of various individuals’ actions that constitutes what is called society or the “great society.” But society itself is neither a substance, nor a power, nor an acting being. Only individuals act. Some of the individuals’ actions are directed by the intention to cooperate with others. Cooperation of individuals brings about a
state of affairs which the concept of society describes. **Society does not exist apart from the thoughts and actions of people.** It does not have “interests” and does not aim at anything. The same is valid for all other collectives. (71, bold emphasis mine). From my perspective, society is a spontaneous ordering of individuals, NOT some collective “we.” I am confident that my individualistic anarchistic friends would agree with me on this assessment. The essence then of this “spontaneous ordering” is captured nicely in Mohammed A Bamyeh’s book *Anarchy as Order*. Within the libertarian tradition proper there exist some sophisticated explorations of sociability that are clearly relevant for any conception of anarchy. The most evidently relevant of such explorations appear in the work of Friedrich von Hayek…his central theme was “spontaneous order,” a much more comprehensive view of how social order arises…Hayek postulated that social life is made possible not by artificial large institutions that supervise society, but precisely in their absence, whence order develops spontaneously. So in summary, I would say that there is no “we the people.” There is only me the individual, you the individual and every other individual. These individuals—without any central controller—can then organize themselves into a system of mutually beneficial and voluntary relationships.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially

NT: I used to have a rather glowing, maybe even naïve, love for the Founding Fathers. After all, when I reflect back to how I came to hold my current political views, I know that a seminal moment occurred for me at the age of 16. I studied some American politics and found that I was naturally attracted to Thomas Jefferson. He seemed to be the coolest! However, three books in particular have made me much more suspicious of the “pure motives” of the founding fathers. Hans Hermann Hoppe’s book *Democracy: The God that Failed* mentions in some detail the “failure” of the American Revolution, i.e., the problem that one ruling class was just replaced by another. Second, Thomas J DiLorenzo’s book *Hamilton’s Curse* argues that the founding fathers can be broadly classified into two grounds: the “good guys” being the Jeffersonians and the “bad guys” being the Hamiltonians. DiLorenzo sees a link between Hamiltonian policies and those of Abraham Lincoln. DiLorenzo is equally good when it comes to throwing aspersions at both of these figures. Of the top of my head, I remember DiLorenzo telling a story about how Hamilton and his New York buddies apparently profited off insider information and some government buy-back program for Revolutionary war bonds. Apparently he knew about it but most of the soldiers did not. Consequently, he was able to buy cheap and sell dear so to speak. Third, Charles Austin Beard’s *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* suggests to me that some of these men were more interested in getting land and wealth than in the “ideal” of liberty. Related to this there was another webpage that I read. I don’t remember what it was called but I vaguely remember that it referenced Howard Zinn’s book *A People’s History of the United States*. The thesis was basically this: the “people” wanted true liberty, true freedom. They were basically “used” by the
revolutionary leaders, mainly because the leaders needed the guns, i.e., the average armed citizen to go and shoot it up with the British. Then, after removing the British aristocracy, the new American aristocracy took over. In other words: the people wanted to be free; the revolutionary leaders wanted to be free of the British, but not free of the idea of having a ruling class.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

NT: That is hard to say because I think we are retrogressing. This is one of the predictions made by Ludwig von Mises actually; society retrogresses when it abandons what he calls “rational economic calculation.” This is what we have done by bailing out banks and other large corporations. Rational economic calculation implies that we actually pay attention to the accounting statements, especially to profit and loss. However, when corporations become effectively part of the corporate or plutocratic ruling class and when they get bailed out all the time then profit and loss become meaningless concepts. Since we have done all of this, I insist that we are retrogressing. If I must think more in a hypothetical sense, I would say this, alluding to Benjamin Tucker’s epic explanation of why he is an anarchist. He basically said this: I am an anarchist because I believe that anarchy is happiness. Happiness means liberty of the individual and the ability for people to be free from material anxiety. In other words, don’t rule me and a better material standard of living. I think both of these are important and would include them in my definition of progress. I would also add a sense of intellectual fulfillment. I think a lot of young university educated people such as myself feel very frustrated by the lack of opportunities to use our brains. I have one friend who got her Bachelor of Science in Finance and was happy to get a job at a laundry mat. I have another friend thinking about leaving Canada and going to Australia to teach because there are just not the opportunities apparently in his part of Ontario. I personally feel the same way: I would love to work in a free market research institute but am always blown off and ignored every time I try to woo one of them to utilize me.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

NT: Again, I can only speak for myself. It would be presumptuous for me to form some sort of global solution to this problem. For example, I am fairly sure that one of my friends is a Mormon but he doesn’t want to really tell me about it because he knows that I am an atheist. I suspect from the way that he talks that he is really big on “family” and “tradition.” For me, these are less important values. To tell you the truth, I don’t like my family and I hate my past. I find “tradition” to be a repugnant concept. I don’t like to think about it. So what is best? What is more important? The answer is: it depends on the person. For me, it is progress, but for others I would suspect tradition.
AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

NT: That is a difficult question to answer. I think that most agorists would say that politics is inherently unethical. For example in the book *Agorist Class Theory* we see that politics is just a tool for solving disputes among the members of the ruling class: “Politicians operate as ‘gladiators’ in the aptly named Political Arena to settle disputes among the Higher Circles (which are not monolithic).” In fact, it is Roderick T Long who summarizes this problem that exists between the two major factions within the ruling class. He sees the ruling class divided into the “corporate class” (represented by the Republicans) and the “bureaucratic-political class” (represented by the Democrats). Therefore, the political “arena” exists in order to resolve disputes between them. The reason why they want to have “politics” in the first place is to create the illusion of consent. Power, of course, as we learned from David Hume in his *First Principles of Government*, ultimately rests on public opinion not guns and bayonets. That way the masses think they are involved in choosing; the reality is that they are getting to pick which branch of the ruling class gets to rule them. Therefore, politics by its very nature cannot be ethical. How can factions of a ruling class fighting over who gets to be master possibly be seen as ethical? This flows naturally from my underlying assumption that the relationship between the rulers and the ruled is not a voluntary one; rather, it is a master-slave one.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

NT: I am of the view that religion—including atheism—should be kept out of politics. If you are asking me: has religion “infiltrated” politics, I would say yes. American politics has way too much influence from both Christianity and also Judaism. We see this in things such as attempts to teach creationism in schools.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society? Does just a thing exist?

NT: Since I don’t believe that there is such a thing as “society” then I have to answer this question from a sort of “hypothetical” perspective. I suppose I could answer it by saying: is the average American treated fairly by how the “system” is set up? I would say no. There clearly is a system that exploits the masses. This would be “unfair” because it does not treat everyone equally. The best example I can think of is monetary policy. The central bank is designed to benefit the bankers and the war machine by treating the masses of taxpayers “unfairly” as taxpaying slaves.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

NT: I think your question reflects an underlying assumption of statism. You are thinking in terms of “what is more important”: America or the rest of the world. But an anarchist does not look at the world like that. It was the famous anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre who wrote in *Anarchism*
and American Traditions a concluding comment that captures precisely how I feel: “In that day there shall be neither kings nor Americans—only Men; over the whole earth, MEN.” I take her comment to mean that, in the final analysis, there are only human beings living on this planet. Not Americans, or Europeans, or Asians, just humans. And if Stephen Hawking is right, maybe we shall also live on other planets or in space. I see the world as a bunch of monopolies. You have the American territorial monopoly and this monopoly is doing what comes naturally to all states: it is trying to expand its territorial reach until eventually it will take over the whole world. It will run into what Hans-Hermann Hoppe called the “paradox of imperialism.” This is what we are experiencing at the moment. The empire is collapsing. I will add that the existence of an American imperialism problem makes the domestic/foreign distinction illusory. Everything gets sucked into what amounts to one big blob as it is.

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

NT: Globalization as a term is another example of a “bait-and-switch” operation by the ruling class. They say “free trade” but what they really mean is mercantilism. Jeffrey Tucker in his From NAFTA to Superstate puts it brilliantly as follows:

NAFTA was an instance of regional mercantilism. The US would be master of the North American continent, granting preferential trade status (“regional content” laws) to any goods produced in the signing countries, while penalizing goods from outside. The treaty was as much about protection as trade. In the imaginations of NAFTA’s Washington theorists, this would give “us” (the US, Canada, and Mexico) a boost of market power over “them” (Asia and Europe), which would allow “us” to compete and win in the global competition for resources and markets. The point of NAFTA was to allow “us” (which really means the government and its most closely connected banks and corporations) to throw “our” weight around the rest of the world.

To me, this just implies depressions and wars. Rothbard mentions in some of his studies about the Great Depression that the 1930s were a set up of currency blocs and trade wars etc. This scenario of North America “wins” at the expense of the “losers” in Europe and Asia is just the recipe for antagonism. This does not suggest a happy future for the world. It also suggests that globalization really doesn’t exist. We have regional blocs infighting. So maybe our leaders will try to merge all of these regional blocs into one big mega global bloc. If the antagonism is as Tucker describes, I am not sure how such a merger of regional blocs could happen. Maybe it will happen as a result of some sort of “desperation”—future global crises forces the hand of these blocs to merge. I am just speculating at this point; I really don’t know. I know that some of the conspiracy theories suggest that “regionalism” was “done by design” as a first step toward a one world government. Hans-Hermann Hoppe in his On the Impracticality of One-World
*Government and the Failure of Western-Style Democracy* predicts that eventually all of this American empire-building will collapse:

But Empire building also bears the seeds of its own destruction. The closer a state comes to the ultimate goal of world domination and one-world government, the less reason is there to maintain its internal liberalism and do instead what all states are inclined to do anyway, i.e., to crack down and increase their exploitation of whatever productive people are still left. Consequently, with no additional tributaries available and domestic productivity stagnating or falling, the Empire's internal policies of bread and circuses can no longer be maintained. Economic crisis hits, and an impending economic meltdown will stimulate decentralizing tendencies, separatist and secessionist movements, and lead to the break-up of Empire. We have seen this happen with Great Britain, and we are seeing it now, with the US and its Empire apparently on its last leg.

There is also an important monetary side to this process. The dominant Empire typically provides the leading international reserve currency, first Britain with the pound sterling and then the US with the dollar. With the dollar used as reserve currency by foreign central banks, the US can run a permanent "deficit without tears." That is, the US must not pay for its steady excesses of imports over exports, as it is normal between "equal" partners, in having to ship increasingly more exports abroad (exports paying for imports). Rather: Instead of using their export earnings to buy American goods for domestic consumption, foreign governments and their central banks, as a sign of their vassal status vis-à-vis a dominant US, use their paper dollar reserves to buy up US government bonds to help Americans to continue consuming beyond their means.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?

NT: Modern technology is vital. It is Facebook, YouTube movies, webpages etc., that make all of this possible.

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

NT: Economic collapse followed by World War. It really is a sad thing to see the destruction of the middle class and a return to a very unequal distribution of wealth (a few rich; most poor). I think this is why Obama is pushing for gun control at the moment. It is about making sure that
the people can’t rise up and overthrow the State. Even this view is a bit contentious among my friends. Some think that this is a possibility. Some think that too many Americans are just all talk and no action. They will just roll-over and let themselves be enslaved. Poor, controlled by a police state—a very bleak future. I don’t like the idea of armed revolution. This is why I like the idea of agorism. It allows for a non-violent revolution. People go underground. They operate as though the State isn’t there. We set up underground networks to trade. In the book *The Stealth of Nations*, these types of “black market” approaches are NOT an option—for many people this is SURVIVAL. Ultimately, the ideal of a full-blown agorism sees the state’s monopoly on security broken. In fact, I have a book called *Doing Business Under Fascism* and I can see some parallels between what people had to do to SURVIVE FASCISM and NAZI Germany and what is proposed by agorism (free market anarchism). It is all about avoiding, undermining, getting around the state’s “technicalities” etc., so that some semblance of TRADE AMONG HUMANS can be maintained.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

NT: The government obviously has a major problem. Social media is creating anarchists. I mentioned my earlier post about Facebook turning people into anarchists. And this is true. A couple of my friends pointed this out explicitly. It is why we are the way we are. The young don’t want to be “ruled.” They want peaceful voluntary exchanges. They want choice. They don’t want their future kids to be turned into drones by the public education system. They want their guns to protect themselves and their families. They want to see what Kolko wrote about: the process of competition decentralizing the economy. This way nobody rules over the economy. There are no monopolies. Then producers have to make what the masses—the average person—in his or her role as consumer wants. It shifts the balance of power back to the “average person” and away from the corporate/bureaucratic ruling classes. So they will want to shut all of this down. They will use tactics like: you need to register or get a license. If you don’t, then you must be a “pornographer.” Scare tactics. It is what they always do. The state is here to keep you “safe.” What it really means is to protect “them” from “us.”

AC: How do you see your movement developing in the future?

NT: I think this is impossible to answer. A free society is a spontaneous order so it is impossible to know how things will play out. Maybe if the economy collapses, there would be an opportunity to try some secession movements.

AC: Do you see the movements developing into a third party?

NT: No. I think the young are seeing the futility of voting. No way. It is all a charade, all rigged.
AC: What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

NT: Hijacked by the establishment. I think it is just a controlled opposition now.
AC: What would you consider to be an inspiration?

DF: The fact the United States of America was built on descent

AC: What does “populism” mean to you?

DF: The body politic expressing its desires outside of politicians

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

DF: Worthless cockroach bastards

AC: What is a grassroots campaign to you?

DF: A campaign originating from local communities independent of political parties.

AC: How important are grassroots movements?

DF: Very Important – grassroots movements are an important voice of the general public.

AC: What does “We the people” mean to you?

DF: We the people mean “the common man” who is not a politician.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible (i.e. the right to decide the fate and accept responsibility for actions) for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

DF: I would rather live and die by my own decisions, than by the decisions of other people who think they know better what is right for me, than I do. Contrary to the opinion of bureaucrats and politicians, the average American does not need a nanny.

AC: You opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially.

DF: The American founding fathers were profoundly wise and intelligent people who understood their place in time and history. They did their best to solidify the principles they thought best for them and their posterity. Thomas Jefferson is one of my favorite founders, particularly with his anti-federalists views that government should be kept to the lowest level possible (the federal government should have minimal impact on the daily lives of citizens) and
that individuals should be responsible for their own successes and failures. Jefferson was short sighted in thinking that the America of his day would remain an agricultural society.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

DF: I would define progress as public law and policy that serves and benefits the public at large; in other words, the opposite of most laws in place today.

AC: Progress or tradition: which is more important?

DF: Progress – tradition is not always worth maintaining.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

DF: Ethics based on what is right and wrong, yes. Morals based on a dogmatic religious worldview, no.

AC: Would you say that there is a civil religion in politics?

DF: No.

AC: How would you define “fairness” in society?

DF: I would define “fairness” as equality among all citizens to succeed or fail on their own merits.

AC: Does just a thing exist?

DF: The federal government is trying very hard to do away with fairness in its attempts to pass laws that make everyone ‘the same’.

AC: Are you more concerned with either domestic or foreign affairs, or both equally?

DF: Both equally

AC: What is your opinion of globalization today? How do you define “globalization?”

DF: Globalization is coming if we like it or not. I define globalization as the process of bringing all people into a global economy where they have the ability to succeed or fail based upon their own actions, skills, and abilities.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activities?
DF: Modern technology, particularly the wide spread availability of digital video recording devices has helped me stay better informed and improved the transparency of government actions (police, judges, politicians, etc).

AC: What worries you the most about the current state of the country?

DF: Runaway expansion of the federal government (too many laws, too many taxes, too much effort to make everyone the same <see #12 above> and the systematic elimination of Constitutional protections, rights, and freedoms – i.e. the slide to the police state with laws passed by the congress and dastardly rulings by the nine unelected tyrants of the Supreme Court.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs. privacy?

DF: Privacy is the individual’s responsibility. If an individual joins a social media, it is the individual’s responsibility to guarantee their privacy concerns are met, not the media’s job to meet the privacy desires of the individual.

AC: What would you consider to be positive changes over the past three decades?

DF: Advances in computer technology and the diminishing role of religion in American life.

AC: What would you consider to be negative changes?

DF: Exponential expansion of government and the creep toward the police state.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is a serious problem for the country or just a transition to new economy?

DF: A transition to a new economy. It is the individual’s job to ensure they are competitive and retain their competitive edge regardless of where the jobs may go.

AC: How do you envision the United States maintaining its competiveness in the world economy?

DF: I don’t. America is on a downward slide (the next big empire to fall) due to stifling rules in education and commerce that ultimately harm innovation.

AC: What is your opinion of the Occupy Movement?

DF: I am supportive of any group exercising their constitutional rights to free speech and assembly. I do not think the complaints/concerns of the occupy movement are unique to that generation, but I am supportive of them exercising their rights.
AC: What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

DF: As with the occupy movement, I am supportive of any organization that exercises their constitutional rights to free speech and assembly. I agree with some portions of the tea party platform and disagree with other aspects of it.

AC: What is your opinion of anarchist thought (any variety)?

DF: If more people studied anarchist philosophy, they would find that we would be better off relying on ourselves and not on a “nanny” or government. I am not a fan of communal anarchy/socialist anarchy as humans are not wired to work for a collective. I consider myself more of an anarcho-libertarian/anarcho-capitalist (Which are labeled as a threat to US national security right along with returning veterans, people concerned about taxes, unemployment, and the expansion of government into the lives of private citizens, as determined by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a subsidiary of US Homeland security.

AC: What is your opinion of the Maker Movement and “3d” printing?

DF: I am supportive of any technology or movement that introduces new or self-sustaining ideas into today's society and to the marketplace of ideas. Any effort to limit either of these should be vigorously opposed.

AC: Have you had dealings with any?

DF: I have not.
AC: Tell me about the Alliance of the Libertarian Left in your own words.

RF: (Problems with microphone) It evolved from individual anarchism. It also takes precedence from the French Assembly and the left, where the people who opposed the aristocracy and the landed class and were for the freedom of the peasants. The people on left were like Bastiat and Proudhon. The third strain left-libertarians take from are Karl Hess and Murray Rothbard from the 60s and 70s. They were forming a new an alliance with the new left. Also there was Samuel L Konkins ideas on agorism. It is obviously a very eclectic sort of field. Basically the ALL is made out of mutualists, agorists, left-Rothbardians, and various other groups that take from these strains. Some are Georgists, some are indiviudal anarchists. It's a very eclectic group, but it's basically centralized the tenets.

AC: Ok. With the ALL, is there a huge amount of people joining the alliance or is it just kind of a free association kind of thing?

RF: It's very much a free association type of thing. The all has no official membership list. We have no way on knowing. There is no central entity to ask for permission to set up a network or chapter. There could be thousands of chapters for all we know. But, you know that could be the case. There's no central leader. I happen to be someone who is rather active in the ALL. There's no leader, there's no real hierarchy like that. If you want to start up your own chapter, you go ahead and do that. You don't ask anyone. It's a good thing to let people know what is going on though- if you're going to start a chapter.

AC: Well then, is there any type of organization with the alliance? I saw Alt-Expo, is there any type of meetings, gatherings?

RF: Sure. Alt-Expo is a very good example. I co-organize it actually. Alt-Expo kind of speaks for itself honestly. It's the exposition for alternatives to the mainstream, whether in medicine, in culture, in history, in politics. Typically Alt-Expo attracts a lot of left-libertarians because the main organizers are left-libertarians. So we tend to have more radical thinking people. We are typically at Free State Project events. The Free State Project is something in New Hampshire that started back quite a while ago. I am not exactly sure when. Basically the whole mission is to get twenty thousand people to New Hampshire to make a libertarian state. That means different things to different people. Some people are anarchists, some are minarchists. The Alt-Expo typically goes on when there is a major FSP event, which is the PorcFest - the Porcupine
Festival- which happens in June in Lancaster, New Hampshire. For the past three years, there have been one thousand plus libertarians at that location, which is pretty cool. It's also- but if you're worried about centralizing all your resources in one place, it's kind of ideologically worrying for some. Then there is liberty form, which was a few week ago and Alt-Expo was there. Alt-Expo has linked up a little bit with the FSP, so we are in the main event, but we have our own events as well. We don't let the FSP control what events we put on. We have become a little more mainstream if you, at least as mainstream as you can as a libertarian. We're still pretty strongly rooted in anti-voting. That is pretty much the only hard line we take. But, yea, Alt-Expo typically has a lot of left-libertarians because the organizers are left-libertarians. There are also book fairs that ALL has a table at. There is the Boston Anarchist Book Festival, which me and one of my friends from Alt-Expo, the other co-organizer, goes to. We have been going there for the past few years. We get a mixed reception. Overall, pretty positive and curious. These book fairs tend to lean toward social anarchism or anarcho-communism. The other book fair the ALL, at least on the east coast- I don't know about the west coast. I know there is stuff going on the west coast but I am not as devoted there. I couldn't tell you about. There is the New York Book Fair. That just got moved to the East Village. Yea, those are some of the big events that we go to. Those are some of the big events that we go to. We try to organize that. The Center for a Stateless Society is left-wing, market anarchist institute that basically is a think tank for the left-libertarian movement. It publishes op-eds and publishes in mainstream newspapers all the time. James (inaudible) was the director. That's really important for the left-libertarian movement. That's are main online site is the Center for a Stateless Society. If you want to learn more about left-libertarianism, that's a very good central hub or getting in contact with us or reading what we are talking about. What issues matter to us. At the Center, we try to write very relevant, modern topics that are very easily digestible, five hundred words or less. The Center is published worldwide, across the United States. It's got a pretty good successful for how radical it is.

AC: You were talking about the radical nature of your organization. Do you feel other American that aren't libertarian do not understand your philosophy?

NF: For sure. I think there is a lot of confusion where libertarianism stands. For example, a lot of the euphemisms about libertarians basically being socially liberal and fiscally conservative, or hippies that like guns, or a lot of people linking libertarianism to conservatism, which I think is fatal mistake. I think a lot of it goes back to Ayn Rand, Nietzsche, Hayek, a lot of those people from the 30s and 40s from the old right who were writing about how bad communism was. I think a lot of them are sourced on how libertarianism started in America, at least in the modern sense. They really gave it that right-wing conservative bend, especially going through the party arc, as Konkin would call it. Basically, as far as I am concerned, rewriting history and ignoring individualist anarchism like Benjamin Tucker, Spooner, all these wonderful figures who have
been largely blended out by the anarcho-capitalists. I think there is a lot of confusion over what left-libertarianism is. Libertarianism in the modern sense is conflated with conservatism, to the point that many would say "what do you mean left-libertarianism?" There is a lot of left-libertarians. Benjamin Tucker was an advocate of the worker, he was against capitalism. He said capitalists needed government to exploit the masses and to generate new products. Josiah Warren, one of the first really American left-libertarians, was an individualist anarchist that started something in Cincinnati, Ohio that was pretty popular. It was based on labor and time based currency. There is a rich history of libertarianism that libertarians ignore and to their own detriment. I think Rothbard tended to write off individual anarchists economic views. That's a mistake. There is a lot we can learn from individual anarchism, because we have to (inaudible) based philosophy. There have been plenty of - feminism is about women's liberation, not necessarily women's liberation through the state. Of course, feminists have advocated that, a lot of them have. That doesn't mean that feminism is bad. There definitely has been a lot of confusion about what libertarianism is. I think the answer to that is education, education, education and demonstrate what models we want to use and cooperate with other models that we find effective. I think it's unfortunate, but I think the ALL is slowly but surely making progress, especially at PorcFest.

AC: Do you find you have considerable opposition to any of your ideas? Is there anyone out there specifically targeting you?

NF: A lot of people at the Mises Institute. I know Walter Block is not a huge fan. He writes a blog for the Mises Institute. Yea, I most familiar with Walter Block, but I am sure there are lot of people who specific issues with ALL in various degrees in various ways. A lot of people subscribe Walter Block's idea, which states that libertarianism is neither left nor right and those that basically don't like socialism or collectivism, tend not to like left-libertarians. People have come up and stated, "What are you guys doing here? Labor troubles? Class theory? Worker's rights? Basically, what are you guys, communists?" People are like this. I don't where those guys are. You don't know your history at all. We are truer to libertarianism, at least I feel, than a lot of these people who want to ally with Rand Paul, and to a certain extent Ron Paul. It's baffling to me that we are being called communists. We are accusing them of being crypto-fascists. (laughing) I don't understand where these people come from. You are always going to get them. I am not overly indebted to Rand for my thinking. I was never much a big "let's read human action" kind of guy. It was just like I want to talk to people and why they feel this way in society. I wanted to know more about it. I never read Ayn Rand's major works, I have hardly read her at all. I don't say she is the devil or that Rothbard was a fascist. There are some
people in the alliance that like Rothbard and I like somethings about Rothbard. There are few good things about the Ethics of Liberty.

AC: I would like to get into a word game now. I will say something and you tell me what it means to you. The first one would be "populism." What does it mean to you?

NF: Populism means a people's struggle against oppression. Basically making sure you are in tune with society. Being aware of what you are doing. Charles Johnson, a prominent left-libertarian, talks about populism in an essay or a blog about a speech he gave to the Libertarian Party a few years ago. He had a good definition of populism.

AC: What comes to your mind when I mention Congress?

NF: Liars. (laughing) Congress or the government are a bunch of thieves or crooks that assist in murder legitimately. I don't know if you know this but apparently the world has more of an acceptance of terrorism than the US does of Congress. (laughing) The sad part is, whether it's true or not, it doesn't surprise me.

AC: What does a grassroots campaign mean to you?

NF: It doesn't mean anything like Obama's grassroots movement. It was basically indoctrinating people. It means that you are active in your community, in the streets and that you want to get the most amount of liberty to the most amount of people. You want to work with people. You are doing it because you are generally concerned not because you want to win political points with Obama. It's not a political game. It's our lives. It means using participatory models that allows everyone to be involved.

AC: What does "We the People" mean to you?

NF: A bunch of rubbish. I read Daniel Spooner's "The Constitution has no authority." I thought it was good, funny but kind of underwhelming. When I read it, that's just common sense. What I noticed is how conservative the American Revolution was. When the revolution happened, a lot of the founding fathers were very puritanical, very restricting, but the culture did develop in a certain way to legislate that way as well. A lot of the after effects of the revolution, Shay's rebellion and the other rebellions, Washington wasn't interest in freedom. To me it seems they were more interested in political power. Some were better than others. Jefferson was certainly better than Hamilton. Still, when he took office, he did the Louisiana Purchase. He basically destroyed those people there. This whole American Revolution- it was a gradual step in the right direction. Pennsylvania became anarchic for a while, but outside states got annoyed about that.
AC: Ok. The next would be do you think Americans should be responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

NF: The question presumes that there is a concept of American citizenry. So, I mean I will start out in saying that I don't believe in the concept of a country or a political organization of a country. So, I don't believe in being a citizen of a country. If you are talking about individuals governing themselves, then, sure, I believe that, but if you're talking about limited government, it doesn't mean Jeffersonian, agrarian society. I'm an anarchist. I want government to be abolished. So, in so far, if we are talking about self-government, like anarchic no-government, then sure, I believe that. In terms of having limited government or having self-government where a government is governing you, then no.

AC: Ok. How would you define progress today?

NF: So a lot of my ideas- people that know each other, work together to solve problems, town meetings, stable community that is autonomous but interlinked with other communities- that would be my ideal sort of situation. Pierre Proudhon wrote an essay on the Philosophy of Progress, which is an interesting take on progress should be seen. Absolutism is on one side and progress is on the other and government tends to advance the causes of absolutism, which is rigidity, making things harder for people to actually move on in their lives. Progress is a liberating force, gives the power back to the people. Progress for me would be giving power back to the people. It would be de-centralizing and dispersing power as much as possible down to the level of the individual where the individual would be free to associate with other collectives and groups. This is where a point where libertarians- when you de-centralize and disperse the power down to the individual, that individual will use that power for themselves to collectively organize and cooperate with others- this is the emphasis of libertarians. They tend to be too idealistic. It's a common complaint. It comes down to a matter of emphasis. Some are better than others. I guess that is what I see as progress.

AC: How would define fairness in society, do you think it could exist?

NF: I think a lot of libertarians, right libertarians, discount fairness. A lot of libertarians think fairness as socialistic. Fairness, I am in favor of it. It has a lot to do with justice and giving people what they deserve. I don't think there is anything un-libertarian about a fair deal. I think people are just worried about fairness being socialized or controlling. I think it's a philosophical and political problem with right libertarians, but for me I am fine with fairness. I think most are too. I just think libertarians worry there it will be some propaganda tool for socialists to get government involved in trading. Then again, I could be straw manning.

AC: Ok. What is your opinion of globalization today and how would you define it?
NF: Globalization. I don't know too much about it but it is definitely a big thing. Globalization to me is the movement to have the world more interconnected through real networks or online through the internet. I think globalization can be a power for good, but it comes from your community. I think you have to think locally and act globally kind of thing. First comes your community and neighborhoods and then comes the federations are whatever you have. In today's world, the globalization movement, I feel that the IMF has a lot to do with this movement. I think the current sort of way people globalize today is another world for centralize and homogenizing power situations in society. All these private holders have a lot of power over market forces. It's very discouraging. I don't think being interconnected requires centralization. If anything, I think it requires networking, dispersal of power, decentralization. This is what the left-libertarian project is about. I don't think globalization is inherently bad, but certainly the way it's being done now, but that is because its being controlled by the state and corporate culture and power. I oppose that. If globalization can exist outside that context, I don't see what's so bad about that. I don't there is anything wrong about someone in China having free access to something in the United States.

AC: Ok. Going on that a little bit, do you think outsourcing is serious problem or just a transition to a new economy?

NF: This is another thing I am not sure of. I haven't looked into it. I know it's a big issue for a lot of people, but I don't know if it's a big issue for me. Then again, well, I am not so sure how much of a problem it is. I don't have a problem giving jobs away to more talented people who can legitimately do the job a lot better, but I feel that a lot of the outsourcing done is to exploit people who will do the job for less. I am not so certain about that. It seems to be a hang up of our corporate culture. I am certainly against exploiting workers and replacing workers with scabs so capital can make more money.

AC: How do you see the Alliance developing in the future?

NF: Well, it's kind of funny the interview is happening today. The ALL page was hacked yesterday by a very, very vehement troll who went out of his way to talk about, to offend everyone. Racial and homophobic slurs. It's kind of ironic that I am having this interview a day after that has happened. The troll posts have been deleted. It kind of to me puts ALL in a good situation. It's like what Gandhi said. First the ignore you, then they laugh you, then they kill you, blah, blah. So we are in that step that Gandhi forgot about where they troll you too, so we are somewhere in there. (laughing) I think this is actually in a weird way- you know you are having success when someone comes up to your table and calls you a crypto communist and when your page is hacked. Basically, anarcho communists, not all of them though, say that left-libertarians are capitalists with a mask on. And anarcho-capitalists say the same thing. Left-libertarians are just crypto communists with a mask on. Something like that. I think you are
doing something well when you are pissing people off. I think ALL has a lot to learn. I don't think it’s perfect. I know it’s the place I feel most comfortable in. We are getting noticed. C4SS is getting noticed around the world. People are actually getting paid to write for it. People are actually getting paid. For promoting anarchism. I do think these are beginning steps to a very positive movement. I hope it continues. We have a good chance to make headway.

AC: One of the books I got from the Alliance of the Libertarian Left website was the "Homebrewed Industrial Revolution." What is your opinion of the Maker Movement and 3d printing?

NF: These are great questions. The Home Brewed Industrial Revolution is by Kevin Carson who I can't believe I haven't mentioned. I have put myself on the left-libertarian cross right now and I am just hanging there in shame. Kevin Carson is an amazing writer. He is a writer for ALL. He is absolutely one of the people you have got to talk to. Probably one of my favorite thinkers and writer. Kevin's book is basically his idea of the second industrial revolution and how it starts at home. I believe it also refers to how the industrial revolution depressed the home brewed revolution and how these types of revolution clashed. It goes back to how Apple started, with Steve Jobs and how it was started in his mom's garage or whatever. That was the homemade part. Now Apple is an IP corporate Nazi group. In terms of 3D Printing and the Maker Movement, I am a big fan. I am a big fan of Hacker Spaces. They are basically cooperative work shops where the tools are shared by members. There is usually a membership fee. You can also you Hacker Spaces for movie nights, you can start a political movement on Hacker Space. Karl has talked about this in community technology. It was one of those lesser known words. Community technology deals with these sort of things. People come together under the guise of working together but the real pretense of working together and sharing technology and working improving society, from there you can say "Hey, if we can do this ourselves, why don't we manage the town by ourselves, hold meeting, make a car by ourselves." Recently I read about a 3d car. It was incredible. There is talk about 3d printing for organs, 3d printing for tissue. 3d printing for guns. Technology can be a really liberating force. There is a collection of essays from Alabama that Johnson largely coordinates called "New Tech as Force Multiplier and Force Equalizer." Technology can be that for us but it can also be that for authority. I am not glamorizing technology. The government could seize these 3d printing models and use them to create terrible war machines. It's the same way that Einstein's theories to create the atomic bomb. He was horrified. Technology can be misused. However, I feel like a lot of times technology is in our best interest and we can use it to liberate ourselves from oppressive forces and communicate in our community and nearby communities. We can use it to disperse, decentralize power relationships in society. 3d printing could really do that
because capitalists could lose their monopoly on production. You could really make it from your home, in a Hacker Space, a communal workshop. It seems to me to be perfectly libertarian and compatible in getting libertarians off their chairs and into the workshop and work on the revolution from the workshop or the Hacker Space. So I am very positive about this. It's not all good. I was at a Maker talk a month ago in New Hampshire. One of the people was from a corporation and how great it was, how 3d printing was being centralized in these corporations and that some of the car dealerships were using it. I was like, that really sucks.

AC: You mentioned that you were an anarchist without prefix, but you did mention that you were not so close to anarcho capitalism. What is your opinion of it?

NF: This is a topic for me. I am not as harsh as some anarchists are on anarcho capitalists. I think there are two types of anarcho capitalists. I think there are "anarcho" capitalists and there are anarcho "capitalists." I think the "anarcho" are more interest in capitalism than they are in anarchism. I think they are more interested in the work place and are more neutral to hierarchy. They don't really care how society is organized as long as Fort Knox has a lot of gold. They don't really care. Obviously that is really a silly picture of anarcho capitalists. For me, they aren't interested in anarchism, which is the dispersal of power. If you have society dominated by the workplace where bosses have power over workers, you either have a state or will have a state. A society like that strikes me as very problematic. Now there are some other anarcho capitalists that are more interested in anarchism and the diversity of ideas. A good example, which is a bad example is Adam Kokesh. He basically said that anarcho capitalism is the only sort of anarchy. That really pisses me off. You really need to read your history. That kind of anarcho-capitalism really pisses me off. But I have a lot of friends who anarcho capitalists in the second sense, who are more interested in the dispersal of power. There is still the neutrality to hierarchy, but they're more sympathetic to left-libertarianism and more sympathetic to whatever will win, will win. If anarcho capitalism doesn't work, that's fine. I am ok with left-libertarianism. I have a really base opinion of anarcho capitalism. I think they have good intentions, but the theory has a lot of problems. I think their history has been whitewashed. When anarcho capitalists say that wage slavery doesn't exist and neither do sweatshops and cooperatives are just socialist malarkey, that's when I am just like fuck you. No, you are not an anarchist, the door is right there, it's open. Please leave. There are times though when they point out good things, like the importance of property, private property, the importance of markets, the importance of exchange. There are things they can get right. The trouble is that people have already said it historically and have said it better.

AC: Ok. I just have two more questions. The Tea Party. What you think of that?

NF: Good God. The first word that came to my mind was racist. (laughing) I don't ever went to Tea Party conventions. I can't say that that word association is true. It started out with some
promise. It seemed really grassroots and the racism seemed low key. I don't know that fact. I should have followed the Tea Party more than I should have. I know some anarchists, anarcho capitalists and minarchists went in to try to convert it. We all know how that worked. I guess you can that about Occupy though. As soon as it was coopted by the conservative leaders, nope. I was out the door. I am not interested in Sarah Palin. I am sorry. I don't want anybody leading me unless I value their opinion and I don't value the GOPs opinion. I don't want them. A lot of the Tea Party people wanted small government, but still wanted borders, the military, they still wanted this or that. That is very problematic for me. I take this very seriously. We can talk economics, but if you are going to shoot people for crossing an imaginary line, you have issues. You have serious issues because you are so bigoted. If you can't keep your job because someone "who can't even speak English" and is supposedly lazy, doesn't want to support his family, and steals, is a criminal, takes it, you have problems. It's ironic because conservatives criticize the socialists for right to work kind of things, but that's how they view immigration and immigrants. It's really weird. It just seems a lot like libertarian conservatism, which I really hate saying. That sort of thing.

AC: And what about Occupy?

NF: Occupy- so I do have some experience with it. I went to Occupy Boston for one day, I wish I had gone more. I was worried about getting my ass beat by cops, even though I am a white male. I am pretty economically disprivelaged and if I got my ass beat, I'm fucked. I basically also had social issues. I have autism, I am an introvert. It's difficult for me to be around a lot of people. It's possible, but more difficult than for other people. I only went for one day. Occupy for me had a lot more promise. It was actually grassroots. They never, as far as I know, let the Democrats or Obama determine who they were. At least not in any major way. They may have had a lot of reformism, which they did, a lot of the tax the rich stuff. It's bullshit. (laughing) The people who are advocating reform and want to tax the rich, they say the rich control the government and the government should be for the people, so we should tax the rich. Ok, but go back a few steps. Who controls the government? The rich! How is that going to work?! A lot of it was frustrating. However, there was a current, an underbent, as you are probably aware of anarchism, consent decision-making process. The General Assemblies, the horizontal organizing, the ad-hoc organizing, the Black Bloc- that's a whole other discussion. Occupy had a lot of good things to say. It opened the conversation to a lot of people, which, again, a lot of libertarians didn't think was important. The whole "anarcho" capitalism argument. There is a video of Peter Schiff interviewing Occupy Wall Street participants and he was "I am part of the 1%," telling people to get a job. The whole get a job thing bothered me too. Occupy had a lot of vitality and I was sad when the clan came and broke it up, beat people up and wrecked shit. There were a lot of problems. There was racism and misogyny in some communities. At least some of the people spoke about it though.
AC: Ok. Tell me about your activism in your own words.

GS: Basically I have been a Bitcoin enthusiast since 2010. I always thought that money had to freed in some way. I was always a big Ant-Fed guy. A bit of a gold-silver bug too. When I heard about Bitcoin, I got really excited about it. Sounded great. It was a way to free money as well as to free payments. Gold and silver- as great as they are as currencies, it’s tough to pay someone with an ounce of gold if they are in China. That was super exciting. I did my own Bitcoin things for a while and then I joined Coinopol, which is a Bitcoin financial services company, about 6 months ago.

AC: Could you go into a little bit about what Bitcoin is?

GS: Sure. Bitcoin is a decentralized electronic currency, which operates from Bitcoin protocol. The payment network, which is the Bitcoin network, is accounted for in units of Bitcoins. So, it’s important to know that it is both a currency and payment system. So PayPal is a payment system and not a currency, and the US dollar is a currency but not a payment system. Bitcoin is both of those things and can be easily downloaded by anyone with internet access anywhere. It’s pretty much the first time that people can have a banking system and financial services instantly and free. You can send and receive payments with no middle man and secure your own wealth away from any other acting party.

AC: What is the inspiration for you to be in Bitcoin?

GS: I’m there- I am pretty much a libertarian. I used to work on Ron Paul’s campaign and Rand Paul’s campaign. Been a Free State Project supporter for a bunch of years now. Bitcoin just enables free market- pretty plain and simple. If you want to make a transaction with anyone, anywhere at any time with no one stopping you, Bitcoin pretty much enables you. So, we spent some time talking about the Silk Road, but that is a beautiful definition of what a free market looks like. People are buying and selling all sorts of goods that governments have outlawed. It [Bitcoin] happens all the time within a peer-review process. It’s also an arbitration and hedging system, so people don’t even worry about the currency risks. It really is more than just this nifty currency. It really allows freedom and free markets, which is what draws me to it.

AC: What is your most effective tool for getting people involved in Bitcoin?
GS: It depends on who your talking to. If you here at the most libertarian get-together on the planet, it’s very ideological. The economic benefits of Bitcoin and just the ability to subvert government control. Not just necessarily government control- if PayPal shuts down your merchant account, that’s a corporation turning off your money system. It really enables people individually to take control of their finances and operate their businesses and all sorts of financial relationships without permission.

AC: To lead into what you just said, what would you say is the reason why people are coming to Bitcoin? Is it ideological, economic reasons?

GS: It’s a mixed bag. There are so many different properties to Bitcoin for so many different things for so many different people. There are insurance people who look at Bitcoin and go, “Wow, it’s a way to secure wealth.” Imagine you’re an insurance company and I want to insure my Bitcoin wallet, if you own part of the private keys that allow access to that wallet, you can 100% insure that those Bitcoins can never leave your wallet without your companies explicit permission. So for an insurance company, it is an amazing product. Any sort of journalist company that hides behind a firewall, if instead of a firewall people could pay two cents for an article, it’s a whole new payment mechanism. You can start tying assets to Bitcoin through cryptography. So there a public companies on the stock market that launch through Bitcoin. So, it’s a new way to raise capital and to match investors with a company. There are so many different reasons why so many different players get into Bitcoin, it’s tough to- I would be wary to name one thing in particular. This decentralized cryptography has allowed lots and lots and lots of new things.

AC: How difficult have you found it to spread the message about Bitcoin?

GS: There’s definitely resistance, but this conversation two years ago, or even six months ago, would have been a very different conversation because to me it was only a matter of time before people so how f-ing useful Bitcoin was. So, that’s starting to happen. So you’re starting to see it snowball into itself. Last month I saw three or four or five venture capitalist companies that all spent millions of dollars on Bitcoin businesses. So you’re kind of watching the tech world take aim at the finance world. So the uses will become more and more apparent and it will become easier and easier to sell to people just because more people are using it. Here at PorcFest is a perfect example. Last year, maybe half of people selling stuff, merchants, were accepting Bitcoin. Now, I think it is eighty or ninety percent. Two years ago, it was five percent. That is specifically within the libertarian community, but business communities are seeing the same thing. Online digital companies are accepting Bitcoin, Reddit is accepting Bitcoin. Wordpress is accepting Bitcoin. Digital content companies are starting to pick up the ball. It makes a ton of sense for them. All their content is digital and their payments are low. You might want to pay a dollar for an app. To do it on PayPal, it costs a buck fifty, on the Apple store it’s a buck. But it’s a whole new payment mechanism. This decentralized cryptography has allowed lots and lots and lots of new things.
Store, it would cost a third of your revenue. For all the people who are going to earn thirty, fifty percent more money by accepting Bitcoin, they’re just going to steam roll. That’s just going to be a big snowball effect.

AC: How would you see Bitcoin being portrayed on the news, in the media?

GS: Two years ago- there was a lot of negativity. This time around we’ve had a bubble and a whole new pop of sorts, but now people are putting heavy stakes into Bitcoin community now that the financial community is taking serious notice of what this is and trying to figure out what it’s going to mean. I would say the press is becoming a lot more neutral, they are seeing it as something they can report on. Things are happening. They know they don’t know if it will be a big thing or not. So I think in a sense, they are being a lot more fair this time around they were the last go around. There are a lot more businesses that make it easier to facilitate Bitcoin in general.

AC: I think I know what you will say, but what do you think is Bitcoin’s opposition? Who do you think would like to stop Bitcoin?

GS: Banks and governments. I mean, I don’t even know how much they realize how much of an enemy to them it truly is yet. This is something they have just picked up on in the last few months as well. They’re realizing that Bitcoin could be a huge threat to their current model. Both governments and banks and governments and banks working together. They both work towards the same goal in the end, which is to take as much money as they can. They like to watch out for each other and now there is this new kid on the block. They don’t know what to do. I have talked to a lot of these industry guys in the field at this point, they don’t have a clue. They really don’t know what’s coming at them. I think it a few years expect the big battle guns between the financial side and the tech side.

AC: How is Bitcoin funded? How was it developed? What is the economic structure behind it?

GS: How did it rise from the ashes sort of? How did Bitcoin become worth something? Basically, you literally have a full year where it was worth nothing. Nobody was working with it accept of few programmers who thought it was a nifty thing, but it was literally worth nothing. You talk to those developers and they would lose thousands of coins. It was just a game. What started happening was people started to say, “Well, yea. We can start using this thing.” Even if it was just pennies, it didn’t really matter because you had a lot of pennies, you had a dollar. If you had a lot dollars, you had ten dollars. Even if that was one hundred thousand Bitcoins at the time. Slowly, but surely, you had people who started to sell stuff. You had the guy who was selling out pack-o-socks with Bitcoin. That was really early. Then you had Ira Millar, who had a site called Bit Munchies, you could basically sell Doritos, Oreos, and popcorn with Bitcoin. They weren’t making huge earnings but it was a way to start circulating Bitcoin in an economy.
All of a sudden you hit dollar parity, and then it goes up from there, and then people started to realize that this works. If you can turn it into cash, you can basically teleport money. If you’re not interested in Bitcoin, you can move dollars from one place to the next with very little fees and no middle man. It was just baby steps really.

AC: That’s a good summary about Bitcoin. Now I am going to go into a word game. I will say a word or a phrase and you tell me what comes into your head. Populism, what does that mean to you?

GS: Populism... I don’t know. A lot of things that people want to do. (laughing)

AC: Ok. Congress?

GS: Useless.

AC: Grassroots campaign?

GS: I am going to try and stray from the word useless again. My view of politics at this point is pretty disappointing. A grassroots campaign? It’s useful, just ignore politics.

AC: We the People- what does that mean for you?

GS: I don’t know. Pretty letters on a document.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

GS: Yea, on an individual level, but don’t start putting responsibility on a governmental level. That’s usually pretty dangerous.

AC: What are your feelings about the founding fathers- Thomas Jefferson especially?

GS: I hope that they had the right ideas in their minds. I guess I am a bit more anarchist then them. I appreciate their efforts, it was a nice try. Sorry to disappoint but it’s time we break it down, but Thomas Jefferson would be with us if we had to rip it down again. Appreciate that forewarning.

AC: How about Thomas Paine?

GS: Thomas Pain is pretty cool because he is from New Rochelle, New York, so he has the same home town as me. You got to appreciate a guy with good writing. I like Thomas Paine.

AC: He was one of the few founding fathers, if not the only, who differentiated between government and civil society.
GS: That’s true. That’s very true.

AC: How would you define progress today?

GS: I don’t know. The more outside of government stuff that I see I get excited and I am seeing a lot of that lately. Governments- they have a tiny box to work in and markets have a much large box. At the end of the day, progress is inevitable. It’s moving along at a good clip.

AC: Progress vs tradition, which is more important?

GS: Progress vs tradition? I don’t know. They’re both pretty cool.

AC: Ethics- do you think it’s important in politics?

GS: Ethics and politics are not the same things. They are two different things (laughing) They have very little to do with each other.

AC: Fairness in society- how would you describe it or do you think it is not possible?

GS: Yea, it’s like fairness and rights. It’s what you as an individual can do without harming other people in anyway.

AC: Now, I am going to do the same thing but with globalization, the economy, and a changing world. What is your opinion on globalization and how would you define it?

GS: There are two different globalizations. One is the globalization of governments and the other is the globalization of free markets. I would look at one as really, really bad and the other as really, really good. Two very different things I guess.

AC: I know modern technology has played a huge role in what you have done, but can you go into specifics?

GS: Yea, I mean the ability to connect people, and this is the globalization of free markets, the ability to connect anybody, anywhere, anytime without interference, this is stuff that didn’t exist 10 years ago. This is the birth of it. It is essential to what’s been going on in development, creating more markets, more opportunities and more wealth. Super important.

AC: What worries you moment about our current society?

GS: Government. (Laughing) It makes me nervous.

AC: What’s your opinion of social media, the internet and privacy?

GS: You know, it depends on what you want to keep private. Unfortunately, it’s very difficult in this day and age to keep things private even if you want to. Any tool that enables privacy I am a
big fan of. I use things like Tor, Bitcoin, PGP encryption for any of my emails. It has nothing to do with doing things criminally, it has to do with doing things privately. It’s an important thing for people to do and to have access to. Don’t push off privacy to social media and governments. You have to do it. You have to personally responsible for your own privacy and security.

AC: Do you see Bitcoin reviving American competitiveness?

GS: Maybe I am a sourpuss on this, but I am seeing America as a less Bitcoin-friendly place to do business in more and more. I suspect that regulation will keep peak trending towards over-regulation and away from freer markets. So, I think America will find it cornering itself and the Bitcoin business going to another jurisdiction. They like us there and they charge us fifty percent less tax and they don’t mind if we do business internationally without signing all this paper work, or whatever it is. So I think the US is going to lose out in this circumstance instead of gain from Bitcoin business. There will still be Bitcoin business in the US, but I think the regulations will severely handicap them in comparison to other companies.

AC: Ok, how do you see Bitcoin developing into the future?

GS: We kind of spoke about this earlier. There’s just tons and tons of new use cases that people are using for Bitcoin that aren’t even necessarily the currency or the payment system. They branch out into other transactions. You can write contracts on the “block chain” and enforce them on the “block chain.” There are these sort of nifty uses for kind of this global in the cloud ledger we use for all sorts of stuff. So you will see it in insurance, in escrow, in finance, in banking, in secure messaging. There are people who are securing message on the “block chain.” You can use it for private messaging, advertising, micro payments. If I were smart enough, I hope I would be working on it. There are colored coins- basically taking Bitcoin and tying it to a particular asset like a house. Imagine a chain of titles system that relies on the “block chain” instead of your local government office with papers from the 1960s. This eliminates it. It’s useless with Bitcoin. You can issue stock purely in Bitcoins. You can give dividends in Bitcoin. There are companies who don’t even know who their shareholders are, but they are paying them weekly and monthly dividends. That’s a multibillion dollar thing there. Go replace NASDAQ or the DOW. Bitcoin really is a monster game changer like the internet was a monster game changer for – What the internet did for communications, Bitcoin will do for money and finance. It’s big. It’s big.

AC: What improvements do you think needs to be done with Bitcoin?

GS: The first and foremost- there are two things on my mind. I am not a developer, so I may not be the best person to tell you. One is in transaction cost. When you have really tiny transaction, they take up a certain cost on the network for taking care of it, so that kind of
needs to be taken care of. I am not really technical enough to tell you how that needs to be dealt with. Basically, it’s trying to figure out how to do transaction down the road when the “block chain” a thousand times its current size. So right now, it’s not a huge issue but at some point it will be. Second issue would be building on anonymity of Bitcoin. It’s still not perfect yet, but there are a lot of plugins being created. There is alternative “block chains” being built. So that’s stuff programmers are working on and will be working on. I fully suspect that is will become easier and easier for the average person to anonymize their Bitcoins. Maybe the third thing would be usability. Two years ago it was almost impossible for the average person to use Bitcoin. Today it is much, much easier, but you still can’t have your grandma use it in five minutes. When grandma can pick up a phone and use Bitcoin in five minutes, that’s where we need to be in usability. User interface - that’s really just programmers making things pretty and easy to use. That will come as well.

AC: Do you see any roadblocks stopping that?

GS: The best thing to stop the growth of Bitcoin would be government. If the government said tomorrow that it’s illegal, then great. Bitcoins go to everywhere else on the planet except for the US. It doesn’t really turn off Bitcoin. Maybe it impedes the growth, especially from a US perspective, but does that mean China will say the next day “Ok, everybody should be using Bitcoin. It will bring down the American Empire.” Fine, we will go to another government. The beauty of a global project is that it’s everywhere.

AC: I just have a few more questions. What’s your opinion of the Tea Party?

GS: In the early days, it was going in the right direction and then it kind of just went the other way. It’s a whole bunch of things to a whole bunch of people. Basically what politics and media do. I miss the Ron Paul days of the Tea Party, which I sure know and love. I have even been a speaker at Tea Party events, I have hosted Tea Parties. At the end of the day, politicians will do what they do. “Sarah Palin is a libertarian, Glenn Beck is a libertarian, blah, blah, blah.” It’s absurd. Whatever gets them television ratings, I am going to do my own thing.

GS: Ok, and what about Occupy?

GS: I see where they are coming from because I was pretty liberal myself. Then I started learning about economics and the free markets and switched my mind. But their hearts in the right place. They see that things are unfair. I don’t disagree with them. Things are incredibly unfair. Just a slight misunderstanding on where the root of the issue comes from. They blame in on corporations, I blame in on government combining their powers with corporations. But, they’re nice. I like hanging out with them.

AC: My last question would be have you worked with either of them with Bitcoin?
GS: Oh yea. That’s what’s super cool about Bitcoin. Everyone works with Bitcoin. It can be some stingy Republican, some hard core libertarian-anarchist, it could be some lefty-Occupy Wall Street guy. They all have a reason for thinking Bitcoin is nifty. All sorts of people we work with.
AC: So basically tell me about your activism in your own words.

EM: Ok, I belong to the counter economy. I have two agorist businesses. That is basically my activism in a nutshell that I do now. That is my civil disobedience that I practice. I just don't tell people around me, outside of my people, that's what it is. Just to keep myself safe from the beau acratic institutions that want to put a stop to things that I am doing. But I am a treasurer of coop that is going to in the future expand into more services.

AC: What would you consider to be the inspiration for your activism?

EM: Wanting to have people around me that care about me that care about each other. And they don't have to share all the same values that I do or even the same outlook that I do. I think it is important to develop cohesion with people you don't necessarily agree with. To try to at least.

AC: What made you go into collective libertarianism then?

EM: Well, trying to find people who want the same things that I do. It's not necessarily a- I want to have people around me that value me. So from my viewpoint, a free world for me, I am not telling people that they can't live the way that they want to. They can join whatever groups and do whatever they want to. They don't have to be in the same groups that I want to. I still think that building relationships with people you don't agree is important.

AC: How do you get people involved in them?

EM: Usually it's face to face, especially with the businesses that I am involved with. I don't do business cards, I do do websites. But that's all. It's all one to one interaction. I do some social media marketing but not a whole lot and usually to a specific target group of people that I think shares the same values that I do.

AC: What would you say is the most effective tool for getting out to people? Is it the face to face contact?

EM: I think so. My years of political campaigning taught me one thing- that face to face communication is the most effective way to get someone to do something. I loathe phone calling. I think that is so disconnected. I am not as effective over the phone as I am face to
face. So, getting people involved for me is going out and talking to people. I talk to my neighbors and to everyone. I like to talk.

AC: I liked what you said about how no one knows anyone in their community anymore.

EM: I fell into that at one point in my life. I just was working so much, when I was in the corporate world, I just didn't have any time. I didn't time for my family or for my friends. I didn't have time to even to take care of myself. I think that getting away from this standard idea of what life is supposed to be- it's a radical transformation of your life. That's what I am asking people to do. So I don't want to scare people into how it works. So I try to do it gently. (Laughing) This idea we have to work forty hours a week to be successful and to climb this corporate ladder to be successful. It's insane. I think a lot of people equate success with having money and keeping up with the Jones' that came out of the materialistic 80s. It's ridiculous. I think that had a lot to do with the disconnect amongst people. We are so consumerized, in a way that's disgusting. It's sickening.

AC: Do you find it hard to talk to people about this, to spread your ideas? Do you see that people are hostile?

EM: I have learned over the years to be very nice about it and smile a lot. I take it in baby steps. For a lot of people it is baby steps. I don't come out and say "I am anarchist and join my collective. Come be with me." It turns people off. I try to do it in a soft and kind and small way. It takes a while. It takes me a long time to move someone from point A to point B if I can get them there. I have run into my fair share of hostility. I just smile and don't let it bother me. I look at it like planting a seed. Maybe someday that person will let that seed grow into a bush or a tree to understand what I am saying. It took me a while to understand. I was deep into neocon people. I didn't want to hear what they had to see. I rejected anything that didn't fit my ideological paradigm at the time. Now I can see that I was a moron. I try not to look at people that way. They just don't know. They just don't know that there's something else out there because I do believe the media squashes anything that might be out of what the government wants us to do. They don't want us to work together. They want to keep us separated because we are easier to control. So, one way to defy the man is to get to know your neighbors. That was great. Why didn't I think about saying that in there? (Laughing)

AC: The news, television, newspaper, radio- How do you see them portraying your philosophy behind what you are doing?

EM: Well, mainstream news and media I wouldn't even try. To be honest with, they are not going to- they are going to want to change the message I am trying to send. I have tried to
tailor somethings around a nicer, more palatable little bite for people to understand. Through print media, that gets a little kinky. The message doesn't come across so clearly. I do print some things, advertising on radio shows, podcasts, and blogs that share my ideals. That's another way of getting more people involved. These are people that have some inclination of what I believe, because they believe what I believe because they are reading the same things that I read. (Laughing)

AC: Where do you find your support coming from?

EM: I get a lot of support from my friends at the Alliance of Libertarian Left. They are a fantastic group. They help me a lot. It's not just me; we have a whole group of people who are doing these cooperative and collectives. It is a great thing to have support for each other. I couldn't do this by myself. It's really hard.

AC: Now I am just going to go into a little bit of a word game. I am going to say something and you just tell me what pops into your head. So when I say populism what does that mean to you?

EM: The tyranny of the masses.

AC: Ok. Congress?

EM: Criminals.

AC: What is a grassroots campaign?

EM: That's local people coming together on an issue that's important to them and hopefully being successful.

AC: How important are they?

EM: Incredibly important. They are the most important thing that people can do to improve their community.

AC: What does "We the People" mean to you?

EM: Nothing.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible for their economy, civil society, and individual lives?

EM: Yes.

AC: What are your opinions about the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson especially?
EM: Because he owned slaves I have no respect for him whatsoever. He did not value all of human life to be equal, so I disregard him as a person to listen to. Yea, he said some great things, he did. But he didn't walk the walk. He talked the talk and I like people not only know how to talk the talk but also who walk the walk.

AC: And the other ones, Adams, Washington?

EM: I don't like any politicians. All the founding fathers were politicians. I don't like any of them. (laughing) And I have friend that are politicians. I like them as people but not what they do for a living.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

EM: Only by getting to know each other and getting together.

AC: Progress or tradition, what do you think is more important?

EM: Well, tradition isn't that important because look at where it has gotten us? I think progress is a lot more important. Moving forward, evolving- isn't that what life is all about? Evolving and moving forward. Tradition has its place but it hasn't gotten us in a good situation economically or civil liberty-wise.

AC: Do you ethics should matter in politics?

EM: Of course. Everyone should be ethical. The problem is that politicians by their very nature can't be. Power corrupts. There is just no way that they can't be. There is just too much corruption going on. Even really great, good people with the best intentions.

AC: How would you fairness in society? Do you think it's possible to exist?

EM: Fairness? No. What's fair to me might not be fair to you. It's so subjective. It's impossible.

AC: I will do more of the same thing but with globalization and a changing world. What is your opinion of globalization today and how would you define it?

EM: It's the whole world working together. The internet had a big hand in that. I now know a whole bunch of friends who live all over the world. It can be a great thing. I think some of the tools of globalization are bad. Outside of that, of course I think government is bad wherever you go. There isn't one that's good. So if we get rid of that and those people, I do believe that globalization would be a good thing. I mean, I don't believe in borders or anything. I want a truly free society where people can come and go as they please and it doesn't matter that you
were born on this geographical location versus that one. People should be free to interact with one another.

AC: What role has modern technology played in your activism?

EM: Well, it has opened up a whole new world. It has opened up all this knowledge. The knowledge alone has changed my life. It’s radical reinvention of learning. My son basically learned everything he needs to know online. I take a lot of classes online that are free. Open source- I love open source stuff. I think it is so great. It has its draw backs though. Prior to the internet, you had to go the library; you had to go out to your community to get that knowledge. I think the internet has isolated people a little, maybe some people a lot, but I think overall that it has been a gift to humanity and not detraction.

AC: What worries you most about the state of society?

EM: The coercion of the government. The police are allowed to beat up and kill people. That bothers me a lot. I try not- I get so soaked up into the negative aspects- it so easy to get soaked up in those and have then run around in your head. So I try to- I know what's going on and I don't want to saturate myself so I can be happy and positive and be able to smile and not cry. When I think about those things it makes me really upset. I feel a little powerless. I want to help people. So, the whole purpose of left libertarianism is to help people through mutual aid, a community coming together to help each other. There is this young lady from Baltimore and she is on call for women from a specific neighborhood that is pretty bad. All the women have her phone number. That's a great thing. We need more of that in the world.

AC: What is your opinion on the debate between social media and privacy?

EM: Like I said to my son- Don't put anything online that you don't want people to know. I don't put anything out there that isn't readily available anywhere else or that I wouldn't tell someone. I tend to keep my private life private. I do share pictures from public events that I go to like this one. I am not going to really share a lot of my personal details, like my address. I would never put my address. I would put my phone number, but never my address. That's just crazy. (Laughing)

AC: Do you think outsourcing as a serious problem or just a transition to a new economy?

EM: Well I see where some people get upset with outsourcing, but I don't think it is a bad thing. I think it is a transition to a new economy. A new way at how we work. Unfortunately a lot of times it could be a bad thing because one it does disconnect people from their local companies. I know I get frustrated when I call some number and I need to get some help, computer type help. It always goes to India. I can never understand anything that they say.
There are the cultural differences. It's very difficult. It makes it harder. Of course, if you know other cultures, it makes it easier.

AC: How do you see collective libertarianism developing in the future?

EM: Well, my hope is that I will have a working cooperative in my area that I will belong to. I hope that it will happen in the near future. The big cooperative that we are doing, we hope to be really successful with that, have a lot of members. Grow it where we offer other services. I am hoping that is where it goes.

AC: You were mentioning up there about changes you would like to see in the libertarian community. Can you go into that?

EM: Well a little more knowledge would be good. That's the one big hindrance- there's not enough knowledge. Or people just don't know to look for it. They are familiar with the word or don't understand what a cooperative is. A lot of them don't understand what a collective is. That was what my intention was. It's not a bad word. It's not a dirty word. That's a problem here. Especially the people who run the FSP, they have a problem calling a group of people a collective. They have a real problem with that. Like it's some communist thing, like we are trying to bring communism to the movement, which is not at all. People working together in a free society is my goal. That is what I want to see in my lifetime.

AC: What do you see as big roadblocks?

EM: The government. Government monopolies. Government itself. The lack of knowledge of people. Hopefully, the more that gets out, the more people understand. That's my job to do that. It's on us. We have to be the change that we want to be in the world. To steal someone else’s words. (Laughing)

AC: These are the last three questions. What is your opinion of the Tea Party?

EM: Well, I think in the beginning they were really a grassroots organization about the disenfranchisement of the people, of the Republican Party. I was never really involved with that movement, but now it has been coopted by the Republican Party elite. Now I, if was still a Republican, I wouldn't call myself a Tea Party Republican. The reason why I left the neocon world started with 9/11. One of the ladies at the meeting got up and started on a rant with a Muslim couple in our neighborhood. She went on this horrific rant about how this woman shouldn't be able to dress as she wants and how it was disgusting. It was so racist and it really bothered me. Then I noticed that there was this whole racists bent against anyone who was not like us. That is not something I want to be part of. I went to the Libertarian Party after that. I knew that there had to be something else. So I went to the Libertarian Party, but they
don't know how to get anything done. That's their problem. Politics just don't work. Once you start on a basic, basic local level, maybe it can. I am still not a fan of any government. I just don't think so.

AC: How do you feel about the Occupy movement?

EM: I applaud what they are trying to do. I think they have also been coopted a bit and have been portrayed so badly in the media that people are turned off by what they are doing. But there are so many good efforts in what they are trying to do. I am friends with quite a few people in the Occupy movement. I support what they are trying to do. I understand where they are coming from. A lot of them are still what I consider statists and want the state to take care of their problems. But it can't. It's up to us to do it.

AC: You mentioned before that you were an anarchist. Would you put a hyphen on that?

EM: No, I am an anarchist. I believe in a life without rulers.
AC: First question. Tell me about the Ron Paul campaign in your own words.

PP: I was really apathetic originally about what was going on. Then I started watching the news more. I wasn’t really enjoying myself that much. I ended up getting involved with the Ron Paul campaign out of necessity- personally. As a whole, the campaign was definitely successful in reaching out to new people, especially young people after all the college tours that he did. I think in that sense I think it was successful. Overall, though, in the end, I came to the realization that the process wasn’t good enough in terms of getting things done. Our local Ron Paul meet up group, which was the local campaign group, we’re still doing stuff more centric on what people are inspired about- specific issues. People are doing things in relation to local politics, but some of us are doing things like teach each other about Bitcoin and stuff, liberating each other and other people.

AC: And how did you get involved with Alt-Expo?

PP: Actually from a completely different realm. I work for a company Open Garden. We were representing ourselves at the Bitcoin Conference in San Jose. We make a mesh-networking application for android phones, so we thought the Bitcoin Conference would be a good place to find a lot of people inspired by the same concepts because Bitcoin is a peer-to-peer system and they can understand the concepts of a mesh network easily. While we were there, someone- a few people actually, Free Staters actually had a table there. A few people came up to us an realized that we were doing mesh networking. They said that a mesh network would be really good at PorcFest and that we should try to get work here. I posted a thing on the PorcFest Facebook group asking if anyone thought this would be a good idea. Jack contacted me. It worked out really well.

AC: After you were saying about before you got involved with Ron Paul, you were pretty apathetic. What inspired you to change to become part of the campaign?

PP: I think it was honestly- I was finishing college. All through college I was really busy and didn’t pay attention to anything. After college the work load was a lot less and I ended up just watching the news more and going on line and realizing that this is so ridiculous. I really didn’t want to sit back anymore, I felt like I couldn’t sit back anymore. I was really just waking up to what was around me.
AC: Do you think other people are joining the Ron Paul campaign for that very reason or do you think there are other reasons?

PP: In terms of younger people, I think so. There is a lot of apathy. They see politics as this corrupt system, you already assume that growing up. Therefore you don’t care and you don’t get into it. Most young people don’t care. They just block it out and are really bored by it. They don’t realize how much it is affecting them until they hear from someone, a viral thing. You just hear it from somebody. The idea gets into your head somewhere that this could be different. If you try to tell other people about this, you have a good chance of getting even more people.

AC: What were the demographics of your section of the Ron Paul campaign?

PP: They already had their own little Ron Paul group from 2008. It was definitely a majority of middle age people who had been there, but there were a lot of younger people joining in, just joining in. During the actual Ron Paul campaign, it was half and half. Now the young people aren’t even in it anymore. Just me and some other people.

AC: How about race and gender?

PP: Mostly male, definitely. 75% male. Race-85% Caucasian.

AC: What were your most effective tools for organizing?

PP: Meet up groups, meet.com. It was the main tool for the local campaigns. Just kind of meeting up and talking to people.

AC: Did you find it hard to engage the public?

PP: In San Francisco, yea. (laughing) The thing is, at times it was hard and then at times they get it. They are so stuck in the system and dependent on the system that they don’t see how it can be done without all this overhead and centralization. But I feel like the morals are still there, they’re still the same. It’s just how to get to the same goal, it’s different. At least with liberals and the idea of communism. It’s a good thing to have in the end, but you have to think about how you get there. I think liberals they haven’t heard a logical explanation that is better than the one they have now. A lot of them didn’t want to hear it, a lot of them just push back. Everything you say goes out the other ear. It happens a lot with older people because they have believed that for such a long time, especially if you’re a young person trying to talk to them. They feel like they know better. It goes on either side. With liberals some issues are easy to talk to them about, with conservatives some issues are easy to talk about. It was pretty difficult, but we also got a lot of turnout. We were in the top five counties with poll results.
AC: Did you ever convert anybody? Or maybe get them to agree with your point?

PP: Yea, it is easy to get them to agree with you on certain points. I didn’t really have the skills to talk to people. I kind of wish I had. I am still doing it though. I am still developing these skills. Just asking them questions and having them answer. “If Obama cares about us, why is the head of the FDA from Monsanto?” It’s about learning how to communicate people.

AC: How would you say the media portrayed the Ron Paul campaign?

PP: They really didn’t talk about it at the time, but now they kind of talk it up. They are trying to keep Ron Paul on their side. The mainstream media, they hid everything. They blocked everything out. There were so many people movement for this movement and all these rallies. I think there were almost ten thousand people in Chico California, or L.A., but it didn’t get covered.

AC: What was the RNC like?

PP: It was really interesting. I went primarily for the Ron Paul rally, with him speaking at the end. The Paul Fest, that was really cool. I got more out of it talking to people like here at PorcFest, like-minded individuals from different areas. I only really knew people from the San Francisco area. In terms of the actual RNC, it was almost liberating for me in how corrupt the convention process could be. You hear how the Democratic convention was scripted, it’s just ridiculous. It was liberating for me in that I realized that this is how it will be. I should just stop and focus my efforts on things that will make a difference now and not in the next election. Talk to people now about what’s important like alternative services like I provide now. Things are starting now and that’s more effective in the long run than convincing politicians not to act on their self-interests. People always act on their self-interests. I think it’s just more effective to innovate and make use of the technology before they do. We have all this technology that they are really taking advantage of and we should be doing it just as hardcore.

AC: Ok, I am just now going to go into a little bit of a word game. Populism, what does that mean to you?

PP: Populism? Majority, democracy. Not sure I know the definition of that work but yea, majority rule.

AC: Congress?

PP: I see it as almost like delegates, people electing them from their areas to represent them because they may not have the time to dedicate to politics. Trusting, I think of how people are trusting the direction of their country with people.
AC: Grassroots campaign?

PP: A campaign that doesn’t have a central command. I think Ron Paul’s campaign was grassroots because it was a lot of local people organizing. He didn’t have a lot of overhead. He didn’t have a lot of money to put towards it. He gave us pamphlets and material to give out. I think there lack of authority helped to get people. Let them do their own thing and reach out to their own community.

AC: “We the People,” what does that mean to you?

PP: It means being an invisible contract, an invisible contract for people who clearly didn’t think that. That’s what I think now. (laughing) I would have said something different six months ago or a year ago.

AC: Do you believe that Americans should be responsible for their economy, civil society and individual lives?

PP: Yes. Incredibly.

AC: What is your opinion of the founding fathers, with special attention to Thomas Jefferson?

PP: I think they had the right intentions. I think they really wanted to see a nation that would benefit from more individual rights. Honestly, as wealthy men, they were trying to escape the taxes from England. They wanted something that didn’t have that, but they were also not common folk either. They were pretty well off, just kind of claimed that this what is going to happen.

AC: How would you define progress in society today?

PP: It’s happening exponentially in terms of technology. I think because of technology it’s going to get faster and develop further. That’s what I like living in Silicon Valley. It’s inspiring. There’s a lot of entrepreneurs and new ideas. There’s just meet up groups everywhere there. Start-ups pitching ideas to get investors to fund them. It’s really great to see that and do things despite what the state is forcing to deal with.

AC: Progress or tradition, what is more important?

PP: Progress.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics?

PP: Yes. I don’t know about that. It what way?

AC: Do you think politicians should behave ethically?
PP: Of course. If you’re going to have politicians, they should definitely behave ethically. (laughing) I think we would be better off without politicians telling us what is good for us- at least in the grand scheme that it is. I think there could be governments providing services and politicians talking to local businesses, but as long as there is competition.

AC: Ok. Globalization, how would you define it today?

PP: I think in terms of the United States and all of the big powers in Europe trying to spread democracy. I think it is just of another way of having more power and more control over a wider span.

AC: This is a good questions for you, what role has modern technology played in your activities?

PP: Well, the company I work for is definitely- I love talking about them. I love promoting what they do. Even just learning how to program is just inspiring and can liberate you in a way you might not realize. Once you’re able to write a piece of code that does some sort of equation, you don’t need to- it’s just an inspiring way to make things yourself.

AC: What is your opinion on social media vs privacy?

PP: Actually, my partner is really into the concept of personal clouds. It’s supposed to replace the internet sort of, in that you have a personal server, silo, that only belongs to you and you can share what information you want with other personal clouds rather than having it in one storage area. I deleted my Facebook account about a month ago over concerns about privacy. It is a good source for reaching out to people. Open Garden has a Facebook page. I actually have technically a Facebook page to manage their account, but I don’t use it. I wish something else was out there that I felt comfortable with. I use Twitter, but there’s real no risk. And they don’t ask information from me. I like keeping my personal information to myself. I don’t like to give out an address or phone number.

AC: How do you see the Ron Paul, well, the Liberty Movement developing?

PP: A lot of people are going onto the Rand bandwagon. That’s a big portion of it and if he keeps filibustering, it could be good. It does bring attention to the issues. I guess I would love to see people focus on alternative systems, start businesses, learn new skills, become independent –even from corporations. Corporations are like a state- a state project. They’re statists. I think it will be divided between that. I think the more and more young people become libertarian, the more and more of them will go just straight into anarchy. I think it will be interesting.

AC: What do you see as serious roadblocks for the movement in the future?
PP: I think it might be just distractions- political distractions. That states encroaching empower is obviously a continuous roadblock. The more and more power they take and give to themselves, the harder it gets to fight them. I think the way they are able to manipulate people through mainstream media is really distracting. It's the one big thing that’s holding us back from spreading information. A lot of people still get the news from NBC and all that instead of using the internet.

AC: What is your estimation of the impact of your movement on the country so far?

PP: I think it’s gotten a lot of people out of their shells in realizing that his movement is alive and growing. The more the younger people are getting into it- they’re really passionate about their feelings and in realizing how this world should be or at least how it shouldn’t be. It’s definitely something that will come from the younger people as they get older and have more power.

AC: I just have a couple more questions, what is your opinion of Occupy?

PP: I think it was well found and that they have every right to be pissed off at Wall Street. They got a few things done, like Occupy Sandy was a huge success when FEMA did nothing. That was a huge success. Other than that, I don’t really know what they got done. It’s sort of the same thing with politics- what do you get done by sitting in the street? What do you get done by voting? Why not just focus on your thing?

AC: Ok, and how do you feel about the Tea Party?

PP: Similar. They are just misguided. I think they honestly watch too much Fox. They are the ones not on the internet. They agree with small government, but their philosophy and morals are not in line. They see the benefits in minimizing government, but they don’t see it to the end.

AC: I take it you are preferable to anarchism. Would you call yourself a libertarian or an anarchist?

AC: My first question would be tell me about Alt-Expo, left libertarianism in your own words.

CJ: Sure. So, Nick and Jack can tell you about the Alt-Expo in general. The Alt-Expo is the Alternatives Exposition. It's a project that has been going on in New Hampshire for about seven years now. They have been putting on alternative programming and alternative communities at Free State events. Basically because of the numbers they were expecting to attract, it didn't get on to the main program. They wanted to talk a bit more about alternative routes for achieving liberty that don't involving political options or organs of political power. Also with connecting with members of the alternative communities. Trying out grassroots alternatives to the status quo- whether that is alternative energy, alternative medicine, alternative health, and alternative education. People who are interested in social experiments in the development of freedom, doing things from the bottom up. It's different from the corporate status quo and political status quo. So I got hooked in with them a few years back because I am a member of the Alliance of the Libertarian Left. I do some work with the Center for a Stateless Society, which is a media outlet. So we're doing some stuff on left-libertarianism, counter economics, agorism, anarchist approaches to consciousness raising. It's a direct action rather than- again part of the reason for it being such a good fit is because of our ideas for direct action and counter institution building instead of political stuff. It has been a good mesh.

AC: What would you say is the foundation for left-libertarianism?

CJ: I think there are a few different strands. I can tell you where I'm coming from in this, personally. I got interested in this stuff and got involved by means of the radical left and social anarchism. I graduated from high school in 1999 and went to college. I got interested in radical leftist and radical politics, radical feminism especially. I got involved in that and radical environmentalism as well. It was really hard to avoid the discussions of anarchism. It was after the November protests in Seattle and the convention protests escalating very much anarchist inspired and influenced global justice movement and movement for political alternatives. So I got really engaged with it then. Between the emerging global justice movement and the anti-war movement during the run-up to war in Iraq, 2002-2003. I got interested in, then involved in, then through activists work with a number of other anarchists, talking with a number of anarchists, talking about anarchists ideas, realizing a lot of things I had been dissatisfied with were the more conventional sectors of the global justice movement and feminist movement were still very attached to the idea of making change through the political process and through
the state instead of making new processes. Why is it that in the counter globalization movement there is so much footsie being played with creepy nationalist elements? I was never particularly thrilled that national sovereignty should be concerned when we were talking about international trade. The issue is who control the international trade, not that we should be putting walls up at the border. So, anarchism provided way for me to try and think through this stuff. What is it that a grassroots people power justice movement might look like? How can we draw from certain examples of movements that had success in the past when there's this strong grassroots component and make a political philosophy that is grounded and not a political myth about how political power works. So, I got involved in social anarchism and from their got involved with individualism and these different strands that are talking about market economics. A few years down the road I start reading some anarcho capitalists and managed to discover mutualists and the individual anarchist tradition. Tucker, Warren, De Cleyre, these sorts of folks. The an-caps and the bow ties, there is something interesting gone on here that I can learn from but there is this big gap between what they are expecting to see and what I think is valuable. I like their war stances. I learned and profited from a lot of their material in ways that big business is actually dependent on the state. I often felt that they didn't take it as far as they could. Not focusing on how systematic and transformational of a change you could expect to see in freed markets without these monopolies. This sort of weird stance that anything that is voluntary and cool with, but then if you actually start saying these are a few things that people have done that are consensual, like examples of feminist culture jamming or wild cat union activism, groups like CIW make use of the state, suddenly you get this culturally conservative freak out. I just suggested things that were voluntary and didn't you say that you are fine with things that are voluntary? So, with mutualism and individualist anarchism, I found this really helpful framework to develop a better understanding. I became a market anarchist because of my deep left wing goals I started out with, not because I decided that I don't care about those things anymore. It’s specifically because I got interested in the ways that market relationships could help me think through things about like the importance of recognizing and incorporating dissent within a consensus process. If we are supposed to be working on a consensus model, it's important to recognize that there is this place for people who break from this consensus if you can't reach a common goal. But also a number of thing like ways in which like stinking to very formulaic Implementations of- not just like we are getting some value out of this general assembly meeting for now, but like the general assembly is the form that free society will take. Being able to talk about a framework where there can be a number of prospective that you can take on, the monopolization of not only economic capital but social capital within this. I get interested in the market stuff precisely because I thought it helped integrate a lot of my concerns and the stuff that I had learned about corporate power and how it operated with this deepening of a commitment to the left-wing and social anarchist goals that I had.
AC: My next question was why do you think other people are joining?

CJ: I want to stress that anarchism as a whole has been growing very rapidly in importance, especially since the end of the cold war, since 1999. The rise of the global anarchist movement floats all boats. It's having a big impact on the social anarchists on one end and then on the other the small government libertarian movement who feel that there is something not quite right in what they have been getting. Now the let-libertarianism is emerging to bring people together from those two movements. As there are more anarchists there are more alternatives and we are providing something that's been speaking to a lot of people who feel that they have been isolated for a long time.

AC: What would you say are you most effective tools for getting the message out, informing people about left-libertarianism?

CJ: I am a print and internet guy. I don't think that's the be all and end all of this stuff. That's what I am good at. I have had a lot of success in just trying to engage people in conversation. I have a blog, the Center has a high traffic website -C4SS is specifically for people on the internet to stumble across but we also submit columns regularly to newspapers around the world. We typically get a few picked up every couple of month. We are trying to get the word out to conventional print media when we can. I do a lot of DIY publishing. So tabling like this and at other conventions with talks has been a big part for me. The second thing besides the deliberate recruiting stuff has been the connections I have made are really important through work-a day activism with a bunch of activist projects that I am engaged in with "Food Not Bombs" in Las Vegas, immigration freedom group out there. I have done some conference organizing; there is an anarcho-feminist influence that I helped with. This sort of work is drawing from a lot of different political perspectives, but broadly radical political perspectives. I think that is one of things that have been important and helpful in talking to people is showing up and doing work and showing that you care about this stuff and talking to people about it when they ask what my views are. Then they know. It is not a matter of preaching, just doing work and making human level connections with people.

AC: You were mentioning working with traditional right-wing libertarian movements; do you cooperate with any other organizations? Obviously here at PorcFest you are, but outside of PorcFest?

CJ: At times. Of course we interact kind of broadly. ALL was created for two purposes. One was to go out to events like this. Originally we went out to the Anarchist Bookfair. So we have connections with left-wing activist groups. Nick Ford was very active in a number of Occupy things similarly on the left. I guess right-wing libertarian groups, it depends. There are issues of cultural comfort zones, where we can productively work together. I don't want to be super
limited with who I can work with concerning cultural disagreements. But if it comes down to people who have very conservative cultural views that are being expressed in such a way that it is silencing other people that also affects me. That affects people that I think are important to work with. So that is one potential barrier for some folks and that is a barrier we are trying to overcome. I try to put a lot into talking with people and make it clear to people who have more socially conservative views in a language they can understand the concerns that are being raised, seeing if we work out some common space. The other significant barrier- there are some barriers that are too broad to cross. If someone is anti-immigrant then I can't work with them because that's a core issue for me and I have some friends who I want to work with who I can't work with if I am working with this. Also, the other potential hitch, that is related by somewhat different, are the folks that are interested in small government and government reform and Constitutionalism. This isn't necessarily a left-right thing. I think there are structural reasons why this leads to a more right-wing libertarian position, if that's what people are interest in. I am not interested in working with them. My goal is not to find ways to limit the state but ways to abolish it. I think the kinds of strategies they recommend for addressing the state are often counterproductive. If there is big focuses on elections or holding people legally to the Constitution that strikes me as a complete waste a time. It's also a complete waste of time that takes us to arguments involving a crappy nationalism for granted. That's not the basis that I want to start my politics from.

AC: You were just describing what groups you don't like working with. Do you consider yourself having an opposition?

CJ: My big enemy is the state and consolidated social power. I can think of groups that I like more and less. It's kind of like insider baseball shit. Honestly, there are some groups that I am more instinctively distancing myself from, but that has never been my big focus. I really do try and keep an eye on what I have the biggest problem with and the amount of time I want to focus it on, which is the state.

AC: How do you see the media portraying your activism?

CJ: I think it is extremely limited. Largely because of ignorance combined with structural- the news cycle is not conducive for giving serious coverage for people with serious political views. There are a couple of problems that pull into different directions. Firstly, the coverage of anarchism is largely just a grab bag. Most of the people doing reports on it have no idea what they are talking about. They will sort of the first thing on the internet they can find about it and start riffing on it. They will start talking about Black Blocers smashing windows, people start talking about Murray Rothbard, and there is no real attempt to get a real picture of what is going on. The other way things can go wrong is libertarianism when portrayed as a more conventional political movement, instead of as part of anarchist movement, it is consistently
portrayed as a movement of the right-wing and a movement focused on making a leaner and meaner state, rather than changing the state as such. Depending on where you get it from, you might get lucky and get some references about the war on drugs, but even that has dropped out now since the 90s. The typical view of libertarianism is that they will name some Republican. Like Rand Paul, Dick Armey. Secondly, you will hear something about taxes or some narrow view on government regulations, the idea is to let businesses do what they want instead of economic freedom for all us, which includes checking corporations. Basically, it becomes the think tank wing of the Republican Party in that presentation. This is partly an internal problem, as people don't own up to this, but it also partly a media problem. I would like it to be the case when someone hears libertarianism is peaceful anarchy, but even with political platforms, I would like the cluster of issues to be anti-war, pro-immigrant, pro-open borders particularly, radically pro-immigrant, in support of undocumented immigrants. Anti-drug war, anti-police state, anti-surveillance, and anti-bailout. So anti-government exercise in doling out privilege. That's not what we are getting in media presentations of it.

AC: Where do you find most of your support comes from?

CJ: We are sort of a fringe of the intersection between fringe movements, so it's tricky to generalize where this comes from, but we get a lot- It's not a movement exclusively of young people, but we tend to have more young people than older on average. It's generally people who are burnt out on or never saw an opening towards politics. It has been a major thing that we have something to offer. There is an alternative to electoral politics to make change and social transformation. There's been an interest with people engaged in the hacker and open source movement, in part because of these ethics of the open source movement have been very focused on grassroots liberation, consensus decision-making, really interesting stuff. Decentralization of authority and breaking down these monopolies of social and economic capital- that is broadly true of agorism and alternative trends that are emerging in libertarianism. As a whole, there has been a lot of interaction.

AC: Ok. Now I will go into a kind of word game where I will same something and then you tell me what it means for you. The first one is populism.

CJ: Populism can mean to mean either an important ethical commitment or a dodgy political strategy. As an individualist I would like to make a difference between trying to connecting with ordinary people and rejecting the preconceptions of the elite about ordinary people. Each one of us is incredible bizarre. We are all full of little weirdness that are incredibly hard to predict before we sit down and have a conversation with each other. I think ethically it is really important to focus on that and not to adopt stances that lay a lot of stress on this idea that most people are zombies or sheep or the problem that most people are too slow or stupid to get things done in their lives. So I actually try to emphasize that kind of anti-elitist attitude and
personal engagement as a political ethic towards any worthwhile political work. There's also populism in the sense of romanticizing the people as a mass that are not weird, that are the definition of normal because there are always more of them than of any other individual person, who you can say anything about without ever having to have talk to before. You know this distinction comes up on Occupy. We would have this discussion about whether we should be emphasizing whether we should be talking with people. So, I worked from Auburn Alabama and the stuff you would expect from southern folks, in particular the instinctive conservatism they were afraid of. Whether we could say sitting around in this GA without talking to anyone that, "Oh no, people aren't ready for that in Auburn." That's not something we should be doing. It will mess up our message and alienate. In Occupy that kind of stuff is annoying, when that stuff goes into the state, it's potentially lethal. You sort of now approaching and appealing to the most conformist and conservative aspect of people, while also rhetorically shoving them into an assimilating way of interacting with each other. That is a political strategy that is potentially dangerous and can be pushed into some ideas about the people that stop at the border or stop at the color of people's skin.

AC: What about Congress?

CJ: About Congress specifically? I think they're- the best they ever do is when they are useless and most of the time they are worse than that. I like it when the branches of government fight with each other because that stops them from getting stuff done, but beyond that... I don't think Congress is any more productive for political debate or change than other branches of government are. Although they may temporarily fight with the administration over something particular or if people invest a lot of energy to get new Congress folks to fight with them, on the whole they have an overwhelmingly amount of commonality in interests with the other branches of government than conflict. More or less inevitably, they are going to put on a show of some superficial disagreements while actually making sure the whole system functions smoothly. I was already a convinced anarchist at the time, but the thing that made me from being a stance of being indifferent about electoral politics to a much more hard line about anti-electoral policies was the 2006 election. You have this huge sweeping change of party in Congress, which is very obviously driven by rejection of the Bush administrations war policies. They were looking especially disastrous at the time and the police state stuff that goes along with the war policies. For two years, nothing at all happens for winding down, let alone ending, either of the major wars going on. You also have every one of those checks signed by the war signed by Nancy Pelosi from California and Harry Reid from Nevada. Of course if you need any further reinforcement of that, it becomes immediately clear that they weren't going to do anything serious to end the wars because the Bush administration said the only way you could do something was by putting your political capital at risk. They decided rather being tarred with that they used the anti-war sentimentality as a campaign issue in 2008. Our president, our
peace prize winning president, could become president. I got fundraising letters from Democratic for the Senate or House Campaign Committee, one of those two. I am specifically talking about putting all this money into getting a veto proof majority to try and end the war. They didn't need this majority because they just needed to stop signing the funding bills. That's utterly despicable. Morally horrifying.

AC: Grassroots movements- what do you think about those?

CJ: I think they're great. I would like more of them. It's hard work and nothing is guaranteed. There are all kinds of internal problems and difficulties, but if there is anything that will change this world it's them. What I would like to see is more of them and sees them grow to develop out into interesting points of agreement and also disagreement within them to produce interesting debates. The kinds of debates that help produce an autonomous women's liberation movement for example. I'd like to see a general move towards a fuller and more conscious recognition that the movement does not exist for the purpose of some further political goal but the development of the movement itself, creating the society we want to live in.

AC: What does "We the People" mean to you?

CJ: I can't say I am a fan. I recognize the impulse behind it, but the "we" is already putting my hackles up. I like consensus and agreement but I want there to be a place for you and me and our neighbor, not just "we." A compacted mass.

AC: Do you believe Americans should be responsible for their civil society, economy, and individual lives?

CJ: Sure. I don't have too much to say about that.

AC: What are your opinions of the founding fathers- Thomas Jefferson especially?

CJ: Thomas Jefferson I think was a beautiful writer and a scoundrel and horrible person. Personally, I don't care about the founder of states and these particular founders have a lot of blood on their hands, even when compared to others. There is a lot of philosophy there and interesting to talk about, but we have to remember that these people were just signatures on documents. They were real people with real lives that caused a lot of damage to enslave people. They also at times made things worse for them. I think the most genuine and productive ways to refer to them- I am more inclined to refer to them in ordinary conversation than dealing with libertarians- I don't want to sort of flatter the cultural tendency to idolize them. I think with a figure of Jefferson is to take him by challenging him on his own grounds. Like the views that William Lloyd Garrison made of the Declaration of Independence, this
glorious statement that you made, if you actually apply it consistently, completely undermines your political practice. We need to live up to the promise of it instead of putting a statue of you on a pedestal.

AC: How do you define progress?

CJ: With the caution that I don't think progress and regress are part of an inevitable narrative, one direction of history. When progress is made, I think it will mean an approach to freer and more equal, more mutual, more loving and weirder communities that allow more social space to work with each other. Avoid or minimize the relationships of dominance and dependency. Give people platforms for doing their own weird things and sharing their enthusiasms with others. Remove things that attempt to constrain or confine or silence that. Also, there should be more loving and compassionate communities that give ongoing concern to identify people who are suffering. One other thing - the greater we can progress in decentralization and dispersion, which means not only equality in the stuff that you and I have but also trying to work towards equalizing authority and social power.

AC: Ok. What would you consider more important - progress or tradition?

CJ: Oh, progress. Absolutely.

AC: Do you think ethics matter in politics or should matter?

CJ: I think ethics matters more than politics in every form of human action. The only politics that I think are worth pursuing are fundamentally shaped by ethical commitments. Part of my problem with electoral politics is the way people talk to each other around political campaigns. They line up into parties to vote and systematically shift the discourse away from any sensible discussion or concerns. If it turns out if everyone is equally shitty, there is no ethical concern in that.

AC: How would you define fairness in society? Do you think a thing can possible exist?

CJ: I think fairness mostly matters to relationships to people at a lower level. There are bigger structural issues but we should talk about how they affect people in their ordinary lives. Given that proviso, sure fairness is potentially really important ethical concern interconnected with other concerns. This is the difference between right and left wing libertarian groups. We want to suggest the importance of libertarian justice and beyond the immediate demands of transactional justice. Trying to look at the fairness of economic arrangements and whether the arrangements are exploitative.

AC: Just to change the theme a little bit - What is your opinion of globalization and how would you define it?
CJ: So, I was saying in my bio, I got into this through very unfortunately what was called the anti-globalization movement. That was not my understanding of it. That was not the understanding of my comrades. They are right now two major strands going on at the same time and running into each other. They are the globalization of resistance and the globalization of control. I am very much for resistance; I really put a lot of insistence on diversity and weirdness of individuals. I like meeting individuals from everywhere. I think we all should work together and contribute together. The development of these global networks and what people are doing all around the world in Greece or in Oakland or Egypt or elsewhere have been really formative for the movement. Simultaneously, there is this neo-liberal global organization that is expressed through the WTO and a number of these so-called free trade agreements. It often makes uses of libertarian rhetoric to justify itself, like breaking down walls and stuff. When you look at what they are actually doing, they're sort of putting gates on some of the walls, but the gates are still managed by bureaucrats and corporate influence. They are also putting up new walls. It allows globalization of capital movements and corporate governance. Meanwhile immigration restrictions are only being ratcheted it up over the past twenty years, ordinary working people can't physically move from one side of the map to the other. Simultaneously, there is a lot of stuff baked into these agreements that significantly serve government cartels of copyright recognition restrictions to the insane levels of the United States. It's a shift in strategies in corporate power. Formerly, the big thing was control over local manufacturing, and now the important thing is now based on other stuff, like the control of money and information flows. They are realigning the barriers. It is really important to challenge that.

AC: Do you think outsourcing is serious problem or a transition to a new economy?

CJ: I guess it could be both. Yea, I understand why people get upset about it. The problem is not that foreigners have a job now; the problem is the ownership structure. You have these concentrations of wealth, where they can systematically dick people over by moving resources around. One way is pitting foreign workers and domestic workers against each other. Ultimately, the answer is going to be breaking down the monopolies on production and distribution that capitalist corporations have. Having bottom level economies not mediated by banks and regulatory committees.

AC: What actually concerns you the most about the state of the world?

CJ: Capitalism, war and violence against women and LGTBQ people. Structured dominance and victimization.

AC: What is your opinion between piracy and property rights?

CJ: IP piracy in particular?
AC: Yes.

CJ: I defend individual property ownership. I think copyrights sometimes have nothing to do with that. I am completely opposed to them. All forms of intellectual property. It's not legitimate base for property, rather it locks down the property of others. When someone makes an unauthorized copy, they haven't taken away anything that I have. They have just used their own property and reconfigured it into a new form. I think it is really key to capitalism right now. They aren't dependent on the ownership of factories; they are dependent on the ownership of information flows. There's no legal solution right now, no attention being given. The only solution is a culture of brazen piracy.

AC: How do you see left-libertarianism growing into the future?

CJ: Hopefully by expanding and growing and connecting with a lot of other movements. These were ideas that no one was talking about when I started. There was always somebody who was writing about individualist anarchism, but the day-to-day stuff was basically jack squat.

AC: What do you see as roadblocks for left-libertarians?

CJ: We are reviving a conversation, but we are also trying to start new conversations between people who haven't talked to each other in a long time. So, I think there is a significant culture shock. It can be productive, but it can also be a barrier. People who are used to thinking of people as their enemies, like "look at those hippies over there." You have to think about how you are going to communicate. Why preconceptions are not necessarily correct. Part of the reason why we have had a disproportionate influence on young people is because they don't have a lot of stored up rhetoric about what libertarianism is supposed to be about. I think that the movement has been disproportionately young, white, and male. This needs to change if we are going to continue and grow. There are barriers that all libertarians and anarchists are facing with respect to the surveillance state. Efforts to repress anti-statist activism-that is going to be the big one for any resistance movement.

AC: I just have a last set of questions here. What is your opinion of Occupy?

CJ: Well, I am a participant. I have a biased positive opinion. I was involved in the Occupy movement locally where I lived in Auburn and I have also done long distance tech work for Occupy Sandy.

AC: The Tea Party, what is your opinion of that?

CJ: It's not my thing. When the Tea Party was first announced in 2009 I was sort of initially more positive, let's say less negative than I am now. I think tax day protests are good things to do. That's one of the things I like about libertarians. They try to call attention to the way in
which people are dispossessed by the state. They are put into unwanted structural projects through the tax system. I am all for protesting taxes and I was happy to see protests against the bailouts. It became clear early on that the sort of the base line level was going to remain conservative and a lot of the people within the Tea Party in particular- there were very overt moves by the Republican Party. They were successful in capturing that electoral base and energizing people to vote. I want to be fair. It’s a big mess of people; there isn’t one group of the Tea Party. There are a number of groups that are less like political machines. I don’t look for much progress from them at this point. I think the progressive narrative demonizing them- they complain that it is this bastion of libertarianism. The problem is they are pushing crappy anti-liberal politics and other things along with their ant-tax rhetoric. If their main problem with the Republican structure is focused on the Tea Party, I think that is delusional. The primary effect of the Tea Party is to knock out incumbent Republicans.
DC: So basically, Christopher Cantwell wrote an article.

AC: Can you just say who he is?

DC: Christopher Cantwell is a former Free State Project participant. He builds himself as an anarchist, atheist, and asshole. Philosophically, everything that he says is correct, but the way that he presents himself that polarizes people. He has a large anti-fan base, a lot of people who disassociate themselves from him. The controversy was last year was that he had written an article about treating law enforcement offices and federal agents as everyone else. Meaning that, if a police office or a government agent initiates force against you, you have the right to defend yourself—even if that means using force against that government agent. In other words, treating that government agent no differently than any civilian. The FSP got nervous and asked him to retract the article. He refused. So they removed him from the participant list and banned him from all FSP events. He has used this to gain more publicity for himself. There is a growing faction of libertarians that is against the Free State Project. Myself, I think the ban was in poor form because he was still talking about defensive force. In his view and mine as well—full disclosure, I am a fan of his. We met on several occasions and we are friendly with each other—it was PR move. They don’t want to misconstrued as advocating cop killing. They thought it would hurt their public image to have this person associated with them and most likely hurt their corporate donors. No corporation or foundation will want to give money to someone who is a cop killer. That was the controversy. So I proposed the idea to Jack Shimek about having Chris Cantwell come as a speaker and have him on a panel about the use of force. So a few months progressed, it was actually Nick Ford, who doesn’t like Chris Cantwell, who posted on the Alt-Expo Facebook page under the Alt-Expo monitor, when someone asked if Chris Cantwell was going to be a speaker at Alt-Expo, he basically said fuck Chris Cantwell. So Cantwell, took a screenshot and ran with it. He said the Alt-Expo has sold out and the FSP has coopted Alt-Expo and it’s time to create an Alt-Alt-Expo.

AC: Tell me what’s different this year between Alt-Expo and the FSP?

DC: Well, this year I think as a preventive measure, the FSP has granted Alt-Expo access to one of their larger tents from 12 noon to 7 pm every day. This has been construed by many of us in Alt-Expo as a way of censoring us. If our talks are in a FSP tent, it becomes a FSP event, which
Chris Cantwell would be unwelcomed. To me, bans and unwelcomes sound like the same things. It’s semantics. Their words were, he is unwelcome.

AC: Have they tried to change anything else in the program?

DC: No. It was suggest to us, strongly suggest, that we have not any discussion on the use of force or any divisive topics. Isn’t libertarianism itself a divisive issue? Isn’t everything we do a divisive issue that divides us from the mainstream drone mentality.

AC: Was there any overt state pressure on the Freedom State Project? About the article?

DC: No.

AC: Do we know if anyone has even read the article?

DC: There is no evidence. I think the FSP wanted to get ahead of it before the rest of the population read it and had a chance to react. I think they were a little too quick to react. They overreacted.
AC: Can you go a little bit into what your activism is?

RM: Right now I am feeling everything out. I have a lot of issues that I care about. My biggest thing is this top story about what life is like in the community. My show, Rebel Love Show, is a YouTube show, podcast. There are so many amazing people in this community. We have access to all these amazing and fascinating people. Once a week we usually have one or two individuals on the show. We might talk about how they got here. It’s always fascinating how they discovered this. It is like the bottom of the rabbit hole. It took them six years of going through the political rabbit hole and finally finding true liberty. So I have to be with these people. They also talk about what like is like or what is going on in the community, pretty much whatever comes up. I pitch it as the Joe Rogan experience for the Free State Project. We just have a chit chat about what’s going on or we go around PorcFest. You can have conversations with people about the use of force. I don’t know if you went to the Alt-Lounge last night? That is so inside baseball. Not only are we a very philosophical people, we are a logical people. Something like going down- where else would you see that? That’s the type of conversations we have day to day. For me, I used to follow all this stuff online, to see what is going on, and documenting and filming that to me is just huge. The Liberty Movement, let’s be honest, around the world, there’s not that many of us. In New Hampshire, whatever you might think about the Free State Project, it’s about the community, people coming together, to actually live together. I don’t feel like a crazy person anymore. I feel like normal person. That is the biggest selling point about coming here, to feel like a normal person. But activist wise, I kind of balance it with my life. Some people go a little hardcore and do a lot and burnout fast. I am trying not to do that. What I do is, I dedicate at least one day for going out and doing something. Last time I did three things because sometimes counter-events happen. You got to go with the punches. In case of last week, there is a court a block and half from my apartment. I can got out there and hand out pamphlets. We had some pretty bad interactions with the country sheriffs, but hopefully I will get arrested at some point for practicing the first amendment. That could happen in front of the court house. We document it and take photos of me handing stuff out and we talk about it. I am going to make a video about it at one point. I try and support other activists. If there is something big going on in the state I try and go there. Do you know the story with Rich Paul? He was a pot activist. Long story short- Keene politicians hate activists in Keene and they try to do anything to get them arrested. He got arrested for selling pot. The state police had the federal terrorist task force working with them.
It wasn’t a federal investigation but they got assistance from the Feds to investigate Rich Paul. They actually used a heroin dealer, they gave him full immunity, to get to Rich Paul. They wanted him to wear a wire in the cap. Long story short- there are multiple clubhouses around the state owned by Free Staters. It’s a place where we can hang out that isn’t a bar or a restaurant. Manchester has over five hundred activists. There were actually two areas we can go to if we want. The Feds wanted Rich Paul to wear a wire after selling pot and said they won’t charge him if he did. He said that he wasn’t going to wear a wire, not going to snitch. Selling a plant is not a crime. He could have taken a plea deal and serve no time and that would have been it. Probation for a little bit, but that would have been it. He decided to take it all the way to trial. New Hampshire is the only state in the union where jury nullification is a law passed through the state house thanks to Free Staters. It’s an actual defense that has to be recognized by a judge. During his case, the judge tried to do everything he could to undermine that defense. He told the jurists not to follow it. Fast forward- last Wednesday his appeal- they had the case thrown out because the judge was breaking the law, it went to the New Hampshire Supreme Court. I don’t know any other New Hampshire liberty activist had a case that went all the way up to the New Hampshire Supreme Court. To me, that was huge. They were just hearing the appeal, they weren’t going to make a decision. Friday, in Manchester, the police have to notify publicly that they are doing a DUI check point. If you are a believer in the Constitution, which I am- I will say this. I am fully open. The only time I agreed with George W. Bush is when he said the Constitution is only a god damn piece of paper. With that being said, I am a believer in liberty. Just because it was written down on a piece of paper, doesn’t mean anything. I am a free man because of my humanity, not because someone wrote it down on a piece of paper. At any rate, the fourth amendment, the right to be free from unlawful search and seizures, a check point is where everyone has to go through, there is no probable cause. They don’t have a warrant. It’s an illegal checkpoint. The fourth amendment was there on purpose because during the Revolutionary War, the British were searching colonists left and right. There is a reason why it’s in there. So what we do is- there is a video. If you go to YouTube, a lot of activists are putting videos up. We did a bunch of videos of us, twenty or thirty of us, holding signs “Turn Now, Police Check Point Ahead.” People were honking, turning around, saying thank you. It’s near the bar scene in downtown New Hampshire. We had people shaking our hands, offering us money to do this. There was a moment where the police tried to arrest us. We pretty much responded by saying “What are you doing? We are trying to help people and your trying to stop us. What are you trying to do to us here?” That’s just one week. That was my week last week, if you want to know my activism.

AC: Ok

RM: Yea. I am a firm believer in New Hampshire independence. If the colonies can separate, do sedition and treason against the crown, tired of people from a faraway land controlling us
and want to break free, why can’t New Hampshire do it from a faraway government in DC. I
don’t want any violence and I am a peaceful person. I don’t want a shooting war. The idea
though of New Hampshire independence should be talked about. So we are going around to
multiple fourth of July parades and firework shows handing out “Foundation for New
Hampshire State Independence” literature. Maybe we can live freer without them in our lives.
Personally, I would like not to have the state exist, but if we can at least get rid of the huge
tyrannical level that use my money to spy on me and kill other people on the other side of the
planet? I have an issue with that. If I can rid of that out of my life, I would be a much happier
person.

AC: Inside, you were talking about getting the message out. Do you find it hard to get the
message out to people who aren’t libertarians?

RM: Yes. Depends, however that is not my activism. There are plenty of people great at waking
people up. Larken Rose is here. See his YouTube videos. Stefan Molyneux. There are people
great at waking people up, reaching out to people. That’s not my activism. I am not the right
person to wake people up. That’s not my place. My place that I feel I can do something is
reach out to people who have already awaken. People outside the matrix, at the bottom of the
rabbit hole, who see the world for what it is. They may feel alone. You don’t need a lot people
here to make change because the population is low. You have a bigger percentage of people
here. The Liberty Movement, around the world, is only ten million, at this level only a million.
We are so stretched thin, that people need to be here to see what’s going on. It makes a
difference. I see so many foreigners here, from Israel, from France. My activism is very niche.
It’s not to wake people up.

AC: Ok. How do you see the movement developing in the future?

RM: I see great hope. Technology in general is huge. Ten-fifteen years ago- we would have
needed a TV studio, a satellite uplink, and go through all the hoops that you need to be on TV.
All you need now is a microphone and a camera and I can put it on YouTube and iTunes. I
already have my own movie studio set on something tiny. Everyone has access now. I can take
a video on my phone now and go around and load it up on YouTube. We have the technology
with us. That gives me hope. Technology is allowing people to communicate freely, especially
on the internet. I am not the same person because of the internet. Who is? I use the internet
to make me a better person. Besides libertarianism and philosophy, I use the internet to
liberate my body. I used to be a big guy, over three hundred pounds. Two, three years ago I
was a forty eight inch waist, now I am a thirty two and down to one hundred and seventy five
pounds. I wouldn’t have been able to do that without the internet, because I was finding
information on different diets and watching YouTube videos on what to do. I was watching
religiously for a month how to make recipes. Teaching myself how to cook, because I used to
just eat fast food. Finally eating healthy- technology is going to free the world if used properly. Some people use technology to better themselves, than there are people who use technology to dumb themselves down. That’s sad, but I used technology to make myself a better person.

AC: I just have two last questions. What is your opinion on the Tea Party and Occupy?

RM: I think their hearts are in the right place. If you watch our last show, Teresa had an interesting journey. She was a Mitt Romney supporter, who then went to Occupy, organizing Occupy Boston, and then she discovered the Free State Project. She jumped all around until she got here. They are both against the control of stuff, I am all about freedom and stuff. Their hearts are in the right place. However, with regards to the Tea Party, everyone thinks their government is the worst, but there are worse governments out there. North Korea’s government is a lot worse than the United States. That being said, this government exists. It is a tyrannical government and has been for a long time, my whole life. I feel like I am a slave to the state. They watch everything that I do. Everything is regulated. Everything is taxed. They are my oppressors. My problem with the Tea Party people is there are like, “Let’s restore the Republic.” So they are waving American flags, and I am like, “You’re hearts are in the right place, but why would wave the flag of your enemy. That’s their flag!” You’re embracing your oppressors. If you are going to fly a flag, make it a Gadsden Flag. That was the protect flag that the colonists used against the British. When I see the Tea Party waving that flag, I get it. They are pro-patriot, pro-America. I am a human being and I think everyone is a human being. I just happen to be born on this plantation known as the United States of America. It’s not my fault I was born here and vice versa. There are so many people in the Tea Party that are so tribalistic. I can’t stand tribalism. I remember when I went to a Tea Party rally in Chicago and the people were like let’s get rid of taxes. And some others were like, “We need some taxes. We need to build the roads.” You’re advocating taxes at an anti-tax rally? There shouldn’t be any taxes. You don’t have the right to steal my income. There were debates about taxation at a Tea Party rally. Those were not the people I wanted to associate because of that.

AC: And with Occupy?

RM: Occupy- People who see us can think we are hopeless romantics about living free and what not. I think Occupy has this notion that government can fix all the ills of corporatism. I don’t think they understand that corporations only exist because of the government. They have a corporation status because of the government. There is a reason why the CEO of any company is not held responsible for the actions of that corporation. It’s the “corporation” that is held responsible. In a free society, you are responsible for your own actions. In a free society, corporations wouldn’t exist then. That’s not something Occupy gets. They say, “We should just tax everything so we can have this.” No. Sometimes, I am very communistic. I am huge on the anti-war stuff. I don’t want people being killed in my name. The anti-war movement was so
huge under Bush and then Obama comes in. Then it goes away. Obama in my opinion is more of a war hawk than Bush. He went to war in Libya without constitutional authority. Bush went to Iraq without it too, but at least he had some sort of vote. Obama didn’t even do that. Bombing is still war, even if you don’t have troops on the ground. You are killing people. We are killing people in multiple countries. It’s all over the place. I hate saying “we.” It’s them. I am not associating with them. I ain’t killing people.
AC: My first question would be to describe agorism and anarchism.

JR: Well, anarchism means no government, I don’t quite agree with that because my government is God. My conscious. It speaks to me through every choice I make. I always try and make the moral choice. Everything I do, how I spend my money, my time, who I spend my time with. Every choice, it’s required to be done the right way. You can find yourself between two bad choices, and you got no choice to extricate yourself to good choices, but it’s not necessarily a choice between two evils. If it’s thrust upon you, there is still a moral choice, often more than two.

AC: Agorism?

JR: Same thing. You aren’t governed by some mythological, earthly institution that ties it with people with no morals that use coercion and force upon you to advance the so-called ideals of that earthly organization.

AC: You described what they are. How would you see people? Do you think they understand what they mean?

JR: Absolutely not. People around here do. To some extent. The general population, no.

AC: Do you find it hard to enlighten people on what they mean?

JR: Henry David Thoreau taught me about the majority of one. Gandhi said “be the change you wish to see.” St. Francis said “preach constantly as words are unnecessary.” But they all say the same thing. Set an example. So you set an example with your own life. Quakers dance around this by saying “being the light. Look for light in others. Look for the light of God.” Everyone plays around with nice sounding things, but they don’t live it. Quakers have license plate, they have house and pay property taxes. Martin Luther, the normal accepted English translation of “A Mighty Fortress,” verse 3, which sometimes isn’t even printed, the last half of that verse says “let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also, the body they may kill, God proved the Bible still. The Kingdom is forever. Choosing between yourself soul, extended life into eternity, and goods on Earth, even family, you are constrained to make a moral choice. Does your family have you in front of a firing squad because they are trying to coerce you? You have to let that happen because everybody who is innocent, is saved. So if you compromise your principles to
save them, you compromise them, you compromise your principles, you compromise your place at judgement.

AC: This is just a side question. How do you feel about Gnosticism? Christian Gnosticism? Early form of Christianity?

JR: Oh, the Gnostics. A lot of them were misguided. The southern France thing?

AC: Oh, I am thinking even earlier.

JR: The Greeks?

AC: Yea, the Byzantines. What I was referring to was the idea that instead about making Christianity about sin and repentance, it was about ignorance and enlightenment. That’s what they saw Christianity as.

JR: Well I see Jesus Christ. It works into a good myth, if you take God is love, to work with that. Fine we have a figure head, whatever you can learn a lesson from. To hold that as a real person though, that someone died on the cross and rose from the dead, I prefer to think that Christ never died, Christ is with us, the least of us. The beggar on the street- when you meet the beggar on the street and you haven’t done write by him, you have trampled all over him. I failed myself one weekend. I was in Atlanta at a dance weekend. There was this obnoxious guy we once hosted. He was a bad dancer and a bad guest. We were out in the lobby and he said, “I might get the station master at the bus station to let me sleep on a bench tonight.” My wife was off in Thailand. I had an empty house, I could have offered to him to stay, but I didn’t. I didn’t realize until Sunday night when he was gone that I had failed the test. That’s an enduring memory that I don’t fail the test again.

AC: Going back to what you were saying about setting an example, what do you see as an impediment to setting that example?

JR: Worrying about cars and property. You’ve got to focus on not being caught by these impediments. I have a house stolen from me, cars stolen from me, by the state. I had bicycles and trailers stolen from me by people. I now have had twenty three bicycles. If someone steals my bicycle I don’t get home so easily, but all in all, you can’t be ruled in any way by possessions or pain or anything that can coerce you. And it doesn’t have to be the state. I got an issue with edema, congestion, I have high blood pressure, I just had my first normal reading in years, which is almost half of what it was last week. If I let those type of things coerce me into to seeking medical attention from any established doctors, that would contradict my principle. I would see an alternative doctor, which is what I have been doing. Cooking that oil, banning carbs. I have principles, right or wrong, but they are mine principles. That is what I try to stick
to. I feel that a seventeen year old or a fifteen year old, when he makes his choices on what he believes, as a thirty five year old he would never make those choices. When he makes them at age fifteen, when he believes in it, he is correct. He can’t find fault with what he believes in. You can’t judge slave owners by today standards, even if we know they were wrong and we think they should have known that. We can’t. It’s sitting in judgement. We can only judge ourselves, we can’t judge others. I preach constantly and I try to teach Quakers what that means, and no one has gotten that yet. It doesn’t mean I will stop. I will still my truth. My activism is to get arrested. I don’t just go and hold a sign. I don’t pay taxes. I haven’t paid taxes in forty years. I have been to the second district court of appeals and won. I get arrested for no license plates on my car. I have a homemade plate. That’s ok. It’s goods, they steal—that’s their problem. I don’t let it be my problem. I just talked to a man from Maine about child support being taking away from him. I said, “Well, the judge is trying to piss you off. Rise above it by not being pissed off.” “Well, I can’t do this and that.” “So?! You weren’t meant to be doing those things. Living by your principles is far more valuable to your peace of mind. Mental peace is a gift from God for doing the right thing. If your constant not doing the right thing you’re always agitated and not peaceful. You can only be peaceful by doing the right thing.

AC: Ok. I’ll just ask a few questions. Word associations. Just tell me what you think. What do you think when I say “We the People?”

JR: Do you have a mouse in your pocket. There is no “we.” If there happens to be an agreement between two people, that doesn’t make you a “we” in any other sense than us being human beings. We are all individuals. We are born alone, we die alone, we face judgement alone.

AC: Who is God for you?

JR: God is love. It’s right here on this t-shirt. Everything that is loving is a God. Everything that is not loving is not God.

AC: My next question would be what do you think of Congress?

JR: Sycophants, cockroaches, leaches, thieves, murderers. Anybody who is a rent seeker is committing murder. It’s like the Wizard of Oz- “Don’t look behind the curtain.” Well, you have to look behind the curtain. You don’t look at a government program and say, “Oh, that’s good.” And that’s the bell curve. You have to look at the middle. Of to the edges, people are dying. They can’t afford their heat. They are being thrown in jail in massive numbers. It’s all propaganda and lies. Every word that issued by a spokesman or program is a lie. You just have to look and you will find that lie. Think outside the box, all the time. They want to build the box.
AC: My next question would be how would you look at the founder fathers?

JR: George Washington led the army against the Whiskey Rebellion, the farmers. Why did he do that? There was a two tier tax system. One lower tax for the Whiskey manufacturers over a certain quantity and a much higher tax for the competitors. What happened at Mount Vernon? Slaves were making whiskey and he was going to personally benefit from the lower tax structure. So, Hamilton talked him into. We are told he was reluctant but he was the first and last president to have led an army. Most of the people deserted. They paid them even though the deserted! So hundreds of dollars were going to soldiers even though they didn’t do what he was supposedly hired to do. God bless them for deserting. God curse them for accepting money for it.

AC: Then there is John Adams. He is pretty...

JR: He was a real reasonable guy! His rotundancy. (Laughing) Yes. Sam Adams too! He wanted to hang the people who led Shay’s Rebellion. Why did Shay’s Rebellion happen? What do I think of the founding fathers? They were in it for themselves. Every way. Nothing good comes from violence. Unless your opening a jelly jar.

AC: Ok. Tradition versus progress: do you think one is more important than the other?

JR: I think they’re both wrong. Tradition is a collection of bad practices and progressivism is replacing them with unknown, untried processes that will just hurt somebody. It’s controlling other people. The worst bane to humanity is control freaks. I call them control freaks/bullies. Whenever I get on the internet and I see what would you change in this world, I always say get rid of the bullies.

AC: To go a little further into that, do you think every individual has the right to define their own lives and society, but also the responsibility to do it themselves?

JR: No, I don’t believe that at all. I have two commandments. Thou shall not use force and coercion on someone and one shall not sit on your ass when force and coercion is used on another. You are obliged to be that good Samaritan. You are violating all sorts of morality by ignoring it. Silence is the voice of complicity. I hold myself to that and I hope to offer an example so that others can form an opinion on that. But I won’t force anybody to pay attention others. That is their own choice.

AC: Ok. Fairness-how do you envision it? Do you think it is possible?

JR: I think it’s wrong to envision fairness because you are trying to impose your ideas on someone else. What someone else thinks is fair, if they think it is fair, they are right. If they think it is not fair, they are making an immoral decision and there will be consequences for that.
But I am not going to impose that consequence. God will do that. It’s not my choice. If someone else does believe what they are doing is right and I believe it is wrong, then it is really wrong. I can be pretty sure. I believe in private justice. I believe if someone does rape your child, you go the right to expiate that rage that is within you. Killing him. It’s not my problem. I don’t want public jails. That makes me possible complicit in immoral behavior. If someone else is wrong about the rapist or took the wrong action, that’s their problem. I don’t want it.

AC: My next question is what is globalization for you?

JR: I believe in a free market, which means no position of limited liability for corporations. That’s equal. You make someone not responsible for their choices, that opens the flood gates to BP spilling oil, Exxon Valdez. That is still polluting up there. Some clean up. Or ship captains trying to impress a woman so he crashes a cruise ship on rocks. Or a Korean captain… He was a jerk. But it was the company that build those extra cargo things on top!! And there going after these crew members who simply acted in fear! And somehow things are better because we’ve done something. I am so opposed to corporations. I believe in individuals. I am a pantheist really. I believe that God is distributed.

AC: Do you see modern technology as a boon for society?

JR: I don’t see Monsanto as a boon. That’s modern technology. There’s technology that improves people’s lives. Electricity improves people’s lives. There is a lot of benefit. It extends lives. There’s a lot of bad technology too. Technology can be misused. Again, it’s the responsibility of the individual to make moral choices.

AC: You were mentioning Facebook before- do you think there is a balance between social media and privacy?

JR: I am careful about what I give up. I preach constantly on Facebook. I share what I think will be of moral value to others. I comment when I see my friends making mistakes. I don’t ban anybody because they constantly say dumb things. I ban websites from my Facebook.

AC: You were mentioning before how you were hoping the revolution wasn’t going to become violent. How do you see the revolution continuing into the future?

JR: I believe in freedom and anarchy and agorism as solving problems. Peace and love is really where it is. Violence makes things worse. I am going to live my life peacefully. My responsibility is to set a good example. Beyond that, it’s up to each person to face judgement on their own. No predictions, only wishes.
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