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Interview with Bill Bowling (audio)

Heather Oriana Petrocelli
Portland State University

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Narrator: Bill Bowling (**BB**)

Interviewer: Heather O. Petrocelli (**HP**)

Date: April 25, 2011

Place: Northwest Film Center in Portland, OR

Transcribed by Heather Petrocelli February/March 2012

Audited by Rhiannon Cates, January 2014

Semi-Verbatim Transcript

Bill Bowling
April 25, 2011

HP: This is Heather Oriana Petrocelli, interviewing Bill Bowling on April 25, 2011 in Portland, Oregon at the Northwest Film Center.

We'll start. Bill, do I have permission to record you for the Center for the Moving Image Oral History?

BB: You do!

HP: Thank you. So, the first question. What is your full name?

BB: My name is William Andrew Bowling, Jr.

HP: Where and when were you born?

BB: I was born in Chicago on the second of April 1943.

HP: A belated "Happy Birthday!"

BB: Thank you.

HP: Could you talk a little bit about, briefly, about your higher educational background, and how you basically got to PSU [Portland State University] and CMI [Center for the Moving Image]?

BB: I graduated from Lake Oswego High School in 1962, went to the University of Oregon's Honors College for a couple of years. I left there to hitchhike around the country, and do various, kind of rebellious, things. I came to Portland State for one quarter in the fall of 1965, and then I think I went off into Vista in Chicago, or something. Then I went off, eventually, to Knox College in Illinois; then I went to San Jose State briefly. Then I went to Georgia State University, and finally came back to Oregon about 1968, when I began sitting in on Andries's classes and the [PSU] Film Committee screenings. Then I probably kinda hung out as a loose cannon in Portland, until maybe '70, when I came back to school and took various classes; and in about '72 I took a film class from Tom Taylor and it really changed my life. Then I just got into film, and then I, from maybe '73 through '75 I was very close to Andries and a student with him, but I was also Tom's assistant in the film lab at the Center for the Moving Image, and taught, times when Tom wasn't there. Then in '75 I went to Hollywood for the summer, and basically it's a long story, but I didn't get back. I didn't come back for a long time, and then I got a Master's Degree in another field in '91. [Pause] I came back because I never graduated. Partly, I didn't want to graduate, because you could keep using the equipment if you didn't graduate, and I came back for one term, I think in '79, to get my requirements for a degree, and ended up with a Bachelor's Degree in '79.

HP: Did they have actual degrees attached to the Center for the Moving Image?

BB: No. They had a... I got a degree in General Studies with a specialty in film, but I'm not sure the "film" part was ever on any official document.

HP: When you got a Master's in '91 in what field did you do that?

BB: In Marriage, Family, and Child Therapy.

HP: Interesting... just going back to your years of hitchhiking and having been to colleges around the states, was film ever anything in your purview at that time?

BB: Never directly for me, except we were all fascinated by film in the late 60's and early 70's, mostly European film.

HP: And then you said when you came back, I believe you said, in '68 or '69...?

BB: Yeah. Yeah.

HP: So the Center for the Moving Image started in '69 but you potentially were seeing stuff in '68 and before, so what did Deinum have going at that time?

BB: Well, I remember the screenings more than who they were sponsored by, and I think they were probably sponsored by the Portland State Film Committee. They were Friday and Saturday nights, in 75 Lincoln Hall, and they were just the great European films of the new wave, mostly. There were a lot of European films. We would go see those, and this was kind of an outgrowth of Deinum's classes, whether he was directly involved or not. The first time I remember—I think it might even have been in '65, but if not it was '68—I still remember thinking it was very cool, going to some screening in there, in this huge room full of people, and apparently people were drinking wine in there, and a wine bottle started rolling down under everyone's seats... "clunk, clunk, clunk, clunk" and for like a 22-year old, we thought that was pretty cool.

HP: That still happens at 5th Ave. [Both laughing] So basically when you were at PSU and you are going to these, potentially, the Film Committee sponsored screenings, how did you become aware of the Center for the Moving Image, known as CMI?

BB: Well, I don't know if I was *exactly* aware of the organization; it was more that Deinum was very famous, and I took classes from Deinum, but I didn't particularly think of myself as a filmmaker. I wasn't at that point taking any production classes; in fact, I was taking Sociology and Psychology, mostly. And Deinum was just a very fiery, interesting person—and you were spellbound by him, and so it was very great. It was also an opportunity to have some exposure to what you could call a European intellectual, and it was unusual for most of us, being children of the

suburban 60's to run into that, and so it was quite stimulating. And then eventually... I can't remember really when it was, maybe '72 or '73, I took a filmmaking class from Tom Taylor, and that's when things really changed, when I thought I might be interested in myself doing it.

HP: And you said you became Tom's assistant?

BB: I did.

HP: How did that come about?

BB: He had a, uh... We could get a work-study job... and the first year, I can't quite remember how it happened. There were like five of us that were doing the work-study. It was in the basement of Lincoln Hall, and we would all have so many hours we would run the film lab, which meant checking out equipment, keeping the editing area open, and working keeping a little shop going there. I must have been good because some way, within a term or two, Tom gave me all the... everyone else disappeared, and I did the whole thing, and I did that for two years. I did that down below, when it was in the basement. Then we moved up to a room called 310 Lincoln Hall, that was our office, and our lab, and everything, and I did that. I was the only one doing that that second year.

HP: Just out of curiosity... so 75 Lincoln Hall is where they would do exhibition and 310 Lincoln Hall was where CMI eventually had its offices?

BB: Not quite. 75 Lincoln Hall was where all the films were shown, both for the Film Committee and for Andries's classes. And he had had that building... he got the University to reconstruct the building so it'd have a fully professional-style projection room—a silenced projection room, with the projectors up there, with a good throw to the screen. What 310 was... 310, if you go up there now, I think it's the Dean's office or something... but it was two rooms on the northeast corner of the top floor. One room we had as our classroom and screening. We had a little division there for the projector to be silenced, behind some glass. Then the outer room, the first room you came into, we had divided into an editing workstation; and then there was an equipment room where

equipment was kept, and there was a hallway down where Tom Taylor had an office, and we had some smaller, more private editing rooms there. Andries, particularly, never had anything to do with that. Andries had his office I think in Neuberger Hall, and he would teach his classes, and they were in different areas. Tom was the production, which had to do with all this equipment and stuff. And, of course, Andries was theory and showing films. He just taught his classes and had his office space. He very rarely came to the production facility.

HP: Going back to your time as Tom Taylor's assistant and working with all the equipment, can you remember or describe some of the equipment you had? Was it a lot of equipment? Did you have a little equipment?

BB: Well, there were two kinds. Tom had arranged some way to get some 16mm equipment; at least one Bolex, maybe two, I can't quite remember. That's the standard for most 16mm shooting. He had got, some way, what's called an Auricon, which was a BIG camera that had, actually, the ability to record direct sound on an optical... I can't remember... to record sound two ways: optically and magnetically. It could record actually in the camera body; but more likely we used something called a Magnasync that was a synchronized, exactly 24 frames a second sound recording box this big [uses hands], where you would sync the sound, put the sound on later. So we had that for making it, but you always started with 8mm cameras, and we had about eight or ten of them. They were mostly Bolex, and a couple of newer ones, I think, with some zooms. They might have even been Japanese or something, not quite sure, maybe French.

Anyway, it wasn't even Super 8, it was 8mm, and that was how you learned to make the film. You were given a little roll, taught how to thread it in *there*, and take it out *there*, and the budget of the CMI let them send that out to probably Technifilm in Northwest Portland to get them processed, and they came back a few days later, and you actually got a black-and-white film, 8mm film.

HP: For the equipment, was it strictly available to PSU students or was it open to the community at all?

BB: No, just to PSU students, just [those] registered for the production class, for Tom's class, yeah. The only other piece of this puzzle is there was a guy named Lyle Mettler in those days, whom Andries had hired to teach television, and he taught a television video class on the fifth floor of Neuberger Hall, that some of us took, and he was kind of a television-mentality guy, who never really got into the theory that Andries was interested in. And then, I remember Andries being upset because one day Lyle Mettler quit. He had apparently had inherited some money, and he didn't need a job anymore. Andries was unhappy that he...what did he say... I can't remember... something like: "Well, he should have told me he was going to inherit the money." [Chuckling] ...some reason... he was *very* upset this guy could actually quit on him like that.

HP: What, just for clarification, what years were you doing production assistant work?

BB: It was '74-'75 for sure, and I think it was '73-'74, but it might have been '72-'73, and then I took some time to go to California or something. I can't quite remember. Those were the years. Then I left Portland for California in June of 1975.

HP: You said for LA, right?

BB: For LA, mm-hmm.

HP: I was just trying to see if you had anything to do with "The Seventh Day" production.

BB: No. It was going on, and I was in those political activities, but I wasn't any part of making that film.

HP: Going back to Deinum since he was the hook that seemed to get you into CMI, can you describe his teaching style?

BB: Yeah, sure. Well, he was always casual, and he was a great storyteller, and he would go usually... the classes weren't in huge rooms...they were usually in these... I remember... these little amphitheater rooms—most of them, I think, in Cramer Hall. You would go to the film, and

the task always, in the film, for the students, was to do what's called a journal. And Andries would...you'd write a journal and that was all you were asked to do, and then turn in your journal. He was very, um, *flexible* about the journal. Some people—if you were an art student, you could turn in drawings, I suppose—but he, but most people, of course, wrote a reaction; but his concern, as I remember it, was that he wanted people to show that they were engaged with the films he showed in some way. He showed a film, I could be wrong on this, I can't remember for sure, I think it was 3 to 5 on Fridays, maybe it was another day of the week; but there was this time in the afternoon, I think 3 to 5, when he would show his films. Then the lectures would be one or two days a week in the lecture room, separate from that, and he would talk, and everyone would listen, and he was *very* good. He even would say, “Well, I didn't spend all that time in Hollywood for nothing.” In other words, he learned that entertainment was key to being a good teacher. He was never a pedantic teacher, and he would tell amazing stories, and his *breadth* of experience was *huge*.

HP: I'm curious. When he would tell stories would he bring in all his experience? Like did you all know about his HUAC experiences?

BB: Yeah, he talked about that quite a bit... HUAC... his meetings with directors. Everyone was very... people are interested in Hollywood; they liked that kind of stuff, you know? Now it's even worse, with the celebrity culture we live in, but even then it was well, he worked in this movie, and a big deal to work in a movie.

HP: From your perspective as a student... Seemingly, what was his relationship to the rest of the University? Did he seem entrenched in the University, or did he kind of seem to stand apart from the University?

BB: I think he was *very* respected by the faculty, *very* respected. Most faculty were probably more or less normal people, who grew up around the U.S. somewhere, and got their doctorate and taught at this mid-level school. He had a very exceptional background, of having been a Hollywood assistant director, and had been in the spy service in WWII—he was in OSS in WWII. That was the highlight of his life. He talked a lot about that, and knowing so many people around

the world. I think was... I have a feeling he was very articulate in the faculty meetings, and so on, and of course, he was one of the *few* faculty people who had had their own television show on public broadcasting. He was *much* more than a regular instructor or professor.

HP: And for some of his lectures, could you tell from the way he taught and the way he would try to create the relation with film that he had a civically-minded bent or a “film as an agent for social change” bent to his theoretical teachings?

BB: I would say it was more than that, in fact. He even *told* us that he would describe himself as a Calvinist, and he would say his parents were Calvinists, and he always felt there was, more than social, there were these *moral*, big *moral* issues, that we were dealing with. And that’s what he would always bring in—right, what was right, the injustices of the world, traumas of the world, and so on. It was more than just social, I think. He would describe himself all the time as a Calvinist.

HP: Since your classes were kind of going in the late ‘60s and through the 70s, what were some of the causes he was most attached to?

BB: Well, *that’s* a damned good question. I think you mentioned earlier the Cold War and freedom of speech. He had a lot to say about censorship. Basically, about censorship he would just say, that he too would rather not have certain things out there in public, but the issue was always how you could ever draw a line; because if you don’t let everything kind of be said, within reason of course, then how do you decide what’s good and what’s bad, and pretty soon people are deciding who *can* decide; who’s the one who *decides* what’s approved and what’s not approved. He was very much big on freedom of speech.

HP: Did you ever know, during that time... did he ever talk about his going before, I believe the Portland City Council, for “The Lovers?”

BB: [Sounds of agreement]

HP: Could you talk a little bit about that?

BB: I don't know a lot about it. He talked about it in every class, I think, because it was a *big deal*. I can't remember to well... I think the Mayor... Well, as I recall, *The Lovers*, I think he wrote a piece, or in some way was publicly quoted as saying that "*The Lovers* is a film about justifiable adultery." Then the Mayor and everyone explosively said, "How can we have someone on our public payroll justifying this horrible thing of adultery? There is *never* a justified adultery," and they tried to get him fired, I think. The mayor was Mayor Terry Schrunck, I believe, and he probably could very well have called the University and made a big hoopla about getting rid of this guy. Plus, you could always bring up the fact that Deinum was a Commie. I mean you could have that whole part of it—a Red, this Left Wing, former Red, is now saying we should have adultery, and blah, blah, blah. So, it was a big deal, and I think he always appreciated and I don't remember who the president was—but I think the University stood behind him and wouldn't fire him. And it was in fact... I can't even remember *The Lovers*, it's a Louis Malle film, and in some way it's about a case for "it's okay to be an adulterer" or something.

HP: Mm-hm... "justified adultery?"

BB: [Sounds of agreement]

HP: During your time at PSU did you pay attention the *Daily Vanguard*, the school newspaper?

BB: A little bit.

HP: I'm just curious. Was there coverage, continual coverage, that was perceptible at that time, about Deinum or about CMI?

BB: *No*. I don't think Deinum and the CMI were in there particularly. There was probably something every *week* about the Film Committee, because these were *BIG* films. These were hugely successful, popular screenings. They were kind of an outgrowth of Deinum's work. They

weren't Deinum. Deinum wasn't organizing them. Brooke Jacobson and Bob Summers were kind of the spear-leaders, and the guy Norm Gould. Did you ever run into his name?

HP: [Sounds indicating "no."]

BB: Norm Gould was a *bear* of a person, and he was head of the Film Committee for awhile. I'd forgotten all about him. He moved to the coast, I think.

HP: Can you expand just a little more about what you know about the Film Committee and its screenings? Were they attended by the Portland community in general?

BB: Yeah. Yeah. The whole—what do you want to call it—intelligentsia, young, youthful. It was too early for “hipsters,” but that kind of people were all very interested in these films. They weren't the kind of films Portland theaters were showing, particularly, and it also was a lot cheaper to see them at Portland State than it would have been in a theater. So, every Friday and Saturday night and it may have been twice a night, I can't recall; there would be these screenings of the mostly European films coming in... Truffaut, Godard... those kind of films, as well as, I think, some Japanese films; all kinds of interesting films were being shown. We would all gather down there, and they would just set up a folding table and Bob Summers, or whoever else would be taking your fifty cents, or dollar or whatever it was to go into the theater... twenty-five cents, or whatever it was. It was not a money making deal; it wasn't expensive. Then we'd all go in there and watch, and then we'd often go, of course, after this go to the tavern and talk about the movie, and drink beer, and that kind of thing.

HP: Did it have a sense of community?

BB: Yeah! Oh yeah, and this is the 60's we're talking about, so definitely it was a precursor to all the political activities of 1970, but it was more giving the *excitement* of the 60s, before all the politics and the violence and you know; the demonstrations came in the 70s.

HP: From talking to other people, I've heard the term “Deinum-ites”...

BB: Yeah, I heard that.

HP: Does that come from these screenings, or, does that come from, more specifically, CMI in general, or... ?

BB: That came from before my time. Andries told me that. He used to make jokes of people who liked him, calling themselves “The Deinum-ites.” I think it was from the 60’s. He was probably pretty popular from his TV show, but I came along after that TV show.

HP: Was that *Speaking for Myself*?

BB: *Speaking for Myself* or *Urban Mosaic*. I can’t remember it, really.

HP: Did you ever get a chance to see them then?

BB: I think I saw them a time or two, but I was never very focused on it. It could have even been going on when I was in high school. I just wasn’t focused on that.

HP: So, we’ve talked about Deinum, now can I turn the tables, and can you kind of characterize and talk a little bit about Thomas Taylor III and what he was like?

BB: Tom Taylor was a worker and cameraman. He loved the camera work. He’d been a student of Andries at the University of Southern California when Andries was fired for HUAC testimony. Tom went off to be a documentary cameraman. Then, in the *strangest* thing, they ran into each other again on a ship, like between Libya and Italy or somewhere, years later, and in some way, Andries got Tom to come up to Portland State. I *think* it was for, when he was still just associated with Continuing Education. I’m not sure. I don’t know for sure whether CMI had been created then or not. Then Tom came up to teach the production part of it when they got some money for equipment. It was always kind of on a shoestring; it was just kind of “get equipment here and there” and everything was used.

HP: In reading a lot of Tom's papers in the archives, he seemingly put together a production school, in a sense, that was very different from the film schools at the time that were known like UCLA and NYU and USC? Where you worked with the community to create films for the community...

BB: Well, not quite. Yeah, that's true, but it's not there, there are several things, but first of all, Andries and Tom, neither one of them had any use for Hollywood. They used Hollywood for the stories and so on, and we certainly knew some good films came out, but they didn't like Hollywood. Andries kind of *hated* Hollywood in a way, and Tom had never, I don't think, he had ever really worked in Hollywood. He went straight into documentary work, and that's what he did. So, they were never into that. What's the question again?

HP: So, basically, I'm trying to get to the production at PSU and CMI... [Bill remembers]

BB: *Oh yeah.* Okay, okay. The issue... yes, they always wanted to serve the community, but I'm not sure that was the primary thing. The primary reason was that film was *expensive*. We weren't using video, and you needed to get money to make any kind of little film; even a five-minute 16mm film cost a couple of thousand dollars or something. The University didn't have a budget for this, and the only way we could ever get to make any films, even as students, *mostly*, was to find a grant, or an organization that needed a film made and had money. So, these were almost all the Portland Art Museum, some historical society; whatever group you could get either a grant from or that had a few dollars to pay for it. So we were always hustling that, trying to get that out, so it was both pieces of that were motivations. It was not just that they were interested in this kind of community stuff, which Tom was more than ever, later, but it was that was the only way you could ever make a film.

HP: Good reciprocal relationship?

BB: Yeah, yeah.

HP: Do you have any memories of anything, specifically that *you* worked on, or that was being talked about a lot while you were there, any particular projects that kind of stick out in your mind?

BB: Well, I made two kind of *films*, actually, that were done, actually, through CMI but through the TV department, because it was something called the Sony- [lowers voice] what was it called- [pauses a few seconds and runs through a couple of ideas]... Betacam, no not Betacam... Portapack. Sony Portapack came out about 1967 or '68. It was the first portable television, and you carried this pack on your back, and a camera. I made a film on the Rose Festival Princesses, and I made another film on Portland poet Walt Curtis, that was an hour long film called *American Ferris Wheel* that showed in a screening at the Portland Art Museum Film Festival. Then in the films, I made a public service announcement for veterans, returning Vietnam veterans, called *Project Return* that was pretty successful. Then I made another, I guess it was another video, in fact, on the Family Circus Portland Theater Group, and what else... [pause] I must have worked on some other films with people, but I can't quite remember any others.

HP: Do these films all still exist?

BB: No, not that I know of. I might have a copy of the public service spot somewhere, because that was shot on film. *Oh, yes!* The Walt Curtis one still exists, because Walt wants me to re-edit it, or he wants it to be re-edited, I should say. He, in fact, re-edited it last year, and gave me a DVD of it. It's very bizarre; it's very- kind of interesting, but... [Trails off]

HP: Was Walt Curtis part of CMI at all?

BB: No. No. He's a friend, and he's an interesting guy, and a poet, and he was going to Portland State.

HP: Oh, he was going to Portland State?

BB: [Affirmative sounds].

HP: Basically just in a very general sense, since you had a long time here, on and off at PSU, would you just talk a little bit about what PSU was like then? Are there any marked differences as you walk through the Park Blocks...?

BB: Yeah, a *huge* difference really. I've noticed it lately. Well, it's surprising, because there are many more students now; I think there are 30,000 students now. I don't know what there were then, maybe seven or eight thousand or something, but the point that's, the thing that surprised me is that there was much more of a community here. There were *many* more taverns where we'd all hang out, cheap places to eat where we'd hang out, more apartment buildings where we could live—they have been torn down now, they really aren't around. I'm living in this neighborhood now, and it's surprising how deserted it is on the weekend and at night. It's really striking how much this campus is a commuter campus, and how little *energy, social* energy, there is, as a part of a real, a vibrant community. I think that's probably the biggest difference. Then, the other difference, I suppose, is just that Portland State is kind of taking all these—the reason there are no more—there aren't so many *apartment* buildings around, is that Portland State is tearing them down you know, and expanding like a... whatever it is, here.

HP: You just used the term “social energy”... [Bill's phone rings. Pause while he answers it]

HP: So, basically, I was just asking you... you has just used the term “social energy” and you were commenting on how you come down now, since you are living here, that the weekends are dead, so seemingly that means that there was more *life, community* life back in the 60s and 70s, even on the weekends... how much of this social energy was part of the film community in Portland?

BB: Well, you've got to kind of realize the era. There was the era in the late '60s when film just became very fascinating to young people, and everywhere film just became the *primary* art form—of course all the European films, and then like *Easy Rider*, and, you know, all those films were coming out in an American New Wave; it was like a fantastic energy from film. So, the film went and just kind of *permeated* the whole world; everyone would talk about film; but, I don't know how that affected the exact block-by-block situation around Portland State.

HP: Well, it's interesting that there's this very blanket kind of consciousness of film at that time, but CMI, according to the record right now, was the only school, potentially, in the Pacific Northwest, at that time, *teaching* both theory and production, the way they were.

BB: Yeah.

HP: Basically that's a kinda a roundabout way of asking if you can talk just a little bit more about how Tom and Andries kind of worked together?

BB: Okay. They're very, very different personalities, and I'm a little hesitant to talk about it. I was *much* closer to Andries. I was *very* close to Andries, and even his wife, and I painted their house in the summer, and spent a lot of time with them. I *worked* for Tom, but Tom and I were on a..... Tom was a completely different animal. Andries was gregarious, articulate; broad depth of knowledge; completely cosmopolitan and sophisticated; spoke multiple languages; as I said, a European intellectual. And Tom was a guy from Utah who was a very nice person, who had a very good heart, who learned his craft. I'd say he kind of focused on the craft, and how to shoot. And his... how can I say this... well his social talents were nowhere close to Andries. Tom was more of a "I can show you how to do the job, let's do the job." So they were completely opposite.

They had some disagreements sometimes, but Andries was the head of the department, and ran it, and Tom... I don't think Andries really cared that much about—I'm *sure* he didn't care about how a 8mm camera worked. He'd be interested to see some of the films, maybe, but he had no interest in editing, and loading the camera, and all that stuff. That's what Tom did, and Tom was a... he was a... they were both very Left Wing people, Andries especially, in a pretty sophisticated way from the European liberal world. Tom's kids went to Metropolitan Learning Center. He had four kids, lived up in Thurman Heights in the Hollywood, what's it called there, and he was really a completely different kind of person.

Tom had—I don't know what's the use with going into personal issues so much—but Tom had some extra money from his family. He had an unusual lifestyle. He lived in a very large house.

He didn't have the restrictions that a normal worker would have. And his wife, Jan was going... Part of the reason I became more involved in CMI was... in about 1973 maybe, I can't remember exactly, they... Tom got a divorce, and it was very, very, very hard on him, and some days he just wouldn't come to work, and I would teach the classes more. So I ended up teaching more fully than I would have as an assistant because I had to do the whole thing. I think it was the spring, springtime, and he was very hurt by that, and then he got married and divorced quickly after that, and then ended up with a wonderful relationship after. Finally.

HP: Yeah, I've heard, I think it was David Milholland, telling great stories about some of the parties that Tom and his third wife would throw.

BB: Yeah, yeah. Marie Peckinpah, Sam Peckinpah's former wife. They had grown up, when they were both going to USC, they had lived together in the Malibu colony. They lived *next* to each other I mean, and they knew each other. Then Marie and Sam got divorced, and then later on, Tom and Jan got divorced, and Marie and Tom got together, and she moved to Portland. She was an actress here.

HP: I heard she also had great culinary skill.

BB: Yeah, she catered too. Wonderful, wonderful cook.

HP: Going back just a little bit to Deinum and Taylor's relationship. You are not the first to basically mention that Deinum wasn't as interested in the production value, knowing the hands-on production, but clearly he valued it because he hand selected Tom to come up and do this project of CMI, for lack of better terms... When you were around those two, was it very palpable...could you tell that...Were they friends?

BB: Yeah, they were friends, definitely, oh, definitely. And Tom respected Andries. I think...I'm a little hesitant about all this to say... I'll try to be as honest as I can, but I'm not too keen on getting into personality stuff here. But I think what happened, really, is that Andries was very—he was the head of it, you know, and Tom would sometimes have to go around, you know.

He wouldn't be as direct, it wouldn't be like a direct confrontation with Andries. It was more that Tom would hear, "Oh, yeah, Andries, we'll do that, we'll do that," and then Tom would find his own way to do it. That happened. I actually got into a—I'm very grateful now—but, when Tom was going to take a sabbatical in '75-76, they needed someone to replace him for teaching. Andries wanted me to do it, and Tom wanted Jim Blashfield to do it, and they had quite a tug-of-war about what they were going to do, in there- trying to figure out what to do. Finally, Tom just went and signed the paperwork, without telling anybody that he'd hired Jim Blashfield to do it. And I remember Andries was really mad about that, and I was very hurt, but it turned out to be the best thing, because that led me to an interesting career in Hollywood. That's kind of one example of how Tom would do things.

HP: Speaking of, you basically went down to Hollywood in the mid-70's. I know you've had a very successful career as a location manager, but can you talk about some of what inspired you to go to Hollywood, and what did you take with you that you had learned at CMI, and talk a little bit about your career?

BB: Yeah, but I don't know if you want to hear about me, it's about Andries. Well, it's *all* because of Andries. Andries had told me that he wanted me to teach the next year, take Tom's place for the next year. I was very pumped up by that. On the basis of that, my mother had grown up in Chicago, with a friend living near her who was crazy about theater, and would make plays in her garage, okay? He went off in his later life to become a casting director for a television company in Hollywood. That's the only connection I ever had to Hollywood, really; actually I had two, but anyway, that's one, the main one. When I thought I might teach full-time, and have responsibility for the whole program, I got ahold of this guy, in Hollywood, who I didn't know, really, and I said "Can I come down to Hollywood for the summer and learn about Hollywood production techniques, so I can be a better teacher next year?" And he said, "Oh, no. That's impossible, because all the jobs are unionized. We can't get you in the union." I went to Andries, and I said this was what happened, and Andries said, "Actually, there are a couple of jobs that are not unionized. There's a job that is assistant to a producer, or assistant to a director." So I, still just being "moxie," and not hardly knowing what I was doing, called the guy up or wrote him a letter,

I can't remember which, and I said "Well, how about a job as an assistant to a producer, or assistant to a director?" to this guy in Hollywood. He said "Well, I'll work on it."

Then one day, around mid-day, I still remember Tom was in the lab and I was in the lab at CMI, and Tom came out and said, "You have a call, from Hollywood, on the phone." And I went in and took it, and this guy said "Okay, we'll find a job for you. We're going to give you a job as an assistant to a producer, for the summer." So I got very excited, and I thought, "This is great." Then, within a few weeks of the end of the term—this was all in the spring—Tom made the switch where I had no job, and he hired Blashfield to do the teaching, and the company in L.A., which was called Quinn Martin Productions and had six network shows, lost half their shows, and they called me and said that they had no job in L.A. either. Meanwhile, I had told all my friends I was leaving, I'd given my notice in my little apartment near Portland State, and I had nothing to stay here for now. So, I went to California anyway.

I stopped in San Francisco and tried to get a job at Francis Coppola's company and couldn't get a job; met someone there who gave me a ride to L.A. I got to L. A. with 185 dollars, I think. No car. I only knew two people: this casting director who, once I went to see him, he didn't want anything to do with me. He just thought I was a liability, a friend of an old friend from college or grade school or whatever. The other was even more hilarious. See, I had gone to see Bob Summers and some people in New York in 1970, and I had met a woman named Debbie Dozier, whose mother was Joan Fontaine, so I knew her. So, I got ahold of her when I got there, and I said "Debbie, I need to get a job," and she said, "Oh, don't worry. I'll take care of everything for you." She said, "Where are you?" I'd got this tiny little apartment for 85 dollars a month. Basically, she said, "I'll pick you up tomorrow," and she picks me up in her car and she takes me down to Santa Monica, says I don't have to worry about anything, and she takes me into this gigantic room, with hundreds of people, and they're all going [sounds indicating chanting], and they're all some kind of Buddhist cult. So, she wanted me to start doing this chanting, and I did for a little bit, and then I said "Well Debbie, it's nice, but I need a job, I don't need a..." She said, "Oh, no, you don't need a job, you just need to chant more, and it will all come to you." So, I gave up on her, and the guy, and then I kind of was lucky to survive in Hollywood.

HP: So how did you actually *become* a location manager?

BB: I was broke, and I was at the Unemployment Office in Hollywood, and I saw that Motown Records was going to start a film division, and they were going to hire someone to take care of the equipment. They were going to pay 300 dollars a week, and I thought, “This is fantastic,” because I know how to take care of film equipment in CMI, and so I went and applied for it, but I basically didn’t know what to do, so I went to the Hollywood library one Saturday, and I got these books on the music industry. I thought I’d better learn about the music industry if I’m going to apply for a job at Motown Records. I walked home from the library with around 15 books, carrying them like this [demonstrates.] One of the books was called “Going Down with Janis: The Last Days of Janis Joplin, by Her Lesbian Lover.” [laughs]

So I go up in this *tiny* little room I’d rented in a house in Hollywood. The woman had rented it to me and I had never met her husband, and he was a CPA from the San Fernando Valley, and they’d had this just as an investment. I’d never met him, and he was there that day, and he was trimming the hedge in the front yard of this tiny house. I came walking down the sidewalk with all these books, and he drops his clippers and he just says, “My God, you’re reading *books!* My God! I thought everyone was a drug addict or a prostitute, in Hollywood! Oh, it’s amazing!” and he said, “Well, didn’t my wife tell me you wanted to work in film?” I said, “Yeah,” and he said, “Well, you’d better meet my friend at the Universal Studios.” Then, it’s a long story, I won’t go into it, but basically, I met his friend at Universal Studios, and I finally got to see the guy, and out of the blue, at the end of my first day there—he let me stand on the back lot all day and watch a TV show—and he brought me to his office after twelve hours out there, and he said, “Have you had any home-cooked meals lately?” and I said no, and he said, “You’re coming home with me.”

He called his wife, drove me to his home; three days they kept me, and he finally said, “You probably need some money, don’t you,” and so he said, “What do you want to do?” and I said, “I want to be a cameraman,” and he called the camera department, and they couldn’t hire me. He got the idea to hire me as a guard. I didn’t want to be a guard. “So why don’t you be a driver and you can see how the whole studio works.” I said, “Okay.” So, he called the Hollywood Transportation Dept. and he said, “I’ve got my cousin sitting across the desk, and I want you to put him to work in

tomorrow morning,” and they did, and then I got in the union. But, going back to the *other* part of the story, that only lasted two weeks before all the permits were off, and business dropped, and they couldn’t hire any people again.

This book “Going Down with Janis” was all about this hotel in Hollywood called the Chateau Marmont hotel. It was where they spent their last days, and it was this wild place where people went and shot up heroin, and things like that. I thought it was pretty cool, so I went to the Hollywood library with a quarter, and I put a quarter in this Rent-a-Typewriter. You could rent a typewriter for an hour for a quarter, and I typed up a kind of an exaggerated resume and a letter. I called up and found out the name of the manager of this hotel, and sent this to him and I told him I’d always wanted to work in a hotel, and my dream was to work at a hotel, and that I’d been in his hotel and it was the greatest hotel I’d ever seen, and I’d like to talk with him. I mailed this letter off to him. About that time, I got the couple of weeks job at the studios, and that ended, and then I called up one day, and I said “Is Mr. Olson in?” and I said, “I sent you this letter, about possibly working for you.” He said, “YES! Can you get over here right now?” So I had to take the bus, I’d never been there before. I found the place, I went in, and it turned out that he wanted me to take over as the assistant manager of the Chateau Marmont, so that he could take four-day weekends out in Palm Springs. So I did that for a year, hated it.

Then I went back into driving; then I decided I would be a location manager, because it looked like the most interesting job on the movie set. I worked for all the studios, and independents, as a driver, it was very interesting, really. The best time I’d ever had in film work. If you were a location manager, you could be on your own, you could be creative, you can use your eye, you’re not stuck in the set all the time. So, I decided I’d be that, so I printed up some cards. I didn’t want to quite lie, and I said my name, and instead of saying “location manager,” I said “location management,” and a phone number.

I passed them out to this company that represented mansions in Bel Air, one day, and I just gave her a whole *stack* of business cards, because I didn’t know the etiquette of handing out business cards. She left them on the front of her desk, and the next day this guy came running in from a TV show, and he was a location manager, and his other colleague, who was also a location manager,

had dropped over dead of a heart attack and they needed a replacement immediately. She said, “You should call this guy.” He called me and asked me if I’d ever done it before, and I said “No.” He said, “Could you?” I said “Yes.” He said, “Come in here.” I went in, and got hired by the guy who had been production manager on *Gone with the Wind*, some ancient guy, who was running this department. The irony was that it was with Quinn Martin Productions, which was the first reason I came to L.A.

HP: When were you were down in L.A. did you still keep contact with Deinum? Did you give him updates?

BB: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I talked to him all the time; went and saw him when I was here – I *didn’t* talk to him all the time, because there was no email, and long distance was expensive, but I would stay in touch with him for sure.

HP: Was he supportive of you career?

BB: Oh yeah, absolutely.

HP: Clearly you guys had a friendship. Did he do that often or was he always keeping an eye on his students as they left the nest?

BB: Oh, I think he was, but there were *very* few. [Pause.] I don’t know if there were any ahead of me who went to Hollywood. Later, a few other people did.

HP: That’s right...[cut off]

BB: Mark Verheiden and Jim Likowski; but I don’t know that any did before I went down there in ‘75.

HP: You set the precedent.

BB: Well, I don't know about that, but, everyone here in CMI hated Hollywood. You've got to realize, I hated Hollywood! I would never have gone there, on my own. It was just this idea of being a better teacher that led me there.

HP: Once you were there... like, how do you feel about it now after having worked in it for that last, near four decades?

BB: While I was at CMI, there were probably 60 students who went through it. I think there was one other out of the 60 who made a living in film, other than me. You just couldn't make a living, staying in Portland, and she was a news camerawoman; that's what she did. I don't think anyone else made a living, and so I'm really, really, really lucky. I mean, I was, also, there were things about L.A. that for me, were very powerful. The first few weeks I was there, I realized "You know, you're in a place where it's not—how can I say—socially small, and you can be anything you want. And nobody cares who your parents are, nobody cares what college you went to, nobody cares where you come from. Their only care is "Can you do a good job at what you're trying to do?" and that's not the way it works in places like Portland. There's a whole other situation, social situation, in a place like Portland. So, it's just very liberating to be in a place where, hey, it's all up to you, you know. If you get the good idea, and you can do the job, and you're in there.

People also say that people in L. A.... there is so much work, and there's so much activity, that you're always looking for the *best* people. Some people say, you know, that the Japanese people say "The tall flower gets cut off," you know, but it's the opposite in L. A. The tall flower gets taken, grabbed. Whereas, in a place where there are very *few* jobs, and very *few* opportunities, it's more likely, if I can hire someone, I'm going to hire my friend; maybe hoping they'll hire me next time, and this whole little world of keeping things *tight*, instead of expansive, you know—and say "Hey, there are plenty of acorns to go around, let's get this going," you know.

HP: Do you still think L.A. is a very expansive community now where, where you went to school doesn't matter or has it changed a lot in the last...[cut off]

BB: No, it's very, very much like that. It's still very open. Now, film *production* has taken some big hits in L.A. Partially because of incentives, and runaway production, and so on. It isn't as... [hesitant sounds, trying to find the right phrase]—Hollywood is not... international film production is not as centered completely on Los Angeles as it once was. So the *workers*, there a huge... hundreds of thousands of other people work there, in the industry. But that's shrunk, the population has shrunk; but yes, people *still* look for the best. You really look for the sharpest people you can find. It's a different mentality.

HP: Is a runaway production a production that is *not* centered in L.A. or is that something...?

BB: Well, it's been used at different times for discussing things... but originally it was to talk about filming, production, that went to Canada. Sometimes it's thought of now as production that leaves the U.S, but also *certainly* means production that has left Hollywood. They used to do all the films and so on in Hollywood. Now, if you can get back 25% of your money in New Mexico, or 40-some percent in Michigan, there's a great motivation to go there; and you don't bring all these people who worked with you in L.A.

HP: Yeah, there's a great quote in one of these articles about you that says that a film about a surfer in California became a film about a skier in Canada.

BB: Yeah, yeah.

HP: Kind of going back to just a little bit and situating CMI and your time in L.A. It's like, so Deinum taught at USC; Taylor was a student at USC; you were living in L.A. And, unless I am mistaken, were you one of the ones that was influential in getting a plaque placed for... [cut off]

BB: No, no. I went over and photographed that plaque. I did have something come up before that plaque was in. I can't remember the year, actually, probably in the 90's I suppose? There was an NPR story on USC, and how they had made apologies to someone who they'd blacklisted, for HUAC kind of issues in the 50's. I heard about it, and by that point, I would say, I was able to kind of, you know, I knew people at USC and we had shot there and so on. I called up Deinum, and I

talked with Ginna, his wife. I said, “Ginna, I’m thinking, I’ve heard that USC is making apologies to people they blacklisted, and I’d like to go talk with them about getting an apology to Andries.” She said, “Whatever you do, don’t do *that*.” She said, “He would be furious. He would be very, very, very angry.” She told me to forget that idea, it was a terrible idea, and not to think about anything like that again. What she was saying, basically, was that he was so *hurt* by what had happened, and he hadn’t forgiven them in any way, and he didn’t want them suddenly being, able to “brighten their paint”—or whatever you say—by saying, “Oh, we’re going to put a plaque up,” or “We’re going to give an apology to Andries Deinum for firing him for his testimony.” So I left it there; and then later, his nephew, who’s from Holland, Brooke knows his name, I can’t remember his name, I think he was the one who pushed them, and they now have put a plaque up, which I could probably send you a picture of. It’s right in the cinema department. I’ve forgotten the wording on it, but I’ve forgotten the wording on it, but it says something... it’s kind of an apology for terminating Andries Deinum in whatever year it was.

HP: Did he ever know that that plaque went up? Or was that post...[cut off]

BB: I think it happened after he passed away. He had been, you know, blacklisted *twice*. Yeah, he was blacklisted, like, in ‘48, from working in the... he told us he was the researcher for the Hollywood Ten, and he wrote up their speeches and did their research. He knew Margaret Herrick, who was the librarian at the Academy, and he would get in there—he was a very smart guy—and he did the research. He’d been an assistant director to Fritz Lang, and I think worked on Alfred Hitchcock movies, so on. And he somehow got blacklisted by Hollywood, out of working in Hollywood. Because he was blacklisted, he went over to UCLA and got a Master’s Degree in film. Based on getting *that* degree, he came over to USC and started teaching at USC. Then, I think it was ‘53, when HUAC came through the *second* time, they blacklisted him out of teaching jobs. So he got blacklisted twice.

HP: So once out of the industry and once out of the academy.

BB: Yeah, yeah.

HP: From the time you spent with Deinum do you know how he felt about Portland overall?

BB: Oh, I think he loved it. He loved his home, which was Holland. He always talked about Holland, but I think he liked Portland very much.

HP: Did he ever talk about why?

BB: Well yeah, I think, frankly, I don't know, I can't really say for sure, but I think he felt Portland saved his life. No one would hire him, you know, after being blacklisted. That job—*no one* would hire him. He was very appreciative of... I think the guy's name was Lester... someone, whoever it was who hired him to come teach at the Continuing Education department—gave him a job. Andries had got a job, after he was blacklisted, I think, for two years, as head of the Robert Flaherty Seminar, but God knows how much that paid. I don't know what that paid. He also, somewhere in there, got divorced. He was married to a woman who... I know her father was a psychiatrist. He was married to her when he first went to Hollywood, and somewhere along the line they got divorced, and he married Ginna. But I'm sure he was just so relieved to get a job, because first, there weren't many film schools around, it wasn't like he could go anywhere and get a job teaching film. And then to have been blacklisted out of one, fired essentially, it would have made it harder than ever. But someone trusted him; someone gave him this job teaching up at the extension division here.

HP: I want to switch the tape real fast.

HP: So, basically, I wanted to know if you could talk a bit about some of the specific classes you took at CMI. Do you remember, specifically, any titles, and what the classes were about, and your memories of those classes?

BB: Well the main class that Andries taught, I think, was called "The Art of Film" or "The Art of the Film." And that was where he showed these films once a week, and then he would talk about them in the classroom. The films were usually films that were kind of off our radar, as normal American kids, and he would show *powerful* films. I remember he was a fan of John Cassavetes.

Some days he would show films that were kind of entertaining, I remember. He would also usually show *North by Northwest*, which you know it's a *really* Hollywood film, but it's still a very good film. Then, oh, *Joan of Arc*, he showed, he'd talk about films in his sessions, and he was always inspirational. He wouldn't just talk about something, he would always usually bring into it a bigger picture. He'd construct this big canvas, so you weren't just talking about a small thing; you were like "What you saw in the film, and how does it affect what's happening today in our culture," and so on and so on. He came out, basically, of a Cold War period, so he was often talking about things, pointing out the *oppression*, almost, of the Cold War attitude, and how everything wasn't all bad about the Left, Communists, and so on.

Then he had another class that was called "The Threatened Individual." I think that was more about... he was what you could probably call a classic ACLU kind of person. He really believed in individual rights, rights to personal freedom, a lot of stuff that the Dutch are kind of known for; but we weren't familiar with it that much. Then, in 1970, I remember we did a seminar. He usually didn't do seminars, but we got him to do a seminar, and there were about ten of us who took that. It was very frustrating for him, because we thought we were all intellectual, and we wouldn't let him go on, the way he did in his classes. We'd want to question, "What does that word mean, and does the word..." and then we got stuck. It was very hard to move forward in that class. Those were the three classes I remember from him.

HP: Did he continue doing seminars after?

BB: I don't know. I don't think it was... he was very frustrated by that, I remember. We thought we were being so "smart," to question every concept that he would try to bring up, and we'd just get stuck, because everyone then would get into this "thing," and you could never quite go forward. He would lecture in the classroom, of course, and just carry on.

HP: So, kind of speaking about his style, while you were in the program, did you ever hear other students kind of talking about him? Was there overall reverence or were there detractors?

BB: No, I never heard any detractors. It was awe—awe and reverence. I remember in some of his

classes, these *nuns* would come, and I think they came in their nun habit. *They* took his classes, because they were... you know... People came and took the classes who were not just students. He was known far and wide, kind of. He had just a broad perspective on life, and on his experience; so he had a chance to really expand your world. I'm so grateful, now that you talk about it, because actually, he *did* expand my world, *tremendously*, internationally, and historically, and he knew so much about the history of Europe, and a very rich—that's a good word—he was a very rich, rewarding person to know. I never heard anyone complain about him.

HP: It's interesting his classes attracted people who weren't part of the PSU community, but Portland community into his classes, and I'm glad that you mentioned Cassavetes, that's the one director I wanted to know if Deinum liked.

BB: Oh, yeah. He showed him. I remember I had broken up with someone, and he [Deinum] came, and he said, "Bill, steel yourself. This is going to hit you hard." He showed one of these big Cassavetes films were everyone's fighting and having their lives fall apart emotionally.

HP: I'm glad to hear that... not the break up but the...[cut off]

BB: Yeah, yeah.

HP: ...but that Deinum liked Cassavetes.

BB: Yeah.

HP: This is a very... more of a *general* question, but what memories of CMI are strongest for you?

BB: Well, my memories are most strongly connected with the place of the 310 Lincoln Hall, because that's where I had a kind of an office for a year, the last year I was there. Even the down below, in the lower floor, I still remember cutting my own little films down there; it was a real pleasure. But I'm a location type of person, so I remember that. I spent a lot, much more time

there than Tom did, probably, because my job was to kind of stay there and keep it open as long as people wanted to cut something. I can't remember the exact hours, but we had to keep it open for people, and Tom wasn't there all the time.

HP: How big was the program per quarter?

BB: I don't know how many. Andries' classes, I think, went up and down. I think he was biggest, probably, in the late 60's. That's my guess, and the early 70's, maybe. And Tom's... If I remember – he had two classes, really: Filmmaking I, which was a one-term class on how you make a film, and everyone made an 8-mm film. And then I went on to two other classes, Filmmaking II and Filmmaking III. When you got into Filmmaking II or Filmmaking III, you could use the 16mm and you got to make a more serious film. You could take Filmmaking III over and over again, (something like that) so that you could keep working, so that theoretically, if grant money came in to make a film, you could go and make a film as a group. And very few of those films were made by... some of them, but... many times they were made kind of by a group. It wasn't exactly as though... you know... there was an educational process. So, it wasn't as though you're the director, and everyone else is your assistant. Because the money's not yours—you didn't bring in the money—money comes from the art museum, or somewhere.

So people kind of did it, and one person would be more for the camera and one more for cutting, and so on. Sometimes one would be kind of the top person, but it wasn't exactly always the case where you could think of a film as coming from one person. And I also think... I guess when I think of CMI though, as much as I think of that place, I think of Andries's soul and heart. That's what means the most to me. 'Cause that's where I learned it's not just learning about film, it's learning about *life*; and that was probably the central thing that Andries taught about. He expanded us all about the nature of the world, and film was to a large extent just a tool for that. What he talked about wasn't exactly the films. In fact, he could have been an English teacher or something. He could have used novels the same way he used films. He could have used those to describe bigger issues, get us off talking about the big issues of the world. For example, you never heard him talk, really, about acting, and you never really heard him talk about camera work or editing; and those are the three big pieces of it, you know. He would always be talking about the

“bigger picture” of film—the content, the substance of it; what it means, how it affects you emotionally; all that kind of stuff. He wasn’t too keen, really, on the technical part.

HP: But he chose film as a tool, was that because he had an affinity towards it, or because he thought it was the new mass means of communication?

BB: You know, I think, and I’m not quite sure—can’t say for sure—but I think he went to Stanford when he was 16. I think when he finished Stanford, he met his future wife, and I think her father was a psychiatrist to the movie people in Hollywood. I think that’s how he got to Hollywood, and through that social connection, he began getting some jobs. And then... well, right in there... he also joined... OSS was the precursor to CIA. He went to London and there are pictures of him in some books we have of him in an Army uniform. He was an officer, and his job was to work with the Dutch Resistance, which he did, I think, from, entirely from London. I think he did it by radio, and so on. So, it was a very exciting time for him, the most exciting time in his life. Whenever you got him going, he’d want to talk about his OSS days, when they were fighting the Nazis, and the Dutch Resistance, and he was some way involved in getting information to the Dutch Resistance. It was a big deal. Then he came back, and probably then got involved in the Hollywood scene through his wife’s father, I believe. Then was part of the Hollywood Ten, did their research, was I’m sure a Communist, going to Communist meetings. Because there were a lot of people did that. Then, as I said, he was blacklisted, and went to UCLA. He came back to USC, and was out of there by ‘53.

HP: Do you know from your friendship with him, did he become a U.S. citizen?

BB: Yeah.

HP: Do you know when?

BB: I’ve got a feeling he became a U.S. citizen... I don’t know when, but I’ve got a feeling he got everything going through his Army service.

HP: Do you know why he came to the United States—was it with his family or did he come over to be a student?

BB: No, he came over like at 16 years old, to go to Stanford some way as a very bright, young, Dutch person. Then he couldn't go back, because at the end of his college, the war had started, and he couldn't go back to Holland. That's when he some way got involved—I don't know the exact years—but in there somewhere he got involved with the Army, and so on.

HP: You kind of did speak to it a little bit, but my question was, basically, how did your experience being at CMI change you? But it sounds like knowing Deinum is what changed you.

BB: Well, not necessarily, knowing Deinum greatly expanded me. I don't want to make *too* big a thing of it, but he was kind of like a father, the father I'd like to have, in that he was so intelligent, and my father was a very nice person, and I had no big problem with my father. He was kind of a typical American person, you know, and Andries was just so rich in knowledge, and compassionate, and passionate about things. That I always felt like he was like... not like exactly a father, but that kind of thing, like maybe an uncle or something I really would love to be connected with. I felt a very strong connection, but the main thing I got out of it really was a whole new life, because I could never get a job in Portland. I did not know what would happen to me in Portland. I'm not the kind of person to put up with going to an office, and I don't know what would have happened—become an alcoholic or something. I mean it, really. I was a very rebellious person, didn't have any use for “the System,” and I was able to get this whole career in Hollywood that I would *never* had. That was the biggest thing—this whole other world I wouldn't have without CMI.

HP: This is maybe a difficult question to answer, but I'm just curious, had they *not* cut CMI in the '81 year, do you think that Portland could have, year over year, continued to grow the industry so it would have been easier for people to get jobs, or do you think that Portland would have continued to be more of an insular, “extended nepotism” kind of place, for getting jobs?

BB: That's a good way to put it. I've always thought that; I guess it's shocking that way. It's a

hard, a good, thing to answer, only... First of all, one of the things we did, in CMI's office in that 310 one time, we founded this organization called Oregon Media Project. Brooke was there, I was there; anyway there was a group of... I think it was the precursor to the Producers' Association. One of the things we pushed for and I think we wrote letters to either the Governor, or the Higher Board Chancellor, or the President. We were always pushing for something called visual literacy, because we believed that the real function of a film department was not just to make films, but to begin to get people *literate*, or familiar, with the way visual images work. I mean, we're bombarded by advertising all the time, and yet have no training or understanding or deconstructing the advertising. So, this was something that was a huge piece of it, and the reason I'm saying that is I think that the motivation of having a film school or continuing CMI isn't just to keep the jobs; it's more to educate in an area of education that has been neglected, and it's very, very important in people's lives. If you think, people watch TV six or seven hours a day, don't you think they should have some training, or knowledge of how these images work, how they're put together, and most people had no idea of that.

The other answer to your question is, I don't think that it's likely, even if... I'm all for CMI having been continued; I think it should have been continued, absolutely... but I doubt that there would have ever been significant employment in film in Portland, Oregon. It's just not in the cards; I mean, it's just not there. But that doesn't mean it shouldn't happen now. Oh, and the other piece of that is that film schools are so popular these days, but there are all kinds of places that don't have film production jobs. It's just become hugely interesting to people. I was in Eugene two weeks ago, meeting with the Dean of the Communications Department at U of O, and they were saying that now, in the fourth grade in Eugene schools, they're deconstructing television commercials. They're teaching media literacy in fourth grade down there. And they should, you know? People should *know* they shouldn't just be brainwashed by this stuff.

HP: You said that you guys founded the Oregon Media Project? Is that the media project that still exists to this day in Oregon?

BB: I don't know. I'm completely out of it. I remember the day, a Sunday afternoon, when we met up there in 310 and we all, about 25 people or so, we were all in film, and I came up with a

name. I came up with a name, actually. We decided to get it going, and I think Brooke was the head of it for awhile. I don't know what happened to it. Is there still such an organization as that?

HP: Yeah, but what year was this? About 1974?

BB: Yeah, it would have been early in the 70's. Is it still around?

HP: Yeah.

BB: Yeah. What does it do?

HP: It advocates visual literacy.

BB: *Really? Really!*

HP: It works as a more grassroots answer to an institution like the Northwest Film Center.

BB: Wow, that's great. Yeah, we started that. It was a Sunday we had that meeting, and we got together and did it.

HP: So, you said there were 25 of you. How did you pull it.... did you flyer and say, "Hey, people interesting in starting...."

BB: No, I think we wouldn't do that. I think we knew each other, mostly filmmakers, that kind of thing.

HP: Can you talk just a little bit more, like narrate more, about how the community worked? I mean, was it that you guys... I know you said you that there were more bars and restaurants in downtown? Did you hang out socially often? Were you a very tight group of filmmakers in Portland? You said you knew Walt Curtis when he was at PSU and David Milholland also knows him. Were you guys like one kind of group that all knew each other or was it just smaller...[cut

off]

BB: Well, there were two kinds, I'd split that off. It's kind of true, we all kind of knew each other, but I'd say those of us who, like, lived around here all knew each other, because we'd go to the same places, hang out at the same taverns blah, blah, blah. And then of course, there'd be other people who may have... yeah, we were all single and hanging out, and college-type students. Some were married, or living in the suburbs coming in to this; we weren't particularly close to them, necessarily. But, so many people lived around *here*, that yeah, we knew each other. It wasn't like we were one group, like David and I were at CMI at the same time. But we were friends, but we didn't particularly hang out a lot together. There was a cadre of like-minded people who you would hang with, and it was always... you've gotta realize, that the bigger issue during these times wasn't this, it was the politics. It was the Vietnam War, and the Nixon, and all that stuff going on that was just escalating; plus, with all the drugs—a lot of us were using drugs in the 60's, and then that part of the 60's just ramped up to these wild, wild times, and then kind of “punctured” in the spring of '70 and then kind of went down into oblivion after that.

HP: That was actually going to be my next question, how politicized were you as a group and were there political aspects to CMI?

BB: Well, yeah, it was always Left. Actually, you reminded me though, here's another film I made. Again, it was on video. I didn't realize I did so much video. What was the name of that? In 1974-75 Carol Rubenstein, who was the editor of the *Vanguard*, and I were friends, and we decided that things had gone to Hell *so* much since 1970, that we'd make a comment on it. So we made a video of Portland State, what Portland State was like. I can't quite remember, we interviewed Joe Blumel, I think he'd become president, and we went around the campus and did this stuff. Then we had this *big* screening in Smith Center, in the ballroom, and we said “Then and Now.” The first thing we showed was *The Seventh Day* and show all the action of politics. And then we show, the next thing, was Frederic Littman pretty sculpture gets dedicated in the Park Blocks. The president says “Oh, now we're here to help the city become a nice city,” and here everything just had lost so much passion. So we did this. It was designed to play with *Seventh Day*. And we did it, you know? Showed it one day and I don't think much happened after that. I

have no idea where that video is.

HP: Do you remember the name of it?

BB: No, I can't quite remember the name of it. Maybe Carol... she's still around, maybe she remembers it.

HP: Carol Rubenstein?

BB: Carol Rubenstein, yeah. Anyway, so I got carried away. What was the question that came up on?

HP: I was asking, basically, if there was politics constantly in the 70's in CMI. It started in '69, and ended in '81, so it really was an institution of the 70's.

BB: Yeah, I see what you mean. Well, the thing is, that's a very good question, more astute than you think. Because, unfortunately, the fact is that Andries and Tom were both very Left people, but I think they were both shocked—and Andries even more—was more shocked than anything when we took over the university and shut it down, and put the barricades on the streets. I think he was, in fact I know, I talked with him about it, I said, "You don't even know what's going on here, do you, Andries?" and he—it was a little too extreme for him—he was still thinking we should be talking about everything; and that was the time, during Kent State, when we just barricaded off the Park Blocks and that was the big deal. The police came, you probably heard about it, and beat everyone up and, you know, broke everything up.

But we were more, by that point, radical that way. And, of course there was the Chicago Eight and all this stuff going on, but Andries was... he kind of got left behind there, because he was still talking. And Tom... Tom was funny, in a way. I think he really... well again, he was very much politically right on this stuff, but he would never express it. He didn't articulate his feelings very well. So, CMI was kind of political, but it had always been, in theory, and when this stuff hit the fan, they were kind of... well, it's not just that they were shocked... when you think it through you

know... people, even like Andries, could have got fired. If the instructors at Portland State had just gone out there and said, "Screw the university, we're going to support these radicals in the street," they wouldn't quite get along very well with the powers that be.

HP: You had just mentioned that you had interviewed the President Joe Blumel ...

BB: Yeah, yeah.

HP: Who was... you know, the one that had defunded, you know, cut the program, CMI.

BB: Yeah.

HP: You had mentioned earlier that he and Deinum were office mates?

BB: Yeah.

HP: Why were they? How did that come about?

BB: I think that's when Deinum first came, when they were just sharing offices; when there were only a couple of buildings at Portland State. It wasn't that there were a lot of buildings. You can go to Neuberger Hall now, and look at a picture of when Portland State was three buildings or something in '65.

HP: Did they maintain a friendship throughout those years, though, in Portland?

BB: *I think* so. I think they did. I know Andries was extremely hurt, because Joe Blumel told him he would *not* cut that program. Then, one summer, when Andries had gone to summer vacation in Holland, he said when he flew back, he said, he learned at the airport that his whole department had been cut and he was out of a job. It didn't make sense to me, quite, until I think of it though, "Well, there was no cell phone, there was no... how could he learn at the airport?" But I realized that Tom Taylor had probably picked him up at the airport. It would be very logical for Tom to

pick him up, and probably told him what had happened at that moment, and he was very angry, and tremendously, *deeply* disappointed to have that happen. And then, he... I can't remember when his strokes came, but he was very depressed for his later years, wouldn't leave his little condominium there on Fifth Street.

HP: He lived on 5th Avenue?

BB: He lived in that building called the Portland Tower or something. It's kind of a rounded building. Do you know where the Forecourt fountain is? It's right west of there, it's like a highrise? Andries lived in Dunthorpe, he had a house in Dunthorpe. He had a very nice house, and when he was in his first days here he drove a Citroën car, and of course in Portland in those days, in the 50's and 60's, a Citroën was like a very exotic car. And here he was this Dutchman, an intellectual, he'd come driving this exotic car. He then finally had to sell it. It broke down, and he bought a Peugeot, I think. But still wouldn't have, like, an American car. His wife Ginna, to my amazement... they lived up in Dunthorpe, I know where their house was, I painted it... she never drove a car. And so she would have to stay up there all the time, alone, by herself, in this house while he was here at the school. Eventually they sold the house and moved up to a new, east-facing high rise apartment up in that building. Portland Plaza, I think it's called.

HP: Going back to when CMI was cut, I know that you wrote two letters of support; you were in L.A. – how did you find out about it?

BB: I don't remember. Someone told me that it was being cut and could we write letters to whomever, I suppose, Blumel or whoever cut it.

HP: Do you remember how you felt?

BB: Oh, I was *furious*. I couldn't believe they'd be so *stupid* to cut it, really. It was such a great program. Tom and I had taught a class one summer, Tom taught the class, but I was active in it; and we taught this class of Beginning Film and I still remember that class and there were not many, maybe 30 students in there or something, and every one of them went off and made a little film. I

was very involved in this class. I remember the last day when they were showing all these little films they made. And I realized *all* these students, they were all probably 20 years old, or whatever they were, and every one of them, all their lives, they had probably sat at a desk in a classroom, every year of their education. And they probably never made one single thing, *ever*, that was creative. And now, all of a sudden they were finding out they could make something creatively. They could make something that was there up on the screen. It was fantastic. I just loved it. I'd rather see those films than a big movie, because it was like, made by these kids, who learned they could do something, instead of being a passive student in a classroom chair.

HP: And reading some of the documents about Deinum it seemed that access was always very important to him—access to education for the entire community, not just for selected people. So can you talk a little bit about your experiences where that kind of mentality came through, and who the man was, and how he taught?

BB: No, that doesn't really resonate. It does make sense that he would think that, but I don't think I had much discussion with him about that. He would be more for equal rights, I'd say, and everyone having a chance, the underdog, and all this kind of thing. Access to education was something I was kind of blind to.

HP: I can't remember your exact wording already, but you just basically said, when they cut CMI, you were basically shocked that they'd cut such a.... [cut off]

BB: Well, such a valuable program, it's just *extraordinary*. As far as I was concerned, it was by *far* the highest quality department at the University. By *far*.

HP: What was it that made it the highest...?

BB: Deinum!

HP: Just Deinum.

BB: Oh, just Deinum, period! Deinum was... I don't know, say, a star. He was like an inspirational figure. He inspired you. He showed you a world you didn't know existed. He blew out the walls and you learned about the bigger world, and the history, and social issues, and things that provincial Portland didn't really know about.

HP: After they cut the program, he still continued to teach some classes, correct?

BB: I don't know. I went to see him after they cut the program, and he told me they had given him an office, but he never went there. He was very deeply hurt, and deeply alienated, and had no use for that place. I don't know, I think he might have taught some, but I don't know what happened with that. And then another tragedy, was that I think Tom had to just almost give away... it took us... for *years and years* we would try to get used cameras, and used this, and a light here, and a light there, and figure out some way maybe on a grant that we could keep a light that we'd get... we built up this equipment supply that we made films with. Tom just guarded his budget, and tried to buy this and that, and I think that State Systems just told him to trash it all. I think they just *gave it away*, because they didn't want to keep it; they didn't want to store it. You have to find out from someone who was around in those days, but I think they just told Tom to sell it off, get rid of it away, they didn't want it anymore, and we had spent so much time in building that up.

HP: I noticed that when PSU had announced they were going to have a Film degree for the first time, you actually wrote in and said "Hey, wait a second. You had one before. You had a department *before*." I thought it was interesting that you wanted to point out the importance of institutional history in a way that was like—don't forget that this did exist before. Do you remember what had inspired you to actually take that action and write that?

BB: No, I can't remember that. Who did I write that to? Was it to this Wim, the President?

HP: I think it might have been to alumni...[cut off]

BB: Oh! I wrote it to the alumni magazine! I was *really* pissed. Oh, I was really angry. I should show you... that's right. Did you read... let me see this [takes letter]. Oh, now this was

disgusting. I wrote a very scathing letter to them, and they cut out *every single*—they cut all the meat out of it, they left just the potatoes in there. That’s all they left is the sweetness, and I got so angry I even went up to... that’s when I wrote a letter to the president, and I sent him a copy. I said, “Is this the kind of alumni magazine you have?” and I sent him a copy of my original letter and what they had x’ed out. They took off 50% of it. Took off everything I wanted to say strongly in there, they cut; and they never acknowledged any editing on it, they just printed it after they’d cut the hell out of it.

HP: What did you originally... [cut off]

BB: Well, I’ll try to find it. Maybe I can find it for you. But I was *furious*, because they just took my main statement—my main statement was about Andries and about how great CMI had been, and how they’d cut the best program they’ve had, and they just printed this... this editor just took it on herself to make it, you know, “Oh, we have to have it sweet, because there’ll be all these contributors,” and all this crap. And, “Oh, we can’t upset the alumni!” Well....

HP: Personally I think they couldn’t handle you saying anything that it was a mistake they had made to cut it in the first place.

BB: Well, *obviously* it was a mistake to cut it in the first place. *Obviously*.

HP: Yeah, well kind of leading into that and just sort of wrapping things up. Basically, if *you* were writing the history of CMI, what would be important to you to get out?

BB: Well, I think Andries is really the big thing, and I think it’s not the production so much. It’s the expanded awareness and depth of knowledge that he left—that he gave to this community. I really think, as I said before, that Andries could have been Andries without film. Film was his tool, but he could have done it without it. He was brilliant with film, but it was not about film. It was about the ideas that come from film, and the substance, and that’s a great gift. The making of films, I don’t know that they changed the world very much. They were fun to do, we learned things, we had a good time. Not that many people got jobs out of it, or careers, but it was an

exciting time. I mean, think about going up there to that lab and making a film, compared to sitting in the Sociology of Oppressed Minorities, or some crap, you know. It's just a whole different world, different planet. I mean, you just sit there, you take your notes, you read your textbook, blah, blah, blah—versus getting out in the world and deciding what you're going to film, how you're going to film it, meeting people, doing this, doing that.

HP: I know that I just said that I was going to wrap things up... and now I'm just curious because you just made me think of something. When you were actually learning in the field, Tom was the one doing the production part of it; is that how you actually learned... going out into the field and start shooting? Or were you taught in the class ... [cut off]

BB: Both, both. Tom would... see, you have to know *some* things. Like Tom could give a class on lighting: What's a key light? What's a rim light? What's a back light? What's a fill light? Because we have these lights and we gotta try to light. Certainly, obvious one you've got to know how the camera works. How do you turn the camera on? How do you make your exposure? Tom had a whole... one of the first classes would be on light meters, called the Sekonic light meters—we had a bunch of those—and we could take an instant light meter reading. But, that's kind of the beginning technical thing. And, there'd be... the deep experience comes from making a film. First of all a film is not made by one person. So, you've got five or six people out there: “Where are we going to put the camera?” “Oh, we better put a light up here.” “What are we going to do to figure out the sound?” Everyone's kind of doing that. It's not a perfect thing. It's that you kind of get together, and you hope you'll have a decent film in the end. But it's a pleasure too... it's the greatest... I went to six universities I guess you could say, seven actually, and *by far*, the best experience I had was at CMI at Portland State.

HP: Do you have any last things you want to say? Anything you want to add?

BB: Oh, I think I've said it, but Andries, especially, changed my life, and changed it from black to white in a way. I mean I cannot imagine, as I said, what would have happened to me. I feel a profound appreciation for not just, not like exactly the *direction*, or physical part of my life, but for my insight, how he expanded my soul, what it meant to me, how much he made me more aware of

the world. And I would like to be able to help pass that on to other people, because it was so meaningful.

HP: Do you remember your last exchange with Deinum?

BB: Yeah. I remember it was very, very bad. He had some physical problems from a stroke that made him unwilling to leave his condominium for years, and I would come to try to take him to lunch or whatever, and he wouldn't go anywhere. And I would go see him in the apartment there, and he was [hesitantly, with pauses] for somebody who had been so inspirational, he was... I wouldn't say he was bitter, I'd say it was something other than that, but he was sad or depressed. You know, he was just a different... you want to have a person who'd given so much to people, you want them to have energy to keep giving. It wasn't there at that time. And then I think that, when he died, and then when Ginna died, it was very sad—very sad to have an ending like that.

HP: When did Ginna die? Shortly after or... [cut off]

BB: She died several years later. I know Tom told me, one of the worst... Tom kind of watched over her for a while... and one of the worst moments he'd ever had was when he went in one day and found her dead on the floor in there, in that condo.

HP: Bill, we have to end it on a nicer note than this. [Both break out in laughter] While you were at CMI do you have any recollection at all of the greater Portland community being aware of CMI?

BB: Well, that's a good question, because again, it's wrapped up in the politics of the time. No, I don't think so. I think people were aware because we were trying to hustle these grants, or trying to go down to some outfit that had some money to do something and say, "Can we make a film for you?" Sometimes they'd say yes and those organizations were aware of us. But remember these films never got seen by the public, really. It's not like they got played on television; they didn't get played in the movie houses of the time. They were made, shown around a little bit, maybe sent off to a documentary festival or something, and that's it. The public generally didn't see them. So, it wasn't that. And then, the problem was that in the time period, when I was there, there was a great

divide between the politics of us at the University and the anti-war, and the politics of like the city, and what were called “straight” people who were all for the war, and for law and order, and for Richard Nixon, and blah, blah, blah. So it was it wasn’t as though people were really aware of this CMI.

In fact, now that you say it, it might be that some people might have considered CMI a negative part of the university, vis-à-vis the public relations face of this. And I think one of the reasons that Joe Blumel, and probably a good thing he did, actually... one of his main... probably the main thing he’ll be remembered for, in a way, is this whole movement of making the university serve the city. He promoted this whole idea and it was a reconciliation too, because the city was very angry with all these demonstrations, and the politics of the students at Portland State, and so he re-approached the city with saying, “We’re here to serve you or here to train people for your businesses, blah, blah, blah.” But for my purposes, the function of a University isn’t so much to train people for businesses. It is to do exactly what Andries Deinum did, and that’s to deeply inspire people, inspire people to do new things, and good things for the world and the society.

HP: Well, thank you very much for your time.