

Oral History Center  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Thomas Laqueur

*Tom Laqueur: On the Meaning of Friendship*

The Marion and Herbert Sandler Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by  
Martin Meeker  
in 2018

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Thomas Laqueur

**Thomas Laqueur** is the Helen Fawcett Professor of History Emeritus at the University of California Berkeley. Laqueur was educated at Swarthmore and Princeton and came to Berkeley in 1973 to join the faculty of the History Department. He is author of several books in European cultural history and the history of medicine and the recipient of numerous awards and honors. In this interview, Professor Laqueur provides an autobiographical outline and then focuses on his several decade friendships with Herb and Marion Sandler. He offers insights into the reasons for their success in business and the principles that drove their philanthropy.

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## **Project History: the Marion and Herb Sandler Oral History Project**

Herb Sandler and Marion Osher Sandler formed one of the most remarkable partnerships in the histories of American business and philanthropy—and, if their friends and associates would have a say in things, in the living memory of marriage writ large. This oral history project documents the lives of Herb and Marion Sandler through their shared pursuits in raising a family, serving as co-CEOs for the savings and loan Golden West Financial, and establishing a remarkably influential philanthropy in the Sandler Foundation. This project consists of eighteen unique oral history interviews, at the center of which is a 24-hour life history interview with Herb Sandler.

Marion Osher Sandler was born October 17, 1930, in Biddeford, Maine, to Samuel and Leah Osher. She was the youngest of five children; all of her siblings were brothers and all went on to distinguished careers in medicine and business. She attended Wellesley as an undergraduate where she was elected into Phi Beta Kappa. Her first postgraduate job was as an assistant buyer with Bloomingdale's in Manhattan, but she left in pursuit of more lofty goals. She took a job on Wall Street, in the process becoming only the second woman on Wall Street to hold a non-clerical position. She started with Dominick & Dominick in its executive training program and then moved to Oppenheimer and Company where she worked as a highly respected analyst. While building an impressive career on Wall Street, she earned her MBA at New York University.

Herb Sandler was born on November 16, 1931 in New York City. He was the second of two children and remained very close to his brother, Leonard, throughout his life. He grew up in subsidized housing in Manhattan's Lower East Side neighborhood of Two Bridges. Both his father and brother were attorneys (and both were judges too), so after graduating from City College, he went for his law degree at Columbia. He practiced law both in private practice and for the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor where he worked on organized crime cases. While still living with his parents at Knickerbocker Village, he engaged in community development work with the local settlement house network, Two Bridges Neighborhood Council. At Two Bridges he was exposed to the work of Episcopal Bishop Bill Wendt, who inspired his burgeoning commitment to social justice.

Given their long and successful careers in business, philanthropy, and marriage, Herb and Marion's story of how they met has taken on somewhat mythic proportions. Many people interviewed for this project tell the story. Even if the facts don't all align in these stories, one central feature is shared by all: Marion was a force of nature, self-confident, smart, and, in Herb's words, "sweet, without pretensions." Herb, however, always thought of himself as unremarkable, just one of the guys. So when he first met Marion, he wasn't prepared for this special woman to be actually interested in dating him. The courtship happened reasonably quickly despite some personal issues that needed to be addressed (which Herb discusses in his interview) and introducing one another to their respective families (but, as Herb notes, not to seek approval!).

Within a few years of marriage, Marion was bumping up against the glass ceiling on Wall Street, recognizing that she would not be making partner status any time soon. While working as an analyst, however, she learned that great opportunity for profit existed in the savings and loan sector, which was filled with bloat and inefficiency as well as lack of financial sophistication and incompetence among the executives. They decided to find an investment opportunity in California and, with the help of Marion's brothers (especially Barney), purchased a tiny two-branch thrift in Oakland, California: Golden West Savings and Loan.

Golden West—which later operated under the retail brand of World Savings—grew by leaps and bounds, in part through acquisition of many regional thrifts and in part through astute research leading to organic expansion into new geographic areas. The remarkable history of Golden West is revealed in great detail in many of the interviews in this project, but most particularly in the interviews with Herb Sandler, Steve Daetz, Russ Kettell, and Mike Roster, all of whom worked at the institution. The savings and loan was marked by key attributes during the forty-three years in which it was run by the Sandlers. Perhaps most important among these is the fact that over that period of time the company was profitable all but two years. This is even more remarkable when considering just how volatile banking was in that era, for there were liquidity crises, deregulation schemes, skyrocketing interest rates, financial recessions, housing recessions, and the savings and loan crisis of the 1980s, in which the entire sector was nearly obliterated through risky or foolish decisions made by Congress, regulators, and managements. Through all of this, however, Golden West delivered consistent returns to their investors. Indeed, the average annual growth in earnings per share over 40 years was 19 percent, a figure that made Golden West second only to Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, and the second best record in American corporate history.

Golden West is also remembered for making loans to communities that had been subject to racially and economically restrictive redlining practices. Thus, the Sandlers played a role in opening up the dream of home ownership to more Americans. In the offices too, Herb and Marion made a point of opening positions to women, such as branch manager and loan officer, previously held only by men. And, by the mid-1990s, Golden West began appointing more women and people of color to its board of directors, which already was presided over by Marion Sandler, one of the longest-serving female CEOs of a major company in American history. The Sandlers sold Golden West to Wachovia in 2006. The interviews tell the story of the sale, but at least one major reason for the decision was the fact that the Sandlers were spending a greater percentage of their time in philanthropic work.

One of the first real forays by the Sandlers into philanthropic work came in the wake of the passing of Herb's brother Leonard in 1988. Herb recalls his brother with great respect and fondness and the historical record shows him to be a just and principled attorney and jurist. Leonard was dedicated to human rights, so after his passing, the Sandlers created a fellowship in his honor at Human Rights Watch. After this, the Sandlers giving grew rapidly in their areas of greatest interest: human rights, civil rights, and medical research. They stepped up to become major donors to Human Rights Watch and, after the arrival of Anthony Romero in 2001, to the American Civil Liberties Union.

The Sandler's sponsorship of medical research demonstrates their unique, creative, entrepreneurial, and sometimes controversial approach to philanthropic work. With the American Asthma Foundation, which they founded, the goal was to disrupt existing research patterns and to interest scientists beyond the narrow confines of pulmonology to investigate the disease and to produce new basic research about it. Check out the interview with Bill Seaman for more on this initiative. The Program for Breakthrough Biomedical Research at the University of California, San Francisco likewise seeks out highly-qualified researchers who are willing to engage in high-risk research projects. The interview with program director Keith Yamamoto highlights the impacts and the future promise of the research supported by the Sandler's. The Sandler Fellows program at UCSF selects recent graduate school graduates of unusual promise and provides them with a great deal of independence to pursue their own research agenda, rather than serve as assistants in established labs. Joe DeRisi was one of the first Sandler Fellows and, in his interview, he describes the remarkable work he has accomplished while at UCSF as a fellow and, now, as faculty member who heads his own esteemed lab.

The list of projects, programs, and agencies either supported or started by the Sandler's runs too long to list here, but at least two are worth mentioning for these endeavors have produced impacts wide and far: the Center for American Progress and ProPublica. The Center for American Progress had its origins in Herb Sandler's recognition that there was a need for a liberal policy think tank that could compete in the marketplace of ideas with groups such as the conservative Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute. The Sandler's researched existing groups and met with many well-connected and highly capable individuals until they forged a partnership with John Podesta, who had served as chief of staff under President Bill Clinton. The Center for American Progress has since grown by leaps and bounds and is now recognized for being just what it set out to be.

The same is also true with ProPublica. The Sandler's had noticed the decline of traditional print journalism in the wake of the internet and lamented what this meant for the state of investigative journalism, which typically requires a meaningful investment of time and money. After spending much time doing due diligence—another Sandler hallmark—and meeting with key players, including Paul Steiger of the Wall Street Journal, they took the leap and established a not-for-profit investigative journalism outfit, which they named ProPublica. ProPublica not only has won several Pulitzer Prizes, it has played a critical role in supporting our democratic institutions by holding leaders accountable to the public. Moreover, the Sandler Foundation is now a minority sponsor of the work of ProPublica, meaning that others have recognized the value of this organization and stepped forward to ensure its continued success. Herb Sandler's interview as well as several other interviews describe many of the other initiatives created and/or supported by the foundation, including: the Center for Responsible Lending, Oceana, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Learning Policy Institute, and more.

A few interviewees shared the idea that when it comes to Herb and Marion Sandler there are actually three people involved: Marion Sandler, Herb Sandler, and “Herb and Marion.” The later creation is a kind of mind-meld between the two which was capable of expressing opinions, making decisions, and forging a united front in the ambitious projects that they accomplished. I think this makes great sense because I find it difficult to fathom that two individuals alone could do what they did. Because Marion Sandler passed away in 2012, I was not able to interview her, but I am confident in my belief that a very large part of her survives in Herb’s love of “Herb and Marion,” which he summons when it is time to make important decisions. And let us not forget that in the midst of all of this work they raised two accomplished children, each of whom make important contributions to the foundation and beyond. Moreover, the Sandlers have developed many meaningful friendships (see the interviews with Tom Laqueur and Ronnie Caplane), some of which have spanned the decades.

The eighteen interviews of the Herb and Marion Sandler oral history project, then, are several projects in one. It is a personal, life history of a remarkable woman and her mate and life partner; it is a substantive history of banking and of the fate of the savings and loan institution in the United States; and it is an examination of the current world of high-stakes philanthropy in our country at a time when the desire to do good has never been more needed and the importance of doing that job skillfully never more necessary.

Martin Meeker, Charles B. Faulhaber Director, Oral History Center, UC Berkeley

**List of Interviews of the Marion and Herbert Sandler Oral History Project**

Ronnie Caplane, “Ronnie Caplane: On Friendship with Marion and Herb.”

Steve Daetz, “Steve Daetz: Values and Leadership at Golden West Financial and the Sandler Foundation.”

Joseph DeRisi, “Joe DeRisi: From Sandler Fellow to UCSF Professor of Biochemistry.”

Stephen Hauser, “Stephen Hauser: Establishing the Sandler Neurosciences Center at UCSF.”

Russell Kettell, “Russ Kettell: A Career with Golden West Financial.”

Thomas Laqueur, “Tom Laqueur: On the Meaning of Friendship.”

Bernard Osher, “Barney Osher: On Marion Osher Sandler.”

John Podesta, “John Podesta: Building Infrastructure for Progressive Politics with the Center for American Progress.”

Anthony Romero, “Anthony Romero: Leadership of the American Civil Liberties Union in Times of Crisis.”

Michael Roster, “Michael Roster: Attorney and Golden West Financial General Counsel.”

Kenneth Roth, “Kenneth Roth: Human Rights Watch and Achieving Global Impact.”

Herbert Sandler, “Herbert Sandler: A Life with Marion Osher Sandler in Business and Philanthropy.”

James Sandler, “Jim Sandler: Commitment to the Environment in the Sandler Foundation.”

Susan Sandler, “Susan Sandler: The Sandler Family and Philanthropy.”

William Seaman, “Bill Seaman: The American Asthma Foundation.”

Paul Steiger, “Paul Steiger: Business Reporting and the Creation of ProPublica.”

Richard Tofel, “Richard Tofel: The Creation and Expansion of ProPublica.”

Keith Yamamoto, “Keith Yamamoto: The Sandler Foundation and the Program in Breakthrough Biomedical Research at UCSF.”

## Interview 1: March 29, 2018

01-00:00:00

Meeker: Today is March 29, 2018. This is Martin Meeker interviewing Professor Tom Laqueur for the Herb and Marion Sandler Oral History Project. We are here at his office in the Department of History at UC Berkeley, and this is interview session number one. So, we begin every interview the same way, for everyone, and that is tell me your name, and date and place of birth.

01-00:00:33

Laqueur: So my name is Thomas Laqueur, and I was born on September 6, 1945.

01-00:00:42

Meeker: Where were you born?

01-00:00:41

Laqueur: I was born in Istanbul.

01-00:00:43

Meeker: You were born in Istanbul—well, there's got to be a story there. Why don't you start out by telling me how your family ended up in Istanbul.

01-00:00:50

Laqueur: Well, it all goes back to January 1933, which was the election of Hitler to be chancellor, and then to March 1933, when he actually consolidated power and the future in Germany, for Jews, was from then on not so bright. My father was in medical school, and actually wasn't able to take his exams initially because one had to prove Aryan descent. So he ended up taking them in Basel. But Hamburg was a liberal city, and so I have his graduation certificate in which some brave registrar took a ruler and black-lined through the documentation for being of Aryan descent—and my dad passed the medical exams anyway. But then, there was no future, so he went off to Holland, where his uncle, my great uncle, was rector of the University of Amsterdam—and a really pretty famous pharmacologist. He founded Organon, and he made his money, and the company's money, on synthesizing estrogen. So he was a figure in the scientific world. So he got my dad a job in Leiden.

And then in early 1937—and even before that—the Turkish government was interested in staffing the University of Istanbul with all these out-of-work academics from all over Europe. So my dad, who was a quite junior pathologist, got a job teaching pathology in Istanbul, after many other efforts to try to get a place to go. And then my mother, who was a research technologist and worked for a quite well-known bacteriologist in Frankfurt—and he was able to keep her on for a long time, but the restrictions got tighter and tighter, and at some point he had to let her go. But he arranged, with one of his buddies who had gotten a job in Istanbul—another route to Istanbul—for Mother to get a job there. So my mother also went in '37, and then they met in a lab in Istanbul.

01-00:03:11

Meeker:

Okay, so they hadn't known each other prior to moving to Istanbul?

01-00:03:13

Laqueur:

No, right. They met in a lab in Istanbul.

01-00:03:16

Meeker:

Did your parents talk about the circumstances of living in Turkey during the war?

01-00:03:21

Laqueur:

Well, the circumstances of living in Turkey were actually, for a young couple, quite good. They were poor. They'd gotten my paternal grandmother out. My mother's mother went to Palestine—then Palestine. And my mother's father, who was separated from his wife, didn't go anywhere, and went to Theresienstadt and then Auschwitz, so that was upsetting to my mother. And obviously, I have letters from them trying to help her aunts, who lived in Frankfurt, who also ended up perishing. So it was not—what to say—they lived through those times. But insofar as daily life went, they were both pretty excited. My father learned Turkish pretty easily, lectured in Turkish, could do his work. My mother enjoyed her work. They were able to do a certain amount of traveling in Anatolia. Before the war, actually, even Greece. You know, it affected their lives! I was born nine months after the word of the German failure at the Battle of the Bulge reached Istanbul. And my mother told me that in 1942 she'd had an abortion, because she wasn't going to have a child until the results of this war were clear—so in that sense it affected their lives. And my mother was forty at the time when I was born, so it was not—the circumstances were stressful.

But in terms of a life, I think they—and many other colleagues, these Germans, had a pretty good life. It was a great, great university. They'd hired all sorts of famous people, both literary people and scientific people from around Europe. So Erich Auerbach, the most important critic of his generation, was there, so was Leo Spitzer and the mathematician Richard von Mises, brother of Ludwig the famous economist, was there for a time and [Paul] Hindemith was there—in Ankara, for a little while—and all sorts of important scientists, Nobel level, were there. So in that sense, if it weren't for the stress of thinking that maybe Turkey was next, after Greece—which it turned out not to be—it was a pretty good. They always spoke about it as a good time.

01-00:05:39

Meeker:

So they found the Turks to be reasonably accepting of Jewish émigrés?

01-00:05:43

Laqueur:

Well, the Turks, at this point, of any immigrant—the Turks invited almost three thousand of them! They were running the Ankara and Istanbul universities, so yeah, they were accepting. And then, of course, there were a lot of Jews in Istanbul then anyway, the old Sephardic communities. The

xenophobic regime didn't really get going till the late forties/early fifties—and then it wasn't just specifically anti-Jewish/anti-Christian/anti-Greek. No, I don't think they had any sense—at least they never spoke of any sense of being Jews in Turkey, in Istanbul. But they also had very little contact with the Sephardic community, which spoke Ladino. My parents spoke German, French, whatever—but they didn't speak Ladino, so I think it was just separate communities. But there was a large one! I don't know how many were in Ankara, but my guess would be fifteen hundred German émigrés and their families in Istanbul.

01-00:06:42

Meeker:

How did your family make it to the United States?

01-00:06:45

Laqueur:

Well, then in '49 lots of people were leaving or starting to leave. And then, I think my dad jumped the visa queue, because he had worked for the intelligence services during the war, making little special kinds of microfilm and maps, so they got there more quickly. And then—this was many émigrés, these Jewish relief services found them a job. And unlike before the war, where immigrant doctors would go to New York and Los Angeles, and so forth, they ended up in West Virginia. It was all very contingent—another pathologist named Laqueur, with a name very close to my father, got a job in Stanford—it was always said it probably was set up for my father. Some little confusion, he ended up not in Palo Alto, but in Beckley, West Virginia, first in a little coal town named Gauley Bridge, then Bluefield, and then in Beckley. And his best buddy from Istanbul ended up in Charleston, and another German pathologist ended up in Parkersburg. So basically, the Jewish relief services put these incredibly educated German pathologists in these little towns all over West Virginia. So he kept seeing his best pal from Istanbul in Charleston till he died.

01-00:08:07

Meeker:

And so you were raised in West Virginia?

01-00:08:09

Laqueur:

I was raised in West Virginia.

01-00:08:11

Meeker:

Where?

01-00:08:12

Laqueur:

Well, first in a place called Bluefield, the Air-Conditioned City, which was the railway hub for all the trains coming out of the Southern Appalachian coalfields, out of Mingo County and McDowell County and all these places where the great union wars had happened. All these trains coming down the hollows ended up in Bluefield, where they were switched to—it was basically a Norfolk & Western town. And then in 1956, the United Mine Workers Welfare and Retirement Fund set up ten hospitals, which was a great thing, sort of like Kaiser, only for the coalfields. And my dad started working for

them, as did many other foreign doctors or out-of-state doctors. It was a real model, and so all sorts of quite distinguished people ended up working for them. So very good years for my parents. Beckley all of a sudden became a multilingual and quite cultured town. And then the mine workers union was taken over by the Mob, and the reform candidate [Joseph] Yablonski was murdered by this guy [Tony] Boyle. Boyle ended up going to jail for having ordered the murder. So the union welfare and retirement fund went down the tubes, and the hospitals went down the tubes, and then my dad still worked there when it was run by the Presbyterians. Then he became chief of staff of Veterans Hospital.

They've lived lives that were culturally German; this is to say, we spoke German at home. They imported bread and sausages from Boston. It came on dry ice every few weeks. So they basically lived like a Martian colony in a strange land. And my mother had friends from my school and stuff. But basically, they lived a quite culturally—at least my dad—a culturally isolated life in West Virginia.

01-00:10:17

Meeker:

Were there community organizations or institutions that you participated in?

01-00:10:21

Laqueur:

Well—no. It was touching, my dad, there was then a thing called the Community Concert Association, which was a big deal in America in the fifties and sixties, or even the forties, fifties, and sixties, which brought quite well-known artists to the backwaters. A guy named Saul Yurok, who was a major impresario, had organized these. And so I don't know how these people did it, God knows, but they came by train to these godforsaken places and did concerts. And my father ran the Community Concert Association for decades. But my father never assimilated to America. He just didn't get it. My mother, because she was friendlier—and her English was much worse. My dad's English was actually pretty perfect, but my mom's English wasn't—but she had school friends, women friends. And she loved to swim and hike, and so that was fine for her.

But you know, my parents decided that I should have a little local culture, so they started sending me to a church first—to the Presbyterian Church and then to the Methodist Church. There wasn't, in neither Beckley nor Bluefield was there a Jewish community. There were Jews, but the nearest synagogue was in Charleston. But in any case, it wasn't their world. They were these very assimilated German Jews. The other Jews were Eastern European Jews of a different educational background, and [my parents] were your sort of stereotypical highly educated German Jews, who were basically Lutherans with a different heritage. I mean, they never didn't want to be Jews. They contributed to Israel, my mother's brother was in Israel. It wasn't like they *weren't* Jewish, it just was not a community they sought. So I went to

Presbyterian Sunday school and learned a lot about the Bible—until I got kicked out at age eleven.

01-00:12:27

Meeker: You got kicked out because—?

01-00:12:28

Laqueur: Because of my views on evolution and the age of the earth—and doubts about the Trinity, and I kept making difficulties. I'm not being—I'm sassing the teachers, they said back then.

01-00:12:44

Meeker: Did you go to public school?

01-00:12:45

Laqueur: Oh yeah! There were boarding schools around, but my parents thought this was another not good idea. So I went to really terrible schools; I mean really terrible schools.

01-00:12:57

Meeker: And did you stay there through high school?

01-00:12:59

Laqueur: Yeah.

01-00:12:59

Meeker: Okay.

01-00:13:00

Laqueur: They were really bad schools. And basically, for much of grade school, or the last three years of grade school, I essentially didn't go to class. The principal let me do work for her. I would take the lunch money to the bank, and I would do little errands and stuff like that, and I would read—

01-00:13:22

Meeker: Does it feel like you were, in essence, home-schooled then?

01-00:13:25

Laqueur: No! Well, yeah, in a sense that I read a lot at home. But the math classes weren't so bad. The geometry class was pretty good. I think the science classes—because after Sputnik there were these national curricula, so they had a physics curriculum that was actually pretty decent, so I did that. But it was one of these kind of—from a West Coast perspective, a breathlessly ignorant world. In other words, I—being a smart-ass kid, I wrote an essay, I guess my junior year, saying that—about Camus's *The Stranger*, and I said something about existentialism. And the teacher wrote on the thing, "Why don't you read *good* books, like Scott, Dickens, or Thackeray?" And then she circled *existentialism* and says, "What is *this*? Did you make it up?" I wish I was clever enough to say, "I wish," but I didn't; I just felt slapped down. So it was

Bible Belt West Virginia. My dad did a couple of autopsies on the snake handlers.

There was not a mile of four-lane highway when I was in West Virginia. So these Appalachian corridors that you now zoom across, the New River Gorge is the one where the—that's the big bridge where a Toyota was dropped into this gorge as a commercial. It's one of the highest bridges in America. It didn't exist, so you basically couldn't get east to west. You could get east to west by going up a 4,000 foot mountain and down a 4,000 foot mountain. But essentially you couldn't—once you got into the Shenandoah Valley you could head north, or the Ohio River Valley, but in the middle, you just couldn't—you couldn't get there from here. And you couldn't go north through the state because of the mountains.

01-00:15:22

Meeker:

Did you ever ask your parents why they stayed there?

01-00:15:27

Laqueur:

It's a good question. I'm not sure I ever asked them explicitly, but my sense was—and I've actually written about this. My sense was that they had moved a lot and that somehow living in this godforsaken part of the world let them live as if they were a colony of Germans in Brazil or Mars, so I just got it the other way around. My mother used to visit her brother in New York, and he lived on Cabrini Boulevard, which is now Dominican, but was then all German Jews. And there was a famous park there called Frankfurt-on-the-Hudson they called it, Fort Tryon Park, and just thousands of German Jewish immigrants, and my mother would come back just *hating* it, all this German. So it began to make sense with me a little bit. There was a movie by an Austrian filmmaker, his name doesn't—I can't remember it right now [Axel Corti], but it's called *Wohin und Zurück—Where [To] and Back*. And one of them, the second part of this, is called *Santa Fe*. And in the second episode, the boy who'd escaped Europe in the first film of the sequence [*God Does Not Believe in Us Anymore*], ends up in New York. And he's in New York, and Santa Fe becomes his fantasy town, for where no one would know that Stefan Zweig had died. In other words, they didn't have to deal with the pains of exile.

And the other side is my mother. They bought a cottage on a lake in Virginia, which was a place not unlike where Mother grew up in the Wiesenthal in Germany, and so Mother loved to swim, and she'd mushroom with German women. And the New River Valley is not unlike where she grew up, so she adored this swimming in this sort of world that I—and I think never really wanted to leave it. And then in the summers they reproduced the German world. All her best girlfriends from Istanbul used to come, her best girlfriends from Frankfurt who ended up in other places used to come, various German-speaking Hungarians would come. So basically, for three months in the summer, they had a little colony of—mostly women. By this time they were

widows, some of them—a couple had been killed in the war, various things had happened, but mostly women, some men. But that kept up till my mother died. Some of them died earlier, but basically, she kept up this world of visitors. My aunt—my father's sister—ran a multilingual boardinghouse in Austin, Texas and then moved to New York where she was a voice teacher. She'd come for the summer, some of her music friends would come. So my sense is that my mother built a life—at least a summer life—which sustained her in Appalachia.

And I think my father just had lost courage—I think my father was just sort of defeated by all this. He just lost—his uncle had been this very distinguished scientist. His grandfather, and father had been a very, as well, a very well known—he ran the Hamburg health service, basically, the public—you know, so the equivalent of the national health. His great-grandfather was a—and great-grandmother was a highly educated person, of course, along with everyone. So you imagine this world, and being the German bildungsbürgertum, that kind of German intellectual elite, and then it no longer existed. And my mother was able to adjust, and my father just never understood his new world and could deal with it, so I think he just was defeated. He had a few efforts—and we'd go to Cincinnati, go to different places. And he wasn't quite as senior as he should be, and he had to have a boss that he couldn't deal with. I don't know exactly what it [was] but my sense was fear.

01-00:19:41

Meeker:

Tell me about your college education and grad school.

01-00:19:44

Laqueur:

Well, my college education: I went to Swarthmore, and I went to Swarthmore because *The Atlantic*, in 1962, had an article that Swarthmore was the best college in the country. Whether that was true or not, I had no idea. But needless to say, there were no guidance counselors that wanted to give me a view on this. But Swarthmore seemed to have everything I wanted, which was it was near a city, which gets me out of Beckley—which was number one, but not in the boonies, which gets me out of Beckley. So I had applied to Oberlin, and Oberlin was too far from Cleveland, so Swarthmore seemed perfect. So I got to Swarthmore, and it was overwhelming, in the sense that I was perfectly intelligent, but I just didn't know the things you're supposed to know—like *what* is an English paper? So my first paper came back—usually people say, “Well, I got a D on my first paper.” I got, “This is not gradable,” on my first paper. [laughter] It doesn't fit the genre of English paper. [laughing] So it was a steep learning curve. But in some ways, it was quite wonderful. It was a brilliant class—thirty-six [National] Merit Scholars from my class, and one kid was smarter than the next—and it was transformative. So in that sense, it was totally great.

01-00:21:00

Meeker:

But were there specific professors that helped you adapt?

01-00:21:05

Laqueur:

Well, there was an English teacher who was very kind to me, Miss Snyder, who wrote about melancholy and was melancholic, and ended up committing suicide. There were some German émigré professors; I took some German classes with them. That was kind of great. I went to my first Seder ever, with a German professor. I got involved in the theater, I directed *The Threepenny Opera*—I had a wonderful, wonderful time. I met my best friend, who I'm still best friends with. And my first semester philosophy professor influenced me a lot, though in a kind of crazy direction. He was a rule utilitarian, which is a wacky kind of ethical view, but he was really smart, and he got me reading stuff that I'd never heard about. And then, a medieval history professor, who ended up becoming my colleague here, got me interested in history.

So I applied to Princeton to go into medieval history, but the two guys that taught medieval history were really just—first of all, they were really old curmudgeons, and they were aggressively sexist, which even then was not so easy. But mostly, they were old CIA guys from the OSS times in the Second World War, who were just totally into the Vietnam War, which was very tense. So Princeton was just in this transition to modernity, so when I came there, graduate students weren't allowed in the faculty colloquium. So I organized this march onto the faculty colloquium, and I did it at the time when Erik Erikson, the great psychoanalyst of adolescence, was speaking. But it was all very managed in Princeton—the old professors who thought that it was unbearable were allowed to walk out, and we walked in. So then I gave up medieval history, and I sort of totally fell in love with Lawrence Stone, whose picture you see back there, who was a really great historian, and a charismatic historian.

01-00:23:03

Meeker:

Family history, right.

01-00:23:05

Laqueur:

Well, before that he wrote this big huge book on the crisis of the English aristocracy, and he was intellectually fearless. His first book, which he wrote in his mid-twenties, was on medieval sculpture. He knew *nothing* about medieval sculpture, except that [Nikolaus] Pevsner invited him to write, the great architectural historian, said we need someone to write the medieval sculpture book for the sculpture of England. And he said—he had a camera, and off he went to write this book. He was intellectually fearless and jaunty—at Oxford they would have said unsound, and he came to Princeton basically because he was—another famous, very conservative historian named Hugh Trevor-Roper, who had married Field Marshall Earl Haig's eldest daughter and then became Lord Dacre, basically blackballed Lawrence for the Regius Chair at York. And a very public, famous blackballing. So Lawrence came to America, and then was triumphant in America and he built Princeton's history department. He got this huge endowment that Princeton still lives off of. And then I had Tom [Thomas S.] Kuhn, who used to teach here, who was a great

historian of science. I don't know if you guys ever did his oral [history], but he was *the* great figure in the history of science, and Bob Darnton, who's now at Harvard. So I had spectacular teachers, and then off I went to Oxford. Well, first I went to Manchester to do research, and it was a complete bust.

01-00:24:28

Meeker:

Do you mind if I stop you? So you began at Princeton in '66? Is that about right?

01-00:24:33

Laqueur:

No, '67.

01-00:24:33

Meeker:

Sixty-seven, okay. All right.

01-00:24:37

Laqueur:

And I actually didn't go back—footnote—I didn't go back to Swarthmore. It was a very magical time, and I couldn't bear to go back. I went back for the first time forty-seven years later, when they gave me an honorary degree. At the ceremony I actually spoke about why I hadn't gone back, why the Swarthmore of the mind was in conflict with the real Swarthmore. Actually, they're quite close together, and I went for my fiftieth reunion and it was great. But I couldn't bear to go back, even though it was quite close. Anyway, so Princeton, and then I went to do research in Manchester, and that was pretty great. I joined the outing club in Manchester, did a lot of hiking and climbing—but I didn't have a thesis, largely because I had one view of what I was trying to find, and the evidence wasn't supporting it. So it was sort of a crisis.

And then, in this sort of English manner, Lawrence got me a studentship at Nuffield College, Oxford, through one of his buddies who was teaching at Nuffield. And at Nuffield, this quite conservative wonderful economic historian named [Ronald] Max Hartwell set me right about my topic, not that I became a man of the right at all, but he—and then at Oxford I had brilliant teachers, one of whom I'm still very close with, a model, a guy named John Walsh who taught at Jesus [College] who's now ninety-two, and I see him every time I go to England. And it taught me something about teaching. John used to take me and another grad student on these reading trips, these hiking trips. We went to the Lake District and we went to the Peaks. We'd talk and climb during the day, and talk more at night—I talk with my students, but he would say how much he regretted that he couldn't do what he—and he took me looking at churches there in Oxfordshire—but he couldn't do what his tutors had done, which was basically give them an education in the art and architecture of England. So he spent thirty/forty hours with me doing this kind of stuff, but not a hundred.

But in his day, his England, the tutors, what they did was they took care of undergraduates. And John knows all there is to know about eighteenth-century

religion and much else, and knows a vast amount of Latin poetry by heart and is a highly educated, brilliant person—but has written six articles in his whole life. He's written all sorts of stuff, but it's in his desk drawer. But no one cares. His life was devoted to teaching people and to being a model, and in some ways it has sort of been a conflict for me in Berkeley, in the sense that here you're supposed to write a gazillion things and be famous. And if you never see an undergraduate—in principle that's not a great idea.

But then right out of Oxford, before I had my PhD, I got *this* job. In fact, I think I still have the telegram. In those days that was how you communicated. It said, "Offered job, acting assistant professor. Acting required when PhD not in hand." So then I got my PhD. I got the job, then I got my PhD by the end of the term.

01-00:27:46

Meeker:

Did you need to come on campus to do an interview for it? Or nothing like that?

01-00:27:52

Laqueur:

I was at the cusp. Well, it's an interesting story if you want to hear it—it's not *interesting*, but it's a story of the times. I was the last person not to come on campus for an interview. But I did talk to people at the AHA informally. Just before me, Randy Starn, my colleague, got the job when—whom I think you know, because—Gene Brucker called up the History Department at Harvard and said, "We need a Renaissance historian." And they said, "Well, here's the person." Edith Kramer, who I think you guys did an oral history with, told me that when she left with a master's degree at Harvard they said, "Well, look—you have two choices for a job. We have a job for you at the Baltimore Art Museum, where you can be a curator, or we have a job for you at Oregon as an assistant professor." That's how it worked then. I was at the cusp. So I didn't have to come to campus. I had no formal interview; I didn't give a talk—but I did actually meet some faculty over coffee at the AHA, so it wasn't an interview.

And then they invited me to the smoker, which is—I thought it was just a party. And this was in New Orleans, and I had dressed in a kind of—it was ridiculous, sort of Austin Powers velvet suit and ruffled shirt, which one wore in—Austin Powers did, right?

01-00:29:08

Meeker:

Did you do this ironically? [laughing]

01-00:29:10

Laqueur:

*No!* That was the early seventies—no, I didn't know! I was going for a party, and it was to go hang out with my friends in New Orleans, and velvet suits were—people had them. It wasn't like this was; I wasn't weird wearing a velvet suit. But before then, Lawrence had wanted me to meet one of his friends, a guy named Jack Hexter, who was a kind of brilliant—really a

remarkable—another German Jewish guy, who ended up [at Washington University] in St. Louis—and a famous drinker. He took me out for drinks, and I had a couple martinis—possibly three martinis. But anyway, enough that I was barely standing. So I show up at this smoker thinking it's going to be fifty people and grad students and a party—and it turned out to be the Berkeley faculty and the three candidates for the job! Who were, needless to say, dressed in blue suits and looking—and sober. [laughter] So once this dawned on me I thought—it's all over.

But apparently, I was told when I got back—Nick Riasanovsky was this very famous Russian historian. I think you guys may done an interview with Nick Riasanovsky. He said, “I didn't read your file or anything, but I said, ‘You know, I think I like the guy in the blue velvet suit.’” [laughter] So that's how I got my job at Berkeley. It was truly the old school. I mean I had a good thesis. It wasn't like there was no merit, but it certainly wasn't through a meritocratic process. I think Lawrence wouldn't have recommended me if he hadn't thought that I would—[he knew] I wouldn't harm his reputation.

01-00:30:52

Meeker:

So I hate to do this, but I think we need to leapfrog a little bit.

01-00:30:55

Laqueur:

Fine with me! [laughter]

01-00:30:58

Meeker:

No, this is great stuff. I could spend an hour talking about the suit. But let's move up to 1980. Tell me a bit about where you were in 1980. I assume you had earned tenure by that point in time?

01-00:31:20

Laqueur:

I had tenure by then.

01-00:31:27

Meeker:

What were you working on at that point?

01-00:31:28

Laqueur:

I'm just trying to think. So I got here in '73. By '80 I had tenure. Well, this is about me again—it wasn't clear what I was working on. I had published this book very quickly in '76, this book called *Religion and Respectability: [Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850]*. And then I'd written an article that came out just around then on working-class politics. I wrote a couple articles on literacy, which did well, but I actually then was trying to sort of figure out what I was going to do. And I thought I would do more on cultural change and industrialization, but it just wasn't going anywhere. And so in a way, I was floundering. And actually, in '80, I had gotten this ACLS [American Council of Learned Societies] grant to study medicine, and I thought well, if this goes well, I'm just going to quit and be a doctor. So I spent eighteen months just doing pretty much nothing but studying medicine, here and at UCSF.

01-00:32:25

Meeker: I didn't realize that was so early, right.

01-00:32:26

Laqueur: So when I met Herb and Marion, when I met Herb and Marion I was studying medicine.

01-00:32:31

Meeker: And that ultimately results in the *Making Sex: [Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud]* book.

01-00:32:34

Laqueur: Yeah, yeah—ultimately results—who knows. But it ultimately resulted in my deciding I didn't want to be a doctor, or I didn't be a doctor under any circumstances. I could have been a perfectly good internist, but if I could have magically be transformed into a professor of medicine at UCSF I might have done it, but that wasn't what was on offer. What was on offer was going through all this slog and then becoming a practitioner, and I didn't enjoy—I love what I learned, and I loved to go to case conferences, but I didn't enjoy hanging out with patients and so that was revealing. And it did get me going, well—on that book, *Making Sex*, but also it got me going on these courses that I then taught with Cathy Gallagher, that ended up in the book *The Making of the Modern Body: [Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century]*. So it was this slightly confused state when I met Herb and Marion—well, I wasn't confused. I was studying medicine, but it wasn't—

01-00:33:27

Meeker: You were at an inflection point, perhaps.

01-00:33:30

Laqueur: Yes, exactly.

01-00:33:32

Meeker: Well, tell me about that context. I believe it was at a dinner party.

01-00:33:35

Laqueur: Yes, so I met them at a dinner party. It's a longer story. I'd had a, in fact, I had a girlfriend who had—back in the seventies—who owned, a co-owner of a beautiful ranch above Jenner, with this guy named Ken Kahn, who'd written a book about socialist chicken farmers of Petaluma. [*Comrades and Chicken Farmers: The Story of a California Jewish Community*] I think I told you about this. And somehow, Marion and I got into talks about what I'd read, and what was interesting, and I started talking about this Jewish chicken farmer book. And she said, "This is ridiculous. This is stupid. Why would anyone read about Jewish chicken farmers?" And that it was just an irrelevant topic and it had nothing to do with anything. So I tried to defend the Jewish chicken farmer story, and somehow—

01-00:34:25

Meeker: How did you defend that, do you recall?

01-00:34:27

Laqueur:

Well, I said, “Look, the world is in a grain of sand. This is a remarkable community of people who transformed this Polish socialism and different versions of Jewish-left politics to Petaluma?” It’s a kind of—really? It’s a kind of remarkable story. And you know, it’s the line I always gave. For in other words, it’s pure research, because it’s interesting—and who knows what someone’s going to use it for, rather than something that’s more directed. And I think Herb and Marion ended up supporting a lot of science that was pure research. But I think most of the rest of their philanthropy was pretty directly engaged with real—what did you do today for something? So this didn’t seem to engage them.

I don’t remember the next stage, but somehow they contacted me and they wanted to remember the details of the book, because I think it resonated with—they remembered that Gerson Bakar, who was a friend of theirs, was from Petaluma. I think you’ve done an interview with him. So I sent them the name of the book, and then they gave the book to Gerson, who didn’t know about it, who liked it and was interested—I guess his parents were there, or whatever. It was some Gerson Bakar story. So I think they thought, “So this guy’s not so wacky.”

And then they invited us, I was with Gail Saliterman then, to a party in Walnut Creek, where I got into a fight with this very conservative friend of theirs named Arthur Rock, who was a big venture capitalist, about Afghanistan, which he thought was a communist takeover. And I said, “Well, maybe, but it’s actually—it’s 1833 all over again,” that is to say, the Russians and the West have been fighting in Afghanistan for at least 150 years, and it seemed to me not particularly to do with communism. I can’t remember the argument—we had a big argument. So I can’t remember what their side was in the argument. So then, and then they started inviting us to more events. We must have had them over—I don’t remember having them over as much. And they started taking us, going on trips with them, and so we became part of their circle.

We had a project together when I became director of the Townsend Center, and they said could they help me? And then they helped me, and one of their advertising guys came and helped me make brochures and they tried to teach me about being a better administrator—“discipline, focus” Marion used to say, which has never been my strong suit. I mean it is, in the sense that I ultimately get there, but I get there in not the direct route that Marion—

01-00:37:28

Meeker:

Did her tutelage have an impact on you?

01-00:37:31

Laqueur:

Well, that’s a good question. I think the idea of discipline and focus has an impact, and I think the sense that they were so successful by knowing deeply what they knew. They were, in the business world, hedgehogs—in Isaiah

Berlin's sense. I'm sure they knew a lot about other things, because Marion was a great stock analyst, but in her life, she knew about everything there was to know about running a savings and loan. And every time I heard them speak, I was impressed at how deeply they knew every part—they had the best training program. They were very proud of the training program they had for people. They had modeled interest rates in a more sophisticated—or they'd had people help them model interest rates in a more sophisticated way than anyone else. When the 2000 [Y2K] glitch thing was around, they followed this very closely and for that thing left for a time to be sure that it worked. They were just incredible and attentive to running that business.

I don't know when this changed but for a long time they didn't invest in commercial properties. They invested just in individual—so you know, they bought, they issued mortgages based on savings for individual family houses which they had done the underwriting for, and they kept 95 percent of their mortgages. That's what they did!

And they had policy interests; they followed things that were relevant to their profession, so that Herb, being a lawyer, one of the earliest debates we had—Gail's dad [Sam Saliterman] had argued a famous case called due on sale, which Gail's dad lost. But this meant that a mortgage had to be reissued in the person's name, and Herb was very much *for* that—and Sam was on the other side. But if they hadn't been, you could keep a low-rate mortgage forever, and they were paying 7 percent/8 percent to their depositors in inflationary times—and you're getting 2 percent on the mortgage, because it was issued a gazillion years ago. And so they were the first to get on to variable-rate mortgages, which were also—people thought, the literature was that people were screwing the customer, but in fact, they presented very convincing evidence that it wasn't.

So what I mean is that at every turn, they were focused—and I kind of admired that, because—and I'm not sure I *learned* from it, but I saw its power. I *can* be a hedgehog when I get onto some little topic, but my instincts are fox, from thing to thing. So it was kind of a pleasure being with someone who's, in some ways—and I exaggerate, because they both were interested widely in things. But in terms of their work life, my impression was very much that they were hedgehogs, and they were proud of being hedgehogs—and they were successful because they were hedgehogs, and they didn't get off into all sorts of things which foxes in the business did get into. In the first savings and loan crisis they came out great. In the second they came out great.

01-00:40:35

Meeker:

So I'm curious about this first meeting, actually. I assume you knew they were bankers, right, upon first meeting them?

01-00:40:44

Laqueur:

Yeah.

01-00:40:46

Meeker:

Who had a criticism of what you saw as pure research and were skeptical of something that maybe wasn't applied, and then—yet, you get this invitation to come over for brunch.

01-00:40:58

Laqueur:

Right.

01-00:41:00

Meeker:

I'm surprised that you would have taken it. What drew you in?

01-00:41:03

Laqueur:

Well, you haven't met Marion. You have met Herb. They're *very* compelling people. They have compelling stories. There must have been some version in a way that convinced them. And look—Herb and I still have these things. I told him [about] a conference recently on humanitarianism and religious xenophobia—and I sent him an invitation too late for him to come. And he says well, he wouldn't have wanted to come; it's just more academic bullshit. And then a day or two later he called up to apologize, to say look, he was just furious about the latest—the Facebook, and he'd been engaged with this all the time, and nothing seemed to matter than fixing this. So there's a sense in which the first instinct is to do something about some immediate outrage, and this slightly—but then I reminded him when he was—some of your best friends are academics. Dare I say, *all* of your best friends are academics. [laughing] So I said, be careful. Right? So they were people who were engaged in lots of things and knew lots of things.

And then Marion was very kind—well, to Gail. Marion ran an investment club. I think probably the basic point was to teach Susan and Jimmy about investment. But Gail was invited, and Robert Post, who went on to become dean of the Yale Law School, taught here, was invited. This must have been in the early eighties sometime, roughly speaking, I think, or maybe the mid-eighties. So they'd go over there, and Herb would bring in the food, and Marion would teach people about analyzing stock.

01-00:43:02

Meeker:

Did you participate in this?

01-00:43:02

Laqueur:

*No!* [with emphasis] It was—I haven't sold—well, recently, just before Gail, my former wife with whom I remained very close, died, I sold my first stock, but only with help—when we got divorced I had kept the stock she gave me, which is—some of them were fine and some weren't. But she was really good at this and made a fair bit of money. I haven't a clue! Not big money, but did very well. I literally never sold a stock and wouldn't know how to sell a stock. So she came over—she had leukemia. She was in a remission. She came over and she showed me how to sell a stock, which is not rocket science, but I'd never done it. But she learned a lot of the analysis from [Marion] and then they had a very interesting and fun relationship about this, because Gail

basically wasn't disciplined in a Marion sort of way, and did okay in her "gambling." Gail played poker with Herb a few times, so they would always joke—Gail's going to buy tungsten futures. And Marion was very focused. So they're different, but they're people who could talk about a lot of subjects, had interesting friends.

And the banker part—oh, I remember when I first met her I said—I knew nothing about them. I really got there because the wife of this man, of Ken Rosen, who was on their board and he was a big housing expert, and who with a friend named Dwight Jaffee had done *the* major, at the time, time series on interest rates—which was obviously of interest to the Sandlers. And so they used to go to Ken Rosen's annual conference on housing economics, wherever they had it, down in Pebble Beach, or whatever. And his wife, named Chris Rosen, is a historian who teaches at the business school. And so I think I was there because of Chris. So I knew nothing about—I mean I knew a little bit about what Ken did. And so I asked Marion, I said, "So, what do you guys do?" And they said, "We have a savings and loan." And I said, "Do you have one branch or several?" And she said, I think 238, or some number of that order of magnitude. And I said, "Oh, 238! What's it called?" So it wasn't that I registered they are bankers, they were just interesting people from another world.

01-00:45:31

Meeker:

Well, it sounds like you learned pretty quickly that they had interests that were quite a bit different than what one might assume the owner of a savings and loan would be interested in.

01-00:45:41

Laqueur:

Yeah, well, Herb said it was sort of that someone asked—when he went, I think when Susan was applying to Stanford, and he went to class, and someone knew he was—and he had the *New York Review of Books*, and then someone asked him, so, "A banker reading the *New York Review of Books*?" It was like—you know. Now, it is true that not many—I don't know old or intimate friends, but I don't think—were in business. I met some investment guys, like Arthur Rock, like Claude Rosenberg. So some of their philanthropic friends—but all of the friends they have that are from finance, like now Tom Steyer and—what's his name, LinkedIn, the people from LinkedIn.

01-00:46:43

Meeker:

So, Reid Hoffman at LinkedIn?

01-00:46:49

Laqueur:

Reid Hoffman—and this guy, his name is [Michael J.] Moritz, who was an early Apple supporter and gave \$100 million to Oxford. But they know these people, not because of their finances, but because of their philanthropy. So I don't think, at least in my time with them, I don't think I ever met a fellow

banker. It was sort of a joke. We were at the opera with them once, and the president of Bank of America came up to Herb and said he had no money—and could he borrow \$20 for a taxi? So that was a big joke. [laughter] But I think that would be the only time I ever heard him communicate with a banker.

But Marion, what I admired about them—Marion told me once about the difference between her and [her brother] Barney [Osher]. She said Barney had a kind of—the Germans would call it *fingerspitzengefühl*, sort of—it's in your fingers, you kind of know it. But she would say he could see a shopping center and figure out whether this is a good investment, and what it's worth, and he did this completely intuitively and brilliantly. And she said she was the opposite. So there's a sense in which everything—Marion was—analytic was the word they were.

So in any case, we got to be friends and we saw a lot of each other and went on trips. And then when I was at the Townsend, they asked if they could help me, and they helped me in practical ways. And then they helped—and then I said, “What you should do is set up a human rights center.” And they gave the money for it, and got—and I wasn't so good at finding a really good associate director then, and they, through Aryeh Neier, eventually got me to hire the director of the Human Rights Center, Eric Stover. And that was a lot of work, getting him hired and so forth—that wasn't so easy. And then we produced this book—and they were disappointed in the book. Robert Post and Carla [Hesse] produced the book on transitional justice, and I think—I would have liked them to have been more interested in the book. I don't think they actually had a sense of how long it takes to do academic articles. On the other hand, the nice thing about Herb is he does sort of get it, that most academics aren't particularly interested in disseminating what they know. What did he get from me? I think talking about this division between just wanting to know it because you want to know it, and because it was practical, got them to put together this consortium of economists, like Emmanuel Saez here, Raj Chetty at Stanford, these guys, on the one hand who do basic research with this center in Washington which disseminates and tries to use them, and they realize that the people who do basic research aren't generally the people who are so interested in doing policy. They're just different kinds of work.

01-00:50:17

Meeker:

Is that the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities?

01-00:50:18

Laqueur:

Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

01-00:50:20

Meeker:

You know, in our pre-interview you had mentioned one of the roles that you think you play in the relationship is connecting them to this broader academic world.

01-00:50:31

Laqueur: Right.

01-00:50:32

Meeker: And introducing them to some parts that—

01-00:50:34

Laqueur: Well, somewhat, but they had lots of connections on their own, so it wasn't—I don't want to exaggerate my version. But for example, we were talking once about libraries, and how libraries were going broke on journals. And I was then biking with this guy named Harold Varmus, who just gotten the Nobel Prize for discovering oncogenes, who was starting the Public Library of Science, so I introduced them, and that opened another world.

01-00:51:08

Meeker: Can you tell me about that, what that was, and what the Sandleresque part played in it?

01-00:51:11

Laqueur: Well, I don't know what role I played. I introduced them, and I knew they were interested. Well, again, it's very Sandleresque.

01-00:51:23

Meeker: Actually, let me stop you there. I've never heard that word, Sandleresque. What does that mean?

01-00:51:26

Laqueur: Well, it's not that they thought of the Public Library of Science. Their gift is to recognize people who think of these things. They don't claim to think of every strategy that works, but the Sandleresque part is that they took this slightly foundering organization and found them a guy who could do the business end. So the idea was that you're going to publish scientific articles of a very high level—open access, so it's free, and not run by Elsevier. But the question is: how are you going to pay for it? So initially, I think, they gave them I think a big chunk for just getting this going for a while. But it actually—I learned when I heard the guy they hired give a talk—it actually costs a lot to produce a science journal—more than a history journal. Mainly because in a history journal—let's say you have four articles, an editor works on four articles. In a science journal, many times you have thirty articles, because they're three pages long, and each of those things has to also go through the same review process that a history article goes through, which I hadn't quite registered. So just leaving aside Elsevier's astronomical profits, just doing a science journal costs a lot of money.

01-00:52:46

Meeker: And I suspect that the review process, peer review, for science requires a different kind of level of consideration than a history journal.

01-00:52:58

Laqueur: Well, they probably maybe do more of them—look, there's lots of problems with peer review, and I'm not an expert on that. But the point is it's expensive.

So the Sandleresque part, they had this idea, they invested in it originally, and then they thought what they could really contribute is find someone who can put this on a sound business footing. So then they developed, or helped develop the idea that people pay for publishing these articles through their grants. And it's not vanity publishing—it goes through the normal review process, but part of funding research is funding publication research. I don't know who thought of this, but certainly Harold and these people hadn't thought—and Eisen hadn't thought of how to actually make this pay for itself.

They did the same thing for a literacy program which was foundering. They found it a director who could actually run the thing. And so a lot of the people who found these organizations aren't so good at running it. And frankly, I think it's how they helped Anthony Romero. We're always arguing about this. I think Anthony was more intrinsically gifted running an organization this—I think they would agree—but Anthony didn't know a lot about doing it, and I think one of the things that helped him is getting him coaching and teaching him how to do it. So the Sandleresque part is making operational someone's ideas and helping them move forward in the world.

And so Marion had a brilliant sense of how you get from A to B. Now, Herb may have had it as well, but Marion—the words *discipline* and *focus* I hear as Marion's words rather than Herb's words. Though obviously, their shtick was that she's the alpha and he's the briefcase carrier, and he drove her—look, who knows about people's intimate lives. But his version was she was the lodestar—publicly, it's certainly true what I just said to you. In real life, Herb was fabulously intelligent, so that it's not like he'd need someone to coach him on logical thinking. But I think in some sense he may be a little—I don't know if *softer* is the word, but there maybe were [more] lapses in the analytic trajectory, if you will, than there was for Marion, who really was very rigorous.

When they did these little dog-and-pony shows, she was the one who always spoke about the rigor of cost control. I think I may have said to this to you maybe in the pre-interview, that in one of the talks they'd talked about how they had determined how large their branches should be, that they'd need x amount of square footage for x amount of people, and the banks had to figure this out, and how much they saved on their heating bills by having the right thing. And how they figured out, before ATMs, they didn't need tellers in the morning and the afternoon, they needed [them] at lunches, and so they'd bunch their people. So she—I think that kind of thinking—Herb thought strategically, and who should we buy, what the future would require. But she did the other stuff, did the managing.

And they were both interested in architecture. So I occasionally met architects there too. That was interesting. Because they had a great pride in—especially this guy [William] Turnbull who designed their house and a bunch of their things.

01-00:56:41

Meeker:

Let me ask you about their attitudes and engagement with the philanthropy. You know, I've been getting a sense from other interviews that the real passion around the issues comes from Herb, and the passion around quality execution and quality personnel might come from Marion.

01-00:57:04

Laqueur:

Well, I think that's probably true, but you know, when they had—the Asthma Foundation was hers, because she suffered from asthma.

01-00:57:19

Meeker:

Did she bring the same kind of passion to the issues that Herb—?

01-00:57:23

Laqueur:

Well, she was not as publicly demonstrative a person as Herb, so in that sense it's a little hard to say. Again, these are people who lived together 24/7, so it's hard to know what went on privately. But I think what you say is, roughly speaking, true. I'm just trying to think of the big—I never heard Marion say that she *wasn't* as interested in this, and some things they got interested in, both of them, through their children—like ecology through Jim and educational things through their children. So in that sense, it was neither of them who focused on it, but the kids. And some was personal, like my Human Rights Center; they thought they wanted to help me. But I think it was Herb thought the—at least, yeah, I think that's probably right. Herb had a—has still—a more, what is it, a more immediately responsive emotional gut reaction to injustice. Not that Marion didn't feel that, but it was filtered, or it was not as expressed. So Herb is outraged in a way that's almost touching, given how much outrage there is, that he still feels every outrage to be equally terrible.

As far as my watching them, they'd never act out about rage. That is to say, when they thought that the right has too much power with all these think tanks, they didn't say, "Well, let's go get the first think tank we can do." They interviewed a bunch of people before, they got to [John] Podesta, they looked at a bunch of proposals—this was not—I've watched the process. In some sense, Marion's what you say making it operational is true in choosing how to actually begin one of these projects. So whether it's Herb who actually thinks we need to do something about a progressive think tank, or the press, or supporting science at the very basic level, or all these other sorts of things, I think Marion was very quickly involved with helping find the best person to do it, and interviewing people, and going through the process. So I think they were completely engaged. But you know, they didn't do this full-time until they retired. In other words, until they sold the bank, which was what, 2002 or 2003?

01-01:00:08

Meeker:

No, they sold the bank in 2006, I believe—2006-2007.

- 01-01:00:12  
Laqueur: It was that late?
- 01-01:00:12  
Meeker: Yeah.
- 01-01:00:13  
Laqueur: Of course, because I met the Wachovia guys after that, that's right. I mean, they were not full-time philanthropists and the bank grew a lot, with each of these savings and loan crises they came out on top.
- 01-01:00:29  
Meeker: When they really started to engage in philanthropy, and I think probably Human Rights Watch was at the beginning.
- 01-01:00:34  
Laqueur: ACLU.
- 01-01:00:34  
Meeker: Followed by CAP and ACLU.
- 01-01:00:37  
Laqueur: I think ACLU may have been before—
- 01-01:00:40  
Meeker: Human Rights Watch?
- 01-01:00:41  
Laqueur: Right. They were interested in human rights when I did the Townsend in the early nineties, so I wouldn't have thought of this if it weren't for—I wouldn't have approached them with that if they weren't already interested in it.
- 01-01:00:53  
Meeker: Did they reach out to close friends like you to mull over their philanthropic interests? To talk about the most important issues that needed to be addressed or the individuals who—?
- 01-01:01:09  
Laqueur: No, and I'm not sure—either they chose academic for—we talked a lot about stuff. So I don't know what general influence I might have had. As I say, more generally, this idea that you have to translate research. But on each of these issues, they went to who they thought was the national expert on that focused topic, so Bob Solow on this economic version [Washington Center for Equitable Growth]. And when they did ProPublica they looked for someone at the *Wall Street Journal*. So we had a lot of general conversations. So we helped, I think, think of the word CAP. So when it came to they want to do it, what are we going to call it? And ProPublica we talked about that. We were on a holiday in LA together, and we talked about the Center for American Progress. So I think we had a role in brainstorming the name.

01-01:02:04

Meeker:

Well, why don't you walk me through that? How did CAP come to be? How did the name of that—?

01-01:02:11

Laqueur:

You know, I don't remember the alternatives, but I remember driving around—they rented a place in LA, and we went—and so we were like a focus group. I don't remember what the—once you get CAP, it's the only thing it would be called, but there were alternative names. So that was a lot of driving around saying, "Well, what if we call it this?" And does ProPublica sound too foreign? So there were these kinds of discussions, so in that sense, we were part of that discussion.

But I think when they focused on this issue, they went—any issue—they went straight to the world-recognized experts. So they didn't just—it's like a medical issue. One of the things about them that's—it was optimistic, more optimistic. I have a darker view of the world, but Herb thinks that people ought to be reacting rationally, and I have much more of a sense that we're made of crooked timber and it's kind of a miracle if we're ever acting rationally and well. So in some sense, their version is you can solve these problems. And I think at the end it was sort of—I don't know how Marion died, in the end. But there was this version—there was an awful lot of medical care, and I don't know about the intimate details, but I'm not sure that one might have not done less medical care, if one were less advised—do you know what I mean? There's a sense in which their genius is figuring out we're going to solve this issue. We're not going to *not* solve this issue. And then some issues you feel are just—death, mortality is the top of the list. It's not solvable. And other issues about human greed and cupidity are probably not solvable either. You can sort of mitigate it. I think if I had a voice in the conversation, it was the—let's be more modest than what we can do. But I wouldn't say we were ever, I or Gail, were ever involved in directly helping a philanthropic thing, but I think we were involved in just—we talked a lot! A lot of holidays with them.

I think it's really one of these things that it's very hard to specify what a friendship does for you, for me, or for them. In other words, this friend—my friend Alexander Nehamas, whom they know and is sort of connected—his sister-in-law is on one of Herb's boards, and so forth. In any case, Alexander wrote a book about friendship, and the thing about friendship is when you ask well, why are you someone's friend, in which he wrote a chapter about me, the model of this thing—why are you Tom's friend? And it wasn't specific things Tom does. In other words, the story he tells is taking his son to school in a rainy, snowy Princeton day, and would I want to come along? Yes. But I wasn't dressed, so I had my pajamas on, and I put a bathrobe around and I had cloth slippers, but nothing else. And we got to the school, and he had a flat tire. So I got out of the car and I fixed the flat tire. He's Greek. He doesn't know one tire from another, and so it's pouring rain and everyone is both

incredibly embarrassed, these friends, and impressed that I could change a tire in the snow in my pajamas. So that's a story you'd say—well, really? You're someone's friend because they changed a tire—on the other hand, you're someone's friend because that's one of the stories that you do when you're their friends, right?

So I think of Herb and Marion—when Gail and I got divorced and we told them, which was very hard—you know, Marion cried, and they were very supportive of both of us. And with just lots of stories and adventures, and trips we took together, so you're friends because you do a lot of things with your friends. So we talked about this stuff, but I wouldn't say I'm their friend because I give them great advice about anything—or vice versa, in some sense. It's not instrumental. One of the good things about our friendship that's actually not what Aristotle called use friendship—in other words, I don't think they get a lot from me, instrumentally. And you know, I don't get a lot from them—it's nice that they support the econ department, and Carla's—you need the social sciences, but that's not the central feature. So it is just the friendship that goes on doing stuff and being interested in the same things.

I got him onto Trollope, so that would be a real influence I had. I got him to read Trollope. I got them to read *Middlemarch*, or reread *Middlemarch*—so books I get them engaged with, both of them engaged with. And when we would take trips, like to France or to Berlin, we're the tour guides.

01-01:07:12

Meeker:

You know, I want to ask about the travel in a second. But something that you said a few moments ago really stuck, and I don't know if you have anything more to say about it, if there's anything more to unpack. But just this idea that their—both Herb and Marion's world view is that any problem can be fixed, and you look at Herb's engagement and broader social justice issues and public sphere issues—and perhaps both of their approaches to Marion's health problems. In spite of repeated evidence, it seems like they still—Herb still believes—

01-01:08:01

Laqueur:

Well, you could call it innocence, or you could call it perseverance. I don't want to be judgmental about it, but there is—and I think it's important that they support all these causes and—

01-01:08:12

Meeker:

Well, it's important that there are people like that.

01-01:08:15

Laqueur:

Absolutely! Look, who knows, if I were a philanthropist. But sometimes I would—and I have talked to Herb. They don't like endowments, and I've talked to him about this. So my sense is the reason Oxford and Cambridge and Harvard are great universities is because someone, in the eighteenth century or

the seventeenth or the sixteenth century, gave them this money. It's not going to do everything right then; it's going to do something in centuries.

But Soros gave all these millions to endow this university [Central European University], which has done great things, but it didn't keep Hungary from going fascist, so he's a sort of disappointed man in some ways. And so in some sense, maybe he would have been better off doing more nitty-gritty practical work, rather than producing an open society. Who *knows* that the way forward is. I think—that's not quite right. I think the Central European University has done vast amounts of good, even if it didn't prevent fascism in Hungary. But Herb's view would not be to endow a university. Herb's view would be to isolate a problem, figure out who's solving the problem, who is addressing the problem—and that's Marion's view too—and dealing with the problem. Soros—it's to produce a different kind of society through educational reformation and through openness, through a much, a more indirect version. I would think their philanthropy is indirect.

And I think, insofar as we've argued about it—which we have—I'm more for *indirection*. In other words, the Human Rights Center became much more sort of just doing investigations rather than supporting students doing research and doing things—and that was a little disappointment to me. I thought ultimately thinking about human rights actually *has* produced a broader sense of human rights and economic and social rights were developed in universities, the idea of this, and so forth. It's not how either of them thought, because in some ways it doesn't allow—both of them, and certain Marion, did develop her analytic strength in what's the best way to do this *now*. So they'd support basic science. But it's—someone, a great neurologist, is working on this and we're supporting neurology, and this is how we're going to go forward.

Well, if you support, broadly speaking, human rights at a university, it's much more diffuse and it's much harder to quantify. And as I say—who knows? George [Soros] is a disappointed man because of this failure of this rather indiscriminate openness to produce a better world. I guess I really don't want to be critical, I'm just saying their version is to find a problem that you think you could solve, so they will do a lot more—they have these cases right now, these ridiculous bails, and this other way of screwing people with—what's it called, a legal doctrine where you can take someone's property supposedly who committed a crime. It comes out of seizure—any way, there's a legal term for when you can take—it's an outrage! You take someone's car when they get a speeding ticket. So they will fix that—and maybe fixing it one step at a time is a better—but that's, temperamentally, I think is what they do. Temperamentally is less my version of this. I'm more—educating the young, a broader—endowments. I contribute to endowments in my small way, thinking that we're building another future. But even though we have different temperaments, we really have been great friends.

But you know, I did—like István Rév showed them around Budapest. I don't know quite how he came to know George, maybe it was through István. There's a way in which—maybe independently, but that's the sense in which we introduced them, we got them to know Robert Post, who became, been good friends with. So in that sort of sense, we brought them circles which bring them circles. I think it's not like it has been unilateral. I think Herb would say we got them into—

01-01:12:22

Meeker:

Tell me about the travel together.

01-01:12:26

Laqueur:

Boy, I wish I could remember when we first did this. It was Hawaii and—

01-01:12:30

Meeker:

You know, let me pause there. In an interview I recently did, the person I was interviewing and talking about Herb, and Herb and Marion—and I don't know how many billionaires this person has had lunch with, but they said it's typical that billionaires don't cover lunch, like they're just not very generous in a personal setting, maybe because they don't think about money, right?

01-01:12:57

Laqueur:

Right.

01-01:13:00

Meeker:

But she talked about Herb being very generous, always picking up lunch.

01-01:13:04

Laqueur:

Well, he does always pick up lunch. We usually have a ritual. We go on these trips, and we pick up a meal. We take Herb out, Herb and Marion out for something—so it wasn't every meal. In some places we had cooks, so they did—but a lot of places we would, like these last two or three trips with Podesta in Hawaii—in fact, we probably paid for most of the food. But Herb would pay for the cottage, and then when we'd sign for things, for a drink, he'd pay for it. But it didn't feel that you were thinking about this a lot. In other words, we bought the food, because there were six of us, and we bought the food and we paid for the food and that was—and cooked, and we took turns cooking. But when we'd go out, Herb always pays for it, except if we explicitly say, "Look, we're taking you to lunch with so-and-so. *Don't* take us to lunch."

On the other hand, they're very careful with money. Marion would do the accounts with the people, the cooks in Mexico and places, to the penny, in a way that—more than someone maybe who has less money would do. We wouldn't do that—we'd figure—round it off for a chunk. It didn't make any difference. So in that sense, it's the analytic mind that tracks how much heat it takes to heat the bank for— No, but I never felt that they weren't totally generous, both of them.

They've always paid for the accommodations. And sometimes—when they started, because of Marion's health they started—started renting a plane for their trips. They also started getting a plane for their business, because it turned out they could do better, this underwriting, if they could get their underwriters around to more places, so it turns out the plane was cost effective. So I don't know whether it was a plane leased to World Savings all the time or they just used it for our trips. So they would obviously pay for the plane, and they would take us somewhere, and they'd rent the place, so it was never a sense of someone else paying for them. And then when we went to Paris, just the four of us—again, they paid for the place. I think Herb paid for most of the meals. It never struck me as an issue.

They'd obviously invite you and they have a lot more money, and they'd take you to these places which we probably couldn't afford, but the thing about them is, other than the traveling by private plane, they don't—even in their house, they don't live extravagant [lives]—they live like a well-to-do neurosurgeon would live—maybe not as well as a well-to-do neurosurgeon. They drive a Mercedes, but they don't drive a 500 SE—they drive a 380, or whatever. And the brunch was regular meals. The one time they had a cook from Chez Panisse at their house, it was when [Richard] Goldstone, the head of the court at the Hague and the justice of South Africa came, and they had him and they needed some people. And I think that's the only—maybe—when we had dinner parties, Marion didn't cook. So when we had dinner parties, they would hire a chef—but not even all dinner parties, and so they just had what came out. And lunches were always the same, and quite fine—but modest.

And so going out [in Paris]—they once took us to the Le Grand Véfour, which we probably—we could have afforded Le Grand Véfour, at least two hundred dollars a person. It wasn't to eat it every day, but they didn't take us to the Tour d'Argent—and we didn't want to go to the Tour d'Argent. But the point is, in some sense you say billionaires, they don't pick up the tab—they took us to places that were sort of modest, and we took them to fruits-de-mer places, and I think probably Le Grand Véfour was more expensive than the fruits de mer, but we're not talking orders-of-magnitude difference. And so even when you're with them, you don't live orders of magnitude differently. Marion was a little more demanding than Herb in terms of the comforts. But the Paris thing—we lived in the same place that we lived, the same flat that Carla and I usually live in, which is a perfectly nice two-and-a-half bedroom fifteenth-century building in the Marais, but nothing luxurious—it was where an academic couple *did* live.

01-01:17:39  
Meeker:

Right.

01-01:17:39

Laqueur:

Right, so in that sense—both of them were relatively modest. So I guess—and I want to say they were always generous. They'd invite us to the opera opening—well, that's a real gift. We wouldn't have done that. It's not that we couldn't have done it, but they would be very generous in that kind of—no, they're very generous people. Is it right to say modestly generous? That is to say you didn't feel that you were being—they don't travel with their butler and their cook, the way billionaires—I'm sure George Soros travels, does, travels with his butler and his chef, a retinue. And they travel by themselves, you know what I mean? So that's a different—they never had a chauffeur.

It's people you can be with in a pretty ordinary way, and so that's why—it's hard to say—what's different about the friendship, I suppose, they're great at gathering people. And they do provide a focus. And so when we went to Mexico once, and Marion's brother died and they had to leave—and somehow, all of us being left behind there, though we're all good friends. Anthony was there, and [Harley] Shaiken, Herb and Beatrice Mainz, and Harley were there, somehow without them there, it lost the gravitational—the gravitational pull of the sun. It wasn't that we couldn't make conversation, and we traveled to Mexico City and we did some sightseeing for a day or two and that was fine. But staying in this great castle didn't seem right.

So they did have a way, a charismatic way, of drawing people together and focusing on conversations. Both of them had that. Marion was a little more abrupt. Marion was edgier than Herb is. That's part of the story you get, that he was the soft and cuddly one. I don't think that deep down he's soft and cuddly, but she was gruffer. And you get a little bit of a sense of that with Barney, a little more abrupt than Herb. Sometimes that could be difficult, on trips and stuff. I think we've had one difficulty in thirty trips. It was not—we traveled well together, with them. With her—I never shop with her. Carla shopped with her. I think she was not an easy shopper, but a lot of women are not—care about these kinds of things.

01-01:20:16

Meeker:

Well, I heard she was a good shopper. I'm not quite sure what that means exactly, other than that she liked to do it.

01-01:20:22

Laqueur:

Yeah, she liked to do it, but I think she had very specific—there was no compromise, and there was no maybe. I'm probably too much in the other direction, well, that's okay. She was—Marion was—whatever she did she was invested in. That's why I say the discipline and focus, there wasn't a kind of emotional penumbra that was not relevant to the activity at hand. You had a sense that this was a woman on a mission. It could be the mission of shopping—or whatever she was doing. She could relax—the friendship. Every so often, she'd put herself in someone's hands. Like the France trip—we organized it, so they just did what we told them to do for ten days. They didn't know the language. We had to leave a day early, and they went to the Crillon.

They weren't going to stay by themselves in this place. So in that sense, every so often when they were helpless—not helpless, but you know, when—but usually they had a direction they set, and it was an interesting direction, except for the France thing, when we set the direction. Or Berlin, when we went with Herb just after Marion died, where we set the direction—this is what we're going to do. And Berlin—LA, for example too. We had friends, a buddy of Carla's was a curator at MoMA, and so we arranged that. Every so often we arranged stuff.

01-01:22:06

Meeker:

How was it traveling with Herb after Marion's passing?

01-01:22:08

Laqueur:

Well, it was not easy at first. The first trip was really tense, I thought. Yeah, I thought the first trip he was really unhappy; he's spending a lot of time thinking about this. Carla had to step into Marion's shoes to make some local arrangements, which is difficult for Carla and disappointing for Herb that it wasn't Marion doing it. So the first trip was quite hard, I think. And you have some sort of sense of normalcy, which clearly wasn't normal. So I think that trip, very shortly after Marion died, was the only one I would say was difficult. The next trip with John Podesta—a year or two later when we went with the Podestas again, it was much easier. If I were to say what the relevant variable was, it was that it was hard for Herb. But Herb also—look, in some senses he's a very emotional man. On the other hand, it's hard to show emotions. When we talked, he called that Marion died. And I said, "So what are you doing? Are you sitting shiva?" "I'm going to work on Monday." Well, his heart must have been breaking. But the thing was just going to move on, and it's a little hard to respond. And the things like this first trip, her absence was palpable—and yet unspoken.

And she would always arrange, when you get there she would be sure the pool was working or the whatever—the person would come on time, the local arrangements—and there was no one there to do it. And so Carla did it, and obviously it was a little trickier. She wasn't Marion doing it. And then we finally got to Berlin—it was a year or two later. Actually, Anthony joined us for a day or two. He was there. And there, you didn't feel Marion's absence quite as powerfully. Herb, but not Herb and Marion, became—it's interesting. I don't know when they took her message off the phone. They just seemed to know that. Because it used to be Marion would come, her voice was just, "Thank you. Leave us the news of the day." That was her message. So yeah, so it took a while to be normalized, to be just Herb and not Herb and Marion—with a hyphen.

01-01:24:40

Meeker:

Did he change in notable ways after her passing?

01-01:24:48

Laqueur:

Well, it's hard to not change after a death. First of all, he gets older. Two or three years ago, two years ago there was a Susan's illness, so it's hard to— They changed—they became bitter—like the *Saturday Night Live* thing. She was alive still, but it made them unhappy, and it was, I thought, a very low blow. So it's hard to know. Is it Marion's dying or is it life—or is it getting older? And he's getting older, and so he's sicker and there's more— But in terms of just the daily routine, like the dinner parties, they sold the place in— there may have been a couple of, there may have been a couple of garden parties in the summer, in Lafayette, before he sold it—but he sold it pretty quickly.

But the parties, the lunches and dinners in the city are exactly like Marion's—the menu hasn't changed, to the last shrimp in the dim sum. So in that sense, nothing has changed about the routine. What's changed—the food he has in the apartment has changed. In other words, I think Emmy, the person who cooks for them, has been cooking, in my view—I don't know if he would admit this—a more varied number of things. The menu has expanded considerably for his regular meals. We eat at the condo more than we used to with Marion. So little changes. But he's not a person whose life took a, I wouldn't say a radical shift, other than—and what's also interesting is that his passions and his hatred of injustices has, if anything, has become more acute.

And I don't know whether—and partly, also the philanthropy, I would say more time has gone on where he's by himself, so I think maybe he's doing more projects of that sort than he would have with Marion, in the sense that—the other thing with the words I think of as Marion's, it's not just discipline and focus but due diligence. So Marion was the due diligence. And when we got the mortgage, it was Marion who would call us and say, “Now, you come down, and we're going to have a tutorial. You should really get a variable-rate mortgage.” And then she took us through the variable-rate mortgages, and then we looked at all the other mortgages. We're such idiots, we didn't want to deal with a variable rate—stupid—like they didn't want to deal with variable-rate mortgages because of wanting to be sure. But she was the one who said, “Before you get a mortgage, you'd better study this.” I have no—it's not what I want to study.

But so I think Herb is, if I were to intuit it, this would be a little less due diligence—but I'm not sure he'd admit that. Maybe there's less of a—how to put it—less of a public due diligence, or less of a performative due diligence. In Marion's time it was just—it was a due-diligence protocol, and you felt that—she was a very cautious, analytic person. And I think Herb always felt like she was more analytic, I thought he was more intuitive, though I think in real life, my suspicion is they couldn't live together if they weren't on the same page in terms of this analytic approach to life and to a lot of issues.

01-01:28:28

Meeker:

I think when we spoke before, you had mentioned your daughter being mentored in some ways by her?

01-01:28:34

Laqueur:

Oh yeah, well they got Hannah—well, first of all, this is also the difference. What I'm just—things to remember. So Hannah was a shy kid, and is very competent and teaches at Davis now. But to this day, it's hard for her to be maybe—as owning her intelligence. So Herb would always, when Hannah as a young child would answer the phone when Herb would call and he says, “Is this the wonderful, is this the brilliant, is this the beautiful Hannah? It is! Well, you put on your dad.” He called her the brilliant, the beautiful, the fabulous Hannah. So that was his, what I imagine Herb—and I don't think Marion *didn't* feel that. But when Hannah started working for Golden West for one summer doing something, and she came in with flip-flops or sandals or something she wasn't supposed to be wearing, Marion said, “Don't show up in flip-flops. Don't show up with this kind of skirt. Get with the program.”

So I think they were equally kind to Hannah. It wasn't like Marion was bad to her, but what I remember is that Herb was a sweet uncle. And Marion was the kind of—well, sweet aunt, but Marion was the serious figure, represented the superego or the paternal, right. So but again, this is stereotypical, but in life it was always Herb who did this beautiful/fabulous whatever, Hannah—and not Marion. But on the other hand, both of them got her engaged with, helped her with this job, maybe even two years, so that helped her a lot, just to get focused and disciplined and learn what you learn there. And they came to Hannah's wedding even though it was incredibly cold. And I went to Susan's wedding. We do these family—we've done these family events together around both—but reciprocally.

01-01:30:49

Meeker:

So I think that we probably are needing to wrap up.

01-01:30:52

Laqueur:

Good, good.

01-01:30:53

Meeker:

Is there anything else that you would like to recall? Any summing up that you'd like to do, or anything that I didn't ask that I should have asked you about?

01-01:31:02

Laqueur:

Well, I guess it was also, as I said, both of them read a lot. But when we went to France, for example, it was Marion that had read all the things we had assigned—or at least seemed to have read all of them. Herb may have read them, but Marion was the kid who knew all the answers. [laughing] So as I say, Herb is extremely well read, but Marion was—at least appeared to be more systematic. The feel of this is that Marion was more systematic and Herb was more entropic. But in real life, you're not that successful if you have sort

of an ectoplasmic intelligence. Obviously, you get it together, get the cell walls—so it's a kind of an impression and a—what do you call it—a kind of a gig, a way of getting through life.

But I think he was very proud of the fact that he was Marion's briefcase-carrier. And to this day he says that she was the force behind his story, as you know, is that she was the force behind all of their successes, and the brave person when he was not the brave person, and that she—and that was their public performance of their lives. All the way to his driving her—he was her chauffeur, he'd say. Literally not true, because they always did the work while they're driving, but their marriage seemed to be one in which she was the person in armor. She was the one who provided the bravery and the courage and the analytic abilities to do it, and he's immensely proud of her, being the first [female] analyst in this Wall Street firm. And he says, of himself, and I don't think it would be true, but he said he would be a New York functionary if it weren't for her. I think he's too gifted [for that] to have been the case. On the other hand, he did link up with a woman that harnessed his talents, from a very different class, very different education.

01-01:33:30

Meeker:

So these interviews, including the long interview I'm doing with Herb, will be included in The Bancroft Library, which is a great resource for historians.

01-01:33:40

Laqueur:

Right, sure. I've used them, right.

01-01:33:40

Meeker:

Particularly the study of the history of the American West.

01-01:33:47

Laqueur:

Right, the west in it was they came west. [laughing]

01-01:33:48

Meeker:

Yeah, well, they came west. So if Herb and Marion are to be remembered historically, as a historian—would you venture to say why in this—?

01-01:34:01

Laqueur:

Oh yeah, look—I think they were hugely important in—well, look, I think affordable housing, as we know it now, wouldn't have existed without their influence. They supported Bridge; they made Bridge happen, and Bridge was modeled for that. And the people who ran Bridge then went on to run HUD, so this was a really huge business. I think they got—I think—so that was really important. I think they got lots of women into the financial world when other people didn't. And I think that was a really big and important version. I think they did a lot to get rid of red-lining, which was in their business. So in that sense, their business really was progressive in a really good sense. So I think that will—and it's at a moment in the history of the West or the Bay Area when that stuff was really—especially the housing was really important. They were civically engaged—it's slightly notched down civic engagements

in Oakland. He was head of the symphony, all these kinds of—so they've been really important civic good citizens.

But they were, coming here in the late sixties, they were crucial in this vast expansion of this part of California, and making it possible for people who might not have been able to do it before. And then, in other states as well, I think their company even may be tarnished a little bit by the end, by some of these revelations. I don't think it's true; I think the company really was a model for corporate responsibility. And I think when people study the history of corporate responsibility and corporate management, they're going to be important. Maybe they're not as well known as [Jack] Welch or those kinds of guys, [Jeffrey] Immelt—but I think when people start studying business, and business thinking, and how you can run a socially responsible business profitably, they'll be an important case study. So that's not inconsequential—not to speak of the philanthropic work.

01-01:36:21  
Meeker:

Which I suspect at this point is where most scholars would go to.

01-01:36:25  
Laqueur:

Yeah, but people are interested in the history of business, and especially now, in the age of increasingly irresponsible business. The fact that you can build this major savings and loan based on honest lending and not be—and then I think when you look at this further you look into their work with Martin Eakes, and their work in predatory lending—I think they're going to—these are also within their world. That is to say, whether the neurology ends up finding a cure for Parkinson's or—I don't know. If they do and it's their guy, obviously they'll become hugely important. And I think ProPublica, and so forth, and the ACLU is important. But I think if you looked at what's the significance of what they spent their lives doing, which is running a savings and loan, one of the two or three biggest in the county, it's going to turn out that you can run a savings and loan profitable and not be criminal like Wells Fargo or Moneytree or these other guys, and actually run an honest business and not screw people with unpayable mortgages and so forth. That's not inconsequential.

So I think people will come to study the business as a way of—that Tom Lehrer song, [with the lyrics] you can do well by doing good. So I think they did well by doing good. They had a huge equity share in the company, but their salaries were pathetic. They were earning a million dollars each, when—they set a model for you can run a business if you have an investment in it, and make a good living and live an upper-middle-class lifestyle, but not—they never thought of having a yacht or a private plane or a Lamborghini. And so in that sense it shows you can be a successful businessperson at the very highest level, in the Fortune 500, and be a reasonable human being. That's not inconsequential.

01-01:38:28

Meeker: Right.

01-01:38:29

Laqueur: I think people will recognize that when they study the business of the late twentieth/early twenty-first century.

01-01:38:38

Meeker: Maybe that's a good note to end?

01-01:38:39

Laqueur: Good, sure.

01-01:38:40

Meeker: All right.

01-01:38:41

Laqueur: All right.

01-01:38:41

Meeker: Thank you, Tom.

01-01:38:41

Laqueur: Thanks, Martin.

[End of Interview]