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University of California
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Robert Price
Free Speech Movement Oral History Project

Interviews conducted by
Lisa Rubens
in 1999

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INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT PRICE

Interview 1; August 19, 1999

[Tape 1]

Rubens: You're currently chair of the political science department. How much longer will you have this position?

Price: This is my fourth year. This may be the last year.

Rubens: I like to begin asking you where were you in the fall of 1964?

Price: In the fall of 1964 I was a second-year graduate student in political science. I had spent the summer in New York.

Rubens: Where you were raised and went to college?

Price: Yes.

Rubens: How did you come to Berkeley in the first place?

Price: I was an undergraduate at what then was Harper College; today, SUNY Binghamton.

Rubens: A poli sci major?

Price: Poli sci major. I applied to a number of graduate schools and I was particularly interested in African politics.

Rubens: Already?

Price: Yes. Within African politics, I was interested in the politics of Ghana. At that time, Berkeley had the pre-eminent political scientist who worked on Ghana. His name is David Apter. That was one reason for me coming here. The other was actually perhaps more relevant to the nature of this project, and I think I wasn't the only one who came here for this reason, but it's a long story. Do you know about the film *Operation Abolition*?

Rubens: Yes, it was a film produced by HUAC, to set the story straight about the committee's mission--ultimately to smear the opponents of the committee, focusing in on the demonstrators against the hearings in San Francisco in

1960. It was also made to particularly castigate students from the University at Berkeley who were among the leaders of the protests.

- Price: When I was a junior--I guess it was--at Harper College, the FBI came to the school, as it did to schools all over the country, to show the film as a way to warn undergraduates who were coming to Berkeley. The film's message was that Berkeley was a training ground for Communists.
- Rubens: You knew these were agents? I actually didn't realize that it was agents who showed the film.
- Price: Oh, yes. They identified themselves. I mean, in 1962, '61, they weren't embarrassed about being FBI agents. So I went to this showing and I said, after seeing it: "I've got to get to that place!" [laughs] Obviously, Berkeley had an excellent political science department, and they had somebody who specialized in what I was interested in. So I wasn't just coming here because the film suggested that Berkeley was exciting--but it was an exciting place. That film served as an important recruiting tool for the university. I think if you go back to a number of people who ended up playing parts in the FSM, you'll find the same thing was true.
- Rubens: Were you already politically inclined? Did you come from a background--?
- Price: Yes, I come from a--I'm a red diaper baby, yes.
- Rubens: You grew up with politics?
- Price: I grew up with politics. I was interested in politics. My parents weren't Party members during the period that I was growing up, but they left the Party--I guess it was during the Second World War, when my father joined the army. But they were always politically interested.
- Rubens: And did you go to Party summer camps or any of that?
- Price: Yes, I did. Once. I hated it. I hated it; and that was it. There was one two-week stretch where I went, but that was it. All my parents' friends were--. So it was sort of my environment, but I didn't have a heavily-charged political environment. I think after the Wallace campaign, which I actually remember slightly--my first political experience was leafleting in the Wallace campaign.
- Rubens: For Henry A. Wallace, when he ran for president on the Progressive Party ticket in 1948?

- Price: Yes. And I remember having the door slammed in my face. I was in an apartment building and no leafleting was allowed. I shoved the paper under people's doors and remember having somebody say something nasty to me-- which I didn't understand. But my parents weren't especially politically active after that, but they were politically interested. They read *I. F. Stone's Weekly* and all of that kind of stuff. So I was politically interested. When I went off to college, it was kind of at the beginning of the post-McCarthy period and the Civil Rights Movement started.
- Rubens: Were you tuned into that movement?
- Price: In the early days of the Civil Rights Movement, yes. There was actually a socialist political organization on the campus at Harper, and so I was involved in that and so on. So yes.
- Rubens: Heavily involved?
- Price: I think I was the president of it, actually.
- Rubens: Of the Socialist Club?
- Price: We didn't do anything. We had discussions or something like that and we invited speakers.
- Rubens: Did being in that group give you an identity, a way to get together socially, or with like-minded people?
- Price: Yes, yes. I guess, yes.
- Rubens: Your group was specifically socialist?
- Price: That's what we called ourselves. I don't know, looking back, how significant that was--other than a symbol of something.
- Rubens: So you come to Berkeley because the FBI was a good recruiter and because Apter is here.
- Price: Yes. And because Berkeley then, as now, was rated one of the top departments in the country. So all those things. But I had this fantasy about Berkeley.
- Rubens: Was the first year good?

- Price: My first year was good. It was not nearly as exciting as the years that followed it! [chuckling]
- Rubens: During the summer of 1964, many students from Berkeley and other universities went to Mississippi.
- Price: Right.
- Rubens: Did that cross your mind?
- Price: No. One of the things was that when I came out here, I was married.
- Rubens: Oh, I didn't realize that. Did you know Mimi, your wife, from high school?
- Price: In high school. So I came out here and I was married.
- Rubens: Both your families are from New York?
- Price: Right. And I think that fact, in some significant ways, altered my relationship to what was going on, on the campus. That may explain why I stayed married and most everybody else I knew when I came out here is no longer married. At any rate, so I obviously knew what was going on, but I never seriously contemplated going south.
- Rubens: You come back for your second year, after the summer. Where were you living at the time?
- Price: Roosevelt Avenue.
- Rubens: What was Mimi doing that year?
- Price: She was teaching in primary school in Oakland.
- Rubens: So you're aware that this controversy is taking place over disputed land?
- Price: Disputed land? No. Well, first, you have to remember in the preceding year, the spring semester was very much consumed by the activities on Automobile Row and the hotels; and it was very much part of my consciousness. I don't remember what I did, if anything, in those demonstrations. I remember them, but I really don't recall what role, if any, I played in it.
- Rubens: And people in your department, particularly professors, other students--?

Price: No, no, I don't think so. It was a Bay Area thing. It was big news, and there was a lot of attention--I remember Willie Brown from that era. I mean, he was the young lawyer who signed those agreements and so on. And, of course, I was aware of what was going on in the South and so on. I actually can recall when the semester began, this edict being decreed by the chancellor, "There will be no off-campus recruiting." I recall, I guess, the civil disobedience of that took place in response to this edict from the very beginning and the discussions around it.

I just happened to be walking back from Bancroft to the campus. I don't know why I was out there, but I was walking to my department--to Barrows Hall--when the police car arrived on the campus to arrest Jack Weinberg. I actually sat down in front of it. There must have been twenty-five people there in the plaza at the time.

Rubens: And you sat down because?

Price: You have to realize by this time--I don't have the dates right--this issue of off-campus recruiting had become a civil rights issue.

Rubens: This was October?

Price: My experience now is that today people think about the Free Speech Movement as a constitutional issue, a dispute about constitutional matters. My recollection is at the beginning it was thought of by people involved as part of the Civil Rights Movement. Rightly or wrongly, the perception was this was the opening battle in shutting down Northern students involved in the Civil Rights movement.

Rubens: Few say that.

Price: I'm convinced--I know that's the way it was seen. And, of course, the organizations that were affected by this were all civil rights organizations.

Rubens: Yes, primarily, but there were others.

Price: I don't remember the time--I'm not saying there's any evidence of this--but there was this belief on the part of many people involved in civil rights struggles on campus that it wasn't just that ex-Senator Knowland was interested in shutting down political activity in the Bay Area, but that somehow he was the front man for the larger project. Today I doubt that was true, but nonetheless, that was the belief system people were operating in.

As I said, this whole stuff began a month before I happened to sit down in front of the car. So this was all very much in the air, right?

Rubens: Right.

Price: And people were expecting something. And so when this police car arrived on the campus--stopping at this table--and the cops got out of the car and handcuffed Weinberg and put him in, people were just walking around and talking and so on. And then there was this spontaneous action just to block the exit of this police car. It wasn't organized. Nobody--and I just saw people sitting down. I did the same thing. I didn't say it was my idea or anything. It just kind of happened.

Rubens: Why did they start that arrest at noon? Didn't they think there would be a reaction?

Price: Whenever, that's when they did it. It was at noon. And then from fifteen or twenty people sitting down, in five minutes there were fifty people; and in an hour there were a hundred people. By the end of the day, there were a couple of thousand people out there, I think.

By the end of the day, let's say five o'clock, hell, I went home for supper. I'm trying to recall. Mimi and I were eating dinner. And as we often did in those days, we were listening to the news on KPFA; and it was interesting the role that KPFA played--I think KPFA was an important factor in all of this.

We were listening to Hannah Pitkin [another professor in the political science department] reading the news, as we would I guess every night at--whenever it was, at six or six-thirty, whenever it came on--we'd listen. She was a KPFA news reader. And there was this news report that police were massing on Bancroft Avenue and so on, and there was this report. So we immediately left there and we walked up to the campus. There was this incredible scene. In retrospect, if we saw it today, it would be no big deal, but then--! I mean, it was this incredible scene. The phalanx of police up Bancroft Avenue, klieg lights on the police car, thousands of students--by this time, I don't know--six thousand or seven thousand people surrounding the car, up all over the Student Union building. And it was a very tense situation in which it looked like the police were going to try to break through to get the car out. I don't recall, but there was some negotiation and some deal struck to disperse for the moment, whatever.

Rubens: Do you particularly remember any speakers up on the car? Might that have been when you saw [Mario] Savio?

- Price: Oh, yes. It would have been that afternoon. It was also going on in the evening when we arrived, yes. I remember seeing Seymour Martin Lipset, actually, who told everyone to go home.
- Rubens: He was on top of the car?
- Price: Yes, yes. It probably was the first time I heard Savio speak, now that you mention it. But I have no clear recollection of it.
- Rubens: I think the fraternity boys came down that night, too.
- Price: Well, they did. That was another big event. That was another big sort of moment, where the fraternity boys came down, surrounded the car, and threatened to beat everybody up who was around it. They were dispersed by either the Lutheran or Catholic priest, the only one who had authority--for whatever reason. I guess it wasn't ZBT or one of those fraternities. [laughs]
- Rubens: Meaning not the Jewish fraternities?
- Price: But now that you mention it, I think that was the first time the whole series--the people who emerged as the leaders of the FSM made some public appearance. Steve Weissman, who I haven't heard anything from since, who at the time I thought was one of the most impressive intellectually of the group--and the two Goldbergs, or one. They weren't married at that time.
- Rubens: There were three different Goldbergs. Two were a brother and sister--
- Price: That's the one.
- Rubens: And then Suzanne, who emerged as a public figure later; she was a Goldberg, also. Later she married Mario.
- Price: I meant the two, the brother and sister. And I heard Savio, and I think John Searle, although at the time he was--
- Rubens: In the philosophy department.
- Price: --he was basically on the side of the students; there was no name for the student movement then, whatever it was. He was critical of the administration.
- Rubens: Correct.
- Price: And then, of course, Lipset told everybody not to engage in this mass hysteria.

- Rubens: Lipset was a sociologist, and that department as the political science department, became very divided over FSM.
- Price: Yes.
- Rubens: Did you know Lipset? He was a big man on campus.
- Price: Very much. I knew him from when I was an undergraduate. I didn't know him personally.
- Rubens: Were you aware of his becoming involved as an opponent of FSM and representative of the administration?
- Price: Yes, I'm trying to remember what the course of events was.
- Rubens: Well, let me ask you something else that may free up your memory. What was it about Weissman? In the literature, there's little talked about him, but in these oral histories people keep say "he was a smart one, he was the one who came up with the ideas. Mario was the one that compelled people, but not necessarily the one--
- Price: If you think of revolutionary movements, they're very much like this. Trotsky was the intellectual, and Lenin was the organizer.
- I think if you look at social psychology, they talk about organizations that have different--people specialize in different things. There are the emotional leaders--and that's the kind Savio was--and the tactical or task-oriented leaders--that was Weissman. I think probably--I don't know about during the movement, the days of the movement itself, but certainly in the negotiation with the university, Bettina Aptheker was extremely important in this respect.
- Rubens: I think so.
- Price: Although she was nothing in terms of a kind of emotional or quasi-charismatic aspect of leadership that Savio was. He was quite extraordinary.
- But Steve Weissman--thinking back from this point in history, we tend to forget how intellectual a movement the Free Speech Movement was and how important the ideas were. I think the legitimacy of that movement on the campus was based on the fact that it was intellectually superior to the opponent's--that is, to the administration. They could make a more sophisticated, more consistent argument firmly rooted in principle. And, in my view, in the last twenty years, left politics in America has evolved into slogan

shouting. It wasn't like that during the Free Speech Movement. I mean, slogans developed, but there was real political analysis out there in the public.

And I think Weissman--was he a graduate student in history at the time?

Rubens: In English, and he was the creator of the GCC [Graduate Coordinating Commission]. He minored in philosophy.

Price: At any rate, my recollection is that as an intellect he probably was--in that aspect of the contribution, he was central.

For example, I recall at one point, whether it was in the *Daily Cal* or somewhere else, Martin Lipset issued some statement having to do with pluralism in American democracy, and all of this. You know there's a way to suggest that it was inappropriate to engage in these kinds of mass actions. Well, he was answered by this leaflet which engaged in a quite sophisticated debate about pluralist theory in American politics. They even called him a fascist. The usual kind of thing. They took him on, on his own terms.

Likewise, as the movement went forward, over time, its legitimacy on campus was that it could claim consistency with the American political tradition and the American Constitution, and convincingly make the argument that the administration had no commitment to it and was violating it.

Rubens: Not only violating it, but the perception among FSM leaders was that the university wanted to remain an ivory tower, as something where there should be no connection to political activity.

Price: Yes, I don't remember that as much as the notion that whatever the administration thought or cared about that was fine. But the students were still citizens of the country, and they had a right to exercise--as long as they didn't break the law--they were free to exercise their political rights, like anybody else. And if they did break the law, it was the court's job to determine that, not the administration. I remember discourse like that. I don't remember discussion about the role of a public university or the ivory tower.

The question about where the university should be engaged I think came later. It was after the Free Speech Movement. It was with Vietnam, because it turned out the university was doing the work of the government in many ways, and that became a kind of issue.

Rubens: Yes, I think you're right. To clarify what I said earlier, I didn't mean that literal kind of engagement. I meant that there seemed to be a lot of discussion

about what the university appeared to stand for: to facilitate philosophical discussion, but the discussion shouldn't be related to the activities of the outside world. I think to many this seemed to be an oxymoron, a paradox, in the first place.

Price: Maybe.

Rubens: For undergraduates particularly, I mean, the university was *in loco parentis*. The university specified what time women came in at night, for example.

Price: I think that the direct attack on *in loco parentis* came later. And it was a logical extension. That's why I think it's important to understand how it began as a defense of the Civil Rights Movement and of political action. Once you establish that and say, "Wait a minute, the university cannot--we are citizens of this country; we are free to exercise our rights. The university should render unto Caesar what is Caesar's." The initial focus was simply on political action.

The university came back and said, "No, no, no. You do not have any rights because you're students at the university, and while you're students at the university, we are like your parents." It was the university which introduced that whole notion of *in loco parentis* as the legitimation for what they wanted to do which then led to the attack on the notion, the extension of this idea of political rights, to say, "Wait a minute, that can't be the case. The whole notion of *in loco parentis* is itself unconstitutional." So I think there was a gradual extension of the purview of that the movement was about: As the movement interacted with the university's resistance to it, and as--and it's interesting--it related to the intellectual nature of this movement and the way it developed.

There were basically dueling principles here. Once the university said, You don't have any rights, and there are good reasons you don't have any rights because the university is *in loco parentis*, the movement had to come back with a philosophic counter to that. It couldn't have just shot them down and say, you know--

Rubens: Right.

Price: And it did so. I mean, that was the incredible part. You know, they had these rallies on Sproul Plaza, and it was different from the rallies I've seen in the last decade and a half.

Rubens: How so?

- Price: Now people just shout slogans. I don't see any difference between political actors now and the cheerleaders at football games. They're basically into the same kind of thing. They have some chants, and they get up there and they chant. These rallies were occasions when the leaders of the student movement demonstrated that they had a more consistent, more valid, more sophisticated, more principled position than their opponents.
- Rubens: I suppose one could argue that these rallies during FSM served as teach-ins. That word hadn't been used yet; the teach-ins specifically spoke to Vietnam. These rallies, the variety of FSM speakers and principles of why they held demonstrations, they were teaching the students what was going on.
- Price: Right, right.
- Rubens: I mean, that was really the basic method of communication.
- Price: But there was a notion that there was this counter-argument. I didn't think about it at the time, but that the movement developed through a public debate, really.
- Rubens: Yes, really.
- Price: And Sproul Plaza was the post--I think we talked about it--but it really acted that way.
- So if the university issued a position paper or an edict or some spokesman for the university did something, the FSM would come back the next day with a rally in which they would answer that, point by point. And then, of course, the university had its spokesmen, and they would do the same. And over time, I think the university was exposed; the university administration was seen as basically intellectually bankrupt. And that's what ultimately did them in.
- Rubens: If I could go back to the issue of discourse--although that term was not used then--about the nature of the university. Savio issues that famous statement before he leads people into occupying Sproul Hall: "There comes a time...you have to throw your body on the levers and stop it..."
- Price: Right, right, right.
- Rubens: Earlier there had been a lot of talk about the multiversity, which is what Kerr had called it. And a fellow named Brad Cleaveland, who had been a political science—

- Price: Yes, yes, I remember that guy. He had written this document--
- Rubens: Yes.
- Price: This revolutionary, anti-technology manifesto or something.
- Rubens: Yes. It was included as a front piece for the Fall '64 *SLATE Supplement*. He also placed it in most professor's boxes. Some have claimed it was too dense and long. So how many read it, I don't know. But there was some debate already taking place about how the university had become large and alienated. Professors taught Kerr's book in their classes.
- Price: Absolutely, absolutely. There's no doubt about that.
- Rubens: Were you a TA that semester?
- Price: Yes, probably was, but I don't recall.
- Rubens: Any specific memory of sections talking about FSM--or students asking you for guidance?
- Price: No, I don't have any memory of that. But I'm thinking back, and I probably--I might have had a fellowship that year. I don't remember. Because you'd think I would have remembered had--I remember during Vietnam; I don't remember during the Free Speech Movement. I probably had a fellowship.
- Certainly--and I don't remember exactly when I entered it--they were both discussions of, but largely metaphors about, the university as an insensitive machine; that it was treating particularly undergraduate students as nothing but cogs in the wheel or data, if you use the computer analogy. And there was this slogan that I guess Savio popularized, too: Don't fold, spindle or--
- Rubens: Mutilate--
- Price: --mutilate--which was why, of course--remember, in the days of IBM cards, as opposed to hard drives and tape and so on, that's what every IBM punch card had written on it. And so there was certainly this metaphor that the university didn't give a damn about the students. They were just some sort of malleable cogs in the wheel, as they churned out their products. And the fact that Kerr, the president of the university and an industrial sociologist, had used the machine metaphor in the book he had written called *The Making of the Multiversity*. I read it at the time and don't remember it now in great detail, except I actually used one reference from it in a speech I gave.

- Rubens: When?
- Price: Just two days ago.
- Rubens: What? What was it?
- Price: He said that--part of this book was a kind of Machiavelli for college presidents. So Kerr in the book says that a college president has three constituents to satisfy: students, alumni, and faculty. And a successful president will know what to satisfy them with. Kerr said that a college president has to provide sex for the students, football for the alumni, and parking for the faculty; and if you do those three things, he'd be fine. [laughs] So yes, there was a lot of talk about the character of the university. Certainly, I don't remember whether the discourse of the speeches on Sproul actually focused at that point on that, but they certainly used the metaphor to quite telling effect.
- It was later on, in the era of reconstitution, 1970, '71, '72, when there was much more discussion of that. And you're right that the Brad Cleaveland's polemic or pamphlet or whatever, had a certain impact. He promoted it. I remember his name, and I kind of remember that thing. But I also remember that it was kind of peripheral. He would have liked to elevate himself to some important. But I don't think that happened.
- Rubens: I have another observation about the public debate that was taking place. I hear nothing at that time about how the university reflected or didn't reflect the social world that these students were engaged in. What I mean by this is that there was no discussion about how many black students there were, black teachers, certainly nothing about sexism was raised. There was a separation between what they were engaged in in the world—Auto Row sit-ins, shop-ins at Lucky's--that's what CORE was doing--and what was going on on campus.
- Price: Right. Yes, I think there was an acceptance of the notion that if it was true, based on a kind of enlightened universalism and the meritocracy type notions, that if there was no discrimination, whoever could do the work would get in.
- Rubens: Right. I think people thought, "Well, there is a little discrimination, but this is the way the system works."
- Price: I don't know. They don't focus on it.
- Rubens: No, they don't.

Price: I think the presumption was that there wasn't discrimination at the university. There might have been on Automobile Row; there might have been in--

Rubens: Jackie Goldberg was engaged in an attempt to desegregate the Greeks: Jews and blacks were kept out.

Price: At that point nobody cared very much about the sororities and fraternities. It all got written off as part of the--there may have been debate about those in the fifties, but in the sixties I don't remember any discussion at all.

[tape interruption]

Rubens: We could go two directions. Do you remember having discussions with professors about FSM events from the car on? Also do you remember anything about how the GCC starts to get formed, how you got into the GCC?

Price: I don't remember very much. I don't have any focused recollection of discussions prior to the sit-in.

Rubens: Apor is not saying to you, "Watch out. Don't get in trouble?"

Price: No, no. There are discussions going on with faculty beginning to think--I think much of the faculty was completely removed from this as it was developing, until the Sproul sit-in. But I remember there was enough discussion that there was some faculty beginning to realize that they had no relationship with students, that too often there were students that they respected who went crazy and identified with this thing--and maybe there was something to it. I can't speak for the faculty, but I really think it was the Sproul sit-in which galvanized all this interest, made this the campus issue, and that's when people started to talk about it but also to divide over.

Rubens: Yes, but before that there was a graduate coordinating committee.

Price: Yes, yes. Was it November?

Rubens: Yes, it starts around there.

Price: There was a political science graduate students' association at that time, just a general one.

Rubens: Yes. In fact the graduate students were no longer part of the student government. They had been kicked out the year before.

- Price: That's right. And I think our department had a graduate students' association. When the FSM formed a graduate student coordinating committee [GSCC], I think there was an election of representatives, and I think the body that did the electing was that graduate student political science association. I and one other person, whose name I don't recall--
- Rubens: Did you campaign, do you recall?
- Price: No, we had a discussion. I don't remember anything about it.
- Rubens: Okay. But you were willing to serve.
- Price: I was willing to serve, and I guess I wanted to. I actually remember nothing about the GSCC except for the penultimate meeting, when the decision was taken or ratified, I should say, more correctly, to sit in at Sproul Hall.
- Rubens: Oh, really? I didn't know that that was debated.
- Price: Yes, it was.
- Rubens: Talk of strike was in the air, and--
- Price: Not strike, a sit-in. Strike didn't come till after the sit-in.
- Rubens: That's right, but I think some people talked about it earlier; in fact there was an abortive strike.
- Price: I don't recall that. But what I recall is going to a meeting in which Weinberg-- I don't remember who else, maybe Weissman, and I don't remember who else from the FSM steering committee was there--presented a plan and argument behind the plan. And I remember, actually--I have a fairly clear recollection of what they said. The argument went something like this: "Look, this has been going on now--this effort to turn back the administration has been going on now since the middle of September. There was a big escalation of the movement around the police car. Students had been mobilized but basically it had been at a dead-end. We just sort of reached a plateau."
- Rubens: It had been a real cat-and-mouse game by then. They had settled on some disciplinary terms, and then when students came back from y, they learned that more students had been dismissed.
- Price: That's right. It wasn't getting anywhere. I think the argument was actually made that the only way to break through would be to have a general strike,

shut the place down to force the administration to negotiate. However, I think the leadership argued that under present circumstances, the conditions did not exist for a general strike; it had to be created. And the way to create that was to sit in at Sproul Hall and draw police on campus, and that act would create the conditions.

I remember this because I sat there and said these people were out of their fucking minds. That was my reaction.

Rubens: Meaning what?

Price: That they're crazy.

Rubens: --to talk about strike and occupation?

Price: I didn't believe it would work!

Rubens: You thought the university wouldn't--

Price: No, I didn't think it would have that reaction. I didn't think that many people would sit in. I thought they'd be arrested. I just thought the whole thing was fanciful, and they were just blowing smoke. That was my reaction. So I sat there, sort of incredulous, thinking that these people are out of their--they're off their gourd. But, of course, everybody voted--I don't remember how I voted--but it wasn't as if this was a plan that was developed that was coordinated. The plan--and I'm sure the decision had already been made, and they came to the graduate coordinating committee with it. They got overwhelming support for this. I went out thinking, Oh, boy, now they've really got us. And, in fact, the thing worked exactly as diagrammed.

Rubens: What do you mean "they really got us"?

Price: I thought that the movement would expose itself, if it would try this gambit. They'd call a party or whatever that thing is, make a war and nobody shows up. That kind of thing.

Rubens: So it wasn't that you were afraid and thinking, Oh, gee, now my whole career is--

Price: No. No, no, no, no, no. It's just I didn't think it was going to work. In retrospect, you could say that, but at the time--

Rubens: I understand. This had not happened.

- Price: Right. And I just didn't think it would work. So I don't recall the difference in timing between the--
- Rubens: Meeting and then the sit-in.
- Price: Right, right.
- Rubens: Did you sit in?
- Price: I did not. And I remember why. I had a term paper due the next day, so I went home to do the term paper--and nothing was happening. They were sitting in, but there was no particular--. When I left the campus, which must have been in the early afternoon, to go back home to work on my paper--there was no sign of police or anything, so I went home. And I was working on this paper, and I didn't listen to the radio. I don't know. I got a little sleep, got up, had some breakfast, and walked up to campus and met all this--you know. I just walked on the campus, and there was all this stuff happening: people being dragged, people watching other people being dragged out of the building. The buses going off to Santa Rita.
- Rubens: Do you have the term paper in your hand?
- Price: Yes. I turned it in.
- Rubens: Do you remember classes being cancelled particularly right then or--
- Price: Yes, I recall some of that. I don't remember this particular class, nor do I remember what the paper was for. I just remember the way in which the campus, and indeed the whole town was galvanized by this event. :Lawyers donating their time, going out to Santa Rita to defend the students--
- Rubens: Happily.
- Price: Happily bailing people out. Driving them back to Berkeley. I remember--
- Rubens: Were you aware of poli sci--I haven't heard of poli sci professors who did that.
- Price: I'm sure Jacobson did, even though he didn't tell you. I recall that he did. I don't remember others. But I think of all the people I recall being the most emotionally engaged by this event and upset, Jacobson stands out. And I remember seeing him the very next day or whatever, that day. That's my recollection.

- Rubens: Had you particularly studied with him?
- Price: No.
- Rubens: Okay. And what happened after that? Did the GCC meet?
- Price: If it did, I don't remember. It may not have. But the sit-in was on what day?
- Rubens: December 3rd. And then December 8th was the faculty resolution.
- Price: When there's this big complication--
- Rubens: I guess December 4th, at the Greek Theater. Scalapino convened--
- Price: Yes, poli sci gets very big in this.
- Rubens: Let's talk about that. Do you remember being at the Greek Theater?
- Price: Absolutely. I remember a lot of things. I remember the university calling this-- and it generally being known that this was Scalapino's idea, and that he had created the agenda. And there were these jokes going around the department-- it wasn't really a joke. Many people said [that] Scalapino is going to be the next chancellor of the university.
- Rubens: Say a little bit more about why was he presumed?
- Price: I don't remember.
- Price: He was chair of the department. He was always ambitious.
- Rubens: His specialty was?
- Price: Asian politics, and U.S. foreign politics, particularly toward Asia.
- I guess there was some sniping by his enemies within the faculty of political science, making snide remarks about him trying to become chancellor of the university. Maybe that's how I got this notion. I don't really know.
- Rubens: Had you thought of the department as being particularly fractious before that?
- Price: No, no. Although at a certain point it became that; and I don't remember at what exact point it was, where there was this conservative faction of the older generation who were opposed--not vociferously opposed. I mean, that became clearest--I don't know if I knew about it--in the Faculty Senate debates.

Rubens: Some of the divisions in some departments go back to the Loyalty Oath controversy.

Price: I don't think this one did. Mike Rogin can tell you, but I don't think this one did.

At any rate, so I remember the morning--I don't recall whether the Greek Theater meeting/convocation was announced the day before or that morning, but I do recall coming to campus and knowing that all classes were being canceled. I guess it was at noontime or eleven a.m.--I think something like that, it was fairly early in the day--and going up to the Greek Theater with Jack Citrin and Ken Jowitt.

Rubens: These are fellow graduate students with you in poli sci?

Price: Yes, right, fellow graduate students. And the place was packed to the rafters, of course. I remember thinking about the absurdity of the speeches from the administration's roster of speakers. They were giving the kind of speeches you'd expect at graduation ceremonies, trying to get the emotional juices flowing about Cal and all this--

Rubens: Really? Did it have that character?

Price: Yes, it had that character. My recollection is they didn't address any of the issues. They just talked about this wonderful university, and don't destroy it, and this, that, and the other thing. But they never engaged the issues. I think that was incredibly alienating. Even before the event that blew the whole thing sky high, people were already alienated by the fact that here they called this, they announced it. This was going to be the moment where everything would be resolved and all the issues would be addressed, and they didn't address anything.

And then, of course, after--at some point, I don't know--I think the word had gotten out earlier that the Free Speech Movement had asked to have Savio put on the agenda. I think so, but I'm not positive. So I think there was some expectation of wondering what was going to happen, because I think that before we went down there, we understood that Scalapino had said to Savio, "This is our meeting. We'll keep the agenda. It's our meeting, our agenda. You're not welcome to speak." Now, whether I came to that knowledge afterwards--I think I had that sort of knowledge beforehand.

At the very end of the meeting, of course, as now everybody knows, Savio was sitting fairly close to the stage. Jumped up on the stage. Was then jumped

by the police, dragged off to the back of the stage, where he banged on this--I guess he was put in a broom closet. And he started banging, "Let me out." You could hear him.

The crowd started chanting, "Free Savio, free Savio, free Savio," and began, as the chants increased, to start to move on the stage. And I thought that there was going to be a huge riot breaking out. And obviously, so did Scalapino because they decided quickly to let Savio out of his temporary jail cell and let him go to the podium.

Rubens: Scalapino declared the meeting over, and now--

Price: But everybody stood there and let him speak. And I think the expectation was he was going to make this big speech. That's what they expected. And he said, "I don't know what the fuss--I just want to invite all of you to our own rally up at Sproul Plaza," and turned around and walked away. That was just--I mean, it was brilliant because it sort of revealed the bankruptcy of the opponents. It put a sort of exclamation point on what actually had been emerging over the previous two months.

So an hour later, there is this vast sea of people out in front of Sproul Plaza. Obviously, the strike had not been ended by this complication. I wasn't a witness to it, but I am told that Wolin and Schaar and McClosky somehow got ahold of Clark Kerr and took him up to the fourth or fifth floor of Sproul [Barrows?] Hall, pointed out the window to him, and said, You better face the fact that that's where authority in the university now resides.

Rubens: Pointing to the crowd gathered on the plaza?

Price: Yes. And, of course, Joan Baez was out there. I don't know if she was there that day, but she probably was.

Rubens: Everyone was hoping she would be, since she'd already shown up before.

Price: She'd been there quite a number of times.

Price: Kerr acknowledged to them that indeed they were right; that was now the case. And I believe that is when McClosky--no, I think that at that time already McClosky had--you ought to talk to Herb, he's around.

Rubens: Yes, I will.

- Price: I think at that point they had already prepared for Kerr a set of principles, which eventually were edited to the December 8th resolutions.
- Rubens: These three: Wolin, Schaar, and McClosky.
- Price: Yes. But McClosky wrote them. And they put them in front of Kerr and basically said, "If you want to reclaim the university"--so to speak--I don't remember what their exact words were—"basically, you're going to have to agree to this."
- Rubens: That's fascinating. I will pursue that.
- Price: And he said yes. That was the basis of calling the Faculty Senate meeting for December 8th and presenting these resolutions.
- Rubens: Herb McClosky specialized in what?
- Price: His specialty is political behavior--civil liberties. He was particularly interested in American mass public attitudes to free speech, free association--. Now, I may be wrong--I certainly know that Wolin and Schaar were--
- Rubens: Were in that meeting?
- Price: Were involved in bringing Kerr up. I think McCloskey did, too, but I'm not certain about that.
- Rubens: Why did the university so consistently make the wrong decisions? Why was someone like Scalapino unable to just adequately judge the temper of the times?
- Price: It's always easier in hindsight.
- Rubens: Of course.
- Price: I think first of all, there was a sense on the part of the kind of older faculty generation that the inmates were running the insane asylum and that that was wrong. "Who the hell are the students to defy these things? I mean, they're just students." After all, they grew up in the era of *in loco parentis*, and so I think that's an important feature. They just couldn't get their mind around abandoning the notion that there was a system of authority: the students were the subjects, not the issuers of policy.
- Rubens: And when you consider student behavior, as you've said at other points, comparing this to what happens later, they were rather respectful. They took

their shoes off when they get on top of the car; they responded to the university word for word.

Price: Right. I mean, nobody is destroying the institution. It was a completely different era.

Rubens: Yes.

Price: I don't know what your research is turning up about the motivation of the administration, the higher administration itself--whether or not in fact it's true that Senator Knowland demanded this [end of political leafleting] of Chancellor Strong during the summer because they didn't want a repetition of this activity in San Francisco or in the Bay Area--

Rubens: Well, if it was not Knowland directly, the perception that Knowland had that influence had great impact, as you said earlier. I don't know if you have any other speculations?

Price: I have no other speculations.

Rubens: There is a claim that Kerr could not handle the changing arguments of the FSM leadership. There would be an agreement, and then the students would come back and change it.

Price: He could out-negotiate them.

Rubens: I suppose. Kerr was also under a lot of attack by conservative regents, and from those at UCLA who begrudged the expansion of the university system.

Price: Okay. At what point did Kerr get directly, intensely involved? Because it wouldn't have been at first.

Rubens: He was away when Dean Towle issued the first edict.

Price: The question is why did Strong order this in the first place?

Rubens: Right. Some say he was provoked by conservative regents.

Price: Yes, someone initially had to want to stop this off-campus activity.

Rubens: The campus Tribune reporter may have received an anonymous phone call from some politico or business person in Berkeley. The immediate question became, who owned the Bancroft strip? The city or the university?

- Price: Right.
- Rubens: At some point the ASUC suggests they buy the strip of land.
- Price: But even so, why did they feel necessary--let's assume--and then what happened was that the tables were moved inside, right?
- Rubens: Right, right, exactly. And that's where Weinberg was arrested.
- Price: So why did they feel they needed to say no off-campus recruiting?
- Rubens: Because the university was getting out of control. It's expanding; its students are behaving in ways that are not--
- Price: I went to a meeting, actually--I must have been a TA because I went to a meeting in which Earl Cheit presided. He was at that point dean of students. And it was a meeting of TAs, who were threatening to strike—I guess “threatening” because I don't remember the strike ever took place. The meeting took place at Pauley Ballroom.
- Rubens: Just TAs, though?
- Price: It was just TAs. It was graduate students in general, but I think it was TAs. His message was, “Look, we're not opposed to the Civil Rights Movement. You can go to Mississippi. You just cannot organize here.” He thought it was a perfectly reasonable to limit civil rights in this case.
- Rubens: Right.
- Price: So that suggested to me that there was this notion that there was some local political person. There were other people, yes. I mean, there may have been others. But there was some sense that the university didn't like the idea that students were engaging in mass politics and civil disobedience in the Bay Area.
- Rubens: Right, right.
- Price: And Earl Cheit--it only poured gasoline on the fire when you say that, because people accused him of trying to kill the Civil Rights Movement. “No, no, no,” he said. “That's no problem. This edict does not prevent you. If you want to go to Mississippi--just not in the Bay Area.”
- Rubens: Do you think it's too simple? We're trying to analyze what was it that led the university to consistently--

- Price: Well, I think once the thing got going, they consistently underestimated the depth--the breadth, not the depth--the breadth of support for something like this. I think they underestimated two things. One, they underestimated the extent to which they would be able to be portrayed as opponents of the Civil Rights Movement. That was the initial mistake.
- And they underestimated the degree to which students had become alienated from the university, because of the way the multiversity treated them. I mean, in all of their relationships. These are particularly undergraduates, right? The masses. You know, everything from financial aid to L&S advising.
- Rubens: Standing in those interminable lines to register for classes.
- Price: Lines. That's right, all of that. They simply did not understand the resonance of this symbol of the phrase "do not fold, spindle or mutilate," this sort of feeling that nobody gave a damn about them except to shuffle them around in impersonal units in this mega-machine. They continued to misunderstand that for fifteen years, twenty years.
- I remember saying to Michael Heyman--I can't remember what the incident was. Maybe it was around South Africa in the mid-eighties, when they were worried about a revival of this stuff. I said to him, "Do you ever wonder why students of this university, at the drop of a hat, are willing to get up and smash the place to smithereens? Do you ever think why that is?"
- Rubens: What did he say?
- Price: I said, "Because they hate the place. They hate the place because of the way your bureaucrats treat them." He mumbled something, and then engaged in a policy which is almost something worse. I don't remember what. But I just don't think that reality, the alienating nature of this place--it's not as bad now as it was then because Chancellor Tien did some things, and I don't think it has quite the nasty edge that it once did vis-a-vis students. Although it could be a lot better. I don't think the administrators ever, ever, ever got it. They had all kinds of rhetoric, which--
- Rubens: See, that's what I'm trying to say. I just don't think it's as clear as Knowland insisting--
- Price: No, no. But that explains why they couldn't get a handle on it once it started. But it doesn't understand--the initial thing is still a mystery to me, why they cared to go down this road in the first place.

- Rubens: As you said, once they made a decision--
- Price: Yes, but why did they want to make that decision?
- Rubens: Some reporters making a stir, and it's--
- Price: Too much trouble. But up until very recently--I haven't heard it recently--but there was all this cant about the fact that this place is such a difficult place to negotiate for students. It's one of its virtues: you learn how to live in the real world. I heard people in the bureaucracy here and undergraduate affairs, I don't know how many times say this. Rather than change it, they said, "Oh, this is the Berkeley way."
- Rubens: Really?
- Price: "It's a plus." This is long after all of this stuff takes place. And I think that that's something that--you know, I've had discussions recently with the development office, and they wonder why their fund-raising efforts for the generation that was here post-1960 are so feeble compared to others. I once said to somebody, "Basically, they hate this place. What the hell are they going to give money to it for?"
- [Tape 2]
- Rubens: Regarding the character and or social make-up of the movement. Do you have a sense that there was a disproportionate number of Jewish and East Coast people?
- Price: That was raised in the press as well. Of course, Mario Savio was Catholic. If you look worldwide, wherever the left wing had movements--the same phenomenon. If you look at the African National Congress and look at the white component of the South African Communist Party, it's predominantly--the white Communists in that group are predominantly Jews. The white ANC supporters are predominantly Jews.
- Rubens: I didn't know that.
- Price: This is not all that unusual.
- Rubens: I guess there's not much more to say about it. Regarding Bettina Aptheker. Of course, she's the daughter of a renowned Communist historian. She gave fuel to some of the claims by the Right that the Communists were involved. But she was tolerated to the extent that she was really a much more conservative

force. I mean, she was the one who did very well at negotiating with the university.

Price: Of course, it's Leninists and compromise. Leninists are pragmatists. The little book called *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* is the key to understanding. When it came to use that model--I think, when it came to negotiations--a lot of the folks that came out of the FSM leadership in Lenin's category would have been infantile erectus, utopians. Bettina Aptheker had her feet planted on the ground. And she could negotiate with her because she understood the restraints under which everyone was operating.

By the way, who ends up to be the most important negotiator from the point of view--and a beloved person for Afrikaners in South Africa, for the National Party--Joe Slovo, a white Communist, right? For much, I think, the same reason, the same kind of tradition as in Leninism. But at any rate--

Rubens: When Mario withdrew the next spring?

Price: Yes, I remember. I was there. He said a swan song and said, "I'm gone."

Rubens: Where was this?

Price: Somewhere in Sproul Plaza. I remember hearing a sort of incredible kind of--

Rubens: What was incredible?

Price: It was incredible that he would say that, I don't want to be a leader anymore, and "I'm leaving. I'm going. I'm withdrawing."

Rubens: Do you recall how the rest of that year went for you? Was there a sort of return to normalcy? Did the GCC disband?

Price: I think it did. I don't recall a return to normalcy. What I recall is always this tug of war of the university trying to backtrack from the December 8th resolutions and this kind of sense of the student movement trying to prevent that. I don't recall any major incidents in the spring of '65.

Rubens: Let's jump ahead in time. You ended up staying at the university, is that right?

Price: Yes.

Rubens: You got your Ph.D. and then--was this your first job?

Price: Yes. That's quite a few years later.

- Rubens: When was that?
- Price: I came on the faculty in 1970, January of '70.
- Rubens: You have always been on this campus?
- Price: Yes, although there was a period--. I left in--I guess it was June of '67 because in the fall of '67 I spent a few months at Northwestern University doing a course in an African language. Then I went off and spent a year in Ghana, returning to campus in February of '69. So I missed all of '68, which was a big year.
- Rubens: A big year for this country as a whole.
- Price: Yes. So the whole Vietnam Day stuff--I saw some of it, but a lot of it I was in--and certainly the Democratic Convention--I was in Ghana.
- Rubens: And regarding divisions within the poli sci department? I know Wolin is still keen to talk about reconstitution.
- Price: Is he? I think it's true that the department really didn't break apart internally, along several dimensions which overlapped.
- Rubens: That's what I'm wondering, if you would just speak to that. There were several ways in which divisions overlapped.
- Price: Yes, they tended to overlap. They didn't completely overlap. They tended to--
- Rubens: Would you explain that?
- Price: Well, I think the Free Speech Movement left--very early on, within the faculty, a number of faculty who had supported the Free Speech Movement, like Mike McClosky, came to feel that the movement had bred a kind of populous politics which was anti-intellectual and was dangerous, was a threat to the university. That basically a movement which had been constitutional and now was led by a bunch of barbarians--essentially, the barbarians were at the gate. That was the year that Jerry Rubin--there was a second-echelon leadership.
- Rubens: It's true. Rubin is absolutely not involved in Free Speech. He's here, and soon runs for Mayor of Berkeley.
- Price: That's right. And what was called the front movement or the Filthy Speech Movement or whatever--reflected a kind of degeneracy of the revolution. And

so some of the faculty who had previously supported the Free Speech Movement became extremely leery of student activism.

Rubens: So that's who--McClosky?

Price: McCloskey comes to mind. I'm sure there were others. And whereas certainly Wolin, Schaar, Jacobson, Rogin, I think, from early on saw in the Free Speech Movement much more than the civil rights, constitutional issue. It related a lot to the whole notion of bureaucratization of modern society, participation, and all of those kinds of things. This probably affected their teaching and affected relationships with some students and so on. But I don't think that their views that there needed to be a fundamental change in the way in which society was organized went much beyond this group of faculty, largely of political theory. Entirely political theory, although Rogin was American politics.

Rubens: Right. Jacobson talks about having brought him in. Schaar, too, he says.

Price: Although he theory when he was in Chicago, so it's not entirely true. But he [Rogin] didn't come here as a theorist. He came as someone who was interested in American political behavior.

Rubens: Are you saying the theorists in your department were concerned with broader change?

Price: Not a revolutionary breakthrough, but a kind of anti-bureaucratic stance. If you believe that modern society without bureaucracy is impossible, then their view--it might have been utopian, but it was-- Rubens: Okay. I mean, they're not Marxists.

Price: No, no, no, no. I'm not talking about going to the barricades. But they seem to believe that it is possible to reconstitute institutions without any of this, but you can do things in different ways.

Rubens: Okay, okay.

Price: It was also within the faculty--of course, at that time, Michael Lierserson was on the faculty. He was the son of a very famous political scientist named Avery Lierserson, who was a superstar, was recruited here to do highly quantitative political science.

Rubens: The son.

Price: Yes. And then got converted to Marxism and to Wolinesque stuff. He kind of was very active in trying to mobilize assistant professors in the department against the senior faculty, arguing that the department was divided up into fiefdoms with certain senior faculty determining everything, and it was time to break this down. You need a revolution inside the department. That didn't earn him a great favor with his senior colleagues, and he was denied tenure, which became an issue as well. But these are secondary issues in the splitting of the department--secondary to the Vietnam War, which then came along. And the mobilizations around that, you know, created both an ideological split on policy and then a split about proper political action.

So you had a group of faculty who were either pro-U.S. in Vietnam or perhaps initially not enthusiastic about it but were not opposed to it either, based upon a general acceptance of the anti-Communist norm in international relations. And another group who fairly early on were opposed to the war. And this coincided, this split, with the split about the Filthy Speech Movement and about this whole question of bureaucratization. That reinforced other divisions and coincides or overlaps.

Rubens: Yes, yes.

Price: So the same people--Wolin, Scharr, Rogin, Jacobson--

Rubens: We haven't mentioned Ladovsky.

Price: He was on the right side of this divide throughout.

Then there's reconstitution. And that is the same split. I guess that's followed by the Third World issues and People's Park. Each one of these things reinforces this overlapping division. What is important inside the department is that each of these involved some sort of mobilizations on the campus in which the department had to basically be called on to take some sort of stand. So these became departmental issues, not just issues of the larger society.

Rubens: And why did they have to take a stand? Are they going to shut down their classes or--?

Price: That's right.

Rubens: Are you going to expel students? Are you going to be more lenient?

Price: Exactly, that's right, everything.

- Rubens: And then people started leaving.
- Price: Wolin and Schaar left. I happen to think they left over another issue entirely, which had to do with the creation of the School of Public Policy and not the School of the History of Consciousness or whatever. Wolin and Schaar--my recollection, my information is that they, and particularly Wolin, had made a proposal to set up a school of political philosophy, in essence, outside the department, a separate school. I don't know if that was the title of it, but that's basically what it was. They made this proposal. Simultaneously, Ladovsky made a proposal to the administration for the School of Public Policy.
- Rubens: There was an experimental college, Strawberry Creek—
- Price: There was a lot of that stuff going on. But these other things were not so much experimental. And at that time Ladovsky was chair of the political science department. My understanding is that he killed Wolin's project; he was able to kill Wolin's project with the administration by arguing it would be competitive with political science and for its graduate students--while, simultaneously, of course, furthering his own ambitions in something that was equally competitive. Or at least one might argue it was equally competitive. And I think it was the last straw for Wolin.
- Rubens: Oh, I think so. I think it was a big thing.
- Bob, I've learned so much from this interview. And I think I have to sort through a lot of this and then ask you—
- Price: Let's meet again sometime.
- Rubens: Yes. I want to throw out one name real quick. Have you ever heard of C. West Churchman?
- Price: Yes.
- Rubens: He ran the space science program, and I wonder if he had particularly connects to Washington?
- Price: The name is familiar, but I don't know anything about it. [End of Interview]