

021 Mr Joel

Please note that any items that were difficult to transcribe are marked with an [indiscernible] tag.

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: I'm meeting with Mr. Joel right now at 202 Brunswick. Thank you very much for agreeing...

Respondent: It's a pleasure.

Interviewer: ...to be interviewed.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: I'm on the board of directors of Harbord Village Residents' Association, and we have a committee. It's our history committee, and we just want to gather information from people who have lived in the neighbourhood for enough years that they can recognize and describe some of the changes that have occurred. [0:00:30] So that's what this is about.

Respondent: Good.

Interviewer: At first we thought we might put a book together; now we're just going to put it on our website and we'll see where it takes us.

Respondent: Okay. Sure.

Interviewer: But I'm sure it'll be interesting.

Respondent: All right.

Interviewer: Can you tell me just to begin what brought you into this neighbourhood?

Respondent: Yeah. Well I had a group of friends who were buying houses and fixing them up and selling them, and everybody was happy and making money, and I wanted to be part of that. So [0:01:00] my

wife and I lived in a coach house at Lawrence and Yonge, which was beautiful and inexpensive, and so I bought the house down here because it had two kitchens, and two bathrooms, and a big tree in the front garden, and it had parking – all of those elements I was looking for for practical reasons. And at that time, a [0:01:30] friend of mine was going through a terrible divorce and needed some space, and would I rent him the house I just bought? So I said I would help him out, help each other out. And so I thought it would be a neat idea if I rented some space to him and then had a little studio on the top floor here so I'd have a bit more space to work, and then I rented the ground floor out to what I thought was a really nice young couple. And [0:02:00] then I was going to just coast for about a year, and put some money together and get serious about putting everything together. Then it all went belly-up; the tenants were not good, and my wife and I discovered that we were not the material for landlords and landladies, and I won't go into details about my friend who was divorcing. But in the end I just said, "Please, everybody [0:02:30] out," and we let the coach house go, and my wife and I moved in, and then we struggled to put the house in order. And a couple of things I noticed right away, which were very positive, was my wife could walk to work.

Interviewer: Where does she work?

Respondent: She works at the university, so she could walk to and from work, and much to my surprise being a freelancer, people [0:03:00] were very happy to come and visit me on Brunswick Avenue to discuss business, but they weren't happy to come up and see me at Lawrence and Yonge, even though I had a huge parking, free parking, and lovely gardens, and all kind of stuff like that.

Interviewer: And it was on the subway too.

Respondent: It wasn't then.

Interviewer: Oh it wasn't?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

- Respondent:** No. That came later. Much later actually, yeah. So in that respect it just seemed to [0:03:30] start to work. Now...
- Interviewer:** What year was that?
- Respondent:** This was thirty years ago, and I'm not very good at numbers so you can work that out, when it's more convenient for you. Yeah. And so I was loathe to let the coach house go, but it needed somebody here on the premises to take care of things, and a lot of things needed taking care of. So gradually over the years, very, very slowly, we started [0:04:00] at the top of the house and worked our way down in terms of repairing it, and making it good. I'm still in the process. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Well it certainly looks – as I told you, it looks beautiful to me. Yeah.
- Respondent:** There's actually an awful lot of things that I don't like about this area, and a lot of things I don't like about this house, but I'm not going to dwell on those; I'm just going to stay with the positive elements.
- Interviewer:** Okay. But as [0:04:30] we're speaking and we're talking about the changes that are occurring and have occurred that you've observed and lived with, I'd be happy to hear both...
- Respondent:** All right.
- Interviewer:** ...because that will be the total picture.
- Respondent:** I'll try not to be – well I'm going to be a little bit gentle because I can be very strongly opinionated, and you don't need that. But I'm not a left-wing person, I'm not really a political person, but this is very much a left-wing [0:05:00] area and I find it uncomfortable to the point where I have to keep my mouth shut. Okay? I can't freely share my mind without – you know, it's one of those politics and religion things that starts a fight and so I keep quiet.
- Interviewer:** Do you and your wife share – are you together on that?

Respondent: Yeah, we're together.

Interviewer: So at least you have her. [Laughs]

Respondent: We are very together. We're inseparable.

Interviewer: Yeah. [Laughs]

Respondent: And what I also don't like is that **[0:05:30]** I take care of our property architecturally and physically, and it distresses me to see that a lot of other people in the area don't have the same aspirations, and I absolutely hate seeing garbage containers out the front of houses, and those sort of things, right? And it's, you know, a bit of paint to a bit of brick cleaning is **[0:06:00]** so wonderful and it's not...

Interviewer: So you like to be proud of your home, and proud of your street, and proud of your neighbourhood.

Respondent: Yeah. And I would like to be proud of the street, and you know, so that's a negative element for me.

Interviewer: Yeah. And that's something we've discussed with the bins having to be put in front where people don't have room in back. But it's something that the HVRA has discussed at times because everybody has three bins now, and some of them can be quite large.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. We're aware of that. Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. **[0:06:30]** I keep them in the back garden, and I, you know, carefully bring them through the house. We've got a small laneway at this side, but it's not big enough to push those things through, but...

Interviewer: Yeah. But it certainly doesn't...

Respondent: They're ugly.

- Interviewer:** Yeah. They are. Yeah. That's putting it very bluntly.
- Respondent:** No, they're ugly and they're disgusting, and yeah. So yeah. But I do love the fact that this house overlooks Central Tech, [0:07:00] which is the first building in the area to cost a million dollars in Ontario, and I like the architecture, and it's very nice. So I haven't got somebody else's backyard or back windows overlooking me. That's a great plus.
- Interviewer:** Are you a bit of a history buff? I mean the fact that you say that's the first...
- Respondent:** Not really. It's just that bit of information came my way, so I thought throw it around when I can. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** We are asking people their ages, so could you [0:07:30] just give me a vague idea of your age and your wife's age? You don't have to...
- Respondent:** My wife is five years younger than I am, and I'm seventy-one.
- Interviewer:** Same age as I am. [Laughter] Okay. And where are you both from originally?
- Respondent:** Well my wife's in Germany, from north Germany, and I'm from southeast London, a place called Lewisham, Catford area. A bit like "The EastEnders" television program. [0:08:00] And I always refer to it as the wrong side of the river. And I came to Canada in 1965 to start a new life, and I don't regret a single second of it. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Good. Good. Yeah. Do you know who lived in this house before you?
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Do you know much about the house? Can you talk about that?
- Respondent:** Yes, I do. A delightful family called the Consiglio family. [0:08:30] They had several sons, and they also had parents who lived next

door at 200, and so they'd worn in each other's rooms and stuff like that for a long time, and between them they didn't do too much about looking after the building, but they clearly lived here [indiscernible 0:08:57]. [0:09:00] And I have since met them, really nice people because then I needed to get some information from them one time, and as coincidence will have it, my wife and I use a travel agent and it turns out that when he asked us what our address was and we told him, he nearly fell off his chair because he used to live next door, so it was amazing.

Interviewer: Yeah. Small world stories.

Respondent: [0:09:30] Yeah, yeah. So we still use him, we still know him, and it's nice to keep that contact. And when the house next-door came up for sale, I contacted him because I thought it would be nice if he could move back. [Laughter] But it was out of their pocket by that time.

Interviewer: But it's interesting that that other family, the three generations that lived next door because earlier they might have already all lived under one roof.

Respondent: That's possible. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I have in fact started to make [0:10:00] inquiries about researching the house.

Interviewer: Oh, so you're going to do that out of this house.

Respondent: Yeah. But I haven't done anything about it other than just register myself within their organization. But I would like to find out who built it and who owned it.

Interviewer: Okay. And if you're ever interested in sharing it with us, I'm sure we'd be very happy to have some of that information.

Respondent: Sure. Sure. I [0:10:30] do know that the two houses were built at the same time.

Interviewer: What year was that?

- Respondent:** We'd have to have a look at the front of the house next door. She's got the date on there. It's well over a hundred years old. And the house to the south of us is a better construction than this one, so clearly whoever built the two properties was intending to live in one and then sell or rent the other one, [0:11:00] and didn't put as much money. And they've got stone lintels and brick walls all around, and we've got just a stone garden, brick fascia at the front.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And I think a lot of the homes were built that way.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. With that terrible insulbrick over on the left, on the side.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. It's a good job we didn't meet any sooner because I'm recovering from a rotten cold.
- Interviewer:** And I guess I'm hearing [0:11:30] some of the...
- Respondent:** Yes, you are.
- Interviewer:** ...it's still lingering.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent:** Yeah. If I may just jump ahead a little bit?
- Interviewer:** Please do.
- Respondent:** Once we did move in here, I discovered that we had four modes of transport – TTC, right? Harbord, Bathurst, Spadina, and Bloor Street. You can't beat that, yeah? You can walk up and down the street and get a taxi more or less any time you like. Because I'm a do-it-yourselfer, [0:12:00] we got Weiner's Hardware, that I've kept alive for thirty years. [Laughs] And everybody knows of Brunswick House Tavern. [Laughter] Everybody used to know Doctor's Hospital, so there was never any difficulty finding us. Everybody I

met at one time lived on Brunswick Avenue or knew someone who lived on Brunswick Avenue. Brunswick or Walmer. [0:12:30] Everybody knew those two streets, and it didn't matter where I seemed to go in Canada, everybody seemed to know about Brunswick Avenue, so that was something there. And we could walk everywhere, which we do. We no longer have a car. No, we got rid of our car about twenty years ago intending to buy a brand new one and never got around to it, so yeah.

Interviewer: Those of us who live in this neighbourhood – and I've lived here for about twenty-five years – I love that about it. You know, the public [0:13:00] transportation, the walkability, and biking, and it is a very, very livable neighbourhood.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. What else? Oh, I'll be glad when Bloor Cinema opens again because we frequent it. Big moviegoers. We have a running track at Central Tech, which we're allowed to use. And I'm not a religious person, but I love the idea that there's a synagogue on the street, a [0:13:30] couple of churches up the road, and I love classical music, but I'm not into Tafelmusik, but I'm glad it's there. I think it's fabulous that it's there. You know, that kind of thing. Keeps it very lively. Lots of cafes, lots of restaurants, and I've become very, very surprised about the development on Harbord. Harbord seemed to be a nowhere sort of street, and now the best restaurants are in town. [Laughs] [0:14:00] Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So you've watched Harbord Street change.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. I have, yeah. And I met doctor what's his name? Morgentaler.

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Respondent: When he was around the corner here, and...

Interviewer: Before they burnt his clinic down.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I liked him. I admire him. I think he's a great, great man. And I used to walk past occasionally. I would see him,

and we'd both [0:14:30] sort of give each other a high fist and smile, and so on.

Interviewer: I had an experience with him. I worked as a waitress at a summer camp in the Laurentians in 1954 and 1954, and he was our camp doctor. [Laughs]

Respondent: Wonderful. Good.

Interviewer: Yeah. And I just gave a lecture at his clinic about a month ago.

Respondent: Oh okay. Great. Good, good.

Interviewer: What a wonderful man.

Respondent: Yeah. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Of course we're sharing our values. [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. Very important. Yeah, yeah. And he deserves the Order of Canada.

Interviewer: [0:15:00] I certainly agree with you.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And the actual buildings that replaced the houses that were burned down are not too bad. It's quite a respectable little bit of architecture. We just need tenants in there now, right? Because the ground floor's empty.

Interviewer: For some reason I think they might have rented it. That used to be Ms Emma's before, I think.

Respondent: Yeah. That's right. Yeah.

Interviewer: But for some reason I think they might have rented it.

- Respondent:** Oh okay.
- Interviewer:** I'm not sure, but it's been empty [0:15:30] for a long time.
- Respondent:** Too long.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** It's probably expensive, Harbord Street, I would think.
- Respondent:** Right. I think so.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** But you certainly enjoy Harbord Street and the sidewalks, and the kind of living that we have in the neighbourhood.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm very critical of some of the qualities of the buildings along the street, and their care and stuff like that.
- Interviewer:** Talk about that a little bit.
- Respondent:** Oh well, it's just me, you know? I'm a bit of a [0:16:00] perfectionist, and you know, I find that people – when you replace a window, it should be architecturally sympathetic to the building, not just the cheapest thing on the market with an aluminum frame you just slap in and forget about it. It's wrong. Absolutely wrong, you know? And unpainted steel doors, things like that, you know? And nothing we can do about the graffiti except clean it off or add to it, but you know, [0:16:30] that sort of thing, you know? I love the little pub. What's it called? Harbord Village Pub?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** The one festooned with flowers and so on. It's cheap and cheerful, and it's really great. And we frequently go to Messis, which I think is

an outstanding restaurant. And the one next to it that doesn't have a name, just 38 I think it is...

Interviewer: 93 Harbord?

Respondent: That's the one. 93.

Interviewer: Oh very nice.

Respondent: [0:17:00] Very nice, yeah.

Interviewer: I agree.

Respondent: Good restaurant.

Interviewer: And quiet. [Laughs] Good food and quiet.

Respondent: That's very critical for it to be quiet, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: I know. I feel that way too.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. I have a hearing problem, so it's...

Interviewer: Are you hearing me okay?

Respondent: I'm hearing you very well. One-to-one is no problem at all.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. And I'm not a fan of Joe-Joe's.

Interviewer: MoMo.

Respondent: MoMo's. Thank you. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Jojo's my sister.

Respondent: Okay. I'm a big fan of Jojo. [Laughter] But I'm not a fan [0:17:30] of MoMo's. It's not my kind of food, and it looks a little bit tacky. And I know that you've said you've been there and you liked it, so I don't

want to be – and I've never been there, so I really can't, but it's not quite as sharp and as neat and as tidy as I think it ought to be. Don't take care of their flowers and the plastic furniture. It's not my cup of tea, right? Charlie's Gallery – it's nice that it's there, [0:18:00] but that's a late night spot, and it's not my bag. And directly across the street there's a restaurant, which is also open late at night, and I can't think of the name of it but it was a Mexican restaurant for a while.

Interviewer: It's up a few steps.

Respondent: Yes, up a few steps. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. I was there only once, but it was so noisy.

Respondent: Yeah, very noisy.

Interviewer: And miserable.

Respondent: Yeah. But it's a great [0:18:30] late night place. People who finish at restaurants, or movie houses, or whatever, nip in now and so – so Charlie's Gallery and that place worked very, very well for the very late nighters.

Interviewer: I wasn't aware of that.

Respondent: Well I only know from second-hand information, from little bits that I've read and picked up. What else can I share with you? [Laughs] Oh I love the [0:19:00] bicycle shop, by the way. They're first-class. They're really, really outstanding. The guy that runs that place is very, very good.

Interviewer: Yeah. And he had a smaller place just a little farther west. In any case, it's convenient to have since a lot of us use our bikes in this neighbourhood.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: I'm one of them.

Respondent: Good.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Good, good, good. Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you have any impression of what the biggest changes have been in your thirty years here?

Respondent: [0:19:30] Yeah. Almost all of the old people have gone. When I say old people, it was the old Italians and the Jewish set. They've all, you know – those who have gotten rich and wealthy have moved off and moved out. Some of our Chinese neighbours too have done exactly the same. Their offspring have moved out and gone to places like Scarborough and so on. It [0:20:00] all would have been nice perhaps if some of the younger set had stayed, but that's been the most evident, I think. But some good things as well. We had some really nasty, tacky people directly across the street who was Hungarian, and a bit of a thug. We actually did have fights on the street, and blood in the gutter, and stuff like that, so – but [0:20:30] he was, you know, he'd get drunk and knock his tenants about, that kind of – so that is gone. That went away.

Interviewer: That makes a big difference.

Respondent: Yeah, it does make a big difference. Yeah. And there was an artist who lived directly across the street. The little grey house. His business wasn't as healthy as it needed to be, so he finally had to sell up, and so that's gone through some changes. [0:21:00] And I think that it's a great pity that there are too many houses on this particular block that are rented, so we get a lot of coming and going.

Interviewer: And they don't take care of those homes the way owners...

Respondent: No, that's right.

Interviewer: ...who live there...

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...take care of the homes.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And the other thing that has pleasantly surprised me is that the few houses that have come on the market have been really quite expensive to purchase, [0:21:30] and there's been some pleasant changes there. But we haven't had the kind of people who are part of the community, so we never see them. We just see their cars and, you know...

Interviewer: Yeah. Well let's hope that they might eventually feel about the community the way we do...

Respondent: Yeah, that would be good.

Interviewer: ...and they would begin to participate.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That would be good.

Interviewer: And sometimes you see people when they have little children and the children are playing outside.

Respondent: Yeah. As a matter of [0:22:00] fact, the grey house does have that, yeah. Except that he's away for half a year. He lives in Japan, I think, so – but that's his business. But he does have children. They do play on the street, so that's all I can say. And just a little house next door to the synagogue, a young couple have moved in about two years ago. Fabulous.

Interviewer: She's on our history committee.

Respondent: Oh good.

Interviewer: [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah. That's right. She has a lot of experience in that area.

Interviewer: She's on the [0:22:30] history committee. Right.

Respondent: Yeah. Wonderful lady. Yeah. And he's...

Interviewer: Nicole is her name.

Respondent: Nicole. Thank you. Nicole and his name is Rob.

Interviewer: I haven't met him.

Respondent: Okay. He's a runner, so we have...

Interviewer: Yeah, I know that.

Respondent: ...that. I've met him. Yeah. Lovely people.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: And they do have children. A child that plays on the street, yeah.
Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: One of the things that distressed me is having a little parkette on the street [0:23:00] here because when there was a vote about what should be done with it, I said it would be a perfect situation for a couple of nice townhouses, and everybody says, "Forget that," and it was turned into a park. And the park has encouraged deadbeats, and it's encouraged layabouts, and graffiti, and all those sorts of little things there. So my [0:23:30] nose is out of joint with that. Should never have been a little park. Doesn't work.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's too bad because it's nice to have a piece of green and at the same time we don't want...

Respondent: Yeah. I don't question that at all. It's very nice to have a bit of greenery. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. But that could be done with better gardens on the street, a little bit more care and attention to, you know, a bit of landscaping, that kind of thing, so.

Interviewer: Yeah. I wasn't aware of what you just described about the park because that is unpleasant and could be scary at times.

Respondent: [0:24:00] Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. There are some topics that I will bring up, and if you have some comments I would love to hear what you say...

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: ...in terms of the way it is, the way it has been in the past. Religion and ethnicity. Have you seen different?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. We used to go to buy eggs, and chicken, and fish just around the corner because all the Jewish [0:24:30] people – and they all went away, all died off or whatever, so we can't do that. But...

Interviewer: There was a fish store on Harbord.

Respondent: Just down here. Yeah, yeah. Where the grey pottery design, Grey Design is. Yeah. I went there by the way to make some pottery. It was great fun. Really, really good, neat group of people. I didn't go back because it's all women and it's [0:25:00] not a guy thing. [Laughter] Not that I'm afraid of that, but it was like, you know – it was very much – I said to them, "Is this a girl thing?" And they said, "Yes, it tends to be." And anyway, yeah. I was talking to someone at the Harbord Bakery just the other day and I said to her, "You are the only ones left of all of the people," and she smiled and said, "Yes, we are. We're very pleased about that." And we are pleased about that because it's great having Harbord [0:25:30] there. So that has been a major change since we moved in with all the Jewish people moving out.

Interviewer: The Jewish people and the Jewish businesses.

Respondent: Exactly. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

- Respondent:** Yeah. But at the same time, even though we would frequent that, we found that the Jewish people have a tendency to sort of treat their customers rather poorly, you know, "Wait your turn, and do as you're told, and you'll have what we give you," rather than, "You're welcome, come on in," and that [0:26:00] kind of thing. But that was just the nature of the business, and you lived with that. The synagogue I think has undergone some major changes as a result of some money they got because of the egg and chicken people putting some money into it. A rather nice little building just down the road.
- Interviewer:** Oh I know of the [indiscernible 0:26:22].
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I know that place. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. [0:26:30] And it's great fun seeing the Jewish people coming out and dancing out on the street once a year.
- Interviewer:** Oh really?
- Respondent:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh, I know which holiday that must be.
- Respondent:** Yeah. You do or you don't know?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Oh okay. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** I love it.
- Interviewer:** It's also a very vibrant and young community.
- Respondent:** Yes, it is. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: So that's something that's pleasant for you.

Respondent: Yes. Yeah. I love it being there. I think it's terrific.

Interviewer: **[0:27:00]** Any comments about any of the churches around, how they're used, or how they've been changing?

Respondent: I know a woman just up the road here. I like to think of her as a good friend. Mary. Mary Sutton. She goes to one of the churches just around the corner here every day, and so quite clearly that's a church that is fully functional, and things are **[0:27:30]** happening there, and I only went there for her husband's funeral. I hadn't been there before or since, but I'm glad it's there. I love it...

Interviewer: And she is too, for sure.

Respondent: Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer: Obviously it's an important institution in her life.

Respondent: Yeah. Sorry?

Interviewer: It's an important institution in her life...

Respondent: Yeah, sure.

Interviewer: ...if she goes daily.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah. There used to be up on Sussex a couple of guys **[0:28:00]** that had a corner house on the corner of the laneway, which we were friends with, very good friends with. They were catalysts. They had got things going in the neighbourhood. Delightful people. Since moved away. But they were having trouble with graffiti on the side, so what I did, I said, "If you" – I knew that one of them was a really good cook, so I said, "If you invite me over for a supper one evening with my wife," I said, "I'll paint you a mural." So I did. So **[0:28:30]** I painted a huge mural on the brick wall, and for three years it was untouched. Nobody tagged it or did anything to it. And then when they left, the new owners, another

couple of guys, they had the siding put on that side there, so the mural disappeared and some other graffiti came back.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think there's a kind of implicit understanding that if there's a mural, [0:29:00] they don't tag or add...

Respondent: That's right. Yeah.

Interviewer: ...graffiti.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So that was such a good idea.

Respondent: Yeah, it works. Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, I wonder if I ever saw it. I must have.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: I can't picture it now.

Respondent: I have a picture of it somewhere, but I can't lay my hands on it at the moment.

Interviewer: Yeah. But that was a very constructive way of dealing with that.

Respondent: Yeah. It worked. They were very pleased

Interviewer: And beautiful.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. They have sausage dogs, so I included lots of images of sausage dogs, and big bold graphics. And I also took some spray paint and did [0:29:30] some spray things as well, so it looked as though it was part and parcel of that activity.

Interviewer: That was quite a trade. A good meal...

Respondent: Yeah, it worked. Yeah. And I got a suntan as well, so.

Interviewer: Yeah. [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: In terms of ethnicity, have you seen changes in your years here?

Respondent: Yes. Yeah, yeah. A lot of the people that literally didn't [0:30:00] speak the language have gone. There are still a couple of people on the street and so on who don't speak the language, but there was quite a lot of people who were, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. I guess they had enough of each other that they communicated with each other...

Respondent: Yeah, exactly. Which is what was happening here. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And that seems to have really, really disappeared. And [0:30:30] there used to be two families of Chinese just south of here; there's only one now. And she speaks a little bit of English, but she speaks it in a very colourful and ambitious manner, which makes her absolutely a delight to spend some time with.

Interviewer: Does she appreciate how colourful she is?

Respondent: Probably not, but she's a sweetheart anyway, so [0:31:00] yeah, yeah. Yeah, so that's an interesting question. When we moved in, almost every other house was owned or occupied by people who didn't speak English. And that's definitely a change.

Interviewer: So that's a big change over the last three decades.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Big, big change.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Anything that you've noticed in terms of class structure?

Respondent: Class structure?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: A little bit [0:31:30] further north on Brunswick Avenue there's been some really nice architectural changes made, modern, and intelligent use of that kind of space. So clearly people are taking their property seriously and I'd like to see more of that happening through here. And for some reason or other, this [0:32:00] particular section of Brunswick between Sussex and Harbord doesn't seem to have attracted that as much as I would like to see, but that's promising. When I walk up to Bloor Street and I see these two houses, and great sheets of glass, and...

Interviewer: Yeah. There's a very modern one on the other side of the street.

Respondent: ...it's very modern. Very modern. Yeah, yeah. That's really chic for want of a better word. And I think [0:32:30] there's a house – I think it's 626 – actually got it written up, the number. I'm not sure about the numbers, but he did a completely refurbishing of the house, and took the best of all of the elements and that looks really very, very nice as well.

Interviewer: So I'm going to look for it. So 626?

Respondent: On the opposite side.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. I'll look for it.

Respondent: Kitty-corner from that. I was once asked by someone [0:33:00] who was working at the TRANZAC for my advice as a designer to put the place – and I was really keen to do it. I did it for free, and made a lot of suggestions, and I made some sketches and some drawings. I took photographs and whatnot like that, and he did absolutely nothing at all, so my nose is out of joint about that. I think it's a dump.

Interviewer: Yeah, it is. Yeah.

Respondent: And I think the Harbord – is it the Harbord? No the Future [0:33:30] Bakery is very welcome, but a bit tacky. A bit tacky. They don't look after their flowers, and they don't look after their trees, and that kind

of – too much plastic furniture, yeah. And a truly lovely building is the Brunswick House Tavern, but it's completely in the wrong hands in the wrong – everything's wrong about it. The gambling, and the shabbiness of it.

Interviewer: Well and [0:34:00] I think that those of you who live near it suffer from the noise, and...

Respondent: Yeah. Fortunately I don't, but I find it visually unpleasant.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And what I do like though is the guy that sells books on the corner. I think that the corner between the Brunswick House and the Harbord Bakery – the Future Bakery would be absolutely perfect for a little market, Saturday market. People would just come and put up a stall of [0:34:30] something like that, and they sell everything from knickknacks to old books and – I would love to see that grow.

Interviewer: They put the bikes in there now.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Have you seen that?

Respondent: Yeah. I'm not quite sure about that. I love it. I love the bikes. I think it's a fabulous thing that's come to the city. Timely. Perfect. But I don't like it on my street.

Interviewer: And the man who sells the books, have you ever had any dialogue with him?

Respondent: No. I should. I should, [0:35:00] but I haven't, and I wouldn't buy his books, right, because they're always out in the rain and that kind of stuff. But I do buy books from the local bookshops. It's enough around here. Yeah. There's one on – a bookshop on Sussex and Spadina. I think it's called something Ten, or Ten.

Interviewer: I know the bookshop; I don't know the name of it.

Respondent: Right on the corner.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. **[0:35:30]** Two things I like about them. I buy books from them, and then also they will take books from me, which is good. And the guy that lives upstairs takes care of a bit of rough ground on the side there. He's wonderful.

Interviewer: Is his name Don?

Respondent: It's Don, yeah. With the orange glasses, and the dark glasses, and the...

Interviewer: Did you watch how that then morphosed into a garden from just gravel or weeds or something?

Respondent: Yeah. A friend of mine presented me with a tree for a little **[0:36:00]** favour that I did, and a tree wouldn't thrive in our garden because it just wasn't the layout for it. So I took it to – his name Don, is it?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I took it to Don and I said, "Don, give this a nice home," and he was very thrilled to put some out.

Interviewer: Yeah. He's done a lovely job there.

Respondent: Yeah. It's great. Yeah. More power to him.

Interviewer: I watched it from when it was just a mess, and he worked very hard. It was a pleasure to watch. Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Don. Okay. **[0:36:30]** Yeah.

Interviewer: Any comments about particular changes of your street?

Respondent: Changes of my street?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Only what I said earlier on, you know? People are not taking care of their buildings. I know it's expensive. There's no question about that. Fixing up your new house is expensive, cripplingly so, right? **[0:37:00]** But at the same time, a little bit of common sense, brick cleaning, and pointing, and the right kind of windows, and the liquor pint could make a fantastic difference. Just walking down the street would be a good pleasure. And we have far too many people on the street who are just literally lazy gardeners. They're really not interested, don't care, and I find that painful. It hurts. I really, really don't like it. And it seems to **[0:37:30]** be particularly in this little corner of Brunswick Avenue because further down Brunswick, some wonderful things going on. And on Major and the other streets are – Robert or Major – all along there, some really fine dwellings and fine care. But it ain't happening on this little stretch. But they don't have Central Tech in their back garden, which is – right? [Laughter] I have that. Yeah.

Interviewer: **[0:38:00]** Any comments of the schools in the neighbourhood?

Respondent: Well Central Tech is fabulous, really good, despite the fact that one sees these young kids smoking and spitting in the street and all that, but you know, you accept that. But I've been inside the school for a number of different reasons, and I've seen what's going on in there and it's truly fabulous. Really, really wonderful. And one of – a little **[0:38:30]** incident actually inspired a drawing of mine that I can show you actually. I saw some guys dancing and one of them was dancing on his head, and it was really fantastic, literally spinning around on his head. He slipped and bounced down the stairs, and he just turned around and laughed, and came back up the stairs, and carried on dancing again.

Interviewer: What a lovely show you had. [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. So that was a truly amazing – and it was music **[0:39:00]** going on there. They have a big fashion department going on in there, and lots of other things going on. And I took a lesson there one time. I studied German and so on. So Central Tech is great. I love it when the film crew comes around and films the stuff like that. I hope that they don't start locking up the playing

field there because people use it to run their dogs and they also [0:39:30] runners will use it as a runner, and there are two separate groups of running groups who actually come to the Central Tech track once a month. Once a week. Well the summer, I think, to use the track, and it's treated with great respect. We don't leave any garbage, and we don't make a mess, whatever, anything like that. But that would be a tragic loss if they decided to close it up, and they could.

Interviewer: [0:40:00] Is that because people are not cleaning up after their...

Respondent: No, I think any – actually I think the mess is what students make. I don't think people who use it. I think the dog runners are very, very careful, very respectful, and I know that people like myself who run there occasionally, we're always picking stuff up and keeping it tidy.

Interviewer: But you're saying it's something that you know is being discussed right now.

Respondent: Yeah. I think so. Yeah, yeah. There's some new signs on there [0:40:30] saying they're going to be locked up at night-time, but if it's after nine o'clock, that's okay. Yeah, yeah. But I love the fact that it's there.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's part of our neighbourhood.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Part of the fabric of our neighbourhood.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. I'm moving on to part of the city, and talking about traffic changes, sidewalk uses, back lanes. So do you want to start [0:41:00] with traffic?

Respondent: Yeah. I only drive when I need to, and I rent a car from Avis at Bloor and Yonge. Right? And that's perfect. It's really, really terrific. Doesn't cost an arm and a leg, and you get a brand new car, and you just put in gas and you give it back and say, "Thank you very

much," and it's terrific. And you get points for doing that. [0:41:30] So the traffic doesn't bother me, right, because I don't commute. I don't drive. My wife walks to work. All right. I would like to say a little bit more respect for the one-way traffic because we're always getting people driving, literally driving upstream, okay?

Interviewer: It's dangerous.

Respondent: And cyclists don't care much about that. [0:42:00] So as for the laneways, I think they're wonderful and I use them an awful lot, and I'm very disturbed about one of the laneways having a certain name, but I'm not going to say any more about that because I don't want to get myself into trouble. And it's nothing I can do about it; I'm going to have to live with it.

Interviewer: Is it the name that they selected? Because we're naming all the lanes soon.

Respondent: I know.

Interviewer: [0:42:30] You're aware of that.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is that okay with you?

Respondent: I'm not going to say any more.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay.

Respondent: Okay? Especially not with that thing on.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Okay. It won't be on the whole time.

Respondent: Okay. So yeah, the laneways I really like, and for the most part I'll use them night and day, it doesn't bother me. So that's fine.

Interviewer: You're not afraid of being in the lanes at night.

Respondent: No. No. No. And what else? What else can [0:43:00] you ask me?

Interviewer: What about use of backyards? Any comments about that?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. We use our back garden a great deal, and we virtually live out there in the summertime. We eat, and drink, and entertain out there, and my wife and I are absolutely one hundred percent responsible for a young couple who came to supper, sat in our garden, were utterly amazed at the peace and quiet, and a month later they bought a house just down the road here.

Interviewer: [0:43:30] Wow.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: It is remarkable. People can't understand how we live so centrally and we can have these little quiet spots.

Respondent: Right. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: I feel the same way.

Respondent: Good, good. And we feed the birds throughout the year, and we're having a little bit of trouble with the birds at the moment because I love the sparrows, and I don't mind the occasional – what's it called? Mourning dove. They're rather sweet things, right?
[0:44:00] But I don't want them en masse, and we've got five or six starting to live here, so we're going to have to do something about dissuading them from coming around. [Laughs] Yeah, but no, we love the garden, and I think in respect to the amount of time that I use the garden, that I'm blessed with neighbours who don't much use it, so I get extra peace and quiet. I don't have, you know,
[0:44:30] our Chinese neighbours next door. They use the garden space, but they're very discrete, and quiet, and pleasant. And they don't speak more than about seven words of the language, but we've got on very, very well together with sign language and generally communicating. Nice tenants.

Interviewer: So there's a friendly feeling between you.

Respondent: Yeah. We're fine. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: And when you bought this home, was there a garden back there? Was it used?

Respondent: It was used to grow grapes, [0:45:00] and some vegetables. It was also a great place to dump garbage, and I think both of the garages were used, but they were packed with junk. And what is now a very nice deck out at the back there had some kind of, you know, rudely constructed outhouse, which the real estate person described as a [0:45:30] cooler room, but it was in fact just a pile of garbage that I think the owner, bless his heart, he would just take a bit of an old metal and nailed it up, and put a tarp over the top, and like that.

Interviewer: Yeah. Pretty ugly.

Respondent: Yeah. So they didn't have the same kind of priorities as we do. And I think they were very surprised when my wife and I bought the house that we didn't have a family, and we didn't want to, you know, divide the house up into [0:46:00] rooms and that kind of thing, so yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Any comments about the heating? Did you change the heating?

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: What was it and what is it now?

Respondent: I have a love-hate relationship with this house, right? I love it because of the location, and I love it because I know it intimately, okay? But it's actually an extremely awkward house. It was too narrow.

Interviewer: What's [0:46:30] the width of your house? Do you know?

Respondent: Fifteen. Fifteen feet or so. Fifteen, sixteen feet. Something like that, you know? And so it's incredibly difficult. There's no storage. All storage had to be built into it, and there's hardly any wall space to hang artwork, which is very important to me, yeah?

Interviewer: [Laughs] I think so.

Respondent: And the way that [0:47:00] I've got a – I love the west setting for the garden, and the south section here, but it gives us no opportunity for windows for growing indoor plants, and I would like to grow some indoor plants. That's simply not one. So that's a problem and that's difficult. And anytime and every time that I've made any kind of repairs on the house, whether I've done it myself or whether I've [0:47:30] got professionals in, there has always been unseen problems and always the attitude of, "Oh, these old houses are nothing but problems," and how they were very badly designed right from the get-go. So we're walking down the street and they're quite pretty, and it's nice that I put a big porch out the front there, and that kind of stuff, but it's – yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: [0:48:00] But in terms of the heating system.

Respondent: Oh sorry. We got off track there.

Interviewer: But it was all related.

Respondent: No, but the heating system was absolutely ancient, and I had it totally pulled out and reworked entirely, and I had a low frequency furnace put in first, which was a big mistake, then I had a mid-efficiency furnace put in, which has been perfect. And I would like to put a high-efficiency [0:48:30] furnace in, but the process of having the – what's it called?

Interviewer: The vents?

Respondent: The vent, right? Our basement is really rather deep, so that the venting process going out onto the little bit we have – space there is very, very problematic, so we didn't go that route.

Interviewer: Problematic for you or for [0:49:00] your neighbour?

Respondent: Problematic. Yeah. Well the thing is that it required a lot of extra work, which would have doubled the price. Then it would have meant an exhaust element sticking out, and I've only got eighteen inches along that little – between our two houses. And although I don't use it very much, it's useful to have that, and about fifteen

years ago there was a fire in the garage two houses south of us, [0:49:30] and the firemen were thrilled to bits because this was the only access that they could have between the houses to get to there, and it was a lifesaver.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: I use the word freely, lifesaving, but the firemen were really happy to be able to get through here onto our roof and tackle the fire that way.

Interviewer: So even though it's narrow, it's an important space.

Respondent: It's usable. Yeah. Yeah. And then putting air vents and other things sticking outside there would have been really [0:50:00] seriously problematic, especially once the snow gets stuck in there, and it does get stuck in there.

Interviewer: Yeah. For sure.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Nobody's going to get through to shovel.

Respondent: Mm-hm. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Any comments about garbage?

Respondent: Any comments about garbage?

Interviewer: How it's been collected over the years. You've already talked about storing of garbage and how that disturbs you.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. I haven't forgiven them for the strike. [0:50:30] [Laughs] And...

Interviewer: That was terrible.

Respondent: ...there was a time when you could quite freely put your garbage out twice a week, right? And almost anything and everything would

be taken away. The way it works now I know is sensible, but it makes one feel as though we are living under some sort of police state in terms of, you know, what you must and [0:51:00] mustn't do with your garbage containers. And I find that perhaps – I find that a little bit disturbing, right? I'm very, very good about the garbage that I put out and I want to say that I'm religious about separating everything, but I'm a good citizen in that respect. But I do feel a bit uncomfortable sometimes about the – the one good thing about the garbage, if you want to get rid of something, right, you can put it out [0:51:30] on top of your garbage container and sooner or later someone will take it away. So that's great. [Laughter] And I've done everything from furniture, to exercise balls, and stuff like that, yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. I like that about the neighbourhood. If there are books that I have no room to store, or a piece of furniture, or bowls or something, there's so much pedestrian traffic, somebody who wants it can take it.

Respondent: Yeah. That works. Yeah. Talking of pedestrian traffic, something that is new – we have a Laundromat [0:52:00] on Harbord. It's only been there, I think, two years, maybe a little bit more, and I noticed now it's frequently used by people all over the neighbourhood, and it's not unusual to see people walking down the street carrying a suitcase on wheels and you think they're going to get a taxi, they go to the airport, and you see them five and ten minutes later they're coming back with, you know, clearly with all their washing done, that kind of stuff. That's new. That's new as of about a year. [0:52:30] Before that didn't happen, now it does. And I see people from – people that I know from the various shops that I frequent that come down here.

Interviewer: So it's part of the fabric of our neighbourhood.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: People using the sidewalks.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And as one guy that lives somewhere close by, he's – not quite sure how to describe him. [0:53:00] He's obviously mentally deficient to a degree, and he doesn't live in that cluster of buildings right on the corner there, but he lives over there somewhere, and he walks up and down our street almost every day twice a day. Long, curly hair. Sometimes has a beard. Never stops smoking. And he and I have a rapport. We just pass the time of day, and when he's in the mood for it he will actually speak, and when he's [0:53:30] in the mood, which is quite frequently, he will just grunt. But I quite like it. I like him. I like him big now, and I like it. Would I invite him in to the house? I don't think I would. Would I help him out if I saw him in trouble on the street? Yes, I would. Yeah. Yeah. But he's a little bit of colour that I...

Interviewer: Yeah. You know that is the word that when you were speaking I was thinking you like colour in our neighbourhood.

Respondent: I do, yeah.

Interviewer: I mean you talk about Central Tech, you talk about the space beside Brunswick House. [0:54:00] You talk about this person, and I can see that you're an artist in every sense. You like our neighbourhood to be colourful and interesting.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I would. Yeah. Much more than it is, but yeah.

Interviewer: And when I think of people like the man you just described, some people would feel wary, some people would feel just negative feelings about...

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: ...and you find him an interesting person, and you engage with him, and in a minimal way, but it's probably very [0:54:30] nice for him too because probably very few people do what you're doing.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Any comments about animals in the neighbourhood?

Respondent: Animals? I'm a cat lover, so I'm quite happy about the cats being around the neighbourhood. I had to put some concrete on the front of my fence because dog owners were finding it a very convenient little spot. Actually caught somebody [0:55:00] and challenged him, and then it stopped. Since I put the concrete in there, that – but I had loose gravel, which I quite liked, and that was a mistake. I'm not a dog lover, but I'm respectful of dog people, okay?

Interviewer: Who clean up. [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah, especially if they clean up and so on. And actually dog people, they're [0:55:30] actually quite nice to engage because they're always – they never walk anywhere. They take a few steps and stop, and a few steps – and I've met several people in the neighbourhood as a result of that, and I've made friends with Cheryl just up the – do you know Cheryl?

Interviewer: Oh yes.

Respondent: Just up the road?

Interviewer: Yeah. She had two dogs. Yeah.

Respondent: Little round Cheryl.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: She had two dogs and now she has one. Yeah. So I do know Cheryl.

Respondent: Yeah. Did you know that she was a skydiver?

Interviewer: Yes.

- Respondent:** Yeah. She's a delightful lady.
- Interviewer:** [0:56:00] So you do like to get to know the people on the street.
- Respondent:** I'd love to know them much more, much more so. I'd like to feel that this was a real community. I know John Liss and his wife across the street. Just over here.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** I know Keith and his family there, and Sandy of course, who I'd introduced you to. And I try to make [0:56:30] friends with some other people, but that didn't work out. And I used to like the couple that lived next to the park on the corner here. What were their names now? They were very involved in your group, your society.
- Interviewer:** In the Harbord Village?
- Respondent:** In the Harbord Village. Yeah. She was a sweet little round, charismatic person, and he was a bit of a snobby [0:57:00] sort of chappy that complained about everything. But they contributed greatly to the community, and they had an annual party here in the little park, which was always welcome. That worked out very well. And he was suffering from ill health, so they went back to the States. I'm sure you must have met them.
- Interviewer:** I don't remember.
- Respondent:** Because they gave them a little award at one of the Harbord thingamajig meetings there.
- Interviewer:** Maybe [0:57:30] I wasn't as involved at that time.
- Respondent:** Oh okay. All right.
- Interviewer:** But I did meet Sandy, and we interviewed, and...
- Respondent:** Yeah. She's a sweetheart.
- Interviewer:** Lovely. So thank you very much.

- Respondent:** Oh good.
- Interviewer:** Any other suggestions, I'd appreciate those because we had a very nice talk with each other.
- Respondent:** Good. Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** But you know, are you familiar with Jane Jacobs?
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Something she called sidewalk living.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** And that's you. I mean – and she thought that was very good in a neighbourhood, which we have. But that really describes, I think, describes you. Enjoying **[0:58:00]** the front porch, the neighbourhood, the sidewalk, the people that you're meeting, especially on your street.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** And the stores in the neighbourhood. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Sure. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So she was describing you. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** Good. Good, good.
- Interviewer:** Generally speaking, I know some of it might be redundant, but the stores that – you've talked about Harbord a lot.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** College Street, Harbord, Bloor Street. In fact, I think **[0:58:30]** when you began to speak you talked about Weiner's, and the fish store,

but any other thoughts about the stores, whether it's restaurants, or hardware, or other kinds of merchandise?

Respondent: I like it that some fashion stores have moved in. There's one – used to be a place called SWAK. Do you remember that?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. That's a fashion centre there, and I think that's good for the – [0:59:00] and also I just noticed the other day that there's going to be a men's fashion store moving into that building opposite the Shoe Museum, directly north of the Shoe Museum. There's a very old, rather attractive piece of architecture there. The ground floor's going to be a men's store. Now that's a plus for it. And I have shopped in the men's store just up on Bloor Street there. The prices are a bit of [0:59:30] out to lunch, but he was very pleasant, is pleasant, and I'm actually surprised to see how that store seems to be staying in business because they're not open on – they don't open until late. I think they're not open on Mondays, and the prices are high, but he's already been there for more than four years, so he's doing something right, so that works. [1:00:00] The bicycle shop across the street – I've been in there on a few occasions, and it's extremely badly run, so I wouldn't go back there. But the bicycle shop just down on Harbord, he's a winner. Terrific, right? Oh yeah, I love the idea that we've got twenty-four hour shopping here for drugs, and for [1:00:30] anything that you need, right? And so those two places are great. But at the same time, I think that they're rather tacky looking from the street element. I'm talking about...

Interviewer: Metro and Shoppers?

Respondent: Yes. Thank you. Yeah. Metro and Shoppers. Yeah, yeah. And as a matter of fact, the thing that irks me most of all, there seems to be [1:01:00] a lot of acceptance of tackiness. The post office is really, really tacky in there. And the piece of ground in front of it, which could look really, really – and have a lovely bit – without going into a great deal of expense, it could be really nice with the tree looked after and that kind of stuff, so it's parked on the whatever. Great having the Beer Store over there. [Laughter] And we could do with

a bigger, better wine store. [1:01:30] We have one in Honest Ed's. That's good. Tucked in.

Interviewer: Oh, I didn't know that.

Respondent: You didn't know that, eh?

Interviewer: No. We go to Dupont to get wine.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. No, Dupont's perfect. It's great. But sometimes just a little bit inconvenient to walk up there.

Interviewer: So Honest Ed's has some decent wine?

Respondent: Yeah. Honest Ed's got lots of little shops in the front there, and one of those is a wine store. Now it's all Ontario wines, all right? So you can't [1:02:00] get anything magical there, but if you need, you know, unexpected company and you need a bottle of wine, or you fancy something red, then you can...

Interviewer: Well that's good to know. Thank you.

Respondent: They're really good, really nice, and they're very polite and nice in there, and helpful if you want it. And they've also got wines in a cooler, so if you like something and you want it...

Interviewer: Oh, on the run. [Laughter]

Respondent: Yes, yeah, yeah. The other shops and stores I don't use [1:02:30] because I'm not interested in whatever they have to offer, but I'm glad they're there. Yeah.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. But it never crossed my mind that we don't have fashion shops, so that's changing.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Just adding to the variety of what we have.

- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. And I think that's very, very important because we have too many fast food joints. Far too many fast food joints, and [1:03:00] that kind of squeezes out the opportunity for variety. But we can get international newspapers right here in the...
- Interviewer:** Book City.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Not only Book City, but the one a little bit further west, next door to a variety shop. There's a place festooned with magazines and stuff like that. They've got international papers there, except they're a bit slow in getting them in, so it's easy enough to go...
- Interviewer:** And not news as much.
- Respondent:** [1:03:30] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So it's easier to go to Yorkville and go down to National Papers there. Yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** How about talking about for a few minutes the institutions in the neighbourhood. I'm thinking of – well we talked about schools already.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** I don't know if you want to add to anything about that. And we've talked about churches and synagogues.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Health care. But we don't really have – [1:04:00] there's not much of...
- Respondent:** I'm not old enough to remember health care. [Laughter] Just up behind the Future Bakery there's some place that's been refurbished and expanded for yoga classes. I'm not into yoga, but I think it's great that that's there. But I don't [1:04:30] know about any other places.

Interviewer: What about – any comments about the JCC? Do you use it? Are you familiar with it?

Respondent: I only go there to vote. I only go there to vote. I'm not a theatre enthusiast. I wouldn't go to the theatre there. And with regards to exercise, I'm a very single-minded person about exercise, and I don't want to do it with a group, and I definitely don't [1:05:00] want to do it with a club, so that wouldn't affect me.

Interviewer: Well you're a serious runner.

Respondent: Having said that, I love it that it's there. Right? Yeah. I love it that it's there, and I like it that they've refurbished that building and done something nice with it on the corner. That's a plus. Really, really nice. And I like it too that there's a new high-rise building there, which [1:05:30] is quite nice from a distance, but up close it's a bit tacky and I'm disappointed in the detail, especially on the streetscape. And I'm really looking forward to seeing what – what's it called? Be something or other there it's called? The new condo that's coming.

Interviewer: On Bathurst you mean?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: It's called Be something or other. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, and I know – I don't know the architects personally, but I know them by reputation. I was in that business for a while, so [1:06:00] they should do a good job.

Interviewer: And they have some nice murals on the wall in the meantime.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Those huge murals.

Respondent: They did a nice job of that. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Any comments about the influence of two institutions – one is the University of Toronto and the other is Kensington Market?

Respondent: Kensington Market I love, and we frequent it. But we don't shop there [1:06:30] as much as we used to because it's actually quite difficult to get really good stuff there, so we go a little bit further afield. We either go down to Lawrence Market or over to Whole Foods, and we prepare to spend a little bit more money. But the Market's fabulous and we do use it. And I go there, and any opportunity I have to go from A to B, I always go through the Market, so yeah, that's great. As for the university, [1:07:00] I'm really not affected much by it. The young people come and go. Sometimes they're great, sometimes they're not great. Sandy has her house next door, but she's a very good landlady. She stands no nonsense, so we need more people like her. But there's a couple of houses down here, and one just a bit down the road there, which will occasionally have a bunch of [1:07:30] students moving in, and for a year you just get used to them, and then they go away. So that's the only effect that I have with that.

Interviewer: In terms of our community, the livability, the security in the neighbourhood, any comments about that?

Respondent: [1:08:00] It's certainly livable. It's certainly comfortable. It's certainly a terrific location. And I would like to know a few more people in the neighbourhood, which is why I became a member of the Harbord...

Interviewer: Harbord Village.

Respondent: Yeah. Harbord Village. [1:08:30] And I wouldn't mind selling our house and making a bundle of money, but there's nowhere to go.

Interviewer: Because you like the neighbourhood. Because you want to live here.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So when you start comparing what else you're likely to get in the downtown core, there's very little or nothing to match it unless you're a multimillionaire, right? So I can't afford to live in Yorkville, [1:09:00] and I wouldn't live in a condo anyway. It

would have to be a house. I'm anti-condo. I'm anti-condo because it's not yours.

Interviewer: That's right. It's...

Respondent: You're paying for the square footage. Yeah, yeah. So if you want to change the front door or put a cat door in the screen door at the back, you're not allowed to do that, and the committee won't have time for that. [Laughs] Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: What about [1:09:30] security in the neighbourhood?

Respondent: When we first moved in we had trouble. We were broke into twice, and once I think initially – it was around Christmastime and I was a sitting duck, so we knew people in the neighbourhood and that kind of stuff. So we got done over. And then the second time we got robbed was about two years later, and that was a vicious break-in. That was a real proper, you know, [1:10:00] damaged doors and stuff like that, and we'd been cased. It was quite clear, right? In Toronto people were very good, and we got our security system put in, and we never had any trouble at all after that. And I took extra precautions as well, so that was not a problem.

Interviewer: That must have been very distressing.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: The first time...

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: ...and then the second time shortly...

Respondent: First time we were just pissed off, [1:10:30] [Laughter] and cross about the whole thing. Second time we were humiliated. And also when we called the police in, they came in with a crew to dust everything. They actually made more mess than the crooks did.

Interviewer: So the whole experience.

- Respondent:** It was terrible. Yeah, yeah. So I've made sure that it won't ever happen [1:11:00] again, so yeah. We have good locks, and windows, and that kind of stuff.
- Interviewer:** And what about when you're out at night? Because you don't have a car, so you're walking if you're coming from the subway.
- Respondent:** For the most part, I feel pretty comfortable, yeah. For the most part, I feel pretty comfortable, and I do come home late at night occasionally, so yeah, that's not a – yeah. That's good.
- Interviewer:** The last three topics have to do with kind of bigger events. [1:11:30] One is – but I don't know if you were here. When they wanted to bring the Spadina Expressway down, were you here at that time? Or were you not here yet?
- Respondent:** I think I came in at the tail end of all of that. It was a done deal, right?
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** I'm thankful it didn't happen.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** It would have really changed us.
- Respondent:** It would have stripped the whole thing, yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And I guess the same would apply to Rochdale. That was [1:12:00] probably behind it.
- Respondent:** [Laughs] Yeah. Rochdale was fantastic, wasn't it? You know, they throw bottles out of the top windows, and the whole place reeked of dope, and all those other kind of things and stuff like that. So yeah. Yeah. It was good that it went. It was good that it was changed over.

Interviewer: You do like colour.

Respondent: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: So it was colourful, but it could have been trouble.

Respondent: [1:12:30] It was trouble. It was trouble. And when the police went over there, I never went there, but you know, I'd learned about it and stuff, and with the police there they had to go very, very carefully or make sure that they had helmets on because there would be things be chunked out the windows at them and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's not fun if you get that on your head.

Respondent: Damn right.

Interviewer: From the front.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. You wouldn't live to talk about it. Yeah.

Interviewer: So I've really covered all the topics.

Respondent: Good.

Interviewer: And I'm wondering whether there's anything that [1:13:00] you had thought about that we haven't touched on at all. Thank you for making those notes. Obviously you took this dialogue seriously.

Respondent: Well I was looking forward to you being here, and I didn't want to be falling over my tongue, so I thought I'd better – yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: [1:13:30] Looks like you've pretty well covered most of that.

Respondent: Yeah. We have. Yes. Yeah, we've covered everything. Yeah. So if I can wave a magic wand and have something done about it, I would have all of the people on the street fix up their houses so that it has some street cred, and just a pleasure to walk along. That would be nice. [1:14:00] And also spend some time looking after the front

gardens, and keeping the garbage containers out of sight. That would make me very happy.

Interviewer: Well and also it sounds if you – you know quite a few of the people on your street.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: And that you like that, and that you would like more of an – you have a neighbourhood. I think you'd like even more of that, is my impression.

Respondent: Yeah, I would. Yeah, yeah. And because [1:14:30] I've always been self-employed, right, so I've always either worked out of this very space here, or on the ground floor when we first moved in. I had a studio on the ground floor. So I don't commute, I don't go to an office, all right, and for the most part my clients would come and see me, so yeah, I'm in the neighbourhood. I know the streets, and the houses, and the buildings, and I watch the trees grow, and [1:15:00] change, and I know when things happen and stuff.

Interviewer: And you like the city obviously. I mean you like being able to see...

Respondent: Oh yeah. I'm a city dweller.

Interviewer: ...Central Tech. You like the lanes.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So you're a city person.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. I'm a city dweller.

Interviewer: Me too.

Respondent: Mm-hm. For sure. No question.

Interviewer: I'm going to turn this off.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: But I do want to say thank you very, very much.

Respondent: A great pleasure.

Interviewer: It's a pleasure.

Respondent: Nice to meet you. I hope we meet again.

Interviewer: I hope so too.

Respondent: Good.

[01:15:15]

[End of recording]